



# **SALAMAN AND ABSAL**

**JAMI**

Global Grey ebooks

# **SALÁMÁN & ABSÁL**

AN ALLEGORY

**TRANSLATED FROM THE PERSIAN  
OF JÁMI  
BY  
EDWARD FITZGERALD**

1904

Salaman and Absal by Jami.

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and to pant for what would seem so Pantheistic an Identification with the Deity as shall blind him to any distinction between Good and Evil. <sup>2</sup>

I must not forget one pretty passage of Jámi's Life. He had a nephew, one Maulána Abdullah, who was ambitious of following his Uncle's Footsteps in Poetry. Jámi first dissuaded him; then, by way of trial whether he had a Talent as well as a Taste, bid him imitate Firdusi's Satire on Shah Mahmúd. The Nephew did so well, that Jámi then encouraged him to proceed; himself wrote the first Couplet of his First (and most noted) Poem—Laila & Majnun.

This Book of which the Pen has now laid the Foundation,  
May the diploma of Acceptance one day befall it,—

and Abdallah went on to write that and four other Poems which Persia continues and multiplies in fine Manuscript and Illumination to the present day, remembering their Author under his Takhalus of Hátifi—"The Voice from Heaven "and Last of the so reputed Persian Poets.

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<sup>2</sup> "Je me souviens d'un Prédicateur à Ispahan qui, prêchant un jour dans une Place publique, parla furieusement contre ces Soufys, disant qu' ils étoient des Athées à bruler; qu 'il s'étonnoit qu 'on les laissât vivre; et que de tuer un Soufy étoit une Action plus agréable à Dieu que de conserver la Vie à dix Hommes de Bien. Cinq ou Six Soufys qui étoient parmi les Auditeurs se jettèrent sur lui après le Sermon et le battirent terriblement; et comme je m'efforçois de les empêcher ils me disoient—"Un homme qui prêche le Meurtre doit-il se plaindre d'être battu?"—Chardin.













How glad of his Protection, and the Grace  
 He gave it with!—Who then of gracious Speech  
 Many a Jewel utter'd; but of these  
 Not one that in my Ear till Morning hung.  
 When, waking on my Bed, my waking Wit  
 I question'd what the Vision meant, it answered;  
 "This Courtesy and Favour of the Shah  
 Foreshadows the fair Acceptance of thy Verse,  
 Which lose no moment pushing to Conclusion."  
 This hearing, I address'd me like a Pen  
 To steady Writing; for perchance, I thought,  
 From the same Fountain whence the Vision grew  
 The Interpretation also may come True.

Breathless ran a simple Rustic  
 To a Cunning Man of Dreams;  
 "Lo, this Morning I was dreaming—  
 "And methought, in yon deserted  
 "Village wander'd—all about me  
 "Shatter'd Houses—and, Behold!  
 "Into one, methought, I went—and  
 "Search'd—and found a Hoard of Gold!"  
 Quoth the Prophet in Derision,  
 "Oh Thou Jewel of Creation,  
 "Go and sole your Feet like Horse's,  
 "And returning to your Village  
 "Stamp and scratch with Hoof and Nail,  
 "And give Earth so sound a Shaking,  
 "She must hand you something up."  
 Went at once the unsuspecting  
 Countryman; with hearty Purpose  
 Set to work as he was told;  
 And, the very first Encounter,  
 Struck upon his Hoard of Gold!

Until Thou hast thy Purpose by the Hilt,  
Catch at it boldly—or Thou never wilt.

#### 4. The Story

A Shah there was who ruled the Realm of Yún,  
And wore the Ring of Empire of Sikander;  
And in his Reign A Sage, who had the Tower  
Of Wisdom of so strong Foundation built  
That Wise Men from all Quarters of the World  
To catch the Word of Wisdom from his Lip  
Went in a Girdle round him.—Which The Shah  
Observing, took him to his Secresy;

Stirr'd not a Step nor set Design afoot  
Without that Sage's sanction; till, so counsel'd,  
From Káf to Káf reach'd his Dominion:  
No Nation of the World or Nation's Chief  
Who wore the Ring but under span of his  
Bow'd down the Neck; then rising up in Peace  
Under his Justice grew, and knew no Wrong,  
And in their Strength was his Dominion Strong.

The Shah that has not Wisdom in Himself,  
Nor has a Wise Man for his Counsellor,  
The Wand of his Authority falls short,  
And his Dominion crumbles at the Base.  
For he, discerning not the Characters  
Of Tyranny and Justice, confounds both,  
Making the World a Desert, and the Fount  
Of Justice a Seráb. Well was is said,  
*"Better just Káfir than Believing Tyrant."*

God said to the Prophet David,—  
"David, speak, and to the Challenge  
"Answer of the Faith within Thee.

a Even Unbelieving Princes,  
 "Ill-reported if Unworthy,  
 "Yet, if They be Just and Righteous,  
 "Were their Worship of The Fire—  
 "Even These unto Themselves  
 "Reap glory and redress the World."

## 5

One Night The Shah of Yúnan, as his wont,  
 Consider'd of his Power, and told his State,  
 How great it was, and how about him sat  
 The Robe of Honour of Prosperity;  
 Then found he nothing wanted to his Heart,  
 Unless a Son, who his Dominion  
 And Glory might inherit after him.  
 And then he turn'd him to The Shah, and said;  
 "Oh Thou, whose Wisdom is the Rule of Kings—  
 "(Glory to God who gave it!)—answer me;  
 "Is any Blessing better than a Son?  
 "Man's prime Desire; by which his Name and He  
 "Shall live beyond Himself; by whom his Eyes  
 "Shine living, and his Dust with Roses blows;  
 "A Foot for Thee to stand on, he shall be  
 "A Hand to stop thy Falling; in his Youth  
 "Thou shalt be Young, and in his Strength be Strong;  
 "Sharp shall he be in Battle as a Sword,  
 "A Cloud of Arrows on the Enemy's Head;  
 "His Voice shall cheer his Friends to "Plight,  
 "And turn the Foeman's Glory into Flight."

Thus much of a Good Son, whose wholesome Growth  
 Approves the Root he grew from; but for one  
 Kneaded of Evil—Well, could one undo  
 His Generation, and as early pull

Hint and his Vices from the String of Time.  
 Like Noah's, puff'd with Ignorance and Pride,  
 Who felt the Stab of "He is none of Thine!"  
 And perish'd in the Deluge. And because  
 All are not Good, be slow to pray for One,  
 Whom having you may have to pray to lose.

Crazy for the Curse of Children,  
 Ran before the Sheikh a Fellow,  
 Crying out, "Oh hear and help me!  
 "Pray to Allah from my Clay  
 "To raise me up a fresh young Cypress,  
 "Who my Childless Eyes may lighten  
 "With the Beauty of his Presence."  
 Said the Sheikh, "Be wise, and leave it  
 "Wholly in the Hand of Allah,  
 "Who, whatever we are after,  
 "Understands our Business best."  
 But the Man persisted, saying,  
 "Sheikh, I languish in my Longing;  
 "Help, and set my Prayer a-going!"  
 Then the Sheikh held up his Hand—  
 Pray'd—his Arrow flew to Heaven—  
 From the Hunting-ground of Darkness  
 Down a musky Fawn of China  
 Brought—a Boy—who, when the Tender  
 Shoot of Passion in him planted  
 Found sufficient Soil and Sap,  
 Took to Drinking with his Fellows;  
 From a Corner of the House-top  
 Ill affronts a Neighbour's Wife,  
 Draws his Dagger on the Husband,  
 Who complains before the Justice,  
 And the Father has to pay.  
 Day and Night the Youngster's Doings



Such—the Talk of all the City;  
 Nor Entreaty, Threat, or Counsel  
 Held him; till the Desperate Father  
 Once more to the Sheikh a-running,  
 Catches at his Garment, crying—  
 "Sheikh, my only Hope and Helper!  
 "One more Prayer! that God who laid  
 "Will take that Trouble from my Head!"  
 But the Sheikh replied: "Remember  
 "How that very Day I warn'd you  
 "Better not importune Allah;  
 "Unto whom remains no other  
 "Prayer, unless to pray for Pardon.  
 "When from this World we are summon'd  
 "On to bind the pack of Travel  
 "Son or Daughter ill shall help us;  
 "Slaves we are, and unencumber'd  
 "Best may do the Master's mind;  
 "And, whatever he may order,  
 "Do it with a Will Resign'd."

## 6

When the Sharp-witted Sage  
 Had heard these Sayings of The Shah, he said,  
 "Oh Shah, who would not be the Slave of Lust  
 "Must still endure the Sorrow of no Son.  
 "—Lust that makes blind the Reason; Lust that makes  
 "A Devil's self seem Angel to our Eyes;  
 "A Cataract that, carrying havoc with it,  
 "Confounds the prosperous House; a Road of Mire  
 "Where whoso falls he rises not again;  
 "A Wine of which whoever tastes shall see  
 "Redemption's face no more—one little Sip

































































































