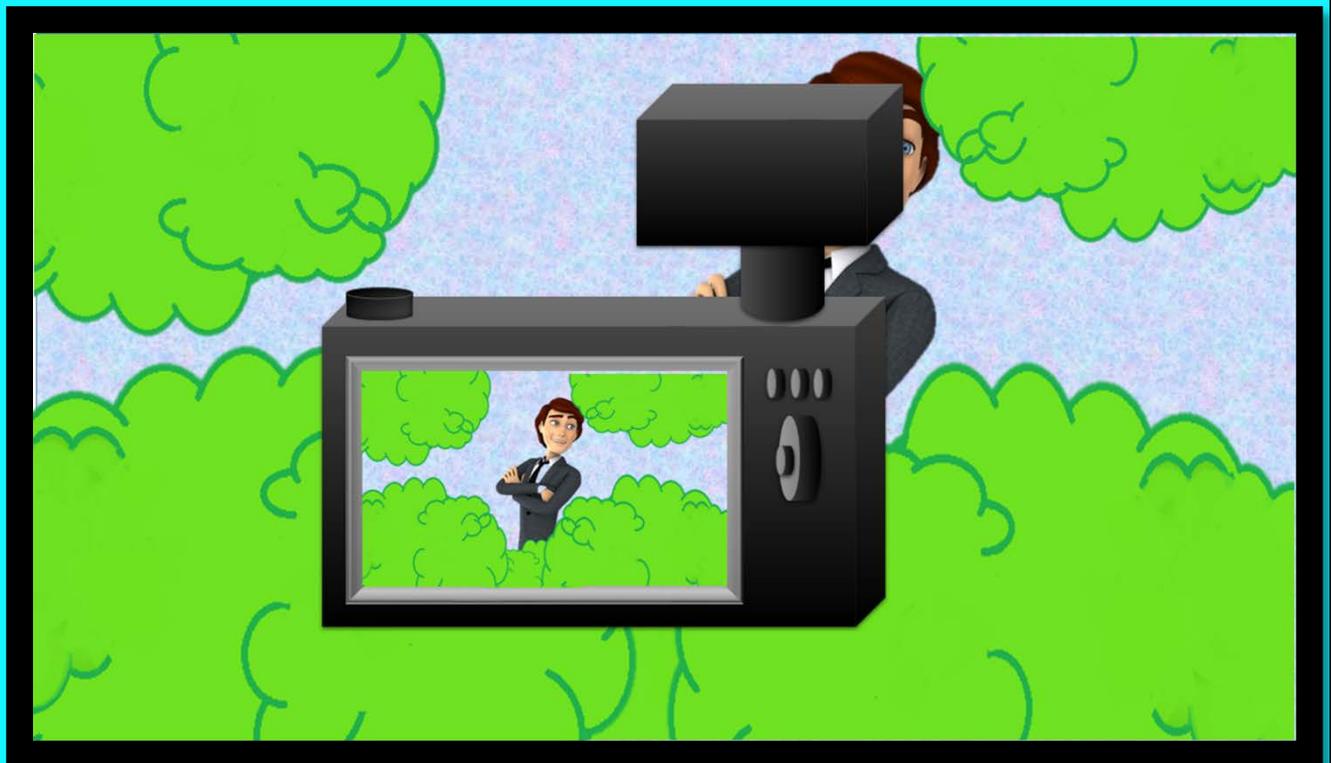




The Messengers

Book 5



Someone is fast on their trail....the only way out is to go faster!

*DEDICATED TO,
Aba Jan,
Moulana Syed Zafar Hasan Amrohvi*

**Pleas recite Surah Fatiha for Syed Nadeem ul Hassan and
Mrs. Mehar Jabeen**

DUA IMAM-E-ZAMANA



اللهم كن أوليك الحجة
بن الحسن صلواتك عليه وعلى آياته
وفي هذه الساعة وفي كل ساعة وليا وحافظا وقائدا
وناصرًا وديلا وعينا حتى تسكنه أرضك
طوعا وتمتعه فيها طويلا برحمتك
يا أرحم الراحمين

Contents

CHAPTER 1 - A SNOWY DAY.....5

CHAPTER 2 - DID YOU HEAR SOMETHING?.....11

CHAPTER 3 - A LETTER FOR YOU13

CHAPTER 4 – BUZZING BY.....17

CHAPTER 5 – PLAN B.....21

CHAPTER 6 – PHASE ONE: OPERATION EXTERMINATION ...21

CHAPTER 7 – PHASE 2: WHERE ARE YOU???25

CHAPTER 8 – DEEP DOWN UNDERGROUND.....31

CHAPTER 9 – IT’S NEVER TOO LATE TO DO WHAT’S RIGHT.43

Chapter 1 - A Snowy Day

Winter had set its icy grip of frost and snow over the town of Peaceville. The sky clouded with cold blue swirls, tossing wave after wave of chilly air. The trees gleamed with a miraculous design in the frost which coated the coarse bark. Grass glistened with the frozen dew drops on their tip. The bird baths were covered with frost and the standing water was frozen as a still pool. Light snow fell from the sky, gently fluttering this way and that, as they lowered themselves to the branches of the trees, landing in abandoned piles of twigs which had once been the home of a migrator.

Samir had his hands extended in front of the heater as he snuggled deeper into his blanket that was spread over his shoulders.

“Would you like some tea Samir Baba? It’s very chilly today and a nice hot cup of tea would warm you up nicely.”

“Well Hannah,” he smiled and replied “You make it sound so comforting, yes, I believe that would be nice. Thank you.”

Hannah handed him a steaming cup of tea in a mug. He held it carefully between his fingers, watching the steam curl up into the air and vaporize. The television

droned on about more snow and lower temperatures. Samir and his family had returned only a few days earlier from a short trip up north. The kids were still asleep, but Hannah and Samir were quite awake now.

Mukhtar had also returned from visiting a colleague. Shajeeh and his family had gone off on a tobogganing trip for the weekend.

He glimpsed at the snowflake as each delicate piece fell into place. ‘Oh Allah! How beautiful and astonishing is your creation. How is it possible that every year billions of snowflakes fall from the sky yet two will never match? How can we understand the greatness of the Divine One if we can’t understand his mere creations?’



Samir continued to watch the snowflakes fluttering through the air, covering the lawn and driveway in a beautiful blanket of white. Sonu walked into the room, looking like a little puffball. She was all bundled up in coats and sweaters. Under her head were several scarves. Her gloves and socks were different patterns and colours.

“My goodness, Hannah,” Samir exclaimed in his futile attempt to suppress his laughter. “Where has my Sonu disappeared to? You seemed to have made a large colourful snowball out of my little girl”

Sonu giggled so hard that she fell over. She rolled about on the floor until she began to whimper. Hannah went and helped the little beach ball stand on her feet. Sonu ran outside and clambered across the lawn. Zain was behind a mound of snow peering intently at a similar mound opposite him, from which Ali was watching him. Each boy had a pile of snowballs beside them that was starting to shrink as the game grew more intense.

Samir looked up to the giant bare tree that stood on the lawn. He remembered from that tree, began a whole series of events leading to the addition of a member to their team. Its branches, now bare, swayed lightly in the wind. The icy zephyr was cool to the touch as it fluttered past his face. Icicles, hung from the branches of the tree, glistening like diamonds with colour and light flourishing from every tip. As he sipped his steaming mug of tea, Samir could feel the warm beverage sink down from his throat to his stomach. The drink warmed Samir as he snuggled deeper into his thick coat.

He slipped on his winter boots and nestled his feet comfortably inside the soft padded shoe. He was met at the front door by knee high snow which he struggled through. He was a few metres from the door when a push in his back caused him to fall flat on his face. He stood up wiping the snow from his face and turned to see Ali, both hands covering his mouth.

“Uh Oh.....” Zain whispered from somewhere behind a mound of snow. Samir shook his head and picked up a bunch of snow and hurled it towards Ali. It hit him square in the chest and he fell back giggling and laughing onto his back.

“Alright!” Zain yelled excitedly.

Samir ducked as a snowball whizzed over his head. The three laughed as the battle commenced. Hannah stood a safe distance away shaking her head in an amused manner. Sonu was trying to make a snow angel.



A car drove up the driveway and Shajeeh stepped out. Seeing him, Samir called the other two boys and whispered something in their ears. Their eyes twinkled with excitement as they slipped away.

“Asalaam Alaikum Shajeeh!” yelled Samir.

“Wasalaam Samir.” He replied. He grinned from ear to ear as the snow fluttered past his face. “Have you seen Ali?”

“Ah yes” Samir rolled his eyes up to the skies as if he was trying to remember. “I think they went inside.”

“Alright...”

He began to head up the driveway when the two boys jumped from behind the trees on opposite ends and

launched a blizzard as they threw all the snowballs they could carry.

He ran back to Samir. “How could you do this?” He exclaimed dramatically. “You’ve turned my own kin against me and now you will pay!” He picked up a huge mound of snow and went roaring after Samir. Samir turned and ran as fast as his legs could carry him. But he slipped and turned to be buried by the mound of snow; courtesy of Shajeeh. Shajeeh laughed so hard that he fell backwards into the snow. The two boys came running into their fathers lap. Samir’s eyes caught a glint in the distance. He stared harder but assuming it was his imagination turned back to protecting himself from the snow.

Deep in the thick forest on the hills, staring down through the fat binoculars, was a person all in black.

The figure pulled out a black laptop and rapidly typed into the search bar. After plugging in the binoculars to the computer the computer screen pixelated before pulling up someone’s profile. The picture showed a young man with short, flat, brown hair and fair skin. There was a simple smile on his round face under a small squat nose and big eyes. The figure then pulled out a small walkie talkie and in a hushed voice whispered, "This is Alpha Echo Bravo, I have a visual, repeat, I have a visual,



returning to home base." It stuffed it into its pocket and hurried off, its tracks covered by the newly fallen snow.

Samir shivered as they all stomped their way into the warm kitchen. Hannah had already prepared the lunch. Sonu was sitting on the counter nibbling on a carrot.

"There is always a great menu prepared at Hannah's Kitchen!" Samir said, mimicking an advertisement narrator. Sonu started clapping and giggling loudly.

Hannah then served them a scrumptious meal.

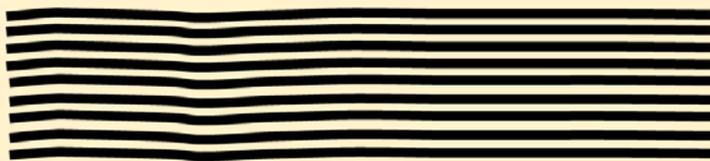
Chapter 2 - Did you hear something?

Shajeeh lifted snoring Ali out of the car and handed him to his wife. As he did so, he heard a sound from the side of the house. He turned and craned his neck, assuming it was a raccoon or ferret. But seeing nothing he headed into the house. Up high in the oak tree, was someone with a hand clamped over their mouth, breathing hard. After checking it was clear, they jumped down and headed into the night. Leaving nothing but a long black shadow in the moonlight.

Huda murmured softly to herself rocking slightly back and forth as she read the words of the divine Lord. She

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

'You can't contain an ocean in a river, the same way you can't describe the bounties and attributes of your Lord. If there is anything which came close it is Quran and that too was from him as a gift to humans for them to understand in their limited capability.'



Quran Publications

then turned to the publishers note:

A rustle turned her attention to the window. Seeing nothing, she closed the treasured book and headed to bed.

Without a sound, they stepped lightly over the neatly mowed lawn. The crunch of their shoes drowned into the silence of the night. In a moment they were gone without a sign or a trace to leave behind.

Mukhtar locked the door behind him and followed his mother towards the car. The route was only a few minutes but due to the recent warnings about icy road conditions, they travelled at a crawling pace. It was dark by the time they reached their flat. While Hannah fumbled with the large key ring in her hand, Mukhtar sat on one of the garden stones and studied a bee. It was buzzing softly as it dug into the sweet nectar of the bluebells that drooped their curly heads. Hannah dropped her purse as she was opening the door.

Mukhtar ran to help her pick it up. As he stood up, there was a clicking in the distance. He swerved around to see nothing but trees moving their long arms back and forth in the gentle wind.

Chapter 3 - A letter for you

Samir joined his kids at the table. He smiled seeing them eat in their humorous manner. Shajeeh was at Samir's house rather early that day. After the food they moved to the living room to have a peaceful chat. As the doorbell started ringing, the butler went and opened the door. He looked around but, didn't see anyone there. Shrugging his shoulders, he was about to close the door when something on the doormat caught his eye. A white envelope lay on the doorstep. Samir's name was typed on the front but that was all. He picked it up and extended it to Samir. He took the envelope and opened the letter. Written on it was,



To Samir Raza,

We know who you are. We know about your team and we know what you're doing. If you make any attempt to find us, we will expose your identity; one that you want to keep hidden. Tell the bird man or woman to be careful.

From,

Anonymous

P.S. This page will turn blank in two hours.

Samir was frozen to the floor, “Sh-Sh-Shajeeh.” He stammered.

Shajeeh walked over and gently took the paper from his hand. He too was frozen, unable to move.

Shajeeh looked at Samir in shock.

“Call the others immediately. Tell them it’s an emergency meeting.”

Shajeeh nodded and flipped out his phone.

Samir looked at the paper again, not believing his eyes.

“They’re coming,” informed Shajeeh.

“Well, then let’s go!”

Samir and Shajeeh dashed into Shajeeh’s car.

Shajeeh tried to focus as hard as he could, but his mind kept wandering to the note in Samir’s pocket. Sweat ran down his red face as he tightly clutched the steering wheel. He swerved just in time to miss a blue car that went speeding by. A large honk of disapproval from the driver did not help much.

Samir’s heart was beating so loud against his chest that he was sure that Shajeeh could hear it. He looked out the window, not uttering a word. Only one word echoed in his mind, ‘How?’

At the office, Huda and Mukhtar were already waiting for them; their faces expressed signs of concern and worry. Samir sank into one of the couches and without raising his eyes, narrated what happened and the message in the letter. Then he produced the letter from the pocket and showed it to the two surprised members of the team. The room was filled with a deafening silence.

“Look!” cried Mukhtar suddenly. The message on the letter faded and got lighter until it disappeared completely.

Huda was the first to speak, “Well...what do we do now?”

They all looked at each other with a questioning look.

“They know who we are.” Shajeeh shrugged his shoulders in a dejected manner and slumped further into the couch.

“Actually, they don’t.” Huda mentioned slowly.

“Remember the message? It said to tell the bird man or woman to be careful. That means they know our names but they don’t know which of us are which.”

“You’re right Huda!” Samir spoke in a slightly excited but serious tone. “I think we



need to be careful, super careful. In fact I think the best option is to split up for a few days.”

“What you’re saying is that we should avoid meeting each other?” Mukhtar asked.

“Exactly!”

“But you and I are going to meet each other anyways.”

“True! But we must produce the image that we play no special role in each other’s life.”

“It is the only thing we can do until we can think of something else.” Huda quipped.

The others nodded in agreement as the meeting was concluded.

Chapter 4 – Buzzing By

Samir went home that day feeling rather strange. Knowing that anyone nearby could be an alibi to this mysterious foe, wasn't a very comfortable feeling. He constantly glanced over his shoulder. A sudden sound in his ear made him jump. He turned to see that it was only a fly buzzing nearby.

Mukhtar was very sober for the rest of the day. His mother stole glances at him. She was very worried. He ate his dinner silently and disappeared into his room. Hannah got distracted by a fat fuzzy fly which was trying to land on her hand. She picked up a tissue and shoed it out the nearest window.

Shajeeh sat on the park bench watching the squirrels bounce from branch to branch. He looked at a banana peel on the floor swarming with fat bugs. One of them flew onto his shoe. He shook it off in a hurry. He then stood up and decided that it was time to go home.

Huda was chatting with an old friend on the phone. She was pulling out a steaming hot freshly baked pie from the oven and set it on the windowsill to cool when a swarm of flies flew past her window. Maybe it would be better to put it inside, she thought to herself. Placing the pie on the counter she continued her lively discussion. After half an hour, she hung up and went to

see whether her pie had cooled or not. The pie was delicious. The crunchy crust in perfect harmony with the fruity inside. She enjoyed it immensely. As she was washing the dishes, a loud crunch came from the window. She turned around and saw a dark figure but as she was turning she dropped the plastic cup in her hand onto the floor. It landed with a loud clatter. She bent to pick it up but when she stood up the figure was gone and all she could see was the pale blue light of the moon. However, fluttering in the wind caught on the window corner was a note. It read,



Birds of a feather flock together.

Even if they separate we know who they are.

*It doesn't matter whether they choose to gather
or not. We will know all the same...*

From,

Anonymous

P.S. This page will turn blank in two hours.

Huda was shocked and scared. She called the others and told them about the note.

Samir woke up rubbing his eyes recalling last night's event. The sun greeted him by blazing its rays through the stained glass panes in the windows. The floor in front of him was a rainbow of colours. He got dressed and rushed but still was the last one to arrive. Huda's face was drained of colour. On the table was a blank note and a piece of paper with a message scrawled in rough writing on it.

Samir sunk into a nearby chair. The others watched him intently, hoping to see some optimism. Samir, unaware of the three pairs of eyes set on him, stared straight ahead thinking very hard. Mukhtar felt the room grow hot and opened one the windows to let a little air in. It was a windy day and a gush of air burst in through the window.

After a while the sun came up and the wind was welcomed in the slowly heating room. A fat bug buzzed its way through the open window. For a few minutes it buzzed around unnoticed but came quite close to Samir's head. Samir brushed it away with his hand but as soon as his hand came in contact with the little bug, he felt a jolt of power that threw him back, more with a surprise. The fly fell in a dejected heap onto the floor. Mukhtar and Shajeeh rushed over to Samir to check whether he was okay or not.

“Check this out!” Huda exclaimed. The rest of them gathered around the hissing electrical dump on the floor.

“What in the name of Allah is that?” Mukhtar exclaimed.

Pulling out a rubber glove, Shajeeh slipped it on and lifted up the debris and looked at it carefully. He took a small pair of scissors from his pocket and cut a red wire. His face looked shocked. Samir was supporting himself on Mukhtar’s arm...

“What is it?” Mukhtar whispered, his face full of surprise, confusion and awe at the sight of such a strange device. Shajeeh held it carefully in the palm of his hand and turned to the rest of the group, “My friends” he announced slowly, expressing each word with a hidden eagerness, “We have just discovered the little spy that blew our cover.



Chapter 5 – Plan B

Mukhtar’s jaw hung in thin air. Samir was glancing back and forth between Shajeeh and the fly. Huda was a little taken aback but suddenly muttered under her breath, loud enough for the others to hear, “The insect espionage project”

“The what?” Mukhtar asked, his thoughts more muddled than ever.

“One of my distant acquaintances is involved in the research unit of engineering department of the government of Aggressville. She told me that the robotics division of the research department developed a device. It was a small camera lodged into a delicate case shaped in the form of a fly. It had fully functional legs along with fluttering wings allowing it to hover in the air. The device can be instructed or manually controlled.

The room was filled with a deafening silence. Mukhtar suddenly announced rather loudly, “I got it!”

“What do you mean?” asked Samir intently.

He turned to Shajeeh and began to discuss with him about a sort of frequency reader. “We would know when they are near. Each of us could carry one.”

Mukhtar had a mysterious smile on his face.

Chapter 6 – Phase one: Operation Extermination

Each of the team members decided to do a little espionage that day.

Samir went for a day out with the kids. As he was exiting his car in the parking lot of the zoo, he heard a beeping noise from his pocket and pulled out a funny shaped device. On it was a red screen with a large dot at the end and a smaller green dot coming closer from the north.

Samir looked up to see a fat bug flying in a slightly lopsided manner. He brushed it aside, this time with rubber gloves on his hand. The fat bug went crashing to the ground, hissing and sparking in a menacing manner. Crushing it with his foot as he passed, Samir opened the car door and helped Sonu out of her car seat.

Shajeeh was mowing the backyard lawn. It was a hot day. Sweat poured down his face like a fountain. Leaning down on the mowing handle in exhaustion, Shajeeh pulled out a black beeping device from his pocket. Glancing over his shoulder, he saw a large fat bug buzzing in his direction. With a smile, he pulled off one of his fat gardening gloves, and swatted the fly. It

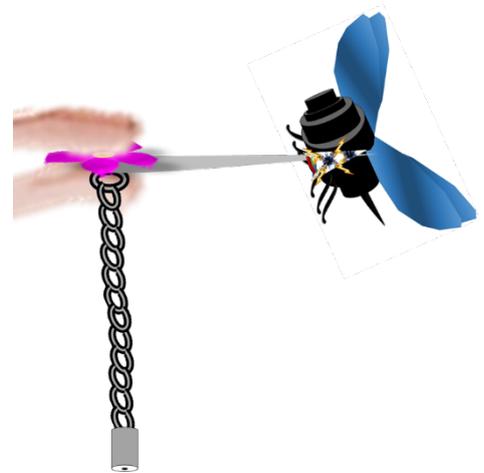


flopped down into the tall grass. With a cheeky smile, he rolled the giant lawnmower over the little bug.

Huda was shopping for some new hijabs when a beeping noise emanated from her purse.

Rummaging furiously through her cluttered contents, she found a black device. A quick glimpse at its screen, and she was scanning the aisles in front of her only to see a

pudgy bug hovering over a nearby shirt. Huda pulled the fancy pin out of her scarf, and when no one was looking jabbed it into the bug. Sparking with electricity, it came to rest on the red carpet. With a quick kick, she pushed it under the shelf, where it was sucked into a vacuum a few minutes later. Smiling with relief, she continued her shopping.



Mukhtar was sitting down in the park, waiting for his mother. She had gone to a milad and he was supposed to wait outside till it finished. He amused himself by watching the little children enjoying themselves in the playground. An irritating beeping noise shattered the peace.

Mukhtar eyed the bug warily as it came closer.

Suddenly he smiled as he glanced at the paper bag that had his sandwich. It was filled with crumbs. He took out a handful and tossed it on the grass.

Soon the birds began to circle overhead. The crowd of flies was dwindling, however, the large insect continued to buzz as if nothing had happened. With a loud ‘Swoosh!’ a fat pigeon came soaring out of the clouds. The single bird was followed by more as they greedily gobbled up the crumbs.

A nosy robin landed near the crowd; it wanted to know what was inside the ring of squabbling birds. It was peering intently when a black fuzz came zooming out. It licked its lips, as it looked at the fuzz heading its way. Without a second thought it lurched forward and gobbled it whole. Mukhtar watched the episode laughing loudly.

Chapter 7 – Phase 2: Where are you???

Samir slumped into a nearby chair. He looked up at the white ceiling as the room spun around him. Huda paced the floor in exasperation. Shajeeh had his head hung down, he twirled a pen in his hand unconsciously. Mukhtar was the first to break the deafening silence.

“Clearly this spy extermination is not working. There are too many of them to destroy.”

Huda agreed with Mukhtar. No matter how many are killed, there are always more of the miniscule menaces. We must find the source of these spies.”

Samir noticed a smile growing on Shajeeh’s face.

“Okay Shajeeh, what’s cooking in that brain of yours?” Samir was very curious.

“I thought you would never ask. While you guys have been swatting this swarm of spies, I made this. From his pocket he pulled out a small plastic box. He opened it up and cried, “Voila!”

Inside was a spy fly! Everyone gaped in surprised. Mimicking a game show host, Shajeeh announced,

“Yes people, you are viewing a duplicate of the spy fly! It has all the abilities plus a tracking device, so you always know where it is. What do you think?”

Everyone clapped, smiles exploding on their faces. Shajeeh took a bow, and then he carefully laid the device on the table.

“Okay everyone, here’s the plan.”

They all huddled in a circle as Shajeeh whispered rapidly. Nodding in agreement, the group was jovial; once more bearing signs of hope and determination on their faces. Shajeeh turned to Mukhtar and queered,

“Do you have a thing for mechanics?”

Mukhtar smiled and humbly replied, “Not more than a university high achiever award in ICT, engineering and mechanics.”

High Award Certificate

We are pleased to present this award on behalf of the "University of Peaceville for Gifted Minds", to

Mukhtar Makdi

for achieving distinction in an advanced course in fields regarding

ICT, Engineering and Mechanics.

Hasan Murtaza

Hasan Murtaza
Headmaster

Shajeeh shrugged his shoulders sheepishly,

“I guess that’s a yes”

The group laughed loudly and stopped only to continue their work.

The sun smiled down on Peaceville the next day. However, a chilly fierce wind was determined to maintain its reign of snow and chills. Frost and ice crawled up the tall bodies and broad boughs of the trees, seeping into every nook and cranny.

Samir gave a loud yawn as he climbed out of his bed. He took his cell phone and texted Shajeeh,

‘It’s time...’

Shajeeh’s thoughts were interrupted by a loud ‘BEEP!’ As he read the text, he smiled and went to wake up Mukhtar.

After a scrumptious breakfast, they went to the office and started the computers. After a lot of quiet hours of work, the duplicate fly, which was set by the window, began to flutter its wings rapidly. Shajeeh moved his hand on a joystick and the fly elevated, hovering above the windowsill. Smiling at each other they flew it around the room. It rocked sideways unsteadily. Shajeeh and Mukhtar repeated this a few times until it started aviation like a normal insect.

They navigated it carefully until it was hovering beside the clear glass. With a flick of a switch it went out the open window. Watching the monitor, Shajeeh maneuvered the little machine around cars, people and

buildings. Mukhtar was watching another screen scanning for any moving green dots.

Suddenly a small beep came from the speakers. According to the map, they had to go to the top of the tower. Zooming through the crowd of little kids, he stopped at the edge and looked up. A fat fly was sitting peacefully on a plastic rafter. After landing his own on a lower one he disconnected the laptop and raced off to the truck. Mukhtar followed behind him. Shajeeh clambered into the back and connected his computer to a bundle of wires. Mukhtar plopped onto the driver's seat. He pushed down on the accelerator, and the big grey vehicle sped forward. Mukhtar moved the vehicle rather slowly, as Shajeeh announced the streets he had to turn into.

The drive led them to the deserted moor that borders Peaceville. It was dark and there was a heavy mist that hung in the air. The ground was hard and bumpy, rocking the van like a boat in the middle of a stormy sea.

Shajeeh felt sore all over as he jolted violently in his seat. Mukhtar strained every muscle in his arm to keep the steering in control. The vehicle progressed slowly as it rolled about the uneven road. Mukhtar squinted outside the fogged window.

“Shajeeh, look at that!”

Shajeeh gazed out the window in shock. Down a steep but small hill was a caravan. The paint had been washed away by rain and it was dull gray piece of metal. The door was wide open and creaking loudly in the gentle wind that rocked it back and forth.

Mukhtar pulled over and stepped out cautiously.

“Are you sure this is the place?” he asked uncertainly.

“Yep, do you have your camera?” he queried.

Mukhtar nodded and pulled out a black camera from his back pack. He pressed it against his face and took a few photos of the desolate ruins.



He took a deep breath and tied a piece of rope to a big metal nail and hammered it into the ground. First he climbed down carefully and then Shajeeh followed. They approached the wrecked vehicle. Ducking underneath the dented frame, they made their way into the vehicle.

The inside was hollow. They were standing on a dusty floor. One of the corners had few boxes and an empty tin can on top. When Shajeeh saw it, he yelled in excitement. He saw his duplicate fly lying beside it.

Mukhtar picked up the tin can but it had no bottom. The crate underneath had a small hole on top. He continued to remove the crates until he saw a hole in the floor. The pipe went through the floor which was made of solid cement. The pipe however was as big as a Shajeeh's palm. Suddenly Mukhtar whispered to Shajeeh,

“What if we bring Samir? He can get down easily.”

“Great idea! Let's go back,”

“We'll bring him tomorrow.”

The two bundled themselves into the van once more and drove off, excited to tell the others of their new discovery



Chapter 8 – Deep down Underground

The next day a packed van bounced across the rough terrain carrying the whole team. Huda and Shajeeh were busy hooking the computer and wires to large components. Mukhtar and Samir were in the front two seats, discussing what should be done when they reach there.

After a while, Samir pressed the brakes and the van jerked forward. Once he was sure that no one was watching, he transformed into the smallest bird he knew, the hummingbird. Shajeeh walked towards the hole with Samir perched on his shoulder. Samir stared into the black abyss before him. Nervousness and excitement clouded his thoughts. Shajeeh kneeled down and whispered to his friend,

“My friend, keep Allah in your mind, and Imam in your heart. It is through this that we have been able to conquer all difficulties so far, and we need to reinforce this again and again.” Shajeeh pulled a small necklace from his pocket and placed it around the young bird’s neck. With a pat, he turned and headed back to the van.

Samir took a deep breath and lowered himself into the black pipe. It was pitch black. He could hardly see anything. It took a few minutes for his little black eyes to adjust. He could make out the faint outlines of bolts, nuts and areas of bulky metal. With every flap of his

wings, he could feel the blue and green feathers brushing the sides. Samir's feathers were soon caked with grime, old oil and other gruesome dirt that had collected in the neglected pipe.

All of a sudden, the pipe was flooded with a bright red light. It leapt up the sides. Inching his way down the side, he lodged his stick feet into a little gap between a nut and screw. Gently and without a sound, he turned himself upside down so he could see the source of the light.

Samir almost squawked in surprise. A device was scanning the flies that they had previously attempted to eliminate. They zoomed past the scanner, and it made a strange sound like a camera and printer in the same device. He got closer and his beak turned in a very human-like manner as if Samir was smiling. He looked down at his wings and thought to himself, 'they say a hummingbirds wings can flap so fast that no one can see them. Time to test that theory on a machine.'

Samir took a step back and lurched himself forward, screeching something that sounded like 'Ya Ali!' Using the bug as a shield, he flew in synchrony with its movement. As it slid over the camera slot, Samir took advantage of those few seconds and zoomed past.

Inside a cave like structure, someone was sitting in a chair, surrounded by large monitors of every size. The biggest was situated in the centre. Many showed various processes and commands being executed. However the majority were blank. They were staring intently at a few screens in the center. The monitor in the top right corner had a live feed from the pipe. The ones in the center were showing the multiple images and videos collected by the flies. They were so captivated by the center screens that they did not notice the flurry of feathers tossed across the camera front.

The tunnel was now horizontal, Samir was pleased. His wings ached and he felt burdened under his loan. But keeping Allah in his mind and Imam (ajtf) in his heart, he struggled forward. He thought it may be best to change his form into a more agile and stealth bird.

A bright yellow light flooded the gloomy passage. Its radiance was unlike any other. Frisking up the grimy walls like a lamb. It blinded him momentarily as Samir felt a stirring of familiar emotions rush through his body as the transformation occurred.

As quickly as he could, he rattled down the pipe. He was getting a little impatient, as the tunnel seemed endless. His sharp black claws clattered against the metal as he ran as fast as he could. He turned a corner and slowed down for the tunnel dropped down. He

peered down the hole and to his surprise found himself looking into a large cave.

Samir found himself staring into a vast hollow cavern. The walls were strung with electric wires. As he was suspending from the ceiling, which was very far from the floor, he thought of changing his form again.

‘Perhaps a nocturnal bird would be more suitable for this’

He turned around and walked back a bit before clamping his eyes shut, waiting. A flash of light ran up the dirty walls, echoing through the emptiness, until it faded away into the darkness. The brown feathers of his enlarged fat body brushed against the side of the pipe as he clambered his way to the entrance. The stalactites glistened in the dim light. They were as clear as crystal, suspending from the black ceiling of a cave.

His triangular ears lifted in curiosity as he heard a familiar voice echoing through the cave. Using the eyes that were designed for the night vision, he peered intently through the obscuring darkness.

A video conference was taking place. A figure dressed in black stood facing a screen. Samir almost hooted in shock. There was a woman wearing heavy make-up, dressed in



glittery purple dress. Her face wore a fake smile. The person in black, coughed and then announced in a deep voice,

“Yes Ms. Naas, we are ready for the deal.”

Samir watched in horror and shock as the two began bargaining.

“Fine I’ll give you fifty percent more than our previous offer.” She declared.

“Ma’am, we definitely appreciate that, but considering the risks, my partner and I have agreed to settle for nothing less than five times the last offer.”

“That is an outrageous amount to demand for such a small mission. There were others who were willing to commit to such a task.”

“Then I suggest that you find one of those people. If that is how you choose to proceed, then that is fine with us.” Naas then asked for some time to reconsider and the meeting concluded.

The black person walked into the next room and began to chat rapidly with someone else.

‘Oh my God! This is much bigger than we anticipated.’

Samir realized that he had very little time. Naas had scheduled the next conference in forty five minutes. There was no time to go back to the team and plan.

Something had to be done immediately. He prayed to Allah in his heart and thought of something.

Following the shadows that were painted on the walls, he swung himself towards the back of the monitors. He gazed around hastily and spotted a large blue plug. Rushing over, he dug his talons into the thick plastic and pulled with all the might in his wings. With a loud click, the plug flew out, tossing Samir away.

At that moment the whole cave went dark. The person in black picked up a large pair of fat glasses and peered intently through them. All of a sudden, they jumped up and ran near the desk. In their glove they picked up a brown feather.

Samir edged his way towards the area beneath the pipe hoping to zoom out without a trace. He spied the folder unattended and had a different idea in mind. He strayed further and further until he bumped into a wire which dropped a wrench on to the stone floor.

The clatter went off like a gunshot. Samir grabbed the folder and flew up as fast as he could. Suddenly he felt a hard jerk pull him downwards. Something had grabbed one of his legs and was now pulling him down to the floor.

With a bang he fell into a cage. He looked at the metal bars around him. The two were looking at him intently. They whispered. Samir could barely hear what they

were saying. With a nod they tossed him into a bigger cage.

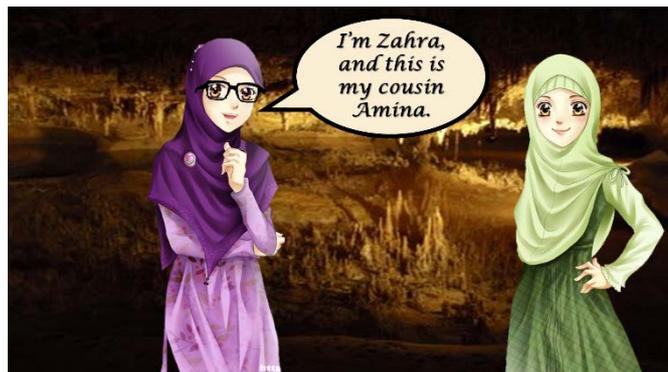
“We know who you are... show yourself.”

Samir didn't move. He kept his eyes glued on his jailors.

“Fine, suit yourself. This will conclude soon anyways.”

Samir nodded. They switched on the lights. In front of him stood two young girls. One wore glasses and had a round face while the other had a long face with shining eyes.

Samir closed his eyes and felt warmth spread through his body. In a few moments, there stood a young man with rich brown hair and laughing blue eyes. He looked at the two girls. One of them said,



“So, you're the special one. Samir, I believe.”

“Who do I have the pleasure of meeting?” he asked.

“I'm Zahra and this is my cousin Maira.”

Samir's expression changed from surprised to concern as he asked his next questions.

“Do you girls have any idea about what you are doing? Do you even know who you were dealing with?”

Zahra eyes flashed angrily,

“Of course we do. But who we deal with has nothing to do with you.”

He smiled sympathetically and told them,

“Girls, in the battle of Karbala there were thousands and thousands of people who didn’t touch Imam Hussein (as), but still they are cursed along with his killers. Do you know why that is?”

“No, but what has Karbala got to do with this?” Both were clearly very sure that Samir had lost it.

“Listen and maybe you will understand. They are cursed not only because they didn’t support Imam Hussein but also because they supported the wrong in their doing. Many narrations from our Imams and Prophet (pbuh) state that standing by the side while a sin occurs makes you an accomplice in that sin. All of those people are cursed because they supported the wrong by not showing any signs of disapproval for their deeds.

This woman who you were dealing with is a bad person with a glib tongue and much support from the wrong sources. She was expelled from Peaceville for causing turmoil and trouble to many lives and is desperate to

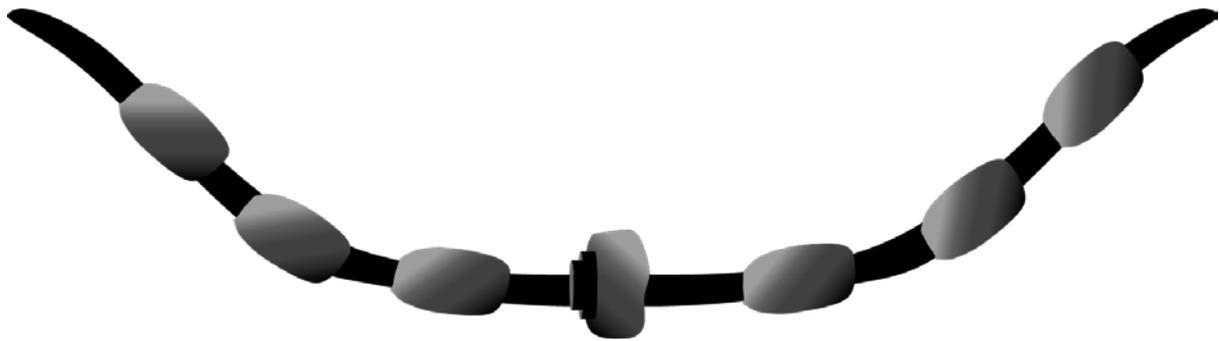
know who exposed her. She has always been on the side of those who are evil, corrupt and sinful.”

“On the other hand, our team comprises of people who are united because of their ideology. They are all sincere followers of our Imam (ajtf), and eagerly desire to be amongst his companions at the time of zuhoor Inshallah. We are blessed with luxurious lives but we are trying to make the right choices to be successful in the hereafter. After all you reap what you sow. I can see the genius and intelligence in you girls. But, is it really logical to use it against yourself. How will you face Allah, when you are supporting those who follow Shaitan?” Samir continued in a mild tone, “With the intelligence that you are gifted with, I invite you to join our team. Let’s work together and prepare this world for the arrival of our Imam (ajtf) who is waiting for us.”

I implore you to reconsider your decision. Not only for us but for your own self. My team has faith in Allah. We know that our Imam (ajtf) will help us as long as we stay sincere to our cause. Until now, in spite of having the most sophisticated means of technology and power of money, the evil forces have not succeeded against us, and by God, you will see that. Allah will help us in future too” Samir’s voice was trembling with emotions..... He paused for a second and as if the trance broke. The girls were looking at him with tears trickling down their cheeks.

The two girls looked down as they pondered deeply. “Let’s prostrate and ask for the help of Allah, who is all mighty and merciful.” After performing ablution, he saw the two girls moving beside each other like two gears in a machine. He smiled as he began his own prayers.

Mukhtar and Huda sat on the sandy ground waiting for Samir. Shajeeh was peering intently at the monitor. Mukhtar couldn’t stand the suspense any longer. His face was deeply troubled,



“Shajeeh! What are you doing?”

A smile grew on Shajeeh’s lips. Asking both of them to come over, he said,

“Before Samir left, I put a black necklace around his neck. Inside one of the beads was a camera. In a few minutes I will be receiving the latest videos.”

The computer beeped and the video of a dark chasm showed up on the screen. For the first few minutes all they saw and heard was Samir shuffling in the darkness.

A flash of light blinded them and they saw a face they knew too well, Naas.

They saw the whole conference incident along with the blackout. Then the picture rotated and they could see a large metal grating. Two black figures were watching him intently. Suddenly the screen went blank.

“Samir is in trouble! We have to help him!” yelled Shajeeh. They all hurried towards the door.

Mukhtar leaned against one side of the wall and started pushing it. Suddenly one of the panels gave way and the ground beside him disappeared. His yell of surprise brought the other two rushing to the spot.

“Of course!” exclaimed Huda. “They had to have a way to get into their lair. They couldn’t fit through the pipe.”

Shajeeh, Mukhtar and Huda cautiously descended down the path. It was a straight tunnel that led to a large hole. Mukhtar gestured to the other two to stay and he approached the entrance.

He directed a big beam towards the room which illuminated the entire room. There was no one. The team was not concealing their panic anymore. They were praying in their hearts for his safety. They started running frantically towards the next room. As they approached the door, the silence in the room froze them. They could sense the seriousness in the room. Samir was standing on one side with a very serious

emotional yet confident look. On the other side were two girls – teenagers with bright and intelligent eyes filled with tears. Before anyone could say anything, Samir said in a very decisive tone as he raised his hand, “Our job is done here, let’s go.”

Chapter 9 – It's never too late to do what's right

Zahra paced the room quietly. She was very disturbed. Everything around her was a puzzling maze. Her own goals and aims began to seem rather shallow. She was experiencing the extremes of emotions – guilt, shame, anger, repentance and hope. They could still make it right.

“Zahra Baji” whispered Maira in a small voice, “I don't think this is the same gang of thugs and outlaws that Ms. Naas was talking about?”

“No my dear I don't think so either. She lied to us and used us for her own evil purposes.”

She sat down on the table and wrote a letter and left it on a doorstep.

“Sir, another letter.” Announced Samir's butler.

Thanking him Samir opened the letter. On a thick parchment, was written,

To Samir and the team,

My sister and I express our most sincere apologies and we hope you will forgive us. We now realize that blindly following someone without knowledge, information and insight leads to sin and destruction. We implore you to allow us to join your team and give us the opportunity to do something that will be to the

liking of our Imam (ajtf). If you wish to reply, please leave a letter on your doorstep. We await your response.

From,

Zahra and Maira

Samir smiled as he sent a message to all the other members of the team. All of them gathered in the meeting.

“Well what should we do?” Asked Samir after everyone was finished reading the message.



“I don’t think we should.” Said Shajeeh. “After everything they’ve done? I think it’s a trap.”

“But what if they are sincere? It will be a sin to turn down someone who wished to assist the Imam (ajtf).”

After much debating they decided to let the girls join. Samir left them a letter telling them to meet at the park the next morning. The meeting concluded with a prayer of thanks, followed by a loud slogan of,

“La Baik Ya Imam!!!

La Baik Ya Imam!!!”

Sneak Peek

Book 6!

RESPIRE after SPITE...



Aqua gown swept the marble floor and the roof showed the entire era of mankind, from the Stone Age to the twenty first century. Every time Naas entered that room, there was a vibe that accompanied her. She approached the swivel chair that was turned towards the window.

"Well, well..." a deep voice echoed off the walls of the office. "The great Naas returned just like all others; ashamed, defeated, with her head bowed down."

Naas could not raise her gaze from the swirling pattern of the floor. She took a deep breath and try to steady her quavering tone as best as she could, "Sir-"

"Don't speak unless you're asked to!" hissed the voice; turned from the deep to a thin raspy tone. "I am not one of those foolish enough to believe your glib and unctuous talk."

Naas found herself speechless throughout the sarcastic and most humiliating tirade that her boss delivered.

As silently as she could, Naas slipped out the door. A meek and sympathetic smile remained on the proud face until she reached her luxurious villa. Tears welled up in her proud defiant eyes as she promised herself compensation. 'I will redeem myself.' she thought. Her mind was clouded with anger and desperation along

with the inconsolable grief she felt for being degraded. One word soothed her conscience, pouring all that despair and anger into a driving force. With as much hate as she could muster, Naas glanced at herself in the mirror and whispered, "Revenge."

Want to know what happened next ????

Find out in our next book,

‘Respite after spite’!

Missed out on the previous books?

No problem!

Just log on to our website

www.asr313.com

And find all the books launched by ‘ASR’ and loads of other fun stuff too. Don’t forget to leave your feedback!

Happy reading!!!!



An exciting journey awaits you.

Samir and his team continue their work, encouraged by the addition of a new member. The city of Peaceville is calm again, defended by its dedicated devotees.

However life isn't so happily-ever-after for long. When they're once more tossed into a whirl of adventure including cool computers, ambitious adversaries and some familiar faces..... were they able to hold onto their faith and confidence on the One (ajtf) who unites them all???

Let's find out!