

Heinrich Sike's 1696 Congratulatory Poem for Adriaan Reland

Translated from the Arabic by Christian Lange

يا أيها صاحبي قد كنت في رشد
أظهرت من قولك ما أعجب البلد
يا ليت قصيدتي من أوجب شاعر
ما كان ما كان قد من مجدك عدد
ما كان الاسلاما ما كان اليهودية
علمت في عزمك المحمود ذي عمد
اليوم حركت ما قد كان في الأول
مجهول مقبور في استر البلد
البعض قد كدر في الاعين الطاهرة
والمسلم شارب من ما من صدد
نبي في الكاذن امي من هاشم
ما كان في صدرك ما كان من صمد
زقوم قد كانت يا ضال طعامك
وشربك السايغ من عين لا برد
وانت يا صاحبي ما أكرم فضلك
ايبت من لعنة وكنت في سعد

*yā ayyuhā ṣāhibī qad kunta fī rashad
aẓharta min qawlika mā aʿjaba l-balad.
yā layta qaṣīdatī min awjab shāʿir
mā kāna, mā kāna qadd min majdika ʿadad.*

mā kāna l-islāmā [sic] mā kāna l-yahūdiyya,
‘allamta fī ‘azmika l-maḥmūd dhī ‘amad.
al-yawma ḥarrakta mā qad kāna fī l-awwal
majhūlun maqbūrun fī asturi l-abad.
al-ba‘du qad kaddara fī l-a‘yuni l-ṭāhira
wa-l-muslimu shāribun mim mā min ṣadad.
nabiyyun fī l-kādhin [al-kādhīb?] ummī min Hāshim
mā kāna fī ṣadrika mā kāna min ṣamad.
Zaqqūm qad kānat yā dāllu ṭa‘āmuka,
wa-shurbuka l-sāyighu min ‘aynin lā barad.
Wa-anta yā ṣāhibī, mā akrama faḍlaka,
abītu min la‘natin wa-kunta fī sa‘ad.

Dear friend, you are rightly guided,
 you have produced speech that has astonished people.
 If only my poem were as is required
 of a poet, there would be no end to your praise.
 In your purposeful and praiseworthy mastery
 you have taught that Islam is unlike Judaism.
 Today, you have stirred up what was initially
 unknown, buried under eternal veils.
 Others have muddied the pure water sources;
 and the Muslim is drinking from what is [better] shunned.
 A lying prophet from [the tribe of] Hāshim, illiterate:
 ‘That which is in your heart did not come from God.
 [The hellish plant of] Zaqqūm, oh misled one, is your nourishment,
 and your tasty drink comes from a well [in hell] that is never cool!’
 You, however, dear friend, how noble is your virtue!
 I spend my nights in damnation, but may you enjoy good fortune.