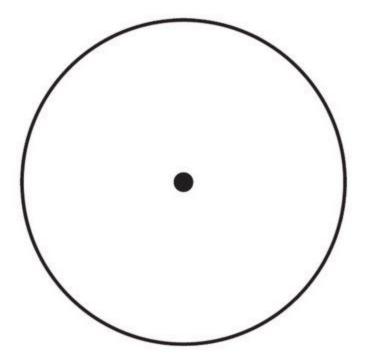




Abr o bâd o mah o khurshîd o falak dar kâr-and Tâ to nânî ba-kaf ârî o be-ghaflat na-khurî Hama az ba-har-e-to sar-gashta o farmân bardâr Shart-e-ensâf na-bâshad ke to farmân na-barî

Clouds, wind, moon, sun and heavens are all active
That you may receive some bread and eat it in remembrance.
For your sake, all are whirling around and obey orders.
Would it be just then that only you would not obey?

[Shaykh Sa'di]





It starts in the Invisible! Next: A dot! The dot becomes a line. The line becomes a surface. The surface is a map. The map becomes a territory. The territory is a world. This world is called 'Alam. There is a map of 'Alam. 'Alam has a wise King. This King rules by means of a rolled-out parchment. Before taking a decision the King consults 4 advisors. This special Circle of the Four consists of a gardener, a minstrel, a cook and a nurse. After consulting these four men and women, the King makes use of his *raqqim-manshûr*, which is a rolled-out parchment, and then he knows in which direction he should proceed.

The King of 'Alam has to take the following four guidelines very serious:

One: Be as generous as the earth!

Two: Be as warm-hearted as the fire!

Three: Be as humble as the water!

Four: Be as free as the wind!

In case the King remains a good and wise King, the rolled-out parchment points him into the direction of an answer to a problem. In case no answer appears, it is time for him to abdicate and leave the world of 'Alam.



THE QUEST

I'm almost certain, but I may be wrong, that you don't know 'Alam Nawaz. 'Alam Nawaz is a Chishti dervish. He has a certain responsibility regarding the world of 'Alam. You have to be 'Alam Nawaz to know exactly what this responsibility is, so let's continue with what he told his assistant, Musafat. He told Musafat to go on a travel and to locate four people. Musafat has a number of endearing qualities. When you'd meet Musafat you would soon see him as the personification of friendship and affection. You'd understand that a man as Musafat would be able to unite people after bringing them together.

'Alam Nawaz began to explain to Musafat which kind of people he had to find. His explanation started in the Invisible! Next: A dot! The dot became a line. The line became a surface. The surface was a map. The map became a territory. The territory is a world. This world is called 'Alam. There is a map of 'Alam. 'Alam has had a wise King. The wise King had to abdicate and has left. He was no longer able to uphold four guidelines. That's why the rolled-out parchment stopped helping him. And - because the King has left - the Circle of the Four was disbanded.

"You have to find four people" – 'Alam Nawaz said to Musafat – "to replace the members of the Circle of the Four. You can find the new gardener in the East. Try to find a man or a woman as generous as the earth".

Thereupon Musafat set forth upon his distant journey. He travelled long, crossing oceans, mountains, plains and deserts. He travelled at sunrise and in noonday heat. Allah preserved him in his travels and after forty days he arrived in the city of Lahore.



EARTH

When in Lahore, Musafat tried his utmost to find the gardener. He, of course, started his quest in the Shalimar Bagh, the gardens that were constructed in 1641 during the rule of Shah Jahan, i.e. the "King of the World". These gardens were modelled on Persian gardens in order to be an earthly representation of the heavenly archetype, the Garden of Paradise. The gardens in Lahore are intended to create an earthly utopia in which humans co-exist in perfect harmony with all elements of nature.

Musafat sat down in a shaded place in Shalimar Bagh. He was able to listen to two people, who were unaware of his presence. One of them was an imam and the other one was his son. The imam was telling about maintenance taking

place. A villager was working in his mosque. The job consisted of whitewashing the walls of the mosque. The imam told his son that the villager liked to talk to him. He explained to the imam that this very work was the most important work of his entire life. When asked why by the imam, the villager said it was because he was working in the house of Allah. By whitewashing its walls, he hoped that Allah would do the same for his black soul.

The imam then told his son that this opinion of the villager was completely wrong. He added: "I have made a theological study during many years. Allah doesn't let Himself be influenced by human beings and certainly not by the activity of an ignorant villager!" When Musafat heard this conclusion, he knew that he had to look elsewhere for a generous man or woman.

After visiting the gardens, Musafat just walked around in Lahore without having any fixed plan. As it was extremely hot, he walked into the direction of two men who were active in a flower garden. He was very thirsty and thus he asked in English for a glass of water.

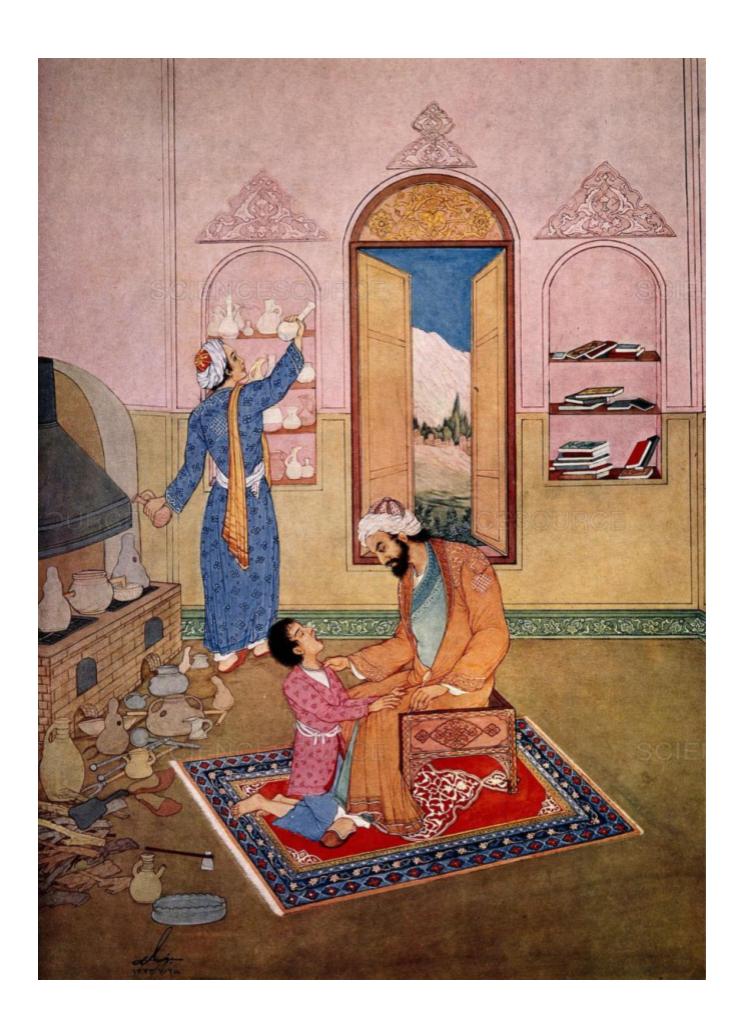
The older of the two men replied in Urdu. Because Musafat could not understand him, the younger man explained it to him: "My father thought that you asked to receive one of his flowers. He answered to you that instead of giving you a single flower, he'd give you the complete flower garden! He is the kind of man who means what he says".

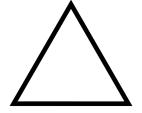
"I'll accept this generous gift and as I am free to do what I want with it – Musafat responded to the son – "I'll give my

garden to you!" He left the two men and was content to have found this generous gardener.

When he arrived at his hotel, he opened his computer and read an e-mail received from 'Alam Nawaz:

Earth dances with pleasure:
Congratulations!
No wonder everyone is happy!
Even the willow, the cypress and the sycamore dance.
Continue your quest: go South and locate the cook!
Open your eyes and observe an orange!
Green trees may hide an interior fire.





FIRE

Thereupon Musafat set forth upon his second distant journey. He travelled long, crossing oceans, mountains, plains and deserts. He travelled at sunrise and in noonday heat. Allah preserved him in his travels but after forty days he did not arrive at his destination. Don't worry! Allah preserved him during his journey but Musafat got into severe difficulties while trying to cross a Southern desert. What happened? I'll tell you in some detail.

When travelling in the desert, twelve heavily armed men attacked Musafat's caravan and killed everyone except Musafat. The attackers stripped him of all his possessions, except for a shirt and a pair of trousers. Musafat was put in a cage. They wanted to investigate if someone would be willing to pay a large amount of money to free him. In case that would not be possible, he would certainly also put to death.

During the night, a dacoit who was guarding Musafat had a dream. It's important to know that this guard took dreams very seriously. He wasn't just a dreamer. His expertise in dreaming had endowed him with an exceptionally keen inward eyesight. Someone recited in his dream the following quatrain:

I was in the garden in the morning and I was gathering roses

And all the time I was afraid that the gardener would see me.

The gardener, however, only spoke these kind words: 'A few roses are nothing as I give you the complete garden'.

At about the same time Musafat was also dreaming. Someone recited these lines in his dream:

What if you slept?
And what if in your sleep you dreamed?
And what if in your dream you went to heaven?
And there plucked a strange and beautiful flower.
And what if you awoke?
And you had that flower in your hand:
Ah, what then?

After awakening Musafat thought about his dream. He was reminded of the generous gardener in Lahore and then he said aloud: "A single flower is nothing! He gave me the complete garden!"

As you can imagine, this sentence gave quite a shock to the guard of Musafat who heard him saying this. This dacoit came to him in the middle of the night and said to Musafat: "Do you wish me to set you at liberty?" Musafat, of course, said yes, but wanted to know why. The guard simply answered: "It was in my heart to help you a little because I was helped much!"

The man even gave him a worn double-woven cloak to protect him during the day from the heat of the desert and in the night from its cold. To top it all, his guard also gave some guidelines to Musafat how to cross the desert. Musafat made his way out and followed the route as shown by the man who freed him.

Musafat was afraid that this man would change his mind, so he entered some thorn bushes and hid there until sunset. The thorns left scars at his arm - these remain to this day - but as he noticed some berries in its midst, he started to eat so eagerly that he was unaware of any pain.

He made his way out and continued to follow the route which the dacoit had indicated to him. Coming down from a sandy hill, he entered a plain where he reached a well. Musafat drank some water from the well and then took some rest under a tree at some distance from the well. When he was sitting there, about twenty armed horsemen came to the well to get water. Then they went away. Allah sealed their eyes and therefore they didn't see the escaped prisoner.

When travelling on, he found some radish leaves and ate them. The next day Musafat was consumed by thirst. What to do to survive? In the distance, another traveller could be seen. Musafat was too tired to run away or to hide. The man came nearer and nearer. He was carrying a jug and a staff in his hands. He saluted Musafat by saying: "Assalaam alaikum!" who replied in English: "May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon you!"

Musafat asked him if he was a man or a jinn. He answered that he was an Ash-paz and his name was Dil-i-Shad, which means "Happy Heart". Dil-i-Shad asked: "Who are you?" and Musafat answered: "A man lost!" whereupon Dil-i-Shad said: "So am I". As Musafat was unable to walk, Dil-i-Shad took him on his shoulders, and to make a long story short, Musafat arrived safely at his destination.

When saying goodbye to Dil-i-Shad, Musafat asked him what his rescuer meant when he said that he was an Ash-paz when they met. Dil-i-Shad explained that he was an Ash-paz by profession. That very day, 'Alam Nawaz, sent Musafat an email:

You have located the cook:
Congratulations!
Sometimes it smells of gnosis in the kitchen.
Turn west, and cross the water.
Find a certain inhabitant of the Green Island.
The west is best during this part of your quest!



WATER

Musafat didn't immediately set forth upon his third distant journey. He needed to travel long and had to cross several oceans, mountains, plains and deserts. This implied to travel at sunrise and in noonday heat in order to reach the Green Island, but as he was extremely tired, Musafat needed some time to recover.

Musafat had a dream about the Green Island that very night. He was walking along the beach in the direction of a city with a harbour. When he arrived there, he noticed that seven different ships were leaving for the Green Island. Somehow it was important to select one of these ships to reach his

destination. A captain of one of these seven ships told him that he used a detailed map to reach it safely. After showing Musafat that you have to cross seven oceans in order to reach the Green Island, the captain rolled the map up again.

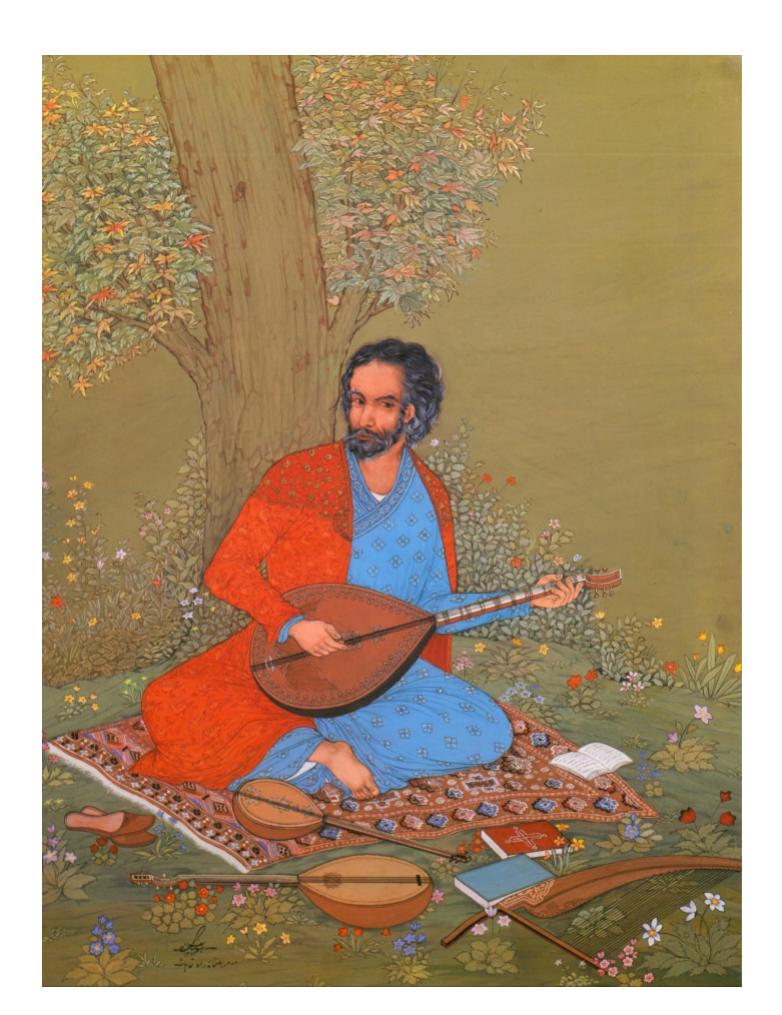
After boarding this ship and after sailing for seven months, Musafat arrived at the Green Island. There were seven cities at the edge of the ocean. Seven walls with high towers protected each city. After passing luxuriant vegetation and abundant streams, and ignoring six cities, Musafat entered the seventh city. Its buildings were constructed from diaphanous marble. All the inhabitants had beautiful and young faces, and they were wearing magnificent clothes. When he started to ask questions to one of the inhabitants, he, however, suddenly woke up from his dream.

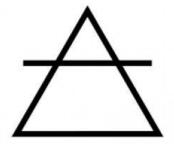
After taking seven weeks of rest, Musafat continued his quest. For some reason or other, he landed up in the New World. He happened to be listening to two people talking about a recent event. Apparently, a ship, the MSC Noah had lost 345 containers during a severe storm at the sea. While many of the containers sank, about two dozen of them washed up on the shore of an island. Plastic products wrapped up in more plastic had polluted the beach of this island. Next to that, there were a number of containers with hazardous substances. A major salvage effort to locate and retrieve the hundreds of missing containers was taking place by the navy and could last several months.

One of the people talking, a woman called Irena, happened to be an inhabitant of this island. Irena explained that the ship-owner from Panama immediately promised to clean the mess and to pay for all the costs: Words, empty words and no action! While the national government was discussing during hour after hour whether the event should be classified as a container calamity or a container disaster, and could not decide which terms were appropriate, Irena didn't wait. As a nurse, she was used to thinking in a practical way. She mobilized 2,200 volunteers to come to her island and by cleaning it, turned it once again into the beautiful green island it used to be. No one praised her, because Irena was the opposite of a proud politician.

Musafat received soon thereafter a message from 'Alam Nawaz:

You have found the nurse:
Congratulations!
Now wait for the wind to comb the tresses of trees.
It will take you away from the Green Island.
Travel to the North to find the minstrel who is as free as the wind.





WIND

Thereupon Musafat set forth upon a fourth distant journey. He travelled long, crossing oceans, mountains, plains and deserts. He travelled at sunrise and in noonday heat. After forty days he reached his destination in the North: The Land of Songs! As you can imagine, he immediately visited the MALS, the famous Music Academy of the Land of Songs.

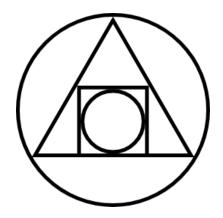
The Magister Musica of the MALS proudly showed him around. "Here", he said, "we train musicians to become master musicians. After a period of rigorous practice under the tutelage of one of my colleagues, we produce musicians with a purity of style, a seriousness in their music and with an unsurpassed mastery in an enchanting lyricism of their performance in front of an audience".

When listening to several of the musicians of the MALS with their soulful music and their dazzling performance, Musafat was quite impressed, but his enthusiasm didn't last. When they stopped singing, Musafat knew quite clearly that their music was unable to move his heart. How to find the minstrel as free as the wind among these master musicians?

That very night Musafat found it difficult to sleep. He left his bed and looked down from the balcony of his hotel to the deserted street. Deserted, but for one man who was leaning against the stem of a tree. The man started to sing a curious song. He sang and he sang and when he every now and then was silent, it was as if Musafat could hear the rustling of the trees in the wind as if the tongues in the trees were responding to the song. Then the stranger's voice could be heard again and in the silent intervals, at first the birds started to sing and when they stopped the brook continued with its song. When the man was singing, everything around him showed being conscious of what took place and was very much alive. Musafat then knew who this strange person was.

'Alam Nawaz immediately sent this message:

You have located the minstrel as free as the wind,
The gardener as generous as the earth,
The cook as warm-hearted as the fire
And the nurse with a service as humble as the water.
Earth, wind, fire and water hold powerful healing energy,
in case you unite them with a fifth element.
Find it in the company of a hero!

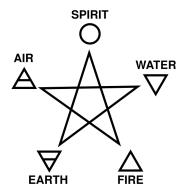


THE FIFTH ELEMENT

How to find a hero? Musafat, of course, knew not where he would meet the hero, but he knew what to do: He had to set forth upon another distant journey. He travelled long, crossing oceans, mountains, plains and deserts. He travelled at sunrise and in noonday heat. Allah preserved him in his travels and after forty days he was in the company of a hero. A hero is after all easy to find, because of his outwardly clearly visible heroic deeds. The hero was well-known because he had conquered most part of Dunya.

His name was Alex Yunani. Alex was often lonely, but not alone. Friendship was very valuable to him, but, as it is with everyone, he had few friends. One day – and Musafat was already in his company - he received a letter wherein he was told that one of his best friends, his personal physician, was poisoning him. Alex received this letter at the same time that this very friend offered him something to drink. He showed the letter to his friend, while immediately drinking from the cup offered by his friend.

The physician was visibly moved by this act of true friendship. He told Alex that he wanted to give him something in return. It was a probably very costly rolled-up parchment. Alex accepted this gift, but his level of friendship was not in need of outward presents, he immediately passed it on to the third person standing nearby. This was Musafat who said that he would thank both of them by making good use of this present.



THE ROLLED-OUT PARCHMENT

This time there was no message of 'Alam Nawaz. That's why Musafat decided to return to 'Alam Nawaz and discuss things in person. When arriving at the house of 'Alam Nawaz he, however, found a letter written by 'Alam Nawaz. Musafat was told that he had located the four replacements for the Circle of the Four. Friendship, true friendship - and not the kind of friendship that is, in reality, a commercial transaction – would function as the connecting element to strengthen this Circle of the Four.

When he'd open the parchment and read its contents he thereby would start a new task. He would never meet 'Alam Nawaz again because after opening the parchment he read what his task was:

Clouds, wind, moon, sun and heavens are all active That you may receive some bread and eat it in remembrance.

For your sake, all are whirling around and obey orders. Would it be just then that only you would not obey? Your task from now on is to be the 'Alam Nawaz! Viva nell 'anima del mondo! Perso nel vivere profondo!

Musafat had become the new 'Alam Nawaz, i.e. the Guardian, the Cherisher, and the Protector of the world known as 'Alam.



The End

