

The Saadi Reader's Gift

Five plates for your wall, and a journal

From *The Rose Garden and the Road*

40 Poems and Stories of Saadi in Modern English

A PERSIAN POETRY CARAVAN EDITION

بنی آدم اعضای یکدیگرند

The children of Adam are limbs of one another

Gulistan, Book One, Story 10

SAADI OF SHIRAZ

دو چیز طیرۀ عقل است دم فرو بستن

A word, released too soon, is like an arrow

Gulistan, the Preface

SAADI OF SHIRAZ

رعیت چو یخند و سلطان درخت

Justice is not decoration for a throne.

It is the earth beneath it

Bustan, Book One

SAADI OF SHIRAZ

خبرت هست که بی روی تو آرامم نیست؟

Do you know that without your face I have no rest

Divan, Ghazal 120

SAADI OF SHIRAZ

عهد گلستان را وفایی نباشد

A garden of words, where wisdom keeps its scent

Gulistan, the Preface

SAADI OF SHIRAZ

A Reader's Journal

for The Rose Garden and the Road

Each of the forty chapters closes with a pause. They are gathered here with room to answer. Print what you need; there is no order to keep.

CHAPTER 1

The Children of Adam

Carry this line into the day: whose pain have I treated as distant, and what would change if I treated it as part of one body?

CHAPTER 2

Gratitude at the Door of Breath

Before reading the next chapter, take one full breath slowly and receive it as something lent, not owned.

CHAPTER 3

The Captive and the King

Ask whether your next “truth” is serving healing, vanity, punishment, or love.

[illegible]

CHAPTER 4

The Prayer Against the Tyrant

Remember one place where power is used without mercy and ask what Saadi would call it.

[illegible]

CHAPTER 5

The Dervish Who Needed Nothing

Ask where you are still bowing too deeply because you want favour.

CHAPTER 6

The Value of Silence

Before speaking on one difficult matter, ask: is this the right word, at the right time, for the right reason?

CHAPTER 7

The Scholar Without Practice

Choose one thing you already know is right and practice it before seeking another lesson.

CHAPTER 8

The Hand That Takes a Hand

Think of the last time your affairs went badly. Who appeared? Now ask the harder question: whose hand did you take?

[illegible]

CHAPTER 9

The World Stays With No One

If the only thing you take out of the world is your name, ask what today added to it, and what today took away.

[illegible]

CHAPTER 10

The Door of Generosity

Find one small broken place near you and mend it without announcing yourself.

CHAPTER 11

The Garden of Justice

Wherever you have authority, ask whether the people under your influence are stronger or more afraid because of you.

CHAPTER 12

The Orphan's Tear

Notice one person with less power than you and choose restraint, help, or gentleness.

[illegible]

CHAPTER 13

The Proud Man Brought Low

Let one success make you more generous, not more distant.

CHAPTER 14

The Honest Merchant

Check one small promise, price, measure, or message and make it clean.

[illegible]

CHAPTER 15

The Fast Horse and the Lame Donkey

Where are you spending yourself at a pace you cannot hold? The road is longer than the first mile suggested.

CHAPTER 16

Work, and Wear What You Like

Name one thing you do mainly so that it will be seen. Ask what it would cost to keep doing it unseen.

CHAPTER 17

The One Who Chose Contentment

Name one enough: enough food, enough money, enough praise, enough attention. Rest there for a moment.

[illegible]

CHAPTER 18

The Last Advice of the Wise

Imagine tonight as a small ending and ask what good deed from today would still matter.

CHAPTER 19

Do You Know I Have No Rest Without You

Is there something you have given yourself to, and still complain about? Saadi would ask you to choose one.

CHAPTER 20

Driver, Go Gently

What are you trying to hide that everyone can already see? Consider what it costs you to keep hiding it.

CHAPTER 21

The Night of Separation

Who have you told, lately, that a thing would pass? Ask whether you were awake for their night.

CHAPTER 22

Whoever Has Seen Your Face

On what subject are you advising from a book? Consider saying less until you have seen it.

[illegible]

CHAPTER 23

I Was Careful, Once

Which of your firm positions has never been tested by circumstance? Hold it more lightly until it has.

[illegible]

CHAPTER 24

The World Is Glad Because of Him

What part of your life have you been sorting into the wrong pile? Sit with the possibility that it came from the garden.

[illegible]

CHAPTER 25

Much Travelling Is Needed

What has the road already done to you that staying could not have? Thank it for one of those things today.

[illegible]

CHAPTER 26

Nothing Said Is Sweeter

Think of the last room you sat in without being in it. Where had you gone, and who could tell?

[illegible]

CHAPTER 27

The Road to the Friend's Door

What distance are you calling impossible? Ask whether the distance is the real difficulty, or the arriving.

CHAPTER 28

Love Makes the Wise a Child

Let yourself not understand everything. Some truths must be lived before they are explained.

[illegible]

CHAPTER 29

The One Who Saw His Own Fault

Before criticising one fault outside you, look for its smaller cousin within you.

CHAPTER 30

The Loud Fool and the Quiet Lute

Before trusting a loud opinion, ask whether it has music or only volume.

CHAPTER 31

The Hidden Truth Behind Appearance

Delay one judgement that is based mostly on appearance.

CHAPTER 32

The Beggar at the King's Gate

When someone needs help, see the person before you see the need.

CHAPTER 33

Advice From the End of the Road

Take one breath and ask what deserves the next one.

CHAPTER 34

The Poor Man Rich in Peace

Ask what one comfort is costing your peace, and whether the price is too high.

CHAPTER 35

The Poison of False Praise

When praise is easy, ask what truth is being avoided.

[illegible]

CHAPTER 36

The Open Hand and the Hidden Heart

Do one kindness without making it part of your image.

CHAPTER 37

Sweetness From the Friend, Bitterness From the Enemy

Recall the last criticism you dismissed because of who made it. Was there one true sentence in it?

CHAPTER 38

The Rose That Does Not Last

Enjoy one passing thing without trying to freeze it.

[illegible]

CHAPTER 39

Speak Only Better Than Silence

Let one silence protect your dignity, and let one necessary word reveal your courage.

CHAPTER 40

The Return of Deeds

Ask what you are planting today: a thorn, a seed, a shelter, or a flame.

[illegible]