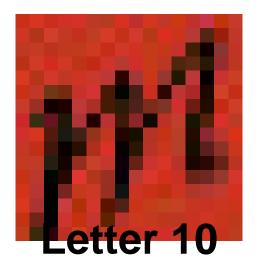
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Mirza [1] to his friend Usbek in Erzerum

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

[1] Acccording 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.