

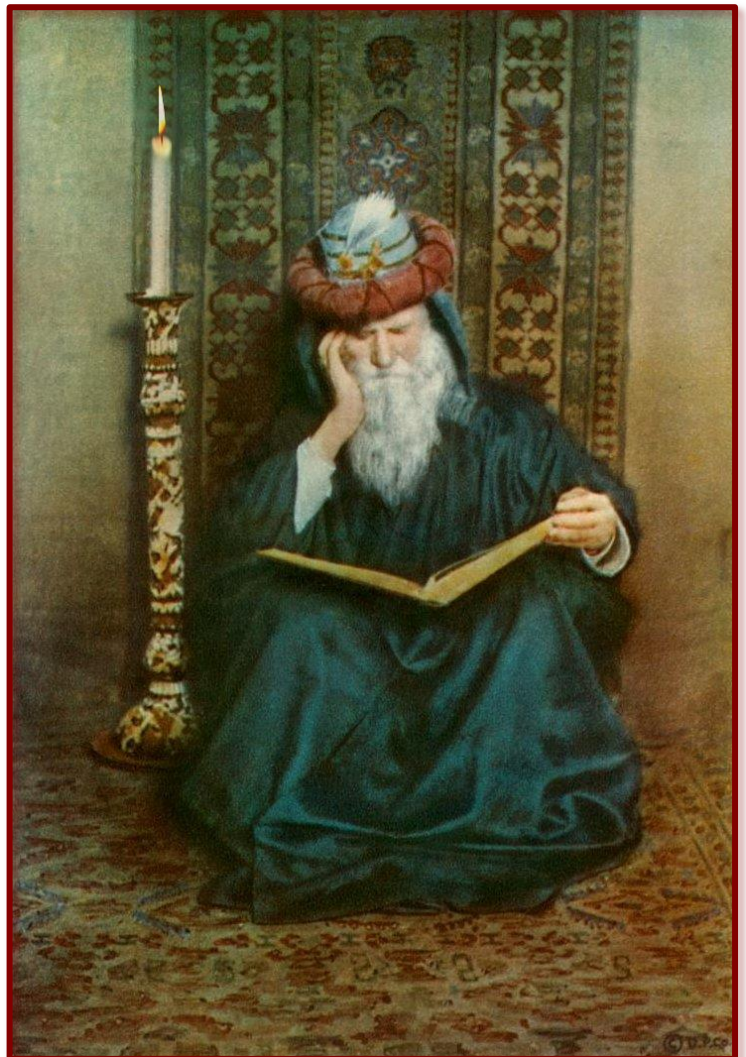
Generations of poets, philosophers, linguists, and other intellectuals have interpreted Omar Khayyám's "Rubáiyát" to mean many things.

Many modern Muslims, who cannot acknowledge that a Sufi poet drank alcohol, interpret the famous passage concerning "a loaf of bread, a jug of wine, and thou..." to mean something profoundly philosophical, spiritual, and alcohol-free. Metaphorical wine.

When I was about 10, I gravitated to the Southern Baptist church, whose rousing music captivated me. The Baptists performed the sacrament of Communion using Welch's grape juice, explaining that the "wine" with which Jesus had such a well-documented relationship represented "a bad translation from the Greek."

Many interpretations similarly attach themselves to the passage of the Rubáiyát that inspired me when I named my little publishing company. "The Moving Finger writes..." meant to me, just as I was pulling away from the sanctimonious hypocrisy of the Baptists, something deeply personal. "Try and stop me," the passage suggested to me. "What is written cannot be expunged, and those who attempt to censor me will suffer in their attempts."

**Steve Susoyev**



**Omar Khayyám  
as imagined in 1903 by  
Adelaide Hanscom Leeson**

*The Moving Finger writes; and, having Writ, moves on: Nor all your Piety nor Wit shall lure it back to cancel half a Line, nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.*

*~ From The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*

رباعیات عمر  
انگشت حرکت می نویسد. و، داشتن حکم، حرکت می کند در: نه همه  
تقوا و دینداری خود را و نه بذله گویی  
باید آن را فریب بازگشت به لغو نیم خط، و نه همه اشک خود را  
بشوید از یک کلمه از آن.