

27th November 2021

Want

“I never complained at the vicissitudes of fortune, nor murmured at the ordinances of Heaven, excepting once, when my feet were bare, and I had not the means of procuring myself shoes. I entered the great mosque at Cufah with a heavy heart, when I beheld a man who had no feet. I offered up praise and thanksgiving to God for His bounty and bore with patience the want of shoes.”

Sadi, The Rose Garden

I could leave you to ponder the meaning of the words above, from Sadi, a 13th century Persian poet, and say nothing else. For they surely contain a truth, a powerful message, that needs little elaboration. However, I do want to say something about why I've included this in my piece for today.

Christmas TV adverts abound! I've been overwhelmed recently at the attitudes conveyed that this Christmas should be, more than ever before, a time of self-indulgence. "We missed out last year," people say, "so we deserve to have it bigger and better this time around." "We've had to cope with restrictions, deprivations, for too long. We need to let our hair down." As a result, hedonism is encouraged, and we give ourselves to over-indulgence. The satisfying of self and our "right" to enjoy take precedence over all else. So, we have no shoes? Unlike Sadi's mosque-worshipper, we may well have the wherewithal to buy new ones, *and* all the other things we desire. Or we might expect for them to appear as a much-wanted gift under our Christmas tree from someone who's noticed we have no shoes and feels they should rectify our bare-feet problem. We expect to get. We expect to have. We expect to be given to. Why would *we* complain about the "vicissitudes of fortune" or murmur over the "ordinances of heaven" when we can always satisfy our cravings, our wants, for more shoes?

We might want, but do we *need*? Let's look around us and see someone with no feet. Let's look around us, we who are worshippers of all things material, and see someone with no feet. Let's look around us, we who would test out the comfort of our Gucci shoes, and see someone with no feet. Let's look around us, and see ... and know ... and change ... and not want so much ... A lesson to ponder as Christmas approaches?

A prayer for today

*Lord, when life is consumed with "wants", turn my thoughts to "needs",
and not just my own either! Amen*

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