

*The Arabian Nights are echoes
from Lemuria and Atlantis*



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For many years it has been customary to regard that collection of interesting stories called “The Arabian Nights,” as pure fiction arising out of Oriental brains at a time when every ruler had his story-teller to amuse him or to put him to sleep. But many a man who has down in his heart believed in the stories he heard in his youth about fairies and ghosts, has felt a revival of his young fancies upon perusing these tales of prodigies and magic. Others, however, have laughed at them as pure fables, and the entire scientific world does nothing but preserve contemptuous silence.

The question here to be answered by men of science is how did such ideas arise? Taking them on their own ground, one must believe that with so much smoke there must at one time have been some fire. Just as the prevalence of a myth — such as the Devil or Serpent myth — over large numbers of people or vast periods of time points to the fact that there must have been something, whatever it was, that gave rise to the idea.

In this enquiry our minds range over that portion of the world which is near the Red Sea, Arabia and Persia, and we are brought very close to places, now covered with water, that once formed part of ancient Lemuria. The name Red Sea may have arisen from the fact that it was believed really to cover hell: and its lower entrance at the island of Perim is called “Babel Mandeb,”¹ or “the Gate of Hell.” This Red Sea plays a prominent part in the Arabian Nights tales and has some significance. We should also recollect that Arabia once had her men of science, the mark of whose minds has not yet been effaced from our own age. These men were many of them magicians, and they learned their lore either from the Lemurian Adepts, or from the Black Magicians of the other famous land of Atlantis.

We may safely conclude that the Arabian Nights stories are not all pure fiction, but are the faint reverberations of a louder echo which reached their authors from the times of Lemuria and Atlantis.

¹ [The strait of Bab-el-Mandeb (المنذب ب اب) is located between Yemen on the Arabian Peninsula, and Djibouti and Eritrea in the Horn of Africa. It connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden. The island of Perim divides the strait into two channels: the eastern, known as the Bab Iskender (Alexander's Strait), 2 miles wide and 16 fathoms deep; and the western, or Dact-el-Mayun, 16 miles wide and 170 fathoms deep.]

Solomon is now and then mentioned in them, and Solomon, wherever he was, has always been reckoned as a great adept.² The Jewish Kabbalah and Talmud speak of Solomon with great reverence. His power and the power of his seal — the interlaced triangles — constantly crop up among the other magical processes adverted to in these tales. And in nearly all cases where he is represented as dealing with wicked genii, he buried them in the Red Sea. Now if Solomon was a Jewish King far away in Palestine, how did he get down to the Red Sea, and where is there any mention made of his traveling at all? These genii were elemental spirits, and Solomon is merely a name standing for the vast knowledge of magic arts possessed by Adepts at a time buried in the darkness of the past. In one tale, a fisherman hauls up a heavy load, which turns out to be a large *iron* pot, with a metal cover, on which was engraved Solomon's Seal. The unlucky man opened the pot, when at once a vapour rose out of it that spread itself over the whole heavens at first, then condensed again into a monstrous form who addressed the fisher, saying that ages before he had been confined there by Solomon; that after two hundred years he swore he would make rich the man lucky enough to let him out; after five hundred years that he would reward his liberator with power; but after one thousand years of captivity he would kill the one who should free him. Then he ordered the man to prepare for death. The fisherman, however, said he doubted that the genii had really been in the pot as he was too large. To prove that he had been, the spirit immediately assumed the vaporous condition and slowly with spiral motion sank into the iron pot again, when at once the fisherman clapped on the cover and was about to cast him back into the sea. The djinn then begged for mercy and agreed to serve the man and not to kill him, whereupon he was released.

Many persons will laugh at this story. But no one who has seen the wonders of spiritualism, or who knows that at this day there are many persons in India, as well as elsewhere who have dealings with elemental spirits that bring them objects instantaneously, *etc.*, will laugh before reflecting on the circumstances.

Observe that the pot in which he was confined was made of metal, and that the talismanic seal was on the cover. The metal prevented him from making magnetic connection for the purpose of escaping, and the seal on the cover barred that way. There were no marks on the sides of the pot. His spreading himself into a vast vapour shows that he was one of the elementals of the airy kingdom — the most powerful and malignant: and his malignancy is shown in the mean, ungrateful oath he took to destroy whomsoever should be his liberator. His spreading into vapour, instead of at once springing out of the pot, refers to his invisibility, for we see that in order to enter it he was compelled to assume his vaporous state, in which he again put himself into the pot.

² [Cf. "Whose 700 wives and 300 concubines, by the bye, are merely the personations of man's attributes, feelings, passions and his various occult powers: the Kabbalistic numbers 7 and 3 showing it plainly. Solomon himself, moreover, being, simply, the emblem of SOL — the 'Solar Initiate' or the Christ-Sun, is a variant of the Indian 'Vikartana' (the Sun) shorn of his beams by Viśvakarman, his Hierophant-Initiator, who thus shears the *Chrēstos*-candidate for initiation of his golden radiance and crowns him with a dark, blackened aureole — the 'crown of thorns.' (See *The Secret Doctrine* for full explanation.) Solomon was never a living man. As described in *Kings*, his life and works are an allegory on the trials and glory of Initiation." — *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (IS THEOSOPHY AND RELIGION?) X p. 162 *fn. et seq.*]

In another story we see a young man visiting an elemental of the nature of a Succubus, who permits him now and then to go out and perform wonders. But the entrance to her retreat is unseen and kept invisible to others. In India there are those who are foolish enough to make magnetic connection with elementals of this class, by means of processes which we will not detail here. The elemental will then at your wish instantaneously produce any article which the operator may have touched, no matter how far away it may be or how tightly locked up. The consequences of this uncanny partnership are very injurious to the human partner. The records of spiritualism in America will give other cases of almost like character, sufficient to show that a compact can be entered into between a human being and an intelligence or force outside of our sensuous perceptions.

In other stories various people have power over men and animals, and the forces of nature. They change men into animals and do other wonders. When they wish to cause the metamorphosis, they dash a handful of water into the unfortunate's face, crying: "Quit that form of man and assume the form of a dog." The terrible Maugraby is a Black Magician, such as can now be found in Bhutan, who had changed many persons, and the story of his destruction shows that his life and power as well as his death lay in the nasty practices of Black Magic. When the figure and the talisman were destroyed he was also. The White Magician has no talisman but his Ātman, and as that cannot be destroyed, he is beyond all fear.

But this paper is already too long. We are not forcing a conclusion when we say that these admirable and amusing tales are not *all* fiction. There is much nonsense in them, but they have come to us from the very land — now bleak and desolate — where at one time the fourth race men held sway and dabbled in both White and Black Magic.

