

Chapter Three
Uvani and Abdul Latif

It will be easier to visualize Uvani and Abdul Latif -- to put them in the order in which they came to me -- if I give brief outlines of their lives, and try to give some idea of their personalities, through what they have said or written themselves.

The summary of Uvani's life was necessarily given to me by him alone, for he is not known to history; and I produce it here as he told it to me. Abdul Latif, on the other hand, was widely known when on earth, and he has been a familiar figure to scholars of his period ever since. The outline of his life, therefore, was not hard to obtain from reference books, with a little patience and effort, and ~~that~~ can be dated with accuracy.

Uvani, when writing through me, often digressed to give me details of his past life. His real name was Yusuf ibn Hafiq ibn Ali, and he was a member of a well-known family of Basrah, interested in the growing, marketing and export of fruit and grain. As a soldier he had been killed in the early part of the nineteenth century, aged about forty-eight, when fighting against the Turks. His father, Hafiq, had been born in Persia, and his mother came from Libya. It was she who gave him the nickname "O^opowani" -- Son of Happiness" -- which remained with him from then on, though she died while he was still a young man.

He said he was born in what he described as a small place, Ahwaz, in the Arabistan province of Persia. After living there for some years, his family had moved to Basrah. It was from there that they exported dates and melons, and they also sold quantities of these, together with prickly pears, in the local market. Barley and millet were other things they dealt in, and they were, he told me, very well off.

He once perplexed me by saying that his father was a Persian, though Uvani himself always described himself as an Arab; but he explained that, although his father had indeed been born in Persia, it was in a province principally occupied by Arabs, and it was with the Arabs that Uvani engaged in frequent skirmishes with the Turks. As he put it: "I was a soldier and was killed in warfare. Between the Turks and the Arabs there were constant feuds, needing little to spark off fire and consequent war to a finish. Many times have I fought against them, and they were, like ourselves, intrepid fighters and mighty horsemen. How vast the store-house which fills the bygone days! I feel the years intervening are those which have made short history, for, when within your sphere, I view them as a flash, the earth life becoming again that which was long. Just at times I look back through the years, reverting to that which is past."

I asked him if he was deliberately remaining where he was, and he replied: "I have been to the higher states and, when there, I am perhaps removed from what I was and am; but I steadfastly continue in this state

wherein dwells your lord. It is permitted to those who wish to dwell here to visit the spheres so far away at times. For souls steeped in ignorance the time is lengthy, but, like all things, the end will be reached."

At this point I said: "All things except eternity?"

"And that does not appear eternal, for we move, stage by stage, evolving and changing. As the soul goes from one state to the next, and ever higher, much purification of the spirit takes place, and the ties of earth are lessened. We only leave for those high spheres when we long to go. We can see them, and we can have foretaste, but until we desire to depart we remain nearer the earth. Your lord has no desire to depart. He wishes only to be as near you as is in his power. He is a very man, resolute, determined, and withal the man you love, strong exceeding and very tender."

Then he went on to say something else, which touched me:

"Now you will understand how the gentleness that has become a part of me has helped to further Uvani. I feel where I was hard, now have I the warmth of understanding. I feel so sweet a glow, as if one who was frozen had been melted by the rays of warm sunlight. It was not possible with me, during the days I spent on earth, that I should learn the lesson, as did so strong a man as is your lord. He was filled with love permeating his being. Though he too has learned, since coming here, the full completeness of love, yet had he it within him, deep and yearning."

Usually aloof and imperturbable when in control of Eileen Garrett, Uvani sometimes showed another aspect of himself, and he told me of some few times when he did become ruffled. Once was when a woman, who was evidently unaware, on this her first sitting with a medium, that no details at all should be given either to the medium or her control, told him of her desperate anxiety to get in touch with her husband. Uvani said he was patiently doing his best for her, when she suddenly jumped up, declaring she had forgotten a hair appointment, and dashed out of the room, leaving everything in mid-air and the sitting unfinished!

Another time his feelings were not so much those of annoyance as of perplexity. A man, who had recently died, had asked Uvani several times to pass on messages to me for his wife, who was a friend of mine. He then asked permission to speak to her directly. Uvani was reluctant, but ultimately gave his consent, and my friend told me afterwards that this talk was almost entirely concerned with her remarriage. This had evidently filled Uvani with chagrin, for he said to me later: "Why does a man profess to be so interested in his woman when he encourages her over his dead body to marry again?" He thought for a moment, and then added grimly: "A great display of affection ending up in a dish of camel's milk. In India they did burn the widows in my time." And it seemed to me he spoke with some regret! So he still sometimes showed himself to be the unregenerate Uvani, and he often amused me by the opinions he expressed over modern behaviour and customs, so different from those he had known in his own earth life.

Almost nine months after Harry had first taken direct control of Eileen Garrett, there was a departure from the usual order, and I was surprised to find, at the start of the sitting, that Uvani had come to talk to me. The reason for this soon became clear. For some time Eileen Garrett had been perturbed by hearing that people who had come to her for sittings had complained later that Uvani had stayed for only a few minutes, and then, saying that he had nothing to give them, had gone away. Such a speedy departure had occurred on the very morning of the day on which I was having my sitting, and, just before going into trance, Mrs. Garrett had ruefully told me about it -- and all the more sadly as she charged no fee for no results.

Uvani gave me his customary greeting, and then continued: "Your lord says Uvani may come for one moment to speak. Abdul Latif, honoured be his name, would come and make your acquaintance; but next time, not to-day.

"Madame, she whom I work through says that I am not an intelligence. I have so many times heard her say: 'If you are you, why do you leave me with my wallet empty?' Now, Madame, how can I help it? I cannot pad.

If I permit the groundwork of even unconscious deceitfulness to creep in, I will not have the instrument as she is now -- and I do think she is second to none in the whole world -- consistent, logical, conclusive. Uvani has been able to stay with his instrument seven years. He has been told to make great effort. They said: 'You will have difficulty. Be strong, be drastic!' She does go through a great trial, greater than I knew a woman could bear. That is all part of her development. I am not paid, my instrument is not paid to talk, but to give results. She said: 'We will not charge if we do not give results.' My heart rejoiced, because that is the easiest way of establishing integrity. But some come to me to give them forecasts, to speak of their financial affairs. They regard me as a necromancer of sorts. I am not permitted to do this work, therefore I withdraw. There are several people who wish to work through this source: greater controls wish to come. The time must come when she must go forth and do other work. She must believe in the sanity and the intelligence of people who work through her.

"Tell her, Madame, this: I have never been guilty of rudeness. When that has been laid at my door, it is because I have been asked for lucky numbers, lucky colours. It is no part of my plan. I am not permitted to come for these things. We are carrying a light to the top of the mountains. We are but the humble ones beating at the door; but we could not open the door to big things if we did not start aright. If I gave [what they wanted]* to people it would be much easier; but I dare not give that which I do not see. Never do I send anyone away except for a good cause. They would not honour me if they got necromancy. I have been the means of giving help to many. I would demean my honesty, her honesty, if I were to do other than I do. My instrument will never reach the backwater. She is a pathmaker, and

* In one or two places I have inserted words or phrases in square brackets (to show that they are mine) into something that has been said by one of my communicators. This is because it may not seem quite clear in cold print, although, when it was written, I knew exactly what was meant.

At another time he wrote the following through my hand:

"Uvani will talk, Madame, should you so desire. I can still vividly recall those days after quitting the earth plane, my mind a strange mixture of ideas, and having few good deeds wherewith I could feel contented at the use I had made of my time.

"I had led an idle life, sitting ever in the sunshine, and happy in possessing sufficient for bodily comforts. I loved many times, or thought I did, and it was an existence which seemed to me fair and satisfying. I was a soldier and was killed in warfare, being, as was your lord, suddenly hurled from one sphere to the other. It took a long time for me to be made anew, for, with all the strangeness of my surroundings and the different world from that which I had dimly thought I would find, I yet had no desire to be other than I was. I saw with reluctance that my life had been lacking in a multitude of ways; but it was not with softened heart that I viewed the seeing. I was indignant, vexed that, like a moving scene, over and over again did it go before me. I saw, and saw so many times, the same scenes vividly portrayed; here one whom I had treated with cruelty; there one shamefully, with no possible justification, taken and abused; another to whom I had been harsh -- and all through was the vision of an insolent, intolerant Arab, taking his pleasures regardless of any who came his way. These visions came ever before me, and I was sick of the beholdings. Still there was no wish to be other than I was. I was troubled by none saying: 'You shall do this. You shall do that. Come here and alter that which thou art doing.' I went my way and asked nought of any whom I met.

"I continued for many years in this wise. Perchance I suffered, for the seeing of these visions abated not, and I longed to be rid of them. At last on a day there came to me, when I was sitting remote from others, one who had wondrous strength of countenance, and the bearing of a man. His face was kind, and he spoke to me and talked of many things. He knew my life. He spake truly of deeds that had been done. He said that there was much in Uvani of courage and of fortitude in what he had done, and in the

manner of his death. There were no words spoken of admonition or reproach, and my heart revived as does the parched earth soften with the precious rain.

"I talked to this man and told him that, though nothing was wrong, yet was my soul strangely sick, in that such visioning was always with me. I told him more than I had ever before told all in the world put together, and to all he listened, saying little; yet did I find that, as I spoke, all sorrows slipped from me, and I knew peace such as had not been mine those many years. I had no feelings then within me of coldness or contempt, only had I a great wish that I might do aught that would pleasure and satisfy the one who was with me; and I said to him: 'It is many years since I have worked. Is there in this land such work as I could do with regard to helping, and in being able to fill my thoughts in other ways?' He said: 'There is much work to be done, and gladly will I tell you of some to be performed.'

"Then did I perceive a poor, unhappy soul wallowing in misery, for he was tormented by the visions of his past; and, as I looked at him, the one who had spoken said: 'I would be happy if you would give aid to this one who suffers.'

"I knew not how to do it; but I had a stir of pity in my heart, and I said: 'Friend, tell me why you are suffering and in fear.' For a time he could not answer, and I waited. Presently, like a dog which has been whipped and is afraid of further punishment, he crept near, and slowly did he find words with which to formulate his thoughts. Falteringly he told me of deeds which he had done. Dark and terrible had they been. I was sorry for this man, and remembered the pictures never ceasing, which had haunted me. Therefore I gave him what sympathy lay within me and he, like me, was strengthened and helped. I never had the visionings in the same way again, and from that time had I desire for serving others.

"When I had listened to the burdened heart of him who suffered, I led him away, and presently one who loved him found him, and joy was in their reunion. He went from me, and I, who had peace in my being, returned from

whence I had come. There I saw the one who had bid me, if I would, to give help unto others. He said: 'You have given strength and hope to that poor man, and there are many others. I go to seek them, and would be happy for such aid as you can give.'

"I felt I would do this work for ever more if he so willed, and I followed as he led. Many, many were the paths he followed, and at times we would be in places that were grimly dark and desolate. We worked side by side. There were those who could not listen and who felt nought of our presence, bound still as they were, tied to earth. We continued -- the one who took me with him and I -- to go about this work, and many were the souls he brought to perfect understanding and the light. In many spheres we went. We went amongst those unable to bear the light, owing to the abysmal depth of their consciousness. That is as it happens. According to the quality and understanding of the mind and thoughts, so are a person's actions regulated. When the time comes for the shedding of the body, so does the soul wrap itself in the ideas best known to it; and should those ideas be bad and selfish ones, so is the time before enlightenment a long one. That is how things are. Only the soul knows its own bitterness. Many layers of selfishness and sloth must be removed. Then, when realization is obtained and awakening ensues, bitter indeed is the plight of this soul. For a time, according to the merits and demerits of his life, so does he continue thus; then, like a fruit ripened by sunshine, does sweetness take the place of bitterness, and once more there is rejoicing.

"I had not led what would, for my time and race, be termed an evil life, (I was an Arab, and our customs differed from those of yours); but I was very hard, very unyielding, and knew not what pity or forgiveness meant. I was the same after passing through death's gateway. No gentle feeling came close, or any tender thoughts of others. There was no love burning out the dross. I was the same Uvani, Arab, and as such I continued. Therefore, as I have related, for many years I saw the visioning of my life, at first unmoved, and later discomfited, and then wearied to my inmost being by the incessant seeing of the life that I had made.

"Sometimes it so happens that chords of memory are struck in Uvani's mind. He remembers many things. The golden sand, hot in the noonday sun; the beat of a horse's hooves in swift flight; the feel of a swift Arabian horse between his knees. Many are the memories; the love that coursed through his hot veins; the lazy sitting by the tents, drowsing in the heat. His mind reverts to those days, far back in reality and yet short when viewed from here. He sees himself lying without toil, just idling away the moments; content to be alive, yet making of his life no purpose.

"Then the picture changes, Uvani now riding a steed which gives him the keenest joy of mastery, knowing that it will obey his slightest touch: the wild rush through the desert, the meeting of steel with steel -- and then my memory recalls the time when steel responded not, and the sharp rapier bit into the flesh."

I asked: "Was that when your earth life came to an end?"

"Even so. One swift thrust hardly felt, so sharp, so quick the blow; but with it could I feel the sinking into the darkness, the blur before my eyes. As I fell I lay, bleeding my life away."

"Uvani, what did you next know?"

"When next aught was apparent to me, the murmur of voices seemingly quite near; but, when I perceived, I was alone. There was none near me, which pleased me, for I did not desire that any should come near me. I wondered where was my steed, where my fellow men. I looked for the wound, saying: 'Surely I have not dreamt? What then has befallen me?' And thus I remained."

"For how long?"

"It seemed to me that the time was very long. And still I wondered, saying: 'Surely I am now dreaming and will soon awake.' Presently I saw two who drew near, and one, perceiving me, said: 'You are more truly alive now than when you were on earth.' To which I rejoined: 'What part of the earth is this to which I have been brought?' He then replied: 'The earth life which was yours is over. Now will you truly live.'

"And then I knew, but, knowing, refused comfort, seeking ever to remain

alone. It was not only the loss of the body, but the whole of earth's values; those, dropping away, left the soul with a strange and naked feeling. If much character has been formed (I speak now as I myself found it) it is not long before the soul is readjusted; but even then, unless love has had its part, there is very great loneliness. The latter I experienced. I left none who mattered when I went, and saw nothing of those on the earth world. Until I had passed numbers of years on this side it did not occur to me to seek or find a way; but presently the time arrived, and I found, with practice, I could come near. I found my instrument and have been able to work with fullness for many. I have told you how this came about. I can also work through your instrumentality in an entirely different way, and for this privilege I am very grateful. Will you attend your lord who waits?"

Whenever Uvani spoke to me about Abdul Latif, it was always with the greatest respect -- "Abdul Latif, honoured be his name", or some such expression -- for he undoubtedly regarded him as being far more exalted than he was himself. I knew he was supposed to have lived a very long time ago, and to have been a distinguished personality; but that was about all until I did a little elementary research on him.

Abdul Latif was born in Baghdad in 1161 A.D., in the last century of the Abbasid Caliphate, and he died in 1231^{*}, at the age of 70, some 27 years before that city was totally destroyed by the Mongol Hulagu, grandson of Chengiz Khan; and the last of the Abbasid Caliphs, Musta'sin, was tortured and led out to execution. A reasonable transliteration of his full name from the Arabic is Mowaffik ed Din abu Mohammed al Latif ibn Yussuf ibn Mohammed Ali ben Said, meaning Mowaffik the Pious, father of Mohammed the Persuasive, son of Yussuf, son of Mohammed Ali, son of Said. He was also known as Abd al Latif, The Persuasive Slave of God, or Abdul Latif, which is the form used in this book.

As a young man he travelled to Egypt, which was then part of the Abbasid Caliphate, and he made that country his base for the rest of his

* Dates taken from Chambers' Encyclopaedia.

life. His main interests were medicine, philosophy and geography, and he wrote copiously on all three subjects, as well as on a number of others. Some sources state that he wrote as many as 165 books and treatises in all. One of his books (MS Pococke 250) is in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, written in his own beautiful Arabic characters, the parchment yellow with the age of more than seven centuries, but the writing still clear, without a single alteration or correction. This book is called Al Mokhtasir, The Compendium, and it deals with Abdul Latif's travels in Egypt, and the conditions there, in 1200 A.D. It is one of the main sources into which historians have delved for very many years, seeking information about that troubled period.

Long before I knew anything of Abdul Latif as an historic person, I asked him, when he was writing through me, to tell me something of his own life on earth. He answered:

"I am only too happy to tell you what I can. You ask what were the really favourite pursuits during my life. It is hard to say, for so many things afforded me deep interest. I was a traveller, and always full of desire to penetrate all the corners of the earth; or, if unable to do so myself, to ascertain everything possible; and every map was scrutinized by me. All things geographical, therefore, interested me.

"I was a philosopher, my mind seeing things with clarity, the reason for them becoming plain. Life was therefore not so complex. Medicine was my chief occupation, for I delighted in it, to alleviate suffering, to trace disease. I was considered advanced, my views being unorthodox, for I grasped early the knowledge that, to understand the intricacies of the body, I must dissect dead ones. Then was music also a great joy. I steeped my soul [in that] and never wearied when I could be refreshed in this way. There were many different delights. Astronomy I studied also, seeking to understand the signs. It is, I suppose, largely owing to my diversity of interests that I decided to work again upon this planet. I saw much in my life of the ways of the people amongst whom I dwelt. I gathered their stories from their

diseased bodies and still more distressed minds. I was in sympathy with them, and after receiving, in sphere beyond, much enlightenment, my sympathies became even more acute. It is only a comparatively short time since I made myself known [in this world], but, during the period of my return, I have been able to give help to many. This is but a brief sketch. We will enlarge upon it at some other time."

With every medium through whom Abdul Latif spoke to me, he had much to say about our sons, Ronald and Bill; and once, when he was speaking through Eileen Garrett, he remarked that, like Ronald, he had done much in the way of doctoring the people he had come across in his travels. I had never said a word, either to her or to him, about this; but it is a fact that Ronald was always being called upon to act as doctor and, on his second journey into Tibet (on which he was engaged at this time), he had taken a very large quantity of medical supplies with him, all of which were exhausted before he returned. Abdul Latif went on to say how great was the interest that he, and Uvani, took in both boys:

"But whereas it is to Billy that Uvani draws so near, it is especially in Ronald that I find the enthusiastic zests. I know that, with him, as was the case with me, around every corner is a new adventure; that every river beckons. Of Billy, Uvani says: 'Like unto his father is this boy, stalwart, firm of purpose and in speech; and in every respect a soldier, and one after my own heart. I too, in my earth life, was a soldier, and in this boy do I feel memory reborn.'"

Abdul Latif is now chiefly concerned in the giving of healing advice to those who go to him. On Eileen Garrett's departure to the United States, he took Nina Francis as his medium for this purpose, in order to continue his work in England; and, until her death some years ago, he continued to do much in this way through her. Miss Francis's regular control, ^LLu^gio, had been an Italian abbot in his earth life, and always spoke in a delightfully intellectual and cultured manner. He too gave me the clearest information whenever I talked to him; but, after a while, he rarely came for more than

a few minutes during my Francis sittings, giving way, with great courtesy, to Uvani and Abdul Latif, both of whom he allowed to control his medium. It was, of course, on account of the generous way in which different mediums were put at their disposal by other controls, that Abdul Latif and Uvani were able to carry out so many cross-tests with me, as I have described later in this book.

Through Miss Francis, Abdul Latif talked to me about the large amount of work done by Uvani among the "Unhappy Ones" -- those people who, for one reason or another, had not realized they were dead, so far as the physical world was concerned -- which Uvani himself had already written about to me, in brief. He had a good deal to say about them, and about the manner in which wrong-doing is punished.

"If people wish to do wrong, to gain experience of any kind, let them do as they wish, remembering that nothing can be done without some effect, either for good or evil. As one has acted, so does one receive back the results of those actions, like a boomerang.

"So many people have wrong ideas about suicides; but God allows for circumstances. According to how the soul is tried, so is the soul helped. No punishment is given by others.

"There is no darkness on this side of life in reality. Remorse is what makes the dark state in which many seem to be living. Those who have, during their earth existence, gloried in cruelty, may for thousands of years remain in the condition of gloom, seeing over and over again these actions of theirs, and the terrible effect they have had on others. Time would seem endless to them; but all their punishment is mental, and given to them by no one but themselves. When, having paid in full through their remorse, their anguish, their intense desire to remedy what they have done, they send out a cry for help, there are ever those watching, ready to help. But understand fully this great truth: no one has punished them but themselves."

I once asked Abdul Latif if he would make clear to me the reason for

the differences that showed in his character, when he spoke through his different mediums -- this, because I had read considerable, and doubtful, comment about it in various psychic publications. I told him that, whether he came through Eileen Garrett or Nina Francis, I could always recognize him as being the same person; but while, through me, he displayed the same personality that he did when he spoke through Eileen Garrett, through Miss Francis it was a quite different side of him which appeared. He replied, through my hand, that he would endeavour to put into words what happened:

"You do, indeed, get me through both these mediums. You find that, when I arrange with you something to be done, it takes place. So far as your experience goes it is the keen, forceful, fiery Abdul Latif, diagnosing with precision, whom you meet with Uvani's ^{*}instrument ; one who appears to be doing his work and attending to business in the same manner as you would find when a doctor is consulted in his own room, where he interviews patients. You find, one after another, items of information are given you on all manner of subjects, yourself, your health -- each symptom known and discussed. Upon everything concerning you does Abdul evince knowledge, and, at times, will he give much about other people who are not related. All these things happen through this source with him. You feel a dynamic force emanating.

"You are aware that there is much controversy always arising over this vexed subject of Abdul Latif's control of two mediums. You have, therefore, quietly observed what occurs in your own case, and, for several years, pursued your investigations, giving no details to anyone as to which controls came to you, or what details were forthcoming -- that fact, that Abdul Latif controlled you, being kept silent. You knew therefore that no one could be aware of what you were doing. From the time Abdul Latif controlled you he had no opportunity of speaking [to you] through Eileen Garrett, and had, in fact, done so on only one occasion; but, through your own mediumship, he came to speak constantly, to acquaint you with details of what he had said [through

* Eileen Garrett

other sources] and what he was doing. To your own satisfaction it was constantly proved that it was Abdul Latif. He knew and could carry out cross-tests. Now we come to your summing up of what you know is the case.

"[With Nina Francis] Abdul Latif is not so decisively the person you meet through the mediumship of Eileen Garrett -- true; for it is through her [Eileen Garrett] that the earth personality is more vividly displayed than is possible with any other living medium. Myself, I think it has never been possible through any other to the same extent. You have found this to be amazingly the case with your own husband. You have seen that, with Uvani, the characteristic side of the Arab is uppermost.

"Now, I find, when I assume control of Nina Francis, who is a very gentle type of medium, that I have a much more ruminative, philosophical side appearing. One might liken it to the feeling of a surgeon who, having been busily employed with his work, sinks into a comfortable chair and prepares to enjoy a chat with a friend well-known to him. With you have I shown, all through these talks [through Nina Francis], that though, perhaps, I am not touching on evidential points in the same way, I none the less allude to all manner of incidents, past, present and to come, in all your lives. You know it is the same old friend."

I answered: "Yes, Abdul, I do."

"Then state as you have found. Place it on record. Make these people see that as, in life, one feels differently concerning one's moods, according to the effect made upon one by those with whom one has to come in contact; still more so does one evince a different side where the medium in trance is of a very different calibre to another also used. If you will give what you, yourself, have discovered to be a fact, people will be benefited, for it is not good they should doubt my authenticity."

As a finishing touch, Abdul Latif swiftly wrote: "Add, to this that I have said: love, unselfish love, is what counts far more than all else, and to those who deeply love, Paradise indeed awaits them."