



Zadig Or, The Book of Fate

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DEDICATION

To The Sultana Sheraa,

By Sadi.

The 18th of the Month *Scheval*, in the Year of the *Hegira*, 837.

Thou Joy of ev'ry Eye! Thou Torment of every Heart! Thou Intellectual Light! I do not kiss the Dust of thy Feet; because thou seldom art seen out of the Seraglio, and when thou art, thou walkest only on the Carpets of *Iran*, or on Beds of Roses.

I here present you with a Translation of the Work of an ancient *Sage*, who having the Happiness of living free from all Avocations, thought proper, by Way of Amusement, to write the History of *Zadig*; a Performance, that comprehends in it more Instruction than, 'tis possible, you may at first be aware of. I beg you would indulge me so far as to read it over, and then pass your impartial Judgment upon it: For notwithstanding you are in the Bloom of your Life; tho' ev'ry Pleasure courts you; tho' you are Nature's Darling, and have internal Qualities in proportion to your Beauty; tho' the World resounds your Praises from Morning till Night, and consequently you must have a just Title to a superior Degree of Understanding than the rest of your Sex; Yet your Wit is no ways flashy; Your Taste is refin'd, and I have had the Honour to hear you talk more learnedly than the wisest *Dervise*, with his venerable Beard, and pointed Bonnet: You are discreet, and yet not mistrustful; you are easy, but not weak; you are beneficent with Discretion; you love your Friends, and create yourself no Enemies. Your most sprightly Flights borrow no Graces from Detraction; you never speak a misbecoming Word, nor do an ill-natur'd Action, tho' 'tis always in your Power. In a Word, your Soul is as spotless as your Person. You have, moreover, a little Fund of Philosophy, which gives me just Grounds to hope that you'll relish this Historical Performance better than any other Lady of your Quality would do.

It was originally compos'd in the *Chaldean* Language, to which both you and my self are perfect Strangers. It was translated, however, into *Arabic*, for the Amusement of the celebrated Sultan OULOUG-BEG. It first appear'd in Public, when the *Arabian* and *Persian* Tales of One Thousand and One Nights, and One Thousand and One Days, were most in Vogue: OULOUG chose rather to entertain himself with the Adventures of *Zadig*. The Sultanas indeed were more fond of the former. How can you, said the judicious OULOUG, be so partial, as to prefer a Set of Tales, that are no ways interesting or instructive, to a Work, that has a Variety of Beauties to recommend it? Oh! replied the Sultanas, the less Sense there is in them, the more they are in Taste; and the less their Merit, the greater their Commendation.

I flatter my self, thou Patroness of Wisdom, that thou wilt not copy after those thoughtless Sultanas, but give into the Sentiments of OULOUG. I am in hopes likewise, when you are tir'd with the Conversation of such as make those senseless Romances abovemention'd their favourite Amusements, you will vouchsafe to listen for one Minute or two, to the Dictates of solid Sense. Had you been *Thalestris* in the Days of *Scander*, the Son of *Philip*; had you been the Queen of *Sheba*, in the Reign of *Solomon*, those Kings would have been proud to have taken a Tour to visit you.

May the Celestial Virtues grant, that your Pleasures may meet with no Interruption; your Charms know no Decay; and may your Felicity be everlasting!

SADI.

THE APPROBATION

I, Who have subscrib'd my Name hereto, ambitious of being thought a Man of Wit and Learning, have perus'd this MANUSCRIPT, which I find, to my great Mortification, amusing, moral, philosophical, and fit to be read, even by those who have an utter Aversion to Romances; for which Reason, I have depreiated it, as it deserves, and have in direct Terms told the CADI-LESQUIER, that 'tis a most detestable Performance.

CHAPTER 1. THE BLIND EYE

In the Reign of King *Moabdar*, there was a young Man, a Native of *Babylon*, by name *Zadig*; who was not only endowed by Nature with an uncommon Genius, but born of illustrious Parents, who bestowed on him an Education no ways inferior to his Birth. Tho' rich and young, he knew how to give a Check to his Passions; he was no ways self-conceited; he didn't always act up to the strictest Rules of Reason himself, and knew how to look on the Foibles of others, with an Eye of Indulgence. Every one was surpriz'd to find, that notwithstanding he had such a Fund of Wit, he never insulted; nay, never so much as rallied any of his Companions, for that Tittle Tattle, which was so vague and empty, so noisy and confus'd; for those rash Reflections, those illiterate Conclusions, and those insipid Jokes; and, in short, for that Flow of unmeaning Words, which was call'd polite Conversation in *Babylon*. He had learned from the first Book of *Zoroaster*, that Self-love is like a Bladder full blown, which when once prick'd, discharges a kind of petty Tempest. *Zadig*, in particular, never boasted of his Contempt of the Fair Sex, or of his Facility to make Conquests amongst them. He was of a generous Spirit; insomuch, that he was not afraid of obliging even an ungrateful Man; strictly adhering to that wise Maxim of *Zoroaster*. *When you are eating, throw an Offal to the Dogs that are under the Table, lest they should be tempted to bite you.* He was as wise as he could well be wish'd; since he was fond of no Company, but such as were distinguish'd for Men of Sense. As he was well-grounded, in all the Sciences of the antient *Chaldeans*, he was no Stranger to those Principles of Natural Philosophy, which were then known: And understood as much of Metaphysics as any one in all Ages after him; that is to say, he knew little or nothing of the Matter. He was firmly convinc'd, that the Year consisted of 365 Days and an half, tho' directly repugnant to the new Philosophy of the Age he liv'd in; and that the Sun was situated in the Center of the Earth; And when the Chief Magi told him, with an imperious Air, that he maintain'd erroneous Principles; and that it was an Indignity offer'd to the Government under which he liv'd, to imagine the Sun should roll round its own Axis, and that the Year consisted of twelve Months, he knew how to sit still and quiet, without shewing the least Tokens of Resentment or Contempt.

As *Zadig* was immensely rich, and had consequently Friends without Number; and as he was a Gentleman of a robust Constitution, and remarkably handsome; as he was endowed with a plentiful Share of ready and inoffensive Wit: And, in a Word, as his Heart was perfectly sincere and open, he imagin'd himself, in some Measure, qualified to be perfectly happy. For which Purpose he determin'd to marry a gay young