

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



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AIYOOB (AS)

A Play by:
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Foreword

The Holy Qur'ān narrates true stories of various prophets in a very interesting manner providing the humanity a valuable opportunity to benefit from them and learn lessons of piety, wisdom, worshipping the Almighty Allah, patience, forbearance, etc. Allah has repeatedly warned man in the Holy Qur'ān not to follow the footsteps of the *Shayṭān*, who misguides people by various thoughts, ways and means.

In this book, an attempt has been made to narrate the story of Prophet Ayyoob(AS) in the form of a drama. It mentions how the *Shayṭān* tried to misguide Prophet Ayyoob(AS) who remarkably succeeded in this very hard trial and remained patient in the worst possible circumstances.

The reader will not lose his interest till he finishes the book.

Considering the benefits to be derived by the readers for improving their personality and character-building, the IPO deems it a privilege and a humble service of Islam by publication and distribution of this book among the interested people.

**International Relations Department
Islamic Propagation Organization**

Characters

| | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| Aiyoob (AS) | |
| Rahimeh | Aiyoob's spouse |
| Homel | Aiyoob's son |
| Boshr | Aiyoob's son |
| Ongha | Aiyoob's son |
| Abdan | Aiyoob's son |
| Seifon | Aiyoob's son |
| Zolkaf | Aiyoob's son |
| Nahara | Aiyoob's daughter |
| Yalded | Aiyoob's servant |
| Yoaa | Aiyoob's servant |
| Elyefez | Aiyoob's servant |
| Jobair | Aiyoob's servant |
| Khozaif | Aiyoob's servant |
| Poor oldman | |
| First oldman | city dweller |
| Second oldman | city dweller |
| Safir | city dweller |
| Woman | city dweller |
| First man | |
| Second man | |
| Devil | |
| White angel | |
| Devils | |
| City people | |
| Servants | |



First Scene

It is Aiyooob's house courtyard. A house with stonewalls dating back to 2500 years ago. A house with high columns and semicircular stone arches and wide stairs and doors on 3 sides of the scene. Servants are busy working. Woodcutting, weaving nets, cutting fodder, bringing water and pounding the mortar are part of their efforts. A woman is handling a mill and two persons are waiting. Aiyooob and Rahimeh enter from the door facing the spectators, each carrying a tablecloth and a clay pot, and walk towards the two waiting men.

Aiyooob: Come brothers. Tell if there is any other need.

First man: May Allah bless you. May Allah protect you.

Aiyooob: And you too.

Second man: May God prolong your life and raise your honour.

Aiyooob: Goodbye brothers, goodbye!

First and Goodbye!

second man:

(They go out and Aiyooob oversees the works of the servants until he comes close to the woman.)

Aiyooob: Nahara, what are you doing, my daughter?

Nahara: I am working, father.

Aiyoob: Your bag of wheat is running out, I'll fill it up.

Nahara: I will do it myself.

Aiyoob: Let me work too. (*Takes up the bag and goes inside, Homel and Boshhr come in with a bag of wheat.*)

Homel & Boshhr: Greetings to all the friends. (*Put down the bag.*)

All together: Greetings to Prophet's sons. (*Ongha and Abdan come in too.*)

Nahara: God's greetings to you, I hope you are not tired.

Boshhr: I hope you are not tired too, what are you doing?

Nahara: Today I am responsible for the baking of bread, I am milling flour.

Homel: Bright sunshine and heavy load has exhausted us.

Boshhr: Help the thirsty ones, bread will not get late.

Nahara: Wait a moment. (*She brings water.*)
(*Aiyoob enters carrying a bag on his shoulder.*)

Children: Our greetings to God's messenger.

Aiyoob: Greetings to my dear ones.

Homel: What is God's messenger doing? (*Takes the wheat off his shoulder.*)

Abdan: We had requested God's messenger not to carry heavy loads.

Aiyoob: Don't worry, it is not heavy.

Homel: Maybe the load is not heavy but God's messenger's working looks bad to us.

Aiyoob: You mean I am so old that you feel pity for me.

Boshhr: We don't think so, certainly we still see you strong.

Aiyoob: So why did you take away the load from me?

Ongha: Because we prefer you leave your works to us

Aiyoob: You know well that I very much like to work.

Hamel: You have spent all your life working, now it is our turn.

Aiyoob: One should not sit idle until the last breath of his life. I will do my works now and thereafter, too.

Children: We will not let it be.

Aiyoob: We will see, you just put that bag of wheat beside Nahara.

Abdan: Obeyed, O God's messenger. (*Puts the bag of Aiyoob beside Nahara.*)

Aiyoob: (*Sees the bags brought back.*) What are these?

Hamel: (*Embarrassed*) The needed grains which we took to distribute among the deprived.

Aiyoob: (*Outraged*) How many deprived did you meet the needs of?

Hamel: Three families.

Aiyoob: (*To Abdan*) And you?

Abdan: Four families.

Aiyoob: Is this the effort that we were talking about?

(*Silence*) Is this the way to give in trust to deserving ones?

Boshr: The more we looked around in the city, the fewer we were able to find a destitute.

Aiyoob: These should have been handed over to their owners and you were negligent in this regard.

Hamel: Tomorrow is God's day too, and we can distribute it tomorrow.

Aiyoob: But if a poor sleeps hungry tonight, how will we justify it to God?

Abdan: I apologize, O God's messenger!

Aiyoob: Apologize to God, not me. I am ashamed of my shortcomings, too.
(*Yalded enters together with a poor old man.*)

Yalded: Greetings to God's messenger.

Aiyoob: God's greetings to you.

Yalded: This old man wants to talk with you.

Aiyoob: All right, you go. (*To the oldman*) Welcome, brother.

Aiyooob: That old unpleasant voice! What do you want this time?

Devil: The old friend of yours.

Aiyooob: Among God's messengers you are the most disfavoured, I say what do you want?

Devil: Don't get angry, I have a good news.

Aiyooob: Another conspiracy? A good news for me? You are kidding.

Devil: Why are you speaking tauntingly?

Aiyooob: Because I know you very well.

Devil: There is no doubt about your knowledge and awareness, but ...

Aiyooob: Each time a new trap, maybe you want me to get proud of my knowledge.

Devil: You are too much skeptical, I said that I have a good news.

Aiyooob: All right, tell me.

Devil: I'll tell it, I went to the fourth sky and had a look around, I saw various groups of angels who were talking about God's best servant and I have come here for nothing but to let you know the name of this best servant, and his name is Aiyooob, Aiyooob the Prophet.

Aiyooob: God knows well that Aiyooob considers himself the most sinful, not the best.

Devil: How is it then that divine angels consider you the best? They like to talk fervently about you and here you consider yourself sinful.

Aiyooob: I know well why I am sinful, you go on with your tricks and tell me whatever you remember.

Devil: Tricks! If God's messenger believes so, I would better keep my mouth shut.

Aiyooob: I think the same, you better keep your mouth shut.

Devil: It is improper to talk when there is nobody to listen.

Aiyooob: My ears are deaf to your words. It is improper to talk when there is nobody to listen.

Devil: You mean I am telling a lie?

Aiyoob: No, you are telling the truth but what conclusion you want to get out of this truth?

Devil: What conclusion? First listen to me, and then judge.

Aiyoob: All right, I'll listen to you, now that you insist.

Devil: But you will not believe it.

Aiyoob: Don't worry, I'll believe it.

Devil: All right, I'll tell you. I heard them saying, Aiyoob is the best servant of God on the earth.

Aiyoob: But you told it before too.

Devil: Yes, yes I remember, and now I will tell you the rest. I heard they said there is nobody comparable to Aiyoob in the lands of Hooran, or Damascus, or Bassniyah.

Aiyoob: What else did they say?

Devil: They said, not only regarding virtue and piety but from the point of view of devotion and assisting the destitute he is second to none.

Aiyoob: And you decided to tell me what you heard, why?

Devil: Because... because... yes I told myself, it is probable that Aiyoob is not aware of his high place before God.

Aiyoob: And possibly it will make him proud?

Devil: (*Annoyed*) No, that is not so.

Aiyoob: Proud of his virtue and piety and charity! But you humble renegade didn't know that Aiyoob wants all these virtues for God.

Devil: (*Outwardly*) God, this is the pure servant, I knew that I cannot prevail over him.

Aiyoob: You dubious, still another scheme for alluring me!

Devil: Ahh, Ahh... (*His yelling changes into groans and he falls on the ground.*)

Aiyoob: What happened, old acquaintance, that I see

you distressed?

Devil: Yes, too distressed, indeed you have made me so helpless.

Aiyooob: You are mistaken, God has contempted you. Otherwise, I could do nothing.

Devil: God, God, God, (*Shouting furiously with ascending voice*) God, over and over again!

Aiyooob: No other name makes you angry but the name of God!

Devil: Do you think I don't know why you remember Him so many times, you want me to believe that recalling Him so many times originates from belief.

Aiyooob: If you were a believer you wouldn't have faced such an abjectness.

Devil: Everybody who enjoys so much wealth ought to always remember God, since forgetting God will result in losing your wealth.

Aiyooob: I don't possess anything, everything that exists belongs to Him, I am His belonging too.

Devil: This worship and devotion is the result of fear, hope and greed and not belief and certainty.

Aiyooob: (*Looking at the sky and shouting*) My Lord, you are always worshipable, whether Aiyooob prays you or not.

Devil: You are afraid of losing your wealth and this has resulted in your remembering God and praising Him. You have thousands of sheep and camels and hundreds of horses and cattle and acres of fertile land, obedient servants, honest sons and maidenly daughters, shouldn't you then worship God and praise Him?

Aiyooob: My Lord! You are aware of my inner side that I remember You only because You are worthy of praise. (*To Devil*) You have been driven away, let me be alone, as you will not

derive any advantage. (*Aiyob leaves and Devil remains broken down.*)

Devil:

It is a lie, your devotees are pretentious and deceitful, should they lose their wealth you see how they forget you. (*Devil becomes static and the stage darkens.*)

Second Scene

It is the same scene, servants are working, Rahimeh is helping her daughter, Yoaa comes in flustered.

Yoaa: My lord, my lord, O God's messenger!

Rahimeh: What is the matter Yoaa?

Yoaa: Where is the God's messenger, dear lady?

Aiyoob: *(Comes in)* Here I am.

Yoaa: O God's messenger, catastrophe, they killed, they killed.

Aiyoob: Whom?

Everybody: *(Servants on the scene.)* Whom?

Yoaa: All our friends, I saw the shepherds|weltering in their blood, the rebels killed all of them to get the cattle, they killed all our friends, killed *(he weeps)*.

(Rahimeh and Nahara seek protection with Aiyoob, slaves in the two sides of the scene seek shelter with each other and set up two groups.)

Groups 1 and 2: Woe our friends, our dears. *(They mourn rhythmically.)*

Group 2: Disaster, ah disaster!

Group 1: They killed all our friends.

Group 2: They killed all our shepherds.
Group 1: Our houses are desolate, without our friends.
Group 2: Our heart is broken for losing our dears.
Group 1: Our happy day changed into a dark night.
Group 2: Woe our friends!
Group 1: Ah, our dears!
Aiyooob: We all are from God and shall go back to Him. It is difficult to lose friends but be patient, since God likes patient ones and with His assistance we will take revenge for our friends' blood from the wicked.
Elyefez: *(Comes in frightened and blood-stained)*
 Help me. *(They take him so that he does not fall. Everybody gets silent.)*
Aiyooob: Elyefez, what has happened?
Rahimeh: My God, we seek refuge with You. What has happened, why are you injured?
Elyefez: Disaster, O God's messenger, disaster.
Groups 1 and 2: Tell us what has happened? Which disaster?
Elyefez: I'm not able to tell, it is so hard for me to tell.
Rahimeh: You said disaster, which disaster?
Elyefez: A great disaster, they killed all our friends.
Groups 1 and 2: Whom did they kill?
Elyefez: They killed our friends, they were several hundred and we were a few. Swords in hands, they attacked us, they were Kaldanian cavaliers and commanders of King of Babol, covetous for the cattle, they killed everybody and plundered everything.
Group 1: Ah disaster!
Group 2: Ah disaster!
Group 1: We are facing unprecedented disasters.
Group 2: Our hearts are depressed.
Group 1: What sin we are being punished for?
Group 2: Why did they plunder us?
Group 1: Who wants to kill our friends?
Group 2: Why is our heart broken?
Group 1: Farewell friends.

Group 2: Farewell dears.
Aiyob: This is the second disaster that I am hearing of, it is not certain that it will be the last one, again our dear friends are killed by plunderers, O Lord, we seek support from You, You heal the broken hearts.
(Effect of a big explosion and thunder and lightning.)

Rahimeh: It seemed to be lightning.
Groups 1 and 2: O Lord, we seek refuge with You.
Jobair: *(Comes in, his face and cloth burnt.)* Fire, O God's messenger, fire. *(He is confused.)*

Aiyob: Jobair, another disaster?
Jobair: Fire!
Rahimeh: What fire, speak out?
Aiyob: *(Shakes his shoulders to bring him to consciousness.)* Why are you burnt?

Jobair: Calamity, O God's messenger, we were afflicted with calamity!
Aiyob: Dominate yourself and speak out.
Jobair: Everywhere darkened, lightning appeared in the sky, there was a huge explosion and a huge fire came down and burnt everything, I saw my friends burning and I couldn't do anything.

Group 1: Disaster!
Group 2: Disaster!
Group 1: Disaster has rushed towards us!
Group 2: Which others are you ravaging?
Group 1: Why our bright days turned into dark nights!
Group 2: We will cry for our dear ones.
Group 1: And we will remember the good old memories.

Group 2: O disaster, O disaster!
Aiyob: *(Invites everybody to be patient.)* My Lord, Your kindness is infinite, now that I have no wealth, open the door of patience to me O

Servant 3: Yes, we are, for years we have lived comfortably along with you, how can we leave you alone in difficult times?

Yoaa: We should give thanks to your favours.

Aiyoob: You should give thanks to God to Whom you are in debt the most. If you don't forget to serve God and don't consider anybody your master except Him, then you have paid your debt to Aiyoob.

Yalded: We had not so far felt that we are slaves here, but today we do so as you are going to free us.

Aiyoob: It is not so, my dears. I rid my friends of trouble. My brothers, if I ever hurt you I repent before God and I ask you to forgive me. Now go that you are free.

Group 1: *(Crying)* No, you fuel our burning hearts. *(Aiyoob sits on the platform in the middle.)*

Group 2: No, don't push us away as we don't breach our promise.

Rahimeh: Wait a minute colleagues, if you consider Aiyoob to be God's messenger, then obey him so that God also gets satisfied.

Elyefez: But how, how...?

Rahimeh: As you have so far obeyed. Don't forget him ever?
(Servants while crying come forward one by one, and kiss Aiyoob's shoulder and leave.)
God bless them that they were honest and loyal friends. *(Goes inside with her slave-girl.)*

Aiyoob: God had lent them to us and took them back. Now our load is lighter and even in disasters we would be patient and grateful to Him. *(Goes into prostration.)*
(Devil comes in. The scene's light gets dimmer and Aiyoob gets under spotlight.)

Devil: You are praying! They know you with this very characteristic feature. Everybody prays his God for the wealth and glory bestowed

Third Scene

The scene is lit with a few torches. The voice of owl breaks the silence sometimes. Khozaif comes in headlong and sits on the platform in the middle. He is confused. He is panting and looking around.

Khozaif: No, no, I am awake, it hasn't been a dream. It is true?! Is it possible that I made a mistake? Is it possible that it is not true? Why isn't anybody here? It seems as if sadness has precipitated over here. But it is early now. I haven't so far told anything. But am I able to tell? (*The voice of owl*). What is that? Why do you groan? Maybe you want to help me, yes tell it, tell it louder. Perhaps so I will get silent. Otherwise why is here such silence? Why does it look gloomy?

Aiyoob: Khozaif?
(*Khozaif is frightened and looks at Aiyoob instantly.*)

Khozaif: O, is that you God's messenger? No, no, everybody except you and my lady, isn't there anybody else over there?

Aiyoob: What is wrong with you?

Khozaif: What about others, servants?
Aiyoob: They went to their hometown each, or wherever was determined.
Khozaif: I was hoping to talk with somebody else other than you.
(Rahimeh and a slave-girl come in.)
Rahimeh: What to talk about, Khozaif?
Khozaif: Is that you, my lady?
Rahimeh: What is the matter, what are you doing here?
Khozaif: Here?! I don't know. *(Confused)*
Aiyoob: You came back alone, you were invited together with my children.
Khozaif: Alone! yes I was invited. *(He doesn't know what he is saying.)*
Rahimeh: Why did you come back alone, where are my dear ones?
Khozaif: I don't know, I didn't see them.
Aiyoob: You were with them, what happened to them?
Rahimeh: You are hiding something, where did they go?
Aiyoob: You were together with them everywhere and all the time, what happened to them?
Khozaif: Yes, I was with them but I don't know what happened to them, I don't know.
Aiyoob: How is it possible?
Rahimeh: If you were with them, then you must know?
Khozaif: *(Helpless)* I said that I don't know, I don't know.
Rahimeh: *(Facing Aiyoob)* What is wrong with him, why does he speak this way? I feel anxious.
Aiyoob: Be patient so that we find out the truth, don't worry.
(To Khozaif) Khozaif you look anxious, are you hiding something from us?
Rahimeh: Why do you cover up? Why don't you speak?
Slave-girl: For God's sake speak out, man!
Khozaif: It is difficult to say.
Rahimeh: *(Seeks help from slave-girl.)* He knows about my dears, but doesn't say.

Slave-girl: Don't be anxious, be patient my lady.

Khozaif: I wish I was blind so as not to see these disasters.

Aiyoob: We have already seen a lot of disasters, is it another one?

Khozaif: Yes it is another one, the worst of all disasters. Everybody wears mourning clothes. Aiyoob is bereaved and Rahimeh has lost her children. (*Rahimeh yells and seeks protection of the slave-girl.*)

Aiyoob: (*Shouting*) Khozaif!

Slave-girl: I wish your tongue was cut off.

Aiyoob: You always brought good news, why are you like an ominous owl today?

Slave-girl: Your tongue hurts God's messenger.

Aiyoob: What happened to my dears?

Khozaif: I said once, should I say again?

Rahimeh: No, no, don't tell any more. (*Walks towards Aiyoob*) Make him silent, let my wounds from his words heal a bit.

Aiyoob: Be quiet Rahimeh. There is no escape from the truth.

Rahimeh: It is not true, it is a lie. (*To Khozaif*) Maybe you have heard something from somebody who intended to torment us? Whom did you hear it from?

Slave-girl: Yes, she is right. We shouldn't take serious what we hear. Whom did you hear it from?

Khozaif: I wish I heard it. I wish I were blind and didn't witness it.

Rahimeh: I don't want to hear it.

Khozaif: It is possible to conceal petty sorrows. But I swear by God this is such a great disaster that I am not able to cover it up.

Aiyoob: Don't pause and tell it all.

Rahimeh: (*Seeking shelter with Aiyoob*). For God's sake stop it, I am not capable of hearing it.

Aiyoob: Although it is like a sting to my heart, we

should hear it, otherwise the truth will remain concealed. Well Khozaif, you said that Aiyooob is bereaved (*He began to shudder*), for which of them shall I mourn?

Rahimeh: (*As if she has found a ray of hope*) Which one of them, Khozaif? Tell us, Homel? Boshir, Ongha, Abdan? Nahara? Seifon? Which one of them?

Khozaif: Don't hurt me so much, God's messenger. Don't deceive yourself so much my lady. For God's sake have mercy on me. Do not persuade me to disappoint you any more. I said once that Aiyooob is bereaved and Rahimeh has lost her dears. All of your children, God's messenger, all of them, all of them. (*He weeps.*)

Aiyooob: Oh! disaster!

Rahimeh: No, no. (*Slave-girl hits at her own head.*)

Aiyooob: Oh disaster! (*He feels weakened and sits down.*)

Rahimeh: No, no, God doesn't permit it to happen on me. It is a lie. (*She loses her consciousness.*)

Slave-girl: My lady, my lady, (*embraces Rahimeh*) what happened to you my lady?

Aiyooob: It is so hard not to see any ray of hope. How did it happen, what happened to my dear ones?

Khozaif: I was sitting for them in front of the house. All of a sudden there was a lightning and it destroyed the house. I saw with my own eyes how the roof collapsed and I heard shouts of distress. I wish I died and didn't witness their death.

Aiyooob: I wish Aiyooob had died. Why did my dears leave their old father alone? How can I tolerate it? How can I bereave ten of my dear ones? Which one of you shall I fondle? My heart is filled with sorrow. My dears, look how

your mother has lost her consciousness. My dear ones, why did you leave us alone? I had a gloomy fate.

Devil: (*Becomes like him.*) God render you patience. It is so difficult to lose children. (*He is wearing ordinary clothes.*)

Aiyooob: Even a mountain cannot tolerate it.

Devil: Nobody can tolerate losing seven sons and three daughters.

Aiyooob: All my dears perished.

Devil: If you were there to see how their bones broke apart and their life terminated.

Aiyooob: My dears left us so soon.

Devil: Your spring turned into autumn so soon.

Aiyooob: My hopes turned into despair. They were my hope.

Devil: One is alive with his hope.

Aiyooob: How can I be happy any more?

Devil: Life is in vain if there were no hope.

Aiyooob: O Lord! I have no other support than You and in times of despair I seek Your support.

Devil: If He were the protector of the helpless, you wouldn't have faced these disasters.

Aiyooob: (*Ceases weeping and looks around confused*) What is wrong with me? If these disasters are from God, why did I then not seek His support?

Devil: (*Angry*) Since there is no hope with him too.

Aiyooob: O Lord, I always seek support from You. I tolerated the previous disasters with Your help, then why this disaster?

Devil: (*Shouting*) Since I misled you. (*Takes off his disguise and appears in his original dress.*)

Aiyooob: Misled? (*Devil laughs*) Is it you? So I had become like you. (*Devil laughs*)

Devil: Yes, it is the sign of my victory. You lost your patience and wailed for your dears, wail more, I like to see your impatience.

Aiyoob: (*Hits his head with his hand.*) He is laughing at me. Misled, yes, for a moment I thought of myself and forgot the God.

Devil: It is late Aiyoob, you got aware late.

Aiyoob: O God, You have said, it is never late to return, and despair is one of Devil's characteristic features. I am ashamed, I come back to You since I know no other protection.

Devil: Why do you call God Who didn't have mercy on you?

Aiyoob: O Lord, I told You about my devil spirit. Help me to counter it.

Devil: No, don't leave me to Him, (*With a raucous yelling*) no.

Aiyoob: He misled me, and following him I got away from You. O Lord, Devil separated me from You and made me impatient on bereavement of the children who were Your belongings.

Devil: Your efforts are in vain, you won't be able to escape from my trap, you will see, you will see. (*He creeps towards a corner.*)

Aiyoob: O Lord, my children all belonged to You and I thought them to be mine. My God I confess to my sin. You gave me the children and You took them back. When You give or take back, in Your anger and satisfaction, and in my benefit or loss, I always praise You. I repent of my sin. I hope You accept my repentance. I pin my hope on You. My God see how ashamed I am. See how tears of remorse I am shedding for my evil deed. I pray You to forgive me.

Fourth Scene

It is the same as the previous one and a torch is the source of light. The house looks old and partly ruined. Aiyooob is sick and is leaning against a stone. He is wearing a short-napped coarse carpet and is groaning. Rahimeh is handmilling flour and is sitting at the left side.

Aiyooob: O Lord, I know no other helper except You.
Rahimeh: (*Goes towards him.*) You have a high fever.
(*Moistens a handkerchief and puts it on his forehead.*) You look thin and pale.
Aiyooob: It is dear to me because it is a gift from a friend.
Rahimeh: I wish I could help you.
Aiyooob: I am grateful to you, you give me hope in the dark nights of disasters and calamities.
Rahimeh: I am nothing where there is God's grace.
Aiyooob: And it is He Who sent you to me to help.
Rahimeh: O God's messenger, isn't it time for you to request God for cessation of these troubles?
Aiyooob: I will not ask it unless the duration of my sufferings equals that of my blessings. I expect you too to be more patient.
Rahimeh: O God's messenger, isn't it time to...?

Yalded: May I come in, God's messenger?

Rahimeh: Come in, Yalded, you are one of us.

Yalded: Greetings to God's messenger, greetings to you my lady.

Aiyooob: God's greetings to you, Yalded, you are welcome. (*Rahimeh greets him too.*)

Yalded: (*He is anxious.*) I'm grateful, O God's messenger, I'm grateful, my lady.

Rahimeh: What is wrong, you look anxious?

Yalded: Yes, I have a news for you.

Aiyooob: I wish it be a good one.

Yalded: Not so much.

Rahimeh: Not so much?

Yalded: Some people are coming here.

Aiyooob: O, it means some of our old friends are coming to visit us.

Yalded: Apparently they don't have a good will, I am afraid they will harm you.

Devil: (*Devil appears under a grey spotlight in the front-left corner of the scene.*) Everybody reaps whatever he sows. Let us see these disasters are the outcome of which one of Aiyooob's deeds.

First old man: (*From outside.*) Is God's messenger present?

Aiyooob: Don't worry, nothing occurs unless God wills so.

Second old man: Isn't there anybody in?

Aiyooob: If you are looking for somebody, yes there is. (*Two old men, aged 60 to 70, wearing be-douin dresses come in.*)

First and second old men: Greetings to God's messenger, Aiyooob.

Aiyooob: Greetings to all believers, you all are welcome, I apologize that I am not able to stand up.

First old man: Be relaxed, God's messenger.

Second old man: I wish you got well soon.

Aiyoob: Thank you, how is it that you remembered us and came to visit?

First old man: We are not disloyal. In our leisure we would again like to see you.

Aiyoob: And you get leisure so rarely?

Second old man: It is not our fault, it is because we are too busy.

First old man: I wish we would see you again and in good health.

Second old man: Have you done anything for treatment, have you visited doctors?

Aiyoob: This ailment is a gift by the Doctor, I don't want treatment unless the Doctor Himself decides.

First old man: Which doctor has made you sick?

Second old man: (*Laughs*) He means God, your resolute belief is appreciable, O God's messenger!

Aiyoob: How are the other friends?

First old man: They are waiting to come in.

Aiyoob: Why didn't you tell it earlier? Yalded, invite them to come in. (*Yalded goes out*)

Second old man: There is no need... in fact, they have sent us as representatives.

Aiyoob: As representatives?
(*People come in and stand in the corner.*)

Aiyoob: God's greetings to you, my brothers, you are most welcome.
(*Some answer and some don't pay attention.*)

Elyefez: Did you say the last word or you were just complimenting?

First old man: It was agreed that you remain silent.

Aiyoob: Elyefez, what has happened, brother? Tell me if there is anything to say.

Second old man: It is not important, there were some rumours and we deemed it better to come to visit you and discuss them too.

First old man: Of course, you know that it is impossible to stop rumours unless you sew up the mouths.

Aiyoob: It is better to be frank. I'm listening to you.

Second old man: In fact people are astonished by so many disasters; they are surprised of these many troubles; they have a lot of questions and there is no answer to any one of them.

Aiyoob: You call it a disaster, but I think it is a trial by the court of God.

Elyefez: Why does God inflict so many calamities, or as you call them trials, only on you?

Aiyoob: God allots more suffering to His nearer friends and inflicts more suffering on those He likes more.

Safir: Why do these calamities not come to an end?

Aiyoob: Those who love God love His blessings and hardships alike.

Devil: (*Under spotlight*) Hardship and suffering are the result of sin.

Safir: Great hardships and sufferings are the results of great misdeeds.

Elyefez: And God punishes distinguished men for their sins more severely than others.

Somebody: Specially sins of prophets and leaders of people.

Safir: Who knows, maybe his claim for prophetic mission is a fake.

First old man: Be quiet, Safir.

Rahimeh: You ignorant people are talking nonsense.

Yalded: You are not entitled to talk with God's messenger in this way.

Second old man: Wait a minute friends, we agreed not to get hot-tempered.

First old man: If you chose us as your representatives, then why do you talk yourselves?

Rahimeh: God Who inflicted calamity on us, if resolved will remove the calamity too.

Elyefez: Which God? If He was potent He wouldn't have inflicted so much calamities on you.

Aiyoob: Be quiet Elyefez, I can tolerate your slanders but not your blasphemous utterances.

Safir: (*Ridiculing*) How is it that God's messenger cannot tolerate the truth?

Rahimeh: Hearing a truth from a pervert; how is it possible?

Second old man: Calm down, we have come here to solve a problem, not to aggravate it, I hope God's messenger will forgive them for their offences.

Aiyooob: Let them talk. Former prophets have also heard what you are attributing to me. And it is an examination itself. O people of Hooran, what is wrong with you? Why did you forget my instructions? Be afraid of God and draw lessons from other people. See how Almighty dealt with those people who ill-treated their prophets. Beware that God's punishment is very severe.

Devil: It is he who is suffering.

Safir: (*Facing Aiyooob*) More severe than your suffering.

Elyefez: What is your suffering for?

Somebody: Haven't you disobeyed God's commands?

First old man: Be quiet, man!

Somebody else: We don't want such a prophet who has provoked God's anger.

Devil: Expel him from the town.

Elyefez: You should get out of this town.

Devil: He is cursed.

Safir: You are cursed.

Second old man: Stop it, what is wrong with you?

Yalded: Divine imprecation be upon you that you consider God's prophet as cursed.

Elyefez: O people, be afraid of the day when his sufferings befall you too.

First old man: What is it? Shame on you.

Rahimeh: Not even the meanest of men treat their prophet the way you do.

Devil: He has a contagious disease which will infect everybody.

Somebody: His disease might get epidemic in the town.

Rahimeh: God never affects His prophets with a contagious disease so that the people don't get dispersed.

Safir: What is this bad odour which torments us?

Yalded: It is the stench of your inner side which you are smelling.

Devil: Expel him from the town.

Safir: He should get out of this town, kick him out.

First old man: Stop it, wait.

Yalded: Who is able to expel the God's messenger from the town? (*Stands in front of him.*)

People: He should go, expel him, why are you waiting? All of us are in danger, he is cursed. (*They attack, first and second old men stand in front of them, Rahimeh and Yalded shield Aiyooob.*)

First old man: What is it? Be quiet!

Second old man: Shame on you, don't be so impatient..

First old man: What is it, why do you do so?

Second old man: You said he should leave, he will go, yours is not a proper conduct.

Aiyooob: O Lord, I thank You that You add up to my troubles every moment.

First old man: O God's messenger, now that these people are breaching their promises, why do you insist to be among them, share their sorrow? Isn't it better to leave them alone?

Aiyooob: I have faced a lot of calamities and suffered a lot, but your distressing words aggrieved me the most.

Yalded: So far Yalded is alive, nobody can expel you from the town.

Rahimeh: Here is our home, this is our motherland, where should we go?

Aiyooob: If it is God's Will to take another test that Aiyooob wander about, I will obey God's resolve and get out of the town.

Second old man: It is better this way, you will get relieved and these people's apprehension will subside.

Rahimeh: Has any prophet left his people to their own?

Aiyoob: You see these people want to leave me. They think my prophetic mission is a fake. (*To the people*). Have you heard any lie from me? Have I received any money from you to guide you? What gain did I receive from you? What abuse did you see from me? Didn't I share my earnings with you? Didn't I put on clothes to your unclad ones? Didn't I satisfy your hunger? Didn't I share your sorrow? Didn't I help you when you were oppressed? Give me reply. People of Hooran, I always pray for you; although you push me out of the town, I have only one will, and it is that you don't breach your promise with the prophets after me, for the worst people are those who breach their promises.

First old man: Did you hear what he said? Now go.

Second old man: What else do you want? Get out of here, go.
(*Everybody leaves.*) I apologize, God's messenger, forgive us.

First old man: I wish you would forgive us.

Both of them: Farewell, farewell!

Aiyoob: O Lord, I am satisfied with these troubles, I will be patient with these hardships as I prayed You for Your blessings. (*To Rahimeh*)
Rahimeh!

Rahimeh: Yes, God's messenger!

Aiyoob: Together with Yalded go out of the town and make a shade there to live in.

Fifth Scene

All the surroundings and sides of the scene are covered with black fabric. A black bed with golden yellow margin is placed in the centre. Devil is sitting on the bed holding his head in his hands. Two devils are standing on his left and right sides in honour. They are wearing black clothes like those of the great devil. The spotlight is grey, and the devils in this scene look horrible and cruel under the grey, light. The sound of drum comes from behind the scene and then two devils making bugle with their hands say:

Two devils: Attention devils, attention devils! the king of devils, the greatest devil has summoned you in. (*Sound of drum is heard again and the two devils repeat the previous sentence again. Six devils in black clothes from each corner of the scene come in cautiously and kneel down beside the bed and touch the ground with their foreheads.*)

Devils: Salute to the great king devil, the regional devils are present here at your service and listening to your commands. (*Devil doesn't answer and after a moment of silence.*)

1st devil: It seems that the great devil has summoned us. (*Again there is no answer.*)

2nd devil: What is wrong with the great devil?
3rd devil: I wish I were blind so as not to see you unhappy.
4th devil: Are you obsessed with a problem?
5th devil: (*Flatteringly*) The great devil is aware of our abilities and knows well that we are able to untie any knot.
6th devil: If the great devil indicates the problem, we would certainly resolve it.
Great Devil: It is not so much easy. (*They are sitting in two rows, he stands up and walks to the front of the scene.*)
Another devil: Don't worry, knowing a problem means solving it. (*And everybody stands up in honour of the great devil.*)
Great Devil: (*Looks at them*) Aiyoob.
Devils: (*Surprised*) Aiyoob!
Great Devil: Yes Aiyoob, I am helpless in dealing with him and have called you for assistance.
1st devil: Helpless with a man?
Great Devil: Yes, helpless with a terrestrial, mortal man.
2nd devil: (*Laughs and comes close to the great devil.*) Of course, you are kidding us.
Devil: (*Who is angered by his words and holds his collar.*) Foolish, kidding with whom and for what?
2nd devil: (*Who is scared, entreats*) Forgive me, my lord, I meant it is hard to believe it. (*Devil releases him and he prostrates and returns to his first place.*)
1st devil: What about so much tricks and deception?
Devil: I applied all of them but to no avail.
2nd devil: Did you apply your contrivances and tacts?
Devil: I applied all of them but of no avail.
Devils: (*Together*) We seek protection of the great devil. What type of man he is!
3rd devil: Is there anybody capable of resisting in front of you?

Devil: (*Angry*) He is not similar to other creatures of God.

4th devil: Great devil is magnifying him.

Devil: (*Nervous*) I inflict a blow and he repels it, I plot against him and he foils it.

2nd devil: By what means does he defend?

Devil: (*Shouts angrily.*) Belief and conviction, and his belief and conviction makes me crazy.

6th devil: But surely there is some way.

Devil: (*Nervous and entreatingly*) My friends, my loyal and true friends, find some way, victory over him is victory over all the God's creatures because he is not an individual but a nation.

1st devil: I suggest we inspire him to love this world which is the best way. (*These questions and answers are uttered quickly.*)

Devil: He doesn't have any love for this world.

2nd devil: Love of all this world is a great trap, his properties should be ruined.

Devil: These were either burnt or plundered.

3rd devil: What about his herds of livestock?

Devil: They were all destroyed (*Devil gets more nervous and answers louder every time.*)

4th devil: He should get bereaved of his children.

Devil: All have been killed.

Devils: How?

Devil: Walls trembled and ceilings collapsed and all of them died.

5th devil: His health should be impaired.

Devil: But ailment and suffering increased his conviction, belief and patience.

6th devil: We should make people withdraw from him so that he gets isolated.

Devil: It was also ineffective. (*More nervous*) Since he was rejected by the people and was compelled to dwell in the desert (*shouting*) he has been more patient with all these troubles and prays the God, and in this way he has ever

more exposed me in front of the God. (*Devil has become helpless.*)

3rd devil: Then what else can we do?

Devil: (*Helpless*) I don't know, I don't know, I applied every trick but of no avail. (*Helpless and angry*) I'll not let him be relieved at all—I'll destroy him, I'll destroy him. (*After a moment of silence, entreatingly*) My friends, my dears, find a solution that I am running amok.

4th devil: Whatever the great devil commands us, we will act accordingly.

Devil: What command? There is no other way left, he doesn't forget the God, he doesn't forget the God. (*He is nervous*). And this is killing me. Is so much resistance possible, is so much belief possible? His belief is killing me. Belief, belief. (*Suddenly he returns and looks at the devils maniacally.*) Listen carefully, damned wicked, if you don't find a solution, I will kill you one by one.

5th devil: O Great Devil, have mercy on us, we haven't had any shortcoming.

Devil: A bunch of useless counsellors, tactless friends who cannot do anything except flattery. I will show you the hell right now which Allah has promised you to give on the Resurrection Day.

1st devil: The great devil gives us an opportunity, we will find a solution.

Devil: How much time? How many opportunities? Why should I keep you when you are not able to solve my problem, you are not able to deceive my enemies? You are useless, you better die, I will teach you a lesson that will be an example for others. (*Devils get frightened*) As you all know nothing other than flattery and helplessness, I will destroy you all and appoint others in your place. Either find a

solution or I will kill you all, listened! Act as fast as possible.

(He goes and sits down on the bed. Devils are frightened. They kneel down in front of him and prostrate.)

2nd devil: *(Raises his head and says:)* My master, something has come to my mind.

Devil: Be silent, let me think.

2nd devil: It is important, Great Devil!

Devil: Tell me, but if you tell nonsense you will be punished.

2nd devil: My master, do you remember Adam's episode?

Devil: I knew that you will talk nonsense, punish him, punish him.

(Two guards take him to punish him, he entreats.)

2nd devil: Wait a minute, my master, wait. How did you deceive Adam?

Devil: Hold on, hold on. What do you want to say?
(To guards) Set him free.

2nd devil: *(They let him free.)* It was you, my master that pushed Adam from the Paradise, wasn't it so?

Devil: All right, that is right.

2nd devil: What trick did you apply against him?

Devil: I afflicted him with greed and cupidity.

2nd devil: No, I didn't mean that. *(Comes close to him and whispers.)*

Devil: Yes, you are right.

2nd devil: It is not possible to deceive the prophets, but why not their followers!

Devil: Yes, you are right, you are right. *(He laughs)*
Bravo, my good friend, bravo. *(Laughs again)*
I will deceive them this way. Now let us see if my deception is stronger or his belief. *(He laughs and the scene gets dark.)*

Sixth Scene

It is the city square and a few houses around it. Suddenly the door of a house opens and Rahimeh is thrown into the scene and a woman comes out and quarrels with her. Devil and one of his friends are standing at the corner of the scene, under spotlight and looking.

- Woman:** I told you to come tomorrow, why don't you understand?
- Rahimeh:** I don't want it gratis, it is the remuneration for my work from morning till this time.
- Woman:** Even if I had I wouldn't have given it to you, humble poor. Come tomorrow and receive your money.
- Rahimeh:** My husband is hungry today and I am in need today. If you don't have money, give me a loaf of bread.
- Woman:** I don't even have a loaf of bread.
- Rahimeh:** How will you explain it to God?
- Woman:** It is none of your business, I told you once that I don't have it today, come tomorrow. (She goes in and shuts the door).
- Rahimeh:** (*Stands up and knocks at the door.*) At least feed us for the so much assistance that we

rendered you. (*There is no response and Rahimeh, anxious and broken-hearted, walks to another house and after some hesitation knocks at the door. A man opens the door.*)

Safir: What is it, what do you want today?

Rahimeh: Good day brother, if you need today too, I will work for you.

Safir: No, we don't need. (*He wants to close the door.*)

Rahimeh: Wait a moment brother, wait Safir, I can handmill flour, bake your bread or wash your clothes, or whatever other job you have.

Devil: I said that we don't have any work.

Safir: No, we don't have, I told you that we don't have any job for you.

Rahimeh: I am satisfied with a loaf of bread even for my work.

Safir: Even if I had a job, I wouldn't have referred it to you.

Rahimeh: Why? why, Safir? You were one of Aiyooob's followers. There was a time when he helped you. Then why don't you help me now that I need you, and reject me?

Safir: It is because you are cursed, I am afraid that if I help you God will get angry with me and your ominousness would befall me too.

Rahimeh: Then why it hasn't occurred so far?

Devil: It is not late, it may occur in the future.

Safir: It may occur today, in addition, we may get infected with your husband's disease.
(*Rahimeh cries and sits at the door. After a while, one passerby sees Rahimeh and wants to hide himself but Rahimeh sees him.*)

Rahimeh: Yalded, is it you, my brother? (*Gets happy, stands up and walks towards him.*)

Yalded: I am sorry, I didn't see you.

Rahimeh: From morning till now I have gone everywhere and asked those whom I knew,

but nobody helped me.

Yalded: What can I do for you?

Rahimeh: It is God's blessing that I saw you, I was getting disappointed.

Yalded: Thank you, Rahimeh.

Rahimeh: My husband is sick and hungry and he is waiting for me. But I haven't been able to find some food for him.

Yalded: It is a pity, but believe me that I am in need too.

Rahimeh: Listen Yalded, my need is little.

Yalded: If I could meet your needs, I wouldn't have hesitated.

Rahimeh: For God's sake, don't make me disappointed. First listen to what I need, if you find it unaffordable then don't accept it.

Yalded: All right, I will listen.

Rahimeh: A loaf of bread, and I don't want it free, I want to borrow it and I will pay it back soon.

Devil: I don't have, no I don't have.

Yalded: (*Wants to get rid of her*) I am ashamed, I don't have. Convey my greetings to Aiyooob, goodbye (*Rahimeh is left broken-hearted. She sits on a bench and weeps. Devil at the corner of the scene tells his friend.*)

Devil: Go, go, let us see what you can do.

Petty devil: (*Enters the scene.*) Who are you, woman?

Rahimeh: I am from this same area, I am not an alien.

Petty devil: Your voice sounds familiar to me. I guess I know you!

Rahimeh: Someday everybody knew me, but none now.

Petty devil: Yes, I recognized, Rahimeh, why have you come here? Why don't you leave these people alone?

Rahimeh: I don't know any other place except this town.

Petty devil: Get out of here, you don't have the right to enter this town. People, people! come out of your homes. Why don't you care about yourselves and your families? How long are you

going to tolerate this woman? Didn't you see how God dealt with her and her husband and children? Aren't you afraid that God punish you too? Aren't you afraid?
(People have come out).

Woman: *(The same woman who had once pushed her out.)* You are cursed.

Safir: Aiyooob himself has gone out of the town and left you for harming the people.

Petty devil: The doctor has said Aiyooob's disease is contagious.

First man: She has the same disease as that of her husband.

Petty devil: Throw her out of the town.

Woman: We should throw her out.

Second man: You and your husband are being punished for your sins.

Safir: Get out of here.

First man: If you care about your health, throw her out.

Devil: What is it, people? Wait a moment, quiet, it is shameful. What has this poor woman done to be punished so?

Safir: She is cursed and should be punished for her deeds.

Devil: Who has cursed her?

First man: God has cursed her.

Devil: But you are not the God to punish her.

Second man: She must leave the town.

Devil: Land belongs to the God, who has entitled you to push her out of the town?

Safir: If everybody gets sick who will reply?

Devil: God is the Doctor and He will treat all.

Petty devil: If we don't oust her today, she will return another day.

Devil: Quiet, you are too shameless to offend a poor old woman, God will punish you severely.

Woman: We will not calm down until she is thrown out of the town.

Devil: I said, be quiet. Go, go and don't offend her so much. (*Petty devil leaves*) Go, go, you too. Don't stand here. Everybody goes to his home. (*People all leave and Devil and Rahimeh remain there.*) You too, rise up and go home.

Rahimeh: Where shall I go, I am ashamed to go home empty-handed. (*She gets up to go.*)

Devil: What is wrong with you? Why are the people hostile to you?

Rahimeh: I don't know, maybe it is due to my misfortune. (*She weeps*)

Devil: They have left, why are you crying now?

Rahimeh: It is not important.

Devil: (*Takes the bag off his shoulder and says.*) Yes, it is important. Maybe I can help you.

Rahimeh: Those who knew me, didn't help me. How could you help me?

Devil: It is true that you don't know me, but it is not important. You tell me your problem, I will help you if I can. It seems that you are in need. Isn't it so?

Rahimeh: Yes, it is so.

Devil: What are you in need of?

Rahimeh: A loaf of bread, my husband is hungry.

Devil: Why didn't you tell earlier? (*Takes a loaf of bread out of the bag.*) Come on, here is the bread. (*Rahimeh wants to take the bread, Devil forbears.*) Let me see, do you have money for it?

Rahimeh: (*Seems disappointed*) Money? No, I don't have.

Devil: But I don't give free of charge.

Rahimeh: But I don't want it free of charge. I will pay the cost at the earliest opportunity.

Devil: (*Devil puts the bread back in the bag and intends to go.*) I deal in cash.

Rahimeh: And I don't have a single penny.

Devil: Then excuse me.

Rahimeh: (*Two steps after him*) Man, God blesses those who lend, for God's sake help me.

Devil: I believe in God and I know good deed brings heavenly reward. I don't want any money. I shall give you this bread in exchange for what you have.

Rahimeh: In exchange for what?

Devil: (*Returns and puts the bag on the stone.*) Well, I will tell you. See, you are in need of a loaf of bread, and I have a problem that you can help me.

Rahimeh: If I can, I will do, unless God has forbidden it.

Devil: (*Sorrowful*) I have a nice and kind spouse who is suffering from a defect and you are able to help her.

Rahimeh: What can I do for her?

Devil: My wife suffers due to her short hair, and my request is that you kindly present her your hair. If you were kind enough to do so, you will rid her of this suffering and in return I will give you whatever you need.

Rahimeh: What can she do with my hair?

Devil: I will graft your beautiful hair to her short hair. It might obviate her defect.

Rahimeh: No, I can't.

Devil: Why? What is wrong with doing so?

Rahimeh:- Cutting a woman's hair is not a little fault.

Devil: It is a fault for disloyal women. But you don't intend to commit disloyalty.

Rahimeh: Although Aiyob is sick and in need of bread, he will not agree with such a work; and if he gets aware, he will never forgive me.

Devil: He will never know, unless you tell him.

Rahimeh: How shall I explain it for God? He is aware.

Devil: Isn't God aware of your situation? Doesn't He see how you are suffering for a piece of bread?

Rahimeh: God is aware of my situation, and knows that I am ashamed of returning home empty-handed.

Devil: Then you will satisfy the God in this way?

Rahimeh: O man, for God's sake leave off this request. It is very difficult for me.

Devil: All right, then you don't expect me to help you. But if you agreed, you may find me in the town. (*Devil picks up the bag and goes. Rahimeh is left helpless. Light is put off.*) I knew, I knew that you are a devoted and a generous woman.

Rahimeh: My God, you know that I am exhausted and nobody helped me and my husband has been hungry for a few days.

Devil: God will reward you for your sacrifice. (*And takes a knife out of the bag.*)

Rahimeh: (*Rahimeh takes the knife*) My God, You are aware that I don't intend to commit a sin. I am doing it for Your messenger. Forgive me that You are Merciful. (*She cuts a part of her hair and gives it to Devil, and Devil gives her two loaves of bread in return.*)

Devil: Take these two loaves of bread. (*Rahimeh takes the bread and sighs.*) Whatever you need tell me and I will provide it for you. (*Rahimeh doesn't answer and goes out of the scene.*) (*Devil has the hair in his hand, looks at it and laughs.*) Goodbye Rahimeh, good-bye!

Seventh Scene

It is a shady place built with leaves of the trees and straw and there is a palm-tree on a side. The shady place is at the left corner of the scene and there is a big stone under it. Aiyob is leaning on it and seems to be ill. He has wrapped himself with a time-worn canvas. Devil enters, looking the same as when he appeared to Rahimeh. It is sunset.

Devil: Greetings to Aiyob, God's messenger.
Aiyob: God's greetings to all His good creatures.
Devil: As usual you look conservative not to greet anybody else.
Aiyob: I answer everybody this way...who are you?
Devil: Your honest good old friend, Devil.
Aiyob: How unfortunate I am! But I don't want to be your friend.
Devil: You are suspicious and consider everybody as your enemy.
Aiyob: God's blessings, there will never come the day when Aiyob is your friend.
Devil: I hope I will prove that I am your friend.
Aiyob: With God's help, I will disappoint you.
Devil: By the way, why are you alone?
Aiyob: God is alone too, what is wrong with it?

Devil: No, I mean your spouse.
Aiyoob: She has gone to the town to obtain a loaf of bread.
Devil: (*Laughs loudly and noxiously.*) Or for another purpose?
Aiyoob: It seems that you are proving your friendship.
Devil: Wait, don't charge in vain, I didn't mean anything wrong.
Aiyoob: All right, why has my wife gone to the town?
Devil: I don't know.
Aiyoob: You said she might have gone for another purpose.
Devil: I don't want to deceive you, she will come now and you ask her yourself where she had gone and why.
Aiyoob: You always try to mislead believers. How come you have decided to stop deceiving and turn into a worshipper?
Devil: I haven't turned into a worshipper, but there are some who are sitting in seclusion and seemingly worshipping the God, but their wives are their breadwinners. Their wives do shameful acts to feed their husbands.
Aiyoob: You are too little to have any control over property, life and family members of good people who bow their heads before the God.
Devil: I intend to tell you the truth. If you do not want to know, I will also not insist.
Aiyoob: Your traps are applicable to those who prefer you to the God, You are too humble to distract my attention from the God.
Devil: Your wife will come soon, not empty-handed but with two loaves of bread.
Aiyoob: Thanks God Who provides our daily bread.
Devil: Give thanks to Rahimeh who has obtained your daily bread. But at what a price, God knows!
Aiyoob: I pray the God Who provides sustenance. And

if an incident has occurred that I am not aware of, I seek protection with the God and request patience.

Devil: You know that God doesn't help you, then why do you call on Him?

Aiyoob: Conscious people observe God's assistance and comprehend it. I have never been deprived of His blessings and assistance.

Devil: I know, I know that so many disasters that befell you are an evidence for it.

Aiyoob: It is an evidence of God's attention and blessing to me that I deserved trial. This ailment is dearer to me than health, because that is His Will.

Devil: Indeed you are a patient worshipper of the God (*while laughing*), but what about this last disaster? (*Laughs*)

Aiyoob: (*Aiyoob is anxious and angry and restless.*) It is God's blessing, too. I haven't seen anything else from Him except compassion and blessing.

Devil: (*Angry and nervous*) Which blessing? What compassion?! Rahimeh has betrayed you and you call it blessing!

Aiyoob: It is a lie, it is a lie, another deception.

Devil: It is a truth and you have closed your eyes on it. She had to betray you since her husband was sick and hungry and she was ashamed to return empty-handed.

Aiyoob: Rahimeh will not commit such a wrongdoing, even if I die.

Devil: Then ask her why sheriff and his men cut her hair. (*Laughs*) A woman's hair is cut only when she has betrayed her husband.

Aiyoob: God damn you, you have deceived her.

Devil: (*Laughing*) No, not me. It is her own fault.

Aiyoob: I seek protection with the God, I ask Him to help me.

Devil: (*Walks around the scene and laughs.*) Seek protection with whomever you want to. But you should accept this scandal.

Aiyoob: (*Angry*) Get out of it, renegade, get out of here. (*With difficulty he stands up and leans on the shady place. He is nervous.*)

Devil: When she comes, look at her hair to see for yourself.

Aiyoob: Get out of here, hated renegade, get lost.

Devil: The end of your patience is near, Aiyoob, it is near. (*Goes out.*)
(Aiyoob, angry and sorrowful and groaning, slipped at the foot of column. He weeps and prostrates and raises his forehead from the ground and says:)

Aiyoob: O Lord! For years I enjoyed Your blessings and gave my thanks to You so far I could. It is now more than seven years that You have taken back the wealth and rendered me disasters, in the same way as messengers previous to me like Lot, Abraham, Ismael, Edris and ZolkafI were inflicted with disasters. We all sought refuge with You. And if You didn't assist us we were all annihilated.
 O Lord, You assisted Aiyoob in all the disasters, help me in this last one, too. I swear to Almighty that if she doesn't have hair, I will whip her one hundred times since it is a great sin and a greater disaster. O Lord, help me in this last disaster too. I know nobody else to help me except You. O Lord, Devil and his friends rejoice at my trouble and I would rather die than hear their rejoicing (*He weeps.*) O Lord, You are the most Compassionate, if the time for trial is nearing over, then hasten it. Aiyoob is afraid of himself. (*Weeping*) O Lord, let it not be that I fail in the examination and get ashamed.

(Aiyooob weeps and prostrates. There come thunder and lightning, Aiyooob is astonished. Thunder and lightning get off. An angel in white dress is standing in the scene under white spotlight and a strong light illuminates everywhere.)

Angel: Greetings to Aiyooob, the dearest of God's creatures on the Earth. O Aiyooob, the Almighty has ordered: Our servant Aiyooob has endured all the disasters and hardships. Almighty, the Supreme, the Great has resolved to grant your prayer and terminate your hardships in reward for your patience and endurance.

Aiyooob: Thanks God.

Angel: Therefore, all your lost property will be returned to you. Almighty will return your children to you, too.

Aiyooob: Indeed He is the most Compassionate. |

Angel: Knock the ground with your foot and a fountain will appear. Drink from its refreshing water and have a bath in it. You will regain your health and comfort and youth and happiness. Tell Rahimeh to do the same. She too has suffered a lot.

Aiyooob: You said my spouse? ! But she is a sinner and I have sworn to punish her.

Angel: Don't worry, Rahimeh has never committed any sin. She is chaste. Take a bunch of one hundred branches of basils in your hand and hit her with it gently, so that your oath will come true and she will not get harmed too.

Aiyooob: I am grateful. *(He prostrates and there are thunder and lightning and the angel goes. Light returns to normal and Aiyooob stands up with difficulty. He leans on the column of the shady place and knocks the ground with his foot.)* Water *(dense steam)* streams out of the

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and God has blessed us again.

Rahimeh: *(Rahimeh prostrates and then prays the God and says:)* O Lord, I praise You that You are the most Compassionate.

Aiyooob: Thanks the God that everything goes in accordance with His Will *(Bundles the twigs together.)*

Rahimeh: I am glad that you are cured and have regained your former health and freshness.

Aiyooob: Thank you, Rahimeh, I have glad tidings for you too.

Rahimeh: Glad tidings!

Aiyooob: Yes Rahimeh, in reward for your patience and endurance, the Almighty will render you your youth and happiness. *(Points to the fountain.)* Enter that fountain and see His Omnipotence. *(Rahimeh doubtfully walks to the fountain and enters it. Green light surrounds her too. She walks out of the fountain. She is wearing a new garment and is looking young and fine. Aiyooob and Rahimeh are standing in the green light when suddenly they hear the groaning and moaning of the devils. The voices draw nearer and the devils enter from the left side of the scene falling and rising and groaning. The great devil is beside them and yells.)*

Devil: I will annihilate you, I will endeavour again, I will not let you rest for a moment, I will entrap you with my deception. I will allure everybody, except the true servants of God, I will deceive everybody except the true servants of God.
(Here Devil's voice is heard from afar and groanings abate and the scene gradually darkens.)

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God's blessings and peace be with you all.

References

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Water *(dense steam)* streams out of the

ground. Thanks God Who is Omnipotent. I praise the Almighty.

(Music is played. Aiyooob takes off the worn-out shirt and enters the steam. After a moment green light illuminates the fountain. He stands up and surprisingly looks at his white hair turned black and his transformation into a joyful youth. He walks away from the fountain and goes to the left side of the scene. Under the spotlight he prostrates and then raises his forehead from the ground and says:)

O Lord, how can I thank You for Your blessings. *(Rahimeh comes in. Doesn't see anybody in the shady place. There is a grey light everywhere, only the shady place is brighter.)*

Rahimeh: My spouse, my spouse, where is he? *(Looks around but doesn't see anybody.)* Aiyooob! *(Frightened, she walks around the shady place and looks everywhere. She sees Aiyooob and walks towards him.)*

Rahimeh: Didn't you see him?

Aiyooob: Whom? *(His voice seems younger)*

Rahimeh: My spouse.

Aiyooob: Your spouse? *(Aiyooob wants to humour.)*

Rahimeh: Yes, he was ill, he was in the shady place when I left, now I have returned and I don't see him.

Aiyooob: What is his name?

Rahimeh: Aiyooob. *(Pause)* Didn't you see him?

Aiyooob: Yes, I saw him.

Rahimeh: Where is he?

Aiyooob: He is here now.

Rahimeh: He is here? *(Runs to the shady place but doesn't see anybody.)* Where is God's messenger?

(Looks around but doesn't see anybody and comes back to Aiyooob.)

My spouse, where is my spouse? You said

you have seen him?

Aiyooob: What did you say, the name of your husband is?

Rahimeh: Aiyooob, Aiyooob the Prophet. He is one of the God's messengers.

Aiyooob: Why did you leave him alone?

Rahimeh: *(Hastens to the shady place and brings the loaf of bread.)* In order to obtain bread for him. I am afraid that wolves might have attacked him. *(And weeps)*

Aiyooob: Will you recognize him if you see him?

Rahimeh: *(Who hasn't so far looked at Aiyooob, looks at him.)* Yes he is my spouse, how is it possible...*(The sentence is left unfinished.)*

Aiyooob: What are you thinking of, Rahimeh?

Rahimeh: Not important, I only think I have seen you before.

Aiyooob: Look again. *(Rahimeh looks again and then turns back to walk towards the shady place.)*

Rahimeh: He looked like you very much when he was young.

Aiyooob: Who?

Rahimeh: Aiyooob, yes he looked like you very much.

Aiyooob: Who knows, maybe I am Aiyooob.

Rahimeh: No, no, it is not possible. *(Goes to the other side of the scene.)*

Aiyooob: Why? *(While talking, Aiyooob picks up some twigs off the ground and bundles them up.)*

Rahimeh: Since, since he was old and weak.

Aiyooob: According to God's resolve, youth grow old, and old people too might become rejuvenated if He resolves to.

Rahimeh: Yes, but he was so sick that he couldn't walk.

Aiyooob: Remedy of sickness also depends on His Will.

Rahimeh: *(Walks around Aiyooob and looks at him.)* Shall I believe that you are Aiyooob?

Aiyooob: Yes Rahimeh, according to God's resolve, the time of our disasters and hardships is over

and God has blessed us again.

Rahimeh: (*Rahimeh prostrates and then prays the God and says:*) O Lord, I praise You that You are the most Compassionate.

Aiyooob: Thanks the God that everything goes in accordance with His Will (*Bundles the twigs together.*)

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