

REWRITING THE PARROT'S TALES: NARRATIVE STRUCTURE AND LITERARY  
CRAFT IN NAKHSHABI'S *ṬUṬINĀMA*

by

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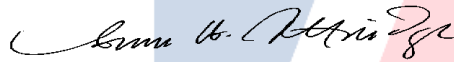
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## Note on Transliteration and Translation

For Arabic and Persian names and words, a modified version of the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* transliteration system has been used; however, other transliteration systems are preserved in cited references. The **short vowels** in Arabic or Persian words are shown as “a,” “e,” and “o,” as in *bahman*, *del*, or *bozorg*. The three **long vowels** are represented as “ā,” “ū,” and “ī,” as in *bād*, *karim*, or *nur*. With regard to diphthongs, “ey” and “ow” are represented as *kheyr* and *Nowruz*.

### Consonants

Persian/Arabic Letter	Transliteration	Example (Persian)
ب	b	<i>bād</i>
پ	p	<i>panj</i>
ت	t	<i>toranj</i>
ث	s	<i>sanā</i> <sup>ʿ</sup>
ج	j	<i>javān</i>
چ	ch	<i>cherā</i>
ح	h	<i>hāl</i>
خ	kh	<i>khāna</i>
د	d	<i>daryā</i>
ذ	z	<i>zāhab</i>
ر	r	<i>rang</i>
ز	z	<i>zan</i>
ژ	zh	<i>zhāla</i>
س	s	<i>sabz</i>
ش	sh	<i>sham</i> <sup>ʿ</sup>
ص	ṣ	<i>ṣabr</i>
ض	ẓ	<i>ẓaruri</i>
ط	ṭ	<i>ṭalab</i>
ظ	ẓ	<i>ẓolm</i>
ع	ʿ	<i>ʿaql</i>
غ	gh	<i>gham</i>
ف	f	<i>farsh</i>
ق	q	<i>qalam</i>
ک	k	<i>ketāb</i>
گ	g	<i>gol</i>

ل	l	<i>lab</i>
م	m	<i>mard</i>
ن	n	<i>nān</i>
و	v	<i>vāhed</i>
ه	h	<i>haft</i>
ی	y	<i>yak</i>

Well-known nouns and royal or religious titles, such as Shah, Sultan, Amir, and Imam, are not transliterated. Additionally, words ending in letter *he* (ه) are transliterated with -a, as in *khāna* and *Ṭuṭināma*.

Unless otherwise noted, all translations in work are mine and reflect my interpretation of the original text.

## Note on Source Text and Manuscript Base for This Study

For this study, I rely on the critical edition of the *Ṭuṭināma* edited by Faṭḥ Allāh Mojtabāyi and Gholām ‘Ali Āriā (Tehran: Manuchehri Press, 1993),<sup>1</sup> which is based on a collation of five key manuscripts: first, the Khalil Ḥayāti Efendi Library (Turkey) manuscript, which is dated Thursday, 13 Moḥarram 955 AH (1548 CE). This is the oldest known manuscript of Nakhshabi’s text available to the editors. The editors prioritize this version due to its early date, and microfilms of its pages are available at the University of Tehran Central Library. The next two manuscripts, from the eleventh century AH (seventeenth century CE), are both preserved at the Ganj Bakhsh Library (Pakistan). Third, a twelfth century AH (eighteenth century CE) copy, reflecting later scribal traditions, is preserved at the University of Tehran Central Library. Lastly, the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Paris) copy, a microfilm of which is held at the University of Tehran, provides additional comparative material. I rely on this critical edition because its variety of resources ensures a reliable base text while accounting for variant readings across the manuscript tradition.

The references to the *Javāher al-asmār* are drawn from the only existing edition by Shams Āl-e Aḥmad, based on the work’s only surviving manuscript.<sup>2</sup> It is important to note that ‘Emād bin Moḥammad Ṣaghari has also occasionally been referred to as ‘Emād bin Moḥammad Naghri and ‘Emād bin Moḥammad Taghari in contemporary works. This variation stems from the visual similarity between the Persian letters ن, ت, س (n, t, s), which differ only in the number of their dots. In the only available manuscript of *Javāher al-asmār*, the system of dotting has not

<sup>1</sup> Zīā’ al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭināma*, ed. Faṭḥ Allāh Mojtabāyi, and Gholām ‘Ali Āria (Tehran: Manuchehri Press, 1993), 260-64.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Emād b. Moḥammad Ṣaghari, *Javāher al-asmār*, ed. Shams Āl-e Aḥmad (Tehran: Ferdaus Press, 1973).

been consistently applied, and many dots are missing. This has led to confusion regarding the correct spelling of author's last name. In the manuscript, only one dot appears in the place of the author's last name. Based on this, Shams Āl-e Aḥmad, the first and only scholar to edit this work, identified the name as Ṣaghari --, because Ṣaghar is the name of a region near Kerman, Iran, and that it is common in Persian to form last names by adding the suffix "i" to a proper noun.

## Abstract

This dissertation examines a fourteenth century Persian adaptation of the Sanskrit *Shukāsaptati* (“*Seventy Tales of a Parrot*”), titled the *Ṭuṭināma* (“*Tales of a Parrot*”) by Zīā’ al-Din Nakhshabi. The Tales of a Parrot story cycle, which originated in India and circulated across Persian, Arabic, and European literatures, yet has remained understudied compared to similar works like *Kalila va Demna*. Nakhshabi’s *Ṭuṭināma* is a creative rewriting of an earlier Persian translation, *Javāher al-asmār* (“*Gems of Stories*”) by ‘Emād bin Moḥammad Ṣaghari and became the most influential version of the tradition.

This study explores Nakhshabi’s stylistic and narrative innovations and exhibits how his reworking of Ṣaghari’s text was transformed into a distinct literary masterpiece. It investigates how Nakhshabi uses of rhetorical embellishment, narrative framing, and temporal structuring to enhance the text’s didactic and aesthetic dimensions. Additionally, the dissertation examines the *Ṭuṭināma*’s engagement with themes of gender, power, and morality, situating it within the broader “wiles of women” tradition while highlighting its conflicted portrayal of female autonomy.

## Foreword

As an elementary school student, my parents rewarded me for completing my daily assignments by allowing me to watch children’s television programs. This was sometime between 1991 and 1996. In Iran, which had recently come out of war, the number of appealing TV programs was rather limited. I have a vague memory of the specifics, but among the handful of shows available, one poorly made program featuring animal characters caught my attention. One of its episodes involved a jackal who fell into a bucket of indigo dye. Transformed into a fierce, exotic-looking creature, the jackal convinced the wild beasts to renounce their allegiance to the lion and appoint him as their king.<sup>3</sup> I emigrated to the United States and forgot about the show, but the story of the blue jackal stayed with me. Some twenty years later, the tale unexpectedly reappeared in my life when I borrowed an English translation of the *Ṭuṭīnāma* (“*Tales of a Parrot*”) from my academic advisor, Dr. Austin O’Malley.<sup>4</sup>

When I came across the story again in 2018, it was nestled among a collection of other tales of a similar nature, and the text appeared to hold rich deposits of gold. Further investigation of the book led to the discovery of many topics that were entirely unknown to me up to that point. Over time, I learned that the *Ṭuṭīnāma* is a part of a story cycle known as the *Tales of a Parrot* literary tradition. I also learned that the widespread circulation and great popularity enjoyed by the *Tales of a Parrot*, including the *Ṭuṭīnāma*, deserve greater scholarly attention. The more I explored this tradition, the more I became interested in extending my studies and

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<sup>3</sup> Ṣiā’ al-Dīn Nakshabī, *Ṭuṭīnāma*, 260-64.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* Through this anecdote, I do not claim the *Ṭuṭīnāma* is the primary source of the blue jackal story. Rather, my anecdote simply explains how I encountered the tale again and, in the process, learned more about its primary source, the *Panchātantrā*.

research into this multilayered collection of stories. The book comprising one of the most striking and thought-provoking tales of my childhood TV programs ultimately sparked my fascination deeper and became the focus of my doctoral dissertation.

My inquiry began with an English translation of the *Ṭuṭīnāma* of Nakhshabi and was later complemented by exploring other works within this tradition.<sup>5</sup> I learned that the *Tales of a Parrot* is a story cycle with numerous renditions and rewritings, all of which consist of collections of fairy and folktales. With a textual history comparable to renowned works of Persian, Sanskrit, and Arabic literature, such as the *Kalila va Demna* (“*Kalila and Dimna*”),<sup>6</sup> the *Tales of a Parrot* eventually made its way into European literature. Both *Kalila va Demna* and *Tales of a Parrot* originated in India, were translated into Arabic from Persian sources, and entered European literary traditions through their Near Eastern versions.<sup>7</sup> However, unlike *Kalila va Demna*, which has been extensively studied, the *Tales of a Parrot* has received comparatively little scholarly attention. Because of the enormity of this tradition and the various existing versions, I limited the scope of my research to one version of the *Tales of a Parrot* written in Persian, the *Ṭuṭīnāma* of Nakhshabi. Yet, I soon realized that any analysis of Nakhshabi’s work would be incomplete without reference to its predecessor, *Javāher al-asmār* (“*Gems of Stories*”) of Ṣaghari. Accordingly, by incorporating the *Javāher al-asmār*, I broadened the scope of my investigation in chapter 1 of the dissertation -- though my engagement with the

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<sup>5</sup> Ziya’ U’D- Din Nakhshabi, *Tales of a Parrot = The Cleveland Museum of Art’s Ṭuṭī-nāma*, trans. and ed. Muhammed Ahmed Simsar (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1978).

<sup>6</sup> ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Muqaffa’, *Kalila va Demna*, ed. Mojtaba Minavi and Mir Jalāl Khazāzī (Tehran: Asātir, 1998).

<sup>7</sup> The Sanskrit *Panchātantrā* (“*Five Treaties*” or “*The Five Books of Wisdom*”), a 3rd century collection of animal fables, was translated into Middle Persian as *Kalilag va Demnag*. In the 8<sup>th</sup> century, Ibn al-Muqaffa’ translated the Middle Persian version into Arabic *Kalila va Demna* (“*Kalila and Dimna*”), turning it into the basis for numerous translations across Persian, Hebrew Latin, and European languages; Arthur W. Ryder, trans., *The Panchatantra* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925).; Ibn al-Muqaffa’, *Kalila wa Dimna*, ed. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ‘Azzām (Cairo: Dār al-Ma’ārif, 1951).

*Javāher al-asmār* remains limited, as the primary focus of the study remains Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma*.

## Introduction

This dissertation examines the *Ṭuṭināma* (“*Tales of a Parrot*”) of Żiā’ al-Din Nakhshabi, a work that emerged through the process of rewriting. In the early fourteenth century, ‘Emād bin Moḥammad Ṣaghari translated *Shukāsaptati* (“*Seventy Tales of a Parrot*”) into Persian under the title *Javāher al-asmār* (“*Gems of Stories*”). Shortly afterward, the renowned poet, author, and mystic, Ḳhāja Żiā’ al-Din Badāyuni Nakhshabi (d.751/1350), wrote the *Ṭuṭināma* (comp. 730/1330), a Persian adaptation that drew from *Javāher al-asmār*, *Shukāsaptati*, and other classical Sanskrit works. Despite being written only a couple of decades apart, the two Persian texts exhibit striking linguistic and stylistic differences. In brief, *Javāher al-asmār* is a lengthy rendition ornamented with complex vocabulary, tailored for an elite courtly audience. In contrast, the *Ṭuṭināma* is a more concise version, written in elaborate yet accessible language designed to appeal to both courtly and ordinary readers. These differences played an important role in the reception and evolution of the *Tales of a Parrot* tradition.<sup>8</sup> Although *Javāher al-asmār* is the prototype of all known Persian recensions of the *Tales of a Parrot*, the *Ṭuṭināma* had more influence on the format and development of this story cycle.

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<sup>8</sup> See Franklin D. Lewis, “The Rise and Fall of a Persian Refrain: The Radif ‘Ātash u Āb,” in *Reorientations/Arabic and Persian Poetry*, ed. Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 212; Paul E. Losensky, *Welcoming Fighānī: Imitation and Poetic Individuality in the Safavid-Mughal Ghazal* (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers, 1998), 104. The *Tales of a Parrot* story cycle was developed over time through the process of literary imitation. This was a practice that enabled authors to incorporate their unique voice into a tradition, which led to the creation of a rich literary history. The ongoing process of reinterpreting, reworking, reconstructing, and rewriting the literary past enabled each author to reshape earlier voices and vision in ways that resonated with their era. The practice of duplication and repetition of a literary text, now known as intertextuality, was a common trait of medieval writings. Literary texts of the medieval period, regardless of genre, often drew from a similar set of images, comprised of a whole or partial imitation of previous models, or refashioned earlier narratives. The creation of literary works invariably involved some form of imitation or replication of the literary past, regardless of how inventive they were. This made it possible for the author to conform to established traditions and reinforce the significance of his creation. As Franklin Lewis argues, lyrical changes emerge through processes such as “imitation, emulation, variation, even pastiche.” This observation is valid not only for poetry but also for prose, and in this case, it applies to the works of *Tales of Parrot* story cycle.

Nakhshabi was not constrained by the original work's restrictions and instead pursued a creative approach. By exploring alternative plotlines, narrative choices, and character development, Nakhshabi's rewrite appealed to a wider audience. Through revising Ṣaghari's version, he shaped how his work was remembered and interpreted over time. He enhanced his work, influenced future generations of writers, and connected with his audience in new and meaningful ways through his revisions. He substantially modified the narrative of the *Javāher al-asmār* to suit his own style, incorporating his own imagery and language, thereby enhancing the influence of the genre.<sup>9</sup> Considering his knowledge of Sanskrit, he may have also drawn influence from the Sanskrit *Shukāsaptati*. Nakhshabi applied his artistic skills, employed his storytelling techniques, and enhanced the quality of the work. Nakhshabi's work employs a wide range of figurative language, particularly imagery, metaphor, and symbolism, to convey meaning with stylistic and imaginative depth. While there is sufficient resemblance between the works of Ṣaghari and Nakhshabi, the latter rendition is distinct because of its author's intellectual and rhetorical embellishments, as well as its considerably different length. Among the attributes Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭīnāma* conveyed to later works in the Persian *Tales of a Parrot* tradition were the delicacy of voice, articulation, and lexicon, and the coherence of the narrative.

Nakhshabi's abridgement of the *Javāher al-asmār* is less a direct modification and more an artistic-poetic reimagining that builds upon the qualities he admired in Ṣaghari's work. This raises two questions about Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭīnāma*: How is the text created, and what is the end result? The answer to the first question, which concerns the narrative progression of the text from

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<sup>9</sup> H. T. Norris, "Fables and Legends," in *Abbasid Belles Lettres*, ed. Julia Ashtiany, T. M. Johnstone, J. D. Latham, and R. B. Serjeant, *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 137, doi:10.1017/CHOL9780521240161.010.

start to finish, will explain how the text is structured.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, to uncover what grants Nakhshabi's work its literary and historical significance, this dissertation addresses the following questions: What distinguishing qualities does Nakhshabi's rendition offer? What are the distinctive characteristics of Nakhshabi's style and voice? This study will also offer new insights into the role Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma* played in shaping a literary tradition. Undoubtedly, Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma* deserves greater attention than it has received so far.

The following pages of this chapter provide introductory insights into the *Shukāsaptati*, the production of *Javāher al-asmār*, the *Ṭuṭināma*, and their authors. Additionally, they explore how the two Persian texts were produced in the Indian subcontinent and eventually contributed to the formation of what is now known as the Persianate world.<sup>11</sup> By studying the *Ṭuṭināma* of Nakhshabi as an important text that has remained understudied, my research fills in three important gaps in the field of Persian literary studies. First, while the *Ṭuṭināma* is widely regarded as a Persian adaptation of the Sanskrit *Shukāsaptati*, previous scholarship has not sufficiently examined its role in the organization and standardization of the *Tales of a Parrot* story cycle across the Persianate world. While limited in scope, this analysis offers a foundation for future studies of the story cycle and how Nakhshabi's version created a template for subsequent adaptations and helped define a Persianate literary identity. This process is central to understanding how Persian became, in historian Richard Eaton's terms, the language of

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<sup>10</sup> Ferial Jabouri Ghazoul, *Nocturnal Poetics: The Arabian Nights in Comparative Context* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2014), 17.

<sup>11</sup> Richard M. Eaton, "The Persian Cosmopolis," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History*, ed. David Ludden (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), e402. The renowned historian, Dr. Richard Eaton defines the Persianate world as "the vast territory from the Balkans to Bengal, and from Central Asia to The Arabian Sea, with extensions reaching maritime Southeast Asia, in which, from the ninth to the nineteenth century, an integrated sense of moral, social, political, and aesthetic order was informed by the circulation of Persian texts considered prestigious and normative." This conceptualization has been further explored in recent scholarship on Persianate cultural exchange and literary influence. See Nile Green, ed., *The Persianate World: The Frontiers of a Eurasian Lingua Franca* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019).

"prestigious and normative" texts across a vast region "from the Balkans to Bengal."<sup>12</sup> Second, the *Ṭuṭīnāma* offers a distinctive perspective for examining the processes of literary synthesis in pre-Mughal India, when Persian was emerging as the primary court language. I show how the *Ṭuṭīnāma* actively created a common cultural idiom by examining Nakhshabi's deliberate insertion of narrative structures, and ethical frameworks. Third, in modern studies of Persian frame stories, *Kalila va Demna*, or *the Arabian Nights*, are often prioritized. According to my analysis, the *Ṭuṭīnāma* is yet another important illustration of the story-within-a-story form. Its multi-layered narratives, intricately linking moral education and enjoyment, exemplify a unique Persianate approach to didactic literature. By addressing these gaps, my study, first, challenges the binary idea of Persian versus Indian literary traditions, and second, gives a more nuanced understanding of how writings like the *Ṭuṭīnāma* functioned as active agents in forming the Persianate world's intellectual and aesthetic norms.

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<sup>12</sup> Richard M. Eaton, "The Persian Cosmopolis."

## The Evolution of Persian Literature in the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal India

Understanding the complex nature and position of Persian literature in the Delhi Sultanate is a prerequisite for comprehending the *Ṭuṭīnāma* and the *Javāher al-asmār* and their profound contribution to the development of the Persianate world. The Mongol invasions of Central Asia forced many inhabitants of the region to flee to the Indian subcontinent and led to the formation of a community of Persian emigrants. Due to their linguistic abilities, these emigrants of diverse social and professional backgrounds rapidly obtained prominent careers, particularly in the courts of Indian rulers. This was especially true in the case of Amir Ḳhosrow of Delhi (d. 1325), the iconic figure of Indo-Persian classical poetry. Amir Ḳhosrow's father and his family fled from Central Asia to India in the early thirteenth century, in the aftermath of the Mongol invasions. The growth of Persian literature in the Indian subcontinent owes much to the legacy of polyglot Persian poets and writers of the Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526). The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when Amir Ḳhosrow of Delhi was active under various sultans of the Delhi Sultanate, marked a flourishing period for Persian literature in India.<sup>13</sup>

The centuries leading to the Mughal dynasty, particularly the time of the Delhi Sultanate, had a prominent role in establishing the Persian language, literature, and storytelling in Mughal India. The Persian literary tradition of the Indian Subcontinent can be broadly divided into four periods:

- I. Early introduction (977-1186), when Persian language and literature arrived in northern India with the Ghaznavids from their early invasion and gradually achieved a high status.

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<sup>13</sup> Sunil Sharma, *Mughal Arcadia: Persian Literature in an Indian Court* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 16–17.

- II. The Delhi Sultanate era (1206-1526), following the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, when Indian courts turned into a sanctuary for Persian and Central Asian scholars and fostered the production of Persian texts.
- III. The period of imperial consolidation (1525-1707), when the first six Mughal emperors, from Babur to Aurangzeb, ruled over the Indian subcontinent. During this time, Persian literary culture flourished.<sup>14</sup>
- IV. The period of transition (1707-1857), which was the final chapter of the Persian literary culture in India, spanned from the years following Aurangzeb's reign to the eventual decline of the Mughal dynasty under the British.<sup>15</sup>

Poets and scholars from Persia and Central Asia were drawn to the Delhi Sultanate, and the multilayered Indian cultural milieu assimilated and refashioned Persian literary trends. The wave of talented emigrants, alongside increasing Hindu participation in Persian writing, augmented the production of Persian literary works.<sup>16</sup> Ṣaghari and Nakhshabi, both multilingual authors of the Muslim faith, were active during the Delhi Sultanate. Their works, different renditions of the same literary work, highlight the shifts in literary expression and compositional styles over a relatively short span of time. Emigrant writers like Nakhshabi used existing literary works for their artistic growth and refinement. He translated and revised a wide array of previously circulated Persian and Sanskrit materials. By rewriting a popular work of Sanskrit literature, Nakhshabi reignited interest and engagement among readers who were familiar with the original Sanskrit version of the *Ṭuṭināma* and attracted new audiences with his novel perspective and updated content. Appendix 1 of this dissertation traces the growing interest of

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<sup>14</sup> Annemarie Schimmel, *Islamic Literatures of India* (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1973), 1.

<sup>15</sup> Mario Casari, "INDIA xiv. Persian Literature," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online* (Trustees of Columbia University in the City of New York), consulted online on 2 October 2023.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

writers in rewriting the *Shukāsaptati* among Persian authors and the role of these Persian renditions in transitioning the *Tales of a Parrot* to other cultural traditions, together contributing to the formation of the Persianate world.

### From *Shukāsaptati* to *Ṭuṭināma*: The Literary and Cultural Journey of the *Tales of a Parrot*

The *Tales of a Parrot* was presumably introduced into Persian literature in the fourteenth century by ‘Emād bin Moḥammad Ṣaghari through his translation of a Sanskrit work.<sup>17</sup> After Ṣaghari, numerous Persian authors created their own versions of the *Tales of a Parrot*, which led to the formation of an enduring story cycle. The *Tales of a Parrot* story cycle traces its origins to a Sanskrit text known as *Shukāsaptati*.<sup>18</sup> The title *Shukāsaptati* is composed of two parts: Shukā, meaning “parrot,” and Saptati, meaning “seventy” in Sanskrit.<sup>19</sup> As classified by Richard Schmidt, the first scholar to edit the Sanskrit *Shukāsaptati*, the text exists in two different recensions: the simple and the ornate.<sup>20</sup>

Classified as a part of *kāthā* (narration or storytelling) literature, the *Shukāsaptati* comprises seventy tales of various natures with underlying didactic implications.<sup>21</sup> While the

<sup>17</sup> While I briefly address the textual background of the documented Sanskrit versions, a deeper exploration of their origins is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Occasional references to the Sanskrit tradition are made without extensive historical detail, as its background does not hold a primary relevance to the present research.

<sup>18</sup> B. H. Wortham, *The Wisdom of India* (London, 1911); A. N. D. Haksar, *Shuka Saptati: Seventy Tales of the Parrot* (New Delhi: HarperCollins, 2000).

<sup>19</sup> Shukā (शुकः), Saptati (सप्ततिः).

<sup>20</sup> Richard Schmidt has addressed the two available recensions of the Sanskrit *Shukāsaptati* as “Textus simplicior,” and “textus ornatior.” See Richard Schmidt, *Die Śukasaptati (Textus Ornatior)*, trans. Richard Schmidt (Germany: W. Kohlhammer, 1899); and Richard Schmidt, *Die Çukasaptati, Textus Simplicior*, trans. Richard Schmidt (Kiel: C. P. Haesler, 1894).

<sup>21</sup> Usually composed in blunt and straightforward language, *Kāthā* literature comprises an Indian style of storytelling composed for religious and didactic purposes. Deeply rooted the spiritual principle of cause and effect, Karma, and the belief in the circumstances of one’s actions, *Kāthā* literature was designed to guide individuals to proper conduct. Popular romances, fairy tales, and tales of adventure are the most common themes of works of *Kāthā* literature while *Panchātantrā*, *Purānās*, and *Hitopadeśhā* are the three best known works of *Kāthā* literature. See Ludwik Sternbach, *The Kāvya-portions in the Kathā-literature (Pañcatantra, Hitopadeśa, Vikramacarita,*

oral origins of the *Shukāsaptati* are widely acknowledged, however, the authorship of its first documented version is uncertain.<sup>22</sup> Scholar A.K. Warder attributes the composition of the *Shukāsaptati* to Hemā Chandrā, an Indian Jain scholar and the author of the important Jain text,<sup>23</sup> *Yogāśāstrā* (a treatise on yoga).<sup>24</sup> However, contemporary scholarship attributes the simple version to Shvetāmbara Jainā.<sup>25</sup> The ornate version is believed to have been compiled by the Brahmin Chintāmani-Bhaṭṭā.<sup>26</sup> Remarkably, the Shvetāmbara Jainā and Chintāmani-Bhaṭṭā versions share nearly fifty tales in common, many of which are recounted in the earliest classical Persian renditions of *Shukāsaptati*, the *Javāher al-asmār* and the *Ṭuṭināma* of Nakhshabi.<sup>27</sup> By comparing the *Shukāsaptati*, with seventy tales, with its Persian recensions, which contain fifty-two nights, scholars have hypothesized that the *Shukāsaptati* contained seventy tales.<sup>28</sup>

Adultery and skullduggery are the central themes of *Shukāsaptati*'s frame tale, a motif also observed in the *Javāher al-asmār* and all of its Persian descendants. Both *Shukāsaptati* and *Javāher al-asmār* are collections of stories narrated by a parrot to a merchant's wayward wife,<sup>29</sup> in order to prevent her from engaging in fornication while her husband is away on business. The

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*Vetālapañcaviṃśatikā, and Sukasaptati*); an Analysis (Delhi, 1971); Ludwik Sternbach, *Subhāṣita, Gnostic and Didactic Literature*, vol. 4.4 of *History of Indian Literature*, ed. Jan Gonda (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1974), 1–43; N. P. Unni, "Evolution of Sanskrit Literature: A Reappraisal," in *Glimpses of Sanskrit Literature*, ed. A. N. D. Haksar (1995), 8–9.

<sup>22</sup> A. N. D Haksar, *Shuka Saptati: Seventy Tales of the Parrot*, xvi.

<sup>23</sup> Attributed to Hemā Chandrā, *Yogāśāstrā* is a twelfth-century yoga treatise that provides a conspectus of Jain doctrines. See Hemaçandra and Olle Quarnström, *The Yogaśāstra of Hemaçandra: A Twelfth Century Handbook of Śvetāmbara Jainism*, Harvard Oriental Series, vol. 60 (Cambridge, Mass.: Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies, Harvard University, 2002).

<sup>24</sup> A. K. Warder, *Indian Kavya Literature*, vol. 3 (New Delhi, 1992).

<sup>25</sup> A. N. D Haksar, *Shuka Saptati: Seventy Tales of the Parrot*: xvi-xvii.

<sup>26</sup> Saroja Bhate, "Classical Sanskrit Prose," in *Glimpses of Sanskrit Literature*, ed. A. N. D. Haksar (1995), 82. Bhate also assumes that both Shvetāmbara Jainā and Chintāmani-Bhaṭṭā versions belong to the thirteenth century.

<sup>27</sup> Mutual is fifty-two stories between the simple and ornate versions. This has given Sanskrit scholars to think that the primitive version of the *Shukāsaptati* only consist of fifty-two stories, which are recounted in both versions. Some features of these fifty stories including their order, length of their embedded tales, names of the characters, and wording are different. See Zīā' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭināma*, 19.

<sup>28</sup> 'Emād bin Moḥammad Ṣaghari, *Javāher al-asmār*, 51.

<sup>29</sup> In many fairytales of Indian origin, parrot is considered as a bird gifted with a special insight. See Tusi Moḥammad ibn-Maḥmud, *'Ajāyeb al-Makhluqāt*, ed. Manucehr Sodontuda (Enteshārāt-e Bongāhi Tarjoma va Nashr-e Ketāb, 1966), 529.

enduring popularity of the *Tales of a Parrot* tradition is evident in the production of many renditions across languages. In the Indian subcontinent, the *Shukāsaptati* has been rewritten and translated numerous times, with versions extant in various Indian vernaculars, such as Hindi, Kannada, Marathi, Rajasthani, Sanskrit, Telugu, and Urdu.<sup>30</sup> However, the Persian versions of the Sanskrit *Shukāsaptati* hold an important position in transmitting the *Tales of a Parrot* tradition to languages and cultures. In addition to the Indian vernaculars, indebted to its Persian versions, the *Shukāsaptati* has been translated into numerous other languages, including English, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Polish, and Russian.<sup>31</sup>

The broad appeal of the *Tales of a Parrot* story cycle underlines the intense contact between cultures and languages throughout history. Particularly, ancient Indian culture has always influenced other cultures.<sup>32</sup> The advent of Islam accelerated this cultural interchange and increased the interaction between languages as well as the flow of both intellectual and material products across regions. An example of such cultural and intellectual exchange is *Kalila va Demna*, which is an adaptation of the *Panchātantrā*.<sup>33</sup> It was translated from Sanskrit to Middle Persian, and from there, to Arabic and numerous other languages.<sup>34</sup> An important milestone in *Kalila va Demna*'s transmission was its Hebrew rendition, which John of Capua subsequently

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<sup>30</sup> See Wilhelm Pertsch, "Über Nachschabî's Papagaienbuch," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 21, no. 4 (1867): 506–8, for a summary of the textual history of the Indian vernaculars of the Sanskrit *Shukāsaptati*.

<sup>31</sup> According to Haskar, the vernacular versions were derived from the Persian translation. A. N. D Haksar, *Shuka Saptati: Seventy Tales of the Parrot*: xvii.

<sup>32</sup> A reserve statement is obviously true and accurate; undoubtedly, the western culture also has been a source of attraction and inspiration to the East ever since antiquity. This chapter, however, deals with the cultural exchanges between the East and West by the means of Eastern cultural materials.

<sup>33</sup> Johannes Hertel, *The Panchatantra-text of Purnabhadra*, Harvard Oriental Series (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1912).

<sup>34</sup> The Persian *Sandbād-nāma* ("Book of Sandbād [the Sage]") and the Arabic *Alf layla va layla* ("The Thousand and One Nights") are other excellent examples of such cultural exchanges. Marcia Williams, *Sinbad the Sailor*, 1st ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Candlewick Press, 1994); Muhsin Mahdi, *The Thousand and One Nights* (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1995).

translated into Latin in the twelfth century under the title *Directorium vitae humanae* (“*A Guide for Human Life*”).<sup>35</sup>

The works of the Persian *Tales of a Parrot* story cycle share a recurring series of themes, structured with a similar narrative order: A wealthy merchant marries a young woman and purchases two birds, typically a parrot and a starling.<sup>36</sup> To make a profit from ocean trade, he embarks on a long journey. During his absence, the wife falls in love with a young man and seeks the starling’s permission to visit her lover. Instead of granting permission, the starling offers her advice to prevent her from visiting her lover, prompting the wife to kill the bird in anger. Then the wife approaches the parrot, asking for his approval. The parrot pretends obedience and warns her to act prudently. To show his good will, he tells a story each night to kill time and arouse her curiosity. This pattern continues for a set number of nights until the merchant finally returns. The conclusion, however, varies across versions. In the *Shukāsaptati* and *Javāher al-asmār*, the story ends with the merchant praising the parrot, and there is no mention of the killing of his wife. In contrast, all the descendants of the *Ṭuṭīnāma* of Nakhshabi conclude with the merchant praising the parrot, killing his wife, and retreating to live as a hermit in the desert.

Despite the recurring themes across versions, the nuances in meaning and content have played a decisive role in the work’s eventual popularity and adaptation. While the concluding portion of *Javāher al-asmār*, where there is no mention of the killing of the merchant’s wife at the hands of the merchant, did not survive in any subsequent Persian renditions, nearly all later versions of Nakhshabi’s *Ṭuṭīnāma* conclude with the merchant praising the parrot and killing his

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<sup>35</sup> Giovanni da Capua, *Directorium Humanae Vitae* (Strasbourg: Johann Prüss, 1488).

<sup>36</sup> According to Pertsch, the starling symbolizes the preacher’s crow, who offers advice that is unwelcome, ineffective, and rejected. See Wilhelm Pertsch, “Über Nachschabī’s Papagaienbuch,” 515.

wife upon his return.<sup>37</sup> The central narrative framework is the same across all versions of Sanskrit and other language versions of the *Tale of a Parrot*. The wife is left alone and becomes desperate to unite with her lover. However, the parrot keeps her home and distracts her with his stories. What varies, however, is the parrot's method of engaging the wife's curiosity and the way the stories are structured. As in the Persian versions, in the *Shukāsaptati* the parrot urges the wife to be cunning in order to escape being discovered and works to delay and prevent her rendezvous, but also encourages her to unite with her lover. Each night, he uses stories to demonstrate his counsel and exhorts her to imitate the cleverness of the tales' protagonists to avoid disgrace. This theme gradually becomes less intense in later versions.

The *Javāher al-asmār* introduces two new elements. First, a stylistic element known as emboisement. In this narrative technique, which is commonly observed in ancient works, including *Kalila va Demna*, shorter stories are placed within longer narratives. While the *Shukāsaptati* comprises seventy stories told over seventy nights, one story per night, Ṣaghari's *Javāher al-asmār* incorporates one to four substories within each main story, reducing the total number of nights from seventy to fifty-two. In his introduction, Ṣaghari does not explain his motives for employing this technique, leaving his reasons unclear. However, as Āl-e Aḥmad points out, the number fifty-two has symbolic meaning. It corresponds to the number of weeks in a year as well as to the number of *Ekhvān al-Ṣafā* (Brethren of Purity) epistles. Given that the Indian lunar months approximately have twenty-seven days, some scholars speculate that the

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<sup>37</sup> While the concluding portion of the *Javāher al-asmār* is missing, information about the absence of any reference to the killing of the wife can be found in the introduction. See 'Emād b. Moḥammad Ṣaghari, *Javāher al-asmār*, 17.

original *Shukāsaptati* may have been narrated over two lunar cycles, or a total of fifty-two nights.<sup>38</sup>

A timeline that situates all of the stories within a particular time frame is the second new element added to the *Javāher al-asmār*.<sup>39</sup> Each story unfolds under the cover of night, begins with Ṣaghari’s vivid descriptions of dusk, and concludes with his remarks on the sunrise of the following day. With its origins in Islamic culture, this theme represents rituals and daily observances. Similar to this, dawn and dusk are commonly used as narrative markers by Persian epic and romantic poets like Neẓāmi and Ferdowsi. In contrast, the *Shukāsaptati* makes no mention of time markers.

Nakhshabi’s *Ṭuṭināma* retains both elements, emboxment and temporal markers, newly introduced in the *Javāher al-asmār*. However, while the number of emboxed substories is drastically reduced in Nakhshabi’s version,<sup>40</sup> the structure of each story remains consistent; every tale begins with a description of sunset and ends at dawn, when the wife postpones her rendezvous to the following night. Although a ploy, Nakhshabi’s parrot also encourages the wife to pursue her lover while admonishing her to act cunningly; however, this theme is less prominent than in Ṣaghari’s work. All subsequent renditions of Nakhshabi’s *Ṭuṭināma*, including that of Qāderi and ‘Alāmi preserve the two elements introduced by Ṣaghari.<sup>41</sup> However, emboxment’s complex narrative approach is often simplified or left out. For instance, in Qāderi’s

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<sup>38</sup> ‘Emād bin Moḥammad Ṣaghari, *Javāher al-asmār* 51. Āl-e Aḥmad does not provide any further details on any connection between the *Javāher al-asmār* and the *Ekhvān al-Ṣafā*. Further research did not suggest any evident connection between the two besides the similarity in the count of the missives and nights.

<sup>39</sup> Richard Schmidt, *Die Śukasaptati (textus Ornatio) Aus Dem Sanskrit Übers.* Schmidt have noted the *Shukāsaptati*’s straightforward narrative structure, with one story per night and no emphasis on time markers such as dusk or dawn.

<sup>40</sup> While an interlaced narrative style is observed in Nakhshabi’s work, it is clear that the author has attempted to reduce the number of embedded substories. This topic will be discussed in detail in chapter 1 of the present dissertation.

<sup>41</sup> For further information, see Appendix 1.

version, only the first and thirty-fourth nights include substories, which reflects a departure from the more complex structure of earlier adaptations.

To understand the content of the *Ṭuṭināma*, we must first focus on the nature and meaning of the Sanskrit text. A significant work of wisdom literature, the *Shukāsaptati* contains many allegories, especially philosophical ones. Ancient Indian philosophy outlined four areas for the future acquisition of worldly wisdom: *arthā* (goal, purpose, or essence), *dhramā* (religion, morality or proper conduct), *mokshā* (liberation), *kāmā* (desire, sexuality, or emotional fulfillment). Among these, *arthā* is a broad concept in Vedic scripture, covering the resources and strategies to attain one's desired state.<sup>42</sup> Many works of Sanskrit literature that were meant to advise both monarchs and common people were based on this principle. In ancient Indian civilization, the *Shukāsaptati* was intended for the middle and even lower ranks of the upper castes. The purpose of the text was to provide advice on how to live a healthy and fulfilling life.<sup>43</sup> Like other traditional Indian literature, its practical objective was to convey principles of household management through storytelling, particularly those related to marriage and gender roles.

Like other texts of ancient Indian literature, the *Shukāsaptati* is not primarily a book about morality (*dhramā*); rather, it is a book of polity and practical wisdom. Occasionally, the text's moral sections are notably devoid of morality, to the extent that they may even appear immoral or amoral. François de Blois, in his analysis of the *Panchātantrā*, draws a parallel between this quality of ancient Indian texts and what is now known as Machiavellianism in

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<sup>42</sup> Both Edgerton (Franklin Edgerton, *The Panchatantra*, UNESCO Collection of Representative Works: Indian Series (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1965), 10–11.) and de Blois (François de Blois, *Burzōy's Voyage to India and the Origin of the Book of Kalilah Wa Dimnah*, Prize Publication Fund, vol. 23 (London: Routledge, 2011), 15.) talk about three objects of human desire that has been discussed in the ancient Indian scripture, namely, *arthā*, *kāmā*, and *dhramā*. Koller, however, discusses *purushārthā* (four aims of life) and considers *mokshā* as another goal of human life. See John Koller, "Puruṣārtha as Human Aims," *Philosophy East and West* 18, no. 4 (1968): 315–19.

<sup>43</sup> This is unlike the *Panchātantrā* whose audience was the upper strata.

Europe. While a complicated concept, the Machiavellian doctrine largely but not exclusively advocates that a prudent ruler may resort to any necessary immoral actions, such as deceit or even elimination of the innocent, if necessary to preserve their power and state.<sup>44</sup> In general, Machiavellianism suggests achieving one's goal through cunning and manipulation.<sup>45</sup> The *Shukāsaptati* reflects this duality as it describes and condemns various forms of deception and treachery, while suggesting that deceit is necessary in navigating worldly life. To put it another way, the moral underpinning of such texts is that the clever triumph, and the fool is doomed to failure. This principle also governs the stories of the *Ṭuṭināma*.

### Ṣaghari's *Javāher al-asmār*: The First Persian Rendition of the *Shukāsaptati*

Literary adaptations of the Persian *Tales of a Parrot* are many, with 'Emād bin Moḥammad Ṣaghari's adaptation widely regarded as the prototype of all known classical Persian versions of *Tales of a Parrot*.<sup>46</sup> Ṣaghari, translated the *Shukāsaptati* into Persian under the title *Javāher al-asmār* around 1314-16.<sup>47</sup> Despite its splendid title, the *Javāher al-asmār* and Ṣaghari's aspiration for "gaining the reputation of Rudaki and Ḥassān,"<sup>48</sup> *Javāher al-asmār* remains obscure, with no mention of the work or its author in contemporary sources outside of

<sup>44</sup> Erica Benner, *Machiavelli's Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 1–2.

<sup>45</sup> François de Blois, *Burzōy's Voyage to India and the Origin of the Book of Kalilah Wa Dimnah*, 15.; Quentin Skinner, *Machiavelli: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: OUP Oxford, 2000).

<sup>46</sup> I have refrained from making a certain statement here as there is no mention of the name of this work in Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma*. Although Nakhshabi talks about a book with fifty-two stories, which arrived at his hands through a friend, he does not cite the work or its author.

<sup>47</sup> Ṣaghari, does not make a direct reference to the year of completion of his work. From his introduction however, we learn that this work belongs to the final years of 'Alā' al-Din Moḥammad Shah Khalaji's reign. See 'Emād bin Moḥammad Ṣaghari, *Javāher al-asmār*, 12, 32.

<sup>48</sup> 'Emād bin Moḥammad Ṣaghari, *Javāher al-asmār*, 16. «که نام بنده نیز چون نام رودکی و حسان به جای ماند»

Abu 'Abd Allāh Ja'far ibn Muḥammad Rudaki (859-940-1), was a Persian poet. Regarded as the fountainhead of Persian literary history and the father of Persian poetry, he was based in the Samanid court. His exemplary poetical quality served as a model for future generations of poets. See F. C. De Blois, "Rudaki," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* (2012). Born in Median, Ḥassān ibn Ṣābet, (c. 563- 674) was an Arabian poet and a companion of the Prophet of Islam. Ḥassān is best known for his poems concerning the advent of Islam and his verses in the defense of Moḥammad. Valed 'Arafāt, *Divān Ḥassān ibn Ṣābet* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1974).

its sole surviving manuscript. Nevertheless, the manuscript provides a vague idea of Ṣaghari's life and motivations. The prologue, particularly, provides brief information about his authorship, motivations, patron, and sources. Aside from a mention of his own name as the author, Ṣaghari mentions the name of 'Alā' al-Din Moḥammad Shah Khalaji (r. 1296-1316),<sup>49</sup> addressing him as "Abu Moẓaffar Moḥammad Shah,"<sup>50</sup> "the sultan of sultans,"<sup>51</sup> and "the second Alexander,"<sup>52</sup> and dedicates his work to him.<sup>53</sup> Ṣaghari's patron, 'Alā' al-Din Khalaji, was the second and the most powerful ruler of the Khalaji dynasty;<sup>54</sup> a Turko-Afghan dynasty that ruled over the Delhi Sultanate for three decades (1290- 1320).<sup>55</sup> Determined to conquer the world, 'Alā' al-Din assumed the title of Sekandar-e Sāni (the Second Alexander) -- a title that associated him with the world conqueror, Alexander the Great. 'Alā' al-Din ruled over the Delhi Sultanate nearly for twenty years.<sup>56</sup>

After being encouraged by his friends to serve the royal family, Ṣaghari composed the first Persian rendition of the *Tales of a Parrot*. According to his prologue, during the final years of 'Alā' al-Din's rule, his friends reproached him, saying that "O you unaware of the justice of the noble king and oblivious of the compassion of the monarch of the age, in these seventeen or eighteen years that the religion-nurturing monarch and the justice-dispensing, servant-cherishing Caliph ...<sup>57</sup> have appointed the magnificent on the throne of grandeur and the seat of

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<sup>49</sup> 'Emād bin Moḥammad Ṣaghari, *Javāher al-asmār*, 5.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> See Richard Maxwell Eaton, *India in the Persianate Age, 1000–1765* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2019), 63–66. 'Alā' al-Din, assumed power as a Khalaji Sultan, after the murder of the founder of Khalaji dynasty, Jalāl al-Din, who was also his uncle and father-in-law. Rulers of this short-lived dynasty include: Jalāl al-Din Firuz (r. 1290-1296), 'Alā' al-Din (r.1296-1316), Shahāb al-Din Omar (r.1316), and Qoṭb al-Din Mobārak (r.1316-1320).

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 65.

<sup>57</sup> A word is missing from the manuscript.

majesty...”<sup>58</sup> Ṣaghari’s friends continued, “why are you heedless, and why do you neglect such blessed honor?”<sup>59</sup> Moved by their words and “witnessing such a promise of fortune and hearing the tidings of this prosperity,”<sup>60</sup> Ṣaghari decided to obey their advice and seek a place in the emperor’s court. However, after careful contemplation, he concluded that gaining access to the emperor’s court was as unattainable as going to the heavens. Instead, he chose to dedicate his effort “to kissing the dust of the celestial court of heir apparent, the Sultan of Sultans, the Second Alexander,”<sup>61</sup> by translating the book under discussion and presenting it before the imperial book treasury. Although Ṣaghari does not make a direct reference to the year of completion of his work, knowing this information, scholars estimate that the present translation was compiled during the last two years of ‘Alā’ al-Din Khalaji’s reign, around 1314-16.

Ṣaghari also lets his readers know that his “grandfather, father, and brother ... have attended the courts of past sultans and assemblies of bygone kings, and they have attained their needs and benefits.”<sup>62</sup> From his introduction, it is clear that growing up in a family with close ties with the court, Ṣaghari had access to education, recited the rhetoric of famous scholars, and studied poetry from an early age. His knowledge and expertise in both Arabic and Persian

<sup>58</sup> ‘Emād bin Moḥammad Ṣaghari, *Javāher al-asmār*, 12.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

ای غافل از نواسم انصاف شهریار ، وای فارغ از عواطف سلطان روزگار ، درین هفده هژده سال که خسرو دین پرور دونگاز و خلیفه دادگستر بنده نواز ... همایون را بر سریر کرسی رفعت و عرش مکنت نهاده است و به دین حنفی درین مدت... مسلمانی داده ، چندین هزار اجناس خلابیق از ترک و حبشی و تازی و دیلمی و چینی و ختنی و رومی و زنگی وسایر اصناف بنی آدم ، احرام این درگاه پادشاه با جاه عالم پناه می گیرند ، و به شرف پابوس و تقبیل حاشیه بساط میمون او مشرف می گردند ؛ تراکه خدمت حضرت سلاطین از آبا و اجداد مورون است ، چرا غافل و از تشریف این چنین سعادت چرا عاطلی؟

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

چون این چنین نوید بخت بدیدم و نوای مژده این دولت بشنیدم، خواستم که به ارشاد آن الهام و هدایت آن بواعث به درگاه جهان پناه پیوندم، و به دخل داخل شاه عالم طرق افتخار بر گردن دلبندم. و لکن به آسمان رفتن کرا امکانو به فلک پیوستن کی توان؟ چه تا کسی عیسی وار تارک جمله مصنوعات نگرده و دل از همه مکونات برنگیرد، قدم بر تارک خورشید نتواند نهاد و بر فلک چهارم نتواند نشست. و تا محمدسان دست از همه کاینات ندارد و پای بر هر دو عالم نهد، کره جبین ماه ران نتواند گشاد و از عرش نتواند گذشت پس بر مقتضای این سیاق و مبنای این قضیت بنده کمتر، رفتن بر درهای جمله مخلوق بگذاشت و دست از دامن عمرو و زید و پای از خانه امیر و وزیر برداشت؛ و همت را به بوسیدن خاک بارگاه آسمان منزلت خلیفه العهد، سلطان السلاطین، سکندر الثاني خلعت ملکنه و خلافت گماشت، و این جریده مترجمه را بر وجه خدمتی به جهت خزانه کتب حضرت خلافت نگاشت

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 11.

جد و پدر و برادر این بنده ... به درگاه سلاطین ماضیه و بارگاه ملوکسالفه شنافته اند و حوایج و منافع خود... [ص ۶] [از] کعبه اقبال و قبله اجلال ایشان یافته و پیوسته در سفر و حضر ملازم خدمت سلطنت بوده اند؛ و در لشکر و کشور متابعت و موافقت رایات دولت نموده

literature are evident through the large number of verses from the Qur'an, Hadith, renowned Persian poets such as Neẓāmi,<sup>63</sup> Khāqāni,<sup>64</sup> Anvari,<sup>65</sup> and Sa'di.<sup>66</sup> Ṣaghari explains that he sought to translate a book into Persian that could remain everlasting, like *Kalila va Demna*, *Sandbādnāma*,<sup>67</sup> and *Nafḥāt al-Reyhān*.<sup>68</sup> For that reason, he examined several Indian texts, but none of them appealed to him. After a long search, he discovered a particular work that stood out as superior to all the others he had encountered. Although he mentions that the work contained seventy-two tales related by a parrot,<sup>69</sup> he leaves the title of the book and its author anonymous. Initially, he intended to translate the entire text, but after a careful examination, he realized that some of the tales were adaptations of *Kalila va Demna* and *Sandbādnāma*, already well-known in the Persian literature, and several of them were not worthy of the royal grandeur. He excluded those unsuitable tales, reduced the number of nights to fifty-two, and titled it *Javāher al-asmār*.<sup>70</sup>

Ṣaghari's opening passages of the frame story are relatively short. After briefly mentioning Sa'id, the merchant's father's infertility, and the eventual birth of his son, Sā'ed, in his old age, Ṣaghari describes how the parrot came to Sā'ed's possession. The remainder of *Javāher al-asmār* is a collection of stories narrated by the parrot to Māh Shekar, the merchant's

<sup>63</sup> Jamāl al-Din Abu Moḥammad, known as Neẓāmi Ganjavi, was a twelfth century Persian poet, who is known for his romantic epic poems. Peter J. Chelkowski, "Nizami Gandjawi," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* (2012).

<sup>64</sup> Khāqāni Shirvāni (ca. 1127-1187) was a Persian poet and prose writer who is well-known for his qasidas and ḥabsiāt ("prison poetry"). Anna Livia Beelaert, "Khāqāni Šervāni," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, available online at <https://iranicaonline.org/articles/kaqani-servani> (accessed on 17 January 2022).

<sup>65</sup> Anvari, one of the greatest poets of Persian literature, was a twelfth century Persian poet who is known for his Divān. J. T. P. de Bruijn, "Anvari," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. II, fasc. 2 (1986): 141–43.

<sup>66</sup> Sa'di Shirāzi (1210-1291), was a Persian poet and prose writer distinguished for the quality of his works, depth of his thoughts. Nicknamed the master of speech, Sa'di is recognized as one of the great Persian poets of all times. Paul Losensky, "Sa'di," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, available online at [https://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2330-4804\\_EIRO\\_COM\\_10984](https://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2330-4804_EIRO_COM_10984) (accessed on 20 January 2022).

<sup>67</sup> Zāhiri Samarqandī *Sandbād-nāma*, ed. 'A. Qawim (Tehran, 1333 Š./1954).

<sup>68</sup> Nāṣif Yāziji, *Nafḥāt al-reyhān* (Early Arabic Printed Books from the British Library, 1864).

<sup>69</sup> 'Emād bin Moḥammad Ṣaghari, *Javāher al-asmār*, 16. As pointed by Haskar, in fact, there are seventy-two tales in *Shukāsaptati*, including the frame and an introductory story. A. N. D Haksar, *Shuka Saptati: Seventy Tales of the Parrot*, xiii.

<sup>70</sup> 'Emād bin Moḥammad Ṣaghari, *Javāher al-asmār*, 15-18.

wife, to prevent her from engaging in fornication while her husband, Sā‘ed, is away. The overarching theme of the frame story is about women’s deception. Māh Shekar, advised by her husband to discuss all the household matters with the parrot, seeks the parrot’s permission to leave the house and unite with her beloved. The wise parrot, while ostensibly granting her permission, warns her to be cautious, saying, “lest the story of such and such be repeated.” Hearing this, every night Māh Shekar falls into the parrot’s trap, asking for the details of each story inquiring “how was that story?”

### Nakhshabi’s *Ṭuṭināma*: The Second Persian Rendition of the *Shukāsaptati*

The second classical rendition of the *Tales of a Parrot*, the *Ṭuṭināma* (“*Tales of a Parrot*”) (comp. 730/1330), is attributed to the renowned fourteenth-century poet, author, and mystic, Żiā’ al-Din Nakhshabi (d.751/1350). Not much information is available about his personal and family life, as historical records and hagiographies provide only brief details, such as his place of death, the year of his death, and a list of his known works. Nakhshabi himself did not provide much information about his life in his works.<sup>71</sup> Most of what we know about him is derived from a hagiographical work by ‘Abd al-Ḥaq Moḥaddes Dehlavi, entitled *Akhbār al-Akhyār fi Asrār al-Abrār* (“*Annals of the Pious and the Mysteries of the Righteous*”).<sup>72</sup>

Originally from Naḵshab (also known as Nasaf, or Qarshi), a city in the Sughd province in

<sup>71</sup> Żiā’ al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭināma*, 9–10.

<sup>72</sup> ‘Abd al-Ḥaq Moḥaddes Dehlavi, *Akhbār al-Akhyār fi Asrār al-Abrār*, ed. ‘Aleem Ashraf Khān (Tehran, 2005). See Żiā’ al-Din Nakhshabi’s entry, page 204. This hagiographical work comprises the biography of two hundred and thirty Sufis. For further reading about Żiā’ al-Din Nakhshabi’s life, see Mofti Gholām Sarvar, *Khazināt al-aṣfiā’* (Cawnpore, 1894), 351; Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India* (New Delhi, 1983), 1:131–33.; Mirzā La’l Beig La’li Badakhshi, *Ṣamarāt al-Qods men Shajarāt al-Ons*, ed. K. Ḥāj Seyyed Javādi (Tehran, 1997), 970–71; Żiā’ al-Din Nakhshabi, *Selk al-soluk*, ed. Gholām ‘Ali Āriā (Tehran, 1980), introduction; Moḥammad ‘Ali Modarres Tabriizi, *Rayḥānat al-adab* (Tehran: Sherkat-e Sehāmi Press, 1947), 6:153–54; Moḥammad Qāsem Hendushāh, *Tārikh-e Fereshta* (Cawnpore, 1884), 394; Mir Ḥosayn Dust Sanbali, *Tazkara-ye Ḥosayni* (Lukhnow, 1875), 324; Żiā’ al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭināma*, introduction; ‘Emād bin Moḥammad Ṣaghari, *Javāher al-asmār*, introduction.

today's Uzbekistan, Nakshab fled to India at a young age, along with his family to escape the Mongol invasions. In Badāyun,<sup>73</sup> a city near Delhi, India, he lived a secluded life and perhaps practiced medicine.<sup>74</sup> According to Moḥaddes Dehlavī, Nakhshabi spent most of his life in Badāyun, and was buried in an unknown place there. Embracing Islamic mysticism in India, he joined the Cheshti order, the most popular Sufi order of the Indian subcontinent, and became a follower of Sheikh Farid al-Din Nāguri (d. 752/1351).<sup>75</sup> In one of his works, *Selk al-Soluk*,<sup>76</sup> he held Abu Ḥanifa in high regard, which coupled with the dominance of Hanafi Sunnis amongst Muslims of Badāyun region, may indicate his identity as a Hanafi Sunni. It must be noted that he has also admired both Shafiite Imams and the Shi'ite Imams in his works.<sup>77</sup>

Some of the more recent sources have regarded him as one of the followers of Neẓām al-Din Owliā' (1238-1325), however, there is no mention of his devotion to Neẓām al-Din in any of his own works or the contemporary and near contemporary sources.<sup>78</sup> Modarres Tabrizi, for instance, has presumed Nakhshabi as one of the followers of Neẓām al-Din Owliā'.<sup>79</sup> Later on, Dehkhoda similarly refers to Nakhshabi as a follower of Neẓām al-Din.<sup>80</sup> In a later work, entitled *Tazkara-ye Ḥosayni*, although Sanbali talks about Nakhshabi's occasional visits of Neẓām al-Din Owliā', he does not consider him as a follower of Neẓām al-Din.<sup>81</sup> Having an identical *laqab*

<sup>73</sup> According to Rizvi, after migrating to India, Nakhshabi settled in Nāgur, which is a city far from Delhi, in Maharashtra. See Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, 131.

<sup>74</sup> I only came across the information about his practice of medicine in Moḥammad Karimi Zanjāni Asl's Iranica article, although Zanjāni Asl cites a number of sources. See Moḥammad Karimi Zanjāni Asl, "Nakhshabi, Żiā' al-Din," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, available online at <https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/naksabi-zia> (accessed January 27, 2021).

<sup>75</sup> *Akḥbār al-Akhyār fi Asrār al-Abrār*, ed. 'Aleem Ashraf Khān, 105–9.

<sup>76</sup> Żiā' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Selk al-soluk*.

<sup>77</sup> See Żiā' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Selk al-soluk*, 12, 86, 109, 116, 130, 141.

<sup>78</sup> See Mir Ḥosayn Dust Sanbali, *Tazkara-ye Ḥosayni*; Żiā' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Selk al-soluk*.

<sup>79</sup> Moḥammad-'Ali Modarres Tabrizi, *Reyhānat al-adab* 6:132.

<sup>80</sup> 'Ali Akbar Dehkhoda, *Loghat nāma* (Tehran: Dāneshgāh-e Tehrān, 1377 [1998]).

<sup>81</sup> Mir Ḥosayn Dust Sanbali. *Tazkara-ye Ḥosayni*, 342-343.

(honorific title) to Żiā' al-Din Barani (d. 758/1356),<sup>82</sup> a disciple of Neẓām al-Din Owliā', who lived at the same time and place, may have resulted in such a mistake about Żiā' al-Din Nakhshabi. Remarkably, Kermāni's *Seyr al-Owliā'*,<sup>83</sup> of the most important Nakhshabi's contemporaneous works, which details the conditions of Neẓām-al-Din and his followers, makes no mention of a mentor mentee relationship between Neẓām-al-Din and Żiā' al-Din Nakhshabi, - raising doubts about the accuracy of Nakhshabi's devotion to Neẓām al-Din Owliā'.<sup>84</sup>

Badakhshi has discussed Nakhshabi's collaboration with the Khalaji Sultan, particularly with 'Alā' al-Din Khalaji,<sup>85</sup> while others talk about his challenging associations with Qoṭb al-Din Mobārakhshāh (r. 716-21/1317-21),<sup>86</sup> who also had difficult associations with Neẓām al-Din Owliā' --, which itself is another contributing factor indicating a possible error in the presumption of Nakhshabi's devotion to Neẓām al-Din Owliā'.

Already well-versed in both Arabic and Persian, Nakhshabi learned the Sanskrit language and employed the translation of several Sanskrit works in his Persian essays. Although he embellished his works with his own poetry and that of others, most of his works are in prose - or prosimetrum. Albeit none of Nakhshabi's work attained the fame of his *Ṭuṭināma*, a prolific writer that Nakhshabi was, Zanjāni Asl has classified Nakhshabi's works in four categories of mystical, religious, medical, and literary writings. His mystical writings include *Selk al-Soluk* (Course of spiritual progression) and *Sharḥ-e Qaṣida-ye Soryāni* (A commentary on the Syriac ode).<sup>87</sup> Available in over forty manuscripts, *Selk al-soluk* is Nakhshabi's most important

<sup>82</sup> *Akhbār al-Akhyār fi Asrār al-Abrār*, 103; Mofti Gholām Sarvar, *Khazināt al-Aṣfiā'*, 351; Mirzā La'li Beig La'li Badakhshi, *Ṣamarāt al-qods men Shajarāt al-Ons*, 971. Żiā' al-Din Barni was a fourteenth century Muslim political thinker and the author of *Tarikh-e Firuz Shahi* during the reign of Moḥammad and Firuz Shah Tuqluq. See "Barani, Żiyā' al-Din," in *Encyclopedia of Indian Religions: Islam, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism* (2018).

<sup>83</sup> Kermāni, *Seyr al-Owliā'*. I have been unable to locate this work.

<sup>84</sup> Żiā' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭināma*, 9-12 foreword.

<sup>85</sup> Mirzā La'li Beg La'li Badakhshi, *Ṣamarāt al-Qods men Shajarāt al-Ons*, 970-1.

<sup>86</sup> Mofti Gholām Sarvar, *Khazināt al-aṣfiā'*, 331; Moḥammad Qāsem Hendushāh, *Tārikh-e Fereshta*, 384.

<sup>87</sup> Żiā' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Sharḥ-e Qaṣida-ye Soryāni*, MS no. 154, Center for the Great Islamic Encyclopedia, Tehran.

work, and as evident in its title, it recounts the courses of spiritual progression. This work includes an introduction and a collection of 151 courses, in which Nakhshabi deftly demonstrates the principal Sufi doctrines and relies on the most distinguished Sufi sources, including Hojviri's *Kashf al-Mahjub*,<sup>88</sup> Ghazālī's *Kimiā-ye Sa'ādat*,<sup>89</sup> and Meybodi's *Kashf al-Asrār*,<sup>90</sup> Mobārakshāh's *Rahiq al-Taḥqiq*,<sup>91</sup> 'Aṭṭār's *Tadhkirat al-Owliā'*,<sup>92</sup> and Sohravardi's *Loghat-e Murān*.<sup>93</sup> Remarkably, each chapter of this didactic work ends with two couplets of Nakhshabi's verses. On the other hand, *Sharḥ-e Qaṣida-ye Soryāni* also known as *Qaṣida-ye Robubiya* (the ode of lordship), is Nakhshabi's commentary on an Arabic ode, a prayer that attributed to Ibn 'Abbās. This commentary comprises Nakhshabi's Persian translation of the above-mentioned Arabic prayer followed by his commentary -- which includes a syntactic analysis of each verse, the translation of each verse into three Persian verses, and a final commentary on its mystical doctrines.

The *Ashara Mobashara* (The ten bearers of good Tidings) falls into the category of Nakhshabi's religious works. This book focuses on ten of prophet Moḥammad's companions who, according to a Sunni hadith, were promised to enter to heaven. Like Nakhshabi's other works, the book is enriched with Qur'anic verses, poetry of himself and others, hadith, and traditions (*abkar*). However, no manuscript of this book has been found up to this day. The next

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<sup>88</sup> Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Ali b. 'Oṭmān Hojvīrī, *Kaṣf al-mahjub*, ed. Valentin A. Zhukovskiĭ (Saint Petersburg, 1899); tr. Reynold A. Nicholson as *Kashf al-mahjub of Al-Hujwiri: The Oldest Persian Treatise on Sufism*, GMS XVII (London, 1911; repr.).

<sup>89</sup> Abu Ḥāmed Moḥammad Ghazālī, *Kimiā-ye Sa'ādat*, ed. Aḥmad Ārām, 2 vols. (Tehran, 1940); ed. Ḥosayn Khadiv Jam, 2 vols. (Tehran, 1982); tr. into English by Henry A. Homes as *The Alchemy of Happiness, by Mohammed al-Ghazzali* (Albany, NY, 1873).

<sup>90</sup> Abol Faḏl Rashid al-Din Meybodi, *Kashf al-Asrār va 'oddat al-Abrār*, ed. 'Ali-Aṣghar Ḥekmat et al., 10 vols. (Tehran, 1952–60).

<sup>91</sup> I was not able to find access to this source.

<sup>92</sup> Farid al-Din 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkiratu 'l-Awliya*, ed. Reynold A. Nicholson, introduction by Moḥammad Qazwīnī, 2 vols. (1905–7).

<sup>93</sup> Šahāb al-Din Sohravardī, *Loghat-e murān: Be Payvast-e Čand Athar-e Parākande*, ed. and intro. Nasrallah Pourjavādī (Tehran: Mo'assese-ye Pazhuhi-ye Hekmat va Falsafe-ye Iran / Berlin: Mo'assese-ye Motāle'at-e Islami, Freie University, 2007).

category of Nakhshabi's writings comprises his medical works, including *Chehel Nāmus* (Forty sections)<sup>94</sup> and *Lazāt al-Nesā'* (Pleasure from women). The assumption of Nakhshabi's practice of medicine has perhaps originated in his medical writings, in which he demonstrates familiarity with the science of medical science and terminology. *Chehel Nāmus*, also known as *Nāmus-e Akbar*, or *Joz'iyāt va Kolliyāt* (details and collected works), is a work dedicated to Qoṭb al-Din Mobārakhshāh, which deals with human body as the most complete and beautiful of God's creatures. This prosimetrum work comprises forty sections, each section dealing with a part of the human body, describing each part's mystical and religious significance. The second of his medical writings, *Lazāt al-Nesā'*, is an illustrated translation of the Sanskrit *Kokashāstra*,<sup>95</sup> which is a medieval Indian work from the twelfth century by Kokkokā on the topic of love based on *Kāmāśutrā*.<sup>96</sup> Commissioned by the sultan of his time, this work discusses women and men's temperaments, their bodily features, and the impact of these traits on sexual pleasure. The stories of *Golriz* (scattered roses), and *Ṭuṭināma*, are Nakhshabi's two literary writings. Comprising both prose and verse, *Golriz* is the story of Ma'ṣuma, and a girl called Nushāba. With an English introduction, this work was published in Kolkata in 1912.

Although itself a rendition of *Javāher al-asmār*, Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma* holds an exceptionally prominent position as a mediator in the subsequent versions of the *Tale of a Parrot* tradition. Surviving in many versions and translated into many languages, *Ṭuṭināma* is Nakhshabi's most widely circulated work. Nakhshabi adapted the Sanskrit *Shukāsaptati* into Persian under the title *Ṭuṭināma*, creating a modified version that included stories from

<sup>94</sup> Zīā' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Chehel nāmus*, MS. no. 2021, Khodābakhsh Library, Patna; published as *Joz'iyāt va kolliyāt (Chehel nāmus)*, ed. 'Ali-Moḥammad Mo'azeni (Tehran, 2009).

<sup>95</sup> Alex Comfort, *The Koka Shastra: Being the Ratirahasya of Kokkoka and Other Medieval Indian Writings on Love* (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1964).

<sup>96</sup> Richard Francis Burton, *The Kama Sutra of Vatsyayana*, Modern Library Pbk. ed. (New York: Modern Library, 2002).

*Panchātantrā*, *Sandbādnāma*, *Kalila va Demna*, and *Vetālā-panchāvimshati* (“*Twenty-Five Tales of Baital*” also known as “*Vikram-Baital*”).<sup>97</sup> Composed in a highly ornate style, Nakhshabi’s *Ṭuṭināma* is adorned with over three hundred verses of his own and others, Arabic and Persian proverbs, verses, and phrases, as well as Qur’anic verses, giving it an Islamic tone. Nakhshabi’s creative version unquestionably shows his thorough understanding and familiarity with celebrated classical works of Persian poetry, such as works of ‘Attār,<sup>98</sup> Sanā’i,<sup>99</sup> Rumi,<sup>100</sup> and Sa’di. As evident through Nakhshabi’s prosimetrum, particularly Sa’di,<sup>101</sup> left a major influence on Nakhshabi. In contrast to the common practice of his time, accentuating the moral of the stories, Sa’di included verses of his own and others in *Golestān* -- a theme that is also evident in Nakhshabi’s *Ṭuṭināma*.

Following the common conventions of the time where attribution and citation were not a standard practice, Nakhshabi neither cites his original Sanskrit source nor the Persian work that provided the groundwork of *Ṭuṭināma*. From the information provided by him in *Ṭuṭināma*’s introduction, we learn that a Persian rendition of a Sanskrit work, comprising 52 tales became available to him. Although they differ in terms of the number of the tales within the embedded tales – there are one to four substories in the embedded tales of *Javāher al-asmār*, while *Ṭuṭināma*’s embedded tales contain fewer of substories – and the arrangement of nights, the

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<sup>97</sup> *Vetālā-panchāvimshati* is an Indian collection of tales and legends. Vetālā loosely corresponds with the vampires of Western mythology. Possessing the body of the dead, Vetālās reanimated corpses at their own will. Mahroo Hatami has published a detailed work on the sources of Nakhshabi’s *Ṭuṭināma*. Mahroo Hatami, *Untersuchungen zum persischen Papageienbuch des Naḥṣabī*, Islamkundliche Untersuchungen, vol. 47 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Schwarz, 1977).

<sup>98</sup> Farid al-Din ‘Attār of Neishāpur, was a twelfth century Persian poet and hagiographer who had an immense influence on the Persian literature and Islamic mysticism.

<sup>99</sup> Sanā’i of Ghazni was a twelfth century Persian poet and the composer of the first Persian mystical epic of Sufism, who left a lasting influence on the Persian literature.

<sup>100</sup> Rumi was a thirteenth century Persian Islamic scholar, mystic, theologian, and poet, who composed the *Mathnawi* – one the greatest works of Persian literature.

<sup>101</sup> Sa’di has an interesting comment in the *Golestān*, that, contrary to common practice, he will include his own verses in his prosimetrum work.

information provided in the authorial prefaces, as well as numerous similarities in the frame tales and content of the stories, have led scholars to consider the *Javāher al-asmār* as Nakhshabi's primary source.<sup>102</sup>

In addition to the frame tale of the *Ṭuṭīnāma*, which directly corresponds to that of the *Shukāsaptati* and the *Javāher al-asmār*; many other elements, such as the starling and parrot, as well as the main human characters, have been retained in Nakhshabi's work. This strongly suggests that the *Shukāsaptati*, in some form, was the primary work that was adapted by Nakhshabi. Remarkably, Nakhshabi preserved all the principal characters of the *Shukāsaptati*, albeit with Persian names.<sup>103</sup> Although some of the embedded tales are a combination of two or more stories from the *Shukāsaptati*, nine of the *Ṭuṭīnāma*'s embedded tales (those of tales of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, and 30<sup>th</sup> nights) directly correspond to thirteen stories of the *Shukāsaptati* (the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, 32<sup>nd</sup>, 38<sup>th</sup>, 39<sup>th</sup>, 41<sup>st</sup>, 43<sup>rd</sup>, 49<sup>th</sup>, and 63<sup>rd</sup> nights). The remaining tales in the *Ṭuṭīnāma* are taken from renowned classical works, such as the *Panchātantrā*, *Sandbādnāma*, and *Kalila va Demna*. Furthermore, out of the fifty-two tales presented in *Javāher al-asmār*,<sup>104</sup> forty-four tales appear in a modified form in the *Ṭuṭīnāma* of Nakhshabi. These include tales 1-23, 25-41, 43, 45, 47, 49, while the remaining four have been replaced, and we cannot determine the content of the other four, as the *Javāher al-asmār* is missing pages.<sup>105</sup>

Both Ṣaghari and Nakhshabi provide limited information about their primary sources and their authors, mentioning only the number of their embedded tales and the language. But

<sup>102</sup> Zīā' al-Dīn Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭīnāma*, 19-20.

<sup>103</sup> See Table 1. I have benefitted from Hatami's work for this comparison.

<sup>104</sup> Some of these tales include 1-4 substories and have been eliminated in the later versions of the *Tales of a Parrot*. Also, four of *Javāher al-asmār* tales are missing. Those are tales 27, 50, 51, and 52.

<sup>105</sup> Tales number 24, 42, 44, and 46. For a detailed chart of this, see Mahroo Hatami. *Untersuchungen zum Persischen Papageienbuch des Naḥšabī*, Introduction.

considering the amount of resemblance between the *Ṭuṭināma*, *Shukāsaptati*, and *Javāher al-asmār*, it can reasonably be assumed that *Shukāsaptati* was the anonymous source of Ṣaghari, while both (perhaps) *Shukāsaptati*, and *Javāher al-asmār* were the unnamed sources of Nakhshabi. Hatami's detailed investigation of the origins of the *Ṭuṭināma* of Nakhshabi led her to conclude that some of its stories are derived from the *Bakhtiar-nama* and older Indian sources. According to Hatami's study, twenty tales of Nakhshabi's work do not have any equivalent in the *Javāher al-asmār*.<sup>106</sup> Stories numbers 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, and 18 are drawn from the *Sandbādnāma*, with four of them, including stories number 13, 14, 17, and 18, appearing in the *Shukāsaptati*.<sup>107</sup> It is worth noting that tale number 8, which remains unnamed in Hatami's work, is a summary of the *Sandbādnāma*'s frame tale.

While the frame tales are almost identical, both Ṣaghari, and Nakhshabi have implemented some small changes to the *Shukāsaptati*'s frame tale. First, both Maymun and Sā'ed buy the parrot at the bazaar and later purchase the female starling to accompany the lonely parrot. In contrast, a brahman named Trivikrāmā brings the parrot and starling to Haridātā as a gift. Second, exasperated by the starling's advice, both Māh Shekar and Khojasta manage to kill her, slamming her against the ground. However, Prabhāvati's attempt to kill the starling fails, as the bird flies away. Third, upon their return from their trips and after learning about their wives' attempted debauchery, there is no mention of the killing of Prabhāvati and Māh Shekar by Madanā and Sā'ed. In *Ṭuṭināma*, however, upon discovering Khojasta's attempted misbehavior, Maymun kills her immediately.

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<sup>106</sup> Mahroo Hatami. *Untersuchungen zum Persischen Papageienbuch des Naḥšabī*, 19.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid*, 211-15.

## A Few Notes on Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma*: Themes, Narratives, and More

The *Ṭuṭināma*'s frame tale tells the story of a wealthy merchant, Maymun, who leaves his wife Khojasta in the care of his two talking birds: a wise parrot and a starling. Before departing, he orders Khojasta to consult the birds before taking any action. In Maymun's absence, Khojasta becomes infatuated with a young man and resolves to meet him secretly at night.

The starling openly opposes her plans. Enraged, Khojasta kills the starling by slamming her head against the ground. The parrot, realizing that direct opposition is fatal, adopts a subtler approach. Each night, as Khojasta prepares to leave, he tells her a tale. His nightly storytelling becomes a mechanism of moral control and narrative suspense, with each tale ending too late for Khojasta to go out. By the time dawn arrives, her plans are postponed once again. Ultimately, he narrates fifty-two stories. When Maymun returns, the parrot reveals Khojasta's attempted infidelity and the murder of the starling. Hearing this, Maymun executes Khojasta, frees the parrot as a reward, and renounces worldly life.<sup>108</sup>

In its present form, Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma* is an anthology of various works from different origins, with the Sanskrit *Shukāsaptati* constituting only a small portion of its content. The *Ṭuṭināma* comprises tales of magic, animals, romance, and quasi-religious themes, with recurring motifs such as departure, feminine trickery, travel, beauty, infertility, and threatening enemies. These embedded tales often explore even the smallest details of proper conduct, rooted in Prophetic and Qur'anic traditions, and include references to the stories of Abraham, Moses, Noah, and other important figures. Occasionally, the tales' reference important events in the Islamic calendar. Namely, the second embedded tale, "The Tale of the King of Tabarestān and

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<sup>108</sup> Zīā' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭināma*, 7-12.

the Devoted Man Who Sacrificed His Son for the King’s Life,” draws parallels to the story of the Prophet Abraham and his son Ismael, exploring themes of sacrifice and devotion.<sup>109</sup>

Like Abraham, the father placed the knife upon the throat of his Ismael and wanted to sacrifice him, to offer a sacrifice worthy of the Ka‘ba. Suddenly, a voice called out from the unseen, “Oh you of noble lineage, withdraw your hands from your son! Through the depth of your devotion and your son’s devotion, the king was saved from the hand of death, and the record of his deeds has been renewed.

پدر ابراهیم وار کارد بر حلق اسمعیل خود نهاد و خواست تا او را بکشد و قربان از کعبه اجلال حلال کند. همان صورت از بیرون آواز داد که ای یتاقی دست از پسر بدار که از برکت اخلاص تو و اطاعت پسر، پادشاه از پنجه مرگ خلاص یافت و <sup>110</sup>نامه عمر او تازه گشت.

Nakhshabi’s *Ṭuṭīnāma* explores a wide range of themes, such as morality, gender, and sexuality, all of which are relevant to the human experience. As a composite work, it encompasses diverse topics while retaining a consistent style and intention. The text seeks to educate its readers about gender norms, sexual ethics, the social structure, and family dynamics of its time. Central to its narrative is the theme of the “wiles of women,” which reflects a male-constructed assumption about female sexuality and is intended to warn readers about the dangers of infidelity and wandering sexual pursuits within marriage. Both the frame story and embedded tales are consistent in style and content, illustrating similar themes relevant to worldly life and deception.

Women (and men) of the *Ṭuṭīnāma* take on different roles.<sup>111</sup> Exploring themes of gender, women, and sexuality, the *Ṭuṭīnāma* frequently depicts women as cunning and driven by

<sup>109</sup> See M. A. S. Abdel Haleem, trans., *The Qur’an* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 287 (37:102). “And when [his son] was old enough to talk with him, [Abraham] said: “My son, I have seen myself sacrificing you in a dream. What do you think?” He said: “Father, do as you are commanded and, God willing you, you will find me steadfast.”

<sup>110</sup> Zīā’ al-Dīn Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭīnāma*, 24.

<sup>111</sup> Depending on the author, literary genre, and social setting, women were portrayed differently in Persian writings from the Middle Ages. Women were frequently romanticized and exalted in Persian poetry, where their grace, beauty, and charm were praised. Often, female characters were used as representations of devotion, love, and longing. In Nezāmi’s poetry, for instance, women are portrayed with a great details, complexity, and relevance. His

depiction of women captures not just their physical attractiveness but also their power, and agency. For example, in *Khosrow and Shirin*, Nezāmi's epic romance, *Shirin* is described with unparalleled beauty and detailed physical features. The following excerpt, from section 18, exemplifies the richness and depth of his praise for *Shirin*:

“A moon, whose like was never seen before,  
Whose face beneath her veils the pinnacle  
Of everything esteemed as beautiful,  
A moon that softens darkness with her light,  
With eyes like life's dark water, black as light,  
Her silver stature has a palm tree's grace  
And black as date two ringlets frame her face  
(And even sweetest dates seem to repeat  
The sweetness of her lips and grow more sweet).  
Her lips are red as agates, and beneath  
Those jewels lie perfect pearls, her glistening teeth;  
The curls and ringlets of her lovely hair  
Are like a coiling lariat, or a snare-  
(Men's hearts are captured by them, and lie prone  
Like grass that's trampled down and overgrown),  
Their musky scent has blurred her eyes as though  
An illness made them hesitant and slow,  
And cast a hypnotizing spell upon  
Her fascinated and now silent tongue.  
There's salt within the sweetness of her smile,  
A piquancy to baffle and beguile;  
Her nose is like a silver knife in place

To split all the apples of her flawless face” In Nizāmī Ganjavi, and Dick Davis. *Khosrow & Shirin*, trans. And intro. Dick Davis. (Washington, D.C.: Mage Publishers, 2023), 14-15; Nezāmi Ganjavi, *Khosrow o Shirin*, ed. Behruz Tarvatiān (Tehran, 1987-88).; See chapter 3 on women and love in Kamran Talattof, *Nezami Ganjavi and Classical Persian Literature: Demystifying the Mystic*, 1st ed. (2022).

پری دختی، پری بگذار! ماهی  
به زیر مقنعه صاحب کلاهی  
شب افروزی چو مهتاب جوانی  
سپه چشمی چو آب زندگانی  
کشیده قامتی چون نخل سیمین  
دو زنگی بر سر نخلش رطب چین  
ز بس کاورد یاد آن نوش لب را  
دهان پُر آب شکر شد رطب را  
به مروارید دندان های چون نور  
صدف را آب دندان داده از دور  
دو شکر چون عقیق آبداده  
دو گیسو چون کمند تاب داده  
خم گیسوش تاب از دل کشیده  
به گیسو سبزه را بر گل کشیده  
شده گرم از نسیم مشکبیزش  
دماغ نرگین بیمار خیزش  
فسونگر کرده بر خود چشم خود را  
زبان بسته به افسون چشم بد را  
به سحری کاتش دل ها کند نیز  
لبش را صد زبان هر صد شکر ریز  
نمک دارد لبش در خنده پیوست  
نمک شیرین نباشد و آن او هست  
تو گویی بینی اش تیغی ست از سیم  
که کرد آن تیغ، سببی را به دو نیم

their desires, reinforcing patriarchal notions of male superiority.<sup>112</sup> The biased combination of deception, trickery, and female sexuality makes the *Ṭuṭināma*'s narrative appealing to its audience. Such themes and textual dynamics – namely its didactic function, the use of anecdotes as examples, entertaining style, stylistic eloquence, and gender and power dynamics – place the *Ṭuṭināma* within *adab* literature.<sup>113</sup>

Turning to another aspect, Nakhshabi's works, including the *Ṭuṭināma*, demonstrate his familiarity with Arabic and Sanskrit. Because of his multilingualism, he was able to fully

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In historical and biographical texts, women were depicted in diverse roles, who held positions of authority and influence, and served as queens, princesses, or prominent court figures. In contrast, women's roles were frequently depicted within moral and religious contexts in texts influenced by Islamic teachings, such as theological and philosophical works. These texts served as guides on ethical behavior and social norms, and addressed topics such as modesty, domestic responsibilities, and women's societal roles. Medieval Persian texts reflected patriarchal norms and often portrayed women as wives, mother, caregivers, and tied to familial responsibilities. A lyrical epic incorporating historical elements, the *Shahnameh* of Ferdowsi exemplifies the portrayal of women in classical Persian literature. Although it assigns roles as warriors, advisors, and politically savvy characters to women, it also portrays them as mothers, nurturers, lovers, and wives. For instance, the central figure Rudāba, the mother of the renowned Rostam and the wife of Zāl, symbolizes the continuation of a heroic lineage. See Firdawsī and Dick Davis, *Shahnameh: The Persian Book of Kings* (New York: Viking, 2006).; Sara S. Poor and Jana K. Schulman, *Women and Medieval Epic: Gender, Genre, and the Limits of Epic Masculinity*, 1st ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). Another example can be found in the closing chapter on women and shaped by the patriarchal norms of early Islamic society as well as traditional gender roles, by Ibn Qutayba's multi volume *ʿOyun al-Akhhbār* (The foundations of stories). He discusses women in the context of family life, virtue, and societal expectations, yet merely reduces women to their sexuality and physicality. Ibn Qutayba's treatment of women centers around their role as mothers, wives, and daughters emphasizing on their role to maintain a household by bearing children and supporting their husbands. Similarly, women's social groups including her neighbors are marginal characters namely beggars, servants, or insane. The female character type, thus, is not only defined through her own essence but also through her social circle. While there may be a variety of reasons for marginality of a group, the female's role is almost exclusively social. Physical and mental reasons are amongst other factors to place one into a marginalized category. See Fedwa Malti-Douglas, *Woman's Body, Woman's Word: Gender and Discourse in Arabo-Islamic Writing* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 6–7, 29–30.

<sup>112</sup> Although these themes are central to the text, their presence alone is may not be sufficient to classify the work as *adab* without further consideration of its moral and didactic dimensions.

<sup>113</sup> The medieval *adab* corpus gave birth to various character types, one of which was the woman character. The female character entered the medieval Persian canon with a misogynist recast, defined by the clever manipulation of her body. *Adab* writings, prose or verse, contained both religious and non-religious content, serving as both educational and entertaining. Insofar, as I know, exclusively written by men, *adab* works can be topical or intended to focus on a certain social character type, namely the unfaithful wife or the disloyal servant. Examples of *adab* works in classical Persian literature include Sa'di's *Golestān* and *Bustān*, both of which contain moral lessons and ethical reflections. Although monographic in nature, the *Ṭuṭināma* includes an encyclopedia of substories, some of which serve to accentuate the frame story's narrative. Social hierarchy is usually a major determining component of the *adab* works, perpetually reducing marginalized groups and women's status and bringing woman to the bottom of social spectrum. Fedwa Malti-Douglas, *Woman's Body, Woman's Word: Gender and Discourse in Arabo-Islamic Writing*, 29-53.

understand the original text, allowing him to navigate linguistic distinctions, which enabled him to eliminate the difficulties presented by their differences and similarities. During the time of Nakhshabi, bilingualism was a prominent characteristic. Bilingualism gave him a broader viewpoint and helped him with expressive techniques that build upon and at times surpass those of his predecessors. Nakhshabi creates a timeless and inventive work by maintaining the best aspects of earlier renditions (engaging narratives, structural devices, and surprise effects) while modifying them to fit the linguistic and poetic preferences of his time. Having access to a wide range of lexical equivalences, Nakhshabi addresses the gaps in Ṣaghari's rendition. Through changes in syntax and semantics, Nakhshabi surpasses his predecessor's work and transcends the limitations of adaptation.

Nakhshabi's work introduces new viewpoints on the Sanskrit *Tales of a Parrot* story cycle and considerably expands the Persian literary tradition. Despite its importance, this work has not yet been thoroughly investigated. Only recently, with growing scholarly interest in the Persianate world, has the *Tales of a Parrot* story cycle begun to receive some attention. While fundamental, the studies by Iken and Kosegarten date back two centuries.<sup>114</sup> Equally important, though covered with the dust of time, is the 1867 article by the orientalist scholar, Wilhelm Pertsch, which provides a textual history and comparative analysis of Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma* stories and its recensions.<sup>115</sup> Another study of great importance is the work of Mahroo Hatami, which examines the historical development and motifs of the *Ṭuṭināma* of Nakhshabi. However, Hatami's study, while exhaustive in its documentation of the Indian sources, pays little attention

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<sup>114</sup> Carl Jakob Ludwig Iken, *Touti Nameh, a Collection of Persian Fairy Tales by Nechschebi*, German translation with an appendix from the same, and from J. G. L. Kosegarten (Stuttgart: Cottaischen Buchhandlung, 1822).; Wilhelm Pertsch, "Über Nachschabi's Papageienbuch," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 21 (1867): 505–51.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

to the other versions and leaves room for further investigation.<sup>116</sup> Ulrich Marzolph's research on the latest segment of the Persian tradition, known as *Chehel Tuṭi*, remains highly valuable to this day.<sup>117</sup> More recently, several edited volumes have been published in Iran, including Nakhshabi's *Tuṭināma* by Faṭḥ Allāh Mojtabāyi and Gholām 'Ali Āriā,<sup>118</sup> as well as an edition of *Javāher al-asmār* by Shams Āl-e Aḥmad. Albeit brief, Mojtabāyi and Āriā's introduction offers valuable remarks on the history of *Tales of a Parrot*. Similarly, Moḥammad Karimi Zanjāni Asl provides a concise historical survey of *Tales of a Parrot* in his *Encyclopedia Iranica* entry, echoing the remarks made by Mojtabāyi and Āriā.<sup>119</sup>

The article "Analysis of the Narrative Elements of the *Tuṭināma*" by Nabilu and Akbari provides a concise overview of the narrative elements and themes present in the *Tuṭināma*. The authors conclude that the text's narrative structures align with broader trends in Persian and Indian folklore and reflect the cultural and moral exchanges between these two traditions.<sup>120</sup> While the study is important in its scope, its wider treatment of numerous topics leaves limited room for an in-depth analysis of each individual element. Solṭāni Qadim and Farzi, on the other hand, focus on a comparative analysis of the Arabic and Persian proverbs found in the *Tuṭināma*. Their work highlights the similarities and differences in the use of proverbs in these two literary traditions.<sup>121</sup> In another article, Farzi conducts a period-based stylistic analysis of the *Tuṭināma*.

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<sup>116</sup> Mahroo Hatami, *Untersuchungen zum Persischen Papageienbuch des Naḥšabī*.

<sup>117</sup> Ulrich Marzolph, *Die Vierzig Papageien, Chehel Tuṭi: Das Persische Volksbuch; Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Papageienbuches*, Beiträge zur Sprach- und Kulturgeschichte des Orients, vol. 29 (Walldorf-Hessen: Verlag für Orientkunde Vorndran, 1979).

<sup>118</sup> Žiā' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Tuṭināma*.

<sup>119</sup> Moḥammad Karimi Zanjāni Asl's *Iranica* article, although Zanjāni Asl cites a number of sources. See Moḥammad Karimi Zanjāni Asl, "Nakhshabi, Žiā'-al-Din," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, available online at <https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/naksabi-zia> (accessed January 27, 2021).

<sup>120</sup> 'Alirezā Nabilu and Manuchehr Akbari, "Taḥlil-e 'anāṣer-e dāstāni-ye *Tuṭināma*" [Analysis of the Narrative Elements of the *Tuṭināma*], *Fasl-nāma-ye Pazhuḥesh-hā-ye Adabi* [Literary Research Quarterly] 3, no. 18 (Winter 2003): 111–13.

<sup>121</sup> Hossein Soltani Qadim and Hamid Reza Farzi, "Analysis of Arabic Proverbs and Sayings in Tuṭi Nameh by Nakhshabi and Their Comparison with Persian Proverbs and Sayings," *Persian Literature Studies* 12, no. 45 (Spring 1397/2018–2019): 45–76.

Farzi investigates sentence structure, lexical features, and literary-stylistic characteristics and argues that Nakhshabi's work exhibits a hybrid style, in which he blends both narrative prose (*naṣr-e morsal*) and ornate prose (*naṣr-e fanni*). Thus, Farzi categorizes the *Ṭuṭīnāma* as a representative of the middle-ground style (*sabk-e beinābein*).<sup>122</sup>

While the study of fables and animal narratives, particularly those written in a mixture of prose and poetry in Persian and Arabic literature, has been explored by specialists, research on several examples of such works, including the *Tales of a Parrot*, remains incomplete. This study contributes to the underexplored *Tales of a Parrot* story cycle, animal fables, and Persian prosimetrum. The present study centers on hybrid Persian narratives in prose and verse and aims to highlight the beauty and magnificence of the *Tales of a Parrot* tradition through an analysis of Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭīnāma*. It seeks to revisit existing ideas about the *Tales of a Parrot* story cycle as a seminal work of Persian literature that exists in numerous renditions and rewritings. It emphasizes the most prominent version of this tradition, the fourteenth-century *Ṭuṭīnāma* of Nakhshabi. Despite the wealth of information contained in Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭīnāma*, it does not appear to be a primary concern in contemporary scholarship.

## What to Expect in This Dissertation: A Roadmap to Navigating This Study

This dissertation examines the *Ṭuṭīnāma*, focusing primarily on its literary and ideological constructions as a standalone text. While one chapter provides a limited comparison between the *Ṭuṭīnāma* and its predecessor, the *Javāher al-asmār* of Ṣaghari, the study centers on

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<sup>122</sup> Hamidreza Farzi, "Taḥlīl-e sabki-ye *Ṭuṭīnāma*-ye Zīā' al-Dīn Nakhshabī" [Stylistic Analysis of Zia Naqshbi's Tuti Nameh], *Naqd-e Adabi va Sabk shenāsi (Elmi-Pazhuheshi)* [Literary Criticism and Stylistics (Scientific-Research)], no. 1 (Fall 1390): 129–55.; Additionally while I am aware of Pegah Shahbazi's dissertation, *Les Récits Persans En Prose En Inde, Exemple: Le Ṭuṭī-nāma* (Ph.D. diss., University of Strasbourg, 2014), I have been unable to obtain a copy through interlibrary loan services or ProQuest. Although I contacted her directly, she informed me that she is unable to share the work at this time, as it is currently under publication.

Nakhshabi's work as a product of its time, which reflects the cultural realities and authorial motivations of its era. The study shows how through processes such as anthologizing, editing, and modifying, Nakhshabi adapted and reimagined his source material, enhanced its overall relevance and impact, and established the *Ṭuṭināma* as an important work in its own right.<sup>123</sup> The brief comparison of the *Ṭuṭināma* and the *Javāher al-asmār* underlines the transformative role of rewriting in forming the *Tales of a Parrot* story cycle. It shows that, in some cases, like the one examined here, rewrites of renowned literary works play an important role in the reception and survival of texts. Occasionally, they produce a work with an influence equal to or greater than that of the original.

Chapter 1 examines the composition of Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma* through the lens of the trilateral process of invention, disposition, and ornamentation. It argues that Nakhshabi's work is not merely a modification of *Javāher al-asmār*, but it is a creative reimagining that elevates the work into a distinct literary masterpiece. The chapter explores how Nakhshabi adapted Ṣaghari's work by focusing on whether he modified the entire text or only specific segments. It also explores the stylistic and thematic innovations that Nakhshabi introduced. The following questions are answered in this chapter: In what ways did Nakhshabi improve his adaptation of *Tales of a Parrot*? What are the aesthetic and stylistic features of Nakhshabi's innovative rendition? How does Nakhshabi's rendition distinguish itself from the work of his predecessor, Ṣaghari? Lastly, what recurring stylistic elements distinguish Nakhshabi's work from Ṣaghari's? By reading Nakhshabi's work against that of its predecessor, *Javāher al-asmār*, the chapter

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<sup>123</sup> André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (London: Routledge, 1992), 5–10. Lefevere considers historiography, anthologization, criticism, and editing as the most evident forms of translation.

identifies his methodological approach and features the recurring organizational, stylistic, and thematic features that define his rendition.

Chapter 2 of this dissertation explores the complex storytelling techniques and the role of nighttime in Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma*. Central to this inquiry are key questions: What storytelling techniques did Nakhshabi employ for self-expression and self-creation? How do these techniques improve the moral, philosophical, and cultural depth of the text? This chapter examines different narrative strategies, which collectively enrich the narrative and reinforce the didactic and aesthetic dimensions. It also explores the dual temporal structure of the narrative, which strengthens the moral precepts of the *Ṭuṭināma* and enhances the storytelling's depth and richness. Nighttime is highlighted as a symbolic and structural element, which represents mystery, desire, and moral introspection, while serving as the backdrop for the parrot's tales.

Chapter 3 of this dissertation examines the complex relationship of gender roles, misogyny, and patriarchal values in Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma*. The chapter first situates the text within the "wiles of women" literary tradition, then offers an analysis of the frame narrative and embedded tales from a gendered perspective. The chapter illustrates that while the *Ṭuṭināma* addresses the more profound affairs of life, particularly the politics of the household, the work perpetuates negative stereotypes of women. Ultimately, the *Ṭuṭināma*, reflects the patriarchal values of its time and emphasizes male control, loyalty, and honor. At the same time, the text occasionally reveals Nakhshabi's nuanced, albeit conflicted engagement with themes of female autonomy and desire.

This study presents a meticulous examination of Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma* for several reasons. Unquestionably, Nakhshabi and his fellow Persian compilers of the *Tales of a Parrot* extensively used vocabulary and figurative language derived from contemporary norms,

practices, and knowledge. Nakhshabi himself declares his overwhelming interest in rewriting a version of the *Tales of a Parrot* “new expressions, new metaphors, proverbs, and fresh analogies” so that his readers and listeners can be “eternally grateful.”<sup>124</sup> Although the first piece of the Persian *Tales of a Parrot* story cycle was introduced through Ṣaghari’s fourteenth-century rendition, the *Ṭuṭināma* of Nakhshabi had a more profound, indeed, “eternal” role in forming the later versions of this story cycle. Nearly all subsequent versions reference Nakhshabi’s work, citing it as their primary source. Surprisingly, nonetheless, the scholarship on the *Tales of a Parrot* has not sufficiently recognized this. Despite the exceptionally ornate style and careful lexicography of Nakhshabi’s *Ṭuṭināma*, his work and its successors are often dismissed as entertaining texts in comparison to revered texts of the time.<sup>125</sup> This oversight results from a failure to analyze the language and style to which Nakhshabi devoted his life in the pursuit of his literary goals.

Studying the *Ṭuṭināma* of Nakhshabi, as an intermediary text of medieval Persian literature, is important for several reasons. First, it mirrors the contributions of Sanskrit literature to Persian literature and demonstrates the subsequent influences of Persian literature on other traditions. Second, it reveals the interconnectedness of the Indo-Persian culture, particularly during the period when Persian emerged as the dominant language of the court across the region. Third, it exemplifies a profound intercultural dialogue between Persian, Indian, and Islamic narratives. Finally, the *Ṭuṭināma* of Nakhshabi is an excellent example of a stories-within-a-story framework, which went on to influence many works of Persian literature. By examining a text

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<sup>124</sup> Zīā’ al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭināma*, 4.

<sup>125</sup> Jan Rypka, Otakar Klíma, and Karl Jahn, *History of Iranian Literature*, 1st ed. (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1968), 223, 663; Ulrich Marzolph, “Persian Popular Literature,” in *Oral Literature of Iranian Languages: Kurdish, Pashto, Balochi, Ossetic, Persian & Tajik*, ed. Philip G. Kreyenbroek and Ulrich Marzolph, *A History of Persian Literature*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater, vol. 18, Companion vol. 2 (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 208–39, 352–64, at 217.

that skillfully blends entertainment with ethical and social lessons, this study also underlines the didactic function of storytelling in classical Persian literature.

Table 1: Comparison of Main Characters in *Shukāsaptati*, *Javāher al-asmār*, and Nakhshabi’s *Ṭuṭināma*

<b>Character Role</b>	<b>Main Characters of <i>Shukāsaptati</i></b>	<b>Main Characters of <i>Javāher al-asmār</i></b>	<b>Main Characters of Nakhshabi’s <i>Ṭuṭināma</i></b>
Merchant	Madanā Vinod	Sā’ed	Maymun
Merchant’s Wife	Prabhāvati	Māh Shekar	Khojasta
Merchant’s Wealthy Father	Haridātā	Sa’id	Mobārak
Merchant’s Mother	Shringarā Sundari	The character is present, but unnamed	Not present

Table 2: Distribution of Tales and Sub Stories Across the Chapters of *Javāher al-asmār* and *Ṭuṭināma*

While some of the chapters are completely missing, the *Javāher al-asmār* includes 86 tales and substories in its current form. The *Ṭuṭināma*, on the other hand, includes 84 tales, including all of its embedded tales and substories, many of which are significantly shorter, and some do not exceed a couple of lines.

<i>Javāher al-asmār's</i> Chapter	Number of Parrot's Tales Per Chapter	<i>Ṭuṭināma's</i> Chapter	Number of Parrot's Tales Per Chapter
One	1	One	1
Two	1	Two	1
Three	2	Three	1
Four	2	Four	3 (2 sub stories, one of which is extremely short)
Five	3	Five	2
Six	2	Six	1
Seven	3	Seven	2 separate stories
Eight	3	Eight	7 (6 substories)
Nine	1	Nine	1
Ten	2	Ten	1

Eleven	2	Eleven	1
Twelve	1	Twelve	2
Thirteen	2	Thirteen	2
Fourteen	2	Fourteen	2
Fifteen	3	Fifteen	3
Sixteen	1	Sixteen	1
Seventeen	2	Seventeen	1
Eighteen	1	Eighteen	2
Nineteen	1	Nineteen	1
Twenty	1	Twenty	1
Twenty-one	2	Twenty-one	1
Twenty-two	3	Twenty-two	1
Twenty-three	3	Twenty-three	1
Twenty-four	2	Twenty-four	3, 2 of which are separate stories
Twenty-five	1	Twenty-five	3
Twenty-six	2	Twenty-six	1
Twenty-seven	Missing pages	Twenty-seven	2
Twenty-eight	2	Twenty-eight	2

Twenty-nine	1	Twenty-nine	2
Thirty	2	Thirty	1
Thirty-one	2	Thirty-one	2
Thirty-two	1	Thirty-two	2
Thirty-three	2	Thirty-three	1
Thirty-four	1	Thirty-four	2 separate stories
Thirty-five	1	Thirty-five	1
Thirty-six	1	Thirty-six	1
Thirty-seven	1	Thirty-seven	1
Thirty-eight	1	Thirty-eight	1
Thirty-nine	1	Thirty-nine	1
Forty	3	Forty	1
Forty-one	4	Forty-one	3
Forty-two	1	Forty-two	3
Forty-three	1	Forty-three	2 separate stories
Forty-four	1	Forty-four	1
Forty-five	2	Forty-five	2
Forty-six	2	Forty-six	1

Forty-seven	2	Forty-seven	1
Forty-eight	3	Forty-eight	1
Forty-nine	1	Forty-nine	1
Fifty	Missing pages	Fifty	1
Fifty-one	Missing pages	Fifty-one	1
Fifty-two	Missing pages	Fifty-two	1
<b><i>Javāher al-asmār's</i></b> <b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b><i>Ṭuḥīnāma's</i></b> <b>Total</b>	<b>84</b>

## Chapter 1: The Poetics of Rearrangement; Invention, Order, and Embellishment in Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma*

With a focus on poetry and the Latin rhetorical tradition, Geoffery of Vinasuf classifies the composition of a work of literature into the tripartite process of invention, disposition, and ornamentation.<sup>126</sup> Invention concerns identifying the subject matter, the mode of presentation, and a basic definition of the work at hand. Informed by invention, disposition involves composing and giving shape to the various parts of the work. Finally, ornamentation comprises the adornment of the work for maximum effect on its audience, achieved through enhanced word choice, imagery, rhetorical devices, and sonic effects. Meisami argues that “the tripartite classification of invention-disposition-ornamentation is implicit in Arabic and Persian writings on poetry...”<sup>127</sup> This chapter builds on Meisami’s argument and shows that the tripartite model is also implicit in the *Ṭuṭināma* of Nakhshabi. This way it extends Meisami’s insight into the realm of prosimetrum.

Employing what is now classified as the tripartite process of invention-disposition-ornamentation, Nakhshabi transformed the little-known *Javāher al-asmār* into the *Ṭuṭināma*. Besides targeting the alleged lack of creativity and literal, word-for-word translation of Ṣaghari’s work, Nakhshabi criticizes the *Javāher al-asmār* for its long sentences with complicated syntax and its overall narrative flow. Nakhshabi’s description of his predecessor’s work is somewhat

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<sup>126</sup> Douglas Kelly, “Theory of Composition in Medieval Narrative and Geoffrey of Vinsauf’s *Poetria Nova*,” *Medieval Studies* 31 (1969): 117–48, esp. 130–35; Judson Boyce Allen, *The Ethical Poetic of the Later Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 117–120.

<sup>127</sup> Julie Scott Meisami, *Structure and Meaning in Medieval Arabic and Persian Poetry: Orient Pearls*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), 21.

accurate. Although *Ṭuṭīnāma* is an adaptation and modification of an existing work, Nakhshabi employed the tripartite process effectively. The relation between Nakhshabi's language and his *Ṭuṭīnāma*, a work evolving out of and influenced by a prior work and his imagination, is a dialectical one; each deeply influences the development of the other.<sup>128</sup> Nakhshabi's foremost concern is to separate his work from that of his predecessor and create an eternal piece. When it comes to Nakhshabi's authorial contest with Ṣaghari, linguistic devices are the most important tools in his hands. The *Ṭuṭīnāma*'s success is closely associated with the sound and meaning of its language.<sup>129</sup> In the struggle for literary domination, the use of a unique linguistic stamp becomes extraordinarily important. The *Ṭuṭīnāma*'s words and melodic speech are highly selective. The *Ṭuṭīnāma* is a collection of Nakhshabi's distinct words. As stated in his introduction, Nakhshabi aims to enhance his rendition through aesthetic and stylistic effects.

A shift in the authorial language is one feature that Nakhshabi's readers expect in the *Ṭuṭīnāma*. Modifying the syntax, word choice, figurative language, and tone of his predecessor's work, Nakhshabi succeeded in establishing mood, imagery, and meaning different from that of his precursor. This chapter will discuss the tripartite composition of the *Ṭuṭīnāma*. First, it will explore how Nakhshabi created the *Ṭuṭīnāma*. Next, it will examine how he rearranged the source material to craft the *Ṭuṭīnāma*. Finally, it will demonstrate some of the lexical changes he implemented at the level of ornamentation. The analysis offered in this chapter will reveal how Nakhshabi's stylistic, structural, and thematic changes set his version apart from the *Javāher al-asmār*. Nakhshabi elevated his work through a unique set of adaptations, aligning his text with the taste, morals, and cultural expectations of his audience. His distinct voice allowed him to refine and reimagine the earlier Persian rendition.

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<sup>128</sup> Austin Warren and René Wellek, *Theory of Literature*, 1st ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1949), 174–75.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 174–5.

## Invention

Nakhshabi was determined to compose an eloquent and organized discourse. His first step was “invention,” which included the creative act of improvising ideas, characters, plots, and literary techniques. Since this was a rewrite, Nakhshabi’s task was to rework the existing ideas through a process of selection and improvisation. As mentioned in his introduction, by implementing these innovations, he expected to develop an easy syntax and a more suitable arrangement to convey his message and perhaps entertain his audience. Nakhshabi was aware that invention was essential for generating fresh and fascinating narratives, characters, and ideas. He demonstrated his creativity through a combination of originality, inventiveness, and artistic experimentation across various aspects of his storytelling. His innovations and improvisation begin with the title of his work.

The Persian title *Ṭuṭīnāma* consists of two parts: *Ṭuṭī* means “parrot,” and *nāma* means, “book,” “history,” or “tale.” Considering the character and purpose of this book, a collection of stories narrated by a parrot, to reflect the work’s essence as a compilation of stories, the word “tale” serves best for the English title of *Ṭuṭīnāma*, hence Parrot’s Tale(s) or *Tales of a Parrot*. This is because, in literary contexts, the word *nāma* is generally used for a collection of narratives, writings, or stories. Perhaps the change of title from *Javāher al-asmār* (Gem of Stories) to *Ṭuṭīnāma*, suggests moving from the finest stories to an assortment of tales narrated by a wise grandfatherly figure or a speech master such as the parrot. This choice of title, therefore, may reflect the creativity of the parrot and the versatility of his tales. The wise parrot offers a selection of the finest stories that suit the occasion. The title demonstrates Nakhshabi’s

effort to suggest original and engaging story ideas that captivate the readers' imagination, a fresh take on a familiar narrative.

## I. Introduction

Nakhshabi, then, implemented more creative ideas to transform the work at hand. The organizational strategies observed in the *Ṭuṭināma* are analogous to those observed in the *Javāher al-asmār*; however, Nakhshabi's creative twists in the layout of the story enhance the creativity of his work. The *Ṭuṭināma* of Nakhshabi combines several structural patterns that can be divided into three sections: I) Nakhshabi's introduction, where he provides information about himself, his books, and how *Ṭuṭināma*'s predecessor reached him, II) the frame story, and III) the embedded tales. He provides a list of his interventions in the introduction of his work. He does not make any reference to the time when he started composing the *Ṭuṭināma*; however, as stated in his epilogue, Nakhshabi completed the composition of the *Ṭuṭināma* seven hundred and thirty years after the Hijra, which corresponds to 1330 CE:

The night I arranged these tales  
Was seven hundred thirty after Hijra

”ز هجرت هفتصد و سی بود آن شب  
130 که این افسانه ها کردم مرتب“

In his introduction, Nakhshabi provides abundant information about the composition of this book, how this book came to him, and how his rendition is arranged. He explains:

... a nobleman said to this poor man, “At this time, someone has translated a book that contains fifty-two tales from one expression to another--from Hindavi into Persian. However, the author has made the writing unnecessarily long and complicated, with excessive wording, and has completely ignored the principles

<sup>130</sup> Zia' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭināma*, 437.

of tasteful arrangement and the rules of delightful composition. He has taken the beginning and the ending of the tales from one place, omitted the important points, and has neglected the masters of eloquence. As a result, the reader is distracted from the intended purpose and the listener loses his anticipated enjoyment. If you rewrite this foundational Indian book in concise language, using smooth metaphors, appropriate arrangement, and a superior composition, you will have proven your endless courtesy to its audience.”

... بزرگی با فقیر گفت که درین وقت کتابی مشتمل بر پنجاه و دو حکایت بزرگی از عبارتی بعبارتی برده و از اصطلاح هندوی بزبان فارسی کرده اما اشهب مقال در مضمار اطالت دوانیده و درازی سخن به اقصی الغایت رسانیده و قاعده ترتیب ذوقی و قانون ترکیب شوقی را اصلا مراعات نکرده و آغاز داستان و انجام حکایت از جائی برداشته و فرو گذاشته [و] اهل بلاغت معطل داشته، چنانکه قاری از مقصود راحت باز می ماند و سامع را مطلوب استراحت فوت می شود. اگر تو این اصل را که اصول کتب هند است بعبارتی موجز و استعارتی سلس و ترتیبی لایق و ترکیبی فایق بنویسی بر قاری و سامع او منت بینهایت ثابت کرده باشی.<sup>131</sup>

The above passage suggests that *Javāher al-asmār* had long sentences with complicated syntax. Nakhshabi's criticism of the *Javāher al-asmār*, however, goes beyond just the flow of the story. He also criticizes the story collection's beginning and end. Nakhshabi accuses the *Javāher al-asmār*'s author of word-for-word replication in the beginning and at the end of his stories, criticizing his lack of eloquence and rhetorical refinement. Based on the following lines, Nakhshabi decides that instead of merely rephrasing sentences, he would find new angles or perspectives to present the information and tailor the rewritten text to meet the needs and interests of his audience. This includes shortening the sentences to make the text accessible for both elite and non-elite readers.

...Although eloquence in speech is when the expression is extended, so that it is not so plain that the elite would not read it, nor so ornate that common people would not understand it. Rather, the best course of action is to choose a middle path.

Nakhshabi, chose the middle way  
And this itself is a prophetic teaching  
Know that moderation is the best practice  
For healthy course lies in moderation

<sup>131</sup> Ibid, 4.

... اگر چه بلاغت در کلام آنست که کلام مطول گردانند نه آن چنان بی تکلف که خواص آن را نخوانند و نه آن چنان با تکلف که عوام آن را نشنوند، بلکه امری که خیر الامور است اختیار کرده [شد].

نخشبی مذهب میانه گزید  
واندرین خود اشارت نبویست  
کارهای میانه کاری دان  
132 امر سالم همین میانه رویست

He reorganizes the structure of the text to create a smoother flow and to highlight key points more effectively. He continues:

Fifty-two stories have been written with new expressions, new metaphors, proverbs, and fresh analogies. The stories that were found to be irrelevant were made connected and the beginning and the end of each tale were ornamented and decorated. Some stories that were hideous and tasteless were replaced, and a manuscript from this hand presented this bride of eternal beauty and this lady of the throne of elegance before the eyes of kings.

پنجاه و دو حکایت به عبارت و استعارت نو و امثال و نظایر جدید نوشته شد و حکایتی که بیواسطه و ربط و ضبط بود آن را مربوط و مضبوط کرده آمد و مطلع و مختم هریکی را تزیین و توشیح داده شد و حکایتی چند که شنیع و بی ذوق بود بدل آن حکایت دیگر تحریر افتاد و این عروس خلد لطافت و خاتون تخت ظرافت را در نظر شاهان، نسخه [ای] بدین دست جلوه داد.<sup>133</sup>

According to Nakhshabi's introduction, his text is revised and prepared to be read by all, both common people and distinguished individuals, with the aim of providing a better text to understand. From the introduction above, one can at the very least assume that the author wanted to enhance his work by revising the existing volume – he even chose a different title to improve the existing volume and communicate the difference between the two versions. Keywords of Nakhshabi's assertion “this bride of eternal beauty” and “this lady of the throne of elegance” indicate his desire to transform abstract ideals into vivid and tangible imagery. Similar to its precursors, imagery, symbol, and metaphor remain as inseparable components of the central structure of the *Ṭuṭināma*. From his introduction, we also understand that he imagined himself on

<sup>132</sup> Ibid, 4-5.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, 5.

a higher level than the Persian author of the *Javāher al-asmār*. Nakhshabi's introduction proves his concerns about creating an eloquent and organized version. He asserts that his improvements in rewriting the *Javāher al-asmār* involve bringing a fresh perspective, rearrangement, and eloquence. Based on what is discussed in the above-cited section of his introduction, he claims that his insertions are more than just replacing words or phrases; they are about reimagining the content in a way that increases value, clarity, or interest. His introduction displays his determination to fashion himself not only as the narrator, but also as the author of his work. Nakhshabi does not deny his association with the anonymous literary work of the past but does not refrain from boasting about his masterpiece. This dissertation assumes that the anonymous work is the *Javāher al-asmār*. Nakhshabi's mission was beyond narrating the work at hand; he was determined to make it his own. Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma* was deeply influenced by its two predecessors, the *Shukāsaptati* and the *Javāher al-asmār*. Although Nakhshabi does not mention the name of either the Sanskrit work or its Persian translation, his reference to the nobleman who requests him to translate the book's *asl* (original) suggests that he had access to the *Shukāsaptati* in some form. When considered alongside the overall features of the frame tale, embedded stories, historical period, and the number of embedded tales, this gives us reason to assume the *Shukāsaptati* and the *Javāher al-asmār* as the unidentified copies Nakhshabi refined.

From Nakhshabi's writings, it is apparent that he did not only study the works of renowned Persian poets and writers, but like many other educated individuals of his era, he was well versed in Arabic and Sanskrit. As discussed in the introduction, looking at the *Ṭuṭināma* and Nakhshabi's other adaptations of famed Sanskrit works, he might have had the *Shukāsaptati* open in front of him as he composed the *Ṭuṭināma*. For this reason, this dissertation assumes Nakhshabi's knowledge and fluency in the Sanskrit language. Based on his introduction, we are

also aware that the nobleman requested him to go back to the “*asl*” (the original), which is the “*oṣul-e kotob-e hend,*” which also suggests Nakhshabi’s familiarity with the Sanskrit language. The wide range of Arabic words and verses from the Qur’an and Hadith, on the other hand, makes evident his proficiency in the Arabic language. Moreover, the signs of his Sanskrit knowledge can be found in the content of his work. As a rendition of the *Shukāsaptati*, the *Ṭuṭināma* occupies the most prominent place in the *Tale of a Parrot*, yet stories from other renowned works of Sanskrit, including *Panchātantrā*, *Sandbādnāma*, *Kalila va Demna*, and *Vetālā-panchāvīmshati*, can also be found. Chapter 8 of the *Ṭuṭināma*, for instance, can be found in both *Sandbādnāma* and *Shukāsaptati*.

## II. Frame Tale

The frame story comes after his introduction. The frame story itself is divided into two sections: the prologue and the epilogue, with the first preceding and the second succeeding the embedded tales. The prologue of the frame story, which clarifies the main narrative, provides this focal point: the merchant’s wife attempts to go to her rendezvous. The wise parrot, however, cleverly thwarts her mischievous attempts by distracting her with his fascinating and curious stories. The frame tale is based on the antithesis between “right-doing, *nik*” and “wrong-doing, *bad*”, with a preference for “right-doing” announced through the epilogue, when the wife is murdered upon her merchant husband’s return.

O brother, a wicked woman is better off dead  
Better not to endure the sorrow caused by women

زن بد ای برادر مرده بهتر  
<sup>134</sup> غم کار زنان ناخورده بهتر

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid, 6.

This duality is later reinforced in another place, when Nakhshabi talks about this contrasting aspect of human nature,

Nakhshabi, there are all kind (of people) in the world  
 Be it good or evil  
 One's character may not be concordant with anyone  
 (However,) everyone's inclination is towards that of the same kind/gender

نخشبی هر که هست در عالم  
 خواه او نیک و خواه بد باشد  
 طبع با هر کسی نیامیزد  
<sup>135</sup>میل جمله به جنس خود باشد

When the merchant's wife insists on her wrong-doing -- pursuing love outside marriage - the parrot persisting on his right deed, remains loyal and protects the merchant's household by means of stories. Loyalty appears to be the central object of Nakhshabi's authorial quest. While not discussed directly and explicitly, Nakhshabi's work demonstrates his notions of loyalty, commitment, and female obedience. When Maymun, the merchant, decides to embark on a voyage, he leaves his trustee, the parrot, in charge of his household, requesting that his wife consult with the parrot on all matters. His epilogue serves as Nakhshabi's moral and cultural commentary, particularly with regard to behavior that breaks the marriage bond by engaging in fornication, drawn from Islamic traditions.

Islamic traditions, both in the Qur'an and the Hadith, center on maintaining chastity and modesty among men and women and place strict prohibitions on fornication (*zina*). The Qur'an explicitly prohibits both fornication and adultery in several verses, including Surah Al-Isra (17:32): "And do not go anywhere near adultery: it is an outrage, and an evil path."<sup>136</sup> In traditional Islamic jurisprudence, the most severe punishment for adultery for married

<sup>135</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>136</sup> M. A. S. Abdel Haleem, trans., *The Qur'an*, 177 (17:32).

individuals is stoning to death, based on prophetic hadith. The protection of women's dignity and honor is also underlined in Islamic teachings.<sup>137</sup> Islam also teaches that those who have engaged in fornication can repent and seek forgiveness.<sup>138</sup> Depending on the cultural, legal, and historical contexts, the interpretations of these laws, however, varied drastically among Muslim communities. Decapitation of the wife by the husband displays the importance of loyalty for Nakhshabi; a concept which closely corresponds with the Islamic principles and values. Islam, however, views marriage as a sacred bond guided by divine teachings and ethical standards, and Islamic doctrines emphasize fidelity, trust, and mutual respect. Although the merchant's wife never engaged in fornication due to being distracted by the parrot's stories, her severe punishment serves as a moral and cultural commentary going beyond her literal actions. Her execution is rather a commentary on the close ties between actions and intentions, underlining that intentions can be morally as important as actions.

There are four stages of the plot of *Tuḡināma*'s frame tale. First, Nakhshabi opens the section following his prologue establishing the scene for the story of the merchant (Maymun) and his wife (Khojasta), the discourse of the parrot and how Maymun acquires it, and finally the merchant's advice to his spouse to consult the parrot and starling upon his departure. In Nakhshabi's words,

In sum, a merchant who had a talking parrot and starling at his house and had to go on a journey. When attending to his wife, he told her, "In my absence, whatever important matter arises, you must not act without consulting these two birds, and do not take any action without their permission."

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<sup>137</sup> "And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their private parts and not to display their adornment except that which [ordinarily] appears thereof and to wrap a portion of their headcovers over their chests..." (24:31)

<sup>138</sup> "Except for those who repent, believe and do righteous work. For them Allah will replace their evil deeds with good. And ever is Allah forgiving and merciful." (25:70)

حاصل سخن آنست که بازرگانی را در خانه طوطی و شارکی گویا داشت، اتفاق سفر افتاد. وقت توجه با کدبانو گفت در غیبت من هر مهمی که بر تو را پیش آید باید که بی مشاورت این دو مرغ در آن سعی نکنی و بی رخصت این دو جانور در آن اقدام ننمایی.<sup>139</sup>

Nakhshabi continues,

During the merchant's absence, his wife fell in love with a young man, and her soul became bound by longing for that youth.

<sup>140</sup>در مدت غیبت بازرگان، زن او را دل بعشق جوانی مبتلا شد، و جان بشوق برنایی مقید گشت.

This is how he prepares his reader for the episodic nature of his work. Second, Maymun's prolonged absence led to a series of events that resulted in encounters between the parrot and Khojasta for fifty-two nights. The loyal parrot attempts to prevent the love-intoxicated Khojasta from committing adultery by distracting her with stories. Third, while every night Khojasta approaches the parrot for permission to leave the house and unite with her beloved, the parrot replies to her request with a story, to arouse her curiosity and distract her. Fourth, upon the merchant's return, the parrot reveals the story of Khojasta's attempted rendezvous and killing of the starling. Following a binary juxtaposition of events,<sup>141</sup> the merchant decapitates Khojasta, sets the parrot free, and devotes the remainder of his life to worship and service of God. Nakhshabi brings the story to an end by reminding his readers that "obedience and worship" are "the greatest of human deeds."<sup>142</sup>

### III. Characters

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> While the parrot suggested his loyalty and his protection of the merchant's wife through the tales he narrated in the opening nights of his storytelling, he demonstrated a change in character upon the merchant's return by sharing Khojasta's story in the absence of her husband.

<sup>142</sup> Zīā' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭīnāma*, 331.

Nakhshabi introduces his characters in his prologue. The main characters remain the same as presented in the *Javāher al-asmār*, however, they are introduced with new names. This alone suggests Nakhshabi's desire to separate his work from that of his predecessor and to create new characters. In rewriting the *Javāher al-asmār*, Nakhshabi introduces a personality twist in two of the characters, Maymun and the parrot. This effective technique, the personality twist, gives depth, surprise, and complexity to the *Tuḥīnāma*'s narrative. Nakhshabi fashions a memorable character with depth, complexity, and a distinct personality: a parrot. The parrot drives the narrative forward and serves as a reflection of Nakhshabi's creativity in crafting diverse personas. The proper names of the main characters of the frame story, Khojasta (merchant's wife), Maymun (merchant), and Mobārak (merchant's father), have the same meaning: happy, fortunate, auspicious, and blessed. The personality traits, motivations, and background information provided by Nakhshabi give his reader a mental image of these characters. About Mobārak, Maymun, and Khojasta he writes,

In days long past and ancient times, in one of the cities of India, lived a merchant named Mobārak, with much wealth and possessions, and he had no child. He made "My Lord, do not leave me childless" his slogan and in desire for a child he warped himself in the plea "My Lord, grant me from Yourself an heir." Suddenly, from the horizon of fortune came good news, "We give you good news of a boy," reached him and a son was born in his house, and what a son he was!

در ایام خالیه و قرون بالیه در شهری از شهرهای هند، بازرگانی بود مبارک نام، با مال و منال بسیار، و او را فرزند نبود، در تمنای ولد رب لا تدْرُنِی فرداً شعاع خود ساخته و در هوس فرزند ربّ هب لی من لدنک ولیاً دثار خود پرداخته، ناگاه از افق سعادت او بدمیه و بشارت اِنَّا نَبَشِّرُکَ بِغُلامٍ بَکْشُوشٍ وقت او رسید، و در خانه او پسری متولد شد، پسری چگونه پسری!

He continues,

The clever Mobārak named his son Maymun. When his incipient beard grew on his face and the boy reached eighteen, his father sought a wife for him whose name was Khojasta. Between and Maymun and Khojasta grew a great affection and attachment, which had not existed between any lover and beloved. For a

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid, 7.

while, they lived under the protection of happiness, and for a season, they rested in this carefree condition.

مبارك زيرك آن پسر را ميمون نام نهاد. چون سبزه عذار او بدميد و سال عمر پسر به هشتمه رسيد، پدر از برای او زنی خواست خجسته نام، و میان ميمون و خجسته اختلاطی ظاهر شد و الفتی با هر گشت که میان هیچ عاشق و معشوق نبود.<sup>144</sup> مدتی بهمين حال در کنف خرمی می بودند و عهدهی هم برين منوال در عهد بیغمی می غنودند.

While the characters are connected through different motivations, all of them are associated with one another through their mutual connection to Maymun, the merchant. Khojasta and the parrot's relationship, for instance, is based on Khojasta's obligation to seek his permission in all household matters including leaving the house after dusk. It is the merchant who brings Khojasta and the parrot into the story -- one through marriage and the other, he purchases one day while passing the Bazaar. It is also the merchant who brings the starling into the story when he purchases her as a companion for the parrot. Nakhshabi's parrot is not a typical parrot; he is religious, a devout servant of God, a reciter of the holy Qur'an, and a participant in theological debates. Regarding Maymun's first encounter with the parrot he writes,

One day, as Maymun was passing by the Bazaar, he saw a talking parrot, which was on sale and stipulated to be an eloquent reciter of the Qur'an. He asked its price. "A thousand dinars," they said. He said, "Only a fool would pay a thousand dinars for a fistful of feathers and spend so much money on food for a cat!" The parrot said: "O young man, what do you know about my value? What do you understand of my worth? I may be a fistful of feathers, but I am full of all kinds of knowledge. The masters of speech are amazed at my logic, and those of insight are astonished at my debate..."

روزی ميمون از جانب بازار می گذشت طوطی (ای) گویا دید که مشروط بر سخندانی و قرآن خوانی می فروختند. قیمت پرسید. هزار دینار گفتند. گفت نادان کسی باشد که از برای مشتی پر هزار دینار بدهد و از برای طعمه گریه چندین مال خرج کند! طوطی گفت: ای جوان تو قدر من چه دانی و قیمت من چه شناسی؟ اگر من مشتی پر اما از همه علمی پر، ایمه کلام<sup>145</sup> در منطق من نگرانند و اهل نظر در مناظره من حیران الله...

<sup>144</sup> Ibid, 7-8.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid, 8.

To Maymun, a thousand dinars sounded excessive, however, the parrot manages to convince Maymun to consider purchasing him for a decent profit. Nakhshabi continues,

[The parrot said,] “The least of my talents is knowing the future events ten days before they occur, and whatever good or evil events will happen in the world, I will announce its coming ten days in advance. Now, in three days, a caravan from Kabul will arrive in this city seeking merchandise. Buy me under a three-day conditional purchase and gather all the hyacinth flowers from everywhere. If the caravan comes and you profit from this business, pay my price, and if not, return me to my owner.” Maymun agreed with these terms. He bought the parrot under this conditional agreement and collected all available hyacinths in the city. On the third day, the caravan arrived, and there were no hyacinths in the whole city. Maymun sold them for whatever price he could sell, gained a great profit, paid a thousand dinars for the price of the parrot, and spent the rest on himself. On the second day, he saw a starling, who was likewise on sale stipulated to be talking. He bought her as well, and placed her beside the parrot, so that her companionship would lead to affection for the parrot and sitting with her would remove isolation.

کمینه هنری در من آنست که امور مستقبل را پیش از وقوع به ده روز بدانم و هرچه در عالم از خیر و شر حادث خواهد شد من از هیوط و نزول او پیش از آن به ده روز خبر دهم که چه خواهد شد. اینک سه روز دیگر درین شهر کاروان کابل به طلب متاع خواهد آمد. مرا به خیاب سه روز خرید کن و هر جا که سنبل باشد گرد آور، و اگر کاروان آمد و توازین سودا سودی کردی و قیمت مرا ادا کن، و اگر نه مرا به صاحب بازده. میمون را این سخن موافق افتاد. او را به شرط خیاب بخرید و هر سنبل که در شهر بود گرد آورد. روز سیوم کاروان برسید و در همه شهر هیچ سنبل نبود، و میمون بهر قیمتی که توانست بفروخت و سودی وافر بدست او آمد، و هزار دینار قیمت طوطی داد، باقی در خرج خود انداخت. روز دوم شاریکی دید که هم بشرط گویایی می فروختند، او را هم بخرید و پهلوی طوطی برد تا طوطی را از موانست او انسی حاصل<sup>146</sup> آید و از مجالات او دهشت زایل گردد.

Although born from the same cause, that is the departure of Maymun, each of the characters experiences the main challenge differently. The parrot’s role is to prevent Khojasta from uniting with her beloved and committing adultery, while Khojasta encounters the parrot’s persistence in discouraging her from her attempted debauchery. Maymun, on the other hand, is confronted by a much more difficult challenge. It is in the epilogue that a reader familiar with the Sanskrit version of the narrative may recognize the twist implemented by Nakhshabi in Maymun’s personality when he decides to kill his wife. Confronted by the breakdown of trust in

<sup>146</sup> Ibid, 8-9.

married life, the central conflict affects Maymun greatly. Maymun's final resolution, when he sets the parrot free, decapitates Khojasta, and enters a hermit's life, illustrates the gravity of the conflict he experienced. The death of Khojasta, the final resolution of the conflict, not only clarifies the main theme, warning the reader (particularly merchants) about women's guile and wandering pursuits, but also communicates the author's view and approach to such matters.<sup>147</sup> Nakhshabi communicates his worldview and the societal ethos of the time through his narrative descriptions. He is the first to change the concluding remarks of the *Tales of a Parrot* story cycle and articulate his own revisions. Nakhshabi's final line communicates the intensity of such attempts in his view. For him and the society of his time, a woman who makes such attempts deserves death, the revealer of her secret deserves freedom, and her deeply hurt spouse earns a life without the "feminine guile."

While Nakhshabi's prologue suggests that Maymun is the omnipresent character of the frame story, besides a short encounter with him in the beginning and at the end of the story, he is absent the rest of the time. The wife's nightly visits to the parrot, however, are triggered by his lengthy absence. The central figure in Nakhshabi's work does not remain the same throughout the frame story. While Maymun is the central figure of the prologue, the parrot becomes the central figure in the remaining section. Each of the embedded tales narrated by the parrot, on the other hand, has its own key character. The frame story has two ubiquitous characters who are present throughout the story: the parrot and Khojasta. Like all other renditions of the *Tales of a Parrot*, the story is informed by the strategic interventions of the parrot and the actions of the

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<sup>147</sup>The idea of "mirror for merchants" was proposed by Aboubakr Chraibi in his study of the *Arabian Nights*. See Aboubakr Chraibi, "Situation, Motivation, and Action in the *Arabian Nights*," in *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, ed. According to Chraibi, "mirror for merchants" refers to the body of literature that provides moral, ethical, and practical guidance to merchants and those who had to travel for business. Such texts were written with the intention of educating merchants on how to govern their household wisely with reflections on personal virtue and moral conduct.

merchant's wife, Khojasta. Although early on the motivations of their characters are established, the reader learns about Nakhshabi's perspective about these characters at the end when the parrot is set free, but Khojasta is decapitated. Considering the episodic nature of the embedded tales, the character of the parrot appears to improve as the story moves forward, while the character of Khojasta deteriorates. In the beginning, the new reader might expect a change in Khojasta's character and her endeavors, but eventually, the reader loses hope for any change in her personality. Since the Sanskrit version of this text was known as a widely circulating one, perhaps many readers were familiar with how the text ends. Such readers' main interest might have been not the frame tale, but the embedded tales. The lack of growth and her persistence in attempting debauchery are two factors that potentially prepare the new reader for an infelicitous ending.

Here is an example of Khojasta's conversation with the parrot at the beginning of chapter 27. At this point, the reader might expect a change in Khojasta's attempts, however, the following conversation displays her persistence on her actions. She says,

“O my bread-sharing friend (friend for the sake of material benefit) and beloved only in words,<sup>148</sup> your friendship has been tested, and your loyalty has been observed. Indeed, a wise man was asked, ‘who is the best of all people?’ He said, ‘He who has not been yet tested.’ Before I had a business with you, I regarded you as the best of companions and the most pleasant friends. Now that I had a small matter with you and a simple concern has been interposed, I see that the story is quite opposite, and I find that the problem is completely different.”

ای یار نانی و ای محب زبانی، یاری تو معاینه شد و دوستی تو مشاهده افتاد. آری، بزرگی را گفتند بهترین مردمان کیست؟ گفت آن که او را هنوز نیاز موده اند. پیش از آنکه مرا با تو مصلحتی افتد، تو را بهترین یاران می دانستم و خوشترین دوستان تصور می کردم. اکنون که مرا با تو اندک کاری در میان آمد و سهل مصلحتی متعرض شد قصه بتمامی بر خلاف آن می بینم و مسئله بکلی بر عکس آن می یابم.<sup>149</sup>

<sup>148</sup> Fair-weather friend in other words.

<sup>149</sup> Žiā' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭināma*, 231.

“O lady of the house,” the parrot replied, “What is this harsh reproach you are launching, and what is this reproving affair with which you are slaughtering me? Such doubts cannot be spun about this loyal servant, and someone like me cannot be called ‘a bread-sharing friend’ and ‘beloved only in words.’ I have engaged to the best of my ability to your affairs and have devoted myself to your commands and prohibitions within my strength. However, what is my fault if the times are not in your favor? And because fortune does not align with you, what’s another’s crime?”

طوطی گفت ای کد بانو، این چه صمام تشنیع است که بر من می زنی و این چه قمقام تقریع است که مرا بدان بسمل می کنی؟ در حق این مخلص شبه این شبّه نتوان سفت، و چون منی را یار نانی و زبانی نتوان گفت. من بقدر وسع در امور تو کمر بسته ام و بمقدار طاقت در اوامر و نواهی تو گردن نهاده؛ اما چون وقت تو را موافقت نمی کند مرا چه گناه؟ و چون<sup>150</sup> بخت تو را موافقت نمی نماید دیگر را چه جرم؟

Halfway through the episodic chapters, the reader can observe Khojasta’s frustration with the parrot in the above-mentioned lines. In the later chapters, as the return of the merchant nears, Khojasta’s frustration only increases. After all, her sole focus is on union with her beloved.

#### IV. Narrator(s)

In *Medieval Persian Court Poetry*, the scholar of Persian literature Julie Scott Meisami emphasizes that the narrator is not always identical to the author, and multiple narratorial voices may coexist within a single text. Rather than viewing narrative solely as the author’s interjection or commentary, Meisami discusses the role of the narrator as a mediator between the text and the audience, who shapes the reader’s interpretations of the themes and morals of the narrative.<sup>151</sup> Examining medieval Persian romance poems, she notes that the poet’s voice “cannot always be equated with that of the poet himself, and that different modes of presentation are often present in the same work, corresponding to differing degrees of authorial ‘presence’ as well as to

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, 232.

<sup>151</sup> Julie Scott Meisami, *Medieval Persian Court Poetry*, 1st ed., vol. 804 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 84–117, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400858781>.

different narratorial personae. Such authorial interventions, usually in the form of commentary on the action, often purport to present the author in the persona of omniscient storyteller.”<sup>152</sup> In the *Ṭuṭīnāma*, Nakhshabi is not only the storyteller but also a moral guide who assumes different roles and voices to shape his audience’s understanding of the narrative. There are two narrators in the *Ṭuṭīnāma* narrative: Nakhshabi and the parrot, both of whom are narratorial personae of Nakhshabi. When narrating as Nakhshabi he adopts an authoritative voice, and when narrating as the parrot, his tone becomes moralistic.

In the two-layer narrative structure, the reader hears two voices: one of which belongs to the author, Nakhshabi, and the second belongs to the primary storyteller of the embedded tales, the parrot. Yet, Nakhshabi’s narratorial persona, the parrot, who is also the primary persona of the plot, has no firsthand control over the stories; he is only a voice of the exterior narrator, Nakhshabi. Unlike the parrot, Nakhshabi has direct control over the topics discussed in each story -- he is fully aware of the details of all the discussed, undiscussed, and modified topics. He is not an active participant in the plot, yet not fully absent; he is the principal narrator of the prologue, introduction, and epilogue, while every now and then, he jumps in, calling out himself, while pointing out the moral of the story through his *qiṭ‘a*, those short, self-contained two-line verses.<sup>153</sup> Nakhshabi’s perspective in narrating the story is clear. The parrot’s speech is “the narrative embodiment” of his self-referential teachings. The parrot’s speech is not only directed at Khojasta, but also to Nakhshabi’s readers. In fact, the parrot’s speech invites the readers to

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<sup>152</sup> Julie Scott Meisami. *Medieval Persian Court Poetry*: 173.

<sup>153</sup> Moḥammadreżā Ḥāji Āqā Bābaie analyzes the *Ṭuṭīnāma* of Nakhshabi from a narrative standpoint. Moḥammadreżā Ḥāji Āqā Bābaie, “Barresi-ye Ravāyat Shenasi-ye *Ṭuṭīnāma*,” *Matn-e Pazhuḥeshi-ye Abadi*, no. 74 (Winter 2017). Āqā Bābaie, argues that there are two types of narrators in the *Ṭuṭīnāma* of Nakhshabi; extradiegetic narrator and intradiegetic narrator. The extradiegetic narrator brings the extradiegetic narrator into the story, he uses the extradiegetic narrator as the primary narrating persona, while he remains an active participant of the narrative.

identify either with Nakhshabi's characters or to make their own choices and reflect on their values and actions.<sup>154</sup>

Khojasta, outwardly full of rage and inwardly full of distress, approached the parrot and said, "O loyal companion and agreeable friend, what is this unkindness I see from you, and this cruelty that appears to me? When will your vast knowledge benefit me, and when will your wisdom come to my aid? At last, devise a scheme and take some measures, so that the turmoil within me may find peace and the blazing fire of my agitation may be extinguished." The farsighted parrot, seeing that her words were insincere and devoid of genuine truthfulness, began, "O mistress of the house, the reward is in accordance with the deed, and your response to your salutation will be proportional to your greeting. In the same manner that you present your pain to me, I too will provide a remedy accordingly."

...خجسته با ظاهری پر غضب و با باطنی پر تعب بر طوطی رفت و گفت ای یار موافق و ای محب مطابق، این چه بی شغفتی است که از تو می بینم و این چه بی رحمی است که تو مرا مشاهده می شود؟ چندین دانایی تو مرا کی سود خواهد کرد و چندین حکمت تو مرا کی خواهد آمد؟ آخر حيله ای بکن و تدبیری بساز که این غوغا درونه من سکونی پذیرد و این نایره التهاب من رکونی یابد. طوطی دوربین چون بدید او سخن از باطن نمی گوید و این ماجرا از صدق بطانه نمی کند، آغاز کرد، ای کدبانو، جزا در خور عمل باشد و علیک اندازه سلام بود. بر نهجی که درد خود به من می نمایی من نیز بر<sup>155</sup> وفق آن دارو می سازم.

And this resembles with when a Muslim intended to break his fast during the month of Ramadan. He took some bread and meat, went into the desert, and said, "I will eat in a place where no one is present." He saw a green meadow and a tree beside it. He sat under it and began eating his bread. As he began to eat, it happened that the owner of the meadow was a Brahmin, who was keeping watch over his field from the top of the tree. When he saw the Muslim eating bread, he moved from the top of the tree. The Muslim looked up and saw a girdle bearer is sitting there. The Brahmin said, "Are you eating bread?" The Muslim replied, "It is correct." The Brahmin came down from the tree and began to eat bread and meat. The Muslim was astonished that the Brahmin, with the girdle on his neck and sacred thread on his forehead, was eating bread and meat like that. The Muslim said, "O keeper, you wear the clothes of a Brahmin. How can you eat bread and meat with me?" The Brahmin replied, "O companion, you also wear the signs of a Muslim. How do you break your fast? Just as you are deviated from your faith, I am too diverged from mine."

و این بدان ماند که وقتی مسلمان در ماه رمضان قصد خوردن روزه کرد. نان و یغنی بستد و در صحرا رفت و گفت من جایی خورم که هیچ آدمی نباشد. کشتی سبز دید و کناره او درختی. زیر آن بنشست و نان خوردن گرفت. اتفاقاً خصم

<sup>154</sup> See Austin O'Malley, *The Poetics of Spiritual Instruction: Farid Al-Din 'Attar and Persian Sufi Didacticism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 163–64, for his analysis of 'Attar's reflective portrayal of his own discourses and his teaching persona.

<sup>155</sup> Zīā' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭīnāma*, 351.

آن کشت بهتی بود، و در بالای درخت کشت خود را نگاه می کرد. چون دید که آن مسلمان نان می خورد، از بالای درخت بجنبید. مسلمان جانب بالا نظر کرد، دید که زنارداری نشسته است. گفت نان می خوری؟ گفت نیکو باشد. بهت از بالای درخت فرود آمد و نان و یغنی خوردن گرفت. مسلمان متعجب شد که بهت، زنا در گردن و صندل بر پیشانی، آن نان و یغنی چگونه می خورد؟! گفت ای نگهبان، تو لباس برهمنان داری. نان و یخنی همراه من چگونه می خوری؟ بهت گفت ای هم لقمه، تو هم نشان مسلمان داری، تو روزه چگونه می خوری؟ چنانکه تو در مسلمانی خود چستی من نیز در بهتی خود چستم.<sup>156</sup>

In the above example from chapter 42, while the parrot's story is meant to dissuade Khojasta from pursuing her lustful intentions, it also resonates with readers who find it difficult to resist their own temptations. Depending on the reader's perspective, one may identify with either the Muslim or the Brahmin in the storytelling. Here, the parrot's storytelling not only delays Khojasta, but also invites the reader to reflect on self-control, faith, religious identity, and shared human experiences. In either case, whether the parrot is trying to teach Khojasta or delay her plans, his story operates on two levels. At the first level, the parrot's storytelling serves as a lesson for the audience, and at the second level it is a tactic of delay within the narrative.

Not only does the authorial persona, Nakhshabi, know all the detailed information about the characters, but he is also well aware of his players' thoughts, speeches, and actions. There are no limits to Nakhshabi as the narrator. The line "the farsighted parrot, seeing that her words were insincere and devoid of genuine truthfulness, began ..." in the above passage, for instance, illustrates Nakhshabi's knowledge of the parrot's thoughts. The narratorial persona, the parrot, on the other hand, is also a third-person omniscient narrator of the embedded tales. Like Nakhshabi, he also has full control over all of his characters and is aware of all of their thoughts and deeds. Chapter 31 of the *Tuṭināma*, for instance, tells the story of a merchant's wife who fell in love with a young man and brought him home every time her husband was away. Her husband, however, became suspicious, and, to investigate the situation, he pretended he had to leave his household for a few days because of a business journey. At midnight, he returned to his

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid, 352.

house secretly and hid under the bed. While hiding there, his wife and her beloved entered the room and sat together on the bed. Noticing the hem of her husband's robe underneath the bed, the wife realized that her husband was hiding there.

When she realized that her husband was under the bed, she thought to herself: although he is ignorant, he is still my husband, and although he is foolish, he is, after all, a man. He must not come out from under there and, harm me in his foolishness. I must devise a plan and craft a trick, for he is a simple-hearted man. Whatever I say, he will believe it to be true, and whatever he hears, he will perceive it as fact.”

چون دانست که شوی زیر تخت است و با خود اندیشید که اگر چه او نادان است بهر حال شوی است، و اگر چه احمق است بهمه وجه مرد است. نباید که از اینجا بیرون آید و از سر نادانی مرا ناقص کند. تدبیری می باید کرد و حيله ای می باید ساخت، که او مردی سلیم القلب است. هر چه خواهم گفت راست خواهد دانست و هر چه خواهد شنید بصدق تصور خواهد کرد.<sup>157</sup>

The tale complicates the moral message of the frame narrative. We expect the parrot's nightly storytelling to promote female obedience, but this story celebrates cunning and deception. Here, rather than being punished for adultery, the wife is rewarded with praise, suggesting that adultery is forgivable as long as it is cleverly concealed. At length, the wife managed to devise a scheme, tricked her gullible husband, and was praised by him for her “chastity” and “devotion.” From this point of view, Khojasta's real mistake might be that she was not clever enough. The story encourages readers to look beyond the parrot's obvious lesson and think whether they are really about morality or just about strategy and survival.

As shown in the excerpt, the parrot is aware of all his characters' thoughts. There is an interesting juxtaposition between the narrators Nakhshabi and the parrot, providing another perspective to explore the Nakhshabi-parrot relationship. The parrot is the so-called “author surrogate” or “author avatar,” a protagonist or narrator who expresses the author's personal position. In literary forms, the author surrogate device is used to express beliefs that may counter

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid, 322.

or complicate established perceptions.<sup>158</sup> He is a fictional character based on that of Nakhshabi's own beliefs. Through the parrot, Nakhshabi inserts himself into the story, either directly (via his *qiṭ'a*) or indirectly (via the parrot's tales). The parrot often acts as a mouthpiece for Nakhshabi's thoughts and philosophies. While Nakhshabi, the author, and the parrot, the storyteller, appear to pursue a single goal of guiding Khojasta back to moral order, the tales occasionally complicate and challenge their purpose. The parrot highlights Nakhshabi's traits and shares several qualities, such as religious beliefs, personal philosophy, ethics, and moral standpoints. Through indirect characterization, the parrot becomes the embodiment of Nakhshabi's actions and reactions, faith, private thoughts, points of view, personality, and speech. After every cohesive block of narrative, Nakhshabi interjects to reflect on the parrot's narrative. See the example below from chapter 15:

It is narrated that once Imam Shāfe'i, may God have mercy on him, was in the presence of the Caliph, and a fly was disturbing the Caliph. Said the Caliph, "I do not understand what wisdom there could be in God Almighty creating a fly." Imam Shāfe'i replied, "At the very least, the wisdom in this is to show tyrants their own helplessness."

*Qiṭ'a*:

Nakhshabi, all creatures are helpless  
Who is astonished at this simple fact?  
Though the lion is courageous and mighty  
It too fears sickness and fever

آورده اند که وقتی امام شافعی، رحمه الله علیه، نزد خلیفه بود و مگسی خلیفه را تشویش میداشت. خلیفه گفت هیچ نمیدانم که حضرت صمدیت تعالی و تقدس را در آفریدن مگس چه حکمت بود. امام شافعی فرمود، کمینه حکمت درین آنست تا عجز جبّاری به جبّاران نماید.

قطعه:

نخشبی خلق عاجزند همه  
کیست کو را درین سخن عجیبی است؟  
گر چه شیر است با شهامت و زور  
هم در اندیشه صداع و تبی است<sup>159</sup>

<sup>158</sup> Ashish Pandey, *Academic Dictionary of Fiction* (Isha Books, 2005), 18.

<sup>159</sup> Zīā' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭīnāma*, 140.

Although both Nakhshabi and the parrot are omniscient narrators of the story, Nakhshabi stands on a superior level of the storytelling hierarchy. A natural result of how the frame tale works, Nakhshabi places himself above the secondary narrator, as illustrated through his linguistic device, choice of words, diction, voice, tone, etc. While the introduction and prologue are written in the first person, the majority of the story is told by a third-person omniscient narrator. He narrates the story from an outside perspective but has full control and knowledge over almost everything. As the first-person narrator in his prologue, he writes,

I have a message, a most delightful message  
That will convey our greetings

پیامی دارم و بس خوش پیامی  
160 که خواهد برد از ما یک سلامی

The embedded tales are narrated by a third-person omniscient narrator. Below is an example from chapter 30 showing the third person omniscient narration by the parrot:

It is related that there was a man in a certain city who had an extremely bad-tempered, quarrelsome, foul-natured, and talkative wife. Because that woman was as combative as a harp with two strings, the man constantly endured the melody of curses from her throat.

چنین گویند در شهری مردی بود، زنی داشت بغایت بدخو و جنگجو و پلید طبع و یاوه گو. از بس که آن زن در  
161 جنگ چون چنگ دو زبان بود، مرد همه وقت از نای حلق او فحش سماع می کرد.

To discuss Nakhshabi's diction, his work should be divided into two parts: first, the introduction, prologue, and epilogue, and second, the embedded tales. The diction of Nakhshabi's prologue, introduction, and epilogue are rather hard to understand and are made up from long, complex sentences, and difficult vocabulary. This is an interesting feature of his

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid, 254.

work, given that he complains about the “lengthiness” of his predecessor’s speech. In the second part, similar to the introduction, prologue, and epilogue, the opening of each tale has rather complex diction. However, constructed with a simpler lexicon, the rest of each tale’s body is made up from less complex vocabularies. The simpler segment starts when the narrator switches from Nakhshabi to the parrot. Nakhshabi, the principal teller, uses complex, decorative, and creative imagery and lexicon, while the parrot, standing on a much lower level of the story telling hierarchy, uses simpler and less elaborate language. This is how the parrot, as the interior narrator is related to Nakhshabi, the exterior narrator, and is a feature that enables the reader to distinguish between the two different voices. Complex imagery, Arabic words, and lengthy sentences at each chapter’s entry when the reader encounters Nakhshabi’s speech. For instance, the beginning lines of the eighth night are as follows:

When, the sun, the single-eyed supervisor, went to the royal court of the West and the moon, the express messenger, emerged from the record-office of the East, Khojasta with a weak body and dim-sighted eye went to the parrot and said, “O regarded of the pious and admired of the religious men, I want to poke a finger in my eye and pull out my eye like the intestines of animals, for I have fallen into all sorts of calamities because of my eye (what I have seen). What bloody stars were watching over me that my eyes fell upon my beloved? For my heart finds no relief from burning and my vision finds no escape from weeping.”

چون ناظر يك دیده آفتاب در دیوان مغرب رفت و برید سریع السیر ماه از دفتر خانه مشرق بر آمد، خجسته با جسمی علیل و چشمی کلیل بر طوطی رفت و گفت: ای ملحوظ ابرار و ای منظور اخیار، می خواهم انگشت در چشم خود درون کنم و دیده خود چون روده جانور بیرون کشم که من در انواع بلا در پی چشم افتاده ام، و مرا این قدر به سبب پیش آمده. کدام کواکب خونی در من ناظر بود که نظر من بر دوست افتاد؟ که نه دل از التهاب خلاص می بیند و نه دیده از انکساب مناص می یابد.<sup>162</sup>

The paragraph above consists of two parts: the first part describes sunset, and the second depicts Khojasta’s repentance for falling in love. Nakhshabi goes out of his way to depict and portray the two parts in detail. This is unlike the more straightforward meaning and content of

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid, 69.

the main chapters or embedded tales, which are much easier to comprehend. Nakhshabi's embedded tales consist of shorter sentences and simpler vocabulary, compared to the rest of his work. The following excerpt exhibits an example of the parrot's speech in the embedded tales. This passage comes from the opening lines of the parrot's narrative aimed at distracting Khojasta on the twenty-seventh night:

It is said, there was a weaver in Iraq named Zarir, whose skill in silk weaving was unexcelled and did miracles in the industry of silk, and never passed an idle moment nor did he rest a second without work and trade. With such great effort, diligence, perseverance, and belief, he gained just enough to get through the day and provide his necessary nourishment.

چنین گویند در عراق شعر بافی بود وزیر نام، که در حرفت شعر بافی موی شکافتی، و در صنعت ابریشم ید بیضا نمودی، و یک لحظه بی کسب و کار نبودی و یک لمحہ از جست و جوی نیاسودی. با چنان جهد و اجتهاد و کوشش و اعتقاد بخونابه او<sup>163</sup> را آنقدر حاصل شدی که روز بدان بگذرانیدی و قوت لابدی خود ساختی.

As shown in the above example, among many others that can easily be found in the book, the stories narrated by the parrot are simple and much easier to understand than the rest of Nakhshabi's work. Occasionally the readers encounter difficult vocabulary, Arabic words, and complex imagery when the omniscient narrator, Nakhshabi, takes over the story. The structure of Nakhshabi's *Tuṭināma*, comprising a complex prologue and introduction and easily understandable embedded tales, represents the common writing style of Nakhshabi's time and while also displaying his effort to write a work that is "not so elaborate ... nor so formal and brief."<sup>164</sup> On the other hand, the use of ornate language and elaborate imagery by Nakhshabi and simple language by the parrot reveals the author's tendency to exhibit his sophistication and style. All fifty-two nights start with a rather complex, sophisticated, description of the sunset. As presented above, the complex imagery provides an extra layer of difficulty in understanding Nakhshabi's implied meaning. Moreover, as discussed by Julia Rubanovich, the narrative shift

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid, 232-3.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid, 3.

could demonstrate a generic difference in the text; the ornate introduction reflects the epistolary style, and the simpler narratives offer the language common to the didactic stories recounted in the *Ṭuṭīnāma*. Exploring the dynamics of written tradition, Rubanovich asserts that the modalities of storytelling affect the narrative choices. The inconsistencies in language and style, thus, are among the conscious narrative strategies, devices, and choices made by Nakhshabi depending on the type of text.<sup>165</sup>

## V. Embedded Tales

Excluding the introductory and concluding chapter, recounted over the course of fifty-two nights, Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭīnāma* includes fifty-two embedded tales. Some of the embedded tales include more than one story. While he confirms the number of embedded tales in his introduction, it is ambiguous how long he dedicated to write his work, based on the following verse:

Unfortunate events turned the world so dark like night  
That I told fifty-two tales in this night

از بس که جهان تیره چو شب کرد حوادث

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<sup>165</sup> Julia Rubanovich, "Telling a Different Story: Redeployment of the Narrative Alexander Tradition in a Medieval Persian Dāstān," *Iranian Studies* 55, no. 4 (2022): 837–56, <https://doi.org/10.1017/irn.2022.2>; Yuriko Yamanaka, "Authenticating the Incredible: Comparative Study of Narrative Strategies in Arabic and Persian 'Ajā'ib Literature," in *Authorship in Mediaeval Arabic and Persian Literature*, ed. Julia Rubanovich and Miriam Goldstein, *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 45 (2018): 303–53.; Pasha M. Khan, *The Broken Spell: Indian Storytelling and the Romance Genre in Persian and Urdu* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2019).; Mahmoud Omidsalar, "Storytellers in Classical Persian Texts," *Journal of American Folklore* 97 (1984): 204–5.; Julia Rubanovich, "Storytelling and Meta-narration in Medieval Persian Folk Romance," *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Folklore* 18 (1996): 63–103 [in Hebrew].; Julia Rubanovich, "The Reconstruction of a Storytelling Event in Medieval Persian Prose Romance: The Case of the Iskandarnāma," *Edebiyât* 9 (1998): 215–47. ;Julia Rubanovich, "Beyond the Literary Canon: Medieval Persian Alexander-Romances in Prose" (PhD diss., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2004) [in Hebrew].;Julia Rubanovich, "Orality in Medieval Persian Literature," in *Medieval Oral Literature*, ed. Karl Reichl (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 653–79.; Julia Rubanovich, "At the Juncture of Orality and Textuality: The Concept of the Book and of the Written Word in Medieval Persian Epic Narratives in Prose," in *Oral Narration in Iranian Cultures*, ed. Maryam Nourzaei, Carina Jahani, and Agnes Korn (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2022), 55–73.

There may be two different readings for the verse above, interpreting night in its literal or metaphorical sense. One, that the world cast the shadows of the night, and Nakhshabi wrote his fifty stories in one night. Or he writes, because the world has become “night,” and therefore he has been able to tell a year’s worth (52 weeks) of stories in a single night. In any case, the writing of all fifty-two tales in one night is an overstatement underlining Nakhshabi’s urge to write his book of didactic tales. The verse above may also demonstrate that Nakhshabi is riffing off storytelling as a nighttime activity. A later chapter is dedicated to the study of nocturnal and nighttime storytelling in Nakhshabi’s *Ṭuṭināma*. The frame tale is interrupted by fifty-two embedded tales, which are highly organized in the *Ṭuṭināma*. Except for chapter 52, which ends differently, all other chapters follow a parallel structure. Every chapter of the story begins with the description of the sunset, a conversation between Khojasta and the parrot in which she seeks permission to unite with her beloved, the parrot’s storytelling in order to distract Khojasta, and the description of sunrise. There is a relatively standard formula in the introduction, content, and closing lines in the frame stories and the tales contained within. Here is an example:

When the yellow jasmine of the sun sank into the pink colored horizon of the West and the hundred-petaled rose of the moon emerged from the rosebush of the East, Khojasta, smiling like a full bloom flower, went to the parrot to seek permission, and said, “O nightingale of time, O bird of age, are you aware of my pain at all? The restlessness of passion has destroyed my patience, and the unrest of love has ruined my tranquility. There is no morning for this night of separation and no lantern for the night of longing.”

Nakhshabi, the day of separation is dark  
 Who doubts this in such a moment?  
 There is no brightness in the day of yearning  
 For those in separation, morning and night are the same

<sup>166</sup> Zīā’ al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭināma*, 5.

Grant me permission to leave tonight so I may brighten my tearful eyes with the sight of my beloved and turn my sorrowful heart into a garden by uniting with my desired one.

The parrot replied, "O Khojasta, I have no intention in preventing or permitting you in this matter! My heart burns with your sorrow, and my eyes overflow with tears. Every night, you are captivated by my charming words and stories, leaving your poor lover waiting. I fear your husband will soon return, and you will feel the same shame as the prince who was embarrassed by a soldier."

Khojasta inquired, "What happened to him?"

The parrot began, "It is said that..."

چون سمن زرد آفتاب در دست گلابی مغرب افتاد و گل صد برگ ماه از شاخ گلبن مشرق بر آمد، خجسته چون گل خندان در طلب اجازه بر طوطی رفت، و گفت ای بلبل وقت و ای عندلیب زمانه، تو را هیچ از درد من خبر هست؟ تامل شوق صبر مرا تاراج کرد و تلافی عشق خانه سکون مرا خراب گردانید. نه لیل فراق را صباحیست، و نه شام اشتیاق را مصباحی.

نخشبی روز هجر تیره بود  
کیست کو را درین دقیقه شکی است؟  
نیست در روز شوق روشنی  
صبح اهل فراق و شام یکی است

امشب مرا دستوری ده تا دیده پر خون از وصال محبوب روشن گردانم، و سینه محزون از اتصال مطلوب گلشن کنم. طوطی گفت: ای خجسته مرا درین کار با منع تو چه کار و درین امر به امتناع چه گذر! مرا از غم تو سینه در التهاب است و دیده در انسکاب. تو هر شب به لطایف و ظرایف من فریفته می شوی و به حکایت و درایت من مشغول می گردی، و عاشق مسکین را در انتظار می داری. می ترسم که شوی تو عن قریب بیاید و تو از عاشق خود آن چنان شرمنده شوی، که <sup>167</sup>آن امیرزاده از آن لشکری شرمنده ماند. خجسته پرسید چگونه بود آن؟ طوطی گفت: آورده اند که...

Different sections of each tale are adorned with verses of diverse content, reinforcing the moral of that section of the story or summarizing the tale. The closing lines of the prose part of each tale have a standard formula, as well: *Khojasta khāst tā ham chenin konad ...* "Khojasta wanted to do" -- as she was told and go to her awaiting lover...except, every day, she encounters the rising morning sun that prevents her from uniting with her beloved. Depending on each tale's content, similar formulas are also employed within similar contexts. Finally, each story ends with

<sup>167</sup> Ibid, 35-6.

a qit‘a directed at Nakhshabi himself, which sums up the lesson taught by the story or the moral of the story.

Nakhshabi, wished to leave tonight  
Toward a beautiful one who beats the drum  
The morning light prevented his departure  
The cock and morning are the lovers’ foe

نخشبی خواست تا رود امشب  
سوی خوبی که زد ز خوبی کوس  
صبح از رفتنش بشد مانع  
دشمن عاشقانست صبح و خروس<sup>168</sup>

In the above verse, Nakhshabi can also be read as the subject of the verb “to leave”. This reading, thus, may suggest that Nakhshabi is putting himself in the place of Khojasta or trying to view the narrative from Khojasta’s standpoint. He writes, Nakhshabi wanted to go visit his lover and the coming of morning prevented it. This reading would seem to make Khojasta’s position, at least for a bit, more sympathetic. Regardless of the author’s sympathy, the narratorial persona, the parrot, drives the narrative in a different direction, revealing Khojasta’s secret to her husband to secure a long-awaited punishment for her. Nakhshabi wants to leave and visit a *Khubi* (the beautiful one). Even the prose line preceding the above qit‘a, ‘...morning unveiled its radiant face, and his departure was delayed,’ is repeated fifty-one times.<sup>169</sup> This repetition seems to suggest a deliberate design, perhaps to pause the action, build suspense, or persistently postpone desire.

The length of tales differs, ranging from one paragraph to several pages. To simplify the *Ṭuṭināma*, Nakhshabi attempts to reduce the double emboxmment feature -- yet there are several

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid, 17.

occasions where substories, albeit extremely short and usually not exceeding a few lines, are placed in the embedded story. We can observe this feature in chapters 4, 5, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 31, 32, 34, 41, 42, 43, and 45. Although under an overarching narrative, each night of the story contains a separate narrative. While chapters 7, 24, 34, and 43 include two separate stories, another exception occurs with chapters 13 and 14, in which the tales narrated in the latter are a continuation of the former. Undoubtedly, there is an emphasis on the time and place context and the physical environment in which the story is set, which is meant to convey verisimilitude and historicity, or perhaps to convey a generic fairytale setting. The emphasis on time and place can be seen both in the frame story and in the embedded tales. Here are two examples,

It is said that the king of Tabarestān was having a feast, reminiscent of Paradise...

<sup>170</sup> آورده اند که پادشاه طبرستان بزمی کرده بود از فردوس یادگاری...

They say that once the Raja of Banaras had a son who was ugly in appearance and vile in character...

<sup>171</sup> چنین گویند وقتی رای بنارس را پسری بود زشت صورت و قبیح سیرت...

Often, the narrator refers to the location of the tales. In Nakhshabi's work, specific locations like India, Neishāpur, and Iraq are mentioned. These locations are not merely geographic landmarks; they also have symbolic meanings related to historical events, scholarly significance, and cultural legacy when it comes to *Tales of a Parrot*. For example, India increases the level of cultural and authorial relevance to the text because the text was first composed in India and in the Sanskrit language. Meanwhile, Nakhshabi has tried to give his work a Persian flavor. In certain respects, similarities in structure, such as the episodic nature,

<sup>170</sup> Žiā' al-Din Nakhshabi. *Ṭuṭināma*, 21.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid, 146.

storytelling, and approach to women, can be seen between this work and the well-known tales of the *Arabian Nights*. The book, nevertheless, retains its Indian flavor. High-ranking Indian individuals, as well as other animate objects like animals attributed to the Indian subcontinent, are found throughout the book.

Besides the main animal character, the parrot, a considerable number of embedded tales include animal characters. The parrot, in fact, is the most dominant and frequent animal of the embedded tales. The parrot is present in chapters 1, 5, 9, 10, 25, and 42 of the embedded tales. In Sanskrit literature, parrots represent a wise grandfatherly figure, who is also a master of speech. This itself is an indicator suggesting the origins of these tales and connecting them to ancient Indian literature.<sup>172</sup> In addition to the tales directly translated from the Sanskrit *Shukāsaptati*, a number of tales have been added to the core of the Persian *Tales of a Parrot*, which are mainly, but not exclusively, of Indian origin. There is no doubt that *Ṭuṭināma*'s parrot is a wise one, however, he is not exactly a grandfatherly figure. He is religious, recites the Qur'an, and is a devoted Muslim. Disguised as a wise man who truly cares about the merchant's wife and her wellbeing, his sole purpose is to save his life and remain loyal to the merchant by keeping the merchant's wife at home. Loyalty to God and to his owner, Maymun, alongside his fear of death, motivates him to entertain Khojasta and prevent her from committing adultery, which is both framed in spiritual terms and is an issue of preserving his owner's male honor.<sup>173</sup> The more Khojasta and the parrot, the two omnipresent characters of the story, speak and interact with each other, the more they reveal about their personalities, motivations, emotions, desires, and beliefs.

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<sup>172</sup> As discussed by Ulrich Marzolph in *Die Vierzig Papageien, Cehel Tuti: Das Persische Volksbuch; Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Papageienbuches*, fables and animal tales, "can be traced to a twofold origin, namely Indian and Greek Tradition." For the text under review, the Indian origins of these tales is beyond doubt.

<sup>173</sup> In Surah Al-Isra (17:32), it states, "And do not approach unlawful sexual intercourse. Indeed, it is ever an immorality and is evil as a way."

This goes hand in hand with the disclosure of Nakhshabi's worldview and his expressions of the conventions and social norms of his time. *Ṭuṭināma*'s content shows what Nakhshabi intends to communicate with his readers, his main message, and ideas.

The *Ṭuṭināma* contains more than just animal tales and stories to distract the merchant's disobedient wife; it also comprises wisdom for those who wish to hear it. The following excerpt recapitulates Nakhshabi's poetic reflection on the power of his storytelling. His verses invite readers to listen to his "delightful tales" and "desirable stories" as a medium that conveys wisdom to them.

Come, I have delightful tales  
 Stories so desirable  
 Lend your heart's ear, my precious pearl  
 Listen well to my enchanting tale  
 Today, my pen is like a spear  
 My tales are long and far-reaching  
 A world of art, wholly restrained  
 Stories interwoven within stories  
 I've adorned the bride of wisdom with grace  
 And given companions a strong wealth  
 How strange is my condition today  
 Many tales will remain from me in the world

بیا افسانه های خوب دارم  
 حکایت های بس مرغوب دارم  
 به گوش دل بکن دردانه من  
 نکو بشنو ز من افسانه من  
 مرا امروز کلک رمح ساز است  
 حکایت های من دور و دراز است  
 جهانی از هنر یکباره مضبوط  
 حکایت در حکایت کرده مربوط  
 عروس فضل را پیرایه داده  
 ندیمان را قوی سرمایه داده  
 عجب افسانه ایست امروز حالم  
 174 ز من افسانه ها مانده به عالم

<sup>174</sup> Zia' al-Din Nakhshabi. *Ṭuṭināma*, 436.

Like other works of the Persian *Tales of a Parrot*, the overarching idea of the *Ṭuṭināma* that Nakhshabi seeks to communicate includes warning the reader about women's guile, the circumstances of women's wanderings in the absence of their husbands, and the implications of disloyalty in married life -- and life in general. Thus, the text revolves around topics concerning morality, gender, and sexuality. The underlining of loose feminine sexuality and drawing attention to masculine emotions are among other themes of the *Ṭuṭināma*, which will be discussed in detail in chapter 3 of this dissertation. All other literary concepts of the *Ṭuṭināma* help communicate the themes. The following section will illustrate the literary tools, including figurative language and interpolation, which allowed Nakhshabi to create his desired themes.

## Disposition and Ornamentation

Nakhshabi discusses the text's structure in his introduction. He presents the outline, tells the reader what to expect, and summarizes the overall organization of his text -- a feature that is borrowed from the earlier versions of the *Tales of a Parrot*. Observing a different structure, his disposition differs from that of earlier authors. According to Nakhshabi, he emphasizes the effective arrangement of his work as well as his presentation of content to enhance readability, coherence, and impact. Nakhshabi's disposition requires giving great thought to the text's organization, flow, clarity, consistency, and audience adaptation to ensure the revised language conveys its meaning in an interesting and effective way. In his introduction, he writes,

Fifty-two stories were written with new expressions, metaphors, and similes, and the stories that were indirect and unrelated were turned to related and relevant tales and the beginning and end of each one were decorated and embellished. The tales which were crude and tasteless were replaced with newly written stories and this bride of the paradise of tenderness and the lady of the thrones of elegance was presented to the vision of the kings at my hands.

پنجاه و دو حکایت بعبارت و استعارت نو و أمثال و نظایر جدید نوشته شد و حکایتی که بیواسطه و ربط و ضبط بود آن را مربوط و مذبوط کرده آمد و مطالع و مختم هریکی را تزئین و توشیح داده شد و حکایتی چند که شنیع و بی ذوق بود بدل آن حکایت دیگر تحریر افتاد و این عروس خلد لطافت و خاتون تخت ظرافت را در نظر شاهان نسخه ای بدین دست جلوه داد.<sup>175</sup>

The ornamentation and disposition stage of the tripartite process includes modification, correction, and embellishment of the antecedent work. Nakhshabi's text is preoccupied with elucidating the meaning and purpose of the work. According to his introduction, his modifications and revisions include the elimination of long and unnecessary details, the rearrangement of embedded tales into more coherent interrelated narratives, and the reorganization of scattered tales and anecdotes. His embellishment includes adding over 700

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid, 5.

verses of his own, 35 direct quotations from the Qur'an, 6 quotations from the Hadith, and 35 Arabic verses, among other detailed descriptions and aesthetic insertions. The modifications can be divided into five broad categories, as listed briefly below:

1. Linguistic (including wording, grammar, and structure): For linguistic revisions, Nakhshabi concentrated on polishing the text to increase its overall readability, coherence, style, and clarity. As part of this process, he changed the text's word choice, sentence structure, and arrangement. His revisions particularly pertain to the embedded tales, enhancing the readability of the text.

Example of linguistic revisions:

In the example below, the original passage is from chapter 19 of the *Javāher al-asmār*, and the revised passage is the abridged version of the same section from chapter 20 of the *Ṭuṭināma*. It is part of a tale that tells the story of a pious man who decided to go on pilgrimage. Upon departure, he counseled his wife and son to give special care to his unmarried daughter, as she was nearing maturity and marriageable age.

Original Passage:

Finally, the ascetic donned the garb of a pilgrim of Mecca with the caravan of pilgrims and took the staff of determination to the Ka'ba. At the time of farewell of his household he advised his wife and son, saying, "There are many dreadful places and perils and numerous dangers and hazards in this venture. In this journey, there are countless dangers and perils, and innumerable calamities and afflictions. Who knows if, like the sacrifice for this sacred occasion, my body and soul will be given over to this cause, and the bird of my soul will fly away while chanting 'Here I am, O God?' As for the daughter, whose existence becomes a source of shame for humanity, as described, '*And when one of them is informed of [the birth of] a female, his face becomes dark, and he suppresses grief*', she is nearing maturity."

حاصل، زاهد باقافله حجاج کمرا حرام بیت الحرام بر میان بست و عصای عزیمت خانه کعبه در دست گرفت؛ و به وقت وداع خانه، زن و پسر را وصیت کرد که: درین سفر مخاوف و مهالك بسیارست و آفات و عاهات بی شمار. که داند که چون قربانی عید، تن و جان من فدای این گردد؟ و مرغ روح لبیک زنان در پرواز شود. دختر که وجود او سبب ظلمت بشره بشر<sup>176</sup> است که: وَ إِذَا بَثِّرَ أَحَدُهُمْ بِالْأُنْثَىٰ ظَلَّ وَجْهَهُ مَسْوُودًا، قریب به بلاغت است.

#### Revised Passage:

One day, the ascetic was seized with the desire to undertake the pilgrimage and perform the 'Omra. At the time of farewell, he said to his wife and son, "There are numerous dangers and hazards in the path which I am undertaking, and our daughter is nearing maturity."

وقتی زاهد را هوای سفر حج و ادای عمره در سر افتاد. وقت وداع با زن و پسر آغاز کرد که درین راه که من قدم می نهم،<sup>177</sup> درو آفات بسیار و عاهات بیحد، و این دختر به بلاغت قریب است.

As shown above, the language in the original passage is more ornate and metaphorical, while the language in the revised passage is simpler, straightforward, and narrative-driven. While addressing the same topic, the linguistic difference between the two passages reflects distinct styles, syntactical structures, and narrative priorities of the two authors. Sentences like "kamar-e eḥrām-e beit al-Ḥarām bar miān bast" (donned of the garb of a pilgrim of the temple of Mecca/ girded himself with the belt of Ihram for the Sacred House) and "‘aṣā-ye ‘aẓimat-e khāna-ye Ka‘ba dar dast gereft" (took the staff of determination for the Ka‘ba’s venture), are more ornate and poetic. Focusing on creating a more direct and less ornate language, "havā-ye safar-e ḥaj o adā-ye ‘omra dar sar oftād" (he was seized with the desire to undertake the pilgrimage and perform the 'Omra Haj) is simpler and straightforward.

2. Meaning (change of order, narrative structure, additional details, and elimination of the unnecessary): Nakhshabi focused on the impact, clarity, and coherence of themes, concepts, and ideas in his work.

<sup>176</sup> ‘Emād b. Moḥammad Ṣaghari, *Javāher al-asmār*, 248-9.

<sup>177</sup> Zīā’ al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭīnāma*, 177.

### Example of Working on Meaning:

Both the original passage and revised passage below are from chapter 4 of the *Javāher al-asmār* and the *Ṭuṭīnāma*. It is the story of a warrior who abandoned his work to dedicate all his time to his wife.

### Original Passage:

When the suffering in matters of livelihood became clear and poverty weakened them, the beautiful person advised him, “There is no escape from acquiring a morsel and searching for a garment for man.”

چون در امور معاش تنگی پیدا آمد و افتقارشان از پای در آورد، صنم بر وجه نصیحتش گفت که: آدمی را از حاصل کردن لقمه و تکاپوی نمودن به جهت خرقة، چاره نیست.

### Revised Passage:

One day the wife said to him: “You have abandoned work and forsaken the service of others. Leave off infatuation, for now we need bread. The wise men say: ‘Whoever abandons work, it is either out of laziness, piety, or shame. Whoever abandons because of laziness will inevitably end up begging, whoever abandons work under the pretense of piety will inevitably fall into greed, and whoever abandons work out of shame will inevitably turn to theft.’

روزی زن باوی گفت تو ترك كسب و كار گرفتی و خدمت چاكری گذاشتی. از عشق فرود آی، اکنون نان می باید. حكما گویند کسی که ترك كسب گیرد، یا از سبب كاهلی باشد یا از سبب تقوی و یا از عار. کسی که از سبب كاهلی ترك كار گیرد، فلائد له من السؤال، و هر کسی که به سبب تقوی گیرد، فلائد له من الطمع، و کسی که از كسب عار گیرد، فلائد من السرقة.<sup>179</sup>

In the examples above, the first passage is concise and shows a direct exchange between the characters. The second passage, however, includes additional details, commentary “*ḥokamā guyand*” (The wise men say), and moral and philosophical analysis. The shift in the second passage enriches the narrative with commentary and philosophical reflections, thereby enhancing the readers’ understanding and engagement with the tale.

<sup>178</sup> ‘Emād b. Moḥammad Ṣaghari, *Javāher al-asmār*, 71.

<sup>179</sup> Zīā’ al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭīnāma*, 36.

### 3. Insertion of figurative language particularly imagery (insertion of descriptive passage).

Figurative language was applied to enhance *Tuṭīnāma*'s depth, emotional impact, and vividness. Nakhshabi used metaphors, similes, personification, and other literary strategies that convey meanings beyond the literal interpretation of words.

#### Examples of Figurative Language Insertion:

The following excerpts are the concluding lines of chapter 10 of the *Javāher al-asmār* and chapter 5 of the *Tuṭīnāma*.

#### Original Description:

The narcissus of Māh Shekar's eye drifted into slumber, and at that very moment, she was awakened from the rays of the sun.

نرگس چشم ماه شکر در غنودن آمد و همان ساعت از تابش آفتاب بیدار گشت.<sup>180</sup>

#### Revised with Figurative Language:

Khojasta arose to do as suggested, but the disturbance of the day had started. The morning began to display its bright appearance and her departure was forestalled.

<sup>181</sup> خجسته خواست تا همچنان کند، غوغای روز بر آمد. صبح چهره لمعانی بگشاد و رفتن او در توقف افتاد.

While conveying the same message, that of the coming of morning, the two passages considerably differ in their insertion of figurative language. The first passage uses metaphorical imagery. Māh Shekar's "narcissus of the eye" (نرگس چشم) portrays a person who falls asleep and awakens rapidly to the sunlight, creating a gentle and tranquil image. In the second passage, the figurative language shows the awakening of the world. The phrase (غوغای روز بر آمد) "disturbance

<sup>180</sup> 'Emād b. Moḥammad Ṣaghari, *Javāher al-asmār*, 94.

<sup>181</sup> Zīā' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Tuṭīnāma*, 51.

of the day" creates a more dynamic scene, suggesting action, movement, and sudden change, resulting in a more intense shift. The former passage, thus, presents a gentle transition, while the latter marks tension and conflict in the transition, thereby adding to the emotional texture of the narrative.

4. Ethical (insertion of social values and religious concepts): Core beliefs, values, and views discussed in the *Ṭuṭināma* reflect Nakhshabi's worldview, ethical framework, social and cultural infusions, and doctrinal influences. Nakhshabi's goal in applying such doctrinal alterations was to clarify and adapt the message to better fit his ethical standards, cultural contexts, and points of view.

#### Example of Ideological Changes:

The passages are selected from the *Javāher al-asmār*'s preface and chapter 52 of the *Ṭuṭināma*. Since the last portion of the original text is missing, the following section is from Ṣaghari's preface where he provides a summary of the frame tale.

#### Original Ideological Perspective:

After the seventy-second night the merchant returned and discovered this mystery. He admired the parrot's wisdom, praised his competence, felt sorry for the death of the starling, and shed tears.

تا که بعد از هفتاد و دوم شب بازرگان بیامد و این سررا دریافت و بر خردمندی طوطی آفرین کرد و بر کفایتش ثناها گفت و  
<sup>182</sup> بر خون شارك حسرت خورد و درر اشک سفت.

#### Revised Ideological Perspective:

The parrot recounted the events of Khojasta falling in love, her killing of the starling, and her coquetry and restlessness. He continued: "For fifty-two nights, I

<sup>182</sup> 'Emād b. Moḥammad Ṣaghari, *Javāher al-asmār*, 17.

have watched over Khojasta with tricks, measures, deceit, and forgery and have kept on eye on your return. Praise God that my efforts and hardships were not wasted and I safely delivered her to you. Now as you are able, take care of her, and release me from this prison of the cage.” Maymun freed the parrot, decapitated Khojasta, shaved his head, donned a woolen Sufi robe, went to a monastery, and engaged in obedience and worship. He never mentioned the name of any women and female sex, and spent the rest of his life in a manly way in stability and prosperity. May God grant everyone the success to manly life and manly death, and the opportunity for obedience and worship, which are the greatest of human deeds.

طوطی احوال عاشق شدن خجسته و بر زمین زدن شاربك و رعنايي و بيقراری او باز نمود و گفت پنجاه و دو شب است که خجسته را بحيله و تدبير و دمدمه و تزوير نگاه داشته ام و چشم بر آمدن تو نهادم. لله الحمد که رنج و زحمت من ضایع نشد و او را بسلامت به تو رسانیدم. اکنون چنانکه دانی و توانی او را نگاه دار و مرا ازین زندان قفس خلاص ده. میمون طوطی را آزاد کرد و خجسته را گردن زد و خود سر بتراشید و جامه صوف بپوشید و در صومعه درون رفت و به طاعت و عبادت مشغول شد و هیچ وقت نام زن نبرد و ذکر آن طایفه نکرد و باقی عمر مردانه و اربعافیت و قرار گذرانی. حق تعالی همه را<sup>183</sup> توفیق آن دهد که مردانه زیند و مردانه میرند و هم در طاعت و عبادت که اعظم اعمال انسانی است روزی کند.

In the original text, the merchant praises the parrot for stopping his wife from slipping, reflecting an ideology that emphasizes loyalty, forgiveness, trust, and reliance. In the rewrite, however, the merchant’s eternal happiness is portrayed as a life without women, reflecting an ideology that emphasizes distrust in women’s fidelity, skepticism, and individuality. The original passage centers around admiration for wisdom and regret for violence, as the merchant expresses regret for the starling’s bloodshed in a reflective and respectful tone. The reader’s takeaway is the value of time, the importance of wisdom, and the consequences of actions. The revised text, on the other hand, is more dramatic and transformative. It emphasizes a moral awakening and spiritual transformation after the merchant executes his wife, sets the parrot free, rejects his past life, cuts off his hair, and enters an ascetic life, all of which suggest a complete rejection of his former life.

<sup>183</sup> Žiā’ al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭīnāma*, 435-6.

5. Elimination of long and short segments: In order to increase readability, coherence, and rhythm, Nakhshabi adjusted the length and structure of paragraphs, phrases, and sections.

#### Example of Revising Long and Short Segments:

Examples are from chapter 3 of the *Javāher al-asmār* and chapter 3 of the *Ṭuṭīnāma*.

#### Original Long Segments:

It is said that in a certain city, a goldsmith and a carpenter had a friendship, and like the morning sun, they breathed sincerity in mutual affection. They were never separated from each other in their meetings and camaraderie, and their friendship and brotherhood reached a point where relatives were envious, and friends and companions were jealous. It is the nature of people that like the treacherous age, they cannot bear to see two friends united in one place. Similarly, human behavior, like the unfaithful passage of time, is such that the joy of one brother cannot be heard without resentment by the other.

By chance, the goldsmith faced an obligation. He fastened the belt of determination and donned the shoes of wayfaring. His friend could not bear the separation, could not say goodbye, was unable to endure the parting, and could not forsake the bond of friendship. So, out of loyalty, he consented to travel with him, embracing the hardships of the road, as it is said: "*Travel is a piece of the blazing fire.*"

آورده اند که در شهری زرگری و نجاری عقد موالاتی داشتند، همواره چون صبح صادق و در تصادق مصادقت یکدیگر، دم صدق زدندی؛ و زمانی از ملاقات و مواءات همدیگر جدا نمی بودند. و کار مصافات و اخوت ایشان به جایی رسید که از آن دوستی، اقارب و عشایر رشک می کردند، و احباب و اتراب حسد می بردند. و عادت مردم خود همین است که همچون زمانه غدار دو دوست را به یکجا نتواند دید. شیوه بشر اینکه مانند روزگار جفاکار، خبر مسرت یک برادر، دیگری نتواند شنید.

از قضا زرگر را ضرورتی پیش آمد. کمر نهضت بر میان بست، و پای افزار رکضت بپوشید. دوست را طاقت جدایی نبود، و امکان مفارقت نداشت و ترک الفت نتوانست گفت. او هم به موافقت او مسافرت اختیار کرد، و به مشقت راه که: *السَّفرُ قِطْعَةُ مِنَ السَّفرِ*، دل نهاد.<sup>184</sup>

#### Revised with Shorter Segments:

It is reported that in a certain city, there was a deep bond of affection between a goldsmith and a carpenter; an affection so strong that, like the twin stars (Two stars near the pole of the Lesser Bear), they could not imagine being apart. They spent their days and nights at the same place, even slept in the same place every night. Anyone who witnessed their devotion would consider them brothers, and

<sup>184</sup> 'Emād b. Moḥammad Ṣaghari, *Javāher al-asmār*, 61-2.

anyone who observed their love would assume they were close relatives. As it is said, “*The kinship of friendship is better than the kinship of children.*”

Qit‘a:

O Nakhshabi, where can we find pleasant friends?  
 Serve the companion, friendship comes from sincere friends  
 The wise have said thusly  
 A loyal friend is better than a bad relation

One day the goldsmith became a traveler to a certain direction. The carpenter agreed to go with him.

چنین گویند، در شهری میان زرگری و نجاری محبتی بود، محبتی که چون فرقدان تصور انفکاک آن نداشتندی. همه روز یکجا بودند و همه شب یکجا غنودندی، و هر که در مودت ایشان را دو برادر پنداشتی، و هر که همه در محبت ایشان چشم افکندی ایشان را دو قرابت انگاشتی. قرابة الوداد خیر من قرابة الأولاد.

قطعه:

نخشبی یار خوش کجا یابند؟  
 خدمت یار کن ولی از ود  
 اهل تحقیق خود چنین گویند  
 یار نیکو به از قرابت بد

<sup>185</sup> وقتی زرگر جانبی مسافر شد. نجار هم با او موافقت کرد.

The original passage is lengthier, more detailed, and descriptive, making the narrative more complex and reflective. The relationship between the goldsmith and the carpenter and the jealousy of others is described in detail, providing a more detailed and complete backstory about the characters. The revised version, however, is more concise and simplified, with the details about the jealousy of others and the societal judgments removed. These revisions in the latter makes the story more focused and straightforward.

Altogether, Naḳṣabī’s most common modifications include the insertion of new phrases to place the erased pieces, changes in grammar, and the elimination of words, phrases, lines, and sections, or even coherent blocks of text. Besides substitutions, other alterations include

<sup>185</sup> Žiā’ al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭināma*, 28-9.

changing the order of stories to maintain a more coherent narrative and adding explanatory details to further clarify the text. In his selective adaptation, among many other techniques, Nakhshabi chooses to downplay his preceding rendition, meaning he deliberately minimizes and modifies the earlier version to fulfill his goals. He does so through changes in order and narrative structure, supplementary details, and the elimination of unnecessary elements. Most certainly, Nakhshabi has made use of the elimination technique throughout his work. His elimination techniques add a certain distinction between his work and the preceding one. Other features of Nakhshabi's work include precision, a preference for substituting vocabulary with their synonyms, a unique conclusion to the plot, a preference for new specific nouns, an emphasis on moral virtues, engagement in contemplative life, and an ideological shift.

### Poetic Interpolations

As might be expected, the peripheral aesthetic features of Nakhshabi's *Tuṭināma* adhere to both the historical period in which it was produced and to the original Sanskrit copy and Ṣaghari's Persian translation. Produced in fourteenth-century pre-Mughal India, the work is written in Persian prose. Remarkably, in Nakhshabi's work Persian folk tales, although mostly presented in prose, are adorned with popular poetry. It is a "text composed in alternating segments of prose and verse. [...] Typically the verse portions serve as lyric, emotive, or personal insets within a philosophical or narrative frame, often with connectives between prose and verse sections,"<sup>186</sup> Nakhshabi's poetic insertions are numerous. The interpolations in the *Tuṭināma* consist of the sophisticated conjunction of his simple prose, numerous insertions of his

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<sup>186</sup> Jan M. Ziolkowski, "The Prosimetrum in the Classical Tradition," in *Prosimetrum: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Narrative in Prose and Verse*, ed. Joseph Harris and Karl Reichl (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997), 45–66, esp. 59.; Christine Van Ruymbeke, *Kashefi's Anvar-e Sohayli: Rewriting Kalila and Dimna in Timurid Herat* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 228.

own *qiṭ‘as*, and the inclusion of *nazm* and *ghazal* of various meters from the poetry of others. The blending of prose and verse seems to have been practiced in the *Shukāsaptati* and all of its Persian descendants.<sup>187</sup> Perhaps, then, the prosimetrum in the Persian *Tales of a Parrot* is an imitation of its Sanskrit model, the *Shukāsaptati*. This tradition was widely observed in Sanskrit literature, where the prose narrative is interspersed with poetry. Such antecedents are also observed in renowned Persian works, notably in the *Golestān* (Rose Garden) and *Bahārestān* (Spring Garden).<sup>188</sup> Nakhshabi’s creative version is embellished with his own and others’ poetry. His work is a hybrid text that stands in contrast to Ṣaghari, who borrowed verses from the most distinguished Persian poets. Nakhshabi’s approach can be placed between the practice of Sa’di, who composed all the verse of the *Golestān* himself, and the *Arabian Nights*, in which most of the poetry is borrowed from well-known poets.<sup>189</sup>

In her discussion of poetic interpolation, Meisami asserts that “by far the most common device of enhancing the norm was poetry-insertion that gave rise to a mixed, prosimetric idiom.”<sup>190</sup> In Bahār’s opinion, the prosimetrum was first introduced into the Persian literary tradition through the mystical writings of ‘Abd Allāh Anṣārī Haravi (d. 1092). By employing topic-relevant poetry within prose, Anṣārī composed mystical treatises in both Arabic and Persian.<sup>191</sup> On the topic of interpolation in Persian and Arabic poetry, Meisami remarks:

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<sup>187</sup> The mixture of prose and verse in literary works dates back to the earliest appearance of old Indic literature. Namely, segments of the *Rigveda*, the earliest collection of verse in any Indo-European language, contain a mixture of prose and verse.

<sup>188</sup> Jahn Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature*, 109.

<sup>189</sup> Wolfhart Heinrichs, “Prosimetrical Genres in Classical Arabic Literature,” in *Prosimetrum: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Narrative in Prose and Verse*, ed. Joseph Harris and Karl Reichl (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997), 249–76, esp. 265.

<sup>190</sup> Julie Scott Meisami, “Mixed Prose and Verse in Medieval Persian Literature,” in *Prosimetrum: Crosscultural Perspectives on Narrative in Prose and Verse*, ed. Joseph Harris and Karl Reichl (Suffolk; Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 1997).

<sup>191</sup> Moḥammad-Taḳī Bahār, *Sabk Shenāsi*, 3rd ed., 3 vols. (First ed. 1942; Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1958).; Julie Scott Meisami, “Mixed Prose and Verse in Medieval Persian Literature”, 298-9.; Christine Van Ruymbeke, *Kashefi’s Anvar-e Sohayli : Rewriting Kalila and Dimna in Timurid Herat*, 227-229.

“The underlying principle of the mixture of prose and verse is not a simple dichotomy between prose and poetry, between (primary) ‘narrative’ and (interpolated) ‘lyric’, but the symbiotic relationship between the two. Poetry (specifically, lyric poetry) is the founding genre of both Arabic and Persian literature, and remains the central genre, to which all others are in some sense poor relations, until the end of the nineteenth century. Poetry is considered ‘perfect speech’, superior to prose because of its metricality and the coherence of its parts, its universal appeal, its ceremonial functions, its relationship with music, its eloquence, its importance as a source of knowledge and so on.”<sup>192</sup>

In the history of Persian literature, particularly in the decades after Sa‘di’s time, writing in prosimetrum became a widespread form of literary expression. The thirteenth-century Persian poet and prose writer, Sheikh Moşleḥ al-Din Sa‘di, deliberately ornamented his work, *Golestān*, with verses of different meters and forms. Sa‘di’s *Golestān* became one of the most influential works of Persian prose. The prose-poetry interpolation was frequently practiced in Persian prose narrative composed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Although a widespread phenomenon in the medieval period, prosimetrum gradually faded out of sight. Heinrichs remarks that “the inclusion of poetry is, however, a phenomenon that gradually peters out; later historiography is as a rule devoid of poems. The same is true of one of the most famous prose narratives in early Arabic literature, Ibn al-Muqaffa‘’s translation of the book of fables *Kalila va Demna*.”<sup>193</sup>

Indebted to the Sanskrit model and to the frequent practice of the vast majority of Persian narrative works of the time, particularly those of Sa‘di, the use of interpolation to convey meaning, enhance the discussed topic, and establish structures applicable to topics beyond the text is evident in all the works of Persian *Tales of a Parrot*, including Şaghari’s version in which he uses the verses of others. For the Persian writers, the narrative, thematic, and symbolic

<sup>192</sup>Julie Scott Meisami. “Mixed Prose and Verse in medieval Persian Literature”, 295-320: 296-97.

<sup>193</sup> W. Heinrichs, “Prosimetrical Genres in Classical Arabic Literature”.

concerns of the text were enriched by the combination of prose and poetry, which created a fruitful outcome. Nakhshabi's small four-line verses, in which he always addresses himself, contain reflections, sentiments and moral lessons related to what has just been narrated. Such interpolation often enhances the message and meaning of each section. Verse intervals serve either as a point of reference or as a call for extra attention to the central message of the narrative. The following section from chapter 22 is an example of Nakhshabi's interpolations containing his reflections:

It is said that in the far reaches of Kermān, there was an amir of great celestial status and a mighty army. He had a wife of extreme beauty and excellence. The ruler also had a jester from whose smile scattered a lapful of flowers from his lips. If he smiled a thousand times in a day, his robe and sleeves would overflow with flowers a thousand times.

Nakhshabi, what wonders there are in this world  
 Rare beauty has always been scarce  
 The world has never been without good and evil  
 And such beings, too, have existed in the world

چنین گویند که در اقصای کرمان امیری بود فلک جاه ملک سپاه. زنی داشت در غایت جمال و نهایت کمال. و آن امیر را ندیمی بود، هر بار که او لب بخنده بگشادی یک دامن گل از دهن ریختی، اگر روزی هزار بار تبسم کردی هزار بار دامن و آستین او پر گل شدی.

نخشبی در جهان چه ها بوده است  
 تا ندانی که نیکویی کم بود  
 دهر از نیک و بد نبد خالی  
 در جهان خلق اینچنین هم بود<sup>194</sup>

Because themes are often seen as the authorial persona's comment on their discussed topics, it is appropriate to conclude that the theme also reflects Nakhshabi's perspective on the subjects. The following example from chapter 52 displays this relationship in a section of the *Ṭuṭināma* related by the narratorial persona, the parrot, followed by Nakhshabi's commentary

<sup>194</sup> Zīā' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭināma*, 192.

and reflection. The tale recounts the story of a pious man, who had a wife, a son, and a bird, and left his household to perform the pilgrimage.

The husband advised his wife, saying, “During my absence, you must behave as you would in my presence. Without reason, do not leave the house, or go to the rooftop or balcony, or neglect the care of the bird and our young son. Do not let them go hungry or uncared for.” After saying this, he departed, unaware that a wicked woman would not be deterred by such counsel and that a bad wife cannot be restrained even by the pilgrimage of her husband.

Nakhshabi, there is no fear in women  
 What can reveal people’s nature?  
 Know a wicked woman as one of those individuals  
 Who will act wickedly, even at the ka’ba

زن را وصیت کرد که باید که در غیبت ما چنان باشد که در حضور. بی مصلحت از خانه بیرون نیایی و در بام و دریاچه نروی و غم مرغ و پسر کوچک بخوری و ایشان را ضایع و جایع نگذاری. این بگفت و بیرون آمد و ندانست که عورت زشت را نصیحت ناصح مانع نشود و زن بدرا حج شوی زاجر نگردد.

نخشبی در زنان نباشد ترس  
 مردم احوالشان عیان چه کند  
 زن بدکاره را از آنها دان  
 195 کو به کعبه کند هر آنچه کند

Here is another example of Nakhshabi’s interpolations that contain his sentiments and moral lessons:

‘Omar Ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, who was a sultan of high rank amongst the caliphs, was poisoned by a slave and rumor of which was widely spread. He summoned the slave and asked, “Was it you who committed this act and gave me this poison?” Said the slave, “Yes, the minister, may his courage be torn apart, compelled me to do this and tempted me with a great sum of wealth.” Umar gave him money and said, “This poison has taken effect on me, I can no longer bear the burden of living, and this story has already become widespread among the people. Before I die and they capture you for my blood, take this money and leave this city.”

Nakhshabi, be like the people of the Sufa  
 There is a difference between a friend and a foe  
 Others show mercy to friends  
 But the people of the Sufa extend mercy to their enemies

<sup>195</sup> Ibid, 427.

عمر عبدالعزیز کہ سلطان چہار بالشت خلافا بود، او را غلامی زہر داد، و این شایع شد. عمر او را بخواند و گفت این حرکت تو کردہ ای و این زہر تو دادہ ای؟ گفت آری، وزیر کہ زہرہ او دریدہ باد مرا بدین آورد و بہ مال کثیر اطعام کرد. عمر او را خرج داد و گفت مرا این زہر کاری آمدہ است، و من ازین زحمت زیستنہ نہ ام، و این حکایت در افواہ افتادہ است. پیش از آنکہ من نمرده ام و تو را از برای خون من نگرفتہ اند، خرج بستان و ازین شہر بیرون شو.

نخشبی اہل صفہ را می باش  
فرق باشد ز دوست تا دشمن  
رفق دیگر کسان بہ دوست بود  
رفق اصحاب صفہ با دشمن<sup>196</sup>

Despite modern scholars' critiques of his interpolations,<sup>197</sup> the examples above demonstrate Nakhshabi's efforts to refine his work. The speaker of the verse sections is Nakhshabi himself, or his authorial persona. By using his pen name regularly, Nakhshabi reinforces his authorial and narratorial presence. In many cases, the verses serve as recapitulations of the moral lesson of each prose section, now addressed reflexively to Nakhshabi the narrator. From the early days of Persian poetry, *qiṭ'as* served as vehicles for expressing mystical and moral themes.<sup>198</sup> The meter of the *qiṭ'as* of the *Ṭuṭināma* predominantly employs the *Khafif* meter. Except for a few cases, nearly all of Nakhshabi's *qiṭ'as* incorporate his pseudonym, Nakhshabi. Below are a couple of exceptional verses where he omits his pseudonym,

'Ezrā' il, the angel of death, has no business with a desperate lover  
Separation from the beloved is enough for me, no need for 'Ezrā' il

نیست عزرائیل را با عاشق شوریدہ کار  
ہم فراق دوست، عزرائیل بس باشد مرا<sup>199</sup>

The above verse is in the ramal meter. Here is another example,

My veins have become visible like the strings of a harp,  
From the tip of each of my hair, a cry has risen

<sup>196</sup> Ibid, 255-6.

<sup>197</sup> See Mojtabāyi, and Āriā's introduction. They have criticized Nakhshabi's poetry for lack of poetic quality.

<sup>198</sup> Annemarie Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun: A Study of the Works of Jalāloddin Rumi* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 5.

<sup>199</sup> Zīā' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭināma*, 85.

بس که چون چنگاز تنم رگ شد پدید  
 200 از سر هر مو فغان برخاستست

Nakhshabi kept the content of prose and poetic sections interdependent. What is important to note is that the poetry-prose sections of Nakhshabi's work alternate irregularly. Like most wisdom poetry, his use of self-exhortation and his tone generate certain emotions in the audience, and thus, such positioning of the verse creates a double meaning and establishes a message that can be obliquely directed at the audience. The example below from chapter 18 is an excerpt from Khojasta's conversation with the parrot at the beginning of the chapter:

I do not know what will become of my situation in this grief, nor where my affairs will lead. Although the world is full of fear and there is no safety, just as in the Hereafter there will be security and no fear, yet the days provided me some relief from this sorrow for a while. I do not know if I will return to that time again or not!

Nakhshabi, safety is the kingdom of eternity  
 Whoever is safe is truly something  
 Fear will exhaust the soul and heart  
 Safety in this world is a good thing

نمی دانم که حال من درین غم بغایت چه شود و کار من درین ندم بنهایت به کجا رسد؟ اگر چه دنیا همه خوف است و هیچ ایمنی نیست، چنانکه در آخرت همه ایمنی خواهد شد و هیچ خوف نیست، مع هذا روزگار مرا چنگاه از اشباه این آندوه ایمن گردانیده بود. نمی دانم که من باز بدان وقت خواهم رسید یا نه!

نخشبی ایمنی است ملک ابد  
 هر که ایمن بود همو چیزی است  
 خوف جان و جگر بفرساید  
 201 ایمنی در جهان نکو چیزی است

Reflecting on the themes of safety and the uncertainty of life, the passage above gives hope for security in the afterlife. As shown thus far, the intercepted prose sections are not controlled by any certain structural framework; the number of lines varies from one section to another. Meanwhile, the variety of meter does not appear to be a requirement for the verse

<sup>200</sup> Ibid, 121.

<sup>201</sup> Zīā' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭīnāma*, 161-2.

sections. Nakhshabi, however, is fully aware of the significance of poetry's artifice and his lack of experience as a poet does not stop him from using poetry successfully. However, one may judge the quality of his verses, it is clear that his verses function very differently from the prose sections of his stories. They serve to break up the text, offer poetic moments to convey deeper meanings, enhance emotional resonance, recapitulate the themes in prose, and provide emphasis and opportunity for reflection.<sup>202</sup>

The *Ṭuṭināma*'s prose portions are supplemented with Nakhshabi's rich and varied vocabulary. While primarily a work of Persian literature, Nakhshabi's volume is characterized by a fairly large use of Arabic loanwords and elements of Arabic literature and culture. Like other Persian scholars of the time, Nakhshabi immersed himself in Arabic literature through his liberal incorporation of Arabic loanwords, Qur'anic verses, Arabic quotations, and verses by distinguished poets. The *Ṭuṭināma*'s fifty-two chapters comprise prose mixed with Arabic and Persian verses, with the latter mostly in qit'ā form. The Arabic section of the following excerpt is a verse from *Ketāb al-She'r va al-Sho'arā'* by Ibn Qutaybah, which is attributed to the Arabic legendary lover-poet, Qais Ibn al-Molavaḥ, also known as Majnun Leilā. The preceding prose Persian section of the excerpt is a simplified rendering of the Arabic verse.

A dog had come out of Leilā's house. Majnun prostrated at every place he stepped. People asked him, "Majnun, what insanity is this?" He replied, "You ignorant people, do you realize from whose house this dog is coming?"

Majnun saw a dog in the desert  
 So, he extended his kindness to him  
 They reproached him for what he did  
 Saying, "What benefit do you gain from a dog?"  
 He said, "Let the blame be on my eyes."  
 I saw him(the dog) once at Leilā's house

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<sup>202</sup> Julie Scott Meisami, "Mixed Prose and Verse in Medieval Persian Literature,"

سگی از خانه لیلی بیرون آمده بود. هر جا که او پا می نهاد، مجنون سر می نهاد. گفتند: ای مجنون این چه دیوانگیست؟ گفت: بیخبران، هیچ می دانیل که این سگ از خانه که بیرون آمده است؟

رأى المجنون فى الصحرا كلباً  
فمد عليه بالمعروفِ ذبلاً  
فعأبوه على ماجا منه  
وقالوا لم نلت الكلب نيبلاً  
فقال دعوا الملامة أن عيني  
رأته مرة فى دار ليلي<sup>203</sup>

Nakhshabi's work includes 754 verses: 710 *qiṭ'as*, and 9 are single verses.<sup>204</sup> Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma* also includes 5 isolated hemistiches, in addition to the verses mentioned above. Of the total 754 verses, 35 are Arabic, three of which are repetitions from the *Javāher al-asmār*. There are 25 verses in the introduction, 729 in the nightly tales, and each of the embedded tales contains 10-28 verses. Table 2 presents the number of verses per section. Nakhshabi found many of his Arabic poetic quotes from renowned Arabic poets, such as al-Motanabbi (d. 354/965). Among the Arabic verses he used, Nakhshabi most frequently incorporated al-Motanabbi's poems. Al-Motanabbi, one of the eminent poets of the Abbasid era, is known for his panegyrics, some of which acquired proverbial status over time, due to their intricacy and sophistication. According to András P. Hámori Encyclopedia of Islam entry, al-Motanabbi "could write verses in which not a word is less than perfectly placed."<sup>205</sup>

In Sa'di's work, the interpolated verses either reflect the moral of the story or provide a commentary on the sections of the narrative -- a practice also seen in the *Ṭuṭināma* of

<sup>203</sup> Zia' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭināma*, 20.

<sup>204</sup> Table 2, page 89, shows the number of verses in each chapter.

<sup>205</sup> András P. Hámori, "Al-Mutanabbī," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, ed. Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson, accessed July 26, 2022, [https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_ei3\\_COM\\_40652](https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_40652).

Nakhshabi.<sup>206</sup> Unlike the *Golestān* of Sa‘di, the *Ṭuṭināma* drew from many prior sources,<sup>207</sup> as it is a modified adaptation of the Sanskrit *Shukāsaptati* and other works of Indian origin. Although it is difficult to determine whether he imitated contemporary practices in composing his rendition or whether, wielding several modifications, he merely imitated the Persian and Sanskrit works available to him, Sa‘di’s influence on his work is evident. The similarity in content refinement between Sa‘di and Nakhshabi’s work catches any reader’s attention. For instance, like Sa‘di, who was persuaded by another person, Nakhshabi began rewriting his book. In his introduction, Sa‘di tells the story of how, on April 21, 1258, a companion convinced him to go to a garden. The companion picked flowers there to bring back to the city, but Sa‘di pointed out their fleeting beauty and proposed creating an enduring literary “flower garden” instead:

Of what use will be a dish of flowers to thee?  
 Take a leaf from my flower-garden.  
 A flower endures but five or six days  
 But this flower-garden is always delightful.<sup>208</sup>

به چه کار آیدت ز گل طَبَقی؟  
 از گلستان من ببر ورقی  
 گل همین پنج روز و شش باشد  
 وین گلستان همیشه خوش باشد

Nakhshabi similarly describes being inspired by a nobleman’s encouragement to work on the *Ṭuṭināma*:

At a certain time when a moment spoke of its youthful days and narrated with allure from the prime of its vigor, a nobleman said to me, ‘At this time, there existed a book containing fifty-two stories...

<sup>206</sup>Franklin Lewis, “Golestān-e Sa‘di,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, XI/1, 79–86, available online at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/golestan-e-sadi> (accessed July 1, 2024).

<sup>207</sup> “Sa‘di boasts in the epilogue that he did not borrow verse from other poets to adorn the *Golestān*, as was common epistolary practice. Despite the appearance of one line from Asadi, and a pair from the *Rāḥat al-ṣodur*, this claim holds true, though Sa‘di does apparently quote lines of his own.” Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Sa‘dī, *The Gulistan or Rose Garden of Sa‘di*, trans. Edward Rehatsek (London: W.H. Allen, 1888), 15.

وقتی از اوقات که در خوشی از وقت شباب حکایت می کرد و در دلکشی از عهد عنفوان روایت می آورد،<sup>209</sup> بزرگی با فقیر گفت که درین وقت کتابی مشتمل بر پنجاه و دو حکایت...

Regarding the value of contentment, Sa‘di recounts a tale in which a dervish, hungry after a long journey, arrives at the house of a generous host. There, a guest asks him to share a word of wisdom. The dervish replies:

Sa‘di. *Golestān*. Edited by Ghulām-Ḥusayn Yūsufī. Tehran: Zavvār, 1354/1975.

I am hungry and before me lies a table of bread  
Like a bachelor standing at the door of a women’s bathhouse

من گرسنه در برابرم سفره نان  
<sup>210</sup> همچون عزیم بر در حمام زنان

The guests realized his helplessness and quickly brought out a meal for him. The host, however, asked him to wait a moment, since his servants were about to serve roast meat. In response, Sa‘di inserts a poem to emphasize his point.

The dervish raised his head and said:

Do not speak of roasted meat at my table  
For the hungry, even plain bread is a feast

درویش سر بر آورد و گفت:

کوفته بر سفره من گو مباش  
<sup>211</sup> گزیننه را نان تهی کوفته است

Similar to Sa‘di, poems are woven within Nakhshabi’s text to create a contemplative, rhythmic break that enhances the reader’s comprehension and appreciation of his teachings. In Nakhshabi’s prose work, the interpolation of prose and verse establishes balance and symmetry between the segments of the story. Moreover, unlike Ṣaghari, who made extensive use of others’

<sup>209</sup> Zīā’ al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭīnāma*, 4.

<sup>210</sup> Sa‘di *Golestān*, Edited by Gholām Ḥosayn Yusofi, Tehran: Zavvār, 1354/1974, Bāb-e 2, Ḥekāyat 26.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

poetry, Nakhshabi's application of his own verses adds flair to the main idea of each section.

Often, Nakhshabi uses rhetorical devices amid the outwardly plain prose of the *Ṭuṭināma*.

However, unlike the more eloquent vocabulary used in the opening of the chapter, Nakhshabi's

poetic expressions employ simple day-to-day language. Mojtabāyi and Āriā have labeled

Nakhshabi's poetry as "weak and insignificant, and not even on par with secondary Persian

poets."<sup>212</sup> Here are a few examples of Nakhshabi's poetry:

Nakhshabi, a fool is a great disaster  
 Who could fathom the depth of such a sea  
 Among Adam's progeny in this world  
 There is no greater affliction than foolishness

نخشبی احمق آفتی است بزرگ  
 این چنین بحر را که بیند عمق  
 نیست در دهر نسل آدم را  
 هیچ علت عظیم تر از حمق<sup>213</sup>

In this verse, simple words drawn from daily speech, such as "fool," "sea," and "depth," combine with a conversational tone to offer a moral lesson about the dangers of folly. The everyday terminology reinforces the metaphor of "fathoming the depth of such a sea," making the dangers of foolishness clear and easy to understand. Below is another example of

Nakhshabi's simple word choice and conversational tone:

Nakhshabi, do not seek refuge in the enemy  
 You cannot draw syrup from vinegar  
 Shall find no grace where hatred grows  
 He who seeks kindness from foes

نخشبی التجا به خصم مکن  
 کار شربت نباید از سیکی  
 روی نیکی گهی نبیند او

<sup>212</sup> Zīā' al-Dīn Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭināma*, 15, introduction.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid*, 147.

In the example above, instead of using ornate expressions, Nakhshabi offers moral advice in plain terms. Using simple and relatable terms, such as “vinegar” and “syrup,” the verse underscores the importance of avoiding reliance on foes. The usage of these ordinary terms makes the metaphor easy to understand. For Nakhshabi, his verses function as objects of value, and solicit extra focus and attention from the audience. For instance, in the example provided below, the correspondence in the lines expands on the implication of the prose segment and performs an essential role in the interpretation of the topic under discussion. The short story below is from chapter 5 of the *Tuṭināma*:

There was a monkey who was skilled at playing chess, who lived atop a fortress, and formed a bond with the son of the magistrate of the fortress through their chess games. The elders advised him, “What connection do you have with humans, and why such affinity with mankind? You will witness harm, from this mingling, and you will surely encounter calamity from this union.” The monkey disregarded them. One day, the son of the magistrate of the fortress hosted notable figures of the city, prominent individuals of the era, wealthy people, and dignitaries, while playing chess with the monkey. Suddenly, the monkey made an inappropriate joke, leaving him embarrassed before the gathering. Then, the magistrate’s son struck the monkey with a chess piece, shattering the ruby-colored piece. In response, the monkey leaped up, bit him severely, and climbed to the top of the fortress.

Nakhshabi, a bad origin is fundamentally flawed  
 The unfaithful will not show loyalty to anyone  
 Even if one gains the approval of the whole world  
 A bad essence will not depart from error

The wound of the son of the magistrate was growing daily, and the mark from the bite grew larger with the passing of each hour. No medicine was effective, and no ointment seemed to work. After a while, an expert physician and skilled healer, who through precise treatment removed the heat from the fire, relieved the trembling from the water, alleviated the suffocation from the air, and soothed the dryness of the earth, arrived and inspected the wound. The physician declared that the only cure for the bite was the blood of the monkey that caused it. If it were

<sup>214</sup> Ibid, 228. The word سبکی can also be translated to wine boiled down to 1/3 volume.

killed and its blood used, the wound would heal, as wine cures drunkenness and the venom of a snake is quelled by burning it. “*Iron removes iron.*”

Verse:

I was healed from Leilā with Leilā and her love,  
As the drinker of wine is healed by wine.

Their few-days long companionship prevented the son of the magistrate from consenting as he was not willing to agree to his death. However, as the suffering grew unbearable and the necessity of the situation became clear, he reluctantly accepted the decision, following the principle that *necessity permits the forbidden*. The monkey was brought forth, and the surface of the ground turned red, like his ignoble being.

بوزنه ای بود شطرنج باز، بر سر حصاری خانه داشت، و با پسر کوتوال آن حصار به سبب بازی شطرنج او را اتحاد افتاد. بزرگان او را نصیحت می کردند که تو را با آدمی چه اختلاط و با انسان چه انبساط. ازین امتزاج عاقبت تو را آفتی مشاهده شود، و ازین ازدواج البته تو را عاهتی معاینه گردد. بوزنه نشنید. روزی پسر کوتوال مشاهیر شهر و جماهیر عصر و اصحاب مکنت و ارباب حشمت را مهمان خوانده بود، و خود با بوزنه شطرنج می باخت. ناگاه بوزنه با او مزاحی فاحش کرد، او از حاضران جمع شرمنده گشت. مهره شطرنج بر سر او چنان زد که بساط شطرنج يك نیمه لعل شد. بوزنه نیز بر جست و بر اندام او گازی بیدریغ برد و بالای حصار رفت.

نخشبی اصل زشت زشت بود  
بیوفا با کسی وفا نکند  
گر چه گیرد صواب جمله جهان  
اصل بد از خطا خطا نکند

جراحت پسر کوتوال هر روز زیادت می شد و اثر گاز هر ساعت مستزاد می گشت. هیچ دارویی بی سود نمی کرد و هیچ مرهمی نافع نمی آمد. بعد از چندگاه طبیعی حاذق و لیبیی صادق که به مداومت دقیق و به معالجت وثیق زحمت حرارت از آتش بردی و علت لرزه و از آب دفع کردی و باد را از رنج خفقان خلاص دادی و خاک را از آسیب خشکی مناص بخشیدی، برسید و آن زخم گاز بدید. گفت داروی این درد و مرهم این جراحت نیست مگر خون همان بوزنه که این گاز اوست. او را بکشند و خون او بدین طلی کنند، این پختگی فراهم آید و این جراحت مندمل گردد، که خمار خمر هم از تجرع خمر دفع شود، و زهر افعی هم به سوختن افعی فرو نشیند. الحديدُ بالحديد يَفْلَحُ.

شعر:

تداویث من لیلی لیلی وحبها  
کما یتداوی شارب الخمر بالخمر

پسر کوتوال صحبت چند روزه مانع می شد و به قتل او راضی نمی گشت. چون زحمت بغایت و علت بنهایت کشید، بحکم<sup>215</sup> عند الضرورت تبیح المحظورات راضی شد. در حال بوزنه را بیاوردند و ساحت زمین چون اسافل او لعل گردانیدند.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid, 46-7.

Had the monkey not associated himself with men, blood would have not been spilled, and his life would not have come to an end. It is ambiguous who is the “evil man” in the four verses quoted in the story. Is it the monkey, or is it the prince? This creative application of ambiguity invites the reader to pick a side. Whether siding with the prince or the monkey, the moral lesson of the excerpt remains ambiguous. Often, the moral message of the story is not clear. As Perry states, “The general proposition implicit in the fable is not always a moral or ethical principle, as is sometimes supposed; on the contrary, the majority of fables in our collections [...] do not teach moral truths, strictly speaking, but rather matters of worldly wisdom and shrewdness ( *Lebensklugheiten* ); and even the moral lessons are formulated more often than not on that basis.”<sup>216</sup> In her study of dissembling morals, Van Ruymbeke explores how in classical texts authors purposely present an obscure moral lesson beneath layers of story. This method of storytelling enables writers to discuss subtle subjects, question social norms, or deal with divisive subjects without resorting to direct conflict.<sup>217</sup>

To reflect on the socio-political realities of the time, particularly those surrounding gender, authority, and moral insincerity, Nakhshabi applies the dissembling morals narrative strategy, using metaphors and allegories to convey his intended moral lesson without compromising his safety due to direct critique. Here, while the prose section uses a simple fable to discuss this topic, it appears that Nakhshabi’s intention was to utilize a more sophisticated language in the prose section of the excerpt. Like the story above, allusion to nobility and aristocracy, including sultans, rajas, queens, and magistrates, occur frequently in the *Ṭuṭināma* of

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<sup>216</sup> Ben Edwin Perry, *Babrius and Phaedrus: Newly Edited and Translated into English, together with an Historical Introduction and a Comprehensive Survey of Greek and Latin Fables in the Aesopic Tradition* (London and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), xxi–xxii.; Christine van Ruymbeke, *Kashefi’s Anvar-e Sohayli : Rewriting Kalila and Dimna in Timurid Herat*, 75.

<sup>217</sup> Christine van Ruymbeke, *Kashefi’s Anvar-e Sohayli : Rewriting Kalila and Dimna in Timurid Herat*, 75-9.

Nakhshabi, and many embedded tales often record the story of rulers.<sup>218</sup> Nakhshabi's frequent allusion to nobility, indicates his audience is either a part of the ruling class or deeply affected by its decisions. Through embedding tales about rulers, he critiques power structures indirectly while appealing to readers' experience with authority. On the other hand, this focus on nobility may reflect literary conventions of the time. Tales of kings and queens were a crucial part of Persian and Sanskrit narrative traditions, and Nakhshabi adopts this framework to align with familiar storytelling norms.

### Figurative Language

Nakhshabi's use of figurative language, especially through devices like imagery, metaphor, and symbolism, enhances the expressive and imaginative qualities of his work. By connecting his literary piece to the language arts, he tries to detach his work from that of his predecessor while enhancing his authorial aesthetic continuum. Symbolism, for instance, is a component of Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma*. We witness the "deliberate translation of concepts into illustrative and pedagogic terms" in Nakhshabi's work.<sup>219</sup> Very few of Nakhshabi's symbols have factual origins; most of them are entirely fictional. Nakhshabi's symbols are traditional symbols, borrowed from earlier traditions. His symbols can be found in other renowned fables of his era. Historically, symbols were used as a pedagogical means that offered a simplified explanation of terms and presented clear images and illustrations through storytelling. Nakhshabi has made use of objects, characters, situations, and actions in a symbolic sense to present ideas and qualities. Similar to the protagonist of the story, the parrot, who symbolizes the wise

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<sup>218</sup> Chapters 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 16, 18, 22, 25, 26, 36, 37, 39, 44, 45, 46, 50, 51 relate stories of kings, amirs, and rajas.

<sup>219</sup> Austin Warren and Rene Wellek, *Theory of Literature*, 188-9.

grandfatherly figure in Sanskrit literature or a master of speech, many characters of the embedded tale are also used in a symbolic sense.

In the embedded tales, each story starts with dusk and ends before the dawn of the next day. Each embedded tale's entry is adorned with Nakhshabi's creative entries, except that of the first night – the first night starts differently as it recounts the parrot and Khojasta's first encounter and the circumstances leading to their exchanges in the forthcoming nights. The following excerpt is an example of Nakhshabi's creative entries taken from the third night.

When the goldsmith of the heavens placed the pure gold of the sun into the crucible of the west and brought forth the refined silver of the moon from the mine of the east...

چون زرگر أفلاك، زر خالص آفتاب در بوته مغرب كرد و نقره ناب ماه از كان مشرق بيرون آورد...<sup>220</sup>

Dawn is described with the same exact line in each tale. While dusk, the triggering point of every embedded tale, is described in great detail, with complex imagery, and elaborate lexical items, dawn, the final point of every night, has received very little care from the author. As discussed earlier in this chapter, Nakhshabi repeats the line about the coming of morning, followed by the same couplet, fifty-one times in the story. Elements of figurative language used in the repeated excerpt include personification in "Morning unveiled its radiant face," while the *qit'a* figuratively describes the coming of morning. Nakhshabi uses figurative literary devices to enhance his writing, and make it more interesting and appealing for his readers' senses. Detailed descriptions of sunset, adorned with sophisticated imagery, metaphor, and symbolism are present at the beginning of each embedded tale. For him, daytime represents routine and monotony, but nighttime is a realm of unusual events and transformative moments. In the following excerpt, Nakhshabi describes the sunset:

When, the sun, the sultan of midday, passed into the dominion of the west, and moon, the night patrolling magistrate rose to make her rounds in the east,

<sup>220</sup> Zia' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Tuṭināma*, 27.

Khojasta inwardly in turmoil but outwardly lamenting went to the parrot to seek permission to leave.

چون سلطان نیم روز آفتاب جانب ملك مغرب رفت، و کوتوال شبگرد ماه در گشت مشرق بر آمد، خجسته باطنی<sup>221</sup> در جوش و با ظاهری در خروش به طلب رخصت بر طوطی رفت.

The excerpt above is an example of Nakhshabi's employment of figurative language.

Here, examples of figurative language include personification in “the sultan of midday” and “the night patrolling magistrate;” metaphor in the use of sun and moon, representing the shift of time; imagery in “Khojasta inwardly in turmoil but outwardly lamenting;” and contrast in the relationship of light and dark. In addition to each chapter's entry, other sections of Nakhshabi's work are also filled with instances of figurative language. Below is an example of figurative language in Khojasta's conversation with the parrot selected from chapter 13 of the *Ṭuṭīnāma*:

Days have come and my eyes left waiting on the path. The weight of love bent my stature like a harp. How long will I be punished, having my ears twisted like the rebab?<sup>222</sup> The parrot replied, o Khojasta, although the sorrow of love consumes the body, it is not proper to complain of love. Like the tambourine, your entire body has become speech and is complaining about love?

روزها بر آمد که دیده در ره مانده ام. بار عشق قامت مرا چون چنگ گرانید. هنوز چون رباب این گوشمالی تا کی؟ طوطی گفت، ای خجسته، اگر چه غم عشق جز جان نفرساید، اما از عشق گله کردن نشاید. چیست؟ چون طنبور همه<sup>223</sup> تن زبان شده ای و از عشق گله میکنی؟

Some of the figurative language in the above excerpt include imagery, metaphor in “the weight of love bent my stature like a harp,” and personification in “How long will I be punished, having my ears twisted like the rebab.” Simile is another element of figurative language that can be found in “Like the tambourine, your entire body has become speech,” which represents the

<sup>221</sup> Ibid, 85.

<sup>222</sup> “A four-stringed instrument in the form of a short-necked guitar but having a surface of parchment instead of wood,” in Francis Joseph Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary, Including the Arabic Words and Phrases to Be Met with in Persian Literature: Being Johnson and Richardson's Persian, Arabic, and English Dictionary, Revised, Enlarged and Entirely Reconstructed* (Beirut: Librarie du Liban, 1970), 567.

<sup>223</sup> Zīā' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭīnāma*, 121.

complete surrender to love. While the reader encounters most of the metaphors, personifications, similes, and imagery, which increase the level of the text's difficulty, when Nakhshabi is the narrator, occasionally they encounter such instances of figurative language in the parrot's speech. The narratorial persona, the parrot, uses stories filled with symbolic images to express ideas and emotions and convey a state of mind that could prevent Khojasta from misconduct. Embedded tales with animal characters fall under this category. See the example below, related by the parrot in chapter 1 after another parrot in his tale is battered by a merchant's wife:

In his grief, the parrots dyed their garments in indigo and the nightingales donned black attire in his mourning. The hoopoe threw away its crest, the francolin shed its mantle, the rooster began to cry out, the dove began to lament, and this news reached the inhabitants of the rose garden and the dwellers of the meadow. The elm tree withered. The cypress was rooted in sorrow. The rose tore its garments, the bud grew heartsick. The grass wore indigo. The violet donned a dark robe. The jasmine's appearance turned pale. The tulip's look was stained with blood.

طوطیان در مصیبت او جامه در نیل زدند، بلبلان در عزاب او لباس سیاه گردانیدند. هدهد تاج از سر بینداخت، دراج دواج از از بردور کرد، خروس خروش کردن گرفت، قمری نوحه بنیاد نهاد این خبر به اهل گلزار و سکان مرغزار رسید. شاخ نارون خشک شد. سرو پای در گل ماند. گل جامه بدرید، غنچه تتگدل شد. سبزه جامه در نیل زد. بنفشه لباس کبود کرد.<sup>224</sup> سمن را رخسار زرد شد. لاله روی خون آلوده گشت.

Some of the various elements of figurative language in the above example include a metaphor in “the tulip's look was stained with blood,” showing the tulips' sorrow, imagery in “the jasmine's appearance turned pale,” and personification in “the parrots dyed their garments in indigo, and the nightingales donned black attire in his mourning.”

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<sup>224</sup> Ibid, 14.

## Concluding Remarks

The powerful yet direct diction of the *Ṭuṭināma* easily appeals to many readers. Employing the trilateral process of invention, disposition, and ornamentation in rewriting the *Ṭuṭināma*, Nakhshabi enhances the work of his predecessor. Building on the foundation provided to him by Ṣaghari, he makes the narrative more intricate, philosophical, and socially aware. Nakhshabi's lexicon is fairly smooth and natural. Enhancing the overall rhetoric and the impression of speech in the *Ṭuṭināma* encourages readers to reflect on their own values. Poetic interpolations, sophisticated narrative structure, avoidance of circumlocution and verbosity, elimination of cliché, placing a greater emphasis on the human experience, and the consumption of cultural and religious components are amongst the stylistic and linguistic methods employed by Nakhshabi to distinguish himself from his predecessor.

Table 3: Number of Verses in Nakhshabi's *Ṭuḥīnāma* Per Chapter

Introduction	25	N12	19	N24	17	N36	11	N48	16
N1	24	N13	17	N25	11	N37	12	N49	12
N2	17	N14	13	N26	19	N38	12	N50	13
N3	20	N15	14	N27	16	N39	10	N51	19
N4	16	N16	19	N28	11	N40	11	N52	16
N5	16	N17	17	N29	13	N41	10	Epilogue	28
N6	20	N18	14	N30	10	N42	16		
N7	12	N19	16	N31	16	N43	15		
N8	22	N20	15	N32	16	N44	12		
N9	19	N21	18	N33	11	N45	11		
N10	10	N22	17	N34	12	N46	14		
N11	20	N23	12	N35	12	N47	12		

Table 4: Comparative Story Origins in the *Ṭuḡināma*

<i>Ṭuḡināma</i> Story Chapter	Present in <i>Javāher al-asmār</i>
One	Chapter 1, Tale 2
Two	Chapter 2, Tales 3
Three	Chapter 3, Tales 5
Four	Chapter 4, Tale 6 2 sub stories, one of them is from chapter 4, tale 5
Five	Chapter 5, Tale 8 1 sub story from chapter 5, tale 9
Six	Chapter 6, Tale 11
Seven	Chapter 7, Tales 13 and 15
Eight	X
Nine	Chapter 8, Tale 16
Ten	Chapter 9, Tale 19
Eleven	Chapter 10, Tale 20
Twelve	Chapter 11, Tale 22 1 sub story from chapter 11, tale 23
Thirteen	Chapter 12, Tale 24
Fourteen	Chapter 13, Tale 25

	1 sub story from chapter 13, tale 26
Fifteen	Chapter 14, Tale 27 2 sub stories from chapter 14, tale 28
Sixteen	Chapter 15, Tale 29
Seventeen	Chapter 16, Tale 32
Eighteen	Chapter 17, Tale 33 1 sub story from chapter 17, tale 34
Nineteen	Chapter 18, Tales 35
Twenty	Chapter 19, Tale 36
Twenty-one	Chapter 20, Tale 37
Twenty-two	Chapter 21, Tale 38
Twenty-three	Chapter 22, Tale 40
Twenty-four	X
Twenty-five	Chapter 23, Tale 43 2 sub stories from chapter 23, tales 44 and 45
Twenty-six	Chapter 25, Tale 48
Twenty-seven	Chapter 26, Tale 49 1 sub story from chapter 26, tale 50
Twenty-eight	Missing Pages
Twenty-nine	Chapter 28, Tale 51

	1 sub story from chapter 28, tale 52
Thirty	Chapter 29, Tale 53
Thirty-one	Chapter 30, Tale 54 1 sub story from chapter 30, tale 55
Thirty-two	Chapter 31, Tale 56 1 sub story from chapter 31, tale 57
Thirty-three	Chapter 32, Tale 58
Thirty-four	Chapter 33, Tale 59
Thirty-five	Chapter 34, Tale 61
Thirty-six	Chapter 35, Tale 62
Thirty-seven	Chapter 36, Tale 63
Thirty-eight	Chapter 37, Tale 64
Thirty-nine	Chapter 38, Tale 65
Forty	Chapter 39, Tale 66
Forty-one	Chapter 40, Tale 67 2 sub stories from chapter 40, tales 68 and 69
Forty-two	Chapter 41, Tales 70 and 71 2 sub stories from chapter 41, tales 72 and 73
Forty-three	X
Forty-four	Chapter 43, Tale 75

Forty-five	Chapter 47, Tale 81
Forty-six	X
Forty-seven	Chapter 48, Tale 83
Forty-eight	X
Forty-nine	X
Fifty	Missing Pages
Fifty-one	Missing Pages
Fifty-two	Missing Pages

## Chapter 2: Storytelling and the Role of Nighttime in the *Ṭuṭināma* of Nakhshabi

The primary plot of the *Ṭuṭināma* is the tale of a merchant who leaves for a business trip, while every night, his wife attempts to commit adultery in his absence. Observing his partner's death, the merchant's parrot manages to distract and delay the merchant's wife's debauchery with his storytelling. The parrot's nighttime discourse is a survival weapon in the face of a disloyal wife intending to unite with her beloved in the absence of her husband. Although a fundamental part of the narrative, the frame tale only takes up a few pages at the beginning and end. A connecting piece, the frame narrative brings all the self-contained slices together. It is possible to eliminate the parrot's anecdotes from the chapters without damaging the frame tale. On the contrary, if the framing narrative were eliminated, the outcome would be a collection of disconnected tales.<sup>225</sup> Storytelling is central to Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma*, adding to the work's enduring appeal and significance. The elements of time and sequence, on the other hand, have critical roles in the structure and interpretation of the *Ṭuṭināma*'s narrative, making it a great example of temporal discourse because of how the element of time is structured, represented, and discussed in the narrative. The narrative displays the chronological transformation of the parrot's struggle for time. He buys himself time by killing time. Nighttime is imperative to Nakhshabi's storytelling. Nighttime scenes frequently serve as a backdrop for the narrative, underlining themes of mystery, intrigue, and the discovery of secrets.

Analyzing storytelling in Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma* involves exploring a selected number of techniques, including repetitive designation, thematic and formal patterning, dramatic

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<sup>225</sup> Ferial J. Ghazoul, *Nocturnal Poetics*, 18–19.

visualization,<sup>226</sup> allusion to oral tradition, and dramatic excess. This chapter's purpose is twofold. First, it analyzes a number of storytelling techniques in the case of *Ṭuṭīnāma*. The frame narrative and its framing moral function, didactic preoccupation, entertainment as a means of engagement, its reflection on Persian and Indo-Islamic cultural values of the time, and its influence on later literature and storytelling traditions are among the reasons that highlight the significance of storytelling in the *Ṭuṭīnāma*. For this reason, I break down and analyze a selected number of storytelling elements of Nakhshabi's rewrite and investigate how they contribute to the overall narrative. This analysis of Nakhshabi's rendition provides insight into how the *Ṭuṭīnāma* is constructed and what elements make it effective. This chapter then takes a deep dive into the role of time in Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭīnāma*. The chapter strives to reveal the structural nuances underlying the nocturnal discourses utilized by Nakhshabi. While the episodic nature of the *Ṭuṭīnāma* has been discussed previously, this section goes beyond the descriptive mention of it and explores the purpose and function of this structure in the *Ṭuṭīnāma*. This chapter discusses the function of time in the *Ṭuṭīnāma* and demonstrates how nocturnal discourse is related to love and storytelling both in the text and in Nakhshabi's own activity.

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<sup>226</sup> David Pinault coined the terms *repetitive designation* and *dramatic visualization* in his insightful Ph.D. dissertation, "Stylistic Features in Selected Tales from the Thousand and One Nights" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1986). He later used the terms *thematic patterning* and *formal patterning* in his work, *Story-Telling Techniques in the Arabian Nights*. See David Pinault, *Story-Telling Techniques in the Arabian Nights* (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1992), 16–30.

## Storytelling in the Case of the *Ṭuṭināma* of Nakhshabi

In his Encyclopedia Iranica entry, Hanaway labels storytelling as a “term used for written and oral genres of fictional narrative. Other terms used for the same genres include *dāstān-guyi*, *dāstān-pardāzi*, *qeṣṣa-guyi*, *afsāna-sarāyi*, and *naqqāli*.”<sup>227</sup> This section focuses on the written genre of fictional narrative with a focus on several techniques of narrative creation, *dāstān-pardāzi*, referring to the art of crafting or narrating and myth-making, *afsāna-sarāyi*, featuring the art of narrating an imaginative, fantastical, or mythical tale. Storytelling techniques are strategies and methods that enable the author to craft a narrative that conveys depth, clarity, and emotional resonance. Nakhshabi has made use of certain storytelling techniques and narrative devices, a selected number of which are described below.

### I. Repetitive Designation

This categorization refers to an object or character that seems unimportant, casual, and incidental at the beginning but, as the narrative unfolds, intensifies in significance.<sup>228</sup> A good example of this technique can be found in chapter 12 which tells the story of a dirt-digger who discovers a precious pearl in the ground. Recognizing its value, he finds that no jeweler can properly assess its worth. The dirt-digger thus decides to take the pearl to a raja for evaluation. On his way to the raja, he encounters four fellow travelers. While he sleeps, they steal his satchel along with the pearl. The dirt-digger never learns who stole the pearl and chooses to remain silent about its loss. After learning the story of the dirt-digger, the raja then summons the four

<sup>227</sup> See William Hanaway, “Dāstān-Sarā’ī,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. VII, fasc. 1, pp. 102–103, available online at <https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/dastan-sarai> (accessed December 3, 2024).

<sup>228</sup> David Pinault, *Story-Telling Techniques in the Arabian Nights*, 16-8.

fellow travelers to his castle. The raja's daughter relates the story of a merchant's daughter who visits a rose garden and wishes to have one of the roses for herself to the fellow travelers. Upon finishing the story, she asks the travelers questions to learn about their intentions. Although her storytelling seems to be incidental at first, it ultimately helps her to unravel the mystery and recover the pearl. The raja then punishes the thief and rewards the three other travelers. Here, the pearl's initial appearance prepares the path for its subsequent reappearance, bringing with it the proof of its significance. Thus, the story shifts from themes of possession, value, and loss to themes of discovery, justice, and morality. By reintroducing the pearl at the end of the story, Nakhshabi invites his readers to reflect on the moral lesson of the story: justice and morality.

Another example of repetitive designation is in a tale from chapter 24. The story begins with a young man from a tribe, Bashir, who falls in love with a married woman named Ḥabbazā. Upon learning of his wife's infatuation, her husband moves their family to another tribe. Desperate, Bashir entrusts a nomad companion and seeks his help to reunite with Ḥabbazā. The nomad delivers Bashir's message to Ḥabbazā and facilitates their meeting at a specific location. At this point, the reader might expect the nomad's role to end. However, his involvement unexpectedly deepens when he agrees to go to Ḥabbazā's house, sleep in her bed, and pretend to be her, enabling the two lovers to spend the night together. The nomad returns to Ḥabbazā's house and sleeps in her bed as part of the plan. Provoked by what he perceives as Ḥabbazā's infatuation and disregard, her husband, unaware of the deception, becomes violent and strikes the person he believes to be his wife while she sleeps. Meanwhile, Ḥabbazā's sister, upon learning of the husband's abuse, visits to offer her support, only to discover that it is the nomad, not Ḥabbazā, sleeping in the bed. After hearing his story, the nomad and the sister connect with each other and spend the night together. The following morning, the nomad returns to Bashir and

Ḥabbazā, bearing marks of the physical abuse on his body and confessing his newfound infatuation with Ḥabbazā's sister. At first, the nomad has a minor role in the story, serving as a backdrop to the narrative. However, his role becomes increasingly important as the story progresses, and ultimately the focus of the tale shifts to him. The nomad's character gains increasing significance through repeated reappearances, ultimately transforming into the focal point of the narrative.

## II. Thematic and Formal Patterning

In the introduction of his *Story-telling Techniques in the Arabian Night* Pinault discusses patterning in the stories of *Alf Layla* and works of fiction in general, defining it as follows:

“In those stories . . . , which are specially well crafted, the structure is disposed so as to draw the audience's attention to certain narrative elements over others. Recurrent vocabulary, repeated gestures, accumulations of descriptive phrases around selected objects: such patterns guide the audience in picking out particular actions as important in the flow of narrative. And once the audience has had its attention drawn to the patterns which give shape to a story, it experiences the pleasure of recognition: so this is the revelation toward which the storyteller is guiding us; this must be the object which constitutes the story's focus.”<sup>229</sup>

He then divides patterning into two categories: thematic and formal. Thematic patterning refers to the recurring distribution of themes and motifs to stress an idea or argument and to create cohesion, structure, and resonance. This technique enables the author to emphasize and reinforce the central idea in a variety of expressions, helping the audience to understand the overarching message of the narrative. Thematic patterning creates unity among the separate episodes and gives depth to the narrative by repeating the theme. Formal patterning, on the other hand, refers to the organizational structure that shapes a narrative, creating a cohesive and balanced

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<sup>229</sup> Ibid, 22.

framework. In addition to enhancing the story's aesthetic appeal, formal patterns help the audience to more easily identify and engage with key themes and morals as the narrative unfolds.<sup>230</sup> Thematic patterning of themes such as loyalty, honesty, love, and justice binds the *Ṭuṭināma* narrative, reinforced in its enframed tales. Other examples of this concept can be found in chapters such as chapter 8 “the tale of the prince, the seven viziers, and the misfortune that befell him because of a maidservant,” and chapter 31, “the tale of the blue jackal and how he became king and was exposed.” Chapter 8 of the *Ṭuṭināma* will be discussed later in this chapter.

In chapter 31, the parrot's storytelling opens by introducing the jackal who had developed a habit of going into the city and had become accustomed to rummaging through people's containers with his mouth.

<sup>231</sup>شگالی را درون شهر رفتن عادت شده بود، و دهان در آوندهای مردمان افکندن خوی گرفته.

The opening sentence immediately establishes the jackal's habit, setting a thematic pattern for the scene that follows. One day, while poking his head into a container of indigo, he falls into it and emerges completely blue, taking on the appearance of a fierce, strange, and exotic creature. Upon seeing him, the other wild animals abandon their allegiance to the lion, proclaim him their king, and pledge their obedience. To conceal his true identity, the jackal initially surrounds himself only with animals of his own kind or weaker ones, keeping wild beasts and predators at a safe distance from his throne. This way, even when he howls, no one suspects his true nature. Over time, however, pride in his newfound status leads him to distance himself from his own kind and seek proximity to more powerful, ferocious animals. At this precarious moment, the audience is reminded of the danger: the jackal cannot howl in the presence of these predators without risking his identity and survival. One night, overcome by instinct, he hears the howling

<sup>230</sup> Ibid, 22-5.

<sup>231</sup> Zīā' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭināma*, 260.

of other jackals in the distance and joins in. His howl immediately exposes his true identity, and the surrounding animals realize they have been deceived. They pursue him to deliver his punishment, but he manages to escape to a distant group of jackals. The group, having heard of his rise to power and how all the animals pledged their obedience to him, confronts him. In response, he reveals the entire story of his deception. Reproaching him, they say:

A power that you were not worthy of, and a position that did not suit you were entrusted to you. Alas, you did not appreciate its value and did not recognize its worth. You disgraced yourself and cast yourself away from the kingdom and sovereignty.

دولتی که نه لایق تو بود و شغلی که نه در خور تو بود، مفوض به تو شد. افسوس که قدر آن ندانستی و قیمت آن نشناختی.<sup>232</sup> خود را هم خود فضیحت کردی و از مملکت و سلطنت دور افکندی.

The jackals tell him that his story resembles that of a merchant whose prosperous state was overturned by life's misfortunes and calamities. At this juncture, Nakhshabi transitions into the embedded tale, framed and nested within the larger embedded tale, together creating a formal pattern.

### III. Dramatic Visualization

Dramatic visualization is defined as the use of detailed descriptions, the author shows his narrative to the audience, rather than merely telling them about it.<sup>233</sup> Pinault defines dramatic visualization “as the representing of an object or character with an abundance of descriptive detail” in a way that makes the scene ‘visual.’<sup>234</sup> To illustrate this technique, the following section presents three analogous scenes from the *Tuṭīnāma*. Each scene revolves around the

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<sup>232</sup> Ibid, 262.

<sup>233</sup> Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 3–9, 40.

<sup>234</sup> David Pinault. *Story-Telling Techniques in the Arabian Nights*, 25.

theme of a bird being slain by a mischievous female participant. The first scene is from chapter 1, “the parrot narration about the merchant’s parrot and his wife.” Confronted by her husband about her misconduct during his absence, the merchant’s wife assumes that the parrot disclosed her secret. Seizing an opportunity for revenge, she sets her sights on the parrot, the story’s protagonist.

When the woman assumed that her secret had been exposed by the parrot and that her affair had become public knowledge, she considered the parrot as an enemy greater than a thousand enemies, planted the seeds of vengeance in the field of her heart and awaited an opportunity for revenge. One night, she found her chance, plucked all the parrot’s feathers, chewed him up, threw him out, and cried out that, “A cat had taken the parrot!”

In his grief, the parrots dyed their garments in indigo and the nightingales donned black attire in his mourning. The hoopoe threw away its crest, the francolin shed its mantle, the rooster began to cry out, the dove began to lament, and this news reached the inhabitants of the rose garden and the dwellers of the meadow. The elm tree withered. The cypress was rooted in sorrow. The rose tore its garments, the bud grew heartsick. The grass wore indigo. The violet donned a dark robe. The jasmine’s appearance turned pale. The tulip’s look was stained with blood.

زن چون تصور کرد که راز بواسطه طوطی کشف شد و این سر بر رابطه او در صحرا افتاد، طوطی را در باطن از هزار دشمن، دشمن تر می داشت و تخم مغادرت او در مزرعه دل می کاشت و منتظر انتقام می بود. شبی فرصت یافت، پر و بال طوطی همه بر کند و او را مضغه کرد و بیرون انداخت، و فریاد بر آورد که گربه طوطی را برد.

طوطیان در مصیبت او جامه در نیل زدند، بلبلان در عزاب او لباس سیاه گردانیدند. هدهد تاج از سر بینداخت، دراج دواج از از بردور کرد، خروس خروش کردن گرفت، قمری نوحه بنیاد نهاد این خبر به اهل گلزار و سکان مرغزار رسید. شاخ نارون خشک شد. سرو پای در گل ماند. گل جامه بدرید، غنچه تنگدل شد. سبزه جامه در نیل زد. بنفشه لباس کیود کرد.<sup>235</sup> سمن را رخسار زرد شد. لاله روی خون آلوده گشت.

The next excerpt, which carries the theme of a bird being slain, is from chapter 19, “the tale of the king’s peacock and its slaying by the brahmin’s wife.” A Brahmin woman, who was unable to bear a child, visited a physician seeking a remedy. The physician prescribed a medicine and advised her to take it with the gall bladder of a peacock in order to conceive.

There was no peacock except the king’s peacock, in that city. The woman waited for an opportunity to capture the peacock through a trick and to take the creature

<sup>235</sup> Zīā’ al-Dīn Nakhshabī, *Tuṭīnāma*, 14. The second part of this quote was mentioned previously; however, I have used it here again to emphasize a point.

into her possession. Eventually, she succeeded, took the internal organs with the physician's medicine, and revealed this secret to her foster sister. Indeed, there is nothing heavier on a person's heart than a secret, and nothing more burdensome to the soul than a hidden truth.

و در آن شهر طاووس نبود مگر طاووس رای. زن منتظر می بود که به حيله آن طاووس را صيد کند و به تدبير آن جانوار را قيد خود آرد، تا وقتی همچنان کرد، و زهره او را با داروی طبیب خورد، و این سر پیش خواهر خوانده خود بگشاد. آری،<sup>236</sup> هیچ باری بر دل آدمی گرانتر از سر نیست، و هیچ امری بر جان مرم ثقیل تر از رازنه.

The last excerpt on a bird being slain is selected from chapter 52, "The Tale of the Ascetic and His Wife, the Seven-colored Bird, How the Wife Fell in Love with the Young Moneychanger, and the Killing of the Bird." A pious man, struggling with financial difficulties, buys a seven-colored bird from the bazaar, which brings him wealth and prosperity. As he sees his business flourishing, he decides to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca. Before leaving, he advises his wife to take good care of the seven-colored bird. In her husband's absence, the mischievous wife falls in love with a young moneychanger and brings him home every night. Through his daily visits, he learns about the wealth brought by the seven-colored bird in the pious man's household. One day, while sharing the story with a friend, he learns that by eating the bird's head, he will wear a crown and become a king. Encouraged by this, he refrains from visiting her for a few days. When she asks the reason for his absence, he dares her to kill the bird and let him eat it.

The young moneychanger said, "I have a craving for the seven-colored bird. If you slaughter it and invite me to its meat, I will be your guest." The woman replied, "The light of my house comes from this bird, and our wealth is due to this creature. How can I destroy my blessings and host you with its meat? I will never do such a thing in my life, nor will I engage in this act." After several days, however, love overcame her, and her desire grew strong and eventually, she reluctantly agreed and slaughtered the bird...

صراف بچه گفت مرا هوس خوردن مرغ هفت رنگ می کند. اگر تو آن را بسمل کنی و مرا به گوشت او مهمان داری، من مهمان تو شوم. زن گفت روشنایی خانه من از این مرغ است و ثروت ما بواسطه این جانور است. ولی نعمت خود را چگونه

<sup>236</sup> Ibid, 172.

توان کشت و از گوشت او تو را مهمان چگونه توان داشت؟ من همه عمر این کار نکنم و گرد این ارتکاب نگردم. چون چند روز بر آمد، عشق غالب شد و شوق جالب گشت و بضرورت زن بدان رضا داد و مرغ را کشت و بسمل کرد...<sup>237</sup>

The slaying of the bird in chapter 1 is described at great length and vividly by Nakhshabi, as the passage above illustrates. His descriptions, however, are more direct and succinct in chapters 19 and 52. This contrast exists because the slaying of the protagonist in chapter 1 serves as the climax of the story. In chapter 1, with a clever twist, Nakhshabi's narratorial persona, the parrot, recounts a tale parallel to his first encounter with Khojasta, aiming to distract her, gain her trust, and delay his potential death. The parrot's death in this story, which is the climax, is imaginatively presented to both Khojasta and the audience. This presentation heightens the tension, enhances the storytelling, and evokes a strong emotional response. In contrast, in chapters 19 and 52, the bird's death is not the narrative's primary focus. Here, the slaying is summarized, acting as a precursor to the climactic moral lessons of each story.

#### IV. Allusion to Oral Tradition

From Nakhshabi's introduction, we learn that his revisions are influenced by the preceding text. It is, however, challenging to determine how the tale anthologies of the *Ṭuṭīnāma* were composed, as Nakhshabi provides no information about whether he relied on oral traditions in addition to the preceding written source in crafting his modifications. Unlike in *the Arabian Nights*, "the performance dimension" of the narrative is not reflected in Nakhshabi's rendition.<sup>238</sup> With a focus on *the Arabian Nights*, scholars such as Hämeen-Anttila highlight the complex relationship between oral storytelling practices and written literary traditions, challenging the

<sup>237</sup> Ibid, 428-9.

<sup>238</sup> David Pinault. *Story-Telling Techniques in the Arabian Nights*:13. In his study of the *Arabian Nights*, Pinault draws attention to the remarks that suggest the public recitation of the *Nights*.

simplistic binary distinction between oral and written forms in the context of folktales.<sup>239</sup>

Drawing attention to the oral connections of *the Arabian Nights*, Peter Molan suggests that phrases such as *qāla al-rāvi* (said the storyteller) and *qāla ṣāḥeb al-ḥadiṣ* (said the master of the tale) are linked to the oral source behind the manuscripts.<sup>240</sup> Such phrases are absent from the *Tuḥfānāma* manuscript. In many instances, however, Nakhshabi reveals his efforts in creating allusions that tie his work to the oral tradition as the source of narrative inspiration. Determined to dissuade Khojasta, Nakhshabi's narratorial persona, the parrot, starts his tales with standard formulas, such as, *chenin guyand ke...* (it is related...), and *āvarde-and ke...* (it is reported that...). Occasionally longer opening formulas like, *dar qrāyeb-e asmār va 'ajayeb-e akhbār chenin āvarde-and ke...* (in strange legends and wondrous tales it is narrated that...), *dar soḥof-e asmār va kotob-e akhbār chenin guyand ke...* (the pages of ancient tales and folios of old books have reported that...), and *dar laṭāyef-e asmār va 'ajayeb-e akhbār chenin guyand ke...* (in the legends and strange wondrous tales it is related ...) are used.<sup>241</sup> This way, by recounting the previous oral transmitters and reciters, Nakhshabi's narratorial persona establishes himself as the last link in the chain of oral and textual transmission, claims his authorship, and guides the readers to expect a story whose context is, in fact, or at least formally, accepted.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> J. Hämeen-Anttila, "Oral Vs. Written: Some Notes on the *Arabian Nights*," *Acta Orientalia* (Copenhagen) 56 (1995): 184–92.; For further information, see H. El-Shamy, "Oral Traditional Tales and the 'Thousand Nights and a Night': The Demographic Factor," in *The Telling of Stories, Approaches to a Traditional Craft: Symposium*, ed. M. Nojgaard et al. (Odense: Odense University Press, 1990), 63–117. El-Shamy's work contributes to a deeper understanding of the oral tradition based on demographic factors, such as the cultural, geographical, and social settings of storytellers and their audiences, which played an important role in shaping the stories of the *Arabian Nights*.

<sup>240</sup> Peter D. Molan, "The *Arabian Nights*: The Oral Connection," *Edebiyāt* n.s., vol. 2, nos. 1–2 (1988): 195.; David Pinault, *Story-Telling Techniques in the Arabian Nights*, 13.; See J. T. P. de Bruijn, "Fiction, i," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. IX, fasc. 6, pp. 572–79, available online at <https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/fiction-i-traditional> (accessed December 4, 2024).

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, 239.

<sup>242</sup> David Pinault, *Story-Telling Techniques in the Arabian Nights*, 12-6.

## V. The Fantastic, Dramatic Excess, Anthropomorphism, and the Logic of Wonder

To stress the moral lesson and create a dramatic impression, Nakhshabi, the redactor, has often employed exaggeration, enhancing the overall quality of his narrative. Anthropomorphized animals with unrealistic abilities such as the supernaturally wise and articulate parrot of the frame narrative, are examples of this technique.<sup>243</sup> The parrot is a striking embodiment of anthropomorphic rhetorical skills and intelligence.

... he saw talking parrot, which was on sale stipulated to be an eloquent reciter of the Qur'an.

طوطی (ای) گویا دید که مشروط بر سخندانی و قرآن خوانی می فروختند.<sup>244</sup>

Night after night, he is able to weave captivating tales tailored to dissuade the Khojasta from her adulterous thoughts. Other fauna, similar to the parrot of the frame narrative, are also granted anthropomorphic abilities. The story of a frog, who was the king of frogs at a certain well, yet was banished due to his tyranny in chapter 26, is another example of anthropomorphic expression in the *Ṭuṭināma*.

There were many frogs in that well, and they had a king named Shāpur, a frog with wisdom and a toad with discernment. However, he was a tyrant.

در آن چاه غوکان بسیار بودند، و ایشان را ملکی بود شاپور نام، غوکی با کیاست و ضفدگی با فراست. اما ظالم<sup>245</sup> پیشه بود.

Employing magical and supernatural elements is another example of such in Nakhshabi's narrative. Chapter 6 of the *Ṭuṭināma* features the story of a carpenter, a goldsmith, an ascetic,

<sup>243</sup> Patrick Olivelle, "Talking Animals: Explorations in an Indian Literary Genre," *Religions of South Asia* 7, no. 1–3 (2013): 14–26.; Christine Van Ruymbeke, *Kashefi's Anvar-e Sohayli: Rewriting Kalila and Dimna in Timurid Herat*, 79–95.

<sup>244</sup> Zīā' al-Dīn Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭināma*, 8.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid*, 224.

and a weaver who are traveling together. On the first night, the carpenter carves a wooden figure of a woman. The next night, the goldsmith takes gold and ornaments from his pouch and adorns the figure. On the third night, the weaver weaves a bridal dress and clothes the figure. Finally, on the fourth night, captivated by the figure's beauty, the ascetic brings her to life.

He raised his hands in prayer and said, "O God, they have served your creatures and have displayed talents. I have served You. You are capable of giving life to this figure." By the blessing of his inner intentions, life entered the figure right away, and it became as if a human being, speaking and hearing.

دست به دعا برداشت و گفت: بار خدایا، ایشان خدمت مخلوق کرده اند و این هنرها نمودند. من خدمت تو کرده ام، تو قادری که جان درین صورت کنی. از برکت اندیشه ضمیر باطن او در حال جان در آن صورت در آمد، و او چون مردم<sup>246</sup> گویا در گفت و شنید شد.

By means of divine-like miraculous interventions, the ascetic brings the figure to life, underscoring the extraordinary nature of spiritual devotion and prayer. Other examples include dramatic consequences of actions and lavish descriptions of wealth and beauty. In many tales, small actions are followed by severely exaggerated consequences, such as extreme punishments and divine retribution, collectively reflecting the significance of the moral lesson within the story. Nakhshabi's narrative also includes dramatic descriptions of mundane commodities that evoke a mythical-level opulence and an exaggerated portrayal of heroines' beauty, elevating them to the status of celestial beings. In the following passage from chapter 7, Nakhshabi's description of beauty serves not only as an aesthetic but as an extreme depiction of perfection.

Once upon a time, the Rai of Bahlestān had a daughter that the painter of authority had never drawn a more perfect form in the studio of time, nor had the designer of destiny seen a more beautiful figure in the workshop of creation.

وقتی رای بهلستان دختری داشت که نقاش قدرت در علم خانه روزگار علمی بهتر از او نکشیده بود و نقشبند قضا در<sup>247</sup> کارخانه ادوار نقشی خوشتر از او ندیده.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid, 56.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid, 62.

In another instance, in the chapter 36 of the *Ṭuṭināma*, Nakhshabi's narratorial persona, the parrot, relates the story of a king who hears about the unimaginable beauty, charm, perfection, and chastity of a certain merchant's daughter, named Maḥrusa. Intrigued, he dispatches his viziers to verify the claims and, if they prove true, to seek her hand in marriage on his behalf. After seeing her, the viziers decide to dissuade the king from marrying her to safeguard the affairs of the kingdom. Losing hope of marrying the king, Maḥrusa instead marries a magistrate whose house is adjacent to the royal palace. One day, from the balcony of his palace, the king catches sight of Maḥrusa. Captivated by her charm and overcome with anger at his viziers' betrayal, he falls gravely ill. The story is as follows,

In the end, the king sacrificed his life for this and perished while consumed by this thought. When Maḥrusa heard of his death, said, "Someone who gave up his kingdom and life for my love, it would not be just if I did not have my life sacrificed for his grave and my body offered as a shield of dust for him." On the fourth day, under the pretense of visiting his grave, she went to his burial site, carrying a dagger with her, she ended her life. When the magistrate heard of this story, he too went to the same site, slit his own throat, and took his own life in despair.

عاقبت پادشاه جان در سر آن کار کرد، و هم درین اندیشه هلاک شد. محروسه چون خبر فوت او شنید، گفت کسی که ملک در راه عشق من باخت و جان در سر کار من کرد، این از انصاف نباشد که من جان فدای گور او نکنم و تن پی سپر خاک او نگردانم. پس روز چهارم بیهانه زیارت بر سر خاک او رفت و دشنه ای با خود ببرد و خود را بر سر گور او هلاک کرد. کوتوال چون این حکایت بشنید، هم در آن مشهد رفت و سر خود را به دست خود برید و جان خود را هم به دست خود کشید.<sup>248</sup>

The passage above is an example of exaggerated emotional expressions, displaying devotion, love, and loyalty.

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<sup>248</sup> Ibid, 305.

## Chapter 8 (The Tale of the Prince, the Seven Viziers, and the Misfortune that Befell Him Because of a Maidservant)

Now that some of the storytelling techniques of the *Tuṭīnāma* have been introduced, let us turn to chapter 8 to examine the complex layering of its embedded subdivisions, which are thematically connected under an overarching embedded tale. As mentioned previously, Nakhshabi turned the embedded tales into more coherent interrelated narratives by eliminating their substories. The sole exception is chapter 8, which contains six substories, while the other chapters include no more than two subdivisions. As a result, chapter 8 stands out for its greater complexity in this regard. Like all other embedded tales, the tale begins with an elaborate description of the sunset, followed by Khojasta posing a question to the parrot and receiving its wise response. The following is Khojasta and the parrot's conversation,

O you, who are regarded by the righteous and esteemed by the virtuous, I wish to insert my finger into my own eye and pull out my eyeball. For I have fallen into endless misfortunes one after another because of what I have seen, and this misfortune has befallen me due to my vision. What alignment of the stars was observing me that my gaze fell upon my beloved? For neither does my heart find relief from its burning, nor do my eyes escape from the reflection.

ای ملحوظ ابرار و ای منظور اخیار، می خواهم انگشت در چشم خود درون کنم و دیده خود چون روده جانور بیرون کشم که من در انواع بلا پی در پی چشم افتاده ام، و مرا این قدر به سبب نظر پیش آمده. کدام کواکب خونی در من ناظر بود که<sup>249</sup> نظر من بر دوست افتاد؟ که نه دل از التهاب خلاص می بیند و نه دیده از انسکاب مناص می یابد.

The above passage reflects a dramatic style and vivid imagery, highlighting Khojasta's internal conflict. Her state creates an ideal opportunity for the parrot's sympathetic, yet distracting tales. Through Khojasta's mention of the eye and vision, the parrot shifts the conversation to an anecdote about Caliph Ma'mun. The parrot replies,

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<sup>249</sup> Ibid, 69.

Every calamity that befalls lovers stems from the eyes, and every affliction that torments the beloved originates from sight. The wise men say, “Whoever prevents their eyes from the forbidden, their body will never encounter hardship.” Once, Caliph Ma'mun saw his son with a scratched face and asked, “What happened.” The son replied, “Yesterday, I was riding a brown horse and fell, which caused my face to be scratched.” By “horse,” he was referring to wine. Ma'mun responded, “If you had ridden a white horse, you would not have fallen, nor would your face have been scratched.” Here, Ma'mun referred to water as the “white horse.” O Khojasta, had you kept your gaze and refrained from looking here and there, the severe misfortune that has come upon you would never have occurred, nor would the calamity that has confronted you ever have reached you.

هر بلایی که عشاق را مشاهده می شود، همه بواسطه چشمست، و هر آفتی که محب را معاینه می شود، همه بواسطه نظر. حکما گویند: هر که چشم از نادیدنی نگاه دارد، تن او هرگز نادیدنی نبیند. وقتی مامون خلیفه روی پسر خود دید خراشیده، پرسید چه شده؟ پسر گفت دی بر کمیت سوار بودم. بیفتادم و روی من خراشیده شد. و مراد او از این کمیت شراب بود. مامون گفت اگر تو بر خنگ سوار شوی هرگز نیفتی و روی تو خراشیده نشود. و مقصود او از خنگ آب بود. ای خجسته، تو نیز اگر چشم بر خود می داشتی و نظر درین و آن نمی گماشتی، شدیدی که تو را پیش آمده هرگز پیش نیامدی، و مکادیدی که به<sup>250</sup> تو معترض شده هرگز نرسیدی.

It appears that the parrot's speech highlights the perils of danger, desire, and temptation.

He begins by talking about the potential risks associated with the eyes and vision, and then he gives an example that connects them to bad luck. Two characters in this anecdote, Caliph Ma'mūn and his son, are actual historical figures. The parrot's reference to well-known rulers makes his warning more credible, and their status enhances the weight of his message. The parrot's choice of historical figures enhances the didactic tone rather than offering direct relatability. In this way, he skillfully amuses and redirects the mistress by talking about self-awareness and moderation. Then, Khojasta adds,

O Socrates of the era, and O Hippocrates of the time, if I go near the beloved, in which direction should I cast my gaze?

<sup>251</sup>ای سقراط عهد و ای بقراط زمانه، اگر من در وثاق دوست روم در کدام جانب نظر اندازم؟

<sup>250</sup> Ibid, 69-70.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid, 70.

The above sentence reflects Khojasta's deep trust in the parrot's guidance, wisdom, and her reliance on his perspective and insight. The parrot then continues with another anecdote.

Once, a preacher was asked about which direction people should look when going to wash their bodies in a pool of water? He replied, "They should look at their own clothes, so they don't get robbed." Similarly, in the presence of the beloved, you should direct your gaze only upon him, so that there does not entertain other thoughts or become distracted. If he has a good brother or a fine close friend, you should not look at them. If you do, the effect will be similar to that of received by the king's maidservant upon her evil gaze.

وقتی مذکری را پرسیدند که چون مردم از برای شستن اندام در حوض درون آب روند، نظر در کدام جانب باید داشت؟ مذکر گفت: جانب جامه خود تا طراری نبرد. تو را نیز در حضور دوست، نظر هم بر دوست باید داشت، تا او اندیشه دیگر نکند و خیال او را در وهم نیندازد. اگر او را برادری باشد خوب و یاری بود مرغوب، در ایشان نظر نباید کرد. و اگر ببینی،<sup>252</sup> تو را از دیدن همان معاینه شود که کنیزک پادشاه را از نظر بد مشاهده شد.

Going back to the topic of dissembling morals from Chapter 1, extracting a clear, consistent moral lesson from the parrot's anecdotes proves difficult. While the parrot presents himself as the source of wisdom, his tales do not include a straightforward moral lesson. Rather, they are complex, combined with allegory and metaphor. His reflection on vision, desire, and temptation, for instance, is perhaps more concerned with distracting, confusing, and comforting Khojasta, and captivating the audience's attention than offering insight and moral guidance. It must be noted that this ambiguity does not contradict the parrot's moralizing role. Rather, it reflects the layered pedagogical strategy employed by Nakhshabi, who uses entertainment as a vehicle for instruction. While the parrot's tales are indirectly moral, they ultimately support Nakhshabi's broader didactic aims.

Ignoring the real significance of his stories and provoked by her curiosity, Khojasta responds, "How was that?" The parrot introduces the first layer of tales within the eighth night starting with the story of "The Prince." He explains that once there was a king in India who fathered a son in his old age. When astrologers read the boy's horoscope, they predicted a great

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<sup>252</sup> Ibid, 70.

calamity would befall him at the age of thirteen. However, they also predicted that he would later be saved from it. While the audience might expect the narrative to immediately focus on this prediction, it becomes evident later that the detail of “calamity and being saved” serves as a foreshadowing of the story’s climax. This motif, introduced early on, recedes into the background only to reemerge later as an important instance of thematic patterning, underlining its importance.

The parrot continues by describing how the father wished his son to learn various sciences and arts. The son, however, was exceptionally dim-witted and foolish. For twelve years, wise men and scholars attempted to teach him different subjects, but he showed no aptitude for learning. One day, the king gathered all the wise men and scholars to discuss his son’s lack of progress. A wise man then spoke and said:

“The influence of the planetary fathers and the elemental mothers is effective. In this celestial realm of sovereignty, until today, there has been a star observing whose influence has brought about dullness and led to a lack of growth. Today, that star is leaving his fortune. This boy must be left with me for six months so that what he has not achieved in these twelve years may be accomplished within these six months, and he may become proficient in the various branches of knowledge and arts.”

نظر آبیای علوی و امهات سفلی موثر است. درین کواکب فلك سلطنت، تا امروز کویکی ناظر بود که نظر او مقتضی بلادت باشد و مفضی بغیر رشد بود. امروز آن کواکب از طالع او می رود. شش ماه این پسر را بر من می باید گذاشت تا آنچه او درین مدت دوازده سال حاصل نشده است درین شش ماه حاصل شود، و به فنون علم ذوفنون گردد.<sup>253</sup>

The king accepted the wise man’s suggestion. In response, the wise man took the prince to a remote place and built a school. He made the roof of the hall, its surfaces, and its courtyard bright and clear, and illustrated various branches of knowledge in every corner of the building. The parrot then elaborates in detail on all the knowledge taught to the prince during those six months:

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<sup>253</sup> Ibid, 71.

In one corner, he showed the structure of the heavens, the zodiac, and the fixed and wandering stars in writing. In another, he illustrated the rules of religious law, the arrangements of prayer and fasting, and the concepts of alienation and kinship. In one section, he recounted the types of illnesses, the names of medicines, the properties of substances, the structure of the pulse, and diagnostic signs. In another, he transcribed mathematical and natural sciences, and drew the shapes of triangles, squares, arcs, and straight lines.

In summary, there was no knowledge whose form and meaning he did not write in that house. He engaged both hearing and sight. He engaged in explaining concepts while illustrating them. The doors of growth and prosperity were conquered to the prince, and the secrets of wisdom were revealed to him. Soon, he comprehended all those sciences and mastered their benefits.

جانبی هیئت أفلاك و بروج و کواکب ثابتہ و سیارہ منقلب در قلم آورد، و طرفی از احکام شرع و هیئت صلوه و صوم و رحم و قطع صورت کرد. جانبی اجناس علل و اسامی ادویہ و خواص اشیاء و هیئت نبض و دلیل باز نمود. طرفی علم ریاضی و طبیعی و اشکال مثلث و مربع و مقوس و مستقیم تحریر کرد.

فی الجملہ، هیچ علمی نبود کہ صورت و معنی او در آن خانہ ننوشت. سمع و بصر در کار آورد. معنی می گفت و صورت می نمود. أبواب رشد و برو مفتوح شد و اسرار حکمت برو مکشوف گشت عن قریب آن ہمہ علوم را درک کرد و آن ہم<sup>254</sup> فواید را حاوی شد.

This passage serves as an example of dramatic excess. Despite failing to learn anything during the first twelve years of his life, the prince remarkably mastered all branches of science within just six months. When the six-month period had passed, the wise man said to the prince, “Tomorrow is the day your knowledge will be tested by the king. You must answer all of his questions correctly so that you may earn praise, and I will be rewarded for having guided you. But first, allow me to examine your horoscope to determine the most auspicious time to present you at the king’s court.”<sup>255</sup> However, upon examining the prince’s horoscope, he exclaimed:

O Prince, although I managed to rescue you from one calamity with a hundred tricks, I now see a hundred other calamities surrounding you. I foresee that the next seven days will be so burdensome for you that during this time, you will face both the fear of losing your life and the dread of destruction. However, your salvation lies in one thing, and that is to refrain from speaking during this week, and if you do speak, you will have risked your life for the sake of your tongue.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid, 71-2.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid, 72.

ای شهزاده، اگر تو را با صد حيله از يك محنت بيرون آوردم، صد محنت ديگر مي بينم به تو محيط گشته. هفت روز بر تو چنان گران مي يابم كه تو را درين هفت روز هم بيم جانست و هم ترس تهلكه. اما خلاص تو در يك چيز است، و آن آنست كه تو لب از گفتن فروبندی و درين هفته اصلا سخن مگویی، و اگر سخن بگویی جان در سر كار زبان کرده باشی.<sup>256</sup>

The account of the prince's learning experience, however, does not mark the conclusion of the tale. Instead, it serves as a subsidiary scene, presented through dramatic visualization, to build suspense and delay the transition to the story's climax. Here, for the second time, the parrot mentions a great calamity that will befall the prince. The recurring reference to "calamity and being saved" establishes a foundation for thematic patterning. As mentioned, the wise man took the prince to his father the following day. Despite their efforts, per the wise man's advice, the prince remained silent in the king's court. "Why did we think he would learn from wise men and scholars?" said the disappointed king. "He even forgot the few words he used to say." The viziers responded, "He is timid in the presence of men at the court and should be sent to the harem, where he might feel more comfortable speaking." There was a maidservant at the king's court who had been infatuated with the prince for years. She suggested to the king that they take the prince to her house to better understand his state of mind. This marks the first instance of repetitive designation in the narrative. The maidservant initially appears to be an insignificant character, but her true significance will become evident later.

The maidservant took the prince to her house and began expressing her love for him. "My heart has been burning for you for years," she said. "However, time has not allowed me to share the story of my love with you. Today, I am fortunate to have the opportunity to be with you and express my feelings." When the prince heard her words, he became upset and quickly left her room. The maidservant said to herself, "What mistake have I made? I should not have revealed

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<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

my secret to him; I should have kept it to myself. What will happen to me now? I must find a way to protect myself before they accuse me of lacking virtue.” Therefore,

She tore her clothes and scratched her face, and, seeking refuge, went to the presence of the king and said, “You have a fine son, and a good outcome has emerged from you! He wishes to engage in love and be with someone who is like a mother to him. By the king’s command, I took him to my house, and like a mother, I said, ‘O jewel from the royal mine and O pearl in the crown of the king, why this silence, and what is the cause of your quietness?’ He began, ‘I am your Majnun, be my Leilā. I am Farhad for you, be my Shirin. The overwhelming love of yours has sealed my lips in silence, and the passion of your attraction has placed the seal of silence upon my lips.’ He spoke such words and made advances towards me. If I had not cried out and raised a public accusation, he would have remained to prevent my (skirt of) chastity from being polluted with (the filth of) depravity, and my (sleeve of) modesty from being stained with (the impurity of) vice. May His Majesty take justice for me from that rebellious infatuated one.”

جامه بدرید و روی بخر اشید و مستغاث کنان به حضرت پادشاه رفت، و گفت نیکو پسری داری و خوش نتیجه ایست که از تو پیدا شده! او می خواهد با ما هم عشق بازی کند و با مادر همبستر شود. بحکم فرمان پادشاه او را در منزل خود بردم و چون مادران با او گفتن گرفتم، که ای گوهر کان شاهی و ای در صدف شهنشاهی، سبب سکوت چیست و موجب خاموشی چه؟ او خود آغاز کرد که من مجنون توام، تو لیلی من باش. من فرهاد توام، تو شیرین من باش. عشق غالبه تو قفل سکوت در دهان من کرده و شوق جاذبه تو مهر صموت بر لب من نهاده. مثل این کلمات بگفت و قصد من کرد. اگر نه جزع و فزع کردمی و تشنیه و تقریح در میان نیاوردمی هیچ نمانده بود که دامن عصمت مرا به لوث فسق ملوث کند و آستین عفت<sup>257</sup> مرا به الایش فجور متلطح گرداند. حضرت پادشاه جای انصاف من از آن شیفته سرکش بستاند.

Hearing her words, the king resolved to deliver a just verdict and vindicate the innocent woman. He therefore ordered the immediate execution of the son. This section exemplifies the technique of thematic patterning, centering on an important “calamity.” At this point, the reader might anticipate the prince being “saved” as part of the unfolding of the great “calamity.” Just as the audience begins to anticipate what comes next, the parrot reveals that the king had seven viziers. One of the viziers requested the executioner to delay the order, offering to approach the king and present several suggestions to save the prince from this peril. The vizier then went to the king’s court and advised him to reconsider, warning that the consequences of hasty action might lead to regret. He continued:

<sup>257</sup> Ibid, 73-4.

...One should not act recklessly in discussions with the weak-minded. Women possess deceit in every expression and treachery in every motion. Has the story of the woman and the dyer not reached the ears of the king?

...به گفت ناقص العقل در تهور نباید شد. زنان را به هر عبارتی مگری بود و در هر اشارتی غدري باشد. مگر به<sup>258</sup> سمع پادشاه حکایت زن و رنگریز نرسیده است؟

The king replied, “What was the story?” In this way, the parrot introduces the second layer of the inner frame narrative, which unfolds over the course of six nights. To avoid repetition, only the analysis of the first night, “The Story of the Woman and the Dyer,” will be presented here. The vizier responded, “There was a love affair between a woman and a dyer. Sometimes the woman would visit him, and other times he would go to her. The dyer had an exceptionally handsome apprentice, and one day, he sent him to summon the woman. Seeing a promising replacement for the dyer, she approached to entice him. When the dyer realized his apprentice was late, he took his sword and went to the woman’s house. Sensing his approach, the woman hid the apprentice and went to open the door. ‘I summoned you this morning,’ said the dyer. ‘You haven’t even put on your shoes,’ he continued. ‘Has something happened?’ The woman replied,

“You should have sent for a woman, not a man, for he came to the door and conveyed your greeting. Although I asked him, he did not come and left instead. How could I come to you at the request of someone like him?”

به طلب من زنی باید فرستان، نه مردی، که او بر در آمد و سلام تو به تبلیغ رسانید. هر چند که او را<sup>259</sup> خواندم نیامد، و هم از بیرون رفت. به استدعا این چنین کس چگونه توان آمدن.

In the midst of her conversation with the dyer, the master of the house arrived. The dyer’s state changed as he wondered what to do. ‘Draw your sword from its scabbard, and amidst turmoil and cursing, pretend to leave my house so that no one dares to approach you.’ He followed the woman’s instructions, left her house unharmed, and safely reached his destination.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid, 74.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid, 74-5.

This reference to the sword presents another example of repetitive designation. While the sword may initially seem like an insignificant object, it ultimately plays a central role in the dyer's escape from danger. The master of the house, puzzled, wondered what was happening. He asked the woman, 'Who was that?' The woman replied, 'I must give charity for you, as an omen, since you have escaped such a calamity and remained unharmed by that madman. I was sitting here when a young boy approached me, asking for help to escape this madman. I hid him in the house, but the madman, armed with a sword, barged in, searching for the boy. I denied the boy's presence, and he couldn't find him. The madman intended to strike me, but then you arrived.' 'Where is the boy?' asked the master of the house. 'In that corner,' replied the woman. The master went over, saw the boy, and said, 'You have been saved from such a great calamity. Beware, do not leave the house immediately. You must not fall into his grasp. Now you are a trusted one, and this house is as your own. Come and go freely, without question, and never forget your mother.' The boy was a master in such matters and had fallen in love many times before. He kissed the master's hand, apologized, and returned to his house."

After finishing his story said the vizier to the king,

"Women have deceit under every expression and treachery beneath every gesture. Their words should not be listened to, and their words should not be accepted."

زنان را در زیر هر عبارتی مکرری و تحت هر اشارتی غدري باشد. سخن ایشان نباید شنيد و گفت ایشان قبول نباید کرد.<sup>260</sup>

Hearing this tale and listening to this narrative, the king's anger diminished, and he ordered that the prince be taken to prison. Early on the second day, the maidservant returned to the court and sought justice. The king ordered that the prince be taken to the execution grounds. The second vizier went to the king and said,

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<sup>260</sup> Ibid, 75.

It is established that haste in all matters is harmful, and more so for rulers. A task whose outcome is disastrous is better left undone, and a path with harmful consequences is better not to be taken. Women lay traps under every step, and their company should not be pursued, and their words should not be trusted. Has the story of the merchant and his wife not reached your highness's ears?

مقرر رأی اعلی باد که شتاب در همه کار زشت است و از سلاطین زشت تر. کاری که عاقبت او وخیم است اگر نکند بهتر، و راهی که عواقب او ذمیم است اگر نرود اولیتر. زنان را زیر هر گامی دامی باشد، و متابعت ایشان نباید کرد و بر قول ایشان<sup>261</sup> اعتماد نباید نمود. مگر به سمع اعلی حکایت آن تاجر و زن او نرسیده است؟

Here, as in the first instance, after hearing the story, the king ordered the prince to be sent to prison instead of the execution grounds. At this point, knowing that the king had seven viziers, a formal pattern began to emerge, suggesting that this sequence would recur. This sequence—beginning with the vizier's attempt to dissuade the king from executing the prince through the power of storytelling, followed by a narrative about feminine guile that softened the king's heart, and culminating in the king's decision to delay the prince's execution for another night by sending him to prison -- was repeated six times throughout the story. This establishes a thematic pattern, where the viziers' stories focus on feminine guile to prove the prince's innocence and expose the maidservant's treachery. These six intervals and short narratives collectively reinforce the central theme of Chapter 8 and the overarching *Tuṭināma* narrative -- that appearances can be deceiving, and people, particularly women, may use cunning to manipulate situations.

Thus far, we have encountered the foreshadowed theme of “calamity and being saved” in two separate instances, with the “calamity” already revealed. At this stage, the reader naturally anticipates the unfolding of the “being saved” aspect. After six days of storytelling by the king's six viziers, it is now, as expected, the seventh vizier's turn to intervene and save the prince. Furthermore, we know that the wise man had advised the prince to remain silent for an entire week. On the morning of the seventh day, following the story's established pattern, the

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<sup>261</sup> Ibid, 76.

maidservant returned to the king, demanding justice. Upon hearing this, the king ordered the prince to be taken to the execution grounds. However, following the advice of the seventh vizier, the prince was instead brought before the king. Upon entering the royal court, the prince began to speak, revealing the full story of the maidservant. Hearing his son's account, the king asked, "Why didn't you reveal your story on the first day and suffer in the prison cell for a week?" "I was advised by the wise man to refrain from speaking for a week," said the prince. Hearing this, the king summoned the wise man to his court and demanded an explanation. The wise man replied, "After the prince completed his six-month-long training, I examined his horoscope and saw a great calamity forthcoming, one that would bring him face-to-face with death. However, I also foresaw that through silence, the outcome of this calamity would turn in his favor, and he would be saved."

Upon realizing this and confirming that the prince had mastered all branches of knowledge within those six months, the king crowned the prince, entrusted him with the state's affairs, shaved his own head, donned the Sufi robe, and ordered the maidservant to be executed. After bringing the story to this point, the parrot looked at Khojasta and said:

O mistress, when you go in the company of the beloved, your heart must be entirely devoted to him, and your gaze should be fully fixed on him. The maidservant of the king, who endured so many hardships and intrigues, ultimately faced ruin and destruction, because she did not keep her heart focused and her eyes attentive to herself. As a result, she saw what she saw and suffered what she suffered.

ای کد بانو چون در مجلس دوست روی باید که دل تو بکلی بدو باشد و نظر تو بتمامی سوی او بود. کنیزک پادشاه که چندان شداید و مکاید معاینه کرد و در معرض تو او تلف افتاد از آن افتاد که دل بخود نداشت و دیده بخود نگماشت. لاجرم<sup>262</sup> دید آنچه دید و کشید آنچه کشید.

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<sup>262</sup> Ibid, 84.

Here the moral of the story seems to overshadow the events of the frame tale. As suggested in the overarching narrative of the *Ṭuṭināma*, upon hearing this, Khojasta hurried to unite with her beloved. However, the arrival of the morning light delayed her departure. To summarize, while the parrot presents the tale as a story about the maidservant, the pattern of chapter 8 can be outlined as follows: First, the introduction of the inner frame narrative, which highlights the great calamity that befalls the young prince. Second, the inner frame narrative, which comprises six tales recounted by the king's viziers, serving as cautionary stories aimed at changing the king's mind, softening his heart, and broadening his perspective. Third, the king's conversation with the final vizier, which culminates in the prince's salvation from the great calamity. As shown, Nakhshabi employs all the storytelling techniques introduced earlier in chapter 8.

## Time and Repetition

The author of *Fiction and Repetition*, J. Hillis Miller, defines a novel as “a complex tissue of repetitions and repetitions within repetitions, or of repetitions linked in chain fashion to other repetitions.”<sup>263</sup> He asserts that recurrences within a novel serve as literary tools to create meaning. Correspondingly, in her work, *Arabesque*, Sandra Naddaff studies the complex relationship between time and repetition in the *Arabian Nights*, asserting that repetition is inherently linked with time -- it relies on sequential structure to exist, and without a temporal framework, it loses both context and meaning. She continues that although subtle, the use of repetition in narratives underscores the temporal framework of the narrative structure.<sup>264</sup> Similarly, *Ṭuṭināma* tales inherently unfold within a temporal framework. Like the *Arabian Nights*, there exists a complex relationship between time and repetition in the *Ṭuṭināma*. The *Ṭuṭināma* utilizes repetition as a narrative device to structure its stories and engage with the concept of time. As a diachronic linear narrative, the *Ṭuṭināma* tales are presented in the order they occur, having a beginning, middle, and end. Without any noteworthy shift or eruption of the narrative timeline, in the *Ṭuṭināma* frame tale, one event leads to the next, creating a straightforward progression of time. This feature allows the audience to easily follow the sequence of events, progression of characters, and themes. The horizontal and vertical axes of time, however, progress in tandem. In other words, the unfolding of events within the frame story’s timeline progresses simultaneously with the act of narration and the relating of the embedded tales, adding a layer of complexity to the narrative.<sup>265</sup> This section will first explore

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<sup>263</sup>J. Hillis Miller, *Fiction and Repetition: Seven English Novels* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 2–3.

<sup>264</sup> Sandra Naddaff, *Arabesque: Narrative Structure and the Aesthetics of Repetition in the 1001 Nights* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 89–95. For more on the complex relationship between time and narrative, see Paul Ricoeur, “Narrative Time,” *Critical Inquiry* 7, no. 1 (1980): 169–90, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1343181>.

<sup>265</sup> Sandra Naddaff, *Arabesque*, 89–95.

how the two temporal dimensions interact and how they shape the unfolding of the *Ṭuṭināma* narrative. It will then explore the role of nighttime in Nakhshabi's storytelling. Finally, it will argue that the *Ṭuṭināma* embodies elements of both repetitive and linear narratives.<sup>266</sup>

## I. Horizontal and Vertical Axis

Time serves both as a device and a theme in the *Ṭuṭināma* narrative, shaping how the narrative is constructed and experienced. Time generates structure and sequence in the *Ṭuṭināma*. The *Ṭuṭināma* uses repetition as a thematic and structural device to resist linearity, delay the end, and prolong the unfolding of events. This complex relationship between time and repetition adds layers of meaning to the narrative and challenges its linearity. Over the course of fifty-two nights, time organizes *Ṭuṭināma*'s events giving the narrative an overall chronological structure. Following sundown, every chapter of the *Ṭuṭināma* progresses overnight, lasting until the next morning. This horizontal progression, shaped by repetition and structure, combined with the vertical advancement of time in the individual embedded tales, enhances the complexity of the narrative's temporal framework. The *Ṭuṭināma* narrative intricately manipulates the horizontal and vertical axes of time to create its own temporal logic. Motivated by the need to delay his death, the parrot tells stories to buy time, disrupt the natural flow of time, and avoid the

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<sup>266</sup> Another approach to the concept of time in Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma* can be explored through the concept of chronotope, developed by Mikhail Bakhtin. Bakhtin's chronotope explains how narratives combine time and space into a unified, meaning-generating structure. Bakhtin defines the chronotope as the organizing matrix of a narrative, where time becomes visible through spatial representation and space gains narrative significance through its interaction with time.<sup>266</sup> The *Tutinama*'s layered storytelling structure, where shorter stories unfold within tales and challenge the linear progression, creates a dynamic interplay of time and space. Thus, Bakhtin's chronotope helps interpret how *Tutinama* blends oral storytelling traditions with dynamic spatiotemporal structures. Enchanted gardens, royal palaces, and mystical realms are just a few of the chronotopic worlds that the *Tutinama*'s embedded stories transport the audience to, even as its frame narrative constructs a cyclical temporality. The text's nested storytelling reflects Bakhtin's idea of the adventure-time chronotope, where episodic, fantastical events defy chronological development. See Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 84-110.

inevitability of an ending. He either has to kill time or be killed himself. By introducing a reverse layer of time, he inserts a new dimension into the narrative, countering the forward progression of time and deepening its complexity.

Narratorial techniques such as flashbacks and foreshadowing enable the audience to explore the past and anticipate future developments.<sup>267</sup> The parrot, uses this function of time effectively to remind Khojasta of the possible consequences of her adulterous temptations. An example of flashbacks and flashforwards can be found in chapter 15, “the tale of the lion and the cat, the slaying of the mice by the cat’s claws, and the cat’s remorse.” In this story, the parrot relates the tale of a lion, who was once the ruler of all wild beasts in a meadow. As he aged, however, his infirmities worsened, and his jaws became weaker. Thus, he became a clumsy eater, and morsels of meat stuck between his teeth. In that meadow lived some mice, who took advantage of the situation, visiting the lion in his sleep to remove the remnants of his food. This disturbed the lion’s peace and sleep, and despite his might, the lion found himself helpless against the mice, unable to protect himself.

The sea, with all its movement, is a shield for the frog, and the mountain, with its firmness, is a trample place for the leopard. It is said that when a lion cub is separated from its mother and born, ants will cling to it. And most often, the lion cub dies from the ants. The lion inspects everything and is unable to free its cub from their aggression. Why is this? It is because those who possess power see their own weakness and not become proud of their strength.

دریا با آن همه حرکت پی سپر غوک است و کوه با چندان صلابت لگد مال پلنگ. چنین گویند چون بچه شیر از مادر منفصل و متولد می شود مور در او آویزد. و بیشتر مرگ شیر بچه از موران باشد. شیر آن همه معاینه کند و نتواند که بچه خود را از دست تعدی ایشان خلاص دهد. این از چیست؟ تا ارباب قوت عجز خود بینند و نظر در قوت خود نکنند.<sup>268</sup>

The parrot then continues with an anecdote about Imam Shāfe‘i, which was already referenced earlier. While the section above is not the end of the lion’s tale, it effectively serves as

<sup>267</sup> Seymour Chatman, “Genette’s Analysis of Narrative Time Relations,” *L’Esprit Créateur* 14, no. 4 (1974): 353–68, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26280067>.

<sup>268</sup> Zīā’ al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭīnāma*, 139.

an example to demonstrate how the parrot uses time and repetition to add complexity to the narrative. Through the interplay of flashbacks and flashforwards, quickly recapping the lion's past before describing his present state, the parrot's tale explores themes of strength turning into weakness. This theme is first encountered in the embedded tale about the lion, who was once a mighty ruler and is now helpless against mice. The story, however, serves as an example of more profound existential truths, echoed in additional commentary about the lion cub, ants, and the fly disturbing the Caliph. The shifts in time between the lion's past glory and present frailty enrich the narrative, underscoring how even the most powerful are vulnerable to the seemingly insignificant. Together, the lion's tale and the commentary serve as a cautionary lesson for both Khojasta and Nakhshabi's audience.

The progression of time influences the pacing and rhythm of the chapters and the overall narrative. It determines how quickly, or slowly narrative events unfold. Nakhshabi's fast-paced recounting builds tension, while his slower-paced descriptions allow deeper explorations of details. A great example of how Nakhshabi manipulates time to impact pacing, and rhythm can be found in chapter 39, "the tale of the merchant of Neishāpur and his wife Shahr Ārā." As discussed in chapter 1 of this dissertation, this story is about a merchant who is deceived by his wife. The following examples illustrate the slower-paced descriptions employed to disclose details about the wealthy yet foolish merchant and his beautiful yet manipulative wife.

There was a merchant in Neishāpur with great wealth and countless possessions, but extremely ignorant and foolish. Wealth and endless riches are bestowed upon the foolish and ignorant, because the ignorant, due to his ignorance, spends all his time gathering gold, while the fool, out of sheer stupidity, spends all his time accumulating possessions.

وقتی در نیشابور بازرگانی بود با مال بسیار و منال بی شمار، اما بغایت نادان و از حد احمق. خود زر فراوان و مال بی پایان نصیب نادان و احمق است، بنابراین نادان از فرط نادانی همه وقت در جمع کردن زر است و احمق از غایت حماقت<sup>269</sup> همه وقت در گرد کردن مال بود.

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<sup>269</sup> Ibid, 320.

This merchant had a wife named Shahr Ārā , who was of the utmost beauty and the pinnacle of grace. Her charm was as valuable as the merchant's wealth, and her loveliness was beyond measure as her husband's ignorance. Although her husband treated her kindly, she was always distant and evasive with him. No matter how much her husband provided for her, she was indifferent, and all her attention was directed elsewhere.

این بازرگان زنی داشت شهر آرای نام، در غایت جمال و نهایت دلالت. لطافت او چون مال بازرگان بیعد، و ملاحظت او چون جهالت شوی بیحد. هر چند که شوی با او بساختی او با شوی نساختی، و هر چند خواجه با او پرداختی او با شوی نپرداختی و همه وقت از صحبت او کاره بودی.<sup>270</sup>

The parrot's deliberate slowdown gives depth to the narrative and allows the audience to fully grasp the nuances of both characters, emphasizing his foolishness and her cunning nature. In contrast, the pace quickens when Shahr Ārā discovers that her husband is hiding under the bed and devises a scheme to deceive him.

Then she signaled to the lover that someone is beneath the bed and began loudly saying, "O my father and O my brother, sitting above this bed, beware! Do not look at me with lust in your gaze. I have invited a stranger and positioned you in place of my pure husband, have a great purpose under this, and beneath it lies a profound secret..."

پس معشوق را اشارت کرد که زیر تخت کسی هست، و بلند آغاز کرد که ای پدر من و ای برادر من که بالای این تخت نشسته ای. زنهار در من به دیده شهوت نبینی و به نظر خیانت ننگری. من که مرد بیگانه را خوانده ام و بجای شوی پاک خود نشانده ام، مرا در تحت این کاری است بزرگ و در زیر آن سری است شگرف...<sup>271</sup>

The rapid sequence of events, including her realization of her husband's presence, the devising of a scheme, her gesture to her lover indicating her husband's presence, and the execution of her plan, unfolds rapidly, building tension and creating anticipation in the reader. This interchange between fast and slow pacing enhances the complexity of the story, heightens tension, and provides momentum for thought and reflection.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid, 321.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid, 322.

The characters, relationships, and themes in the *Ṭuṭināma* grow, change, and evolve over time. Time operates on multiple layers within the narrative. There are stories within the stories and substories, which create a nesting effect with multiple temporal levels, altogether creating a complex web of time. A tripartite concept, time serves as the sequence of narrative events or plot time, storyteller or narratorial time, and lastly reader's time, which reflects the time the audience takes to experience the story.<sup>272</sup> This matryoshka effect of time in the *Ṭuṭināma* continues, particularly in the narratorial time, which itself unfolds on four levels. The first level of narratorial time transpires when we hear Nakhshabi's voice directly addressing the overarching story of the merchant, his parrot, and Khojasta in his introduction, the beginning and end of each night, and the epilogue. The primary storyteller's time remains implicit throughout the chapters, only surfacing in Nakhshabi's interpolations and at the end of each night.

Khojasta put the veil of shamelessness upon her head and donned the shoes of recklessness. Just as she was about to set out, the day began to display its bright appearance and her departure was forestalled.

خجسته چادر بی شرمی بر سر کرد و موزه نا حفاظتی در پای افکند و خواست تا روان شود، روز که روز او  
خوش باد ظاهر شد و صبح چهره لمعانی بگشاد و رفتن او در توقف افتاد.<sup>273</sup>

The second level of narratorial time emerges through the narrator's narratorial persona, the parrot's voice, which comes through clearly at the beginning of each tale, addressing himself in the first person and directly addressing Khojasta. An example of this can be found in chapter 16, where the parrot engages in a conversation with Khojasta, as shown below.

I have told you a hundred times to go to your beloved and unite with your desire. If, by chance, this secret is revealed and this mystery comes to light, I have already considered a solution to this concern and have thought of a way to resolve this situation.

<sup>272</sup> Sandra Naddaff, *Arabesque*, 89-95.

<sup>273</sup> Žiā' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭināma*, 324.

من صد بار می گویم که تو بر محبوب خود برو و بر مطلوب خود بپیوند. اگر میادا این سر کشف شود و این راز<sup>274</sup> در حیرت ظهور آید من دفع این اندیشه هم اندیشیده ام و اصلاح این واقعه در خاطر نیز گذرانیده ام.

The third level of narratorial time emerges when the parrot relates his tales and the omniscient narratorial voice ostensibly belongs to him. While the voice clearly belongs to the parrot, the tone adopts the qualities of an omniscient narrator. As we progress through the levels of narratorial time, the narratorial voice recedes, only becoming increasingly faint over time. Examples of this narratorial voice can be found in the opening of the parrot's tales, where the omniscient narrator provides a detailed overview of his tale. Below is an example of the third level of narratorial time from chapter 21.

It has been narrated that in the region of Gujarat, lived a Brahmin who possessed wealth, prosperity, and riches. Suddenly, the deceitful heavens and treacherous times threw the dice of his destiny into the door of misfortune and took back everything they had given him, turning him into an impoverished person and a beggar.

روایت کرده اند که در نواحی گجرات برهمنی بود که با مال و منال و ثروت و غنیت و ثروت، ناگاه فلك مکار و زمانه غدار مهره<sup>275</sup> مراد او در ششدر نامرادی انداخت و آنچه بدو داده بود بکلی باز ستد و او را مفلس و گدا گردانید.

The fourth level of narratorial time emerges when, in the parrot's tale, the characters begin to speak for themselves. Using the first person and with a clear shift in narratorial time, the verbs are typically in the past tense. At this level, the authoritative narrative voice fades almost entirely. For instance, at the beginning of chapter 8, upon discovering the prince's innocence, the king asks:

Why didn't you say this on the very first day? And why did you endure a week of hardship in imprisonment and the peril of death?

تو روز اول این معنی چرا نگفتی و هفته ای زحمت زندان و آفت کشتن را چرا کشیدی؟<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> Ibid, 146.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid, 184.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid, 83.

Despite the frequent exploration of the past in the embedded tales, the primary narrative returns to the present each night, marked by Khojasta's nightly conversations with the parrot. As discussed previously, nighttime holds a peculiar significance in the narrative's temporal realm. Notably, aside from the narrative dawn and night markers, the story scarcely pays attention to the passage of time on other occasions. Beyond its literal function, time, particularly nighttime, holds symbolic significance in the *Ṭuṭināma* -- it sets the mood and atmosphere and enhances the overall depth of the narrative.

## II. The Role of Nighttime

In addition to its literal meaning, nighttime often carries symbolic significance, especially in relation to love and storytelling. In literature, love, particularly romantic love, is frequently associated with the night. The night creates an atmosphere of passion, intimacy, and secrecy, providing a backdrop for secret meetings and moments of affection, away from the prying eyes of the world. In Arabic and Persian literature, night often sets the stage for powerful expressions of love, such as longing and desire. It is this rich symbolism that makes the night such a fascinating theme in these traditions. For example, in Sa'di's ghazals, night is portrayed as a time of deep yearning, capturing both the heartache and hope of lovers.

What a long night it is, the night of lovers without hearts  
Come, for with your arrival, night will eventually bring the dawn

شب عاشقان بی‌دل چه شبی دراز باشد  
تو بیا کز اول شب در صبح باز باشد<sup>277</sup>

Beyond its aesthetic value, night in this verse also represents suffering, separation, and a deep

<sup>277</sup> Sa'di, *Divan-e Kāmel-e Sa'di*, ed. Gholām Ḥosayn Yusofi (Tehran: Khārazmi, 1366/1987), Ghazal 194.

longing for reunion. It represents a long journey towards being reunited with the beloved -- one that will eventually give way to the dawn or perhaps signal a hopeful transition leading to that long-awaited union.

The connection between nighttime, love, and storytelling is rooted in the symbolic significance of the night as a canvas for exploring intense emotions, hidden aspects of characters, and the enigmatic twists of plotlines. This connection gives depth and richness to both themes, allowing creators to tap into the evocative power of the nighttime setting to enhance their narratives.<sup>278</sup> Several Arabic and Persian tales, such as *the Arabian Nights* and *Ṭuṭināma*, employ the darkness of night to introduce elements of the unknown, where characters face challenges and make discoveries that they might not encounter in the light of day. The following episode from *the Arabian Nights* illustrates Shahzamān's return to his palace, where he discovers his wife's debauchery.

[He] set out towards his brother's domains. At midnight, however, he remembered that he had left in his Palace an article which he should have brought with him, and having returned to the palace to fetch it, he there beheld his wife sleeping in his bed, and attended by [in the arms of] a male negro slave. On beholding this scene, the world became black before his eyes, and he said within himself, if this is the case when I have not departed from the city, what will be the conduct of this vile woman while I am sojourning with my brother? He then drew his sword, and slew them both in bed.<sup>279</sup>

The imagery of night in the *Ṭuṭināma* is not just descriptive. Like Shahrzād, the parrot relates exclusively at night and “adopts a nocturnal rhetoric.”<sup>280</sup> While it fully explores the meanings and associations of darkness, it also ties these elements to the essence of the narrative and storytelling. This section argues that the *Ṭuṭināma* is fundamentally nocturnal. Not only is it set within a framework of nighttime, was composed at night, and according to Nakhshabi's

<sup>278</sup> Ferial Jabouri Ghazoul, *Nocturnal Poetics : The Arabian Nights in Comparative Context*, 26-7.

<sup>279</sup> Edward W. Lane, *The Thousand and One Nights*, trans. (London: Chatto and Windus, 1912), 3 vols., vol. I, p. 4.

<sup>280</sup> Ferial Jabouri Ghazoul, *Nocturnal Poetics : The Arabian Nights in Comparative Context*, 152.

concluding remarks, meant to be read at night, but it is also nocturnal in its metaphorical aspect, representing mystery, darkness, and the unknown.

From Nakhshabi's epilogue, we learn that the composition of his work was a nighttime activity, or perhaps he considered storytelling itself a nighttime activity. According to the verse referenced previously, he writes that the composition of the *Ṭuṭināma* was completed on a certain night, seven hundred and thirty years after the Hijra. However, it is unclear whether he uses "night" in its literal or metaphorical sense. There is no doubt that he views disloyalty and attempted debauchery as dark acts, which cast shadows on daylight. His lines are thus ambiguous. There can be two interpretations: First, due to unfortunate events, the world had become so dark that one could not distinguish day from night. Both day and night were saturated with darkness -- one from the darkness of immorality, the other from shadows of nighttime. Therefore, he might have composed his work on a night-like day. Second, he may have actually composed his work during the night.

Unfortunate events turned the world so dark like night  
that I told fifty-two tales in this night.

از بس که جهان تیره چو شب کرد حوادث  
پنجاه و دو افسانه بگفتیم در این شب<sup>281</sup>

Besides being composed at night, nighttime holds a unique significance in the narrative, with its framework saturated in tenebrous aesthetics. The following excerpt, following Khojasta's first encounter with her young beloved, illustrates how the text cleverly makes use of the darkness of the night.

Although Khojasta initially resisted, in the end, she relented, saying, "The day is the veil of lovers' gate, while the night deceives the longing heart. When the light of the day folds up its radiance and the veil of darkness descends, I shall find myself in the prince's embrace." When the sun disappeared behind the veil,

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<sup>281</sup> Ibid, 5.

Khojasta lifted the veil from her face and went to the starling, reasoning that she was female and, due to their shared womanhood, she would have a natural affinity with her, she would not resist in this matter, and would grant her permission to leave.

خجسته اگر چه اول امتناع کرد، آخر راضی شد و گفت : روز در پرده در عشاق است و شب حيله گر مشتاق. چون روز بساط نور طی کند و شب تنق ظلام فرو هلد، من در وثاق اميرزاده بيايم. چون آفتاب در پس پرده شد، خجسته پرده از روی گرفت و بر شارك رفت، بنا برآنکه او ماده است و بسبب انوئت با او نسبتی دارد، درین کار او امتناع نخواهد کرد و برفتن<sup>282</sup> دستوری خواهد داد.

For Khojasta, nighttime represents an opportunity to pursue union with the beloved. Every night, she approaches the parrot to seek permission to leave the house and spend the night with the young man in her neighborhood. In this context, nighttime reveals the darkness of Khojasta's actions and the complexity of her relationships. Through stories, the narrator, the parrot, offers her the chance for self-exploration and self-discovery, and instructs her on moral and ethical behavior. However, she fails to comprehend the gravity of her dark actions.<sup>283</sup> Nighttime marks a transformation in Khojasta's character for the worse, since her desire to unite with her beloved persists over time, despite the parrot's perseverance. To distract her, the parrot relates introspective and entertaining stories and challenges her inner thoughts; however, he fails to change her mind. The following examples display Khojasta's persistence in pursuing love outside of marriage in the absence of her husband. The following are examples from chapters 21 and 52.

Excerpt from chapter 21:

When the roaring lion of the sun set in the forest of the west and the musk-deer of the moon rose in the wilderness of the east, Khojasta went to the parrot to seek permission and said: O you, unaware of the turbulence of the waves of separation and the crowds of the forces of passion, my imagination and intuition tells me that you have never had any share in my fortune, and you have never gained anything from my good days.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>283</sup> The motivation of the parrot will be thoroughly investigated in chapter 3 of the dissertation.

چون شیر غران آفتاب در بیشه مغرب رفت و آهوی مشکین ماه از بیابان مشرق بر آمد، خجسته به طلب رخصت بر طوطی آمد و گفت ای بی علم از تلاطم امواج فراق، وای بی خبر از تراکم افواج اشتیاق، مرا چنین تخیل و تخالج می<sup>284</sup> شود که به تو روزی از روز من روی ننموده است و تو را وقتی از نمد من کلاه نبوده.

Excerpt from chapter 52:

When the bird of the sky, the sun, settled its nest in the west and the silver-colored falcon, the moon, flew in the skies of the east, Khojasta went to the parrot to seek permission to leave.

چون مرغ آسمان آفتاب در آشیان مغرب رفت و باز سیمین ماه در هوای مشرق پرواز کرد، خجسته به طلب<sup>285</sup> رخصت بر طوطی آمد.

It is only in chapters 36 and 40 that Khojasta begins to introspect and reflect on her actions. However, she rapidly changes her attitude in the following chapters, once again seeking permission from the parrot to leave the house every night. Chapter 36, for instance, begins as follows:

When the eastern merchant of the sun packed up its clothes on the western throne, and the watchmen with a silver halberd, the moon, rose to patrol the eastern horizon, Khojasta, ashamed in appearance and regretful, went to the parrot and said, "O confidant of secrets and source of solace, the wise men detested four things and acknowledged them as more offensive when they occur from four types of people: lies (told) by the wise, frivolity by the learned, parsimony by the rich, immodesty by women. Now, I wish to put my hand in the sleeve of chastity, place my foot into the skirt of decency, and abandon this impudence and turn away from my corrupt thoughts."

چون بازرگان مشرقی آفتاب رخت خود در تخت مغرب بست و کوتوال سیمین ناچرخ ماه در گشت مشرق بر آمد، خجسته شرمنده شکل و پشیمان وار بر طوطی آمد و گفت ای محرم سر و ای مایه بر، حکما چهار چیز را زشت گویند، و از چهار کس زشت تر باشد: کذب از حکما، و سبکی از عالمان، و بخیله از توانگران، بی شرمی از زنان. اکنون می خواهم که<sup>286</sup> دست در آستین عفت زنم و پای در دامن عصمت کشم، و ترک این بی شرمی گیرم و از اندیشه فاسد خود باز آیم.

As evident in the examples above and in chapter 1 of this dissertation, nocturnal imagery and metaphors, including the stars, the moon, and the quiet darkness, are frequently used by

<sup>284</sup> Ibid, 183.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid, 425.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid, 299.

Nakhshabi. The storyteller employs nocturnal themes to create an atmosphere that heightens the drama and mystery of the narrative. Nakhshabi's nighttime setting lends an air of suspense, danger, and unpredictability to the stories. These nighttime elements carry their own set of themes, moods, and associations that contribute to the depth and impact of his overall narrative.

The contrast between day and night is also used to emphasize conflict and challenges faced by the characters, the parrot and Khojasta. Nighttime in the *Tuṭināma* heightens tension and drama. The characters, the parrot, and Khojasta, experience night differently. Nighttime for Khojasta represents potential union with the beloved, while for the parrot, it involves dealing with seemingly insurmountable issues, namely, saving his life and remaining loyal to the merchant. The darkness of the night acts as a cloak, covering Khojasta's mysteries and love affair. She spends the entire night, from dusk to dawn, listening to the parrot's touching stories. Despite the parrot's tireless effort to dissuade her, Khojasta insists on pursuing her rendezvous every night. While the parrot's stories prompt her reasoning and contemplation, she does not reconsider her intentions. Nighttime reveals Khojasta's insatiable desire to pursue illicit love. In notable instances, like the one mentioned in previously, however, the parrot does not attempt to delay her but instead offers a lesson on the importance of love, advising her to look only at your beloved. Examples like this only complicate the moral of the text and suggest that desire is not condemned, it is misdirected.

While the *Tuṭināma*'s narrative primarily unfolds at night, it is also intended to be read during nighttime. By leveraging the allure of night and its contemplative mood, Nakhshabi encourages his readers to engage with his stories at night to enhance their storytelling experience. Throughout his narrative, Nakhshabi frequently alludes to the surreal nature of

storytelling. Declaring himself as the teller of *asmār*, much like the parrot to Khojasta, Nakhshabi presents the *Ṭuṭināma* as a nocturnal book, meant to ease the reader into sleep.

O brother, the world has turned in the colors of night  
 Drape a veil over your time  
 Joyfully immerse yourself in the waters of your tears  
 And, like me, rest blissfully for an hour in slumber  
 And if the turbulence of this era  
 Denies you sleep without tales  
 Come, I have fine stories  
 I have many exquisite narratives  
 Lend your heart's ear, my precious one  
 Listen well to my tales

جهان در رنگ شب شد ای برادر  
 بکش بر روی وقت خویش چادر  
 ز اشک خویش آندر آب خوش شو  
 چون من یک ساعتی در خواب خوش شو  
 و گر از خیز خیز این زمانه  
 تو را خوابی نیاید بی فسانه  
 بیا افسانه های خوب دارم  
 حکایت های بس مرغوب دارم  
 به گوش دل بکن دردانه من  
 نکو بشنو ز من افسانه من<sup>287</sup>

Weaving together history, moral lessons, and entertainment, Nakhshabi identifies nighttime as the perfect setting for his audience to recite, contemplate, and comprehend his narrative. He encourages his readers to embrace the unique qualities of the night to enrich their experience of reading his story, find tranquility, and fall asleep more easily. Highlighting the advantages of the night's peace, quiet, and comfort one can gain from reading his stories, he writes:

My state is such a wondrous tale today  
 Tales of mine have remained in this world  
 The world is left with no strength of wakefulness  
 My night can no longer endure vigilance  
 Come, spend the night in rest  
 For a comfortable sleep arises from tales

عجب افسانه ای است امروز حالم  
 ز من افسانه ها مانده به عالم

<sup>287</sup> Ibid, 436.

جهان را تاب هشیاری نماندست  
 شبم را وقت بیداری نماندست  
 بیا شب بگذران در استراحت  
 که از افسانه خیزد خواب راحت<sup>288</sup>

Free from any distractions and in solitude, nighttime storytelling serves as a powerful and enduring tool for rest and peace. Nakhshabi's unique stories possess yet another extraordinary quality:<sup>289</sup> they act as antidotes to the weariness of existence. He continues:

Come, listen to a few tales from me  
 Place a few precious pearls in the ears of your soul  
 No awareness has remained at this time  
 Wakefulness is nowhere to be found in the world  
 However, wakefulness is not separate from sorrow  
 So come, slip into sleep for a moment  
 O slumbering one, the world is but a tale, arise!  
 Once again resort to wakefulness

بیا بشنو ز من افسانه ای چند  
 بکن در گوش جان دردانه ای چند  
 چه وقت است این که هشیاری نمانده است  
 به عالم هیچ بیداری نمانده است  
 ولی بیداری از غم نیست خالی  
 بیا در خواب شو این لحظه حالی  
 جهان افسانه است ای خفته برخیز  
 یکی در دامن بیداری آویز<sup>290</sup>

### III. The Role of Repetition

The role of repetition as a device for shaping the concept of “ending” was discussed earlier in this chapter. Unlike “the human end of time,” which is an inevitable phenomenon,<sup>291</sup>

<sup>288</sup> Ibid, 436.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid, 437.

No one has pierced such a precious pearl

No one has ever authored such a tale

چنین دردانه هرگز کس نسفته است

چنین افسانه وقتی کس نگفته است

<sup>290</sup> Ibid, 437.

<sup>291</sup> Sandra Naddaff, *Arabesque*, 95.

the ending of a repetitive narrative is determined by its author. In contrast to traditional narratives, where events unfold in a linear way, repetitive narratives are cyclical, going back and forth between moments.<sup>292</sup> This format creates a distinct ending that does not align with the conventional resolution usually found in the narratives. Instead, the ending of a repetitive narrative returns to the beginning of the story and reinforces or realigns with the original situation. In other words, a cyclical narrative provides closure not by resolving the plot but by looping back to the beginning of the story. Chapter 8, which was examined earlier, illustrates the concept of a repetitive narrative. In chapter 8, the themes of “calamity and being saved” are introduced at the beginning of the story. Over the course of six nights, Nakhshabi employs a repetitive cycle of storytelling, reinforcing and realigning the ending of the tale with the initial theme of “calamity and being saved.” On the seventh night, the intervention of the seventh vizier and the prince’s explanation of his silence lead the king to pardon the prince, crown him, and entrust him with state affairs. This ending is not a linear resolution but a return to earlier moments of the story, affecting how the ending is perceived.

Under a repetitive narrative arc, one might expect the frame tale to revisit and realign with earlier moments for a conclusion. Surprisingly, however, Nakhshabi creates closure by subverting the original situation. Rather than a re-examination and restoration of the great affection and intimacy between Maymun and Khojasta, the merchant resolves the conflict by decapitating Khojasta, setting the parrot free, and devoting the remainder of his life to worship and service of God. As mentioned in the introduction of the *Ṭuṭināma*, this version emphasizes organization, coherence, consistency, readability, and the flow of the overall narrative.

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<sup>292</sup> See Tzvetan Todorov’s discussion of the ideal narrative with a stable beginning, middle, and end in “La grammaire du récit,” *Langages* 12 (1968): 94–102. Todorov argues that in an ideal traditional narrative, the story begins with a stable situation, which is disrupted in the middle, and the dilemma is resolved at the end, leading to something new or distant from the beginning.

Nakhshabi achieves this by eliminating long and short segments of the narrative as well as reducing the substories of the embedded tale, thereby shifting the repetitive narrative closer to a more linear form. His ending, therefore, more closely supports the resolution of linear narratives, offering closure rather than revisiting and realigning with earlier moments. While not entirely a linear narrative, Nakhshabi's work incorporates qualities of a linear story, placing it between the repetitive and linear narrative.

## Concluding Remarks

The examination of storytelling elements as well as time and repetition in the *Ṭuṭināma* uncovers the elaborate layers of meaning that thematically and structurally enrich Nakhshabi's narrative. Besides functioning as narrative tools, these elements engage with moral, philosophical, and social dimensions of the text. Repetitive designation reinforces the role and significance of characters and objects, while thematic and formal patterning create a roadmap and ensure a cohesive structure and balanced framework. Dramatic visualization creates an immersive experience for the audience by conveying vivid imagery of the tale, and allusion to oral tradition links the narrative with its cultural roots. Lastly, dramatic excess enhances the narrative's splendor and emphasize moral lessons. All of these storytelling elements work harmoniously to create a captivating and instructive narrative.

Time in the *Ṭuṭināma* is free-flowing and flexible, shaping the way its stories are told and experienced. The narrative often surpasses linear temporality and creates a repetitive rhythm, which displays the recurrence of certain events, moral lessons, and patterns of human actions. The repetition not only highlights the inevitability of certain human tendencies but also reinforces the moral lessons and the didactic function of the *Ṭuṭināma*. An important element in the narrative, nighttime, serves a metaphoric role, binding together themes of desire, secrecy, and hidden aspects of human nature. Night creates a transitional realm and allows the text to explore the tensions between public and private spheres. The *Ṭuṭināma*'s frequent returns to nighttime illustrate a period when the ordinary rules of behavior are suspended, replaced by deception and trickery. Together, all of these elements make the *Ṭuṭināma* a profound commentary on the nature of human existence.

## Chapter 3: Feminine Wiles, Authorial Hands: The Gender Dialectics of Narration

The first manifestations of patriarchal gender dynamics and misogynist attitudes can be traced back to the classical literature of male-dominated, patriarchal cultures.<sup>293</sup> A prominent example in Persian literature is the *Tales of a Parrot*, which explores the wandering pursuits of a merchant's wife in her husband's absence, highlighting themes of feminine sexuality. This text, belonging to the Wiles of Women genre, exemplifies the pervasive misogynistic attitudes of its time. In these narratives, the authors, predominantly male,<sup>294</sup> divide society into two groups of the dominant and the subordinate, assigning each group specific traits. However, stories that celebrate female treachery complicate the moral message. Tales like the one with the clever wife who deceives her husband hiding beneath the bed, portray women not only as immoral but also as resourceful and intelligent characters. Generally speaking, positive values are attributed to the dominant group, and negative ones to the subordinate. This unequal distribution of attributes reflects the biases of the male authors who favor the dominant group. Women, black people, and servants typically comprise the subordinate group, who are portrayed as cunning and dishonest --

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<sup>293</sup> Judith Grossman, "Infidelity and Fiction: The Discovery of Women's Subjectivity in *Arabian Nights*," *The Georgia Review* 34, no. 1 (1980): 113–26.

<sup>294</sup> In his study of *One Thousand and One Arabian Nights*, Hasan El-Shamsy argues that the *Nights* reflect a predominantly male-centered world, stating that "the absence of female-centered tales, in addition to the dominance of male centered themes, values, and stylistic features, leads one to conclude that *Alf Layla* is predominantly and illustration of the world of the literate male". According to El-Shamsy, the stories consist of "semiliterary stories of folk extraction reworked by literate editors and redactors," largely composed by male writers, in contrast to "true folktales in oral traditions," which are primarily narrated by women. The same hypothesis applies to all the stories of *Tales of a Parrot*. Viewed through a gendered lens, it becomes evident that these stories were produced by male authors, narrators, translators, and editors typically for a male audience, with the intention of reinforcing a male-dominated societal order. See Hasan El-Shamsy, "The Oral Connections of the *Arabian Nights*," in *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, ed. Ulrich Marzolph and Richard van Leeuwen (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 9–13; Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Reading 'Wiles of Women' Stories as Fictions of Masculinity," in *Imagined Masculinities: Male Identity and Culture in the Modern Middle East*, ed. Mai Ghousoub and Emma Sinclair-Webb (London: Saqi Books, 2000), 147–68.

attributes that are condemned by the dominant group, typically men. Women are frequently associated with deceit and sexual infidelity, while servants are depicted as disloyal, and black people are regarded as unworthy. The portrayal of the women's world is often dark and negative unless women are represented in roles such as mothers, sisters, daughters, or devout worshippers.<sup>295</sup> Although female sexuality is emphasized in these tales, sexual fidelity is expected only of women, revealing a clear double standard in the narrative framework.<sup>296</sup>

While deceit and female sexual transgression are central to all versions of the *Tales of a Parrot*, this chapter will demonstrate that gender dynamics are one of Nakhshabi's primary concerns. The discussion will begin by defining the Wiles of Women genre and situating the *Ṭuṭīnāma* within this literary tradition. It will then closely examine the gender dynamics at play in both the frame narrative and the embedded tales and analyze how these dynamics shape the portrayal of the characters. Finally, the chapter will explore the role of desire in the narrative and highlight its significance in reinforcing and challenging the text's gendered power structures. Although the *Ṭuṭīnāma* of Nakhshabi is often regarded as an entertaining text with didactic elements, it is Khojasta and her insatiable heterosexual desires that primarily drive the narrative. Like the earlier renditions, while Nakhshabi's version frequently includes shorter stories, it questions women's fidelity, featuring female loose sexuality, and disloyalty as central motifs.

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<sup>295</sup> In *Woman's Body, Woman's Words: Gender and Discourse in Arabo-Islamic Writing*, Malti-Douglas provides a feminist analysis of the *Thousand and One Nights*, identifying a misogynist undercurrent in frame story and exploring male-constructed utopias. She observes that women in the tales are primarily portrayed as sex objects unless depicted as mother or lovers. Malti-Douglas highlights Shahrzād's mastery of discourse, noting that while her storytelling reflects an intimate link between the body and writing, she ultimately sacrifices her role as narrator to conform to the ideal mother and lover. She concludes that the *Thousand and One Nights* perpetuates three core misogynist elements central to Wiles of a Women tales: woman's sexuality, speech, and guile, often illustrated through narratives of older women attempting to seduce young men. Fedwa Malti-Douglas, *Woman's Body, Woman's Word: Gender and Discourse in Arabo-Islamic Writing* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 28.

<sup>296</sup> See, for example, al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab* (Cairo: Ṭabʿat Dār al-Kutub, n.d.), 4:16–23; al-Djawbarī, *Le voile arraché: L'autre visage de l'Islam*, trans. René R. Khawam (Paris: Éditions Phébus, 1979–1980), 2:235–257; *ibid.*, 118–19.; Fedwa Malti-Douglas, *Woman's Body, Woman's Word: Gender and Discourse in Arabo-Islamic Writing*, 29–30.

Central to this exploration is the idea of gender politics and gender dynamics, which are inseparable from Nakhshabi's work. Themes such as male authority, female fidelity, and the upholding of patriarchal values lie at the core of the *Ṭuṭināma*'s narrative. Through these inquiries, this chapter offers a gender-conscious reading of the *Ṭuṭināma*, emphasizing Nakhshabi's recurring masculine utopian vision.

Misogyny has a ubiquitous and peculiar propensity to recur throughout the *Ṭuṭināma*. The gender dynamics portrayed by Nakhshabi in his text are certainly not coincidental. The classical Persian literary canon is inherently patriarchal, and, like other male writers of his time, Nakhshabi imagines the ideal male world as one free of evil, disloyal women. This examination of the *Ṭuṭināma*'s gender dynamics sheds light on how Nakhshabi approaches his female characters, reveals the dominant mental framework of his text, and explores the portrayals of women's sexuality, speech, and guile as presented in the *Ṭuṭināma*.

## *Tuṭināma*, a Work of Wiles of Women

Persian culture has been predominantly Islamic since the ninth century. However, it bears some influence from non-Islamic traditions. Although often shaped by male-dominated perspectives, the Perso-Islamic textual legacy reflects a civilizational reality where literary expressions of religious ideals were prevalent. Persian writers, influenced by Arabic and Greek traditions, introduced gender awareness and discussions about the roles of men and women, producing important works on these topics. Since gender dynamics and misogynist attitudes permeated medieval texts, even those on unrelated topics, gender-conscious analysis became essential for understanding the societal structure within the Perso-Islamic tradition.<sup>297</sup> Centuries later, literary works that explored gender dynamics and depicted sexual depravity and deceit as inherently feminine traits were categorized under the label Wiles of Women (*makr-e zanān*).<sup>298</sup>

The works categorized under the Wiles of Women genre represent a recurring set of themes interwoven with the cultural and literary tradition of the time. Persian literature offers numerous examples of such narratives. Among them, *Tales of a Parrot*, both in its frame tale and many embedded stories, fits right within this category. These tales are inherently misogynist, portraying women as the source of all disorder, and frequently envisioning a world without women as the sole way to masculine liberation. The driving force of all the versions of the *Tales of a Parrot* revolves around one central premise: a married woman who attempts to abandon the traditional role of a chaste wife to pursue her sexual desires. Other medieval works of the Wiles

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<sup>297</sup> Shalom Goldman, "Representations: The Wiles of Women Literature," in *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures*, ed. Joseph Suad (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

<sup>298</sup> Afsaneh Najabadi, "Reading 'Wiles of Women' Stories as Fictions of Masculinity," 147; Marshall Hodgson coined the term Islamicate to distinguish it from Islam as a religion. According to Hodgson, "Islamicate would refer not directly to the religion, Islam, itself, but to the social and cultural complex historically associated with Islam and the Muslims, both among Muslims themselves and even when found among non-Muslims". Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, vol.1, *The Classical Age of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 59.

of Women category include the Arabic *One Thousand and One Arabian Nights*,<sup>299</sup> and the Persian *Sandbād-nāma*, among others. These texts reflect a shared cultural and literary tradition where feminine cunning and moral peril are recurring and central themes.

The Wiles of Women literature comprises a large body of Islamicate literary works in which women are depicted as “inherently deceitful, and men are warned of the power of ‘women’s guile.’” While traces of the Wiles of Women themes can be observed in many Near Eastern and pre-Islamic literary genres, the form reaches its peak in Islamic works.<sup>300</sup> Some scholars argue that the Wiles of Women theme in literature is influenced by interpretations of Sura 12 of the Qur’an, which critiques women’s guile.<sup>301</sup> Scholars have noted that in this body of literature, particularly in the philosophical allegories, male utopias are often constructed and idealized by male authors and participants.<sup>302</sup>

Najmabadi interprets Wiles of Women stories as a kind of fiction that reinforces male solidarity and dominance.<sup>303</sup> Similarly, Adrienne Rich views the recurring themes of insatiable female sexual desire and women’s guile not as realistic depictions of female sexuality but as

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<sup>299</sup> The *Arabian Nights* is not exclusively centered on wiles of women and encompasses a verity of other genres and themes as well.

<sup>300</sup> Shalom Goldman, "Representations: The Wiles of Women Literature."

<sup>301</sup> See Judith Grossman, “Infidelity and Fiction: The Discovery of Women’s Subjectivity in *Arabian Nights*,” 117. Grossman suggests that this binary attitude towards man and women may be linked to the Islamic practice of polygamy. Other scholars have traced its origins to the Sura of Yusuf, where Yusuf’s faith is tested by God. They argue that the verses denouncing women’s guile inspired much of the Wiles of Women literature. For example, Goldman in "Representations: The Wiles of Women Literature" highlights how the Qur’ānic exegetical tradition, histories, and commentaries on the Sura 12 significantly shaped the theme and its misogynistic portrayal of women across wide body of literature. One should bear in mind, however, that not all texts conform to such simplistic portrayals; works like *Khosrow and Shirin* or *Vis and Ramin* go beyond this binary framework. Karen Merguerian, and Afsaneh Najmabadi critique how the story has become a foundational narrative for later works of Wiles of Women in "Zulaykha and Yusuf: Whose ‘Best Story’?" *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 29 (1997): 485-508; Afsaneh Najmabadi. “Reading-and Enjoying-"wiles of Women" Stories as a Feminist.” *Iranian Studies* 32, no. 2 (1999): 203–22.

<sup>302</sup> Fedwa Malti-Douglas, *Woman’s Body, Woman’s Word Gender and Discourse in Arabo-Islamic Writing*, 4.

<sup>303</sup> Afsaneh Najmabadi, “Reading “wiles of women” stories as fictions of masculinity,” 131-45.

expressions of male anxiety.<sup>304</sup> The Tunisian sociologist Abdelwahab Bouhdiba suggests that the Wiles of Women literary genre serves for men as an opportunity “to create, restore, or to rediscover, the universes of women”, “through memory, mimic, dream, or imagination.”<sup>305</sup> Fedwa Malti-Douglas delves deeper, arguing that these misogynistic textual traditions play a pivotal role in “the propagation of cultural ideas and values” about gender, both historically and in modern times. Najmabadi echoes this sentiment, asserting that the production of Wiles of Women literature continues to perpetuate the association of guile with women in contemporary literature and culture.<sup>306</sup>

While depicting Khojasta as one of the main characters, stories like the *Ṭuṭināma* are designed to warn a different audience, men. Women in the stories are divided into two categories: the virtuous ones who support men (labeled as “complicit women” by Najmabadi) and the subversive women who work against men.<sup>307</sup> Shamma explains that the virtuous women make themselves marriageable through internalizing the patriarchal codes, supporting their husbands against their subversive counterparts, and perpetuating the masculine line by bearing them male inheritors.<sup>308</sup> Through passing on the legacy of former generations, the tales instruct men in ways to counter the threats of subversive women.<sup>309</sup> According to these stories, the law of the family only prevails when a man is married to a good wife; one who protects her own

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<sup>304</sup> Adrienne Rich, “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Experience,” reprinted in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Abelove, Michele Aina Barale, and David M. Halperin (New York: Routledge, 1993), 227–54, at 236.

<sup>305</sup> Abdelwahab Bouhdiba, “The Child and the Mother in Arab-Muslim Society,” in *Psychological Dimensions of Near Eastern Studies*, ed. L. Carl Brown and Norman Itzkowitz (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1977), 126–141: 147; and idem, *Sexuality in Islam*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), 225–30.

<sup>306</sup> Afsaneh Najmabadi, “Reading “wiles of women” stories as fictions of masculinity,” 147–68.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid.

<sup>308</sup> Tarek Shamma, “Women and Slaves: Gender Politics in the *Arabian Nights*,” *Marvels & Tales* 31, no. 2 (2017): 239–60.

<sup>309</sup> Zīā’ al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭināma*, 7. Nakhshabi begins the first night stating that “The narrators of tales and the wise masters of reports say that in days long past and ancient times, ...”.

sexuality and defends her men against the mischief of other women and female challenges to the patriarchal society.

As a fourteenth-century *adab* work, the *Ṭuṭināma* serves as a collection of instructive and entertaining tales centered on the Wiles of Women. Despite the inherent misogyny present in nearly all versions of the *Tales of a Parrot*, Nakhshabi's rendition emphasizes a male-dominated world free of women more explicitly than its predecessors, the *Shukāsaptati* and the *Javāher al-asmār*. Organized chronologically over fifty-two consecutive nights, the *Ṭuṭināma* draws from Islamicate cultural tropes of the Wiles of Women genre, incorporating direct linguistic and historical allusions to well-known Islamic stories, such as the story of Yusof and Zolaykhā. What sets Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma* apart is its amplification of misogynistic elements compared to earlier versions. His nuanced portrayal of the deceitful wife, Khojasta, and his violent conclusion to the frame story reinforce these stereotypes. This marks a substantial departure from his predecessors and adds an intensified strain of misogyny to his work.

## Nakhshabi's Portrayal of Men and Women

The *Ṭuṭīnāma* centers on themes of feminine infidelity, cunning, and the art of storytelling, with female sexuality, its nature, and the perceived dangers of female desire serving as its central focus. While the frame tale is triggered by the transgression of a matrimonial bond, it gains its scope through a chain of events that unfolds, questioning female loyalty. Much like the Arabic *One Thousand and One Nights*, the *Ṭuṭīnāma* does not draw its appeal from sensational depictions of sex and violence but rather from the elaborate connection it establishes between “sexual and narrative desire”.<sup>310</sup> The frame narrative revolves around two omnipresent figures: the parrot and Khojasta. From the parrot's perspective, the extended storytelling serves three purposes: gaining time, distraction, and life-preservation. The parrot's response to Khojasta's pursuits is marked by patience and persistence, as he delays his death by seamlessly linking one tale to the next. In contrast to the parrot, who embodies perfection in loyalty, the merchant's wife's character and merits are presented as unworthy of careful consideration.

As a consequence of the wife's attempted debauchery, the parrot begins narrating stories, skillfully weaving tales in which women are almost exclusively portrayed as threats to marital and social institutions. As discussed in chapter 1 of this dissertation, after hearing the parrot's story, Maymun unquestioningly accepts his male counterpart's words without verifying the truth with Khojasta. Upon discovering the alleged betrayal, Maymun immediately renounces Khojasta and executes her without hesitation. This swift reaction reflects his unwavering trust in the male counterpart and his complete lack of trust in his wife. Maymun's reliance on the parrot's words alone to sever the marital bond underscores the deeply ingrained gender dynamics and mistrust toward women portrayed in the text. Animality in this context has an important role; it contrasts

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<sup>310</sup> Fedwa Malti-Douglas, *Woman's Body, Woman's Word Gender and Discourse in Arabo-Islamic Writing*, 11.

sharply with flawed humanity. The male animal character, the parrot, is elevated to a position of authority, saturated with positive human-like features, intelligence, wisdom, and agency. This may suggest that even a male animal is more trustworthy than a woman, reinforcing the text's gendered biases.

While a current of misogyny is evident throughout the story, the conclusion of the frame tale stands bold in terms of its anti-female ideas. Like many works of classical Persian literature, Nakhshabi portrays a strong connection between women's voices, their corporeality, and their sexuality. The Foucauldian concept of power relations, which governs interpersonal relations and dominance is applicable to the *Tuṭināma* and its portrayal of gender roles. The relationship between the parrot as narrator and the merchant's wife mirrors a subject-object dynamic that reflects the biases of Nakhshabi as the author. The parrot, as the supplier of discourse, places the merchant's wife in a restricted and helpless position. Through the parrot's narrative, Nakhshabi conveys his vision of rigid gender boundaries. The dominance of male narrators, both Nakhshabi and the parrot, is a disturbing aspect of the text, highlighting their control over the storytelling and, consequently, over Khojasta's actions, agency, and fate. Female interventions in the narrative are brief and futile, serving primarily to reinforce the male narrator's authority. Khojasta is left with no meaningful agency or control over the discourse. From the outset, she is depicted as a sexualized figure who attempts to pursue her desires in the absence of her husband. Her actions, including her intention to unite with her lover, underscore her portrayal as a character defined by her sexuality rather than her individuality or autonomy. This dynamic reflects and reinforces the patriarchal structure of the text.<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>311</sup> The issue of male narrative dominance and lack of female narrative agency was examined in chapter 1 of this dissertation.

The *Ṭuṭināma*'s cautionary tales depict women as seductive figures whose allure can lead to a man's downfall. Rooted in a patriarchal cultural and moral framework, the tales caution men against the perceived dangers of succumbing to passion, desire, or female influence. The *Ṭuṭināma* thus serves to encourage men to maintain self-control and resist temptation. In addition to cautioning against the potential dangers of female guile, the interrelations of all beings and the concept of justice are also central concerns in the *Ṭuṭināma*. Ironically, given the male control over the structure of the story, Maymun is a relatively passive figure. *Ṭuṭināma* men are generally seen as passive and women are active; it is perhaps this inversion and final killing of Khojasta that makes the relationship between Maymun and Khojasta untenable.

At the beginning of the frame tale, there is a brief mention of the merchant's parents' infertility, but his mother is entirely absent from the narrative. Although the role of a mother is one of the few revered female roles in medieval texts, she is completely omitted from this chapter. Nakhshabi writes that, despite his wealth, possessions, and blessings, until old age "he had no child."<sup>312</sup> Eventually, God answered his prayers and granted him a son, Maymun. While Ṣaghari's version includes a brief mention of Maymun's mother, she is entirely absent from Nakhshabi's account.<sup>313</sup> Unlike the almost ubiquitous destructive female characters, positive depictions of women are scarce in many parts of the text. As noted earlier, aside from those portrayed as mothers, sisters, daughters, or devout figures, other female characters are often presented negatively. Both females in Nakhshabi's frame tale, Khojasta and the starling, are dark characters: one through her guile and dishonesty, and the other through her lack of intelligence.

The *Ṭuṭināma* depicts a masculine construction of feminine sexuality shaped by anxieties surrounding women's sexual desire. In this context, "nights" serve as layered symbols, which

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<sup>312</sup> Zīā' al-Dīn Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭināma*, 7.

<sup>313</sup> See page 50 of this dissertation for textual evidence.

reveal the perceived mysteries and dangers of female sexuality. Within the tales, nights become a narrative device to expose the perils of sexual desire and its ramifications within male-dominated institutions such as the family and society. Each tale, recounted nightly, functions as both a cautionary and instructional tool. These tales act as mechanisms for men to exchange knowledge and wisdom about women. On the one hand, they warn men of the potential consequences of women's sexual pursuits; on the other hand, they offer strategies for navigating and overcoming such challenges. Ultimately, the *Ṭuṭināma* narrative highlights a tension regarding the limits of male narrative control over women. By his narrative authority, Nakhshabi attempts to influence Khojasta, illustrating how even the most skilled narrator remains powerless to control the response of a female audience. Regarding female deceit, he writes:

Nakhshabi, women have no fear  
 What might reveal the condition of men's soul?  
 Consider a wicked woman to be one of them  
 Who would do whatever she wants, even in the Ka'ba

نخشبی در زنان نباشد ترس  
 مردم احوالشان عیان چه کند  
 زن بدکاره را از آنها دان  
<sup>314</sup>کو به کعبه کند هر آنچه کند

The verse serves as a cautionary message from Nakhshabi, warning about the perceived danger of uncontrolled female sexual autonomy and desire. Nakhshabi's distinctive portrayal of women becomes evident early in the story. While female deceit is a recurring theme throughout the narrative, the female protagonist takes deception to a whole new level. She has the opportunity to refrain from mischief after hearing stories about women's cunning, yet she chooses to act otherwise. In his introduction, recapitulating the narrative, he alludes to the eventual conclusions of the tale:

<sup>314</sup> Žiā' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭināma*, 427.

For fifty-two nights had passed, until the merchant returned from his journey. The parrot reported to him the situation, the merchant praised him for his discernment, and killed that woman.

تا پنجاه و دو شب، که بازرگان از سفر باز آمد. طوطی صورت حال باز نمود، بازرگان بر فطانت او آفرین کرد و آن زن را <sup>315</sup>بکشت.

Unlike preceding versions in which the merchant forgives his wife upon his return, Nakhshabi articulates his revisions in the introduction, before his audience reads the actual story. This approach to the main female character shows his unique perspective on the nature and function of women in the narrative. Nakhshabi describes a man's life in solitude without a female counterpart as the sole path to personal development and emancipation. While this suggestion was made at the very end of the frame tale, he repeats this idea in the embedded verses as well. Below is an example from chapter 10:

Nakhshabi, the company of women is harmful  
A married man endures sorrow  
Whoever abandons women  
Will remain manly as long as he lives

نخشبی صحبت زنان تبه است  
مرد زن دار غصه کش باشد  
هر که ترک زنان بگیرد او  
<sup>316</sup>تا بود مردوار خوش باشد

These lines in chapter 10 are followed by an example couched in Nakhshabi's figurative language that expands on the theme of the anguish of mistrust and feminine sexual depravity:

O brother, a wicked woman is better off dead  
And better not to suffer sorrow for women's actions

زن بد ای برادر مرده بهتر  
<sup>317</sup>غم کار زنان ناخورده بهتر

<sup>315</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>316</sup> Ibid, 99.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid, 6.

Nakhshabi employs a distinct syntactical structure, such as a recurring formula accusation, and a pattern of generalization is used to portray women as deceptive. In chapter 8, which has been discussed in chapter 2 of this dissertation and will be revisited later, Nakhshabi provides substantial evidence to support his male participant, while deliberately emphasizing the cunning of women. Below are some of the sentences he uses to portray women:

Women have deceit in every expression and treachery in every gesture.

<sup>318</sup> زنان را به هر عبارتی مگری بود و در هر اشارتی غدیری باشد.

Elsewhere in the same chapter, he writes:

Women have a trap laid under every step, and one should not follow them nor trust their words.

<sup>319</sup> زنان را زیر هر گامی دامی باشد، و متابعت ایشان نباید کرد و قول ایشان اعتماد نباید نمود.

A clear advantage is granted to the male characters and the dominant groups, as they are typically the ones narrating these tales and driving the plot. For example, chapter 10 recounts the story of a merchant who had a close relationship with a vizier's son. While on a business trip, the merchant purchased a wooden parrot capable of speech. Excited by his purchase, he shared the news with the vizier's son. Skeptical of the claim, the vizier's son wagered his wife, wealth, and status that such a thing could not be real. Impressed by the abilities he had heard about the parrot and fearing the loss of everything he had wagered, the vizier's son - who was secretly having an affair with the merchant's wife - conspired to acquire the parrot through her. The vizier's son commissioned a carpenter to craft a replica of the wooden parrot and had the fake parrot returned to the merchant's wife. The vizier's son also shared the scheme with his own wife.

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<sup>318</sup> Ibid, 74-5.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid, 76.

The replicated wooden parrot did not talk. Unaware of this deceit, the merchant grew frustrated and sought the help of a monk known for his purity and wisdom for help. In exchange for receiving all the merchant's winnings from the wager, the monk agreed to restore the parrot's voice. However, the monk, who was also having an affair with the wife of the vizier's son, learned of the scheme and requested that the original parrot be sent to him. Upon receiving the parrot, the monk replaced it with the replica and returned the fake parrot to the wife of the vizier's son. When the wager was resolved, the merchant asked the parrot about his initial silence. The parrot revealed the entire story and exposed the complex web of deception. The merchant became angry and confronted the vizier's son, calling him a traitor and exclaiming, "Whatever deceit you plotted against me, another plotted against you!"<sup>320</sup> Together with the vizier's son, they went to confront the monk. In a surprising twist, the story concludes with the revelation that the real source of chaos was the actions of the merchant's wife and the wife of the vizier's son. Altogether, this illustrates the recurring theme in which women are ultimately blamed for the disorder and deceptions that unfold.

So, both women, who were the reason for this corruption, were stoned in the four corners of the Bazaar, and they all three lived manly and never went around women.

پس هر دو زن را که ماده این فساد بودند در چهار سوی بازار سنگسار کردند و ایشان هر سه بیش گرد زنان<sup>321</sup> نگشتند و مردوار بزیستند.

Nakhshabi presents a variety of stories on the theme of women's cunning, illustrating the diversity of female guile. However, the *Ṭuṭināma*'s narrative framework is itself a story of both men's and women's deceit, encompassing both 'wiles of men' and 'wiles of women.' Yet its

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<sup>320</sup> Ibid, 99.

<sup>321</sup> Ibid.

هر مکرری که بر من اندیشیدی دیگری بر تو اندیشید.

content and message remain deeply misogynistic. In the story referenced above, it becomes clear that all the men in the story are corrupt, including the monk, who, despite his reputation for purity and wisdom, agrees to help the merchant restore the parrot's voice under certain self-serving conditions. While the chaos is clearly initiated by the men, the women are portrayed as instigators. Ironically, the women face severe punishments, while the men are ultimately absolved of guilt.

The *Ṭuṭināma* also challenges the notion of women's cunning as a predictable concept. The book serves as a cautionary tale for men, warning them to guard against being seduced by women. Not only can the women in Nakhshabi's tales tempt and seduce, but their methods of temptation are also unpredictable. One of the substories of the eighth night recounts the tale of a man who, after investigating all forms of women's cunning and creating an index of their tricks, is deceived by a woman who employs a scheme absent from his catalog. While traveling, he becomes a dinner guest at a friend's house. In the absence of his friend, the wife approaches him, asking, 'What do you have in the box you're carrying?' 'These are my notebooks of the deceptions of women,' the man replies. The woman continues:

"Have you written all the schemes that women have devised in your notebook?" He replied, "Apparently, yes." She then asked, "Can no woman deceive you?" He answered, "No."

The woman took the young man's hand and laid the foundation for physical intimacy and playful interactions. After satisfying physical pleasure and fulfilling sensual desire, when she was separated from him, the woman cried out, "O neighbors, come to my aid! O people of the neighborhood, come here!"

هر مکاری که زنان کرده اند در دفتر تو نوشته؟ گفت ظاهراً هست. گفت هیچ زن با تو مکر نتواند کرد؟ گفت: نه. زن دست جوان بگرفت و بنیاد ملامسه و ملاعبه کرد. بعد از فراغ حظ جسمانی و اتمام هوس نفسانی چون ازو جدا شد، زن<sup>322</sup> فریاد بر آورد که ای همسایگان فریاد رسید! و ای اهل محله در آیید!

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<sup>322</sup> Ibid, 79.

Nakhshabi makes it clear that women's seductive power lies in both their words and their bodies. Although brief, the above embedded tale from the eighth night succinctly encapsulates Nakhshabi's mindset. Expanding on the unpredictability of female guile, Nakhshabi suggests that men would need to compile hundreds of books to document their experiences of feminine cunning and manipulation.

O Nakhshabi, the deceit of women is a great offense  
 You will not easily discern women's treachery  
 If anyone were to write out of their inner passion  
 A hundred books would be filled with the cunning of women

نخشبی مکر زن بسی تبه است  
 تا ندانی تو سهل غدر زنان  
 گر نویسد کسی ز شغف درون  
 صد سفینه شود ز مکر زنان<sup>323</sup>

In a wider context, Bencherikh's analysis of *One Thousand and One Nights* posits that the stories by Shahrzād function as literary interludes. For Bencherikh, the frame narrative itself constitutes a complete literary work, and its prologue and epilogue should not be treated or read separately.<sup>324</sup> This perspective is equally applicable to the *Ṭuṭīnāma*: while the frame story is a complete narrative on its own, it gains deeper meaning when read as a unit alongside the embedded tales. These embedded tales, as Bencherikh suggests, act as literary intervals that enrich the overarching narrative. Although the individual stories within the *Ṭuṭīnāma* hold their own significance, it is the interplay between the frame and the embedded tales, notably the interconnected gender dynamics, that reveals the strengths and weaknesses of the text as a cohesive corpus. While there is no mention of any women in several embedded tales, the narrator's attitude towards Khojasta remains consistent throughout.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid, 80.

<sup>324</sup> Jamel Eddine Bencheikh, "Le roi, la reine et l'esclave noir," special issue on *Itinéraires d'écriture, Peuples méditerranéens* 30 (1985): 151–54.

This attitude is first established in the opening chapter of the embedded tales, where the narrator, through the persona of the parrot, shares a story that parallels the relationship between the merchant and his wife. In this tale, the wife, much like Khojasta, is portrayed as deceitful and attempts to pursue her rendezvous in the absence of her husband. Through this parallel, the narrator implicitly characterizes Khojasta, through the merchant's wife as a mirror to reflect her behavior. The parrot's stories are carefully crafted to convey moral lessons, wisdom, and subtly criticize Khojasta's actions, aiming to influence Khojasta's behavior and encourage her to reflect on her choices. However, despite the narrator's efforts, Khojasta's determination to reunite with her beloved leads to the stability of the narrator's attitude toward her. Chapter 11 of the embedded tales, for example, begins as follows:

When the lover of the sea, the sun, went to the chamber of the West, and the beloved of the stars, the moon, came out of the eastern sky, Khojasta with eyes as tearful as the sea and tears like the Pleiades, went to the parrot to seek permission to leave and said, "O confidant of my secrets, O essence of my necessity, the preoccupation of love has prevented me from all other tasks, and the captivity of passion has fettered me from all other affairs..."

چون عاشق دریا، یعنی آفتاب، در خلوتخانه مغرب رفت، و معشوق انجم، یعنی ماه، بر جلوه گاه مشرق بر آمد، خجسته با چشمی گریان چون دریا و اشکی چون ثریا به طلب رخصت بر طوطی رفت و گفت ای محرم راز وای مایه نیاز،<sup>325</sup> مشغولی عشق مرا از اشتغال جمله کارها مانع شد، و گرفتاری شوق مرا از جمیع امور پای بند گشت...

Similar patterns across the chapters show Khojasta's persistence in uniting with her beloved and her repeated attempts to outwit the parrot to seek permission for leaving the house. Several key elements including language and word choice, explicit remarks, and characterization through parallel characters, reflect the narrator's consistent attitude toward Khojasta. While some of the stories aim to reform her behavior through reasoning and morality, others, particularly those female-free chapters, serve primarily to distract her. This mixture of moral instruction and

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<sup>325</sup> Zīā' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭīnāma*, 101.

distraction underlines the parrot's diverse strategies and reveals the complexity of his narrative control. Chapter 13, which tells the tale of eighty wise men and the recognition the king's son's competence through musical instruments, exemplifies the absence of women in certain substories.<sup>326</sup> Despite the absence of women in some tales, the recurring theme of trickery and deceit is often associated with subordinate groups. These groups, whether female, male, or animal are usually associated with evil behaviors such as disloyalty and trickery, qualities that were traditionally linked with women. Therefore, due to engagement in such misconduct, they are often relegated to female-level status or portrayed as parallel to women. The substories display the author's misogynist attitude towards all female beings, both human and animal, as well as female-like men. As a result, the embedded and frame tales can be categorized into four distinct groups:

1. The first category consists of the embedded tales featuring both female and male participants, where adulterous behaviors are predominantly attributed to the subordinate category of women, black people, and servants. Chapter 22 serves as an example of this category. It tells the story of an amir who had a beautiful wife and a boon companion from whose mouth a handful of flowers fell each time he opened his lips in laughter. One day, on his way to the amir, the boon companion encounters a cheerful *Zangi* and asks him about the reason for his joy.<sup>327</sup> "Tonight, I will visit my sweetheart, who is the boon companion's wife, since her husband will be with the amir," the *Zangi* replied.<sup>328</sup> Learning of his wife's infidelity from another man thwarts the boon companion from displaying his skill before the amir. As a result of his inappropriate behavior, he

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<sup>326</sup> Zīā' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭināma*, 121-7.

<sup>327</sup> *Zangi* refers to anyone with dark skin color usually those residing in Ethiopia, Egypt, and Zanzibar. See Steingass 627.

<sup>328</sup> Zīā' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭināma*, 193.

is imprisoned. While trying to sleep in his jail cell, he witnesses the amir's wife making love with the elephant driver. Amused by this revelation, he bursts into laughter, and his garment becomes covered in flowers. When the amir inquires about the reason for his laughter in prison, the boon companion reveals the story of his wife's infidelity and the amir's wife's affair. He continues, "If a lady of such high status engages in lovemaking with the elephant driver, it is not surprising if a woman like mine indulges in a similar affair. After doing his due diligence, the amir orders both adulterous women and men to be punished."<sup>329</sup>

After investigating, the amir ordered to blacken the face of the boon companion's wife like that of the *Zangi*, and both blackened-faced ones were thrown into the fire. He also commanded that his own wife and the elephant driver be bound together and thrown under the feet of an elephant. This was done, and the world was freed from their wickedness, depravity, and corruption.

بعد تفحص امیر فرمود تا روی زن ندیم هم چون چهره زنگی سیاه کنند و هر دو سیاه رو را در آتش اندازند، و زن خود را با پیلبان با هم بندند و زیر پای فیل افکنند. و چنین کردند و عالم از خبث و فسق و فساد ایشان خالی گرانید.<sup>330</sup>

Chapter 22 also contains echoes of the frame-story: here, too, male speech serves to protect another man's honor. The boon companion, like the parrot, ultimately succeeds in getting the support of other men. Both tales also come to a similar end: the annihilation of deceitful and disloyal women. Here, however, members of the subordinate category, the elephant driver and the *Zangi*, who are relegated to female-like status, are punished alongside women. Another example of this category lies in Chapter 6, which tells the story of a group of travel companions who journeyed in peace until their encounter with a wooden statue of a beautiful woman. Their desire to own the idol instigated an altercation among them, ultimately leading them to part

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<sup>329</sup> Ibid, 192-6.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid, 196.

ways. This story features an inanimate female character, illustrating how women—even images of them—can stir up trouble among men.<sup>331</sup>

2. The second category includes embedded tales featuring both human and animal characters, where stupidity, dishonesty, and infidelity are exclusively associated with the subordinate group, whether human or animal. The frame story provides the best example of this category. In the frame story, corruption is solely attributed to female participants. It tells the story of Maymun's departure for business, Khojasta's killing of the starling, and the parrot's unwavering devotion to his male counterpart. The two female characters of the frame story are the problematic Khojasta and the unwise starling.<sup>332</sup> After falling in love with a young man, Khojasta attempts to pursue her love affair and leave the house at dusk. To secure permission, she first goes to the starling, who is also a female. The starling, however, counsels her by appealing to her sense of chastity, satirizing her reproachfully. Unwilling to tolerate any opposition to her desires, Khojasta kills the starling right away. Then she turns to the parrot to seek permission. Nakhshabi writes:

The parrot began, "O mistress, what is this mistake you have committed and what is this error you have made? The starling shares the homogenous nature of femininity with women, and opening one's heart to women and sharing one's secrets with those who are deficient is far from reason and distant from intellect."

طوطی آغاز کرد، که ای بی بی، این چه غلط بود که تو کردی و این چه خطا بود که از دست تو رفت؟ شارک انوثت و مجانست با زنان دارد، و سر دل گشادن با زنان و راز دل در میان نهادن با ناقصات از عقل دور باشد و از خرد بعید<sup>333</sup> بود.

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<sup>331</sup> Ibid, 53-9.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid, 4-12.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid, 12.

Nakhshabi describes the parrot as “an intelligent bird,” while his narratorial persona, the parrot, labels the starling as a deficient female, like all other women. In this segment of the narrative, the subordinate group of females, human or animal are alienated for their perceived lack of intelligence.

3. The third category comprises the embedded tales that feature only male characters, exhibiting dishonesty and trickery among men and male non-humans. Chapters 3 and 6 are two examples of this category. Chapter 3 tells the story of two loyal friends, a goldsmith and a carpenter, who decide to relocate. Since their skills and craftsmanship were not in demand in the new location, they devise a scheme to steal valuable idols and gems from a nearby temple. Their greed, however, brought their years of comradeship to an end.<sup>334</sup>

One day, the goldsmith, because impurity is part of his profession, and he cannot exist without stealing, became greedy for the carpenter’s share. Casting aside their years of friendship, he yearned to take it without compensation and deprived him (of his share). One night, he took all the gold and carried it to his own home. In the morning, as pure gold of the sun emerged from the bushes of the east, the goldsmith grabbed the carpenter’s tunic and said, “O treacherous thief and seditious rival, you did not honor our partnership and wasted our long-standing friendship and deprived me of my rightful share.”

روزی زرگر از آنجا که خبث زرگرانه است و بی دزدی نتواند بود، در حصه نجار طمع کرد. خواست که مجاناً ببرد و او را محروم گرداند و محبت چندین گاه بگذارد. شبی آن همه زر بیرون آورد و به خانه خود برد. بامداد چون زرگر ایام زر خالص آفتاب را بوته مشرق بیرون آورد، زرگر چنگ در دامن نجار زد و گفتن گرفت: ای دزد بیوفا و ای حریف پر دغا، حق سلام علیک نگاه نداشتی و محبت چندین گاه ضایع کردی و مرا از نصیب محروم گردانیدی.<sup>335</sup>

Like the rest of *Ṭuṭīnāma*’s embedded tales, these stories are directed at the male audience to reinforce patriarchal values, reminding them of traits such as loyalty, honor, and integrity. These values are essential traits for men for maintaining the social order, hierarchy, and trust within

<sup>334</sup> Ibid, 22-28.

<sup>335</sup> Ibid, 31-2.

male-dominated structures. Stealing, in this context, violates these principles, breaks the bond of friendship, and undermines the patriarchal expectations of masculinity, loyalty, and integrity.

4. The final category includes stories featuring animal characters, where female animals are often portrayed as unwise and reckless. Chapter 40, with a substory about the Emperor of China is an example of this category. While watching two deer and their fawns in his garden, the emperor notices an approaching storm. The doe, driven by fear, leaves her fawns behind to protect herself while the stag stays by their side and drowns with them. After observing this, the emperor's heart becomes cold toward women and he decides never to associate with them again.<sup>336</sup> In tales such as the example above, female animals often serve as symbols that uphold misogynistic stereotypes of the time.

One day, he was sitting overlooking a scene and below a wall, a doe had given birth to her fawns. A flood came from the sea. The doe, unable to endure, heartlessly abandoned her fawn and fled... but the stag, stayed by the fawns' side, out of compassion, and drowned with them. From that day on, the emperor witnessed such cruelty from that merciless doe, his heart grew so cold toward women that he refused to even mention the name of female sex, did not associate with any women, and wrote many tales about women's infidelity.

روزی او بر منظر نشسته بود، وزیر دیوار آن منظر آهوئی بچگان آورده. سیل دریا در رسید. ماده آهو تاب آن نیارورد، بی شفقت از بچگان بیرون شد... اما نر از غایت شفقت پهلوی بچگان مانده و هم با ایشان غرق شده. ای ملکه، از آن روز که فغفور از آن ماده آهو بی شفقت بدید و چنان بی رحمی مشاهده کرد، دلش بر زنان چنان سرد شده که نام زن نمی برد و گرد عورت نگشته و در بیوفایی زنان داستان ها نبشته.<sup>337</sup>

The *Ṭuṭināma*'s narrative often portrays women as temptresses or sources of moral corruption, serving as a cautionary tale warning men against their influence. Each of the above-mentioned categories reinforces male power and privilege by perpetuating negative stereotypes about women, justifying male control, and preventing challenges to the established gender order.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid, 245.

<sup>337</sup> Ibid, 331-2.

Through these narratives the *Ṭuṭīnāma* upholds patriarchal values, strengthens traditional gender hierarchies, and perpetuates control over women. Like many other premodern writings, the *Ṭuṭīnāma*'s narrative encouraged men to regulate women's actions, particularly in terms of sexuality, obedience, and social roles, ensuring the preservation of patriarchal norms. While some of the parrot's speeches are drawn from earlier renditions, Nakhshabi's version introduces many new details. These additions, particularly the narratives highlighting women's deceit and sexual depravity, offer insight into Nakhshabi's worldview and mentality. His rendition is not merely an adaptive response to the source materials; it also reflects his personal values. As explored in chapter 2 of this dissertation, this attitude is particularly evident in the eighth night of the *Ṭuṭīnāma*, where Nakhshabi weaves together his perspectives on various societal groups. The tales of this night establish similarities to the story of Yusof in Sura 12 of the Qur'an. God tests Yusof's faith in the Islamic narrative. The story describes how Yusof, a beautiful servant, is pursued by Zolaykhā, the wife of his master. After being rejected, however, Zolaykhā falsely accuses him, leading to his imprisonment. After Yusof proves his innocence, his master remarks, "This is another instance of women's treachery: your treachery is truly great."<sup>338</sup> In this instance, Zolaykhā's husband does not merely condemn her individual actions but extends his condemnations to the cunning of all women.

In the following section, through the lens of their gender, the role of the main characters in the *Ṭuṭīnāma* will be analyzed.<sup>339</sup> The focus will remain on how their actions, traits, and relationships are shaped by the relationship between male authority, female agency, patriarchal values, and the concepts of honor and loyalty.

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<sup>338</sup> M. A. S. Abdel Haleem, trans., *The Qur'an*, 147 (12:29).

<sup>339</sup> Joan Wallach Scott suggest looking at representations of gender as a relationship in "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," in *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Reading-and Enjoying- " Wiles of Women" Stories as a Feminist," 206-7.

## Maymun: the Son of Mobārak and the Owner of the Parrot

The frame story begins with the tale of a wealthy merchant named Mobārak who was unable to have a child. After many years of prayers, God grants him a son. When the son, Maymun, turns eighteen, he arranges his marriage. One day, while passing through the bazaar, Maymun notices a parrot for sale. This moment marks the entry of the parrot, depicted as a heroic figure and the merchant's trusted companion. Unlike Khojasta, who enters the merchant's life through the strong bond of marriage, the parrot appears serendipitously crossing the merchant's path in the bazaar. His allegiance to the merchant is quickly established when, shortly after their meeting, he advises the merchant to purchase every hyacinth in the bazaar, leading to a substantial profit. In gratitude for this remarkable favor, the merchant immediately purchases an eloquent talking starling from the bazaar to serve as the parrot's companion. Recognizing the parrot's knowledge, intelligence, and skills, Maymun frequently seeks his counsel in all his business matters and dealings. Before leaving town for ocean trading, Maymun entrusts Khojasta with an important responsibility, instructing her to consult both the parrot and the starling on all household matters and any problems that may arise.

Maymun said, "O Khojasta, women have also been called the threshold of a door. Thus, a woman should always remain steady like a threshold, and like a pillar, never move from her place. In my absence, whatever matter arises for you and any important issue that confronts you, you must consult with the parrot and the starling and seek their counsel in all events as the outcome of consulting the wise men and the fruit of approval is always rewarding." With these words, he bade farewell to Khojasta.

میمون گفت: ای خجسته، زنان را آستانه در نیز خوانده اند. پس باید که زن چون آستانه همه وقت برقرار باشد و چون سده هیچگاه از جای نجنبند، در غیبت من هر کاری که تو را پیش آید و هر مهمی که به تو معترض گردد، باید که با مشاورت طوطی و شارق کنی و در جمیع حادثات صواب از استصواب ایشان جویی، که نتیجه مشاورت عقلا همه صلاح بود و ثمره<sup>340</sup> استصواب بلغا همه فلاح. این بگفت و خجسته را وداع کرد.

<sup>340</sup> Zīā' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Tuḡināma*, 10-1.

Maymun's crucial role in the story is conveyed through his absence. His departure serves as a central catalyst; it sparks the events of the story, and creates a source of moral tension throughout the narrative. His absence is central to the theme of honor, loyalty, and accountability. A catalyst for the plot, his departure creates a scenario for Khojasta to be tempted to pursue romantic love outside the confines of her house and allows the parrot to initiate his nighttime storytelling to dissuade Khojasta from infidelity. Maymun represents traditional male authority, and his honor becomes the narrative's central focus. He gives instructions to his wife to remain confined to the house during his absence. Although he is away at sea on business, his influence is still felt in the household, as the parrot's efforts continue to focus on safeguarding the merchant's honor and reputation. The concept of honor is closely linked with controlling the wife's conduct and the parrot's stories are intended to highlight fidelity as essential. Maymun's connection with the parrot represents a deep and loyal homosocial bond. In *Between Men*, Sedgwick describes homosociality as a social relationship between individuals of the same gender, a central feature of many classical Arabic and Persian works.<sup>341</sup> The parrot's unwavering dedication to his master leads him to act as his substitute and go to great lengths to safeguard his master's interests. This dynamic highlights themes of male solidarity and loyalty, with the parrot assuming responsibility for maintaining the merchant's authority. Maymun's return marks the story's long-awaited resolution. The tension caused by his absence is eventually relieved with his homecoming, highlighting the parrot's successful efforts to maintain the merchant's honor. His

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<sup>341</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 1-20. Sedgwick argues that homosocial relationships are formed through "erotic triangles," where two men are against one woman, thereby strengthening their bond through trafficking the female participant. In the *Tuṭīnāma*, examples of erotic triangles include: the first involving Maymun, the parrot, and Khojasta, and the second involving as Maymun, the parrot, and the starling.

return brings a restoration of order and reinforces the moral values that the parrot sustained throughout the narrative.

### Khojasta: the Wife of Maymun

When Maymun's return is prolonged, Khojasta catches sight of a young prince from the roof of her house -- a familiar topos in romantic literature -- and the two fall in love instantly. Intoxicated with love, they seek ways to meet. Following the advice of a lady engaged to facilitate their affair,<sup>342</sup> they decide to meet at night, using the cover of night as a disguise. At dawn, eager to gain approval for her planned illicit meeting, Khojasta turns to the starling, believing that, as a fellow female, the bird will naturally sympathize with her desire and approve of her rendezvous. Unlike the explicitly moralizing verses on the Wiles of Women, the language in this passage does not condemn Khojasta. Rather, it places her within a romantic conventional framework, where love is a powerful force. Ultimately, however, the narrative links her passion with transgression and portrays her as easily influenced by desire and inattentive to the expectations of matrimonial loyalty.

As Maymun's absence grew longer, one day, Khojasta was gazing at the public from the rooftop, when her two eyes met the eyes of the king's son. Instantly, she lost consciousness, fell into a swoon, and surrendered herself to passion. The army of longing conquered the vanguard of patience, the envoy of love seized control over the domain of stillness, the sultan of desire established his tent of restlessness in the kingdom of her heart, and the constable of passion obliterated her five senses. Matchmakers on both sides got to work, and schemes of both parties resorted to their tricks. Although Khojasta initially resisted, in the end, she relented, saying, "The day is the veil of lovers' gate, while the night deceives the longing heart. When the light of the day folds up its radiance and the veil of darkness descends, I shall find myself in the prince's embrace."

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<sup>342</sup> The word *كاهن* is used in the original context, meaning agent, broker, or pimp.

چون مدت غیبت میمون دراز کشید، روزی خجسته بالای بام تماشای عام می کرد، دو چشم او با چشم ملك زاده دچار شد. فی الحال از پای در آمد و بیهوش شد و از دست برفت و مدهوش گشت و لشکر شوق بر طلیعه صبر استیلا یافت ویزك عشق بر مقدمه سکون مستولی شده و سلطان ولا بر ولایت دل خیمه بیقراری نصب فرمود، و شحنة هوا، حواس خمسه را نیست و نابود گردانید. دلالة هر دو طرف در کار شد و محتاله هر دو جانب به حيله در آمد. خجسته اگر چه اول امتناع کرد، آخر راضی شد و گفت: روز پرده در عشاق است و شب حيله گر مشتاق. چون روز بساط نور طی کند و شب<sup>343</sup> تنق ظلام فروهد، من در وثاق امیرزاده بیابم.

Each night, the merchant's wife, the parrot's only listener, appears adorned and dressed in finery. While her actions challenge the expectations of loyalty, the language of the passage does not overtly condemn her, presenting her desire as a persuasive force rather than a moral failing. In contrast to the more overtly critical and judgmental verses on the Wiles of Women, this passage presents Khojasta's situation with a certain ambiguity. She is caught between duty to her husband and the temptation of love beyond the confines of her home, making her a destabilizing character in the narrative without reducing her to a mere symbol of transgression.

Khojasta's life is heavily influenced by male figures, such as her husband and the parrot, making her a victim of patriarchal control. By planning to pursue romantic love outside her marriage, she challenges some patriarchal expectations. Her actions, such as the killing of the starling, who advised her against union with her beloved, also reveal how she internalizes and perpetuates the norms that denigrate women's advice. Her actions highlight the tension between personal desire and societal expectations, making her a symbol of female agency and rebellion in the narrative. Her agency, however, is ultimately limited by the patriarchal structure of the narrative, reinforcing traditional gender norms by illustrating the consequences of female disobedience in her demise. We will return to the representation of Khojasta later in this chapter.

### The Starling: the Parrot's Female Counterpart

<sup>343</sup> Zia' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭināma*, 11.

Out of her loyalty to the merchant, the starling sternly cautions Khojasta and speaks of upholding her chastity in marriage. Hearing her words, Khojasta, who is intoxicated with love, grabs the bird, forcefully beats her on the ground, and ends her life instantly.

When the sun sank behind the horizon, Khojasta removed the veil from her face and went to the starling, since due to their connection because of the female sex, the starling would not object to her actions and would permit her to go (to the rendezvous). When she explained the present situation, the starling's loyalty to her master prevented her from complying and she advised Khojasta to follow the path of the lawful. She did not realize that a lover is not interested and the one in love has no use for counsel.

چون آفتاب در پس پرده شد، خجسته پرده از روی بر گرفت و بر شارك رفت، بنا بر آنکه او ماده است و بسبب انوثت با او نسبتی دارد، درین کار او امتناع نخواهد کرد و برقتن دستوری خواهد داد. چون صورت حال باز نمود شارك را حق ولی نعمت مانع شد و خجسته را بر طریق حلال خوارگان نصیحت کرد و ندانست که عاشق با نصایح چه کار و دلداده<sup>344</sup> را با مواعظ چه مصلحت؟

Nakhshabi continues,

Khojasta was overtaken by the torments of love, and the overwhelming waves of passion were moving within her. The starling's advice boiled her from within and her appearance changed. She pulled the starling out of her cage and struck her against the ground with such force that the bird of her soul flew from the cage of her wings and feathers and, in an instant, ascended to the celestial abode of the Throne.

خجسته را سكرات عشق در كار شده بود و غلبات شوق در حرکت آمده، از نصیحت شارك باطن او در غلیان شد و ظاهر او در دوران افتاد. شارك را از قفس بیرون کشید و چنان بر زمین زد که مرغ روح او از قفس بال و پر برپرید و فی الحال به آشیانه عرش رسید.

The way the starling's demise is muted in the narrative conveys more than the immediate loss; it reflects a more profound societal dismissal of the female perspective and moral counsel and emphasizes the futility of her advice in the face of the impulsive Khojasta. The killing of the starling at Khojasta's hands shows the internalization of patriarchal ideas even by the female participants in the narrative. The starling's removal also reinforces a framework in which the

<sup>344</sup> Ibid, 11-2.

rejection of all females is normalized, even by their own kind. It further complicates the gendered dynamics of the story, suggesting that women, too, can internalize and perpetuate patriarchal norms, even as they struggle against them. In this way, Khojasta demonstrates that, while she rejects control over her desire, she adopts its logic of silencing opposition.

The starling acts as a counterpoint to the parrot; she offers a perspective that corresponds with, yet contrasts with, the parrot's standpoint. Although the starling is only present in the narrative for a short period, her role is important. She serves as a catalyst for the role of the parrot. The starling's demise sets the tone for the parrot's authority, and her unfortunate removal acts as a reminder of the consequences of rash behavior. It is her removal from the narrative that allows the parrot to become the sole moral guide. The dramatic event of her death signals the shift towards a more structured and cautious approach to guiding Khojasta. Watching the starling's destiny, the parrot approaches Khojasta with a more structured and controlled strategy. The starling's character, therefore, emphasizes the need for reflection and careful guidance, while subtly warning the reader about the dangers of unrestrained actions.

### The Parrot: Maymun's Faithful Trustee

Furious, Khojasta then turns to the parrot, reports her encounter with the starling, and seeks permission to leave the house. The parrot's role is to break the destructive bond between the merchant's wife and her beloved and protect his master's honor. Threatened with fate like that of the starling, he seeks a strategy to avoid his death.

The parrot was a clever bird and an intelligent creature. He reflected upon the situation and said to himself, "If I choose the path of giving advice, I will witness the same fate that befell the starling. But if I approve of what is happening, it will lead to falsehood and misguidance. The fortunate one is he who takes a lesson from others. The best course of action is to engage in words and discourses and outwardly agree with this situation. Then see what emerges from behind the veil of the concealed."

طوطی مرغی زیرک بود و جانوری ذاهن با خود تامل کرد و گفت که اگر طریق نصیحت مسلوك خواهم داشت، همان معاینه خواهم دید که شارك را افتاد و اگر رضا خواهم داد در بطالات و ضلالت خواهد افتاد: السعيدُ منْ و عظمُ لغيره. <sup>345</sup> مصلحت آنست که به قیل و قال بپردازم و به ظاهر با این بسازم. پس بینم که از پرده غیب چه زاید.

Like his prior engagement with the merchant, where he asks the merchant to purchase him at the bazaar, he advances on his initiatives to persuade Khojasta and save the situation. His strategy is to distract her by telling her stories at dusk and elongating the tales until dawn. This plan serves multiple purposes: it delays his own execution, preserves his master's honor, and prevents Khojasta from committing adultery. However, an element of trickery is engaged in his storytelling, which is evident in the way he crafts his tales. Thus, for a complex set of reasons rooted in his own survival and the preservation of masculine honor, the parrot continues telling stories to Khojasta. By keeping himself alive, he indirectly protects his master from falling victim to Khojasta's deceit. He delays his potential demise by manipulating the unfolding events, keeping Khojasta engaged and controlling her response. In addition to helping him survive, his storytelling aims to transform Khojasta's heart and mind and build a relationship and a sense of trust between himself and Khojasta, providing a platform for his didactic expression.

The parrot's first story is one parallel to that of Maymun and Khojasta, reflecting on his own role in saving the merchant's wife. Its central message is clear: I, the parrot, seek only what is best for you. Khojasta responds appropriately to the message, allowing him to continue instructing her the following night. Over time, the parrot's storytelling, rooted in moral and societal expectations, creates a bond between himself and Khojasta. Each tale strengthens the parrot's influence over Khojasta and draws her deeper into the world of his storytelling. From the very beginning, he is portrayed as a wise and literate bird, displaying intelligence, creativity, and mastery of narrative craft through his speech. He involves Khojasta at intellectual and emotional

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<sup>345</sup> Ibid, 12.

levels, hoping to build a relationship based on trust and curiosity. Through his tales, he also hopes to illustrate the transformative power of storytelling as a tool for education and entertainment.

The parrot, the story's male narrator, skillfully manages to outlive the danger of the wandering sexual desires of the merchant's wife, using storytelling as his survival weapon. His narrative is itself a ruse – he must either advise Khojasta to stay home and pay the price or manipulate the discourse to save his life. In this situation, his deception emerges as a positive trait, a strategic means of self-preservation. His tricks closely resemble those of Shahrzād in the *Arabian Nights*. Like her, by means of a clever strategy of storytelling, he relates nightly tales that last all night and delay his fate. Fully aware of King Shahriyār's custom of executing his wives after their wedding night, Shahrzād refuses to become his prey. Instead, she captivates him with stories, ensuring that each dawn brings the promise of another tale and another day of survival. The following excerpt captures Shahrzād and Shahriyār's conversation following her first tale:

“But morning overtook Shahrazad, and she lapsed into silence, leaving King Shahrayar burning with curiosity to hear the rest of the story.

Then Dinarzad said to her sister Shahrazad, “What a strange and lovely story!” Shahrazad replied, ‘What is this compared with what I shall tell you tomorrow night if the king spares me and lets me live? It will be even better and more entertaining.’”

The king thought to himself, “I will spare her until I hear the rest of the story; then I will have her put to death the next day.”

When morning broke, the day dawned, and the sun rose; the king left to attend to the affairs of the kingdom, and the vizier, Shahrazad's father, was amazed and delighted. King Shahrayar governed all day and returned home at night to his quarters and got into bed with Shahrazad.

Then Dinarzad said to her sister Shahrazad, “Please, sister, if you are not sleepy, tell us one of your lovely little tales to while away the night.” The king added,

“Let it be the conclusion of the story of the demon and the merchant, for I would like to hear it.”<sup>346</sup>

While both Shahrzād and the parrot employ storytelling as a survival strategy, their storytelling approaches differ in their use of suspense. The parrot begins a new story each night, whereas Shahrzād deliberately leaves her stories unfinished and creates suspense to prolong her survival. Analogously, the parrot reflects a calculated “control of instinctive response to a threatening situation.”<sup>347</sup> For him, cunning constitutes a necessary survival strategy in the face of unfortunate circumstances in the merchant’s absence. Despite facing great danger, he remains loyal to his male counterpart. His deception, therefore, is justifiably motivated: he wants to preserve his own life and uphold his duty to the merchant. The following excerpt illustrates his first attempt to gain Khojasta’s trust during the first night of the merchant’s absence.

Now, rest assured and dismiss all thoughts, because I will, to the best of my ability, do everything I can to help you achieve your goal. If this scheme is revealed and this secret is discovered, and the news reaches your husband’s ears, even if, like the parrot of the merchant, my feathers have to be plucked out from head to foot, I will arise and reconcile the situation between you and your husband.

اکنون خاطر جمع دار و هیچ اندیشه با خود مگمار که من بقدر وسع و استطاعت کمر انقیاد بر میان بندم و بدانچه ممکن گردد، تو را به مقصود برسانم، اگر این سر فاش شود و این راز کشف گرددو خبر به شوی تو رسد، اگر چه چون طوطی تاجر از سرو بال و پر برخاستن بود، برخیزم، و میان تو و شوهر اصلاح دهم.<sup>348</sup>

Thus, when the parrot, seemingly powerless in the face of the merchant’s wife, learns of the danger threatening his life, he attempts to distract Khojasta through stories. Initially appearing defeated, the parrot proceeds to recount stories of similar situations to survive this

<sup>346</sup> Husain Haddawy, Trans., *The Arabian Nights*, based on the text edited by Muhsin Mahdi (New York: W. W. Norton, 2008), 30.

<sup>347</sup> Zīā’ al-Dīn Nakhshabī, *Ṭuṭīnāma*, 121.

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid*, 12-3.

critical point. For his vindication, he introduces a story akin to that of Khojasta and Maymun, yearning to invoke a response from her. Similarly, when the merchant goes away for business, his wife fulfills her sexual desires outside the legal framework of matrimony with a young man in her neighborhood. Although he observes all of this, the parrot does not get involved for fear of his life. While the two tales are similar in many ways, chapter 1 of the parrot's stories concludes differently from the frame tale. Upon the merchant's return, the parrot reports everything except for the wife's love affair to prevent causing trouble in their marriage. The merchant, however, learns about his wife's infidelity from another source. Thinking that this secret was reported by the parrot, the merchant's wife seeks revenge. One night, she takes the parrot out of his cage, plucks all of his feathers, and she throws him out in the alley. Barely alive, the parrot drags himself to a shrine nearby. Suffering remorse over the loss of his parrot and his wife's disloyalty, the merchant throws his wife out of the house. By ironic coincidence, the wife also lands in the same shrine as the parrot. Seeing this, the parrot steps forward and tells her that he was not the one who revealed her secret to his master and that whatever he has experienced at her hand, she too will experience it because of her wrong accusation. The next day, however, the parrot returns to the merchant's residence, claiming that he has risen from the dead to testify on his wife's innocence. Immediately after hearing the parrot's testimony, the merchant runs to his wife, begging for forgiveness. By sharing a story reminiscent of Khojasta and Maymun's tale, the parrot establishes his reliability and displays his good intentions from the very beginning.<sup>349</sup>

After planting the sapling of trust in chapter 1, the parrot continues:

When the parrot brought his story to this point, he said to Khojasta, "O mistress, if your heart is occupied with the love of your beloved and your soul is inflamed with the affection of a desired one, do not worry. Do as you wish and play a game of union with him. (If, by chance, this secret is revealed, and this scheme is

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<sup>349</sup> Ibid, 13-6.

discovered by your husband) Even if I, like that merchant's parrot, may lose my wings and feathers, I will rise and, with the spell of a talisman, ultimately lead you to your husband, like that woman. This is a felicitous hour and a pleasant time. Rise and go towards the house of your beloved and do not break the promise of the first night." Khojasta wanted to do so. But morning, you could say, was awaiting her like her beloved.

طوطی چون سخن اینجا رسانید با خجسته آغاز کرد که "ای بی بی، اگر دل تو مشغول محبت محبوبی شده است و جان تو مشغوف مودت مطلوبی گشته، هیچ اندیشه مکن. چنانکه دانی با او می ساز و بازی مواصلت می باز. (اگر مبادا این سر تو کشف شود و این راز به شوی تو برسد) اگر چه مرا چون طوطی آن تاجر از سر بال و پر باید خاست، بر خیزم و به هندسه طلسم، عاقبت تو را چون آن زن به شوی تو برسانم. این ساعتی خوش است و وقتی دلکش. برخیز و جانب وثاق دوست شو<sup>350</sup> و وعده اول شب خلاف مکن." خجسته خواست تا همچنان کند. صبح گویی چون عاشق او منتظر بود.

This is how the parrot manages to become the master manipulator of the story. While consistently encouraging Khojasta to unite with her beloved, he simultaneously distracts her and delays their union. The following excerpts illustrate the parrot's manipulative conversations with Khojasta, aimed at gaining her trust. Although such conversations can be found throughout the narrative, the excerpt below is from chapter 24:

O Khojasta, do not look at what reason dictates that you will never see the face of your beloved. Rather, see what hope proclaims that ultimately, you will grasp the tresses of union. Do not turn away entirely from reason, but focus on far-seeing hope, for the wise men have said: one may despair of everything, but one cannot despair of hope itself.

ای خجسته، در آن مبین که عقل می گوید که تو هرگز روی یار نخواهی دید، اما در آن بین که امید می گوید که عاقبت تو زلف وصال او خواهی کشید. نظر بر عقل منقطع مکن، چشم بر امید دوربین نه، که بلغا گویند: از همه چیز نومید<sup>351</sup> توان شد، اما از امید نا امید نتوان گشت.

In the same chapter, he continues:

O Khojasta, collect your inner self and do not surrender to despair. Do not be completely hopeless of the union with your beloved, and do not despair of union with the desired one, for fate has its ways. If one tastes the poison of pain in the morning, in the evening, he will be treated with the curative antidote.

<sup>350</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>351</sup> Ibid, 208.

ای خجسته، باطن خود جمع دار و خود را به نومیدی مسپار. از وصال محبوب بکلی نا امید مشو و از اتصال مطلوب بتمامی مأیوس مگرد، که ایام را رسمی است. اگر یکی را در صبح زهر دردی بچشاند، عاقبت در شام تریاک<sup>352</sup> درمانی برساند.

On numerous occasions, the parrot encourages Khojasta to unite with her beloved and offers her relationship advice, yet each time, he relates a story to divert her attention. The following excerpt from chapter 13 of the *Ṭuṭināma* illustrates this pattern:

O Khojasta, go to your beloved's chamber tonight and order that the music that brings joy to hearts be played. If he becomes joyous upon hearing it and is moved by the sound, then know with certainty that he is a man of noble essence.

ای خجسته، تو امشب در وثاق محبوب رو، بگو تا سماع مبهج دلهاست در دهند. اگر او در استماع آن در نشاط شد<sup>353</sup> و از شنیدن آن در اهتزاز آمد، حقیقت دان که مردی گوهری است.

He maintains his manipulative discourse each night. The following excerpt is from chapter 52 of the *Ṭuṭināma*:

O Khojasta, you have shown much negligence and endless lethargy in going to see your beloved. Today I dreamed that your husband has returned from his journey and the master of the house has come back. Reflection and contemplation are one thing, but do not let this dream become reality. Your husband may arrive today or tomorrow, and you will become covered in shame before your beloved, just as the wife of the pious man was ashamed before her husband.

ای خجسته، تو در رفتن بر دوست کاهلی فراوان کردی و آهستگی بی پایان نمودی، و من امروز خواب دیدم که شوی تو از سفر رسیده است و خواجه خانه در آمده. تأمل و تفکر من همان است، نباید که این خواب راست شود و امروز و فردا شوی تو<sup>354</sup> برسد و تو از دوست چنان شرمنده مانی که زن زاهد از شوی شرمنده ماند.

Then the parrot relates the story of a pious man's wife and her love for a young man. After concluding the tale, he once again urges Khojasta to unite with her beloved:

O mistress of the house, I am afraid that your husband may suddenly return from his journey, and you will be as ashamed before your beloved as the wife of the pious man was eternally ashamed before her husband.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid, 209-10.

<sup>353</sup> Ibid, 123-4.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid, 425-426.

ای کدبانو می ترسم ناگاه شوی تو از سفر برسد و تو از روی دوست چنان شرمنده مانی که زن زاهد از روی شوی شرمنده  
 355 اید ماند.

Outwardly, the parrot offers a voice of support for personal freedom and desire, and his advice corresponds with Khojasta's own impulses. However, his true goal is to prevent her from committing an indiscretion in the absence of her husband. Using provocative language and sympathetic expressions, he prevents Khojasta from questioning his genuine intentions. By narrating tales that explore topics such as gender issues, sexuality, deception, and male authority, he offers a wealth of evidence regarding the consequences of deceit and disloyalty. While prolonging his own life, he gives Khojasta the opportunity to reconsider her actions and choose for herself.

The parrot's control over the narrative mirrors the intense societal control of men over women's lives. Because of his male privilege, he can navigate the narrative without facing the same consequences as the starling. His approach can be seen as a form of patriarchal bargaining; he does not outright condemn Khojasta's desire but instead uses storytelling to subtly guide her toward following societal expectations. This reflects how Khojasta's agency is restricted within the framework of control. Through his stories, the parrot shapes Khojasta's understanding of her roles as a woman within society. He emphasizes themes of loyalty, chastity, and obedience, which are central to defining praiseworthy female identity in the narrative.

It is important to point out that, ultimately, the parrot negotiates his freedom in return for telling the merchant what happened in his absence. He didn't simply tell him out of a sense of duty from one male to another. Here, too, the parrot has a self-serving interest in his own survival. The parrot is in a weak position and repeatedly improves it by sharing knowledge. He,

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<sup>355</sup> Ibid, 435.

too, is cunning, and his testimony becomes a form of currency in exchange for his safety. While he is dedicated to protecting his master's honor and acting as his eyes and ears, he is not there only to support the merchant. While he is doing all of these things, there is an overarching goal of preserving himself. His storytelling, then, is not purely moral or loyal – it is strategic. For him, knowledge becomes a tool of control, and his speech, which is carefully timed and shaped, allows him to assert influence. Thus, the parrot's cleverness mirrors the very qualities he warns the merchant about in women.

## The *Ṭuṭināma*: A Narrative of Desire

Malti-Douglas describes the *Arabian Nights* as a narrative of desire. Similarly, the *Ṭuṭināma*'s frame narrative is shaped by both appropriate and inappropriate desire, particularly Khojasta's longing to unite with her beloved in her husband's absence. While both forms of desire are present, it is the inappropriate desire that drives the narrative forward. The *Ṭuṭināma*'s narrative teaches us that appropriate and inappropriate desires are more than moral opposites; they extend into material and social realms of what is acceptable and ultimately satisfying. They go beyond the simplistic dichotomy of the just and the unjust.<sup>356</sup> The opening scenes of the frame story illustrate the significance of desire. After years of infertility, the merchant's parents finally conceive a son. As he reaches the age of eighteen, his parents arrange his marriage to Khojasta. Their longing for a son and the son's desire for a wife are portrayed as natural, reinforcing the fundamental role of desire in the narrative structure.

The clever Mobārak named his son Maymun. When his beard grew on his face and the boy reached the age of eighteen, his father sought a wife for him named Khojasta. A visible bond formed between Maymun and Khojasta, and their affection for each other grew to an extent unmatched by any lovers. For a time, they sheltered in the shade of happiness, and for a while, they rested in the comfort of a carefree existence.

مبارك زيرك آن پسر را ميمون نام نهاد. چون سيزه عذاراو بدميد و سال عمر پسر به هشتمه رسيد، پدر از برای او زنی خواست خجسته نام، و میان ميمون و خجسته اختلاطی ظاهر شد و الفتی با هر گشت که میان هیچ عاشق و معشوق نبود.<sup>357</sup> مدتی مدید بهمین حال در کنف خرمی می بودند و عهدی هم برین منوال در عهد بیغمی می غنودند.

Another natural desire, namely Maymun's desire to build wealth, leads to the parrot's entry into the story. The merchant's pursuit of economic prosperity brings the parrot into his life.

<sup>356</sup> Fedwa Malti-Douglas, *Woman's Body, Woman's Word Gender and Discourse in Arabo-Islamic Writing*, 15.

<sup>357</sup> Zia' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭināma*, 7-8.

Also, this same desire for financial gain ultimately leads him to leave his family and hometown for a business journey.

When the parrot's intelligence, knowledge, and ability became apparent to Maymun, he consulted him in every matter and sought his advice in all dealings. One day, the parrot was talking about various topics with Maymun. Suddenly, the conversation about ocean trade came up. The parrot described the benefits of sea commerce in a way that, despite having never seen the ocean, Maymun put on his shoes and decided to set sail immediately.

میمون را چون علم و دراست و ذکاوت کیاست طوطی معلوم شد در همه کار رجوع به مشاورت او کردی و در جمیع امور صواب از استصواب او جستی. روزی طوطی نزد میمون از هر جنس سخن می گفت. ناگاه سخن در تجارت دریا افتاد. طوطی چندان سود دریا شرح داد که میمون آب نادیده موزه از پای کشیدن گرفت و خواست که در حال راه دریا<sup>358</sup> گیرد.

Based on a previously mentioned verse on page 48, the narrative frames certain relationships as more natural than others. Two possible interpretations can be drawn from those line "everyone's inclination is towards that of the same kind/gender." First, the relationship between creatures of the same kind, here, the parrot and the starling, could be viewed as natural and proper, since every being is meant to associate with those of its own kind. Second, Nakhshabi might be subtly commenting on same-sex relationships, particularly bonds between the two male characters, the merchant and the parrot, which could also be interpreted as a natural and proper connection. In both readings, the narrative presents male homosocial or heterosexual desire as inherently natural. In contrast, the female desire expressed outside of marriage is portrayed as the most unnatural and unacceptable element of the story. While the frame narrative and embedded tales feature numerous male participants, it is female sexuality, particularly Khojasta's desire that becomes the central focus of scrutiny and condemnation.

While many characters with different desires come and go, it is Khojasta's desire that considerably alters the narrative. Her desire to fulfill her sexual needs in the absence of her

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<sup>358</sup> Ibid, 9.

husband becomes the driving force of the frame tale. The frame story initially communicates Maymun's desire as a natural longing for a companion within the bonds of marriage, thus a proper desire. It is the entrance of his female counterpart, Khojasta, that eventually disrupts this equilibrium, shifting the narrative toward an improper desire. Everything appears natural until Khojasta's sight of a young man, when she becomes the source of immorality in the frame. Upon Maymun's departure, her yearning for a young man in the neighborhood becomes the central disruptive force of the story, as it compromises the sanctity of her marriage bond.

Alongside his condemnation of women's wiles, Nakhshabi seems to advocate for a world of men without women, particularly evident in the conclusion, where Maymun never remarries. Some of his verses reflect Nakhshabi's deeply misogynistic views, portraying women as inherently deceitful and deserving of punishment.

Nakhshabi, deceit is born from women  
 An evil woman is like a seedling of cunning  
 The creation of the cunning women  
 Is as if descended from the lineage of cunning

نخشبی مکر از زنان زاده است  
 زن بد چون نهاله مکر است  
 خلقت عورتان مکاره  
 گویا از سلاله مکر است<sup>359</sup>

Nakhshabi describes all women as malicious, demon-like creatures who deserve to be deprived of life. He writes:

Nakhshabi, your sword is suitable for a woman  
 He who killed a woman is considered manly  
 Sorrow for what, if a woman dies?  
 An evil woman is better killed with a big sword

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<sup>359</sup> Ibid, 81-2.

نخشبی تیغ دان تو در خور زن  
 مرد آن را شمر که او زن کشت  
 گر بمیرد زنی چه افسوس است  
 زن بد کشته به، به تیغ درشت<sup>360</sup>

One fascinating feature, however, is that, unlike his verses on wiles of women, Nakhshabi's language is not particularly judgmental towards Khojasta, the deceitful wife.

The *Tuṭināma* reveals a tension between the author's personal inclinations and the prevailing social conventions of his time. Notably, the text occasionally diverges from established portrayals within its frame narrative and offers glimpses of Nakhshabi's complex perspective. While his narrative often corresponds intellectually with the parrot and Maymun, and the patriarchal notions of his time, there are moments where he appears to emotionally sympathize with Khojasta, even seemingly placing himself in her position and taking subtle pleasure in the idea of women outsmarting men. For instance, in the verse previously provided, Nakhshabi appears to inhabit Khojasta's position for a moment. He does so, not only by assuming the voice of a desiring woman, but also by expressing frustration with the same forces that obstructs Khojasta's longing. This suggests a degree of imaginative sympathy with her perspective.<sup>361</sup> This nuanced stance is particularly interesting given Nakhshabi's authorship of *Lazāt al-Nesā'*, which demonstrates his openness to themes of female sexuality. His tone remains largely non-judgmental in reference to Khojasta specifically, yet he ultimately conforms to the male authoritative language and misogynistic norms of his era. If we exclude the preface, Nakhshabi's treatment of Khojasta throughout the story appears to call for a happy resolution.

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<sup>360</sup> Ibid, 84.

<sup>361</sup> Nakhshabi, wished to leave tonight  
 for a beautiful one who beats the drum  
 The morning light prevented her departure  
 The cock and morning are the lovers' foe  
 See page 97 of this dissertation for the Persian verses of the above translation.

The logical outcome of the narrative suggests Khojasta's acquittal, given that her desires, which are wholly transgressive, are portrayed with a degree of understanding. However, male power demands a different conclusion. The closure of the story underscores the significance of male homosocial relationships and the importance of their survival under every circumstance.

Khojasta's sexual desires, and probably every married woman's wandering sexual pursuits, become associated with death, reinforcing the societal fear of female autonomy.

Meanwhile, as a narrative of desire, the *Ṭuṭināma* tells the story of the merchant whose male counterpart, the parrot, desires to uphold a male utopia. By relating stories that reinforce ideals of social order, male authority, honor, loyalty, and control, the parrot seeks to maintain the merchant's masculinity. Two distinct types of desire tie Khojasta and the parrot to the merchant: first, affection based on sensual qualities, and second, favor, preference and longing for a counterpart of his own kind. The parrot's future-telling skills, business acumen, and his loyalty are not the only sources of his desirability; he belongs to the merchant's world, the world of men. A special section in the frame tale's introduction is dedicated to the parrot's superiority and desirability. By bringing a substantial profit to the merchant, he proves his worth and loyalty. His status is further reinforced when the merchant entrusts his wife to consult with the parrot (and the starling) in all household decisions during his absence. It is essential for the parrot to rectify the situation by amusing Khojasta through resorting to narratives and creating new desire. From the outset, the starling is automatically regarded as playing a secondary role to the parrot. She exists primarily to fulfill the parrot's needs for companionship; she's there to satisfy his desire. The parrot's superiority naturally calls for a comparison between him and the other feathered character of the frame narrative, the starling. Both the parrot and the starling remain loyal to their owner and attempt to dissuade his wife from leaving the house. Yet, while the parrot is

established early on as a wise figure, the starling is portrayed as an unwise bird whose life comes to an end by a more deceitful female figure in the house. This contrast may reflect Nakhshabi's general portrayal of women; not only as adversaries to men but also as rivals to one another. The story concludes with the killing of Khojasta and the parrot's release, corresponding to the parrot's desire for freedom, and the seclusion of the merchant, affirming his desire to safeguard his masculinity.

Although their desires differ, freedom for the parrot and seclusion for the merchant, their shared goal is separation from women and rejoicing in their masculine identity. This ending communicates their unbreakable bond and the absence of such solidarity among the female sex. The relationship between Maymun and the parrot is fundamentally homosocial, serving as the backdrop to the entire narrative. The male pair plays a pivotal role in shaping the dynamics of gender within the *Ṭuṭināma*. The frame tale contrasts the homosocial Maymun-parrot bond with the heterosexual Maymun-Khojasta relationship. However, it is the latter that becomes the central problem. The initial disruption caused by the female figure is eventually resolved by male homosocial desire. After Khojasta's demise, Maymun frees the parrot. This, along with Maymun's seclusion, reinforces the Maymun-parrot shared release from female influence and reaffirms their bond.

Like many medieval Persian works, the *Ṭuṭināma* links homosocial desire with voyage as a transformative experience. This journey leads to two distinct discoveries for Maymun: one within his heterosexual relationship, as he learns of his wife's infidelity and the second, within his homosocial bond, where he discovers the parrot's unwavering loyalty. The story does not function without the homosocial pair -- after Maymun's departure, the parrot assumes his role, protecting the household. Upon his return, it is the parrot who reveals Khojasta's betrayal,

reignites Maymun's manliness, and drives him to decapitate his wife. This interaction between homosocial and heterosexual relationships unfolds in the most intense and unexpected moments, as seen in the following description of Maymun's return:

Khojasta was getting ready to leave when her husband entered through the door and instead of the uproar of the morning, the servants and maids raised a clamor, saying, "The master has returned!" Maymun had returned from his sea voyage. Khojasta, who was adorned and dressed for her lover, was caught off guard, came forward, and threw herself at her husband's feet. Maymun then went to the parrot's cage and inquired about his well-being. The parrot replied, "In your absence, I served you in a way that no one else ever has, and I saved your honey from the trouble of flies and have protected your affairs from the touch of ruffians. If, in gratitude, you set me free from this cage, I will reveal the full account of what has transpired and uncover the astonishing secrets of the past to you."

خجسته در استعداد رفتن بود که شوی او برادر آمد و بجای غوغای صبح غریو غلامان و کنیزکان برخاست که خواجه رسید و میمون از سفر دریا بازگشت. خجسته که آماده و پرداخته مطلوب بود به ناکام بیشتر شد و در پای شوی افتاد. میمون بعد از آن پیش قفص طوطی رفت و از حال او تفتیش کردن گرفت. طوطی گفت در غیبت تو من تو را خدمتی کرده ام که هیچ وقتی کسی این خدمت نکرده است، و شهد تو را از زحمت مگس مانع شده ام و عمل تو را از دست مال اوباش نگاه داشته ام.<sup>362</sup> اگر به شکرانه آن مرا از این قفص رها کنی کیفیت گذشته بگویم و سر ماضی بس عجب نمایم.

Nakhshabi's occasional sympathy for Khojasta, coupled with moments of playful engagement with her perspective, suggests that he finds both tension and pleasure in the disruption caused by desire. His portrayal reflects both a societal impulse to control desire and a personal intrigue with its subversive power, which positions desire as both a source of narrative chaos and creative vitality. His adherence to societal expectations may suggest that Nakhshabi viewed his sympathy for Khojasta as an improper desire, one that needed to be concealed.

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<sup>362</sup> Ibid, 435.

## Concluding Remarks

Gender politics and dynamics are central to Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma*. In the *Ṭuṭināma*, the parrot serves as the moral enforcer, embodying the ideals of patriarchal control. Dedicated to protecting his master's honor and masculinity, and acting as his eyes and ears, he ensures the surveillance and regulation of Khojasta. The narratives imply that female loyalty is essential to maintaining the moral and social order, while simultaneously suggesting that women are inherently susceptible to temptation and thus require male guidance to uphold their prescribed virtues. Collectively, the *Ṭuṭināma* reflects the deeply ingrained patriarchal values of its time by presenting a vision of gender relations that upholds male control and elevates obedience to male authority as a fundamental societal value. Nakhshabi's narrative simultaneously displays a subtle fascination with female agency and cunning. This duality makes it difficult to ascertain whether these portrayals reflect Nakhshabi's personal attitude, the prevailing conventions of the genre, or the deep cultural and social assumptions of the time, revealing his complex relationship with the social and moral conventions of his time.

## Conclusion

The case of Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma* delivers a compelling response to the question posed in the introduction of this dissertation: How were the stories of Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma* developed, and what is the end result? This question is particularly important for several reasons; it forces the reader to consider not just what the stories mean, but also how they function, and what narrative strategies Nakhshabi employed to achieve his goals. Through this investigation, a clear conclusion emerges: Nakhshabi, as the second Persian redactor of the *Shukāsaptati*, intervened to make the *Javāher al-asmār* more accessible for public recitation and wider readership, and introduced changes to make it more popular. His rendition not only became the authoritative version of the two but ultimately emerged as the definitive version of the *Tales of a Parrot* story cycle. A prolific writer, Nakhshabi secured his literary legacy through the *Ṭuṭināma*. Although not the first Persian animal fable of its kind, the *Ṭuṭināma* rapidly became popular across the Persian-speaking world. His style, his language, and his liberal usage of his own poetry and that of others, caught the attention of Persian authors and audiences in a way that earlier versions had not done. In fact, the *Ṭuṭināma* of Nakhshabi inspired a wave of similar Persian works and subsequently influenced literary traditions beyond its original cultural sphere.

The most significant elements of my study include the trilateral process of creating the *Ṭuṭināma*, Nakhshabi's storytelling techniques, and finally the treatment of gender dynamics in the text. These elements collectively demonstrate that the *Ṭuṭināma* of Nakhshabi is an erudite literary composition that transcends its source material. Nakhshabi's text blended didacticism and entertainment and became a notable work of Persian literature. Rather than merely being an adaptation of *Javāher al-asmār*, Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma* is a creative reimagining of the work in

his hands. My analysis in the first chapter demonstrates that Nakhshabi employed what we now recognize as the trilateral process of creation, disposition, and decoration, and introduced stylistic, structural, and thematic modifications to the original text. Nakhshabi's creative adaptations, including rearranging stories, removing unnecessary information, and adding poetic interpolations, improved the work. His work reveals Nakhshabi's attempt to craft a distinctive version with fresh syntax, word choice, metaphorical language, and tone. Through implementing these modifications, Nakhshabi enhanced the text's accessibility, consistency, and artistic appeal.

The analysis of storytelling techniques in the second chapter discloses the complexity of Nakhshabi's narrative. By applying repetitive designation, thematic patterning, and dramatic visualization, among other storytelling techniques, Nakhshabi crafts an engaging and instructive narrative. Cleverly adding the interplay of storytelling techniques with time, he enhances the work of his predecessors. He manipulates time and increases the depth and intricacy of his narrative by employing flashbacks, flashforwards, and pacing. Nakhshabi's utilization of temporal discourse with the nocturnal setting further contributes to the thematic richness and enduring appeal of his masterpiece. The symbolism of nighttime emphasizes themes of secrecy, desire, and moral reflection in his work. Altogether, Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma* presents a fine example of the power of storytelling in exploring the human condition.

Finally, my examination of Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma* in chapter 3 displays his perspective towards women and gender roles. His text illustrates the prevalent patriarchal attitudes of its time and the author's engagement with the "Wiles of Women" genre. Gender-related themes, such as the portrayal of women, themes of infidelity and sexuality, and the dynamics of power between genders, suggest the cultural and societal norms of Nakhshabi's era. Although the work frequently upholds conventional patriarchal ideals and features a conclusion distinct from earlier

versions of the *Tales of a Parrot*, it also gives Nakhshabi a platform to express his critical thoughts on these structures and provide his understanding of the complexities of gender roles in his time. At the same time, there are a few moments where Nakhshabi subtly conveys admiration for, or amusement at, women's cleverness and a reversal of gendered expectations.

This study affirms that it is possible for revisions like Nakhshabi's to reach and impact audiences beyond the scope of the work of their predecessor(s) -- the *Javāher al-asmār*, in this case. This comprehensive examination of Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭīnāma* illustrates the significance of rewriters and rewritings in forming literary traditions and cultural narratives. Although this dissertation does not offer a detailed discussion of the *Ṭuṭīnāma*'s role in the formation of the Persianate world, it does point to the ways in which works like the *Ṭuṭīnāma* have contributed to the transmission and transformation of tales through translation and adaptation. Creative reinterpretation, which allowed texts to travel across regions and languages with new meanings and qualities, was a key factor in the formation of the Persianate world. Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭīnāma* served as a bridge between Indian and Persian cultures by integrating tales of Indian origins into the Persian literary canon, in addition to adapting them to Persian aesthetic and moral standards. Here, Nakhshabi's work, among many other works of Persian literature that were not examined here, became a vehicle for this cultural synthesis. This fusion of traditions is certainly one of the most enduring legacies of Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭīnāma*. This alone is an important reason that underscores the need to study the *Ṭuṭīnāma* within a broader comparative framework.

In addition to its cultural significance, one of the most striking features of the *Ṭuṭīnāma* is its episodic nature, created by the interplay between the frame story and the embedded tales. The *Ṭuṭīnāma* serves the dual purpose of entertainment and instruction. Nakhshabi employs both structures to reflect on the overarching themes of temptation and the consequences of human

action. Through his narrative, he offers timeless lessons to his audience and invites his audience to contemplate the characters' choices.

This study is one of the very few comprehensive examinations of Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma*. It is unknown to me why, in modern scholarship, a significant text such as the *Ṭuṭināma* has remained unexplored. However, my most important takeaway from this study is that this text, as well as its author, its intricate narrative structure, cultural history, moral undertone, and influence on other works of the *Tales of a Parrot* literary tradition and the broader Persianate world, deserve further attention. A more thorough analysis of the *Ṭuṭināma*'s lyrical interludes, metaphorical and symbolic usage, and engagement with past literary traditions, for example, could provide fresh perspectives on Nakhshabi's artistic process and the cultural context in which he operated. Additionally, a comparative analysis of the *Ṭuṭināma* and its source texts could shed light on the ways in which Nakhshabi adapted and transformed his material to suit his audience's tastes and expectations.

Most certainly, this gap in the *Tales of a Parrot* demonstrates one issue: the urgent need for more scholars to engage with this text. My study contributes to filling this gap and attempts to offer fresh perspectives on this overlooked text. The layers of meaning that are concealed within this text have only now begun to be uncovered by my examination, and I hope that it will provide a basis for further research. The text is a treasure trove of narrative and cultural riches, and it deserves to be studied with the same rigor and enthusiasm as other literary masterpieces. By doing so, we can not only deepen our understanding of the *Ṭuṭināma* but also contribute to the broader field of Persian studies, which is in need of fresh perspectives and innovative approaches.

Ultimately, this study sees Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma* as a literary invention and cultural artifact, that both preserved and went beyond its original sources. The *Ṭuṭināma* is a prime example of how medieval Persian literature functioned as a vibrant hub for cross-cultural interaction because of its imaginative blending of Indian and Persian narrative traditions, its sophisticated engagement with temporal and gendered discourses, and its balance of instruction and entertainment. The lasting impact and canonical status of Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma* challenge modern scholarly neglect of intermediary texts that facilitate the connection of literary traditions. Future research could explore how Nakhshabi's adaptive methods relate to contemporaneous works of Persian literature. It could also investigate how the text's moral frameworks fit with growing Islamicate conventions of storytelling. Such analyses would further illuminate the *Ṭuṭināma*'s role in forming the Persianate world.

## Appendix 1: From India to the World: The Role of Persian Adaptations in the *Tales of a Parrot* Tradition

The initial introduction and recurring production of works of *Tales of a Parrot* within Persian literature led to the transportation of this Indian literary tradition to other languages. This section provides an overview of Persian renditions, which had a principal role in transitioning the *Tales of a Parrot* to other cultural traditions. Since the introduction of this dissertation underlined the critical role of Persian adaptations of the *Shukāsaptati*, particularly *Javāher al-asmār* and Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma*, as intermediaries in the eventual dissemination of *Tales of a Parrot* story cycle to other literary traditions, they have already been discussed in detail earlier. Here, only a brief list of existing manuscripts of *Javāher al-asmār* and Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma* are presented. The focus here is on other renditions of this tradition to emphasize its migration beyond the religious and physical boundaries of its original context.

The textual history of the *Tales of a Parrot* highlights the enduring popularity and adaptability of the original text. It also traces the first manifestations of these tales in European languages. Through the establishment of this textual history, we can observe the transformation of the tradition, which was initially intended for the upper class and aristocracy and was modified over centuries to appeal to a larger audience. In many cases, the Persian *Tales of a Parrot* evolved from a high level of didactic literature to what is now recognized as folklore. The *Tales of a Parrot* have survived not only in various versions and rewritings but also in different literary forms, including prose and prosimetric compositions. Today, many stories from this tradition, detached from their original source, are widely known and circulate globally.

Through an analysis of the textual history, this section will show that Persian writers did not only “adapt” the Indian *Shukāsaptati*; rather, they “adopted” this story cycle to Persian traditions, making it their own, and subsequently passing it to other cultures. By assimilating the *Shukāsaptati* into their own linguistic, national, and ethical frameworks, they created their own versions that reflected their unique literary and societal values.

### Existing Manuscripts of *Javāher al-asmār* and Nakhshabi’s *Tuṭīnāma*

The only known manuscript of *Javāher al-asmār*, written in Persian and likely dating back to the fourteenth or fifteenth century, is preserved in the library of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, Tehran, Iran. The manuscript has 354 pages or 177 folios.<sup>363</sup> Each page has 23 lines, and each line is roughly 4.7 inches long. This surviving copy of the *Javāher al-asmār* is imperfect as it lacks several portions of the text, including the conclusion of the frame story. The lost portions include the end of the 26<sup>th</sup> and the 49<sup>th</sup> nights, the beginning of the 28<sup>th</sup> night, and the entire 27<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup>, 51<sup>st</sup>, and 52<sup>nd</sup> nights. Altogether, the manuscript contains 86 stories that are recounted over forty-nine nights, with each night containing one to four stories. Due to the absence of the concluding folios, the identity of its writer remains unknown. The manuscript is full of scribal errors, which have given its editor, Shams Āl-e Aḥmad, reason to believe that the copy was not prepared by “the secretary or scribe of a lavish court.”<sup>364</sup> Consulting the prominent scholars of the field led Āl-e Aḥmad to believe that the manuscript was prepared in the fourteenth or fifteenth century.<sup>365</sup>

<sup>363</sup> 8.3/4 in. by 6.1/4; 23 lines, 4.3/4 in. long, written in Nastalīk, apparently in the fourteenth or the fifteenth century. The manuscript is written in black ink while its verses, new Persian idioms, and anecdotes are tinted in red ink.

<sup>364</sup> Shams Āl-e Aḥmad, *Javāher al-asmār*, 31.

<sup>365</sup> Āl-e Aḥmad footnote indicates that he has consulted Mojtabā Minavi, Iraj Afshār, and ‘Abd Allāh Anvār, for such conclusion. See Shams Āl-e Aḥmad, *Javāher al-asmār*, 31 (introduction).

The only scholarly printed edition of *Javāher al-asmār*, based on the only known manuscript, was edited by Shams Āl-e Aḥmad and was published in 1954, in Tehran, Iran. This edition comprises a learned introduction by Āl-e Aḥmad and contains a glossary of unfamiliar Persian and Arabic words.<sup>366</sup> Unlike *Javāher al-asmār*, the *Ṭuṭīnāma* of Nakhshabi has been preserved in many manuscripts, some of which are listed below:

Manuscripts of the British Museum Library: According to the *Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum* by Charles Rieu,<sup>367</sup> multiple manuscripts of the *Ṭuṭīnāma* and its descendants are preserved at the British Museum. The oldest copy was written by a Parsi named Khosrow ibn Esfadiār.

The Manuscript of the Cleveland Museum of Art: Approximately dated to circa 1560, this manuscript was produced for Emperor Akbar (r. 1556-1605), representing the origins of Mughal painting.

The Manuscript of the Atif Efendi Library: Presently located in the Atif Efendi Library, Istanbul, Turkey, this manuscript was completed on February 23, 1548.<sup>368</sup>

The Manuscript of the Ganj Bakhsh Library: Two manuscripts of the *Ṭuṭīnāma* are preserved in the collection of Persian manuscripts at the Ganj Bakhsh Library of Islamabad, Pakistan. One dates back to July 1667 and although undated, the second is presumed to also be from the seventeenth century.

The Manuscript of the Central Library of Tehran University: This manuscript was completed on July 28, 1718 by an individual named Hārūn, who resided in the Pargana (in the Lakhi region).

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<sup>366</sup> Ibid.

<sup>367</sup> Charles Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 2 (London: British Museum, 1966), 753–54.

<sup>368</sup> Or 13 Muharram 955, according to the manuscript.

The *Ṭuṭināma* of Nakhshabi was translated into English by Benjamin Gerrans in 1792.<sup>369</sup> Gerrans' translation of Nakhshabi's work marks the first appearance of the *Ṭuṭināma* in Europe. His translation is a one-volume work containing only twelve stories, including nights 1, 6, 7, 9, 14, 16, 35, 39, 40, 41, 45, and 47 of Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma*. The published translation by Gerrans does not include Nakhshabi's introduction,<sup>370</sup> and in his own introduction, while Gerrans states that he has modified Nakhshabi's work when needed,<sup>371</sup> he does not make any reference to the Persian manuscript used for this translation. In 1978, a more comprehensive translation of the *Ṭuṭināma* of Nakhshabi, containing all fifty-two stories, was completed by Moḥammad Simsar based on the Cleveland Museum of Art's manuscript.<sup>372</sup>

### Abol Fażl 'Alāmi's *Ṭuṭināma*

The third classical Persian rendition of the *Ṭuṭināma* belongs to Abol Fażl 'Alāmi (1551-1602). After being forgotten for almost two hundred years, the *Ṭuṭināma* of Nakhshabi was abridged by Abol Fażl, the grand vizier of Akbar I (1542-1605). Akbar, the third Mughal emperor, a patron of art, literature, and culture, introduced many cultural reforms across the Indian subcontinent. Akbar strove to unite the diverse population of the Indian subcontinent through the expression of Indo-Persian culture. He commissioned scholars, scribes, and translators to collect and translate the most distinguished works of Arabic, Greek, Latin, Persian, and Sanskrit languages. Abol Fażl 'Alāmi, a highly erudite figure in Akbar's court, played a pivotal role in these literary endeavors. Abol Fażl wrote an epitome of Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma*,

<sup>369</sup> Benjamin Gerrans, *Tales of a Parrot: Done into English from a Persian Manuscript Entitled Tooti Nameh*, vol. 1 (London, 1792). Only volume one published.

<sup>370</sup> Wilhelm Pertsch, "Über Nachschabi's Papagaienbuch," 508-10.

<sup>371</sup> Ibid: viii-ix.

<sup>372</sup> Ziya' U'D- Din Nakhshabi, *Tales of a Parrot = The Cleveland Museum of Art's Ṭūṭī-nāma*.

simplifying Nakhshabi's ornate style to a more accessible and less embellished version. The manuscript of Abol Fażl's *Ṭuṭināma* is currently preserved at the British Library and similar to Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma*, contains fifty-two tales.<sup>373</sup> From Abol Fażl's introduction we learn that he wrote this abridgment at the order of Akbar. The unique manuscript is interlined with Deccani translations of the prologue and the first thirty-five stories in red ink.<sup>374</sup>

### *Ṭuṭināma* of Moḥammad Qāderi's

Completed in 1793, Moḥammad Qāderi's rendition of *Ṭuṭināma* is the last known classical Persian epitome of Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma*. Moḥammad Qāderi does not provide any information about himself in his introduction. Both Āl-e Aḥmad<sup>375</sup> and Ğolām-Ḥosayn Yusofi,<sup>376</sup> have considered the Mughal prince Dārā Shokuh to have been the author of this rendition of the *Ṭuṭināma*. However, there is no mention of *Ṭuṭināma* as one of Dārā Shokuh's works elsewhere.<sup>377</sup> The Mughal prince Moḥammad Dārā Shokuh (1612-1659) was the eldest son of the fifth Mughal emperor, Shah Jahān (1592-1666). Although the heir-apparent of Shah Jahān, following the war of succession triggered by the illness of Shah Jahān in 1657, the defeated Dārā Shokuh lost the throne to his younger brother, Aurangzeb. As evident from his political career, Dārā Shokuh had more interest in philosophy and spirituality than in military pursuits. A dedicated follower of the Qāderi Sufi order, Dārā Shokuh sought to advance spirituality during

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<sup>373</sup> Two royal manuscripts of *Ṭuṭināma* are preserved from Akbar's time; one of which is an illustrated manuscript of Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma* and is presently kept at the Cleveland Museum of Art, and the other one is an abridgment of Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma* with Abol aẓl 'Alāmi's epitome, which is held in the British Library. See Charles Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian manuscripts in the British Museum*, 753-4.

<sup>374</sup> Ibid.

<sup>375</sup> Shams Āl-e Aḥmad, *Javāher al-asmār*, 51.

<sup>376</sup> Ğolām-Ḥosayn Yusofi, "Čehel Tūfi," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, available online at <https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/cehel-tuti> (accessed February 27, 2025).

<sup>377</sup> Supriya Gandhi, *The Emperor Who Never Was* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2020); Kazuyo Sakaki, "Dara Shokoh's Contribution to Philosophy of Religion with Special Reference to His *Majma' al-Bahrayn*" (PhD diss., University of Delhi, 1998).

his life, and reflected his spiritual progression in his writings. Dārā Shokuh was indeed a prolific writer; he translated many books from Sanskrit to Persian to demonstrate the compatibility of religions, particularly Islam and Hinduism. Mojtabāyi and Āriā in their edited version of the *Ṭuṭināma* of Nakhshabi, affirm Moḥammad Qāderi to be different from Dārā Shokuh.<sup>378</sup> Following their discovery, I consulted many hagiographies and biographies, however, I did not come across any information confirming the *Ṭuṭināma* as one of the works attributed to the Mughal prince Dārā Shokuh.

As evident through its title, the *Ṭuṭināma*,<sup>379</sup> this rendition's frame tales are similar to that of Nakhshabi. Labelling Nakhshabi's work as an elaborate composition, Qāderi asserts that he has written an abridgment of the *Ṭuṭināma* in a more accessible and straightforward language, intended to reach a large number of audiences, particularly those of high rank. He writes, "the narration, tales, and fables of Hazerut Nekhsheby, (the mercy of the Almighty rest upon him!) in the *Tootinameh*, or Tales of a Parrot, being composed in a difficult and abstruse style, Mahommed Qāderi (may God amend his condition!) for the sake of didacticism and illustration, and in order to render them intelligible to all descriptions of men, has written them in familiar and easy language, so as to comprise the epistolary style and ordinary conversation benefitting persons of high rank."<sup>380</sup>

Not only did Qāderi reduce the number of nights to 35, but he also simplified the *Ṭuṭināma* of Nakhshabi and shortened the length of the stories. Qāderi also changed the name of Maymun's wealthy father to Aḥmad Sulṭan. Out of these 35 stories, seven of them including nights 8, 9, 19, 25, 27, 28, and 35 are different from Nakhshabi's *Ṭuṭināma*, while the rest appear

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<sup>378</sup> Zīā' al-Din Nakhshabi, *Ṭuṭināma*, 21.

<sup>379</sup> Mahommed Qāderi, *The Tooti Nameh or Tales of a Parrot in the Persian Language with an English Translation* (London: Calcutta Printed, 1801).

<sup>380</sup> *Ibid*, 9.

to be modifications of *Ṭuṭināma* tales. Comprising stories both in Persian and English, the London edition, also known as the Calcutta edition, was translated by one of the founding fathers of the Asiatic Society, the prolific translator Francis Gladwin (d.1813),<sup>381</sup> who translated numerous distinguished works of Persian literature into English. Gladwin's translation of Qāderi's work was published in Calcutta in 1800, and a year later, in 1801, was republished under the order of the John Debrett Heritage Foundation, in London. Qāderi's *Ṭuṭināma* also provided the basis for the first German translation of the Tales of a Parrot by C. J. L. Iken, in 1822/1837, in Stuttgart.<sup>382</sup> The German translation contains an appendix on Nakhshabi's works by Kosegarten. On another front, under the title, *Ṭoṭā Kahāni*(Parrot's Story) Saiyid Haidar Bakhsh, a native of Delhi, who used the pseudonym Hadari, translated Qāderi's *Ṭuṭināma* into Urdu.<sup>383</sup> Hadari undertook the translation of the *Ṭuṭināma* under the order of John Borthwick Gilchrist and completed it in 1801.<sup>384</sup> Although comprising thirty-five stories and a translation of Qāderi's work, from Hadari's translation we learn that he also incorporated Nakhshabi's work in his translation, blending both in an improvised style. Qadarī's *Ṭoṭā Kahāni* was translated into English, while Qāderi's *Ṭuṭināma* was published in Iran by the Asadi publishing press in 1967.<sup>385</sup>

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<sup>381</sup> Ziyā' al-Din Naqshabī, Muḥammad Qādirī, and Francis Gladwin, *The Tooti Nameh: Or Tales of a Parrot, in the Persian Language, with an English Translation* (London: J. Debrett, 1967).

<sup>382</sup> Richard Schmidt, *Sukasaptati: Das Indische Papageienbuch*, aus dem Sanskrit übersetzt von Richard Schmidt, followed by C. J. L. Iken's German translation of the *Totā-Kahānī* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1913).

<sup>383</sup> Wilhelm Pertsch, "Über Nachschabi's Papagaienbuch," 506-7.

<sup>384</sup> John Borthwick Gilchrist was a Scottish surgeon who moved to India due to his association with East India Company. He later developed an interest in Hindustani languages and served as a professor of Hindustani language in the Forth William College of Calcutta.

<sup>385</sup> 'Emād bin Moḥammad Ṣaghari, *Javāher al-asmār*, Introduction: 25.

## The Seventeenth Century Renditions: From ‘Abd al-Ḥamid Lāhūrī and Sari ‘Abd Allāh Efendi

Two different renditions of the *Tales of a Parrot* tradition emerged in the seventeenth century, and both traveled into the literature of other languages. In 1660, Sari ‘Abd Allāh Efendi translated Nakhshabī’s *Ṭuṭīnāma* into Ottoman Turkish. This Turkish rendition eventually traveled to European literature through a German translation by the European orientalist Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Rosen (1820-1891). Rosen translated the work into German in 1858.<sup>386</sup> Entitled the *Tuti-nameh*, this work was published in two volumes in Leipzig. The second rendition of the seventeenth century is a prose work attributed to the Indo-Persian historian, ‘Abd al-Ḥamid Lāhūrī (d. 1654).<sup>387</sup> Elements of this prose rendition were incorporated into the Mongolian *Ardeshi Bordeshi*.<sup>388</sup>

### *Chehel Tuti* (forty parrot [stories])

The early works of the Persian *Tales of a Parrot* story cycle were primarily produced for elites and aristocrats. Over time, the great popularity of the *Tale of a Parrot* story cycle led to the production of more popular literary adaptations. Incorporating a greater array of cultural elements, they were tailored to meet the needs of broader readership and align with what is known as folk literature. This shift led to the production of a version of the *Tale of a Parrot* known as *Chehel Tuti* (Forty Parrot [Stories]). A title synonymous with the *Ṭuṭīnāma*, the title *Chehel Tuti*, became popular during the past century due to an increasing number of homonymic

<sup>386</sup> Ziyā’ al-Din Naḳshabī and Georg Rosen, *Das Papageienbuch: Tuti-Nameh* (Leipzig: Insel-Verlag, 1858).

<sup>387</sup> R. M. Eaton, “‘Abd-al-Ḥamīd Lāhūrī,” *Encyclopædia Iranica*, I/1, p. 112, available online at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/abd-al-hamid-lahuri> (accessed October 30, 2023).

<sup>388</sup> Ziyā’ al-Din Naḳshabī, *Ṭuṭīnāma*, introduction: 21.

works and frequent publication in inexpensive lithographs. The choice of title *Chehel Tuti* is rather interesting. Unlike the literal meaning of its title, “forty parrots” is neither about forty parrots, nor does it contain forty stories. The number forty seems to have a symbolic use rather than a literal one. Much like *One thousand and One Arabian Nights*, the number forty is an authorial choice that signifies a high quantity, suggesting a lengthy and circumstantial narrative unfolding over many nights. The *Ṭuṭināma* was a popular work prior to the publication of *Chehel Tuti*; thus, the author’s intentional change of the title may reflect his intention to distinguish his work. Today, *Chehel Tuti* is held in high esteem in Iran and its hard copies can be found next to major works of Persian narrative literature in Iranian book markets.<sup>389</sup> Like earlier versions of the *Tales of a Parrot*, *Chehel Tuti* was also translated into other languages, namely Turkish and Kurdish. In terms of content, although *Chehel Tuti* resembles the earlier renditions, it introduces notable modifications. Unlike the earlier renditions of the Persian *Tales of a Parrot*, in which the stories were narrated during the darkness of night, in the *Chehel Tuti*, the merchant’s wife attempts to visit her beloved during the day, and the storytelling occurs during daylight, concluding at sundown. Additionally, the *Chehel Tuti* revives the *Shukāsaptati* tradition of presenting one story per section.

According to Marzolph, the question of the authorship of the *Chehel Tuti* remains unresolved. A certain ‘Abd Allāh, about whom nothing further can be found, is the author of the chapbook. However, the linguistic style of the *Chehel Tuti* suggests that the work resembles writings from the early Qajar period (1789-1925).<sup>390</sup> Marzolph notes that early Qajar writing was often characterized by the use of “simplest Persian colloquial language with interspersed

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<sup>389</sup> Ulrich Marzolph, *Die Vierzig Papageien, Chehel Tuti*, 10–11.

<sup>390</sup> Founded by Moḥammad Khan Qajar, the Qajar Dynasty was a royal dynasty of Turkic origin who ruled over the present-day Iran and a large part of the Caucasus.

poetry.”<sup>391</sup> Thus, it can be reasonably concluded that the *Chehel Tuti* originated at the beginning of the 19th century, as the first lithographed prints of the work date back to 1848.<sup>392</sup> Nearly all the existing editions of *Chehel Tuti* were published in Iran and Bombay, India. Between these two locations, a total of twenty-seven editions of *Chehel Tuti* have been published.<sup>393</sup> Interestingly, none of these printed versions are uniform. The title was first suggested by Jalāl Āl-e Aḥmad and Simin Dāneshvar.

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<sup>391</sup> Ulrich Marzolph, *Die Vierzig Papageien, Chehel Tuti*, 11.

<sup>392</sup> *Ibid*, 10-11.

<sup>393</sup> For a complete list of the twenty-seven edited volumes of *Čehel Tuṭī* see Ulrich Marzolph. *Die Vierzig Papageien, Chehel Tuti*, 13-14.

## Appendix 2: Summary of the *Ṭuṭināma* Chapters

### Chapter 1: The Tale of Maymun and Khojasta, and the Parrot's Account About the Merchant's Parrot and His Wife

A merchant's parrot witnesses the merchant's wife's infidelity but stays quiet to avoid causing problems between the merchant and his wife. Later, the merchant discovers the truth through another source. This leads the wife to think that the parrot had revealed her secrets. For revenge, she brutally plucks the parrot's feathers and throws him out. The wounded parrot waits in hiding, then cleverly directs the wife into repentance. In the end, he helps fix their marriage.

### Chapter 2: The Tale of the King of Tabarestān and the Devoted Man Who Sacrificed His Son for the King's Life

A soldier who served as a royal guard remains unnoticed for years. One night, while he was on guard, he hears a ghostly voice. The voice warns him that the king would die unless someone offered their son as a sacrifice. In response, without hesitation, he prepares to sacrifice his own son. Moved by his devotion, the ghost spares them both at the last moment. After the king learns of this act of loyalty, he appoints the guard as his heir.

### Chapter 3: The Tale of the Goldsmith and the Carpenter, the Bringing of the Idols, the Goldsmith's Theft, and the Carpenter's Trick

Two friends, one a goldsmith, and the other, a carpenter, pretend to be holy men and steal golden idols from a temple. Later, the goldsmith falsely accuses the carpenter of theft. To take revenge,

the carpenter trains bear cubs to act like the goldsmith's children and convinces authorities that the goldsmith's sons were cursed and transformed into bears. This way, he forces the goldsmith to confess his greed and return the stolen wealth.

#### Chapter 4: The Tale of the Soldier and the Righteous Woman, the Bouquet of Flowers That Remained Fresh

A warrior's wife gives her husband a magical bouquet, which stays fresh while she remains chaste. After learning about the bouquet, the prince dispatches his people to assess her moral character. The wife, however, outwits them by revealing their plots, preserves her honor, and keeps the roses fresh.

#### Chapter 5: The Tale of the King of Kāmru, the Parrot's Remedy, and His Cure That Remained Half-Finished

A parrot falls into a hunter's trap. He becomes desperate and tricks the hunter by pretending to be a skilled physician who can treat leprosy. After hearing about the parrot's abilities, the King of Kāmru purchases him to cure his own leprosy. Despite the parrot's apparent dedication to the cure, after a partial treatment, he leaves the king.

#### Chapter 6: The Tale of the Carpenter, the Goldsmith, the Ascetic, and the Tailor: The Wooden Idol's Difficulty and Its Appeal Before the Tree

Four companions, including a carpenter, a goldsmith, a tailor, and a hermit, travel together.

While traveling, they collaborate to create the figure of a woman. The carpenter carves her out of wood, the goldsmith adorns her with jewelry, the tailor prepares clothes for her, and the hermit

brings her to life through prayers. All four men, along with three authorities, who are there to mediate their dispute, claim ownership of her. This sparks chaos since each man asserts his contribution in making her. Eventually, a magical tree of justice resolves the conflict by absorbing the woman back into itself, returning her to her origin.

Chapter 7: The Tale of the King of Kings, the Demand for His Head, the Daughter of the Jinn Monarch, the Brass Cauldron, and the Elder Lover

1. A lovestruck dervish seeks to marry a princess. In order to do so, he overcomes impossible demands through the help of the King of Kings. Ultimately, he proves that love exceeds rank and marries the princess.
2. A jinn princess is discovered trapped underground. To choose between her old lover and a king, she tests their love. Both pass her purification test. The compassionate king gains her loyalty, the aged lover regains youth, and she reunites with him.

Chapter 8: The Tale of the Prince, the Seven Viziers, and the Misfortune that Befell Him Because of a Maidservant

A maidservant falsely accuses a prince of assault, and the king orders the prince to death. Except, for six consecutive nights, the king's seven viziers delay the execution by telling stories about the cunning of women. On the seventh day, the prince breaks his silence, exposes the maidservant's lies, and saves his life. After the disclosure of the truth, the maidservant receives a punishment.

Chapter 9: The Tale of the King of Shām, the Release of the Parrot, and the Retrieval of the Fruit of Immortality from the Spring of Darkness

A hunter catches a wise parrot and sells it to the King of Shām. The King of Shām treats the parrot kindly and sets him free. To repay the king's kindness, the parrot brings back a magical fruit from the tree of immortality in the underworld. But a snake poisons the fruit, killing a test subject. As a result, the king thinks the parrot betrayed him and orders his execution. The parrot, however, begs for a second chance with another fruit. This time, the fruit transforms an old test subject into a young man. At the end, the king sees the parrot's loyalty and forgives him.

Chapter 10: The Tale of the Vizier's Son, the Merchant, Their Wives, the Monk, and the Talking Wooden Parrot

A merchant purchases a talking parrot during his business journey. Upon his return, his conversation with the vizier's son about the magical bird triggers a wager between them. The vizier's son, who is secretly having an affair with the merchant's wife, replaces the parrot with a replica with the help of the wife. When the merchant discovers that the magical bird has lost its abilities, he seeks the help of a monk. The corrupt monk, who is having an affair with the vizier's son's wife, learns about the vizier's son's deception through his wife and switches back the original parrot with the replica. In a twist, the story ends with both wives' execution due to their adulterous actions.

Chapter 11: The Tale of the Raja's Son, Bringing the Sea to the Feast, Presenting the Offerings, and Giving All Those Gifts to the Brahmin

A raja orders a Brahmin to invite the King of the Ocean to his son's wedding. He threatens the Brahmin with execution if he fails to complete this nearly impossible task. The King of the Ocean learns about the Brahmin's dilemma from the wind, transforms himself into a man, attends the wedding, and presents treasures from the sea to the raja, saving the Brahmin's life. Pleased by the Brahmin's loyalty, the raja ultimately rewards him with some of the sea treasures.

#### Chapter 12: The Tale of the Dirt-Digger, Who Found a Precious Pearl, Discovering Its Value, Its Theft by a Travel Companion, and the Raja's Daughter Discovering It

A dirt-digger discovers a valuable pearl. However, on his way to the raja for appraisal, four fellow travelers steal it from him. The raja's daughter cleverly uncovers the theft through her storytelling and questions. When the truth is revealed, the thief is punished, and the other travelers are rewarded.

#### Chapter 13: The Gathering of Eighty Wise Men, and Recognizing the Temperament of the Prince

When still an infant, a prince is tested by wise men using music to determine his noble nature. They agree that his joyful response proves his royal lineage. Ultimately, the infant prince proves his noble lineage. Later, the story transitions to a debate on the power of music, where the parrot explains how melodies intoxicate the soul like wine.

#### Chapter 14: The Tale of the Science of Music, the Nature of Psalms, and Their Invention and Discovery

A continuation of the previous chapter, this section features a debate about the divine origins of music. The parrot claims that all creatures innately praise God through sound. He asserts that musical understanding requires spiritual purity.

#### Chapter 15: The Tale of the Lion and the Cat, the Slaying of the Mice by the Cat's Claws, and the Cat's Remorse

An aging lion struggles with mice disturbing his sleep by removing food from his teeth. A cat is appointed to control the mice, but he deliberately spares some, knowing their complete extinction would render him useless to the lion. Everything goes well until the cat's reckless son kills all the mice. This prompts the lion to dismiss the cat once the mice are gone, leaving the cat unemployed.

#### Chapter 16: The Tale of the Raja's Son and His Delicate Wife, and Her Infatuation with a Pickpocket Youth

A foolish prince marries a brilliant princess, hoping her wisdom will reform him. However, she hates his stupidity. Seduced by a beggar's sweet voice, she abandons her husband. The beggar, however, steals her jewels and abandons her by a river. There, she witnesses a jackal dropping his bone to chase a fish. The unlucky jackal fails to catch the fish, while another animal steals his bone. This reminds her of her own folly: just as the jackal lost his bone for greed, she had lost her husband, and both were left with nothing.

#### Chapter 17: The Tale of Mansur the Merchant, His Journey, the Imposter Who Came to His Home, His Likeness, and the Man's Ultimate Shame

A merchant, named Mansur, leaves his devout and beautiful wife unprotected during his travels. In his absence, a depraved young man becomes obsessed with her and attempts to seduce her through flattery. The wife, however, rejects the young man with virtue. The young man then mimics Mansur's appearance, enters his home, and deceives his wife, until she notices his uncharacteristic behavior. When the real Mansur returns, the young man encounters the wife's testimony in court and receives a punishment.

Chapter 18: The Tale of Nikfāl (a Devoted Woman), Khaleṣ (a Snake), and Mokhleṣ (a Frog), Who Were Bound in Service to the Prince

A prince is sent away by his jealous brother into exile, where he encounters a dervish and trades his ring for good fortune. This way, he gains three loyal companions -- a snake, a frog, and a woman. Later, his companions help him solve impossible tasks, such as finding a lost ring and curing a poisoned princess.

Chapter 19: The Tale of the King's Peacock, Its Slaying by the Brahmin's Wife, the Betrayal by Her Foster Sister, and the Brahmin Wife's Cunning Plot

An infertile Brahmin's wife follows a doctor's advice to eat peacock meat to conceive. She secretly kills the king's peacock and confesses to her foster sister. The sister reports her crime to the king for reward, but the Brahmin's wife outsmarts her by saying it was only a dream that she had shared with her foster sister.

Chapter 20: The Tale of the Ascetic's Daughter, Her Three Husbands, Her Burial, Their Retrieval of Her, and Her Revival

An ascetic leaves his unmarried daughter in his family's care while he goes on pilgrimage. At the time of his departure, he instructs them to marry the daughter off if a worthy suitor comes. While he is away, his wife, son, and even himself promise her to different men. This leads to chaos when all three suitors arrive. After a near-death experience and disgusted by the conflict, the daughter renounces marriage entirely, committing herself to God for the rest of her life.

Chapter 21: The Tale of the Lion, His Four Ministers, and the Brahmin Who Was Relieved Through Two Ministers' Courtesy, but Was Overcome by Two Others' Quarrels

A wealthy Brahmin loses everything to misfortune and ventures into the jungle. There, he sees a lion. The lion, advised by his minister, a deer and a gazelle, gifts the Brahmin treasure. Greed drives him to return for more. But, this time, the lion's cruel viziers, a wolf and a jackal, nearly get him killed. Once again, the deer's quick thinking saves him again.

Chapter 22: The Tale of the Amir's Wife, Her Seeing the Narcissus, The Laughter of the Roasted Chicken, and the Smile of the Boon Companion

An amir's boon companion has a magical laughter that produces flowers. However, upon discovering his wife's affair, he becomes too depressed to show his magic. Later, the amir's wife, who is also secretly having an affair, pretends modesty by refusing to look at narcissus flowers, causing a roasted chicken to laugh at her lies. When the boon companion exposes both women's infidelities, the amir orders both to be executed.

Chapter 23: The Tale of Kāmju, the Laughter of the Fish, the Intellect of the Orphan, and the Killing of Eighty Men

While wandering in the wilderness, a merchant finds a skull. It warns that it will cause eighty deaths, even after its discoverer's death. Hoping to stop its prophecy, he grinds the skull into powder, but his daughter accidentally eats some and miraculously gets pregnant with a son. Years later, this son exposes the queen's secret affairs, leading to eighty executions.

Chapter 24: The Tale of Bashir and His Falling in Love with Ḥabbazā, the Beating of the Arab, and the Arab's Rendezvous with Ḥabbazā's Sister

1. Time had a daughter who was loved by three suitors: Intellect, Wealth, and Hope. She rejects Intellect and Wealth despite their qualities, because of their burden and unrelatability. In the end, she chooses Hope as a constant companion to people and a source of comfort, even when dreams remain unfulfilled.
2. Bashir, who loved a woman named Ḥabbazā, seeks help from a nomad Arab to reunite with her. Thus, the Arab man disguises himself in Ḥabbazā's clothes and is beaten by her husband in her place. In a twist, the Arab ends up falling for and spending the night with Ḥabbazā's sister.

Chapter 25: The Tale of Jāmās and His Chaste Wife, the Discourses of the Parrot and the Starling on the Vices and Virtues of Women and Men

King Jāmās of China, advised by his wise parrot, marries Ma'suma, who is a princess from Syria. United with Ma'suma's starling, the parrot and the starling begin a debate about the virtues and vices of men and women. Their discussion turns into a series of short tales, beginning with a story told by the starling to defend women's loyalty.

Chapter 26: The Tale of Shāpur, the King of Toads, the Domination of the Enemies, the Revenge of the Serpent, Shāpur's Remorse, and His Separation from His Kin

A cruel frog king, named Shāpur, is overthrown by his people. He seeks revenge by recruiting a deadly snake. The snake destroys the population, including Shāpur's relatives. With no frog left, Shāpur lives out his days in misery and regrets his alliance with a deadly enemy.

Chapter 27: The Tale of Zarir the Weaver, His Journey to Seek Wealth, and His Return Empty-Handed, and the Tales of the Horse and the Jackal

A weaver, named Zarir, leaves his occupation to seek wealth, but returns empty-handed. His wife tells him the tale of a horse that envies a jackal's freedom, only to witness the jackal's starvation and vulnerability. She thus reminds him that true sustenance comes from the divine.

Chapter 28: The Tale of the Potter, the Revelation of His Lowly Lineage, and the Enduring Nature of the King's Upbringing

A potter is mistaken for a war hero because of his scars, therefore, the king appoints him as a soldier. When the king asks him to prove himself in battle, he confesses the truth. The king then compares him to a jackal that was raised among lions: The jackal looked brave in his appearance but lacked true courage.

Chapter 29: The Tale of the Lion, Lynx, and the Monkey, How the Lynx Took Over the Lion's Den, and How He Escaped Through Clever Tricks

A lynx takes over a lion's den while he is away. When the lion returns, he finds out about the intruder and tries to take back his home. Eventually, using clever tricks, the lynx manages to save himself from the lion's anger.

Chapter 30: The Tale of the Woman and Her Children, the Leopard's Attack, and How the Woman Saved Herself from the Leopard

A quarrelsome woman leaves home with her children in a rage. On her way, she is confronted by a leopard in the wilderness. Regretting her disobedience, she uses clever speech and tricks the leopard into fleeing by pretending to be a powerful sorceress. Through strategic deception, she saves herself and her children from danger.

Chapter 31: The Tale of the Blue Jackal and How He Became King and Was Exposed; and The Tale of the Merchant and the Monkey, and the Gardener Finding a Song

A jackal accidentally falls into a container of indigo, turns bright blue, and appears so strange that the wild animals crown him as their king. He distances himself from other jackals and surrounds himself with stronger beasts, to hide his true identity. One night, he instinctively howls back at a distant jackal and reveals the truth. The animals, feeling deceived, turn on him and force him to flee in shame.

Chapter 32: The Tale of Khorshid, the Wife of Aṭārod, and Three Other Young Men, and The Calamity That Befell Her Because of Her Beauty and Perfection

A woman of great beauty and virtue, named Khorshid, is betrayed and accused by three men. Despite her great sufferings, she remains pure. In the end, her wrongdoers receive punishment, and after confessing, they are forgiven by Khorshid.

Chapter 33: The Tale of Three Viziers, Their One Son, and Two Daughters, and The Account of Their Love and Affection, and How All of Them Attained Their Desire

A king has two viziers, whose children, Ayāz and Maḥmuda have been engaged since a young age. Upon the death of the third vizier's wife, he wins royal favor, leading the king to break the engagement, ordering Maḥmuda to marry him. Through a clever plan and with the help of friends, Maḥmuda reunites with Ayāz.

Chapter 34: The Tale of the Merchant's Daughter and Her Three Suitors, the Fairy Who Took the Girl Away, the Return of the Suitors, the Tale of the Daughter of One King and the Son of Another King, the Brahmin, His Falling in Love, and the Cutting of His Head

1. A fairy kidnaps a merchant's daughter, who has three suitors, each skilled in foretelling, magic, and archery. They cooperate to rescue her but ultimately quarrel over who deserves to marry her.
2. A prince vows to sacrifice himself if he can marry the princess he loves. After their marriage, he fulfills his vow and sacrifices his head. Witnessing this, his loyal Brahmin companion, also takes his own life. In the end, the princess revives them both.

Chapter 35: The Tale of the Brahmin Falling in Love with the Daughter of the King of Babylon, and How They Both Attained Their Desire the Efforts of a Clever Magician

A clever Brahmin falls in love with the daughter of the King of Babylon. With the help of a magician, who gives him a magic bead, he disguises himself as a woman and enters the women's quarters. After winning her love, they flee the palace and switch their identities to prevent being caught. In the end, the magician tricks the king to allow the lovers to live happily in peace.

Chapter 36: The Tale of the King of Zābol, Maḥrusa the Merchant's Daughter, the Magistrate of Zābol, and the Destruction of All Three

A wealthy merchant offers his beautiful daughter Maḥrusa to the king. The king's viziers advise against this match out of fear this would distract him from his duties. The king dies heartbroken, because of their advice. Maḥrusa, moved by this, takes her own life. The magistrate, also in love with Maḥrusa, ends his life. This way, all three die.

Chapter 37: The Tale of the Prince of Sistān, the Black Snake, the White Elephant, and the Prince's Rise to Kingship

Following a quarrel with his brother, a prince from Sistān is exiled, prompting him to devote himself to serve a wise snake. With the snake's help, he cures a royal elephant and gains the amir's favor. As a reward for his loyalty, the amir raises him to power.

Chapter 38: The Tale of the Wren, the Long-Beaked Bird, the Frog, and the Elephant, and How the Sparrow Took Revenge on the Elephant with the Help of Her Companions

A wren seeks revenge after an elephant destroys one of her eggs. With the help of her friends, including a bee, a long-beaked bird, and a frog, she blinds the elephant and leads him into a deep ravine where he dies.

Chapter 39: The Tale of the Merchant of Neishāpur and His Wife Shahr Ārā, and How the Woman Changed Her Speech in the Presence of Her Lover Out of Fear of Her Husband

A foolish merchant in Neishāpur thinks his wife, Shahr Ārā, is unfaithful. He hides under her bed to catch her. She realizes his presence, quickly devises a scheme, and tells a story about a dream that requires her to sit beside a stranger to save her husband's life. This leads the gullible husband to believe her, praise her for her chastity, and welcome the lover into his home as a brother.

Chapter 40: The Tale of the Emperor of China, the Wise Vizier, the Queen of Rome, the Female Peacock, the Deer and the Doe, and the Emperor of China's Marriage to the Queen of Rome

The Emperor of China dreams of a beautiful woman and becomes lovesick. After hearing about her, his vizier paints a portrait of that woman and discovers that she is the Queen of Rome, who has vowed never to marry. The vizier, however, manages to change her mind, and in the end, the two rulers marry.

Chapter 41: The Tale of the Singing Donkey and the Deer, the Foot-Stamping of the Wood-Seller, and the Magical Jar

A donkey and a deer sneak into a garden at night. Despite the deer's warning, the donkey insists on braying. To warn him, the deer tells him a cautionary tale about a foolish wood-seller who destroys a magical jar and loses all his wealth. The donkey ignores his tale, brays, and gets them both in trouble.

Chapter 42: The Tale of 'Obeyd, the Merchant's Son from Termez, and His Falling in Love with His Father's Wife, the Parrot and the Starling's Advice; the Tale of the King's Daughter with Three Breasts, and the Blind Man with a Cane

Falling in love with his bride, 'Obeyd neglects his family and work. Concerned about this situation, his father brings a wise parrot and a starling to counsel him through moral tales. The tales include one about a disloyal wife and a blind man, and the other about a disobedient son. Their stories ultimately awaken 'Obeyd's conscience and help him resume a responsible life.

Chapter 43: The Tale of the Raja, the Cutting of the Snake's Tail, the Woman's Trick, the King's Decision to Die, and the Advice He Hears from a Sheep

1. A Muslim man tries to secretly break his fast in the woods, but he finds a Brahmin present. The two share a meal. Each of them is surprised by the others' hypocrisy as the Muslim man eats during the month of Ramadan and the Brahmin eats meat.
2. A raja injures a female snake by mistake, but the snake claims that he attacked her. This provokes the husband snake to seek revenge, but he forgives the raja upon learning the truth. The male snake then teaches the raja the language of animals and asks him to keep this secret. The raja almost discloses this information under pressure to his wife. Knowing the language of the animals a sheep's words awaken his reasoning and change his mind about killing himself.

Chapter 44: The Tale of the Old Raja Who Had a Son and a Daughter, Both of Whom Were Plotting to Kill Him, Until a Singer Said Some Words That Made Them Repent

An old raja's son and daughter each plot to kill him for their own gain. During a night of music and dancing, a singer's words make both children repent. After learning about their plans, the raja forgives them, crowns his son, and marries off his daughter.

Chapter 45: The Tale of the Compassionate Amir, the Black Snake, and 'Abd al-Malek, the Monk, the Gold, and the Ignorant Bloodletter

An amir saves a snake from its hunter, but the snake repays his kindness with betrayal and tries to kill the amir. Thus, the amir, prays for divine help and manages to kill the snake.

Chapter 46: The Tale of the Raja of Ajin, and Qa'riya the Daughter of the Second Rām, and Her Attainment of Her Goal

After hearing about the underground princess Qa'riya's unparalleled beauty, a raja embarks on a journey, by the aid of magic. After many trials, including the betrayal of his vizier's son, the raja marries Qa'riya and lives in peace.

Chapter 47: The Tale of Four Loyal Companions Who Went to a Sage, and the Sage Gave Each of Them a Talisman Bead, Each One Discovered a Treasure, But One of Them Returned Empty-Handed

Upon receiving guidance from a sage, four friends, find a different treasure: copper, silver, gold, and finally iron. The last friend, hoping for something better, rejects the iron and, due to his greed, ends up with nothing.

Chapter 48: The Tale of the Young Man from Baghdad Who Fell in Love with a Singing Slave Girl, Sold Her to a Hashemite Youth, Repented, and Finally Attained His Desire

A wealthy merchant from Baghdad falls in love with a singing slave girl. However, he sells her and soon regrets his decision. By chance, he reunites with her while traveling by ship, and after enduring many hardships, he marries her.

Chapter 49: The Tale of the King, His Vision of the Wheat Stalks, and the Three Farmer Brothers: the Youngest Grew Old, the Middle One Became Middle-Aged, and the Eldest Remained Young

A farmer discovers an ancient cluster of wheat and brings it to the king. To determine its origins, the king sends out a courtier to investigate the matter. While on the mission, the courtier meets three farmer brothers, who appear in reverse order of age. The oldest in age, who looks the youngest, explains that freedom from anxiety at home is the reason for his youth. In contrast, household related anxieties have aged the younger brothers prematurely.

Chapter 50: The Tale of the Daughter of the Emperor of Rome, Who Cleverly Proved Her Chastity, and by Means of Ruse, Made Her Innocence Known

The daughter of the emperor of Rome, who has a son from a previous marriage, marries a king and keeps this information about her child a secret. To be near her son, she disguises him as a slave and brings him to the palace. This, however, leads to a misunderstanding, when a guard thinks there is an affair between the two. Ultimately, the king realizes the truth and unites the mother and son.

Chapter 51: The Tale of Bahrām Shah and His Two Viziers, Khāṣa and Kholāṣa, and How Khāṣa’s Daughter Obtained Justice and Was Freed from Calamities by the Blessing of Her Own Chastity

Upon killing Khāṣa, Bahrām Shah forces his daughter into marriage. In the meantime, Kholāṣa, Bahrām Shah’s other vizier makes advances on her. After being rejected, Kholāṣa accuses her of infidelity, and has her exiled. Later, another king named Khosrow learns about her innocence and punishes both Bahrām Shah and Kholāṣa.

Chapter 52: The Tale of the Ascetic and His Wife, the Seven-colored Bird, How the Wife Fell in Love with the Young Moneychanger, and the Killing of the Bird

A pious man buys a magical bird that brings wealth. While on pilgrimage, his unfaithful wife kills the bird for her lover. Their son unknowingly eats the bird’s head. He manages to escape his mother’s attempt to kill him and becomes a king elsewhere. Years later, he reunites with his father and exposes his mother’s betrayal.

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