

Chapter Twenty

"*Fi Amanillah*", the men from Mukhaberat blurted, and turned their backs. We were brought by them to Saddam Airport under guarded escort and handed over to Immigration. Moments later, we were in the departure lounge waiting for the announcement telling us to proceed to the aircraft. We were asked to wait as other passengers proceeded, and when none but my wife and I were left, my wife asked: "Are we really going, or is it just another joke played on us?" "God forbid," I said.

Finally, the ground hostess led us to the aircraft. Our Passports were given to the steward with an instruction to part with them after the take-off. On our way to London, my wife kept on warning: "Do not talk to anyone, please. He could be a devil from Mukhaberat. They are capable of recalling us from the air. This is their national airline".

As we landed in London, the reactions to the torment I had undergone began to surface. My right foot refused to move; a severe backache and high temperature further disabled me. Surprisingly, my wife, who was equally weakened, kept her calm and composure. She helped me through the formalities, and we came out of the Airport.

No one on earth knew that we had been at last released. Emotion within me welled up, and oddly enough, I decided to keep my arrival a secret for further few hours. My wife insisted that I ring our daughter and request her to come to the Airport. I dialed the number.

Our daughter picked up the phone.

"Hello", she said.

I could not respond. Words choked up my throat, and my tongue wagged nervously.

"Hello"? She repeated.

"We have come.... dear.... we have come." I managed to say.

"But who are you?" she queried.

"Your father and mum – we have come." She wept.

The sincere and earnest prayers by Momineen all the world over were heard. How the menacing threat of execution was averted, and which factors contributed to our release, is a matter of anybody's conjecture. One thing is sure.

"Who answers the oppressed when they cry out to Him and relieves affliction, and makes you inheritors of the earth. Another God besides Allah? How little you reflect."

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