

The travellers were a long time getting ready, and I withdrew to my tent. In the outer court a dog was gnawing and tearing at the ears of a dead ass—it was his evening meal before his night journey.

At nine o'clock all was in order. Then the dog began to bark, shouts and talking were heard, and the bells began to ring in earnest, much as when an orchestra starts to play. The large bells ding heavily and slowly, smaller bells chime in, innumerable small tinklers give forth a metallic sound, and the whole loud carillon moves off on the way to Meshed. The leading bells have jingled past our tents long before the last camels have left the court of the serai. The long train is only heard and is quite invisible, for now it is dark, and the only light is that of the stars. In two places in the train merry singers are heard, but they are drowned by the clang of the bells, which also dies away in the distance on the road to Imam Riza's tomb, worn for centuries by pilgrims and caravans. And we are enveloped in the perfect calm of another night.