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- Persian Letters - Letters -

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<a href="#">Letter 9</a>	<a href="#">Letter 11</a>
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*Mirza [1] to his friend Usbek in Erzerum*

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You were the only person who could have consoled me for the absence of Rica, and Rica alone could have consoled me for yours. We miss you, Usbek ; you were the soul of our society. What violence it takes to break the engagements which the heart and mind have formed ! We argue a lot here ; our arguments usually relate to morality. Yesterday the subject was whether men are made happy by pleasures and the satisfactions of the senses, or by the practice of virtue ? I have often heard you say that men were born to be virtuous, and that justice is a quality which is as inherent to them as existence. Explain to me, if you will, what you mean. I have spoken to mullahs who exasperate me with their passages from the Qur'an, for I do not speak to them as a true believer, [2] but as a man, a citizen, and paterfamilias. Adieu.

*Isfahan this last day of the moon of Saphar 1711*

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[1] According to Chardin, *Mirza* is a title that means "son of a prince" (IV, 123). He writes only this one letter, but he will receive from Usbek, in addition to four replies, a letter (no. 83) devoted to toleration.

[2] An expression characteristic of Moslems to designate themselves, especially in prayer.