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# Politics, Religion, and Love: How Leo Strauss Read the *Arabian Nights*\*

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It is difficult to find any non-Western work of literature that has had a more lasting effect on Western thought than the *One Thousand and One Nights* (in English more commonly called the *Arabian Nights*, hereafter *Nights*).<sup>1</sup> Since its introduction to Western readers by François Galland in 1704, this work has not only played a key role in shaping the Western image of the East but has also contributed to the West's self-understanding.<sup>2</sup> The *Nights* was for some time considered a reliable source for the study of the manners, religions, and customs of Oriental societies. However, we are far from such Orientalist naiveté, and we no longer look for the real East in the *Nights*. Like other traditional texts, the *Nights* has been investigated and dissected by the instruments of historical criticism, and it is now considered an expression of creative genius, akin to a collage: a variety of stories with a variety of origins finding their source and prototypes in Persian, ancient Indian, Mesopotamian, and ancient Egyptian cultures. The attention of scholars has therefore been mainly directed toward questions regarding sources and origins of the stories, as well as the comparative folk-narrative study of the purely formal characteristics of the stories, narrative motifs, and tale types. The *Nights* is today studied "not so much as an individual work of literature but rather as a phenomenon comprising various manifestations in different forms of creative expression."<sup>3</sup> From this perspective, it would be difficult to attribute

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<sup>1</sup> The edited version of Leo Strauss's typescript on the *Arabian Nights* is found here as Appendix A, and the Table of Concordance of stories in different versions is provided in Appendix B.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Irwin, "Preface," in *The Arabian Nights and Orientalism: Perspectives from East and West*, ed. Yuriko Yamanaka and Tetsuo Nishio (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), viii.

<sup>3</sup> Ulrich Marzolph and Richard van Leeuwen, *The Arabian Nights: An Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004), xxiv.

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a definite intention to the author or speak about *the* teaching of the *Nights*, precisely because it is thought that there is not a single author behind the whole work: there cannot be a coherent message in this book because we are not dealing with a unified whole but rather a compilation of disparate stories—ones that have been frequently transformed by narrators over the centuries.

However, this is not the only perspective one can bring to bear on the *Nights*. There is a reading of this work that treats it as a carefully designed and coherent theologico-political writing composed by a thinker of high rank with a specific intention and specific teaching. This interpretation is found in a typescript by Leo Strauss, here published for the first time, titled “1001 Nights,” located among his papers. No prior attempt has been made to present the content of this typescript or collection of notes.<sup>4</sup> In the following presentation, the content of these notes will be discussed. Strauss’s interpretative method and the theoretical background of his interpretation of the *Nights* are discussed first. As Strauss comments on a considerable number of the stories contained in the long edition of the *Nights* (the so-called Calcutta II), the major themes of Strauss’s interpretation are presented, while focusing on some of the most revealing stories.<sup>5</sup> Because the intention is to understand Strauss on the basis of his own principles, this presentation will

<sup>4</sup> Strauss makes only a single passing remark about the *Nights* in his published writings, and that for explaining a passage in Nietzsche’s *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Leo Strauss, “Jerusalem and Athens,” in *Studies on Platonic Political Philosophy* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983], 148). He also mentions this work in two of his courses on Nietzsche (1967 and 1971–72). The historical context of the composition of the notes is as follows: In a letter to Seth Benardete on September 27, 1960, Strauss mentions that he is “reading . . . the *1001 Nights*” and he describes the work as an equivalent of Aristophanes’s plays “under Islam.” The relationship between the *Nights* and Aristophanes’s works seems to have been particularly important for Strauss, as again in January 24, 1961, he writes to Peter H. von Blanckenhagen that “in my free time I am reading *1001 Nights* which has much in common with Aristophanes, as you can imagine.” See Leo Strauss Papers, box 4, folder 2, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library; Seth Benardete Papers, SB 04–05, The New School Archives & Special Collections. The typescript cannot be precisely dated but the best estimate is that it was written after 1960. It is reported that Muhsin Mahdi gave Strauss the German version of the *Nights* and Strauss composed his notes while recovering from heart surgery (the source of the anecdote is Professor Charles E. Butterworth). Mahdi went on to prepare the critical edition of the *Nights* and wrote several commentaries on this work, one of them just after Strauss’s death. However, Mahdi does not mention Strauss in any of these, and his interpretation does not follow that of his teacher; in fact Strauss pays much attention to parts of the book that Mahdi later describes as inauthentic additions to the original work by unscrupulous European booksellers. Muhsin Mahdi, *The Thousand and One Nights (Alf Layla Wa-Layla): From the Earliest Known Sources*, 3 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1994), esp. 3:11–101; Muhsin Mahdi, “Remarks on the 1001 Nights,” *Interpretation* 3, no. 2–3 (1973): 157–68.

<sup>5</sup> The edition used by Strauss is the translation of the Macnaghten edition or Calcutta II by Enno Littman. It is the same version famously translated by Richard Burton and translated recently by Malcolm and Ursula Lyons (Malcolm C. Lyons, Ursula Lyons, and Robert Irwin, *The Arabian Nights: Tales of 1,001 Nights*, 3 vols. [London: Penguin Books Limited, 2010]). In this presentation the Lyons translation is used; references to the *Nights* are identified by AN, followed by volume and page numbers. Strauss’s notes are found at Leo Strauss Papers, box 20, folder 2, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library. References to Strauss’s typescript are identified by MS, followed by the page and paragraph numbers of the typescript.

proceed in a purely descriptive manner. I will therefore leave the critical evaluation of Strauss's interpretation, as well as my reservations about his reading of the *Nights*, for another occasion. Such a critical evaluation must take into account the fact that one of the major themes of Strauss's thought is absent in these notes: Strauss argued that reason is incapable of refuting the claims of divine revelation and that revelation continues to coexist with reason and philosophy as a powerful alternative.<sup>6</sup> In these notes Strauss abstracts from the challenge of revelation and does not engage in a critical evaluation of the *Nights's* view of religion. Finally, in view of the character of Strauss's notes, the following interpretation has a tentative character and should be read in the same spirit.

#### STRAUSS'S HERMENEUTICS

No aspect of Strauss's thought has attracted more attention or has been more contested than his claims about the art of writing, or esotericism. He bases his thesis on esotericism on what he considered to be a well-known characteristic of many societies, namely, persecution of thought. Strauss argues that closed societies do not recognize free thought or the right to evaluate and criticize the authoritative beliefs of those societies. In such societies, Strauss claims, heterodox thinkers are faced with grave dangers and must protect themselves and their ideas. If these thinkers decide to transmit their thoughts to other heterodox or potential heterodox readers, they have to practice an art of esoteric writing, or writing in a way that conceals one's heterodox ideas from all but those who are knowledgeable about the practice of reading between the lines. Esotericism allows the majority of readers to receive a conventional message while allowing a select group of readers to take away the heterodox message. One of the common techniques of esoteric writing is to state one's heterodox ideas by using an unsympathetic character as a mouthpiece or to avail oneself of the immunity of a storyteller, a narrator, or a mere expositor, thereby putting a distance between oneself and the opinions reflected in one's writing. This is the reason, Strauss claims, for finding "in the greatest literature of the past so many interesting devils, madmen, beggars, sophists, drunkards, epicureans, and buffoons."<sup>7</sup> These characters might have been the way by which the persecuted freethinkers transmitted their controversial ideas. As we shall see, Strauss's reading of the *Nights* is based on this esoteric thesis. But whatever the merits of Strauss's thesis regarding the interpretation of different philosophical works may be, the *Nights* is a literary work. It is generally admitted that literary writers often

<sup>6</sup> Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 74. But see Heinrich Meier, *Leo Strauss and the Theologico-Political Problem*, trans. Marcus Brainard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 16, 29–45.

<sup>7</sup> Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 36.

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employ rhetorical devices, such as symbolism, to convey unstated meanings. Consequently, it is a common practice among scholars to pay attention to the unstated or indirectly conveyed intentions in literary works.

Strauss's interest in the esoteric dimension of the *Nights* is closely related to another major aspect of his thought, one that proves more controversial than esotericism, namely his preoccupation with the relationship between religion and various aspects of human life, especially politics and philosophy. The religious aspects of the *Nights* have not escaped the notice of readers, as religion is omnipresent in the *Nights*: even apart from several stories that depict religious conversion, proselytism, and the struggle between the adherents of different religions, religion is in one way or another present in all the stories. This aspect of the *Nights* makes the work particularly important for Strauss, because he considered the theologico-political problem the central theme of his intellectual odyssey.<sup>8</sup> But what is Strauss's theologico-political problem? At its most basic level, it is the tension between philosophy on the one hand, and the authoritative religion or beliefs of one's community on the other. For Strauss, philosophy and philosophers are above all concerned with one fundamental question: How should one live? This amounts to asking the question of the best way of life. As man is a political animal living with other human beings in a political community, this question is therefore essentially a political question.<sup>9</sup> It is a political question as it addressed and was answered by the authoritative traditions of political societies. It is also a theological question in that, in all premodern societies, the most authoritative tradition that answers this question is the religious belief system of those societies.

According to Strauss, because free thought and critique of common authoritative answers are the most distinctive characteristics of philosophy, there has always been a fundamental tension between philosophy and religion. Philosophy provides its own answers to the question of the best way of life and therefore sometimes (according to Strauss, always) enters into conflict with the sacred tradition of the community. Here is the origin of the theologico-political problem. In Strauss's interpretation of the *Nights*, the question of esotericism and the theologico-political problem join together and form the perspective through which he interprets this work. He reads the *Nights* as a work intended to be read between the lines, containing heterodox ideas incompatible with, and critical of, the reigning religious beliefs of the time. Although this perspective on the *Nights* is unique and surely susceptible to criticism, it is not without precedent in the study of comparable writings. For instance, the idea that the authors of *Kalilah wa Dimnah* and *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa* voiced their criticism of sacred beliefs through esoteric

<sup>8</sup> Leo Strauss, "Preface to *Hobbes' Politische Wissenschaft*," *Interpretation: A Journal of Political Philosophy*, no. 8 (January 1979): 1.

<sup>9</sup> Leo Strauss, "Farabi's Plato," in *Louis Ginzberg: Jubilee Volume* (New York: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1945), 366.

techniques such as putting their words in the mouth of characters, and even animals, is shared by other scholars.<sup>10</sup>

#### CRITIQUE OF THE REIGNING BELIEFS

Strauss begins his notes with his famous numerological observations (MS 1.1). One must first explain a point about this unusual practice: Strauss's interest in numerology is not related to the view that numbers have occult, divine, or mystical characters. What Strauss is interested in can be described as *conventional* numerology, that is, the idea that some writers conventionally used numbers for transmitting their message. The importance of such practices in medieval and early modern writings is well known.<sup>11</sup> In his numerological observations Strauss claims that the number 1001 in the title of the *Nights* is perhaps chosen by the author to transmit a message about the content of the work. This number is a multiple of 7, 11, and 13. The theological symbolism of the number 7 is obvious, as in Abrahamic beliefs God created everything in six days and took his rest on the seventh day (Genesis 1; Qur'an 7:54, 2:29, 67:3, 71:15, 78:12). Number 11 is less obvious, but coming after 10, which represents the Law (as in Ten Commandments), it stands for disobedience.<sup>12</sup> The number 13, particularly mentioned by Strauss in his reading of Machiavelli, also seems to have an antitheological significance.<sup>13</sup> These three numbers are therefore for Strauss a kind of wink toward the theologico-political problem or the conflict of reason and revelation. Strauss also suggests that the book might be considered 1003 Nights—if one adds two stories told before the ones told by Shahrazad. Number 1003 in its turn is a multiple of 17 and 59. For Strauss, the number 17 represents nature (*phusis*), as the Greek alphabet, the original language of the study of nature, has 17 consonants: the consonants being mute like nature are put in opposition to tradition,

<sup>10</sup> Jennifer London, "How to Do Things with Fables," *History of Political Thought* 29, no. 2 (2008): 189–212; C. E. Bosworth, "The Persian Impact on Arabic Literature," in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period*, ed. A. Beeston, T. Johnson, R. Serjeant, and G. Smith, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 487–88; Paul Kraus, *Alchemie, Ketzerei, Apokryphen im frühen Islam*, ed. Rémi Brague (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1994), 167. See also Shatha Almutawa, "Imaginative Cultures and Historic Transformations: Narrative in 'Rasa'il Ikhwan Al-Ṣafa'" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2013).

<sup>11</sup> In the case of Islamic thought it suffices to mention Abjad numerals. For a general introduction see Vincent Foster Hopper, *Medieval Number Symbolism* (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2003). For a rather detailed bibliography on the use of numerology in Islam see Annemarie Schimmel, *The Mystery of Numbers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 288–90.

<sup>12</sup> "Eleven is transgression; eleven oversteps the ten commandments," in Friedrich Schiller, *The Piccolomini, or The First Part of Wallenstein*, trans. S. T. Coleridge (London: N. Longman & O. Rees, 1800), 30 (act 2, scene 1).

<sup>13</sup> Leo Strauss, *Thoughts on Machiavelli* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1958), 52; Leo Strauss, "Niccolo Machiavelli," in *History of Political Philosophy*, ed. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 311. See the comparison with Spinoza.

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which must be audible to be transmitted.<sup>14</sup> The significance of number 59 is not entirely clear, but it seems that for Strauss it also represents nature.<sup>15</sup> These numerological observations are followed by a general statement about the content of the whole work: “The overall suggestion: refutation of the *nomos* regarding inferiority of women; and: indictment of tyranny; and: how *jealousy* of a king is appeased” (MS 1.1). How these three subjects, namely a critique of *nomos* or (religious) Law, a critique of tyranny, and a critique of “jealousy” are related will gradually become clear. But what is particularly interesting is that these subjects prove to be, one way or another, connected with religion: tyranny and jealousy are both divine (MS 4.12, 14.39), and women represent erotic longing as a kind of “counter-religion” (MS 14.39). It is therefore fitting to begin at the beginning before turning to politics and love.

In Strauss’s interpretation, the critical view of the author of the *Nights* toward the sacred is first reflected in the frame story of the *Nights*: King Shahriar invites his younger brother Shah Zaman to visit him. On his way to Shahriar, Shah Zaman discovers his wife in an act of infidelity with a kitchen boy. Enraged and jealous, Shah Zaman kills both of them and then proceeds to visit his brother. During his visit, Shah Zaman suffers from a deep depression. He spends his time in the palace while his brother King Shahriar goes out hunting. One day while looking out the window, Shah Zaman sees his brother’s queen in the courtyard betraying her husband with a black slave. Surprisingly, by witnessing the misfortune of his brother, Shah Zaman’s condition improves, and he informs Shahriar about their shared affliction. Dismayed by their misfortune, they both decide to roam the world in hope of finding someone whose misfortune is greater than theirs. On their way, they discover a jealous *jinni*, a male supernatural being. The demon’s wife betrays him with men every time the demon takes a nap on the shore (AN1:5–7). Just as in the case of Shah Zaman, the misfortune of the demon brings joy to the jealous kings, and they return to rule their realms.

For Strauss, the major leitmotif of many of the stories in the *Nights* is the jealousy of kings, demons, and caliphs (see MS 1.1, 4.12, 5.15, 10.30). The jealous beings encounter unfaithful women, and, being slaves of jealousy, their anger leads to violence. King Shahriar takes revenge not only by killing his unfaithful wife after returning to his realm, but he also takes a wife every day and kills her the next morning—until he marries Shahrzad, who tells

<sup>14</sup> Nasser Behnegar, “Reading ‘What Is Political Philosophy?’” in *Leo Strauss’s Defense of the Philosophic Life: Reading “What Is Political Philosophy?”*, ed. Rafael Major (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 41 n. 5.

<sup>15</sup> Commenting on Plato’s *Laws*, Strauss writes: “The Athenian suggests then that the future city should consist of 5,040 land holders and defenders of their plots and the same number of plots. This number has the advantage that it can be divided by all numbers up to ten; in fact, it is susceptible of fifty-nine different divisions” (*The Argument and the Action of Plato’s Laws* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998], 73, 79). I owe these observations to Steven J. Lenzner. The chapter dedicated to *Discourses on Livy* in Strauss’s *Thoughts on Machiavelli* also consists of fifty-nine paragraphs. It should be also mentioned that fifty-nine is the seventeenth prime number.

him stories to stay alive. For Strauss, the lesson is that it is a dangerous thing to deceive “kings”; their jealousy must be taken into account (MS 1.2). But who are “kings,” and why is jealousy so important? Jealousy is one of the traits of the biblical God, “for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God” (Exod. 34:14). Exclusiveness is the core of monotheism, therefore jealousy is *the* characteristic of the god of monotheism. There is a famous hadith that makes the same point: “Sa’d ibn ’Ubada said, If I were to see a man with my wife, I would have struck him with the sword, and not with the flat part (side) of it. When Allah’s Messenger heard of that, he said: Are you surprised at Sa’d’s jealousy? By Allah, I am more jealous than he, and Allah is more jealous than I. Because of His jealousy Allah has prohibited abomination, both open and secret. And no person is more jealous than Allah.”<sup>16</sup>

Strauss makes this point rather forcefully: “Allah is a jealous God” (MS 1.4). However, he also observes that “it is not dangerous to deceive demons,” as one can see how the wife of a demon has betrayed him with 570 men without the demon knowing about it (AN1:6; MS 1.2). In other words, the jealousy of a fantastic being does not seem to be as dangerous as that of a real being. But what do such fantastic beings represent in the *Nights*? To answer this question one must turn to the story of the merchant and the demon (AN 1:10–19): in this story, a group of travelers tell stories to appease the anger of a demon. In the first story, an old man tells the demon that because his wife did not bear him any children, he took a concubine. The concubine bore him a son. The wife became jealous and through magic turned the son and the concubine into a calf and a cow, and she asked her husband to sacrifice them at Eid al-Adha—a Muslim festival that symbolizes the story of God asking Abraham to sacrifice his son as an act of submission to God’s command (Muslims sacrifice a sheep at this ceremony in remembrance of that story). In the man’s story, a young girl who possesses magic skills recognizes human beings in the form of animals. For revenge she turns the jealous wife into a gazelle and restores the son to his human shape. The story reminds us of and clearly points to the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham, except that here a jealous wife asks her husband to sacrifice his son, thus confirming Strauss’s suspicion that in the *Nights* divine jealousy is a theme (MS 1.4).

The second story is told by a merchant who is accompanied by two greyhounds. He explains to the demon that the dogs are his ungrateful brothers whom he has rescued from bankruptcy several times. The three brothers together went on a journey, and during the trip the narrator meets a beautiful young woman on the shore. He takes her with him onto the ship. His two

<sup>16</sup> Imam Muslim, *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, trans. Nasiruddin Al-Khattab (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2007), 195, Hadith 3764. For the relationship between jealousy and women in the Bible, cf. Genesis 30:1 with Numbers 5:29. Exclusivity, that is, not admitting partners, is the core of jealousy. Jealousy of God who doesn’t suffer sharing our love with others, is also a common theme in Islamic mysticism (Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011], 39).

brothers become jealous and throw the couple overboard. But the beautiful woman turns out to be an *ifrita*, a she-demon who declares her faith in Islam and the Prophet. The she-demon is angry with the merchant's treacherous brothers and offers to kill them. However, the merchant tries to appease the demon's anger and asks for a more lenient punishment. The she-demon agrees to turn them into greyhounds instead of killing them (AN 1:17). As Strauss observes, the "she-demon wished a greater revenge than the brother of the treacherous brothers" (MS 1.4). The merchant is more humane toward his fellow men than the Muslim she-demon is.

By underscoring the difference between the humane punishment of the merchant and the inhuman cruelty of his fantastic religious lover, Strauss reminds us of his discussion of the "inhuman cruelty" characteristic of biblical morality (MS 14.39). Strauss argued that one of the major concerns of early modern thinkers such as Machiavelli was that biblical morality legitimized, nay, made inhuman or pious cruelty a duty.<sup>17</sup> That what is meant by the cruelty of these supernatural beings is divine cruelty is corroborated by another story that a woman tells before the caliph: Once, she went on a journey and arrived at a city of unbelieving fire worshippers. All the inhabitants of the city, including children and animals, have been transformed by God into stone because, as she learns later from the only surviving witness, they did not heed a mysterious voice that summoned them to convert to the True Faith of Islam. The only inhabitant of the city who was saved was the son of the king of the city. The prince was clandestinely proselytized by a Muslim woman, a servant of the king who treacherously concealed her religion (AN 1:110–11; see also the story of the semipetrified prince below and MS 5.14 and 18.62).<sup>18</sup>

According to Strauss, jealousy and pious cruelty are not the only objects of the *Nights'* critique of religion. In this work, Strauss implies, religion in general is seen as a pernicious phenomenon. In the *Nights*, according to Strauss's reading, God is depicted as a major impediment to the good life. He observes this in the dialogue of the wise vizier Shimas with the young prince Wird Khan. The dialogue is at first sight a long-winded repetition of the ideas common to the scholars of the time. However, in the middle of the uninteresting back and forth some interesting points are hidden: one is that vizier Shimas mentions that this life and the next "are at variance with one another" and therefore one living in this world will inevitably "injure his soul in the next." Prince Wird Khan approves this point by describing this world as the kingdom of an unjust king in which, as Strauss explains, "men cannot be just" (MS 17.58). He explains the situation of those who live in the belief in an afterlife as someone who has "fallen between two kings" (AN 3:462–64). They live in an impossible situation created by the introduction of the belief in

<sup>17</sup> Strauss, *Thoughts on Machiavelli*, 187.

<sup>18</sup> The story seems inspired by the stories of many generations in the Qur'an who also refused to heed the messengers and were consequently destroyed (Qur'an 7:59–136).

an afterlife. This view of the divine is most clearly depicted in the story of the peahen and the duck (*AN*1:613–21): A peacock and a peahen, looking for a place to be safe from wild animals, go to live on an island. One day a duck arrives and tells them that he is afraid of the “son of Adam.” The duck has been warned of man’s viciousness in a dream. The duck thinks that the son of Adam is the source of all evil and goes around warning all animals about the danger of man. However, in the end the duck is the one who is hunted by man. When the duck perishes, the peahen (a high-flying bird) says that the duck perished because he did not glorify God and was punished for it. Strauss calls this “a female explanation of the fate of beings” (*MS* 10.30). The duck and the peahen say in fact the same thing. As Strauss explains, the story read literally would hardly make sense, as animals are killed not only by man but also by other animals. The story would make sense, then, only if it is interpreted in human terms: seen from the point of view of animals, *man is God*. The peahen unknowingly unveils the message of the duck’s symbolic warning: all evil comes from God—this is why we see the duck and other animals take refuge in the protection of a lion. But the peahen also obfuscates the message of the duck by hiding the real culprit, that is, God, in whose absence all animals would live comfortably and in perfect harmony and friendship.

If the peahen was not such a high-flying bird (*MS* 8.30), she could see the real culprit. This seems to be the reason why Strauss also refers to the remarkable story of an old woman who lives in the desert. The old woman feeds on bitter water and snakes. When a traveler asks her why she lives in this earthly hell, she asks the traveler about his own country. The visitor, who is on his way to Mecca on pilgrimage, describes his hometown: in his city, everything exists in abundance and there are “such blessings as are only to be found in the Paradise which Almighty God describes as being reserved for his pious servants” (*AN* 2:274). The woman tells him that the “earthly” paradise of the visitor is ruled by a tyrant who if “he wants can drive you from your house and uproot you,” thereby reminding us, among other things, of God’s expulsion of man from the original Paradise. Then she compares this tyrant with the old rulers who governed with grace. The author completes this story by narrating the story of al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf, the famous Muslim governor. Al-Hajjaj rebuked the demands for a more lenient rule by saying that “Almighty God has appointed me as your ruler.” Strauss compares this story with book 1, chapter 26 of Machiavelli’s *Discourses on Livy* (*MS* 14.39). Only in that chapter, which according to Strauss is specifically devoted to the phenomenon of tyranny, does Machiavelli directly quote from the Bible. Machiavelli uses a famous quotation from the New Testament (also a part of the Magnificat that is frequently sung in Church services) to describe the actions of King David—while the biblical passage is in fact about God. Machiavelli is therefore describing actions similar to David’s as being “very cruel” and the enemy to every way of life. Strauss thinks that this is Machiavelli’s

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esoteric way of saying that God, like Philip of Macedon (also mentioned in the chapter) is a cruel and inhuman tyrant.<sup>19</sup> In other words, according to Strauss, the author of the *Nights* and Machiavelli look at the biblical/Qur'anic image of God as a violent tyrant ruling over human beings. It is therefore not surprising that Strauss sees a relationship between Aristophanes's comedies and the *Nights*. In Aristophanes's *Peace*, Tyrgaeus succeeds in bringing peace to Hellas by disinterring the goddess of peace against the explicit command of Zeus: "The just and pleasant life of ease and quiet cannot be brought about except by dethroning the gods."<sup>20</sup>

### WISDOM, BELIEFS, AND POLITICAL THEOLOGY

What should one conclude from the critique of religion in the *Nights*? Is it the intention of the *Nights*, according to Strauss, to help rid men of religion? Does the author think that men should live their life without religion? Strauss often argues that before Pierre Bayle, no philosopher argued for the possibility of an atheistic society; even unbelieving thinkers thought that some kind of religion, even in the form of a salutary myth or more precisely a "political theology," is necessary for the functioning of a decent political order.<sup>21</sup> The same seems to be true of the *Nights*: its teaching is rather the manipulation of beliefs in the service of a decent human life.

This point is intimated in the story of the fisherman and the *'ifrit* (AN 1:19ff.). This story represents the new situation of the wise in the world of revealed religions (MS 3.7, toward the end of the passage). The story depicts a poor fisherman who goes to cast his net in the river to earn his day's living. From the beginning, we suspect that he is no ordinary fisherman: he is "musical" and while casting his net sings verses about his own wisdom and his undeserved poverty (AN 1:21). The fisherman catches a brass jar in his net—one with a lead seal imprinted with the inscription of Solomon. Unknowingly he opens the jar, and thereby frees a heretical demon who rebelled against Solomon and was imprisoned in the jar. During his captivity, the demon had sworn to kill the person who freed him from the jar, and he now plans to kill the poor fisherman. But the fisherman is very confident of his own intelligence. He apparently knows many things about religion and its powers. First, he conjures the demon by "the Greatest Name of God" to answer his questions.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Strauss, *Thoughts on Machiavelli*, 44–49; Harvey C. Mansfield, *Machiavelli's New Modes and Orders: A Study of the Discourses on Livy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 99.

<sup>20</sup> Leo Strauss, "The Origins of Political Science and the Problem of Socrates," ed. David Bolotin, Christopher Bruell, and Thomas L. Pangle, *Interpretation* 23, no. 2 (1996): 147.

<sup>21</sup> Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 198; Leo Strauss, "The Law of Reason in The Kuzari," in *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 115, 130. For the classical understanding of political theology see Augustine, *The City of God* 4.27.

<sup>22</sup> Traditionally the "Greatest Name of Allah" (*Ismul A'zam*) is said to be hidden from ordinary men. According to a hadith, the Greatest Name of Allah is "the one which if He is called by it, He will answer" (Ibn Majah, *Sunan*, vol. 5, trans. Nasiruddin Al-Khattab [Riyadh: Darus-salam, 2007], 114, Hadith 3857).

The demon is apparently shaken and tamed by the mentioning of the Greatest Name. The fisherman benefits from the perplexity of the demon: he tricks him into returning to the jar, and puts back the brass stopper imprinted with the inscription of Solomon. The fisherman seems to be a master of the art of controlling demons by using the revealed religion.

The demon begs for mercy, but the fisherman refrains from releasing him and begins to tell a story to explain to the demon why he cannot trust him. The story told by the fisherman is that of King Yunan and Duban the sage (AN 1:25ff.). King Yunan, whose name means “Greece,” suffers from leprosy; there comes a sage who has studied the books of the Greeks, the Persians, the Arabs, and the Syrians.<sup>23</sup> He is the master of all the sciences and manages to cure the king with his medical knowledge and is given the most splendid rewards. The new status of the sage arouses the jealousy of the vizier. The vizier tries to convince the king that the sage is a dangerous individual possessing unknown powers who might kill the king in the same way that he had cured him. The king is at first skeptical of the vizier’s claim, but the vizier tells a story to convince him. In the vizier’s story, a wicked vizier conspires with a female demon to kill the prince, but the demon foolishly advises the prince to pray to God if he wants to save himself. The prince prays and, being saved, goes back to the king explaining how the wicked vizier wanted to kill his son. The king kills the wicked vizier, and now King Yunan, listening to the story, is convinced that he should also kill the sage Duban. When the sage is brought for execution, he says that he is innocent and that killing him after the service he has done for the king would be like “the crocodile’s reward.” The king asks the sage to tell the story of the crocodile, but surprisingly the sage refuses to do so. After unsuccessfully pleading with the king to spare his life, the sage requests some delay for putting his affairs in order. When the sage returns, he offers a magic book to the king and tells him that the book will make his head speak after it has been cut off. All that the king should do, he says, is read some passages from the book. The sage is beheaded, but as the king tries to open the book, he sees that the pages are stuck together. The king licks his fingers to open the pages, but the pages had been poisoned by the sage, and the king dies: the king “Greece” and the sage end up killing each other.

As Strauss mentions, nothing is said about the fate of the wicked jealous vizier, but we can assume that he inherited the kingdom. Strauss thinks that “the wicked vizier is a prophet who denigrates his predecessors,” that is, the wicked viziers of the past. He has devised a plan to destroy the foolish king (“the prophet’s master”) and his rival, the sage, in a mutual destruction

<sup>23</sup> Compare the career of Duban with the common background of philosophers in the Islamic world. See, for instance, the surviving passages from Alfarabi’s autobiography in Majid Fakhry, *Al-Farabi, Founder of Islamic Neoplatonism: His Life, Works and Influence* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2002), 158ff.

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(MS 2.5). The episode reminds Strauss of the conflict of Athens and Socrates (MS 3.7–8, 4.12), and how two partners who could have been beneficial to each other followed the path of mutual destruction.<sup>24</sup> The sage of the story who could not tell a story to save his own life should learn from the musical fisherman, his religious knowledge and poetic powers, or from the prince who learned the power of prayer from a demon. The fisherman is a musical sage who has learned to use the divine art of prayer and religion to imprison the demon.

Strauss observes the same teaching in another story of the *Nights*, the story of the second dervish. This dervish, who is especially religious, was transformed into a monkey by a descendant of Satan. The dervish-monkey is presented to a king who has an intelligent daughter knowledgeable about the art of magic: a princess who knows 170 charms (10 × 17). She discovers the monkey to be a prince and pledges to release him. A fierce fight between the king's daughter and the demon who has put the dervish under spell takes place. In the end the dervish is restored to his human shape but the princess is mortally wounded and dies: the princess and the demon end up killing each other (AN 1:74, 86, 88). Strauss imagines the possibility of an alliance between the princess and the heretic demon against the religious dervish and thinks that such an alliance would lead to the ruin of "the wicked vizier" and his master "the ugly negro slave" (MS 3–4.12; for "the ugly negro slave" see below).

Such a fruitful alliance with a descendant of Satan would be devoid of any fanaticism. The same is true of the alliance between the fisherman and the heretic demon who rebelled against Solomon (MS 2.6, 3.9). The fisherman releases the demon, and the demon shows the fishermen a lake containing four kinds of fish in different colors. He tells the fisherman that he can become rich by selling the fish to a king. But when the fish are fried by the king's cook, the kitchen wall splits open, and a young woman appears and speaks to the fish, and the fish speak to her. To find the mystery of the fish, the king asks the fisherman to take him to the lake. Near the lake, the king discovers the palace of a young prince, the lower part of whose body had been turned into stone. The prince tells the king the story behind his condition: his wife has been betraying him by committing adultery with a "leprous ugly black slave" who lives in a domed shrine-like hut and sleeps on

<sup>24</sup> The spurious story that a king killed Socrates probably finds its origin in a misunderstanding about *archon basileus*, the Athenian magistracy dealing with the indictment against Socrates for impiety. It is mentioned in Plato, *Euthyphro* 2a3. The same spurious story is reflected in al-Kindi's anecdote about Socrates. Al-Kindi, *The Philosophical Works of Al-Kindi*, trans. Peter Pormann and Peter Adamson (Karachi: OUP Pakistan, 2012), 263. Another possibility is that the story has reminded Strauss of another Socrates, "the Armenian Socrates" in Xenophon's *Education of Cyrus*, who is killed by the jealous Armenian king. See Xenophon, *Education of Cyrus* 3.1.38ff. and Strauss's discussion of the story in Leo Strauss, "Course on Xenophon," Session 12, 1963, <https://leostrausscenter.uchicago.edu/xenophon-winter-1963/>.

cane stalks covered with rags and tatters. Although she is mistreated by the black slave, the princess humbles herself to him and praises him like a god. When the prince found out about his wife's adultery he tried to kill the black man, but only injured him. As revenge, the wife, who knows sorcery, has turned the lower part of the prince's body into stone and his subjects into the fish found in the lake. The adulterous princess lashes the prince every day and nurses the injured black slave. The king kills the black slave and forces the wife to lift the spell, thereby returning the citizens of the city to their human forms. The king also rewards the fisherman and, contrary to King Yunan and the sage, they end up helping each other.

For Strauss, the alliance of the fisherman and the demon leads to rescuing the population of a city and the salvation of the prince of that city, betrayed by a woman in love with a black slave. Strauss calls the fisherman "the enemy of the fish" (MS 3.6). It seems that he has a passage in Alfarabi's *Philosophy of Plato* in mind in which the fish symbolize stupidity and men devoid of human intelligence are compared to "a fish with a shape like that of a man."<sup>25</sup> The fisherman is a philosopher, the enemy of stupidity, but he does not remain the enemy of the fish. The new fisherman-philosopher *helps* the fish by transforming them into human beings. The sage is the savior of the many in the age of revelation. Strauss also mentions that the actions of the fisherman were not possible in the time of Socrates, namely, trusting in oaths and imprisoning demons with the Name of God: the revealed religions have given birth to new theologico-political problems as well as new *arms* (MS 3.7). Strauss compares the prince's adulterous wife, who had preferred to him a most ugly leprous black slave, with the wicked vizier in the story told by the fisherman (MS 4.12). The wife is a prophet who *believes* in the beauty of the ugly slave, and her attachment to him had transformed the people into fish, the dumbest of all animals.<sup>26</sup> The new religion marks the rise of the fortunes of the ignoble—the black slave who fornicated with the queen of King Shahriar was called Mas'ūd, "the fortunate."<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Alfarabi, "The Philosophy of Plato," in *Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, trans. Muhsin Mahdi (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 64 (Rosenthal & Walzer, 18). I owe the reference to Nasser Behnegar. The origin of the idea seems to be Aristotle, *History of Animals* 505a33–b1, in which fish are described as animals lacking most of the sense organs.

<sup>26</sup> This is also the message of the fantastic story of Ma'ruf the Cobbler: in that story it is shown how a poor cobbler who has run away to another city from his ugly and troublesome wife starts believing his own lies that he is in fact a rich merchant and that his caravan will arrive soon with his many fantastic possessions. Only a miraculous ring can make his vain hopes a reality (MS 18.63).

<sup>27</sup> Mahdi, *Alf Layla Wa-Layla*, 128. In a famous tradition, the Prophet states that "I was sent to the red and to the black." On the basis of this tradition, Averroes argues that Islam is intended for all mankind. Averroes, *Faith and Reason in Islam: Averroes' Exposition of Religious Arguments*, trans. Ibrahim Najjar (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2001), 103–4. It is said that the Prophet, upon his triumphal return to Mecca, asked Bilal, a black African slave, to call the people to prayer. Several prominent Meccans were unhappy about this, which occasioned the revelation of the Qur'an 49:13: "We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of

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The alliance between the sage and the irreligious demons and kings is possible if the sage learns about the power of religion and puts it in the service of the many.<sup>28</sup> The sage should also learn how to appease the king and the demon, and learn to charm them by his story telling, just like Shahrzad, who mastered not only medicine and philosophy but also the art of storytelling, and thereby managed to save her own life and that of her fellow women. The possibility of an alliance between kings and sages is depicted not only in the frame story of the whole work in which Shahrzad tames King Shahriar and teaches him many things but also at the end of the story of the just King Anushirvan (*AN* 2:327). At the end of this story, Shahrzad addresses the king for the first time and approves of the opinion of “the wise men and philosophers” who said that “religion depends on the king,” showing the way toward an alliance between kings and sages for the subduction of religion (MS 14.40).

However, one must remain prudent about the possibility of such an alliance. Strauss reminds us of the limitations of the power of wisdom in guiding human life. This is intimated in the story of Wird Khan. Before the birth of Wird Khan, his father King Jali’ad had a dream which predicted the injustice of his unborn son. The king tries to prevent the fulfilment of the prophecy by giving his son an exemplary philosophic education and asking the wise Shimas to be the vizier to his son. In the end, as Strauss explains, a twelve-year-old boy and the fear of impending invasion of enemies succeed in doing what philosophy and wise men could not do: they knock some reason into Wird Khan (*AN* 3:503ff.; MS 17.58). The tale depicts the impuissance of philosophy and wise counsel in controlling the tyrannical tendencies of King Wird Khan.

### LOVE AND LIBERATION

According to Strauss, one of the major aspects of premodern thought is the awareness of the limits of politics.<sup>29</sup> He also intimates the presence of such

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Allah is the most righteous of you.” Compare the Prophet’s Farewell Address: “Indeed, there is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab, nor of a non-Arab over an Arab, nor of a white over a black, nor a black over a white, except by *taqwa* [piety].” Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, *English Translation of Musnad Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal* (Riyadh: Dar-us-Salam Publications, 2012), Hadith 22391. Islam is also depicted as a lean and brown slave in the story of the Yemeni and his six slaves (*AN* 2:83–96): in that story, the order of the brown slave girl in the enumeration is changed, and she is particularly praised. The same is the case of the thin slave girl. Neither of them quotes the Qur’an in their speeches, thus separating themselves from the four others, as if they *are* the Qur’an and do not need to remind us of their Qur’anic superiority (MS 14.38).

<sup>28</sup> See “language of brutes” (MS 1.3), “mistake of the sage” (MS 2.5), “the king’s daughter who knows 170 [17 × 10] charms” (MS 14.12), “address of Scheherazad to her king to the effect that religion depends on government” (MS 15.41, italics in the original).

<sup>29</sup> Leo Strauss, “The Spirit of Sparta or the Taste of Xenophon,” *Social Research* 6, no. 4 (1939): 528, *The City and Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 127, “On Classical Political Philosophy,” *Social Research* 12, no. 1 (1945): 117, and *Natural Right and History*, 151.

an awareness in the *Nights*: “men cannot be just while living in this life” (MS 17.58). This means that the real remedy for the problem brought about by revealed religions should not be sought in the sphere of politics. But where should one discover the real remedy offered by the *Nights*? The answer seems to be in love and erotic longings. This should not sound surprising, as one can easily describe the *Nights* as a love story: love is the major theme of the whole work and is the guiding motive of many of its characters. However, Strauss gives a theologico-political twist to this observation and calls “the counter-religion of love” a recurring theme of the work (MS 13.39). Eroticism and love are somehow related to the *Nights*’ view of religion. To explain what is meant here, let us first begin with some preliminary observations about love in the *Nights*.

Love, eroticism, and the body are depicted as the principal targets of religious thought in the *Nights*. One can see this in a group of six stories (MS 14.39). The first one is about an extremely religious son of the caliph who has chosen to live ascetically. He works as a bricklayer for a trifling wage, although he has a precious ruby in his pocket (AN 2:213–17). The following stories prove to be a concealed criticism of the basis of the prince’s mode of life: in the second story, an eminent man has met a remarkable schoolteacher who masters the Qur’an, grammar, poetry, and philology. The narrator describes him as a man of intelligence, contrary to the common belief that schoolteachers are stupid. After a while the narrator finds the teacher in mourning. He asks him about the cause of his sadness and the teacher responds that his beloved had just died. The narrator questions him about her identity but the teacher tells him that he had never seen her: he had fallen in love only after hearing someone recite a poem about her, and recently he had heard another verse, indicating that the woman of the first poem had died. The narrator calls the teacher a fool, and Strauss describes the story as “falling in love on hearsay” (AN 2:217–19; MS 14.39). The story reminds us of the princess who believed in the beauty of an ugly slave. In the third story, we meet yet another schoolmaster, who has surprised his guest with his knowledge of jurisprudence, grammar, and philology. At night, the guest hears a loud cry in the house and finds the teacher covered in blood and about to die. Asked what has happened, the teacher answers that his reflection about the works of Almighty God has led him to believe that all the members of the body created by God serve a purpose except the sexual organs. He has therefore cut the useless source of his erotic longings with a razor. The narrator again calls all schoolmasters foolish and Strauss describes the message as “the absurdity of asceticism” (AN 2:219; MS 14.39). The next story describes a schoolmaster who loiters in a mosque (AN 2:219–20). He cannot read or write but pretends that he does and tricks parents into sending their children to him. Although he is illiterate, he pretends that he can read the letter of a husband to his wife and tells her that her husband is dead. The story is followed by the story of a king who desires his subject’s woman.

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When the husband suspects that the king has his eyes on his wife, he refuses to sleep with her until the king assures him that he has lost interest.<sup>30</sup> The next story is the fantastic story of the bird Rukh and all the incredible things told about it, followed by several stories of unhappy lovers. One of the stories is about a man who sees a beautiful woman and falls in love but has no house to which he can invite her. He therefore goes to the house of his friend, called Muslim. The friend gives him money to buy some food, but when he returns to the house, he finds that Muslim has locked the door and is making love to the woman. When he knocks, Muslim simply grabs the food and closes the door, saying that God at the Day of Judgment will reward and repay him for the favor that he has done for him (AN 2:225–27).

In the *Nights*, religion is the enemy of eros and erotic longings. But man is an erotic being and love is a part of his nature. Religion must therefore mutilate man's nature. The metaphorical mutilation of human nature by religion is depicted literally in the story of the hunchback: in that story, a Muslim, a Jew, and a Christian tell stories of mutilated Muslim men. Strauss remarks that the most mutilated Muslim is the one in the story told by the Muslim (MS 6.17; AN 1:189–97): the Muslim narrator has attended a gathering for recitation of the Qur'an where the Muslim jurists were also present. After the recitation, the table is set for a feast, and on the menu, there is an almond dish. A young man among the guests whose thumbs and big toes have been cut off refrains from eating the food unless he washes his hands one hundred and twenty times, reminding us of the ritual ablutions. The guests ask for the story behind his aversion to the dish. He says that he was once a poor merchant when a beautiful slave girl of the caliph visited his shop. He fell in love and married her, but before consummating the marriage, he ate the same almond dish and forgot to wash his hands. In the bedroom and about to enjoy the union, the slave girl smelled the scent of the dish and was repulsed by the merchant's unwashed hands. Outraged by the merchant's lack of manners, she cruelly cut off the merchant's thumbs and toes as a punishment for not washing his hands after eating it. The young man later took an oath to wash his hands before eating the almond dish again. Remarkably, despite the terrible punishment, the slave girl has become the merchant's wife and they continue to live together.

Strauss finds the origin of religion's anti-erotic vision partly in the bodily dimension of erotic desires. God is noncorporeal and lacks eros. "God is jealous either because He is not, or does not believe Himself to be, infinitely attractive, and the reason for that is his hiddenness: He Himself is the ground of His jealousy" (MS 5.15). However, the God of the *Nights* is not and cannot be responsible for the effects of His jealousy. In the story of the

<sup>30</sup> Compare the story of Abu 'Isa and Qurrat Al-'Ain (AN 2:239), in which Isa hides his love for the slave girl Qurrat, who is offered to the caliph.

crow and the cat we see him depicted as a mere spectator: sitting under a tree and living in peace, a cat and a crow see a leopard coming toward them. The crow flies to safety, but the cat, unable to save himself, asks for the crow's help. The crow sees a herdsman and his dogs nearby and attracts the dogs toward the tree. The leopard runs away and is followed by the dogs. The herdsman only observes the whole affair from afar. For Strauss, the story points to the absence of divine providence by depicting "man" as a silent observer who does not do anything, but only observes (*AN* 1:640–41; *MS* 11.30). The effects of God's jealousy on human life therefore come about through human beings, who believe in divine punishment (*MS* 5.15, 15.50).<sup>31</sup>

The effects of belief in divine punishment are seen most forcefully in the story of a young man who is robbed of the pleasure of love by a loquacious barber. The story is narrated by a tailor who has been to a wedding, where he meets a limping young man. As soon as the young man sees a certain barber also attending the feast, he refuses to sit down, telling the guests that he had sworn never to stay in the same town as this barber. Asked about his story, the young man tells the guests that he was once rich and fell in love with a beautiful young woman and arranged to meet her at her home. But before going to the appointment, he decided to shave his beard and called the barber to his house. The barber turns out to be a remarkable individual and claims to be a modest man of few words who never meddles with the affairs of others. He guesses that the young man is going to meet his lover and offers his services to smooth things over. Exasperated by the barber's meddling, the young man gets rid of him and sneaks away to the house of the beautiful woman, but, unbeknownst to him, the barber follows him. While in the woman's room, to the young man's dismay, her father unexpectedly returns home and starts punishing one of the maids for some minor infraction. The barber, who is waiting outside, hears the wailings of the maid and thinks that the father has caught the young man. He begins shouting in the street that his master is being killed in this house, thereby causing an uproar and attracting a huge crowd of people outside. The father, hearing the barber's accusations, asks him to search the house to see for himself that he hasn't murdered anyone. Meanwhile, the young man has concealed himself in a trunk. The barber finds the trunk and leaves the house running with the trunk on his back. The young man manages to throw himself out of the trunk, but breaks his leg, and that is why he is limping—and why he cannot bear to see the barber (*AN* 1:205–17).

<sup>31</sup> According to Strauss, the same theme is discussed from a similar point of view in Aristophanes's *Wasps*. Philocleon is a zealous Athenian addicted to law courts and condemning his fellow men. He is tricked by his son into acquitting a defendant, but Philocleon is afraid of having committed a sin against the gods. For Strauss, Philocleon's addiction to law courts and his savagery against his fellow men is the result of his belief in the punitiveness of the gods. Philocleon is also an unerotic man and does not desire wine and other refined pleasures. Strauss, "Origins of Political Science and the Problem of Socrates," 147.

Strauss pays particularly close attention to the personage of the barber: he is a busybody who is of a very low status; Strauss mentions his “camel-driver” friends to show his status (MS 6.17). But at the same time, this busybody barber boasts of his expertise in all aspects of occult and religious sciences: he knows the Qur’an and the reports of the Prophet, and resembles an accomplished religious scholar, if not more. He is described as “the ruler of kings” and is proved to be a “demagogue” who successfully mobilizes common people in a revolt.<sup>32</sup> The barber tells the story of his six brothers and against all evidence to the contrary he boasts of his own taciturnity and politeness; he is wont to denigrate his brothers, and calls them talkative and impolite. Strauss compares the barber to the wicked vizier (the prophet) who denigrated his predecessors, and surmises that the barber’s brothers were also barbers. This is why the barber is capable of performing “miracles” and brings the dead hunchback to life. In the barber’s story of his six brothers, Strauss underscores the stories of the central brothers (the third and the fourth).<sup>33</sup> The second brother is invited to an extremely beautiful house to enjoy making love to a beautiful woman. He enters the house but is asked to endure anything at all if he wants to have his desire. He is slapped, his beard is shaved, his mustache is plucked, and his eyebrows are dyed. He is asked to dance around the house while the slave girls and eunuchs throw objects at him. Constantly encouraged to endure everything for the union, he obeys every command. In the end, he is thrown in the middle of a crowded market stark naked and drunk—without enjoying love. The third brother is a blind beggar. He goes into a house to beg for money but goes away empty-handed. He is followed by the owner of the house. The beggar, not being able to see the owner of the house, joins other blind beggars who eat their food together and share their daily proceeds. They suspect that a stranger is among them and get into a fight with the owner of the house who wanted to steal their money. The fight attracts a crowd and they are all brought to the governor. Before the governor, the owner of the house pretends to be blind and accuses the others to be impostors who pretend to be blind. The governor gives some of the beggars’ money to the owner of the house and keeps the rest for himself while punishing the beggars. Strauss observes that two of the brothers succeed in entering a house but the second brother is robbed of the pleasure of *love* while the third who is there to earn *money* is robbed of the money he had. The three brothers clearly belong together (MS 6.17).

<sup>32</sup> Cf. “Socrates does get into trouble through a certain inbetween type of man [i.e. Strep-siades], who is *not distinguished by honesty*. Here we remind ourselves of the fact that the old jurymen of the *Wasps* . . . is also socially an inbetween type. Needless to say that the *demagogues* too belong to the inbetween type” (Strauss, “Origins of Political Science and the Problem of Socrates,” 152–53, italics added).

<sup>33</sup> The importance of the central items in an enumeration and the central passages, paragraphs, or chapters is one of the common principles of Strauss’s hermeneutics. For the justification of this principle, see Cicero, *Orator* 50 and *De Oratore* 2.313ff.; Strauss, “Farabi’s Plato,” 371 n. 35; Leo Strauss, *Xenophon’s Socrates* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1972), 58.

While eros is the target of religious thought, it is also the way toward liberation. This is owing to the fact that for Strauss there is a link between erotic longings and philosophy: eros is a rebellious, even *the* most rebellious, desire. It does not obey the law and does not bend to the will of nomos. It is the unruliest human desire and hence *the* target of religious thought. One can easily see this in Genesis, where the first disobedience leads to consciousness about one's sexuality. Eros opens the way for philosophy, as the essence of philosophy is also rebellion. In fact, for Strauss, "*eros*, in its highest form is philosophy." Eros leads man away from and beyond the city and nomos and encourages men to disregard nomos. This is why there is a connection between women, wisdom, and nomos in the *Nights*. As Strauss explains, "refutation of the nomos regarding inferiority of women" is one of the major themes of the whole work (MS 1.1). Women, representing eros as well as wisdom, are *the* enemy of nomos. Elsewhere Strauss goes so far as to call "the philosophic *eros*" the *phusis* of the philosopher.<sup>34</sup> Eros and wine are also old allies. In the same way that eros rebels against the law, wine loosens the tongue and mind's fetters that bound it to the ancestral and the sacred.<sup>35</sup> This is why according to Strauss, Aristophanes's myth in *Symposium* "teaches that by virtue of *eros* man . . . will approach a condition in which they become a serious danger to the gods."<sup>36</sup>

In the *Nights* too, eros is depicted as incompatible with the sense of shame and fear of God. In a story, Nur al-Din, a young man who knows that wine drinking is "a great sin, forbidden in His Book by Almighty God" (AN 3:351) learns from his companions to ignore the prohibition against wine drinking. He finds it bitter at first but is told by a gracious old man (compare with the story of the Devil below) to try it with sugar. He is next told about its uses: "it emboldens the coward and encourages copulation." When the young man returns home, he in his drunkenness strikes his father and blinds him; he leaves his parents and falls in love with a Frankish woman who can successfully pretend to be Christian to her Christian parents and abuse Islam. But at the same time, this woman kills her Christian brothers and avoids being brought back to her parents by professing Islam, and she threatens the caliph with divine punishment were she, as a Muslim woman, to be separated from her lover and returned to infidels (AN 3:423–24). The wine drinking of the young Nur and later the beating of his father recall Aristophanes's *The*

<sup>34</sup> Strauss, "Farabi's Plato," 361.

<sup>35</sup> The theme of wine drinking and its opposition to the sense of shame, respect for the old laws, and established order is mentioned by Strauss in his commentary on Plato's *Laws*. In the *Laws*, the search for the best laws, which are to replace the old divine laws of Crete and Sparta, gets underway when the old men of the dialogue are freed from their restraints by talking about wine drinking, whereupon they engage in a "vicarious enjoyment of wine through a conversation about wine" (Strauss, *The Argument and the Action of Plato's Laws*, 19–21; Leo Strauss, *What Is Political Philosophy?* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959], 31).

<sup>36</sup> Strauss, "Origins of Political Science and the Problem of Socrates," 150.

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*Clouds*, where Pheidippides beats his father after going through philosophical training at Socrates's Thinkery. The wine drinking has prepared Nur to ignore the patriarchal order and has put him on the path of falling in love with a Christian woman. The opposition between eros and religion can also be seen in the story of the wife of a Frankish knight who is in love with a Muslim merchant. The merchant abstains from intercourse with the Christian woman because of her religion, but she forsakes her husband and avoids being sent back to her Christian husband by professing her faith to Islam: an unbeliever converts to Islam to satisfy her desire and Islam is depicted as the handmaiden of love. One can imagine the same thing happening with Christianity in a different context (MS 17.55).

The most striking example of the stories that depict the transgression of the divine law in the *Nights* is that of Judar the fisherman (AN 2:610–48). The fisherman is instructed by a magician to go through seven tests in order to unravel all the mysteries (AN 2:625). In the first six tests, he must confront several fantastic beings who try to kill him. Each time, Judar is directed by the magician to offer himself willingly and without fear, so as to go to the next level. The magician explains to the fisherman that these fearsome beings are only images and that he should not fear them. The sixth test is to confront a black slave and to open a door by saying "Isa [Jesus], tell Musa [Moses] to open the door." The most interesting test is the seventh and last: to succeed in this test, Judar must force the phantom of his mother to strip off her clothes and allow him to look at her nakedness. Judar is instructed by the magician to ignore his mother's pleas, for if he does not he will die (AN 2:624). At first Judar is hesitant as his mother tells him: "Have you a heart of stone, my son, that you would shame me by uncovering my private parts? This is unlawful." But Judar learns to ignore her pleas and succeeds in passing the test. In his comment on this story (MS 15.47) Strauss is probably thinking about a similar story in Herodotus's *Histories*. He explains the importance of this episode many years before in a letter to Jacob Klein.<sup>37</sup> In Herodotus, Candaules persuades Gyges to see his wife's nakedness (1.8.1–2). For Strauss, this represents questioning the basis of the patriarchal law. Shame and fear are the instruments by which the ancestral protects itself, and the one who questions the ancestral must first vanquish his fear and sense of shame at doing so. As Seth Benardete, following Strauss's lead, explains, "to see [human beings] naked is to see them as they are, stripped of the concealment of clothes. And laws are like clothes: they too conceal from us the way things are. All laws say that certain things cannot be seen; before certain things one must have shame."<sup>38</sup> The story of Judar is that of a man who learns to do away with his cowardice and sense of shame and learns to look

<sup>37</sup> Leo Strauss, letter to Jacob Klein, October 15, 1938, and *Gesammelte Schriften*, Band 3, ed. Heinrich Meier and Wiebke Meier (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2001), 556.

<sup>38</sup> Seth Benardete, *Herodotean Inquiries* (The Hague: St. Augustine's Press, 1969), 12.

at things as they are. However, there is one major difference between the story of Judar and that of Gyges: while Gyges sees the nakedness of a beautiful woman, Judar sees the ugliness of his mother's old and frail body. The sacred is thus seen as an ugly old woman, or as Strauss puts it, as "treacherous hags or old witches" (MS 5.14). The tradition seduces young men and transforms them into religious zealots, like the old treacherous woman in the story of the lady of the house who has converted the son of a king.

The story of Judar shows transgression in its brutality. However, transgression has its own charms and beauties. In fact, what leads to transgression is often attraction to beauty. We encounter the beauty of transgression in a story in which the Devil himself is depicted as an attractive, handsome old man possessing eloquence and remarkable grace; he is fond of wine, can sing Arabic poems of supreme beauty and is apparently himself in love (AN 2:777–78)! It seems that he also procures women for men (AN 2:796; MS 15.49). But the most remarkable of the stories that depict the triumph of love over religion and the charms of transgression is the story of Nur al-Din 'Ali and Anis al-Jalis (AN 1:244–78). In that story we are introduced to a sultan in Basra "who loved the poor, the beggars and all his subjects, distributing his wealth to those who believed in Muhammad" (AN 1:244). Nur, a young man, seduces and sleeps with a slave girl intended for that sultan. Together they travel to Baghdad and have a drinking party in the garden of the caliph, and even make the pious old gardener of the caliph join them in transgression (MS 7.20). The gardener, who is aptly called Shaikh Ibrahim, is a strict follower of the injunction of the Prophet about wine and has not consumed wine for thirteen years, but he is persuaded by the fine casuistry of Nur to drink with them (AN 1:262–63). The caliph sees the burning lights of the banquet in his garden *from afar* and at first believes that the city has been taken from him—and in a sense it has. The vizier tries to calm the caliph's anger with an excuse: he tells the caliph that Ibrahim has asked the caliph's permission to have a party in the garden to celebrate his son's circumcision. The vizier has forgotten to tell the caliph about it. The caliph thinks that he must join the party as he believes that the pious gardener is entertaining the poor and the dervishes at the gathering. But before joining the gathering, the caliph wants to observe it anonymously, so he climbs a high tree and observes the party from *above a tree*. When the caliph sees the pious gardener, cup in hand, drinking and singing with a young and beautiful couple, he becomes furious over such transgressions being committed in his garden. But listening to the music and observing the graceful young man and woman, the caliph joins the party and excuses the participants (cf. AN 3:351). The story perfectly describes Strauss's point about "the impotence of kings vis-à-vis love" as the one of the recurring themes of the work (MS 15.50).

In his remarkable essays on the *Nights*, Muhsin Mahdi argued that a common theme cannot be found in the whole of the stories included in the large editions of the *Nights* and thought one must look for a common theme only

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in portions of the stories, namely the “Syrian branch” version.<sup>39</sup> It seems that Strauss had been trying to find such a common theme in all the stories included in the Calcutta II edition and that his notes are the result of this effort. This common theme is the theologico-political solution of the Medieval enlightenment. Theoretical radicalism and practical moderation are characteristic of this solution. For Strauss, the author’s radical and critical thought is clearly joined with practical moderation: although he leads the reader step by step toward his esoteric radical views, he carefully bows to the common opinions of his time at every turn. Liberation from prejudices and false opinions is reserved for those few who see through the orthodox disguise; they are taught to live like the author, a stranger in his homeland, “praising, speaking, seeing, doing things against [his] intent so as to please the prince.”<sup>40</sup> It seems that for Strauss, the author of the *Nights* is no revolutionary; his political teaching consists of learning to live with the reigning opinions and trying to find some breathing space for the life of the mind. He does not propose the root and branch elimination of the reigning beliefs. His teaching consists only of a tactful handling of the common opinions in the interest of a decent human life. He is a private man who lives “as a member of an imperfect society which he tries to humanize within the limits of the possible.”<sup>41</sup>

### APPENDIX A

#### *A Previously Unpublished Typescript by Leo Strauss on the “Arabian Nights”*

The following is the edited version (edited by Rasoul Namazi) of a typescript of eighteen pages titled “1001 Nights” found in Leo Strauss Papers.<sup>42</sup> The typescript is corrected by pencil in Strauss’s handwriting. There is another version of the same typescript that is a photocopy whose original could not be found.<sup>43</sup> The corrections of the second version are fewer and are by a different hand. In the typescript, six volumes are referred to, the last tale being that of Ma’ruf the Cobbler; as there are several examples of German words and Germanicisms in the text, one can surmise that Strauss only consulted the German translation of the *Arabian Nights*. The German version is the one by Enno Littmann (1875–1958), who based his translation on the Calcutta II edition.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Mahdi, *Alf Layla Wa-Layla*, 141. In his notes, Strauss mentions about 144 stories included in Calcutta II edition. Of these, only thirty-four are included in Mahdi’s edition.

<sup>40</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield and Nathan Tarcov (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 3.2; Strauss, *Thoughts on Machiavelli*, 168.

<sup>41</sup> Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, 17.

<sup>42</sup> Leo Strauss Papers, box 20, folder 2, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

<sup>43</sup> Leo Strauss Papers, box 23, folder 13, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

<sup>44</sup> *Die Erzählungen aus den Tausendundein Nächten*, trans. Enno Littmann, 6 vols. (Leipzig: Insel-Verlag, 1921–28).

*Editorial remarks:* some of the corrections are only present in the first version of the typescript and are absent in the second one: these discrepancies are indicated in the footnotes by MS 1 and MS 2; numbers in curly brackets, inserted by the editor, refer to the page numbers of the typescript; numbers in square brackets, also inserted by the editor, refer to the paragraph numbers of the typescript; numbers in parentheses are in the original typescript and refer to the page and volume numbers of Littmann's translation; underlined words are replaced by italics; crossed out words and handwritten insertions are mentioned in the footnotes; an arrow symbol in the typescript, used for showing the logical consequence of ideas, is everywhere inserted by hand; and Strauss's corrections of typographical errors have not been noted. The errors are the responsibility of the editor. I thank Professor Nathan Tarcov, Leo Strauss's literary executor, for giving us permission to publish the typescript, and who retains all rights for further publication.

*1001 Nights*

{1} [1]  $1001 = 7 \times 11 \times 13$ . If one adds the two stories preceding the stories told by Shahrazad,  $1003 =^{45} 17 \times 59$ . The overall suggestion: refutation of the nomos regarding inferiority of women; and: indictment of tyranny; and: how *jealousy* of a king<sup>46</sup> is appeased.

[2] *The Introductory story*: it is dangerous to deceive kings; it is not dangerous to deceive demons. The kings deceive the demon out of fear of the demon: they are compelled to deceive him. Both the demon and the kings are *jealous*. The number of deceptions practiced by the demon's wife:  $570 (= 19 \times 30)$  and  $572 (= 13 \times 11 \times 4)$ .<sup>47</sup>

[3] *The donkey and the seer*: the man with the secret knowledge which he cannot reveal except at the danger of death—he is tempted to reveal it and hence to die but is saved by another piece of secret knowledge: of a rooster and 50 hens—of 51: the secret knowledge is knowledge of the language of *brutes*. The first piece of secret knowledge: the donkey is happy by doing nothing; his happiness is due to his silence on the *reason*<sup>48</sup> of his happiness; he is made miserable by the revelation of his secret. The master of the animals is said to be a peasant—in fact he is a merchant. (27).

[4] *The merchant*<sup>49</sup> *and the demon*: the merchant is saved from the demon who is set to kill him, through story tellers; certainly 2 of the 3 story tellers are also merchants. (Merchants are travelers.) The first story reminds of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac: the *jealous* wife wishes that the father slaughter his own son; the son who is saved goes to India. Cf. 74: Allah is a jealous God. In both the first and second story the [human]<sup>50</sup> revenge is much milder than the crime; but the she-demon wished a greater revenge than the brother of the treacherous brothers (the fellow-men); in the third story only the proper punishment of the adulterous wife but not of the slave. The three stories describe the transformation of men into brutes (cf. the language of brutes {2} in the preceding story); both stories of demons and of the transformations of men into brutes gradually disappear.

<sup>45</sup> "=" is inserted by hand.

<sup>46</sup> "of a king" is inserted by hand.

<sup>47</sup> Two "=" are inserted by hand.

<sup>48</sup> Underline not in MS 2.

<sup>49</sup> "merchant" has a double underline, hence it is put in bold characters.

<sup>50</sup> Square brackets are in the typescript and are inserted by hand.

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[5] *The fisherman and the demon*: these stories are told not as the preceding ones<sup>51</sup> in order to appease the demon but after the demon has been brought under control. The fisherman tells the demon the story of the vizier of King Junan to justify his action against the demon; fisher: demon = the sage<sup>52</sup> (who heals the king by his worldly wisdom): the king or the vizier—i.e. the story told parallels the story in which the story teller acts—the fisherman will not make the mistake of the sage. The story is partly told in the form of inserted stories, of the story told by the king and story told by the vizier. In the light of the events the vizier's suggestion amounts to this—vizier in the story : king in the story =<sup>53</sup> king and sage : vizier. The story telling wicked vizier brings it about that the king and the sage kill one another: *nothing happens to the story telling wicked vizier*. /→ the vizier becomes the king/. In the vizier's story<sup>54</sup> the wicked vizier tries to destroy the prince but since the vizier's ally betrays the vizier by asking the prince to pray to God, the vizier is destroyed—just as the real vizier wants to destroy the sage (of whom he is jealous). /the real vizier succeeds because he has no ally and the sage does not pray—the king is a fool/. But why does the wicked vizier succeed through telling a story of a wicked vizier and through extolling the virtue of prayer? /the wicked vizier is a prophet who denigrates his predecessors and the foolish king is the prophet's master. First—fisher : demon = sage : king or vizier<sup>55</sup> (cf. 96). Then—fisher : demon = king : sage.

[6] The demon is a *heretic* (53 top)—through the fisherman who takes the risk of trusting the demon, the demon brings about the salvation of a prince and of a state which had been ruined by the prince's *adulterous wife who had preferred to him a most ugly negro slave, a leper*—/ that adulterous wife =<sup>56</sup> the wicked vizier in the story told by the fisherman—/the wife believing in the {3} beauty of the ugly slave had transformed the people into fishes, the dumbest of all animals, and the fisherman is the enemy of the fishes.

[7] Whereas the sage refuses to tell a life-saving story because he is not free (69<sup>57</sup> bottom), the demon connects the same refusal based on the same ground with a request to be set free so that he can tell the story (73) and the fisherman sets him free without requiring the demon to tell his story (neither the demon nor the sage tell their stories),<sup>58</sup> to the benefit of the fisherman, the demon and the ruined state. The sage does not *wish to live* /=<sup>59</sup> Socrates—the name of the king is Junan =<sup>60</sup> Greek—cf. 75/ /in Socrates' time the action of the fisherman was not yet possible or necessary/.

[8] The inserted story: the victory of the wicked vizier and the destruction of the king and the sage (Socrates).

[9] The frame story: through the heretical demon, destruction of the adulterous wife who loved the ugly and leprous negro slave and [. . .] of that slave.

<sup>51</sup> "as the preceding ones" is inserted by hand.

<sup>52</sup> "=" is inserted by hand.

<sup>53</sup> "=" is inserted by hand.

<sup>54</sup> Underline not in MS 2.

<sup>55</sup> "=" is inserted by hand.

<sup>56</sup> "=" is inserted by hand.

<sup>57</sup> "9" is inserted by hand.

<sup>58</sup> Comma not in MS 2.

<sup>59</sup> "=" is inserted by hand.

<sup>60</sup> "=" is inserted by hand.

[10] *The porter and the three ladies*—the frame: wine drinking—paradise on earth<sup>61</sup> (105)—beauty and joy—graceful obscenity. Questions are forbidden (109) but the prohibition is transgressed: the three monks (former kings) tell their stories in order to escape capital punishment incurred because they asked the forbidden questions.

[11] Story of the first monk: a terrible divine punishment for incest and: an unpunished, successful act of treachery by a wicked vizier.

[12] Story of the second monk: a justly jealous demon transforms a sage who does not know philosophy and physics, into a monkey; right is on the side of the demon (142f., 155), the monk lies about him (160). In the two preceding stories (merchant-demon and fisherman-demon) the demons were not infinitely revengeful but could be appeased by storytelling or proof of superior cleverness. And: while the lover of the ugly negro slave transforms men into fishes, the demon here transforms the sage only into the external shape<sup>62</sup> of a monkey. The inserted story told originally under duress and now again as part of the whole story {4} under duress → demon : adulterer = envied good man : envious bad man (= monk), i.e. the demon who is a descendant from the devil himself and who denies Islam (157 bottom) is perfectly pious, befriended by good spirits. But in the light of the action: the jealous demon is envious and hence miserable /→ the sage would not hate the jealous God but pity him and forgive him/. The sage regains his human form by an act of treachery on the part of the king's daughter who knows 170 charms (154); that princess kills the demon and the demon kills her posthumously: just as the king Junan kills *the* sage and the sage kills the king posthumously → the demon = Socrates = envied good man—the fight between demon and princess to the benefit of the religious sage<sup>63</sup> ≠<sup>64</sup> the fight between king and Socrates to the benefit of the wicked vizier. /alliance between the perfectly just demon and the philosopher to the ruin of the wicked vizier and his master, the ugly negro slave, remains unspoken/.

[13] The story of the third monk: his salvation depends on his not mentioning the name of Allah—he mentions it and is punished for it (165f.)—apart from pronouncing the forbidden name, he raises forbidden questions and opens a forbidden door (176, 181)—the 10 half blind youths who had opened the forbidden door and were like him half blinded for that reject him /but they had not pronounced the forbidden *name*—they never mention it/. The story confirms the truth of astrology (169ff.) → he is not punished for a killing decreed by the stars—/this is a different *world* than the world described in the stories of the first and second monk—cf. 162 top/.

[14] The story of the oldest sister: the 17th night—Allah's terrible revenge ≠<sup>65</sup> the demon's comparatively mild revenge ≠ the oldest sister has no desire for revenge at all. (Cf. the story of the second man in merchant-demon (41–45): there 2 brothers changed into dogs, here 2 sisters changed into she-dogs). A whole {5} city (including children and animals) transformed into stone by Allah's wrath (cf. the prince half-transformed into stone by his adulterous wife, the lover of the ugly leprous negro slave) for its unbelief—(they were<sup>66</sup> *fire worshippers*)—the son of the king of the

<sup>61</sup> "earth" is crossed out in one of the typescripts, but the strikethrough is not in MS 2.

<sup>62</sup> "shape" is inserted by hand.

<sup>63</sup> "≠ the fight between king and Socrates to the benefit of the religious sage" is crossed out.

<sup>64</sup> "≠" is inserted by hand.

<sup>65</sup> "≠" is inserted by hand.

<sup>66</sup> "are" is crossed out and "were" is inserted by hand.

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pagans is the only one to escape thanks to the *treachery* of an old woman who was a Muslim in secret (194) /cf. the story of the treacherous vizier in fisherman-demon and the treacherous princess and the treacherous vizier in the present cluster of stories as well as the treacherous hags or old witches later on/.

[15] The story of the she-janitor: a story of terrible revenge brought on by a slanderess out of unfounded jealousy (cf. Allah's jealousy: 208); the human beings here do not kill nor infinitely punish /God is jealous either because He is not, or does not believe himself to be, infinitely attractive, and the reason for that is his hiddenness: He Himself is the ground of His jealousy. /The terrible effects of God's jealousy come about through humans who are motivated by human jealousy and may or may not believe in God's jealousy/.

[16] *The three apples*: murder out of unfounded jealousy. In order to save the life of his half-guilty negro slave from the wrath of his ruler, a vizier tells a story which ends happily. A merciful vizier tells a story of a merciful vizier who punishes his nephew senselessly and threatens him (without meaning it) with still greater punishment for something which is in no way a sin (281 bottom–282 top) in order to find out something (285) which could have been found out without that inhuman threat. In the inserted story 2 orthodox demons avert the catastrophe threatened by an angry ruler; through Allah's permission 1 of these 2 demons is destroyed (255 bottom–256 top) but this has no effect on the following events. /for the benefit of a negro slave who is indirectly responsible for a murder out of unfounded jealousy, a story is told of a merciful vizier and of orthodox demons and of Allah's permission (≠<sup>67</sup> infliction) of death of an orthodox demon—an orthodox version of the earlier story.<sup>68</sup>

{6} [17] *The hunchback*. A tailor's wife kills a hunchbacked court jester in China ruled by a Muslim; 3 other men are brought to *believe* to have killed him: a Christian, a Muslim and a Jew; all three tell stories told to them by Muslims who were mutilated; the most mutilated occurs in the Muslim's story. Only the Christian has acted without any guile (403)—he tells a story of a perfect and happy love; the Muslim: cruel punishment for nothing by his beloved, a slave girl, who thereafter becomes his wife; the Jew: terrible revenge out of jealousy, the revenge followed by life-long repentance—but thereafter a wholly unexpected compensation for the woman murdered out of jealousy (he gets the murdered wife's sister). The Muslim tailor is the socially lowest of the 4: a youth does not get the girl thanks to the loquacity and busybodiness of a barber who acted as a demagogue (360) and hence as a ruler of kings (352) although he belongs to a very low class, like *camel-drivers* (355)—contrary to obvious fact he claims to be the silent one, a man of few words and unobtrusive, in contradistinction to his 6 brothers who are all mutilated, talk much and are impolite (363–66) → the barber is not mutilated (has no bodily defect). The stories of the 6 brothers: 1 | 2,3 | 4–6.<sup>69</sup> The Caliph laughs only at the end of 1, 3, and 6: central stories 2–3 → [the *two* brothers of the barber] [the barber denigrates his brothers just as the wicked vizier denigrated a wicked vizier] [no profession is mentioned in the case of the 2 brothers: they might have been barbers too].<sup>70</sup> Brothers 2–3 succeed in entering a house;

<sup>67</sup> “≠” is inserted by hand.

<sup>68</sup> “/.” is not in MS 2.

<sup>69</sup> Two vertical lines are inserted by hand.

<sup>70</sup> Four previous square brackets are in the typescript and are inserted by hand.

the 2nd brother is called to a house where he is robbed of pleasures of *love*; the 3rd brother goes by himself into a house where he loses the little bit of money he had instead of getting *money*. At the end, the barber *resurrects the dead* court jester (405).

[18] *Nur ed Din*. The open transgression of the *law* in the presence of the Caliph [is] compatible with perfect virtue and happiness.

[19] *Ghānim*: but it is indispensable that one should have the utmost respect for the honor of the *powerful Caliph*.

{7} [20] *Nur*—the son of a perfectly virtuous vizier, hurts the honor of his sultan (427, 446) by living together with a slave girl destined for the Sultan; he escapes to Baghdad, transgresses openly but gracefully the legal prohibition against wine drinking (434f.), his girl even seduces a pious old man into joining them in the transgression (436ff.); the Caliph vanquished by the beauty of Nur and his girl and especially by the beautiful singing of the girl, forgives them and makes Nur the king of his homeland. Nur cannot kill the wicked vizier who has driven him from his homeland, for he is impressed by the wicked vizier's verse to the effect that both he and Nur only acted according to their *nature* (459).

[21] *Ghanim*—a young *merchant* comes into mortal danger through 3 castrated negro slaves 2 of whom tell the story of their castration; the 2nd is more wicked than the 1st and the 3rd is the most wicked of all; only the 2nd has nothing to do with sex; his crime is that he is a terrible liar; the 1st is really innocent. Ghanim does not touch the girl, the beloved of the Caliph, out of sacred awe of the Caliph (481) or out of fear (482, 484); the Caliph would not have been able to discover Ghanim and the girl because the Caliph is unable to transgress the law or to overcome the fear of God (485, 486).

[22] *Omar and his sons*—an alliance between the Christian king of Constantinople and the Muslim king of Baghdad against the Christian king Hartub; the Christian seems to plan treachery against the Muslim (533). Sharkun, the son of the Muslim king meets on the campaign the paragon Christian girl Abriza, the daughter of Hartub, whose mother is an old hag whom Abriza loathes. Abriza does not betray Sharkun to the Christian knights, she is free from all religious fanaticism (518) but she refuses to go with Sharkun to the land of Islam because the Muslim men are lascivious (522), she has a perfect command of Arabic culture while Sharkun does not know Greek. Sharkun quotes to her an Arabic poem dispraising the holy war while praising the war with *faire women* (530; cf. the poem 639 center). She sides with Sharkun in his fight with the Christian knights and reveals to him the treachery of the Christian king of Constantinople; she follows him to Baghdad where Sharkun's {8} father Omar disgracefully violates her (confirming her view of Muslims); on her flight home she is murdered by a treacherous negro slave.

[23] The adventures of Omar's daughter Nuzzath-as-Zamān, philosophically trained; her lecture on government: the king of faith (≠<sup>71</sup> the king who protects the holy—the latter in the center is also concerned with the things of the world, he is not necessarily a believer) (602; cf. the parallel 653 bottom–654 top); cf. also her praise of a perfect pre-Islamic king of Persia (601, 603); a single truly just man is sufficient for a whole country (607f.) → no need for *many* just men. The account of her lectures takes 7 nights—the lectures given by the Christian girls later on take 6 nights—altogether 13 nights.

<sup>71</sup> “≠” is inserted by hand.

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[24] Sharkun marries unknowingly his half-sister Nuzzath; they are shocked by their mortal sin; she bears him a daughter; they separate immediately; no further untoward consequences because the affair is kept secret. The story of the incest, unusually short, is told in the 68th (4×17) night (622f.).

[25] The old Christian witch, Abrizza's grandmother, murders Omar. Ban el nukum (Nuzzath's brother) becomes the Sultan; the old witch brings him 5 perfect Christian girls who pretend to be Muslims; the girls know philosophy and the stories of the past; the king is interested only in the latter (652); the 5 girls and the witch lecture on piety (667) (Cf. 662 para. 3 on the problem of piety); the instigator of those pious lectures is the unbelieving witch (700) who plans to ruin the king, the violator of her granddaughter.

[26] Holy war against the Christians; the description is full of savage hatred and invectives (≠<sup>72</sup> the humane relation of Sharkun and Abrizza); the Muslims march off against Constantinople; marvelous victories of the Muslims but Constantinople is not conquered (which is indicated rather than said); Sharkun is killed through the treachery of the old witch; the king finds no comfort for the death of his brother except through stories (715). The vizier tells him a story into which a story is inserted—both are love stories—the frame story is one of happy love: {9} son and daughter of kings<sup>73</sup> – the youth had only *heard* of the princess – the princess originally loathes men on the basis of a dream—the happy ending brought about by a wise vizier (≠<sup>74</sup> the prince and his father) (II 89, 85). Cf. Dan el nukum making a senile former worker the king of Damascus (II 140). The inserted story is one of *unhappy* love: merchant—a youth had *seen* the girl—a<sup>75</sup> girl who loves him but is not loved by him dies from grief—she is of perfect sweetness, overcomes her jealousy completely—does not use force or guile against him she unhappily loves—the youth is eventually castrated—he repents his unfaithfulness to the good girl he had deserted—the alternative would have been the satiety of fulfilled love (II 59)—cf. the praise of love in the poem II 30. Cf. the poem I 83: the complete atheistic loneliness of the unhappy lover (in the 130th night) → the uselessness of religious comfort as underlying the vizier's story telling here.

[27] In an entirely different context the witch who intends to kill the prince, tells him a most ridiculous story of a hashish eater who had a dream of approaching bliss and then a bitter awakening; i.e. she predicts his intended terrible fate to him, but then the witch's plan comes to naught.

[28] The end: the son of Omar and Abrizza who had become a *Muslim* had been brought up by his *Christian* grandfather (Hartub) as a Christian and the *Muslim* king *rule Baghdad jointly*—*nothing is said of that Christian's becoming a Muslim*—but a certain obscurity prevails (223–24).

[29] This is the first story in which Christianity-Islam is manifestly the theme. At the end of the story the first apparent change in the mood of Shechrazad's husband (224 bottom–225 top).

[30] The king wants to hear stories of birds, of beings which fly *high* (244)—Schechrazad tells stories of birds, and other animals but no longer of metamorphoses:

<sup>72</sup> “≠” is inserted by hand.

<sup>73</sup> “a” is crossed out and “s” is inserted by hand.

<sup>74</sup> “≠” is inserted by hand.

<sup>75</sup> “the” is crossed out and “a” is inserted by hand.

the stories must have been told by men who know the language of animals. The 1st story describes man from the brutes' point of view: all animals would live in {10} peace and freedom but for man's guile. The most frightened of the animals, the duck, alarms all other animals but is caught and killed by man. According to the she-peacock, the duck perished because alone of all creatures it had not praised God (239). The male peacock mentioned at the beginning of the story has dropped out completely: a female explanation of the fate of beings. The duck [which does not fly high and is the<sup>76</sup> pig among the birds]<sup>77</sup> says: our danger comes from man. But the she-peacock says: our danger comes from God. The story taken literally is nonsense: birds are killed also by other brutes, not only by men. But the story makes sense if retranslated into human terms (birds : men = men : God): the duck says that all evil comes from God and the she-peacock confirms this somehow. The she-peacock's assertion that praising God is sufficient for averting disaster is refuted by the story of the hermit and the doves. The story of the pious shepherd who is perfectly chaste (ascetic) and his male companion who is of extreme charity to beasts and birds (both live in the service to God) (to the jealous God who demands complete surrender to Him) and they do not even die (end of the story): *at this point the king shows the first sign of repentance for his cruelty and jealousy*. The water bird and the turtle: the water bird sees a human corpse and believes that the man must have been a criminal [only criminals are killed: simple moralism; God is killed]<sup>78</sup>—strikes up a friendship with a turtle—develops a doctrine of what befits the true man—is killed, as it is said because it did not praise God; the turtle is not killed. The wolf and the fox: the fox (the subject) warns the wolf (the king—256 bottom) to be gentle to him lest man, the wily insidious being, might control the wolf; but the fox gets rid of the wolf by his own ingenuity. *The inserted story told by the fox to the wolf*: the stronger eats the weaker but *through God's action* dies from it. The mouse and the weasel (the central story)—the weasel arranges that the mouse be killed by man [*tracing* everything to God ~ doing everything through God].<sup>79</sup> The raven and the {11} cat: this edifying story of pure friendship is told at the request of the king; everything is done here by animals; the shepherd [God]<sup>80</sup> hardly does more than looking at, whereas in the preceding unedifying story, man [God]<sup>81</sup> is the actor.

[31] The animal stories = 146th–152nd nights = 7 nights. The next story (Abu ibn bakkar) = 153rd–169th nights = 17 nights.

[32] The story of a young prince falling in love with an odalisk of the ruler of the faithful and she with the young prince; they meet for a night; they become separated and each dies from grief. The caliph does not become jealous: because he loves the girl so much that he doesn't believe what is reported to him about her misconduct. [*A story of an unfaithful woman whose unfaithfulness is not believed by her husband, is told to a jealous king.*]<sup>82</sup>

[33] Kamr az-zamān. In this story 2.65 pages on the average for a night; in the preceding stories 6.42 pages on the average for a night.

<sup>76</sup> "a" is crossed out and "the" is inserted by hand.

<sup>77</sup> Two square brackets are in the typescript and are inserted by hand.

<sup>78</sup> Square brackets are in the typescript and are inserted by hand.

<sup>79</sup> Square brackets are in the typescript and are inserted by hand.

<sup>80</sup> Square brackets are in the typescript and are inserted by hand.

<sup>81</sup> Square brackets are in the typescript and are inserted by hand.

<sup>82</sup> Square brackets are in the typescript and are inserted by hand.

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[34] A prince who is *very pious* hates women because of their faithlessness; a believing she-demon from the race of the devil but a believer together with a cursed he-demon brings him together with a princess who is less chaste than the prince (391–92) but *very intelligent* (373); she does not wish to marry him because she does not wish to be ruled by a man (375): the *believing* she-demon admires the *pious* prince; the *cursed* he-demon admires the *intelligent* princess. Prince and princess marry and are separated by some accident; the princess must pretend to be a man and marries a princess to whom she reveals her sex. The prince comes to a city of the Magians. They are reunited; the prince marries also princess number 2 and has 2 wives, gets a son from each; each wife tries to deceive him with a son of the other wife → the prince's view of women was true (480f., 484, 490)—the 2 wives behave like Potiphar's wife, the sons are driven into the wilderness, one of the sons falls into the hands of fire-worshippers and the other falls under the spell of a woman who expresses pagan feelings (508f.), is compelled to kill her; son number 1 converts the daughter of the Magian who keeps him prisoner and tortures {12} him, to Islam; eventually he converts that girl's father too and everything is forgiven. But nothing is done to the faithless wives and the Magians are tolerated. *The king is more pleased with this story which includes the account of the unpunished faithless wives (569) than with any previous story.*

[35] The inserted story. The caliph forgives and reunites the young couple, the male part of which had entered his harem to recover the girl who had been spirited away there—the central reason: the lover and the beloved were in his house and in his power (559) [application to God obvious].<sup>83</sup>

[36] *Ala ed-din abu esch-shamāt*—21 nights. An unheard of remark of Shechrazad's sister (580 top) at the beginning of the 252nd night. A jealous old wife accused by her old husband of sterility tells him that he is sterile and advises him as to what he should do to improve his semen [she did not wish to have a child nor did her husband hitherto];<sup>84</sup> the child born against all expectations, brought up in strict isolation out of fear of the evil eye—the impossibilities: after 40 years of marriage she is still menstruating and the new born babe looks like a one year old (572f.). The young boy sees how foolish his parents are; owing to his silly upbringing he himself is easily fooled, by a Magian who pretends to be a Muslim, a wicked pederast (581) but<sup>85</sup> is infinitely better than the Arabs of the desert, he does not kill<sup>86</sup> anyone (592f.); the boy's father is opposed to travelling (584). In Baghdad he gets a marvelous wife and becomes a favorite of the caliph; his wife dies but in 625ff. the wife seems to be still alive as a mistress of the caliph ?? He is disgraced and condemned to be hanged. But through a ruse a heretic who is also a criminal is hanged in his stead; he flies with a friend, on the flight they kill 2 Jews; a heretic tries to kill the caliph and is executed for this. Ala el din is captured by Christians and brought to Genoa together with 40 other Muslims, the latter are executed by the Christians, he is saved by an old woman for service in the church, but the old woman tells him how he can force others to do the work for him. His wife has lived all the time with a Christian princess who was served by {13} a she-demon who has taken on the shape of his wife (was buried in the latter's stead); the wife herself was brought by a mighty demon to Genoa; the princess was predestined to become the wife of Ala el din; she was a secret Muslim; her

<sup>83</sup> Square brackets are in the typescript and are inserted by hand.

<sup>84</sup> Square brackets are in the typescript and are inserted by hand.

<sup>85</sup> "he" is crossed out.

<sup>86</sup> "hurt" is crossed out.

father refuses to become a Muslim and is killed by Ala el din who returns with his 2 wives to Egypt [a stupidly fantastic and very pro-Islamic story—Schechrazad's king does not react].<sup>87</sup>

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[37] The king expresses his pleasure with the story told and asks her to continue; Schechrazad will tell stories of the men of generosity (84 bottom–85 top). The 1st story of a *pagan Arab* (sculptures of girls) (85–86); the 2nd story of an early Muslim famous for his generosity; → generosity not specifically Islamic, no reference to anything Islamic in the first 2 stories. The 4th story has nothing to do with generosity but with the Muslim conquest of Andalus and with the Muslim's *finding* of wealth and *science* in the conquered lands → still less is science specifically Islamic. The 5th story: the moral superiority of a young Bedouin to a Caliph. 6th story: the nobility of character of a poor negro and also of a deposed Caliph as well as of the ruling Caliph. 7th story (277th–279th night—277th night extremely short) someone believes to have discovered the paradise on earth, an extremely beautiful but uninhabited city; it was built by a ruler of the whole earth who lived more than 300 years and was an unbeliever ruling over unbelievers in imitation of the paradise in the beyond; Allah destroyed that ruler and all the people with him. 8th story: contains a reminder by Schechrazad of the fact that her fate is still uncertain; the Caliph's bride is praised more highly than the Caliph. 9th story: a beautiful wife sleeps out of jealousy with a dirtiest and most ill-smelling man. 10th story: a man who imitates the Caliph perfectly, in some respects superior to any Caliph (136 top), is particularly generous (141), he only played the Caliph in order to reach his goal, i.e. to get back his wife; his wife {14} had revered him like a prophet or more than the prophet (147) but had rejected and tormented him out of unfounded jealousy [a true prophet rejected by his admiring wife had to become a false Caliph, a savage killer or at least threatening with death (151) in order to regain his rank].<sup>89</sup>—The stories told in each night here are particularly short. 11th story: 2 impudent liars, for this very reason scolded as being Manicheans by kadi. 12th story: *parody of fiqh—here for the 1st time the author addresses the reader*. 14th story: the story of a man whom a Caliph had crucified out of jealousy (cf. 195 para. 1 beginning). 15th story: 172 bottom–173 top. The fate of Schechrazad is still as undecided as it was at the beginning, as the king makes clear → the 15th story is a story of demons and metamorphoses—in order to arouse the king's interest. 16th and 17th story: a generous family of which the Caliph was jealous.

[38] The man from Yemen and his 6 slave girls: note the change of order, 1st yellow and black and then yellow and brown—change in the repetition regarding the yellow (dropping of the prophet) (293)—special praise of the brown one (294 bottom) who does not refer to the Koran, nor does the slim one whereas the other 4 refer to the Koran (cf. 284).

[39] P. 409: *the counter-religion of love* = a frequently recurring theme. The stories on 526ff. seem to have this connection: asceticism (526–33)—falling in love on hearsay (533–35)—the absurdity of asceticism (536–37)—the fantastic story of the bird Ruch, stories of unhappy lovers. Cf. 589 bottom–590 top on secrecy; 623 para. 2–625 tyranny, human or divine (cf. Machiavelli Disc. I 26).

<sup>87</sup> Square brackets are in the typescript and are inserted by hand.

<sup>88</sup> Square brackets are in the typescript and are inserted by hand.

<sup>89</sup> Square brackets are in the typescript and are inserted by hand.

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[40] *The slave girl Tavaddud*: a fantastic account of philosophy—at the end (696) a long address of Schechrazad to the king on the liberality of kings which has disappeared.

[41] *3 stories of the angel of death* (697ff.)—1. Islamic—a pious man longs for death to see God, contrasted with a king 2. Islamic—only a God forgetting king 3. Jewish—a wicked Jewish king goes to hell; the kings are all stupid and wicked. {15} Immediately afterward (704) Alexander the Great confronted by a cynic wise king<sup>90</sup> (≠ angel of death) who teaches hell and paradise after death—Alexander neither stupid nor wicked. Immediately thereafter (706) a wise old Persian king → *the 2nd long address of Schechrazad to her king* to the effect that religion depends on government—followed first by a Jewish and then by an Islamic pious story, then by a story of a wonderfully pious negro slave, then by a Jewish pious story etc. etc.

[42] For the Queen of Serpents see my references in III 812.

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[43] P. 115: the beginning of the speech of the narrator is the end of a night's tale of Schechrazad (161).

[44] *Sindbad*—the central story—a pagan people (145)—cannibals; they are apparently Muslim people with the custom of burying the surviving spouse alive together with the dead spouse—Sindbad becomes a murderer.

[45] Messingstadt—preaches unqualifiedly world-denial, *meditatio mortis*—but cf. 258: Solomon (≠ Mohammed).

[46] Ruse of women—i.e. Schechrazad's own doings (cf. 267 and 297) but ruse of women only in stories # 1, 2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 17, and 22. Note that this story contains harmless repetitions of some stories from the 1st section.

[47] *Dshaudar*: the last and decisive test is incest with mother.

[48] *Adshib and Gharib*: the whole world is made Islamic (Abrahamitic) long before Mohammed by war and with the help of armies of demons. Contrast with the next story (Utba and Rajja) which is very short: see the central poem (619), and the story of<sup>92</sup>

[49] *El Mausidi and the devil*: a very attractive description of the devil (645–49).

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[50] 1st story: the impotence of kings vis-à-vis love; the kings' complete dependence on their servants—these are frequently recurring themes.

[51] 4th story: contains a *non-public* story (225–26) which was *written* in the {16} first place—of a pagan king (228) but: 230—God's revelation to Solomon (231) the pagans become Muslims (235–237). Contains an account of a vizier (≠ king) who conducts himself prudently like Odysseus with the Cyclops etc.; the vizier (≠ king) does not have a marvelous ring from King Solomon; the whole adventure of the king and the vizier caused by the thoughtlessness of king Solomon (295) or through his complete indifference (305 bottom–306 top).

[52] 5th story: it is not said which book Hasan read (316); he is taught the best of all arts, i.e. the art of making gold, a *dangerous* art (319f.), a *non-public* art (321) by a fire worshipper (325) who cheats and torments Hasan.

<sup>90</sup> "being" is crossed out and "king" is inserted by hand.

<sup>91</sup> Square brackets are in the typescript and are inserted by hand.

<sup>92</sup> " , and the story of" is inserted by hand.

<sup>93</sup> Square brackets are in the typescript and are inserted by hand.

[53] 6th story: a monkey predicts to a fisherman that if he persuades a rich Jew to say certain things, the fisherman will become very rich and the Jew very poor (510–511)—the rich Jew says the words in question (in this connection: complete indifference of the fisherman to the Jew becoming a Muslim: 515) but nothing happens; by a series of accidents the fisherman becomes incredibly rich but nothing is said about the Jew becoming poor.

[54] 7th story: a married Jewish woman's adultery with a Christian (574, 582); in order to escape punishment for her crime, she pretends to be a Muslim (604); she becomes a Muslim; 4 kadis promise her their help against the Jew and to marry her; her husband is humiliated and jailed but the woman deceives the kadis who die from sorrow; the Jew is freed from jail; on her way home the woman stops in a monk's convent where all 40 monks try to seduce her; she regains her lover who also becomes a Muslim and she arranges that her husband is buried alive [a victory of wicked love presented as victory of Islam].<sup>94</sup>

[55] 8th story: Nur transgresses the Islamic law re wine (639); in his drunkenness he beats his father and deprives him of one eye; he flees to Alexandria where he falls in love with a Frankish slave girl who had become a Muslim and who was the daughter of a Frankish king; while being drunk he sells her to the one-eyed vizier of the Frankish king who takes her back to her father. Nur cannot fight just as he has no brains nor self-control whereas the Frankish princess is a marvelously {17} courageous fighter and killer; she kills her 3 brothers in single combat and escapes with Nur to Muslim lands; she abjures all connections with Christianity and her people and family [a triumph of Islam, in fact a triumph of love—Islam *used* for such a triumph—the opposite (i.e. the use of Christianity for this purpose) is equally possible].<sup>95</sup>

[56] 9th story: a Muslim falls in love with a Christian woman in the then Christian Akko but out of fear of hell abstains from intercourse with her (760); after the Muslim conquest of Akko, she is taken prisoner, bought by a Muslim and becomes a Muslim; her Muslim lover even gets back the money he had spent on her while she was the wife of a Christian knight in Akko. [the whole story presupposes that she did not love her Christian husband].<sup>96</sup>

[57] Tenth story: a young Muslim who had become poor, sells his beloved, his slave-girl, to a noble Muslim; he does not commit suicide out of fear of hell; he becomes reunited with her and again wealthy thanks to the generosity of that noble Muslim.<sup>97</sup> [also a story of a reward for Muslim piety but it also presupposes that the man and the woman love one another passionately<sup>98</sup>].

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[58] 1st story: the necessary conflict between this world and the next—men cannot be just while living in this life (49–51); the contradistinction between reason and the Sharia (53–54; cf. 65 top); 135: this teaching of a 12 year old boy (+ terror of enemies) achieves what the boy's wise father and philosophy did not achieve.

<sup>94</sup> Square brackets are in the typescript and are inserted by hand.

<sup>95</sup> Square brackets are in the typescript and are inserted by hand.

<sup>96</sup> Square brackets are in the typescript and are inserted by hand.

<sup>97</sup> Square brackets are in the typescript and are inserted by hand.

<sup>98</sup> "properly" is crossed out and "passionately" is inserted by hand.

<sup>99</sup> Square brackets are in the typescript and are inserted by hand.

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[59] 3rd story: the absurdity of those who believe in another better life and weep when someone they love dies; those free from that absurdity, i.e. who draw the conclusion from belief in better life, live in nakedness and promiscuity (208).

[60] 4th story *from end*: story of *apparent* infidelity of a sultan's mistress.

[61] 3rd story *from end*: a dervish who sings very impure songs but proves to be of incorruptible chastity—and: the successful deception and ruin of a husband by his wife with a bitter end for the wife—contrasted with the adulterer's sister who does not even remarry after her husband's death.

[18] [62] 2nd story *before the last*—transformation into *stones* of a *pagan* city by Allah; the single survivor, a most beautiful princess who became a Muslim; transformation into *dogs* of the *treacherous* 2 brothers by a she-ghost out of gratitude to the 3rd brother who had saved the she-ghost from disgrace; the Caliph demands that the 2 brothers be no longer punished but restored and that they be forgiven; but they do not deserve to be forgiven. The beautiful princess commits suicide when 2 brothers throw the decent 3rd brother into the sea.

[63] Last story: a poor shoe repairer who is so gentle that he must run away from his vicious wife; he learns to give away other people's money which he gets by telling the untrue story that his caravan will come soon (589). He believes those untruths in his simplicity (589); he marries the king's daughter and confesses his lies to his wife who for sheer shame helps him with her money so that he can make his lies true; by a lucky accident he finds a ring which makes him the master of a spirit who procures him everything he wants through the ring, yet his wife gets possession of the ring and does not give it to her husband or her father (cf. Schechrazad who is wiser than her father and her husband). The ring is so powerful that its possession endangers the survival of Islam; the princess alone insures the survival of Islam (633, 634). The princess dies. His abominable 1st wife finds him: he *forgives* her and lives to *repent* it (cf. 639)—out of piety (640 bottom–641 top) he takes off the ring and would have been destroyed by his first wife but for the prompt action of his 7 year old young son from his second wife.

### APPENDIX B

TABLE B1  
TABLE OF CONCORDANCE

No.	Story	MS	Lyons	Mahdi	Littman
1	Shahriyar and His Brother	1,2	1:3	5	1:15–29, 6:675–77
2	The Bull and the Ass	3	1:7	15	1:24–26
3	The Merchant and His Wife	3	1:8	18	1:26–28
4	The Trader and the Jinnî	4	1:10	21	1:29–47
5	The First Shaykh's Story	4	1:12	27	1:33–38
6	The Second Shaykh's Story	4	1:15	31	1:39–44
7	The Third Shaykh's Story	4	1:18		1:44–46
8	The Fisherman and the Jinnî	5,9	1:19	36	1:47–100
9	King Yûnân and the Sage Dûbân	5,8	1:25	44	1:56–73
10	King Sindbâd and His Falcon	46	1:28		1:62–65

TABLE B1 (*Continued*)

No.	Story	MS	Lyons	Mahdi	Littman
11	The Husband and the Parrot	46		50	
12	The Prince and the Ogress	5	1:30	52	1:65–67
13	The Ensorcelled Prince	6,7,9	1:41	68	1:86–100
14	The Porter and the Three Ladies of Baghdad	10	1:50	80	1:100–227
15	The First Qalandar's Tale	11	1:66	104	1:127–37
16	The Second Qalandar's Tale	12	1:76	111	1:138–70
17	The Envier and the Envied	12	1:79	122	1:151–55
18	The Third Qalandar's Tale	13	1:90	138	1:171–96
19	The Eldest Lady's Tale	14	1:106	162	1:198–211
20	The Tale of the Portress	15	1:113	171	1:212–24
21	The Three Apples	16	1:126	181	1:227–312
22	Nûr al-Dîn 'Alî and His Son Badr al-Dîn Hasan	16	1:129	189	1:239–312
23	The Hunchback's Tale	16	1:173	248	1:313–437
24	The Nazarene Broker's Story	16	1:178	258	1:322–41
25	The Reeve's Tale	16	1:189	275	1:342–55
26	The Tale of the Jewish Doctor	16	1:197	287	1:355–68
27	Tale of the Tailor	16	1:205	300	1:369–434
28	The Barber's Tale of Himself	16	1:217	320	1:391–433
29	The Barber's Tale of His First Brother	16	1:219	323	1:394–400
30	The Barber's Tale of His Second Brother	16	1:223	328	1:400–406
31	The Barber's Tale of His Third Brother	16	1:226	332	1:406–10
32	The Barber's Tale of His Fourth Brother	16	1:228	335	1:410–15
33	The Barber's Tale of His Fifth Brother	16	1:231	340	1:415–27
34	The Barber's Tale of His Sixth Brother	16	1:237	349	1:427–32
35	Nûr al-Dîn 'Alî and Anîs al-Jalîs	18,20	1:244	416	1:438–96
36	Ghânim ibn Ayyûb	19,21	1:278		1:496–540
37	Tale of the First Eunuch, Bukhayt	21	1:282		1:502–3
38	Tale of the Second Eunuch, Kâfûr	21	1:283		1:503–11
39	'Umar ibn al-Nu'mân and His Sons Sharrkân and Daw' al-Makân	22,23,24,25, 26,28,29	1:304		1:540–828, 2:3–235
40	Tâj al-Mulûk and the Princess Duniyâ	26	1:475		2:3–138
41	'Azîz and 'Azîza	26	1:489		2:23–80
42	The Hashish Eater	27	1:594		2:201–4
43	Hammâd the Badawî		1:605		2:221–31
44	The Birds and Beasts and the Carpenter	30,31	1:613		2:236–51

TABLE B1 (*Continued*)

No.	Story	MS	Lyons	Mahdi	Littman
45	The Hermits	30,31	1:621		2:251–56
46	The Water-fowl and the Tortoise	30,31	1:624		2:257–61
47	The Wolf and the Fox	30,31	1:627		2:261–82
48	The Falcon and the Partridge	30,31	1:632		2:270–71
49	The Mouse and the Ichneumon	30,31	1:639		2:282–84
50	The Cat and the Crow	30,31	1:640		2:284–85
51	The Fox and the Crow	30,31	1:641		2:285–94
52	The Flea and the Mouse	30,31	1:642		2:287–90
53	The Saker and the Birds	30,31	1:644		2:291–92
54	The Sparrow and the Eagle	30,31	1:645		2:292–93
55	The Hedgehog and the Wood-pigeons	30,31	1:645		2:294–98
56	The Merchant and the Two Sharpers		1:647		2:297–98
57	The Thief and His Monkey		1:648		2:298–301
58	The Foolish Weaver	30,31	1:648		2:299–300
59	The Sparrow and the Peacock	30,31	1:649		2:301–3
60	‘Alī ibn Bakkār and Shams al-Nahār	31,32	1:650	356	2:303–76
61	Qamar al-Zamān and Budūr	33,34	1:693		2:376–601
62	Nī‘ma and Nu‘m	35	1:808		2:560–92
63	‘Alā’ al-Dīn Abu ‘l-Shāmāt	36	1:832		2:601–96
64	Hâtīm of the Tribe of Tayy	37	1:884		3:85–87
65	Ma‘n ibn Zâ‘ida	37	1:886		3:87–88
66	Ma‘n ibn Zâ‘ida and the Badawî	37			3:88–90
67	The City of Labtayt	37	1:888		3:90–93
68	The Caliph Hishâm and the Arab Youth	37	1:889		3:93–96
69	Ibrâhîm ibn al-Mahdî and the Barber-surgeon	37	1:891		3:96–109
70	The City of Many-columned Iram	37	1:898		3:109–16
71	Ishâq of Mosul	37	1:903		3:117–25
72	The Sweep and the Noble Lady	37	1:908		3:125–32
73	The Mock Caliph	37	1:912		3:132–58
74	‘Alī the Persian	37	1:928,		3:158–63
			2:3		
75	Hârûn al-Rashîd and the Slave-girl and the Imâm Abû Yûsuf	37	2:6		3:164–67
76	The Lover Who Feigned Himself a Thief	37	2:8		3:167–73
77	Ja‘far the Barmakid and the Bean-seller	37	2:11		3:173–76
78	Abû Muhammad Hight Lazybones	37	2:13		3:176–200
79	Yahyâ ibn Khâlid with Mansûr	37	2:27		3:200–204

TABLE B1 (*Continued*)

No.	Story	MS	Lyons	Mahdi	Littman
80	Yahyâ ibn Khâlid with a Man Who Forged a Letter in His Name	37	2:29		3:204–9
81	Caliph al-Ma'mûn and the Strange Scholar	37	2:32		3:210–12
82	'Alî Shâr and Zumurrud	37	2:33		3:212–67
83	The Loves of Jubayr ibn 'Umayr and the Lady Budur	37	2:69		3:267–89
84	The Man of al-Yaman and His Six Slave-girls	38	2:83		3:289–308
85	Hârûn al-Rashîd and the Damsel and Abû Nuwâs		2:96		3:308–15
86	The Man Who Stole the Dish of Gold		2:100		3:315–19
87	The Sharper of Alexandria and the Chief of Police		2:103		3:319–22
88	Al-Malik al-Nâsir and the Three Chiefs of Police		2:104		3:322–28
89	The Story of the Chief of Police of Cairo				3:328–25
90	The Story of the Chief of the Bûlâq Police				3:325–27
91	The Chief of the Old Cairo Police				3:327–28
92	The Thief and the Shroff				3:328–30
93	The Chief of the Qûs Police and the Sharper		2:109		3:330–32
94	Ibrâhîm ibn al-Mahdî and the Merchant's Sister		2:110		3:332–37
95	The Woman Whose Hands Were Cut Off for Giving Alms to the Poor		2:113		3:337–39
96	The Devout Israelite		2:114		3:340–42
97	Abû Hassân al-Ziyâdî and the Khorasan Man		2:115		3:342–46
98	The Poor Man and His Friend in Need		2:118		3:347–48
99	The Ruined Man Who Became Rich Again through a Dream		2:119		3:348–50
100	Caliph al-Mutawakkil and His Concubine Mahbûba		2:120		3:350–52
101	Wardân the Butcher		2:122		3:353–59
102	The King's Daughter and the Ape		2:125		3:359–62
103	The Ebony Horse		2:127		3:362–99
104	Uns al-Wujûd and al-Ward fi 'l-Akmâm		2:148		3:399–441
105	Abû Nuwâs with the Three Boys		2:177		3:441–47

TABLE B1 (*Continued*)

No.	Story	MS	Lyons Mahdi	Littman
106	'Abdallâh ibn Ma'mar		2:181	3:447-49
107	The Lovers of the Banû 'Udhra		2:182	3:449-51
108	The Vizier of al-Yaman and His Young Brother		2:183	3:451-53
109	The Loves of the Boy and Girl at School		2:184	3:453-54
110	Al-Mutalammis and His Wife Umayma		2:185	3:455-56
111	The Caliph Hârûn al-Rashîd and Queen Zubayda in the Bath		2:186	3:456-58
112	Hârûn al-Rashîd and the Three Poets		2:187	3:458-60
113	Mus'ab ibn al-Zubayr and 'Â'isha bint Talha		2:189	3:460-62
114	Abu 'l-Aswad and His Slave-girl		2:190	3:462
115	Hârûn al-Rashîd and the Two Slave-girls		2:190	3:463
116	The Caliph Hârûn al-Rashîd and the Three Slave-girls		2:190	3:463-64
117	The Miller and His Wife		2:191	3:464-66
118	The Simpleton and His Sharper		2:192	3:466-68
119	The Qâdî Abû Yûsuf with Hârûn al-Rashîd and Queen Zubayda		2:193	3:468-70
120	The Caliph al-Hâkim and the Merchant		2:194	3:506-7
121	King Kistrâ Anûshirwân and the Village Damsel		2:195	3:508-10
122	The Water-carrier and the Goldsmith's Wife		2:196	3:510-13
123	Khusraw and Shîrîn and the Fisherman		2:197	3:513-15
124	Yahyâ ibn Khâlîd the Barmakid and the Poor Man		2:198	3:515-16
125	Muhammad al-Amîn and the Slave-girl		2:199	3:516-18
126	The Sons of Yahyâ ibn Khâlîd and Sa'id ibn Sâlim al-Bâhilî		2:200	3:518-20
127	The Woman's Trick against Her Husband		2:201	3:520-21
128	The Devout Woman and the Two Wicked Elders		2:202	3:528-29
129	Ja'far the Barmakid and the Old Badawî		2:203	3:529-31
130	The Caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khattâb and the Young Badawî		2:204	3:531-38

TABLE B1 (*Continued*)

No.	Story	MS	Lyons Mahdi	Littman
131	The Caliph al-Ma'mûn and the Pyramids of Egypt		2:208	3:538–41
132	The Thief and the Merchant		2:209	3:541–43
133	Masrûr the Eunuch and Ibn al-Qâribî		2:211	3:543–46
134	The Devotee Prince		2:213	3:546–54
135	The Unwise Schoolmaster Who Fell in Love by Report	39	2:217	3:554–56
136	The Foolish Dominie	39	2:219	3:556–58
137	The Illiterate Who Set Up for a Schoolmaster	39	2:219	3:558–60
138	The King and the Virtuous Wife	39	2:221	3:560–62
139	'Abd al-Rahmân the Maghribî's Story of the Rukhkh	39	2:222	3:562–64
140	'Adî ibn Zayd and the Princess Hind		2:223	3:564–68
141	Di'bil al-Khuzâ'î		2:225	3:569–71
142	Ishâq of Mosul and the Merchant		2:227	3:572–77
143	The Three Unfortunate Lovers		2:231	3:578–79
144	How Abû Hasan Brake Wind			
145	The Lovers of the Banû Tayy		2:232	3:580–82
146	The Mad Lover		2:233	3:582–84
147	The Prior Who Became a Moslem		2:235	3:584–91
148	The Loves of Abû 'Isâ and Qurrat al-'Ayn		2:239	3:591–600
149	Al-Amîn ibn al-Rashîd and Ibrâhîm ibn al-Mahdî		2:245	3:600–601
150	Al-Fath ibn Khâqân		2:246	3:601–2
151	The Man's Dispute with the Learned Woman		2:246	3:602–13
152	Abû Suwayd and the Pretty Old Woman		2:254	3:613–14
153	The Emir 'Alî ibn Tâhir and the Girl Mu'nis		2:254	3:614–15
154	The Woman Who Had a Boy and the Other Who Had a Man to Lover		2:255	3:615–616
155	'Alî the Cairene and the Haunted House		2:255	3:616–47
156	The Pilgrim Man and the Old Woman	39	2:273	3:647–51
157	Tawaddud	40	2:275	3:651–726
158	The Angel of Death with the Proud King	41	2:321	3:726–28
159	The Angel of Death and the Rich King	41	2:322	3:729–31
160	The Angel of Death and the King of the Children of Israel	41	2:324	3:732–33

TABLE B1 (*Continued*)

No.	Story	MS	Lyons	Mahdi	Littman
161	Alexander and a Certain Tribe of Poor Folk	41	2:325		3:734–36
162	The Righteousness of King Anûshirwân	41	2:326		3:736–38
163	The Jewish Qâdi and His Pious Wife	41	2:327		3:738–42
164	The Shipwrecked Woman and Her Child	41	2:330		3:742–46
165	The Pious Black Slave	41	2:332		3:746–50
166	The Devout Tray-maker and His Wife		2:335		3:750–56
167	Al-Hâjjâj and the Pious Man		2:338		3:756–58
168	The Blacksmith Who Could Handle Fire without Hurt		2:340		3:758–62
169	The Devotee to Whom Allâh Gave a Cloud for Service		2:343		3:763–68
170	The Moslem Champion and the Christian Damsel		2:345		3:768–75
171	The Christian King's Daughter and the Moslem		2:350		3:775–79
172	The Prophet and the Justice of Providence		2:353		3:779–81
173	The Ferryman of the Nile and the Hermit		2:354		3:781–84
174	The Island King and the Pious Israelite		2:356		3:784–91
175	Abu 'l-Hasan and Abû Ja'far the Leper		2:360		3:791–95
176	Queen of the Serpents	42	2:363		3:795–860, 4:3–98
177	The Adventures of Bulûqiyâ		2:367		3:804–60, 4:3–80
178	The Story of Jânshâh		2:390		3:846–60, 4:3–74
179	Sindbâd the Seaman	44	2:453		4:99–215
180	The City of Brass	45	2:518		4:215–68
181	The Craft and Malice of Women	46	2:546		4:268–384
182	The King and His Vizier's Wife	46	2:547		4:272–75
183	Story of the Confectioner, His Wife, and the Parrot	46	2:549		4:275–77
184	The Fuller and His Son	46	2:550		4:277–78
185	The Rake's Trick against the Chaste Wife	46	2:551		4:278–80
186	The Miser and the Loaves of Bread	46	2:552		4:281–82
187	The Lady and Her Two Lovers	46	2:553		4:282–84
188	The King's Son and the Ogress	46	2:554		4:284–87

TABLE B1 (*Continued*)

No.	Story	MS	Lyons Mahdi	Littman
189	The Drop of Honey	46	2:556	4:288–89
190	The Woman Who Made Her Husband Sift Dust	46	2:557	4:289–90
191	The Enchanted Spring	46	2:558	4:291–98
192	The Vizier's Son and the Hammâm- keeper's Wife	46	2:562	4:299–301
193	The Wife's Device to Cheat Her Husband	46	2:563	4:302–7
194	The Goldsmith and the Cashmere Singing-girl	46	2:567	4:308–13
195	The Man Who Never Laughed	46	2:570	4:313–23
196	The King's Son and the Merchant's Wife	46	2:576	4:324–27
197	The Page Who Feigned to Know the Speech of Birds	46	2:578	4:327–29
198	The Lady and Her Five Suitors	46	2:580	4:330–41
199	The Three Wishes	46	2:587	4:341–42
200	The Stolen Necklace	46	2:588	4:343–45
201	The Two Pigeons	46	2:589	4:345–46
202	Prince Bahrâm and the Princess al-Datmâ	46	2:589	4:346–51
203	The House with the Belvedere	46	2:593	4:352–65
204	The King's Son and the 'Ifrit's Mistress	46	2:601	4:365–68
205	The Sandal-wood Merchant and the Sharpers	46	2:603	4:370–76
206	The Debauchee and the Three-year- old Child	46	2:607	4:377–78
207	The Stolen Purse	46	2:608	4:378–81
208	The Fox and the Folk	46		4:383
209	Jûdar and His Brethren	47	2:610	4:384–448
210	Gharîb and 'Ajîb	48	2:648	4:448–642
211	'Utba and Rayyâ	48	2:757	4:642–49
212	Hind bint al-Nu'mân and al-Hajjâj		2:762	4:649–52
213	Khuzayma ibn Bishr and 'Ikrima al-Fayyâd		2:764	4:652–59
214	Yûnus the Scribe and the Caliph Walîd ibn Sahl		2:768	4:659–65
215	Hârûn al-Rashid and the Arab Girl		2:771	4:665–68
216	Al-Asma'î and the Girls of Basra		2:773	4:668–73
217	Ibrâhîm of Mosul and the Devil	49	2:776	4:673–77
218	The Lovers of the Banû 'Udhra		2:779	4:677–87
219	The Badawî and His Wife		2:784	4:688–95
220	The Lovers of Basra		2:789	4:695–702

TABLE B1 (*Continued*)

No.	Story	MS	Lyons Mahdi	Littman
221	Ishâq of Mosul and His Mistress and the Devil		2:794	4:702-7
222	The Lovers of al-Madîna		2:796	4:707-11
223	Al-Malik al-Nâsir and His Vizier		2:799	4:712-14
224	Dalîla the Crafty		2:801	4:714-55
225	The Adventures of Mercury 'Alî of Cairo		2:824	4:755-809
226	Ardashîr and Hayât al-Nufûs	50	2:855, 3:3	5:3-88
227	Jullanâr		3:3	5:88-158
228	King Muhammâd ibn Sabâ'ik and the Merchant Hasan	51	3:91	5:228-329
229	Prince Sayf al-Mulûk		3:95	5:237-329
230	Hasan of Basra	52	3:145	5:329-528
231	Khalîfa the Fisherman	53	3:261	5:528-85
232	Masrûr and Zayn al-Mawâsif	54	3:293	5:585-656
233	'Alî Nûr al-Dîn and Maryam the Girdle-girl	55	3:341	5:657-798
234	The Man of Upper Egypt and His Frankish Wife	56	3:428	5:798-805
235	The Ruined Man of Baghdad and His Slave-girl	57	3:432	5:805-17
236	Jalî'âd and Shimâs	58	3:439	6:3-147
237	The Mouse and the Cat		3:441	6:7-10
238	The Fakir and His Jar of Butter		3:444	6:13-15
239	The Fishes and the Crab		3:447	6:18-20
240	The Crow and the Serpent		3:449	6:22-23
241	The Wild Ass and the Jackal		3:450	6:24-26
242	The Unjust King and the Pilgrim Prince		3:452	6:27-30
243	The Crows and the Hawk		3:454	6:32-34
244	The Serpent-charmer and His Wife		3:456	6:35-37
245	The Spider and the Wind		3:458	6:39-40
246	The Two Kings		3:463	6:47-50
247	The Blind Man and the Cripple		3:465	6:51-53
248	The Foolish Fisherman		3:485	6:86-87
249	The Boy and the Thieves		3:486	6:89-90
250	The Man and His Wife		3:489	6:92-94
251	The Merchant and the Robbers		3:490	6:96-98
252	The Jackals and the Wolf		3:493	6:100-103
253	The Shepherd and the Rogue		3:495	6:104-5
254	The Francolin and the Tortoises		3:500	6:114-18
255	Abû Qîr and Abû Sîr		3:519	6:147-91

TABLE B1 (Continued)

No.	Story	MS	Lyons Mahdi	Littman
256	'Abdallâh the Fisherman and 'Abdallâh the Merman	59	3:544	6:191–223
257	Tale of Hârûn al-Rashîd and Abû Hasan the Merchant of Oman		3:561	6:368–94
258	Ibrâhîm and Jamîla		3:576	6:395–426
259	Abu 'l-Hasan of Khorasan	60	3:594	6:426–51
260	Qamar al-Zamân and the Jeweller's Wife	61	3:608	6:451–532
261	'Abdallâh ibn Fâdil and His Brothers	62	3:654	6:532–99
262	Ma'rûf the Cobbler	63	3:690	6:599–675

NOTE.—Story numbers and titles are borrowed from *Encyclopedia* and follow Burton's edition. *Encyclopedia* = Ulrich Marzolph and Richard van Leeuwen, *The Arabian Nights: An Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004). Burton = Richard F. Burton, *Arabian Nights with Introduction & Explanatory Notes*, 16 vols. (Beirut: Khayat, 1966). MS = Leo Strauss Papers, box 20, folder 2, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library; references are by the paragraph numbers of the typescript. Mahdi = Husain Haddawy, *The Arabian Nights: Based on the Text Edited by Muhsin Mahdi* (London: Norton, 1990); references are by page numbers. Lyons = Malcolm C. Lyons, Ursula Lyons, and Robert Irwin, *The Arabian Nights: Tales of 1,001 Nights*, 3 vols. (London: Penguin, 2010); references are by the volume and page numbers. Littman = Enno Littman, *Die Erzählungen aus den Tausendundein Nächten—Vollständige Deutsche Ausgabe in sechs Bänden zum ersten Mal nach dem arabischen Urtext der Calcuttaer Ausgabe aus dem Jahre 1839*, 6 vols. (Leipzig: Insel-Verlag, 1921–28); references are by the volume and page numbers.