

**THE BOOK OF  
JOSEPH  
AND ZULEIKHÁ**

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The book of Joseph and Zuleikhá by Mulláná Abdulrahmán Jám

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**MULLĀNĀ ABDULRAHMĀN JĀM**

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BY  
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THE BOOK

OF

JOSEPH AND ZULEIKHÁ

*M. J. Jami* BY

MULLÁNÁ ABDULRAHMÁN JÁMÍ.

*HISTORICAL ROMANTIC PERSIAN POEM.*

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE BY

ALEXANDER ROGERS,

LATE BOMBAY CIVIL SERVICE; EDITOR OF THE "DOSTÁN"; TRANSLATOR OF  
"PERSIAN PLAYS", "KEINERE FUCHS", ETC.

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1892.

## ERRATA.

Page 11, line 10 from bottom, *for* "heav'n" *read* "heaven".

Page 46, line 7, *for* "making" *read* "waking".

Page 168, line 10 from bottom, *change to*

"Wool on his silver body be not worn."

Page 193, line 12 from top, *change to*

"Her eye of blood a fountain would disclose."



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## PREFACE.

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THE poet Nasr-ul din Abdúlrahmán, called Jámi, from having been born in the town of Jámi in Khorasán, was one of the most celebrated and prolific of Persian poets. Of his writings, the poem of *Yusuf and Zuleikha*, the latter commonly known as the wife of Potiphar, into whose house Joseph was sold as a slave in Egypt, is the most widely known and most appreciated in the Eastern world, especially among Mussulmans. Joseph is esteemed by them a type of manly beauty and virtue. Whereas the Jewish Scriptures in the Old Testament mention little in connection with him and Potiphar's wife but the fact of the temptation of the former, his resistance to it, and his consequent imprisonment, this poem enters into the details of the manner in which the latter became acquainted with Joseph in three dreams, in the last of which he informed her, rather prematurely, that he was Vazír of Egypt. As her health was suffering from her unrequited longing for Joseph, her father sends an embassy to Egypt to the Vazír to inform him of Zuleikha's state of mind, and obtains his consent to her marriage with him. The Vazír meets her on the road, and there Zuleikha, looking through a

b

hole made by her nurse in the tent, finds, to her despair, that he is not Joseph. She is, however, received with all honour in Egypt. The poet then leads the reader to Canaan, and, after brief references to Adam and the patriarchs, relates the early history of Joseph, the hatred of his brothers to him on account of the dreams foretelling his future superiority over them, their putting him into a well, and finally selling him into slavery. When he is put up for sale in the market, Zuleikha sees and recognizes him, and, doubling other people's offers, obliges the Vazir to purchase him. Then commences the account of her long and vain pursuit of him, until her nurse persuades her to allow her to build a palace in which wherever Joseph might look—on the walls, on the roofs, or on the floors—he might see himself pictured with Zuleikha in his arms. The palace completed, she leads him into it, and urges their union with every blandishment. He is on the point of yielding, when he sees something behind a curtain, which she informs him is the idol to which she is in the habit of praying, and which she has concealed behind a curtain that it may not see what she is doing. Horrified at this, he feels the position in which he has placed himself, and tries to escape; but Zuleikha overtakes him at the entrance, and tears his vest down behind. As he goes out, the Vazir meets him and leads him back to Zuleikha, who imagines he has betrayed her, and at once makes a counter-accusation against him, on which the Vazir, notwithstanding his denial of the charge, sends him to prison. Then a miraculous event is introduced, in

which a child of two years of age is made to point out to the Vazír that, if Joseph is innocent, his vest will be found to have been torn from behind ; but, if he is guilty, it will have been torn in front. Put to this test, Joseph's innocence is established, and he is released. One or two episodes are now introduced, which do not interfere with the main thread of the story. Zuleikha persuades the Vazír to imprison Joseph again, to hide the disgrace she has been brought to ; and she still feeds her futile flame for him by visiting him secretly in prison by night, and looking by day at the walls that confine him. Then follow the interpretation by Joseph of the dreams of two of his fellow-prisoners, and its accomplishment by the death of one and the restoration of the other to favour. The king of Egypt dreams his two dreams of the seven fat and seven lean kine, and the seven fat and lean sheaves of corn. Joseph is sent for to interpret them ; and, Zuleikha having admitted her guilt, he is restored to honour, and entrusted with the government of the land. The Vazír dies, and Zuleikha, being left in poverty, pines away for Joseph's love, and loses her beauty and her eyesight. She builds a reed-hut by the way-side, that she may hear him passing by, and at last gains admittance into his presence, and tells him who she is. He is moved with compassion, and, at her request, prays that her youth and beauty may be restored. This miracle takes place, and she again pleads for union with him. He consents to this on being directly inspired by the angel Gabriel. The marriage happily takes place, and the pair are