

Primal Dream: A Man, a Woman, a Goat and a Mountain

In a hollow at the summit of a mountain in the wastes of Old Kafiristan, the Land of the Kafirs, there grew a million-year-old holm oak tree. The tree was squat and gnarled, and was close to death. The sunlight here was burning, yet there was a coolness in the undertow, a reminder of the white season when the few peasants who existed lower down the slopes would swathe their bodies in shawls made of thick, black wool ¹. Both air and mountain thinned as they rose, so that around the summit, which apart from this protected hollow was sharp and pyramidal, the sky flowed like deep blue liquid. The wind made a distant howling sound as it siphoned through the narrow gorges. A few crows circled around the hollow, but none had nested in the tree. From the valley far below, tiny coils of smoke rose from the peasants' huts, but the smoke dissolved long before it reached the level of the hollow. A river wound like silver wire around the scattered hamlets. As the shoulder of the mountain rose, vineyards and wine-vats gave way to cattle-fields which became sheep-folds and then forests of walnut, cedar, pine and fir, and these in turn thinned until there was nothing left but bare black rock.

The holm oak tree was an oddity, an impossibility at this altitude. It had never yielded fruit, nor even blossom. It had only ever been seen by the greatest of the shamans. Many lesser magicians had tried to find it, but they had ended up losing themselves on the vast slopes of the Grey Mountain. Some of them had gone mad, and had been found decades later, wandering like Yunani ghosts along the beds of dried-up streams, searching for the gold nuggets of dead emperors. It was said that Sikander, Great Qaisar of the Greeks, having heard of the holm oak, himself had climbed the Grey Mountain, and after seven days and seven nights had reached the hollow. But when Alexander had arrived, the hollow had been empty and it had reminded the Macedonian of nothing more than the dust-bowls of Minoa ².

Since idiosyncratic technique had worked for Iskander in relation to the Gordion Knot, as well as in his conquest of a thousand other cities, caravans and women, so now, slowly, elegantly, elliptically, he drew his sword and held the short blade up to the sun. The autumnal evening light shone like a bronze mask upon his countenance and he closed his regal eyes and intoned – or rather, chanted – secret words which he may have learned from a singing Persian scribe whom his scouts had found wandering around the ruined fortress of Kapisa, words which, years earlier, had been penned upon a golden Herodotian scroll (this scroll having been incendiary, along with the larger part of the wisdom of the ancient world, in the great fire of Old Egyptian Alexandria, the incantation itself has since been lost) ³.

Upon uttering this spell, the Conqueror of the World opened his eyes and there, reflected in the orange metal of his sword, was the fully-formed, and indeed already ancient, holm oak. The tree opened its metempsychotic mouth and spoke into the ear of the great warrior. It is no longer known what the tree said to Sikander; it is rumoured that the words of the oracle were inscribed upon the lower wall of a high-class brothel in Middle Mesopotamia and also upon a door in the burning land of the Hubschi. The former was believed subsequently to have been looted by mercenaries engaged in fighting (or rather, whoring) on behalf of one of the fickle lieutenants of the golden-horn'd Rumi Emperor. Being en route to Arabia, and since they were well-sated, the mercenaries felt the stone to be rather heavy and so they buried the remnants of the wall in a deep yet accessible well ⁴ which had been dry since the campaigns of Cyrus the Great, fully intending to collect it on the homeward journey.

In the meantime, the local dynast had decided to improve the civic water-supply and so in a swish of himation and a gush of top quality Thassos (and accompanied by a fanfare of curvaceous horns which were not yet French) various channels were opened in the sides of the nearest river, and the old well re-flooded. Gradually, the wall was edged downstream to the River Tigris and thence eventually to the Arabian Sea, where, shaped now like a trireme and still buoyant after all those years, it was spotted by the great bearded Sindbad, a rose on his way to the thousand-petal'd boudoir of Scheherazade. The African door, on the other hand, lay for centuries in the ancient land of Abyssinia, where, according to most orthodox scholarship, it still lies, covered over by a tower of sand in a secret place guarded by six acolytes, though there are dissenting voices who claim that during the late Mediaeval period it was carried by a group of Falasha tzaddiks southwards all the way to the great city of Zimbabwe, whereupon the trail seems to have gone cold.

Thus, it is not known what the tree told Alexander of Macedon; yet it must have been something of great import, since the Emperor immediately resolved to become a dervish and to wander along the byways of Bharat, searching for the inner light and the gold of Nuristan. A little-known version of the truth states that Sikander had a twin brother, a shadow, a doppelganger, who accompanied him everywhere, disguised as a woman (some heretical Nestorian sources say that in fact he was a woman, in which case the true disguise lay in the military vestments; however, these fringe Chaldean Mongol sources do not specify as to the means by which a female twin could appear, even to battle-weary choreic cadres as phenotypically identical to her brother) and that it was this Sikander, and not our bronze-wielding fantasist, who actually led his/ her hot little band into battle across the pregnant belly of Asia Major. And that it was this alternative Alexander who commanded the troops against the Didymus Poruses, the terrible twins of the Indus Water and the dignified elephantine humility, and that it was this cross-dressing military female Dhul Qarnayn who crossed all but the last of the Paanch Aabs. Whereas the man who had climbed the mountain and received the vision, and possibly also the revelation, from the ancient holm oak did not return to his regiment, but instead went off firstly to a local hamlet where a tailor quickly knocked him up a goodly set of Kafir robes, and thence eastwards, initially in parallel with his former comrades, but when later he feared that they might go all the way and actually capture Indraprastha and the pulsing, Gangetic heart of the hot continent and that he might always have to glance over his chugha-clad shoulder lest a former jilted adjutant recognise him down some dark stinking alley of Hind, our Good Sikander, the mystic, insinuated his way into the Macedonian camp and infused the arak rations of the Greek Army with distilled essence of juniper, which led the soldiers quickly into revolt against their leader – his twin sister, brother, whatever. And hence the long, westward retreat along the burning blackened coast of Makran. What became of this pir is not known, but there is a rumour...

Another version relates that the holm oak cracked open and a great light issued from the cleavage. When this light struck Iskander, the hero also split into two, each part of his body then regenerating the deficient half quickly and unconsciously like a sponge, earthworm or bacterium. Each of these now whole halves went off and did their own thing; one continued the Near-Eastern warrior-god tradition, while the other evolved into a seeker after mystical truths, a magnet for nodes of Gnostic confluence, a dancer on words, thoughts and on the forms which lie between the two⁵.

No woman had ever been to the hollow; if one had dared to attempt the journey, she would have been killed either by men or by bull-headed spirits which would have erupted, rugose, big-mouthed and bleeding, from the rock. The holm oak sometimes appeared in visions to

very young children and on occasion had been glimpsed in the gleam from the athame-blade as it had been applied to the inner carotid artery of goats about to be sacrificed. However, since only the goat could have made out this picture, and since, seconds later, the visualisation would have pumped, hot with the blood from its neck, away into nothing, essentially the tree remained hidden from all but the most sacred of brains.

It was so gnarled that its trunk had twisted back on itself so that it was impossible to tell where its growing point ended. Though the month was June, yet still the tree had no leaves. Its branches tapered to curled twisted horns which, like the horns of a goat or the crescentic mantle of an angry ancestor, were almost black, yet the structures did not point in any particular direction, not even at the sky but rather twirled around themselves as though seeking, in the proximity of the tree, some kind of infinity. The tree had never grown above the height of a one-storey house; it had ceased moving heavenwards after the locust hordes of Timur the Lame had devastated the surrounding areas. Though the hordes had never reached the hollow of the holm oak tree, yet the tree knew of everything that had occurred to north, south, east and west, not just in the Valleys of the Red Kafirs but further east, in the valleys of the Black Kafirs (the unbelief of the tribes being polychromatic as well as pantheistic) and beyond, as far as the glacier of Kailas, which was the source of the great Sindh Darya.

The tree was surrounded by a low stone wall which had been constructed of flat rocks. At the centre of the wall was an iron gate to the bars of which had been attached tiny pieces of coloured cloth and bits of paper with faded writing. Originally the gate had been black, but long since had faded to a dun grey, seeded here and there with patches of rust. It had been opened, but not closed again, and the metal emitted a harsh grating sound as it swung in the breeze. On either side of the gate were six-foot-high fir poles hewn into the figures of the sleeping gods which had been decorated with particoloured flags and pennants. A third of the way up the tree trunk was a rough shelf and on the shelf were tiny wooden figurines carved in the shapes of beasts; a bull, a goat, a snake, a woman and a man. There was no path leading to this area and from outside there was no sign of the hollow's existence. Even blue goats did not venture to this altitude. To the north were yet higher mountains whose summits, perpetually snow-clad, were inhabited only by fairies and by those ancestors who had been forgotten.

A figure was praying at the foot of the holm-oak tree. He was hunched over, his back bent almost double so that his face was completely hidden. He was wearing a thick woollen chugha which had been dyed red and, pulled down low, a black Pashtun cap. It was not cold enough to have warranted this couture, so he must have done it purposely, perhaps to protect his neck against the backward imprecations of djinns, bhoothes and the like, or perhaps as a physical shield against the collective Schadenfreude of envious piriya (fairies that were green, not with holiness but with this deadliest of sins), since even these notorious beings had not been able to visualise the tree since the time, some three hundred years earlier, when the kala monstrosity of Newtonian Physics first had ballooned into the ether. The man's feet were protected by black, knee-length, mid-nineteenth-century British Army cavalry boots, minus spurs. He was intoning a prayer in a low mumbling voice in the language of the Red Kafirs.

The man's concentration had attained a level close to perfection, or at least to a facsimile of the form of the Grey Mountain – that is to say, the opened stone of his thoughts had liquefied and resolved to a shape that was almost pyramidal. Gradually, the sound of his voice and the underlying howl of the air both grew louder and began to alter in quality so that it seemed as

though they were moving together towards a common tone, at which point, the man slumped forwards onto the ground. This was clearly unplanned, since his left cavalry boot became caught up in the hem of his chugha, pulling and stretching the red material almost to tearing point over his back and neck. Because it almost never rained here (whenever the temperature dropped below a certain level, it snowed and filled-in the hollow and covered the tree and when it became even colder, everything simply froze) as he fell, dust from the ground and from his chugha rose in a billowing white cloud. As it evanesced in the sunlight, the cloud yet retained the man's form, appearing thus as a simulacrum, or astral body, of the original. The shadow thus created (or freed, depending on which philo-political position one takes) hovered for a moment, as though uncertain of its own being, and then flew off northwards towards the white peaks. Just then, the left-hand side of the man's chugha began to rustle and tremble. The shaking spread over his whole body and grew more and more violent, until it was as though either he was having a fit, dying, giving birth, or else being actively possessed by some lonely, hill-walking unilateral succubus. First a snout and then a full head poked out from beneath the red robe and within seconds, an entire young goat had struggled free from the man's chugha. Its face was white, but the rest of its body was covered in shiny black sable. The watery bag of the amnion, which had not yet come loose from its back, bulged and sagged about the upper parts of its limbs, so that each movement occurred slowly and with unreasonable difficulty, as though in a dream. Slowly, tremulously, the goat rose onto its haunches and stretched its whole body upwards in the direction of the sun. There was a tearing noise as the bag of clear liquid detached from its spine. The animal staggered forwards and for a moment, the transparent membrane hovered and trembled at its rear the goat like a plastic, avant-garde sculpture. The sun's rays were refracted through the body of the sculpture as though through a giant's eye and the man's body was bathed in yellow light. Then, in the name of a disembowelled stomach, the membrane slumped down onto the sharp stones, its skin burst and the liquid flowed over man and dust alike. From the left side of the goat's neck, over the pulse of the carotid artery, a thin stream of blood began to trickle onto the ground. Gradually, as the goat fell forwards onto all fours and wobbled towards the shrine, the flow of blood began to slow, so that after a while a drop would fall only once every few minutes. And then, after the goat had opened its infantile jaws and eagerly consumed the hardened walnut-bread of the figurines – first the horse, then the woman, the crow, the man, and finally the clay figure cut in its own image – the bleeding ceased and a maroon scab began to form over the wound.

As the miraculous beast passed between the pillars of the shrine, its wound, symbol of its botched self-sacrifice, was rapidly healing-over. The goat cast a single backwards glance at the man, remarking, in its rapidly-expanding mind, on the strangeness of the man's posture: face-down, arms spread-eagled to west and east, and legs drawn up in ungainly fashion under the off-white buttocks while, half-caught beneath the taut chugha, the sculpted outline of the man's balls pushed through the wool as though attempting some kind of frantic rear-end escape. The goat shrugged and turned its head from side to side and, carefully watching where it placed its delicate polished carbon hooves, it began to tiptoe like a ballerina down the side of the mountain. In the bright noon light, two hairy stumps, each just a little larger than the size of a child's thumb, protruded from the top of its skull.

The great demon goat of Yarkand came down like a stick-man from beyond the mountains and he hauled after him the large grey stone which he had sliced off the tops of the peaks, and when he reached the walnut-grove by the river he grew tired and sat down and fell asleep.

Meanwhile the laughing man, seeing that he was asleep, came to the grove and shook the tree so that the walnuts fell down upon the head of the demon. Since the fruit was not yet ripe, their pounding on his head gave the demon strangely raw dreams.

In the zero dream, the demon of Yarkand was awake. But before that, he was a point of light in the midst of nothingness. Gradually the light began to pulse and swell until it possessed the consciousness of the goat. He was lying alone in a hut, naked. And his body was white and was that of a young woman. She sat up and reached down between her legs and when she gazed at her hand, she saw that her fingers were covered in fresh red blood. The hut was dark inside, yet she could tell that it was daytime, because shards of light slipped in through cracks in the wood and because over at the far side of the hut was a small square window. From outside came the rushing of water over stone; she knew that the river was close by and that she was in the Bashali, the house of the women, and she felt the presence of those others, the silent women, women hidden in the shadows who, like her, had secreted themselves in the impurity of their nakedness. They too would perceive themselves as being alone.

She got up and went over to the window. The land was covered in snow. The vineyards, the cedar and pine trees, the peaks of the mountains and the substance of the sky were all white. Even the disc of the sun shone like an opal-stone through the haze. Yet the snow was no longer falling and the air was clear as the jelly of a goat's eye. And in this clarity the woman could see that everything had changed. It was as though the snow which had fallen during the night had not only covered the land, but had altered the nature of the world.

The window glass felt smooth and cool and, with the index finger of her right hand, she began to trace out lines, curves, dots. She drew a picture of the hut as though she were viewing it from the outside and then she drew it again, this time from the perspective of her actual physical locus. Both aspects were contained within one drawing, as though she had plotted out a six-dimensional architectural plan of the building and its contents. In her picture, at the centre of the room, was a tree. Its branches sagged with bunches of greenish-brown walnuts, which were almost ripe. Beneath the tree slept a demon, and she drew, approaching the demon, the figure of the laughing man, his legs long and spindly from hunger, his face cut with slanting eyes and a perpetual cracked smile. Then, as she watched, the shapes which she had caused to exist seemed to judder and move, and she saw that the trickster had taken hold of the tree-trunk and shaken the branches, so that the walnuts cascaded down onto the demon's skull, battering against the place where the aperture lay. As they began to ache in the white light, she shaded her eyes with her hand.

She began to shiver and so went over to the fire at the opposite end of the hut and sat down. The fire burned fiercely, its white-hot flames seared the logs and leaped towards the hole in the roof. A griddle had been placed over the fire, but the griddle was empty and the woman felt a painful tugging in her belly and realised that she was hungry. The pains formed a fist within her and the fist began to punch up through her trunk and through her spinal column, and her head began to grow light with the impact. She wished there was some galette dough from which she might make an oval bread, or even a jug of wine which might warm and settle her insides. But there was nothing. Just the fire, the bed and the window. And outside, the snow. And beneath it all, the sound of the river. She began to rock back and forth, and she hung her head so that her long black hair fell forwards and swung across her face.

When at length she looked back at the rough wooden bed and at the planks of the floor along which she had walked, the woman saw a trail of blood marking out her every movement. The

air in the hut was so cold that steam began to rise from the trail as though the blood was boiling. It filled the air until she could no longer see beyond the length of her own arm. The steam had a soporific quality about it; it smelled of walnut-juice and, as the lustrous air began to swim before her, the smell began to make her eyelids feel heavy and her insides weightless. I've only just woken up, she thought, but then she saw by the opalescent light coming through her picture in the window that it was afternoon, and she wondered how time could have passed so quickly when just a few minutes before, when she had drawn the picture in the glass, it had been early morning. To stop herself from falling asleep, she got up and vigorously rubbed her arms and legs and jumped about on the bare floorboards. But it was difficult to leap around for very long without purpose, and so instead she began to dance, to trace out the circular steps of the Dance of the Bracelet. At first her steps were mincing and tiny upon the coarse floorboards, and her hips swayed delicately to the soft pad-pad of her feet. But as she sank deeper into the dance and as the pangs of hunger evanesced, the woman's movements grew wilder and more forceful, until she was leaping through the air, her legs causing the steam to oscillate, her uncoiffed hair flying around her face and at its uppermost crest, almost brushing against the low arched ceiling. As her feet pounded out the rhythm, in the spaces between the beats of bone sole upon wood, she began to make out the sound of a single string being plucked from somewhere high up on one of the mountains, from the pure place which lay far beyond the last of the villages of the blood kafirs, up where the fairies danced and where only goats and ibises were permitted to roam. She danced like a stem of wheat, swaying in the breeze, like juniper smoke, curling towards heaven, like the long ascent of thought through memory, or like the movement of generations along the mountain-passes, the transmutation from spine seed to wood spirit, the dust of the ancestors rising translucent from the white peaks.

And as she danced on the mountain-top, she made out a figure ascending from the valley. The movement of the heavily-robed figure was too rapid to have been that of a human being. It was as though the figure was flying a few inches above the surfaces of the rocks, the grass, the bogs, the clay pits which had been hewn out years earlier by the saponaceous⁶ peasants of Torbêla, and as the figure drew closer, the dancing woman saw that its face resembled that of a goat, with white beard and scimitar horns, and she knew that this must be the goat priest of that dark mountain where, long ago, the last of the giants had made their stand⁷. The priest's robe was green, with across its face gold thread filigree'd in strange and fantastical patterns, and when at last he drew level with her he too began to dance, but in the opposite – the counter-clockwise – direction. And his goat-mouth opened and he sang the cornet Song of the Seven Doors⁸. And as he sang in his undulating, ululating, high-pitched, vibrato, wind-tunnel voice, the dancing woman saw emerge from the deep blueness of the sky a pair of swastikas, the arms of each spinning in opposite directions. After a time, the swastikas merged and the figure so formed spun in both directions at once. Then the shape resolved again, this time into a figure seven. And the figure seven also began to judder and bend and dance, until its outline became a blur, until at length it began to resemble a perfect circle. A zero.

1: Such shawls, whether knitted from the fleeces of white or black goats, are worn by women over the traditional long, black-coloured dress.

2: According to Pseudoepigraphos of Deosai (d. circa 150 BCE), whose real name may have been Majjhima or else (it is disputed among storytellers) Maha Antiochos, perhaps it would be appropriate to lay the blame for the generalised obsession with the golden colour on Alexander of Macedon, who, as is well known, was himself preoccupied with the idea of finding the giant ants who dug gold dust from the great sands of the regions which lay somewhat to the north of Ferghana. In connection with this, the following tale was related to an acquaintance of the author, a certain Mme M. Desmoulins of Alfortville, Isle de France, France, who, disguised

as a talib, spent some three and a half years in the company of various peoples of the Imaus - the Himalaya, Hindu Hush, Pamir and Karakorum ranges - and the plains, valleys and gorges that lie enclosed within these elevated topographies. The narrator was a qussa who went by the name of Zarra and she told Ms Desmoulins that she was the daughter of Natshab Ali of Sheh. Moteshakeram.

The first of fifteen ant stories from the Land of Women: Document XXX7a, tape 97514:

It is said that in days gone by, in a cleft rock (or perhaps it was a glacier crevasse) that lay close to the snowy summit of Rakaposhi, Sikander, Qaisar of the Yojana engaged in conversation with a hud-hud bird and the Queen of the Mountain Ants. All three were sipping from gourds filled with mayura and around them, carried on a gentle breeze came the music of delicate and fragile ice flowers. After the exchange of some circuitous diplomatic niceties, Alexander asked the ant-queen where he would find the precious metal of which he had heard much, whereupon the insect, who had grown over the years to be the size of a fox, replied that in order to locate the gold, first he would have to eat the earth and drink the lakes. Whereupon the Son of Ammon drew his sword. The hud-hud intervened, telling the emperor of men to put away his blade and that the gold could be obtained only through the way of the ascetic. "This," the hud-hud went on, "is why certain of the red and yellow lamas bend down and eat the dry soil of caves. The gold lies in their hearts. Knowledge is immortality." And Iskander paused and put away his sword. And thus began the great quest of Zhul-Qarnayn for the fountain of eternal life.

3: Although the preceding is fact, there is a persistent rumour, which relates to Colonel Algernon Durand of the Borderlands (brother of the infamous Mortimer Durand who drew the nineteenth-century border between Afghanistan and British India), who once was the British Agent in Gilgit. This kahane is known as 'The Dead Leonard Speaks' and as recited by the daughter of Natshab Ali of Sheh, it goes something like this:

Fifteen marches north-west of the town of Gilgit, buried deep beneath the floor of the Chamber of the Idols, which lay some seventeen thousand feet above sea-level in a long-forgotten part of the mountainous region of Transoxania, was a casket within which had been placed a book known as the Shas-i shathiyat, whose author was the well-respected Baqli of Shiraz, the one known in those lonely expanses that lie to the east of Khurasan as the Sultan al-shathatin, or the King of the Paradox. It was rumoured that in order to protect it from the ravages of Genghis Khan's Mongol hordes, it had been carried there on the backs of seven red horses (so many volumes did the loose sheafs fill) led in ceremonial procession (as per the Ancient and Venerable Order of Arachosia) by one Salman-i Dari.

One day, many centuries later, a Friend was wandering along the goat tracks at the start of his year on spiritual retreat. In order to commence his khalwa in proper manner, the Friend had to find a place of darkness into which sound and light would not penetrate. So far, he had found nowhere suitable. Either they would turn out to be a secret conduit for coupling lovers, or else would be revealed in the light of the torch-flame to be the Capital of Bats (or worse). Once, he had even come across a cavernous gorge which he had thought would be ideal for his purposes, but when at length he had climbed down to the base of the gorge - an almost flat surface some twenty feet across - he had found nothing more than a trio of unfrocked, tailless demons grovelling in the dust. Another time, late at night, the Friend had wandered deep into a pine forest and had entered a small clearing which had turned out to be the residence of Persian-speaking hornets. In fact, our cavaliere, our jawanmardin, our honourable and chivalrous young man, had spent so long imagining what his cave might look like, he had developed moon blindness. So when at last, he came across the entrance to the cave which really was little more than a crack in the rock-face, having examined it meticulously, using first his palms and fingertips and then, disrobing to the bone, utilising the full length of his body, he had exclaimed from the navel with joy: "La ilaha illa 'llah!" and without a moment's hesitation, had entered through its mouth.

And he stayed in that place for exactly one whole year, to the minute. And when at last he emerged, white and thin, with a beard longer than the wine-dregged fleece of Abu 'Ataba Ahmed ibn Faraj Kindi Hasmi of Suq al-Rastan and red eyes which seemed to be staring at something far beyond the material, he found that he had become quite dumb. From that day onwards, the Friend never spoke another word, but only sang phrases in a high-pitched voice which sounded more like the noise that issues from the movement of a bone plectrum across a broken lute than those which emanate from the human heart. These phrases became known as the zikr shouts of the Sufis as they moved through the various modes of ejaculation consequent upon turning their faces towards the utter renunciation of the Tark and characterised a particular school of dervishes who resided only in those khanaqai which had been built, Greek-style, on the points of mountains above fifteen thousand feet in height, the lack of oxygen perhaps eliciting the elevated tones of the singers.

Having myself lived in this same cave for upwards of ten weeks, continued the dead Leonard, I now know that songs come into the body through the skin from the cold stone and that one must needs lie, quite naked, on the

dark slabs for seven days and nights during a singularly favourable conjunction of the stars and planets, in order to imbibe this wondrous essence, whole.

This tale is re-printed from the 'Book of Sighs', by Shams of Marchena, with additional material by Fatimah Begum are Shib (also known as Badshah Begum, also known as Jahanara, also known as Sahibat al-Zamani, also known as Mistress of the Age, also known as Padishah Begum, also known as Lady Emperor, also known as Begum Sahib, also known as the Lady of the Gardens, also known as the Princess of Princesses) and is reproduced here by kind permission of Tasawwuf Publishers, Isle of Barra, Outer Hebrides, Scotland HS95HO. It should be remembered that if Dara Shikoh, son of Shah Jahan, and confidante and philosophical soulmate of Jahan Ara, had succeeded his father as Mughal Emperor of Hindustan instead of his wanking, psychopathic bigot of a brother, Aurangzeb, it is likely that India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Island would all be very different places today.

4: See 'Houses with Lower Doors and Wells with Lower Floors', by Fatimah of Cordoba, Vol. III, p. 19 and Vol.V, p. 786.

5: A poem was discovered a number of years ago during the clean-up operation following a flood in the library of a small kirk in the town of Dumbarton, Scotland. It had been enfolded in a book and the book placed in a musty compartment that lay behind the largest of the secretaries. A certain Mr Illiam Quilliam Elphinstone of the Isle of Man lays claim to the document and accordingly its provenance, as well as its guardianship, remain the subject of the procedures of the courts. Without prejudice.

6: Saponaceous, not in the sense of their being excessively unctuous, but rather, of their resembling, in complexion and consumption, nothing more than soap of the old Castilian type. Once, such blocks were cut and exported as far afield as the Convent of Ávila where, inch by inch, the burning Teresa was known to have scrubbed herself clean, save for a single rank speck which she left upon her skin in an unknown place, lest ever she should forget that in this glowing beneficent universe only God is pure. Many centuries later and through at least seventy manifold incarnations, this same lump of clay, half-soap, half-human, being refined and etiolated to a state somewhat beyond the transparent, was used as an entheogenic truth drug by the commercial quarrying arm of the Central Intelligence Agency of the Far Western Republic known as the United States of America (Peace Be Upon It).

7: There is a magical mountain, one of the dark peaks of South Uist in the Western Isles, otherwise known as the Outer Hebrides, which lie off the Atlantic coast of Scotland.

8: A version of this song was first recorded by Joe Stalefruit Lecombe on a wax cylinder in the ancient and venerable city of New Orleans, Louisiana, circa 1890. This recording, alas, has been lost, but there is a version, caught from sequestered pirate vinyl held within a hollow, Siqilliyan pillar of the Doric (also known as Phrygian) mode that remains extant and it is this incarnation of the song, flat second, augmented third, which has been obtained courtesy of an ex-Beat Head-cum-professore universitario of Catania (City of the Elephant) and which appears on melodic quantum paper at the foot of this page.

**IN ORDER TO HEAR SAID SONG, RUB HERE, RIGHT TO LEFT, SEVEN TIMES WITH DRIED
CELIBATE SEMEN EVINCED BY THE HAND OF A VIRGIN FROM THE LOINS OF THE SEVENTH
SON OF THE SEVENTH SON OF THE SEVENTH SON OF A LAPSED, LIFE-PROFESSED MONK OF
THE ORDER OF SAINT BENEDICT.**