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The Silly Shop-Keeper

A heavy built tall man was passing through the market of Kufa, his step firm and assured. He had fine figure and sun-burnt face; encounters of the battle-field had left their marks on him and the corner of one of his eyes was slit. A shop-keeper, to amuse his friends, threw a handful of sweepings onto the man. The man continued his walk in the same assured and firm manner, without raising an eye brow or looking towards the shop-keeper. When he went away, a friend of the shop keeper said:

"Do you know who the man is whom you have insulted just now?"

"No, I do not recognize him. He was a passerby like thousands of people passing this way every- day. But tell me who was this man."

"Strange! Didn't you recognise him?! He was Malik Ashtar, the renowned Commander-in-Chief of Ali."

"Strange! He was Malik Ashtar?! The same Malik whose bravery turns the heart of lion into water and mention of whose name makes his enemies tremble with fear?"

"Yes, that was Malik himself"

"Woe to me! What did I do? Now he will give order to punish me severely. I must run to him immediately to apologize and pray him to forgive my misbehavior:"

He ran after Malik. He saw him turning towards a mosque. He followed him to the Mosque and saw that he had started praying. He waited till he finished his prayer humbly introducing him- self he told him:

"I am the man who had committed the silly prank and behaved disrespectfully to you"

Malik: "But, by Allah, I did not come in the mosque but for your sake; because I knew that you were a very ignorant and misguided man and that you give trouble to the people without any cause. I felt pity on you and came here to pray for you and ask Allah to lead you onto the right path. No, I did not have any such intentions as you were afraid of "

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