



# The Messenger

Book 8

MAGNETIC MUDDLE!



North, South, East or West ... our team is the best!



*Dedicated to,  
Mrs. Sarah Batool  
Zaidi (28<sup>th</sup> March  
2015)*

*An inspiration,  
A close friend,  
A sincere teacher,*

*Please recite a Surah Fatiha for her...*

Please recite Surah-e-Fatiha for Syed Nadeem-ul-Hasan and Mr. & Mrs. Syed Naseem ul Hasan. You lovely people, we miss you!!!

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## Author's Foreword

The Muslim Ummah sees the start of another year of the Islamic calendar with the beginning of the holy month of Muharram. As this holy month comes to pass, we must ask ourselves,

What did I do to improve myself and bring myself close to Allah (swt) and my Imam (ajtf)?

And was I successful?

My fellow brothers and sisters, as the time of the coming of the twelfth Imam (ajtf) is approaching, it is more important than ever that we strive to improve ourselves. We must be able to distance ourselves from the distractions around us, be it our materialistic or ambitious desires. Our sole purpose in life should be to serve our Imam (ajtf) in whatever capacity we can. Ask yourself..... What did I do for my Imam (ajtf) today?

You don't have to be a great scholar, or a famous reciter to do something for your Imam (ajtf). All you need is a pure intention and a strong faith.

Labaik ya Hussein!

In the following lines write something that you want to try and accomplish this Islamic year. (E.g. give up a bad habit, start reciting a dua or ziyarah etc.)

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Good Luck!!!!!!

## Chapter 1 – Labaik Ya Hussain (a.s.)!!!

A sorrowful mist settled down in Peaceville as the tragic month of Muharram arrived. The people no longer wore bright, joyful colours. They dressed in black clothes. Flags hung from every lamp post along the streets of the Islamic city.



Alams stood proud and tall alongside the roads. Their black flags fluttered in the breeze, the embroidery glittering in the rays of the sun. The hands on top stood defiantly against the strong gales, their palms open wide; a representation of the stance taken by the third Imam, Imam Hussain (as).

His refusal to pledge allegiance to the tyrant of the time, Yazid bin Muawiyah, led to the tragic event of Karbala. The entire family of the Prophet and those accompanying them were brutally killed, all except for the fourth Imam, Imam Zain-ul-Abedin (as). The women and children were captured and taken to Damascus in Syria.

The entire city prepared for the weeks of sorrow that were to come. Mukhtar was sitting in his room, lying down on the soft blankets of his bed. Constantly glancing out the window, he peered at the preparations being made outside. Slowly he lay back and closed his eyes. Only a few moments passed when he felt his phone vibrating by his side. He pulled out his phone and saw that he had a new text. His eyes rolled down the screen, widening until he jumped up with joy.

Hannah came rushing in, “What happened?” she queried.

Mukhtar shook his head, “Sorry for the noise Mom, I just received a text from an old friend of mine. Do you remember Hamza? He was a college friend. He found employment overseas and has come to Peaceville for Muharram. I haven’t met him in so long.”

Hannah smiled, “Well that’s very good news dear, now hurry up and get dressed for the majalis. I have ironed your clothes.”

Mukhtar nodded in acknowledgement. Hannah left to get ready. He smiled as he remembered the days when they played pranks, fought for the first position in the class and many other memories. With a small sigh, he got out of bed and got ready for the evening majlis.

As the sky darkened, the halls in the large mosque of Peaceville began to fill with people. Like a sea, the mourners, all clothed in black, sat side by side; all present to mourn the tragedy of Karbala.

The halls were lit up with lights, and the walls were adorned with the names of the martyrs of Karbala. The curving walls bent into the green dome at the top. Beautiful, mournful recitations emanated from the speakers fixed in the wall.

The scholar took his place on the elevated seat, known as the mimbar. He was an aged man, his hair was white and his brow burrowed down on his face, indicating that he had spent many hours in deep contemplation. With a slow graceful hand, he gestured the audience to take a seat. After clearing his throat he recited the Khutba and began his speech.

“In the name of Allah (swt), the most beneficent, the most merciful. I thank the organizers for hosting this event, and pray that Allah (swt) blesses them with the opportunity to continue to do this dhikr (remembrance) of Imam Hussein (as).

Muharram dawns once more on the Islamic ummah. In this month, the grandson of the Prophet (saw) gave all that he had to save the religion of Islam.



The main aim of his sacrifice was to ensure that Muslims receive the true religion. So that, us, the future generations of Islam; could practice the religion revealed by the Prophet (saw). Such a big sacrifice deserves to be honoured, remembered and respected.

All of us must feel obliged towards Imam Hussain (as). So the question is, what is the best way to honour his sacrifice? The answer is simple. We must keep alive the religion he sacrificed his life for. To ensure that the traditions, morals,

values and lessons are prevalent in our society and alive in our hearts. Most importantly, we have to be able to ignite the light of Islam in our future generations.

There is so much to learn from Karbala that it is necessary to take this learning process as a gradual, progressive journey. We must divide this seemingly impossible goal into several easy achievable targets. A person needs the emotional boost to know that he is progressing as a result of his efforts. Now we reach a point where we face the query: What would be the best way to do this? One of my teachers taught me and my fellow colleagues a simple method to merge the lessons taught by Imam Hussain (as) into our daily lives. Let's go through each step, one at a time.

The first step is to pick a few lessons from Karbala which would either improve us spiritually or counter a negative vice or emotion.





For example, I am a person who has a very bad temper. What lesson could I pick from Karbala that would assist me in controlling my anger? I could choose: patience or tolerance. Start with one at a time. There are so many lessons that it is an endless list to pick from. Our Imam (as) has left us with no excuse to continue with the wrongs in our lives. Imam Hussain (as) clarified the truth for all of us.

Once you have selected a lesson, make a conscious effort to include it as a part of your diurnal actions and speech.

Gradually, you will notice a change in your spiritual self. But the real test comes in these days of Aza. Ask yourself! Have I changed in any way from how I was last Muharram? Am I still a person affected with those same spiritual illnesses?

My fellow brothers and sisters! This world is a mere stopover; don't be so worried for it. Know that whatever we gain, lose, earn or steal; is all going to remain here. It's our preparation for the hereafter. How long do we get to live in this world? Fifty? Sixty? Seventy years? But there, we are to remain forever.

We see the morals and values of this modernizing society crumbling away in front of us. The satanic materialistic desires have over ruled the minds of today's generation leading humans to live and act like animals. It is more important than ever that we build a foundation of morals and values in ourselves and our children, upon which we construct an invincible tower of our beliefs.”

He took a deep breath and the hall was silent. After the recitation of the masaib (remembrance of the tragedy of

Karbala.), he concluded his speech. It was time for the dua. Wiping tears from his face, he said,

“Raise your hands and pray with me. Oh Allah! Keep us firm on the path of those you are pleased with and not on the path of those who suffer from your anger. Oh Allah! Strengthen my belief in my faith! I am a sinful person but you are the most merciful and I know you will not turn me away empty handed. Oh Allah! Give everyone in this room the tawfeeq of being on the side of Sahib-uz-Zaman (ajtf).”

The hall erupted with a loud ‘Ameen’ and then they formed lines for the matam. In perfect synchrony, the large crowd rocked back and forth, beating their chests. A mournful eulogy was recited and the masses wept as they remembered the sacrifice of their great Imam (as).

After the eulogies finished, the crowd turned in the direction of the Qibla. A reciter came forward for Ziyarat-e-Ashura. A Ziyarat is a special salutation recited in respect of a pious personality. Certain Ziyarats are particular to a specific date. For example, Ziyarat-e-Ashura has been said to grant most Sawaab when recited during the month of Muharam, as it was conveyed to the Muslims to remember the tragedy of Karbala. Included in its text are: praises to Imam Hussain (as) and his companions for their great sacrifice; curses to those involved in the tragedy of Karbala either directly or chose to stay indifferent and let it happen; and an allegiance sworn to our Imam (as) to keep his memory alive.

The ending of the ziyarat was promptly followed by the arrangements for the food. Long tablecloths, called dastarkhans, were laid down on the floor. The food was placed

in large dishes, silver in colour. Steaming rice, hot curries, and freshly baked breads were served. Tantalizing aromas wafted around the hall and soon everyone was busy in greeting late comers and taking food.

Zain stood patiently by his father's side, waiting for Samir to finish talking. Samir took out some snacks for Zain and sent him off to the Kids Corner. A line of tables stood in orderly rows, with little children whispering excitedly amongst themselves. Zain scanned the groups for familiar faces and was pleased to see his best friend, Ali Raza. He hurried over to that table and sat beside him.

Meanwhile, Samir had found Shajeeh and the two fathers started enjoying a delicious plate of food and some coffee. Both watched their kids and smiled as they chatted together about upcoming events.

“Is it busy at the office?” asked Shajeeh, carefully sipping from his steaming coffee cup.

“Not really,” replied Samir, shaking his head. “These ten days, the office is closed, and business will be minimal until Arbaeen.”

He nodded and continued to eat. Feeling very thirsty, Samir got up and went to the water cooler to get himself a drink. While he was filling his cup, someone tapped him on his back and he swerved to meet Mukhtar's grinning look. After exchanging salams, he introduced Samir to a young man standing right beside him.

“Brother Samir, this is an old college friend of mine, Hamza.”

Mukhtar's eyes twinkled happily as the two men shook hands and greeted each other. Samir invited the two to join them. Soon, the four were sitting in a group having a lively conversation.

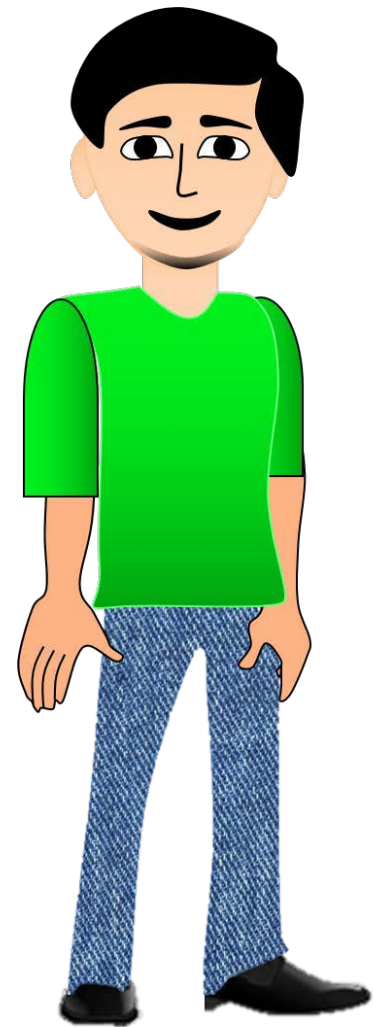
"Hamza, do you live in Peaceville?" asked Samir.

Hamza shook his head, "No, I work abroad. After college, I got a good offer and I took it. My family lives here and I come to visit them quite frequently."

He then continued to talk about his studies. Samir found him to be an intelligent, well-versed young man. With a degree in engineering, he was working as an architect abroad. Every few months he came to Peaceville to visit his parents and his younger sister and brother.

Hamza looked at his watch and politely excused himself, as he had to pick his mother. Following his departure the three men didn't stay long. They soon exchanged farewells and left.

It was dark that night in Peaceville. The beauty of the night was breath-taking. The world was quiet, aside from the occasional creaking of the crickets, from their hidden den. Their melodious voices were carried by the gentle zephyr that rustled the leaves of the nearby bushes. Nothing stirred as everything was still. The birds in their nests, the squirrels in the trees, the rabbits in their burrows, and all other creatures



huddled together to fend off the nipping chill that still hung in a mist over the city. The moon was hidden from sight, enveloped in a mystifying cloak of stars, which concealed its blue light and cast a shadow of darkness. However, in the dark, someone rose and turned on their light.

Hamza sighed. Worry and anxiousness creased the brow that lay on his once smiling face. He looked in the mirror and pulled his hand out of his pocket. On his outstretched palm lay three spoons. They were silver in colour and engraved on the handle was, 'Peaceville Mosque'. He shook his hand feebly in the air, as a final attempt to the hour long struggle. However, all his efforts were in vain. No matter how hard he tried, they remained attached to his hand.



Hamza shook his head. This was not the first time something like this had happened. He could remember several incidents where small items, like thumb pins and staples remained fastened to his hand, but now the problem grew to cutlery, stationary, and even small devices. Considering the issue to be something unusual, he used Muharram as an excuse to come

to Peaceville to seek help. He thought of Mukhtar but dismissed the idea instantly. No one was going to believe him. This was something supernatural. With a confused mind and a concerned heart, he fell into prostration and asked Allah, his eyes closed and his voice quaking,

“Ya Allah (swt)! What is happening to me? Why am I turning into some kind of magnet? Why are all these objects sticking to me?”

The questions just flew, one after the other until he sighed and whispered,

“Oh Allah (SwT), the most Merciful, the most Beneficent. I ask you to guide me and to assist me.”

With a few moments of silence, he rose and then went to bed. His heart felt much lighter.

Samir lay in his room and was doing his accountability session. His day went well and he was very pleased. He thanked Allah (swt) for such a perfect day. He even got to meet a new person, Mukhtar’s friend; Hamza. Samir found him to be a polite young man and saw a bright future for him. He lay awake listening to the sounds around him. There was the gentle whisper of the wind, as it flew past the balcony, followed by the light tinkling of the wind chime. The beauty of the silence was astonishing but it was short lived, as Zain’s blatant snores shattered the peace and tranquility. With an amused smile on his face, Samir fell asleep.

Mukhtar was very happy to see his friend that day but something was not right. He decided to let go of his thoughts as his eyelids became heavy, and he fell asleep.

The next day the sun shone on the city. The warm rays were lapping up the icy chill that had once ensnared the town in its frosty grip. Spring began to bloom. Everything was fresh, new, crispy and colourful. The farmers were planting seeds or preparing the soil; their fields scattered with sheep and the air filled with the bleating of new-born lambs. The sweet scent of hay rolled down the hills, across the grassy plains. The town was already bustling with people, smiling up at the sun. They were pleased to get rid of their sweaters and coats, welcoming the season with utmost enthusiasm. Hamza woke up weary and tired. He clambered out of bed and into the washroom. Getting dressed, he hurried down the stairs.

‘Thump! Thump! Thump!’ He ran down the stairs. His little sister jumped up with excitement. It was always entertaining when her big brother was home. They would always have fun and he had a surprise for her every day. As he reached the kitchen, he saw her smiling up at him with a mischievous grin on her face. He smiled back and pulled out a small box from his pocket. Her smile broke into a childish laughter and she ran to give him a hug. They both proceeded to the living room.

Their living room was simple but elegantly decorated. Black sofas faced each other bordering the opposite walls. Across the wooden floor, lay a green carpet, with a beautiful white and black design. On the walls were pictures of the shrines of the Imams (as). On the small coffee table, by the couch, was a special vase. It was made of steel, adorned with colourful fake gems and engraved with designs of nature. Near the table was a tall shelf that held many of their mother’s prized ornaments.

They were colourful little glass figures, mainly souvenirs, as she had travelled a great deal in her youth.

Hamza's mother was a dentist.

After her marriage, she moved out of Peaceville to join her husband who had left earlier. Both Hamza and his sister were born abroad but their younger brother was born in

Peaceville. Hamza's sister remembered very little of their life abroad but Hamza, who was older at the time, remembered much more. Hamza's father got a job in the Peaceville University Hospital as a consultant in the field of orthopaedics (related to bones).

Hamza sat down on the black couch and opened the seal.

Beside the shelf was a small stool, upon which his little sister sat. She dragged the stool to the sofa and jumped with glee when her brother gave her the box. It was a lovely bright pink box wrapped with silver ribbon

Inside was a thin bracelet made from woven threads. She turned it over in her hand,





mystified by its simple yet graceful look. Attached to it was a strap which had a verse of Quran written on it. She read it out slowly,

“Indeed Allah (swt) is ever watching over you.”



She gave her brother an ear-to-ear grin and then a big hug. She slipped it on her wrist and rushed off to show her mother. Hamza smiled as he saw her run off, pleased by her excitement. He started feeling hungry and realized that he hadn't had breakfast.

As he rose to go to the kitchen, his hand hit the steel vase on the table beside the couch.

CRASH!!! It fell with a loud clatter on the floor. He looked around in fear and hurriedly picked it up. What followed next was shocking. He was unable to put the vase back.

‘Not again!’ he thought to himself as he gently placed it on the table and opened his fingers but it was useless. The vase remained fastened to his palm. Suddenly he heard a soft voice call out,

“Hamza! Is everything okay?”

It was his mother. He heard her soft, quick footsteps growing louder. Upon entering the room, she looked at him, worry creasing her brow.

She was a tall woman with soft brown eyes between which sat a small round nose. Above her smooth chin were red, rosy lips which were often seen smiling.

Hamza smiled innocently and replied,

“Yes, everything’s fine. I was just picking up the vase. I knocked it over.”

He gave an innocent look and his mother smiled.

“As long as nothing is broken, it’s okay.” She responded.

“Come along now, breakfast is on the table.”

He nodded in acknowledgement and she left. He peeked around the corner making sure that she had left the room before letting out a huge sigh of relief. Wiping the beads of perspiration from his creased forehead, he stood up to go. As he was approaching the door, he felt a ‘WHOOSH!’ followed by a loud clatter. He looked down and was delighted to see the vase on the floor. However, there was little time to celebrate. He picked it up quickly, put it on its stand and then rushed off to the kitchen.

His mouth watered as he saw the food. Two fried eggs, sunny side up, lay there steaming on the ceramic plate. Alongside were two slices of toast from a homemade baked loaf. On the side was a large glass of freshly squeezed orange juice. Complementing the splendid meal, was a bowl of fresh fruit, just bought from the local farmer.

The local farmer was an old man with a large nose upon which sat two laughing blue eyes. Underneath was a big mouth which always wore an ear-to-ear grin. On his round, bald head, he wore a large straw hat, tattered and roughened at

the edges. Bits of hay stuck out here and there from between the holes and patches.



Everyday he would come around on the streets, with a cart pulled by Snowflake, his favourite horse. She would drag the farmers cart as he would go about crying his wares, “Fresh fruits and Vegetables! Fresh fruits and vegetables! Straight from the field to the cart! Fresh fruit and vegetables!” He had been doing the same thing for over thirty years and everyone was more than pleased to see him.

Hamza enjoyed his breakfast. After finishing his meal, he decided to go for a walk in the neighbourhood. Their home was situated near the periphery of the Peaceville metropolis, however it was a very pleasant area. Living near the country meant wide, open spaces. Greenery was sprouting from every corner. The twittering of the birds filled the air alongside the buzzing of the bees, from a nearby meadow. The path changed from grey concrete to a countryside dusty road. It looked like

one of those rabbit trails that lead into the forest. However, Hamza knew this path well. He had been up and down this path more times than one could count. Further ahead, the path led into a thick green forest of giant evergreens, oak, beech and all other types of trees. He continued to walk straight into the woods, past the trees. The once beaming sun, now flickered as it peeked through the foliage. Hamza's pace was quite fast as he was anxious to get to his destination.

The woods had soft grass and fluffy mosses covering the forest floor, occasionally interrupted by springy beds of heather. Tall trees stood proud and tall. Their branches brushing the pale blue sky. It was a shortcut to go from his town to the periphery of the metropolis. He was to meet Mukhtar at a café in the town.

The café was a little shop at the corner of an intersection. It was a small place that could accommodate twenty people comfortably. White walls flowed into the cream floor, elegantly holding an organized array of chairs and table. In a corner were family booths. They were large coffee cups, round and cushioned on the inside, designed to house a family of six to seven people. It was a favourite place for many old settlers of Peaceville. It was known for its quick, reliable service; friendly and cooperating staff as well as the scrumptious food and tasty beverages.

Hamza entered the well-lit room and was welcomed by the grinning face of the old cashier and owner of the café. He was a short, hefty man, with beefy arms and legs. In his large face he had a large tomato red nose, upon which sat two twinkling blue eyes. Under his nose was a mouth that was always seen

wearing an ear-to-ear grin. He ran his stubby fingers through the greying beard that cupped his face.

“Salam alaikum Hamza!” He cried cheerfully. “My, haven’t you grown! I still remember the time you had to stand on your tippy toes to see over my counter. Now look at you!”

Hamza smiled at the man and shook his outstretched hand heartily.

“Walaikum Salam. It feels good to be back Agha Jan,” which meant ‘dear uncle’. “I need a place for two.”

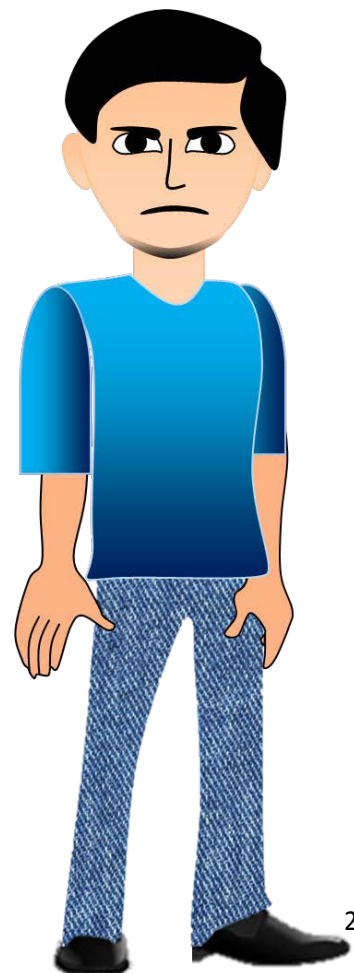
The old man smiled, “I don’t suppose your partner would be that young whippersnapper Mukhtar.”

Hamza smiled his reply and then followed Agha Jan to one of the seats in the corner. It wasn’t too long before Mukhtar entered. He greeted Agha Jan warmly and then gave his order to the waiter.

“One cappuccino, one latte, and two doughnuts, please.”

Hamza gave him a disapproving look. “You’ll get fat eating all those sugary desserts.”

Mukhtar smiled and shrugged his shoulders. He had quite a large sweet tooth and everyone knew that. With a loud sigh, he slid into the seat and then sat down opposite Hamza. “So, while we are waiting, why don’t you tell me why you wanted me to come?”



Hamza looked at him, “Just to catch up. It’s been a while since my last visit and I thought it would be nice to have a cup of coffee with you.”

Mukhtar smiled and then lay back in the chair. “Sure...”

He smiled and they began to discuss about local news, friends, families, current affairs etc. While they were discussing, their order arrived.

Typical of a perfectionist like Agha Jan, they were served on white, spotless ceramic plates and the beverages were in tall cups. The plates were perfectly decorated, stylish and cool yet very easy to do. They began with the name of Allah (swt) and set to the task of consuming their delicious treats.

While they were eating, Hamza sighed and asked Mukhtar in a very apprehensive tone, “Mukhtar, what would you do if you noticed that, well.... that you could do something ‘different’ ...”

“What do you mean by ‘different’?”

“I mean, something beyond the capabilities of the normal human being. I mean something *supernatural*.”

“Hamza, from my understanding, a human being is a glorious creature made for the purpose of serving Allah (swt).

However, when a human being sins and loses that belief in Allah’s greatness, it leads him astray. These sins cast veils upon the path between us and our Lord, making it more difficult for us to reach out to Him. When someone strives to battle satanic temptations to gain proximity to Allah (swt),





these veils are lifted gradually. Our Imams and Prophets have no veils. They became a reflection of attributes of Allah (swt).

“But they lived more than a thousand years ago, I’m talking about these times and ages.”

Mukhtar gave an amused grin and told him, “The examples are right in front of you”

Hamza gave him a confused look.

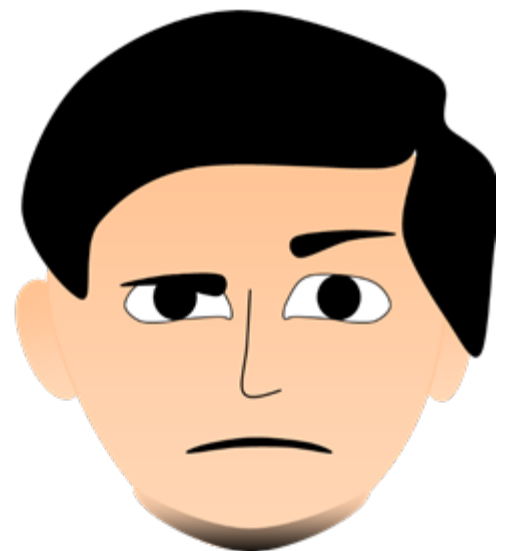
Mukhtar continued. “N-N-Not l-l-literally” he stammered. “I mean the great spiritual leaders. They are known to have performed acts unlike any other. They are granted this because they have shown and proven to Allah (swt) that they have that spiritual maturity to handle the power and responsibility that comes with these blessings. Frankly speaking, if I found out that I had such a power, I would be ecstatic that Allah (swt) found me worthy of entrusting me with it. Anyway why do you ask?”

“Oh, no reason.” Hamza quickly replied. “I just felt curious...”

They finished the rest of their meal with conversations on trivial matters like sports, politics and other topics. Once they were done, they paid and left.

Hamza was in deep thought.

Without raising his eyes, he stared at the pavement. His pace quick, and breathing deep, the bustling scene surrounding him flew past.



Mukhtar noticed his friend's silence and decided not to disturb his train of thought. He struggled to keep up with the fast pace of his friend. After a brisk walk, they reached the intersection where their paths parted. They exchanged goodbyes and then parted ways.

Hamza had to pick up his brother on his way home so he deviated from his usual track. This too, was a shortcut through the woods; past the giant oaks. From their broad trunks sprouted a maze of branches, green with young leaves and unripe acorns. Their bows bowed humbly in the blowing zephyr. The air was filled with the sweet aroma of grass soaked by morning dew. As spring was slowly making its way into Peaceville, life began to awaken from deep within the forest.

An occasional squirrel could be seen every now and again, and if one was lucky, they could catch sight of a young fawn





with its mother. Slowly the trees faded as he made his way to a different path. It was an unformed road, brown and dusty, in much contrast with the lush, colourful, surrounding flora.

He passed by some mulberry and holly bushes. Though lovely in appearance; these plants carry a nasty sting and are better left untouched. However, the mulberry plants were friendly little plants; much unlike their aggressive neighbours. A tasty fruit similar in looks to a raspberry grew on it. The bushes did not have any ripe fruit this early in the season, however there were a few here and there between the leaves of the plant.

Hamza plucked quite a few and then took them to a nearby hand pump to wash it. With every push on the round, well-oiled handle, cold icy water shot out the faucet. After washing the fruit, he strolled over to the nearby gate. It lay in the center of a line of well-maintained fences. They stood staunchly in the dirt, without trembling in the strongest of gales. Running all around the vicinity, it enclosed the field of the school where his younger brother, Abbas, studied.

Abbas's school 'Razavi Academy' was named after the eighth Imam, Imam Ali Raza (as). It was the national Islamic institute of Peaceville for boys. The school was unparalleled in terms of academic excellence, receiving many international awards. Alongside its high academic profile, the school endorsed Islam in every subject. The goal behind it was to stimulate the natural inclination towards the divine and pure religion by activities and projects. These included jamaat prayers sessions; workshops with renowned scholars; an early morning and late night buffet during the holy month of Ramadhan; special events on auspicious nights like Laylat-ul-Qadr and many, many more. The teachers were professionals

and highly qualified in the subjects they taught. More importantly, they were all practicing Muslims and an embodiment of the morals, ethics and values endorsed by Islam. Although it was a Muslim school, it welcomed people of other faiths with open arms. In response to concerns raised about this policy, it told everyone, ‘Our Prophet (saw) never turned away anyone, even if they were from another faith. He invited people to Islam not by telling them what is right and wrong, but preached by practice. We welcome all, Muslims or Non-muslims, and we show all why Islam is an excellent religion.’

Hamza was watching Abbas playing with his friends and



teachers. They were having a soccer match of teachers versus students. The teachers put aside their cloaks and began to battle their little but ferocious opponents. The boys were masters and took full advantage of their short heights and agile figures. However, since they were playing for fun, the teachers decided to make use of what they had. This included picking up a little boy to steal the ball.

It was a hot evening. A scarlet ribbon wove its way through the colourful sky as it stretched across the horizon. The heat from the vanishing sun did not diminish as the air grew humid and warm. Under the waves of warmth, the faces of the players were red and puffed. Beads of perspiration fell from their foreheads like rain. Wet grass cushioned them, saturated with the dew from the morning.



“Come on Abbas! It time to go home!” called out Hamza. The little boy raised his head, looking across the field. A grin grew over his face upon seeing his big brother waving to him. He ran off to join his brother.

Half way through the journey, Hamza picked him up and carried him; Abbas on one shoulder and his school bag on the other. Hamza smiled to himself as he felt Abbas breathe heavily, and occasionally release a little snore. It wasn't long before he reached his comfy suburban home. His mother opened the door and relieved him of his little weight. Hamza dumped the bag on the floor and then went up to his room.

It was a small square shaped room, large enough to fit a bed and a desk while leaving enough room for Hamza to do his own activities. He slumped onto the bed. The air conditioning was efficient and his room was deliciously cool in comparison to the unbearable heat outside.

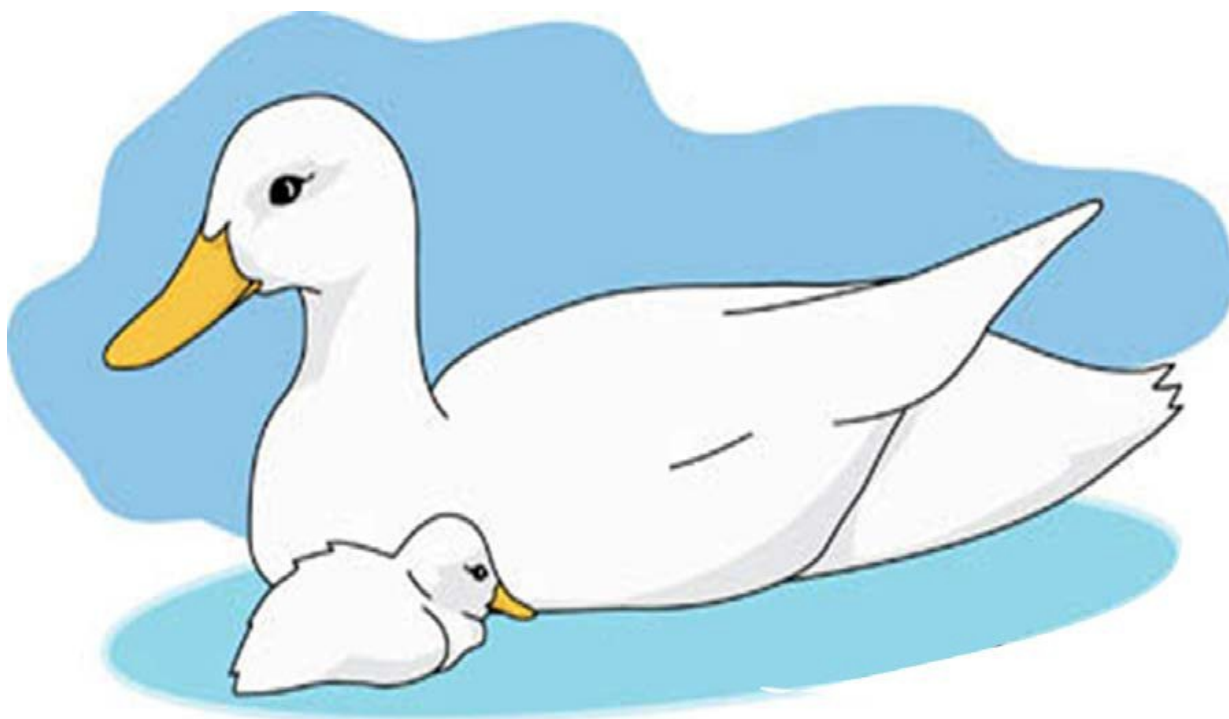
Even in the city, offices were unusually quiet with the late workers rushing to complete their assignments and rush home hoping to make it in time for the evening majalis.

## Chapter 2 – Who, what and how?

Hamza's mother was very worried about her son. Her motherly instinct told her that her son was unwell. She could sense that her son was worried.

A mother is probably the closest relation that can occur between any two living beings.

In this world, the strength and love invested in this bond is evident in every aspect. Animals often sacrifice themselves for the survival of their children, from the smallest fish to the largest bird.



Hamza's mother was in the kitchen cooking dinner.

After setting the food on the stove, she walked over and stood beside her son. He didn't seem to notice her.



Lost in his own thoughts, he continued to stare down at the floor, as quiet as a mouse. She sat down on the couch beside him. Hamza was slightly startled. He instantly stood up, but his mother laid a gentle hand on his shoulder. He sat back down.

“Hamza, how does it feel to be back home, dear? Are you enjoying your vacation?” asked his mother, in a gentle voice.

Hamza gave his mother a weak smile, but it didn't slide. She gave him an obstinate look, but decided not to probe.

She smiled and asked him, “So, I heard you found an old friend, who is it?”

He shrugged his shoulders and replied, “Mukhtar.”

“That’s nice. Dear son, a secret is a painful thing to hide. A lot of times keeping it to yourself doesn’t solve the problem. A problem told is a problem halved. You are surrounded by people, willing to help you out. All you have to do is reach out to them...”

She dropped his mobile into his hands and then gracefully stood up, exited the room. He turned over to view the mobile screen. On the window, was Mukhtar’s number. With trembling hands, he pressed the big green button. ‘Thanks mum’ he silently mouthed.



## Chapter 3 – Moment of truth

Mukhtar gasped as he scrubbed his face with the icy water gushing from the cool, grey tap. With wet hands he hurriedly turned the knob, after which, a vigorous scrubbing occurred. He rushed to slip into the black shirt and pant lying ironed on his bed. Mukhtar was in his room getting ready for the evening majlis.

His house was a little bungalow, quite close to the urban area of Peaceville. It was a charming home. Strong brick walls coated in fresh white paint supported a solid tiled, tilted roof. Two walls were occupied with windows, and the third with a door. The final wall, however, was vacant and was home to Hannah's home garden, proudly boasting healthy vegetables and an impressive array of various floral beauties. Leading up to the house was a smooth path made of shiny white pebbles, much like a cobbled path but pleasant to walk on. The door was made of solid oak painted with a lovely royal red.

Peaceville was prepared for the mourning ceremony of the King of Martyrs, Imam Husain (as). The banners were hoisted high in the air. The lamps dimmed, and the streets crowded with people on their way to the mosque.

The mosque had three major bodies: the scholars, the trustees, and the citizens of Peaceville.

The scholars were the leaders and made all decisions pertaining to the mosque and any affiliated aspect like the weekly congregation and the decisions regarding jurisprudence. Their decisions were accepted by all. They had

representatives all over Peaceville. The representative in the major metropolitan was the well-known, Mr. Abidi.

Secondly, there was a board of trustees. They were few in number, only five or six. Their task is to manage the logistics. According to the constitution, they had no say in any decision regarding the religious affairs as the experts had the final word on it. Just like any other field, a hospital is run by doctors, a school by teachers and similarly, a mosque should be run by scholars.

The cooperation of the trustees with the board of scholars allowed the system to run smoothly and effectively serving the purpose of connecting the community with their faith.

Mukhtar had finally found a parking in the large yet filled parking lot. Hannah hurried inside whilst Mukhtar locked the car.

He had just finished and was about to head towards the men's entrance when he heard a loud 'RINGGGGGGGGG!' from his pocket. He pulled out his phone and was surprised to see a message from Hamza:

Are you at the masjid?

He stared at the message and typed back,

Yes. Was just going in.

The reply surprised him even more,

Drive around the back and meet me behind the masjid. Before the event starts. Something very urgent!



He glanced over his shoulders. What was going on? Why did Hamza need to see him? What could be so urgent?

Without further ado, he occupied the driver seat again. In thirty seconds he was at the back of the mosque.



Despite the bustling crowd inside, it was a very eerie place. The only object there was the large shed where the trash was kept. He stepped out of the car making as little noise as he possibly could.

“Psst!” he whispered to the general obscure oblivion of empty deserted concrete. “Hamza are you here?”

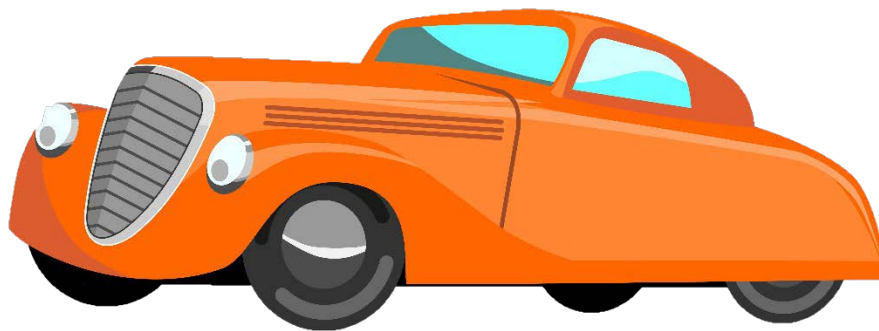
However all he could hear in response was the chirping of the hidden crickets. Suddenly, out of the nebulous darkness, a familiar silhouette materialized itself in front of him.

“Hamza!” he half yelled in relief. Hamza put a finger to his lips and signaled towards the car. Mukhtar nodded in acknowledgement and followed behind him.

Once they were near the car, away from the mosque he started speaking,

“Mukhtar, I know this may seem uncanny and strange but I promise your doubts will soon be cleared. You see, I have been given something. I do not know whether to call it a blessing or a curse but hiding it has tormented my life. Not being able to handle it anymore, I have decided to trust you with my secret.”

Mukhtar’s face wore a solemn look. “Hamza, we are friends. In fact we are like brothers. That means we help each other. Let’s sit inside the car, it’s getting a bit chilly out here.”



He opened the door and sat inside. Hamza, however

remained outside, a painful worry creasing his brow. Mukhtar rolled down the window,

“Come on Hamza what are you waiting for?”

Hamza sighed and replied, “That’s what I wanted to tell you, I can’t.”

Mukhtar, confused and perplexed, hurried out of his seat and went beside Hamza, “Why not?”

Hamza gestured towards his hands. They were resting on the car door. Mukhtar yanked at them and was surprised to see that they didn’t move. He pulled harder and harder. Finally, they gave way and the two stumbled backwards.

His voice was shaky and he buried his face in his hands, “It’s what I have been trying to tell you. It’s some weird power. Metal objects stick to me like I am some sort of magnet.”

There was complete silence for a few seconds, but Mukhtar decided to handle the situation.

He smiled and helped him to his feet. He began to walk to the shed and stepped inside. Hamza followed along feebly. He turned to Hamza and smiled,

“If you thought that was weird then my friend you need to see this.”

Hamza looked up, curious.

Mukhtar clapped his hands and placed them together, slowly a light emerged, illuminating the whole shed. Hamza’s jaw dropped; his eyes bulging out of his head. He kept looking at Mukhtar, then the light, and then back to Mukhtar.

Mukhtar closed his hands and the light disappeared. He turned to Hamza and said,

“What you have and what I have are neither curses nor powers. They are a blessing bestowed upon us alongside the responsibilities. Our job is to use these powers for the good of our religion. Not long ago, I too found myself in such a state, and I needed to know what was happening to me. I can understand what you are going through. It will take time to adjust but you can start feeling happy about the fact that it is a blessing, of course, with responsibility, but it is a blessing!

Hamza's once sober face slowly grew into that of his previous cheerful self. "So, are we like those superheroes in our comic books?"

Mukhtar nodded and then burst out laughing. He was soon joined by Hamza.

Once they had regained their composure, he asked Mukhtar, "Who was the person who helped you?"

Mukhtar lay a warm hand on his shoulder, "That can wait till tomorrow. For now we have more important affairs to attend to."

Hamza agreed, "Sure we do. Let's go!"

The two boys hurried into the hall just in time as the speaker was just beginning his lecture.

Hamza's face bore no more forlorn looks, and once more, the light of excitement and eagerness radiated from the young man's face.

Peace had made its way into his once restless heart. Calm and tranquility filled his tense body. His problem was solved.



## Chapter 4 – Meet Magneto!

The next day was bright and sunny. Much in congeniality with Hamza's mood. He was up early and rushed down the stairs. His mother was preparing breakfast and the school lunches of his two siblings. They were seated at the dining table, eagerly awaiting their meal. He ruffled the hair of his little brother and greeted his little sister with a big hug.

With a grin on his face, he skipped into the kitchen and planted a kiss on the cheek of his much astonished mother.

His mother's astonishment soon changed to happiness. A smile appeared on her sweet face as she could see from the smile on his lips and the spring in his steps that his troubles were over.

Mukhtar was waiting by the office of the team. Hamza arrived and followed Mukhtar to the office. Shajeeh, Huda and Samir were standing there awaiting his arrival. They introduced themselves.

They spoke to Hamza for a while. Mukhtar had already briefed them about Hamza's good character and his love for Ahlebait (as). Hamza's power was a shocking discovery but they were getting better at handling surprises.

After they talked with him for a while the team huddled together to discuss as to whether to let him in their team. Mukhtar joined them for a while.

Samir looked at Hamza, a serious look on his face,

“Mukhtar, letting an individual into this team is a very serious matter. What goes on within these walls must remain top secret as it affects not only our lives but the lives of those

whom we love. That's why I must ask with all the seriousness of the matter, can we trust him?"

Mukhtar nodded, "Hamza and I practically grew up together. I know him like my own brother. You can trust him, as much as you trust me."

In a few minutes they came to the room where Hamza was waiting for them.

Samir stepped forward,

"Hamza, Mukhtar is an important member of his team. We respect him. In his eyes, you are a true Muslim. He believes in you and as I have trust in Mukhtar, I believe in you too. Therefore, we have decided to invite you to be part of the team. Do you accept?"

Hamza nodded, "I accept"

Samir embraced him warmly,

"Brother Hamza, welcome to the team..."

Mukhtar added,

"All superheroes have names, so how about 'Magneto' for you?"

Mukhtar's eyes were glinting with mischief.

The rest of the team were enjoying the chemistry between the two friends.

"Magneto?" Hamza questioned.

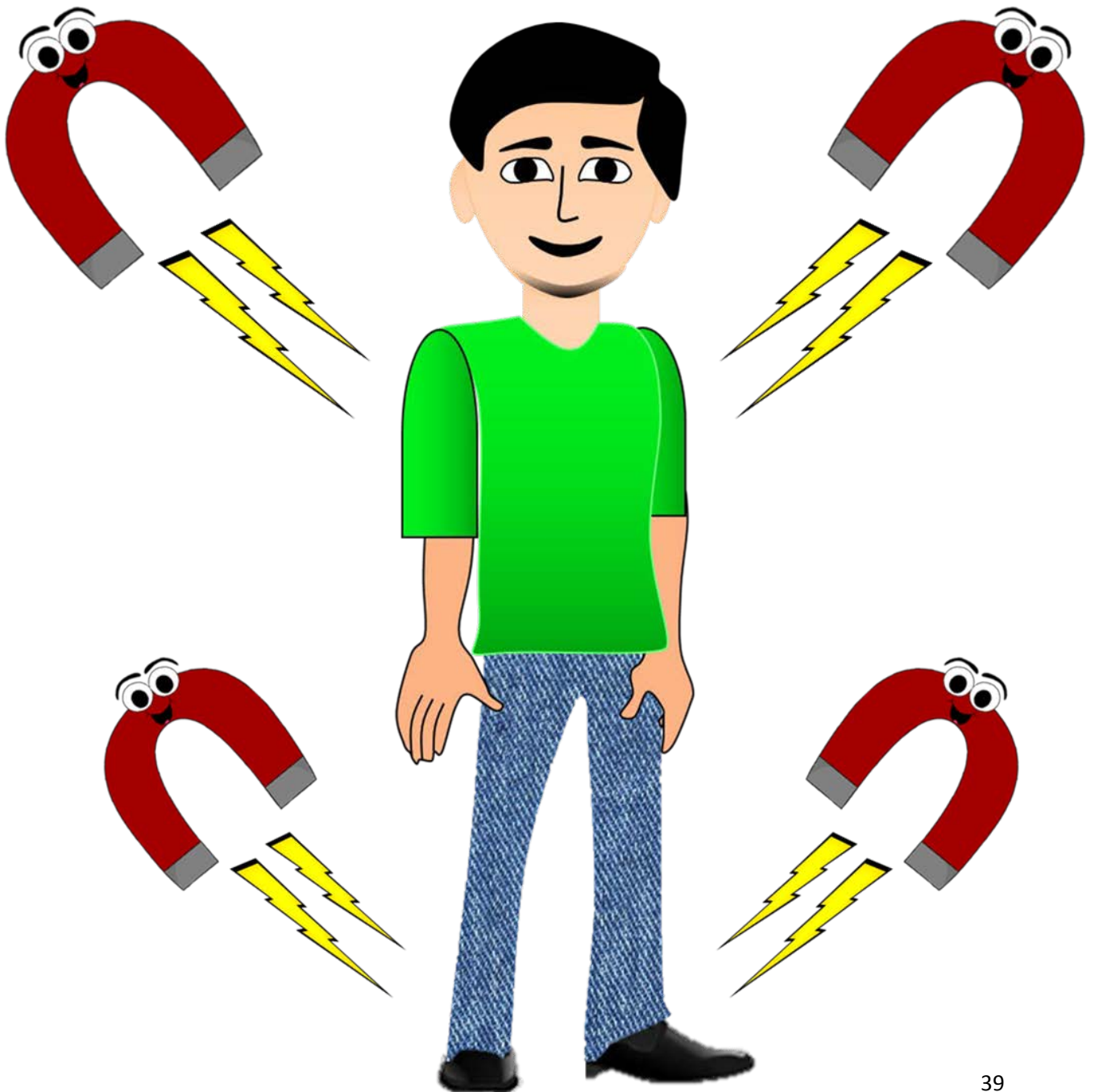
"Yeah!" responded Mukhtar, looking at all the others for agreement.

He further added,

“It is the best I can think of on such short notice ...”

They all burst out laughing ending another mystery and looking forward to the beginning of a new one with their newest member,

## Hamza ‘The Magneto!’





# Sneak Peek!



## Book 9

### Concept Conundrum...





The addition of a new member of the team has brought joy to the lives of all. Calm and tranquility dominate Peaceville as Hamza struggles to bring his new growing power under his command. However, the peace is short-lived...

The overseas residents of Peaceville are having some problems.

It becomes complicated as there are problems in Peaceville too.

An influential group of Peaceville citizens return home after spending years abroad. The difference in their ideological and social beliefs causes a discrepancy in the lives of many, including the team members themselves.

How will the team tackle this new problem, and take a stand against the unwelcomed values threatening the society?

Is the problem as simple as it looks???

Stay tuned to find out!

PUBLISHED SO FAR:

# 'The Messengers'

Book 1 - Superhero or Superhuman?

Book 2 - Superhero at play!

Book 3 - Are there more like me?

Book 4 - Little things....Big Impact!

Book 5 - Peek a boo! I know you!

Book 6 - Respite after Spite

Book 7 - Sugar coated Evil

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Facebook: Asr Kids





**Hidden amongst the masses lies a confused mind...**

**Weird occurrences leave him perplexed, unable to decide...**

**Whether it's all real or just a dream ...**

**Until the arrival of our courageous team ...**

**Will they leave him at the hands of despondence and despair?**

**Or leave with Allah, all of the affairs.**



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