

## Chapter 10

Ahmad's next trip was drawing near. He enjoyed the few days that remained with his fiancée. He took her to a public park near a mosque. They sat and watched the people walking by and were pleased to see several worshippers enter the mosque.

"How wonderful Islamic prayer is," Sumayah said. "It causes one to feel security and happiness."

Ahmad agreed, "That is quite true. Mosques are the best places for Muslims to meet and to manage the affairs of an Islamic state, as it was at the advent of Islam. Decisions were reached in the mosque and the laws were created which ruled half of this globe. The eternal call of Allahu Akhar to prayer echoed throughout dozens of Islamic countries."

Sumayah mused, "How wonderful those days must have been."

"Yes, and it is useful to study them. Since we are committed Muslims, and we live according to Islamic instructions, we are happy. Our happiness is to be derived from our firm stand against all deviated ideologies. It means a lot when we defeat the evil intentions of the self." The Prophet (S.A.W.) says, 'Whoever adheres to my Sunnah when the ummah is corrupted, has the reward of a hundred martyrs.' "

"The early Muslims were the masters of the world", Sumayah remarked.

Ahmad corrected her, "Actually they were leaders, since Islam considers all people as free human beings. There are no masters or slaves in Islam. A Muslim is evaluated only with regard to his piety and righteousness. The early Muslims did not want to dominate and exploit others. They wanted to guide people to the right path, to purify their thinking. Islam is a universal doctrine, and is beneficial for all ages and all countries. Dominating or enslaving others cannot result in a nation's progress. With such ideas, the Muslims reached the Persian Court and the Roman Imperial fortresses."

"Did any women play significant roles in the early days of Islam?" Sumayah inquired.

Ahmad told her, "Of course they did. Woman participated in shaping Islamic history. She proved her ability and personality as a human being entrusted with a mission. She was no less active or less brave

than a man."

"What is the difference between the Muslim woman of those days and the Muslim woman of our time?" Sumayah asked.

Ahamd said, "Woman today is misled. Man has fooled her and deprived her of all her innate dignity. She has been pulled down to the bottom of society. Our duty is to awaken her from her slumber. We should save her from this pitiful situation into which she has fallen."

"I am afraid it is difficult to reform the Muslim women who have decided to follow Western ways," she said, thinking about her cousin.

Ahmad said, "A real Muslim woman cannot be fooled easily. She knows the true nature of her religion and is secure in the knowledge that Islam has given her all her rights. Anyway, it is not too late to reform the misled ones. Even a misguided Muslim woman still has good qualities within herself, which can remove her blindness one day."

"When and how?" Sumayah asked.

Ahmad said, "I think the time is drawing near. Women who imitate the West suffer terribly in the end. The breaking up of Muslim marriages has increased due to this blind imitation. Such marriages, if they are unIslamic, cannot be happy ones, or survive for long."

Sumayah said, "Some of the misled women claim that *hijab* is imposed on woman by man and it undermines her status."

Her fiancé replied, "This is mere nonsense and an echo of foreign propaganda. The obligation to dress modestly is not confined to women only. However women are more attractive and can have a stronger influence than men; therefore, her *hijab* is more significant. *Hijab* acts as a sort of protection for women. Islam wants women to cover the source of their beauty, as a means of increasing their dignity. Muslim women at the advent of Islam participated in battles, attended the wounded and encouraged the Muslim combatants. The Islamic modest dress they wore did not hinder them from having an effective role in their society."

Sumayah sighed, "How I wish we were like them."

Ahmad told her, "Every woman can be like them."

Sumayah asked, "How?"

Ahmad said, "Struggling for the sake of a belief has many degrees. A Muslim woman can achieve this any time. The struggle against temptation and corruption and enjoining the good and forbidding the evil can all be forms of struggle for belief. In fact, the struggle against selfish desires is of more use than all

other struggles. Imam Ali (A.S.) said, 'To purify the self of corruption is more difficult than any actual struggle'."

The call to prayer could be heard, so Sumayah and Ahmad arose and entered the mosque to perform their prayers.

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