

Exploring Islam



Ra-id Abdulla, MD

Course Five

**First Edition
2014**

Exploring Islam

Islamic Studies for Children

Course Five

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First Edition

2014



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Introduction

Prophet Muhammad emphasized education for all Muslims and, in particular, of children. Indeed, the first act upon victory at the Battle of Badr was for war hostages to be ransomed by teaching Muslim children how to read and write. We have decided to follow the Prophet's example in tackling the awesome task of providing an Islamic Studies curriculum for full-time schools, currently not available to English speaking children.

This job is normally completed by a Ministry of Education, as is the case in Muslim countries, or a large committee of highly paid specialists for the particular subject. This tremendous undertaking was met by the few resources and limited manpower of Universal School to benefit the Muslim generation at large.

Universal School struggled for its first ten years with many books and several publishing houses to find the right curriculum. In time, we realized that no one, single book or series was made for children of full-time school setting. No texts carried the needed didactic or progressive series of knowledge to cover the entire Islamic curriculum. None of the books we examined for this purpose took into consideration the appropriate age and grade level being taught. Such books were intended for either a weekend school program or parents to help their children; this was not satisfactory for the educational demands of full-time schools.

The author, Dr. Ra-id Abdulla, is a pediatric cardiologist by profession and Editor-in-Chief of the *Pediatric Cardiology Journal*. He is the father of three beautiful children at Universal and agreed, after much pressure from me and for the sake of Allah ﷻ and the children of the Muslim community, to take on this task of writing Islamic studies textbooks for the elementary grades. This task consumed thousands of hours; Dr. Ab-

dulla utilized special computer software, a large number of references including Islamic studies curricula from various Muslim countries, and gave up many social commitments to have the project see the light as soon as possible. All thanks to Allah who gave him the time and the patience to complete this task in less than two years.

Each textbook covers Iman, Aqida, Quran, Sunnah, Hadith, Fiqh, Akhlaq, Ibadat, and Mua'amalat for the appropriate age and grade in a progressive format from first to fifth grade. As such, the Islamic Studies program comprehensively covers all aspects of Islam, and can be a tool for the teacher and the parents to use in the classroom and at home.

We thank Allah first and Universal second for giving us this opportunity to serve His Ummah and the Muslim American community at large. I thank all of the reviewers and the commentators who contributed to this work and; lastly, I thank the children who are the sole reason for this publication.

Abdul R. Amine, M.D.

Chairman of the Board of Directors

Universal School, Bridgeview, Illinois

Preface

In the name of Allah Most Merciful, Most Compassionate

Praise to Allah, the Knowledgeable, the Guider. Peace upon his Prophet Muhammad, his household and his companions.

Writing any book is hard; writing a children's book is a nightmare. Will they understand the concept? Are the words too difficult for that particular age group? Am I making any sense at all? And on and on go the questions in one's mind.

It would not have been possible to embark on such an important endeavor if it wasn't for Dr. Amine's request, encouragement, and unrelenting persistence. I am also indebted to my father in law, Dr. A. S. Hashim, whose great scholarly work embodied in numerous Islamic textbooks for young Muslims inspired and assisted me in writing this series of Islamic books for children.

This book is a unit of a larger plan. Prior to writing these books, a committee of educators from Universal School in Bridgeview, Illinois developed an Islamic Studies curriculum for grades 1-12. The hope was to produce a single textbook for each educational level, similar to other subjects taught in elementary, middle and high school.

In writing these books I avoided the typical preaching style of listing things "to do" and "not to do". Instead, these textbooks deliver their teachings through stories. It is hoped that this format will be more interesting to young children who are more attentive when a story is narrated. Each story includes Islamic teachings as well as a Hadith or Quranic verses relevant to the topic. It is interesting to note that more infor-

mation could be packed this way, not to mention making it more fun to read.

The issue of how to best transliterate Arabic names remains difficult to solve. There is no consensus amongst writers. We hope that with future editions this issue could be resolved.

I am grateful for the wonderful work of all those who spent endless hours editing this book. We hope to reprint this textbook annually, introducing corrections and revisions every year. Therefore, we welcome your comments regarding any unforeseen errors or suggestions for improvement.

Mrs. Atta, the Islamic Studies teacher of elementary levels at Universal School was instrumental in the success of using this series of books. She has been able to provide valuable contributions to improving the books through her suggestions and addition of questions after each chapter. We pray that Allah rewards her on our behalf and bless her and her wonderful family.

I am indebted to my wife, Janaan, whose support and critique were most valuable. Furthermore, I would like to thank my three children, Muhammad, Zaineb and Maryem who let me know that the stories were worth listening to.

و الحمد لله رب العالمين و الصلاة و السلام على أشرف المرسلين.

Ra-id Abdulla, MD

Dedication

To
My son Muhammed

رحمة الله عليه

May Allah forgive his sins and grant him the everlasting Paradise for his efforts in editing this book. His loving and happy nature was a fresh breeze Allah ﷻ graced us with during the 22 years of his life before he returned to His Lord.





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Chapter

1

Alinfitar

Mr. Zuhair Is Missing

Zaineb joined her sister Maryem and brother Muhammed in the family van. Their mother drove home while Muhammed and Maryem argued endlessly, but Zaineb remained quiet. It was not unusual for Zaineb to be quiet, but she was more so that afternoon and seemed absorbed in her thoughts.

“He said so, didn’t he Zaineb?”

Startled, Zaineb looked at Muhammed, “Who said what?”

“Mr. Zuhair said he would be away for a month starting next week.”

Zaineb was suddenly very interested in what was being said. “Are

you sure he said next week?" asked Zaineb.

"That's what he told us. I thought you already knew!" replied Muhammed.

"I did, but he didn't come to school today."

"See? I told you he's already gone! The substitute teacher started today," added Maryem.

"When I saw the substitute today, I thought I got my dates mixed up," Zaineb replied. "But I'm sure he said he wouldn't be going to the Islamic teachers' conference in Egypt until next week."

"What makes you so sure?" asked Maryem.

"Last week, he asked me to print the report the class was preparing about Islam in the United States. He was planning to show it to other teachers at the conference. He told me to bring it today so he can see it and make sure that the report is ready. He said if there were any changes to make we could finish it this week before he leaves to Cairo."

"Are you sure?" asked Muhammed

"Of course I'm sure!" snapped Zaineb

"Maybe he changed his mind during the weekend and left early," suggested Maryem.

"That's what I thought," started Zaineb, "But then ..."

"But then what?" Maryem and Muhammed asked at the same time.

Zaineb looked at Muhammed and Maryem, not sure whether to continue with her story or not.

“C’mon, Zaineb!” urged Muhammed impatiently, “Then what?”

Zaineb looked out the window, about to explain, only to realize they were already at home.

“I’ll tell you later,” she said as she started to gather her things.

Once they all got into the house, Zaineb went straight to the backyard to change the rabbit’s water as she usually did when returning home from school.

“C’mon, Zaineb!” demanded Muhammed, “What makes you think Mr. Zuhair didn’t change his travel plans?”

Zaineb hesitated, she was not sure if what she was thinking made any sense, but finally decided to share her thoughts with her brother and sister.

“Mr. Zuhair liked our report very much. He doesn’t give compliments easily, but this time he seemed very happy with the way it turned out. When I e-mailed him the report last week, he said he would read it over the weekend and see if it needed any changes. He also said he would leave a book for me on his desk to use for improving the report.”

“What’s wrong with that?” asked Maryem.

“Nothing,” Zaineb replied, “But when the class went to Mr. Zuhair’s classroom for Islamic studies we saw Mrs. Hamdi there and she told us that Mr. Zuhair had already left to Cairo and that she would substitute for him. I noticed a book on his desk so I took it, thinking that it was the one he left for me, only it wasn’t a regular book.”

“What do you mean?” asked Muhammed

“It was Yousif Ali’s translation of the Quran.”

“Why would he give you Yousif Ali’s translation? We all get a new copy every year along with our textbooks,” said Maryem.

“That’s just it!” said Zaineb, “It didn’t make any sense, so I took the book and didn’t think much of it. Later during lunch, I was going through it to memorize Surat Alinfitar and I noticed something strange.”

“What?” asked Muhammed and Maryem.

“There was a piece of paper tucked in where Surat Alinfitar is. The paper had two words written on it in Mr. Zuhair’s handwriting,” Zaineb explained as she took the Quran and piece of paper out of her backpack.

Muhammed took the paper and read it out loud: *start here*. “I wonder what he means by that?”

“Read the introduction and the sura. Tell me if you notice anything strange,” Zaineb instructed.

Muhammed and Maryem read the chapter where the piece of paper was. This is what they read:

lyleb
Lolse
Ouash
Vahia
Erhnp
Meetp
Umwhy
Hyiib
Ajise
Mollp
Myrii
Eaefo
Dnweu
Zdaas
Aprn
Irdd
Niyt
Edoh
Beue
AiwH
Nnie
Dstr
Mhhe
Aaga
R'of
Yaot
Elde
Mlnr

Surat Alinfitar was revealed in the early years of Islam, when the Prophet lived in Mecca. Allah reminds people that two angels record every person's actions, one angel records good deeds and the other angel records evil deeds. On the Day of Judgment, people will be shown their deeds and Allah himself will be the judge of their deeds. Those with more good deeds than bad will enter Paradise, while those with more bad deeds will be thrown in Hellfire.

It is surprising that some people cannot see that they will be held responsible for their actions on the Day of Judgment. Those people enjoy Allah's gifts in this life and think that it will last for ever. Such people cannot see that Allah will judge them one day and hold them responsible for every thing evil they did while in this life.

It is important that we think of everything we do and ask ourselves if what we are doing is good and will help us in the Hereafter when all people will be brought back to life, or if what we are doing is bad and will hurt us in the on the Day of Judgment.

Sura 82: Alinfitar الانفطار

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

- | | | |
|---|--|----------------------------------|
| 1 | When the skies split
open | إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انْفَطَرَتْ |
| 2 | <u>And</u> when the stars fall
and scatter | وَإِذَا الْكَوَاكِبُ انْتَثَرَتْ |
| 3 | And when the seas
<u>burst</u> | وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ فُجِّرَتْ |
| 4 | And when the graves
are turned upside down
and bring out their
contents | وَإِذَا الْقُبُورُ بُعْثِرَتْ |

Iyleb
Lolse
Ouash
Vahia
Erhnp
Meetp
Umwhy
Hyiib
Ajlse
Mollp
Myrii
Eaefo
Dnwew
Zdaas
Aprn
Irdd
Niyt
Edoh
Beue
AiwH
Nnie
Dstr
Mhhe
Aaga
R'of
Yaot
Elde
Mlnr

Iyleb
Lolse
Ouash
Vahia
Erhnp
Meetp
Umwhy
Hyiib
Ajlse
Mollp
Myrii
Eaefo
Dnweu
Zdaas
Aprn
Irdd
Niyt
Edoh
Beue
AiwH
Nnie
Dstr
Mhhe
Aaga
R'of
Yaot
Elde
Mlnr

5 Then a person will
know what good or bad
deeds he has

عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخَّرَتْ

6 O man! What has made
you careless about your
Lord, the Most
Generous?

يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ مَا غَرَّكَ بِرَبِّكَ
الْكَرِيمِ

7 Who created you,
fashioned you
perfectly, and gave you
perfect proportions

الَّذِي خَلَقَكَ فَسَوَّاكَ فَعَدَلَكَ

8 In whatever form he
willed, he put you
together

فِي أَيِّ صُورَةٍ مَّا شَاءَ رَكَّبَكَ

9 No! But you deny the
Day of Judgment

كَلَّا بَلْ تُكذِّبُونَ بِالَّذِينَ

10 There are angels in charge of mankind to watch you

وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَافِظِينَ

11 Honorable and writing down your deeds

كِرَامًا كَاتِبِينَ

12 They know all that you do

يَعْلَمُونَ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ

13 For sure, the good and righteous will be in Paradise

إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ

14 For sure, the wicked, disbelievers, sinners and evil-doers will be in the blazing Hellfire

وَإِنَّ الْفُجَّارَ لَفِي جَحِيمٍ

15 They will enter, and taste its burning flame on the Day of Judgment

يَصَلُّونَهَا يَوْمَ الدِّينِ

Iyleb
Lolse
Ouash
Vahia
Erhnp
Meetp
Umwhy
Hyiib
Ajlse
Mollp
Myrii
Eaefo
Dnweu
Zdaas
Aprn
Irdd
Niyt
Edoh
Beue
AiwH
Nnie
Dstr
Mhhe
Aaga
R'of
Yaot
Elde
Mlnr

Iyleb
Lolse
Ouash
Vahia
Erhnp
Meetp
Umwwhy
Hyyib
Ajlse
Mollp
Myrii
Eaefo
Dnwew
Zdaas
Aprn
Irdd
Niyt
Edoh
Beue
Aiw
Nnie
Dstr
Mhhe
Aaga
R'of
Yaot
Elde
Mlnr

16 And the evil people
will not be absent from
it

وَمَا هُمْ عَنْهَا بِغَائِبِينَ

17 And what will make
you know what the
Day of Judgment is?

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمَ الدِّينِ

18 Again, what will make
you know what the
Day of Judgment is?

ثُمَّ مَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمَ الدِّينِ

19 It will be the day when
no person shall have
power to do anything
for another, and the
decision making, that
day, will be all to Allah

يَوْمَ لَا تَمْلِكُ نَفْسٌ لِنَفْسٍ
شَيْئًا وَالْأَمْرُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلَّهِ

“Is it supposed to mean anything?” asked Maryem.

“Mr. Zuhair knew we would be studying this sura because we have a test on it this week. I always borrow his Quran to review the week’s assignment at lunch. He’s used to it by now because I always do it. That’s why he left me a message in the sura!”

“A message! What kind of a message?” asked Maryem.

“Look at the chapter again, pay attention to the underlined letters,” said Zaineb.

Muhammed and Maryem looked back at the chapter, they noticed for the first time the letters underlined with a green pen. Muhammed grabbed a pen and started to write down the underlined letters:

“h e l p k i d n a p p e d”

“Help Kidnapped, that’s what the message says!” exclaimed Maryem.

“Yes! Exactly!” said Zaineb excitedly. “Somebody must have kidnapped Mr. Zuhair and he managed somehow to leave a message in the Quran before they took him away.”

“Who’s “they” and where did they take him to and why would anyone want to kidnap a teacher?!” asked Maryem. “This doesn’t make any sense.”

“I know, I know! That’s exactly what I thought,” said Zaineb, “But

how can you explain this message?”

Muhammed was still looking at the Quran, “Look here,” he said while pointing at some more letters. “There is more to the message.”

Muhammed grabbed the pen and started writing some more letters on the paper: “a b u b a k r”

“Abu Bakr!” exclaimed Maryem. “What does he mean by Abu Bakr?”

“Could it be the name of whoever kidnapped him?” wondered Zaineb.

“Or does it mean Abu Bakr the Prophet’s companion?”

“Do you think it may have anything to do with the chapter?” Muhammed suggested.

“What do you mean?” asked Maryem.

“Maybe if we read the chapter more carefully we will find something in the meaning that will help us solve this clue,” said Muhammed.

They all looked at the Quran and read again the sura.

“It starts the way many suras do—with Allah making an oath to make us pay attention to what He will be saying next,” said Maryem.

“Then Allah tells us how we are shown on the Day of Judgment our good deeds and our bad deeds,” said Muhammed.

“And based upon our deeds we either enter Jenna forever, or enter Jahanem,” added Zaineb.

“I don’t see any connection to Abu Bakr!” Muhammed exclaimed.

“Hey, guys!” exclaimed Maryem. “Remember last year when Mr. Zuhair gave that Juma’a khutba where he talked about the Prophet’s companions and how they loved and feared Allah so much that even though they were promised heaven by Allah because of their good deeds that they continued to do good and be afraid that they were not doing enough to please Allah.”

“I remember that! It was a khutba about Abu Bakr,” said Muhammed.

“Don’t you see?!” yelled Zaineb in excitement. “He was carrying a book with him during the Khutba. Asma’, my classmate asked him afterwards about the book, he said that it was a biography of Abu Bakr, he showed it to her and if I remember correctly, he burrowed it from the school library.”

“Well, what are you waiting for? Go call Asma’ and get the name of that book!” said Maryem.



Chapter 2

Abu Bakr

The next day, Muhammed, Zaineb and Maryem met after school. Instead of going out to the yard to be with their friends as they usually did, they went straight to the library to look for the book about Abu Bakr.

“Did you get the name of that book?” asked Maryem.

“Yes, it’s called just that: ‘Abu Bakr,’” replied Zaineb.

As they approached the library, they slowed down and walked inside. Mrs. Salman, the librarian, looked up when she heard them entering the library. She greeted them with a smile. She was surprised to see the three siblings coming to the library. Students preferred to be in the yard that time of the day and they did not usually come to the library right after school ended.

“Can I help you find something?” she asked.

“We’re looking for a biography of Abu Bakr,” answered Maryem. “It’s called ‘Abu Bakr’.”

“Sure,” said Mrs. Salman. “I have it somewhere here; I haven’t had a chance to put it back.”

Zaineb’s heart was racing as a thought occurred to her. “Was it just returned?” she asked.

“As a matter of fact, it was. One of the teachers had borrowed it.”

Zaineb, Muhammed and Maryem looked at each other; all three of them were thinking the same thing.

“Was it Mr. Zuhair?” asked Muhammed.

Mrs. Salman looked surprised, “Why yes it was! How did you know?”

“Just a guess,” he answered.

The three siblings checked out the book and left the library in a hurry. They went to *Mahal*, a nearby soda and sandwich shop adjacent to the school and very popular with the students.

Each of them got a drink and they settled down in one of the booths. Zaineb had the book clutched in her arm.

“Well! Are we going to look at it or what?” asked Maryem impatiently.

“I don’t know, somehow I feel scared” replied Zaineb.

Maryem paused for a moment, “I know what you mean, but let’s get going with it.”

Muhammed took the book from Zaineb and opened it. It was a medium size book, smaller than their school textbooks. First Muhammed looked at the table of contents; nothing in particular stood out until he noticed a green ink dot below chapter one, titled “Summary”. Muhammed hurriedly turned the pages to that chapter; all three huddled around the book and read:

lyleb
Lolse
Ouash
Vahia
Erhnp
Meetp
Umwhy
Hyiib
Ajlse
Mollp
Myrii
Eaefo
Dnweu
Zdaas

Abu Bakr was one of the Prophet’s closest friends. He was 2 years younger than Muhammad ﷺ, born in Mecca to a wealthy and important tribe. His friendship to Muhammad was strong, long before Islam was revealed to the Prophet.

Abu Bakr’s name before Islam was Abdulka’ba, which means slave of the Ka’ba, but he changed his name to Abdullah after Islam. He was known for his honesty and high morality. He never worshipped idols, even before Islam. It never made any sense to him.

Once, when he was young, he was brought to an idol and was told, “This is your Lord, pray to him.” He looked at the stone idol and asked it, “If I am hungry, can you feed me?” The idol remained silent. Then he asked the idol again, “I am cold can you cloth me?” Again, the idol again remained silent. Abu Bakr gave up and threw a rock at the idol, making it fall. This was the last time he had anything to do with any idol.

Abu Bakr was also known as Elsiddiq, which means the believer. He got this nickname when some of Mecca’s masters were mocking the Prophet ﷺ when they heard of his overnight trip to Jerusalem and the heavens. They asked Abu Bakr, “Can you believe your friend?! He says he traveled overnight to Jerusalem!”

“Did he say so?” asked Abu Bakr.

The non-believers assured him that the Prophet did say so.

“Then he tells the truth,” replied Abu Bakr.

Iyleb
Lolse
Ouash
Vahia
Erhnp
Meetp
Umwwhy
Hyiib
Ajlse
Mollp
Myrii
Eaefo
Dnwew
Zdaas
Aprn
Irdd
Niyt
Edoh
Beue
AiwH
Nnie
Dstr
Mhhe
Aaga
R'of
Yaot
Elde
Mlnr

Iyleb
Lolse
Ouash
Vahia
Erhnp
Meetp
Umwhy
Hyyib
Ajlse
Mollp
Myrii
Eaefo
Dnweu
Zdaas
Aprn
Irdd
Niyt
Edoh
Beue
AiwH
Nnie
Dstr
Mhhe
Aaga
R'of
Yaot
Elde
Mlnr

Abu Bakr never knew his friend Muhammad ﷺ to lie, so there was no reason for him to do so now. Abu Bakr believed the Prophet when he told people about being the messenger of Allah so why wouldn't he believe him if he said that he traveled during the night to far away places? Abu Bakr's complete faith in the Prophet earned him the name "Elsiddiq" or "The Believer".

Abu Bakr was devoted to Islam right from the beginning. He asked the Prophet during the early days of Islam to call people to Islam in the open, but the Prophet advised him to keep the message a secret because it was still new and only few people were Muslims. Abu Bakr was too eager to call everyone to Islam, so one day he stood next to the Ka'ba and called people to Islam. The non-believers disliked that very much, so they attacked Abu Bakr and beat him so hard that when his family was finally able to get the pagans off of Abu Bakr, they thought he was dead.

They were pleasantly surprised to see that he was still alive. When Abu Bakr finally woke up, the first thing he asked was about the Prophet to make sure that no one had hurt him. He didn't care a bit about himself and his aching body.

Abu Bakr was a wealthy merchant who had a successful business and plenty of money. When he became a Muslim, he never hesitated to support Muslims with his money and influence. He bought and freed 7 slaves who were tortured for accepting Islam. Abu Bakr's generosity was so great that by the time he migrated to Medina with the Prophet, he had very little money left.

Iyleb
Lolse
Ouash
Vahia
Erhnp
Meetp
Umwwhy
Hyiib
Ajlse
Mollp
Myrii
Eaefo
Dnweu
Zdaas

“It’s amazing how the companions of the Prophet ﷺ were always ready to give all they had for the sake of Allah,” said Zaineab. “The other day I was walking back home from school and saw a poor man sitting on the corner begging, I had a five dollar bill, but nothing else. I didn’t want to give him that much money, but I just couldn’t walk by and not help.”

“So what did you do?” asked Muhammed.

“I went into a nearby store to break the five dollar bill to give him one

dollar, but when I got out he was gone!”

“Oh! Tough luck,” said Maryem.

“I felt awful for being selfish. But just as I was ready to head back home, I saw the poor man standing nearby so I hurried to him and gave him the five dollar bills I had. I thought that was what the Prophet’s companions would have done.”

“I like what you did,” said Maryem.

All three of them turned their eyes back to the book and read on:

Zdaas
Aprn
Irdd
Niyt
Edoh
Beue
AiwH
Nnie
Dstr
Mhhe
Aaga
R'of
Yaot
Elde
Mlnr

Abu Bakr was chosen by the Prophet to be his companion as they escaped from Mecca to Medina. Abu Bakr and Muhammad were close friends and Abu Bakr’s devotion to Allah and tireless defense of Islam gained him the distinction of being the Prophet’s companion for such an important event.

The Prophet and Abu Bakr left at night to migrate to Mecca. Allah temporarily blinded the pagans surrounding the Prophet’s house so that the Prophet

could pass right in front of them without being seen. Muhammad went to Abu Bakr's house and told him of Allah's order to migrate to Medina. Abu Bakr pleaded with the Prophet to allow him to accompany him on the journey. The prophet replied that Allah has ordered that the two of them go together as they migrate to Medina.

Abu Bakr was so happy he cried. Abu Bakr hired Abdullah bin Uraiqut, a guide, to take them to Medina. After leaving Mecca, they hid in a cave in Mount Thaur, 3 miles southwest of Mecca to hide since they knew the pagans would be close behind them once they realized that the Prophet had escaped the siege around his house. Abu Bakr arranged for his son Abdullah and his daughter Asmaa' to check on them while in the cave and bring them food. The Prophet and his companions were able to get to Medina safely after an exhausting trip.

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Zdaas

Abu Bakr remained the Prophet's closest companion throughout the years they lived in Medina. Abu Bakr was a close companion to the Prophet and he stood by the Prophet during difficult times when many abandoned him.

"The other day," said Muhammed, "I was having lunch with Amin and Sami when Mustafa joined us. He was telling us that Fareed told him a day or two earlier that they would be meeting the mayor." Mustafa did not believe what Fareed was saying but Amin said, "I believe him." We all looked at him and wondered why he would be so sure that it was true. Amin told us that he has never known Fareed to lie, so why would he start now?"

"It's true," said Zaineab. "And the opposite is true too, the other day one of our classmates was saying how she went to Florida for spring break but nobody believed her because she tells fibs all the time. She cried because some of the girls were making fun of her but it turned out that she really did go to Florida."

"I don't see any clues so far in this chapter," said Maryem, keeping the group focused. "Let's keep reading."

When the Prophet became ill just before he died, he asked his wife A'isha to ask her father, Abu Bakr, to lead the prayer because of his weakness. A'isha told the Prophet that her father was emotional and nobody would be able to hear his recitation of Quran, as he tended to cry when reciting during prayers. The Prophet insisted that Abu Bakr lead the prayer. Abu Bakr led Muslims for the next 17 prayers until the Prophet died 3 days later.

When Abu Bakr learned of his companion's death, he went into the Prophet's room. He uncovered the Prophet's face and fell down, crying and kissing his face. Afterwards, he left the room and went out to see that people were in shock and disbelief.

People were stunned when they heard that their beloved Prophet had died.

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. Omar bin Alkhatib was one of those who could not believe that the Prophet could die; he was emotional and swore that the Prophet could not and did not die. Abu Bakr stood up and told Omar, “Be patient and stop the oaths,” Then Abu Bakr addressed all people and said, “Those of you who worshiped Muhammad, then let it be known that he has died. But for those of you who worship Allah: He is eternal and will never die.”

Abu Bakr’s wisdom and guidance to Muslims during the worst hours after the Prophet’s death convinced Muslims to choose him as their next leader. A group of Muslims met and chose Abu Bakr to be their next khalifah.

Abu Bakr ruled Muslims with justice as the Prophet had done and aimed to please Allah. He made it clear to all that nothing in Islam would change. When some tribes in Yemen decided to stop paying Zakat, claiming that they need not pay Zakat anymore because the Prophet had died,

Abu Bakr realized that if he was to change one simple thing that Allah ordered Muslims to do, then there was no stopping people who wanted to change this little thing and that little thing until, before long, Islam would no longer be what Allah had intended. Abu Bakr fought those who withheld Zakat; he sent an army the Prophet had prepared before his death. This army was prepared to fight the Byzantine Empire armies who were harassing Muslim tribes in northern parts of the Arabian Peninsula. The leader of this army was a young Muslim named Usama bin Zaid. Some Muslims thought that he was too young to be the leader of the army, but Abu Bakr was firm. He told everyone that if this young man was good enough to be chosen by the Prophet then he was good enough to be chosen by him.

When the army was ready to leave Medina to Yemen, Abu Bakr told them to fight only those who fought against them. He ordered them not to betray those who trusted them, to respect the bodies of those who died and treat them properly.

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He also ordered them not to kill women, children or the elderly. He even ordered them not to damage any trees or kill any animals. Abu Bakr wanted the army to fight those who wanted to change what Allah has ordered, nothing more.

Abu Bakr's rule was short, only about two and a half years, but it was important in many ways. He proved to Muslims and non-Muslims alike that Islam was a religion for all times and that it would continue as Allah revealed it, without changing to please anyone or out of fear of anyone.

As Abu Bakr became ill, he felt that he might die soon and so he told Uthman bin Afan that he would like Omar bin Alkhatib to follow him as ruler of Muslims.

“Hey! Look at this,” Muhammed said as he pointed to the book.

“What?!” exclaimed Maryem.

“Look at this hand writing at the edge of the page!”

All three stared down at few, small handwritten words at the bottom of the page, just below where the text ended.

“*Washing arms halfway September 20, 2002,*” read Zaineab, pointing at the words on the bottom of the page.

“What does washing hands have to do with Abu Bakr?” wondered Muhammed.

“It must be a clue,” said Zaineab

Maryem laughed as she said “Remember last year when I went with Mrs. Hamada to help out with the preschool kids when we took them to the masjid to learn wudu and salat? She was telling them that they had to wash their arms all the way up to their elbows, and then one of the kids, when it came to washing their feet, washed his legs all the way up to the knees. He thought that since he had to wash his hands and arms up to his elbows that he had to do the same with his legs. It was funny.”

“That’s it! That’s just it!” exclaimed Muhammed.

“What?!” Maryem shouted back.

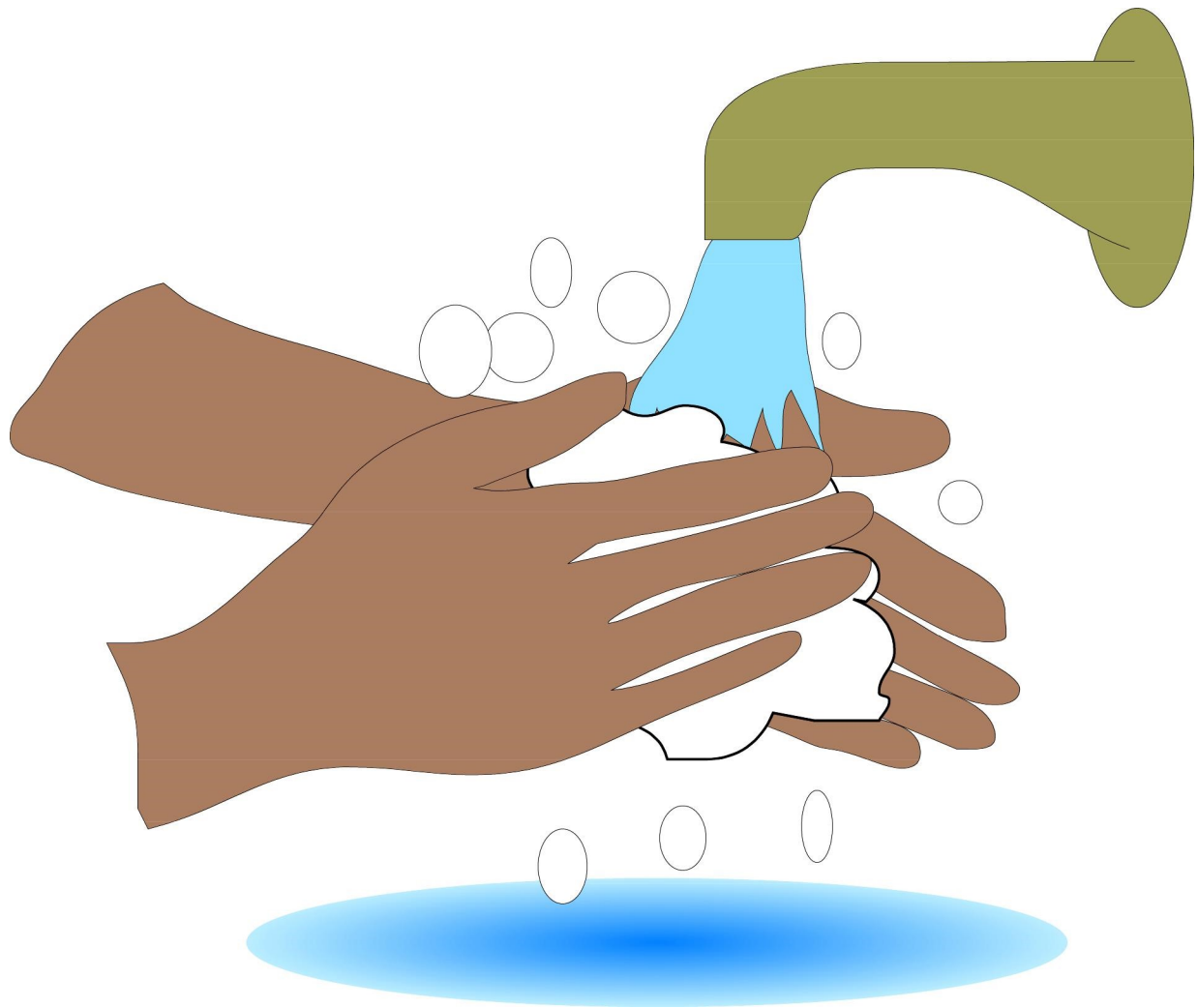
“Mistakes in Wudu,” replied Muhammed. “That’s the name of the book Mr. Zuhair told us about during the Islamic knowledge contest we had last September.”

“This must be the next clue,” said Zaineab hurriedly. “There must be

another clue in that book. This is great!”

“Don’t be so happy!” said Maryem. “Where are we going to find this book?”

Muhammed and Zaineب realized that Maryem was right. They had no idea where to find this book or how to go about looking for it.



Chapter 3

Mistakes in Wudu

The next day, Maryem, Zaineb and Muhammed sat together on a bench in the schoolyard after school. They were quiet and disappointment showed on their faces. A visit to the library earlier in the day and asking two different teachers did not result in any new information about the book they were seeking. They still did not know what book Mr. Zuhair meant in his last clue. No one they asked had heard of a book titled, or about, mistakes in wudu.

“I can’t imagine a book only about mistakes in wudu,” said Zaineb. “It may be part of a book about wudu or salat, but not a whole book about *just* mistakes in wudu.”

“Yeah, but there are so many books about salat and wudu,” said Muhammed. “How will we figure out which book?”

Maryem was quiet, and then spoke slowly as she thought, *What if it’s not a book?*

“If it was a book,” Maryem began, “then Mr. Zuhair would have given us the name of it.”

“You’re right,” agreed Muhammed. “But what else could it be?”

“The note said *washing arms halfway September 20, 2010*,” said Maryem. “It may have something to do with the date. Were you in the class the day Mr. Zuhair talked about mistakes in wudu on September 20?” Maryem asked Zaineab.

“Yes,” Zaineab answered.

“Can you remember anything about washing arms halfway?”

“Mr. Zuhair talked about how to do wudu, and then he took us to the masjid’s wudu room and asked each of us to make wudu in front of the class.” answered Zaineab.

“Did anything unusual happen?” asked Muhammed.

“Not really...” Zaineab said slowly as she thought back about that day. “One thing M. Zuhair said that was helpful was about right and left, right and wrong.”

“What do you mean?” asked Maryem.

“One of the boys was making wudu, it looked as if he was doing it the right way, but Mr. Zuhair asked if anyone noticed what was wrong in the way he was making wudu.”

“Mr. Zuhair explained that there were certain things we always had to do when making wudu because they were *fardh* and Allah asked us to do these steps in the Quran. Those are washing the face, washing the arms up to the elbows, wiping our head and washing the feet to the ankles. The prophet used to swish water in his mouth and then sniff water

to clean the nose and wash more parts of the body than what is *fardh*, like the ears and neck. These are considered *sunna*.”

“Did the boy not do some of these steps in wudu?” asked Maryem.

“Actually,” Zaineb replied, “he did all *fardh* and *sunna* parts of the wudu correctly, the only thing he was doing wrong was that he was starting with the left arm before the right arm and the left foot before the right foot. At first nobody noticed, but then somebody figured it out. Mr. Zuhair told us that it is also *sunna* to always start with the right and then the left parts of the body when making wudu.”

“To remind us of this,” continued Zaineb. “He said to all the class to remember, right is right and left is wrong. He was trying to help us remember to start with the right arm or foot since the right side is the right way of starting but the left side is the wrong way of starting with wudu.”

“Right and wrong...hmm...where did I hear this before?” wondered Muhammed.

“Right and wrong! That’s it!” exclaimed Muhammed. “That’s the name of a book we used this year in Islamic studies. We had to make copies of one of its chapters because it’s an old book and there is only one copy at the school kept in Mrs. Sultan’s classroom,” Muhammed said breathlessly.

The three siblings were energized and excited once again and could not wait till the next day to get hold of that book for their next clue.

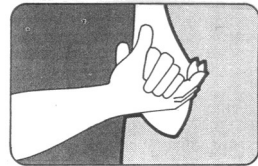
Wudu Steps:

Start by saying:

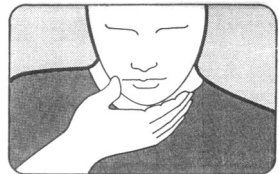
In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

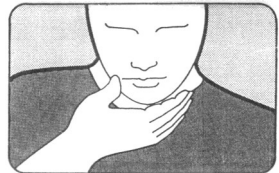
Rinse both hands, three times.



Rinse mouth, three times.



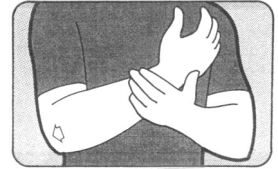
Inhale from palms filled with water, three times.



Rinse face, three times.



Rinse right arm first, then left, three times each.



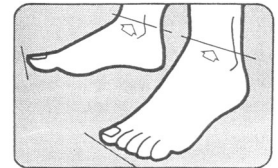
Wipe the top of your head, once only.



Wipe behind the ears, once only



Rinse right foot first then left, three times each.





Chapter 4

Kindness to Neighbors

The next day, during lunch break, Muhammed went to Mrs. Sultan's classroom. As he approached her room, Mrs. Sultan came out and turned to lock the door behind her.

"*Salamu alaikum*," Muhammed greeted Mrs. Sultan. "I was wondering if I could borrow a book from your classroom."

"*Wa alaikum assalam*, Muhammed," replied Mrs. Sultan. "Shouldn't you be in the lunch room?"

"I finished eating and wanted to spend the rest of the break looking up a book."

"Which book are you looking for?"

"Right and Wrong."

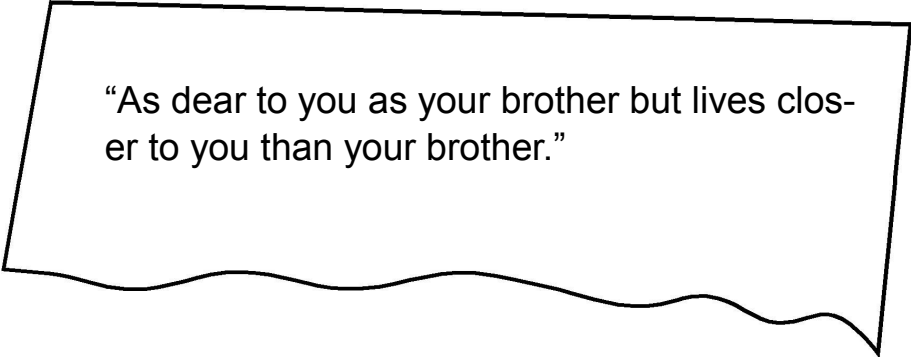
“That’s an old book, I don’t want it leaving my classroom; it is already starting to fall apart.”

“Can I look at it in your room without taking it out?”

“That should be okay,” replied Mrs. Sultan. “But please remember to lock the door when you leave.”

Mrs. Sultan left the classroom and Muhammed walked in all alone. It was very quiet since all students were at lunch. It felt somewhat strange and even a little scary to be up in the classroom when nobody was around. Muhammed shook his head and said, “*A’uthu billah min ashaytan arajeem*” اعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم and walked towards the bookshelf to look up the book he was after.

He found the book immediately; it was very old. Muhammed carried the book and set it gently on top of a nearby desk. He opened the book to the table of contents and there he saw a small piece of paper with writing on it.



“As dear to you as your brother but lives closer to you than your brother.”

“As dear to you as your brother but lives closer to you than your brother,” Muhammed read out loud.

“Must be some sort of a clue!” he thought eagerly.

“Who is as dear as a brother and lives closer to us?” wondered Muhammed as he looked through the table of contents, and then said out loud in joy, “Neighbor! That’s who is as dear to us as a brother and lives even closer to us than our own brother!”

Muhammed remembered the chapter in this book about the right way of treating a neighbor and how Allah made it very clear to Muslims how one must treat a neighbor like family and how it is wrong not to visit them and be friends with them.

Muhammed carefully turned the pages to the chapter about neighbors and read:

Zdaas
Aprn
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Niyt
Edoh
Beue
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Nnie
Dstr
Mhhe
Aaga
R'of
Yaot
Elde
Mlnr

The Prophet ﷺ said, “For people to believe in Allah they must want for their brothers and neighbors what they desire for themselves.”

عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يُحِبَّ لِأَخِيهِ أَوْ قَالَ لِجَارِهِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ

The Prophet said, “Those who believe in Allah and the Day of Judgment must be kind to their neighbors, show hospitality to their guests and say what is good or keep quiet.”

قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُحْسِنِ
إِلَى جَارِهِ وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمْ صَيْفَهُ وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ
بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَسْكُتْ

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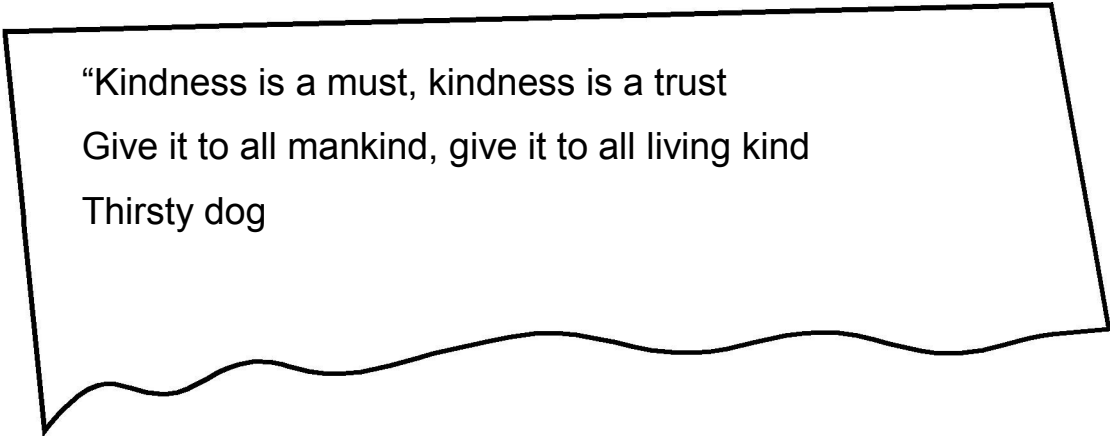
Muhammed remembered the discussion in Islamic studies class when they were studying how a Muslim must treat their neighbors. One of the students asked the teacher, “How can I love my neighbor more than I love my brother when I do not even know my neighbor’s name?”

“That is the problem!” said Mr. Zuhair to the class. “We must know our neighbors before we can be kind to them. We must visit them when they first move in, share meals with them, help them when they need help and be with them when they are going through hard times. And when a new neighbor moves in, we make them feel that they are living with family and not strangers. This way we will be able to be as kind to them as Allah

ordered us to be.”

Muhammed thought about all these things and remembered when they first moved to their new home. The house they moved into was nice, but they felt all alone. Muhammed missed their old house and his friends who lived nearby. The feeling of loneliness did not last long because his parents visited their neighbors, who in turn visited them back and before he knew it he made new friends. One of the friends he made was Mustafa who became one of his best friends. He also made friends with Josh. At the beginning he did not think that it was okay to be friends with a neighbor who was not Muslim, but his mother told him that Allah wants us to be friends with all neighbors, no difference between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Muhammed looked back at the page he was reading; he could not find any handwritten note or underlined letters leading to the next clue. He went back to the table of contents and looked again at the piece of paper left there by Mr. Zuhair, he flipped the piece of paper and saw that there was something written on the back:



“Kindness is a must, kindness is a trust
Give it to all mankind, give it to all living kind
Thirsty dog

Muhammed thought about it for a while, but these words did not make any sense to him. Time was running out, so he took the piece of paper and carefully placed the book back on the shelf.

“I’ll show this clue to Zaineb and Maryem,” he told himself as he left the classroom, “Maybe we can come up with something.”



Chapter 5

Kindness to Animals

Maryem, Zaineb and Muhammed sat in their backyard thinking about this new clue.

“I still don’t get it!” exclaimed Maryem. “Why and how would Mr. Zuhair go around putting clues in books when he was kidnapped? Or if he put it just before he got kidnapped, why didn’t he just ask the police or someone for help?!”

“My guess,” said Zaineb. “Is that he knew something wrong was about to happen, but did not know what or when it would happen, so he put these clues in place just in case someone harmed him.”

The three siblings were quiet again. Muhammed had the piece of paper with the clue in his hand. He read it out loud, “Kindness is a must; kindness is a trust. Give it to all mankind; give it to all living kind. Thirsty dog.”

“What does kindness have to do with a thirsty dog?” wondered Zaineb.

“I got it!” exclaimed Maryem. “It’s kindness to a thirsty dog!”

“I don’t get it,” said Muhammed.

“Remember in the beginning of the school year,” said Maryem. “Mr. Zuhair was introducing the animal shelter people who brought animals to the school to show us. He told us then that Allah ordered Muslims to be kind to animals and he told us about the hadith of the man and the dog.”

“I remember that!” Muhammed exclaimed. “It was when the Prophet once told his companions a story about a man who was walking one day when he felt thirsty. He found a well and drank from it. Then he noticed a dog by the well who was unable to reach the water to drink. The man realized that the dog was as thirsty as he was just before quenching his thirst, so he took off his shoe and filled it with water for the dog to drink from. Allah was pleased with this man’s kindness. The prophet’s companions were surprised for what the Prophet said.”

“And the Prophet’s companions,” finished Zaineb. “Asked, ‘Does Allah reward those who help animals?’ ‘Yes,’ said the prophet, ‘Allah rewards for every kindness to any animal.’”

“So the clue must have something to do with dogs,” said Maryem.

“Or kindness to dogs,” Muhammed added. “Do we know of any act of kindness to a dog that could help with the next clue?”

“I think I know!” Zaineb shouted excitedly. “Remember, Maryem, how you said that Mr. Zuhair asked the students if they could give examples of kindness to animals and Mohsin, one of the kids in your

class, told his story of finding a sick dog with three puppies in the woods behind their house. The dog died the next day so Mohsin took the three puppies and fed them with a special bottle until they were old enough to eat regular dog food.”

“Yeah! Mr. Zuhair was so happy to hear that story,” said Maryem. “He told us that kindness to those who cannot help themselves, like children, old people and even animals can save us on the Day of Judgment. He even reminded us of a hadith in our Islamic Studies book about the story of the man with the thirst dog, Let me go get my book to look it up.”

Maryem went to her book back and got her Islamic Studies book out and looked through it, her face brightened as she pointed to a page in her book. All three gathered around the book and read:

Iyleb
Lolse
Ouash
Vahia
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Ajise
Mollp
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Eaefo
Dnwew
Zdaas

The Messenger of Allah said: “While a man walked on a road he became very thirsty, he found a well so he climbed down and drank. As the man climbed out of the well he saw a very thirsty dog near the well unable to climb down to drink. The man realized that this dog was as thirsty as he was before he quenched his thirst, so he climbed back

into the well, filled his shoes with water and brought it up for the dog to drink”. The Messenger then added: “Allah was grateful for the man for what he did.”

Those who were listening to the Prophet were surprised and asked: “Do we get reward from Allah for how we treat animals?”

The Prophet replied: “Yes, in every kindness to a living being there is reward from Allah.”

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَيْنَمَا رَجُلٌ يَمْشِي بِطَرِيقٍ اسْتَدَّ
عَلَيْهِ الْعَطَشُ فَوَجَدَ بِنْرًا فَنَزَلَ فِيهَا فَشَرِبَ ثُمَّ خَرَجَ فَإِذَا كَلْبٌ يَلْهَثُ
يَأْكُلُ الثَّرَى مِنَ الْعَطَشِ فَقَالَ الرَّجُلُ لَقَدْ بَلَغَ هَذَا الْكَلْبُ مِنَ الْعَطَشِ
مِثْلَ الَّذِي كَانَ بَلَغَ مِنِّي فَنَزَلَ الْبِنْرَ فَمَلَأَ حُفَّهُ مَاءً ثُمَّ أَمْسَكَهُ بِيَدِهِ حَتَّى
رَقِيَ فَسَقَى الْكَلْبَ فَشَكَرَ اللَّهُ لَهُ فَغَفَرَ لَهُ قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَإِنْ لَنَا فِي
هَذِهِ الْبَهَائِمِ لِأَجْرٍ فَقَالَ فِي كُلِّ كَبِدٍ رَطْبَةٌ أَجْرٌ.

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Zdaas
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Aaga
R'of
Yaot
Elde
Mlnr

After reading from the book, Maryem turned to Zaineb and asked: “How come you remember this story?”

“Because the next day, after you told me that story,” answered Zaineb, “Mr. Zuhair told us about the same story during Quran class. We were studying a sura about the Day of Judgment and Mr. Zuhair told us how every little thing we do counts on the Day of Judgment. Even kindness to animals will count in our favor when Allah puts in a balance our good deeds and our bad deeds.”

“Great!” exclaimed Muhammed, “This must be the clue. What sura was it?”

Zaineb stared at her brother and sister, as hard as she thought, she could not remember!



Chapter 6

Attakweer التكوير

Zaineb spent much of the night awake. She was trying to remember the sura that Mr. Zuhair taught the same day he talked about kindness to animals. She knew the sura was about the Day of Judgment, but could not remember exactly which one. She opened the Quran where she found the first clue and tried to remember the name, but still could not. The hours of the night passed, Zaineb eventually got tired and fell asleep. The next day, she was tired and got out of bed with some difficulty. After many yawns and much stretching she hurried to get to school on time.

In the car on their way to school, Zaineb was still absorbed in her thoughts, trying to remember the sura about the Day of Judgment, when suddenly she remembered that the name of the sura sounded like the word ball in Arabic, or more like making something round like a ball.

“What’s the word in Arabic for making something round like a ball?”

Zaineb asked her mother.

Zaineb's mother thought for a moment, "I believe the word is *takweer*."

"Yes!" exclaimed Zaineb, "That's it, Surat *Attakweer*, that's the sura Mr. Zuhair taught the same day he talked about kindness to animals."

At that moment, the van arrived to school and there was no time for Zaineb to explain to her siblings what she just figured out. They all ran into the school to avoid detention for being late. Zaineb's mind was racing, trying to figure out how this new discovery would help them find the next clue.

The day was busy for all three of them and they did not get a chance to see each other. After school, when all three siblings were in the car on their way back home, Zaineb had Mr. Zuhair's Quran with her. All three were staring at its pages as Zaineb leafed through the pages of *Surat Attakweer*.

Zaineb read the introduction out loud:

Iyleb
Lolse
Ouash
Vahia
Erhnp
Meetp
Umwhy
Hyiib
Ajlse
Mollp
Myrii
Eaefo
Dnweu
Zdaas
Aprn
Irdd
Niyt
Edoh
Beue
AiwH
Nnie
Dstr
Mhhe
Aaga
R'of
Yaot
Elde
Mlnr

This sura starts by describing the Day of Judgment. On that day, the sun will lose its light, the stars scatter, mountains will be uprooted and destroyed and people will no longer care for even their most loved ones. Even the wild animals will get together without fighting; the water in oceans and seas will boil and then the soul of every person will reunite with its body and return the same way they were before dying. The records of deeds, which contain all what we did on earth, will be laid open for us to see and people will be called and asked for every good and every bad thing they did while alive.

Allah will then reveal Paradise and Hell for all to see and people will know what good and bad they have done.

In the second half of the sura, Allah tells people that Muhammad is not a madman, instead he is a prophet from Allah to warn mankind and that he did indeed see Angel Jibril in the bright skies in broad daylight to reveal the message of Islam.

“Any thoughts?” asked Muhammed.

“No,” replied Zaineb slowly as she was thinking back to that day. “This is the sura we were studying that day, I remember that for sure.”

“You must be right,” said Maryem. “The sura talks about the Day of Judgment, just like you said.”

“Mr. Zuhair told us that day,” said Zaineb, “that all acts matter on the Day of Judgment, all the little bad things we did and all the little good things matter. He told us that even giving a drink to a thirsty dog can make the difference between going to Hellfire or Jenna.”

“Well,” said Maryem with a sigh. “Now we know the sura, but we still don’t know the next clue.”

Zaineb continued reading the sura and its translation:

Iyleb
Lolse
Ouash
Vahia
Erhnp
Meetp
Umwhy
Hyiib
Ajlse
Mollp
Myrii
Eaefo
Dnweu
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R'of
Yaot
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Sura 81: Attakweer التكوير

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

- 1 When the sun is covered إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ
- 2 And when the stars darken وَإِذَا النُّجُومُ انْكَدَرَتْ
- 3 And when the mountains are made to pass away وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ سُيِّرَتْ
- 4 And when the pregnant camels are neglected; وَإِذَا الْعِشَارُ عُطِّلَتْ

5 And when the wild
beasts are gathered
together

وَإِذَا الْوُحُوشُ حُشِرَتْ

6 And when the seas
become a blazing fire
or overflow

وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ

7 And when the souls
shall be joined with
their bodies, the good
with the good and the
bad with the bad

وَإِذَا النُّفُوسُ رُوجَتْ

8 And when the female
infant buried alive is
questioned

وَإِذَا الْمَوْؤُودَةُ سُئِلَتْ

9 For what sin, was she
killed?

بِأَيِّ ذَنْبٍ قُتِلَتْ

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Iyleb
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10 And when the written
pages of deeds, good
and bad of every
person, shall be laid
open

وَإِذَا الصُّحُفُ نُشِرَتْ

11 And when the heaven
is stripped off and
taken away from its
place

وَإِذَا السَّمَاءُ كُشِطَتْ

12 And when Hellfire is
set ablaze

وَإِذَا الْجَحِيمُ سُعِّرَتْ

13 And when Paradise is
brought near

وَإِذَا الْجَنَّةُ أُزْلِمَتْ

14 Then, every person
will know what good
and evil they have
done

عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا أَحْضَرَتْ

15 So for sure, I swear
by the planets that
disappear during the
day and appear during
the night

فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالْخُنُوسِ

16 And by the planets
that move and hide
themselves

الْجَوَارِ الْكُنُوسِ

17 And by the night as it
departs

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا عَنَوَسَ

18 And by the dawn as it
brightens

وَالصُّبْحِ إِذَا تَنَفَّسَ

19 For sure, this Quran
brought by a most
honorable messenger
(Jibril), from Allah to
Prophet Muhammad

إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ

lyleb
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Ouash
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Erhnp
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Umwwhy
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Iyleb
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Erhnp
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Eaefo
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Zdaas
Aprn
Irdd
Niyt
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Aaga
R'of
Yaot
Elde
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20 The one with power
and high rank with the
Lord of the Throne

ذِي قُوَّةٍ عِنْدَ ذِي الْعَرْشِ مَكِينٍ

21 Obeyed by the angels
in the heavens, and are
trustworthy

مُطَاعٍ ثَمَّ أَمِينٍ

22 And your companion
Muhammad is not a
madman

وَمَا صَاحِبُكُمْ بِمَجْنُونٍ

23 And indeed he saw
Jibril in the clear
horizon towards the
east

وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ بِالْأُفُقِ الْمُبِينِ

24 And Prophet
Muhammad does not
withhold knowledge of
the unseen

وَمَا هُوَ عَلَى الْعَجْبِ بِضَنِينٍ

25 And this Quran is not
the word of the
outcast Satan

وَمَا هُوَ بِقَوْلِ شَيْطَانٍ رَجِيمٍ

26 Then where are you
going?

فَأَيْنَ تَذْهَبُونَ

27 For sure, this Quran is
no less than a
Reminder to all
mankind and jinn

إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ

28 To whoever among
you wills to follow
the straight path

لِمَن شَاءَ مِنْكُمْ أَن يَسْتَقِيمَ

29 And you cannot will
unless Allah wills, the
Lord of mankind, jinn
and all that exists

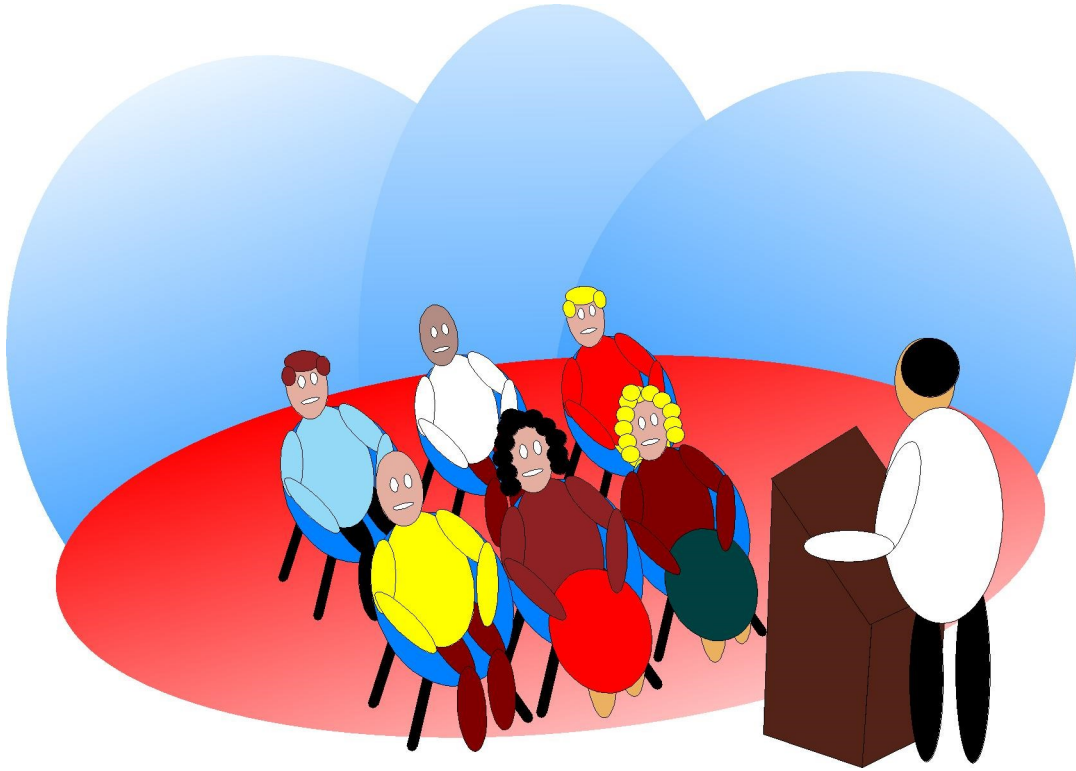
وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَن يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ
الْعَالَمِينَ

lyleb
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In a very small handwriting at the bottom of the page, written in almost the same way as the text of the book, Muhammed noticed this sentence:

“One believed everything he said, the second made Islam strong.”

All three stared at the handwritten sentence. They were relieved to find the next clue. But what did it mean?



Chapter 7

Omar bin Alkhatab

“One believed everything he said, the second made Islam strong”

During recess the next day, all 3 siblings stood together in the hallway at school. Muhammed wrote the last clue they found on a piece of paper, looked at it for a while and then said, “The clue must be talking about two different people.”

“I think you’re right,” said Maryem while looking at the piece of paper. “I know who made Islam strong!”

“Who?” Zaineb and Muhammed asked in one voice.

“Omar, Omar bin Alkhatab, the second *khalifa* in Islam,” Maryem answered. “I remember the teacher once saying that he made Islam

spread in many countries and for the first time Islam spread outside the Arab peninsula.”

“That’s it! The first one must be Abu Bakr,” said Muhammed, “He always believed what the prophet said, so much so they called him ‘Alsidq,’ or the believer.”

“The next clue must be about Omar bin Alkhatab,” said Maryem. “We already had one about Abu Bakr.”

“I guess we need to find a clue in a book about Omar bin Alkhatab.”
Said Zaineb

“Not a book,” said Maryem excited.

“What then?” Muhammed asked.

“What’s today’s date?” asked Maryem.

“It’s November 2nd,” answered Muhammed.

Maryem looked at Muhammed, she was about to say something but then paused for a second or 2 then said, “Hey, that’s your birthday!”

“Oh yeah! I completely forgot,” said Muhammed. “But what does this have to do with the Khalifa Omar?”

“Oh! Nothing really, it just occurred to me that it’s your birthday, happy birthday by the way. The real reason why I asked about the day is that we have a guest speaker today, right?”

“Yes,” said Zaineb looking excited as she realized what Maryem was about to say. “The topic of the lecture today is about Omar bin Alkhatab, isn’t it?”

“Yes!” Maryem. “The next clue must have something to do with the lecture.”

Quickly all three of them hurried to the main school hall where the lecture was about to begin. They were excited and did not know how they would find the next clue in a lecture; all there were planning on listening particularly closely to today’s lecture.

The guest speaker was a university professor of history who was invited to talk about Omar bin Alkhatab. After an introduction by the principal, Professor Naser started his lecture:

He was known for his hot temper before Islam. He drank too much and became angry easily. Before he embraced Islam he was upset at

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“Omar bin Alkhatab was well known even before Islam. He was a wealthy merchant who was strong and wise. The people of Mecca used to send him as ambassador to other tribes at times of trouble because of his wisdom and knowledge.

Muhammad and the Muslims for abandoning their old religion and he fought them fiercely.

One day he decided to go and kill the Prophet. As he was marching towards Muhammad's house, he was stopped by a man who asked where he was going. Omar informed him of his intention to kill Muhammad.

"Kill Muhammad?!" the man was surprised. "Shouldn't you take care of your own sister and her husband who became Muslims first?"

Omar was furious. His sister abandoned their religion! He forgot about Muhammad and went instead to his sister's house.

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Inside his sister's house, Muslims had gathered to read Quran. Once they heard Omar approaching they ran away, leaving a script from the Quran behind. Omar stormed into his sister's house and beat her and her husband.

After seeing the blood running from his sister's face, he felt sorry for what he did, and then he noticed the script from the Quran.

He asked his sister to hand him the script so he could read it, but she refused to hand it to him until he washed up; she explained to him that no one could touch the Quran unless they were clean and purified. Omar washed up and took the script to read the first few verses of surat Taha:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

- 1 *Ta-Ha* طه
- 2 We have not sent down
the Quran to you to
cause you distress مَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لِتَشْقَى
- 3 But only as a reminder
to those who fear Allah إِلَّا تَذِكْرًا لِمَنْ يَخْشَى
- 4 A revelation from
Allah who has created
earth and high heavens تَنْزِيلًا مِمَّنْ خَلَقَ الْأَرْضَ وَالسَّمَاوَاتِ
الْعُلَى
- 5 The Most Gracious
rose over the mighty
throne الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى

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Omar was touched by these verses from the Quran. He realized that these could not be words of a man; the words rang true and the verses flowed with beautiful poetic music. It had to be revelations from an almighty God. Omar decided right then and there to become a Muslim. He marched to the Prophet and declared his Islam. This was a great victory to Islam. Only three days ago, Hamza, the Prophet's uncle and a great warrior had declared his Islam and now Omar, one of the great men of Mecca also converted.

Prophet Muhammed had long wished that Omar bin Alkhatab would join Islam, he had once said, "O Allah strengthen Islam with one of the two Omars", hoping that either Omar bin Alkhatab or Amr bin Hisham will join Islam, as both were great men who would support the new religion.

Omar was known for his bravery, he declared his Islam and worshiped in the open, not fearing the Pagans who did not dare to

oppose or fight him. When it was time for Omar to migrate to Medina, he went to the Ka'ba where he made tawaf and prayed, then went around the Ka'ba declaring to all that he was about to journey to Medina and that if anyone wished to die, they could follow and try to stop him. No one dared to, and Omar arrived safely to Medina.

Omar was kind to people who feared Allah and did right, but he was harsh on those who disobeyed Allah and did wrong. As the ruler of Muslims, Omar was very just. His decisions were based on what was right, without a concern for what people might say or think. He did not hesitate to punish those who did wrong, even if they were his relatives or close friends. This is clearly seen in how he treated one of his governors, Amru bin Ela'as. Amru was the governor of Egypt and one day, his son lost in a race to an Egyptian. The son was upset for his loss, so he hit the Egyptian man, telling him, "This is what you deserve for insulting the son of honorable people." The Egyptian man went to

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complain to Omar for what Amru's son did. Omar asked for the governor and son to come to Medina. When Amru and his son arrived, Omar asked Amru and his son about what had happened, once he heard all the facts he was extremely upset for what Amru and his son did. Omar stood up and handed the Egyptian man a whip and asked him to hit Amru's son and the man did so. Then Omar asked the Egyptian man to hit Amru as well for not doing the right thing as a governor in protecting people. Allah has allowed people to pay back people who hurt them with the same kind of punishment, same as Allah allowed this right to other religions before such as Judaism and Christianity as stated in the Bible: An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But Allah makes it clear that it is better to forgive, for doing so we get our reward on the Day of Judgment.

In another incident, people complained to Omar that the governor of Syria was not doing his job well. They complained that the governor did not show up from his house until almost

noon and that one whole day every month he would not show up at all. They also complained that the governor was not show up till after Isha' prayer. Omar called this governor to find out what was happening. The governor arrived to Medina and explained to Omar that he could not show up in the morning because he had to prepare his own bread, which took him all morning to fix and that he spent one day every month to wash his clothes and wait for them to dry since he had only one outfit. At night, the governor stayed at home to worship Allah. Omar was pleased with the governor and dismissed what the people had to say about him.

Omar was very careful not to use his influence as ruler to benefit himself or his family. Omar was a rich merchant before Islam, but when he became the leader of Muslims he had very little money to support his family. He ate simple food and wore simple clothes. Omar always thought of Allah and feared disobeying him in every thing he did. His son, Abdullah bin

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Omar, was an excellent Muslim who knew Islam and followed its teachings, but his father did not give him a government job because he feared that he may be doing it only because he was his son. Many people advised him to appoint his son to be the ruler after his death but he refused to do so.

One day Omar heard a baby crying and he asked the baby's mother what was wrong with her child. She replied that she was trying to wean him from breast milk. The child was too young to be weaned, Omar thought, so he asked the mother why she was weaning the baby when he was so young. The lady did not realize she was talking to Omar and she told him that the Khalifa Omar had ordered that a salary be given to all Muslims except for babies who were still nursing, since they were too young to need anything but their mother's milk. Omar felt very bad because he saw that his decision was forcing mothers to starve their babies. He cried that night, and immediately sent orders that all Muslims, including babies,

shall receive money from the government to support them.

During Omar's rule, the Muslim nation grew larger; Iraq, Palestine, Syria and many new lands were added to the Muslim nation. In these countries, Christians, Jews and members of other religions lived. All were welcome to embrace Islam, but none were forced to do so. One day, while Omar was visiting the monks inside the Holy Church of Sepulcher in Jerusalem, he heard the calling for prayer. He stepped out of the church and prayed outside. Omar did not pray inside because he wanted to be sure that Muslims would not imitate him and pray inside churches, taking them away from Christians. Omar made sure that people other than Muslims did not lose their places of worship and properties. He ordered Muslims to respect non-Muslims and treat them equally. Omar ordered the Muslim treasury to help out all needy people, including those who were not Muslim.

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One of the most important things Omar did during his rule was gathering the Quran. The Quran was written down on leather and pieces of flat bone and wood, but it wasn't gathered in one book. Many people knew the Quran by heart, but it was not collected together in one book. Omar ordered the Quran to be gathered in one place, so all written verses were put together in one room for people to read. The Quran was gathered in one book later during the rule of the next Muslim *Khalifa*, Uthman bin Afan.

Omar was wise in dealing with people and knew how to talk to them. During his rule, the governor of Egypt sent a message to Omar, informing him that Egyptians were complaining that the Nile water level was low and that before Islam they had the habit of throwing a beautiful young women into the river as a gift to the Nile when the water level was low in the river. The lady drowned, but they believed that that caused the Nile water to rise. Omar sent a message back saying, "To the Nile, if you flow

on your own, then stop yourself from flowing, but if you flow by the command of Allah, then we ask Allah to allow you to flow and allow the water to rise.” The people of Egypt realized that they were wrong, and the water level of the Nile soon rose without following their usual practice.

Omar ruled for 23 years. During his rule, the Muslim nation became larger as Muslim armies conquered the neighboring empire of Persia and forced the armies of the Byzantine Roman Empire to withdraw and stay away from Muslim towns and villages. Omar was a just ruler who feared Allah in all his actions. He lived a simple life, wearing simple clothes and living in a humble house, even though he was a rich man when he first became a Muslim.

Omar was killed while praying. A young man from Persia who worshiped fire hated Islam and Omar for conquering the Persian Empire. He attacked Omar while praying and wounded thirteen others who fought to stop him. The attacker then killed himself.

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Elde
Mlnr

Omar's justice lasted even after his death. He did not appoint a ruler to follow him because he wanted Muslims to choose their own leader. Instead he appointed a few of the Prophet's companions to choose a leader to follow him. His son Abdulla was one of those companions, but he asked that his son not to be chosen as a leader for fear that people might think that Abdulla inherited the leadership. Omar knew that Islam was not a monarchy where a ruler made his son a ruler after him. Instead, in Islam the best person is chosen by the people to rule the Muslim nation."

Muhammed, Zaineb and Maryem had never paid attention to a lecture as much as they did today. They clung to every word uttered by the speaker, hoping to find the next clue. Nothing seemed to stand out as clue. They looked at each other, each of them knowing that neither of the other two had an idea of what the next clue might be.

“I think I have a headache from listening so closely to the lecture,” said Maryem. “What should we do now?”

Zaineb and Muhammed had no answers; they remained seated as most of the other students left. At the other end of the lecture hall, the principal was talking to Professor Naser. The principal turned around and looked towards Muhammed, Zaineb and Maryem and pointed to them as she was talking to the Professor. Zaineb noticed the principal coming towards them and so she lowered her head and said in a whisper, “The principal is coming towards us, let’s get out of here quickly.”

“Why should we?!” snapped Maryem. “We didn’t do anything wrong.”

The principal was right next to them at that point.

“Salamu alaikum,” said the principal. “Zaineb, Professor Naser would like to see you.”

“Wa alaikum assalam,” replied Zaineb. “Who? Me? Why?”

“Perhaps if you go there and talk to him, he will let you know,” answered the principal calmly.

The principal walked out of the lecture hall and Muhammed, Zaineb and Maryem stood up and walked slowly towards Professor Naser, not knowing what to expect.

“Salamu alaikum,” Professor Naser greeted them. “Are you Zaineb?” asked the professor as he looked at Maryem.

Maryem pointed towards Zaineb, but remained quiet.

Professor Naser turned towards Zaineb and handed her a small piece of paper. “Here you go,” he said simply.

Zaineb looked at the paper, then back at Professor Naser. She did not know what was going on. Professor Naser saw her confusion. “You are in Mr. Zuhair’s class, aren’t you?”

Zaineb nodded her head.

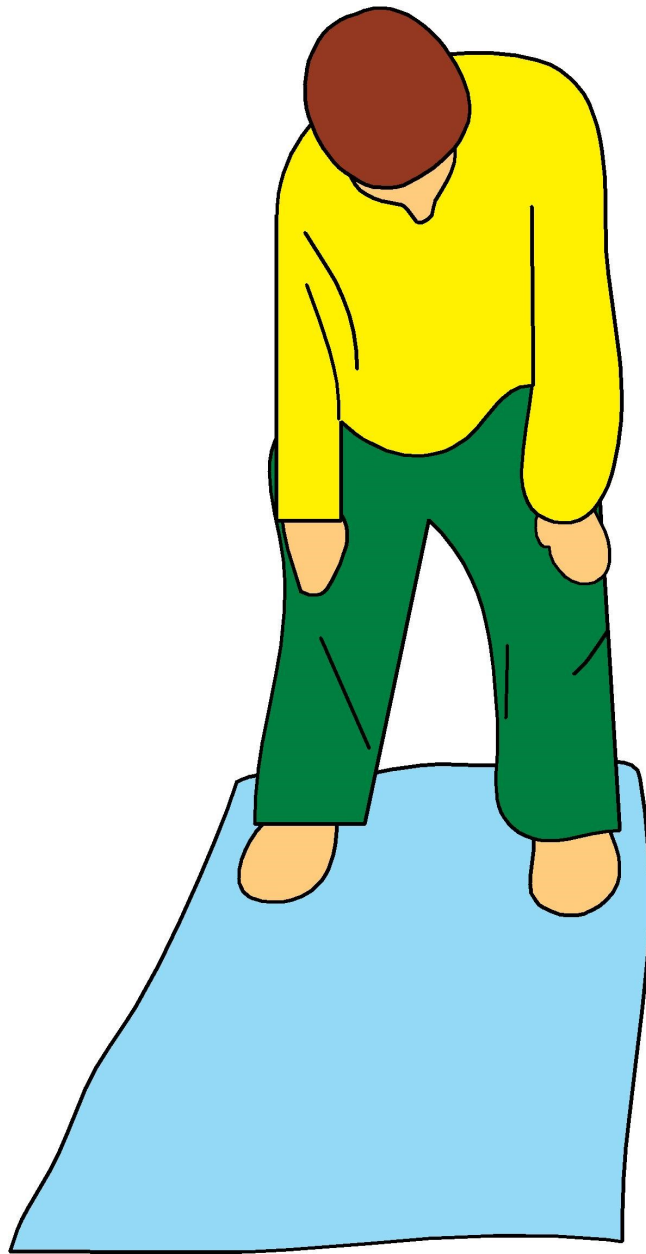
“This should be your next clue,” said Professor Naser as he walked out.

Zaineb stood there. She and her siblings stared at the small slip of paper. They were confused and did not know how Professor Naser knew that Mr. Zuhair was kidnapped.

“This whole thing is so confusing,” said Muhammed. “Professor Naser seemed too relaxed, as if people get kidnapped every day.”

After few seconds, Maryem said, “Well! Let’s see what’s in that piece of paper.”

Zaineb unfolded the paper. They all stared at it and were utterly surprised to see it blank!



Chapter 8

Mistakes in Salat

“There is nothing on it!” Exclaimed Maryem.

“Muhammed took the piece of paper from Zaineb and examined the paper carefully. It was about 2 by 8 inches and torn off a regular piece of notebook paper, it was lined on both sides. As Maryem noted, there was no writing on it. Zaineb took the paper and looked at it again; she then handed it back to Muhammed and said, “Wait! Hold on a minute.” She ran out of the lecture room and came back a minute later holding something in her hand.

As she approached, Muhammed and Maryem could see that it was a lens that she was carrying. Zaineb took back the piece of paper from Muhammed and re-examined the piece of paper, hoping to find some small print somewhere on the paper, but none could be found.

They all sat down, staring at the paper, every now and then flipping it around and examining each side hoping that some words would suddenly appear.

“I don’t think staring at this empty piece of paper will change it,” said Maryem. She paused for a moment, then her face brightened; she took the piece of paper and started sniffing it.

“Are you sniffing a clue?” Muhammed asked jokingly as he stroked her head pretending to pet a puppy.

“Yes!” Maryem cried out. “Here smell it.”

Muhammed smelled the piece of paper. His sense of smell was not as good as his sister, nothing seemed unusual to him, Zaineb smelled the paper too and again it did not seem to smell different than any other piece of paper.

“Lemon!” Maryem explained. “It smells like lemon!”

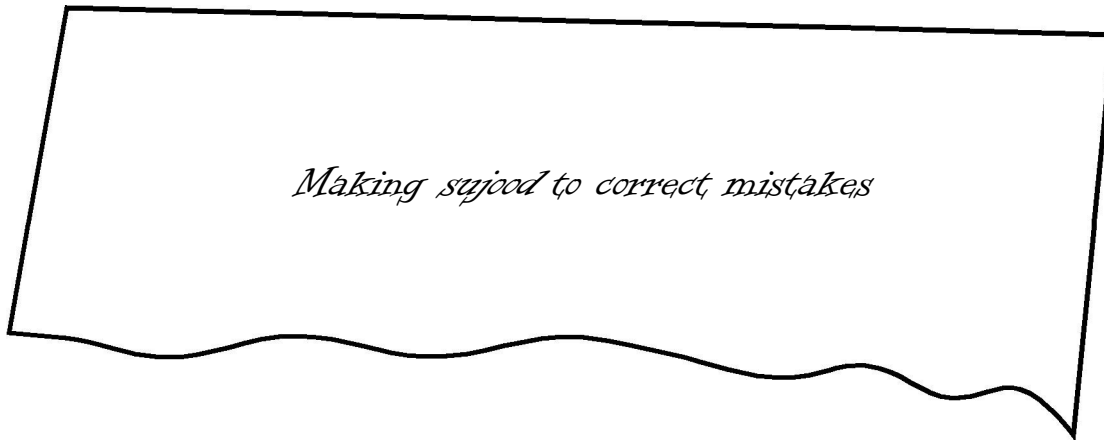
Zaineb took the paper again and was now able to smell what Maryem described: a faint smell of lemon.

All three of them looked at each other and knew exactly what this meant. There was a message written in secret ink. They knew from a trick they watched on the internet that if you use lemon instead of ink to write something it would not show unless the paper was exposed to heat.

Maryem took the paper, carefully folding and tucking it into her small purse. “We have some ironing to do when we get back home.”

A few hours later, as soon as they got back home, all three of them were standing around an ironing board waiting impatiently for the iron to heat. Finally, Maryem laid down the piece of paper on the board and

carefully applied the hot iron to the paper and gently moving it about the surface of the paper. Slowly, a faint brown color appeared on the paper and words magically formed in front of their eyes. Maryem then took the piece of paper in her hand and all three read the following:



Muhammed immediately knew the next clue, “It’s the tape about salat!” he said out loud.

Zaineb and Maryem knew what Muhammed was talking about. They all remembered the video made by Mr. Zuhair to teach students salat and what to do when making mistakes in salat.

“I have a copy of that video,” Muhammed said excitedly.

The three siblings ran to Muhammed's room, he fumbled through a large collection of DVDs he had on a shelf. A few seconds later, he raised a DVD in his hand, "Here it is!" He proclaimed.

They all went to the family computer, inserted the DVD and started watching:

In the movie made by Mr. Zuhair, the Imam raised both hands close to his head and said *Allahu Akbar* then started salat. There were three rows of men and two rows of women behind the Imam. It was shortly after noontime and the group was praying *Dhuhr*. After the third *ruka'a*, the Imam sat down and read *altahiyat* instead of standing up to do the fourth *ruka'a*, the worshipers behind him hesitated, and one of them finally said out loud *Allahu akbar*. The Imam noticed that he made a mistake, so he stood up and completed the fourth *ruka'a* and then completed the salat with *altahiyat*, but before looking either way for the *tasleem* he made two extra *sujoods* and then turned his head both ways for the *tasleem*.

After prayer, people asked him why he made the two extra *sujoods* before ending the salat with *tasleem*. The imam said, "I realized when you said *Allahu akbar* that I had made a mistake, so I corrected my mistake and, at the end, made the extra *sujoods*, which are called 'forgetting *sujood*' or '*sujood alsahoo*'. This is what the prophet did when he made a mistake in *salat*."

"What if you did not realize you made the mistake until after you finished salat? Do you have to repeat your salat all over again?" asked a man.

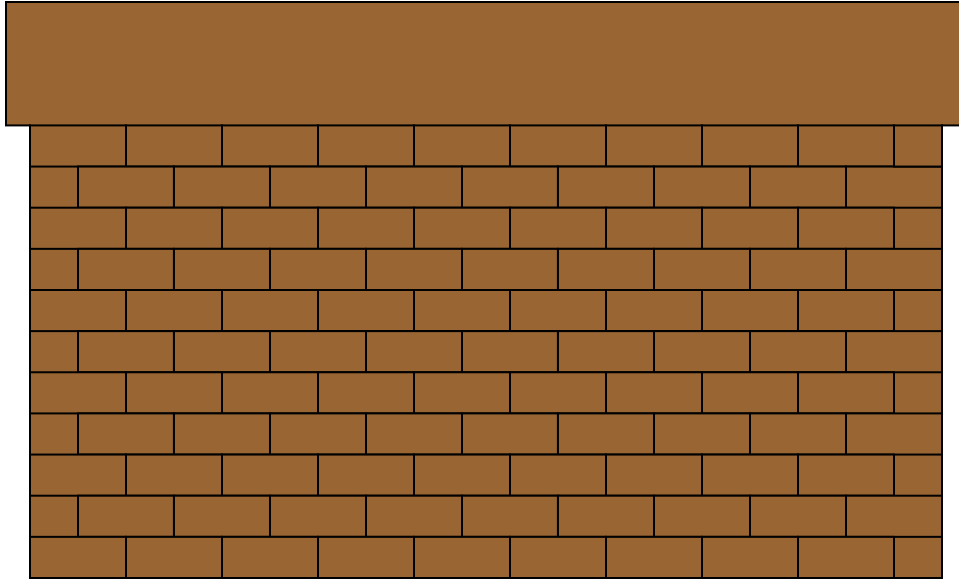
"No," the Imam replied, "All you need to do is make the two *sujood alsahoo* right after you finish your salat at the time you realize that you made a mistake.

The short film ended, it was not clear to them what the next clue was. A few seconds later, however, the screen turned black and writing appeared:

“Muslims are truthful to themselves and to Allah.

Three signs of a hypocrite”

The three siblings looked at each other, they knew that they found their next clue, but what did it mean?



Chapter 9

Hypocrites

“Muslims are truthful to themselves and to Allah.

Three signs of a hypocrite”

“I wonder what this clue means?” said Zaineb, “I guess it has something to do with being truthful.”

Muhammed and Maryem were quiet, thinking of this new clue.

Finally, Muhammed sat up straight and said: “Didn’t Mr. Zuhair talk about signs of the hypocrite few weeks ago during a Friday Khutba?”

“You’re right, but it was mostly about honesty and not lying,” said Maryem and then paused for few seconds while thinking, “What are

hypocrites anyway?”

“They are people who lie and do not keep their promises,” said Zaineb.

“That’s it!” Yelled Muhammed. “Hypocrites are those who lie, don’t keep their promises and cannot be trusted, now I remember!”

Zaineb and Maryem looked at Muhammed as he began to explain what he had just realized.

“That was a chapter about truthfulness in Islam and how the hypocrites are known by three signs. I remember when Mr. Zuhair gave the Friday Khutba he mentioned the chapter in the Islamic Studies book he uses to teach 10th grade. He has a copy of it in his classroom.

“I guess we’ll have to go and check it out tomorrow,” said Maryem.

The next day, Muhammed, Zaineb and Maryem arrived to school early. They went to Mr. Zuhair’s classroom, thankful that there were no students at school that early in the morning. Muhammed went to the bookcase at the far end of the room and started looking through the books until he found it. All three gathered around the book as Muhammed sat down and opened the textbook to Chapter 9, titled “Hypocrites.”

The book chapter was about people who pretend to be Muslims but, in fact, do not believe in Allah and his teachings.

“Why do hypocrites do what they do?” asked Maryem.

“What do you mean?” Zaineb asked in response.

“Well,” said Maryem, “So many people make fun of us for being Muslim because they don’t know us or they’re afraid of people who are different

from them, so why would anybody who doesn't believe in Allah want to pretend to be a Muslim just to be harassed by those who hate Islam?"

"Oh, I see what you mean," said Muhammed. "I guess the hypocrites are those who live with Muslims and want those Muslims to think that they are one of them, but they don't really believe in Islam, they're just pretending to be Muslim so they can be respected and loved by Muslims. They're sort of acting as if they were Muslims when in fact they do not believe in Allah or his teachings, so everything they say is a lie."

"And if they lie about who they are and what they believe in, they'd probably lie about almost everything else," added Zaineb.

Muhammed opened the book to the chapter about hypocrites and read the *hadith* of the Prophet about hypocrites:

Zdaas
Aprn
Irdd
Niyt
Edoh
Beue
AiwH
Nnie
Dstr
Mhhe
Aaga
R'of
Yaot
Elde
Mlnr

The Prophet said, "Hypocrites can be known by three signs. If they talk, they lie. If they promise, they do not keep their word. And if they are trusted, they betray the trust."

قَالَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ آيَةُ الْمُنَافِقِ ثَلَاثٌ إِذَا حَدَّثَ كَذَبَ وَإِذَا وَعَدَ أَخْلَفَ وَإِذَا أُؤْتِمِنَ خَانَ

“Why was it so important for Muslims to know who the hypocrites were?” asked Maryem.

“Muslims trust each other,” Muhammed answered. “If you trust someone you believe what they say and if they promise to do something, you believe that they’ll do it. Hypocrites lie and don’t do what they promise to do and this makes people stop trusting each other. Everyone will end up thinking that all other people are liars, when only those who are hypocrites are the liars.”

“I guess they make the Muslims weaker by ruining their trust, even if only a few of them are really liars,” added Zaineb.

“Like the hadith of the Prophet about Muslims being like a solid brick wall,” said Maryem. “If some of the bricks are weak, the whole wall could tumble and fall apart. Hypocrites are weak people who cause damage because of their weak faith and cause trouble between other Muslims.”

“Do you know any hypocrites?” asked Maryem.

“There were many hypocrites in Medina, especially soon after the Prophet and Muslims migrated from Mecca to Medina,” answered Muhammed.

“No,” said Maryem, “I meant hypocrites living with us and pretending to be Muslims.”

“Oh, you have to be careful with that. We can’t accuse anyone of being a hypocrite just like that,” said Zaineb. “That’s *haram*, just like calling a Muslim a *kafir*. We are not supposed to do that.”

“I guess only Allah knows what’s in our hearts,” agreed Maryem.

“Only if we see a Muslim who does all what a hypocrite does,” said

Muhammed. “If they talk, they lie. If they promise, they don’t keep their word and if they are trusted, they betray that trust.”

All three of them looked back at the book, trying to find a clue telling them where to find Mr. Zuhair. It seemed lately that there was nothing but one clue leading to another with no hope in sight for finding their missing teacher.

“Do you really think that Mr. Zuhair was kidnapped?” asked Maryem.

“I hope he’s just hiding,” Zaineb replied. “It only makes sense if he was hiding because otherwise, how could he leave all these clues for us?”

Not finding any clue, Muhammed closed the book but just as he was about to replace it onto the shelf, he noticed something he hadn’t seen before. Getting excited, he leapt up and yelled, “Look!”

Zaineb and Maryem looked at where he was pointing. Over the edge of the book a word was written with a pencil: “BRIEF.”

They all looked at each other and knew full well that that was their next clue. But what could it mean?



Chapter 10

Manners

“Brief!” exclaimed Zaineb. “What could this mean?”

All three siblings stared at the book edge where the word was written with a pencil. It clearly said “Brief” but none of them knew what it could possibly mean.

“What does “brief” mean anyway?” asked Maryem.

“Short,” said Muhammed. “Like saying the summer vacation was too brief, meaning it was too short.”

“It also means summary,” added Zaineb. “Don’t lawyers write up something they call briefs?”

“Yes, I heard Mama say that she had to finish a brief to send to the judge in a case she was working on,” Muhammed affirmed.

“Do you think that Mrs. Zuhair wrote a brief and saved it someplace or sent it to court?”

“He’s not a lawyer like Mama,” interrupted Maryem. “Why would he write a brief?”

They looked at each other and back to the word on the book’s edge.

“I don’t think it means the kind of brief a lawyer writes,” said Zaineb. “See how the letters are very thin and written close together as if they were squished? I think this is meant to look as if to mean short or a summary.”

“You think so?” asked Muhammed as he looked at the word again.

“So we are back to short or summary,” Maryem said. “Where does this leave us?”

“Is there a book called “Brief” in Mr. Zuhair’s library?” Muhammed wondered.

All three of them looked at the many books on the shelf and started to search for a book titled “Brief”. The search took several minutes, but no book was found with that name.

The time was approaching 8:30am and the school was now full of students. Muhammed, Zaineb and Maryem abandoned their effort and went to morning assembly while still thinking of what the word “brief” could possibly mean.

A few hours later, Muhammed sat in his English class. The teacher and students were discussing the latest book they were studying, a novel titled “The Children of the New Forest”.

“I want each one of you to write a summary of this novel,” said Mrs. Ibrahim, the English teacher.

“How long should the summary be?” one of the students asked.

“Short,” answered the teacher. “A summary is a brief account of what happened in the novel.”

“I got it!” screamed Muhammed.

All students and Mrs. Ibrahim stopped and stared at Muhammed, wondering what he meant.

Muhammed realized that his remark was inappropriate. No one knew that he had just realized the meaning behind this morning’s clue.

Muhammed was eager for the lunch break to start. He quickly went to the table where his sisters sat in the cafeteria.

“I know what ‘brief’ means,” he told them with much excitement.

“What?” the sisters asked at the same time.

“Brief can mean short or a summary,” Muhammed said hurriedly. “Mr. Zuhair has a notebook he calls ‘briefs’ where he writes summaries of the books he uses to teach different classes. I saw it with him once and asked him about it. He showed it to me and explained what I just told you.”

“What does it look like?” Asked Maryem.

“It’s a red spiral notebook, just like the one I have for English,” Muhammed answered. “And on the cover it says “Briefs” written just like the way he wrote it on the edge of that book.

“But the word we saw said “Brief”, not “Briefs”,” said Maryem.

“You’re right,” said Zaineab. “But this could mean that the next clue is in a brief inside of that notebook of briefs.”

All three were excited and happy to finally figure out this tough clue. Their joy did not last long, though.

“How on earth are we going to get this notebook?” asked Zaineab in a disappointed voice. “We don’t even know where to look for it.”

Just then, Mrs. Sidiqui, the middle school English teacher stopped by their table. She opened her satchel and took out a couple of notebooks, handing them to the older students sitting next to Zaineab and Maryem. Muhammed, who was standing next to Ms. Sidiqui, looked into her satchel as she pulled out the notebooks. It was then that he noticed a red spiral. His heart was racing. “Could it be the same notebook they were just talking about?” he wondered silently to himself.

Muhammed craned his neck to allow a better look at the front cover of the red notebook. Just then, Mrs. Sidiqui turned towards Muhammed and noticed him looking into her satchel.

“Can I help you?” Demanded a frowning Mrs. Sidiqui.

“No, no, nothing...” stammered Muhammed as he retreated.

Mrs. Sidiqui turned around to leave, but she did not have a good hold over the satchel and it fell out of her grip and onto the floor spilling all its contents. Muhammed immediately went down on his knees and helped Mrs. Sidiqui gather the books and papers. A minute or two later he got up on his feet and Zaineab noticed a huge smile on his face. He signaled to them to follow as he left the cafeteria. Once they were out and safely in a corner by the stairs, he turned to them and said, “I saw it! I saw it!” he exclaimed. “I saw the red note book with the word “Briefs” on the cover.”

“You mean Mrs. Sidiqui has Mr. Zuhair’s notebook?” Zaineb asked in disbelief.

“Yes! Yes! She has it!” replied Muhammed.

“How do we get it?” asked Maryem.

All three paused for a moment, trying to come up with a plan.

“I think one of us should go and tell Mrs. Sidiqui that Mr. Zuhair wanted us to look up one of the briefs in the notebook for a class assignment,” said Muhammed.

“But that would be lying,” Zaineb pointed out. “Besides, how can Mr. Zuhair ask us to do something when he’s not even around?”

“Well, do you have a better idea?” Muhammed demanded.

Muhammed and Zaineb went on with their argument. Maryem grew tired of hearing them bicker and so she walked away silently. A couple of minutes later she returned to see the other two still quarrelling.

“Are you two still arguing?” asked Maryem in astonishment.

Zaineb and Muhammed looked at her as she stood there in front of them with her arms folded in front of her chest holding a notebook—a red notebook!

They both stared at her, moving their eyes between the big smile on her face and the red notebook she held in her arms.

“How did you get it?” asked Muhammed.

“I just asked for it,” Maryem replied calmly, with a smile still on her face.

“You just asked for it?!” exclaimed Zaineb.

“Yep.”

“She didn’t want to know what you wanted to do with it?” demanded Muhammed.

“Nope,” said Maryem. “You know, you guys always make things more complicated than they really are. I asked for it, nicely I may add, and she handed it to me and said to be careful with it and to give it back to her before the end of the day.”

Muhammed and Zaineb stared at Maryem. After a brief pause, they all sat down and opened the notebook. As Muhammed had explained earlier, it contained summaries of the many books they studied in English and Islamic studies. One of the summaries was titled “Being Brief” and next to the title was a check mark.

“This must be what we’re looking for,” exclaimed Maryem.

The handwriting was Mr. Zuhair’s. At the top of the page there was a sentence in Arabic.

Muhammed read it out loud:

Iyleb
Lolse
Ouash
Vahia
Erhnp
Meetp
Umwhy
Hyiib
Ajlse
Mollp
Myrii
Eaefo
Dnweu
Zdaas

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ

The Prophet said, “Whoever believes in Allah and the Day of Judgment should say good things or be quiet.”

“This was an assignment we had in Mr. Zuhair’s class for last year,” said Muhammed. “We were asked to write down as many things as we could think of about the best way to speak.”

“You mean like being truthful and nice and that sort of thing?” Maryem asked.

“Yes,” replied Muhammed. “Nobody thought of saying that being brief in what we say is a good thing to do.”

“Why would being brief be a good thing to do?” Maryem asked.

“If you get to the point in what you’re saying and without going on and on, you waste anyone’s time,” answered Zaineab.

“That’s true, but also you won’t risk saying something wrong if you just get to the point,” Muhammed added. “People tend to make mistakes if they keep talking all the time. They get in the habit of just talking and talking and talking and when they run out of things to say, they just say things they don’t need to say, which might be something hurtful or wrong.”

“Now I get it,” Maryem said. “You mean just like Farhana in my class, she just rambles on all day long. Some of what she says is funny and interesting, but most of it is just nonsense, not to mention repeating herself on and on and on all day long. One day I was in class and she came and—”

“You’re doing it,” interrupted Zaineb.

“Doing what?”

“Not being brief!” replied Zaineb. “You could have just said ‘Now I get it’, but you went on about things you didn’t need to say. In short: you were not brief.”

“And by not being brief you bad-mouthed Farhana,” Muhammed added.

“You’re right, I am sorry Farhana,” said Maryem to the imaginary Farhana standing next to her.

All three of them shifted their attention to the notebook again.

There was not much else on that page except for few numbers written with a pencil rather than a pen like the rest of what was written on that page.

“Look here,” cried Zaineb as she pointed to the numbers written with a pencil:

80/585

“I suppose this is our next clue,” said Maryem, stating what was obvious to all three of them.

“But what do these numbers mean?” they all thought.



Chapter

11

عبس A'bas

“80/585, I wonder what those numbers mean,” said Muhammed as they walked towards the car where their mother waited for them. All three climbed in and were unusually quiet, thinking about the mysterious numbers “80/585”.

Muhammed was looking outside the window as the car entered the highway on the way home. He was still thinking of the numbers they just discovered. It must mean something, a page in a book or perhaps one of those numbers libraries use for books. It may mean a specific book. “I should go to the school library tomorrow,” he thought to himself. He moved his gaze from the rapidly moving scenes out the car window to inside the car and he looked at the seat next to him.

“That must be it!” He exclaimed with excitement. “That must be it!”

He grabbed the Holy Quran that was on the empty seat next to him and opened it.

“The numbers must mean a page or something in the Quran,” he thought. He turned the Quran to page 80, not knowing what to expect. Surely there cannot be an aya that is 585, that would be too high of a number. Page 80 was surat Annisa’, the ayat on that page had low numbers, like 15, 16 and so on. Certainly not anywhere near 585. “I wonder if I am wrong,” he thought and was about to put the Quran back on the seat next to him. But then he realized what the numbers *meant*, *I wonder if sura number 80 is on page 585. He leafed through the Quran excitedly. Zaineb and Maryem noticed his excitement and, as they realized what he was looking for, they both waited anxiously.*

“So! Is it?” asked Maryem with impatience as he stopped searching through the book and stared at a particular page.

Muhammed remained silent, but looked at them with a broad smile as he handed them the Quran which was open to page 585 where surat “Abasa” started, the 80th sura of the Quran!

Muhammed, Zaineb and Maryem sat on the sofa in their living room; they had just arrived. Muhammed sat in the middle with the Quran open in his lap. The Quran was open to page 585 and they read the English translation of the sura:

lyleb
Lolse
Ouash
Vahia
Erhnp
Meetp
Umwhy
Hyiib
Ajise
Mollp
Myrii
Eaefo
Dnweu
Zdaas
Aprn
Irdd
Niyt
Edoh
Beue
AiwH
Nnie
Dstr
Mhhe
Aaga
R'of
Yaot
Elde
Mlnr

One day the Prophet was talking to the chiefs of Mecca, trying to convince them to believe in the message of Allah. The Prophet was hoping that by convincing the rich and important people of Mecca, Islam would spread faster and Muslims would no longer be treated poorly. As the Prophet was engaged in a discussion with the chiefs of Mecca, Abdullah bin Umm -Maktum, a blind man came to him wanting to know about Islam and Allah. The Prophet did not want to interrupt the important discussion with the chiefs of Mecca so he did not attend to this blind man's needs. This, Allah reminded the Prophet, was not the right thing to do. Allah told the Prophet and all of us that people who want to know about Islam should be attended to first, since they are interested in wanting to know about the truth and are more likely to become Muslims and follow the right path.

In the second half of the sura, people are reminded that they were created by Allah and given plenty of things to enjoy and that one day, on the Day of Judgment, people will care only for themselves and it is their deeds alone that will make them enter Paradise or Hell Fire.

Sura 80: A'basu عيس

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

- | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | The Prophet frowned
and turned away | عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّى |
| 2 | Because there came to
him the blind man
while preaching to
some of the chiefs of
Quraish | أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَى |
| 3 | And did you consider
that he might embrace
Islam? | وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّهُ يَزَّكَّى |

Iyleb
Lolse
Ouash
Vahia
Erhnp
Meetp
Umwhy
Hyiib
Ajlse
Mollp
Myrii
Eaefo
Dnweu
Zdaas
Aprn
Irdd
Niyt
Edoh
Beue
AiwH
Nnie
Dstr
Mhhe
Aaga
R'of
Yaot
Elde
Mlnr

Iyleb
Lolse
Ouash
Vahia
Erhnp
Meetp
Umwhy
Hyiib
Ajlse
Mollp
Myrii
Eaefo
Dnweu
Zdaas
Aprn
Irdd
Niyt
Edoh
Beue
AiwH
Nnie
Dstr
Mhhe
Aaga
R'of
Yaot
Elde
Mlnr

4 Or he might receive
admonition, and the
admonition might
benefit him?

أَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنْفَعُهُ الذِّكْرَى

5 As for him who thinks
himself self-sufficient

أَمَّا مَنْ اسْتَعْتَى

6 To him you attend

فَأَنْتَ لَهُ تَصَدَّى

7 What does it matter to
you if he will not
embrace Islam

وَمَا عَلَيْكَ أَلَّا يَزَّيَّجَى

8 But as to him who
came to you eager to
learn about Islam

وَأَمَّا مَنْ جَاءَكَ يَسْعَى

9 And is afraid of Allah
and his punishment

وَهُوَ يَخْشَى

10 Of him you are
neglectful and divert
your attention to
another

فَأَنْتَ عَنْهُ تَلَهَّى

11 No, indeed this Quran
is a reminder

كَلَّا إِنَّهَا تَذْكِرَةٌ

12 So whoever wants, let
him pay attention to it

فَمَنْ شَاءَ ذَكَرْهُ

13 It is in Records held
greatly in honor

فِي صُحُفٍ مُّكَرَّمَةٍ

14 Exalted and purified

مَّرْفُوعَةٍ مُّطَهَّرَةٍ

Iyleb
Lolse
Ouash
Vahia
Erhnp
Meetp
Umwhy
Hyiib
Ajlse
Mollp
Myrii
Eaefo
Dnweu
Zdaas
Aprn
Irdd
Niyt
Edoh
Beue
AiwH
Nnie
Dstr
Mhhe
Aaga
R'of
Yaot
Elde
Mlnr

Iyleb
Lolse
Ouash
Vahia
Erhnp
Meetp
Umwhy
Hyiib
Ajlse
Mollp
Myrii
Eaefo
Dnweu
Zdaas
Aprn
Irdd
Niyt
Edoh
Beue
AiwH
Nnie
Dstr
Mhhe
Aaga
R'of
Yaot
Elde
Mlnr

15 In the hands of angel
scribes

بِأَيْدِي سَفَرَةٍ

16 Honorable and
obedient

كِرَامٍ بَرَرَةٍ

17 Be cursed the
disbelieving man! How
ungrateful he is!

قُتِلَ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا أَكْفَرَهُ

18 From what thing did
Allah create him?

مِنْ أَيِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ

19 Allah created him from
male and female drops
and then set his
creation in perfect
proportion

مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ خَلَقَهُ فَقَدَرَهُ

20 Then he makes the
path easy for man

ثُمَّ السَّبِيلَ يَسِّرُهُ

21 Then Allah causes man
to die and puts him in
his grave

ثُمَّ أَمَاتَهُ فَأَقْبَرَهُ

22 Then when it is Allah's
will, He will resurrect
him again

ثُمَّ إِذَا شَاءَ أَنشَرُهُ

23 Nay, but man has not
done what He
commanded him

كَأَلَّا لَمَّا يُقْضَىٰ مَا أَمَرُهُ

24 Then let man look at
his food

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ إِلَىٰ طَعَامِهِ

25 We pour forth water in
abundance

أَنَّا صَبَبْنَا الْمَاءَ صَبًّا

lyleb
Lolse
Ouash
Vahia
Erhnp
Meetp
Umwwhy
Hyiib
Ajlse
Molp
Myrii
Eaefo
Dnwew
Zdaas
Aprn
Irdd
Niyt
Edoh
Beue
Aiwh
Nnie
Dstr
Mhhe
Aaga
R'of
Yaot
Elde
Mlnr

Iyleb
Lolse
Ouash
Vahia
Erhnp
Meetp
Umwhy
Hyiib
Ajlse
Mollp
Myrii
Eaefo
Dnweu
Zdaas
Aprn
Irdd
Niyt
Edoh
Beue
AiwH
Nnie
Dstr
Mhhe
Aaga
R'of
Yaot
Elde
Mlnr

26 And we split the earth
in clefts

ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا

27 And we cause the grain
to grow in it

فَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا حَبًّا

28 And grapes and clover
plants

وَعِنَبًا وَقَصْبًا

29 And olives and date-
palm trees

وَزَيْتُونًا وَمَخْلًا

30 And gardens dense
with many trees

وَحَدَائِقَ غُلْبًا

31 And fruits and herbage

وَفَاكِهَةً وَأَبًّا

32 To be of benefit for
you and your cattle

مَتَاعًا لَكُمْ وَلِأَنْعَامِكُمْ

33 Then when there
comes the second
blowing of trumpet on
the Day of
Resurrection

فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ الصَّاحَّةُ

34 That day man will
flee from his brother

يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ

35 And from his mother
and his father

وَأُمِّهِ وَأَبِيهِ

36 And from his wife
and his children

وَصَاحِبَتِهِ وَبَنِيهِ

Iyleb
Lolse
Ouash
Vahia
Erhnp
Meetp
Umwhy
Hyiib
Ajlse
Mollp
Myrii
Eaefo
Dnweu
Zdaas
Aprn
Irdd
Niyt
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Iyleb
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Eaefo
Dnweu
Zdaas
Aprn
Irdd
Niyt
Edoh
Beue
AiwH
Nnie
Dstr
Mhhe
Aaga
R'of
Yaot
Elde
Mlnr

37 Everyman that day
will have enough to
make him careless of
others.

لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِنْهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ شَأْنٌ يُغْنِيهِ

38 Some faces that day
will be bright

وُجُوهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُسْفَرَةٌ

39 Laughing, rejoicing at
good news of Paradise

صَاحِكَةٌ مُسْتَبْشِرَةٌ

40 And other faces, that
day, will be dusty

وُجُوهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَلَيْهَا غَبَرَةٌ

41 Darkness will cover
them

تَرْهُقُهَا قَظْرَةٌ

42 Such will be the
disbelievers, the
wicked evil doers

أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرَةُ الْفَجْرَةُ

“Where is the clue?” wondered Zaineb.

“I think I know,” said Muhammed. “It must be it,” he added. “It must be about that day during morning assembly when Mr. Zuhair talked about doing what is right and not just what people think you should do. He started with surat A’basa and explained how the Prophet should not have ignored the blind man who was interested in knowing more about Islam. The prophet was thinking at that moment that paying attention to the important people of Mecca would help Islam a lot more than spending time with the blind person. The Prophet hoped that if the chiefs of Mecca would accept Islam, the religion of Allah spread faster. The Prophet did not want to interrupt his conversation with the chiefs. Mr. Zuhair then gave another example of how things may seem not to make sense, but to the believers it made all the sense in the world.” Muhammed paused and looked from one side to another at his sisters who were sitting on either side of him. They were deep in thought remembering that talk.

“Was it about Uthman that he talked next?” asked Maryem unsure of what she was remembering.

“Yes!” Muhammed confirmed enthusiastically. “And do you remember what he had in his hands as he read to us about Uthman?”

“Yes!” Zaineb shouted excitedly. “I remember, it was a binder he made about the companions of the Prophet, he made copies from it for us to study.”

“Right!” said Muhammed. “I bet you anything the next clue will be in that binder.”

“But where does he keep it?” Maryem asked.

Muhammed and Zaineb were quiet; neither of them seemed to know

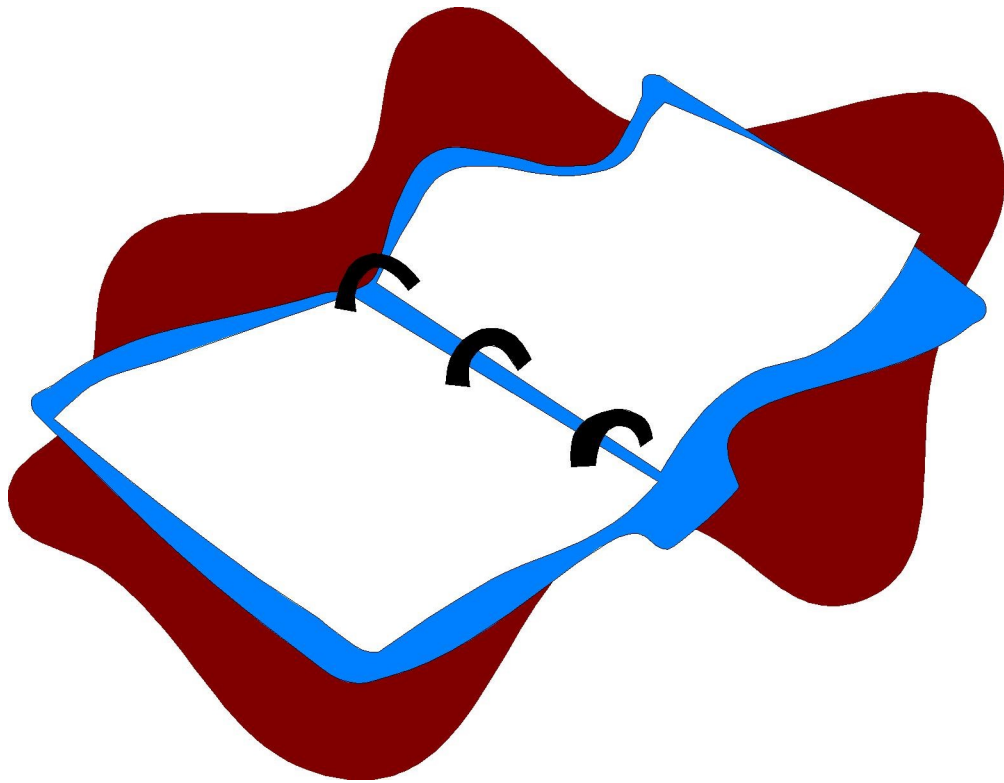
where that binder could be kept.

“Do you think it’s in his classroom?” Maryem suggested.

“I don’t think so,” answered Zaineb. “I don’t ever remember seeing it there.”

“It can’t be in the library,” added Muhammed.

Their excitement after finding the next clue quickly fizzled. They did not know how to go about finding the binder where they were sure the next clue of Mr. Zuhair’s whereabouts would be.



Chapter 12

Uthman bin Affan

Zaineb and Muhammed sat at the kitchen table doing their homework. Maryem walked in and asked, “You know how our Islamic studies books are written by Mr. Zuhair?”

Muhammed and Zaineb looked up.

“Well, I was thinking that the book about the prophet’s companions might be the next book that Mr. Zuhair is writing,” She paused. “Remember how we used to make copies from a binder that Mr. Zuhair made for our Islamic studies class and now we have books for Islamic Studies which were the same as the binders and all written by Mr. Zuhair. I was thinking that maybe this is the same.”

“What do you mean?” asked Muhammed as he tried to understand what Maryem was saying.

“I know I’m not making any sense. What I’m trying to ask is do you think that Mr. Zuhair gave the binder about the Prophet’s companions to the printers to make a book for Islamic studies?”

Zaineb and Muhammed stared at their sister, immediately realizing that she must be right.

“That’s brilliant, Maryem!” exclaimed Muhammed. “I’m sure that’s where the binder is.”

“So how do we get it?”

Zaineb jumped out of her chair and raced to her room. She grabbed her Islamic Studies book and brought it down to the kitchen, opening the book to its first few pages, looking for the name of the printing shop.

“It’s Vivid Colors Print Shop!” Zaineb reported.

“That’s owned by Salwa and Sameer’s father, isn’t it?”

“Yes, let’s call them.”

“And say what?” asked Maryem. “We can’t just say Mr. Zuhair was kidnapped and the next clue may be in his book.

They were quiet for few moments, trying to come up with the best way to get to the binder without having to explain something that would sound really strange.

“I got it!” announced Zaineb. “Salwa and Sameer go to the print shop every day after school to help out. We can ask if we can come along to check the place out and once we’re there we can look for the binder.”

Her siblings agreed and the next day, after school, they asked Salwa

and Sameer if they could join them at their father's print shop. Both were good friends of theirs and they were happy to take them along.

The print shop was not too far and they walked there from school.

"How come you want to come to the print shop?" asked Salwa.

"We were talking about it yesterday after noticing that your father's shop printed our Islamic studies books and thought it would be a good idea to check it out," said Zaineb, trying not to say too much.

Soon, and without any further questions, they arrived at the print shop. It was a one-story building with a small parking lot next to it. There was a reception desk at the entrance and the receptionist greeted Salwa and Sameer by name, "I see you brought friends with you today," she noted in a pleasant voice. "You're just in time, we're just starting to print one of the books for your school—you guys may be interested in seeing how it's done."

Zaineb, Muhammed and Maryem were very eager to hear this. "It must be Mr. Zuhair's book," they all thought. Sure enough, as soon as they walked into the print room, they could see that it was Mr. Zuhair's book being printed. At the other end of the large print room was a large wooden desk and right on top of many books and papers was the binder that they were looking for. Muhammed whispered in Zaineb's ear, "Keep them busy, I'm going to the desk over there to see if it's Mr. Zuhair's binder."

Muhammed walked slowly to the desk, he did not want to attract any attention, as he got to the desk he could see that it was the binder they were looking for. Quickly, Muhammed opened the binder and started to look through it. His sisters soon joined him, he did not expect them and

was startled by their sudden appearance.

“What are you doing here; you’re supposed to be distracting them.”

“Don’t worry, they’re distracted enough. Their father called them to do something, they should be busy for the next half hour.”

All three stared at the pages of the binder as they leafed through it. They focused on the section for Uthamn bin Affan since they suspected that it was there that they would find the next clue.

They read:

Iyleb
Lolse
Ouash
Vahia
Erhnp
Meetp
Umwhy
Hyiib
Ajlse
Mollp
Myrii
Eaefo
Dnweu
Zdaas
Aprn
Irdd
Niyt
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Beue
AiwH
Nnie
Dstr
Mhhe
Aaga
R'of
Yaot
Elde
Mlnr

Uthman bin Affan was the third Khalifa (ruler) of Muslims after the Prophet. A group of men, appointed by Omar before his death, chose Uthman to be the next Khalifa to follow Abu Bakr and Omar. He was known for his extensive knowledge of Islam. He memorized the Quran as it was revealed and he was a good reader and writer and the Prophet used him to write the Quran and many important letters and documents.

Uthman was six years younger than the Prophet and Abu Bakr called him to Islam very soon after it was revealed to Muhammad. Uthman was a rich merchant who spent much of his wealth for the sake of Allah. During hard times, he would donate large amounts of food to the poor. While in Medina and during a period of starvation, one of his caravans filled with food and goods came to Medina from Syria. The merchants of Medina came to purchase from it. They wanted to buy food from Uthman so they could sell it to others. They kept offering him more and more money, but he kept refusing, saying that someone will pay him more.

“Who would pay you more?” The merchants

asked.

“I will give all these goods and food to the poor for free and Allah will pay me ten times its worth,” he told them.

Uthman married Ruqaya, one of the Prophet’s daughters. After a few years, she died, and Uthman married Um Kalthum, another daughter of the Prophet. He was called “The One with Two Lights” because he married two of the Prophet’s daughters.

Uthman’s greatest achievement as a leader was making copies of the Quran. The Quran was all written down on pieces of leather, flat bones and wood. It was kept in a room in Hafsa’s house. Hafsa was the daughter of Omar bin Alkhatib. As more and more people began joining Islam, it became difficult to teach Quran, especially in far away places where there were very few who knew the Quran by heart. Uthman asked a few of the Prophet’s companions who memorized the Quran by heart to make copies of the holy book. Zaid bin Thabit, Abdulla bin Zubair, Said bin Ala’as and Abdulrahman bin Alharith worked very hard and wrote copies of the Quran by hand. They made sure

lyleb
Lolse
Ouash
Vahia
Erhnp
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Hyyib
Ajlse
Mollp
Myrii
Eaefo
Dnwew
Zdaas
Aprn
Irdd
Niyt
Edoh
Beue
Aiwh
Nnie
Dstr
Mhhe
Aaga
R’of
Yaot
Elde
Mlnr

Iyleb
Lolse
Ouash
Vahia
Erhnp
Meetp
Umwhy
Hyiib
Ajlse
Mollp
Myrii
Eaefo
Dnweu
Zdaas
Aprn
Irdd
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AiwH
Nnie
Dstr
Mhhe
Aaga
R'of
Yaot
Elde
Mlnr

that the copies of the Quran were accurate by checking every single verse. Uthman read the copies to make sure that they were accurate and then sent them to the different parts of the Muslim nation with many new converts to Islam.

Uthman had a tender heart; he loved his family and relatives and was always nice to them. He appointed some of them as governors of Muslim states. Some of these relatives were not good in governing and they made people mad at them. Muslims, including many of the Prophet's companions asked Uthman to remove those relatives from their positions but Uthman did not have the heart to do so. This made people even madder. Things were getting very ugly and Uthman's life was in danger because of the many angry people in Medina. Ali bin Abi Talib feared that someone may kill him, so he asked his sons Hassan and Hussein to stand guard at Uthman's front door. Others also sent their sons to help protect Uthman. One day, some people attacked Uthman's house. They couldn't get inside through the front door because Hassan and Hussein and other young Muslims were guarding the front entrance of the house. Those attacking Uthma's house shot

Hassan and Hussein with arrows and wounded them. Then they climbed over the neighbor's house and got into Uthman's house and killed him.

Muslims were shocked by this brutal and un-Islamic crime against one of the most pious Muslims, one who was told by the Prophet that Allah promised that he would enter Jenna.

lyleb
Lolse
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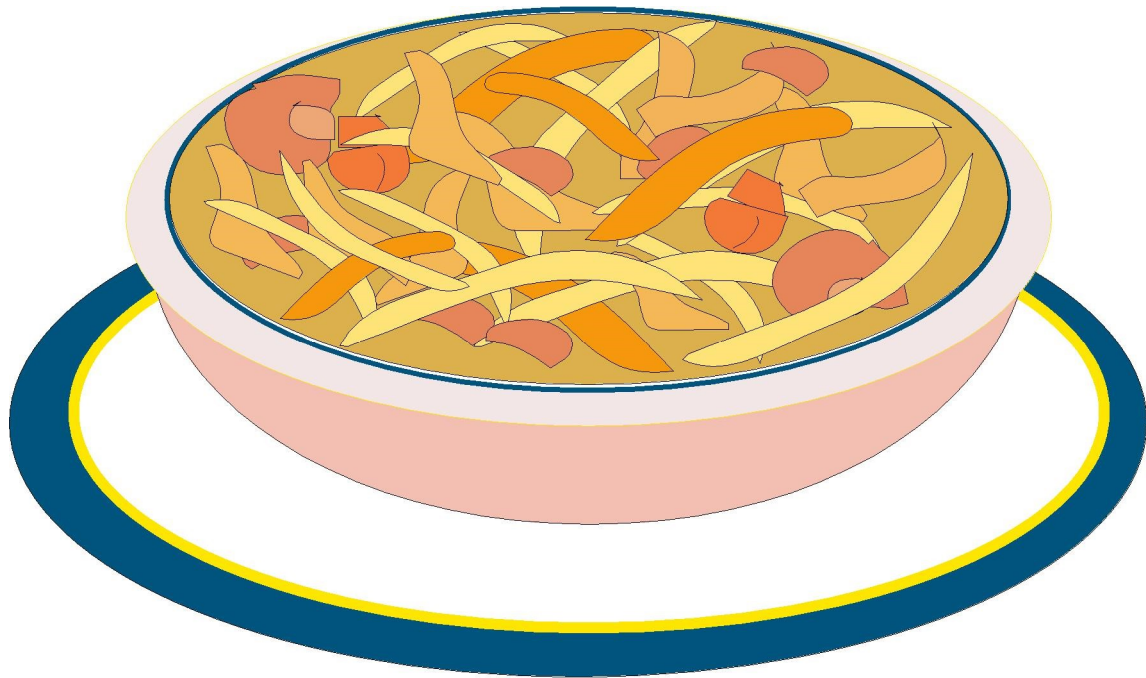
“Do you see any clues?” asked Muhammed

“Look, see this!” said Maryem pointing at a sentence with several red lines crossing it. They all stared at it and were finally able to make out the words: “when is a mistake not a mistake.”

They were not sure what it meant. They wrote down the words on a piece of paper just in time, as Salwa and Sameer were joining them again.

~~when is a mistake not a mistake~~

“We’ll have to figure out what this means later,” said Zaineb as she shoved the piece of paper in her pocket and joined their friends to look around the print shop.



Chapter 13

A mistake in fasting. or is it?

“When is a mistake not a mistake,” said Maryem. “I wonder what this clue means. That’s of course if it really is a clue and not just something Mr. Zuhair wrote as a note to himself or something like that.”

“It must mean something that looks like a mistake but is really not a mistake,” said Muhammed as he was thinking about this new clue.

“All the clues so far had to do with Islamic Studies, right?” asked Zaineab.

“Yes,” replied Maryem. “So this must be about something he taught in his class. What is something that we think is a mistake but is really not a mistake?”

All three of them were deep in thought; they did not hear their

mother calling them for dinner. When their mother appeared at the door asking why they were not answering her calls, they were startled.

“I’m sorry,” said Muhammed. “We didn’t hear you.”

All three walked down the steps to the kitchen for dinner. Their favorite dinner was served; beef and potato stew with rice.

“It smells great,” said Maryem. “We haven’t had this since Ramadan!”

The moment Maryem said these words, all three looked at each other as they immediately knew what the last clue meant. It was about Ramadan. Mr. Zuhair talked to them about eating by mistake while fasting is not really a mistake; it is a gift from Allah. They remembered the story he told them about Sarah, his daughter who was asleep on a hot Ramadan afternoon. When she woke up, she was confused, not sure where she was or what time of the day it was. She was thirsty and her throat was dry, so she walked to the kitchen, opened the fridge door and got out a cold bottle of water. She unscrewed the top and did not even bother with a glass, instead she gulped down the cold water and enjoyed it. It felt good to drink the cold water, and suddenly realized it was Ramadan and she was fasting! Immediately she pulled away the bottle from her lips and spat out the water in her mouth as she coughed. “Oh my God, what did I do?!” she exclaimed as she sat down. After a minute or two her mother walked into the kitchen and saw that she looked upset. After hearing from Sarah about what just happened her mother told her that eating or drinking by mistake while fasting is really not a mistake and does not break the fast. Instead it is a gift from Allah. Sarah smiled, cupped her hands in dua’a and said “Alhamdulillah for giving me this gift while fasting.”

They were sure that this was the clue, but not too long after this

discovery they realized that this really does not tell them where Mr. Zuhair is or what the next clue is.

“Maybe we should just ask Sarah,” said Maryem in a matter-of-fact way.

“What do you mean?” asked Muhammed

“Well, it is clear that the clue has to do with Sarah. She is with us in school and it must be that Mr. Zuhair wants us to ask her about where he is, she may somehow have the next clue.”

“It makes sense,” said Zaineb. “But we can’t make her worry; she may not know that her father was kidnapped.

All three agreed on this plan.



Chapter

14

Generosity

Zaineb spotted Sarah during recess in the playground; she was sitting by herself underneath a tree reading a book. Sarah was two years older than Zaineb. They were not exactly friends but Zaineb and Sarah talked to each other occasionally. Sarah was nice and most girls at school liked her.

Zaineb hesitated a bit, but finally made up her mind and walked towards her. As Zaineb approached where she was sitting, Sarah looked up and immediately smiled.

“Hi!” said Sarah. “Haven’t seen you in a long time, what’s up?”

“Oh, not much” replied Zaineb. “I was wondering if you could tell me something.”

“Sure, what’s on your mind?”

“It may sound silly,” hesitated Zaineb again. “But I was wondering if you remember the day you thought you broke your fast and ...”

“Oh, finally!” interrupted Sarah. “But wait a minute, I didn’t think anyone would ask till a week or two from now, I guess he started it all earlier.”

Zaineb had no idea what Sarah was talking about. She was really confused.

“Anyway, I’m glad it’s you.” Said Sarah as she was looking through her book bag and finally producing a piece of paper and handed it over to Zaineb.

“Good luck,” added Sarah as she walked away.

Zaineb was totally lost and did not understand what just happened. She stood there with the piece of paper in her hand. Muhammed and Maryem who were watching from a distance ran over to where Zaineb was standing.

“What did she say?” asked Maryem

Zaineb remained quiet, trying to make sense of what just happened. She did not answer and instead just handed the piece of paper given to her by Sarah. The paper had a single sentence in Arabic, it read:

قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَا حَسَدَ إِلَّا فِي اثْنَتَيْنِ رَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْقُرْآنَ فَهُوَ
يَقُومُ بِهِ آتَاءَ اللَّيْلِ وَآتَاءَ النَّهَارِ وَرَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ مَالًا فَهُوَ يُنْفِقُهُ آتَاءَ اللَّيْلِ وَآتَاءَ
النَّهَارِ

Muhammed translated it aloud: “The Prophet said, “Only two people are worthy of envy, one who reads Quran day and night, and one who spends his wealth for those who need it all the time.”

“What did she say when she gave you the paper?” asked Maryem.

“I didn’t understand what she said; something about being happy that it was me and that she did not think anybody would ask her for another week or two.”

“Huh!” said Maryem. “Why would she be expecting anyone to ask her? And why not for another week? This whole thing makes no sense.”

Muhammed kept staring at the paper, wondering what it meant. He remembered that hadith of the Prophet about people who do good things.

“Well, let’s see if we can figure out this clue,” said Zaineb. “The hadith is about people who are so good that they are worthy of envy. “I guess it means that reading Quran and giving money in charity are the best a Muslim can do.” Said Maryem. “Reading Quran helps us know Allah better and learn how to be the best kind of person like the people of

the cave, or not be arrogant like the Pharaoh of Egypt or the people of Prophet Lot.”

“Reading the Quran also reminds us that we only live in this world for so many years, after which we die and if we did good in this life we end up in Paradise,” added Muhammed.

“Spending for Allah’s sake is also a good thing,” added Maryem. “I felt really good when we had the clothes drive last year. Some people stay cold all winter long just because they do not have enough money to buy clothes. I liked helping, it made me feel really good to make people warm, especially when I saw so many clothes for kids and babies. I could see so many people happy when they got these donated clothes. The great thing is that most of what people gave in the donation drive was brand new clothes and not some old torn rags. It really is good to give and help others.”

“You know something...” Zaineb began. “Giving is not only giving stuff, it could also be giving your time in helping others like tutoring younger kids or volunteering at the soup kitchen, it is giving of your time and effort, just like giving money or things to those who need it.”

Muhammed, Zaineb and Maryem looked at the piece of paper again while thinking of what was just said. They wondered how reading the Quran and giving away to those in need can give them the next clue.

“I guess the next clue has to do with reading the Quran and giving away in charity,” said Maryem.

“I know!” exclaimed Muhammed. “Maryem, you’re a genius, that’s just it. It has to do with both, Quran and giving.”

“What do you mean?” asked Maryem and Zaineb in one voice.

“It must have to do with the “Give a Quran” program. The one we helped out with 2 months ago, remember where Muslims donate money to print Qurans in different languages and donate to those who are interested in knowing about Islam. The next clue must be there!”

Zaineb and Maryem did not need to say anything, the excitement on their faces told everything; they found their next clue.



Chapter

15

Neighbors

Muhammed, Zaineb and Maryem were getting ready to leave the house with their father to the “Give A Quran” center. It was far away from their house and their father agreed to drive them there. They planned to spend the day at the center helping out with distributing the Holy Books.

Just before they left, the phone rang. Their father answered the phone and the siblings could hear him talking.

“Good morning, Jane,” their father said to Miss Jane, their neighbor.

“I’m sorry to hear this; I’ll be right over with the kids,” said their father. “Hurry up guys, go change your clothes to something you don’t mind getting messy. We have to go next door to help Miss Jane. A water pipe busted and her basement is flooding.”

“They all ran to their rooms, changed into their play clothes and followed their father and mother to Ms. Jane’s house. They were not happy to change their plans so abruptly but they realized that Miss Jane really needed their help.

At Miss Jane’s basement, there was an ankle-deep puddle of water. Their father rushed to the main water pipe and turned off the water. The water puddle on the basement floor stopped getting bigger but there was already a lot of water to get rid of. Pails and buckets arrived and they all started to dry up the flooded basement. They all stood in a chain, the first person in the chain filled a bucket with as much water as they can get from the floor and handed it to the person standing next to them who then handed it to the next person and so on until the bucket reached the last person in the chain who stood by a drain outside the house and emptied the bucket. They kept doing this for a long time. Finally, the basement was getting dry. Miss Jane and the siblings’ mother went upstairs and fetched few mops, each one grabbed a one and helped mopping the floor till it was once again dry.

Everyone was exhausted. They all left the basement and went upstairs to Miss Jane’s living room. She was very grateful for their help and ordered pizza. Once it arrived they all shared the hot delicious meal.

Muhammed, Zaineb and Maryem walked back home with their parents. They were all quiet.

“We are late going to the center,” Maryem complained. “You promised to take us hours ago.”

“I know sweetie, but we had an emergency,” answered her father. “It’s true you’re late to the center. There is nothing better than helping spread the word of Allah by giving the Quran to those who can use it, but it is just

as important to help a neighbor in need.”

“Angel Jibreel told the Prophet as much,” added her mother.

Remember the hadith where Angel Jibreel kept telling the Prophet how important it is to take care of one’s neighbors. Angel Jibreel repeated this to the Prophet so much that the Prophet thought people and their neighbors were so close that they must be like relatives who inherit each other after death.”

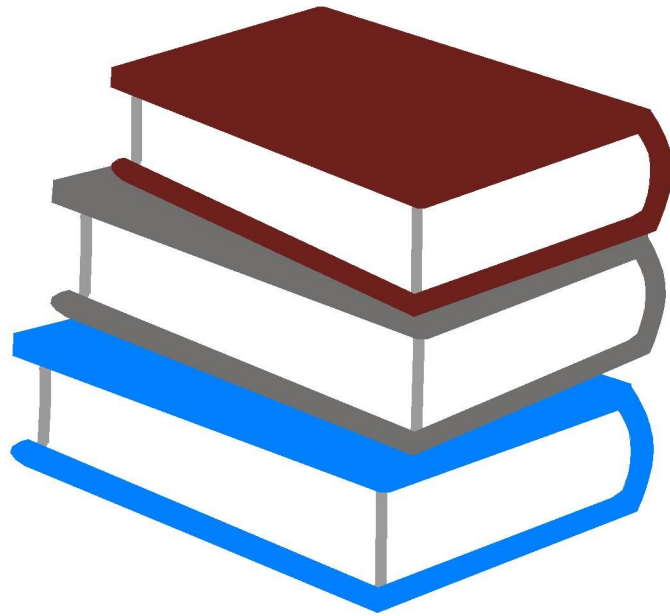
قَالَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَا زَالَ جِبْرِيلُ يُوصِيَنِي بِالْجَارِ حَتَّى ظَنَنْتُ أَنَّهُ لِيُورَثَنَّهُ

“Does that mean we will inherit Miss Jane?” asked Maryem.

“It does not actually mean that one would inherit their neighbor, but that neighbors must be so close to each other that they act as if they were brothers and sisters.” replied her mother.

“We did want to go to the center much earlier,” said Zaineab. “But I’m happy that we helped Miss Jane. She would have never been able to clean that mess all by herself.”

“Okay guys,” Their father announced, “Go change again and I’ll drive you to the center.



Chapter 16

النازعات An-Nazia'at

Zaineb was the first to enter the center and face the reception desk in the lobby. Ms. Sayed was standing by the desk talking to some of the volunteers; she had just directed them to go to the storage room to help out with unpacking the newly arrived boxes of Quran. Ms. Sayed turned towards Muhammed, Zaineb and Maryem as they entered and greeted them, "Assalamu alaikum and welcome, are you here to help?"

"Yes," replied Zaineb. "We heard from Mr. Zuhair that you take volunteers."

"Mr. Zuhair? Are you in his class?" Ms. Sayed asked Zaineb.

"Yes," replied Zaineb

Ms. Sayed hesitated a bit, and then asked, "Are you here for the clue?"

Muhammed, Zaineb and Maryem stared at Ms. Sayed. She seemed to know that Mr. Zuhair was nowhere to be found but that he has left clues behind. They could not understand why she had not told the police or his wife about it. They just nodded their heads in response to Ms. Sayed's question.

Ms. Sayed walked back to her desk, pulled a drawer and handed Zaineb a copy of the Holy Quran.

"Look up surat Alnazi'at, that's surah number 79. You can go in there and read the sura," Ms. Sayd pointed to a room on her left side.

Muhammed, Zaineb and Maryem walked towards the room; it was a large room with many chairs and sofas, the walls were covered with shelves filled with many books about Islam. It was a reading room for the center. All three walked to the far end of the room, away from the door and sat down at one of the sofas. Maryem was in the middle, she laid the Holy Quran in her lap.

"If Ms. Sayd knew about a clue that means she knows that Mr. Zuhair is gone and if she knows that he's gone, why is she not doing anything about it?" wondered Muhammed.

"Maybe she got to this clue like we did but got stuck and is hoping that we can solve this problem," offered Zaineb.

There was nothing else to say, none of them knew what was going on.

"Well, let's get to this clue," said Maryem as she opened the Quran to surah 79, Alnazi'at. She read out the introduction in a soft voice, even though they were the only people in the reading room:

lyleb
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Vahia
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Mlnr

The first part of this sura describes scenes from the hereafter. The souls of disbelievers are pulled out of their bodies with great force by angels who obey Allah's commands, while the souls of believers are pulled out gently. Angels will be swimming all around, doing what Allah orders them to do. Then the whole universe will shake as the first trumpet is sounded and everyone will die. Then the second trumpet will sound and all dead people will come back to life. Those who did not believe in Allah will be frightened and will look down because they know the evil they have done. And they know that they will be punished for what they have done during their lives.

After these short scenes from the future, Allah takes us back to thousands of years ago, when prophet Musa was asked by Allah to talk to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and tell him about Allah and to follow the right path. Musa grew up in Pharaoh's house as a child and knew how

powerful and arrogant he was, but Musa obeyed his Lord's commands and went to Pharaoh and advised him to believe in Allah and stop his evil ways. Pharaoh was angry for being told that he was wrong. Pharaoh claimed that he himself was god and that Musa was nothing but a liar. Allah then punished Pharaoh by drowning him and his army in the sea. Pharaoh and his army followed Musa and those who believed in Allah to capture and kill them. Musa and his people arrived to the red sea and could go no further, but Allah saved them by making the sea part open to allow Musa and his people to go through. When Pharaoh and his army arrived at the sea, they saw it parted aside with dry land in between, so Pharaoh and his army followed Musa and once they were in the middle of the parted sea, it closed onto them by an order from Allah and Pharaoh and his army drowned. By that time, Musa and the believers had already crossed safely to the

lyleb
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Zdaas
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Iyleb
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other side.

Many people are surprised how Allah could create human beings, animals and all creatures. But Allah reminds us that he has created what is more amazing than this. He created earth and made it appear flat though it is round and planted mountains to keep the ground we walk on steady and made night dark so we can rest and the day bright so we can go around doing what we need to do. Allah also provided us with water to drink and for our plants to grow.

All this creation will be destroyed at the end of time, when on the Day of Judgment people will be brought in front of Hellfire and Paradise. Those who believed in Allah and did good will be rewarded with paradise, while those who did not believe in Allah and did evil will end up in Hellfire.

Many people wonder when the Day of Judgment will come. Many asked the Prophet to tell them when it will happen, but Allah informed

people that Prophet Muhammad does not know of that time and only He (Allah) knows. When the Day of Judgment comes it will feel as if our life on earth lasted only few hours and not the many years it was. Unlike our life on earth, Hereafter will be forever and ever.

Sura 79: An-Nazia'at النازعات

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

- 1 By the angels who
violently pull out the
souls of the
disbelievers and the
wicked

وَالنَّازِعَاتِ غُرُقًا

lyleb
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Ouash
Vahia
Erhnp
Meetp
Umwwhy
Hyiib
Ajlse
Mollp
Myrii
Eaefo
Dnweu
Zdaas
Aprn
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Aiwh
Nnie
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Aaga
R'of
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Elde
Mlnr

Iyleb
Lolse
Ouash
Vahia
Erhnp
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Umwhy
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2 By the angels who
gently take out the
souls of the believers

وَالنَّاشِطَاتِ نَشْطًا

3 And by the angels
that swim along

وَالسَّابِحَاتِ سَبْحًا

4 And by angels that
press forward as in a
race

فَالسَّابِقَاتِ سَبْقًا

5 And by angels who
do what their Lord
ordered them. For
sure, you disbelievers
will be called to
account

فَالْمُدَبِّرَاتِ أَمْرًا

6 On the day when the first blowing of the trumpet is blown, earth and mountains will shake violently and everybody will die

يَوْمَ تَرْجُفُ الرَّاجِفَةُ

7 The second blowing of the trumpet follows and everybody will be resurrected

تَتَّبِعُهَا الرَّادِفَةُ

8 Some hearts that day will shake with fear and anxiety

قُلُوبٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَاجِفَةٌ

9 Their eyes will be downcast

أَبْصَارُهَا خَاشِعَةٌ

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Vahia
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Eaefo
Dnweu
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Yaot
Elde
Mlnr

Iyleb
Lolse
Ouash
Vahia
Erhnp
Meetp
Umwhy
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10 They will say, "Shall we indeed be returned to our former state of life?"

يَقُولُونَ أَأَيْنَا لَمَزِدُونِ فِي الْخَافِرَةِ

11 "Even after we are crumbled bones?"

أَتَيْدَا كُنَّا عِظَامًا نَجْرَةً

12 They say "It would in that case, be a return with loss!"

قَالُوا تِلْكَ إِذَا كَرَّةٌ خَاسِرَةٌ

13 But it will be only a single shout

فَإِنَّمَا هِيَ زَجْرَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ

14 When they find themselves on the surface of earth alive after their death

فَإِذَا هُمْ بِالسَّاهِرَةِ

15 Did you hear of the story of Musa?

هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ مُوسَى

16 When his Lord called him in the sacred valley of Tuwa

إِذْ نَادَاهُ رَبُّهُ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى

17 Go to Pharaoh; he has done lots of wrong

اذْهَبْ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَىٰ

18 And say to him "Would you purify yourself from your sin by becoming a believer?"

فَقُلْ هَلْ لَكَ إِلَىٰ أَنْ تَزَكَّىٰ

19 And that I will guide you to your Lord, so you should fear him

وَأَهْدِيكَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَتَخْشَىٰ

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Erhnp
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Ajlse
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Eaefo
Dnwew
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lyleb
Lolse
Ouash
Vahia
Erhnp
Meetp
Umwhy
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20 Then Musa showed
Pharaoh the great
miracles

فَأَرَاهُ الْآيَةَ الْكُبْرَى

21 But Pharaoh did not
believe and disobeyed

فَكَذَّبَ وَعَصَى

22 Then he turned his
back, striving against
Allah

ثُمَّ أَدْبَرَ يَسْعَى

23 Then he gathered his
people and cried aloud

فَحَشَرَ فَنَادَى

24 Saying "I am your
lord, most high."

فَقَالَ أَنَا رَبُّكُمُ الْأَعْلَى

25 So Allah seized him
with punishment for
his last and first
transgression

فَأَخَذَهُ اللَّهُ نَكَالَ الآخِرَةِ وَالْأُولَى

26 For sure, in this is a
warning for whoever
fears Allah

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِمَن يَخْشَى

27 Are you more difficult
to create or is the
heaven that he
constructed?

أَأَنْتُمْ أَشَدُّ حَلْفًا أَمْ السَّمَاءُ بَنَاهَا

28 He raised its height,
and he has perfected it

رَفَعَ سَمْتَهَا فَسَوَّاهَا

29 And covered its night
with darkness and its
morning with light

وَأَغْطَشَ لَيْلَهَا وَأَخْرَجَ ضُحَاهَا

Iyleb
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- 30 And after that he spread Earth وَالْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ دَحَاهَا
- 31 And brought forth from within its water and its pasture أَخْرَجَ مِنْهَا مَاءَهَا وَمَرْعَاهَا
- 32 And the mountains He fixed firmly وَالْجِبَالَ أَرَسَهَا
- 33 To be a provision and benefit for you and your cattle مَتَاعًا لَكُمْ وَلِأَنْعَامِكُمْ
- 34 But when there comes the greatest catastrophe, the Day of Judgment فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ الطَّامَةُ الْكُبْرَى

35 The day when man
shall remember what
he struggled for

يَوْمَ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا سَعَى

36 And Hellfire shall be
made apparent in full
view for every one
who sees

وَبُرُزَّتِ الْجَحِيمُ لِمَنْ يَرَى

37 Then for him who
transgressed all
bounds

فَأَمَّا مَنْ طَغَى

38 And preferred the life
of this world

وَأَثَرَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا

39 For sure, he will end
up in Hellfire

فَإِنَّ الْجَحِيمَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَى

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40 And for him who
feared standing before
his Lord, and
restrained himself
from impure evil
desires and lusts

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى
النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَى

41 Verily, he will be in
Paradise

فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَى

42 They ask you about
the “Hour”. When
will be its appointed
time?

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مُرْسَاهَا

43 You have no
knowledge to say
anything about it

فِيمَ أَنْتَ مِنْ ذِكْرَاهَا

44 To your Lord belongs
the knowledge of the
end

إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ مُنتَهَاهَا

45 You are only someone
who warns for those
who fears it

إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنذِرٌ مِّنْ يَّحْشَاهَا

46 The Day they see it, it
will be as if they had
not lived in this world
except an afternoon or
a morning

كَأَنَّهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَهَا لَمْ يَلْبُثُوا إِلَّا عَشِيَّةً
أَوْ ضُحَاهَا

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“I also used to wonder when the Day of Judgment would be,” said Muhammed. “Baba said that only Allah knows and we don’t need to worry when it’ll happen, only that it will happen for sure.”

“Me too,” said Zaineab. “It is good to know that we will be rewarded for everything good we do, sort of like studying for a test. If we study hard we get good grades and then a reward from Baba and Mama.”

“Why do some people not believe in Allah?” wondered Maryem. “It makes no sense not to believe that Allah is there. Who do they believe created all that is around us that is just perfect for us to live in? If there was no creator then it may have ended up being too cold or too hot for us to live, or all the food on the planet is poison, which would kill us the minute we eat it. Everything around us fits everything else so perfectly. This *must* mean that there is a one Creator, Allah, because otherwise it will all fall apart. I’m not sure I’m making much sense, but it feels right and makes perfect sense to have Allah, so why would someone not believe in Him?”

“I didn’t know you were such a philosopher,” said Muhammed looking at his sister with amazement.

“Just because I’m quiet sometimes doesn’t mean that I don’t think,” she snapped at her brother.

“Okay,” interrupted Zaineab. “Back to our clue here.”

Zaineab turned the page they were just reading and found that there was a small piece of paper wedged between the last two pages of the chapter, it read:

On the Day of Judgment, all deeds will be revealed, good and bad deeds will be known. Who will be the one who will have in his good deeds saving the prophet in his sleep?

They stared at that piece of paper, read it and reread it. Who saved the prophet while asleep?



Chapter 17

Ali bin Abi-Talib

Many of the Prophet's companions protected the Prophet ﷺ from harm one time or another, but how could anyone protect the Prophet while he was asleep, they wondered.

“Ali!” exclaimed Muhammed. “It was Ali bin Abi-Talib, the Prophet's cousin. “He protected the Prophet while asleep.” Muhammed, Zaineb and Maryem were having breakfast when Muhammed was finally able to solve the last clue. It was the Prophet's cousin who protected him when Ali slept in the Prophet's bed to fool the non-believers who wanted to kill the Prophet. Muhammed left the kitchen table and went to the living room; he pulled a book from the shelf. It was titled “Ali bin Abi-Talib”

He opened the book and all three of them read:

Ali bin Abi Talib ﷺ was Prophet Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law. This close relationship was made even stronger by living in the same house for many, many years. The Prophet grew up in his uncle's house. He lived with his uncle and cousins since he was eight years old after his mother and grandfather died. The Prophet ﷺ was much older than his cousin Ali, so after Muhammad married Khadija and moved to his own house, he offered to take Ali to live with him. This strong relationship between Muhammad and Ali became even stronger when Ali married Muhammad's daughter Fatima after they left Mecca to Medina. Ali and Fatima's house was next to the Prophet's house. Ali became the Prophet's brother when Muhammad asked each Muslim man and woman from the Muhajereen (those who migrated from Mecca to Medina) and Ansar (native people of Medina) to take each other as brothers and sisters. Each man embraced another Muslim man as his brother and each woman embraced another Muslim woman as

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her sister. The Prophet chose his cousin Ali as his brother even though both were from the Muhajereen.

Ali ﷺ was one of the very first people to convert to Islam; he was only eight or ten years old when he embraced Islam. As the Prophet's cousin and family member, he witnessed Islam as it spread amongst people. Ali was able to memorize the Quran as it was revealed and was one of the scribes who wrote down its verses.

The Prophet ﷺ chose Ali to stay behind in his bed when the Prophet migrated with Abu Bakr to Medina. Ali slept in the Prophet's bed to fool the non-believers and make them think that the Prophet was still asleep and did not leave his house. This trick worked and helped the Prophet to get a head start in escaping the non-believers who wanted to kill him. This was very brave of Ali who could have been killed. Ali remained in Mecca after the Prophets' migration to give back all the things left by

people in the Prophet's trust.

Shortly after Ali's arrival to Medina, he married the Prophet's daughter, Fatima. They lived happily in a house next to the Prophet, where they had four children, two boys, Hassan and Hussein, and two girls, Zaineb and Um Kalthoom.

After the Prophet ﷺ died, Ali did not participate in the election of Abu Bakr as the first kHhalifa, instead he was washing the Prophet's body and burying him. Ali's did not agree with the process of choosing the new khalifa and he did not pledge support to the new khalifa as was the custom. It was important for Ali not to cause trouble to the young Muslim nation, so he did not object in public so that the Muslims would stay united. A few months later, he did pledge support to Abu Bakr.

Ali ﷺ was strong in his belief in Allah and Islam. He was a great warrior who defended Islam from its enemies. Ali participated in all

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the battles with the Prophet, but decided, for reasons that he did not make clear, not to participate in the government or fight in battles during the rule of Abu Bakr, Omar and Othman. Ali was always teaching people about Islam as one of the close companions to the Prophet.

During the rule of Uthman رضي الله عنه, many people became angry at Uthman's decisions. People from Kufa, Basra and Egypt were influenced by lies spread by those who did not like Islam. This was made worse by mistakes made by Uthman, like allowing his relatives to influence him and give them what many saw as more than they deserved in government positions.

A group of misled Muslims decided to go to Medina and force Uthman to step down as khalifa. As they traveled to Medina, they gathered tribes on the way to join them. By the time they arrived at Medina their number was large.

Ali ﷺ and many honest Muslims saw that those misled Muslims were planning on causing trouble. Ali tried his best to defend Uthman. Ali spoke with Uthman repeatedly to correct the mistakes he was making, but Uthman ﷺ hesitated to make any changes as advised by Ali and by many other Muslims in Medina.

One day, a number of murderers from those who were upset with Uthman were able to enter his house and kill him even though many guards stood in front of his house, including Ali's sons Hassan and Hussein.

After Uthman was murdered, the people who were upset with his rule asked Ali to become the next Khalifa. They were feeling guilty that some of them killed Uthman and were afraid that people will be upset with them if they left Medina without appointing a ruler in Uthman's place. Ali was one of the most well known Muslims at that time. Many Muslims approached Ali to become the next Khalifa, but

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he refused to have anything to do with those who were angry at Uthman and caused chaos which led to the killing of the Khalifa Uthman. Time passed and no one wanted to become Khalifa after Uthman's death. Ali became more and more concerned that there would be more trouble if he did not do something so finally after a lot of hesitation, he accepted to become the next Khalifa.

The first problem Ali faced as the new Khalifa was the chaos caused by the large group of people who came to Medina and caused the killing of Uthman. Ali knew that they were wrong and that those who killed Uthman were evil, but he was unable to fight them. Those people were large in number, armed and spread all over Medina.

Muslims from Medina like Talha and Elzubair came to Ali and asked him to punish those who killed Uthman. Ali told them that he wanted to punish them as much as they did, but

did not know how to do so because of their large number. After a while, the killers of Uthman and the tribes who followed them left Medina.

Ali wanted to change many of the wrong ways of Uthman, he knew that Uthman's relatives who became rich and powerful during Uthman's rule would not like what he was about to do, but Ali never hesitated when it came to doing right and correcting what was wrong. Many people wanted Ali to avenge the death of Uthman and go after his killers who went back to their home towns of Kufa and Basra, but Ali had different plans. He also wanted to punish those who killed Uthman, but first he wanted to unify Muslims and get rid of corrupt rulers like Mu'aweya who governed the state of Sham. Mu'aweya had refused to step down as Ali asked him to and pretended to be concerned about Uthman's death. Ali knew that Mu'aweya was not a good governor and that he would cause the Muslim nation to split, so he put all his effort in

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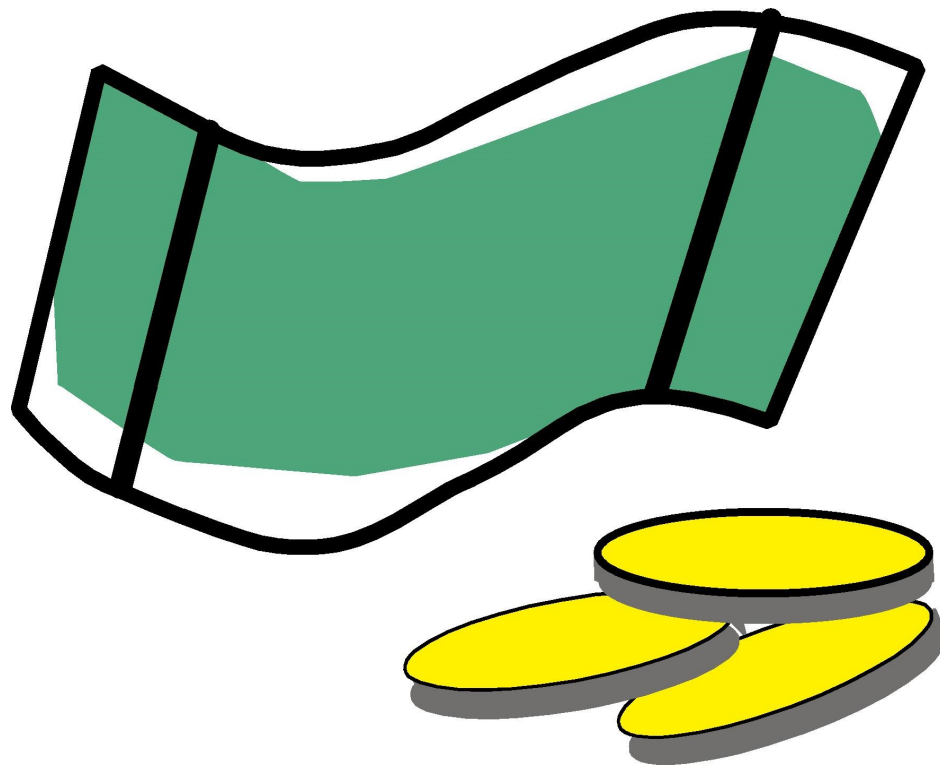
getting rid of Mu'aweya first rather than go after the killers of Uthman. This upset many Muslims including some of the Prophet's companions like Talha and Elzubair who saw it necessary to punish the killers of Uthman first.

Ali's short rule was spent in getting the Muslim nation to unite and fight those who want to cause it to break up. As Ali fought to keep the Muslims as one nation, a group of misguided Muslims decided that the best way to end the fight between Ali and Mu'aweya is to get rid of both Ali and Mu'aweya by killing them at the same time. The killer who was to kill Ali was successful in doing so by stabbing him while he was leading the prayer, while the killer who was supposed to kill Mu'aweya failed to do so. After Ali's death Mu'aweya became even more powerful and eventually was able to become the Khalifa.

“I like Ali,” said Maryem. “He was bright, brave and loved the Prophet. Much better than any of the superheroes people make up these days.”

“That’s true,” agreed Zaineb. “I wish I lived back then to get to know him.”

The three siblings remained seated on the sofa after reading from the book, they were not sure what this last clue means or what to do next. It has been few of weeks of clue searching and it seems that they finally came to what appears to be a dead end!



Chapter 18

Mistakes in Zakat

Muhammed took money out of a small safe and put it in his backpack.

“What are you doing with this money?” asked Maryem.

“I am taking it to school to pay zakat” replied her brother. “You should do the same thing.”

“Only grown-ups pay zakat,” said Maryem.

“It has nothing to do with age. You pay Zakat to the needy if you have extra money you haven’t used for a year.”

“But I don’t have any money. Mama gives us allowance every week

and I don't have any left."

"Zakat has to be paid for other things, like gold and silver. I am paying Zakat for the gold and silver coins I collect."

"I don't have any coins," said Maryem

"But you have gold jewelry."

"Really! How much should I pay?" asked Maryem

"You have to figure out what is their worth, you can ask Mama, then for every 100 dollars you have to pay 2½ Dollars."

Maryem went to ask her mother, shortly afterwards she returned.

"Mama said I don't have to pay zakat for my jewelry, and neither do you," said Maryem.

"How come?" asked Muhammed

"You don't have to pay for jewelry you wear. Mama says you pay zakat for jewelry."

"But I don't wear my coins, so that means I do have to pay Zakat," said Muhammed.

"There is something called nisab Mama said, which means if you have less than a certain amount of money, she said about 300 Dollars, then you do not pay any Zakat, because that means you do not have a lot of money and so you do not have to pay Zakat."

"What should I do with this money I was planning to pay as Zakat?" wondered Muhammed.

“Well, you can give it as sadaqa, it still counts as hasanat,” said Maryem.

“Good idea, I will.”

Just then entered Zaineb. “What are you guys talking about? Did you find the next clue?” she asked.

“No not really, we were talking about Zakat and sadaqa.

It has been 3 days since the last clue they found and they still did not know what to do next.



Chapter 19

Al-Naba' النبأ

“I have an idea,” Zaineb announced.

It was one day later and Muhammed, Zaineb and Maryem were having breakfast.

“You know how a good number of the clues we found so far were in chapters from the Quran?”

“Yes,” replied Muhammed and Maryem at the same time.

“Well, I looked up those chapters and there is something about them that may lead us to the next clue.”

Maryem and Muhammed stopped eating and were now looking at Zaineb waiting to hear what she had to say.

“I looked up the last 4 verses of the Quran which had clues: Alinfitar

Al-Takweer, A'basah and An-Nazia'at," said Zaineb in a low voice as if someone may be eavesdropping. "I found out that these 4 verses are in order."

"What do you mean," asked Maryem.

"The order in which we found them as clues is the same order in which they appear in the Quran. Actually more like in an opposite order," explained Zaineb. "Alinfitar is sura number 83, Al-Takweer is number 82, A'basah is number 81 and An-Nazia'at is number 80."

"How is that a clue?" asked Muhammed.

"Well, the next sura should be 79, which is Al-Naba', may be there we will find our next clue!"

"You're right!" exclaimed Maryem as she stood up. "I'll go get the Quran," she added, as she ran out of the kitchen.

"Hold on, wait!" said Zaineb. "I think we should look it up in Mr. Zuhair's Quran in his classroom. That's the only place where he would be able to put the clue, not in our own copy of the Quran."

"You're right again," agreed Maryem. "I have Quran class today, it's the last period and you guys can come to Mr. Zuhair's class at the end of the day and pretend you're helping me get my stuff together while we look the surah up in the Quran."

After the last period, Maryem lingered in the classroom waiting for Muhammed and Zaineb who hurried from their last classes to join her. Luckily, the substitute Quran teacher was in a hurry to leave and asked Maryem to lock up the classroom. Muhammed, Zaineb and Maryem were

all alone in Mr. Zuhair's room. Muhammed fetched the Quran Mr. Zuhair always used and opened it to surat Al-Naba'. They read it carefully, starting with the introduction:

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People who did not believe in Allah ﷻ at the time of the Prophet could not believe that there could ever be a day when all dead people will come back to life. “How could we come back to life?” they would ask. “How could anyone put us back together when we have turned to bones and dust?” The non-believers could not understand that Allah, who created everything to start with, can very easily create everything all over again. “Look around you!” Allah tells them in this sura, “Look at the earth around you, look at how all living things are created in pairs, a male and a female.” Allah wants people too see that the world is a perfect creation and that it could not have been an accident, and just as Allah created the entire universe and everything in it,

it is not difficult for him to bring back on the Day of Judgment all people that ever lived. Those that believe in Allah will be rewarded with paradise to live within forever, while those that disbelieve in Allah ﷻ will be sent to Hellfire.

Sura 78: Al-Naba' النبأ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | What are they wondering about? | عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ |
| 2 | About the great news | عَنِ النَّبَأِ الْعَظِيمِ |

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3 About which they
are in disagreement

الَّذِي هُمْ فِيهِ مُخْتَلِفُونَ

4 No, they will come
to know!

كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ

5 No, again, they will
come to know!

ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ

6 Have we not made
earth flat as a bed

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ مِهَادًا

7 And the mountains
as pegs?

وَالْجِبَالِ أَوْتَادًا

8 And we have
created you in pairs

وَخَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا

9 And we have made
your sleep for rest

وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا

10 And made the
darkness of night a
covering

وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِيَاسًا

11 And we made day
time for people to
get their things
done

وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا

12 And we built above
you seven strong
heavens

وَبَنَيْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شِدَادًا

13 And we put a
shining sun in the
sky

وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَاجًا

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- 14 And we sent down from the rainy clouds abundant water وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً ثَجَّاجًا
- 15 That we may produce grains and vegetation لِنُخْرِجَ بِهِ حَبًّا وَنَبَاتًا
- 16 And gardens of thick growth وَجَنَّاتٍ أَلْفَافًا
- 17 For sure, the Day of Decision is a fixed time إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفُصْلِ كَانَ مِيقَاتًا
- 18 The Day when the Trumpet will be blown and you shall come forward in groups after groups يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ فَتَأْتُونَ أَفْوَاجًا

19 And Heaven shall
be opened like
gates

وَفُتِحَتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ أَبْوَابًا

20 And the mountains
shall be moved
away from their
places and they
will be as if they
were a mirage

وَسُيِّرَتِ الْجِبَالُ فَكَانَتْ سَرَابًا

21 Truly, Hellfire is a
place of ambush

إِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا

22 A dwelling place
for those who do
wrong

لِلطَّاغِيَةِ مَأْبًا

23 They will stay
there for ages

لَا يَبْرَأُونَ فِيهَا أَحْقَابًا

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- 24 They will not taste anything that is cool while in Hellfire, nor have any drink
لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا بَرْدًا وَلَا شَرَابًا
- 25 Except boiling water, and pus
إِلَّا حَمِيمًا وَعَسَاقًا
- 26 A punishment which fits their wrong doing
جَزَاءٍ وَفَاقًا
- 27 For sure, they did not think that there will be a day when they will face reckoning
إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا لَا يَرْجُونَ حِسَابًا
- 28 They completely denied our signs
وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كِذَابًا

29 And all things we
have recorded in a
Book

وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ كِتَابًا

30 So taste the results
of your evil
actions. You will
get nothing but
more punishment

فَذُوقُوا فَلَنْ نَزِيدَكُمْ إِلَّا عَذَابًا

31 For sure, for those
who feared Allah
and followed his
commands there
will be Paradise

إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ مَفَازًا

32 Gardens and
vineyards

حَدَائِقَ وَأَعْنَابًا

33 And young, mature
maidens of equal
age

وَكَوَاعِبَ أُنثَىٰ بَابًا

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- 34 And a full cup of wine وَكَأْسًا دِهَاقًا
- 35 They will not hear false, evil talk or lies while in Paradise لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَعْوًا وَلَا كِبْرًا
- 36 A large reward from your Lord, because of their good deeds جَزَاءٍ مِّن رَّبِّكَ عَطَاءٍ حِسَابًا
- 37 From the Lord of Heavens and Earth, and whatsoever is in between them, the Most Gracious, with whom they cannot dare to speak on the Day of Judgment except with His permission رَبِّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا الرَّحْمَنُ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْهُ خِطَابًا

38 The day that Jibril and the angels will stand forth in rows, they will not speak except him whom Allah allows, and he will speak what is right

يَوْمَ يَظُورُ الرُّوحُ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ صَفًّا لَا
يَتَكَلَّمُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أُذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ
وَقَالَ صَوَابًا

39 That is without doubt the true day. So, whoever wills, let him seek a place with His Lord by obeying him during their life

ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمَ الْحَقُّ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذْ إِلَى
رَبِّهِ مَآبًا

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40

For sure, we have warned you of a near suffering, the day when man will see that the deeds which his hands have committed. The disbeliever will say: "Woe to me! I wish I was dust!"

إِنَّا أَنْذَرْنَاكُمْ عَذَابًا قَرِيبًا يَوْمَ يَنْظُرُ الْمَرْءُ
مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ وَيَقُولُ الْكَافِرُ يَا لَيْتَنِي
كُنْتُ تُرَابًا

“Well,” said Muhammed. “Any ideas?”

All three of them stared back at the Quran pages, there seemed to be no writings or scraps of paper or underlined words. There simply seemed to be no clues.

“Maybe there is a clue in what the sura is about,” suggested Maryem.

“The sura is mostly about the Day of Judgment,” said Muhammed. “Do any one of you remember Mr. Zuhair saying something recently about the Day of Judgment?”

They thought for a while, but nothing came to mind.

“I give up,” said Maryem. “Maybe we should go and talk to someone about Mr. Zuhair and these clues.”

“You’re right,” said Muhammed. “But who should we talk to?”

“Tell what about Mr. Zuhair?” a familiar voice asked.

All three siblings looked up and stared at the man standing in the doorway in disbelief. They could not believe their eyes!



Chapter 20

Mr. Zuhair is found

Muhammed, Zaineb and Maryem stared at Mr. Zuhair. For a moment, they could not believe their eyes. After weeks of fearing that he was kidnapped and searching for clues, here he was standing in front of them, seemingly unharmed. Zaineb was the first to stand up followed by Muhammed and Maryem, then all together they ran towards Mr. Zuhair and hugged him.

“We thought you were kidnapped,”

“I never thought I would see you again,”

“I am so happy you’re safe!” they shouted at the same time.

Mr. Zuhair looked down and hugged them back and then they all sat down. Mr. Zuhair shifted his eyes from one to another; he was not sure

what they were talking about or why they appeared distressed, but as he was looking at them he realized what had happened

“You found the clues, didn’t you?”

“Yes,” they all cried.

“But how did you manage to leave the clues if you were kidnapped?” asked Maryem.

“Kidnapped!” exclaimed Mr. Zuhair. “So that’s what this is all about!”

“Well! Weren’t you?” asked Zaineb.

Mr. Zuhair could not help but laugh.

“I’m sorry that’s all my fault, I should have known you guys were too smart for your own good.”

“What do you mean?” asked Muhammed. “If you weren’t kidnapped, why did you leave all those clues?”

“And where were you all this time?” Maryem added.

“I suppose it all started with a project I had for the class,” started Mr. Zuhair. “I wanted to get all the students to participate in an activity that would be lots of fun and teach about Islam at the same time. I thought this could be like a treasure hunt, instead I made it as if someone was kidnapped and left clues behind to where he is. The idea was that all students in the class would compete to find clues and at the same time learn about Quran, hadith and other Islamic studies topics.”

“So all these clues were for a fake kidnapping?” asked Maryem crossly.

“Well,” said Mr. Zuhair apologetically, “Sort of. I wasn’t sure if it was going to be a treasure hunt or something else, I just didn’t think that far ahead. You see I had a lot to prepare for the conference, and a week before the conference they asked me suddenly to go to Cairo ahead of time and help out with the preparations for the conference as an organizer. It was an honor to be asked, but that meant I had to drop everything and go to Cairo as soon as I could. So I did not finish the string of clues and decided to postpone the whole thing till I got back. But it seems that you found the first clue and thought that I was in trouble or something.”

“First clue!” exclaimed Zaineb. “More like 20 clues!”

“What? You already found all the clues I left?”

“Yes!” they all replied.

“Wow! Really? You found all the clues! I’m amazed.”

“You see we thought you were kidnapped because you all of the sudden didn’t show up and we thought that you left the clues for us to find out who kidnapped you,” said Maryem.

“Did you guys tell your parents or any of the teachers about what you were thinking?”

“No,” replied Zaineb. “We weren’t sure and we didn’t want to alarm people if it was just our imagination.”

“You see, everyone seemed to be okay with you not being around,” Muhammed explained, “and we didn’t want to look like idiots by suggesting that you were kidnapped. We just kept finding one clue after another until we found the last one and were stuck with no more clues and no Mr. Zuhair to be found.”

“Wow!” Said Mr. Zuhair with a sigh. “I don’t know what to say. Wow!”

“We’re sorry we ruined your treasure hunt or kidnap hunt or whatever you want to call it,” added Maryem.

“Oh no,” replied Mr. Zuhair. “No, don’t worry about that. I thought the clues were too hard to be figured out; I’m really impressed that you were able to figure out all the clues. Some of them were very difficult.”

“I can’t say it was easy,” replied Zaineb. “But if it wasn’t for us worrying about you it would have been a lot of fun.”

“You know what? You guys are going to help me make the next set of clues and this time we will make it even harder to crack! How about that? Will you join me?”

“YES!” they all replied.

“You know what would make these clues more fun,” started Maryem, but before she could finish her brother and sister started to say what they thought the next clues should be. All three spoke at the same time, all exited that the next adventure was about to start.

