

Chapter Nineteen

Raising my palms towards heaven, I prayed vehemently: "O God, the ordeal seems to have no end. We are being transferred from one cell to another, each worse than the other. Have mercy upon your servants, O Allah!" This was Monday, two days after my arrival here. They had promised my release the next day, but freedom was not in sight. Majid's words rang in my ears: "Yes, they told me so seven months ago"; and the prospect of being incarcerated indefinitely in this gloomy environment frightened me out of my wits.

I recalled how earnestly I had prayed in the preceding days. Once as I prostrated before my Creator, beseeching for mercy, I fell into a momentary trance. How distinct were the words, which were heard from nowhere: 'Verily, Allah is ever vigilant over His servants.'

I raised my head not believing that I heard the words. Alas! My prayers were answered. The horrors of detention in the Mukhaberat nightmarishly haunt my mind even today, but I feel profoundly soothed and placid when I recall how my communion with the Almighty was lovingly answered. A call of distress it was, which cannot be re-enacted in days of ease and plenty.

I had not finished my prayers when a car was seen at the door. It was from Mukhaberat. I heard the frightened friends warning each other: "It is from the Devils – It is from Mukhaberat. Heaven knows who is the victim." Right then my name was announced. I stood up to prepare myself for the departure, but I could not guess where I was transported. Was it another cell? Am I going back to the cell No.58? My legs shook as I put on my shoes. It was all the more difficult to handle my luggage. Majid helped.

I saw my wife already seated in the car, and I arranged myself next to her. The officer politely informed that I was booked for London next morning, showed me the tickets and then said: "You will be our guest for tonight—in the cell of course. Keep ready tomorrow at six." As the car sped through the streets of Baghdad, members of the public regarded it apprehensively; for the infamous car was well known.

Back to the cell, we waited for the dreary night to pass, a night which seemed long and endless.

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