

## (7) The Betrayal

Pin drop horrifying silence prevailed all round  
The mosque of Kufa stood on hallowed ground  
Treachery it had witnessed time and again  
It was the mosque where Ali had been slain.  
The town crier was reading the Governor's decree  
"To associate with Muslim will not go free  
He is an emissary of Prophet's grandson, Husayn  
Who has refused allegiance to Yazid, with disdain."  
When the prayer was over, Muslim looked back  
The mosque was empty, earlier it was packed  
He glanced at his host, Hani Ibn Urwah  
No words were needed, only a breath choking, Ah!  
The packed mosque had just witnessed jubilant scenes  
So great was the rush to swear allegiance to Muslim  
They had madly jostled and vied with each other  
In honoring Muslim, as Husayn's cousin brother.  
They exchanged glances, the picture was clear  
For their own lives they had absolutely no fear  
To inform Master Husayn was the sole prime need  
Whom could they trust? No, none, indeed!  
Hani rushed out, choked to the brim  
He had in his house, two sons of Muslim  
He whisked them out by the back door  
For safety's sake, there was no other go.  
Muhammad and Ibrahim, two innocent lads  
Were anxiously awaiting return of their dad  
They were now on the road; alone, all alone!  
The cruel treacherous world was now their home.  
Soon was Hani's house completely surrounded

The hopes he had nourished were soon grounded  
He fought the armed troops of upstart Obeidullah  
The odds were too heavy; he prayed to Allah!  
He was soon overpowered and chained  
There was now no hope which remained  
His only thought was to inform post haste  
To Husayn, of the events and breach of faith  
After Hani's departure, he reflected a while  
A train of thoughts flowed, mile after mile  
Hani was sincere, there was no iota of doubt  
But if in danger, whom could he for help shout.  
He thought of his sons, the two young kids  
In the house of Hani, he hoped they were hid  
He prayed to God to spare him for a little while  
So that, to Husayn, he could send the secret file.  
It was night, he had no place to go  
Tired and forlorn, his walk was slow  
Curfew was imposed, no soul stirred out  
The search was on in all possible hideouts.  
He sat for a while and leaned against the door  
The door of a house with an old muddy floor  
An old lady came out to see who it was  
"My son! Why do you not return to your house?"  
"Do you not have a wife nor children?  
Go and rest, in peace, in your own garden!"  
A lump came to his throat: yet, he sadly smiled  
"I come from the house of the Prophet," he replied.  
The venerable old lady was in shocking pain  
"My God! You are Muslim, the Emissary of Husayn,  
How did I fail to recognize you, O, My Lord!  
What reply will I give to my Most Merciful God?"  
She hid him on the old wooden attic floor  
Extinguished the lights and shut the door;  
Her son soon returned from his usual rounds  
He was in the army of the Yazidi hounds.  
"Hani has been beheaded," he declared,  
"The search is now on for Muslim and his lads."  
The simple old lady was moved to tears  
And confided to her son, her own gnawing fears.

The son was elated at the fortunate news  
He pretended sorrow, as a deceitful ruse,  
"I will soon be back with the two young lads"  
And rushed to his Master, Obeidullah Ibn Ziad.  
The sound of horses hoofs were approaching near  
Muslim was in his prayers; he knew no fear  
He immediately realized, he had been betrayed  
His time was up; he would soon be dead!  
The noble lady was aghast! How could she explain?  
It was her son who had brought her everlasting shame  
Muslim assured Taha that he was absolutely sure,  
She was a lover of Husayn and his grandsire!  
The lane was narrow, it had no width  
Two horses abreast could hardly breath  
It was an ideal ground for single combat  
Like lion, Muslim ferociously fought.  
To the enemy, it soon became abundantly plain  
It was a futile and sure losing game  
From housetops, they hurled missiles and stones  
Seriously wounded, Muslim left his vantage position.  
He desperately moved forward; they all fell back  
So fierce was the charge, they all fled in a pack  
To stop him, they thought of a clever ruse  
They dug a trench and had it covered, as subterfuge.  
He rushed on wielding his sword dexterously  
He fell in the trench, as planned treacherously;  
The retreating hounds soon swooped down  
In no time, he was heavily chained and bound.  
In the streets of Kufa, he was soon paraded  
Those who had sworn him allegiance, were delighted  
They were watching him with perfect equanimity  
As if he was an utter stranger; what rascality!  
"As per Arab custom, I shall fulfill it  
Your last wish if you shall reveal it."  
A glint of hope came to Muslim's eyes  
Why not accept and make this final try?  
Obeidullah, if you are true to your word,  
Fulfill my last wish and inform my lord  
To return to Medina, before it is late

As coming to Kufa, would be a sheer waste.  
The crafty Obeidullah was absolutely flabbergasted  
Spare the lives of my two sons, he could have suggested  
He could not even imagine, how could a person  
Think of his master, when doomed were his sons.  
Muslim's last wish did not go in vain  
Merciful God kindled the heart of one of them  
He left Kufa post-haste to fulfill his mission  
And informed Husayn of Muslim's martyrdom.  
Husayn wept bitterly, as never before  
Muslim's daughter realized her father was no more  
One pair of earrings, he lovingly gave to her  
And another to Sakina, his child most dear.  
"Are you returning back?" the messenger inquired  
"No! I am not," Husayn, very sadly replied  
"As ordained, I am going to meet my destiny,  
And so are my faithful friends, who are with me."

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