

## Two Stories from The Golestan of Sa'di on the advantages of silence

Translated by Sir Edwin Arnold, [1899]

I said to a friend that I have chosen rather to be silent than to speak because on most occasions good and bad words are scattered concurrently but enemies perceive only the latter. He replied: 'That enemy is the greatest who does not see any good.'

The brother of enmity passes not near a good man  
Except to consider him as a most wicked liar.  
Virtue is to the eyes of enmity the greatest fault.  
Sa'di is a rose but to the eye of enemies a thorn.  
The world illumining sun and fountain of light  
Look ugly to the eye of the mole.

A scholar of note had a controversy with an unbeliever but, being unable to cope with him in argument, shook his head and retired. Someone asked him how it came to pass that, with all his eloquence and learning, he had been unable to vanquish an irreligious man. He replied: "My learning is in the Qur'an, in tradition and in the sayings of sheikhs, which he neither believes in nor listens to. Then of what use is it to me to hear him blaspheming?" To him of whom thou canst not rid thyself by the Qur'an and tradition The best reply is if thou dost not reply anything.



Tomb of Sa'di Shirazi; Persian Poet and Prose Writer