

## Chapter Ten

A young Egyptian entered our cell with a wobble that betrayed his poor state. Our headman squeezed him between the rows where he calmly settled, talking to no one. As was customary, a group of friends surround-ed him with the intention to know his case, but he did not respond. Right then the window flicked open and the Haras said: "*Wayn Huwa? Haza Masriy?*" – Where is he, this Egyptian? The head answered that he was sitting comfortably with his Egyptian fellow men. "No one should talk to him–No one–do you understand?", he commanded, shut the window and disappeared.

Two hours later, Majid, a young officer from the Amanaat, walked in followed by the ever-present Haras. The Egyptian young man was summoned, and a volley of questions started. Majid lit his cigarette, and demanded: "Where did you get the dollars from?" "*Wallah, Ma Adree,*" By God. I do not know, came the reply. "So you do not know eh?" Majid was furious. He slapped him and then hit him hard blows. "*Wallah, Seyyidi – Ma Adree,*" – By God Sir, I do not know. This time the boy was kicked on his ribs, and as he tried to control himself from falling, blows and slaps followed. The boy cried helplessly. "Stretch your palm", Majid said. The boy extended his palm, and the burning butt was extinguished against his palm. He gave out a cry of pain and bitterly wept. Caught by the neck, Haras pushed him out of the cell and the door shut. I thought the boy was in for trouble and that he would be half dead if at all brought back. Instead he returned hail and happy. He told us that he had confessed, and supplied further names of those involved with him in the illegal transaction.

Amanaat is the entry point and also the exit. My wife and I were driven from Baghdad Airport (Saddam Airport) under escort. I was given a small white handkerchief to tie around my wife's eyes, and then they blinded me with my own muffler. As the car sped along the main roads of the city, my wife clasped my hand and asked, "Where are they taking us? Are we going to be killed?" My heart throbbed with fear; nervously I replied, "I do not know. But we are the guests of Imam Hussein. Allah is with us–do not panic." We felt that the car was speeding down a ramp, and then, a sudden halt. We came out of the vehicle without the slightest idea of what destiny held in store for us. And we entered a place, which looked like a warehouse. For when the cloth was removed, we saw the place full of various articles. There were clothes, shoes, trunks, arms and ammunitions, knives, motorbikes, and heaven knows what

all spread around, with a lot of dust gathered over them. "*Uq-oud*", a Haras shouted, but I did not "know". "Sit Down", and both of us complied. We saw Majid in a corner, seated on a wooden chair, writing. And then he approached us." Remove your clothes and all your belongings. Tell your wife to go in the adjoining room and change. Come on, quickly", he ordered. I was given the dirty torn pyjama suit; and my wife an old dress. We were then beckoned to the table where we signed the list of our belongings. Just as we finished signing, Majid looked at me snarling: "Jasoos Khomeini? Khomeini's spy?" I made no reply for I did not "understand". "You will see the fire, soon, very soon", he warned. Earth seemed to slip from under my feet. For the first time I realized that I was held under serious suspicion. My lips went dry with fear and my wife silently wept. But worse was to come.

The Haras put the shackles around my wrists, and blindfolded my wife and me. Then he pulled us in a zigzag manner giving the impression that the alley was not straight. We came to an elevator. On the second floor, I was ordered out. My wife screamed: "Where am I going? I shall die.... They will kill me.... please do not go...." and the screams died down as the elevator shot upwards. I saw my wife again after four months.

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