



## Divergent Interpretations of Omar Khayyam's Quatrains: The Pivotal Role of FitzGerald

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### ABSTRACT

Omar Khayyam, a philosopher, mathematician, astronomer, and scientist, is one of the intellectuals whose arguments and insights traveled beyond the borders of Persia and profoundly influenced the literature and cultures of many other countries over the years. The Eastern-inspired quatrains' meanings, contexts, and messages were subjected to unrestrained interpretations and distortions, dramatically impacting Khayyam's reputation. Although scholars debated the non-uniformity of the quatrains and cast doubt concerning the attributions to Khayyam, FitzGerald picked up a few poems from hundreds of quatrains, and his rendering of selected quatrains became more accountable for the related phenomenological diversions. Afterward, by utilizing techniques such as adding, subtracting, and incorporating a few quatrains into one, he developed a compilation that, on the one hand, became a seasoning for Western readers and, on the other hand, threatened the spiritual, scientific, and cultural context of Khayyam. Thus, biased interpretations by FitzGerald resulted in a series that reflected controversial schools, including materialism, hedonism, agnosticism, determinism, nihilism, and skepticism. This article illustrates the inauthenticity regarding the attribution and interpretation of quatrains by applying a few quatrains as examples of the collections, as well as the fact that none of the extracted schools are consistent with Khayyam's philosophy and thought. Additionally, the primary quatrains credited to Khayyam adopt a mystical and Sufi perspective.

**Keywords:** Omar Khayyam, Rubaiyyat, Quatrains, FitzGerald, Philosophical Schools, Ideological Manipulation

### Ömer Hayyam'ın Dörtlüklerinin Çelişkili Yorumları: FitzGerald'ın Temel Rolü

#### ÖZ

Bir filozof, matematikçi, astronom ve bilim adamı olan Ömer Hayyam, argümanları ve içgörülerini İran sınırlarının ötesine geçen ve yıllar boyunca diğer birçok ülkenin edebiyatını ve kültürünü derinden etkileyen entelektüellerden bir düşünürdür. Doğu'dan ilham alan dörtlüklerin anlamları, bağlamları ve mesajları sınırsız yorumlara ve çarpıtmalara maruz kaldı, Hayyam'ın itibarını önemli ölçüde etkiledi. Bilim adamları dörtlüklerin tek biçimli olmadığını tartışmalar ve Hayyam'a yapılan atıflarla ilgili şüpheler uyandırsalar da, FitzGerald yüzlerce dörtlükten birkaç şiir seçerek dörtlüklerin yorumlaması ilgili fenomenolojik sapmalardan daha sorumlu hale geldi. Daha sonra birkaç dörtlük toplama, çıkarma, bir araya getirme gibi tekniklerden yararlanarak, bir yandan Batılı okuyucular için bir çeşni haline gelen, diğer yandan manevi, bilimsel ve Hayyam'ın kültürel bağlamı derinden değişti. Böylece, FitzGerald'ın önyargılı yorumları, materyalizm, hedonizm, agnostisizm, determinizm, nihilizm ve şüphecilik dahil olmak üzere tartışmalı okulları yansıtan bir dizi ile sonuçlandı. Bu makale, derlemelere örnek olarak birkaç dörtlük uygulanarak dörtlüklerin isnat edilmesi ve yorumlanmasındaki asılsızlığın yanı sıra, çıkarılan ekollerin hiçbirinin Hayyam'ın felsefesi ve düşüncesiyle tutarlı olmadığı gerçeğini ortaya koymaktadır. Ek olarak, Hayyam'a atfedilen birincil dörtlükler, mistik ve tasavvufi bir bakış açısı benimsemektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Ömer Hayyam, Rubaiyyat, Dörtlükler, FitzGerald, Felsefi Okullar, İdeolojik Manipülasyon

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## Introduction

Omar Khayyam (1048–1131 AD) remains one of the most illustrious figures in history, even after his death. He was an Eastern astronomer, scientist, mathematician, musician, and later a poet. His quatrains gained fame in the West after the translation of Edward FitzGerald in 1859, with a radically different theological orientation and context. As in one of his letters, FitzGerald purports: "Anything like a literal translation would be, I think, unreliable." "It is an amusement to me to take what liberties I like with these Persians, who (as I think) are not poets enough to frighten one from such excursions, and who do want a little art to shape them" (Terhune & Terhune, 1980, p. 261). The quatrains of Khayyam afterward depicted a variety of philosophical and spiritual concepts. Scholars have drawn many schools, from Nihilism to Hedonism to Islamic mysticism, through his poems. This article aims to demonstrate the multi-dimensional interpretations that have led to the establishment of different schools and then compares and contrasts a few Rubaiyyat (quatrains) to illustrate contradictions that emerged primarily during and after the transformation into English.

Hundreds of studies have tried to uncover Khayyam's initial convictions, opinions, and philosophical approaches. His quatrains are among the most mysterious in Persian literature. Poems credited to him have boosted his prestige in recent years, even though none of his contemporaries or sources have mentioned Khayyam, a poet and the composer of even a single quatrain. According to Farzaneh, the quatrains attributed to him started to surface sparingly about two centuries after he passed away. (Farzaneh, 1970, p. 33).

Allameh Muhammad Taqi Jafari divides Khayyam's quatrains into three categories: those with nihilistic ideas that go against his philosophical background; some with themes of Epicurean attitudes that also contradict his religious beliefs; and the third group contains epistemological-ontological concerns such as life's instability, the struggle between good and evil, the limits of human knowledge versus God, and the mortality of all beings (Shokrollahzadeh, 2016, p.19). Other researchers have made an effort to categorize quatrains into four groups: relatively original Rubaiyyat; pseudo-Khayyamian Rubaiyyat; imitative; and non-Khayyam Rubaiyyat (Fuladwand, 1968, pp. 7–11). The endeavors made by researchers to categorize Khayyam's poetry demonstrate that all actual Khayyam researchers are aware of and concur that it is erroneous to attribute all poems to Khayyam. Second, there is a growing tendency to ascribe more quatrains to him. Contextual constraints caused by such an unbridled process made it difficult for academics to determine the real Khayyam and his school of thought. Western researchers also took the same route after realizing the falsity of the attributions to ascertain Khayyam's worldview and validate his original quatrains. For instance, Arthur Christensen (1875–1945), a Danish–Persian speaker, was the first to commit himself to identify the difference between authentic and dubious quatrains. He employed various methods to locate the original quatrains (Polat, 2008, p.35). Russian scholar Vladimir Zhukovsky published Omar Khayyam and the Wandering Quatrains in 1897. In this edition, he verified the original quatrains and eliminated 82 Rubaiyyat that had no connection to Khayyam (Dashti, 1998, p. 16).

Finding and verifying the actual quatrains of Khayyam appears time-consuming and expensive due to the scarcity of original scripts. It is important to remember that Khayyam was not always known for his quatrains to the same extent that he is now. Despite making enormous contributions to mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, music, and medicine, he led a typical life at the time. Years after his passing, his quatrains were peaceful and free of philosophical and religious debates. Many of the poems in so-called Khayyam's collections belonged to other authors, like the Persian poet and scholar

Afdal ad-Din Kashani (1213–1214 AD) (Homaei, 1988, p. 24). Due to the problem of attributing the quatrains of Khayyam to others and others to Khayyam, the quest was rendered ineffective in discovering the original Rubaiyat. However, in contrast to the claimed quatrains, Khayyam's treatises and other writings do not include ambiguity.

## Review of Related Literature and Studies

Due to the complexity of his contradictory attitudes toward life, religion, and philosophy, it is challenging, if not impossible, to ascertain Khayyam's final intellectual and philosophical personality based on a few quatrains. According to the ideological resonances of the poems, Khayyam was a guy who frequently changed his mind about the nature of reality, moving from mysticism to materialism and from determinism to a supporter of free will. Interpreters may conjure up many figures for Khayyam based on the jumble of quatrains attributed to him. Some scholars include him in the list of agnostic poets, as FitzGerald envisioned (Aminrazavi, 2005, p. 237). Few academics have demonstrated his mystic thinking; others, like his biographer Imam Muhammad Baghdadi, have regarded him as a committed Muslim (p. 46). Some critics attempted to introduce him as a Sufi of his day (Nasr, 2006, p. 174), while others claim he contests this by disparaging Sufis and calling them hypocrites and double-faced (Seyed Gohrab, 2012, p. 27).

Concerning Khayyam's reality, there were many thorny issues raised. Quatrains interpreted in a materialistic light raise questions about a learned man who had read the Quran and Hadith, responded to all inquiries about the religion, and then suddenly became confused and ruminated on the meaning of creation, the nature of the universe, and nature of humans, respectively. Khayyam wrote dozens of treatises, all of which, according to Aminrazavi, began by praising the Almighty God and requesting His help. He develops a worldview that holds people responsible for their acts, affirms God's status as the creator, and fervently upholds the value of revelation and the necessity of the subject of prophecy (Aminrazavi (2005, pp. 157–60).

In the process of identity conflict between Western researchers and the documentation about Khayyam in Persian sources, like Beyhaqi's History, we come to very significant differences, as if the Khayyam discussed in the West was not the one who speaks Persian but instead born in a city in England. For instance, His son-in-law, Imam Muhammad al-Baghdadi, claims that Khayyam studied Metaphysics in Avicenna's book *Shifa* in the final moments of his life. When he reached the chapter on "The One and the Many," he asked me to summon the righteous companions so he could make his testament. He then made his will, stood up, and prayed. Neither ate nor drank. Performing the last evening prayer, he prostrated and implored: O God! You know I have sought to know you through the measure of my power. Forgive my sins, for my knowledge, is my means of approaching you (Beyhaqi, 1938, p.85). It is puzzling why and how a scientist who exhibits such conviction and dedication to the historical records of his own country ends up serving as a role model for intoxication and enjoyment in western culture.

Rezazadeh cites Khayyam's classification of the distinct sorts of God-seekers and -lovers in his book *Danesh Namehy-e Khayyam*: "First, the theologians who try to grasp God purely via verbal arguments." Second, to understand God, philosophers and sages use logical and intellectual methods of inquiry. The third group, the Sufis, cleanse their spirits of bodily filth and lusts not via reflection and reason but through soul purification and moral refinement. As the soul ascends, it soars to heaven and unites with reality. Khayyam is undoubted of the opinion that the last method [Sufism] is the best way to know God (Rezazadeh, 1998, pp. 389–391). Therefore, in light of Khayyam's demonstration of

such a notion about Sufism, the majority of anti-religious and anti-Sufi interpretations are called into doubt. However, critics have been open to reading Khayyam's quatrains from an Islamic perspective under the shade of original historical records. These statements, in particular, may be found in Khayyam's treatises, generally accepted as being written by him.

Unlike the heavenly and mystical figure, Al-Baghdadi described, European and Russian followers of Khayyam's Rubaiyat have expressed opposing views. They symbolize Khayyam as a drunken and tired thinker who sees gayness as the only road to pleasure. The illustrations for each quatrain ascribed to Khayyam, translated by FitzGerald or others, provide Khayyam with contradictory pictures from his scientifically and historically confirmed treatises. As a result, the mentioned inconsistencies and contradictions between the contexts and approaches of some quatrains have molded Khayyam into a multifaceted figure who has sometimes ambiguously changed his viewpoints. The increasing number of quatrains contributed to Khayyam is another puzzling phenomenon that complicates the discussions about his philosophy. Presenting some quatrains attributed to Khayyam, this brief study demonstrates the complexity and intellectual discrepancies in the collection of quatrains. Several schools of thought, including Agnosticism, Hedonism, Gnosticism, Materialism, Atheism, Sufism, Reincarnationism, Esotericism, and others, can be inferred by readers from the collection. The last section ends with the impact of the translation manipulations and the role of FitzGerald in prolonging such ambiguities.

### **Purpose and Research Questions**

The mentioned inconsistencies and contradictions between the contexts, Sadeq Hedayat says that a person who lives a hundred years and changes his faith and views twice a day would never be able to express such contradictory thoughts as those multifaceted opinions inserted in the Rubaiyyat (Hedayat, 1974, p. 1). Therefore, this study aims to determine how far the quatrains attributed to Khayyam faced semantic and conceptual corruptions. Moreover, contradictory messages emerged from the quatrains that exposed Khayyam's face upside down to the world of literature as the consequence of the employment of particular translation procedures and from the interference of personal and intellectual inclinations. Therefore, this research sees it as crucial to investigate the causes, origins, and processes of such tendencies and identify the elements which contributed to the distortions.

### **Methodology**

As this study aims to determine the causes and reasons for the manipulations of the original quatrains, a comparative and descriptive methodology has been used based on the dispersion of quatrains, particularly quatrains from the FitzGerald collection. This attempt tries to estimate the intricacy of the problem based on the views of writers, biographers, and scholars. The nature of such studies requires materials with relative and maximal validity. The collections of Rubaiyyat by FitzGerald applied in this study are approvable by almost all scholars and researchers. On the other hand, to recognize the depth of ideological manipulations in the process of translation, the viewpoints of Andre Lefevre (1945-1996) have been briefly applied.

### **Results and Discussion**

Some quatrains attributed to Khayyam ask about unsolved concerns about existence and its meaning, as well as the afterlife, while they wait for rational and logical answers. The author challenges life and

everything within since he cannot find a convincing answer to his doubts. Because of these difficulties, questions and skepticism begin concerning the philosophical and theological school to which the quatrain-based poet Khayyam belongs. On the other hand, none of the quatrains associated with Khayyam's philosophy contradict God or display any evidence of infidelity, as Seyyed Gohrab has suggested (Seyyed Gohrab, 2012, p. 46). However, after noticing all kinds of shortcomings, contradictions, and failures in this worldly life, he decides to criticize the causes of all kinds of dissipating from this world:

None answer'd this; but after Silence spake  
A Vessel of a more ungainly Make:  
"They sneer at me for leaning all awry;  
What? did the hand then of the potter shake? (FitzGerald, 2012, p. 63)

According to several poems attributed to Khayyam, he seeks to rationalize any approach as a thinker who values logic, and all that can be confirmed intellectually (Dshti, 1965, p. 254), rejecting metaphysical and philosophical theories as well as Sufism impulses. It could appear weird at first. However, such a logical outlook on life was his natural right, given that his main areas of study throughout his life were mathematics, space, and the structure of celestial bodies:

For "IS" and "IS NOT" though with Rule and Line,  
And "UP-AND-DOWN" by Logic I define,  
Of all that one should care to fathom, I  
Was never deep in anything but-Wine. (FitzGerald, 2012, p. 38)

When researchers put the collections of quatrains claimed to be Khayyam together, they witness a landscape of contradictions and inconsistencies that, according to the collectors, all lead to a persona named Khayyam. Irrespective of the mentioned dilemmas, the only common point in all quatrains is that Khayyam generally binds himself to worldly concepts such as dust, clay, clod, pot, potter, wine, and short-term ecstasy. All the signs and symbols depict a hapless life filled with unavoidable pains and problems. In his quatrains, three agents, Potter, Saki, and the Universe, play central roles in leading human beings to many disasters and obstacles. The juxtaposition of some ascribed quatrains will reveal the reality of the concurrent conflict between quatrains, all attributed to our historical Omar Khayyam. It is possible to see the complexity of this significant character by just scanning the intellectual symbols in his poems. The reader will be submerged in questions and confront a perplexing occurrence.

## 1. Hedonism

Some philosophers and intellectuals indulge in earthly pleasures, ignore existential anxieties, and relieve mental and intellectual aches to escape and deliver themselves from the fear of death and trouble, which are natural and inescapable components of human life. Hedonism thus serves as a painkiller, embracing countless Europeans who are sick of wars and anarchy. In this regard, a few quatrains of Khayyam conclude that living cheerfully and grasping the present moments is the only

way to escape all world afflictions. Such a promise intrigued FitzGerald to cheerfully choose the selected and rendered Rubaiyyat as a way to forget his perceptual bafflement and break away from the constraints of his time. As the following quatrain from his collection demonstrates:

Waste not your Hour, nor in the vain pursuit  
Of This and That endeavor and dispute;  
Better be merry with the fruitful Grape  
Than sadden after none, or bitter, Fruit. (FitzGerald, 2012, p. 38)

From a hedonistic point of view, since all of life's moments and days are fleeting, no matter how long or short, Khayyam encourages readers to enjoy each day with joy and disregard the past or future, as a person's physical existence is the only investment. While in the literature and culture of Islamic mysticism, grapes symbolize knowledge and wisdom. As Govinda Tirtha puts it, "the seed of the Vine of Knowledge was sown on the earth during the time of Adam, sprouted in Noah's time, blossomed in Abraham's time, bore grapes in the time of Moses, and was drawn into pure wine [the remembrance of God] in the time of the prophet Muhammad(Peace be upon Him)" (Govinda Tirtha, 1941, p. xvii). Khayyam is not the only Eastern-Islamic poet or mystic to utilize the word "grape" symbolically; Hafez and Attar are just two examples.

Some quatrains reveal the contradictions in Khayyam's perspective on human fate and destination. Man has the freedom to live his life as he pleases. To put it another way, we have made life either full of pleasure or full of obstacles. As a result, man is responsible for all events and changes that occur according to his free will. On the other hand, the human being cannot change his destination in other quatrains. Whatever happens in our lives is governed by some predetermined principles that we must adhere to without the ability to change their course. Such inconsistencies have created numerous difficulties in identifying the real Khayyam among groups of quatrains, each of which depicts a distinct personality:

With Earth's first clay They did the Last Man's knead,  
And then of the Last Harvest sow'd the Seed:  
Yea, the first Morning of Creation wrote  
What the Last Dawn of Reckoning shall read. (FitzGerald, 2012, p. 43)

## 2. Doubts about the existence of life in the Hereafter (Skepticism)

How sweet is mortal Sovranty!--think some:  
Others--"How blest the Paradise to come!"  
Ah, take the Cash in hand and waive the Rest;  
Oh, the brave Music of a distant Drum! (FitzGerald, 2012, p. 38)

'The brave Music of the Distant Drum' is a Persian proverb, meaning not to trust in a claim or other stuff; a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, as the English saying goes. It represents arguments and conversations on Paradise and Afterlife's pleasures. To put it another way, it threw doubt on the existence of life after death.

Khayyam perceives a sense of ambiguity if there is no clue or proof to understand the Resurrection or a better life after this worldly life. It is a one-way and once-in-a-lifetime experience. As a result, all promises made in Bibles and the Quran about the Day of Judgment remain questionable. In this quatrain, as Weiming and Ikeda write, Khayyam's intellectual structure is similar to that of Buddha and Confucius. They suggest forgetting all other kinds of life and focusing solely on today's pleasures and entertainment (Weiming & Ikeda, 2011, pp. 103-117). He purports the same idea in many other quatrains:

And those who husbanded the Golden Grain,  
And those who flung it to the Winds like Rain,  
Alike to no such aureate Earth are turn'd  
As, buried once, Men want dug up again. (FitzGerald, 2012, p. 6)

Khayyam was well-versed in the Quran and was well aware that one of the cornerstones of Iman (faith) in Islam is believing in and testifying to the Resurrection. He knew that all human beings would be rounded up and measured for their acts (Quran: 2, 286). Any attempt to deny one of the pillars outlined moves a person away from the premise of believing. However, according to the last line of this quatrain, there is no Resurrection or kind of life after earthly existence. Unequivocally, he states that man is not as precious as gold to recover after being buried in the dust and soil:

Alike for those who for TO-DAY prepare,  
And those that after a TO-MORROW stare,  
A Muezzin from the Tower of Darkness cries  
Fools! Your Reward is neither Here nor There. (Arberry, 2005, p. 7)

Any attempt to interpret Khayyam as denying the hereafter is flawed because it fails to take into account the intellectual and religious background of the author as well as the literature and culture that influenced him. The physical world is viewed as meaningless throughout the Islamic mystical and literary traditions, notably in Sufi literature, where symbolic words communicate with the world of eternity through the heart, which is thought to be the site of God's presence. These concepts have a far broader scope than materialism and nihilism.

### 3. Agnosticism

An agnostic does not deny the existence of God and Heaven. However, it "holds the view that any ultimate reality (such as God) is unknown and probably unknowable" (Merriam-Webster). It is possible to be an agnostic atheist, though, as Poidevin asserts, "one who does not believe in God and does not permit the idea to have any practical impact on their life, while acknowledging that they do not have substantial grounds for disbelief" (Poidevin, 2010, p.9). From the perspective of FitzGerald and his translations, according to Seyyed Gohrab, Khayyam suffers from agnosticism, unable to grasp the purpose of creation and the direction in which he should proceed. He claims that despite living and studying for many years and collecting knowledge for seventy-two years, all he obtained were uncertainties and doubts. (Seyyed Gohrab, 2012, p. 26):

The Skies rotate, I cannot guess the cause;  
And all I feel is grief, which in me gnaws;  
Surveying all my life, I find myself  
The same unknowing dunce that once I was! (Govinda Tirtha, 1941, p. 19)

Inquiring into a person's philosophy of life might lead to grasping compelling reasoning and rational goals. However, certain aspects of life stay concealed from view and need various techniques to overcome challenging issues. Because man does not possess all of the necessary tools, he stops and wanders into an intellectually ambiguous position in the middle of his search:

Into this universe, and Why not knowing  
Nor Whence, like Water willy-nilly flowing;  
And out of it, as Wind along the Waste,  
I know not Whither, willy-nilly blowing. (FitzGerald, 2012, p. 32)

In numerous quatrains, Khayyam expresses his solid and abiding faith in his wisdom and shows the reader the way to happiness and salvation. In other words, they adopt a strategy that generally veers from the agnostic movement's course:

Unless your mind recedes from friends and foes,  
Your prayers are rejected for He knows;  
You cannot flee from doubts and phantasies,  
Until you shun your Self and worldly shows. (Govinda Tirtha, 1941, p. 104)

#### 4. Determinism

According to the determinism viewpoint, Khayyam promotes a way of being and living preoccupied with planned objectives in a handful of his quatrains. Certain quatrains exemplify how everything in this universe proceeds following a predetermined design. Therefore, the argument over whether humans have free will is nonsensical and futile. He says:

And that inverted Bowl they call the Sky,  
Whereunder crawling coop'd we live and die,  
Life not your hands to it for help—for It  
As importantly moves as you or I. (FitzGerald, 2012, p. 15)

From the point of the quatrain above, human beings are constrained within the circle of fatalism. These poems harken back to an old philosophical debate about the inconsistencies of divine providence and human authority. If God is all-knowing, he must know whether we will spend eternity in Paradise or Hell. "He should be aware of our deeds, both done and undone" (Quran, 67:13). That is, if these acts (according to the Quran) are written in the eternal and on the Al-Lawh al-Mahfudh (the preserved tablet), (Quran, 85:22), we will have no choice and will be powerless to change the outcome.



Therefore, the divine test of human beings seems in vain. In other words, the will of man is based conditionally on God's determination.

This approach to Man and his destination has broadly been discussed in Islamic philosophy and has divided the believers into two categories. Some scholars believe that man has authority in this world and enjoys free will. In contrast, others conjure that the whole existence, including our world, has been preprogrammed, and each living being has to follow fate, which has been already determined for him (Mutahhari, nd, pp. 56-8). Some of Khayyam's quatrains place him among the latter group:

What, without asking, hither hurried whence?  
And, without asking, whither hurried hence!  
Another and another Cup to drown  
The Memory of this Impertinence! (Arberry, 2005, p. 8)

Since the early ages of the establishment of Islam, there has been a dispute among Islamic philosophers about whether human beings end up with determinism or free will. Therefore, books are rife with criticisms that each has attempted to illustrate the validity of their thesis. This problem is an essential requirement for the expansion and evolution of human thought, yet it does not necessarily hold to skepticism or seek solace in agnosticism.

## 5. Denialism

Some of Khayyam's poetry put him in the company of denialism. "Denialism is denial writ large-when an entire segment of society, often struggling with the trauma of change, turns away from reality in favor of a more comfortable lie" (Specter, 2009, p. 2). Although this label does not fit the status of a famous scientist and a committed thinker like Khayyam, many poems attribute him to such fragile thoughts. Khayyam is too big to deceive himself and starve in the cave of the ignorant. Nevertheless, surprisingly, quatrains named after him were found in the translation collections, which altered his course in history. One of the concerns elicited from some of his quatrains is the denial of the Hereafter. According to some critics, Khayyam tries to get people to think about things like the potential of a different sort of existence in the Hereafter by inviting them to present rational and reasonable applications (Alsatie, 2019. P.30). So, the technique of denial may work here:

When world is fresh, and blowing roses hail,  
Bestow thy grace on lovers in thy pale ;  
Away with Houries, Halls of Heav'n, or Hell,  
These windy words will blow us in the gale. (Govinda Tirtha, 1941, p. 140)

The mentioned quatrain highlights the hypercritical manner of life that its era's religious leaders used to control the community's will and destiny by employing religion as a potent tool. Khayyam, a long-time remote pupil of Avicenna and author of several treatises, was neither a pagan nor a non-believer intellectual. He used to begin his endeavors in the name of the All-Powerful God. However, witnessing an oppressed and unknowing society, whose religious and political hypocrites chained people in ignorance and incarceration, he felt grief and misery concerning injustice in some parts of

the community of his day. Unlike the criticisms pointed out earlier, another group focused on the quatrain is the concluding sentence that argues that Khayyam openly and comradely denies Hell and Paradise, two forms of living in the Afterlife.

## 6. Nihilism

There is no such concept as futility in the purpose of creation in the religion that Khayyam considers himself a companion. God made man in the most excellent shape and with the highest value and dignity for a particular reason. However, this reflection is the opposite in some quatrains credited to him. The forthcoming quatrain highlights the absurdity of living on our planet. It confirms the assumption that a man's life eventually ends with no desirable ending for him:

“With them the of Seed of Wisdom did I saw,  
And with – my own land labour'd it to grow:  
And this was all the Harvest that I reap'd-  
'I came like water, and like Wind I go.” (Arberry, 2005, p. 7)

A child grows up to be a master and eventually dies; the other follows in his footsteps and perishes. According to quatrains, these circulations mirror the universe's pre-timing and, as a result, terminate in futility. The final line of the preceding quatrain clearly illustrates this point 'I came like water, and like Wind, I go.' We face the truth that nothing exists in the realm of becoming and circulation. Everything is one and nothing else. There is no other existence but that of time, which will finally terminate in naught. Therefore, the heavens, planets, and the entire cosmos are meaningless. The bad news is that the period we live in, and the moments we want to preserve and valorize, are quickly becoming a case of the past. As a result, the future quickly supplants by another past. According to this circulation, the future we anxiously await becomes the past that has already passed away. Finally, Khayyam encounters various philosophically perplexing and identical figures in the quatrains. Another significant stumbling block in researching Khayyam is the possibility of two Khayyam with distinct personalities and perspectives (Tabatabai, 1991, p. 17). Many of his quatrains have been attributed to others, some to him. Scholars have debated this perplexing, multi-dimensional identification of his works for decades. The debate over the attribution of quatrains to him is still going on. On the other hand, FitzGerald offered a new perspective on Khayyam through his selected translation of quatrains. The documented images, which drown out his quatrains, are replete with western symbols that starkly contrast with Khayyam's intellectuality. As a result, the hazy clouds surrounding Khayyam's quatrains, symbolic of his school, get darker and more convoluted with each passing year. Therefore, the first mission should be to recognize and identify the actual Khayyam. Then, with the help of his other written and conformed works, serious efforts without prejudice seem crucial to set aside erroneous quatrains from the originals.

## The Pivotal Role of FitzGerald

Fitzgerald's approach to translating quatrains has added to the complexity, as has the impact of taste-based interpretations of quatrains, followed by Western readers' intellectual and ideological backgrounds. Poole and others show that Fitzgerald selectively fulfilled his task and that the concepts injected into a translated quatrain were sometimes derived from a combination of several Persian

pieces attributed to Khayyam (Poole, Ruymbeke, Martin, & Mason, 2011, p.xxi). FitzGerald was eager to build a decorative world for his readers irrespective of the central messages of the Eastern composer of Rubaiyyat, as he called his translation "pretty," "tessellated," and "scattered" (ibid). As a result of this broad approach, the messages contained in Persian quatrains were significantly distorted. Unfortunately, Fitzgerald's quatrains left a more profound impact on the world's literary and philosophical communities than the original Persian quatrains. Furthermore, the remained influences are opposed to the theoretical orientations of the original poems.

When it comes to conveying ideas from one language to another, translation is vitally important. In this regard, any changes or distortions in transferring concepts are the translator's responsibility. In the field of translation, ideological translation is one of the most effective elements. As Andre Lefevere asserts, "Rewritings can introduce new concepts, new genres, new devices and the history of translations, the history of literary innovation, of the shaping power of one culture upon another" (Lefevere, 2017, p. vii). In the process of translation, the translator's interventions are incredibly subjective, as Bastin calls "deliberate intervention" (Tedick, 2012, p. 30), which is related to the translator's cultural, social, and doctrinal identity, leads to a deep manipulation in the meaning and concept of the original text, both prose, and poetry.

According to Lefevere, the translator may seek to insert a sort of authority in the translated texts, which he calls "patronage." As he asserts:

(...) The translation is not merely a linguistic transfer but a cultural process. The translation is another type of rewriting (for instance, anthologies, historical books, criticism, etc.) motivated by the ideology and poetics of people who hold some kind of power or wish to use rewriting to gain power in the target culture (...). The ideology of a given place and time in which the rewriting occurs combines with the dominant poetological conceptions to determine the image of a work of literature that a translation projects. Rewriters can create images not just of a work but also of a writer, a genre, a whole period, etc. (Lefevere, 2017, p. xxii)

The meanings and messages of Khayyam's quatrains have been drastically altered due to numerous interpretations. FitzGerald is said to have contributed significantly to the distortion. As a result, it seems critical to figure out how he came up with these misunderstandings. Thomas Wright (1859-1936), a biographer of FitzGerald's translation of Khayyam's quatrains, believes that his translation is a reflection of FitzGerald's own emotions, which had a wandering mind about existence but could not find answers to his troubled mind (Brigham, 1925, p. 5). In other words, FitzGerald saw quatrains as a mirror reflecting his bewildered mind about life, death, and existence. By juxtaposing a few translated quatrains to Persian origins, influential factors; deletion, addition, substitution, and attenuation related to ideological manipulation introduced by Zauberga (2004) (Piskorska, & Walaszewska, 2017, p. 140) will be observed in the translations by FitzGerald.

In order to show the depth of ideological manipulation carried by FitzGerald, Shafiei, has determined the cases of deletion, addition, and attenuation in some of his translations through a comparative analysis, such as the following:

Awake! for Morning in the Bowl of Night	<i>[xoršid][kæmænde][sobh][bær][bam][æfkænd]</i>
Has flung the Stone that puts the Stars to Flight:	<i>[keyxosroe][ruz],[badeh][dær][jam] [æfkænd]</i>
And Lo! the Hunter of the East has caught	<i>[mey] [xor] [ke] [monadi] [sæhærgæh] [xizan]</i>
The Sultan's Turret in a Noose of Light.	<i>[avazeh] [æšræbu] [dær] [æyam] [æfkænd]"</i>

(Shafiei, 2012, p.131)

By comparing and contrasting FitzGerald's translations with Persian quatrains, readers can identify the extent of manipulation, particularly ideological distortion. All the aspects of manipulation can be observed in the preceding quatrain meticulously conducted by Shafei. Such extensive alteration can significantly damage the original text's thoughts and meanings when transferred into the target language. As an example, here is a thorough evaluation of Shafi'i:

There is no general correspondence between the source lines and the translated lines. In other words, the images created in the reader's mind through reading the four Persian lines are utterly distinct from those created through the four English lines. Not only the concrete words ([xoršid], [badeh], [jam], [kæmænd] ...) but also the message of the original quatrain, inviting the man to drink the wine (of love for God) every day with the sunrise, have been manipulated. Khayyam's bringing the word '[æšræbu],' an Arabic word seemingly extracted from the verses of the Quran, which may not be unintentional, provides evidence for the figurative sense of the wine with a religious load. (p.132)

Symbolic expressions are more vulnerable to manipulation than other literary works due to their sensitivity to expressing thoughts. Similar phenomena emerge in translating quatrains from Persian literature into English, although the two languages have distinct literary underpinnings. Thus, for example, during the manipulation of the translation, the term "wine," which has a mystical sense, was changed to the culture of the target language; owing to the intervention of the translators' ideology, it was unable to express its profound message to Western readers.

Another challenge emerges concerning the source of the poems or the reality of attributions. Confusions crane out from the translation of quatrains wrongly attributed to Khayyam or quasi-Khayyam in the English-speaking community. For example, the following quatrain:

Oh, plagued no more with Human or Divine  
To-morrow's tangle to itself resign,  
And lose your fingers in the tresses of  
The Cypress-slender Minister of Wine. (Arberry, 2005, p. 22)

The mentioned poem, attributed to Khayyam in the FitzGerald collection, as Poole and others note, is a religious debate between Christians and religious critics of this society about the duality of the existential nature of Jesus Christ, which dates back to the time of the ecumenical council in Chalcedon (451 CE). Furthermore, this poem appeared in 1861 (Poole et al., 2011, pp. 61-2).

FitzGerald has attributed the following poem to Khayyam, while Christine Rampis, in his book *Khayyam and His Quatrains*, ascribed it to Abu Nazar 'Abdul 'Aziz bin Mansur 'Asjadi:

Remember not what happened yesterday,  
Nor hail the morrow still so far away;  
Ye should not fret for future or for past!  
But now be calm and do not waste your day. (Govinda Tirtha, 1941, p. 97)

Weir says that there are quatrains attributed to Khayyam in the ancient manuscript that demonstrate him to be a faithful person, and we know that FitzGerald examined the same quatrains. However, they have not been included in FitzGerald's translations, such as:

Council will I give thee, if thou wilt give me ear;  
For God's sake, put not on the garments of falsehood!  
The issue is for all time, this world but for a moment.  
For the sake of a moment sell not the kingdom of eternity. (Weir, 1926, p.48)

The existing attitude and philosophy in the quatrain diverge from the Western-painted portrayal of Khayyam. Surprisingly, there is no reason to believe this poem is not by Khayyam (p.48). Durant writes that "the Darwinian mood of FitzGerald's time moved him to ignore Omar's kind humor and to deepen the antitheological strain" (Durant, 1950, p. 322). The profound mistake made by FitzGerald is that his understanding of Khayyam did not go beyond the literal translation of quatrains. As Sarton inserts, "English, French, German, Italian, and Danish translations are comparatively arranged following the text of FitzGerald's version, with further selections, notes, biographies, and other materials (...). Such literature lends itself admirably to interpolations, and many of the Rubaiyyat is probably apocryphal; one of them is ascribed to Avicenna" (Sarton, 1927, p. 761).

According to Brown, FitzGerald believed that Khayyam was a desperate and careless person and established a system that came up with nothing. So he showed his feelings in natural wine and roses and, to offer an ideal philosophy, inverted his thoughts in Rubaiyyat about fate, free will, existence, and annihilation (Brown, 1992, p.13). According to some, the second and subsequent editions of FitzGerald's translation of the Rubaiyat portray Khayyam as a realist who criticizes some Sufis for their hypocrisy, despite the first edition portraying Khayyam as a merry philosopher who enjoys eating and drinking and is in line with materialistic Western modernity. (Poole, Ruymbeke, Martin, & Mason, 2011, 56). FitzGerald's first translation guides the reader into materialism and predeterminism ideology (p. 57), and it evokes in the mind of the reader that Khayyam is under the rain of many questions for which the religion of Muhammad has no answer (ibid).

Criticism of FitzGerald's chosen quatrains began for reasons other than those listed. Khayyam's authentic writings go intellectually against the claimed perplexities. On the contrary, according to the treatises, he responds to many must-be-answered ontological questions (Nasr, 2006, pp. 170-178). Of course, as Poole and others mentioned, in later editions of FitzGerald's translations, Khayyam went further from the materialist accusation, taking a skeptic and agnostic face. He is approaching the thoughts of personalities such as Dante, the Renaissance poet, and Lucretius, the Roman poet, who wrote philosophical materials on the philosophy of existence and explained the universe on a materialistic basis (Poole, Ruymbeke, Martin, & Mason, 2011, 57).

According to Baqeri, it can be challenging to fully understand FitzGerald's quatrains and relate them to Khayyam's Persian sources at times (Seyed Gohrab, 2012, pp. 68–9). For instance, the Persian quatrain that is attributed to Khayyam but lacks a reliable source is as follows:

Ah, but my Computations, People say,  
Reduced the year to better reckoning? — Nay  
'Twas only striking from the Calendar  
Unborn To-morrow, and dead Yesterday. (ibid)

Will Durant, in his book; *The Story of Civilization*, asserts the following Paragraph:

Of the 110 quatrains translated by FitzGerald, forty-nine-in, the judgment of those familiar with the original-are faithful paraphrases of single quatrains in the Persian text; forty-four are composites, each taking something from two or more quatrains; two “reflect the whole spirit of the original poem”; six are from quatrains sometimes included in Omar’s text, but probably not his; two were influenced by FitzGerald’s reading of Hafiz; three have no source in any extant text of Omar, were apparently fathered by FitzGerald, and were suppressed by him in his second edition (Durant, 1950, p.322).

## Conclusion

The wide range of interpretations of the quatrains of Khayyam demonstrates the human race’s dispersal and intellectual disturbance concerning the universe and being. For millennia, intellectuals and researchers have grappled with ontological issues such as the purpose of creation, the co-existence of good and evil, the philosophy of life and death, the later phases of life, the notions and meanings of pleasure and happiness, and a slew of other issues. The uniqueness of quatrains is that everyone may regain their loss, leading to a condition of relative peace following a particular intellectual basis. Meanwhile, the sad side of the story is that Khayyam’s actual intellectual and philosophical standpoint is missing from the arguments as the supposed inventor of quatrains. Thus, it is logical and scientifically erroneous to ascribe all of the quatrains riddled with inconsistencies to Khayyam. Since Khayyam, an asset of Eastern literature, entered the literary world from such a hazy vantage point, it is necessary to deconstruct his work to free him from philosophical and intellectual ambiguities.

According to sound theories and scientific views surrounding the principles of translation and the translator's crucial task of conveying thoughts from one culture to another, FitzGerald was not an honest translator. He was motivated simply by the quatrains of Khayyam, and his purpose was to construct just an artwork. He did not attempt to grasp Khayyam correctly, and his investigation of Khayyam's philosophical and intellectual background was tangibly restricted and impracticable. FitzGerald only drew inspiration from Khayyam's quatrains, according to sound theories and scientific opinions regarding the principles of translation and the translator's critical role in communicating ideas from one culture to another, and his sole intention was to produce art. His investigation into Khayyam's philosophical and intellectual underpinnings was severely limited, and he could not identify the actual poet as a result of an insufficient effort to comprehend Khayyam.

FitzGerald and subsequent translators incurred a terrible blunder by attributing any quatrain to Khayyam without considering his other philosophical or scientific publications, personal beliefs, or intellectual background. Historical Omar Khayyam carried the labels of mathematician, scientist,

philosopher, and believer in his native country. Eastern readers view him as a poet who belonged to a respected and influential school of thought, in contrast to Western readers, who view him as a wandering poet whose significant goals were to have fun and seize the moment. FitzGerald's main focus was developing his significantly versed persona.

It appears impossible to manage and adapt all worldwide translations in vast, varied, and contradictory ranges. Because of this, it makes sense to distinguish between "Western Khayyam" and "Original Khayyam" in literary materials to ensure the genuine Khayyam, revered in Eastern culture and literature, is not obscured by imitative works and interpretations. Finally, further research is required to convey the authentic Khayyam to quatrain readers in distant countries that forbid access to his pure philosophy and metaphysical position as a significant thinker in mathematics, astronomy, literature, and science.

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