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Fudhail

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In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

He walked with pride and arrogance today, as was his way. The market was busy, and he had eyed his next prey, a young girl. Walking to her, he whispered if she knew who he was. The panicked young girl had no clue. "Fudhail" he had said. When the terrified girl had run away from him, he had screamed at her with joy, 'tonight it will be your house'. Such was his way. He would threaten his victims of theft, and at night he would raid their houses, and violating whatever seemed violable to him.

The sun had set long ago, and the stars had a vigil with their wide eyes, awaiting the happenings of tonight. Once again a helpless family will be looted, and violated. The family had prepared their defense, but once eyed by the hungry animal, the victim had lost hope in safety. So, they had put the children to sleep, and the elders were praying for safety.

Fudhail had walked up the ladder, intoxicated with the thought of what his gains would be that night. He reached the top of the ladder. His ears had gotten very sharp over the years. He heard a voice, a sad voice. He had heard many pleas, many cries during his raids. But this was different. This was a sad, yet firm voice that sang something with a sweet melody, just as the lulls of a tending mother to a sickly child. There was hope. He tended to the invitation. It was reciting:

***"Has not the time arrived for the believers that their hearts in all humility should engage in the remembrance of Allah and of the Truth which has been revealed (to them), and that they should not become like those to whom was given Revelation aforetime, but long ages passed over them and their hearts grew hard? For many among them are rebellious transgressors."* (57: 16)**

He froze in his place. Reality struck him. He had violated so many people and here was at the threshold

for another one. His heart raced with fear and shame. Trembling he remained at the top of the ladder. Where was he to go? Should he drop dead? Should God turn him into dust, so that he will be relieved of this pain and shame? The words rang in his ears 'has not the time arrived', 'has not time arrived'. Drowned in tears of guilt, he whispered: Yes it has. He climbed down from the ladder and walked away aimlessly. Then he recalled one place that he could go to.

Away from the city, he had arrived at this ruin. None shall see him here, and he shall have his time with his Lord. Busy in his pleas for forgiveness, he heard people coming to the ruin. Where would he hide his disgraceful person? He remained. He heard people saying: 'May God be harsh to Fudhail. From his fear we run to these ruins to be safe from his raids. May Allah save us from encountering him!'

His grief was unbearable. He cried to Allah: 'O my Rabb what a wretched I am. A family is in fear of their life and dignity in the middle of this night that you have provided for rest. I have made rest for them Haram. And here a group of travellers have sought refuge into the ruins from the fear of my violence. My God, shall I ask your acceptance of this wretched one? Where is hope for one like me?

Disappointed he left the ruins in search of nowhere to run away from people, to not face them.

Years passed and there was no news of Fudhail.

One day of Ashura, a man who had frequented sitting at the side of Ka'ba for years now, in constant plea and repentance was found dead.

Fudhail had died.

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