

## The Story of the Sons of Rostam Shāh, and of How His Majesty the Shadow of God Went to Ardabil; the Killing of ‘Ali Khān Solţān

When Rostam Shāh died, four sons survived him. The Torkmān amirs made the eldest, who was named Maqşud Mirzā, their king. He ordered that a young goat be roasted.

Yusof Mirzā, one of Rostam Shāh’s other sons, went to the elders of the Qarā Qoyunlu tribe and said, “My older brother is crazy, but kingship requires reason and judgment. If you kill him and make me king, I won’t even drink water without your approval.” So the elders hoisted him up and brought him into the court to place him on the throne. The king, Maqşud, said, “O friends, what are you doing?” The amirs drew their swords and cut him to pieces, then placed Yusof Mirzā on the throne.

Alvand Mirzā was the third brother. When he heard that Yusof Mirzā had pledged his loyalty to the Qarā Qoyunlu tribe and that they had made him king, he went to the Āq Qoyunlu tribe and started to weep and lament, saying, “My elder brother was entitled to the throne, but they have killed him! If you make me king, whatever he does for the Qarā Qoyunlu tribe, I will do twice as much for you.”

They replied, “Ḥasan Pādesihāh was one of our tribe. How dare they try to vie with us?” Then they hoisted up Alvand Mirzā and brought him into the court. Yusof Mirzā was just saying, “Bring the goat that my brother had wanted to roast,” when the amirs killed him; the roast was thus again delayed. Alvand Mirzā placed the royal crown upon his head and took his place on the throne of Ḥasan Pādesihāh.

Word reached Solţān Morād, the fourth brother, that events had transpired this way. He went to the elders of the Qarā Qoyunlu and started weeping and lamenting, saying, “You handed my brother over to be killed!” He importuned them so much that they said, “We shall make you king in your father’s place.” So they hoisted him up and headed for the court. Two brothers had already been killed at the foot of the throne.

Alvand said, “Bring the roast, for I fear that my brother’s fate may repeat itself.” At that moment a great commotion was heard at the entrance to the court. He said, “What’s going on?” They told him. Alvand had had the foresight to post a thousand men of the Āq Qoyunlu at the entrance, and when he learned that three thousand Qarā Qoyunlu were on the way, he ordered his

men to keep watch; he also sent someone to tell to the elders of the Qarā Qoyunlu to send a few men for him to parley with.

Solṭān Morād said, "Let a few Āq Qoyunlu come to us; we too shall send a party."

It was thus decided, and some high-ranking Qarā Qoyunlu went to Alvand Solṭān. Alvand said to them, "O friends, what are you thinking? Of the descendants of Ḥasan Pādesihāh, only two of us remain; do you want us to kill each other and have rule pass to the descendants of Shaykh Ṣafi?"

"What shall we do?" they asked.

Alvand said, "We two brothers shall divide the realm into two parts. I, who am the elder brother, shall sit in our father's place, while my brother shall go to Shirāz and have as his portion all of Fārs and Yazd and Kermān and Eṣfahān and Kāshān and Qom and Qazvin and Hamadān and Kohgiluyeh. For my part, I shall have as my portion this part of Ādharbāyjān and Ardabil and Shirvān and Qarābāgh and Yerevan and Diyārbakr."

The Torkmān amirs agreed to this, and both they and the elders swore fealty to each brother. They laid out a feast, and each of the brothers got to eat the roasted goat. Then Solṭān Morād left for Shirāz, and Alvand took his place on the royal throne.

Meanwhile, the news arrived that Shāh Esmā'il had emerged and advanced as far as the vicinity of Ardabil. When 'Ali Khān Solṭān learned of this, he raised an army and headed out to intercept him; but he returned without fighting, since word had it that Shāh Esmā'il had gone back to Gilān and would come back another time.

Alvand Pādesihāh was glad at this and sent a robe of honor to 'Ali Khān Solṭān. Fear of Esmā'il had shaken him badly, though, so he ordered that an army assemble at Tabriz.

Now Esmā'il was passing the time at Tārom, and when Nawruz came, he put the foot of happiness in the stirrup and set out for Ardabil. When he entered the city, he and his army poured down on the houses of the Torkmāns. As soon as the population heard that he had arrived, they all got together, drew their swords, and killed the Torkmāns en masse. They surrounded and besieged 'Ali Khān Solṭān's house, trapping him and his ten thousand Torkmāns. The Ṣufis of Ardabil broke in, seized 'Ali Khān Solṭān, and brought him as a prisoner to Shāh Esmā'il, who said to him, "I will make you commander of my army on the condition that you curse the enemies of the Faith and say, 'I witness that 'Ali is the Friend of God.'"

That accursed one refused, so Esmā'il ordered that every household gather a pile of firewood and bring it. A great bonfire was built, into which he threw 'Ali Khān Solṭān and anyone who would not say "Ali is the Friend of God."

With that business finished, he found his mother and brother, appointed seven thousand men to guard them, and left for Diyārbakr with seven thousand others. As he approached the river Aras, he was told, "A descendant of Mirzā Jahānshāh Bārāni, Solṭān Ḥosayn, is here with twenty thousand Torkmāns of the Dhulqadr. He is the ruler of this region, and every year he pays tribute to the king of Iran."

When Solṭān Ḥosayn heard that Shāh Esmā'il had made his emergence and come to the river Aras, he said to the elders of his tribe: "O friends, I want to emerge, and now Shāh Esmā'il has done it and come here. What do you say?"

They said, "O prince, you must welcome him and show him great hospitality and, as a trick, invite him to be your guest. Then place poison in his food and do him in. If his men then follow you, so much the better; otherwise, kill them all." Solṭān Ḥosayn agreed to this plan.

When Shāh Esmā'il approached the country of Solṭān Ḥosayn Bārāni, Solṭān Ḥosayn ordered his whole army to go out to welcome him and be at his service; he himself even rode out a league to greet him. Approaching His Majesty, Solṭān Ḥosayn said: "We have been watching and waiting for the emergence of this prince for quite some time! It is most gracious of him to have come in this direction. I, the least of men, have twelve thousand men in my army, and along with them, I am at your service. When we have killed Alvand Shāh and Your Highness is on the throne of power, I shall be like a slave in your service. Now I desire that you adorn the house of this humblest one with the joy of your arrival."

Shāh Esmā'il was very pleased to hear this. He said, "Today let us rest from the travails of the road. You go home too, and God Almighty willing we shall see each other tomorrow." Then he went back to his royal tent.

Solṭān Ḥosayn said to his amirs, "I can't tell the nature or kind or disposition of this prince! I shall make preparations however you tell me to." The amirs told him how to prepare things.

The next day, Solṭān Ḥosayn went to the entrance of Esmā'il's royal tent and said obsequiously, "My lord must grant me a visit!" The amirs brought this request to the attention of Esmā'il. He sought out his nobles and told them, "Go to this man's house and test his good intentions. If he seems genuine, let me know. Otherwise let us be wary of him, for I don't detect any whiff of sincerity in this man."

So Ḥosayn Beg Laleh and seven other men went to Solṭān Ḥosayn's house. In conversation with him, they talked about the qualities of the Shāh and his forefathers, and they related what they had undergone with His Majesty. They noticed that Solṭān Ḥosayn was not happy at all to hear about it.

Afterward, Solṭān Ḥosayn again sent someone to Shāh Esmā'il requesting the honor of a visit. When he arrived, Esmā'il was asleep, and in the world of sleep, he saw the pure light of the Commander of the Faithful. "O my son," said 'Ali, "don't go to the feast that Solṭān Ḥosayn Bārāni has prepared; he wants to destroy you and your companions by poisoning your food. Tonight you must decamp and move on; that way you will retain the upper hand." Esmā'il then awoke to the news that Solṭān Ḥosayn's messenger was waiting. His Majesty sent back a message that said, "We are indisposed and can't come. Today you can chat with Ḥosayn Beg Laleh and my other friends; tomorrow we shall be together."

The messenger brought this message back to Solṭān Ḥosayn, who said to himself, "Tomorrow I shall take care of him."

Ḥosayn Beg Laleh and his companions then went to the Shāh. "O friends," he told them, "this man wants to destroy us with poison. The holy Commander of the Faithful told me so."

"May we be a sacrifice to you!" they said. "We didn't trust him either."

Esmā'il said, "Tonight we will decamp." And when night fell, they packed up and headed for Qarābāgh.

Day broke, and Solṭān Ḥosayn learned what had happened. "I won't let him get away!" he said. He gathered eight thousand men and pursued Shāh Esmā'il and his men to the edge of the river Aras, where His Majesty had alighted. When he heard that Solṭān Ḥosayn was coming, he and his troops mounted up and rode into battle. Solṭān Ḥosayn's army was defeated in the first assault; a great many of his troops were killed, and he himself turned to flee. Shāh Esmā'il pursued him for almost two leagues, and when he drew near enough, with one blow of his murderous spear he knocked the man out of his saddle and into the dustbin of fortune. He cut off his head and took his weapons; then he turned around and saw Ḥalvāchi-oghli arriving. Esmā'il praised him, then mounted Solṭān Ḥosayn's head on his spear and handed it to him. Then they went back to the battlefield.

By the time they arrived at the royal encampment, the Ṣufis had defeated Solṭān Ḥosayn's army, killing four thousand men and granting quarter to those who professed that "Ali is the Friend of God." When Esmā'il saw this, he fell upon the tribe and possessions of Solṭān Ḥosayn, plundered them completely, and gave it all out to the Ṣufis of clear faith. Then they went off to fight Farrokhyasār.

When Farrokhyasār heard that it was Shāh Esmā'il who was coming, he ordered his troops to go and guard the shore of the river Kura, lest Esmā'il bridge it. Three thousand men set off. Esmā'il, for his part, ordered Qarāpari to take twelve thousand men and go to the river Kura and build a bridge for him.

When Qarāpari arrived at the river and saw the army of Shirvān waiting at the water's edge, he knew he could not build a bridge. He sent word of this to Shāh Esmā'il. His Majesty came in person and surveyed the situation, then placed his trust in the Creator and hurled himself and his army into that immense river. When they emerged, the water had not claimed a single soldier. They thanked God and started the battle, and within a short time, they had defeated the Shirvāni army and killed every one of them.

When Farrokhyasār heard that Esmā'il had crossed the river and defeated his army, he mounted up along with twenty thousand men, rode for six leagues, and began a battle with the Qezelbāsh. Immediately his army met with defeat; they were killed en masse. The ever-fortunate Shāh Esmā'il caught up to Farrokhyasār and slew him with a blow of his shining sword. The defeated army turned and fled to Shamākhi. His Majesty then entered the city of Shirvān and took his place on the royal throne.

News of this reached Shaykh Shāh, the son of Farrokhyasār, and he was struck with fear. He sent his property and treasury to the fortress of Golestān, then betook himself and his army and people to Mount Alborz. Word soon got around that he had done these things, and Shāh Esmā'il ordered Qarāpari to take four thousand men and besiege the fortress of Golestān.

Having arrived at the foot of the fortress, Qarāpari saw that capturing it would be a problem. He made camp and wrote a petition to the Shāh. When his petition reached His Majesty, he went himself to the foot of that fortress. He ordered that they write a letter to Khosraw, the servant of Shaykh Shāh, who was the porter of the castle: "We have come in majesty and glory, and you must hand this fortress over to us without any further trouble; if you do, I will raise you to the pinnacle of fortune."

When the messenger went back into the fortress and the porter read the letter, he became angry and gave the emissary a vigorous tongue-lashing. The emissary said, "Fear the day when you are taken with bound hands into the presence of the Shāh, and His Majesty is overcome with rage and tongue-lashes *you!*" This annoyed that ill-bred slave, and he ordered that they beat the emissary. They thrashed him so badly that they killed him; then they suspended his corpse from the rampart of the fortress.

When Esmā'il heard what had happened, he ordered that Qezelbāsh to surround the fortress, cut off its water and supplies, and capture it by force. Shaykh Shāh's porter Khosraw was punished and the property of those in the fortress distributed among the Qezelbāsh ghāzis; then Esmā'il set off for Shamākhi.

When Alvand Shāh got wind of this, he let out a cry and ordered his army to assemble. With that accomplished, he headed to Shirvān with thirty thousand men.