A Soldier of Allah

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Mahwash Hirmendi

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Article

Authors(s):

Mahwash Hirmendi [1]

It was well past midnight. Nargis and her children lay peacefully in the arms of the quiet night. These were hard times. The country was hit with a drought this year. Daily, they watched the horror of men coming from the villages to sell their young daughters for a bag of rice, wheat or potatoes, literally for the price of a family's few days life.

Today, in the market, she had seen the horror with her own eyes. An old man had offered her his ten year old daughter. As the man, in his need, had started advertising her daughter, she had simply given him the money she had taken for the week's groceries, and the Eid's sweets, and returned home empty handed.

When the kids had nagged about not having the sweets for Eid, she had smiled at them and had thought that perhaps one less child will be away from her family this Eid. There was enough in the house that the kids could live with. Her husband, on a journey, had sent her the money and had reminded her to stock some food, as the situation may get worse.

Had she done the right thing? She was a bit worried. Her mother's parting words to her had been that even in charity, she was to consult with her husband, for that was most pleasing to God.

The restless child on her right groaned. She woke up, and covered him, silently. She closed her eyes. Then she sensed a very, very bright light shining in the room. Fear spread in her veins. There were thefts in the neighbourhood, lately.

What was she to do? Breathless, and hesitantly she opened her eyes, helplessly. A bright light was illuminating the entire room. She couldn't see the source. She whispered a prayer of safety for her children, and her mind started scheming defense. It didn't seem wise to move yet. So she laid quiet, eyes half opened, her lips whispering prayers and pleas.

The light remained. Moments passed and the light vanished. Hurriedly she ran to the kitchen, grabbed a knife and returned to the room. The night was still, and dark. Armed, she stayed by the door until the drumer in the street called time for Sahar. Nothing happened.

In the morning, she went to enquire about Amina, the old woman who lived at her house, in the west quarter. Tired, yet satisfied with her night Amina had spent the night in the yard, in prayer. As Nargis told her about the thief and the light, the wise woman asked Nargis what she had prayed for at that very moment. Her children's safety, Nargis replied. The old woman bitterly shed tears. Was she frightened, Nargis asked her.

With a sigh, the old, wise woman said: “No. We spent years in waiting and longing, standing in prayers night long. Yet, Allah chose to pay you a visitation, in your sleep. Why? For you are His soldier.

Your waking and sleeping is a prayer in itself; a young woman who guards her chastity, who is like a dove and a lioness in love and protection of her family, one who is always industrious, who isn't involved in the moans and groans of the spoiled bored women, whose adornment isn't gold and silver, but honesty, and sincerity, one who has conquered the tyrant tongue and ego and none but the unjust is hurt by it, one who has no colored old tales to tell, but certainly lives a fresh one, with a bright, simple hue.

Rest assured my daughter, your prayer will be granted, for surely last night was one of the nights of Power.”

Contributed by Mahwash Hirmendi, mhirmend@opal.tufts.edu [2]

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