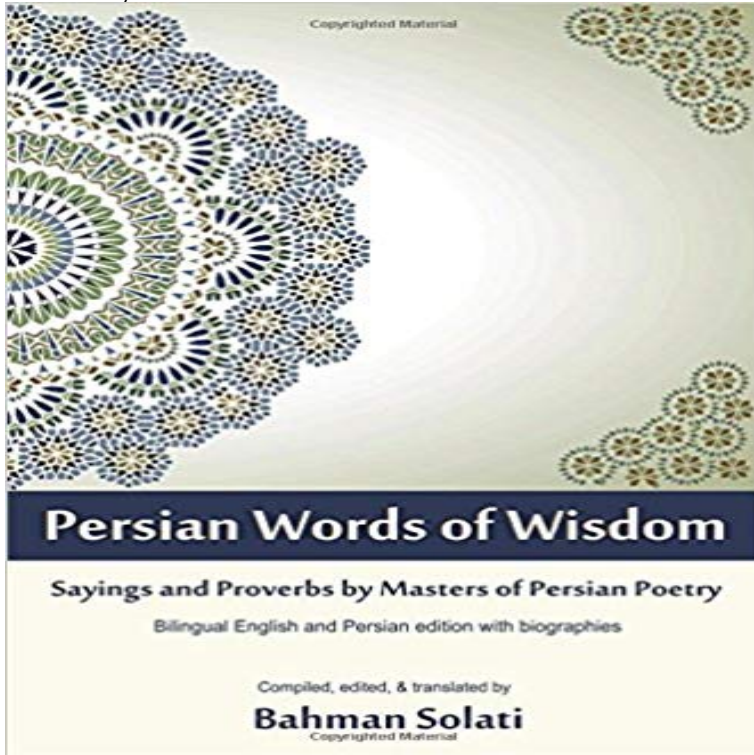


Persian Words of Wisdom: Sayings and Proverbs by Masters of Persian Poetry



What is the secret of happiness? What is the nature of love? What makes us good hosts or good guests? What traits should we seek out in friends and seek to embody as friends ourselves? How should we approach the sensual beauties of this world- when do they induce us to error and when are they signs of God? The poets and bards of many traditions have long sought answers to such questions, but perhaps no culture has taken up this challenge with more passionate urgency than that of Persia, from the ninth century AD to modern-day Iran. These eleven centuries of poetic tradition include poets who have become well-known in the West, such as Umar Khayyam, Rumi, and Hafiz, as well as many others whom Westerners have yet to discover. In Iran these poems remain part of everyday popular culture, with people of all classes and levels of education able to recite them from memory, even if they may not always be sure who the poets were, where they came from, or what precisely was the spiritual intent behind the verse. In *Persian Words of Wisdom*, the US-based Iranian scholar Bahman Solati has compiled hundreds of examples reflecting his country's religious and spiritual traditions, especially the Shia branch of Islam and Islamic Sufism, but also the Zoroastrian faith. This bilingual edition with his own English translations further illuminates the sometimes enigmatic poems with parallel Western proverbs, as well as comparison quotations from Christian, Jewish, and Buddhist scripture and secular sources ranging from Mark Twain to Dale Carnegie. One of Solati's goals in this anthology is to build a cultural bridge through poetry between the West and Iran, making these treasures of Persian culture more available both to Westerners generally and, most specifically, to young people of Iranian descent who have grown up in the English-speaking world, perhaps without

fully understanding the wealth of their heritage. For them and all readers, this will be a book of discovery.

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