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(14) The Triumph Of Truth

A day dawned, when there was a stir in the prison
The jailors were puzzled; what could be the reason
The Queen of Damascus, was visiting the prison
To even imagine such a thing, was an act of treason!
Zainal Abedeen was in prayers, a guard entered the cell
Fizza, the oldest amongst prisoners, he turned to tell
About the visit of Her Highness, Queen Hind, and to ensure,
That not a word of complaint was uttered, by way of censure.
With her ladies-in-waiting, Hind entered the cell
Gloomy, was the dungeon, unventilated and dark, as hell
With bowed heads, and faces covered with long tresses,
The ladies were sitting, with torn and tattered dresses.
An emaciated figure, with heavy chains and manacles
Was busy with prayer, though unable to stand in shackles
A lady, with her head, lay prostrate on a small grave
In a corner of prison, portraying the sad and pitiable tale.
Hind, was perplexed; she was dumb-founded
Approaching the grave, the lady she sounded
"My good lady, do let me know, who are you
For what crimes, you are behind the bar?"
"Which family you belong to? Whose grave is this?
Untold sufferings, your sorrowful face reveals."
The lady burst into sobs; her lips were sealed
Gently stroking her head, Hind herself kneeled.
Another lady sat in a corner, surrounded by others
She must be the one, who was, perhaps, their elder
This was the lady, who had roared like a lion
To hurl defiance at the court of the tyrant.
"What are the reasons for your sufferings and plight"

Hind inquired of Zaynab; her tone was so polite
"My husband is evading, annoyingly, my repeated inquiries
On grounds, that they relate to governmental diaries."
"Lady Fatima, I am seeing frequently in my dreams
In a most disconsolate state, she is, so it seems;
I am perplexed, I am unable to understand
What all this means. Explain to me if you can"
"In the laps of luxury, Hind, you are comfortably living,
Tortures, beyond human endurance, my children are facing;
You are, no doubt, utterly in the dark of what has happened,
To my near and dear ones, and my beloved son, Husayn."
"My Lady's coming and her constant lamentations
has it any connection with your incarceration
I really wonder, how can it at all be true
Prophet's family, to do anything with you."
The eyes of the two ladies met, for a moment
One depicting a soulful of agony and torment,
The other reflecting bewilderment and inquiring
Zaynab burst into sobs, trying to control her feelings.
She had not recognised her, so much the better
It saved her the humiliation, to narrate the torture
She partially covered her face, with her long hair
Hoping that Hind would soon go away and leave her.
Hind, suddenly remembered that, she had seen
In better times, the venerable lady had been
With a gasp, she cried, "Are my eyes deceiving me?
Is that Lady Zaynab, O' no! how can it be?"
"How can I, even entertain such a thought?
I feel, I am getting demented, O' my Lord!
For the sake of Lady Fatima, I, beseechingly, implore you
Are you related to Lady Zaynab? Is it true?"
"Hind, Zaynab died long ago on Karbala's plain,
with youths of her family, who were slain;
the shadow of Zaynab, is now before you
Those who can recognise her are, indeed, few."
Covering her face, her tears, she tried to hide
Falling prostrate at her feet, Hind cried
"Lady, forgive my utterly unpardonable neglect"
begging forgiveness, she expressed profound regret.

Zainal Abedeen had just completed his prayers;
Turning to him, "O' my Imam, your forgiveness I crave,
It was sheer thoughtlessness, for not probing deep
I do not know how I could eat, drink or even sleep."
"When my suspicion was aroused, on that first day
when someone demanded, the young girl, Sakina as a slave;
she must be the beloved daughter of my Lord Husayn.
Was she enslaved, by some brute, with a wicked brain?"
Zaynab stood up and going slowly towards Hind
"In vain, you are looking for my beloved Sakina
she is sleeping peacefully in that yonder grave
relieved of sufferings, she had courageously braved."
"May I ask, what was the cause of her untimely death?"
this fragrant rose bud withered away, unsung, unwept
she narrated the sufferings, she had bravely endured
how her earlobes kept bleeding, how her body turned blue.
Recounting her sufferings, Zaynab and others were crying
Only one lady, sitting near the grave, was quietly lying
Seeing her loosing consciousness, Zaynab immediately rushed
Putting her head on her lap, she was very carressingly brushed.
Hind, ordered cold water, from her nearby palace
She sprinkled it on Umm Rabab's ash white face
Opening her eyes with a dazed look, she glanced
She faintly uttered, as if she was in a trance.
Her grief stricken mind had created a protective shield
To resist the cruel impact, of what fate had purposefully built
To escape the grief laden atmosphere around the grave
Of her darling daughter, who had, all sufferings braved.
Zaynab felt, she must be awakened from this stupor
Or else she would loose her sorrowing mind, for ever;
She gently explained, that Sakina had joined her father,
At this, she returned, to the word of reality with a shudder!
Hind, excusing herself, to the palace she hurried
Moawiyah, her son, was the only male issue of Yazid
Only they had access to him, without announcement
They found Yazid, pacing up and down, himself denouncing.
Yazid was surprised to see Hind's hair disheveled;
Her eyes full of tears, charges she defiantly leveled
Both mother and son, spared no words to make it plain,

"Set free this very day, the family of Imam Husayn."
The cup of cruelty had got filled to the brim
Yazid was aware, the situation was getting grim;
Realization had dawned that time was running out
Nemesis might overtake him, unless he had stopped the rot.
He was having nightmares, with Prophet upbraiding him
Everyday, he was having most horrifying and frightening dreams
"O' Yazid, what had my Husayn done to deserve your vengeance
What made you bestow upon my family such inhuman penance."
"Is your hatred, for me and my family, not yet satisfied
Such tortures, you are inflicting, as can not be narrated."
He was brooding about ways, to resolve the dilemma
Which was his own creation, a self created drama!
Now his own son, his own flesh and blood
With Queen Hind, was flinging at him mud
The time was now ripe to act with grace
A little delay, and he would loose the race.
"A strange way for pleading for mercy, you have
Could you not find, a better way, to remonstrate
I accede, to your request, to set the prisoners free
I shall summon my court and announce my decree."
"Now, both of you may rest, in peace, till they are free
Let me have some respite, after the shock you have given me."
"Peace, did you say?" in surprise, Hind burst out and cried
"Can we ever have peace, after knowing what has transpired."
"For these unforgivable atrocities and unpardonable sins
Make best amends, to Lady Zaynab and Zainal Abedeen
Restore them to the place of honor, which is their right."
It is through them, that God sheds His Merciful Light!
Decked, in a jeweled dress of silk and brocade
Yazid sat on the throne; of solid gold it was made
With full display of regalia, of Ommayad's courts
It was late in the evening, all had assembled in the Fort.
With all solemnity, the ushers announced in the Fort
The grandson of Prophet Muhammad, was entering the court
His garments tattered, but with dignity in his bearing
Zainal Abedeen entered, with everyone admiring his daring.
There was a radiance on his countenance; a "halo" on his face
It inspired awe in their hearts; they stood up out of grace

Yazid got up from his throne, seei9ng the spontaneous gesture
Impelled by an uncontrollable force of undiscriminating nature.
With a slow halting gait, Zainal Abedeen walked to the pulpit
His aching lacerated legs, made walking an ordeal, a bit
The rustling of the curtain, indicated the ladies had entered
Seated behind the pulpit were the ladies, with Zaynab centered.
Yazid offered condolences; his words sounded hollow
Cursing his lieutenants; he tried to paint a "halo"
He pleaded innocence, as if he had in it no hand
He expressed profound regret, for all that happened.
He told the Imam, that they were all know free
He offered any amount, they wished as blood money
Seeing the Imam's face turning red with rage
He urged it in the name of religious usage.
Zaynab, who was listening from behind the curtain, cried out
"On the day of judgement, you shall be answerable, no doubt
You offer, what you possess, on that day, to Prophet Muhammad
It is not for us, to accept any money, for the Martyr's blood!"
Yazid was abashed by the daughter of Ali's bold retort
He had seen her courage, even as a prisoner in his court
He changed the subject and addressing Zainal Abedeen
He declared, "You are free to demand from me anything."
"At your disposal, is a house of status and position befitting
Highest honor and respect will be extended to you beings."
"All we want is the severed heads of our near and dear ones
Our looted property and clothes, though tattered and torn."
Yazid, expressed extreme surprise, at the simple request
They had not even ornaments, at the time of their arrest
He could not see anything of value, in the things looted;
The immense sentimental value, which in them, was rooted.
He ordered restored of all their belongings, forthwith
He endeavored their every desire, every wish, to meet
Medina, via Karbala, they wished, to immediately return
Canopied camels and best horses; the purchase was done.
The local citizens paid their respectful condolences
To serve them, they vied with one another, for chances
"Stay on in Damascus, for sometime", they all jointly pleaded.
For burial rites, their presence in Karbala, was needed.
The entire city turned out to bid them adieu

Hind, had remained all along with Zaynab, now knew
Time of parting was near; was unimaginably sad,
When you live and venerate someone, more than your dad.
She begged for forgiveness, for the past neglect, from each one
She was about to leave, when came a call from someone
Umm Rabab expressed, to Zaynab, her departing wish
To visit the grave of Sakina, to bestow a farewell kiss!
The disconsolate mother fell on Sakina's tiny grave
With a heart-rending shriek; vent to her feelings she gave
Turning to Hind, and other ladies of the unhappy town,
"Occasionally, offer Fateha," she cried, and fell in a swoon.

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