

# Urban Polemics



# Urban Polemics

Randall Eugene Mitchell Jr.

Copyright ©2021 by BIY Corporation Publishing

*No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system, except as may be expressly permitted by the 1976 Copyright Act.*

BIY Corporation Publishing Division

Oakland, CA 94609

# Bereshit

---

“God is good!” Judah Masod rang towards the largest diverse Church of God in Christ congregation in Northern California.

“All the time!” they shouted back in unison.

“And all the time?”

“God is good,” everyone praised. Even though the Bishop and all his family were African American, it didn’t mean his Church had to be. People of all colors from the Islands, South America, the Middle East, Africa, and even Europe occupied this massive Church. The different shades of color diversity made this Church one of a kind.

“Amen. My father, Bishop Isaac Masod of this here New Jerusalem Church of God in Christ,” Judah announced as the congregation commended, “has given me the pulpit today. We are, as a people and as a nation, experiencing troubling times,” the 21-year-old Judah professed as he loosened his tie and unbuttoned the top button to his black satin Tom Ford dress shirt.

“Amen!”

“God bless our President but,” Judah began when some of the congregation began to boo at even the mention of the president of the United States of America. “Oh is that right?” he looked upon his father’s people in awe. “When did we become judges? Have we changed our minds about Whose understanding to lean on?” Judah asked the Church.

“Hey!”

“Preach!” they called out.

“Does God not know what He is doing? Y’all wanna act like that?” Judah tested the people as he moved around the pulpit, gaining connection with them. “This behavior is oddly familiar. Like, Pride. Pride comes before what?”

“Destruction!” The Church shouts.

“Ight now. Let us trust in God. How can the pot say to the potter, *‘you don’t know what you’re doing?’* Huh? Let the one without sin cast the first stone upon a man we despise. Put that pride up! Tell me. Where does it come from? Uh? Pride? How does God create perfection from His creation; someone full of wisdom and beauty, filled with every precious stone: the sardius,

the topaz, the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, the jasper, gold, sapphire, and the emerald as his covering? The workmanship of his tabrets and his pipes was prepared in the days of his creation. Yet,” he held a long pause after huge images of the different precious stones displayed on a large projected screen behind him. The different visuals that appeared made Lucifer look pretty cool, to be honest. This was the workings of the Creative Director, as he would google images and display them on the screen as the preacher would speak. Spicing Church up.

“Yet, iniquity was found in his heart? An imbalance,” Judah spoke with his hands simultaneously. “Get this. Listen, kinfolk,” he successfully gathered the attention of his father’s people. “Through that same iniquity, found in Lucifer, was our ancestors TRICKED into knowing the knowledge of both good and evil, subjecting them. Through that same subjected iniquity, we are born into this world needing salvation from the TRICKERY. That’s why we find it easy to lust after certain things that aren’t necessarily good for us, even after taking into consideration how and Who we are made after. Lusting after what is the opposite of our good natures because of iniquity. We, right here in this church are victims of it. The urge to do that which is unrighteous. Addiction. Poverty. Constant lustful thinking and many more forms of unrighteousness.”

“Yet, we point the finger about who is bad and good? You all can sit here and judge that our President is a bad man based on what? Let me catch you drunk after work somewhere hollering, *‘Jesus’s first miracle was turning water into wine!’*” Judah peered at a member in the congregation with a half-smile as the congregation erupted in laughter. He was just like his father, always making the Church laugh. “Let me catch you looking at another woman, another man while you’re married. Let me catch you doing anything unpleasant in the eyes of the LORD and then point the finger-like you are the Father Himself. We are such hypocritical people. Is that not what makes us human? But then we expect to receive all these blessings from God while at the same time trying to act like God yet behaving like children of men. Romans 8 says what?” Judah opened his bible and searched. “Come on. Go to Romans 8 and,” he continued to look.

“Romans 8:20. Say Amen when you’re there,” he left the floor open until *Amens* began to seep.

“It says: ‘For the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but because of Him who hath SUBJECTED the same in hope, 21 Because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.’ What does that

mean? Everything ever created was put under the power of change! God judged not only man but creation itself, due to man's sin. Not only are we, humans, in a degraded state, but also that which is all around us due to iniquity entering the world. Yet, God did this in HOPES that everything is made free from the power of death since we took it upon ourselves to be like Gods and know good from evil. Everything shall be purposeful again, as it was originally intended. For now, we thrive to subdue ungodliness. Amen? We better humble up if we want that Garden of Eden back. Matter of fact, I believe it is already here. Accept Jesus in your life and He'll provide you that Garden of Eden, that divine relationship with our Creator," Judah was always extremely emotional. It made him a very likable person. A young man that people could gaze upon in awe and receive sound hope. He was so young but spoke as if he'd been here before.

"So, therefore, just because our president is who he is, doesn't give you the power to judge and act holier than thou. We are all fallen yet saved through Christ who said love your enemy, did He not?"

"Amen."

"So, don't 'boo' God's plan. He might 'boo' yours," Judah smiled, connecting eyes with his best friend, Hawa Greene, Hawa being Arabic for 'Eve.' She smiled graciously seeing her best friend up there for the third time ever in their Sunday's best.

Hawa's mother was from Isfahan, Iran (Babylon) and her father were from the Jungles of North America, specifically East Oakland, California, North America (New Babylon). Hawa's parents met when Mr. Greene was sent to Iran a little before the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center. Mr. Greene was part of a Special Forces unit that had spy operations going on during the Clinton administration. He met the now Mrs. Greene in an Iranian café called The Diamond Café. He had often visited when he wasn't on duty and one day there she sat, reading an American book titled, *'To Kill A Mockingbird'* by Harper Lee.

"*What you know about English literature?*" this Black man asked this petite Iranian woman. From there, the rest was history. They would meet at that same café every day as soon as it opened. Mrs. Greene had practically thrown herself at Mr. Greene in an attempt to escape from her reality without being judged and condemned by her community. Before anyone knew anything, Mr. Greene had been called back to America and Mrs. Greene was close behind to begin their newfound relationship in the States. At least, this was the story believed by many.

Together, they created a golden nugget who later decided to fall in love with Christ Jesus. She still wore a hijab to cover the top of her head and was commonly seen with different and various Henna designs on her hands and neck but that was it. She loved tradition and her culture, as so her mother and even sometimes her father could be seen wearing a kufi.

Hawa would get lost in the words of Judah. She was deeply in love with this near-perfect man, no doubt about it. She could be thought of as near perfect herself. Hawa was probably the most beautiful girl in California, at least to Judah, but she was always hidden to an extent. Rarely seen, only in church and Sacramento State going for her master's degree in Education Leadership. Her skin was smoother than the bottom of a baby. Her voice is softer than an angel of God. Her touch is soothing to even plants! Her handmade dresses that resembled wealth from tradition could not be mimicked. She even wore a nose ring that connected with her earrings, something cultural and maybe something not so much looked upon in the Church. After all, the ancient Israelites wore jewelry in the same way according to Exodus 32.

Hawa suffered from jealousy though, as any woman whose man received the attention that Judah received would. Not only was Hawa aware, but the whole congregation knew that Judah was destined to take over New Jerusalem, which made him even more prominent.

“Now, it has come to our attention that an outbreak has occurred around the world called COVID. The State of California has issued a ‘stay-at-home’ order beginning tomorrow. That means no more fellowshiping until who knows when, but these are merely the tribulations. Don’t fret. We are saved through the blood, amen?”

“Amen!” they followed, yet Mr. Greene, Hawa’s father, voice could be heard most notorious. There he sat, looking like a street millionaire, gold teeth, Rolex watch, just a sore eye to the Church in Judah’s eyes. Judah hypothesized Mr. Greene’s role in the community, and it wasn’t a pretty one. That never deterred Judah’s love and admiration for Hawa, whom he met right here in the Church, yet he was still determined to win the hearts of Hawa’s parents, regardless of their sins. And next to Mr. Greene sat Mrs. Greene, looking as if she was a spitting image of Hawa. She clung to her tradition even more than her daughter, just, in love with King Jesus.

“This gives us time to sit back and think. To meditate on the Word of God, Amen? A lot of us will lose employment because a lot of businesses will close, but take it with a grain of salt,” it almost sounded like Judah was prophesying. “Take this time to interact with your children,

your spouse, your grandchildren!” Judah turned to smile and point at his mother, Lady Miriam Masod, as she sat elegantly off to the side on the pulpit. Regular Church folk may look at Lady Miriam and assume she wasn’t American from the way she looked and even dressed. Being from the Middle East as well, she held onto some of her traditions as well but allowed some rituals to be more lenient when she married Bishop. She didn’t wear a hijab, but her clothing was definitely vintage. Lady Miriam waved her oldest son off with a smile. “Take this time to dig deep within yourselves. Work out. Eat healthier. Do the Daniel fast with me?” he asked as a good amount of people clapped and praised.

“Give more. Pray more. Work on our mental health. Start that business you always had in mind. Read that book. Write that book! Cook more and stop eating out. Work on yourself, Amen?”

“Amen!”

“We will be opening parts of the church to house some of the homeless and our soup kitchen will remain open daily for whoever is hungry. I know things may get hard, with children about to be slumped up in the house, having to feed and entertain them as the schools would once do. I have a strong feeling that the schools will not open again for a while. New Jerusalem is stepping in to take some of that burden off. Amen,” Judah continued as the audience clapped and stood. “We are a community, regardless. We may have to close down the church depending on how bad things get,” he paused, shook his head in disgust, and looked out into the congregation.

He spotted his right-hand man a couple of pews back, Lamont. Lamont nodded towards Judah to give him props. They’d come a long way, even though Lamont was more unorthodox than anything, he was still in attendance. Instead of dressing up, he’ll come to church in a t-shirt that had a tie and vest printed on it, almost mockery. He only wore name-brand Jordan’s and never believed in dress shoes. At least the brother wore some slacks and came to church in the first place. Judah tried to never judge. He and Lamont were like brothers. But Lamont only came when he knew Judah was going to either be preaching or teaching Sunday school. Lamont felt uneasy being the male best friend of Bishop’s son. Lamont felt as if he wasn’t worthy enough to be in the midst, yet, he stayed put because Judah always treated him with the utmost respect in the Godliest way.

“Instead of going deeper into the Scripture today, we’re going to pray. We’re going to pray our hearts out. Give it all to the Lord so when we leave up out of here, we will feel renewed and strengthened for the times to come. We’re going to testify how real the Lord is, Amen?”

Judah asked as the congregation agreed and that was just what they did.

Judah prayed until tears were falling from every touched soul in New Jerusalem that day. He flowed like he was filled with the Spirit. He never stuttered as the prayers filled the ears of the people with gratitude. Hands were lifted, prayers were being shouted and people were kneeling and wailing unto the LORD as the pianist played slow and heavenly keys. It felt good. The energy. Being forgiven for all the guilt they once held onto. Right then and there, Bishop Isaac saw something in his son no one else could see. Strength and endurance. True strength and true endurance.

*‘The tests are yet to come,’* Bishop Isaac whispered to himself, witnessing the prominence that his oldest son displayed.

# Shemot

---

“**Y**ou a trip, man,” Lamont told his best friend, Judah. “We about to go on lockdown. This is the last home warming we’re ever going to be invited to before Jesus comes back. Why not go out with some dignity?” Lamont tried to re-word his statement, making the home-warming sound less demonic than a house party in the Natomas area of Sacramento. “No church service tonight too, thank you, LORD!”

“Ha!” Judah couldn’t help but laugh. “My *dignity* is with my Savior. Plus, Hawa would kill me if she knew I was going to a home-warm, oh, I’m sorry, a house party!” he continued to fold his clothes in his own tiny home situated in the back of his parent’s mansion. Lamont lay on his friend’s bed, tossing and catching a miniature basketball up and down, trying to convince Judah to attend. Judah never partied. Just wasn’t in him. He was grown before he was a child. He was too humble sometimes. Like a turn-off almost.

“Your Savior is everywhere you are, right? So, why don’t you and your Savior have some dignity with me tonight at this house part, I mean, home-warming? And only tell Hawa if she asks,” Lamont fought. “She ain’t gotta know everything, bro. She is just a friend. You more afraid of her daddy, the Pusha Man, huh?” he asked, smiling, trying to get the truth from Judah. “I see how fidgety you get when you’re around him. And I know you know something that you ain’t told me yet. I be having them visions too, man. Them dreams,” he shook his head emphasizing the truth. “I have dreams that be telling me stuff, Judah,” Lamont wasn’t lying. But Judah thought otherwise.

“Wow,” Judah sarcastically sounded. “What is it you dream that I am hiding?” Judah wanted answers.

“It’s too deep,” Lamont tried to brush the question off.

“Don’t start something and not finish it,” Judah shot.

“It’s weird,” Lamont gave up, wanting his best friend to help interpret his dreams. “I think it’s from ole girl, casting spells on me...”

“Ole girl?” Judah interrupted.

“Yeah, the Muslim chick that works with your girl, Hawa,” Lamont confessed when Judah thought he was always lying about Hawa’s boss spying on him. Judah thought Lamont had a thing for Hawa’s boss, even though no one had ever seen her face; it was always covered.

“You think Hawa’s boss is placing spells on you because she is Muslim?” Judah questioned and wanted to laugh but held it in.

“Seriously. I mean, I’m dreaming I’m in the middle of Iran, driving in the desert, man. Where would I get that from? Hawa’s boss spying on me! I caught her! And the dreams are concurrent. Like, I’ll have the dream on a Monday night, then that Thursday, the same dream will just continue from where it left off. It’s crazy,” Lamont couldn’t believe what he was going through.

“Driving in the desert?” Judah was just as confused.

“Right? Then, another day, as the dreams pick back up, I’m seen picking up this little kid, this little Arab boy, God bless his soul. It looked like someone smashed his face with a rock. But he was smiling and even had a warm presence,” Lamont couldn’t shake the dreams.

“Uhm,” Judah thought. “How do you know you were in Iran?” Judah asked.

“Right!” Lamont had always said *‘right’* when he was asked a question he didn’t know. He looked confused. “Ole girl from Iran. I saw her again. Today!” Lamont stated matter-of-factly.

“Who? The girl that works with Hawa?” Judah guessed right.

“Yeah, man! I mean, she wasn’t harassing me like she normally did. But, I don’t know. I get a warm feeling when I see her, but,” Lamont looked confused. “Is it something with, ok, like,” he stumbled over his words. “Because your lady is from that culture. So, like, are they putting spells on us strong Christian Black men? Or, like, are we assigned to convert them over to the free gift of Salvation through Jesus Christ? I don’t know. Something is calling me to that crazy woman. Maybe it’s just that I see you with a similar cultured woman and unconsciously I want to mimic or imitate.”

“And to think I was an overthinker,” Judah laughed at himself, but Lamont was serious.

“Maybe Hawa wants me and her boss to be together like you and Hawa are. So we can go on double dates or whatever,” Lamont ranted.

“Whatever it is, I can bet she means no harm. Hawa believes Fatima to be a special person,” Judah stood up for the woman stalking Lamont.

“Fatima! That’s her name!” he remembered. “Special like, special needs?” Lamont asked more so out of concern.

“No. Special like gifted from God.”

“Oh. And what does that have to do with me?” he asked. Judah gave him a blank face. Judah didn’t have the answer. “She forced me to get my passport before the epidemic. Paid for it! She even wanted me to sign for a Residency visa. I’m like, what?” Lamont was utterly confused.

“There must be a plan at hand,” Judah became serious and begin to ponder on what God was up to. This wasn’t the first time Judah heard Lamont rambling about Fatima. But, Judah had never met Fatima, only heard of her through discussions with Hawa and Lamont. Judah would usually rub it off as complaining from Lamont, but now, he paid a little more attention.

“God works in mysterious ways, I guess,” he answered.

“No. God doesn’t work in mysterious ways. Those who seek the LORD understand all things. God doesn’t deal with us in confusion and mystery. He tells you what He’ll do before He even does it,” Judah corrected.

“Uhm. That’s odd. When I look at instances like Jonah in a whale, seems kind of mysterious to me. Or Joseph being sold into slavery, falsely imprisoned, and then turning around to see him as the most powerful man in Egypt next to Pharaoh,” Lamont tried to explain. “Or how Job was humiliated even as a righteous man of God. Is there not a mystery to that kind of behavior? In Isaiah, it is written, *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways.*”

“You have been studying,” Judah was surprised that Lamont was able to quote Scripture. Lamont simply smiled. “Jonah being in the whale’s belly for 3 days and then emerging is similar to the crucifixion and Jesus being in the tomb for three days then resurrecting. A fulfillment of prophecy, not a mystery. Joseph being sold into slavery was much deeper than one can take at face value. I wrote a sermon on it. But to make a long sermon short, God used Joseph to teach him to be able to serve, so that he may be able to overcome a prideful attitude and learn humility. Joseph was chosen to save Israel. He had to be trained to be faithful, to prepare him to comfort others. To prepare him to lead his brother in repentance. To teach him patience, first, so that he may teach his brothers who later come with their backstabbing hands out. To teach him how jealousy can cause suffering. Ultimately, to save many lives. And Job. One of my favorites.

Having Faith in the Lord would save one from damnation before Christ was even born as said in Job 19: *'I know that my redeemer lives and that in the end, he will stand on the earth.'* A Christ was not something that just shot up out of nowhere. The Old knew of the Redeemer. They were simply waiting to be redeemed. And for the Isaiah verse, I can say the same between us, as humans. My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither my ways yours. That doesn't mean I won't tell you my thoughts or demonstrate my ways. God's thoughts are above us, yes, but that doesn't mean they are a mystery," Judah tried to convey. Lamont, like usually, sat there in defeat. "But back to your point about the housewarming, I want to be able to take Hawa out before everything is closed. I want to surprise her tonight," Judah tried to make clear.

"Surprise her? Y'all going out now? Like, y'all finally a couple? A whole relationship type thing?" Lamont sounded a little jealous.

"I don't know, man," Judah placed his head into his chest as he stood. He struggled between his raging hormones and Hawa. As a virgin, he wanted to wait until marriage to give himself to a woman. He often felt he would abandon that sacred vow between man and woman during marriage and end up giving himself to someone outside of marriage. This was another reason he didn't want to go to the house party with Lamont. He had enough temptation around him already.

"See, it got you stressing," Lamont instigated Judah's feelings. "Take your mind off the madness and just come chill with your boy for a while. Dress down and just come chill. You are well respected in the city, everyone knows you. No," Lamont slapped down some slacks Judah had picked up. "No slacks, no sandals, Judah, come on. Look like you from the year 2020AD and not 2020 BC," Lamont got up and went to Judah's closet. "I bought you these Jordan Concord 11's two years ago and you only wore them once to appease me. I am humiliated by you. You and your..."

"Lamont. Stop it. I'm not going. I want to take Hawa out before everything closes down," Judah was firm. But it looked as if Judah had struck a nerve. Lamont looked dumbfounded.

"Everything is already closed down," Lamont put his head down. "Good luck," he gave up and sat back down. "See, that's what I'm saying. Stressed," he continued to try and persuade. "I don't know why we can't go to this kickback, meet some new people, bring them to the Lord," he added emphasis on the latter, wanting his best friend to attend so badly that he'd say anything.

Lamont was compelled to attend this house party because Fatima, like always, had pulled up out of nowhere, like she was working with the police force, and notified Lamont of the importance of bringing Judah with him to this party in Sacramento. Of course, if Lamont were to tell Judah this, Judah would think the both of them were crazy, but maybe Lamont and Fatima were crazy.

See, Lamont was from around the way. Oak Park to be exact, is a section of Sacramento infested with gang and gun violence. Judah was from Natomas, a more privileged neighborhood. They'd known each other since elementary school and never really separated, despite their differences. Judah was slowly but steadily bringing Lamont to the Lord. After all, they both were good men, Lamont just being on the rough side a bit.

Lamont worked for Foot Locker, like a good tax-paying civilian. He didn't sell drugs and wasn't involved in anything that could get him caught up. This is why Judah and Lamont remained together for so long; they both stayed out the way.

"Bring them to the Lord, huh?" they laughed together. "Lamont, why would I want to go bring people to the LORD where there will be secular dancing, drinking, and smoking? Nobody's going to want to hear that. There's a time and a place."

"Man, check it," Lamont was steadfast. "You can just be in the background. Like, Jesus at the wedding," Lamont smacked his friend's chest lightly, wanting him to attend more than anything. Not only did Fatima convince Lamont to bring Judah to this party, but the party itself convinced Lamont. He hadn't been to a party in years, and it was getting lonely for him. He figured he could find a girl to hook up with. With that, Lamont needed a wingman and didn't want to show up to a party all by himself looking thirsty. Lamont had distant friends, but he never enjoyed their company. Judah's energy was grand, and Lamont loved being around his best friend more than anyone. But it was time for a woman to come into Lamont's life.

One day Lamont would commune with the Rastas and participate in smoking the 'herb' and the next day he's referencing the Black race being superior after listening to sermons from Minister Louis Farrakhan. Then, even on the next day, he comes back to Jesus, and everyone is made in the image and likeness of God. One wouldn't say he was confused; rather seeking and maybe a woman would help in solidifying his faith.

"Don't play with God like that, bro," Judah warned.

“Man, don’t give me that holier than thou bull crap either, Judah. Jesus turned water to wine, and it’s noted to be his first miracle. Getting people drunk? Are you trying to tell me God isn’t cool and wants to party? King David only sinned one time! One short of Jesus and other than that, he was perfect! Yet we see him dancing with the town folk and drinking. Partying! Dancing naked in front of the...” Lamont continually lifted his hands trying to remember where King David was dancing naked.

“The Ark of the Covenant. And no, King David was not naked. He was girded in a linen ephod. Go back and read the bible, Lamont,” Judah was serious when it came to Theology.

“You sure? Why did God curse David afterward then? God didn’t bless David after the frantic dancing. I remember reading that,” Lamont tried to argue his point.

“God didn’t curse David. God did curse his wife, daughter of former King Saul for looking down on the dancing of David; but no, God did not curse David. As a matter of fact, the wife died with no children for making the comments she did about David making a fool of himself by dancing half-naked and especially in front of the slave women. But David replies, *‘I am willing to look even more foolish than this, even to be humiliated in my own eyes to give glory to God. But to those servant girls you mentioned will indeed think I am distinguished!’*” Judah taught. After all, he was alumni of Biola University, one of the top-tier Christian schools on the west coast.

“Uhm,” Lamont laid back down and continued to throw the ball up in defeat. “Whatever. I didn’t go to theology school. I must’ve read it wrong.”

“But you can read and not go on hearsay,” Judah argued.

“Aye. Let me be real with you,” Lamont sat up. “You real anxious now, bro. Like, there is a certain seriousness about you that I do not see in your father,” Lamont admitted. “Like, when you were preaching today. That is not how your father preaches. Bishop Isaac is usually jumping around the pulpit in a childlike manner or crying on the pulpit with the people in a child-like manner,” Lamont gave accurate descriptions of how Bishop Isaac preached. It was true. It was almost as if Bishop Masod suffered from age regression. It was like he took Matthew 18:3 a little too seriously. Bishop was known to be quite comical as well. Judah was nothing like his father.

Judah was serious. Salvation was serious, nothing to be played with and even though Bishop knew this, he also thought he could go about saving people in a way in which would make them feel comfortable. This was the only thing Judah disagreed with.

“Pops about to give you the church and here you go acting like you better than everybody else. Like you Mr. Know-it-all. That’s making me very uncomfortable, man. Even your father knows to come to earth and be amongst the people with his style of preaching rather than acting like you know what God wants the people to do.”

“Excuse me?” Judah found much offense.

“I mean, you were always calm, cool, and collective with me as we’ve grown. Patient and whatnot. Now, it’s like I can’t even talk to you if I’m not on my righteous horse. You always argue with me, correcting me. Everything from you is a no. *‘No, I don’t want to go to the party. No, I don’t want to go shopping with you. No, I don’t want to at least listen to what Jay Electronica is spitting with Jigga!’* I’m about to call it quits!” Lamont was serious. Judah sensed it and immediately regretted his anxious, ‘holier-than-thou’ behavior. He knew better than that.

“Apologies,” Judah lifted his hand. “I’m afraid,” he gave in and sat next to his boy. “I’m about to be responsible for people’s lives, man. I can’t joke around with stuff like that.”

“Doesn’t mean you always have to be God-awfully serious. You’re only 21 years old, man. What do you think Jesus was doing at 21?” Lamont seriously asked.

“Don’t go there,” Judah shook his head knowing Lamont always had something up his sleeve.

“C’mon! Jesus isn’t mentioned in the Bible from age 12 to 30 and He decided to show off his divinity at a party? To keep the buzz going? What was he doing in His late teens and all of His 20’s that made Him come back and do that?” Lamont waited until he couldn’t wait any longer. “Partying!” he shouted and stood up to dance in front of Judah. Judah couldn’t help but laugh and knew the LORD was probably laughing as well.

“You might be right,” Judah gave in.

“Come on. Let me pick you out something to wear for the night,” Lamont went to his friend’s closet as they prepared for the night. “Yo, Pops got his own restaurant! You can take Hawa out anytime, man. Spend some time with ya main man before you’re gifted this humongous task! Like, a bachelor’s party, but for the saved and sanctified.”

“Lamont,” Judah tried to communicate with his friend, but Lamont wasn’t hearing it.

“Lamont, Croissant! Get dressed or we ain’t friends no more. I got a real good feeling about tonight,” he continued to try and dress his best friend. “Grandma Ruthie would have dressed you better than me and accompanied us with gratitude to the party,” Lamont brought up

Judah's Grandmother, Ruthie. Isaac's mother passed away about a year ago and the loss could still be felt, even to friends of the family.

"Grandma Ruthie," Judah looked up to the sky and felt her warmth.

"You feel her too, huh?" Lamont asked.

"Boy, that's my grandma!" Judah laughed with Lamont and got ready.

*Later that night...*

"I cannot believe it," Judah's mother sat up in her seat upon watching the news in the living room as Lamont and Judah entered.

"What happened?" Judah asked his mother, preparing to tell her of his departure with Lamont.

"Oh, nothing," it seemed as if Miriam was frightened by the presence of Judah.

"We, the undersigned, recognize the importance of maintaining and strengthening peace in the Middle East and around the world based on mutual understanding and coexistence, as well as respect for human dignity and freedom, including religious freedom," a man named Muhammad al-Hasan made known, giving the speech in front of the United Nations and others. He looked like the Americanized Jesus. "We encourage efforts to promote interfaith and intercultural dialogue to advance a culture of peace among the three Abrahamic religions and all humanity," he continued as Miriam could not stop moving in her seat. Judah took notice. "Therefore, we will proceed with the reconstruction of Solomon's Temple in the Holy City of Jerusalem."

"Mother," he called out. "I clearly see something wrong with you. Do you know this man? He's from your country?" Judah asked after witnessing his mother moving in her seat as if she was uncomfortable. This man looked young, about Judah's age and it inspired Judah. Someone so young speaking in front of the United Nations, trying to bring peace.

"Yes, I know him. I mean," she put her head down, not wanting to speak on it. She began to shake lightly and once she discovered her own shaking, tried to hide it from even herself. Judah knew something was up, but he decided to not act on it until the truth came out.

"Ok. Well, I'm leaving tonight to hang with Lamont," he announced, but Miriam ignored her son and ran to the kitchen, looking for something.

“Where is your father?” she asked Judah.

“I’m not sure,” Judah answered. “Mother,” Judah took her by her shoulders. “What is wrong? Please, tell me,” Judah rarely seen his mother act this way. Miriam stared her oldest son in the eyes, looking for an answer through her bulged eyes. She looked terrified.

“Ok, please tell me because,” she took a second to swallow, “I am not well versed in the Scriptures. How will the Antichrist come back?” she asked seriously.

“Antichrist?” Judah asked and looked back at the man on the television set. He was very handsome, and Judah knew this is how the Antichrist would come back. “How will he come back? I don’t think he comes back. Or maybe he does since 1 John says, *‘even now, many antichrists have come,’* and this was 2,000 years ago. But, like, the ultimate antichrist, I believe, is born from prestige. According to The Book of Revelations, he grows up under a King or monarch and knows that he is the antichrist from a noticeably early age. He deliberately accepts his role in this world,” Judah began to teach his mother. “Uhm,” it had finally hit Judah as he looked back at the flat screen in the living room. Miriam and Lamont followed to look.

“That’s the antichrist?” Lamont asked. Miriam said nothing as Judah looked on.

“Can’t be,” Judah looked upon this Iranian. Judah instantly thought of the Book of Daniel where he prophesied, ‘And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering.’ Judah thought this verse attributed to the antichrist because Matthew 24:15 referred to the sacrilegious object that causes desecration standing in the Holy Place. But maybe it referred to more than one event. Maybe it was a past, present, and future event. Also, The Book of Daniel stated that ‘the abomination that causes desolation standing in the holy place,’ which would be the final arch antichrist despising the third temple. Or did this pertain to pagan worship in the house of the Lord during the era of Daniel when the Israelites were in captivity? There was that past, present, and future thing taking place again. Maybe Judah was wrong. Maybe God did work in mysterious ways.

“Doesn’t the antichrist come from the lineage of Israel?” Benjamin came out of nowhere. This was Judah’s little brother, and he was almost smarter than an encyclopedia. “Since the Book of Daniel says: *‘Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers.’* Or was it Abraham who was considered the Fathers and not Israel?” he constantly fought with himself on numerous issues. “Abraham begot Christians, Muslims, and Jews, so to have an Iran Muslim coming back as the antichrist, being a descendent of Ishmael, almost makes sense, no?” Benjamin asked everyone.

“It’s *an Iranian Muslim*,” Lamont corrected his play brother most gently. “Still, you get any sharper, you’re going to cut someone,” he tried to joke but Ben didn’t get the joke.

“Doesn’t the rapture take place before the antichrist comes?” Miriam asked her son.

“Yeah, to the pretribulation believers. Yet, we can find evidence in the bible, depending on how interpreted of course, that believers will live through the 7-year tribulation, but be unharmed by the grace of God,” Judah said looking upon this Iranian man. Judah thought the antichrist was going to come from sort of a new type of Roman Empire, mainly America. “Well, if he is the antichrist, for the ones believing in the pretribulation events, we are clearly still here. We are firm believers,” Judah assured them.

“Are we?” Lamont asked, still trying to be funny. Judah wasn’t buying it. The way his mother reacted to this Iranian man, Judah knowing his mother was from Iran and the way she responded, terrified Judah. Yet Judah was determined to dumb down the situation.

“I wouldn’t stress about it. Father knows more about the End Days. Ask him, but I don’t know,” Judah gave this accused antichrist the benefit of the doubt. He was a handsome man and spoke exceptionally good English to be from Iran. But it wasn’t on the heart of Judah to be worried.

“Ok. Anyway,” she took a very deep breath while entering the open-styled kitchen again. “Where you guys going?” Miriam asked her firstborn. The kitchen was huge and bright, white-colored mixed with a mahogany wood embedded in all the fixtures. The Masod household was truly blessed as Lamont would only dream of having what his best friend had. Everything and everyone in the Masod household was clean and righteous, even little Ben.

“Yeah! Where are you going? Mr. Knower of the antichrist?” Benjamin asked who Miriam’s youngest son was of the two.

“I’m stepping out with Lamont, Little Brother!” Judah jerked at Ben to playfully frighten him.

“Ahh!” Ben jumps and runs to hide from his big brother, his kid side finally coming out.

Judah and Benjamin had a bond no one could break. They were all they had, and their relationship stood on solid foundation. And even though Ben was only 7 years old, he behaved like he was 7 times 7! Tell him that and he’ll respond, *‘77 times 7!’*

“Where are you guys stepping out to?” Mother Miriam asked in her dearest voice as she placed leftovers away. Miriam was a gracious First Lady and mother. She wasn’t the typical First

Lady we'd hear about or see on television or even in our churches. She was much like Hawa as far as tradition was concerned because they shared cultural ties, both being converted from Islam but still attached in some form. Jesus would have accepted them all. Plus, Miriam Masod was patient, soft-spoken even though she rarely spoke. But when she did speak, it was in Spirit as the walls of the Church would tremble when she praised the Lord. Everyone in Sacramento was well aware of the First Lady's power to move a people with her words, be it spiritually or politically, advocating for women's rights and the rights of the less fortunate. God surely moved through Miriam.

"We're going to a home gathering," Lamont butted in.

"Home gathering?" Miriam's asked. "You mean, a house party?" she waited for a response, adopting some of that American sass.

"Yes, ma'am," Judah responded truthfully.

"Uhm, that's quite unlike you, Judah," she pointed. "Now, Lamont on the other hand," she smiled, "the way I see you dancing in the church tells me this was your idea."

"Lord willing," Lamont confessed.

"Lord willing," Miriam whispered to herself. "You don't even know what that means," she laughed and swayed them off. "Be careful, boys. And wear a mask! The news reports this Covid-19 mess may get out of hand," she warned.

"Yes, ma'am," Judah and Lamont responded respectively, as they always did.

Lamont followed his best friend to the 4-car garage to enter Judah's black-on-black 2000 Cadillac El Dorado, his father's old car. For a 20-year-old car, it looked and drove brand new.

'*Cleanliness is Godliness*' was illustrated on the top of Judah's rear window as he backed out of the garage that was attached to the seven-bed, five-bath mini-mansion.

'*Beep Beep!*' Judah was alerted by his father's shiny Black Cadillac Escalade EXT pick-up truck pulling in the driveway as he was pulling out.

"That's Pops," Lamont spoke aloud, referring to Judah's father and also, a father figure to Lamont.

"Yeah," Judah responded rolling down his tinted window. "Papa!" Judah nodded.

"Son," Bishop Isaac responded. "Where you headed to?" he asked, just noticing Lamont in the car. "My other son," he pointed to Lamont and smiled.

“Pops!” Lamont greeted. Bishop Masod was still a 21-year-old in a 50-year-old body. He showed signs of age with his salt and pepper hair, but moved, smiled, and spoke as if he still had 100 years to live. Bursts of energy would erupt from Bishop and sometimes he would act as if he were only 12 years old, jumping, singing, yet praising the Lord all the way.

Bishop was lean, tall, and dark. It was a miracle that he didn’t succumb to using his looks and charm to harm the emotions of people, rather bring them to the Lord. And that he did. He got a lot of attention for it as well, just like his son. Like Father, Like Son. They were spitting images of each other. They actually envied each other most respectably.

“I got your offering from the church today,” Isaac threw his son an envelope that landed right in Judah’s lap. It was a hefty stack.

“Jesus,” Lamont was shocked at Judah’s offering from New Jerusalem.

“For the love of money is the root of all evil. Invest in finding yourself a place to stay so I can give Benjamin the back house,” Isaac almost ordered.

“Benjamin?” Judah was confused. Ben was a bit too young to be back there on his own, even though he behaved like an old wise man.

“Yes, Benjamin. Your mother and I want to reenact Adam and Eve. That includes walking around the house naked,” Isaac was serious. Lamont laughed whole-heartedly, but Judah was almost furious. He was suddenly being pressured to leave.

“Right when everything is going to shut down, Pops?” Judah asked.

“I didn’t say now, just start looking. You’re 21, Judah. You make enough money with the church. Hawa is ready for you, but you have to go talk to her father, Mr. Greene.” Just as Isaac mentioned Hawa’s name, she called Judah’s phone.

“Ok. I’ll start looking,” Judah lifted his phone as a way to say goodbye.

“Be safe. God bless,” Pops touched his heart and pulled into his garage.

“Hello,” Judah answered Hawa’s call.

“Oh my God,” she answered. “You made me cry today.”

“Really, how?”

“The way you prayed with us, Judah,” she exhaled as she fell more in love with Judah. “This was your fourth time ministering the service and I swear, every time you speak, you get better and better. You flew through the sermon so peacefully and thoroughly. You cited Scripture like a Theologian and taught knowledge like a professor. When your father took the podium, I

want to say I saw you in fast-forwarded time, but you preach much different than your father. You are more serious with your teachings, but not a put-off seriousness. I don't know. I like it," Hawa gave in.

"Stop it, Hawa. I'm blushing," Judah smiled.

"I'm only being honest. God has his hand on you, Judah. You're becoming wiser every day, and I'm your witness. Stay humble, my man," Hawa spoke as if she'd grown up on Lauryn Hill or Erykah Badu.

"Will do," Judah responded graciously.

"I know you're headed out with Lamont tonight. Just be safe. Wear a mask," Hawa ordered.

"Oh," Judah was surprised. "How'd you know?"

"I know more than you think, sweetheart. Call me when you get home tonight. I'll be up," she sounded sweet to Judah's ear.

"Yes ma'am. I love you," he would always say and waited eagerly for the day she'd return the love. Hawa never said she loved Judah, but Judah understood love. Judah knew love to be unconditional, so it didn't matter if she never said it back.

"Awww. Y'all too cute," Lamont joked as Judah hung up. "But aye," Lamont pointed to the envelope in Judah's lap. "You ever talk to your father about that?"

"About what? Tithes and Offering?"

"Naw. About what the word on the street is, intelligent one," Lamont said with some sarcasm.

"The word on the street?" Judah was more confused until that lightbulb lit up in his head. "Ah, Ha! About my father and Mr. Greene?" Judah smiled, knowing full in his heart that his father was never into that lifestyle.

"These ain't no back in the day stories, son," Lamont was surprised his best friend didn't know who he was from. "Man," Lamont shook his head.

"How can you be so sure of something like that, Lamont? Come on? Pops is the Bishop of Northern California. He spits too much truth. Only the devil would bring up crazy accusations like that."

"Cats just don't pull this stuff out the air, bro. Have you sat and talked with him about it?"

“No. There’s nothing to talk about,” Judah tried to end the conversation by raising his voice an inch. Lamont caught on.

“Just talk to him. Tell him you heard about it from around the way and watch him never deny it. He’s not going to lie in front of your face, but I believe Bishop Masod will mask the truth from you. Watch him never deny it though,” Lamont promised. Judah couldn’t believe his best friend. Sure, Lamont had mentioned this before, but the fact that he was bringing it up again only made Judah subconsciously question his father. He’d seen Mr. Greene and his father speak on numerous occasions but thought it only pertained to their children, Hawa and Judah. Mr. Greene referred to Judah as his nephew, even though they barely spoke.

“You’re crazy, man. You watch too much television,” Judah had a good fake laugh. “Maybe back in the day, and that’s cool man. If my father was some sort of drug dealer and all. God uses the criminals, the prostitutes, the killers, the thieves, the lame and transforms them into His Sons and Daughters. Paul used to kill Christians. Half of the disciples were thieves, liars, and untrustworthy. Matthew couldn’t even testify in court because of his profession.”

“As a tax collector?”

“Yeah! Publicans were regarded as traitors to their people, stealing their money and whatnot. Money from a Publican wasn’t even accepted in the Church as tithe or offering. This is why when Jesus sat with him for dinner, he’d upset the Pharisees, for they didn’t even associate with the Publicans. Simon probably had a couple of bodies on him, being a Zealot and all. Moses was a murderer too and yet, is one of the greatest prophets. Elijah killed over 400 false prophets with a sword. Let’s not talk about how much blood was shed from King David. David had so much blood on his hands, that God refused him to build the temple and gave the instruction to his son, Solomon. God uses all.”

“What’s a zealot?” Lamont asked, knowing Judah was an open Biblical Concordance.

“Zealots were a rebellious religion sect that fought against the Roman Empire and their invasion of Palestine. Die-hard Israelites trying to overthrow the Romans by force, basically.”

“Nice.”

“Right? So, if Pops did do a little dirt back in the day, so be it. I very much highly doubt he’s doing it now, bro. Now can we drop the accusations?” Judah asked nicely.

“Ask him,” Lamont was firm. Judah shook his head and turned up Miles Davis as they rode the rest of the way in silence.

If Bishop Masod was doing something outside of the Church, Judah was oblivious to it. Judah knew himself to be smarter than that though. He knew how to pick up on people's energy and knew his father was pure and sincere, even when silly at times. Judah had talks with his father. Talks about the past and how one wasn't so perfect in his life. Bishop never got into details but now Judah was more intrigued than ever. Isaac Masod would always reference Biblical events and figures when trying to explain his past and that was always good enough for Judah. But just from being around his best friend, Lamont, he was yearning to know reality, truth in its purest form. Lamont called it how he saw it and that was something Judah could relate to. He respected Lamont's mind which made Judah think creatively sometimes. There was a dualism that was present and much needed in Judah's case.

\*\*\*

"Here it is," Lamont pointed to a house that sat in a cul-de-sac. Cars were lined up everywhere as you could hear the music from inside. People were still mourning a deceased rapper by the name of Nipsey Hustle whose music was blaring from the party house.

"Wow! A lot of people here," Judah commented.

"A lot of people needing saving, right?" Lamont laughed with his best friend as they exited the Cadillac. "They got pool tables in the basement with foosball, the Nintendo Switch on the big screen, see," Lamont showed Judah an Instagram post of what was happening on the inside. "They got a designated smoke area in the back, so no smoking in the house. Maybe some naughty dancing and drinking but," Lamont shrugged his shoulders.

"Aye. Drop the holier than thou act, bro," Judah giggled.

"Thinking about gambling on some pool? I know how good you are," Lamont asked. Judah didn't want to seem uptight. He never gambled because the soldiers gambled for Jesus's clothes when He was on the cross. But then, the Disciples cast lots to figure out who would replace Judas as a disciple and the lots were in favor of Saint Matthias. Just then, numerous scriptures evaded his mind. Luke 12:15 states *being on your guard against greed for life does not consist of an abundance of possessions*. Or in Luke 16 stating that *we cannot serve two masters, both God and money*. Ecclesiastes 5 stating *whoever loves money never has enough*.

“Maybe,” Judah finally answered, thinking it is not too bad to gamble this one time. He knew he had no love for money. What he didn’t know is what it felt like to have no money. He was raised in money but taught to appreciate the smallest things in this world. He was always able to overcome temptation, even though he knew good and well that no man in this earth is good. He knew this, but fought every day, earnestly and easily to be this good man. He also knew that with big opportunity comes big responsibility. Judah knew the devil was going to be out, after him and his soul.

Judah whispered the Ephesians 6 verse to himself without a care in the world who heard or saw him: “The whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

“Amen!” Lamont smiled, Judah not caring if anyone was listening or not.

“Amen!”

As they approached the house party, they were greeted by front door security.

“Ahh shit! We got Minister Masod in the house!” one of the rent-a-bouncers stated. “Oops, my bad for the profanity, my faithful servant,” he held his mouth and began laughing, not to necessarily mock, rather an intoxication of some sort.

“All good,” Judah raised his hands as a surrenderer.

“What you doing here?” he asked. “Getting it all out before Armageddon, huh? We are already forgiven so why not, huh?” he laughed again. Judah didn’t find anything humorous and thought that as soon as he prayed, the devil popped right up.

“Playing wingman,” Lamont spoke up.

“Wingman? I go to New Jerusalem sometimes with my grandma, man! And you be on the pulpit looking at that Arab lady that be seated with the plug!”

“T?” the other door security asked.

“Exactly! The plug going to Church, talking with the Bishop. I peep game. I thought that was you,” he assured himself. This didn’t sit well with Judah. “Who you be looking at? The daughter or the wife?” he seriously asked. This angered Judah, but he showed no emotion. Judah knew right then and there that this may’ve been a bad idea.

“Brother,” Judah smiled and placed his hand on the shoulder of the man that asked the question. “Follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that does good is from God, but he that does evil hasn’t ever seen God,” he was truthful and straightforward, trying to straighten this brother out with Scripture.

“Ahh, here we go,” the bouncer slapped his hand on his head. “If you come here to preach, you in the wrong place, brotha,” they submitted a bit, discouraging entrance.

“Naw. I felt slightly disrespected when you just accused me of lusting after women in the Church. I react with Scripture...” Judah stated then Lamont immediately butted in.

“Instead of busting yo head in!” he aggressively stated. “With the Word of God, of course,” Lamont quickly corrected.

The guards laughed and clapped hands with each other.

“Y’all crazy, man,” the bouncer continued. “Wait, don’t you date the Arab girl? I’ve seen y’all at that café before. Uhm,” he tried to think of the name. Judah knew exactly what he was talking about. He and Hawa would visit Cushion Café very often. Three times a week sometimes.

Judah didn’t flinch. The evil inquiries and ignorance that these men displayed were humiliating, but Judah didn’t let it phase him.

“Bruh. Where the respect at?” Lamont spoke up.

“Respect? I respect this brother. I’m asking a serious question. People have lives. I’m merely interested in the well-being of the brother. They say Arab Muslims go to New Jerusalem and everything. I want to know what’s up with that?” this heavy-set bouncer stood his ground.

“There is a difference between an Arab Christian and a Muslim. Arab Christians wear hijabs because it is a part of their heritage, their culture,” Judah explained why hijabs were in the Church. “Women were wearing hijabs in Genesis, boy,” Judah tried to be intimidating by using the ‘boy’ word. “Rebekah wore a veil and covered herself when she meet Isaac off her camel. In Numbers where...”

“Ok ok, we get it. But why?” the bouncer was seriously interested in why these women wore coverings over their heads.

“To prevent j-cats like you from sending bad and unwanted sexual energy just by looking at her face!” Lamont spat. “To keep hidden the precious gems of God from evil thinkers and doers! Duh! To leave the man’s mind with imagination instead of revealing everything to them,” he pointed to the head of the bouncer.

“Lamont,” Judah grabbed his friend’s arm to calm him down. The bouncers looked at each other, the main speaker being angered a bit by the looks of his facial expression.

“He got a point,” the other bouncer that rarely spoke had finally spoken up. “Come on in, Brotha Masod. A pleasure to have you here. Don’t go preaching in this mutha- opps,” he covered his mouth again to prevent him from cursing. His whole demeanor had changed in an instant. “And for you,” the bouncer pointed to Lamont, “keep my man safe,” he patted Judah’s back to confirm his safety as they entered the house party.

“I got big packs coming on the way / I got big stacks coming out the safe / I got Lil Max with me he the wave / It’s a big gap between us and the game!” Lamont rapped the words to the song now simmering as they were inside. Judah was quite surprised Lamont knew the words.

*‘Late in the midnight hour / God’s gonna turn around! It’s gonna work in my favor!’* Judah sang to himself in the midst, trying his hardest to remain humble and holy. Even though he was used to a barrage of people, to his surprise, the energies weren’t so far off. This wasn’t his type of environment, but still, he understood dichotomy to a certain extent.

“Come on. Let’s go to the basement,” Lamont yelled to Judah over the music while grabbing four Styrofoam cups. He doubled them and handed one pair to Judah. “I know you not drinking, but at least put something in your hand, bro. Get em out ya pockets, loosen up,” Lamont tried to make Judah feel at ease. “Never leave your cup out either. You’ll wake up asking God for the most forgiveness,” he added as they followed a small crowd to the basement.

“Wassup, Lamont!” a girl came out of nowhere and surprised Judah’s best friend.

“Oh snaps! Wassup, Rosi!” Lamont greeted and was happy to see a friend. Rosi was fly. She had red braids in her hair, was light-skinned, and wore some of the most enticing clothing. Nails long and done really nice, smacking on bubble gum, and looking as if nothing can stop her from doing her. Mama would call her *fast*, but Judah wasn’t quick to judge. He’d seen many people come to God, from all walks of life.

“I forgot to give you something,” she hung onto Lamont and placed her finger to his mouth. “Come on,” she slurred as she’d clearly been drinking. Lamont looked up at Judah before responding to Rosi like God was going to judge him if he agreed to leave with her. Rosi peeped that Lamont had looked upon Judah, looking for an answer. “Who this?” Rosi got a little too close to Judah.

“This is my best friend I was telling you about. The Bishop’s son, Judah. Judah, Rosi,” Lamont introduced as they stood right outside the door towards the basement.

“Ahhhh! Judah! I heard soooo much about you,” she tried to straighten up, her words becoming clearer, and decided to rest her hand upon Judah’s chest. Judah’s manhood rose a bit, feeling the divine energy from another woman.

*‘Temptation. No,’* Judah fought and thought to himself. This was too much for Judah, already. It seemed the devil was everywhere he went.

“You traitor! You sold your own brother into slavery! You slept with your daughter-in-law through prostitution!” she began to spit like she was possessed. “I got something for you!” she pointed into the chest of Judah.

“I saved my brother from death! The Messiah came through Judah sleeping with his daughter-in-law,” Judah knew exactly what she was talking about and was quick to counterattack. Rosi looked surprised.

“As I said, I have something for you,” Rosi said, still awfully close to Judah. “She studies that Theology stuff,” Rosi continued to rub on the chest of Judah, wondering how Judah would react.

“Rosi!” Lamont tried to tame his girl. “Dang! You like Judah now?” “Oh hush,” Rosi tried to look into the eyes of Judah. Judah resisted and faced upwards. This was too much. Rosi took Judah’s arm and slowly began to move it towards her. “Feel the warmth of where God comes from,” she thrusts Judah’s hand between her legs.

“Rosi!” Lamont almost yelled, seeing the whole thing. Judah jerked his hand from her and stood there in shock.

“Sniff it,” Rosi commanded more than anything. Judah and Lamont held a stare of disbelief. Judah felt as if he could faint, but he didn’t want to appear anything less than a man.

“Bruh, my bad,” Lamont tried his best to apologize and even smiled a bit just from looking upon Judah’s face of shock.

“Go ahead. Hahaha!” Rosi clapped her hands as her bangles clinked with every clap. “Just because you the son of Bishop, doesn’t mean you anybody’s Jesus. Lamont looking all up to you for permission to come with me. Ha! What kind of crap is that?” Rosi was upset with Judah’s rule.

“Watch how you talk to me, Lil mama,” Judah was firm. “I don’t play games.”

“Ooohhhh,” Rosi intentionally shook her knees like she was seriously terrified. “What you gone do? Call fire out the sky? Elijah! Boy, please. What you gone do? Huh? Pray for me? Lil holy celebrity tryna come up in here and..” it seemed as if she blacked out for a moment and stumbled back towards Lamont.

“Rosi. Please, act humane,” Lamont was just as embarrassed. He then looked to Judah. “What you tryna do, bruh? You good?” he asked. Judah looked up at a Rosi going in and out of consciousness. To be so cute and smart, she sure was drunk. And it didn’t hurt to think someone was cute and smart. It wasn’t a sin to let something like this pass. It’ll be a sin to judge. After all, she had a point to Judah. All life form comes from something similar to what he touched.

“She mentioned somebody studying Theology. A she. Where she at?” Judah asked Lamont, trying to fit in the best way he could by also diverting from the awkward situation. It seemed as if Rosi suddenly woke up and smiled at Judah after hearing his interest in the person studying Theology.

“Uhhh,” she moaned as if she’d just waken up. “Her downstairs,” she pointed in a flirtatious manner. “Lead the way,” she created a path for Judah. Without thought, Judah led the way downstairs towards the basement.

The same music was playing as people were crowded in the basement. Judah still held his hand out and decided to smell it without thinking twice. Why not. It’s his hand.

“POW!” a man’s voice echoed followed by the crackling of pool table balls. Even though Judah jumped a bit from the man’s sudden voice, the sound of Pool was so refreshing. He knew, just by how the balls clicked together, that someone with some skill was playing. Pool was Judah’s favorite sport, easily. Call him nerdy if you want, but the young man would rarely give the opposition a turn to play. If Judah was breaking, 8 times out of ten, he was finishing the game without losing a turn. The only people that knew this were Judah, his father, his little brother, his mother, and Lamont.

“Ok. 8-ball corner pocket after this solid blue 2 hits the side,” the pool player concentrated then knocked the solid blue ball in the side pocket and the 8-ball in the corner pocket just as he said. “GAME!” he yelled. “Who next?” he asked collecting a big wad of cash. “Hahahaha! Who next?” he kept calling out, counting his money.

“Ain’t nobody down here messing with my mans in this pool!” someone else yelled from afar.

“Tell ‘em, Russ! 5-time Sacramento Pool Champion at only 20 years old! Who said you can’t get rich from playing pool?” he flashed his money. Judah simply smiled, knowing he’ll be a good match, but he didn’t say anything. Judah had dreamed of playing in the Sacramento Pool Championship and even when encouraged by his father, Judah would always determine his studying the Word was more important. Maybe he did need to venture out a bit while keeping his faith and salvation.

“Aye! I got \$50 on my boy Judah!” Lamont yelled from behind. Judah’s heart fell into his stomach. “Judah, right here!” Lamont had his \$50 out and placed it on the table.

“Judah! Step up!” the loudmouth eyed Judah and called him out. Everything was moving so fast. Before he knew it, Judah had a pool stick in his hand.

“Aww snaps! That’s the preacher son! That’s the young New Jerusalem preacher!” someone called out from the crowd. Loudmouth looked at his opponent.

“It is, isn’t it. Preacher or not, the Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away! Prepare for Him to taketh away. Rack ‘em up!” he slid the triangle toward Judah as the crowd erupted in laughter. It was funny how people quoted Scripture they didn’t understand. That Scripture pertained to Job and his unique situation. People misunderstood the love of God. But here and now was not the answer, or maybe it was. Judah looked around and many people were about. He held his tongue. “How much you betting, Preacher boy?”

“My name is Judah,” he dug in his pocket and counted out \$1,000, all \$100’s, from the same envelope his father gave him. It barely made a dent. “\$1,000!” he called out as it seemed the music stopped and the whole crowd gasped. Loudmouth didn’t flinch. Instead, he smiled.

“Make it \$2,000!” he pulled out a wad of cash. “Since you and yo daddy wanna pimp our Black community, I’ll just take ya money and Robin Hood it right back to us. Deal?”

“Save the Black community. What’s your name, brother?” Judah asked with his hand extended.

“My name is Finna Take yo Money Mack!” he dapped Judah’s hand instead of shaking it and counted out his two thousand. The both of them handed their money to the ‘money man’ and Lamont made sure to be right next to the ‘money man,’ just in case.

*“Wise men lay up knowledge. But the mouth of the foolish is near destruction,”* Judah quoted Proverbs 10:14. The crowd instigated again with various oohs and awws. Judah looked around again to see all his people, yet the ones on the other side of the fence. Brothers with gold grills in their mouth, drinking Lord knows what. Beautiful women of all color shades being present, looking upon Judah and Mr. Finna Take yo Money Mack.

“Get him, Codi!” a girl yelled from the crowd.

“I got you, baby!” Codi replied.

“Codi, huh?” Judah found out his name. “God Bless your heart, Codi,” Judah removed the triangle from the table.

“God bless my heart?” Codi took out a coin. “You funny. You call it to break. Heads or Tails?”

*“For we are the head, and not the tail,”* Judah thought and called out, “Heads!” The coin was surely heads, as the crowd simmered with anticipation.

“Your break. Good luck,” Codi said, toning down his energy since so much money was on the line. Judah got in position and took a deep breath. He chalked the tip of his pool stick and even chalked between his fingers. Judah then became level with the playing field and began to concentrate for the break. Before he could inch the stick through his fingers, a splendid figure came into focus that sat right in front of him. She’d shown as a light. He couldn’t help but to focus on her before breaking the balls. A radiance emerged from this feminine figure that was irresistible to the sight of Judah. He concentrated, examined, and tried to comprehend all while looking as if he was preparing to play.

She stared back at him like she wanted to burn holes straight through him. Rosi sat next to this young woman, whispering something in her ear. They almost looked identical as Judah assumed that to be the girl Rosi was talking about. She was drop-dead gorgeous. The way the basement light fixtures gleamed on the defined structures of her face that partially hid behind the fat, shiny, blackened locks that occupied her head. The way she simply looked at Judah or whatever she was sending his way was surely reaching him. To Judah, Hawa was his Eve, and he

was her Adam. The first of many. But this woman, Judah felt as if he were Solomon, and she was the Queen of Sheba. He shook it off a bit.

Judah regained his composure and concentrated. Pool was as easy as eating cake to him, so he wasn't worried about a woman sending him energies of any sort to off his game. Judah inched the pool stick between his fingers held his breath and struck the cue ball towards his favorite part of the triangled balls.

***“Clackackack!”*** the balls split with sophistication. Two solids went in as planned.

“Solids,” Judah confirmed. Codi's face grew weary when he saw how Judah broke. His stance, his swing at the stick all looked intimidating. Judah positioned himself to knock all solids in. And with every ball that went in, the crowd grew more anxious. Judah was using the striped balls to knock his solid balls in and even jumping the cue ball over stripes to get to his balls. The man was amazing. He peered at the sister glowing in between turns and she was nothing short of impressed, clapping and smiling and all the works.

“The Preacher's son though!?” Codi yelled once Judah was down to the 8-ball.

“8-ball, side pocket,” Judah called it, and boom! Game! The crowd erupted in celebration.

“Double or nothing! Double or nothing!” Codi yelled. “You didn't tell me you were a professional!”

“Was I supposed to tell you anything?” Judah smiled, happy to have won the people over with his pooling skills.

“Double or nothing. Only in the name of good Sportsmanship,” Codi extended his hand and got close to Judah but not an intimidating closeness. Codi was bigger with a gold chain that looked like it was worth something. “Double or nothing?” Codi's right hand was out for a handshake to seal the deal while his other hand had more money in it. Judah peered at Lamont and Lamont simply shrugged his shoulders, leaving that decision up to Judah himself. Judah then peered towards Rosi's girlfriend, and she still sat there, sipping on something, awaiting the decision from Judah. A simple nod of her head did it for Judah. That's all he needed.

“Ok. Double or nothing,” Judah took Codi's handshake. Codi gave the money man another \$2,000 while Judah gave back the \$2,000 that came from Codi.

“Loser break!” Codi took the initiative. Codi prepared the triangle and then went to take the position.

**“Clack!”** he broke as three solids went in.

“Solids!” Codi called out and hit the next two balls in. On the third ball, he scratched and cursed his lungs out.

“You know you then messed up!” Lamont called out to Codi as Judah took his position. In his peripheral, he could see Rosi’s girlfriend slightly raising her hand. He peeped and noticed her shaking her head in the ‘no’ position.

*“Don’t do it,”* was the message he received from her. Don’t beat this man twice and take all his money. Let him win back his money and go home, breaking even, to whereas everybody is content. Judah took the advice and scratched on purpose on his next play.

“Awww, bull crap, Judah! Don’t let him win!” Lamont yelled out, knowing very well that Judah staged that last play. Codi didn’t let up again. He made sure to knock all his balls in and called 8-ball, corner pocket, to nail it in the coffin.

“Whoa!” he celebrated, and the crowd erupted in celebration. The money man respectfully paid everybody their money.

“Judah!” Codi approached amongst the ruckuses. “I know you threw that last game, bro. You would’ve really had to turn that other cheek if you didn’t throw it,” it sounded like a threat coming from Codi.

“Turn the other cheek?” Judah asked. Codi held back from saying anything else with a smile faker than his demeanor.

“I have a team. You should join us,” Codi changed the subject.

“Really?”

“Indeed. Hit me up,” Codi handed Judah his phone to place his number in. Judah followed.

“The Lord on my side bro. I fear no man. All that slick talk is dead to me,” Judah shot back. Codi was impressed. He didn’t take Judah for being one to stand up for himself.

“You’re right. My bad. I appreciate you, no doubt,” he whispered and shook the hand of Judah before going his way.

“Scary boy. You know you threw that last game,” Lamont said coming up from behind Judah.

“Right,” Judah confirmed. “I would’ve done the same. No telling what them Garden Blocc Crips be up to.”

“Garden Blocc Crips?” Judah asked.

“Yeah. Codi. Shot caller. Highly respected,” Lamont said as Judah looked back and caught Codi staring him down in jealousy. Judah nodded his head and got a nod back. “Looks like you made a friend. Shoot, you could probably convert all the Crips, starting with Codi,” Lamont tried to find light out of the situation.

“Judah!” Rosi made him jump.

“Jesus!” Judah turned and was facing the girl with radiance.

“This is my sister that I was telling you about. Pita, Judah. Judah, Pita,” Rosi introduced.

“Pleasure,” Judah spoke with a smile. Pita lifted her gorgeous locks behind her head and took his hand. Right when they touched, a sharp stream of chilliness entered their bodies simultaneously. They both jumped within themselves at the same time. They spoke to each other without verbally talking, confirming that they both felt that chilling experience upon contact. What Judah had not known is that Pita knew who he was. Pita knew more about Judah than he thought.

“I dreamt about you,” she admitted through the noise.

“Oh, is that right?” Judah smiled as Pita smiled gracefully. Judah figured she was just running game on him.

“Quite odd for the Preacher’s son to be in a place like this,” Pita began with another topic, but before Judah could respond, ruckus broke out further into the basement that caught everyone’s attention.

“Judah,” Lamont quickly grabbed his best friend to escort him out. “You too valuable to get caught in any of this,” Lamont said as everything was moving too fast. Judah was unable to make out the words being exchanged, but surely heard the shattering of glass, the dropping of bodies in which looked like an all-out brawl. Judah took one last look before continuing up the stairs behind Pita and Rosi with Lamont at his back.

“*My mans,*” Judah thought of Lamont as it was wise to leave.

“Y’all drove here?” Lamont asked the girls as they were exiting the house. The party was clearly over that fast, even though the upstairs party had no idea what was going on downstairs. They were smart to leave early. Anything getting out of hand, especially in Sacramento, was a no-no.

“Yes! Why?” Rosi asked, looking less relaxed and soberer.

“Follow us,” Lamont gave instructions before confirming with his friend. Judah wasn’t tripping though. He was more than intrigued by Pita, as a human being of course. He wanted to delve into the reasoning behind that chilling experience and whatever her dream was. He wanted to know her, as a human being, of course.

“Follow y’all where?” Rosi asked.

“To the Sacramento River. I know a nice spot that way with the city view. Yeah?” Lamont raised his hands in question. Rosi and Pita checked for each other and then smiled in approval.

“I guess,” Pita finally gave in as they walked to their cars in the cool air of the night. Lamont smiled and nudged Judah as if they had just found treasure.

“Bring her to the Lord,” Lamont made a sinister laugh.

“*That’s my job,*” Judah thought, yet his mind was somewhere else. Pita jumped in the driver’s seat of a newer Infinity.

“Oh snaps! That’s you?” Lamont was surprised at what Pita was driving. Judah reached his Cadillac and Pita took notice with a smile.

“Keep up!” were Pita’s last words before she entered her car.

“But ain’t they following us?” Lamont said more to himself than to Judah as they entered the El Dorado.

Pita pulled up to the driver’s side of the Cadillac. Both windows tinted as they were lowered. The dreadlocks on Pita were so beautiful, they made Judah want to mimic.

“I got a better spot. Rosi said you already took her to that spot back in the day,” Pita told the gentlemen. “If I lose you, you lose me,” Pita said and sped off.

“Go! Get her!” Lamont tried to juice his boy up.

“Lose her? I got Hawa. I’m not in need of...”

“Boy! Go! She getting away! This a NorthStar engine, son! And I ain’t NEVER seen you pedal to the medal this ‘granny-driving-Miss. Daisy’ Caddy, Judah! Go! Live! Moses and them were doing 70 in a 50 when they went through the divided Red Sea, running away from Pharaoh and them! GO!” Lamont was firmer than ever. Judah looked in his rearview and witnessed Pita getting away. He did drive a V8, dual exhaust that was in excellent condition all around. Judah never as so much floored his car. Maybe that chilling sensation was worth chasing. Maybe it was time Judah opened up a bit.

“Ok. Hold on,” Judah thrusts his car into drive and spun out to make a U-turn. Pita was making a left 3 lights up which made Judah increase the pressure from his foot to the gas.

“*Vroom!*” the engine roared as the Cadillac gained speed with ease.

“YEAH BABY!” Lamont yelled, holding on to his seat. “LORD GUIDE US!” he yelled as Judah smiled, racing through the streets of Sacramento.

After making a left to catch up with Pita, Judah was gaining speed as he’d hit 100mph in a 35mph zone.

“Ok. Too fast, Johnny!” Lamont calmly asserted. “Slow down, Judah!” he warned again but Judah was feeling himself. One of those spontaneous events. He’d been struggling with that chilling sensation from touching Pita ever since it happened in which probably led to him trying to chase her down without a care in the world. “Judah! We close enough. Slow down, Abraham!” Lamont was still fired up but was also concerned. “JUDAH!” he yelled and snapped his friend out of his trance. Judah let off the gas and began to brake.

“My bad,” Judah caught hold of himself. Lamont simply stared at him, wondering who this man was. He’d never done anything like that. Break the law like that. Lamont knew he peer pressured him, but when Judah got a taste of that other side, he went all out.

“Yo bad? You blacked out, boy! You like her that much?” he waited for an answer, but Judah didn’t respond. “I saw the way y’all glared at each other when y’all touched. Love at first sight, huh? Ha! I know that look, man! Hawa gone cut yo throat,” Lamont laughed hysterically. Judah gave his friend a grim look, still driving slightly above the speed limit just to keep up with Pita.

“You not the one to run your mouth, are you?” Judah asked.

“You even sound different! Run my mouth? I ain’t never heard you say anything like that. Usually, it’s, *‘A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger,’* or *‘Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise.’* Both verses from Proverbs you use daily when coming into confrontation! But now it’s running my mouth?”

“Ok. Ok,” Judah congratulated. “I see you studying,” Judah was all smiles, loving the feeling of pushing his car to the limit, yet hating the fact that he’s chasing women and breaking the law. Mixed feelings at their best with his only fuel being Lamont’s encouragement.

“And I see you loosening up. About time. But don’t have me be the reason you lose it, bro. I fear if you get too out of hand, won’t be no coming back for you. Feel me?” Lamont asked,

knowing that if Judah did get a taste of the fast life, it'll suck him in faster than anything in this world. He also knew this to be true from the rumors in the streets about his father being involved in some not-so-holy business.

"Naw. I don't feel you. I'm protected by the Blood," Judah confirmed. "Always and forever."

"Don't mean God won't slap the living crap out of you, Judah."

"Look who talking," Judah snapped a bit. Lamont was left with his jaw dropped. He couldn't believe how fast Judah changed. Judah never said, *'Look who talking'* or anything or that matter. Of course, there were smaller incidents in the past that concerned Lamont, and they aired that out earlier in the day. Judah apologized for his uptight behavior. A righteous uptight behavior though. But tonight, there was a snotty-type behavior associated with Judah that turned Lamont all the way off.

"Bruh," Lamont had had enough. "You got me ready to put hands on you, boy," he pointed to his friend. "You losing respect. Not just for me or yourself, but for God. And for what? What I do?"

"You act like if I don't sin, we can't hang," Judah was coming from the heart.

"Negro! We already forgiven for our sins! What are you talking about? I was pleading for you to come with me to this party where all kinds of temptation occurred," Lamont was feeling himself.

"That don't mean we deliberately sin!" Judah shot.

"Oh my God! What? Are we supposed to be praising God all day? Reading the Bible all day! Trying to be good all day, every day! Following the white man's laws when he doesn't even follow them himself! Trying to be deemed human to a government that hates Black people! You speed a little, play a lil pool and converse with women, and now you a sinner?" Lamont asked. "Doing it all with a smile on your face, huh?"

Judah didn't respond. He took in the words from Lamont.

"Man, you know what?" Lamont looked about his surroundings as they still followed Rosi and Pita. "Where are we going?" he pulled out his phone and dialed Rosi.

"What?" Rosi answered on speakerphone.

"Where we going?" Lamont asked.

“We to Pita’s apartment, by the River. She got a leftover vegan lasagna. Y’all good?” Rosi asked. Lamont looked at Judah. He wanted to call it a night, but he’d never been to Pita’s place. Opportunity for some quiet time with Rosi. And lasagna! But vegan. He was still down.

“We good?” Lamont asked Judah, not wanting beef when it was evidently there.

“Of course, Lamont,” Judah gave in.

“Of course we good. You heard my mans. We spending the night?” he asked followed by the girls laughing aloud.

“Guess that means no,” Lamont smiled.

“We pulling up now. Just follow us into the garage.”

Judah followed Pita into the parking garage of Capitol Yards, an upscale apartment complex situated right at the Sacramento River.

“I don’t plan on being here long, bro,” Judah tried to make certain before anything else got out of hand.

“I know. I know. We can leave whenever you ready. Or shoot. You can leave me here if they ain’t tripping,” Lamont was giving options.

“Whatever,” Judah said feeling neutral about the whole situation. They exited the Cadillac and followed the girls to Pita’s apartment.

“Nice place,” Judah complimented on the residence. “What do you do?”

“I do me,” Pita was all smiles. Pita was happy to finally have some company. She worked hard to become a Professor of Sociology at Sacramento State at the ripe age of 23. The first and youngest Black female to attain such a position at Sacramento State which was just the beginning of her already accomplished goals.

“She’s a professor at Sacramento State!” Rosi put her friend on blast. Judah instantly thought of Hawa who was attending Sac State.

“Oh wow. Very nice. What do you teach?” Judah asked.

“Sociology,” Rosi responded again.

“Aye, Miss. Lady. I can speak for myself, thank you very much,” Pita shot at Rosi as Judah tried to think about which classes Hawa was taking. Things were looking messy already so Judah decide to not reveal as much as he should.

Pita led her company up the stairs to the third floor and into her apartment.

“*Meow!*” was the first thing everyone heard.

“Athena!” Pita picked her Siamese cat up as her company awed at her place.

“*Meeeeooooowwww!*” the cat kept making weird sounds.

“She’s in heat. Don’t mind her,” Pita laughed it off. Once her company got to looking around, they figured Pita was very neat as her place almost looked like a staging area.

“You don’t actually read this stuff, do you?” Lamont reached for her massive bookcase situated right beside the front door.

“Read, write, co-write, you name it,” Pita locked the door behind us. “Ok. Check it. I’m only letting y’all in my house because of who you are,” she pointed to Judah.

“Ah! Excuse me!” Rosi got mad.

“And the fact that y’all mess with each other, I guess,” Pita waved off her sister and Lamont and focused back on Judah. “Y’all hungry?”

“Yup!” Lamont was quick to answer as Pita began to prepare leftovers.

All four of them ate and small talked amongst each other for the next half hour.

“The hot tub open?” Rosi asked as she and Lamont were trying to get some alone time.

“24/7. Here,” Pita handed her sister the key.

“We’ll be right back!” Rosi smiled as they almost ran out the front door. As soon as they were gone, Judah and Pita made an eye-contact with one another that was borderline sexual. They both knew that they were able to control themselves, but something was different about the person that stood in front of them. That feeling upon touching was something that they both wanted an explanation for, but they didn’t know how to communicate it. What now?

# Vayikra

---

“You uh,” Judah tried to start a conversation, but couldn’t as Pita waited so eagerly to listen. They stood in the kitchen putting dishes away. She even moved closer as to catch every word he was to say, but the ole Siamese cat had his tongue. Judah didn’t know whether to speak secularly or to steer more towards his profound knowledge of theological matters.

“Lord,” Judah began to speak to God in his head while staring at Pita. “Why are you doing this? Am I in love already or is this lust? Am I being led into temptation? What about Hawa? You are not the author of confusion. Why?”

Then, in Judah’s mind, God replied, “Boy, you accompanied on your own accord.”

Judah laughed at himself for thinking how God would respond.

“What’s so funny?” Pita smiled and Judah waved her off. “Ok. Cite the first scripture that comes to your head. Now! Go!” Pita put him on the spot with biblical matters.

“Uh,” Judah was taken aback.

“Don’t even think about it! Just go!” Pita challenged him more than anything.

“Ok,” Judah closed his eyes, took a deep breath, then opened his eyes and his mouth at the same time. He still saw Pita, but they weren’t in the apartment anymore. They were in the Garden of Eden, before the Fall of Man. Just like that. His imagination had shocked him a bit. Never has he imagined so vividly. He decided to play on the matter, still maintaining much respect.

“Behold, Thou art fair, my love; Thou hast doves’ eyes within thou locks. Thy hair is like a flock of goats descending from the mountains. Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep just shorn, coming from the washing. Each has its twin, Not one of them is alone,” he continued as Pita was caught laughing and blushing.

“Your lips are like a scarlet ribbon, and thy speech is calmly. Your cheeks are like halves of pomegranate behind your locks. Thy neck is like the Tower of David, built with rows of stone, on it hang a thousand shields, all of them shields of warriors,” Judah stopped and opened his eyes, knowing the next verses may’ve been a bit inappropriate. Judah witnessed Pita in a daze of some sort, like a jolt of shock went through her. She sat there; mouth opened.

“Really fast,” she held up her hand and went to retrieve something from the living room. She came back with a small journal in her hand. “There is a reason you are here,” she seemed somewhat excited. “I’ve been having dreams,” she admitted. First Lamont, now Pita.

“You mentioned at the party,” Judah reminded.

“Out of all people, you. I’ve only been to one of your Father’s sermons. Check this,” she began to read from her journal. “This is my dream: *I was on a plane with a group of people, but we were all separated. I remembered seeing the Bishop’s son from New Jerusalem. He was on the plane, and it felt as if I was traveling with him, just not seated next to him. Then we arrived at a place that was beautiful with trees and animals and even people I’d never seen before. It looked like the Middle East. As I was walking and taking in the views, the Bishop’s son was suddenly walking beside me,*” she stopped and peered up, but Judah knew there was more.

“Uhm hmm,” Judah insisted.

“That’s it.”

“No, it’s not. I see more,” Judah pointed, intrigued since this was the third time the Middle East had come into Judah’s focus. First, from Lamont’s dreams with this whole Iran thing. Secondly, his mother and the news situation from the Middle East and now this.

“That is personal. Maybe I’ll tell you someday,” Pita laughed but to Judah, this was no laughing matter. Something was fishy and Judah made sure to pay attention to these dreams.

“Ok. You finish. Thy neck is like the Tower of David, built with rows of stone, on it hang a thousand shields, all of them shields of warriors...”

“Naw, the rest is...”

“My breasts...” Pita fixed her bra and Judah almost fainted at Pita’s knowledge of the Scripture rather than the movement of her breasts.

“No way! You know the Word?” Judah asked. Pita simply smiled.

“There’s a lot you don’t know about me. Please,” Pita laid out her hand to escort Judah into the living room. Her television displayed a Gif of a raccoon studying at his desk as lo-fi hip-hop beats played in the background.

“So, you’re a Christian?” Judah asked his new friend.

“I don’t like being labeled,” Pita confessed.

“Ok. But you do believe in Jesus?”

“Haha! I’m not sure. What is belief? A friend of mine got raped by her uncle who wears a Jesus cross around his neck and believes in the Lord, so what’s the difference if somebody believes or not? It doesn’t necessarily make them a better person, now does it?”

“Uhm,” Judah couldn’t say much.

“It has come to my knowledge on the legendary gods of spiritual instruction in the most prominent places and cultures like India, Judaism, Islam, and even Christianity came from the datum that it was entirely in the hands of scholars and religious leaders trained in literature, or of Ecclesiastics and Monks of book religions who were professionally educated in the art of poetry. And the Bible being constructed in the, what? Second, third century by Constantine; in which originally the ancient Hebrews authored those books. He had the nerve to have his pagan and Roman Catholic posse to discredit maybe the most important texts we’ll never read, or the missing Gospels as we call them today. Then the various translations of homosexual King James in the 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> century, translating the original text from Greek to English with his quote-unquote ‘poetic land of men’ only leaves us to question the authenticity of certain words, phrases, and verses. And who were these ‘poetic land of men?’ The greatest poet and storyteller in that day and area was who? Shakespeare! Yes, ladies and gentlemen, Shakespeare wrote the Bible,” she spat.

“So we discrediting the Bible?” Judah asked feeling challenged by Pita’s intellect. “And let us not contradict. You just said the Bible was *translated* in the 15<sup>th</sup> century when Shakespeare was alive. So, therefore yes, Shakespeare could have helped *translate* the Bible, but he didn’t *write* it,” Judah pointed.

“Not exactly,” Pita intervened. “Do you even know how to read Hebrew?” she asked and by Judah’s reaction, she already knew the answer. “Wow. So, you preaching a religion that you’re unable to read in its original form?” she almost laughed, getting more settled into the sofa they shared.

“There isn’t much difference,” was all Judah could come up with. Pita decided to let him slide, just a bit.

“It’s just very watered down. The Gospels we have today, if insignificant, are not to result. For instance, it was written of the wealthy young man: *‘He went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.’* The **missionary** commandment, however, is unconditional and unambiguous, give what thou has, absolutely everything! The **legislator** will say that this is a

socially senseless imposition as long as it is not brought about everywhere. Thus the legislator supports the tax policy, confiscatory taxation, outright seizure of properties and personal belongings, in a word, compulsion and regulation for all. The **moral** commandment, however, is not at all concerned with ruling classes, taxation, and the like. This unconcern is its essence. Or take the example, *'turn the other cheek.'* This commandment does not question the sources of the other's authority to strike and is quite unconditional. Except for a saintly man, it is a moral of humiliation. This is it. One must be saintly in everything; at least in intent, one must live like Jesus and His likeness. Then this moral makes sense and expresses a kind of pride in servitude; otherwise, it does not. For it is said, in line with the universal morals of love, *'Resist not them that is evil with force,'* for the legislator the opposite holds, *'thou shalt resist evil by force,'* or else you are responsible for the evil taking over you. He who wishes to follow the ethic of the gospel should abstain from strikes, for strikes lead to compulsion..."

"Ok, wait, before you go too deep," Judah held his hand up. "You mean to tell me the Bible stands on these moral principles and commandments from these different perspectives of morals versus legislator versus missionary? What about the ethical truth? What about what's real and not these categories made up by men?"

"Exactly! What about truth? Where is truth? I mean, just to put it in perspective, the Romans represented the legislator, the Jews represented the missionary, and yet Jesus was all of the moral commandment, the missionary, and the legislator. How? It just doesn't make sense to me," she looked for an answer in Judah, rather than trying to prove a point. It threw Judah off a bit as he barely understood where she was going. He was almost confused because he'd never been faced with such a dilemma. He prayed in his heart for God to give him the words to reply.

"Let's use your examples. Did not Christ test the young man's faith? Was not the young man's faith more into his perishables than in the truth he sought? He doubted truth and wasn't fully submissive to the LORD God of whom he served. That's a hypocrite, no? Everybody doesn't have great possessions, even in Heaven, so if the legislator did govern the ruling of giving up all one had, would not everyone be equal? Would not we separate ourselves from the flesh and be closer to God, O Legislator? Jesus also says, *'Give unto Caesar what is Caesars and give unto God what belongs to Him.'* This also very well accounts for His outlook on the legislator side of..."

“Which doesn’t coincide with his moral nature. He’s being submissive to an evil government,” Pita combatted.

“But even you stated the moral commandment is not at all *concerned* about it and that this *unconcern* is its essence. Not submitted, just not concerned. That’s why Jesus was able to send Peter to cast a hook in the sea and to gather gold from the mouth of a fish to pay taxes. Christ didn’t care for worldly money...”

“Yet He had an accountant as a disciple.”

“Because He had a mission. He was still a man, having to eat and fast. Tired from exhaustion, having to be wrapped in cloth as a baby to keep Him warm, because He was one of us. Human. He cried and laughed and displayed emotion and compassion. Our brother. Our King. And when you’re tasked with saving the entire world, you’re going to need a crew, a posse as you may term it, so they can go collect food in the manner of tithes and offering,” they laughed and caught glances. This stimulating and theological conversing was touching the hearts of both Pita and Judah.

“A mission, huh?” Pita smiled, not defeated, but giving Judah the upper hand since he had a point. She could have gone there. She could’ve dug deeper, but she decided to save that for another day, in case Judah stuck around.

“Indeed. Christ regularly argued with the Pharisees and the Elders alongside the missionary ethics because unlike Him, His commandments were conditional and ambiguous as for the people who are not spiritually inclined have not the ears to hear, the eyes to see nor the heart to receive. Don’t throw pearls to the pigs,” Judah ended.

“Sounds like you saying I’m not spiritually inclined,” Pita tried to start some mess, all the while smiling. The next sound was the teapot whistling. “Upt, that’s the tea,” Pita raised herself to make her company a beverage.

“You are very spiritually inclined. I didn’t mean that. I’m just so used to talking to Hawa and my mother,” Judah confessed.

“Hawa?” Pita asked, busy with the tea. “Name strikes a bell,” Pita confessed.

“Yeah. That’s my lady,” Judah was truthful, trying to make it known that Hawa was close to his heart more than any other woman, intimately without action.

“Why didn’t you bring her?” Pita asked, clueless, for now, that Hawa was a student of hers.

“Not her cup of tea.”

“Uhm. *But your cup of tea,*” Pita smiled and whispered to herself, more concerned about the pleasure she received from having such prominent company over. She intended to pick his mind, for fun and potentially enlightenment.

“I’m sorry?”

“Oh nothing,” Pita said returning with two steaming cups of tea and her cat Athena joining the tea party.

“You mentioned this being my cup of tea. I heard you,” Judah laughed, letting Pita know he was hip to game. “As I said, I came out with my friend since everything is to be closing very soon. I just wanted to get out of the house, break the norm a bit. Nothing wrong with it. The Church is going to be closed for the foreseeable future,” Judah was trying to find every excuse to come out.

“I was just playing. I’m not trying to flirt with you in the realms of all this knowledge, my mans,” Pita playfully shoved Judah. “I’m actually in sort of a relationship with someone too. Crazy thing is, he’s Muslim. Black Muslim,” Pita laughed.

“Nice,” Judah was attentive. “I’d love to talk with him,” he confessed.

“I’ll set something up. We were arguing a few days ago about The Holy Wars or the Crusaders. Ok, question,” Pita sat up and became more conscientious. “To the best of your knowledge, what were the Muslims and Christians fighting for between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries?”

“Uhm,” Judah sat up himself and looked off into the living room to think back on his studies. “There are many theories. To the people, they fought over land, I would assume. What land would belong to the Christians and the Muslims? To discredit my faith a bit and even to hoax secret societies, there is a theory that they fought over the body of Christ. Gained that from some external readings. For political reasons, they may’ve fought to establish a religious government within that area. I’m not too sure which to believe.”

“And you condone this warfare?” Pita asked.

“Not at all.”

“Then why fight?”

“Conflict of Interests. You know how men behave. *There is no one righteous. Not even one.*”

“These are supposed to be religious men though. Men of God supposedly.”

“What are you saying?” Judah asked.

“Religious men. Men of God,” she repeated. “Religion! That’s what I’m saying. The great wunderkinders of celestial love of humanity and goodness, whether stemming from Nazareth, Asia, from the Indian Royal Castles, or what have you, have not operated with the political means of violence. Religion has! The supreme sacred values, which are promised by religion have not necessarily been universal ones. Not everybody has entrance to Nirvana, to Heaven, to the meditative alliance with God, the carousing, or the abstemious possession of God. That’s where a division is created between the religion and the message, the soul, unity,” Pita felt herself delving.

“Yup,” Judah could do nothing but agree. She had a point. A good one, as Judah tried to follow.

“The ones that came teaching us how to live and love. Yeshua, Buddha, Krishna, Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him. Their kingdom was *‘not of this world’* and yet they tilled the souls of men and continued to work in this world. He who pursues the salvation of his soul and others should not seek it along the avenue of politics, for the rather distinct tasks of politics, or that legislator role can only be solved by violence. Therefore, Religion and Politics coincide. The genius, or demon, of politics, lives in an inner tension with the God of Love, your God religiously, our God universally. This tension can lead to an unreconcilable conflict, at any time. Religious men knew this, even in the time of Church rule, and this is why I eerie the Bible a bit, alongside every other translated religious text,” Pita made her point. Judah smiled and almost fell in love on accident right then and there.

The resistant knowledge that Pita displayed was something that kicked off the euphoria in Judah’s brain. He tried to kick the feeling, but he couldn’t. He felt himself get excited, inwardly, and outwardly. Her quest for truth was attractive versus Hawa who just accepted and obeyed out of fear. Judah enjoyed the bold resistance.

“There’s a saying,” Judah began, smiling and impressed. “*The devil is old; grow old to understand him.* This saying may not refer to age in terms of chronological years. I have never allowed myself to lose out in a debate from a reference to a date registered on a birth certificate. But the mere fact that someone is 18 years of age and the other older, maybe even elderly, is no cause for me to think that that alone is an achievement before which they are overawed. You can

grow old with a dead spirit your whole life. Age is not decisive; what is decisive is the trained relentlessness in viewing the realities of life, and the ability to force these realities and to measure up to them inwardly. See, and I try to explain this to a lot of people I come across in the Church. I am under the impression that in 9 out of 10 cases, I deal with *people* who do not fully realize what they take upon themselves. These are the ones who intoxicate themselves with romantic sensations. From a humans point of view, this is not extraordinarily interesting to me, nor does it move me intensely. However, it is extremely moving when a mature man - no matter whether old or young in years – is aware of a responsibility for the consequences of his conduct and feels such responsibility with his heart and soul. He then acts by following an *ethic of responsibility* rather than an ethic of legislator, missionary, or morals. Then, somewhere during this persons' journey, they reach the point where they say: '*Here I stand; I can do no other.*' That is something genuinely human and moving," Judah wondered if Pita was following along as he was both explaining his definition of the *devil growing old quote* and his very own mission on earth.

"And so," Judah continued, "every one of us who is not spiritually dead must realize the possibility of finding himself at some time in that position. As far as this is true, an *ethic of ultimate ends* and an *ethic of responsibility* are not absolute contrasts but rather supplements, which only in unison constitute a genuine man – a man who can have the '*calling for politics,*'" Judah finished. "Like Obama," he added.

"Like Obama!" Pita laughed. "Right!" she said halfway sarcastically. "So, basically you're saying, find your calling. When you do find your calling, immerse yourself in it. It doesn't necessarily have to coincide with romance or the material things of this world. Upon finding out why you're here, it shouldn't be taken lightly as the consequence for ignoring your calling can be devastating, in this life and the next," Pita tried her best to understand Judah. Before he could talk, she continued, "And, having found your calling can be synonymous with developing into a genuine person, one capable of responsibility, like that of governments and politics."

"Precisely," Judah smiled.

"Ahhhh shucks!" Lamont appeared with Rosi from the front door. "Never seen you smile this wide, broham!" Lamont said, noticing Judah's face. Rosi ran straight to the back without saying anything.

“Boy, what? Where Rosi?” Pita asked playfully.

“I think she went straight to the shower.”

“We ready to go?” Judah asked his best friend.

“Ready to go? We ain’t been here but a couple of hours. Look like you having a suitable time to me,” Lamont fought.

“Oh, my bad. I thought y’all were done, she taking a shower and everything,” Judah apologized.

“We just getting started,” Lamont rubbed his hands together and almost whispered.

“Boy, go!” Pita demanded Lamont to go back into her guest room with Rosi.

“Aww, like that? You enjoying Minister Judah like that?” Lamont was silly. Happy. Drinking. “Well so be it!” he left with skip.

Pita and Judah locked eyes, each waiting on the other.

“Welp, looks like I’m hanging,” Judah exhaled.

“Your *lady* friend isn’t going to be worried?” Pita asked.

“We don’t operate like that.”

“Like what?” Pita looked dumbfounded.

“Trust issues. We trust each other. We’re best friends. Plus, we rarely get ourselves into anything outside of our homes and the Church,” Judah confessed.

“Uhm. And this is the rare occasion of you getting yourself into something outside home and Church?” Pita was started to become adamant. Judah didn’t know how to respond. He knew where Pita was trying to go. He knew he’d gotten to her, but still decided to play it safe.

“I thought you had a Muslim boyfriend? You a bit too friendly to be having a boyfriend, no?” Judah was straightforward.

“How you figure I’m being too friendly?”

“Your feet are curled up under your legs, your leaning towards me, you’re almost touching me,” Judah pointed to where her knee was slightly touching Judah’s thigh. It was evident Pita was feeling him, even Mr. *Drunken in Lust* Lamont witnessed it.

“Oh,” Pita hurriedly removed her feet from under her legs to sit upright. “I’m sorry,” she looked sincere.

“No. Haha,” Judah laughed softly and whole heartedly. “I’m sorry. This is your adobe. If anything, I am trying to contain myself from thoughts only a man would think,” he had spoken too fast and immediately wanted to take back his words.

“And what would a man think right now?” she went there but Judah was good with controlling his thoughts.

“Fleshy desires.”

“And what is wrong with fleshy desires? Do not they come from God?”

“Spiritual desires come from God,” he said, intentionally leaving out where fleshy desires come from. He knew she would have a counter.

“Is not sex a spiritual act?” Pita went there. She figured why hold back?

“It is, between a man and his wife,” Judah confirmed.

“*Then let’s get married,*” Pita thought and, like Judah, immediately expelled her thoughts of lusting after Judah.

“Uhh?” Judah asked as he literally heard her thoughts but couldn’t understand fully what the thought conveyed. Pita looked upon him, knowing there was a chance he heard her thoughts.

Judah wasn’t going to lose his cool. He was in love with Hawa but just to have another perspective, and also coming from a beautiful woman, was marvelous. He made a mental note to go in depth with a new study on Mary Magdalene’s role in Christianity.

Just then, the moon seeped through the window of Pita’s cozy living room. Both Judah and Pita took notice.

“Beautiful isn’t it. And a full moon at that. It’s a sign,” Pita smiled as if she really believed it was a sign. Her smile lit up the room in itself. He hated to compare but Hawa’s smile was like a diamond in the dirt; you had to find it as her head was nearly always bowed. Pita’s smile was like the sun on a cloudless day; radiant and forthcoming.

“Beautiful indeed,” Judah’s soft yet deep voice entered Pita’s ears and stayed there.

“*Thank you,*” Pita thought, taking Judah’s comment on the moon for herself.

“Did you know,” Pita started and waited for Judah’s reaction. He was attentive. She was glad. Kareem, Pita’s Muslim boyfriend was the one always taking. He knew the Quran like the back of his hand yet practiced Black Islam or a form of Black Nationalism. It was almost a turn off to Pita, the Black man being God and the woman being Earth. Pita didn’t like that concept at all.

So there they were, Judah being as attentive as possible as he actually listened, even though their beliefs weren't parallel.

"Yeah?" Judah waited with a warm smile. Right then and there, Pita had to contain herself as well.

"Uhm, heh," Pita removed her fat black and shiny locks from her face in a shy like manner. "The Moon," she pointed. "It caresses the tides of the waters so that the Earth doesn't flood herself and water makes just about everything live, no?"

"Correct," Judah agreed.

"Have you ever meditated on the Moon, or even the Sun for that matter? We are Black folk. I believe the Sun and the Moon has healing properties. Ha. Kareem laughs at me when I digest the rays from the moon and sun."

"Digest?" Judah was confused.

"Yeah, like this," Pita stood up and Judah's eyes wandered to places of secret veils. He quickly slapped himself internally and tried to make himself holy from within again.

*'This is a sister of the Lord's,'* Judah tried to convince himself. Pita stood next to the window near her patio and looked back.

"Come here," she waved, and Judah met her at the oriel window. Judah was still admiring the place that belonged to Pita. "Come on, sit up here," was a space big enough for Pita and Judah to sit and admire the outside world. "Meditate with me, just for a little bit. Your God is cool with meditation, correct?" she seriously asked.

"Of course," Judah said thinking on the many times Jesus left his disciples and meditated.

"Good. Now, sit Indian style to create a roundabout of energy," Pita made an invisible circle with her finger outlining where the circle of energy is to be recycled along with the Indian sitting style. Judah was flexible, so he followed suit.

"Like this?" Judah asked and Pita nodded.

"Now, just look at me and what I do. And when you began to imitate, be sure to try and release thoughts from your mind," she instructed. Judah was familiar with such practices but rarely practiced them. The Holy Spirit was the best of all comforters. "When you release all thought from your mental, you allow a passageway for the Creator to speak to you," she mentioned the Creator. Judah smiled. Maybe he was unconsciously converting.

"Ok," he simply followed orders.

“You would start by staring at the Moon,” Pita began to meditate and instruct at the same time. “Get rid of thought and when you feel yourself drifting off, close your eyes slowly onto the Moon. Stick your tongue out, like this,” Pita stuck her tongue out slowly and Judah couldn’t help it. He wouldn’t have been a man if he didn’t get excited from this beautiful stranger with her eyes closed and her tongue sticking out.

*‘What is she doing?’* Judah was actually taken aback. He almost wanted to stop the whole meditation until she continued.

“The Moon is actually brighter than the Sun, as far as gamma rays are concerned. When Sun and Moon rays hit your saliva and you swallow your saliva, you are digesting divine entities that has existed since the beginning of time,” she stuck her tongue back out. Judah looked like a baby seeing something cool for the first time. He forgot to follow suit and meditate himself. It was like there was a magical spell being placed on him, a magical love spell.

*‘No. Stop it,’* Judah laughed on the inside. All the women that have approached him in the name of Jesus, he ought to be used to this. But Pita didn’t approach in the name of Jesus. She was a different type of receptive from other women Judah encountered.

“And breathe. Focus on breathing, either through your nose and out your mouth or vice versa,” she inhaled and exhaled, sticking her tongue back out. Judah wanted to mimic but was in such a state of awe, nothing else mattered. It was like time had frozen. Judah began to hear birds and water as if there was a waterfall nearby. Night turned into day in an instant as it appeared Pita took on the brightness of the Moon. Yes, the Moon! Pita was still, almost like she was unconscious in a matter of minutes. Judah’s entire world transformed around him as his mind began to wander.

*‘Why you doing this to me, Lord?’* Judah’s mind asked. Then the Lord responded.

*‘You doing this to yourself,’* The Lord sounded like a woman rather than a man. This made Judah question to whom he was talking. He immediately became frightened a bit and wanted to escape this ethereal world. But he couldn’t escape. He was trapped. If he gave in, he’d be ok. But he didn’t want to give in any longer and wasn’t ok with the whole ordeal.

*‘Lord, remove me from this place,’* Judah asked nicely in his mind.

*‘Why remove what stirs your curiosity?’* was the Lord’s answer, along with a sensational rub from Athena the Cat. It made Judah smile in the mist of this bliss only briefly before he replied.

*'Because I am steadfast in my beliefs!'* Judah shouted in his mind, thinking no consequence was going to be brought forth for doing such.

'As you should be. Yet, **knowledge** is the **potential** of **power**, and that **power** is **wisdom**,' emphasis was put on keywords from this Lord herself.

"And I am that wisdom," Pita spoke, opening her eyes as this imaginative world faded instantly before Judah's eyes. "And you are that Knowledge. You *know* the *ledge* before falling off the *edge*," she smiled, looking deeply into Judah's eyes. Pita witnessed the moon substituting the eyeballs of Judah and began to fall in a spiritual love with every little aspect of Judah. Something had just happened there and neither of them could take it back.

They spoke without speaking and it looked as if Judah was filled with something other than the Holy Spirit. It almost looked as if Judah had been drinking, the way his mouth propped open, his eyes droopy and his attentiveness below alert.

"How do you feel?" Pita asked Judah as he tried his hardest to keep his composure.

"Good," was all Judah could come up with, trying to tap back into reality.

"You look a little shook up," Pita laughed a bit. "Here," Pita reached for the face of Judah as he appeared to be hot. "My hands are cold. Looks like you about to break out into a sweat. Too much?" she asked, resting her hand on the forehead of Judah. It felt good. Her cooling touch. Judah closed his eyes and received her touch.

"I was born to give the white man hell, and I will give him hell from the cradle to the grave! But when I see a fellow brother of mine receiving touchy feelings from my woman, that same wrath shall be bestowed on my brother, for he is behaving like the devil," a man announced from behind them. Judah quickly snapped out of whatever he was in. Pita jumped up and approached Kareem, her boyfriend.

"Babe. You're back early," Pita said, only a little concerned.

"Of course, I'm back early. Allah put it in my heart to come back home," Kareem said getting closer to Judah. A young Black man dressed in all black, looking like a member of the New Black Panther Party. He had a mini afro that sat on his head that was picked perfectly. "And of all people in this entire world, Brother Masod is here," he dropped his bags right in front of him. His face read confusion. "This can't be. You a good dude," Kareem pointed. "What in the devil's home are you doing in my house?" he asked. "Wait, you got a fiancée, no? Earth Hawa!

Right?” his words sent shivers down Judah’s back. Also, it had just clicked in Pita’s mind, right then and there that Hawa was a student of hers.

“What, I,” Judah was at a loss for words trying to comprehend what Kareem was saying and still overcoming what he and Pita had just experienced. *‘Earth Hawa?’*

“And to think, Fatima bought 6 airline tickets to Iran. You,” he pointed to Judah. “Me, Pita, Fatima herself, Earth Hawa, and some fool named Lamont,” he spat. Judah thought this was another dream. Kareem had come out of nowhere and began to make claims that made absolutely no sense to Judah.

“Lamont is here. Him and Rosi are in the back,” Pita spoke up.

“In our guestroom?” Kareem’s voice grew louder. “Wait. You turning my home into a whorehouse when my sister is trying to fulfill the will of Allah?” he was clearly angry and went straight to the back. Without notice, Kareem flung open the door to their guestroom and witnessed Rosi and Lamont.

“Kareem!” Rosi announced as she continued to give Lamont a back massage, on a rug floor, listening to a classical album.

“Whorehouse?” Pita swung Kareem around from their guestroom and dared him to act out of accordance again. “This is our home. Don’t come up in here with that bull crap, Kareem. Brother Masod and I were meditating while Lamont and Rosi entertained each other with the hot tub, massages, and some tea! Jesus! Breathe!” she calmly yet firmly stated. Kareem wasn’t hearing it. He looked directly at Judah, but before he could say anything, Judah started.

“How do you know Hawa? I’ve never seen you at New Jerusalem,” Judah wanted answers. “Earth Hawa at that?”

“Earth Hawa a 5%’er, my Christian brotha. You didn’t know?” his lips spread into a devilish smile.

“5%’er?” Judah heard the phrase before but wasn’t hip.

“Nation of Gods and Earths,” Kareem stated.

“Oh,” it was coming back to Judah. “A sector of the Nation of Islam?”

“You can say that,” Kareem nodded. “It’s a shame you know not what your woman does. That’s crazy,” he looked to Pita and the others for approval. They weren’t buying it. Judah knew Hawa worked at a daycare filled with a diverse of Muslims and Arab Christians who got along fine, but what was this 5% mess?

“Ok, but how do you know Hawa?” Judah repeated.

“My sister owns the daycare center, boy. Relax. You should be glad she’s around faithful sisters, covered up at all times. You not going to chastise that, are you?”

“Chastise? What?” Judah was confused by Kareem’s words.

“I know how you Christians are, quick to judge. Another reason I can’t believe the son of Bishop Masod is dating outside his very own religion,” Kareem shrugged his shoulders. “Y’all got Muslims and Jews all up in the church!”

“They are Middle Eastern and Jewish Christians. They are not Muslims nor orthodox Jews,” Judah was clear.

“So, Earth Hawa a Christian yet she prays with the sisters every time the Adhan is called?”

“What’s wrong with prayer?” Judah wasn’t to judge. “If anything, Jesus was more Muslim than Prophet Muhammad.”

“Peace be upon Him. And how you figure?” Kareem smiled.

“Jesus prayed very often, more than five times a day I would assume. He was in constant communication with the Father, no? He would leave His disciples to just go pray. He gave to the poor something better than money. That’s called *zakat*, correct? He gave them sight to see, healed them of disease and such fourth. Christ preached one God! Christ went on a 40 day fast just like Moses did in the mountains with God. Can we consider that to be *Ramadan*? Forgive me because I know there are more pillars,” Judah was trying to remember.

“The pilgrimage to Mecca!” Lamont answered as he decided to join the festivities in the living room.

“Ha! Seems Jesus forgot that one!” Kareem laughed.

“Really? You tell me where He was from the ages of 13 to 30?” Judah tried to counter.

“India!” Lamont spoke again. Some modern biblical scholars would’ve sided with him.

“India, perhaps. Mecca! In the Mormon religion, America?” Judah was thinking outside the box. “So me being with a Muslim cultured woman feels more right than anything. At least my lady believes in something,” Judah spoke a bit too fast. He turned to Pita. “Not to-”

“It’s cool,” Pita lifted her hand. Even though Pita was searching, she still believed in something and that something was self.

“She’s a believer,” Kareem tried to keep his cool. Underneath, his blood was boiling, yet he decided to use that anger to clap back at Judah theologically.

“A believer in what?” Judah asked, smiling.

“The belief in One All-Powerful, All-Wise, yet anthropomorphic Creator. It is the trademark of our ancestors religion of the Black Man and Woman. Come on, you should know this, being called and all. Our ancestors religion and the God that inspired it provided us with the thought process and world view allowing us to build marvelous civilizations which baffle scholars and scientists today. These civilizations were built on righteous law. Long before Moses received the Ten Commandments, we displayed our righteousness in the 42 Negative Confessions in Egypt, and the Code of Hammurabi in Ancient Babylon. This is the same God that appeared to us, all the prophets from Abraham to Moses to Muhammad. Since we have abandoned our Father,” Kareem pointed to Judah, “we have been able to build as much as a teepee for ourselves, by ourselves,” he added, making Judah think on the outside help needed for building the New Jerusalem Church. “We turned our back on the Gods we worshipped when we were World Rulers and now wonder why we cannot even rule in our own homes. The Gods of our Forefathers have been abandoned and the gods of the enemy have been adopted. Black people are to be truly liberated from our oppressors once we organize a Black Liberation Theology in order to pick back up the Black God of our Fathers and render unto Caesar what is Caesar’s,” Kareem stuck his hand out. Judah simply looked it at, moved, in a way, but not enough to shake on it.

“So, that’s what you preach? God being a Black Man?” Judah asked, that smirk still across Kareem’s face.

“The Honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches us that God is not a formless, immaterial spirit. God is a Man, more so He is a Black Man. Not Man as we currently understand man; but Man as he was before the Great Fall! Fall of Man! This Man is divine, supreme in knowledge, wisdom and understanding, holiness and power! He has power overall, period,” Kareem spoke in which Judah only agreed with the latter. “Exodus 15:3...”

“The LORD is a man of war,” Judah finished for him. “The LORD is His name.”

“Well, amen,” Kareem congratulated even though Judah knew that Kareem was elementary in his studies. Man before the Fall of Man did not know evil, therefore how could the first man, or the man before fall know all things, all powerful and supreme in knowledge? “You

do know that Scripture, but you have to understand it. When we say *spirit* we're simply saying *energy*. Both Spirit and Matter, the incorporeal and the corporeal, are two manifestations of the same One Reality. This One Reality is God. Energy is eternal according to the Law of Conservation of Energy, which claims that energy is neither created nor destroyed but constantly transforming. This one essence is the same and from it sprang both matter and spirit. The two are different forms of the same basic stuff in as much as ice and steam are different forms of water.”

“That’s Einstein’s  $E=MC^2$  equation right?” Lamont asked.

“Indeed. With energy moving at light years multiplied by light years, energy begins to gain mass, making it something material rather than invisible. Creation didn’t begin until God’s Spirit, or Energy, began moving upon the face of the waters. Then Light came,” Kareem taught.

“What are your sources?” Lamont asked, wanting to be a part of the argument.

“The Bible! Think about it. When Jesus Christ was resurrected He had the ability to travel from one place to another at the speed of thought and the ability to walk through walls. This indeed was Man before the Fall. And also this Man was able to function properly on Earth. Actually, many people believe God to be up in the sky, hidden somewhere. But actually, following the God of our Ancestors we come to find out that God and His Divine Council are hidden in a secret subterranean Kingdom called Shamballah. From this hidden kingdom, located in the Earth, underground, God and His Host are said to direct the affairs of Nations and individuals. According to Ancient Egypt tradition, the man-God named Atum-Ptah, tunneled through the Earth, and constructed a subterranean paradise called Shamballah or *The Hidden Earth*. No one knows where this place is today. Some say Afghanistan, others say India, but all the people there are protected from Evil, and crimes do not exist within its bounds. Science has there developed calmly, and nothing is threatened with destruction. The subterranean people have reached the highest knowledge and now it is a large Kingdom, millions of men with the King of the World as their ruler knowing all forces of the world.”

“Wow,” Judah bowed his head and giggled a bit. “That sounds a bit farfetched. God the Father being beneath us? You sure you aren’t mistaken for Satan?” Judah didn’t mean to throw shade. “I mean, I exemplify Christ, The Lamb, The Blameless One. I demonstrate the order in which God our Father wishes us to live, right here and now. Christ ascended unto Heaven. Not into the Earth, like our forefathers, where this Hell is supposed to be. Believing in such myths as the Lord dwelling beneath the very people He created is very much unorthodox and

extraordinarily little factual proof. But I understand brother, we are not perfect, but through Christ, we are made perfect,” it seemed as if Judah ridiculed what Kareem believed in and was trying to bring him to Christ. Kareem thought he’d already known Jesus, just through a different lens. This angered Kareem. Judah was just like every other Christian, oblivious to new knowledge.

“Nothing wrong with a little bit of knowledge,” Kareem spoke through clenched teeth.

“Trust in the Lord your God and lean not on your own understanding,” Judah shot. That was it. Kareem felt as if Judah was clearly disrespecting. Lack of Knowledge is what kept the Black Man in this poverty-stricken state he was in. First they were caught in his home and now he was being mocked for his beliefs? That was the end of the line.

“Get you, yo boy, yo white God and yo begging, pleading preaching, and get out my house,” Kareem was aggressive. Judah understood but couldn’t understand one word that came out of Kareem’s mouth. Of course without a relationship with God, one would assume Jesus was a white man, but that other word.

“Begging?” Judah asked, face scrunched up.

“Yeah. Begging. That’s all you Christians do. Always pleading with God, bombarding Heaven with your requests and demands! It’s in your Bible,” Kareem was trying to go there.

“Oh crap,” Lamont said getting up and getting dressed.

“What are you talking about?” Judah wanted to set the record straight. How dare this man speak on Judah’s people.

“Ha! How you next in line and don’t know the Word?” he waited for a response, but Judah didn’t give one. Judah simply looked at Kareem dumbfounded. “Luke 11.”

“The Lord’s Prayer, ok?” Judah was right.

“What happens after Jesus teaches the people the Lord’s prayer?” Kareem asked.

“Huh,” Judah tried to think but that was probably something he had to delve into his Bible with. “Remind me.”

“The man coming to his friend’s house in the midnight hour asking for 3 loaves of bread.”

“Aww, yes!” Judah remembered.

“Matter fact,” Kareem went to his bag and retrieved his Bible.

“Well, sheesh. You don’t know rather to be mad and clean the house out or have Bible study?” Pita half joked with her boyfriend.

“Naw, just because I’m Muslim doesn’t mean I don’t know this,” he held up the Bible. “Watch me put Bishop’s son in his place. Teach him something his daddy should’ve taught him a long time ago,” he grinned. “Luke 11 and 5 reads:

‘Which of you shall have a friend and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves. For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him anything, because he is a friend, yet because of his im, im...’

“Importunity!” Judah corrected him. Judah knew then and there where this was going. Kareem looked up at Judah with envy in his eyes, simply because Judah knew a word he didn’t.

“I know what the word means. Basically, Jesus is saying this friend eventually got up to help because of the constant begging of his friend. His friend kept knocking at the door, kept begging and finally he was helped. Y’all do the same thing. I mean, that’s how the Christian thinks, no? All that shouting at God during praise and worship like He is unable to hear your inner thoughts. Does not your God act like the man who told his friend that his door was shut and to leave? But since he begged, like y’all do with the God y’all serve, the man finally answered. If y’all want something from God, y’all go all out to get His attention. Now us, we know God.”

“Alright, hold up. That’s enough,” Judah felt threatened by Kareem’s dogmatic and bias knowledge. “When you uh,” Judah paused and tried to formulate his words the best he could while maintaining respect.

“Go head now Brother Masod,” Lamont cheered his best friend. The ladies laughed.

“There are so many errors in your interpretation of that particular scripture. It’s almost like you seek Biblical occurrences out just to try and argue.”

“What errors?” Lamont asked.

“Just from you thinking the man in the house actually told his friend to get lost tells me a lot. It tells me you only scratch the surface. Luke 11:7 says, ‘*And he from within shall answer and say.*’ That *within* word or in some other translations the word is *inside*, of course one would think the two are conversing. This is wrong. That *within* or *inside* word comes from the Greek

word *esothern*. *Esothern* means from within or from inside pertaining to the mind and the soul. Not inside or from within a house. In some other translations, it reads; *‘And suppose the one inside answers,’* or, *‘and he from within shall answer.’* So, the man in the house said nothing, pretended he was sleep and waited until he couldn’t take the consistency anymore.”

“Ok. You still proving my point,” Kareem tried to get an easy win.

“Am I? When you don’t even understand the passage. Jesus was making a contrast, not a comparison. If you keep reading, Jesus says ask and it will be given. Seek and you shall find. Knock and the door be answered.”

“Exactly. Keep knocking boy,” Kareem commented.

“The exact opposite. Jesus is more than a friend. We should only have to ask once, if at all, for Christ is meek and lowly at heart. All that excess bears no fruit. God is more than willing to invite us into the Kingdom. Jesus was saying *‘what good is a friend that you have to keep begging!?’ I am more than a friend. You ask me and receive it!’* Further down in the scripture, Jesus is asking what sense it makes to give a man a serpent when he asks for a fish. Why give a man a stone when he ask for bread? It was a contrast, not a comparison. As Christians, we are not perfect, hence the crucifixion. Some of us don’t know that God will never answer a prayer in where you’re asking Him to do something He has already done. He also doesn’t answer a prayer where we’re asking Him to do something in which He has already told us to do. Some of us don’t know this and revert to begging. It’s almost ignorant. Jesus was telling us that begging is not necessary. If God gave us His most precious everything in Heaven, His Son, then why won’t He give us all things? So don’t bash us. Because the Muslims are far from perfect themselves,” Judah stood there looking at a Kareem who was thinking a bit too deeply.

“Uhm,” was all Kareem would say. “Well,” he sipped his tea then sat it down. “I’m man enough to say touché,” Kareem finally smiled and outstretched his hand. Judah reached for it and experienced the unexpected. Kareem pulled Judah as close to him as possible in the swiftest movement possible.

“Kareem!” Pita shouted.

“You in here touching on my Queen trying to appear smarter than me,” he pulled out a gun from his backside. “Ha!” he laughed and looked at Pita. “We were just talking about this, huh Pita! Muslims versus Christians. Guess who won?” Kareem whispered the last sentence. Before Judah could response, a loud shattering was heard followed glass falling on the face of

Judah. Looking up, everyone realized that Lamont had smashed a vase to the back of Kareem's head. Flowers, water, and glass were everywhere, but Kareem still stood standing.

"Oh word?" Kareem looked back at a horrified looking Lamont.

"My bad," Lamont lifted his hands like he messed up after Kareem didn't pass out. "You pulled ya gun out, playa. I just tried to knock you out and leave before-"

**"Bop!"** Kareem punched Lamont so hard that he fell.

"Aye," Judah tried to step up, but Judah never had to fight in his life.

"What? What you gone do, Preacher Boy?" Kareem moved back closer to Judah.

"Ok. Stop it," Pita spoke softly and disarmed Kareem in that instance.

"They disrespecting. Broke our vase," Kareem said through clenched teeth and feeling for the back of his head.

"You pulled out the gun and you know you weren't going to use it," Pita recited street laws. "That's a no-no."

"This choir boy don't know anything about that," Kareem said, still gawking Judah down.

"Yeah, but Lamont knew something about it. That's why he tried to go upside your head," Pita stated. Judah never backed down, simply held Kareem's stare. This was actually turning Pita on.

*'Muslims vs. Christians,'* she thought and smiled on the inside.

# Bamidbar

---

“Man, my bad,” Lamont apologized, lip busted, about to exit Judah’s car. “You stood your ground like a G, no lie,” he smiled through the pain of getting knocked back by Kareem. “Didn’t flinch one time. No fear in your face, no trembling when I saw you enter the car. Look,” Lamont held his hand up. “I’m shaking like I got tremors,” he joked.

“You take care of yourself, man,” Judah told his best friend. “I appreciate you for having my back and all, but you should know better than anybody that God got us. That falling out and being unconscious by the shattering of a vase is for the movies,” they shared a laugh.

“Maybe this is somewhat related to my dreams. Iran representing Kareem and his Islam. We in the car. The kid,” Lamont turned to look in the back seat, but was disappointed at seeing nothing. “Or maybe not,” he’d let his own self down.

“Like I said, I appreciate you,” Judah held out his hand, trying not to remember Lamont’s lofty dreams. Lamont gracefully shook it, and they went their ways. Judah watched as Lamont safely made it inside of his Oak Park home off MLK and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Then Judah breathed.

“Lord, Lord, Lord,” he placed his car in drive. “What was that?”

Not even five minutes away from Lamont’s house, Judah’s phone rang. Judah checked the time before checking his phone and the Cadillac’s clock read 3 in the morning.

“Jesus,” he was shocked it was so late. He picked up his phone. It was his father.

“Solomon! Where are you? I mean, urh,” it sounded like Isaac was stretching from being awoken. “I mean,” it seemed as if he was trying to gather his thoughts.

“Pops. You cool?”

“Uh, oh yeah. Uhm, Judah! Yeah. Aye, where are you? Your mother is worried. She woke me,” the latter sounded more stern than anything.

“Yeah, uh, on my way back now. Just dropped off Lamont.”

“Ok.” *‘He’s fine,’* Isaac said the latter to Miriam. “You out awfully late. This is a first.”

“Right,” Judah agreed.

“See ya soon, son,” Isaac said and hung up.

Judah drove just a thinking. He was about 15 minutes away from home and took that time to ponder on what just happened. How was he going to approach Hawa with the allegations?

Calm and collective of course. Maybe he wasn't going to say anything at all. Maybe Kareem would be the first to open his mouth about the situation. The devil was busy.

\*\*\*

Judah pulled into his driveway and entered his tiny house through the backyard as quietly as possible. It was dark as Judah felt his way through the yard and to his door. Upon opening his front door, he hit his lights and his father was right there.

“Solomon! I mean. Christ,” Isaac smacked his leg.

“Why?” Judah asked. “That’s the second time you did that tonight. Calling me Solomon.” Judah was worried, knowing Solomon died believing in a false god, all over a woman. The fact that he just met Pita and already some mess was spewing.

“I apologize. I was practicing a sermon based around Solomon and, I guess I,” he shook his head trying to gather his words. “I don’t know, Judah,” his father looked more confused about his own personal issues than Judah arriving home this late. “Sacramento is forcing us to close down the whole church. I mean, we could go against the government and have services, but we’ll be fined, and I’ll be looking at jail time, possibly,” Judah’s father was drenched in concern. Just then, Judah began to think on Lamont’s accusations of his father in the illegal drug trade. Judah could’ve allowed his world to spin out of control with the accusations. He could’ve asked his father about the claims attributed to him and then accuse him of lying. He could go start some beef with Hawa over how Kareem knew her by *Earth Hawa*. He could link up with Pita again, after all, he knew where she lived.

“Lord, forgive me,” Judah said aloud and came to sit next to his father.

“What you asking forgiveness for?” Isaac asked.

“My train of thought,” Judah confessed.

“You thinking about sleeping with Hawa? Or is it another woman? Wow, probably why I keep calling you Solomon,” it had come to Isaac as he said exactly what Judah had been thinking.

“All of that, plus an attack on my faith a bit,” Judah said thinking of the resilience of Kareem, the boldness of the bouncer at the house party and also the pool player, Codi.

“How?”

“When I go out, especially to places less desirable by righteous men, the people believe they can be sarcastic and almost poke fun of God. Like, I’ll meet someone, and they’ll be excited to see me and then will slip up and profane a bit. Nothing harsh or negative, just profanity. But then they would catch themselves and apologize to me like I’m supposed to be offended, or like I’m the one to judge,” Judah explained. “I don’t like that. I want people to be themselves, not overly righteous because they see the son of Bishop Masod,” he pointed to his father.

“What’s wrong with that? That’s RESPECT!” his father smiled. “Where did you go? Or never mind. I apologize for acting like your Mother,” Isaac was sincere. Judah knew his father was going to go crazy without his Church. He saw the onset already, the mistakes, the long thinking. Usually, Isaac was sharper than a two-edged sword, but with this epidemic coming fourth, he looked a bit feeble.

*“Maybe he has the virus?”* Judah thought, taking a good look at his father. He did look weaker.

“Pops, get a covid test,” Judah said with all the concern in the world.

“Ha. Son, you know the-”

“Yes, I know. But I’m serious,” Judah held out his hand. “Go see Dr. Williamson, asap. You deal with a community of people of the daily and you’re kind of whacking out,” it took Judah some balls to say the latter.

“Whacking out?” Isaac asked as Judah simply shook his head, hand still out waiting to seal the promise. After a short pause, Isaac agreed. “Very well. I’ll do as you say. But back to you and this attack on your faith,” Isaac waited.

“I don’t know,” Judah shrugged his shoulders.

“Are you still confident in your faith?”

“What?” Judah took that as an insult. “Father. Please,” he shook his head. “I’m covered. Ain’t no going back.”

“But there is,” Isaac said. “P before D,” he added as his son knew that stood for Pride before Destruction. “The fact that you feel some type of way about how people treat you tells me you’re a bit rocky in your faith.”

“How, Pops? Are we not supposed to have feelings?”

“We are. But we are in communion with the Most High, no? We under the New Covenant, right? The New Covenant gives us confidence and makes us bold in our faith. So

confident and bold that I can care less what anyone thinks of me. People acting and reacting off what they think of you, but they don't know you. I know you. God knows you. So, don't be concerned about what they think, be concerned about what I think and what God thinks. We think you're a fabulous young man, well-educated and highly favored. And I am blessed to have you as my child."

"Thank you, Pops. You are right. I honestly don't care what those people think," he told the truth. He realized he would simply steer himself clear from even mentioning Pita. Or Hawa for that matter. Bigger problems. "I am so confident that I am the righteousness of God, ha," Judah stood up, realizing something. "You right. I don't care what people think about me. I am the righteousness of God because I believe that I have been made righteous. And by the Holy Spirit, '*Glory be to God*,'" Judah snuck in a praise to the Most High before finishing, "who administers that righteousness based on my belief, I am the righteousness of God," he held his head up, casting every evil spirit from him in the midst of his father, just as he'd been taught. "I'm the righteousness of God when I'm up! I'm the righteousness of God when I'm down! I'm the righteousness of God when I fail when I succeed!"

"Amen!" Bishop joined his son in praise.

"I'm the righteousness of God!" Judah professed. "We under the New Covenant! That's Second Corinthians. That veil over the face of Moses and how it represents the Old Covenant compared to today."

"Wait, what was the veil hiding?" Isaac tested.

"Moses face. His glorified face! The veil representing condemnation," Judah remembered.

"Because they were under what?"

"Old Covenant, which fades away, like Moses' glorified face and yet we are still left with the veil representing condemnation and the people ourselves."

"And once the veil is altogether removed, what do we get under the New Covenant?"

"Everlasting life through the sacrifice of Christ," Judah and Isaac exchanged fruitful words and ate from the conversing.

"And how does that relate to today?" was Isaac's definitive answer.

“The people live by the old law. Eye for an eye. Tooth for a tooth. I even learned a new street law. Don’t pull out your gun unless you plan on using it,” Judah told his father. Isaac’s whole appearance shifted.

“What? Who told you that? Lamont?” Isaac guessed.

“Of the few.”

“Judah,” Isaac gazed upon his oldest. “Something I should know. You in trouble?”

“Naw, of course not. If I was, you’ll be the first,” he stood up. “I been up all night,” Judah finally yawned and felt sleepy. “Shall we continue tomorrow?” Judah asked his father.

“Yeah,” his father stood up to leave, but was more suspect than anything now. As he walked to the door, he stopped dead in his tracks, like he’d forgotten something. “Oh yeah,” he waved his finger back and forth towards Judah. “It only makes sense. Me calling you Solomon so many times. You having problems with your *‘best friend’* and what not. It makes sense now,” he had Judah’s full attention.

“What is it?” Judah was interested in knowing.

“My dream,” Isaac mentioned. Then it struck Judah. Everyone around him were having dreams and Judah took it upon himself to dissect them in a manner that was very lofty. “It was simple. I saw you standing in a sandstorm. I saw a beast that tried to attack you, but you had the Spirit of God on you,” he praised the Lord a bit when discussing. “Then I saw Hawa. She tried to run to you but the Spirit of the Lord that was upon you prevented her from coming near you. I think this is a strong message,” his father admitted

“Uhm,” Judah sounded, his father’s words becoming rather shocking to him.

“Now, I like Hawa. I love Hawa, don’t get me wrong. But today is a new day. Now tell me, have you given yourself to her yet?” he asked his son. Judah felt embarrassed and humiliated for the second time. Judah always found it extremely foolish and silly for his father to be asking if he was still a virgin. Judah was actually disgusted. Almost mad. Judah felt himself release today, just a bit, and found it suitable to protect himself.

“I’m trying to find an instance in the bible where a father is asking his son if he is still a virgin,” Judah had some bite to his tone.

“Excuse me?” Isaac grew some bite to his tone as well. “I want to make sure you are practicing safe sex if anything. I am not here to judge you, son. I am here to educate you. Plus, you represent New Jerusalem. We don’t do birth out of wedlock,” he was stern.

“Maybe when I feel comfortable talking to you about it, I’ll come to you,” Judah tried to reconcile.

“Maybe you watch your mouth when you still under my roof,” Isaac pointed.

“Maybe I’ll move out, Pops,” Judah lowered his voice and tried to remain respectful. “I mean, I just find it very offensive for you to tell me about a dream where Hawa is unable to receive the Spirit of God with me, and then ask me about my virginity. Like, Christ,” Judah became frustrated and took a seat. “I’m 21 years old, man. In this day and age, I am too young to marry and too righteous to fornicate. Like, I’m stuck between a rock and hard place,” he was almost in tears.

“I know how you feel...”

“Do you? When you were my age, you had a body count. At least that’s what Uncle Tamir says,” Judah mentioned Mr. Greene, Hawa’s father.

“I’m going to act like you didn’t say that.”

“Yeah. Like you’re going to act like you were a 21-year-old virgin,” Judah shot, eyes watering.

“These are temptations...”

“Then you basically say that Hawa is not for me. The only girl I’ve known for most my life,” Judah interrupted. Isaac simply put his head down. He knew how frustrated his son was, or maybe he didn’t. But he saw Judah’s frustration and decided to back off.

“Ight. My bad,” Isaac threw his hands up. “But when the Lord speaks to me, I listen,” it almost sounded like a threat until he said, “you should too.”

“Yes, Father,” Judah just wanted him to leave and without another word, Isaac made his way to the door. “Remember, Dr. Williamson,” Judah reminded as Bishop made his way out the door. Judah moved in love despite the disagreements he would encounter with his loved ones. But this time around, he was frustrated with life. Not just his sex life, but with his faith versus the flesh. Either way, Judah knew he wasn’t in trouble with anybody. He was probably tired, but Isaac thought different. Pops thought his son was hiding something and made it his unruly duty to find out what it was.

In his tiny home by himself, Judah threw himself onto his bed. He pondered over the night he had and rolled over to view the time on his clock. It was now 4:30 in the morning and even though Judah was tired, he had a strong urge to call Hawa. Just to see if she was up. He

picked his phone up and stared at it. Pita was a hard image for him to shake. He decided to call anyway. He needed to hear her voice before he went to sleep.

Hawa picked up on the first ring. “Hello,” it sounded as if she was up.

“Hawa?” Judah answered.

“Yes, Judah,” she sounded seductive.

“Surprised you up,” he admitted.

“I’m surprised you up,” she shot back. “You know I Fajr.”

“Fajr?” Judah was confused.

“Yes. Morning Prayer,” she admitted.

“Oh. You never invited me to morning prayer?” Judah asked, not knowing Hawa was talking about her cultural practices.

“You’re Christian,” she responded. “And plus Fajr starts around 5 in the morning anyway.”

“Oh. You’re Christian too, right?” he asked.

“Of course. I’m Christian because I believe Jesus died for the sins of humans. But I still pray, Judah. I can’t help it.”

“But you still pray? Well, of course. Aren’t you supposed to pray?” Judah was really confused and blamed it on the early hours of the day.

“The Church wouldn’t like the way I pray,” she confessed.

“I don’t get it.”

“Salat. You know, prostrating. How Muslims pray,” she declared plainly for the first time. Judah sat up in his bed.

“Salat? Yeah. I’ve uh,” he tried to formulate his words. “I, uh, heard of it. When they call, ‘*Allahu Akbar!*’ Judah tried to relate from the heart. He didn’t want to pass judgement, especially after what happened a couple of hours ago.

“Yes,” she giggled. “That’s it.”

“Wow, uhm,” Judah was taken aback. “Why is this the first time me hearing this? We’ve known each other for so long. What? 7 years? Since you first came to America. My best friend since. I was blessed with you and Benjamin at the same time, no?”

“Yes, I know. Kareem told me this would tick you off, being son of the Bishop and all,” she said, normally, no change in her voice. Judah looked at his phone like she was crazy. She’s

never spoken so freely. It wasn't a problem, of course, but mentioning Kareem and his opinion on what he thought of Judah was troublesome. Judah wanted to get up from his bed, but he couldn't.

"Kareem?"

"Yes, Kareem. That's my Knowledge. I'm his Wisdom," Hawa said. Judah didn't know what to think. He didn't know what to say. "We shall soon have Understanding," she spoke. Judah's heart fell through his chest. What was she talking about?

\*\*\*

"Judah! Judah! Judah!" Judah suddenly woke from a dream. He looked around at his tiny home being in pristine condition as always. Benjamin, Judah's little brother, jumped on top of Judah's king-sized bed. Judah had gifted his little brother a key to his place, somewhere to hide out when Judah wasn't there. Benjamin continued to jump and rejoice.

"Judah! Wake up, big bro! Hawa is here!" he continued to jump. "Brush them teeth, man. God don't like ugly," he laughed his heart out and jumped off the bed, waiting for his big brother. Judah had to pinch himself to make sure he wasn't dreaming again. Things were happening so fast that he really didn't have time to comprehend his dream. He knew he must've fell asleep as soon as he hit the bed.

"Ok. I'm up," Judah got up, still very tired, and went to the bathroom. He peered back at the clock as it read 9 am. Judah only had 4 hours of sleep. Benjamin stood there inspecting his every move.

"Stand up straight! You look weak this morning," little Ben jumped and patted his brothers back. Ben was the most adorable little brother any person in this world could have. A handsome young man; knowing too much good stuff for his age. A glowing light clothed in his very own brown skin. A proper young man with neat yet bushy waves covering his head. He wore miniature glasses that hung off the tip of his nose, like a librarian, because he read so much. He would always look over his glasses, while they were still on his head, anytime he tried to understand something in more detail.

"Weak?" Judah asked.

“Yes! Usually you glow, like me. Like Nana Ruthie. Remember she always said, ‘The Holy Spirit shining through us like the sun shines through the drapes of this beautiful house our Father in Heaven has blessed us with,’” Ben sounded poetic, citing their late grandmother who often quoted from Scripture.

“Yes,” Judah smiled reminiscing on Grandma Ruthie.

“What happened to your glow this morning? Look, I’m your little brother. I know better,” Ben stood his ground. “I’ve known you straight out the womb, all my life and every day. I study you. We are intertwined, sort of like Jacob and Esau, minus the minute age difference. I’m just waiting for you to sign over that birthright,” Ben stood, hands on his hip, smiling in all his might. Judah could do nothing but be proud of his little brother.

“I love you, Benjamin,” Judah said right before brushing his teeth.

“Aww, there it goes,” Ben raised his hands, glad that his brother had finally glowed. “What is it? Thinking a lot lately?” Ben asked trying to get into the head of his brothers. Judah simply shook his head yes in a matter-of-fact fashion. “Ok. Well, uhm,” Ben stood there, tapping his foot with his fingers caressing his chin and looking towards the ceiling. “Where should I go to help?” he asked himself.

“Uh,” Judah laughed through his throat. He knew his little brother was thinking of a bible verse to help the situation.

“Wait, before I go there. I had a disturbing dream last night that lead me to ask you this question. Is the Prophet Muhammad a false prophet?” Benjamin asked. Judah stopped brushing his teeth and peered upon his little brother. They stared at each other for a at least 10 seconds before Judah continued to brush his teeth. “I’m serious. If you don’t know, it’s fine,” he added. Judah shrugged his shoulders as if he didn’t know. But he had an idea simply based on what the Muslims believe.

“Uhm hmm,” Judah made the impression that he was clueless. “Y u as me dat?” Judah formed through foamed mouth bubbles.

“Because the Lion King was based in Africa. Not the Middle East. But isn’t Africa the Middle East? Anyway, I study more there, but I keep dreaming of Scar and Mufasa. The brothers. The good one and the evil one, but Scar isn’t evil in my dreams. He is tough, but not evil because he continues to help his brother, Mufasa,” Ben tried to explain.

“Uhm,” Judah took mental notes.

“Right. I could tell that was Scar because he had a scar in his face. They were lions, I mean, you can’t miss a Mufasa or Scar, even in real life. Then there was Simba. But it looked like someone beat him up really bad,” Ben made a frustrating face. “But Scar and Mufasa save Simba from the evil monkeys!”

“Pwwwaaahhh!” Judah spit out his mouth and onto the mirror in laughter. “Stop it!” Judah joked.

“I’m serious. I believe the Lord wants me to pay attention to stuff like this, man,” Ben pleaded to be taken serious.

“Then pay attention,” Judah said and rinsed his mouth.

“You pay attention too! You are involved somehow. I think you are Mufasa. I get that sense,” Benjamin tried to figure it out right then and there. Judah listened intently when Ben caught his stare. “Anyway, where were we?” he got cold feet and proceeded to play it off by cracking his little fingers. Then he began to ponder again. “Oh. Perfect. Ok. You tell me the book, chapter and verse and I’ll make your bed today! Deal?” Ben asked as Judah shook his head in agreement.

“Finally, big brethren-”

“Philippians fo and eigh,” Judah continued to rinse his mouth while speaking. Ben’s jaw dropped in amazement.

“No way! Wait, how did you know?” Ben was in shock. He couldn’t believe how Judah always had one up on him. Judah finished rinsing out his mouth.

“You think you know me,” Judah told his brother between rinses, “but I know you more. Finish,” he instructed.

“Yes. Uhm,” Ben tried to bounce back from his shock. “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any praise, think on these things,” Ben recited straight from the King James version of the Holy Bible.

“And what does that mean?”

“Give every bit of your life to serve the Lord. Why?” Ben asked himself. “Because the LORD is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. If you continually think about these things, as they are of the LORD, then you are dedicating your whole life to serve the LORD. Are not these things great to ponder on? Does not good things come from thinking with such

positivity?” Ben added. Judah could put his life on the fact that God spoke through little Benjamin. The stuff this little man would say would be extraordinary at times.

“The way you preaching, Pops might give you the Church,” Judah joked.

“I wish. Not yet, big bro. There are demons out there that are tough. It’s hard for grown people, with much more experience than I, to rebuke some of the demons in this world today,” Ben claimed.

“Experience? We walk by faith, not sight, not experience,” Judah tried to correct.

“Works. Not Experience. I meant works. People have put in more works than I and it is yet difficult for them. Therefore, faith without works is dead,” Ben was just like his brother, always trying to combat his argument.

“You putting in work right now. Reciting from Scripture, distributing your positive energy towards me and the community, giving your friends and I words of encouragement, being in communion with God. That’s the work you putting in! Finding pleasure in meditating on the word of God rather than playing video games, or-”

“What’s wrong with playing video games?” Ben almost shouted. “Does that mean I’m not getting the PS5?” his whole mood shifted. Now he was human. Now he was a child, in a child’s place.

“No. Not at all. You just don’t spend a large amount of time on it like a lot of youngsters do.”

“I’ve seen you read more than playing video games and you in a fairly good spot. Your girlfriend looks like Jasmine from Aladdin. Father is giving the Church to YOU! Your car is the best! You’re the smartest man, I know. *Even smarter than Dad,*” he whispered the latter.

“Benjamin!” Isaac yelled from the backyard. Ben jumped in his skin, thinking his father heard him. Pure coincidence.

“He heard you,” Judah joked as Ben ran out the room to see what his father wanted. “Aye,” Judah stopped his little brother just for a second. “Best friend. Not girlfriend. Hawa is my best friend,” Judah tried to make clear. Benjamin burst out laughing and ran outside to his father. As soon as Judah exited the tiny home, Hawa came in graciously. They exchanged smiles as Hawa closed the door behind her.

“Hey,” she continued to smile, removing her hijab. Judah could breathe now because that’s what Hawa’s presence did; made one able to breathe.

“Hey Hawa,” they hugged and for the third time in their lives, Hawa reached in and kissed Judah on the lips. Judah was shocked because this was so rare. He felt his father’s glare from outside his window and then Judah looked. Indeed, his father was peering into the window from the backyard and witnessed the kiss. Isaac thought that action between Judah and Hawa sealed the deal, right then and there. That now validated his suspicions.

“What was that?” Judah asked, now afraid for his life and not even wanting to move. Bishop was so nose-y sometimes. Judah’s father never really disciplined them, because they were raised with the Spirit of God upon them, but Judah was 21 now.

“I love you, Judah,” Hawa confessed, rubbing the chest of Judah.

“My father is looking,” Judah said through gritted teeth.

“I don’t care. He knows,” Hawa couldn’t take her eyes from his.

“He knows what?”

“That I love you. Silly,” Hawa smiled and was acting very unusual today. “We are both aroused, no? I want to share the same bed together. We’ve talked about marriage plenty of times. When is the right time?” she asked him. “We have enough money to buy our own home. You’re the youth pastor for New Jerusalem and if it weren’t for covid-19, your father would be stepping down and handing the Church to you. All the puzzle pieces are falling into place. What are we waiting for?” she asked. This troubled Judah. Her quest for impatient communions. Something was up and Judah was able to successfully smell it.

“Let’s go somewhere and talk about this, huh?” Judah asked. Hawa looked at him with a face of dullness.

“What’s wrong with here?” she asked.

“I need some fresh air. My father is being nose-y and obnoxious. Let me get dressed really fast,” he went to his closet and got dressed.

“Cushion Café?” Hawa suggested. “I’ll get us breakfast,” she offered.

“Indeed,” Judah agreed and got dressed to go to their favorite café.

\*\*\*

Instead of taking Hawa’s Honda Civic, Judah drove his Cadillac on this light rainy day.

“You look tired,” Hawa said, them just minutes away from the café.

“Yeah. Long night,” Judah responded.

“Out with Lamont, huh?”

“Yes, ma’am,” they exchanged glances. “How is work?” Judah hurriedly tried to change subjects, condemning himself almost immediately.

“Strange. Very strange,” Hawa admitted. “My boss lady, Miss. Fatima asked me to retrieve something from her desk yesterday. I didn’t mean to be the person to pry, but I saw your name on an Emergency Contact form for me. I’d never gave them your information for emergency contact. Only my Mama and Papa. That was weird.”

“Did you ask Fatima about it?” Judah asked.

“No. Because,” Hawa exhaled. “I don’t know. She scares me sometimes. Like, she’ll rub my face and say that I’m special and that Allah has bestowed His blessings upon me.”

“And that scares you?”

“But what comes after. She’ll continue and say something like, *‘You are chosen, but first you must go through the fire.’* And that is the part that scares me,” Hawa admitted.

“Wow. Maybe you shouldn’t take her words lightly. After all, you may become the First Lady of New Jerusalem coming from an Islamic background. That’s fire in itself,” Judah smiled. “That says a lot about the power of Christ, no?”

“Yeah, I know. But I think there is more to it, I don’t know,” Hawa placed her head down in her chest.

“What makes you think there is more to it?” Judah asked. He knew something was up. Hawa didn’t respond. She would do that often. They would get deep into a subject and then she would just freeze up and go into a deep thought but never reflecting on it. Judah also thought it was about her transitioning from her cultured religion to Christianity, the way her uncomfortable energy would desorb. Whatever it was, it bothered Judah and he blamed himself for how she would react sometimes. He blamed himself in this particular instance because maybe he wasn’t being as honest as possible about everything. So he began:

“I had a dream about you,” Judah decided to bring up what was at the front of his mind.

“Oh, nice,” Hawa smiled. “About?”

“It wasn’t very nice.”

“Oh no. Dreams are sometimes more real than reality. What happened?” Hawa asked, coming back to life it seemed.

“Do you know someone named Kareem?” Judah decided to be very blunt. They were always very blunt with each other, despite Hawa’s innocent submissiveness.

“Kareem?” she thought and quickly responded. “I know of a Kareem. Radical Black Muslim. He comes to the daycare sometimes. He’s the brother of Boss Lady, Fatima,” she spoke all truth. “Why do you ask?”

“He calls you Earth Hawa,” Judah stretched the truth as much as he could.

“Ha! Wait, this was all in your dream?” she didn’t wait for a response. “Haha, He calls every sister Earth and every brother God,” she said, Judah thinking on how he was never called God when speaking with Kareem. “That’s amazing, how you are able to get that from a dream,” Hawa interjected. Judah simply didn’t respond. “He’s a loudmouth for sure. Always rambling about something intergalactic or expressing his faith in unusual ways.”

“What kind of unusual ways?” Judah was stern.

“Like using your own belief system against you. I listened to him just rambling one day and he spoke on how God was birthed. Interesting but clearly vague. Or maybe I wasn’t there for the quote unquote sermon,” she giggled.

“You remember what he said?”

“Something like God being an atom and that’s where the name Adam came from. This atom being in something called triple stage black matter, how it start spinning then it exploded and created the Big Bang. That’s right. He merged Science with Islam. Then I continued carrying about my business, but always wondered where he was going with that,” she seemed intrigued about the memory, knowing Judah was more than understanding when she spoke truth to him. Yet, Judah panicked on the inside a bit. What if what Pita had done to Judah was the same as what Kareem was doing to Hawa? What if Hawa secretly had feelings for Kareem?

“Wow!” Judah decided to subdue the negative thoughts. “How often do you see him?”

“He comes to the center once or twice a week. Drops something off to his sister, ministers a bit, then he’s off,” Hawa spoke as if she was telling the truth. “Ok. Enough of your questions, mister. May you answer mine?” she asked nicely. Even though Hawa was always this nice and open, she should shut down in the blink of an eye. Judah though maybe it was a type of depression, but never really acted upon it. Judah was best at lending an ear and leaving people be. It was only now that Judah felt some different type of way about Hawa. It honestly felt like

he was in jeopardy of losing Hawa. He immediately asked the Father to forgive him for his unfaithful thinking.

*'Hawa just accepted and obeyed versus Pita and her search for truth which was attractive to me,'* Judah thought. *'I'm sorry, Lord.'* Judah quickly prayed because he knew the Lord would take Hawa from him if anything. He sort of felt it in his heart, no matter how hard he tried to fight it.

"Also," Hawa was to add. "I think I saw him come to the Center with my Sociology Professor once before," she added. Judah's heart dropped. He remembered Rosi mentioning Pita working at Sacramento State as a Sociology Professor.

"What's your Sociology Professor's name?"

"Professor Lupita Guevara," Hawa gracefully smiled. Judah peered at her. "Your turn, Master Judah," she smiled innocently and laughed a bit. "Are you afraid to tell me the details of your dream?"

"A little," Judah admitted, now knowing Pita was Hawa's professor.

"I'm very understanding. You know that," Hawa was persuasive as she placed her hand on his arm. Judah agreed and told Hawa everything. He started at having that episode with his father to lying down and dreaming to Benjamin waking him up. They sat outside in the car, parked by Cushion Café while they spoke.

"Then you walked in," Judah finished.

"Uhm. That sounds like Five Percenter talk all right. Wait, I'm confused. You've never met Kareem. How could you dream about him?" Hawa was confused.

"I met him last night. And your Professor Lupita too," Judah wanted to be as truthful as possible.

"Shut up! No way! Where was I?" she was all smiles. But not regular smiles. Not happy smiles. More so like nervous smiles. "Probably sleep, knowing I had to wake up for Fajr."

"Fajr," Judah repeated, remembering that name from the dream. "So you do pray. Like, the Islam prostrating prayers," Judah asked.

"For someone so smart, Judah, I wish to swear," she giggled and shook her head all to herself. She was throwing shade. She was almost right, but Hawa knew she hid her prayers well.

"Aye," Judah laughed from the gut. "Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer. Noon Prayer. That's what all that meant?" he asked seriously. "How come I've never seen you do it? There

have been times when we were together all day and I've never seen you pray by prostrating," he admitted.

"I make up for my prayers at a later time, called Qadha Salaat. Sometimes, if I know I'm going to be around you or others, I do extra prayers beforehand to make up for the ones I'll miss," she smiled. That broke Judah's heart. He felt his eyes water a bit.

"What? You're ashamed to pray in front of me?" he made sure his voice didn't crack.

"Not at all. Out of respect. You help lead a Christian denomination to salvation. Why confuse you? I love you," she swayed her hand from Judah's arm to his leg. She was acting very unusual and very sexual today. Never has she been so touchy. Rather than Hawa's touch feeling as if it came from the Heavens, like usually, it now felt like her touch was one from a lustful manner.

"God is not the author of confusion. Now, since you feel as if you have to hide, I want you to teach me to pray," Judah commanded, a bit uneasy about his commandment while simply ignoring Hawa's hand at his leg. He was simply trying to make up for what he fell into last night, but it seemed as if Hawa wanted to take it to the next level. Or was Judah overthinking?

"Ok. Welp, I don't hold on to my heritage, my culture for nothing, Judah. I don't wear this hijab for show. I'm really about where I come from because that is what makes me who I am," she sounded more and more like the Modern Spiritually Awaken Black Queen of America. "I have nothing to hide," she said then went into that trance again. This time, it was the deep ones. Judah couldn't explain it. Her whole face would change emotions and she would shut down. Normally Judah would ask what's wrong, and Hawa would not respond most of the time. The times she did respond, it was always nothing wrong with her.

"Respect," Judah shook his head and ignored her 5 minutes of personal depression. Judah had even prayed about revealing what was wrong with Hawa or at least healing her of whatever was going on. Judah made a mental note to pray extra hard tonight for Hawa, to make things clear for the both of them. "You ready?" he pointed to the café.

"Sure. I still want to know what happened between the three of you," she was now more serious than anything.

"And Lamont was there with his newfound girlfriend," Judah added as they were getting out.

“Oh. You Fifth Wheeling it now?” Hawa laughed, dressed in tight fitted jeans that showed her curves, a blouse and a hijab that only covered her head and not her face. She wore it so beautifully that Americans would assume she wasn’t Muslim and that it was simply a decorative piece. Judah tried his hardest to not look at Hawa’s buttocks, but he couldn’t help it as he compared Pita to Hawa in the size of buttocks.

“*Stop it!*” Judah told himself, without even paying attention to Hawa’s question.

Hawa returned the favor with her thoughts as she gawked at Judah, waiting for his answer. His tall and masculine body fit his towering demeanor. To Hawa, Judah seemed really serious today and it actually turned her on.

Yet, Judah was burning all kinds of holes through Hawa, the way he asked questions, the way he tried to understand his dreams, the way he wanted to know who Kareem was. The way he dressed down in his brown turtle-neck sweater, brown jogging pants and brown Timberlands. Hawa lost her mind right then and there staring into the face of Judah. She wanted to give herself to Judah so bad because she knew time was of the essence. The wait was over. Either what Hawa expected to happen was to happen, by some rare uncanny fate, or she would finally put the nail in the coffin when it came to securing Judah. But if what she expected to happen wasn’t her and Judah securing their lives, then what was it?

“Never Fifth Wheeling it. We about to become One, no?” Judah asked, all smiles.

‘*Not right here! Not right here!*’ Hawa screamed in her head, wanting to bend the corner and give herself to Judah, rather than behave in a holier than thou manner. Oh how she dreaded for the day that Judah was going to ask her hand in marriage, giving Hawa new life. Judah wasn’t far from the thought as he opened the door to the café for Hawa.

They found a table and ordered a White Mocha, a Latte and bagel sandwiches. Hawa took out her homework as Judah helped here and there while reading up on a Myles Monroe book his father gifted him.

After about an hour or so, Judah began to fade in and out due to the comfortableness of this café. He sunk right into the soft cushions as the easy classical music soothed his ear. The words began to dim off the page and under the security of Hawa, Judah fell into a light conscious nap.

“There was once a man,” Hawa began as Judah opened one eye and peeped up, letting Hawa know he was listening. “He went for a walk one day. He decided to simply walk this day,

headed nowhere in particular and then he suddenly walks right into paradise. It was like the earth glowed. The flowers were a vibrant color, the temperature was perfect, the birds sung to this man. Then this man thought: *I am tired. I wish there were a place for me to rest.* Before one knew it, there was a huge tree just a few yards away. It had cushion like grass underneath and shade for centuries. The man went there and rested. He rested for a few hours and woke up. Still brilliant the outside was. Then he thought: *I am hungry. It'll be awesome if I had some food.* Before he knew it, he looked down to discover his favorites foods right before him in perfect portions. So he ate,” Hawa told as Judah simply smiled.

“Hmm,” Judah nudged a bit, just thinking about his most favorite foods.

“Then this man stood up and did what he shouldn't. He questioned. Like, in the Bible, I believe, Peter was the one who walked on water with Jesus but as soon as his faith lacked, he fell. The same for this man. He began to think: *Well, I asked for a place to sleep, and it was granted. I asked for food, and it appeared right in front of me. What is this place? Maybe it's haunted and ghost are going to chase me.* He laughed to himself. Yet, as soon as he looks up, ghosts came floating towards him. He ran and screamed in fear saying: *Oh no! There are ghosts! There're going to torture me!* And that's just what they did, torture him. As ghosts were torturing him, he says: *Oh no! They're going to kill me.* And that's just what the ghost did. They killed him. The power is in the mind and in the tongue,” Hawa added, proving to make a point. “Watch who you share your thoughts with, Judah, who you tell certain things to,” Hawa tried to instruct but found Judah to be dozed off.

She would temporarily gaze at Judah as he slept. She rarely got a chance to see him sleep because they'd forbade themselves from spending the night. Temptation was so close to having its way. But Hawa had her own reasons for wanting to secure things with Judah. She felt as if Judah could provide her with a safe haven and be forgiven if anything were to come to surface. Judah kept himself because God told him to; Hawa kept herself because guilt told her to.

“Here is another story,” Hawa began, knowing Judah was not fully attentive. She decided to let some things off her chest. “They committed murder. Both the mother and the daughter,” she continued as Judah silently woke to pay attention but still acted as if he was sleep. “Like Sarah's servant, Hagar, giving birth to Ishmael, no father was ever found. The Mosque took the mother and the daughter, but the Mosque killed the daughter's spirit. Yet, the Redeemer of Islam

came from the killing of the daughter's spirit. The Redeemer of Islam is a boy. A twisted boy. A boy from the seed of the elite. The elite being twisted themselves," she spoke now in a daze.

"Who are you talking about?" Judah interrupted, spooking Hawa just a tad bit. He was listening attentively, and the story sounded as if it was being attributed to someone in particular.

"It's a story, Judah," she confessed and breathed hard, but Judah didn't believe her.

"A sad story at that."

"Indeed," Hawa agreed.

"Please continue. The elite being twisted themselves..." Judah left the floor open wanting Hawa to finish. Hawa knew to be more careful this time around.

"Like Moses, the mother and daughter committed an erogenous act and fled from the dogmas of manmade religion. Yet, the Redeemer of Islam, the twisted boy calls out to his mother and grandmother," Hawa said and realized she may've been saying too much.

Judah opened his eyes and tried to comprehend everything Hawa had just said.

"What was this erogenous act?" he asked.

"Murder," she answered with a straight face, "as I've mentioned before."

"Jesus," Judah flinched back. "Ok, uhm, what is the Redeemer of Islam?" he asked another question.

"I don't know," Hawa answered. "Either someone who is instrumental in changing the course of the world religions or someone that will altogether..." she stopped and thought before speaking more.

"Uhm," Judah exhaled and laid back down on Hawa's lap, looking up into her eyes, trying to read her soul. "Lean not on your own understanding but pray and fast and the Lord shall reveal the answers to you," Judah answered knowing this story had something to do with Hawa. Was it someone from her family? Was it a friend she knew? Was she speaking symbolically? Did she need help with a school assignment? Judah didn't know, neither did he wish to delve. He had enough to think about and he'd deal with her problems later, when they were more severe; not knowing that her problems were more severe than anything Judah would experience.

Hawa said nothing, even though she had more to say. She wanted to tell him, but thought they weren't deep enough into their own relationship to reveal certain secrets. Or too young in their relationship? Judah quickly fell into a light sleep as Hawa simply sat there to think. Her heart was on fire, her stomach didn't have butterflies, yet bumblebees.

*'Allah knows the heart,'* Hawa thought as she watched Judah breathe in his sleep. Just then, his phone buzzed. Hawa paid it no attention until it buzzed again. And again. The buzzing didn't wake Judah, so Hawa decided to see who was blowing Judah's phone up. She knew his passcode because they had nothing to hide besides a distant past. A text message from an unknown number was sent and read:

I really enjoyed your company last night and I'm quite impenitent on how it ended. Call me when available and don't feel bad. You're good.

Hawa didn't realize she'd stopped breathing. She looked at Judah who was now wide awake again and staring right at Hawa.

"Who is it?" he asked.

"I don't know. Unknown number," she handed Judah his phone. Judah read the message and automatically knew it to be Pita.

"It's Pita," he said. "Lupita," he corrected, wanting to not be too informal. *'Impenitent?'* he said more to himself than anyone else.

"Yes. It means without regret in regard to one's actions. It means something happened between you two and while she may feel good about it, you feel bad."

"Yeah," Judah didn't flinch, appearing to be deep in thought.

"Would you like to discuss what happened?" Hawa had concern written all over her face.

"Sure," Judah sat up. "Before Kareem came into the picture, Lamont was in a back room with Rosi, and I was in the living room with Lupita. We were debating, you know, Christianity versus Secular whatever! Secular Atheism!" he said matter-of-factly. "Then I agreed to meditate with her and that's when Kareem came into the house. He didn't know company was going to be at his house, so he was a little upset. Especially with another man being there. A Christian man. A Christian man and his secular friend. A Christian man belonging to a Muslim woman that Kareem surely knows," Judah pointed at Hawa. "It was all really weird. We got into a heated debate over various subjects. So heated that Kareem ended up pulling out a gun. But you know me, *'No weapon formed against me shall prosper,'* so I didn't budge. Lamont on the other hand, ended up smashing a vase to his head, thinking it was going to knock Kareem out. It didn't. Kareem punched Lamont; Lamont fell. I tried to stop the mayhem and we were able to leave without further harm," Judah told the truth, leaving out some vital details. On purpose.

"Hiram!" Hawa murmured to herself. "Lamont," she spoke.

“I appreciate Lamont for what he did. I caused that upon myself, and Lamont acted on impulse. I mean, it may not have been the smartest choice, but he was looking out for me, nonetheless,” Judah praised his best friend.

“Judah,” Hawa continued to shake her head in despair. “And Professor Guevara knows that I am with you?”

“She should.”

“Oh Lord. How will I behave in class?” she asked herself.

“Like you regularly do. If she comes at you with anything, be honest. What’s the worst that can happen?”

“She can fail me, Judah.”

“Why would she do that?”

“You’ve built a relationship with another woman and when you don’t give them what they want, especially Americanized woman like Lupita, then they do crazy things,” Hawa was reaching.

“I haven’t built a relationship, Hawa. Stop it. I don’t even know how she got my number.”

“Lamont!” Hawa was stern. Judah knew she was right. “And then this mess,” Hawa began to get a bit upset. She felt as if she was being left in the dark with something.

“Hawa,” Judah said just as his phone buzzed again. They spoke so low and calm, that no one, even though six feet apart, could hear what they were saying.

“Her again?” Hawa asked. Judah peeped at his phone. It was definitely her.

“Here. You read it. Since you’re beginning to think some kind of way,” Judah got a little frustrated. He was simply tired.

“No,” she refused. “That’s you. I trust you,” Hawa began to revert back to love and happiness. Judah looked upon her in disbelief. He didn’t want to do too much either. What was becoming of himself? “I know how it is. To be a community celebrity. A one that is good at that,” she added.

“No one is good,” Judah debated.

“Well, you know what I mean. Even Fatima, at the job. She came to me the other day talking about, *‘Judah will shine! And when he does, it will be time to bite my tongue.’* I got so offended, Judah. You have no idea,” she expressed herself.

“I thought you had a good relationship with Fatima?”

“I do. But some of the things she says is malarkey,” Hawa said, and Judah laughed. Hawa found nothing funny.

“I’m sorry, Hawa. Look,” he opened the text message in front of the both of them. It read:

‘I also didn’t get a chance to compliment you on Hawa. Majestic, mysterious, clever, and absolutely beautiful are just some of the words that come up your Lady. Please invite her next time. We would love to have her.’

“Lady?” Hawa’s eyes blew up. “You’re telling people I’m your Lady? And my professor at that? What happened to best friend?” she was all smiles. Judah couldn’t help but break into a smile. A tired smile. Hawa took notice and began to rub his arm. “Majestic, mysteriously clever and absolutely beautiful,” she imitated, dazzling at herself in an imaginary mirror. Judah laughed and lay his head in Hawa’s bosom. She rubbed his head as they sat in their secluded area of Cushion Café.

That last text really put Hawa at ease. She smiled, knowing Judah was right around the corner with proposing to her. On the other hand, Judah knew Pita was speaking from the loudmouth of Kareem, who thought he knew everything. Judah tried his hardest to fight these irregular feelings, but he couldn’t shake them. Was it jealousy? Jealous of Pita being with an ignorant Kareem?

*‘Don’t think like that, Judah,’* he told himself. *‘Yet, Solomon had 700 wives,’* he continued to fight with himself. He needed to rest his mind. Lack of sleep caused one to become deprived of common sense.

“Hey,” he sat up. “I am awfully tired,” he admitted.

“Yeah, I see,” she began to gather her things, unmoved.

“I’m sorry.”

“No, please. You were speaking good energy about me and towards me all night. The reason I was so drawn to you this morning. The reason I breezed right into your tiny home this morning,” she smiled, fixing her hijab. Judah smiled.

Judah drove Hawa back to her car at the house. They drove in silence, both thinking deeply on their own inner insecurities.

Hawa decided to come inside with Judah as he took a nap, and she did her homework. Benjamin occasionally came in to bother, but Judah slept like a baby, and for a long time. Hawa left Judah with a kiss as it closed in on 3pm. And still, Judah slept, dreamless.

\*\*\*

“Judah! Wake up, man! You got company. Not me, I’m not company,” someone familiar said, nudging at Judah’s leg.

“Uhn?” Judah tried opening his eyes to the dawning sun.

“Wake up, Babyboy!” a females voice was heard. He recognized the females voice before he did the man’s. It was Pita, beside her being Lamont.

“What happened?” Judah thought something was the matter.

“Group Discussion with Sacramento State students at my house. Where’s Hawa?” Pita asked, looking dazzling. Judah had to gather himself as quickly as possible to keep himself from staring down this grown woman in his home.

“How y’all get in here?” Judah asked, moving to the edge of his bed, continuing to gather himself.

“You know me and Pops like this,” Lamont crossed his fingers. “Introduced Professor Lupita as Hawa’s teacher up at Sac State.”

“Beautiful home, by the way,” Pita complimented, her being dressed down in a Sacramento State jogging suit. “Even more beautiful tiny home,” she looked about. Judah kept catching himself stare at Pita for no apparent reason. He couldn’t believe his father simply let them in like that. It seemed as if the respect value between Judah and his father were diminishing.

“Thank you,” Judah responded.

“Come on. Get dressed. Pita and Kareem are hosting a Great Debate at their house. You’ve been formally invited,” Lamont instructed.

“And you?” Judah pointed to Lamont, remembering on how he was clobbered for the vase incident.

“We good. Kareem approached me later that day and we talked it out. He understood the measures I’ll go to protect you. You’re special, son,” he sounded New Yorkish with the latter. “You got a people to lead. No room for nonsense.”

“And expect an apology from Kareem, too. He knew he was in the wrong,” Pita added. Judah simply shook his head and stood up.

“A Great Debate, huh?” he stretched. “About?”

“Theology. But who knows what the topics will ultimately be? I host the debates at my place for extra class credits at Sac state. Usually just a bunch of white kids wanting to know more about religion, life, the beginning, you name it. We record it all and even working on forming a podcast, just to see where it goes,” Pita smiled, clapped her hands and shrugged her shoulders. “And the way you handled yourself last night, I was only compelled to have you attend this round. I feel like a lot of people can learn from you, if not gain a distinct perspective.”

“Right. Didn’t know you could think outside the box,” Lamont admitted.

“Please, sit,” Judah offered them both the bench at the edge of his bed. “I’ll be but a sec.”

After all the small talk and Judah getting ready, the pack of three found themselves in Lamont’s 1988 Ford Mustang on their way to Pita’s house.

# Devarim

---

“Those foreordained for grace can seldomly be subjected to dogmatic faults. That goes for other sins and experiences as well as it is showed that often those Christians who were ignorant in theological studies exhibited the fruits of faith most clearly. On the other hand, it becomes evident that mere knowledge of theology does not guarantee the proof of faith through conduct. With these so called man-made universal laws that aren’t even followed by the men who create them,” a younger white woman announced towards Kareem. Judah, Pita and Lamont were just making their way in. The living room was packed out with mostly young white intellectuals. Kareem sat center stage; the same place Pita and Judah meditated.

“Shade?” Kareem asked the white lady, smiling a bit and noticing the new company. “You say I am *less than* because I study more than being leant towards ignorant bliss? The blind faithful have a better chance at enlightenment than one who seeks?”

“When researching so much, one tends to manipulate their own ideas,” she said as it seemed they’d already been discussing a topic and firing on all cylinders. “I don’t understand. It’s almost like religionism.”

“Ha, religionism. That’s a first,” Kareem laughed. “You know, maybe this stuff is not for you to understand,” Kareem seemed to keep his cool. Pita, Judah, and Lamont sat where they could as most of the students attending took notes. “Say somebody breaks into your home. This somebody as a small Jesus piece around their neck insinuating that they are Christian. Still, he breaks in and steals everything you have. Ties you up. Ties your family up. Then he rapes everybody! He is a thief and a rapist, right? With a belief in a higher power, right? Ten years later, you find this same man. You break into his house now and take everything that once belonged to you and more,” he was stern. “You have him raped! You take his Jesus piece and then question the authenticity of his religion, often bashing it as you find inconsistencies. Are you then considered a Religionist? Are you now a thief for taking back what was yours? Are you a rapist for raping the man that once raped you? Your ancestors took our people, conquered our people through evil means, banished our language, laughed at our clothes and our God, changed our names and customs. But when we get the slightest revenge, simply questioning the religion you bring to us, we are called Religionist. When we say things like, ‘*Black Lives Matter*,’ you

respond with *'All Lives Matter,'* or *'Blue Lives Matter,'*” Kareem was making his point. “White women cross the street when a Black man is approaching. Why? We should be the ones fearful of you,” he pointed. He was surely making the people in his presence feel uncomfortable, but it was the truth.

“Now it just sounds like reverse racism,” another student commented.

“And I thought I was speaking with college students,” Kareem commented. “Have you forgotten overnight? Racism is when you deprive someone of their natural means of living based on their skin color. Can Black people deprive white people of their natural means of living in America? Racism is not being able to get a bank loan for a house in a certain neighborhood because I’m Black. Racism is *'Black people can't go to this private school,'* or *'Black people, even though qualified, aren't able to be employed here.'* Glass ceilings, revolving doors, all these corporate sociology terms hindering Black folk from achieving the American Dream. The Justice System, systemically racist! Racism is prejudice plus power! What power do we have?”

“Obama?” another student commented. They were going back and forth, like children. Each one trying to be right.

“Please. The Germans, Italians, Chinese and Jews benefitted from Obama being in office more than anyone else. That was a move of political clout rather than prosperity for Blacks. Obama’s election was the end product of a civil-rights strategy that prioritized political power to advance Blacks, and eight years later, we once again learned the limitations of that strategy,” Kareem said with shrugged shoulders. The students simply jotted down everything said by Kareem.

“Maybe we are just afraid?” another young white student asked.

“As you should be,” Kareem chuckled. “Tell me. What are you all so afraid of?”

“The way you guys act, you know,” he didn’t look too sure of himself. “The music and glorifying of murder-”

“America glorifies murder. America awards her killers and gives out medals and trophies for it. Former President Bush, General Patton, Eisenhower, Regan, General Douglas MacArthur,” Kareem scooped to the intellectuals level. “So, what else is new?”

“You take away from Jesus,” another young white man spoke. “When we look at where Bethlehem is, Jerusalem, we can confirm that Jesus was an Arab, from the Middle East. You

claim Him to be a Black man from Africa,” the students were throwing anything at Kareem because he had a point.

“The school system,” Kareem pointed to the students while looking Pita’s way and smiling all too hard. “It’s unbelievable. Like brainwashing,” he laughed.

“Right,” Lamont supported.

“Middle East is a term coined in the early 1900’s by some white Naval Admiral. Before the Middle East, Arabia, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq was all considered Africa. Egypt is Africa. Let’s dig deeper. The Quran tells us in the Chapter Al-Hujurat, verse 26, *‘We created man of potter’s clay of BLACK mud altered.* Even Satan argued, *‘Why should I prostrate myself unto a mortal man whom Thou has created of Black mud when You created me from Fire!’* So if we were created in the image of God and the likeness, and God used Black mud to cloth us, then what color was God?”

“BLACK!” Lamont shouted out of excitement. Seemed as if Lamont was hooked.

“That’s right, Lamont. We are all not descendants of Ham, Noah’s Black son. No. Ham, Japheth and Shem were all Black! The Honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches us that all color comes from Black. Ask a painter. Dark skinned is the only skin color that can produce the full range of colors from white to black. Neither medium skinned nor white skinned can do this. It being hot in Africa does not make people turn black neither is wintry weather in the North known to make people turn white. Matter of fact, everything in existence comes from Black, nothingness. Close your eyes,” he instructed everyone. “Go on, close em,” he waited until everyone’s eyes were closed. “Now what do you see?”

“Nothing,” a few people answered.

“And what color is that nothing?”

“BLACK!” Lamont shouted again with small giggles from the crowd. Judah was impressed in the slightest.

“We are taught,” Kareem continued, “that within our cell structure, we’re able to get the brown race from Black, yellow from the brown, and white from the yellow. This generic engineering was practiced in the Bible when Jacob separated the spotted sheep, or people, from the solid colorings. Or, separating the Black and mixed from the white.”

“Bad allegory,” a student rose his voice.

“What? When Jesus said, *‘My sheep shall hear my voice,’* He was talking about sheep? Or His followers? His believers? People?” Kareem asked.

“So races were divided based on generic engineering?” a student asked. “What happened to migration from Africa to the Caucasus mountains.

“And that caused a skin change? Ha!” Kareem laughed. “Did you not just hear me? You act like the sun don’t shine in Europe and Asia. It takes millions of years for a lineage to begin to change their skin tone, in the slightest, due to lack of sun. All we need is about an hour or two of sun a week to keep our color. The only theories that make sense to me about how white people came into this world is either by having the disease of Leprosy or being born Albino. Leprosy is a disease of the skin where it turns white. In the Bible we see many people with these diseases. Answer this. How can the skin of a white person turn white? You would’ve had to been Black, or at least brown for your skin to turn white as snow. And Albinos, those with a birth defect or a defect within the DNA structure, are birthed from two Blacks resulting in pale white skin, blonde hair, and blue eyes. We can create white people. We have created white people,” Kareem corrected himself.

“I like him,” Lamont whispered to Judah. Judah simply nodded, infatuated with the new knowledge he was hearing.

“Regardless of His race, you still claim Him to simply be a man, a prophet when He is indeed the Son of God. The Immaculate Conception.”

“Matthew chapter 1 verse 23,” Kareem left the floor open. This was Judah’s time to speak. The words were beginning to slip out his mouth and before he could stop himself:

“Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which means God is with us,” Judah decided to slightly roar, making his presence known. For what? He didn’t know. The whole room focused on Judah now.

*‘It’s Judah Masod from New Jerusalem,’* one of the students whispered to another. Judah knew it was better to listen than to speak, yet something seemed to come over him when around Kareem now. Like he needed to prove himself worthy.

“Very good, my friend. In a Greek Concordance, what does the word *virgin* mean, since I get the impression you’re a biblical scholar,” he left the floor open again. This is what made Pita like Kareem so much.

“It means a woman who has never been with a man,” Judah answered boldly, knowing he’d only researched the Concordance to cross reference scripture. Judah knew he still had a long way to go, as far as his knowledge with Hebrew and Greek translations were, another reason in which he was afraid to take over the Church.

“You sure?” Kareem asked, all smiles. He reached for a black bag close to him, the same bag from when Judah met him the first time. He pulled out a Strong’s Concordance and Thayer’s Greek Lexicon. “You sure?” he asked again, holding up the books.

“Yeah,” Judah didn’t break and silently exhaled, knowing Kareem had something up his sleeves, especially for an audience.

“Well, according to your Strong’s Definition, ‘*virgin*,’ which is ‘*Parthenos*’ in Greek simply means ‘*a maiden; by implication, an unmarried daughter.*’ And to go even back further,” Kareem instructed while opening the Thayer’s Greek Lexicon, “You know what this is?” he asked Judah.

“No,” Judah responded truthfully.

“Hmm. What a shame. The leader of Christians in this city and still clueless as to where your doctrine originated from,” Kareem shook his head in disgrace, sounding like Pita and Rosi put together. Before Judah had the time to say anything, Kareem continued. “According to Thayer’s Lexicon, ‘*a virgin is either a marriageable maiden, or a young married woman, a young bride or newly married woman.*’ Noting implicates already having sex or never having sex. Jesus had siblings. James, Judas, Simon, Joseph, Salome, Anna, huh?” Kareem instructed. “Wasn’t James older than Jesus?” he asked and right there Judah knew Kareem didn’t have it all. A loudmouth simply scratching the surface of theology with his fancy books and elementary findings. “And to say Jesus comes from the Line of Judah, well that would be false if he didn’t come through the seed of Joseph because Joseph is from that line of King David, not Mary. Are we all of the sudden attributing lineages to people? Therefore the Immaculate Conception makes no sense.”

“LORD, give me the strength to stand up for You,” Judah prayed to himself.

“And don’t bring up no crap like Joseph had previous marriages. If so, to whom? Who was Jesus’s stepmother? Who were these other descendants of David, Solomon, and Abraham that were so close to Jesus that they be not mentioned? Jesus was a regular man, called by God

and successfully completed His job in restoring salvation for the Israelites,” Kareem tried to finish but Judah held his hand up.

“Let me stop you,” Judah began. “I don’t understand where the dogmatism comes from? I honestly thought Christians and Muslims were brothers. What difference does it make if I believe in something that differs from you? That is what makes this world beautiful. Differences. You want everybody to believe the same thing you do?” Judah tried to take the effortless way out.

“And you don’t? Preacher man?” Kareem shot.

“I simply let my community know about the free gift of grace from God. Seems like you’re objective is to discern what’s truth from fiction. How can one be so sure what is truth?”

“Exactly. You not really about this Word, Judah. You preach about a Jesus you know nothing about,” Kareem kept undermining Judah. Judah kept turning the other cheek.

“Ok,” Judah stood up. “You right. I tried to take the easy route. What were we discussing?” Judah thought for a quick second. “The birth of Christ. Of course. You mentioned His siblings. You mentioned James being the elder, but you have absolutely no evidence from this. Not in the Quran nor the Bible. Yet, the Bible does state that Joseph did not consummate, meaning having sex to confirm or seal a marriage or relationship, until after Jesus was born. That’s what? Matthew 1 and 25. Let me look that up in the Thayer’s,” Judah made his way towards Kareem. Kareem wanted to decline and say to get his own but then what would he look like. Let Judah bury himself, right?

“Sure,” Kareem handed the Lexicon.

“First, let’s go to Matthew 1:20. I’ll look up the word *dream* and,” Judah searched.

“You know how to work one of those?” Kareem asked in reference to the book. Judah didn’t response. Rather continued to search. Of course Judah knew how to search in a Lexicon, a Concordance, you name it.

“Matthew 1:20, oh wow,” Judah recognized then looked at Kareem. “This thing has the whole verse, English, Hebrew and Greek translations,” he said falling madly in love with the Lexicon book occupying his hands.

“A gem indeed.”

“*Gar gennao en autos esti ek hagios pneuma,*” Judah tried his best to pronounce Greek from taking self-taught online classes. “The Angel of the LORD conversed with Joseph and told

him *for that which is conceived in her (Mary) is of the Holy Spirit*. The Bible is literally telling us that the Holy Ghost will impregnate Mary.”

“And who is the Holy Ghost that He comes and sticks His...” Kareem began but was suddenly stopped by Judah.

“Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is unforgivable. Be careful,” Judah warned. With a keenness in his eyes, Kareem backed off. “This is the same Holy Spirit that hovered over the Earth when it was void and waters were upon the face of the Earth. Now, let us look up *hagios pneuma*,” Judah insisted. After locating some information, he explained how *hagios* is used as *The Holy* in cross referenced verses with Moses and his communion with God. Then how *pneuma* meant *ghost* and was closely related with how the old testament used the term ‘*giving up the ghost*’ in relation to leaving Earth and being with the LORD. Therefore, Holy Ghost was a Spirit from the LORD, sent by the LORD, in Its Holiest form.

“It’s hard to take away from that. Let Scripture interpret Scripture,” Judah started again. “Then Matthew 1:25 mentions a word. *Prototokos*. According to this Lexicon, *Prototokos* means firstborn. *Prototokos yhios* meaning firstborn son. Again, the Bible very clearly tells us the truth,” Judah laughed in slight desperation. “And ok. *Virgin* can simply mean *a young woman, married or unmarried*, but even you said it doesn’t imply anything sexual. So for all we’re concerned, taking Scripture for what it is, we can conclude that Mary was without a man and bore Jesus without having sex since virgin entails sex to no degree. The Immaculate Conception stands. We can even grasp an idea of who Mary was before meeting Joseph in the Protoevangelium of James where she was born holy, free from Original sin. At least that is what Catholicism believes. So we doubt Mary was going around giving it up,” Judah said as he got some laughs. “Also, Luke is credited with the genealogy of Mary, through her father, and father-in-law to Joseph, as she is also descendent from David. And if we keep reading, we’ll find in chapter 2 of Matthew an angel telling Joseph to, ‘*Get up, ... take the Child and His mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.*’ Joseph is to take two people, Mary, and Jesus, not James, Simon, Salome, Anna, Judas and so forth. Jesus was the oldest. Keep reading and God calls out to Joseph to return the single Child and His mother to the land Of Israel. A three-party crew.”

Lamont, and a few others, began to clap his hands softly as he was loving the debate. Like a kid in a candy store. Finally, someone to counter brotha Kareem. Kareem didn't like the gesture of clapping for another man in his house. He still knew how to accept defeat.

"Very well, Judah. You can read," he laughed along with some others.

"Truth is truth," Judah replied.

"Yeah. And ignorance is ignorance," Kareem shot. All eyes were on Kareem as it seemed Judah had hit a soft spot.

"How so? Who is ignorant?" Judah asked, not backing down.

"I'm just saying," Kareem tried to pull something out of the air, as a way to get back. "As Christianity is being practiced, ignorance is viewed as being spiritual elevated. Think about it, those who follow Christian doctrine with the least amount of questions and the most obedient, are the most faithful, which in turn are the most spiritual," he said, sounding like Pita now. Most of the young students shook their head in approval. "Obedience becomes more valued than individual self-expression. And we all know the government and the Church doesn't want the people finding their own way to God."

"That's odd, because you practice Islam, right?" Judah rushed to say. "If you follow Islamic doctrine, you have to be one hundred times more obedient than a Christian, no? Having to pray five times a day at a specific time. If you miss it, you'll have to make up prayers, like Allah is literally counting them," Judah was able to pick up from conversing with Hawa.

"Watch it," Kareem pointed his finger.

"No, you watch it. I sat here and witnessed you try and make Jesus's birth something made up then switch to how Christianity as a whole, limits us from self-expression. I mention Allah one time and you get upset. You got a lot of work to do," Judah pointed back at him. "It sound good, though."

Without thought, Kareem slapped Judah's hand down really hard. The crowd exhaled. Pita began to make her way over when Judah held out his other hand.

"Go head," Judah wanted Kareem to continue to release his anger.

**"Pow!"** Kareem slapped Judah's other hand down, anger being prevalent on his face. They both stood up in each other's face, neither afraid of the other.

"You good, now?" Judah asked, hands in slight temporary pain. His facial expression didn't flinch. He wasn't shocked. It was like Judah knew Kareem was going to go this far.

“Kareem!” Pita got close but Judah held out his hand to keep Pita back from them.

“He’s a man,” Judah told her. “God is not,” Judah added with a smile. “God is not a Black man. In the Book of Numbers it says God is not a man...”

“...that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent,” Kareem conformed back to instructing. While everyone was still in shock, Kareem backed down and held his hand out. “Forgive me, brotha,” Kareem finally let up. “I be losing it sometimes. I ain’t gone lie,” he admitted.

“All good,” Judah acknowledged yet ignored Kareem’s hand.

“For real, man. My bad,” Kareem whispered. Judah shook his head to confirm. “But,” Kareem began as he sat back in his position. “God is a Black Man. Not only does the Quran tell us in the chapter *The Rocky Tract* that man was created of this Black mud as mentioned earlier, but also, you have to learn anatomy of the body, DNA and even the spectrum of color.”

“That’s true,” another student spoke. By this time, Judah had silently back away and found a seat. “Brown comes from Black. Yellow comes from Brown. White comes from Yellow. If that be the case, explain the extraction process? Was it changing of environments and migration? Or maybe the sheep were actually people and Jacob separated the darker and the lighter to mate and procreate to eventually get a white people?” she asked.

“Uhm. We can go many ways with this. Mostly theories. The Theory on the Origins of White People. Almost sounds like a book title,” he laughed to himself. “Again, the disease of leprosy becomes prevalent because you have to admit, white people today still have a skin deficiency. The Sun is supposed to strengthen and help grow, not kill, and cause cancers. So, I think I can rightfully call upon the theory of leprosy bringing white people into existence. Or, we can lean back on the theory of Albinism. An Albino can be found anywhere in the world where Black natives reside, which is, everywhere in the world. Albino Pakistanis, Albino Indians, Albino Australians and so forth. It may’ve been a birth defect within the DNA structure that once plagued Africa. Albinos were outcasted, birthing their own communities and even causing strife upon the Black Africans because they were treated differently. This lead to the expulsion of the Albinos to the Caucus mountains, where in fact, Black Africans were already there, still Black. Maybe this is why white people don’t like Black people today. Or maybe the Black Africans didn’t kick the Albinos out. Maybe the Albinos in Africa couldn’t take the heat since they were already melanin deficient and decided to move themselves. Wherever they moved, they found us.

We were everywhere first. China, Europe, India, Australia, you name it. The First Chinese Dynasty was Black. Look into the histories of Europe and watch you run into Black Kings and Emperors that ruled the lands. But to say our skin color changed due to lack of sun is simply false. The Sun shines everywhere and all we need is a tiny bit of Sun to retain our color.”

“But Vitamin D,” a student spoke out. “It plays a significant role in bone growth and the body’s natural protection against certain diseases, and the inability to absorb enough in areas of less-powerful sunlight would have decreased life expectancies in our African ancestors. The further north they trekked, the more vitamin D they needed and the lighter they got over the generations due to natural selection.”

“True,” another white scholar announced. “While people of all skin types have the ability to produce the same amount of vitamin D in their systems, ‘highly pigmented, or Black people, will need to stay in the sun around 6 times longer than light people in order to synthesize the same amount of vitamin D. And a lack of vitamin D, something occurring among many American children right now, partly because they don’t get out much, can make them more susceptible to everything from heart disease to internal cancers,” he concluded.

“Wow,” Kareem smiled, looking like he about to rip them into pieces with his debate. “You ever heard of Rickets?” he asked the students as some shook their head, knowing where he was going. “Right? Caused by lack of Vitamin D. An epidemic amongst whites in Europe and North America. So much so, that they had to start adding Vitamin D in the manufacture of their milk, cheese, cereals, and such. This was NOT done for Blacks, who don’t need it.”

“Uhm,” Judah sounded to himself. He’d never come across this information about people. He never thought it mattered. Judah was almost alien to the depths of racism. Jesus saves all. Race didn’t matter. Race was used to separate a people. A tool, Judah thought.

“Allah is Most Wise. Most Exalted. Man created this division between us. Know that Allah is better than any man. He becomes furious and even sad, though, as a man. Am I wrong? Yes, Judah. The Book of Numbers placed emphasis on God not being man like us, in the fallen state. Who says He isn’t a man in the Heavenly state? Say you go to Heaven and actually see God, what will you see? A man with two arms, two legs. A-L-L-A-H meaning Arm-Leg-Leg-Arm-Head,” Kareem touched each body part. “God grieves and feels pain. He talks, laughs, becomes happy, questions his future actions with Moses, all attributes of man.”

“The Bible also says God is a spirit,” Judah spoke up.

“Man is Spirit. When I look at you Judah, I’m only looking at the temple, the vessel of Judah, not the real man within. If you believe in the hereafter, you should also believe that your body shall return to dust. Then our real spiritual bodies will manifest, and I’ll be able to see the real Judah, correct? Still tangible, just in a different realm, like Christ after His resurrection.”

“Are we not able to walk in Spirit now? Are we not able to achieve those bodies now? I can surely bring my inwardly self out and walk in Spirit, no? Isn’t that being enlightened?” Judah debated.

“Yes. Something I may know nothing about,” Kareem gave up. “I still throw temper tantrums and slap peoples hand down for talking about what I believe in. I am far from enlightenment,” he shook his head, thinking deeply to himself for just a moment. “I would ask for any more questions, but I think I’ll pass it on to the second segment of today’s lecture,” he told the group and pointed towards Pita.

*‘Second segment?’* Judah thought and knew he was going to be there for a while. He simply sat back and decided to listen more. He was actually enjoying himself, despite all the differences.

“My turn!” Pita took the small nook as the small crowd clapped their hands for Kareem.

“Thank you,” Kareem bowed as he exited and sat next to Judah and Lamont.

“I want to stay along the same lines, but I also want to combat every religious dogmatic issue we presented today. I’ll try and find some grey area. I really want the religions that you all represent to drown itself,” she professed, looking at both Kareem and Judah. Pita then took a deep breath and began.

“The sympathetic principle of redemption religion is in intense tension with the greatest irrational force of life, sexual love. The more channeled sexuality is, and the more principled and relentlessly consistent the redemption principle of brotherhood is, the sharper is the tension between sex and religion. Originally the relation of sex and religion were very intimate. Sexual intercourse was frequently part of magic orgiasticism or was an unintended result of orgiastic excitement. The foundations of ‘The Skoptsy’ or what we can call ‘The Castrators’ sect in which were a removal of the testicles, based in Russia, evolved from an attempt to do away with the sexual result of the orgiastic dance of the Khlyst, or Christ Believers, which was elevated as sinful. Sacred harlotry has had nothing whatsoever to do with an alleged ‘primitive promiscuity;’ it has usually been a survival of magical orgiasticism in which every ecstasy was considered

*'holy.'* Even the word *harlot*, in the Bible, translates to holy woman, not prostitutes of today. And profane heterosexual, as well as homosexual, prostitution is very ancient and often rather sophisticated.

“What happened to the verse, ‘And Adam knew his wife Eve’ or ‘therefore shall a man leave his parents and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall become one flesh?’” another student spoke out. This speaking out was certainly tolerated. “This was in the beginning so where did all this orgy-play and it being considered holy come from?”

“Good question,” Pita answered and began. “Legally constituted marriage is full of all sorts of intermediary forms. Concepts of marriage as an economic arrangement for providing security for the wife and legal inheritance for the child; as an institution which is important due to the death sacrifices of the descendants for destiny in the beyond; and as important for the begetting of children, these concepts of marriage are pre-prophetic and universal. They have had nothing to do with asceticism, or self-denial. And sexual life, per se, has had its ghosts and gods as has every other function. But more religiously, a certain friction between religion and sex come to the fore only with the temporary cultic chastity of priests. This ancient chastity may have been determined from the point of view of the strictly stereotyped ritual of the regulated community cult in it that sexuality was readily considered to be specifically dominated by demons. Furthermore, it was no accident that subsequently the prophetic religions, as well as the priest-controlled life orders, have regulated sexual intercourse in favor of marriage. The contrast of all rational regulation of life with magical orgiasticism and all sorts of irrational frenzies is expressed in this fact. And to finish it off, the extraordinary quality of eroticism has consisted in a gradual turning away from the naïve realism of sex. The reason and significance of this evolution, however, involve the universal rationalization and intellectualization of culture.”

“So a person practicing abstinence, or chastity as you call it, is being manipulated by an ancient stereotypical cult, which regarded the naïve naturalism of sex as being demonic?” a student asked.

“Exactly! Certain spiritual similarities of both spheres sharpen the tension between religion and sex. The highest eroticism stands psychologically and physiologically in a conjointly substitutive relation with certain subconscious forms of courageous virtue. In opposition to the logical, active abstinence which rejects the sexual as irrational, and which is felt by eroticism to be a powerful and deadly enemy, this substitutive relationship is oriented

especially to the mediums union with God. From this relation there follows the constant threat of a deadly sophisticated revenge of animal nature, or of an unmediated slipping from the mystic realm of God into the realm of the All-too-Human. This psychological affinity naturally increases the antagonism of inner meanings between eroticism and religion. All this is quite apart from the fact that the enthusiastic character of eroticism appears to the religion of brotherhood as an undignified loss of self-control and as the loss of orientation towards either the rationality and wisdom of norms willed by God or the mystic ‘having’ of godliness. However, for eroticism, genuine ‘passion’ per se constitutes the type of beauty and its rejection is blasphemy,” Pita stated. Judah only understood a bit, while most of the students paid more attention than ever. She spoke with such difficult language, it was hard for Judah to follow along, let alone Lamont.

“You are wanting to solidify the connection between God and sex?” another student spoke out. “Or is it that you are attempting to break the religious concepts of sex, or fornication and sin?”

“Or,” Kareem spoke up. “Without us embracing eroticism, married or not, we would be going against the mystic union of God? Pursing such an act as being genuinely passionate is perfectly normal and should be practiced because if avoided, we are accused of blasphemy?” he asked for clarification.

“You should know. The Quran permits you to have many wives at once,” Pita acknowledged Kareem.

“Indeed it does. That is why Jesus was killed. They accused Him of blasphemy, right? A genuinely passionate man who married and actually had many wives,” Kareem added. Judah gave Kareem a disturbing look. “Think about it. How can God experience human nature without real love making?”

Right after Kareem’s statement, Judah’s mind went blank. He tapped out of reality. What was he doing here? The way Jesus was being misrepresented here was beyond Judah’s comprehension. He suddenly went into deep thought about everything. The Church that was being given to him by his father, the relationship he had with Hawa and her father, his father wanting him to move out and speaking on Hawa in negative aspects. Then this; the tempting of his very own faith. He knew he could stand tall but the emotions he felt and received when he meditated with Pita was out of this world. The debates with Kareem were often won, but still, it made Judah question. Even what Pita was saying sounded like wickedness, in MLA format.

Judah thought about getting up and walking out since he was clearly unable to even hear the discussion anymore. Either God closed his ears, or Judah had found the capacity to withdraw himself from such speech.

No more than 20 minutes passed when Kareem nudged Judah.

“Boy,” Kareem said jokingly. “Look like you over there hypnotized,” he laughed.

“Apologies,” Judah snapped out of it and looked about. Everyone was getting up, gathering their things, and conversing in the mix.

“You good?” Kareem asked. Judah didn’t immediately answer, instead, he silently located Lamont with his eyes. He looked back at Kareem with that menacing looking smile. Judah didn’t want to think like that, but he couldn’t help it. He decided to win another battle. Afterall, Judah was a soldier for Christ.

“Christ married more than once, therefore being charged with blasphemy in opposition to Jewish tradition. Where you’d get that myth from because I know it surely isn’t in the Quran,” Judah said with confidence. He knew the story of Isa in the Quran.

“Hostile,” Kareem jokingly stated. “As I. Answer this,” he lifted his finger then pointed to Judah with all respect. “Do you worship Jesus?”

“Of course. The Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgement to the Son...”

“Lord,” Kareem shook his head in disbelief.

“That all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.”

“Keep reading that verse. In the same breath Jesus says ‘By myself I can do nothing. I judge only as I hear and my judgement is just, for I seek to not please myself, but Him who sent me.’ What would that imply?” Kareem asked.

“That Christ answers to someone higher than Him.”

“Exactly. So why praise anyone lesser than God? In the Quran it says, ‘And behold! Allah will say: “O Jesus the son of Mary! Did you say unto men, ‘Worship me and my mother as Gods in derogation of Allah?’ Jesus will reply: ‘Glory to You! Never could I say what I had no right to say. Had I said such a thing, You would indeed have known it. You know what is in my heart, though I know not what is in yours. For you know in full all that which hidden. Never said I anything except what You commanded me to say, to wit, ‘Worship Allah, my Lord, your Lord.’” Kareem tried to drill Judah. “In the same book you quoted from, John, chapter 4 I

believe, it says what?" he didn't wait long at all for Judah to answer. "The Hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth! For the Father seeketh such to worship Him!' So, it seems you're busy worshipping man and missing the point of worship to the One True God. Regardless or not if I believe Jesus was a Muslim and had multiple wives doesn't deter His message or our worship to the Most Excellent Allah," Kareem ended.

"Was Christ not God manifest?" Judah fought.

"Why do you call Him Son of God? Or even Son of Man for that matter? Why does Jesus refer to His God as Father? Matthew 19, was it? Young rich man referring to Jesus as good and how he shall inherit eternal life. What Jesus say, according to the Bible?"

"If no one is good but God, and the young rich ruler is calling Him Good Master, then doesn't that make Jesus, God?" Judah answered in his own words rather than Scripture. Kareem repeated what Judah said to himself then realized the message.

"Blasphemy!" Kareem shouted and smiled at the same time. They both shared a laugh. "It's odd though, Judah. That God walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden. He came down and ate with Abraham, heard Sarah laughing at Him while warning Abraham. He fought Jacob! And got his butt kicked! God tapped out! God was in direct communication with Moses. This was a man, for the Book of Exodus says *God is a Man of War*. Am I right?" he asked seriously.

"Yes," Judah wanted to go there.

"Go ahead," Kareem tried to open the floor.

"Naw, you right," Judah gave up. '*A hardened heart*,' Judah thought to himself.

"Look, I don't mean to stomp on you or your beliefs. Religion claims to offer an ultimate stand toward the world by virtue of a direct grasp of the world's 'meaning.' It does not claim to offer intellectual knowledge concerning what is or what shall be. I know you've probably been instructed, or even raised into believing only in the Bible and only using it as your guide, but Allah may've put us here today for me to inform you to seek knowledge. Don't be afraid to look elsewhere for truth. Learn where the Bible really comes from and how it was really constructed, as well as the Quran," Kareem placed his hand on Judah's shoulder, as to tell him to get with the program.

"2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 4 and 3. You familiar?" Judah asked.

"Please, refresh my memory."

“For a time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears,” Judah recited.

“Correct,” Kareem smiled again. “When Paul wrote that letter to Timothy, was the Bible even constructed yet? So how can you say the Bible is sound doctrine? Even the Torah. Where do you think Moses got the Ten Commandments from? Mind you, he was raised and taught with the Pharaohs in the Kemetic schools of Egypt. So, therefore, he was taught the 42 Negative Confessions which were and are laid in stone inside the pyramids; a structure that has been standing long before Abraham himself. The 42 Negative Confessions or 42 Laws of Maat state, *‘I will not kill my brother. I will not steal from my brother. I will not steal from the gods. I will not sleep with my brother’s wife.’* These laws were in effect far before Moses and the Israelites.”

“The Tao teaches us to seek and find what sits in our hearts and to follow that,” Pita came from nowhere and intervened. “Just because some religious book or holy person tells us to do something doesn’t mean we necessarily do it. You do what your heart tells you to do, right?” Pita asked. “You have a line of students waiting for you, Kareem,” Pita quickly got her 2 cents in and then proceeded to break Kareem from Judah.

“Boy!” Lamont came from behind Judah. “If I could cite Scripture like you,” he stopped and thought. “Would it make me rich?” he asked laughing.

“You ready to go?” Judah asked, clearly exhausted and needing time to think to himself for a moment. The interpretations he heard today were alien to him. *‘42 Laws of Maat,’* Judah thought without waiting on an answer from Lamont.

“Sure. Let’s go,” Lamont took the lead, and they were out.

# Lesous

---

Judah arrived home just in time for dinner. Lamont went his way, exhausted from all the knowledge he'd picked up today. Judah took a quick wash up and joined his family for dinner.

"My son!" Isaac announced as Judah joined.

"Pops. Hey," Judah sat to a most-delicious vegan lasagna and salad.

"I give you an allowance from your sermon and you run off. Not being found for days on in. I tell you on the dream I had between you and Hawa and told you to correct that. Instead, you're caught kissing on the lips. A sign of pure lust. What's happening?" Judah's father asked.

"Isaac. Stop it," Mariam tried to ease her husband.

"Days on in?" Judah was confused. He came back home every night.

"He in the world, Daddy," Benjamin revealed. Small laughter erupted from everyone.

"How you figure, Youngest?" Isaac would call Benjamin.

"He all tired. Not reciting Scripture throughout the house like he usually does. His eyes aren't radiating anymore. That's the world," Benjamin was right. Judah hated to admit it, but Ben knew him more than he knew himself. That was phenomenal for a child.

"You reaching, Benjamin," Judah tried to steer away and change the subject. "Anyway, with this covid and such, what is it looking like for New Jerusalem?"

"Nun-uhn. I don't think Ben is reaching," Lady Miriam said, wanting Judah to get back on topic.

"Right. If anybody knows anything about you, it would be the youngest," Isaac said. Judah exhaled and nodded his head down. He was trying to figure out something to say without lying nor giving away too much information. He knew how smart everybody at this table was, so he knew better than to try and play them.

"God is going to call him to do a task. The devil wants this task to not be fulfilled, therefore tests have been in place to strengthen his faith," Ben announced to the family. "But this task is more than phenomenal than we think. We will mimic representations of a people from the Book of Revelation," he made strong claims.

"Ben," Isaac tried to stop his youngest. "Don't get ahead of yourself."

“Ok. Just remember what I said,” Ben pointed to his older brother, Judah. The little boy spoke as if he were filled with the Holy Spirit and Judah didn’t take his words lightly. Judah loved to think Benjamin was free from sin, even through the seed of man. The way he recited Scripture and was able to read through symbolism was crazy. But Judah knew Benjamin was alien to the knowledge of the Ancients, the ones in opposition or seeking repentance from the Lord of Hosts, in a sense. So, again, he decided to change the subject.

“You ever heard of the 42 Laws of Maat, or the 42 Negative Confessions?” Judah decided to dive right in, reciting what he heard from Kareem.

“The world,” Benjamin affirmed.

“Why do you ask?” Isaac questioned.

“I heard that’s where the Ten Commandments came from. It made sense because Moses was raised with the knowledge and wisdom of the Pharaohs. That’s definitely in the Bible,” Judah questioned. Benjamin shook his head in disgust knowing his big brother was out in the world, tainting his faith.

“Don’t shake your head at your big brother, Younger. You must remain in your place, you hear?” Isaac checked his younger son.

“Yes, Father. Apologies, Judah. You are simply seeking Truth, correct?”

“Benjamin!” Mother Miriam called out and Ben tried to totally silence himself.

“When was those pyramids constructed? Do you know?” Isaac asked his oldest.

“Around 2500 B.C.E., correct?” Judah remembered from researching before asking his father anything. “Oh wait,” Judah caught himself before further proceeding. “The Flood took place around 2300 B.C.E. That means the pyramids survived the Flood?” Judah asked confusingly. No one answered Judah right away, instead, they waited for him to solve his own problem. “I don’t get it. Somebody lying.”

“Indeed,” Isaac smiled and took a bite of his food. “Don’t let your food get cold, thinking too much,” he pointed. Judah dug in even though he really didn’t have an appetite. He was hungry for knowledge.

“Can I say something?” Ben asked to speak, unable to hold his tongue.

“What is it, Ben?” Miriam asked her son.

“I know where you going, Judah. You looking for the authenticity of the Word of God. I’ve been there,” Ben said as if he were much older and wiser than anyone at the table. This

spooked Judah because he believed Ben wasn't equipped with such knowledge. Judah was wrong. "You should read *The Watchers*, Enoch's book. This is Pre-Flood documentation about the Ones who fell from Heaven and taught Men the secrets of magic, arts, astrology, weapons, cosmetics, and other techniques that we know today. These are the Ones who built the pyramids in Egypt. They did it for astrological reasons in which we may never know. The inscriptions, or Hieroglyphics, on the inside give us details into a crucifixion, resurrection and even an Immaculate Conception that predates Jesus, but think about it: These Watchers knew secrets about the world. God told Satan in Genesis after the Fall of Man what?" Ben pointed to Judah.

"Psst," Judah didn't respond and shook his head, knowing where Ben was going. Immensely impressed was Judah before his little brother.

"I will put enmity between..."

"Slow down, Ben," Isaac interrupted. "Again, you're getting ahead of yourself. The Fall of Satan, The Fall of Man and the Fall of the Watchers are different events. Vastly different events."

"I know. I never made a distinction between the falls," Ben corrected his father. Isaac didn't say anything, simply looked upon Benjamin in thought.

"Benjamin, eat your food," Miriam told her son.

"What? What I do?" Ben asked in confusion. Isaac was losing it. Maybe he had more to say pertaining to the falls, and maybe he simply had a brain fart.

"In *The Book of Job*, who was either a Judean or an Idumean, study that," Isaac pointed to Judah, "we read Satan being admitted into Heaven and having his way with some of God's most righteous people. We see Satan a part of the heavenly structure as he roams throughout the earth and heavens, being the adversary. Like the District Attorney," Isaac said, and Judah instantly thought of what Lamont had brought up. How Judah's father may be involved in some mess with drugs and how the law enforcement could become involved. Judah quickly shoved the thought from his mind.

"Right. We must think of the relationship between Lucifer and God before the creation of man," Benjamin spoke. "Was not Lucifer here before the fall of Man? Was not the Watchers? Because the Watchers looked upon the daughters of man and chose to enter them," Ben spoke, Judah wondering if Benjamin knew what 'enter them' meant. "So that means," Ben sat there in

thought. “I have a bit more studying to do,” he continued to eat because like always, his father boggled his little mind.

“Indeed you do,” Judah shot.

“Benjamin’s theory is accepted amongst most scholars though. I will give him that. We may not ever find the answers. It may not be for us to understand. But I lean more towards the gods of Old, like Osiris and Horus from Egyptology, Shiva and Krishna from Hinduism, the gods from Anunnaki, Apollo, Zeus, and many more were a result of either the Fallen Angels with Satan or from the Fallen Watchers who were ordered to watch over the sons of men. The pyramids were either built by these heavenly beings that predate Adam and Eve or the Beings/Watchers in who helped humans build it. Before the Earth was hovered by God’s Spirit, before Genesis 1:1, there was a darker world. But what do we know?” Isaac asked without expecting a response.

“So they were also prophets? These fallen angels as they were able to predict the conception, resurrection and crucifixion of Jesus?” Judah asked.

“Why was Satan kicked out of Heaven in the first place? Envy of God? Envy of man? Was that not why Satan caused Humans to rebel? Envious that we were God’s best creation? They knew! Ben was going somewhere when he began to recite Genesis 3:15. Satan knew from the beginning that a part of the Father, or The Son, was going to come and crush his head after what he’d done. The Watchers had secret knowledge, meaning they knew a lot. They knew plans and ways of the heavenly realm. Of course they were going to try and re-create God’s strategy to beat Him at His own plans. So much so that we see hieroglyphics of Horus trampling his heel on snakes, suggestive of the link between what God told Satan in the beginning versus these angelic-like beings trying to mimic God’s plans to deter them away from the truth,” Isaac spoke and ate, leaving the floor open.

“Why do you think God would allow such things to happen?” Judah asked.

“I’m not sure. Maybe to respect Man and his freewill. Maybe to show how loving God is, by allowing us to have free will, yet still loving us and willing to fulfill our lives with prosperity,” Isaac spoke. “We’ve rejected truth and love so many times. But our God is all loving. Even in the end times, there will be people who see the power of God and they will have many chances to repent and come to the truth. Believe it or not, some will still follow the ways of the world. They will deliberately disobey and go against Righteousness.”

“So,” Ben started. “Even though these heavenly beings came from God and are a part of God, they remain evil because of their disobedience. Right? But I remember reading that the Watchers became very sorrowful and begin to repent and ask God for forgiveness only to not receive it.”

“That is true,” Isaac responded. “Yet, they instructed Man, who is God’s most precious creation, how to kill with weapons which caused wars. They...”

“But Cain killed Abel with a weapon. He didn’t learn from the Watchers, that’s for sure,” Ben fought, as if he were now on Judah’s side. “Seems as if Man would’ve learned sin, through trial and error and over the generations on his own,” Ben spoke as if he was already a scholar.

“So much to learn,” Isaac shook his head and realizing he didn’t have an answer for the specific question. “When Adam sinned, iniquity entered the Earth. He gave the throne to Satan. The Earth was ours but when Adam fell, the Earth became Satan’s. Satan wants to rule like God, yet opposite of God’s laws. Kill, Steal and Destroy is the embodiment of Satan. Jesus came to destroy the evil king and that iniquity Satan flooded the Earth with by offering Himself, the perfect sacrifice, from the seed of God, not man since man is flawed. Now eternal life is free. A free gift. You get an immortal body, and you get to reign the Nations with Christ in the New World. That’s all to it,” Isaac stated with a raised voice. He was clearly disturbed. “Anything else is almost irrelevant.”

“Uhm,” Judah huffed and continued eating while Ben did the same. Judah still wanted to know about the flood.

“Uhm?” Isaac asked. “What does ‘Uhm’ mean?” he shot. “You expect me to have all the answers for you? Huh?” Isaac stood up in anger. “You expect me to act like I have all the answers for you?” he asked.

“No, Father. I...” Judah started but was interrupted.

“Seek, and you’ll find. Knock and the door shall be opened. Amen?” Isaac looked for affirmation.

“Amen,” Judah, Ben and Miriam said all together in fear.

“This is free,” Isaac lifted his hands and looked around his house. “This roof. My children. My wife. Your Mother are all gifts from God. I serve the LORD with all my heart and when the LORD sees that, He rewards me gifts. HA! AMEN! Like a father does his children. When you do good, what happens? I bless you! When you get on that pulpit and move the people

of God the way you did, God rewards you. God rewards me to reward you! Double blessings! Amen?" Isaac asked again.

"Amen!" everyone joined in.

"God is not the author of confusion, so don't bring that mess in my house, amen?"

"Then how shall we seek?" Ben asked.

"Seek for truth. Seek in what aligns with the Word of God," Isaac ordered. "Amen!?" he asked, and everyone followed but Judah. "Amen?" Isaac directed that last Amen to Judah.

"Even that. Amen-Ra. Egyptology," Benjamin tried to save his big brother as Judah and Isaac held stares. Judah was getting tired of his father and his 'holy temperament.' Judah simply shook his head in agreement and to Isaac, which was enough, for now. Even though they said nothing to each other in that instance, so much was said.

The rest of dinner was silence. Isaac almost felt threatened because for the first time in his life, Judah did something quite bold to Bishop. He knew the day would come. The testing of faith and manhood.

*'Keep him, Lord,'* Isaac whispered in fear to himself after seeing his oldest leave the dinner table.

"This is good," Miriam told Isaac.

"What? Judah venturing off?" Isaac responded with sass.

"It'll either make him or break him. We raised him to make it in this world, right?"

Miriam spoke with subtleness. Isaac listened to his wife and confided in her words. "Trust in him, but more importantly, trust in yourself, that you equipped Judah with the necessary tools for spiritual warfare."

"You right. As always," Isaac broke into a smile, but in the back of his mind, he thought differently. Isaac thought he still had to do something to protect his child.

"I'm not always right, silly," Miriam sat in the lap of her husband, as both their children were away.

"I think I'm going to give Judah the keys to the Townhouse by the River," Isaac told his wife. "I want him out of here. If he think he's ready and not answering me and giving me that eye, he can go and pay his own rent. He's blessed to have a father that can put him in place without credit checks, deposits and things of that nature."

"Nice. And indeed Judah is blessed. Did you furnish it already?" she asked.

“No. That’s his job,” he smiled, trying to keep his composure. “He has more than enough money to do as he wills. I peeped at his bank account a month ago. He needs to jump from this nest, that’s for sure,” Isaac made firm.

“Yes. I’m sure he’d still love it,” she kissed him.

“You think so?” he asked once they finished smooching.

“Well,” Miriam got up to do the dishes. Isaac followed. “He doesn’t cling to us as much anymore. He’s mostly either in his tiny home or out. I think he’ll be ok.”

“And the Church?” Isaac asked.

“That’s another story. I mean,” she took a deep breath. “He does know how to deliver a sermon; I’ll give him that. He knows how to pray. He knows how to call on the name of Lord and the Lord move. We’ve seen it, no?”

“We have.”

“And with this covid occurring, this may give him the time to sit back and analyze his life, his mission, his calling. As parents, it’s only natural for us to be worrisome. But, from what I’ve seen and experienced with Judah, he’s more than ready. And if YWHW is talking to you in your dreams about what to do with the Church and what to do with your relationship with your oldest, you better listen,” Miriam told Isaac. All Isaac could do was agree. In his dreams, Judah was to lead the people after a famine. Isaac predicted the outbreak of Covid to be the famine. Famine of Spiritual Awakening since the Church was forced to close down. This was just the beginning of a new age. Isaac always dreamed of Judah losing Hawa and he felt it in his heart to do something about it before Judah ruined himself.

“Throw him out the nest, huh?” Isaac asked and knew the answer.

“For everyone’s sake,” Miriam looked up at the towering Isaac graciously. She thought about Muhammad Hasan, the man she saw on the news who mentioned rebuilding the Jewish Temple and signing a treaty with Israel. She knew that man, in her heart, she honestly knew that man. She wanted to ask Isaac, but something forbade her to. Maybe next time.

\*\*\*

Judah entered his tiny home in the backyard and slammed onto his bed. The last few days were quite hectic. He simply gawked at the ceiling and thought. He thought on his own faith. He thought on Pita and Kareem and the different perspectives they would bring. He

thought about Hawa and the promises he promised her about wanting to participate in Islamic prayer. What was he about to tap into? He thought about the Church and was unable to see whether or not he was equipped for the job. He thought about the annoyance his father was bringing to the forefront of his life.

“Judah!” Isaac came in unannounced, frightening Judah a bit just as he was on his mind. “Saw you thinking deeply. Thought I’d ease your train of thought with gifts,” Isaac dug in his pocket and retrieves a small box.

“More gifts, huh?” Judah sat up. “Just a minute ago, you were inches away from caving my chest in,” he laughed.

“Have I ever caved your chest in? Have I ever even hit you? Never! Never had a reason to,” Isaac aggressively hugged his oldest son with all the love in the world. “I love you more than life itself, son. You’re a spitting image of me, yet more intelligent. Less silly. Seeking more. Destined for more. More room for wisdom to take over. But I’ve schooled you enough. My time is almost done from teaching you. One more task is at hand, and yet it is not this,” he pointed to the box. “Open it.”

“Pops,” Judah tried to withdraw from receiving.

“Naw. I need you to have that,” Isaac pointed. Judah opened the box and there was a key with a tag of an address attached to it. “That’s the townhouse! All yours. Sits right on the Sacramento River. Call Lamont to help you move. He’d love to assist,” Isaac announced. “This space will belong to Benjamin so your mother and I can live like Adam and Eve,” Isaac smiled to himself.

“Eww, Pops. But, wow! Thanks! Uhm, do I pay rent?” Judah asked.

“Of course. Rent-to-Own. I bought the place out right and you’ll pay me until you pay it off. This will teach you financial responsibility. Since you’ll be taking over the Church, your money will come from there.”

“And in the meantime? Like, with this covid outbreak?”

“Don’t worry. This is a time for your preparing. Prepare to lead the people. Don’t worry about rent for the first couple of months. The government is putting into law a National Eviction Moratorium, so you’re good for now. More than anything, you need to be ready to lead. I believe you can do this better being by yourself. Just you and God. I only have one rule that you don’t break.”

“What’s that?”

“Don’t move anybody in that house, except for Hawa if need be. And maybe even Lamont because I know them. But keep your space personal. Keep your space holy. If you do move in Hawa, talk to Mr. Greene, first. Understand?” Isaac simply tried to convey responsibility.

“I do.”

“Be out by the end of the week, son. I love you,” Isaac concluded but something came to Judah’s mind.

“Pops,” he stopped his father. “Did Mother mention some man from Iran being tied to the antichrist?” Judah had forgot the name of the man, Muhammad Hasan.

“Your mother has said nothing of the sort, but I am aware of yet another false Twelver in my opinion! I don’t know why this one is getting so much clout. I don’t think he is the antichrist though. He may just be another Grand Ayatollah trying to win political votes. And then we must be careful on how we interpret Scripture. Many antichrists have come, even before Christ, and many more shall come. But the Word does speak on the end times and the signing peace treaties with Israel. The rebuilding of the Jewish Temple so that the antichrist may defile it. Uhm,” Isaac looked more serious now than ever, thinking deeply. “I better get to studying,” he held his chest, like he’d lost something. “Because if that is true, we must prepare. Time is of the essence, no?” he looked to his son for an answer. Judah replied not, still happy to have his own place and so rapidly at that. “It all makes sense. The covid, the closing of the Church. The Devil is making way,” he ran out the tiny home to go study. Judah thought his father was losing it. The falling out at the Church was really getting to him, or at least Judah thought. That’s all Isaac knew, according to Judah, was the Church.

Nonetheless, Judah was ecstatic about moving. He took his mind of this supposed antichrist and the concern for his father and immediately began to pack his things. Being able to rest in a place he can call his own was something he really looked forward to. Judah would think being in his tiny house would make him feel more independent, but he was wrong. He was still under the rule of his parents. It actually made him feel like a pet, the way he was situated in the backyard.

He called Lamont to come help and Lamont sounded just as ecstatic as him. Lamont was there in under thirty minutes to help Judah pack. He didn’t have a lot. Bed framing, a mattress, a

flat-screen, and other small miscellaneous things from books to clothes to journals of his own writings he'd saved over the years. The letters from Hawa when they first meet filled a moving box to the brim. They'd written over 500 letters over a span of two years to each other when they first meet in the Church, when Judah was 13 and she was 15.

Judah lived very simply and below his means, even though he saved up more money than anyone could've guessed. With over \$200,000 in his savings account, he felt more than ready to venture into the world. God had blessed him with a place of his own, a car and more than enough money, let alone a whole Church to lead. Judah knew he had a lot to do before stepping into that pulpit and proclaiming his calling. This was the beginning of something new and exciting and Judah, even though quite frightened, was also overjoyed for the future.

It was 10pm when Lamont and Judah drove separate cars to Judah's new place. The address looked familiar, and it didn't dawn on neither one of them until they pulled into the car garage, again.

*'Oh no. Lord, I know what you are doing!'* Judah told the Lord as he drove into the same car garage he did a couple of nights ago. Lamont honked the horn and could be seen dancing in the rearview mirror. Judah shared the same building as Pita and Kareem; they were now neighbors.

"You so lucky!" Lamont patted Judah's back once they exited their vehicles. "You got Hawa and Pita on lockdown! You did this, huh? On purpose, huh? Or is it God? He about to test you, huh? What is it?" he was adamant.

"I don't know," Judah shrugged his shoulders and shook his head.

"It's God. I see the fear in your face."

"Fear?" Judah tried to straighten his face, but it was too late. Lamont was excellent at reading Judah as well.

"Pita gone be knocking at your door every day, watch! She's attracted to that theological knowledge, no? She's a professor who's dating an ass in the form of a donkey-wannabe-know-it-all, right?"

"Lamont. Stop, bro," Judah tried to calm his friend, who was sounding like the Adversary right now.

"My bad," Lamont backed off. They took everything from their cars and placed them inside the new place which was immaculate. Granite-stone counter tops, marble rock-like walls

that were very non-traditional when it came to interior housing. Isaac had bought his son the Junior suite, which was quite different from Pita and Kareem's place. More elegant and sophisticated. Even the floors would heat up through the transparent stone-like material that displayed rocks of assorted colors beneath.

"Wonders!" was all Lamont could say. Even though Lamont had a nice small house, it wasn't nothing compared to Judah's. "See! And that's why I gave my life to the Lord. So I can live like this!" he lifted his hands up. "You spending the night here?" he asked knowing Judah had no comfortable place to sleep.

"Yeah. I brung some comforters. I want to pray over my new place tonight, bond with it," Judah spoke truth.

"Yessir," Lamont was making his way out. "I'm off tomorrow. Swing by in the morning? Around 10am?" he asked Judah.

"Perfect!" Judah agreed as they were to go shopping and then go chat with Mr. Greene that morning.

Lamont left Judah.

Judah looked around at his smaller miscellaneous belongings and agreed to do everything at once tomorrow. He closed his eyes.

"*Lord,*" he began to pray. "*Lord, Lord, Lord,*" he didn't know what to say. He knew this was a test; a test within a blessing so he didn't know whether to thank God or ask for help. Both? He was already being tested by knowledge foreign to him. Then this blessing.

"*Lord,*" he fell to his knees. Judah wanted confirmation of God's existence, deep down, but knew he'd better not tempt God. He then rolled over and fell flat on his back on the warm, transparent-stoned floor. He felt his brain going into an overload, especially being fed that alien knowledge in the recent days. "*Lord,*" he called out again, maybe even waiting on an answer. He couldn't say anything else. He began to grow weary of repetitiveness with the words he would say in prayers. They got him this far, but still. He had a feeling on the inside that disturbed him. Maybe he needed not to talk to God. Maybe he needed to bind Satan.

"Satan!" Judah opened his eyes and stood up in a hurry. Before he could say anything, someone knocked at the door, taking him out of his element.

"Who is it?" Judah called out.

“Pita!” he heard from the other end. His eyes bulged. She already knew he was inside. It would be rude to leave her out there. But she lived here. But maybe Judah wanted to be alone, busy with himself.

“May I help you?” Judah called out.

“*May I help you?*” Pita repeated to herself. “Boy, open the door!” she demanded. Judah was taken aback. No more Mr. Nice Guy. The line had to be drawn somewhere! And for Judah to be so close to God, he thought that would make the devil more attracted to him.

Judah swung the door open and began, “I don’t appreciate you...” he stopped to find Pita holding a Greek Lexicon.

“I come bearing gifts and you don’t appreciate me,” Pita said handing the Lexicon to Judah. “A low-down dirty shame,” she laughed and made her way inside at her own will. She knew who she was. She knew who Judah was. She knew what they were going to be.

“How did you know where I lived?” Judah asked. “And so fast?”

“We are intertwined. We’ve meditated together. I know you. You know me. You are my Knowledge. I am your Wisdom. Together we shall form an Understanding,” she spoke as the words sounded extremely recognizable.

“I don’t under...”

“You don’t understand a lot. And yet you’re ready to lead a people to salvation?” Pita asked.

“...”

“Cat got your tongue?” Pita asked, pulling out some sort of brown cigarette and sitting on the floor near the living room windows.

“Please, no smoking.”

“It’s just weed,” Pita ignored Judah and lit the joint. “If anything, you need to hit the weed,” she said trying to pass the blunt. Judah just stood there, astonished in the worst ways possible. Being disrespected with such composure caused confusion. Judah didn’t know how to react.

“I thank you for the Lexicon, but I think we should catch up tomorrow. I was trying to bless my place and now you’re inside smoking,” Judah complained.

“Just freeing the mind, brothaman,” Pita smiled and blew out smoke. “Here,” she tried passing it again.

“No. I rather keep my temple clean and sober.”

“When did cannabis destroy the temple?” Pita fought.

“Not cannabis, but the smoke. The mere event of fire being inhaled into the lungs is something I’m not fond of,” Judah fought back.

“That’s crazy. I thought you indulged. Your name is JUDAH, after all,” she couldn’t hold back from laughing.

“And?”

“And,” she fiddled with her phone until a song began to play.

“Ain’t no rules, ain’t no vow, we can do it anyhow! I’n’ I will see you through, Cos’ every day we pay the price with a little sacrifice!” Pita sung along to Bob Marely.

“Jesus is from the tribe of Judah! And stemming from this lineage of Christ, from the tribe of Judah, comes the Rastafarian Nation. A tradition within the Nation, equivalent to Passover Sundays or even fasting in your faith, is the same as smoking the herb of the Earth. Our spirits become more awakened and willing to praise Ja, another name of God, the same God who sits on Mount Zion. The Rasta Nation gives credit to where credit is due. The Bible! That Lexicon!”

“Uhm,” Judah simply let her dance and smoke and with her surfaced universal knowledge. He felt defeated, especially after his father gave his clear instructions on who to let in his place. He didn’t want to act out of character, but Pita was surely pushing his buttons. He never thought she’d be this disrespectful in a million years. Maybe Judah needed it; a bit of disrespect to humble himself more.

“Listen to the Scripture he’s reciting: *‘Jah sitteth in Mount Zion! And rules all creation!’*” she sung. This is real spiritual music. What does Genesis say about plants bearing their own seed? That it was good!” she answered her own question. Judah finally began to smell the chronic smoke and it was strange to his spirit.

“Pita,” he coughed a bit, wanting to tell her politely to leave.

“Yes, Judah,” Pita got a bit too close for comfort, blowing more smoke in his face. She rubbed her free hand along his torso and then down to his stomach. Red signs felt as if they appeared everywhere. A slight hint of arousal crept into Judah when Pita touched him down there. The smoke was making Judah less aggressive to remove Pita from his home. Maybe the

smoke made him more reluctant to accept whatever she was trying to do. It was like the smoke was hypnotic as Judah was relieved of all pressures to get Pita out.

“I said, yes, Judah?” she repeated and began to unbuckle Judah’s pants. “This ain’t for everyone,” she blew out more smoke. Pita was determinedly opening Judah up to a new world. “Some people act dumb and silly. Some are stuck, couch lock,” she giggled. “But this stuff, Judah, is for the elite. Sort of reminds me how Buddhism was bred by thoughtful, indigent priests, who rejected the world and, having no place to lay their heads, migrated. Only these were full members of the laity of inferior value which included items, not subjects as in people, of religiosity,” she spat alien knowledge while trying to drop Judah’s pants.

“No!” Judah quickly took hold of his pants, trying to conceive his surroundings. Things were blurry. Was it the chronic smoke or was he dreaming again?

*“This has to be a dream,”* Judah thought to himself. This was, in fact, Lucid Dreaming. This was a time where Judah had full control over the storyline of his dream, being somewhat conscious while he was clearly sleep on his floor. He’d experienced this phenomenon before, having full control over his dreams and he admired it.

“You fear me,” Pita spoke. “You fear me and my universal knowledge. You also have fears of slipping from the mystic realm of God and transitioning from being all holy to all-too-human, huh?” Pita began to slowly drop to her knees.

*“Can I sin in a dream?”* Judah thought to himself. *“Especially if I know what’s going on?”* he asked himself again as Pita tried to pull his pants down again. Judah could feel his heart pounding in his chest, not knowing what to do. He knew, even from his current state, that he would remember this dream from here on out.

*“It’ll be nice,”* Judah thought to himself then immediately found himself guilty of sin.

“Let me teach you some things,” Pita proceeded to reach into Judah’s pants, but Judah pulled back. Those pleasures were cool and all, but Judah was on another level. He could’ve shown himself weak and animalistic, or even all-too-human, but if he’d continue this sort of behavior, he’d only get worse. In a dream or not.

“No. You need not teach me anything. Let no one deceive themselves. If anyone among you seem to be wise in this world, let them be a fool, that they may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain,” Judah spoke from Scripture, citing from I Corinthians. He pulled himself away from Pita and

pulled his pants back up, standing amidst the smoke. “I am not conformed to this world and its wisdom. I’m sorry, Pita,” Judah stood his ground.

“What?” Pita stood up, covering her face with her hands and repeated. “What? What? What?” It began to spook Judah a bit, but Judah held his ground, ready to call on the name of Christ Jesus if Satan tried to reveal himself. “What happened to cosmic love?” she still said behind a covered face. “What about universal love?” her voice got higher and higher in pitch. “What about the sin of rejecting sexual desires?” her voice got higher by each question. Then the palms of her hands began to descend from her face. Judah was able to witness a frowned forehead, nothing in resemblance to Pita. “What happened to being all-too-human rather than all-too-holy?” she said, now revealing the eyes of something that looked both angelic and demonic, interchangeably. The eyeballs and the pupil would change colors with the second going from pitch black to crystal clear blue. Judah had seen enough.

“In the name of Yeshua! In the name of Jesus Christ. In the name of the Son of God. I rebuke you!” he almost shouted, and Pita’s body immediately flew back, but what looked like her spirit stayed. She looked anew as she was separated from body and spirit. She looked as if she’d known she had just lost something.

“Judah,” her spirit, still standing in front of Judah, called out with lifted hands. Then she fell to her knees and continued to call out, “I am yours,” her tears fell from this spirit body that was now her, as the fleshly body behind her was unconscious or dead.

“Wake me up, Lord!” Judah called out and in an instant, he woke. He woke with deep emotions. He looked around and everything was how he left it when he originally laid down. He questioned everything in that moment. He was becoming more and more frustrated because now everything seemed imbalanced.

Then, in an instant, he began to tear at the eyes. He wanted to rid the frustration, but it felt as if moving closer to Pita and Kareem would antagonize it. Then he remembered how before he fell asleep, he couldn’t find the words to pray. He had the words now.

“Emmanuel! O’ Blameless One!” he began to almost yell at the top of his lungs. He could care less who heard him. He was going to pour his heart out on his own accord. “Hear my prayer O’ Lord! You test me! You allow Satan to tempt me! The wisdom of this world sounds true and gives good perception O’ Lord! I do not wish to wander off into unsound doctrine O’ Lord. But in my heart, I have found the need to search for truth O’ Lord. Allow me to go not

unto unsound doctrine, leading me into the hands of the deceiver O' Lord. I am troubled, torn between women as I shouldn't be. Pressured with unlawful sexual desires, pressured with new and unfamiliar knowledge! Pressured with the expectations of my father. Bless him O' Lord and hear me when I call on Your Name!" Judah got so loud that the Lord almost flinched. "Hear my prayer! Your child comes to You and only You. Your Will be done O' Lord as I know You are just and true! I am your living sacrifice! Please continue to have me go down the straight and narrow O' Lord. I have a people to lead but I feel changes! My pride is engulfing! My hormones are raging! I feel myself slipping O' Lord!"

"You are human!" Judah heard someone say. Judah was so into prayer that he figured the voice to come from Heaven. To come from within, not really paying attention to who said what. More than anything, he was ready to respond.

"Human I am. But how shall I move forward? Almost at the point of lust when it comes to another woman. Almost at the point of changing the way I think based on theological observations. Being a Christian is in tension with the greatest irrational force of life; sexual love," he whispered the latter, mocking Pita almost word for word from a previous conversation.

Before Judah could think of anything else to say, he saw his front door open. Kareem's head peeped through.

"Boyyyy," Kareem came in smiling, holding the same Greek Lexicon in his hand that Pita had in his dream. "You kinda loud. Waking up the neighbors and whatnot," he closed the door behind him. "Welcome to the neighborhood, baby boy," Kareem hugged Judah. "Despites our differences, you my brother. No doubt," Kareem continued to warm the heart of Judah. "I saw how fascinated you were when researching the Lexicon and had to get a copy for you. Didn't know you were moving in here until I talked to the property manager after seeing your car. Boy got the Junior Suite. I see you," Kareem was still all smiles.

"Thank you, Kareem," Judah said, still trying to take in everything. He'd just dreamed about Pita coming in here giving him the same Lexicon. He left his door open? How was he to interrupt this?

*"With a grain of salt,"* his inner self told him.

"No problem. And apologies for everything, man. I know I've been hard on you from the get-go. It's all in the love of theological knowledge."

“No problem,” Judah answered, but still felt uneasy about Kareem. Judah wondered if Kareem was helping to build his spirit or break it. Judah also remembered Kareem mentioning airline tickets when they first met. “Aye, remember when we first met. You said something about someone purchasing tickets for us. To Iran. You never elaborated,” Judah was beginning to put the pieces together.

“It’s nothing,” Kareem brushed it off. “I was told to not speak on it. In due time, most definitely,” he said and prepared to leave. “I’m also having these wild dreams, brother. You are in them! I’m afraid to tell you though,” Kareem admitted. Yes, God was clearly trying to deliver messages to Judah.

“Please do tell. You aren’t the only person telling me about dreams in which I am in. I think God is trying to relay something to me, to us,” Judah made clear.

“Man,” Kareem rubbed his face and stretched at the same time. “To sum it up, all I remember is sword fighting some fake prophets, leading naked men to be shown in front of thousands of Muslims in the middle of prayer time and even being in an Arabic jail with my sister, Fatima. It’s crazy. Some weird looking kid with magic powers. A hairy beast. Middle Eastern Soldiers. The Quran and The Bible being used as literal weapons. Everything is scattered,” Kareem confessed. It was a lot to take in, even for Judah as he realized all the dreams were in somewhat related. Judah was caught thinking and had nothing to say. He needed to speak with God more, without interference, that was for sure.

“Ight. Let me know if you need anything, man,” Kareem said after he discovered Judah was nonresponsive, and made his way to the door.

“As a matter of fact, I do,” Judah stopped Kareem as he turned and smiled.

“What is it?” Kareem asked, appearing to be sincere. All Judah wanted was an explanation of Islam, especially in regard to Jesus and especially since he promised to pray with Hawa in the near future.

“I mean, I know as much as Islam teaches that Jesus was merely a prophet. A prophet He was, as He prophesied, but did He not die for the sins of humanity? Did He not die then resurrect on the third day, defeating death? How is Muhammad, peace be upon Him, greater than Jesus?”

“Whoa! There you go starting mess,” he laughed. “No one said Prophet Muhammad, alihi wa-sallam, was greater than Jesus, alihi wa-sallam,” Kareem made his way back into the comforts of Judah’s home. He leant on the kitchen’s counter and proceeded. “But Brother, let us

speak as men, and not wailing children. Let us accept our own truths, first, before we cast judgement on the next man. I clearly see you are troubled. Is it with this new knowledge?"

"You heard me praying?" Judah had just caught on.

"Yessir. I was the one saying, *'You are human,'*" Kareem waved. "Then you began praying again like it was God who answered you," he laughed a bit.

"Yeah, ha," Judah gave in a little.

"But to your question, and I'll stick to the Bible. Isaiah 53:10 reads: 'Yahweh was pleased to crush him. He made Him sick. If He would give Himself as a guilt offering or an atonement for sin, He shall see His offspring, and God shall prolong His days. And the Will of the Lord shall success and prosper in His hand.' What does that mean? We believe Jesus never died. This scripture is saying that Jesus was willing to give His life up and from there was He granted life! Jesus was saved! Psalms 166:16 says I worship you LORD, just as my mother did, and You have rescued Me from the chains of Death. Psalms 91:16 in reference to God speaking on Jesus says: With long life will I satisfy Him and show Him My salvation. If Jesus only lived to 33 years old, He didn't live a long life. God took Jesus before they killed Him and as Muslims, we believe that Jesus will come back, the Second Coming. Jesus will come back and defeat the army of Satan, live a long life and die a natural death only to be resurrected then and there."

"He already did that. Did He not already defeat Satan by defeating Death? The prophesy of Jonah in Matthew 12:40," Judah was ready for battle. "*For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the Earth.*"

"Correct," Kareem quickly interrupted before Judah could mention Jesus ascending into Hell, or Abraham's bosom, to take the keys from Satan and free the ones since the beginning of time. "Yet Jonah was alive during this ordeal, not dead. He was alive on shore, alive in the whale's belly and alive when he was spat out. Alive, Alive, Alive! Therefore Jesus was alive. Many people die for hours and even days and come back to life. Does that mean they were ever dead? Remember, Jesus's disciples weren't there with Him when He supposedly died. Mark 14:49-50 states: *'I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you took me not. But the scriptures must be fulfilled.'* And they all, Jesus's disciples, forsake Him and fled. So none of the disciples witnessed this. Remember in John 19:34 when they pierced the side of Jesus and blood, and water came out. It said, *'And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he*

*knoweth that he saith true, that ye may believe.* Who is to say this man's testimony wasn't a mistake? What if he only *thought* Jesus to be dead? Even today, we have all kinds of machines to check your pulse, your heart rate and yet doctors still make mistakes. What makes you think just by someone observing that they weren't making a mistake?"

"Luke 23:46 says, 'And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, 'Father, into Thy hands I command My spirit.' And having said this, He gave up the ghost.' Doesn't that put a death certificate on Him?" Judah asked.

"Again, Luke wasn't there. None of the disciples were. It's all hearsay. Why do you think the disciples were afraid when Jesus appeared to them after the quote-on-quote resurrection? They thought Him to be a ghost? Why? Because they THOUGHT he was dead. But He was never dead. The disciples thought Him to be a Spirit, but Jesus told them to touch Him, for spirit does not have flesh and bones. He never died," Kareem was stiff in his beliefs.

"Maybe that was Jesus's resurrected body. Also remember, they didn't recognize him at first. They were actually afraid. This was a new body. If he never died, he'd have the same body and therefore be recognizable, right?"

"False," Kareem interrupted. "They were afraid because they thought they saw a ghost! They heard Jesus died and when He showed up, they were afraid, because they thought He was a spirit. But Jesus told them to touch Him and feel His flesh and bones, for spirit does not have flesh and bones. That was His body, man."

"Yes, yet a new creature. A new body. Not the same body that was brutally beaten and taken to the cross. Then he'd surely be unrecognizable. This is why the disciples were afraid, they thought they saw a ghost," Judah tried to answer one question at a time then laughed to himself a bit. In that instance, God relieved Judah of some tension, unconsciously relating to Judah that he needed to relax a bit.

"What?" Kareem asked, noticing the slight smile on Judah's face.

"You crazy, man," Judah smiled, thanking God inwardly. "Your interpretations are selective and it's almost like you disregard other Scriptures."

"How?" Kareem asked, intrigued now.

"Your whole theory on Jesus, like, I've never heard of anything like it. Maybe I haven't dug as deep in the Quran as I should, but, ha," Judah laughed and slapped the palm of his hand to his forehead. He was genuinely amazed.

“Explain, please.”

“I know there is more to it, the whole everything in our disagreeing. But, like, ok, you started by quoting Isaiah. It sounds like it’s from a different translation, but never mind that. I get the impression that you believe Jesus was supposed to have literal offspring, like children, in the physical and live a life in full on earth. Well, good news. He’s alive. He’s just as alive as Elijah or Enoch. And He has offspring. Hundreds of Millions of offspring through the Spirit. Through the Blood. Then you quote Psalms and make it out to be Jesus being saved from Death. Again, I agree. Jesus was saved from Death. He defeated it by being raised by God. He descended into Sheol and preached to the dead before Him and to those waiting for Him. Who is Him? The Second Adam! The First Adam was God’s firstborn, no?” Judah appeared to be on a roll. Kareem shook his head in agreeing. “Yet, the first, the first King of this Earth, Adam, disobeyed and caused sin to enter the world. Adam gave up his birth right to Satan, by being deceived. Just like Esau giving up his birthright. Just like Satan trying to steal Jesus’s birthright when he was 40 days in the desert. The devil is real. Our whole domain, corrupted by this ‘Prince of the Earth!’ Now by nature, we sin. By nature, we think ill will and slap people’s hands down when we get mad. That is not the Original Man,” Judah referred to Kareem’s actions from previous encounters.

“Yup,” Kareem was agreeing so far.

“Therefore Son of Man emerges. The Second Adam. God through woman so that He may experience life as a human to take on the temptations of all evilness, and still be held as a sacrifice for them to bring about everlasting peace. Again, this Second Adam, a blameless man, and the eternal God, shall take on all the sins of the first Adam and his offspring and pay for them at the Cross. God gave Himself, in the person of Jesus Christ, to suffer death, punishment and curse due to fallen humanity as the penalty for our sin. What else you going to do with your sin? Work it off? Be held accountable? For the wages of sin is death. You sin under the Law you will be judged under the Law. Romans 2 and 12. You sin without the Law; You perish without the Law. The death of Christ deals with sin and injustice while his resurrection is the renewal and restoration of righteousness. Right? You and I know we all fall short of the glory of God, right?” Judah asked.

“Wrong. We are still Original Man. We never fell. The Fall happened in Heaven not Earth. Adam was a human being, and a man tends to forget things.”

“Aww come one. No way,” Judah spoke up.

“Man’s heart changes and his will weakens. Satan summoned all the envy within him and took advantage of Adam’s humanity to exploit him. He started to whisper to him day after day, coaxing him: ‘Shall I guide you to the Tree of Immortality and the Eternal Kingdom?’ And Satan continued: ‘Your Lord did not forbid you this tree save you should become angels or become of the immortals.’ And Satan swore by Allah to them both saying: ‘Verily I am one of the sincere well-wishers for you both!’ Years went by, and Adam and Eve were preoccupied with thoughts of that tree. Then, one day, they decided to eat of its fruit. They forgot that Allah had warned them not to approach it and that Iblis was their sworn enemy. Adam stretched out his hand, picked one of the fruits, and offered it to Eve. They both ate of the forbidden tree. Allah Almighty told us: ‘So he Satan misled them with deception.’ O’ Children of Adam. Let not Satan cause you to fall into affliction as he expelled your parents from the garden, pulling off from them both their clothing that he might show them their evil inclinations, he surely sees you, he as well as his host, from whence you cannot see them; surely We have made the Satan’s to be the guardians of those who do not believe,” Kareem tried to argue back.

“Whoa!” Judah announced. “That’s a whole nother story,” he confessed.

“Who is to say yours or mine is true?” Kareem asked.

“Logic.”

“Ok.”

“Apparently, we can both agree that evil or sin was entered into the world by Satan and Man being deceived by him, correct,” Judah asked as Kareem shook his head yes. “How do we then fix the problem?”

“We deal with it. We do good. We have free will. Allah guides us.”

“Allah guides who He wishes to guide according to the Quran, right?” Judah asked.

“You’re right. Abraham verse 4 says, ‘*Allah lets go astray whom He wills and lets find guidance whom He wills.*’ How does that differ from your Hebrew God?”

“The Father is separated from Man by sin. God is all-holy. Correct?”

“Correct,” Kareem confirmed.

“So, how does Allah remit sin?”

“Good deeds versus bad ones,” Kareem said nonchalantly. “Following the guide that Allah has laid out upon us.”

“So, you’re saying your honorable deeds have to outweigh your bad ones?” Judah asked him.

“Not at all. Allah will love you and forgive you your sins for Allah is All Forgiving and All Merciful. Family of Imran verse 31.”

“Ok,” Judah decided to stay on topic while switching it up a bit, “Would you rather be judged by God or by the Son of Man?” Judah asked.

“Hiram! God is the only judge,” Kareem shot.

“You are right. Yet, in John 5 Jesus says: ‘By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgement is just, for I seek not to please myself but Him who sent me. If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. There is another that bears witness of me; and I know that the witness which He witnesses is true.’ Verse 41 says: ‘I receive not honor from men. I have come in My Father’s name, yet you don’t accept Me. If someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him. How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another, and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God? Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: your accuser is Moses, on whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote about me. But if you do not believe his writings, how shall you believe my words?’”

“So you recite that Scripture to say what?” Kareem was lost.

“When we’re judged, we all come up against the Father, be His name Allah, YHWH, whatever. God has many names. Sin is what curses us and it comes from the devil. Satan is the adversary, like a District Attorney. We are defending our souls from sin because God will judge. Jesus would be my lawyer. Moses would be yours. Or Prophet Muhammad. With my belief in Christ and being born of the Spirit and not the world, my sins are paid for in full because once I accepted Jesus, I became a new creature through a shared resurrection. I began to think differently and act accordingly, in spirit first. Therefore my deed be good. My sins already paid for by the blood, that liquid that embodies life, from a perfect Man of God, from God. But then, when my brother takes the stand, Kareem,” Judah points, “And you have Moses or Prophet Muhammad representing you. Or even you representing yourself. Where is the atonement for sin? In your deeds? What about every time you thought something evil? Did you know that is an offense to God? Have you atoned from it? Does not a good deed have to be accounted for every evil thought that seeped into your mind? Now think about that? Having to battle that uphill

struggle in the land of sin. No one is good. That is why God made a way, through the ultimate sacrifice,” Judah preached.

“You may be right,” Kareem seemed a lot easier this morning. “Who says Moses doesn’t have what it takes to admit me into heaven?” Kareem asked all smiles. They both laughed. “Afterall, Moses was chilling with God in the mountains for 40 days. Who knows what Moses knows? When Jesus was in the desert for 40 days, we only hear about the devil coming to chill with Him, not the Father. I know Christ has His blood as evidence for admittance, but Moses may have something too,” Kareem was persistent. “Even when Jesus took Peter, James, and John to the mountains, who did they meet?”

“Moses,” Judah smiled.

“And Elijah! See,” Kareem said with outspread arms.

Before either of them could say anything else, another knock at the door sounded.

“Should I hide?” Kareem asked.

“Hide?” Judah was playfully confused. It was like, in an instant, instead of them debating to whereas it’d hurt their spiritual well-being, they debated to come to truths. Judah answered the door to Lamont.

“Brother Masod,” Lamont hugged his friend Judah. “And Mister Louis Farrakhan Junior himself!” he laughed with outspread arms. “The one and only, my brother from the same mother, maybe a different father, Kareem!” he announced. Maybe Lamont had gotten up on the right side of bed.

“Lamont. Peace, brother,” Kareem bowed. “I didn’t mean to intrude. Just came bearing gifts.”

“We just going shopping for the place. Help us,” Lamont decided to dictate for Judah. “We could use a third set of eyes for the interior. I believe more in the three when the bible says when 2 or 3 are present, I am surely there,” Lamont testified. “Or the Trinity. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit,” Lamont was trying to appease the company. Little did he know, he was adding theological fuel to the flame. Before Judah could say anything to change the subject, Kareem attacked.

“When did we start equating things and people with God? I thought God was One? Where did three come from?” Kareem asked.

“Three persons in One,” Lamont tried to begin until he witnessed Kareem hold up three fingers.

“One plus one plus one equals three. Not one,” Kareem combatted. “That’s irrational.”

“Then how is it we have Body, Spirit and Soul?” Judah tried to jump in and save Lamont. “If we were made in His likeness and image, then wouldn’t three parts exist with God?”

“A three part? What about a googolplex?” Kareem asked.

“Googolplex?” Lamont was confused.

“The largest number known to man,” Judah answered.

“God is a part of everything, is He not?” Kareem asked. “Everything that exists, was God before, no?” Kareem asked then answered himself. “From fungi to rock. From bee to an ant, from a fish to a bird; has not God been it all?” Kareem asked. Lamont and Judah gave each other faces as if Kareem was a mad man.

“You coming?” Lamont asked, knowing he didn’t have an answer. Everyone looked at each other before Kareem looked upon Judah for confirmation. Judah shook his head in approval.

“Sure,” Kareem stated.

“Ok. Let me wash my face and freshen up. Meet downstairs,” Judah instructed, and they followed.

After brushing his teeth and washing up with the toiletries found in his luggage, Judah got dressed and meet his friends downstairs. Lamont and Kareem were joking next to Lamont’s Mustang when Judah met them.

“I’ll get in the back,” Kareem offered, and they were off to Ikea.

“Quick question,” Judah started as he sat in the front seat, turning around to Kareem. “Because Hawa brought this up to me about you. She claimed you were ministering about the origins of God and how it merged with Science. She began to go in depth, but said she kept carrying about her business. Something like atom and Adam being one in the same,” Judah asked a thorough question.

“Aww, yes,” Kareem answered. “The Origins of God. You ready?” Kareem asked. Judah sat back as Lamont drove.

“We got 20 minutes,” Lamont announced.

“In the beginning of beginnings, there was triple stage black matter. Not just darkness but triple stage darkness which implies that there was some measure of light hidden in the darkness in order for there to be three degrees of it to differentiate. For an unknown period of time this force of light laid dormant, hidden in the triple dark womb. Then, suddenly, the Hour struck. For unknown reasons, the force exploded and differentiated itself into charged balls of fire. These ‘balls of fire’ are known to scientists as quarks, the plus sign, and leptons, the negative sign. The atoms of modern physics. From these quarks and leptons would develop the protons, neutrons, and electrons we know today: The Atom is born. This Atom is the root of God’s physical manifestation. The Atom out of which Man was created came from space. It was out in space where He originated. An Atom of Life was in the darkness of the space, and He came out of that Atom. What came out of space was a human being,” Kareem reiterated his point.

“So, we aliens?” Lamont asked, laughing a bit.

“We are Gods. Creators,” Kareem answered then continued to finish. “That violent bursting forth, or ‘explosion,’ of the Atom was not only the beginning of God as we know Him, but also of Time. Motion is Time. Time started when the first motion of an Atom moved in and out of darkness. Inherent in the Atom were the rudiments of divine intelligence. 9,999 other atoms emanated out of that initial Atom. After that happened, they were attracted back to the first Atom by the Power of Attraction, making a total of 10,000 atoms; this is when God became One. We are taught that an Atom is one ten-thousandth to one. Therefore, 10,000 atoms would equal one.”

“So, from one Atom, we got 9,999 qualities of God? Where did those qualities come from or how were they formed?” Lamont asked, like he was paying attention and actually receiving the message.

“That would lead back to what I was originally saying in Judah’s place. How God was everything before He became who He is today. From this first Atom, the first organism was born: moneron. Moneron is the primeval single celled organism that gave birth to all life. This single celled moneron, Allah as The One, went through an evolutionary process which lasted 6 trillion years during which He became a bacterium, a rock, a plant, a fish, a mammal and finally a Man. You understand? This Man, also called A.T.O.M. (Allah The Original Man) is the grand manifestation of that God Force that existed alone in the womb of space. After God emerged from the womb in the fiery explosion, that God Force wrapped Itself in the cloak of the black

material which developed in the dark womb as a result of the creation of the atomic elements. He designed Himself! Think about a Man being able to design His own form and He had never seen another Man before He saw Himself. This is a powerful thing. Trillions and trillions of years ago, God was physically born from the womb of triple darkness. He fell in love with this womb so much, that which he came from, that He placed it in the woman. Womb-man,” Kareem said sounding like he said the word *woman*. “He had always existed as a force, or spirit, but in order to accomplish the act of Creation, He had to create Himself physically. He put the Sun in the heavens because He hated darkness but loved the womb and immediately followed by placing stars in the heavens. He kept pushing the edge of darkness further and further back until, whereas in the beginning you couldn’t get out of the circumference of darkness, we now can’t see out the sphere of light. Allah’s War with Darkness was the second War in Heaven,” Kareem stated and sat back. “That’s all I’m going to leave y’all with,” he swiped his hands together, like he’d just finished eating. “Much love to True Islam for teaching me that,” he pounded his chest and showed respect.

“Christians can’t dig that deep,” Lamont said as he and Judah were left awestruck to an extent. “Do it make sense?” Lamont asked Judah.

“You’d have to write that down so I can read it over and over,” Judah commented.

“Don’t worry. I have a book I’ll lend you from the god-body, True Islam. He breaks it down. How the Black Man is God and how the Black Woman births God,” Kareem offered.

“How the Black Woman births God?” Judah repeated to himself and continued to ride.

“Deep stuff, huh,” Lamont tapped his best friend.

“Unsound doctrine,” Judah simply stated.

“How?” Kareem asked.

“God is a Spirit,” replied Judah.

“God is Spirit. Not a Spirit,” Kareem corrected. “Big difference. Man is Spirit. Not a Spirit. You are taking away the vague commentary which is grammatically small but theologically important as it indicates that John is not attempting an ontological definition of God, as in, God is a spirit as opposed, for instance, to a man. The Bible also says God is Light and God is Love where the same constructions are used. God is certainly not an actual light, a natural luminary nor a human emotion.”

“Number 23. God is not a man...”

“That He should lie,” Kareem finished for Judah. “*Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?* Remember, we are made in His likeness and image. God is Man, not a man. Ezekiel 8 says *I looked and saw a figure like that of a man* when he was looking upon the God of Israel. God doesn’t sin like man, doesn’t lust like man, doesn’t think like man, but He is surely Man. He sits on a throne like a man, He weeps like a man, He has feelings like a man. When did immaterial things have emotions?” Kareem politely asked.

“No,” Judah couldn’t find room to accept Kareem’s beliefs. “You are equating Adam with God. You are equating the created with the Creator. It sounds good. But God exists in a wholly different realm. God isn’t limited in any way and is far greater than anything in the material world. Why are you confining Him to one place and putting limits on the Power of God? I mean, you are correct, God acts as a person does; He feels, thinks, forgives, judges, hates evil and divorce and such forth, yet there is a vast difference between God’s personality and ours. Emotions like anger, selfishness, hatred, jealousy, and pride overwhelm us. Our personalities may even become self-destructive. But God, He alone is perfect to whereas even His anger is righteous because it is solely directed towards evil,” Judah taught.

“Agreed. Yet, you can’t deny that your God doesn’t walk, talk, and behave has a human does,” Kareem tried to set in stone his truth.

“And, I don’t think you can beat that creationist story. You have yet to teach the origins of God,” Lamont announced to Judah. “Kareem don’t sound too far off. I mean, it kind of goes hand and hand with science and the Big Bang.”

“Exactly. As science grows, it begins to merge with religion,” Kareem stated.

“I have given you an answer as to the origins of God,” Judah told Lamont out of nowhere, all of the sudden remembering where God came from. “God is eternal. There is no beginning and no end. From everlasting to everlasting. One day to the Lord is a thousand years to us. His existence transcends the boundaries, limitations, and definitions of time. Kareem says when motion began, time started, but how? Who was recording time? Who knows what existed before light was brought to this dark and flooded Earth?”

“The Fallen Angels were bound to the dark and flooded earth,” Kareem commented.

“You must know it all,” Judah looked back and smiled, surely knowing Kareem only knew what he read and not so much applied.

“I just know what I know,” Kareem smiled back.

The three men parked in the Ikea’s parking lot and entered. Judah didn’t really have a budget as they decided to hold off from religious talk and switch topics to the interior designing.

“Any color schemes in mind?” Lamont asked.

“Black. And Gold. Maybe hints of Lavender somewhere.”

“Nothing white as snow? I’m surprised,” Kareem joked.

Judah ended up not purchasing anything. He decided he would window shop for now and come back with Hawa to finalize some purchases. He took pictures of the things he adored and got some sound advice about interior design from the employees and feng shui from Lamont and Kareem.

As the young men were leaving Ikea, another young man came rushing their way.

“Brother Masod. Or, I’m sorry, Minister Masod,” he corrected himself, hand stretched trying to greet himself. Judah shook his hand. “Praise the Lord. Pray for me, brother,” he bowed once he had Judah’s hand in his.

“I will do,” Judah stated only slightly confused, not recognizing this man from anywhere.

“And Brother Kareem from Mosque #33 of the Five Percenters! As salaam wa alaikum,” he bowed to Kareem as Kareem responded respectfully. “It blesses my heart to see brothers from different faiths joined together. Allah is love. Jesus is love. God is Love. That is all that matters. Amen?” he asked and even Kareem said ‘Amen’ along with Lamont and Judah. “Very well,” he was about to leave. “*For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers of darkness and against the spiritual forces of wickedness,*” he smiled, turned, and went his way. Judah thought him to be an angel. Kareem thought him to be an enlightened one, delivering a message from God. Lamont thought nothing of him.

They continued to walk to the car, no one saying anything to one another until they were greeted again.

“Hello. Spare change, young handsome men?” an elderly woman asked the three of them, Kareem being the closest.

“Sure,” Kareem stated. “In the name of Zakat,” he said reaching for his pocket.

“Oh. You’re all Muslim? Never mind,” she waved them off. “I’d rather starve than receive money from devil worshippers!” she spat. Kareem’s neck turned and face twisted. He pointed to Lamont and Judah in disbelief. They had blank faces.

“You know what, I’m going to give you this anyway,” he reached and pulled a \$20 bill from his wad of money. The poor woman, standing between Ikea and the parking area, slapped the money from Kareem’s hand. Kareem’s whole wad fell and began to scatter with the wind. Only Lamont had the nerve to help and chase it down.

“Get away from me! Gawd damned devil!” the stranger lady spat again. Kareem, reviving from shock, raised his hand in an attempt to slap the woman; but Judah was quick, in spirit.

“Kareem!” Judah announced as he stopped Kareem from striking this poor lady, especially in front of a crowd. It seemed as if Kareem turned into another person.

“Here,” Lamont came forward and tried to give the woman the money. “I’m a Christian. I believe in Jesus, I promise. Will you take it now?” Lamont asked her, with sincerity in his voice.

“I will,” she smiled, missing teeth and all. “I will, I will, I will. Bless your heart, young man,” she lightly bowed and continued her panhandling. Judah still stood there, holding Kareem’s arm in the air.

“C’mon,” Lamont grabbed the both of them and as they traveled towards the car, Kareem couldn’t lift his eyes from the poor woman.

“What’s wrong with you, man?” Judah asked. “You strike everybody that doesn’t agree with you and your beliefs?” Judah had some bass in his voice.

“They who disbelieved among the People of the Scripture and the trinity polytheists will be in the fire of Hell, abiding eternally therein. Those are the worst creatures,” Kareem quoted from the Quran, but Judah and Lamont knew not. They were rather offended as Kareem sat there in discomfort the whole ride back.

Arriving back at Capitol Yards, where Judah lived now, Kareem exited the vehicle fast.

“Again, I apologize for my behavior,” he subdued his pride. “I don’t know why I get so angry,” he seemed really frustrated with himself. “I be ready to fight for what I believe in,” he argued.

“Yet, you continue to apologize. Therefore, your heart is telling you the difference between what is right and wrong. No?” Judah asked. Kareem didn’t answer right away. Instead, he bowed his head, in defeat. Judah knew his heart, right then and there. Judah knew Kareem was merely seeking truth. Real Truth is only found in Love. A hardcore seeker like Kareem could only be swayed or inspired by a show and prove method, not by faith.

“Right,” was all Kareem could say then he excused himself.

Lamont followed Judah up to his suite. They settled in on the floor and they were mute for a time being.

“You need some time alone?” Lamont asked as they both sat, looking out the door-length windows from the living room.

“It’s whatever. My mind is running in circles, bro,” Judah released how he really felt.

“What you mean?”

“I don’t know. Maybe I’m tired. Need some rest.”

“Exactly. You need some time alone?” Lamont asked again. “Yeah,” he stood up. “You haven’t been yourself, bro. Trying to be holier than thou and being reckless like driving fast and cheating on Hawa.”

“Cheating on Hawa?” Judah stopped him.

“I’m playing! I’m playing. Haha! But, usually you’re hyped and full of energy. These last few days, you’ve been drained,” he confessed. Just then, Judah reminded himself of the meditation event he had with Pita. Maybe that was the source of his draining? Maybe that’s why he was so restless.

“I’m sorry,” Judah apologized.

“For what? Rest up, man. I got things to do anyway. Let me know if you need anything, though,” Lamont traveled towards the front door.

“I appreciate you, Lamont.”

“No diggity,” he announced and left.

So, there Judah was. Again, him and his thoughts. The two were becoming dangerous. He didn’t want to be alone, at least for right now. He felt vulnerable. He needed Hawa. Maybe he did need to make things right with her. His mind had been so occupied on Pita the last few days that he was losing himself. He decided to call Hawa.

“Hawa,” he announced before she could answer.

“Yes?” she answered.

“How you doing, love?”

“Love? Oh wow. That’s a first,” she seemed happy to hear from Judah.

“I want to talk to you,” Judah was making it up in his mind, right then and there to make things all the way right with Hawa. Marriage? Perhaps. Hawa was near perfect aside from the

cultural miscommunication. To his knowledge, they were both virgins. They both feared the Lord and had a righteous upbringing, to the knowledge of Judah.

“You home?” she asked.

“I moved.”

“Moved?”

“Yeah. Come to my new place. I just texted you,” Judah told his to be wife.

“No way. Hold on,” she looked at her phone to see where she had to go. “Oh wow! You’re on the Sacramento River. Nice, Judah! See, that’s what I’m saying! Putting things in motion, sweetheart,” one could feel her smiling through the phone. “I’m pulling up in a minute!” she announced and hung up before Judah could say goodbye. Judah smiled to himself and even thanked his father tremendously for trusting Judah with his own spot. Judah earned it. You know another Theology degreed, 21-year-old, virgin, black man from Sacramento filled with the Holy Spirit?

Judah waited and peered out the window until he saw Hawa’s car.

Rushing down the stairs instead of the elevator, Judah was able to meet the love of his life just as she exited her vehicle.

“My Queen!” Judah smiled, lifted Hawa off her feet and swirling her around. Hawa laughed her heart out.

“Oh wow! This is your place now?” she asked.

“This is our place!” Judah affirmed as Hawa gave him a look of disbelief. Judah decided to go all the way in and maybe this would take his mind off of Pita and Kareem’s alien knowledge.

“Yeah, ok. My father is awaiting your arrival,” she said.

“When?” Judah instantly became nervous.

“Before I move in. But,” Hawa thought as they walked to their new place. “Shouldn’t we get married before moving in together?” she asked through cracked voice. Judah noticed.

“Why does your voice always crack when you mention marriage. I’ve noticed that,” Judah asked when Hawa began to think on her deepest secrets. Secrets that could ruin a marriage if not brought to the foretold beforehand.

“Because,” Hawa tried to think of something besides the absolute truth. “Marriage is a big deal, no?” she asked. “I mean, you have confessed too recently that you were clueless on

how I prayed, prostrating and whatnot. There are clearly a lot of things that you don't know about me," she looked into his eyes. Judah was confused.

"Then tell me all about you. I thought we've done this before," he assured. In fact, they had done this before. Hawa was good for beating around the bush and leaving out the most crucial details. As sweet and beautiful as she was, she was riddled with forces not of this world.

"Yes, we have," she placed her head down and exhaled loudly. Now, Judah knew something was wrong with Hawa. He'd always seen it, but again, he used to just think it was because of her conforming to a different culture. Switching from Iranian Islam to American Christian would cause a culture shock.

"It's ok," Judah saw her frustration. "Do not fret. When the time is right, all things shall be revealed and healed," Judah's words sent shivers through the body of Hawa.

*'All things shall be revealed,'* Hawa thought to herself, heart dropping into her stomach. She'd known something to the magnitude of her secrets would soon surface, especially with her boss, Fatima, breathing down her neck about prophecies. Hawa knew she couldn't hide it forever, especially if she were to marry a man of God.

"I'll talk to my Pops. And yours. I mean, since I won't be preaching in the pulpit in the foreseeable future due to this covid thing, I don't see why we can't get a taste of living together before committing our lives to each other. Right? I'm sure our parents would agree. They trust us. My father and mother moved in together when they were teenagers and stuck together ever since."

"Same here," Hawa announced a lie and Judah knew it. He wanted to expound on the subject, but something told him not to. Judah was not one to delve into trying to get people caught up in their own mess, but Isaac had told his oldest son everything about Hawa and her parents.

Isaac and Mr. Tamir Greene, Hawa's father, had been friends, on and off, since middle school. When Isaac was coming into his walk with the Lord 21 year ago, him and Tamir were already in business. As Isaac grew with the Lord, he'd decided to stray away from the illegal matters of something that helped the community and move towards the legal way of distribution and cultivation. He never told his family because he was afraid of his wife, mostly. She grew up with her family and culture despising cannabis. The truth would soon come to light.

“So, we should be good,” Judah decided to stay on course about her moving in with him before marriage.

They entered the suite-like loft and Hawa’s eyes blew up. She inhaled and forgot to exhale.

“Judah,” she placed her hand at her chest then began to walk around. “Inshallah,” she whispered but Judah heard her. Reminded him of Kareem and his teachings that tended to stick with Judah.

“Nice, huh?” Judah smiled, happy to be able to provide.

“What’s your furniture budget?” Hawa asked. “I want to go shopping. I can help.”

“Budget?” Judah thought about how much money he had versus the cost of Ikea furniture. “No budget. Just nothing ridiculous,” he took out his phone. “I went to Ikea this morning to look at some things for the place. Here’s what I found,” he handed his phone to her.

“Ok. Nice. Hey,” she began to look then placed his phone down a bit too rapid. Surely, something was on her mind after realizing what was happening. “If we do move in, how will this work? Like, are we sharing financial information? Better yet, are you financially literate?” she asked.

“Financially literate? I’ve been saving money for the last ten years. Between my checking and saving account, I got about a quarter million. Two hundred in savings and fifty thousand to spend,” Judah announced to his best friend in whom he known for 7 years plus. Hawa’s jaw dropped.

“You have a quarter million dollars, Judah?” she asked unbelieving. “I don’t believe you.”

“Whoa. I won’t lie to you, Hawa. You know that,” he smiled that sexy smile in which captivated her. She knew this wasn’t going to last. She didn’t want to bask in the blessings and then be released from them. She rather not experience them at all. But she’d already been through so much and Judah was a man of forgiveness and grace, like his God. She was just as confused about everything but did an excellent job of keeping it under tabs.

“Depends on how one defines lying,” she smirked. Deep down inside, she felt even more guilty.

“We’ll go shopping. I want you to decorate the place. Is that cool?” he asked.

“Of course. Wait, how did you get a quarter million dollars?” Hawa wanted to know. Judah was only a youth pastor for the past three years.

“I told you. Been saving for over ten years.”

“Saving from what?”

“Allowances, offerings from the church when I preach and for being a youth pastor.”

“You’ve been a youth pastor for only three years. No way you got all that money from preaching to the youth at New Jerusalem,” Hawa was in disbelief. “The youth don’t give tithes or offerings. How much you get on a paycheck?”

“Hawa,” Judah tried to stop her accusations. “You’d be surprised how much you can save in ten years without having to pay for anything but gas and a phone bill. What? Gas, my phone bill and other miscellaneous things like white mochas at the cafe or some clothes I may rarely come across. I really don’t like spending money. Food and roof has always been provided. Entertainment has always been provided. The Lord provides in abundance. I have more deposit statements with my bank than withdrawals. I’m good. We good,” he corrected himself.

“Uhm,” Hawa smiled as they crashed to the floor to lie on each other. “What’s that?” she pointed to a controller on the wall.

“Not sure,” Judah got up to inspect. It was a controller to control the marbled floor.

“Wow!” Hawa sounded as Judah was able to change the colors coming from the ground and shining up.

“Even heat!” Judah announced as he turned on the heater for the floor. “No way,” he set the mood to a purple coloring and heated the floor.

“This is amazing,” she sounded as they began to feel the heat from the marbled floor.

“I tell you what,” Hawa sat up, preparing a suggestion. “There is so much I want to do with you, Judah. I know it isn’t the time now, but I want to feel you,” she spat it out. “Not like that,” she warned. “I just want to feel your skin against mine. Let us lie naked together,” she offered. “The floor is really warm, we are by ourselves, and I just want to be engulfed in you, naturally and spiritually,” she fought hard to get Judah to remove his clothes. This reminded Judah of the dreams he had with Pita.

“Uhm,” Judah was at a loss for words.

“Do not be ashamed. Of yourself or of saying no to me, Judah. I love you, unconditionally,” she rubbed his head.

“I love you too,” he whispered back to her. “Promise to not tempt me and to refrain from us going there.”

“I promise,” Hawa could easily make that promise. Even though she wanted Judah, she wasn’t too hooked on having sex. A lot of clouds around that subject when it came to Hawa.

Judah and Hawa removed their clothes, to the bare bone and lie together on the black marbled heated floor. Hawa took in Judah and Judah took in Hawa and they were pleased.

Even though they were both aroused, they were able to contain themselves. Judah did an excellent job thinking on the things of the Kingdom rather than sacrificing his virginity before marriage, something God would substantially honor.

After a couple of moments of silence and laying in nakedness, Hawa asked, “You went to Ikea by yourself?”

“Naw. Lamont and Kareem came with me,” he answered. Hawa jumped and looked back at Judah.

“Kareem?” she asked.

“Yeah? You surprised? As a matter of fact, both him and Professor Lupita stay in this same building. She can’t wait to invite us for company,” and even though he lay there naked with Hawa, Pita somehow creeped back into his mind, unconsciously.

“Oh wow! Nice,” she leaned back into the bosom of Judah. “What do you think of Kareem?” she asked.

“I don’t know. I think he’s using his own religion to justify his dogmatic actions. I don’t know,” Judah exhaled, thinking on how Kareem would strike first and strike hard. “I’m starting to think he’s just a bad person.”

“No such thing as a bad person, Judah. Come on, we discussed this. There are no good people and bad people. If you create a very pleasant and happy atmosphere, people will behave accordingly. If you create a very unpleasant and unhappy atmosphere, people will be unpleasant and unhappy. There are joyful people and miserable people, but there are no good and bad people,” Hawa tried to drop some game. Judah didn’t agree. He didn’t want to go into the whole evil kingdom thing with their evil ruler debate. He enjoyed where he was, laying naked with his lady, listening to her philosophical, yet uplifting stories. “Don’t be moved by his words. Or, in other words, don’t let him get to you. When someone gets to decide what happens on the inside

of you, like making you mad, angry, and so on, then they've successfully enslaved you. Am I wrong?"

"No, Hawa," Judah agreed.

"Very well. You continue to be the person with the bigger heart," Hawa spoke, as if she was lightly shunning Kareem. It put Judah at ease, knowing that Hawa felt such ways about the Muslim boy. "I've heard him speak. Too much zeal. Men and Women of God are supposed to be soft spoken, no?" she asked more than anything.

"I don't know. I imagine John the Baptist being pretty loud. Isaiah 59 talks about the righteousness as a breastplate, helmet for salvation, garments of vengeance for clothing and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak. Not necessarily a dreadful thing," Judah responded.

"Romans 10:2 says: For I bear witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge."

"What does the next verse say?" Judah quizzed.

"Being ignorant of the righteousness of God and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness," she successfully quoted. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes."

"Very well," Judah was really surprised. "You've been studying," he assured.

"If I'm to be First Lady, I better know that Word," she confessed as she brushed the palms of her hands down Judah's chest. Deep down, she trembled. How can one be the first lady with such atrocities unknown to anyone but her and one closer to her than her own self.

"Right," Judah said then began to think on the debates he had with Kareem. Then Judah's mind took him to the possibilities of where Hawa and her beginnings came from; maybe the same place of where Kareem's beliefs sprang from. Maybe Hawa was just convinced in the Lord Jesus Christ, but the way she held on to her tradition, Judah could only question her heart, her intentions. "But," Judah began to even debate his very own best friend. "Wasn't Prophet Muhammad, Peace be upon Him, the last of the prophets?" Judah asked in reference to her traditional beliefs. "I know you know the Quran, but what made one come to Christ, besides the Church? I'm truly intrigued."

"Al-Ahzab verse 40: Ma kana muhammadun aba ahadin min rijalikum walakin rasoola Allahi wakhatama alnabiyyeena wakana Allahu bikulli shayin AAaleeman," Hawa recited in Arabic as smooth as the wind. "Meaning: Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but

he is the Messenger of Allah, and the Seal of the Prophets: and Allah has full knowledge of all things.”

“Seal of Prophets, huh?” Judah asked.

“Yes. The Last of the Apostles, Prophets and Messengers from God,” Hawa confirmed.

“Then what about Kareem and what he believes? The Nation of Islam coins Elijah Muhammad being a Messengers of God, no? Or what about Marcus Garvey prophesying about Haile Selassie coming out of Africa as a King to the Rastafarians?” Judah went back to his college debating days. “Are these not prophecies and prophets after the Prophet Muhammad, Peace be upon Him,” Judah debated. Hawa sat up, breasts perked and attentive now. It was hard for Judah to contain his hormones.

“When did we ever debate?” she asked. “I think you’re hanging around Kareem too much. I don’t dig into African American religions that much, Judah. We both know where Christianity comes from. We both know that Jesus’s mother looked like this,” she pointed to her hijab. “Remember, I’m still searching for truth myself and I doubt we’ll find it from some American Negros that invented a religion based on the true Islam,” she found offense. Judah found more offense.

*‘I don’t dig into African American religions,’* sort of hit Judah inappropriately. He didn’t like that at all. Again, he kept his comments to himself.

“I’m sorry, Hawa,” Judah apologized. “Kareem really made me think. Aside from always being taught what is truth and false, right now, I am able to decide for myself what is truth and what is not. And the fact that I’m coming across information that may alter my way of believing...”

“Haram,” Hawa commented, and Judah knew that word meant something bad. “Stand firm in your beliefs, Judah. Don’t become that person who lives for everyone else, and in the process loses who they are. Yes, it is honorable and even admirable to try and make everyone around you happy. But what about your own happiness?”

“I’m not trying to make him happy...”

“By understanding what he is trying to convey, yes you are. By accepting him into your space and lending an ear to listen, you are making him happy. He’s enslaving you,” she calmly stated.

“Ha. Ok,” Judah stated but knew Hawa was almost right. No one had moved Judah to think elsewhere except for Kareem and Pita.

“Do your retreat,” Hawa offered. Then it clicked in Judah’s mind. She was right. Judah’s retreat was long overdue. His retreat was a 2-day fast in the middle of nowhere. Just him and God, trying to communicate. He’s only did tis retreat twice in his life and every time afterwards, the rewards were grand. His emotional state would become more intact, the things that he spoke would come into fruition, and he just overall felt better; energized.

“You’re right. I need to get some stuff off my chest,” Judah stood up and looked down upon Hawa. She looked up, waiting to be told what to do, but Judah’s mind was elsewhere. Judah knew God spoke through Hawa, right then and there. He had so much to ask God and knew he could only get it in the middle of nowhere, just him and his Lord.

“*Beep beep!*” the sound to the front door went off like someone else had a key.

“Hey hey!” someone said from behind as the front door opened. Judah and Hawa looked towards the door in terror to discover Bishop Isaac making his way inside. As soon as Judah’s father discovered the nakedness of his son and Hawa, especially in their positions, even though they did nothing, he dropped everything he had, along with his mouth.

“Judah,” was all he could say as he witnessed the nakedness of his son. Without a second thought, Bishop Isaac ran away from the scene without another word.

Hawa and Judah were beyond embarrassed.

“Shoot,” Judah stood naked, mad at himself for being caught by doing absolutely nothing.

“Right. We haven’t done anything, Judah. It’s fine,” Hawa stood up and hugged Judah in their nakedness. “Just tell him the truth. He’ll know if you’re lying.”

“Will he?” Judah asked Hawa. “He is already experiencing me grow and change a bit with my attitude,” Judah shook his head in deep thought. “*Now what?*”

“It’s fine. You’re grown. You’re out from up under their roof now. I don’t even know why your father finds it suitable to barge into your personal space like that,” Hawa continued to speak as Judah went over to discover what his father had gifted. It was a bag that looked as if it was from a specialty store. Judah opened the bag and took out a box. Opening the box, he discovered a golden pocket watch. Engraved on the outside of the pocket watch was cursive

writing: *To My Son – Wherever your journey in life may take you, I pray you'll always be safe. Enjoy the ride and never forget your way back home. I'm always here for you. Love Dad.*

“Ahh,” Judah sounded as his eyes became watery. He was on the verge of crying, encountering the love from his father and the slight ‘*let-downs*’ that Judah felt he’d displayed in the past few days. He really needed to step out.

“You ok?” Hawa asked.

“Aye,” he changed the subject and prepared to leave. “I’ll leave my card and an extra key card for the place,” Judah told Hawa in all his might. Hawa was turned on to the max, seeing Judah for the first time in all his manliness.

“Get some furniture. If you need help, call Lamont,” Judah continued to instruct. “He’ll be over here in a heartbeat. But you are right. I need to commune with my Lord,” he moved towards his belongings and grabbed his bank card and extra key card to leave for Hawa.

Hawa was right. Judah needed to free his mind of all the things that may’ve entered within the last couple of days. It seemed as if the devil was terribly busy, and Judah had some rebuking to do.

Hawa said nothing, knowing Judah had to do what the Lord pleased. It was put on her heart to recommend his retreat into the wilderness to try and hear a word from God, rather it be in his heart, in the form of an animal, a person, a spirit, a feeling, bring it! Nothing was more special than reuniting with your ultimate creator.

Judah hurriedly placed the same clothes on and before leaving told Hawa to not stress about his father walking in. Judah would fix it. They pecked each other on the lips and Judah went his way.

He jumped in his Cadillac and drove. He drove far, pass the Sacramento Airport. Pass the Sacramento and Feather River. He just drove, having the Lord lead his way and the Lord took him where there was nothing but nature to be seen. He passed the Lake of the Woods State Wildlife Area when something told him to travel east. He listened. He traveled and tried to talk to God, but nothing was coming to mind. He felt clogged in the head. He needed some fresh air and a space where no one could see him commune with his God. It seemed as if driving deterred him from his focus. Or the fact that his father walked in on him like that, it really bothered Judah even though he tried to put it at the back of his mind.

After it felt like Judah was about to make a huge circle while driving, he decided to go to Folsom Lake, excited and a bit worrisome about his 1-on-1 date with God.

After parking his car off to the side on Salmon Falls road, Judah left everything in the car, even his keys. He hid his key under the floor mat in the back seat.

“Here we go,” Judah said to himself and exited the car. Judah took another deep breath when he closed his door. He was preparing to be fearless with Lord, demanding answers. He knew for a fact that his method worked, and he needed answers.

Judah began to walk through untamed wilderness in preparation of finding a place to be as loud as possible with the Lord. He dug his hands in his pockets and felt a small tube that he didn't remember placing there. He felt on it and became suspicious as he walked. Taking it out, he discovered a small vial with liquid in it. It read: *'Holy Water.'*

“Holy Water?” Judah said to himself as he continued to walk. He thought on where this may've come from.

*“Despite our differences, you my brother, no doubt,”* he remembered Kareem hugging him back at his place. This was the only time anybody got close to him, beside Hawa, but they were naked. *‘No way Kareem put this in my pocket,’* Judah told himself, but maybe he was wrong.

“Holy Water,” he spoke aloud and unscrewed the top of the vial. He sniffed and smelled nothing. Something told him to drink it. Then another something placed fear in his heart about drinking this holy water. What harm could it do? If anything, it could be used as a placebo.

Judah continued to walk pass redwood trees, taking in the different sounds and sights that the forest offered. His heart was to tell him when to begin speaking to the Lord. He looked back and all around him to see if anyone would be able to hear him. He believed he was in the clear after about 10 minutes of steady walking through the forest of Folsom Lake Recreation Area.

“Lord!” Judah almost shouted and then looked at the vial that occupied his hand. “Is this Holy Water?” he asked the Lord, and his mind didn't give an answer. The last time Judah was doing a 1-on-1 with God, he'd spent two days in the wilderness, no food, no water, steady trying to get God's attention. When Judah would feel relieved and if as God heard and responded, Judah would feel compelled to leave, in all good faith. This may've been another occurrence.

“Lord!” he called out again as if the Lord didn't answer him the first time. “Shall I drink this to get closer to you?” Judah felt as if he was asking God stupid questions. He began to

become more frustrated because he felt so absent from God. The new knowledge. The new people in his life. The new train of thought.

Without another thought, he chugged the vial and drunk the Holy Water that was in the vial. He placed the empty vial in his pocket and sat in the middle of nowhere in a pile of leaves between all kinds of trees.

“Ok, Lord. I give up. I don’t know what you are trying to do. What’s up with Hawa? Talk to me. What’s up with all these people having dreams about the Middle East? Why am I encountering those such as Kareem and Pita, ones coming to tempt my faith? Shoot, matter of fact, Hawa tempting my faith too. Seems she wants to sleep with me more now than ever. And Pita!” Judah said and laughed to himself. Nothing wrong with women chasing you. As long as you are able to control and keep yourself. Judah made himself understand, if not the God in him.

“And then my parents,” Judah continued to question God. “My father,” he shook his head in disgrace. “Why is he acting so weird? Walking in on me in my new place. I mean, I know he paid for it, but wasn’t it for privacy reasons? And for him to believe we did nothing but lay there would be like riding a unicorn into Church with the apostle Paul on the back in the flesh,” he tried to loosen up and commune with God in Spirit, Truth and slight humor. Then Judah began to giggle. Almost uncontrollably. His body began to feel good, all around, but he also began to feel pain in his stomach. He stood up and instantly became very lightheaded. Within 5 seconds, being in and out of consciousness, Judah fell to the ground, in the middle of the forest, trying to regain his full consciousness.

“Lord!” he called out. “Mama!” he then called out when he felt as if he was dying. Then, without another thought, while still semi-conscious, he vomited as he lie on his side.

**“Bleuuurrrpppp!”** Judah threw up and heaved between breaths of air. Judah wanted to feel miserable, but he didn’t. Instead, he laughed after throwing up. He would vomit, breathe, try to fear for his life, but when he knew for certain that the Lord was always with him, he laughed. He laughed because he still felt good. His mind was in a state of something else, something of that which he couldn’t explain. He thought maybe he’d felt this feeling before, when being in the Spirit at Church. When everyone gathered in the House of God and sung praises to the Most High, the Holy Spirit would surely show up and this experience was close to it, if not, above and beyond it.

Then, Judah, seeped in his own vomit, passed wind. His stomach felt very uneasy, and he needed flatulence to occur, but he knew what was coming was heavy. But it was traveling so fast through his digestive tract that he couldn't hold it in if it would've saved his life.

Judah tried to pull down his pants, looking rather sick from anyone afar off. But it was too late. Feces rapidly released from the anus of Judah as he lie in his own vomit. But still, he felt good. He laughed it off. Despite the feces that smeared his buttocks and traveled down his leg, Judah smiled and laughed whole heartedly.

“Thank you, Lord!” he realized that a cleaning process was being engaged while still trying to hold on to his consciousness. He closed his eyes and would envision sacred geometry. Shapes, numbers, equations, and colors occupied the mind of Judah when his eyes closed. It was a sight to see, even within his own mind, the vivid expressions shown to him were breathtaking. He wanted to indulge and delve more into this mystic realm as his head began to spin out of control.

Then, in the blink of an eye, Judah experienced himself, being present in this altered state of mind. It was like he was fully conscious within a different realm.

“Woo-Woo!” Judah tried to echo as it seemed like he was in some sort of void. He saw nothing anymore. He simply knew he was somewhere else.

“Jesus,” he called out, like Jesus was somewhere sitting on a sofa, waiting for Judah.

“Judah!” he heard a thunderous voice call back that shook his spirit. If Judah were again capable of ruining his pants in this realm, he would have after hearing the voice of something so superior.

Judah was about to start a conversation with this Being, when a light appeared before him, interrupting his train of thought. The Light traveled faster than anything Judah had witnessed and when it came face to face with him, Judah became frightened for his life. No more was he smiling and giggling. No more was he in some lofty trance. He was now conscious and felt all emotions. He felt himself dirty from the accident that'd taken place in front of this colossal of a man figurine.

“Take your clothes off! You reek. Place this on,” this Being gave a white garment to Judah. Before Judah could make out this person, he hurriedly took off his clothes, not realizing how filthy he really was. “Your emotions are intact. I will make you clean,” this Being that stood as tall as a San Francisco skyscraper told Judah. Then he/she outstretched their hand over the top

of the head of Judah. A crystal-clear water began to emerge from the hands of this Being and showered Judah, wetting and cleaning both him and his new garments. Yet, as soon as he placed his new garments on, he instantly became dry.

“Ok. I’m ready,” Judah said through his panicked voice. He successfully placed the white garment onto his body and prepared for whatever was at hand.

Judah looked at the Being in all his might. He glowed and Judah could barely see the face of this Being since he stood so tall. It was if he was filled with glory because he shown like a light as bright as the Sun but not a scorching brightness like the Sun. It was more so a light of love. And even though Judah feared, he knew he wasn’t in his body. Judah knew when he wasn’t in the body, he was with the Lord.

“I come in the Name of Isho. Yeshua. The King of Kings. The One Who has given Himself as sacrifice to save the world in which you live,” The Being said with open arms. This Being then touched Judah and they were instantly transported through the cosmos.

# Shofetim

---

Judah was terrified yet felt invincible and enlightened at the same time. He wasn't dead, but still felt some qualities of the euphoric sensations one experiences after death. He could feel his own fear more than all the chaos going on around him as he traveled through the most excellent Cosmos with this Being. A sense of dreadfulness trickled up and down his spirit body as he witnessed war in the Cosmos.

Even though they traveled through the spiral gasses and galaxies that were colors ranging from: blue sapphire to bright maroon, from brick red to cadmium yellow, from Catawba to Cosmic cobalt, there was still war. The way stars and other outer galactic materials would explode into crystals and different forms of light was amazing. It appeared to be an all-out war with no real teams or sides. Judah noticed shabby and frayed beasts that were gigantic and looked to represent evil. Then there were Beings who were reflections of the Light coming from above that either fought with the other evil creatures or simply watched. It was loud and chaotic as stars and asteroids were being thrown and weapons from celestial materials looked to blasts off from all places. Even though this celestial war was more than hectic, Judah knew he was safe, being escorted by a Being of Light.

He had never even thought of experiencing such traumatic emotions. He couldn't comprehend his environment as the non-human figures that fought looked like something out of a science fiction movie. All kinds of living entities from squid-looking spider-like flying creatures to human-like creatures taking on the resemblance of the Greek god Zeus. The different noises and clashing of swords that looked like that were submarines was something astonishing to Judah. And for someone to think human war is deadly, the way these Beings fought were eternal punishing. He heard heavenly horses neigh; the sound of fire being shot fourth along with an innumerable amount of voices hailing sounds of praises and agony. It was almost too much for Judah to bear as it seemed this war encompassed the whole universe and was going on for over an eternity. Zillions of Beings fought, and they came in all different shapes and sizes. It was actually amazing seeing all the different creatures as Judah figured they all had a background or history of some sort.

Then all of the sudden, Judah began to water at the eyes. He wasn't a fan of war and wondered why these Beings fought so vigorously. Couldn't God simply cease this madness? Judah felt as if everything was doomed. He felt as if the Beings were battling over him, over his soul. How could so many Beings war over the soul of Judah? Was this not a war for the souls of all humans?

As they traveled through, the chaos seemed as if it was closing in on Judah. He closed his eyes in fear. The voices grew louder as Judah could now feel the heat from the fire being shot out from opposite sides of the battle.

*"Open your eyes, Judah,"* the Being that traveled with Judah said in the midst of the chaos. *"You need to see this,"* the Being conversed through mind and Judah's eyes were open. Judah made sure to pay more attention for some particular reason this time around and he could now see the good Beings that reflected the Light losing the War.

Upon ceasing to fight, the defeated Light Beings would turn into protostars and simply lie dormant in the cosmic battlefield. It was rather odd, to see the good losing. But just as Judah thought that and continued to look out onto the defeated Light Beings as they turned to birthing stars, another set of Beings emerged from a void between galaxies. This innumerable multitude was also a reflection of the Light and right then and there Judah tried to comprehend everything and what it really meant. This new army also wore white clothing and also came like the shining sun. With a roar, the new Light Beings sung:

*"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty,"* the multitude sang in a thunderous voice.

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world. Ephesians," Judah spoke to himself while witnessing the greatness that was upon him.

As they got closer, Judah recognized them to be Saints, humans of Old and New. Looking beyond them to see where the Light was coming from, Judah could now see a Throne in the distance. A Throne in the middle of the whole universe. The unnumerable amount of hovering Human Beings were descending from the Throne that sat high in the Universe. It seemed as if the Light Being who traveled with Judah flew at a million miles an hour to get here. Maybe time didn't exist here, rather space in the sense of an accelerated expansion.

There was really no sense of direction in the cosmos to Judah, so to best explain it, afar off and closer to the Throne, there was a planet that caught the eye of Judah. It glowed within

another constellation and resembled a marble or pearl in the distance. Yet, instead of regular space with the black background and the trillions and trillions of stars, this area of space was so lit, that it had a bluish-purple background with galaxies of bright blue hues that could fit a million earths inside. Solar panels were numbered in the thousands as they orbited this planet with more than a couple space stations. The way in which they harvested energy was astounding. Rings around the planet were used for harvesting as many robotic-like machines were working together. This planet had more than one sun and it appeared the species on this pearl-like planet was even harvesting from some of the suns. The way energy traveled throughout this galaxy through subatomic particles was soul touching. The Being that was with Judah knew what he was thinking.

“Star lifting. Just about an unlimited source of energy until the species outlives the stars. Then Light travel comes to fruition. They are also cooling down their suns so that they may prolong the life of them. Neat, indeed. Humanity is next,” he spoke inside the mind of Judah. The Being decided to take Judah into the small, round, and pearly planet with its particular glow and rings around about. This was their destination.

Coming through the atmosphere, the clouds were filled with red water ice crystals. Judah felt the mists of blood-like water and ice brush against his skin in the smoothest form known to man. The water on this planet felt thicker than the water on earth, sliding on the skin like a leech with no suction. The water was also softer here. Mountains were stacked on top of each other and resembled purple and pink colors which were also a reflection of the Light that was shown from the Throne above. Mountains seemed to survey the whole land as communities and bodies of waters were throughout the whole land of mountains. The moons were awfully close, and Judah witnessed humanoid figures traveling to and from the mountain planet to their moon. Flying lizards were seen soaring through the air and accompanying people dancing and traveling. Waterfalls were just about at every cliff within the numerous mountains that occupied the land. It was amazingly beautiful.

“What is this place?” Judah asked his Angel.

“This is the constellation that humans refer to as Ursa Major. The name of this planet is not able to be pronounced by humans,” the Angelic Being notified Judah.

Judah looked about the planet and witnessed all kinds of different Creatures as they looked to be in a hurry of some sort.

“Wow!” Judah looked on in amazement. “Dinosaurs?” he pointed to a herd of Tlatolophus, standing at 7 foot high and 26 foot long with colorful designs within their large bodies. Raptors looked as if they were messengers, running the fastest, back, and forth, to and from.

Everyone and everything scattered about, looking as if they were extremely busy. Some flew, some rode all kinds of prehistoric and ancient animals from Mammoths to Smilodon Cats that stood on their hind legs. Some creatures that stood upright could be seen in see-through buildings. The crystal-like buildings that were built here looked as if they emitted energy of some sort, almost like they were alive. Some walked with their young ones and others were seen building more structures that looked like it was made from some sort of magical ice.

Most of the Creatures looked Judah’s way and when they recognized him, they began to smile and become excited and even notify others of Judah’s arrival. Some had heads with each side that of a different face. Some faces were that of animals never seen on earth. Some had the face of men, others the faces of things that looked so alien that Judah couldn’t put a finger on it. Judah witnessed one being with a man’s face yet having eyes everywhere about. It sounded more frightening than it looked. Judah also witnessed communities of creatures in the water that interacted with the creatures on land as if they coexisted perfectly. They all looked like inhabitants of this planet and it seemed they were enjoying life, yet something was at hand.

Roads were made out of some sort of golden gravel mixed with all kinds of colorful minerals and pebbles that literally moved within the roads, like they were alive. The Brachiosauridae assisted in constructing new skyscrapers that were being built. Everything was neat, the way this world was alive and thriving, yet, to Judah, it felt like something was coming. Friendly beasts that walked on two legs and looked like Big Foot would cater to the young ones and jump with the baby fairies in an attempt to playfully catch them.

Looking up into the atmosphere, Judah was able to perceive a long hem; white and spotless that looked like it dropped from the sky. It looked as if it was coming from the Throne that sat high in the cosmos.

“*The Father’s robe?*” Judah thought. Was not Earth the Father’s footstool? Just in the small time of traveling, Judah had encountered many galaxies and with many other life forms. What made this one so special, let alone Earth?

Looking back onto this new planet Judah was experiencing, the dwelling places were made with precision, and they were all see-through. Judah thought about privacy and how these buildings and homes withheld from such. Maybe the society of these creatures were far different than humans on Earth. Judah got closer to touch these buildings that were literally made from ice. A thick ice that was in the forms of unusual colors, like red ice, blue ice, green ice, black ice and so on. The ice didn't radiate a cooling sensation, rather a neutral sensation as the materials from the buildings looked to be translucent. This made the structures look extra bright as it reflected from the Great Light. The Creatures were seen gardening, cleaning, cooking, playing, mining, eating, meditating, and so much more. It was so phenomenal, Judah wanted to smile and speak amongst the creatures, but his spirit was troubled for some reason.

"Why are we here?" Judah asked but his traveling Being was no longer with him. Judah looked about, searching for his friend when he noticed another group of Creatures coming from afar off. They were large in number and looked much greater than the Creatures that peacefully occupied this planet. A dark cloud followed this band that was making their way up a mountain to where Judah was.

"Shoot," Judah had a sudden feeling of being terrified when he saw this evil-looking army coming. "More war, huh?" Judah didn't understand.

"Cursed it be the one who deceives," a creature came up from behind Judah. It didn't frighten Judah because these creatures were meek in nature.

"What do you mean?" Judah asked this creature that had the face of a beautiful leopard, but the body of a woman with a tail that had a mind of its own. The tail actually stood up next to her and maneuvered in a way of its own accordance. She was decked out in all kinds of gems and rocks that glowed from the top of her head to the bottom of her feet. Some gems were even implanted into her fur-like skin. She looked absolutely beautiful. Unlike most of the creatures on this planet, this particular one had shown with an extra degree of light.

"Is it not Satan? The Fallen Light Bearer?" this Cat creature asked Judah. "Before Humans were deceived on Earth, we were already in a fallen state, seeking redemption," she spoke with modesty.

"Even on other planets? What?" Judah asked in utter amazement.

"Why indeed. You are from Earth. An unbelievably beautiful planet. In fact, a favorite of The Creator. A favorite species of The Creator. There is none like you and the Humans, soul,

spirit, and body all in one. The Holy Trinity all in One. The three-part family tree all in one,” she emphasized. “You are the spitting image of *I AM*. Earth, your homeland, is His footstool. No one dares to even touch the footstool of a King, except for him,” she pointed to Satan. Judah’s mind was blown. He was definitely dreaming, but he’d never dreamt like this. It was too detailed.

“Has there been a redemptive process yet?” Judah asked.

“We are still in debate. Some continue to wait on our Savior while others believe She has yet to come,” this mysterious cat woman told Judah. It reminded him of the Jews and Christians in the Earth.

“We suffer the same problems,” Judah began to look around again, noticing the evil army getting closer, but not close enough to start any mess. “It’s just that I look around and see all kinds of creatures, varied species...”

“We are all the same species. Created by a Fallen Angel. We’ve existed for over 30 million moons,” she confessed. Judah was confused. “Over 80,000 years of recorded history,” she smiled gracefully, converting the moons to years. Judah looked about and could tell that she was telling the truth. With eighty thousand years in existence, they sure were an advanced civilization.

Then she peered back at Satan with a look of fury. “We were all made from Andromaleus, our demi-god. He was made from Elohim. He was one of the 72 spirits of Solomon and thought of by humans as a good spirit because He punishes thieves. He is the reason we know so much about the humans on Earth.”

“Uhm. Indeed. But, this planet has the robe of the Father coming through the atmosphere. That is God literally here, no?” Judah tried to argue with this other creature.

“That is our god Andromaleus. That is his robe. It sustains us. That is our connection to our creator even though there is a greater Creator than Him. The special thing about humans from Earth is that your Creator is within you all as if you have created yourself,” she pointed to Judah’s heart. “More than a billion attributes of God roaming the Earth with the ability to do absolutely anything. Even though we, as separate creatures, operate on a higher frequency, you possess the Spirit of The Supreme Ruler of All,” she said. Judah thought on the significance of possessing the Spirit of the Father.

As the darker army grew near, the beautiful and eclectic creatures of this planet moved alongside the cat woman that spoke with Judah. It looked as if they were preparing to defend themselves.

“Victory is ours!” the creatures’ voices shook the whole planet, like a subtle earthquake. The sky, which was once lit with colors that weren’t even on the color spectrum, now turned pitch black. Darkness evaded the planet with the Light from the robe only being shown in a specific place within the planet.

Beasts with origins from this planet began to emerge from the ground. Some were in forms of Kobolds, almost like Lizard people, but they appeared to be intelligent with weapons that looked as if they were straight out of Star Trek. Others looked like flaming birds that came from the ground. They all looked resurrected, in a sense, rather than the dead raising.

“Ok, Judah. Wake up,” Judah told himself, but this was real, and Judah couldn’t escape the many different creations that existed outside of his realm.

Looking to the sky, Judah witnessed stars falling at the speed of light towards the planet. These stars falling were helpers of the meek creatures of the planet. Just then, another more masculine creature was erected amongst the cat woman who spoke with Judah. He looked like a deer with wings and long horns. He was beautiful and was able to erect on his back two feet. Just when he erected himself, he began to chant loudly in a language Judah had never heard. Judah could see the language patterns as they targeted the falling stars and seemed to direct the paths of them. Some stars exploded into beautiful crystals that showered onto the planet and formed into shielding structures to block intruders. It was a defensive mechanism. Other stars shape shifted into fairy-like creatures. It was amazing seeing this winged deer chant hymns to prevent his planet from being destroyed by the falling stars, in which were being sent by the evil army.

So, some stars were mere beautiful crystals that fell like pillars to shield the people while the other stars turned out to be babies; fairy-like creatures, thanks to the winged deer erected and speaking in the foreign tongues. The baby creatures fell into clouds that were miraculously placed there by the winged deer echoing chants next to the cat woman who held her hands up in praise. The fairy-like baby creatures, with smiles on their faces, began to worship their god in song and dance. It was a spectacle to see for Judah. The Babies rejoiced and flung their arms in the air, singing songs of praise with the infant voices that occupied them.

“Sardius, Topaz, and the Diamond, the Beryl, the Onyx, and the Jasper, the Sapphire, the Emerald, and the Carbuncle. Every precious stone adorned you,” the fairy babies sung. “Until iniquity be found in thy heart!” the voices of the babies changed from that of innocent and childish to that of something manly and thunderous. They equipped themselves with bow and arrows that fit their small bodies perfectly and took their place within their resting places.

Judah smiled and then looked back once he felt the evil army getting closer.

As Judah peered out onto the goblins, gargoyles and wolverine-like evil creatures, he also witnessed them carrying a throne in the midst. A goat sat upright in the throne with horns that reached the sky. Judah also saw a man sitting patiently at the right hand of this goat creature that sat on the throne, who was *probably Satan himself* Judah thought. The human man looked as if he was subjected to the evil one on the throne.

As the evil army came closer and the meek creatures prepared for battle, Judah could make out that the evil throne was made from a fine Ebony wood with the head of human skulls and goats staked everywhere about. Black horns covered almost every inch of the bottom-outer throne with two sets of wings being erected from the back of the throne’s chair. Eight creatures that looked like oversized emps carried this throne. Everything was happening so fast; Judah could only watch.

The man that sat on the space next to the throne could now been seen as being naked and tied to the throne’s extra space like a captive. Unusually, he was tied to the throne’s extra space in vines that looked as if they came from a tree. His mouth was covered with a leaf that had a name in Hebrew letters inscribed on it, yet Judah could not understand or even pronounce the name. This was no ordinary man. His eyes looked like those of small figs. Even though his hands were tied in front of him, he still possessed something in his right hand. He held on to it extremely tight. Judah couldn’t make it out until he gazed at his left hand to discover another object. a gardening tool. A gardening tool with a pruning hook attached to a golden handle. This was all very puzzling to Judah.

The evil creatures and their vegetative captive got closer to Judah and the meek creatures. Judah knew the man held captive. It felt like they were related. Getting a closer look, the captive’s right hand held some sort of crown. A crown that was supposed to be placed on the head but was held in this man’s hand.

Judah became terrified. Was he next? He began to hesitate and looked to the meek creatures for answers, but they appeared to be in a meditational, strategic trance. What was this place with all this war? Judah tried to wake up again, but he knew he needed to face these encounters for some truer meaning.

Then, Judah witnessed the captive tied to the evil throne yell something with all his might, but no actual words could be heard because a leaf covered his mouth. He continually tried to yell something, yet instead, something began to emerge from his mouth. This object cut straight through the middle of the leaf that occupied this captive's mouth but was situated and balanced, almost levitating.

Judah knew it wasn't Jesus as Christ wouldn't be sitting on anything dark, tied to nothing put forth by humans or evil spirits. This man, was someone different and if the evil spirits had their way with him, then he'd surely been defeated before.

"Adam!" it clicked as Judah called out to The First Universal King and First Priest of the Earth. At the call of Adam's name, everything stopped. The meek creatures came out of their trance, the evil army halted their slow and steady pursuit and Adam's leaf was removed from his mouth and somehow transformed into a fruit that was somehow caught in his mouth.

It was indeed Adam. The whole situation seemed as if it shifted, if only for a moment because of Judah's knowledge of the First God Man, the first of his species, the only creation made out of the direct image and likeness of God.

The object that was stuck in Adam's mouth was some sort of fruit. Adam stood, still chained at the feet and hands, and he forcefully spit the fruit out towards Judah as they stood many feet away from each other. Judah caught the fruit and inspected it. It smelled savory and looked like a huge purple grape. Judah lifted the fruit and dared to taste it. Was this the forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil? Judah remembered many times when he'd come across different interpretations of the Fall of Man. He was almost amazed to be experiencing the fruit that may've cause the fall of man.

Before anything else happened, the grape-like fruit turned into a thick, red liquid that resembled blood and poured out of Judah's hand. Judah knew it was symbolic but didn't have a clue as to what was going on.

"Judah!" Adam called out, falling to his face as if he'd lost all his strength in the midst of that evil army. "Judah!" Adam called again. His voice was sweet and innocent. He sounded like

a pre-teen yet looked like he played linebacker for a college football team. There was only a hint of masculinity in the voice of Adam. He knew he messed up, big time. But why did the devil have him captive?

“Yes,” Judah answered, somewhat afraid, noticing the scar on his external oblique. *The first operation. Eve*, Judah thought, looking upon the scar on Adam.

“Do not be deceived,” he roared. “I still have the same faith!” he shouted. “I did not see my Father form me. He had not breathed life into me yet. I did not see my Father form Eve. I was sleep when the operation took place. Therefore, I had faith! From the very beginning and I continue to stand in this faith, for as long as Judgement has not come,” he spoke with conviction. This caught the attention of the evil army as they all looked at him in confusion. The goat that sat on the throne barely moved. But when Adam made that last statement, the Devil looked upon Adam.

Then, one by one, the innumerable evil army of beasts began to enter Adam, literally. The evil creatures literally either flew right into the body of Adam or jumped right into him. Adam absorbed them, the whole multitude. It happened fast, like millions of strides of lightning shooting right into this representative of Adam.

A different person emerged from within Adam. A person filled with darkness. He evolved from captive held in vines to a man strengthened by evilness, even though the vines and leaves that occupied him before were now dead.

Adam ripped the dead vines from himself, crushed the crown he once held and broke in half the golden gardening tool. The darkened throne began to grow larger than life as the goat sitting thereon began to form into something else. A goat head, a head of an ox, a human head and the head of a bird all occupied this evil person that sat on the evil throne now.

The dark clouds that covered the planet seemed to not move as thunder and lightning struck and would occasionally strike one of the meek creatures.

Something evil was surely being accomplished and this simply reminded Judah of what John wrote in Revelations regarding God giving Satan power to rule after the people who deliberately disregard truth. Judah could no longer see the majestic colors of the heavens in which he first encountered from this planet. Now, everything was dark smoke with the only dim light being illuminated from the lightning and thunder.

“Do not be deceived?” Satan spoke in might and laughed. “Now you embody me,” Satan pointed to Adam in which Judah figured was symbolic. “You too!” he pointed to Judah.

“What’s going on?” Judah tried to ask the cat woman in which still stood next to him. She did not respond, rather, she continued to look upon the event with tremendous courage. The winged deer who was once humming hymns looked upon in both shock and bravery as well. Judah wondered why.

“Who is Adam?” The winged deer asked Judah without looking towards him.

“The First King and Priest of God on Earth. God chose Adam to rule over all. The First Ancestor of the Eternal King. But Adam failed in keeping the commandments of his Maker. It was he who brought us into our sinful nature, needing salvation,” Judah stared upon the evil embodiment of Adam.

“Addis,” the winged deer and cat woman said to each other at the same time. Judah figured these creatures shared a redemption scenario in which needed a Savior. Judah wondered who their Savior was.

There was no more army, just Satan and an evil Adam, but they didn’t look ready for battle. Instead, they appeared to be very laid back. Satan arose from his throne and began to approach Judah and the creatures of this planet like he was welcomed. Adam looked like a beast-man, eyes blood-shot red and veins popping everywhere on his fleshly body. Judah witnessed this and wished to not even get close to Satan.

Satan was able to transform into a man when he approached Judah. A black man that was pleasant to look upon and sort of reminded Judah of his father.

“Earth, huh?” Satan asked, roaming around Judah and the others. “One of my favorite places in this entire galaxy. God has chosen Israel within the Earth. For the God of Israel is supreme and beside Him there is no other. Yet, there is a symmetry in understanding. In nature and in human life, you will find an evil side.”

“Due to iniquity being found in thy heart!” Judah pointed to Satan. “And thou trickery towards humanity. Thou hatred toward humanity!” Judah became angry a bit.

“Hatred? I love human beings. Was it not I that guarded the Gates of Eden? Was it not I that brought you all into the Age of Enlightenment? Is it not my duty to be adversary to challenge and assess the good? Am I not the enemy of sham and pretensions? Do I not report for duty to the King to execute my will? I am no mere instrument, rather, I am an intelligent servant

who knows how to offer suggestions for a test-experiment. I am jealous of God, I will not lie, even though I am the father of liars,” he laughed whole heartedly. Judah didn’t know whether to take the latter lightly or not.

“Facts. Liar! So how can anything you say to me be true?” Judah asked.

“It’s in the Bible you read, my fellow intellect. When did I become a fallen angel?” he said and also pointed to the creatures of this world as they listened intently. “When was I filled with hatred and rebellion to God? Satan is a person. Me? Uhm, maybe something you humans made up as an excuse. But my functionality does not exist outside of God. I am always under the divine will. I am powerless without the divine permission from our Father,” Satan spoke rather well. Judah was impressed. “I can do nothing beyond the permission of God, you know this,” he smiled at Judah. “God’s ultimate purpose throughout is benevolent.”

“Yet, as acting adversary, you seem to relish in the tasks placed before you, the censor becoming the censorious, the criminal lawyer becoming the criminal.”

“It’s a balance to everything, Judah. I love the balance. Why have humans be stuck in an ignorant bliss? Robots? Free will was supposed to come to you all, one way or the other,” Satan related. “Don’t blame me when you reap what you sow.”

“You can’t say you don’t spread a negative influence over humans. You can’t stand here and lie to me without me knowing. I am a child of God. You hate humans. Otherwise, what is your purpose to accuse us of sin? Why are you here causing mischief amongst a varied species? You missed me with that love,” Judah backed away from Satan and came closer to the creatures of this planet. “I know love. Love is truth. Love is real. Love is patience. Love is unconditional.”

“My, my, my,” Satan shook his head in disgrace. “You have so much to learn, my young lad. Love is one of the most intense feelings felt by humans, indeed this is true. But then again, another intense feeling is also hate. When one forces themselves to feel indiscriminate love, it becomes very unnatural. If you love everyone, do you not lessen your feelings for those who deserve your love? Repressed hatred can lead to many physical and emotional ailments. Releasing your hatred towards those who deserve it can cleanse yourself of those malignant emotions towards the ones you love,” Satan tried to debate Judah. And for Judah to think Kareem was too far off. Was Satan playing games? Like, did Satan really think Judah was that ignorant? Judah knew he should be careful because Satan was no one to play with, be it a dream, reality, whatever.

“That is not true,” was all Judah could say. Satan’s philosophies weren’t too far off and kind of made sense, but Judah knew that it was all a lie. Satan would do anything to hinder God’s children from succeeding. He even tempted Christ, who was perfect and without sin.

“Hell is not true either. I told the Eskimos about the horrors of Hell and the eternal damnation and soul roasting of the fiery place. They wanted to come. Badly,” Satan made jokes that only he himself found funny.

“Shaytan! Shaytan!” another plain, fleshly man was seen running up from behind Satan and the cursed Adam. He was begging and pleading for something from Satan but speaking in Arabic in which Judah couldn’t understand. He looked like Jesus, but Judah knew it wasn’t Him. It couldn’t be Him because this man looked like the European Jesus drawn by famous artist from hundreds of years after Christ. What trickery was taken place?

*“This can’t be Heaven if I am unable to understand different language. This has to be another reality,”* Judah thought to himself. This man of Middle Eastern descent ran and slid towards the feet of Satan. He reached into his green thawb and retrieved two candlestands. He laid them at the feet of Satan, yet Satan looked distraught. Satan looked up at the creatures, then Judah, then back at this Arab man. Everyone could tell that Satan was feeling some type of way, negatively. Satan gripped the Arab man by his neck and lifted him above. It seemed as if this Arab man had extremely caught Satan’s attention.

“What is this? That you bring at my feet! The thing that emits light!” Satan roared and then threw the Arab man down to the ground. The Arab man hurriedly regained his posture and reached into his thawb again and revealed two miniature olive trees. He then laid them at the feet of Satan. This made him even more frustrated.

“What have you done?” Satan asked the Middle Eastern man.

“I bring to you, the Two Priests of the Lord, the Two Ministers of your God,” the Arab man answered in all his humility. Judah then realized that this was the same man that Miriam saw on the television. The same Arab man that was signing a peace treaty between Middle Eastern countries.

“I don’t understand. Make it plain,” Satan told the Arab man. It was unusual for the Arab man to converse so intimately with Satan, even though Satan just had him by the neck.

“First they will unite the Christian and the Muslim world. Then they will further unite the Christian, Muslim, and Jewish world,” the Arab man told Satan. “That’s 5 billion people!” he stressed.

“Impossible! I had grips on the Prophet Muhammad,” Satan yelled. “But...” then he looked upon Judah. The Arab man looked upon Judah as well.

“You,” the Arab man pointed. “He is instrumental in the outcome of this,” the Arab man spoke but Judah froze.

Satan peered at Judah with a grim smile. “Indeed he is. Yet, more stressing matters are at hand. He and his will be destroyed very shortly,” the Devil seemed to be making promises.

“Liar! Everything you say is a lie. You’re miniscule to the God I serve,” Judah said, pointing to Satan. Judah thought if he was in a dream, he’ll wake up. If this was real, it sure wasn’t a judgement of sort. Judah had a feeling he’d be going back to Earth so he might as well get it all out now.

“Howbeit I am miniscule yet having deceived not only your whole wide world, but also this world and just about every other world that has ever been created? You have given me your throne, let us not forget. I am your King,” Satan stated as a zombie-like Adam stood next to him simply waiting for instruction.

“Liar! Thief! Murderer!” Judah cursed the already cursed Satan. It seemed to fuel the Devil.

“Master, what shall we do with this man?” Middle Eastern asked Satan and this struck Judah. Did this man just refer to Satan as Master?

“He is trouble for my Kingdom!” Satan yelled out of frustration. “Yet we are unable to interfere right now. The Federation have forbidden us.”

The Arab man then got really close to Judah, close enough for Judah to take position for fight. The Arab man looked deeply into the eyes of Judah.

“One day they will ask you, *“Who is like the beast? Who can wage war against it?”*” he spoke and before he could finish, fire shot through the sky and lit it up like nothing ever seen before by Judah. The light was as bright as can be. Light shone from a Being that absolutely diminished the existence of darkness. He came with millions of other lights as Judah was trying to fixate his eyesight. Everyone’s attention was on the sky as a Being shown Himself fixated in the air with a host. The meek creatures began to praise and worship the Being in the sky. From

the Lizards flying in the sky to the creatures that arose from the ground, from the cat people to the fairy-like babies, they all praised in their native tongues and were no longer worried about Satan and the cursed Adam that was brought along as a prized possession.

Judah heard the Being in the sky say, *'Cease!'* which sounded like the quickest earthquake (or planetquake) in the world. An energy was sent from this Being in the sky towards Satan, but Satan tried his best to resist. The Light Being in the sky was seen peering down at Satan and the evil Adam as they tried to resist the power of some sort of energy coming from above.

The Light Being could be seen landing from the sky in a slow and steady manner while Satan and the evil Adam were busy fighting off the invisible spirits sent their way.

Judah could now see the Being and it looked to be another creature of this world. But this creature was different. This Being was more so a Lion rather than a cat, lizard, or any other creature for that matter. This Lion appeared to be upright, walking on His slightly bent hind legs as He landed. He was beautiful. His mane was full and glowed with a golden glow. He looked like the King of the Jungle and His good energy could be felt throughout all. It felt like an unconditional love. The creatures fled to this Lion Savior type of figure and began to praise and worship Him in a very humble way.

The Lion Being lifted their paw towards Satan and the energies they fought with began to come back to the caster. Satan and evil Adam regained composure and looked to the Lion as He made His way towards them.

Upon passing Judah, The Lion looked at Judah and smiled, showing teeth sharper than a two-edged sword.

"Jesus?" Judah asked and the Lion nodded His head as an affirmation. The Lion, probably another embodiment of Christ brought here to save the creatures of this planet, was seen coming to the rescue. Was this normal? Could not the people defend their own home? And why was the devil so rampant and so visible? It's not like we literally see the devil on Earth. This is what probably made us so special, to be hidden from such evils to an extent.

*"Away from thine harmonious creation!"* The Lion displayed sharp claws erect from his paws, like he was ready for war.

"Let's play!" Satan charged at The Lion but was miserably shredded into pieces by the claws of this Cat Being in a matter of nanoseconds. The shortest event ever, yet the most

spectacular as shreds from the devils physical body were transformed into sparkles of colorful dust. It was like Satan never existed, but this was simply just a form of Satan being destroyed. His spirit still lived on, but only for a time.

The Lion Being, after utterly destroying Satan in this form, placed His hands on the cursed Adam. The evil spirits that occupied Adam begin to immediately desorb from him. As the evil spirits visually came out, the Baby Fairies began to shoot their arrows with precise precision, hitting every vile spirit that left Adam.

After all the chaos, Adam was restored, and the people of this planet began to shout in praises to this Lion Being who reminded Judah of Jesus. The evil throne was cast out of the planet along with the Arab man who referred to Satan as Master. But the candlestands and the olive trees were still in place, that of which the Arab man brought to the attention of Satan.

“Watch,” The Ultimate Lion Being told Judah in English.

There were two Olive trees next to each other. The tree on the right grew larger than life but its branches began to fall off. As the branches fell off, they began to shape shift into people. They weren't just ordinary people, but Jewish people. They were the Original Jewish elect, the Chosen amongst them that fell off. They were the religious leaders of their day and today. They fell off as branches to the olive tree on the right. The remaining branches on the tree to the right were converted into people as well. Jewish people. God's chosen. But they rejoiced and sat in the tree and ate from it rather than falling from it.

Then the tree to the left. One could say it was overgrown. It had too many branches, but that just made the tree bigger. Judah witnessed this Olive tree with the many branches also turn to people. But they weren't Jews. They were old and modern Egyptians and Sumerians, modern-day Chinese, Japanese, Africans, North, Central and South Americans, Europeans, Australians, you name it. Judah believed they represented the Gentiles. Judah always though Scripture which spoke on the two olive trees were in reference to the two witnesses to come. Or was it two nations?

Then, even on the 'Gentiles' tree, some branches fell, or people. Not as many as the Jewish Olive tree, but still, some fell. Judah looked to see at where they fell and behold, beneath them, the two candlestands grew, just as the trees, larger than life. Only a few people that fell where able to catch hold of either of the candlestands. They either clung to one or the other or continued to fall pass the candlestands.

“Do you understand?” The Christ-like Lion Being spoke to Judah in the smoothest voice coming from one who looked like a humanized cat.

“I think,” Judah answered in amazement. Judah felt love transferring from this Being and into Judah’s most inner core. Judah almost wanted to bow, but subconsciously, Christ had told him no, not here, not in this form.

Yet, Judah was more amazed that Christ could take on more than that of a human and go be a Savior to different creatures and species from other planets. It absolutely blew Judah’s mind. Jesus had whiskers! Judah hugged this Cat Being whom he assumed was Christ and instantly felt the power from Him. He was taken aback by all the greatness happening at one time.

“There is so much, Judah,” He extended His paw. Judah gracefully took it, and they joined the millions of hosts in the sky.

As Judah traveled with the actual and literal Lion of Judah, He began to shape shift into that of a human as they traveled. Judah was able to witness the transformation of flesh right before his eyes. It looked like beautiful works of quantum physics being manipulated.

His feet, literally, that of fine brass. His eyes resembling a clean fire, and a sword coming from his mouth as if He were equipping Himself as they traveled the cosmos.

Then Judah believed He was seeing Earth in the distance, directly under the throne of God. But this Earth appeared to be much larger and there wasn’t a single Sun or Moon in sight. Rather, there were many Suns and Moons within the heavens of this New Earth. The Light from the Throne that sat above was the Sun of this new World.

Within this New World, there could be seen a Great City from space. One could actually hear the songs and praises from space as they entered into. The Great City was huge and glittered with gold specs spread across what looked like a country. There was also other activity, outside of the Gates. This is where Christ and Judah went first.

Landing on the outsides of the gates were modern kingdoms made with the eternal flesh of man’s hand. There were numerous construction sites being developed with the help of friendly giants and gigantic birds. Instead of vehicles, creatures rode on hovercrafts that were able to move by slight levitation rather than full fledge flight. It looked like a futuristic earth. It appeared everything was good here as Judah saw nothing evil being displayed.

Yet, looking out onto the mountain and seeing the Great City which Judah figured was the New Jerusalem within this New Earth was far more desirable. Judah tried to put two and two together. Why was he being shown the outside of New Jerusalem? Or even the New Earth period? Why was he being shown other planets where a nation of all types of creatures existed? They had their own Jesus. Or did they share the same Christ as the humans on Earth? Was it man's fault in which we ruined the whole of creation? Their own way to salvation or salvation through us, Man? The same person yet in different dimensions at contrasting times? It was still difficult for Judah to process.

"But in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom also He made the universe. Hebrews 1:2," Judah thought of that particular Scripture and wondered if it was in relation to Christ being Savior of other planets that held life.

"Judah," Christ spoke like numerous waterfalls, His very own throne descending from the Great City like it had a mind of its own. Cherubs were seen dancing and playing instruments atop the Throne.

"Yes, Lord?" Judah answered with an open heart and ready for whatever. He was so excited, yet terrified, to be called by name by this Being who Judah absolutely knew to be Christ.

"Pay attention to the things I tell you," Christ reached down and placed His hand on Judah's shoulder. Right then and there, Judah knew. Even though he would have to be told in verbal form, Judah knew. He knew he had to help restore something particularly important back home. He knew he had to go great lengths to get something done, simply due to the power emitting from Christ in knowledge, wisdom and understanding. Still, Christ spoke to reiterate.

Yet, before Christ even spoke, Judah weep. His face trembled and he tried to hold it in, to be tough in front of the Lord, but the Lord was something more than tough. He was love. The love radiating from Christ was unmatched. Judah felt as if he'd grossly underestimated the Love of Christ. Judah could feel the intense emotion of Love from his Lord, something much deeper than the love to and from his mother, father, Hawa, and anyone else altogether. It was like nothing could stop this love, like nothing could tarnish it, like nothing could happen for this love to not be received. This was it. Judah felt special. More special than any other person in the galaxy. To be here, in front of Yeshua. Christ felt more personal to Judah than anything, ever, because Christ knew His very own perfect empathy. He knew because He experienced

temptation and knew what we went through as humans. Judah simply wept out of the goodness of the Lord when Christ began to speak to him.

“Take the six and meet the 7<sup>th</sup>. Everything is prepared for your departure,” He began to speak in a poetic tone. “Go to the Land of the Persians and reunite the people of the Land with their Lord. They shall not so eagerly provide you with a child to be paired with Benjamin. But this must be done. It will bring the offspring of Ishmael to the Light,” He spoke with authority as he settled upon His White Throne.

“Yes, Lord!” Judah answered and shook his head in agreement, still amazed at the glorification of his Savior, yet not clearly knowing exactly what to do. Judah knew this was Jesus Christ in the New Body, but He appeared far different from how He was depicted in Earthly art. He looked glorified, but rugged in the sense of human experience. It was something absolutely beautiful to behold, God in servant form, always in servant form. His eyes were a deep brown, and His hair was locked and twisted to perfection and whiter than snow. Then He smiled and outstretched His hand. He still had the marks from the crucifixion at His wrists. Aside from the Love being emitted, His wrists sealed Judah’s conviction.

Judah took His hand and Christ helped Judah to his feet from his weeping. Then and there was Judah transformed. If he hadn’t seen the Light shown from himself before, he could surely see it now.

“There is more,” Christ told Judah and took him into the gates of New Jerusalem. “Your destiny is at hand,” Jesus bowed to Judah and paved a way for him to enter into the Gates of Judah. Actual Lions were seen at the gate and various people sat at this gate, eating, and conversing in utter happiness. They looked prominent and Judah wondered who they were. It looked as if some sort of meeting was taking place, but it was rather unorthodox.

Judah listened by way of the energies being emitted as they walked into the Great City. It was surrounded by a massive wall made of Jasper.

“Welcome, Judah,” an elder welcomed.

“Thank you,” Judah bowed to someone who emitted a powerful source of love and wisdom. Christ bent to whisper something in Judah’s ear as they passed the gathering.

“That was Silas. Or Silvanus,” Christ told Judah.

“Silas?” Judah looked back and witnessed a smiling Silas, long shaggy hair that glowed, clothed in white garments and very disguisable. ‘*Silas?*’ Judah thought. *‘The faithful brother that*

*traveled with Paul, Peter and Timothy. Yes, Silas!*' Judah remembered and smiled back, waving. A saint. One of the Seventy sent out by Christ Himself.

As they entered the City, Judah took in the majesty His people. They danced on the clouds, played instruments of all kinds, sang songs of praise and worship and happiness was filled within everyone and everything. The children played with all kinds of animals ranging from Panthers and Leopards to Eagles and Falcons. The Bear ran with the teenagers and the Fish swam with the ones fond of aqua nature. It as a party. A feast! Drums, harps, trumpets, horns, pianos, cello's, you name it. It was all being played at once and it made the most beautiful sounds known to man. It was incomparable, the music that was being played here. It literally touched your soul as one could feel the wavelengths of the music being intertwined within themselves.

"The King of Kings," Judah smiled at the magnificent will of the people and also of the dwelling places that existed here. It was as if Judah knew that Christ was the architect. There was a river that flowed through the main street. The main street was covered in a transparent gold. Judah looked and beheld the Tree of Life as it stood in the middle of the City.

Then, looking on high was the Temple of God but it wasn't a temple as a building is. It was a throne. It was the Father Who'd shown like the Sun. This was the Temple of God. It would be disrespectful to call God anything other than what He is, and that is ultimate Love, Light, Power, Grace, Beauty and much more in which the human language cannot describe. Nothing like Man. Nothing to the liking of Man. It was absolutely incomprehensible to understand the Power and overwhelming Fulfillment of the Most High.

He did not just sit in His throne. It seemed as if zillions of emotions were being displayed within this One entity. He moved. He danced as He rested in His throne. He was overjoyed to see His best creation come to Him. He is a mastermind, the best mastermind. Judah bowed his face to the ground and began speaking in tongues. He lifted his arms towards the Throne that had innumerable Beings going to and fourth in praise, singing, dancing, chanting and everything in between. Judah cried his heart out due to the wonder, the pure love. God's presence made the word love child's play. This was something utterly amazing, beyond description in our language today.

Judah felt Christ calling him to follow in Spirit, for Judah's praises were far beyond sufficient, both here and on Earth. Judah raised himself and followed Christ, still praising, and

worshipping the Lord. As they moved more into the City that glistened with Gold and gemstones, Judah noticed that these stones, the gold, the gemstones were unlike the ones we see in Earth. They were in original form. They shined, sparkled and if one would listen close enough, they would hear the objects and minerals praising God in their own way. It was something rather spectacular. Judah continued to gaze at this masterpiece of a city that looked one hundred million times larger than New York City, Beijing, Shanghai, Mumbai, and Tokyo put together. Judah walked with Yeshua pass waterfalls, ponds, rivers, gardens bigger than parks, just absolutely beautiful. Along with people dancing on the air and playing all kinds of instruments never seen to man, there was also what looked like thousands upon thousands of tropical biomes. There were sections in the Great City that differed substantially. The forest was lit with all kinds of bugs that emitted different colorful lights and even in the sky there were painters literally hand painting the sky which would be implemented into the actual heavens in which the Kingdom of God was. There was so much going on, Judah could barely take it all in.

It was as if Satan's influence was no more. This was truly something amazing to remember and to be a part of for ever and ever.

*'I wonder the difference between the people on the outside of the Gates and the people on the inside?'* Judah thought to himself. It was much livelier on the inside of the Gates while the outside simply felt like regular life. Judah remembered reading Revelation talking about the dogs being on the outside of the Gates, but Judah did not witness the attitude of dog-like behavior from people outside the Walls. Maybe was it there past lifetimes?

Judah continued to take in the sights as everything was made from every type of precious jewel and granite. The architecture of the city meshing with the heavenly forests was something to stare at for ages because the smallest feature of every structure, the smallest bug with the brightest light was all made with detailed precision. Gold, emeralds, rubies, and sapphire all glistened from the streets to the accents on the dwelling places that were within the city. The gardens to each dwelling place stretched as far as the eyes could see and seemed to intertwine with the beginning of a forest. It was massive.

"This is New Jerusalem. The City I have been building before the Fall of Man," The Christ notified Judah. "Did I not tell the inhabitants of the Earth that I will go to prepare mansions for you?"

“For it is written,” Judah attest. Christ smiled at Judah and that was it. Judah felt secure. He was ready for whatever the Lord had planned for him.

“I have told you what to do. I know you will do it,” He smiled. “Now, I will leave you with someone that is living to see you,” Jesus moved aside, and Grandma Ruthie appeared in all her glory.

“Grandma!” Judah smiled and ran to his grandmother. She’d exited her porch of a mansion that looked as if it had 4 floors and was covered in bricks of gold. Gardens were all around the mansion as they were filled with all kinds of fruit, most alien to Judah’s knowledge.

“Judah! My baby!” the young woman almost ran to her grandchild, and they hugged until they missed seeing each other face to face.

It’d been too long. Judah knew his grandmother was in her Heavenly Body. She looked much younger, about a ripe 25, and glowed just like the Heavens.

“You’re with the Lord, Grandma!” Judah announced.

“In the Spirit!” she laughed, spun around then hugged Judah again because she was so glad she got it right. It was surely his grandmother, his father’s mother, Grandma Ruthie.

“Where Grandpa?” Judah asked. Her joy instantly diminished, but just a bit.

“He’s asleep. I am asleep too. We will wake once the Final Judgement is at hand,” she smiled wholeheartedly.

“Huh?” Judah was confused. “This is the New Heavens or the New Earth. The New Jerusalem. Judgment has already been handed down, no?” Judah sought answers.

“Not quite, my son. The LORD has caused me to temporally dream. But I am unconscious in the grave. When I return, I will simply be sleep until the Resurrection, knowing nothing, feeling nothing, no devices, simply sleep. Christ said no man has ever ascended to Heaven in our new glorified bodies,” she looked at herself and shouted for joy. “Whoo! But I got a sneak peek!” she began to dance with a passing crowd of young children.

“So, I’m just in a dream of yours? From the grave?” Judah asked.

“I believe it is far deeper than that, son. There is much to be done on Earth before anything miraculous will happen coming from the sky. Y’all need to get it together down there. He is the Truth, lean on Him” she pointed towards Christ as He walked away with the same children and animals that passed them by.

“Understood,” Judah couldn’t agree more, an overwhelming feeling coming over him.

“Tell your father to open the Church. I know the devil has released the covid disease amongst God’s children of the Earth, still, against the rulers of the world, tell your father to open the doors to the Church,” she stated without searching for a confirmation from Judah.

“I will,” Judah confirmed anyway.

“Come on in. Time is of the essence for the both of us,” Grandma instructed. Judah followed through her massive garden displaying Tulips, Orchids, Roses, Lilies, Moonflowers and many more Judah couldn’t put a finger on. “Have a pomegranate,” she outspread her hand towards a tree filled with fruit. Judah didn’t like pomegranate and his Grandmother knew this. “It’s fine. Here, things grown are of the Lord, not of the tainted Earth. Try it,” she smiled and continued to walk towards her mansion. Judah took a pomegranate, and it literally glowed a reddish purple. Judah bit into it and before digesting, a surge of energy flew through him like none other. It was good to the taste buds of Judah as it tasted like sweet juicy cherries. He began to giggle upon entering his grandmother’s heavenly mansion as an overwhelmingly sensation of joy flowed through him all over again. Was the fruit making him giggle? It seemed as if the fruits here had more potency than anything, almost like a drug.

Upon entering the mansion that was sealed with a ring of light, Judah was amazed yet again. Everything was transparent and absolutely humungous. Everything glowed with assorted colors and shades of colors. Judah could not decipher a sofa from a bed from a table to chair. It was odd, almost unexplainable. Then the effects of the fruit were kicking in.

“Do not trouble yourself, my child. You are here to receive further instruction from me, the Presbyterian,” Grandma Ruthie ordered as Judah simply shook his head in agreement.

“Aggh,” Judah lightly screamed as he was caught off guard by a heavysset bull nudging at him. A real bull, like the ones the Spaniards run from in Spain. But it was calm. Its eyes told stories of old. Grandma Ruthie decided to keep the story of the Bull for another time. Now was the time for Judah to act upon the Earth.

“Board the Bull, son,” Grandma Ruthie told her grandson. He did as was told and the Bull ran through the house like it was mad, but never insinuated chaos. The inside of Nana’s house began to show various imageries of events happening.

Judah saw himself being followed by a number of people. He saw Benjamin. He also saw a friend of Benjamins walking alongside him. Benjamin and his friend had power, but his friend wore something of Middle Eastern culture and clung heavily to Hawa at times. Ben’s friend

faced Judah for the first time within the vision and he was not pleasant to look at. But his presence seemed to make one feel comfortable. The charisma placed on this was substantial. Benjamin and his friend were seen in the visions studying together, from both the Bible and The Quran. They spoke in front of large crowds and were able to captivate a people of many different nations.

The Bull continued to run around the house, being careful to not run into anything or else the visions would become blurry from the presence of the Bull disturbing the smoke.

“Agghh! No! No!” either a boy or girl screamed because the latter *no* was said in a different tone than the first. The second *no* sounded of something masculine while the first *no* and was screaming female. It frightened Judah as he came closer to the scream. This was Hawa, as she lay in a puddle of blood. She cried while she smacked at this puddle of blood, searching for something or someone.

Then she suddenly looked up and noticed Judah to be there. Upon the arrival of Judah, she screamed and sort of turned into a demon. Her eyes became as red as blood and her mouth looked oversized with teeth sprouting everywhere. She screamed at Judah in the most demonic ways possible. This made Judah incredibly sad and frightened. He knew, in his heart, that Hawa would need serious help. “Get away from me!” she screamed, but not towards Judah this time. It was towards Benjamin’s friend, the one with the distorted face and the Middle Eastern clothing.

“I come to make way of the Lord!” someone said within another visioned cloud smoke. Judah saw that it was the same Middle Eastern man that spoke with Satan, calling him Master. Judah, right then and there, knew he would have to come face to face with this man on Earth. He also knew this man may’ve been instilled with power, but from the Evil One instead of the Most High.

Then, within the visions, Judah was seen striking this same Middle Eastern man. Judah struck him with force with an object that was unknown to Judah himself at the time, but it looked to be in the form of a book. The Middle Eastern man died a terrible death, but still lived. Then the weapon was given to a friend of Judah’s, Kareem. Kareem took the weapon with delight in his eyes.

Then Hawa, Judah’s best friend, came into the Temple in which it appeared Judah was standing within this visionary smoke that displayed as Judah still rode the Bull.

“Iza jaa-a nas rullahi walfath! Waraayta annasa yadkhuloonafee deeni Allahi afwaja! Fa sab bih bihamdi rabbika was tagfir, innahu kaana tawwaaba!” Judah witnessed another person yelling within the Temple. She appeared right next to him. It was a female, but it wasn’t Hawa. This female was shorter and darker in complexion, and it appeared the Spirit of God was on her. So much so, that she was arrested by some sort of Islamic soldiers of the city. She was taken captive right in front of Judah. Judah, being in the vision, knew that these things must pass and therefore did nothing to stop it.

Then a lion came into the temple and destroyed it. The lion tore the Temple to pieces and devoured the people within the Temple which looked to be of a Middle Eastern descent. The lion wasn’t big at all. In fact, it looked like a cub about to venture into adulthood. It looked as if it was still wet behind the ears. Then the lion approached Judah, all within the vision still, and they both intertwined, magically. It was a vision, after all.

Then, as the Bull continued to run through the house, another vision appeared within the smoke as they travelled. Judah saw Pita dressed up as the Statue of Liberty. In one hand she had a book and in the other she had a torch, just like the Statue of Liberty. She approached Judah and the closer she got, the more excited Judah became, both in the vision and witnessing the vision. Pita walked right into Judah, and they became one as well. Now, Judah was seen with the book and the torch. But the book was different in Judah’s hands. The book was now the Holy Bible instead of a regular book in which Pita once held. The torch was ignited in Judah’s hand while in Pita’s, it was simply a torch. Her Light was being shown through Judah.

Then the Temple began to collapse, but Judah feared not as he escaped with a child in his arms. As they were exiting, there was a breastplate shining being held up against a wall. It basically called Judah to place it on him.

Getting closer to the breastplate as the Temple was collapsing, Judah saw that it read three letters: LMT. He immediately knew that to be symbolic of Lamont. Therefore, he placed the breastplate on and exited the Temple, head held high.

Then, the last vision. Upon walking outside of the Temple, a multitude of people from all kinds of backgrounds and faiths were wailing. They all confessed that Christ was King of Kings. From all tongues and faiths, as if they’ve incorporated the Gospels into their hearts. Benjamin and his friend, the unattractive boy from a Middle Eastern country, were at the top of the mountain, both, professing that Christ is King of Kings, the Son of the Most High.

“See you in the New Kingdom, baby!” Judah heard Grandma Ruthie claim just as everything began to scatter into pieces and fall. Like a digital puzzle coming apart.

Judah fell off the bull when everything began to collapse right out of the sky. It was one of those falls in a dream that you feel, even after waking up. Judah was simply preparing to wake up. This must’ve been the end. It was good and informative while it lasted.

Before Judah knew anything, he was back on Earth.

# Moabite

---

Judah woke up on the shore of Folsom Lake. His clothes were wet and even though he was really dirty, he felt renewed. He remembered everything that took place in the Heavens. He remembered everything and suddenly he began to cry and praise God, yet again.

He looked about through watery eyes as everything was more beautiful than before. The trees whispered songs and it seemed as if the birds could be heard and even understood from miles away. The water glistened and reflected off the sun with such rigor, it amazed Judah. The smell of nature tickled his neurological brain system somehow. Everything seemed more vivid, more real.

The wind would hit his face in a different manner. The sun would hit his skin more intensely in the best way possible. Judah finally hit his knees and stuck his face in the water just to get back to reality. He drank the water from the Lake and smiled, then laughed. He was alive on Earth, and knew, sooner or later, that he'll have to work towards that calling which was somewhat revealed to him.

up to the Heavens, he smiled, eyes grazing at the sun. He opened his mouth to say something, yet nothing came out because he was trying to think too hard. All the visions, the things Christ and Grandma said, the feelings and memories were something to ponder on for the rest of his life. He took a deep breath and decided to ease his mind. He was so excited about so many things, that it almost became overwhelming. A dream or not. Judah knew in the deepest depths of his heart that something had to be done.

Then, without notice, Judah began to speak in tongues, yet again. A language unknown to him. It almost sounded like Hebrew, but he could not tell. The words fell from his lips like vomit. He was indeed in the Spirit. It seemed as if he didn't want to stop praising the Lord.

Now, a certain man had helped Judah when he was passed out. The man saw him, unconscious, and knew it to be Judah Masod of New Jerusalem Church. He knew this young man to be the son of Bishop Masod of Sacramento. Not only was Judah passed out, but this man also realized that Judah had smeared feces all within his clothes. The man followed his heart, picked Judah up in his unconscious state, and threw him in the Folsom Lake. The man bathed both himself and Judah in the Lake. The man decided to wait for Judah to wake, as he floated on

the water near the shore. Then, when Judah woke and began to praise the Lord, the man became attentive. Judah had not yet seen the man through all his praising and watery eyes, but once the man witnessed him praising, he put his cigarette out and continued to look on from a distance.

“...” Judah continued to speak in tongues with his eyes closed, meditating on the visions and memories from his encounter with the Creatures, Christ, and Grandma Ruthie. The elderly man that helped Judah felt the power of the Lord coming from him and before the man knew anything else, he fell to his knees and began praying to God, right along with Judah.

“Thank you, Jesus! Thank you, Lord!” he rang, which caught Judah’s attention from 20 yards away. Spiritually, Judah was on fire. Anyone who came close to him felt the power of God. “Thank you Most High, Most Gracious. Thank you for the Blood of the Lamb to make me clean,” the elderly man continued to profess as Judah got up and went towards him, soaked and wet. Judah kneeled next to him and joined.

“Hallelujah! Praise the Lord,” Judah rubbed the back of this stranger who was now in tears. Even though both Judah and this elderly man acknowledged each other, it didn’t take away from their praise.

After about thirty minutes of calling out to the Lord, both men came back to reality.

“I apologize. The Lord called me over to you. I feel so much better, oh my God,” this elder praised and jumped for joy, like a child does when they’ve done something right. He did not even mention the fact that he had found Judah passed out covered in feces. This man felt the Spirit of the Lord on Judah. No explanation was needed for anything.

“Do not apologize. You listened to the Lord and now you are healed,” Judah felt himself sound more different than anything. He sounded more mature than he previously was. Enlightened even.

“Thank you, brother,” Elder said. Only then, was when Judah realized this man to be a White male. That ignorance seemed to have vanished from him, judging by the color of one’s skin, because they had both praised the Lord in Spirit and nothing else mattered. It was as if Judah could now read the soul, the heart. He could not wait to get back to town to fulfil his mission.

“May you be blessed beyond your measure,” Judah spoke, and the man began to wail in excitement all over again. He stood straight up and reached for the heavens, calling upon the name of the Lord.

“I am healed!” he praised and begin to dig in his pockets. “I am healed! I profess it! In the name of Jesus! I am healed!” he began to calm down, approaching Judah with some type of jewelry. Judah wished not to delve into what this man was healed from, rather he was healed and that was that.

“You are good with me. Your energy is sufficient,” Judah contested but the man insisted.

“No. Please. Take this,” he handed Judah a wooden bracelet that sparkled. “Whatever you do, DO NOT sell it. DO NOT take it off. AND DO NOT give it away until you move away from Sacramento with your disciples,” he said then looked Judah directly in the eye, not knowing where the latter words came from. “This is surely from the LORD!”

“Yessir,” Judah replied, eagerly accepting how God was already manifesting in his life.

“No, repeat it to me, please,” the elder stressed and Judah perfectly reciting not selling it, taking it off nor giving it away until he moves from Sacramento with his disciples. “This bracelet; the wood is the same wood from the cedar tree in which Solomon built the Temple. It is intertwined with gold dust from Heaven. Attached in the sphere is a lavender Halueve. A precious stone unknown to this world,” Judah looked at the stone and it resembled some of the colors he saw in his Heavenly vision. He was reminded of what he experienced when he viewed Heaven.

“No way,” Judah was in shock, yet again.

“There is much gold and an abundance of costly stones, but your lips of knowledge are a precious jewel also,” it sounded as if the man was quoting from Proverbs. “For wisdom is better than jewels and all that you desire cannot compare to Lupita,” he smiled yet the latter of the words took him for a loop. Judah’s mouth dropped a bit as he suddenly remembered his foreign mission. But what did he need to do? He knew Benjamin was involved somehow. He knew a breaking between him and Hawa had to take place because she was shown in Heaven as having demons. He knew Lamont to be his protection just from *LMT* being imprinted on the breastplate in the vision. He knew Kareem was to be with him in the Temple. He knew Pita to play a vital role in the callings to come. He knew he was to save a boy. He knew this boy was special. Who was this boy though? How was he related to anything Judah had going on? These things he knew, but how could he be certain?

“Very well, brother,” this man hugged Judah in all his wetness and went his way praising the Lord. Judah stood there, glowing, with a bracelet straight from the Temple and the Heavens

with a mission bound for completion. Judah placed the bracelet on his wrist and ran back to his car and began his travels back to his place. He needed to speak with Hawa to try and get some clarification.

\*\*\*

Parking his car in the garage, he exited and began to walk towards his own home when he noticed Hawa's vehicle. She was still here.

"She lied to you," someone caught Judah off guard. It was Kareem.

"Kareem!" Judah was shaken up a bit. "Jesus," he giggled.

"Muhammad! Peace be upon him," it seemed as if Kareem was again, looking for trouble.

"Who lied to me?" Judah tried to get straight to the point.

"Hawa," Kareem said, loosening the grip on his face when he came into the presence of Judah. His forehead decreased its frown, and his eyes became wider. His mouth opened and it looked as if Kareem was trying to reach for Judah. Like, trying to touch him for some odd reason. It was the glow.

"About what?" Judah asked, dodging the hands of Kareem as he, being immediately drunk in the spirit, tried to touch him.

"About... everything," it seemed as if all breath were exhausted from Kareem as he simply stared at Judah like he'd never done so before.

"Usually, I would not entertain these accusations. But, since I have come to know you, please elaborate," Judah leaned against the stairway wall. Judah knew Kareem may've had some missing pieces to what was revealed to him. Maybe even those pertaining to Hawa.

"She, uhh," Kareem began to tremble just a little. "Wait, what has happened to you? Judah?" he asked, wanting to simply touch his friend but was afraid to. Judah simply smiled. "Are you an angel, come as Judah?" Kareem had the nerve to ask.

"No, Kareem. I'm the same man that you've been arguing with for the past few days," Judah made straight. "Now, what happened to Hawa?"

"Hawa, uh," he tried to gather his thoughts. "She gave testimony that shed light on her past, probably accidently," he faintly laughed. "I did some digging," Kareem displayed a manilla

folder and shakingly handed it to Judah. “Her name is Hawa ibn-Hasan from Iran. She has a child with a Grand Ayatollah in Shia Islam named Muhammad ibn-Hasan. According to the birth certificates, he’s seven years old,” Kareem looked for anger in the face of Judah but couldn’t find it. Too much light. But deep down, Judah’s mind raced. He’d heard that name before.

*“She has a child with a Grand Ayatollah of Shia Islam?”* Judah thought to himself as Kareem continued to gossip. Then it began to come back to him. From watching the News and seeing the man wanting to reconstruct the Jewish Temple and signing a peace treaty with Israel to the visions Judah had with the Middle Eastern man conversing with both him and Satan. Judah’s father even mentioned something about a Grand Ayatollah some time ago. Maybe these two people were one in the same. Once Kareem was done talking, Judah lifted his head.

“Very well,” Judah smiled, making Kareem even more confused. What Kareem didn’t know is that his snooping around trying to destroy something was actually being used to fulfill the will of God.

“Very well?” Kareem looked a bit upset because he didn’t get the response he hoped for. Judah took the papers without having to look at them. “I think I’ve been assigned to restore the family,” he confirmed with a smile.

“Restore the family? Assigned by who?” Kareem was now very confused.

“By Yeshua.”

“Jesus?” Kareem asked and Judah agreed. “Ha! Ok. Brotha. This is freaking me out, please,” Kareem waved Judah off, disbelieving as he begun to walk the other way. “And oh,” he turned to face Judah, but was again struck by the brilliance that radiated from his Christian brother. It was as if Judah were a new man, and Kareem could not accept it. “Nothing,” Kareem gave up. His behavior was odd, even though consistent.

“Kareem! How did you gather this information?” Judah asked, more so intrigued by Kareem’s skills of research rather than his will. “Because believe it or not, you are called also.”

“I was called upon birth! Just like you! And the info? I have resources,” he spoke over his shoulder and went his way. Judah paid attention to the glory he displayed and how it affected people. He swore to himself to not let it interfere with his mission, getting big headed and whatnot. Fulfilling what the Heavens had bestowed upon Judah while remaining sane was primary.

Entering his home, there she was. Hawa. She sat gracefully and fully clothed, reading a book called *Becoming* by Michelle Obama.

“Judah! Wow. That was fast. I didn’t even get a chance to furniture shop,” she rose and ran towards Judah to embrace him. Hawa was fearful to even move once they were caught by Judah’s father, lying naked. As soon as Judah left, she clothed herself and simply froze. She was afraid of going outside because she thought Judah’s father was out there waiting, or that she’d run into the father and son fighting each other. Even as time as passed, she was in a trance. She knew her time was almost up and that she’d have to face some of her most inner demons.

As soon as they touched from hugging, Hawa forcefully removed herself from Judah in an instant. The look on her face was that of much disorientation. “O’ Allah,” she stated and grabbed at her chest.

“Hawa. How are you?” Judah asked seriously. He amazed himself at how well he was able to contain himself knowing the visions he’d received on the way Hawa was to act. Demonic to say the least.

“I am...” she stuttered, looking into the eyes of Judah. “You are difficult right now. I mean, different,” she backed away in fear.

“What do you mean?” Judah asked, even though he knew what she meant.

“Oh my Gooood,” she wailed and fell to her knees like something awful had just happened. She attempted to look Judah in the eyes from the ground but couldn’t. He was glowing. It showed. “Judah,” she cried and shielded her eyes from him.

“Hawa,” he sounded, but to Hawa, it sounded like thundering rattling when Judah spoke. That made her yell even louder. Judah kneeled down beside her to comfort her. “What’s wrong?”

“No,” she replied immediately, knowing the truth had been revealed to Judah somehow, somehow. “Get away from me!” she yelled in terror and in a darker manner. It seemed as if frustration overcame her in an instance.

“Release it then,” Judah told her in all his knowledge. But she could not. She cried and cried some more. Wailing and screaming to the top of her lungs with shivers like she’d taken a bad hit of a drug. It didn’t faze Judah though. The demons within Hawa knew that couldn’t use trickery on Judah, so they began to prepare their departure.

“I can’t,” she gave up and replied once she also knew Judah wasn’t falling for it.

“Yes, you can. Sin has no place in you, for you are filled with the Spirit of the Lord, Amen? You chose this. You chose to receive this free gift of Life. Now live it. Do not continue to hide in the shadows of Darkness. There is nothing there but death, sickness, and destruction. Release it. I am here for you. I will not condemn you,” Judah spoke without having to think about his words. But what Judah was saying was something she had on her mind probably every single day since she met Judah.

“You will condemn me,” she cried only replying to the latter. Judah then stood up and hovered his hand over the top of Hawa’s head. He prayed for the Spirit to lead him in prayer. The Holy Spirit of Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Gentleness, Faithfulness and Self-control.

“Lift yourself up, woman. Let every vile entity be removed from you right now! You are saved in the name of Yeshua of Nazareth. You are healed in the name of Jesus Christ. You are forgiven now and forever after in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In the name of Emmanuel, the King of Kings we defeat the Prince of Darkness! In your Holy Name we pray!” Judah prayed through Hawa’s ceasing uproars.

“Nooooo!” Hawa whimpered, being defeated, yet the person who’d spoke was not Hawa. That was the voice of someone or something different. Judah decided to up the antics and get personal with the Prince of Darkness.

“Hither away, Shaytan! You hath no place here,” Judah sounded with a great voice before speaking in tongues and having both his hands be placed on the top of Hawa’s head. Judah did not fear and used his faith to try and remove whatever demon Hawa had in her. “Hither away in the name of Yeshua, the Christ. The Son of God from Nazareth! Hither away, Shaytan!” he returned to English as Hawa began to violently shake in her place.

Judah prevented her from falling back by catching her as it looked like she’d passed out for a moment’s time. From Hawa passing out to waking up only took a couple seconds and when she woke, she was even more confused.

“Wha-,” she looked about, confused, holding onto her head. “What happened?” she looked Judah back into the eyes. “Oh my God,” it looked like it was about to happen all over again. She began to cry and shake.

“Everything is fine,” Judah tried to hug her but was pushed back by Hawa. She got up from where she was and ran to the bathroom. Now, Judah was a bit confused. “Hawa,” he tried

following her, but she slammed the door and locked it. “Ok, fair enough. But please, talk to me. What are you thinking?” Judah asked. He got no response after some moments. “Hawa?”

“Leave me alone, Judah! Let me calm down,” she said through whimpers.

“Are you with child?” Judah asked, remembering Hawa sitting in a pool of blood searching for someone, then yelling at the boy with the distorted face. Judah knew not how to connect the visions with reality, so he found it best to start from the absolute bottom.

“With child? No,” she giggled through disbelief. “What?” Hawa asked through the bathroom door.

“Have you ever been with child?” Judah asked his next question. Silence for some moments.

“What?” she whimpered. Judah said nothing, knowing she knew what she’d heard. Then, the bathroom door flew open. “No! How can you...” and then she realized she was in the presence of a glorified Judah. She was unable to lie further.

“How can I what?” Judah asked, standing there in all patience.

“Nothing. Nothing,” Hawa shielded her face and tried to excuse herself. Judah was well aware and putting the pieces together as time elapsed.

“Who is he?” Judah asked. “Is he the boy with the distorted face? The one in the Middle East?” Judah asked, knowing this bold and mysterious statement would potentially cover some bases.

“Ah,” Hawa was now able to look upon Judah with suspense in her eyes. She began to shake slightly. “Ali,” she couldn’t hold it back and she fell to the floor and began to cry all over again. Judah had her figured out and actually felt for her.

“His name is Ali?” Judah asked, but Hawa ignored. Rather, she remembered the one they deserted a while back. She remembered. She had almost remembered but had made it mandatory to erase all memory of those unpleasant days.

“Ali..” Hawa held her stomach and cried, reminiscing. But this time, her cries were mixed emotions of sadness, happiness, and confusion, instead of a host of demons crying out. “Ali,” she shakingly cradled an invisible baby in her arms as she was kneeled to the floor, snot and tears dripping this time. “Why are you doing this?” she finally asked during her sobbing. “What is going on? You come up here and call yourself casting out some kind of evil spirit from me and now you are referring to Ali?” she sobbed.

“Are not the two hand and hand?” Judah asked her, and the tears began to really rush this time. She screamed very loud out of excitement and fear, and it made Judah jump back a bit. The fear of God through Judah intervening. The excitement of God through Judah intervening.

She cried and wept for a whole hour trying to talk, but not much was said. Judah simply listened. After she was exhausted, Judah made a pallet for her to sleep on as she was dozing off.

He looked upon her in disbelief. He couldn't believe he'd been lied to this whole time. If it were true, Hawa had a child somewhere. If Kareem were telling the truth, Hawa had the child when she was really young. 14 years old perhaps. It sounded like tragedy to Judah and maybe Hawa was just too embarrassed to shed light on the truth. But where was Ali now and why was it so important?

\*\*\*

It was early evening when Judah pulled up to Mr. Greene's home, Hawa's parents, in Rancho Cordova, a town twenty minutes east of Sacramento. Judah noticed his father's truck parked in the driveway. Judah wondered why his father was here and assumed it to be about the episode that was just witnessed between Hawa and him. The laying in nakedness. Who knows what Bishop had already said to the parents of Hawa? He was already tripping off his oldest son being around Hawa, and now it seemed as if Judah knew why.

Just as Judah was approaching the front door, his father, Isaac, emerged with a black duffle bag in his hand. When Isaac saw Judah, he stopped in his tracks and almost dropped the duffle bag.

“Son,” he called out, looking more suspect than anything.

“Pops!” replied Judah with a nodding of the head.

“What are you doing here?” he asked in awe, realizing an unusual glow from his son.

“Judah! My... man!” Mr. Greene began to yell but ceased when he saw the glory on Judah as well. Mr. Greene came from behind Isaac, teeth shinning in gold with diamond rings on his fingers and chains on his neck.

“Mr. Greene,” Judah bowed. “What you guys up to?” Judah asked, getting closer to his father. Isaac, stuck in his position, began to grip the duffle bag closer to himself, as if he were afraid of Judah finding out its contents. Then Isaac held up his arm to shield Mr. Greene in a sense. Like a ‘stay-away-from-Judah’ order was silently being given out.

“I’m uh,” Isaac looked and for the first time ever, Judah felt a lie coming forth. He sensed it. He wanted to prevent the lie from leaving his father’s precious lips but then Lamont’s accusations began to arise in the mind of Judah. Accusations that Lamont brought up about Isaac being some sort of drug dealer. “This is...”

“Stop,” Judah told his father. “I can sense a lie forming in your head to come out the mouth. And I know that not to be your heart.”

“Ha! Wow!” Mr. Greene continued to look at Judah in awe. “So, you go get a glow up and now you can warn your own father to not lie,” Mr. Greene intervened with folded arms. “You telling me Judah doesn’t know about the business? And he’s about to take over the Church while sleeping with my daughter?” Mr. Greene said the latter like it wasn’t a big deal. As a virgin, this struck Judah rather hard. How could his father spread assumptions as such?

“He doesn’t need to know about the business,” Isaac seethed in a calm manner, yet all while feeling exposed and fearing Judah just from his radiance. “And I told you, I only caught them lying together naked. Nothing insinuating intercourse. I did not smell the act of sex. Usually you would,” Isaac spoke and usually, a person, especially a son, more especially the son of a Bishop would feel absolutely embarrassed. But to Judah’s surprise, he didn’t nudge. He knew his truth and he knew no one could hamper it. He’d met Jesus face to face. What was the worst that could happen?

“Maybe he...” Mr. Greene began until he got closer to Judah. Now, Isaac and Mr. Greene were in the full presence of Judah. Judah’s father was able to look his son in the eyes, but Mr. Greene couldn’t. “Sheesh. What is that? You got some type of bright make-up on, son?” Mr. Greene asked, covering his eyes with his arm. Judah decided to dumb it down and scope to their level. Something he wished he’d never done.

“There is rumor that you fondle with the ones that sell poison to the community. I heard you have, and I heard you still do, till this day,” Judah put his father on blast. Judah said it so calm, that Isaac couldn’t do anything but reveal to Judah the truth. Isaac approached Judah to whereas they were within arm’s reach. Isaac touched his son.

“You’re different,” he said as Mr. Greene went back inside the house. Maybe he couldn’t stand the light. “What happened to you? Glory to God!” he dropped his duffle bag and touched his son’s face. “You’ve been glorified,” he whispered and smiled.

“Father, answer me,” Judah removed himself from his father in the most subtle manner. “You granted me a place to stay but still there is no privacy. Then you go and tell the world like I’m some kind of backsliding sinner on my way to the gates of hell,” Judah became furious and decided to allow only a small amount of it to show, since it was just him and his father for now.

“I need not answer you, Judah. I am your father. You are my son. What I do is between me and the Lord. And your mother,” he quickly added. “If I decide to operate outside of the Church to open up apartment complexes for the low-income based, tiny homes for the poor, resort-like programs for addicts, dispensaries for the sick and a place of worship for the saints of God, so be it. It is what it is. Where am I sinning?” he asked his son, almost in a plead.

“I.. uh,” Judah shook his head, wanting not to answer his father. Judah wasn’t Jesus.

“I.. uh,” Isaac mimicked in apparent dismay.

“Operate outside the Church? What does that mean?” Judah wanted to maintain a level of respect yet call his father out since his father could so easily call him out.

“What do you think it means, Judah?” Isaac was feeling some type of way; a feeling Judah had encountered only a handful of times in his life. It looked as if Isaac was caught red handed, still trying to conceal himself to an extent. Yet, he was not shameful in what he did at all. Nor was Judah. Isaac was more so shameful in what he withheld from Judah along with the recent encounters between him and Hawa. There was a time and a day for such matters and right here right now was not the time. At least for Isaac.

“Dispensaries? Ha. It’s true. You’re a drug dealer,” Judah told his father. Isaac smiled and looked back for a reaction from Mr. Greene, not knowing Mr. Greene had already emerged back into the house.

“A drug dealer. Wow, Judah,” Isaac shook his head.

“Why do you continue to beat around the bush? I will not judge you, father. I didn’t judge you when Bob Marley rang through the house as I grew up. I will not judge you now,” Judah tried to find something to use against his father.

“Bob Marley? Boy, how does the pot say to the potter anything for that matter?” Isaac mixed Scripture with his own verbal teachings. “Bob Marley was a man from God. We heal people, even the ones who aren’t ready to come to Christ. Have you ever been to our dispensary?” Isaac asked. “THC? The Hope Conspiracy?” Isaac smiled and realized he was

acting out of character, perhaps like a child trying to excuse himself from his firstborn, who seemed to have more power than him at the moment.

“Like I said, I am not here to judge. I am here to simply know who you are so I can have an idea of where I am going,” Judah tried to make clear. “The whole busting in on the place. Our hormones are ranging. That is natural. And I know man is above natural, but no one is perfect. We strive our hardest to keep control of ourselves, and so far, we have,” Judah tried to make clear.

“Liar,” Isaac decided to start more mess. “And to think I was about to hand you the Church,” he said as it seemed he allowed Satan to enter him right then and there. Instead of the awe in his eyes, there was more of a father wanting to chastise his son because of his actions.

“Ha, what?” Judah gruesomely smiled, still glowing in which his own father combatted by allowing evil thoughts to override his mind.

In that moment, the garage door opened which caught the both of them by surprise. Isaac knew who was coming out, but Judah didn’t. It would only ponder more questions for the young man. Isaac looked upon his son, deciding on the best move to take. Maybe he’d just wait.

“Hahaha! La ‘usadiq dhilk!” Judah heard his mother speak in her foreign language. He was surprised to understand it. “Ladayna nfs al ab! Kl hadhih alsanawat!” she said without seeing either Judah or Isaac as she was talking to someone else.

“Hadha ma sayafealuh alhurub min ‘iinjab abe zawjat,” another woman spoke. This intrigued Judah as he went around to the garage. It was his mother and Mrs. Greene. Was he hearing these things right? As soon as Miriam and Mrs. Greene saw Judah, their jaws dropped.

Then everything stopped. It seemed as if time had stopped and the only people who moved were Judah and Salima Greene. But within the first few seconds, Salima aged dramatically and turned back into the garage. Inside the garage were plants and there was a specific plant in the garage that lit up and glowed. Judah looked closer and saw someone tending to it. Their back was turned but it looked like a young brother. Judah thought it to be Lamont until he discovered the brother had dreadlocks in his head, but he never turned around. He tended to the plant that glowed and then suddenly, reality was back in effect.

“Judah!” Miriam almost shouted.

“Mother,” Judah snapped back in.

“What happened?” her eyes were wider than ever as she moved swiftly towards Judah. She witnessed that same light radiating from him. “Oh my God,” she came closer. It was as if she was drawn to the light from Judah. Isaac was able to withstand it, but everyone else couldn’t.

Judah looked inside the garage to see if plants were inside and there were, but nothing glowed. He wondered why that little incident happen in his head.

Then, suddenly, Miriam began to cry. Judah knew why. It was because of his glow and because of her innocent guilt. He understood what had been spoken in Arabic.

“I know,” Judah confirmed both his glowing light and her innocent guilt.

“Have you slept with Hawa?” she asked through tears, still not able to touch the face of her son due to her fear. Miriam felt so helpless for reasons of true ignorance. “I mean, it’s ok, son. To lose your virginity without marriage. I mean, it’s not ok, but God forgives. Jesus died for your sins. Repent,” she began to cry as she searched for the right words. Miriam tried to kneel to the feet of her oldest son, but Judah didn’t allow it as he lifted her back up.

“Mother. Why does it matter if I lost my virginity or not?” Judah asked. He also looked upon Salima Greene, the mother of Hawa, but Salima couldn’t look back. Like her husband Tamir Greene, they were blinded by Judah’s light. It was as if the literal Sun was in their faces.

“Because, baby,” Miriam looked back at Salima and Tamir Greene. It seemed as if Mr. Tamir Greene nodded his head towards Judah’s mother. Just then, Miriam turned back to Judah and professed, “Hawa is your first cousin. Salima and I are sisters,” she claimed, able to convey that story looking directly into the eyes of Judah.

“Right,” Judah smiled, trying to extinguish the feelings for Hawa immediately even though he sensed the devil in the middle of this whole circumstance. He knew in his heart that Hawa was not his first cousin. He also knew to not rely 100% on the heart for in the Book of Jeremiah, he warns us that *‘our hearts are deceitful above all things. They trick us.’*

“Huh?” Isaac looked upon his wife as if she were crazy.

“It’s true,” Miriam nodded, but Judah suspected deceit. They were playing with him, and he knew it. He was glorified. It was hard to lie to Judah, having just recently been where he’s been. “When you walked out, we further discussed...”

“Stop it,” Judah rose his voice. He was utterly disturbed that his parents would go this far. “You all want me to stop seeing Hawa? Just say that. But don’t invent lies! I suspect the devil has gathered here with us today,” he looked directly at his father first, then his father’s best

friend, Tamir. “You want me to stay away from your daughter? And why? Because we kiss and lie together naked without intercourse?”

“Watch it! You skating on thin ice!” Tamir’s voice raised.

“The devil?” Isaac was still fixed on Judah acknowledging the devil being here. Isaac got closer to his son to further inspect him. Satan was certainly having his way with Bishop. The fact that Bishop was separated from the Church, troubled him deeply. Right then and there, Judah thought of what Grandma Ruthie told him in his dreams. She wanted Bishop to open the Church. Rather, Judah decided to keep that stuff to himself for now. He felt attacked in the most bizarre way.

“Yeah. The devil. Hawa is not my first cousin. You two are not sisters,” he pointed to his mother and Hawa’s mother. “You’re not even...” Judah pointed to Tamir but decided not to finish his statement. He wasn’t speaking of himself, rather he was speaking from a place of truth. He didn’t know where it was coming from, these words just shooting out his mouth, things he knew nothing about.

“I’m not even what?” Tamir got closer to Judah, and it looked as if Tamir and Bishop Isaac were to pounce on Judah. Satan was clearly influencing them because they no longer were awed by the light.

“Satan, get behind me,” Judah spoke, and his father raised his hand towards him. Before he could come down at Judah’s face, Judah lifted his arm and blocked his father’s blow, then went further and pushed him away.

Everyone looked about in awe, but when Judah touched his father to move him, Isaac felt something supernatural and begin to pray. Even though him and Tamir displayed faces of angry men, Isaac was reconsidering his approach towards his son. Salima and Miriam shook within themselves seeing their men go at it.

Isaac then begin to approach his son again when suddenly his son called out.

“Ali!” Judah called out with all his might, expecting some Middle Eastern boy to come out the house. That didn’t happen. Only then was Salima able to face Judah. In all Salima’s might, was she able to uncover her face and walk towards Judah in the midst of funk between her husband and Bishop Isaac Masod.

“That is my grandson,” she stated in all truth. “Held in captivity,” she added as Isaac and Miriam looked on with astonishment in their faces.

“Grandson?” Bishop asked. “Hawa is with child?” he seemed more than upset now.

“Father. Calm down, please,” Judah felt as if he was getting somewhere. “Salima, please elaborate,” Judah wanted some answers, yet it looked as if Salima hesitated. She peeped around herself, probably concerned about how Tamir would react. “Do not fear him. Tamir can only accept the truth,” Judah spoke as if everything was under his dominion.

“This negro got the nerve,” Tamir pointed to Judah. “*‘Do not fear him?’*” he mimicked.

“My daughter was taken from me for uhm...” she hurriedly looked about for an answer to subdue the tension in the air. “For religious reasons. Hawa was deemed fit for the Grand Ayatollah of Iran,” she stated. Judah was not surprised, yet again, to know precisely what Salima was talking about.

“*Grand Ayatollah?*” Judah thought wondering if that Middle Eastern man that was talking to Satan in the vision was the Grand Ayatollah being referred to here.

“A section in Islam known as the Shia Twelvers have high ranking clergy. One of the highest ranks is Grand Ayatollah which means Great sign from God,” she added.

“This Grand Ayatollah. Perhaps an older man going into the young,” Judah had no censors. “Did you believe him to be true? Or were you both forced? Afterall, you left your grandchild with this man,” Judah asked.

“I am not sure what to think,” Salima shrugged her shoulders. “And I didn’t leave him, per se. Wait. Did Hawa tell you these things?”

Ignoring Salima’s question, Judah was already thinking deeply about his next moves. From Salima’s statements, it seemed as if Ali was left abandoned in the Middle East by some ‘holy men.’

“Ali needs rescuing. I believe the heavens have called me to rescue Ali and to bring him here. Reunite him with real family. His grandmother and his mother,” Judah simply let Miriam in on all truth.

“How come you never told me about this, Salima?” Mr. Greene asked his wife. “I’m a Grandfather?” he couldn’t believe it and actually pinched himself to see if he was sleep. “Huh?” Tamir asked, looking around trying to find an answer. “Have I been lied to this whole time?”

“No, Tamir...” Salima tried to soothe but Tamir wasn’t having it.

“Wait. Is Hawa even my daughter?” Tamir was trying to put the pieces together. Judah had just stirred up some mess.

“What are you talking about, Tamir?” she tried to continue to lie.

“It doesn’t make sense. How was Hawa deemed fit for a high-ranking man if she weren’t from the seed of another high-ranking man? I am American. They hate us.”

“That’s probably why they took her in the first place!” Salima continued to spread lies. Judah noticed it.

“What? No one knew Hawa to be an America. What are YOU talking about?”

“Ok, everybody settle down, please,” Miriam tried to take the conversation into another direction. “Let us all break away and come back in a couple hours. At our home. We will discuss everything there, in the name of our Father in Heaven. Ok?” she tried to reconcile.

“I know what to do. Everything else is not my bidding,” Judah responded, being terribly upset about the outcome of this imbalance.

“Then whose bidding is it? And don’t say the Lord’s. You’ll miss me with that one,” Mr. Greene added, veins popping out his neck, yet he tried his best to contain his anger.

“Your Grandchild is in trouble,” Judah responded. “And since you won’t do anything about it, I will,” Judah was taking shots left and right.

“I DO NOT HAVE ANY GRANDCHILDREN!” he shouted. Judah simply looked at Salima as she looked to the ground searching for the words to rely to Mr. Greene. Tamir then peered upon his wife. “SALIMA!” he shouted again, causing Salima to jump out her skin.

“Tamir,” Isaac tried to cool down his best friend. What we had not known is that Isaac secretly prayed in his heart to remove Satan from himself as everything was playing out. If a glowing Judah professed that Satan was in the midst, then it shouldn’t go unnoticed.

“No! Don’t call my name! Your son comes to my house in this bright light. For beware! Even Satan comes as an angel of light! With these extravagant accusations about my daughter being with child!” he yelled. Just then, it was as if Judah was reading Tamir Greene’s heart. Tamir was hiding something. Or he was ignorant of wanting to know the truth about certain family matters. It was as if the Holy Spirit descended upon Judah to provide him with some truths. The words simply left his lips rather than forming in his head.

“You left Salima when she was with child. She lost that baby. Stillbirth. You served in the Iraq/Iran War, no? American Government called you back home after you left a pregnant Salima in her home country,” Judah was laying out all truth. “You assumed you just met your daughter, for the first time, about 7 years ago. But you’re wrong. Hawa is not your daughter. And

correct because that means Ali isn't your grandchild, so yes, you speak truth. But you've made up your mind to care for Salima and Hawa. Therefore you must also care for Ali. So what do you really mean?" Judah had no filters.

Tamir Greene immediately looked upon Isaac, as this was the only man that he'd told this to. "How could you?" he added.

"Right hand to God, I said nothing," Isaac responded.

"Neither has Hawa nor your wife," Judah further explained. Just him knowing this information angered Tamir beyond madness.

"Why you..." Tamir charged at Judah, but Isaac was too quick and moved with the help of the Holy Spirit. Isaac quickly and firmly grasped the striking hand of Tamir.

"T. Watch it," Isaac said with conviction when Tamir finally realized what he was doing. Tamir exhaled loudly and fell to the floor. He wept. He wept like he'd never wept before. Isaac had seen this before, when Tamir first told him the truth about seeing his daughter for the first time 7 years ago and immediately knowing it wasn't his. But still, he said nothing and proceeded to claiming her and loving her just as she was. Just Tamir hearing it from the mouth of Judah was frightening. He wept, this mass of a man, with all the gold shinning in his teeth and on his wrist, he wept. Mrs. Greene came to his side to comfort him.

"Off me. Liar!" he cried. "I can't believe you. Stillbirth?"

"Let me explain," Salima was willing to come forward.

"Judah! Leave here and come home for dinner around 7, ok?" Miriam whispered to her oldest son. "Bring Hawa. Bring Lamont and that other girl too," she added.

"The other girl?"

"Yes. The girl I saw in your tiny home with Lamont the other day. She teaches at the College," Miriam said as Judah already knew who she was talking about. He wanted to be sure as he nodded his head in approval and went to his car.

"Judah," Isaac approached his son with an upsetting expression. "Please, let us resume this elsewhere. Let me calm down Tamir and..."

"AHHHH! YOU DON'T KNOW ME!" Tamir continued to cry in pure agony towards Salima. It was if the revelation of the truth was really hurting him because he already knew the truth. Just the realization of it killed him. Judah bowed his head and left.

Judah had expressed what he had to do and could care less if Tamir or Salima thought otherwise, in all due respect. Judah knew he was assigned a Heavenly task in a way, and nothing was going to get in his way.

\*\*\*

Judah returned to his place to pick up Hawa. But Hawa wasn't there.

“Hawa!” Judah called out, thinking her to be in the bathroom. After checking his whole place, Hawa was not found. He called her cell phone, and it went straight to voicemail. His heart dropped. He called again and left a message.

“Hawa. I know you've been through some mess. I am here to help you. I know you may've run into some truths and lies recently, but do not worry. We have never done anything out of context, and you are forgiven,” Judah said then begin to think of them kissing and his butterfly-like feelings towards a mother whose lied on her child. He did his best to remain humble because anything less and Judah would beat himself up and be disgusted towards women for the rest of his life. “But this has to be done. It may even be fun. Listen, I promise. I understand you'll have to revisit some past horrors, but I'm still here,” Judah said the latter when it finally dawned upon him. Now, he almost wanted to vomit just thinking on having feelings for a liar and manipulator. Now, the Heavenly make-up was smearing, and he was coming back down to reality, to absolute freewill.

After hanging up the phone without any real closure of the message, Judah crashed on the pallet he'd made for Hawa. He could smell her scent on the covers, yet he had to keep reminding himself that this was no more. The visions Judah had about Hawa were more than enough to cause separation. How would the Church look upon him now? Judah's phone rang right when he'd crashed and he rushed to pick it up, only to find Lamont calling. He allowed his phone to fall on his chest, not really wanting to speak with Lamont right now. But Lamont was persistent. He called again. And again.

“Yes, Lamont,” Judah answered.

“Bro. Hawa been sitting outside my house for who knows how long, bro,” he said. “Oh, she coming to the door now. What should I do?” he asked. “Here,” he added as Judah's phone beeped wanting him to switch to video. He switched to video and sure enough, Lamont was peeking through his blinds, catching Hawa's every moment. “Y'all coming to sacrifice me?”

Because I never expressed interests in Hawa, dawg,” Lamont said playfully and made Judah giggle a bit. “What should I do, bro?”

“Answer it. Invite her in. Listen to her and I’ll be on my way,” Judah instructed, and Lamont followed.

\*\*\*

Judah rushed to Lamont’s house in the gang infested Oak Park neighborhood of Sacramento. He wondered what in all the heavens and worlds was Hawa doing there.

Before Judah was five minutes away, Lamont called him back.

“Hey,” Judah answered.

“Judah, she leaving. She walking out right now,” Lamont said.

“What happened?” Judah asked.

“She asked to borrow five thousand dollars, Pastor!” he was joking but being serious. “‘Ha!’ I laughed. Just like that. What make y’all think I got money? I ain’t worked since Six Flags back in 2015! I was more confused than her, to be honest. What happened between y’all? She wouldn’t tell me.”

“Where is she?” Judah asked.

“Getting in her car now.”

“Go stop her! Please, Lamont! Stop her and tell her I’m on the way!” Judah rushed as he was able to hear Lamont running from the scuffling sound on the phone. Judah heard the door open from the phone and more running.

“Hawa!” Judah heard Lamont shout followed by running. “She ain’t stopping,” Lamont exhaled. “Yeah. She gone,” he’d stopped running. Judah felt as if he was getting angry.

“Ok. I’m still coming. Be there in 5,” Judah said and hung up.

Pulling up Lamont’s house, Judah parked. Before he could think of getting out the car, Lamont was coming out and jumped in the passenger’s seat.

“I think I know where she going. To the daycare place she works at. She received a call and start speaking in Arabic,” Lamont explained. “Bro, what’s going on?” Lamont looked at Judah and began to see the remnants of the light Judah displayed from earlier. The light was dimming, but one could still see. Was it because Earthy affairs were starting to get to Judah?

“Five thousand dollars?” Judah asked.

“Right? Why y’all think I sell drugs? I honestly think she tryna pull something, King? What she need 5 racks for?” Lamont added in the Ebonics, still looking upon Judah in awe. “And what happened to you? You got baptized again or something?” Lamont smiled, being perfectly able to look upon Judah, not because of the dimming of Judah’s light but more so because of the lightness of Lamont’s heart. The fact that Lamont loved Christ, despite his environment and circumstances.

“She’ll be ok. And I visited a special place and was assigned a task. I think I have to reunite Hawa with her child. I think he’s in Iran,” Judah added trying to piece everything together.

“Wait. Hawa has a child? In Iran? I don’t understand,” Lamont shook his head in confusion. “Or maybe my dream!” he looked in the back seat. “But the kid. He’s not here,” Lamont cried, and Judah thought him to be insane for a moments time. “I keep looking for signs of my dreams, bro. I’m sorry. I had another dream last night that after you and the boy were in the car, we went to a woman’s house who knew the art of illusion. It’s crazy,” Lamont shook his head just thinking about it. “And that! Oh snaps!” Lamont was losing it. “That bracelet! I’ve seen it before. It is special. It’ll be a sign into...” he shook his head and couldn’t find the words to describe his dream.

“Really? Well, look, man. You want to come with me to the daycare center?” Judah asked, ignoring Lamont’s crazed statements, and needing to find Hawa. Lamont didn’t know what to think. He quickly came to his senses once Judah started his car up again.

“You know I’m down, Judah. Let’s go,” Lamont agreed, and they drove off.

\*\*\*

Judah knew he had to control his thoughts and stay calm. It was amazing at how well the flesh could overcome the spirit so easily in this world.

Pulling up to the Islamic Daycare Center, Judah was able to locate Hawa’s car. Both Lamont and Judah exited the Cadillac and entered the Center.

“Judah Masod,” front desk staff greeted him.

“Hello,” Judah provided a warm smile. “Hawa here?” he got straight to the point.

“Why yes. I did see her,” the front desk attendant stood up and peered around. “Uhm, I think she may be in Fatima’s office,” she pointed towards the back. Fatima must’ve been the manager here in whom was Kareem’s sister. Judah traveled to the office without admittance as Lamont followed. The door was cracked when they approached, and Judah pushed it opened softly.

“It’s Judah,” he announced, opening the door fully to discover Hawa, Fatima and Kareem there having a discussion. When Judah appeared, they all stopped.

“Judah,” Kareem was the first to announce, yet Judah simply gave him a head nod.

“Hawa. Can we talk, please?” Judah asked.

“Lamont!! Why?” Hawa called out. Lamont looked most confused and simply shrugged his shoulders. “You said I could trust you!”

“You can! You can trust Judah too! Look at him!” Lamont open his arms to Judah’s glow.

“It was brighter earlier,” Kareem hated.

“Alhamdulillah!” Fatima moved closer to Judah slowly, being fully covered from head to toe, one only being able to see her smooth and youthful chocolate face. Fatima saw the light. “You have visited Jannah,” she said. Judah understood and shook his head in agreement. “Alhamdulillah!” she repeated and praised God. “It makes perfect sense now,” she looked back at Hawa. “I knew it! I knew it! I knew it!” she kept praising and pointing to Hawa. “I told you messing with a man like that, having the true Spirit of God on him that the truth would surface. But it is good!” she continued to preach to Hawa. “Stand up! Do not be afraid, sister! You are the mother of a son that is great! We must all go, for Judah has been called. Judah has been chosen,” Fatima said as if she’d just been awakened to something. It was all happening too fast, but the excitement behind Fatima’s praises were one to bear in mind.

“I can’t,” Hawa dried her tears from soft crying. “I am afraid. They will kill me,” she confessed. Those words sunk in Judah’s heart and hurt him more than anything. “I am beyond embarrassment. My parents told me this is my first cousin,” Hawa made the news public and gripped her stomach. “I can’t,” she tried to hold it back but couldn’t and vomited on Fatima’s office carpet. Fatima understood and told Kareem to get a cleanup crew together while consoling Hawa.

“Is this true?” Fatima asked Judah once the vomiting was over.

“Heavens no,” Judah simply stood there and allowed everything to play out. “They have lied to us to keep us away from each other. To keep the will of God from prevailing. I wouldn’t know the reason behind any of it,” Judah spoke truthfully.

“Then it is true! We must hasten to Iran. I already have everything ready for us!” Fatima said as more Islamic women came inside the office to help clean up.

“Hey Fatima!” Lamont called out in a flirty manner.

“Lamont. You should know me pretty well by now. Took you long enough to catch on,” she teased him, but everyone was unable to see her face reaction as she was covered in an elegant blue khimar.

“What is going on?” Lamont looked at everything inside the office. “You force me to get my passport. You pay for it. We’re mentioning Iran. Hawa’s son is in Iran. What is really going on?”

“Allah is all-knowing,” Fatima praised and began to speak Arabic. Judah understood her praying and knew it was a recital of a Surah from the Quran. Fatima then moved behind her desk to remove a folder from within it. The folder was metal and had a lock on it. She removed a key from her necklace and unlocked the folder. Out came papers of all sorts as she studied through them.

“Alhumdillallah,” she praised with all heart content. “We leave really early in the morning. All six of us,” she spoke. “I am aware that Bishop has your passport, correct, Judah?”

“Yes,” Judah answered in uncertainty.

“Tomorrow morning?” Lamont asked. “Ok, wait,” Lamont had to sit down. “I think I’m tripping. Your parents lied about Hawa being your cousin. For what?” he asked Judah. “Wait. And I am supposed to go with you to Iran? For what? Wait. Can we even go to Iran? Don’t we need visas or something. Covid-19 is running rampant. Y’all need to slow down,” it was all coming to Lamont way too fast. “I’m not going to no Iran,” it finally came to him. “Y’all crazy,” he added.

“Maybe you need to speed up,” Fatima responded, printing some papers from her printer, and then handing them to Kareem, Lamont, and Judah. “These are your itineraries,” she handed them their plane tickets. “These tickets were purchased 3 months in advance and the date for boarding is in 8 hours. Allah knows all things best! The Visas are also attached. You can’t tell me Allah is not real,” Fatima professed.

Now, Judah was more intrigued than ever. What was he to do in Iran? Find Ali? Where would he look? Hopefully, Hawa had those answers.

Kareem knew all along that Fatima had something up her sleeve, but he never knew exactly what it was. For Lamont, it simply didn't make sense to him, and he wanted nothing to do with it.

"I'm good," Lamont handed the papers back to Fatima, but she didn't take them.

"You're good? Do you know what I went through to get all these things for us? Do you not know the world will be changed with your help, Lamont?" Fatima asked.

"How do you know this?" Lamont asked.

"Allah told me. Why else is Judah shinning? Why did I purchase these tickets months ago and now seems as if it's the perfect time to go, especially with our flights departing in the morning?" Fatima was bringing all the miraculous wonders to his attention. Lamont didn't respond, rather reflected on what Fatima had just said. "Hawa even told me that you're dreaming of her son!" she shot.

"Her son? That little Arab boy?" he asked and then it hit Judah. The boy with the disfigured face seen in the visions. It was Hawa's son.

"You still good?" Fatima asked Lamont as he was deep in thought. "Exactly. Now, get them straight with Covid tests," she told her brother and Kareem left without another word. He came back with the tools to conduct a covid check, as this Center was eligible and equipped for Muslims to get their nasals plucked.

"So, this is what we've been waiting for," Kareem spoke with his sister, Fatima. "This is why you had me orchestrate Pita's cousin to get with Lamont. Because Lamont was Judah's only friend," it was all coming to Kareem as well. "This is why you had me keep tabs on Judah. I swear," he laughed, "I had no idea where you were going with this," Kareem was shocked to say the least. "The timing is nothing less of perfect. But what does Pita have to do with anything?" Kareem was still puzzled about Judah meeting Pita.

"Do you love Pita?" Fatima asked her brother.

"Yeah! Of course," he answered in a very high-pitched voice, almost like he was lying. Fatima caught on to the latter.

"Good. Keep that same energy," she pointed.

"God is good," Judah interrupted, matter-of-factly.

“All the time! Also, in those papers are your Travel Authorization numbers from the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The travel visas are still good for another 30 days,” Fatima moved like Allah had chosen her.

“How are you so aware?” Judah asked.

“Allahu Akbar. A woman coming to work for me who shall be led under my guidance for a period of time. She will be the Mother of the reincarnated Ishmael. On his 7<sup>th</sup> year, he shall be joined with his long-lost brother, Isaac, with 7 representing the number of Allah,” she mentioned.

“Who is Isaac supposed to be?” Judah asked, knowing it to be his little brother, Benjamin.

“I am not sure. Everything in all is still a bit unclear to me. But I had very vivid dreams and was led to put all of this in motion. Blind faith, perhaps. I have the money,” Fatima smiled and rushed through paperwork as she spoke. “But what really intrigued me was the flight to Iran and my imprisonment,” she looked for a reaction and surely received one. “I am to be taken by the authorities of Iran and I am to testify something different,” she looked puzzled. “It is Islam, but a different Islam,” she confessed. Right then and there, Judah knew Fatima to be called by God. Even if to her, His name be Allah, it didn’t matter. She knew something from divine places where Judah had just come from. She was true.

“And what shall they do? This Isaac and Ishmael reunion?” Judah asked, almost pleading to know, peering down at the sick Hawa.

“I am not sure,” Fatima told the truth. “I’ve had other dreams that were quite disturbing, like,” she lifted a journal and opened it. “I began to write them down. My dreams,” she searched the small notebook as everyone waited eagerly. “Oh, here: *There was a man who spoke in my original language,*” she began to read. “*He spoke very eloquently and was able to recite the Quran with no hesitation. Many people loved him. Then, another man showed up dressed as a Muslim, but something told me he was an imposter. He was covered head to toe. I could tell he was a man from the way he would stride. He struck the man that the people loved with a book. I could not tell what book was, but it looked to be a textbook of some sort. He struck this beloved man, and the crowd grew angry. Incredibly angry! They called to have this mysterious man stoned to death, but they could not find him. It was as if he disappeared. Looking back at the beloved man that was struck, he was now naked and crying out to Jesus. The crowd looked confused and wished to stone both the mysterious man and the once beloved man. Then, the*

*beloved man, in all is nakedness, looked at me and began to point. 'She did it! She knows!' he yelled. The authorities came for me. I became so terrified, I woke up,*" Fatima said and closed the book in an instant. Judah knew he would need Fatima on this trip. This naked man who was once someone prominent in her dreams was the man Judah saw conversing with Satan in his visions. It had to be.

"May you loan that to me?" Judah pointed to her Dreams notebook.

"Oh my. Uhm," Fatima looked unsure.

"Or better yet, you are coming, right?" Judah asked.

"Yes!" she almost jumped. "And one for Lupita," she added.

"Lupita?" Hawa asked through her pain and misery.

"Yes. Your professor. She is needed," Fatima spoke as if she knew something no one else knew. Judah made a mental note to get close to Fatima and found out as much as possible. Because her dreams may've been correlated to what was displayed in the Heavens. Judah was beyond amazed at not only God's doing, but Fatima's faith.

"There is much for you to do, rather than stand here and receive lecture. We'll have plenty of time for that on the way there. You must prepare for departure. Kareem will bring..."

"No!" Hawa tried her hardest to scream. "No! I can't go back! I just said that!"

"You have to trust this process, Hawa," Judah approached her, trying to consort her, but Hawa was livid. She still couldn't believe anything that was going on. Not only being called out on a child that she has been hiding from someone of such prominence, but also being lied to by her parents that Judah was related to her. Or maybe her parents weren't lying and Hawa had fallen in love with her first cousin. Either the devil was on a full fledged attack or the Lord was working with her.

"Get away," she barked at Judah as he obeyed.

"Quit beating up on yourself so much, Hawa. Own up and face this mess head on. You are not weak. You have to stomach this phase and move on because God has..." Judah stopped because he honestly didn't know what God was doing, at least for the fate of Hawa.

"Shukraan lilalih," Fatima spoke, meaning Thank God.

"I." Hawa looked up at Judah and for the first time Judah saw the pain and suffering that displayed through her eyes. She wanted it all to go away, but it was too late. She tried to escape with the help of Lamont, but that wasn't God's plan.

“What?” Judah asked in all sincerity.

“Do you...” she stopped and gasped for air, still being bent over to an extent, “believe we’re related?” and then she vomited again before anyone could respond.

“Get it all out then,” Judah whispered as the Muslim women stood by her side, consoling her. Judah literally saw her vomiting more demons. Hidden demons that she’d tried to bury. Judah could literally see little imps fall from her mouth and die when they’d hit the ground. Judah didn’t flinch. She was getting it all out of her. The lies and deceit. Lamont and Kareem continued to simply look on in disgust.

“Y’all really related?” Lamont asked Judah.

“I really don’t know,” Judah said after he exhaled deeply.

Fatima touched the back of Judah as to tell him to follow her. Judah nodded to Lamont then pointed to Hawa as to keep an eye on her, then followed. As they meet in the hallway, Fatima started.

“Speaking of dreams, Hawa’s been having nightmares, Judah. Of course you wouldn’t know because the two of you do not sleep together. She’s hidden a lot from you. I assume she doesn’t tell you these things because she is afraid of her horrific past. But I’ve been able to get a lot out of her, believe it or not. I will share with you some of her deepest secrets, if you wish and if you believe it’ll fulfill God’s plans. I say this because you have to figure out what her dreams mean to help with our journey as well. I am unable to interpret some of the things she says to me, but I know Hawa is a vital part in this blessing that is coming to the world. Began to look at things closely, because even the smallest details, signs, visions and dreams may pertain to this calling,” Fatima emphasized.

“What do you mean?”

“What do you mean, *What do you mean?*” she got fussy. “To be so bright, you sure do want to know a lot. Do you not already know? Have you not already been given instruction?”

Judah could only try to smile from her slight humor. “Everything was symbolic.”

“Like I said, find out what it means. It’ll help. Use this,” she pointed to his head, referencing his brain.

“You on FIRE!” Judah felt the surge from the Holy Spirit after conversing and seeing all of what Fatima had done in advance. “Give me some more insight. What has she told you pertaining to these dreams? What are they about?” Judah was thirsty for more.

Fatima looked around and noticed the coast to be clear.

“Her son. Like, she keeps having dreams that her son is Chuckie,” Fatima looked to the ceiling trying to remember. “And then, dreams in whereas you’re holding her up towards the sun and then suddenly drop her into the depths of the void,” she said which made Judah look up and really pay attention.

“Who is Chuckie?” he asked pertaining to Hawa’s son.

“You know, the doll. The doll that talks and spreads evil. Seed of Chuckie. Bride of Chuckie.”

“I’m not hip,” Judah honestly didn’t know what she was talking about.

“Anyway, yeah,” Fatima gave up. “Talk to her.”

“One more thing,” Judah was interested in how God, or Allah, used Muslims. He had way more questions burning up inside of him and deemed Fatima to be the only person to whom he could relate. “It seems you are called by God. My God. I’ve done my share of studying and not to be a trouble-maker, but do you not agree that we have two quite different Gods?” Judah confessed.

“Yes,” Fatima shook her head in agreement.

“Yes?” Judah was surprised.

“From what we’ve been taught, yes. Indeed, perhaps. You are right. That’s why I’ve been called. Remember, I told you that I will be imprisoned and preach a *different* Islam. Preaching anything outside the Quran in the name of Islam is a death sentence, but I am willing to die to help purify my beautiful religion. I know we have our flaws, even within the Quran or just the interpretation therein, but between me and you, this trip will open our eyes to the unification of the world religions, Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. I don’t know how, but I’ve dreamed this. I know the thought is way out there, you know, finding commonalities amongst the cultures and religion practices, but it’s something way bigger,” she sounded true. “I just don’t know what or how I’ll be teaching,” she looked off in utter confusion.

“Jesus!” Judah almost jumped for joy. Fatima smiled.

“Jesus, huh?” she didn’t flinch at the thought.

“Jesus of Nazareth! Yes ma’am! Y’all already halfway love Him. It is time to come into the full grace of the true King,” Judah spoke wisdom.

“Ok,” Fatima gave in a little too easy. “But how? It will be a task indeed. I thought it would be me teaching something or someone like the Mahdi or even the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam,” she mentioned.

“Who is the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam?” he asked Fatima.

“Some in the Islamic community believe him to be Muhammad ibn’ Hasan of Iran.”

“Muhammad Hasan is the father of Hawa’s child, Ali Hasan,” Judah made known. Fatima’s jaw dropped. She didn’t say anything; instead, she shook her head in confusion.

“The 12<sup>th</sup> Imam isn’t supposed to have children. Ok. That solves that lie. Whoa,” she almost fainted. “That’s a big lie. And Muhammad Hasan is a public figure. An extremely attractive one at that. I could see how...” she tried to think about what was really going on.

“What do you believe on the matter?” Judah asked.

“I believe in the Most Gracious. The Most Excellent. The Most Exalted,” Fatima stood by her faith. “Like I said, Allah knows best. No man is good,” it sounded like she was quoting from the Bible. “Now come get your vomiting cousin so we can get ready for departure,” she ordered, and Judah followed without a second thought.

He began to admire Fatima. Her faith, her instruction, her humor. Judah smiled to himself, thinking on the friendship they were to commence.

\*\*\*

By this time, Hawa was nearly unconscious from all the vomiting. Judah and Lamont was able to put her in the backseat of Judah’s Cadillac. Lamont got dropped off at his house to prepare for the journey. Judah thought on taking Hawa straight to her house, but what had just transpired there today, then bringing their daughter home in that condition wasn’t worth it. He remembered his mother telling him to come over for dinner and to bring company, but company had to get ready for departure. His parent’s home seemed more fitting anyway. He called his father.

“Pops! Hey,” Judah answered, remembering on the argument they had earlier.

“Uhm,” his pops answered.

“I am, ugh,” Judah caught on to his attitude. He still remained respectful. “I have Hawa with me. She hasn’t been taking too lightly to all the news and lies and whatnot. She’s nearly unconscious from all the vomiting. What should I do?” Judah asked for guidance.

“Bring her here,” Isaac directly instructed. “Her parents are here.”

Judah listened without thinking twice.

Pulling up to his parent's home, Judah parked his car on the street rather than the driveway. He needed to speak with Hawa.

"Hawa," he looked to the back, but she was sleep, knocked out like a baby. Judah could smell the vomit on her breath and winched back from the stint. He sat back in his seat. *"They didn't show me that in Heaven! My father lying or even the possibility of his mom and his best friend's mom being sisters?"* he wanted to ask the Lord but thought otherwise. Judah knew better. Judah knew that him having a *'girlfriend'* and being called to lead a people would be somewhat unorthodox in the Church. Bible doesn't say anything about boy or girlfriends. Either you were married or not. Why continually tempt oneself? Judah always found himself trying to resist even thinking about the nasty stuff with Hawa.

*"Incest?"* Judah thought to himself and hurriedly shook off the thought. *"Why Lord?"*

"Because Lord! Hahahahaha!" Judah heard Hawa from the back. It was Hawa's voice but deepened. But wasn't Hawa just sleep? Judah heard her loud breathing, inhaling, and exhaling, and thought about turning his head. "Hahahahaha!" she continued to laugh in the manner of a crazed demon now. "Because Lord! Why Lord! Hahahahaha!" she laughed at what Judah was simply thinking. He hadn't said anything at all. How did she know what he was thinking to scream it like that? Judah knew this was yet another trick from Satan.

"Satan, I rebuke you, in the name of Yeshua!" Judah whispered with faith and conviction. The car began to jerk, just for a few seconds, and then the laughing, jerking, and breathing stopped. Just then, Judah looked back and surely Hawa was there but not in the same position as he remembered from a couple of minutes ago. Her hijab was covering her face and Judah refused to move it. From fear of what she'd look like?

With a frowning face, Judah removed himself from his car. He was mad. He couldn't believe what the Lord had led him into but knew it must've been for a bigger purpose. Judah just prayed everything to not be destroyed in the process. But maybe a little fire refines.

Judah opened the back seat and picked Hawa up, cautious on even touching her from her just displaying signs of demonic possession, again. Or was this just another play on Judah's mind? Judah did not fear though. He carried her with conviction to the house and upon arriving, the parents were terrified.

“Ya ‘iilhi!” shouted Hawa’s mother. “What is wrong with my baby?” she cried. “Ugh. There is vomit everywhere!” she covered her nose. “What happened?” Salima Greene asked.

“Something from her past,” Judah went left and decided to look Hawa’s mother in the eyes, searching for an answer. Salima kept her head down. “She needs rest.”

“Judah,” Mr. Tamir Greene approached from the shadows. Judah faced him. Tamir was able to look Judah in the eyes this time around. Judah’s father must’ve prayed with him. Tamir extended his hand. “Please, accept my apology for acting out of character earlier.”

“No apology needed,” Judah took his hand. Judah felt as if he was owed an apology from both Tamir and his father. But Isaac refused.

“But I don’t understand. I trust your father, so I trust you. But you’re taking my daughter halfway around the world to reunite her with her child in whom she’s been hiding from everyone all this time. This is one of the most honorable things a man could do. Not judging and deserting and someone because they fell victim to sin. Hallelujah!” Tamir rejoiced. “I’ve learned so much from the both of you, the reason I am able to forgive the ones I love, despite their trespasses,” he peered at Salima and again, she placed her head down.

“I am still trying to understand everything myself, Mr. Greene,” Judah exhaled. “But maybe it’s not for us to understand. Maybe we just roll with the punches,” Judah suggested. “Maybe there is something much bigger at hand. You are a part of it,” Judah tried to make Tamir feel important because he really was. The fact that Tamir knew Hawa was not his daughter and still taking it upon himself to take care of these women and to respect them was heroic in itself.

“Yeah. Again, apologies for my child-like behavior earlier. I was tired of pretending and lying,” Tamir announced. “Tired of pretending that we’re this close, legit family when in reality, Hawa hates me. I remind her of her...”

“No! Stop it! You are speaking nonsense,” Salima stopped her husband.

“I’m serious. I’m a Black man from America. What can I tell her? How can I be a father to a woman from a different culture than...?”

“Stop it, I said!” Salima made herself clear. “Judah is a Black man from America. Hawa seems to get along with him fine. Hawa doesn’t hate you, she just doesn’t understand how a grown man, her father at that, behaves like a 21-year-old rapper! And then the secrets you keep from this *‘so-called family’*,” Salima was getting feisty. The old adults had their own thing going on – this is what Judah perceived.

“Maybe I am trying to do what is right. I love you, Salima. I love Hawa like my own. I didn’t think it would blow up like this and involve everybody and they mama! I mean, I understand the real reasons we got married, but do you not believe that God has blessed us? I thought we would see eye-to-eye by believing in the same thing, going to the same church. But even the Bible says in a bed of two, one will be taken and the other left behind,” Mr. Greene tried to quote Scripture.

“Amen,” Isaac whispered.

“We never have to ask for anything. We never have to worry about anything. And what? You’re upset because of the means I went about obtaining our riches? Have I not transitioned it to something legal?”

“Even though you still delve in illegal activities?”

“Like what? Smoking weed!” Tamir almost shouted but remained respectful. “It’s a choice! Just like it’s a choice to work out in a gym. It’s a choice to eat meat. It’s a choice to drink! Smoking weed doesn’t hinder my salvation! My actions do!” Tamir convinced himself. “Bishop smoke weed!” he pointed.

“Tamir!” Isaac held up his hand as Judah and Miriam looked upon Isaac. Salima knew. Salima held multiple secrets and it seemed Tamir was allowing it all to be known.

“It’s true! I mean, not everyday type of ordeal. But when you have those days, which is more than once a week, I find you over my house, taking from my plants, praying over my plants like a weirdo,” Tamir was clearly angry about something, again.

“Isaac!” Miriam was shocked.

“Miriam!” Isaac tried to mimic, playing it off, looking at Judah and waiting for him to say something slick. Judah simply stood there, a face of *I knew it* being expressed. Miriam left the room and Salima followed to console. Miriam wasn’t mad, just shocked. Maybe Miriam wanted in on the totting. It was a shock that Isaac would keep something from her.

After Tamir saw the mild chaos he’d caused, he tried to apologize but Isaac stopped him by lifting up his hand.

“My bad,” Tamir sat on the lush couch. “My mind is spinning. My daughter is...Or step-daughter, to be real...” he shook his head. “I don’t know. I don’t know what to do,” he expressed.

“Just be strong for your daughter. Don’t go bashing people because you feel some type of way,” Judah said and had caught the attention of both his father and Tamir. They looked upon him in disbelief because he’d never spoken with such authority.

“Whatever,” Tamir dodged the words of Judah.

“So, now that you are coming to the truth, let me ask you this,” Judah sat next to Tamir. “Why lie about Hawa and I being cousins? I am here to help, not destroy. If you wanted me from around your daughter, you could’ve come to me in truth,” Judah tried to sympathize. Tamir didn’t take so lightly to his words. Instead, Tamir thought Judah was trying to be a ‘holier-than-thou’ smart aleck.

“I never lied to you,” he told Judah in the view of him verbally telling the lie, rather than him being the author of the lie. Judah saw straight through him. It was amazing how people could deliberately see the wonders of God and still relish in sin.

Without further word, he excused himself and ran upstairs to meet his mother and Salima.

“Please excuse my husband,” Salima was the first to speak as they sat in Judah’s old room, which was now another guest room.

“All good. Do you mind if I ask you some questions before we embark on this journey with Hawa?” Judah asked.

“Sure,” Salima sat up, attentive.

“How did you and Tamir meet?” Judah asked and remained silent. Miriam looked on, waiting for an answer. Salima shook her head and cleared her throat.

“After The Gulf War in Kuwait is when I met Tamir, back in 1991. He was in the military and tasked with Desert Storm which only lasted about a month, then he decided to go rogue in order to capture Saddam Hussein. Either that or looking for a connection to opium. I believe the latter to be true because I met him when I was working at the Shabandar Café in Bagdad. He had a meeting with the infamous Masoud Mowlavi. Mowlavi was an Iranian dissident who... Well, let’s just say they opposed the law of the land,” she looked down, maybe afraid to continue to discuss.

“Then, upon serving them, Tamir stood up to use the restroom and ran right into me. I dropped everything and he was just so apologetic. He was different. He was a Black American going back and forth from Iran, Iraq, and America so he stuck out like a sore thumb. I was attracted to him. He offered to buy me another manteau and hijab and I took him up on the offer.

It was only me and my mother and I never told her about seeing Tamir. The shopping turned into a date. He began to teach me English; I began to teach him Arabic. It was beautiful, the merging of cultures. We continued to meet in secrecy, very often for about a year. We even got married in secrecy in our own little way. He rented me an apartment in Baghdad and then promised me a new life in America back in 1993, but that did not go as intended. Our love was interrupted. Tamir was arrested by the Iraqi authorities and ended up being sentenced to 8 years in Iran and 8 years in the American prison system. And perfect timing because they took him when I was pregnant. Then I lost the baby. So, that's how we initially meet," Salima sat up in the bed, adjusting her body.

Judah had remembered when his mother would discuss her reasons for leaving Iran as it ran parallel with what Salima was saying about the war.

"I had absolutely no way of contacting Tamir after the loss of our child. Iraqi prison system is quite different than American. Tamir and I didn't have the sense to plan to designate anything to one another. He left no money behind," she shook her head at the lost times. "We were in the moment. In love. We didn't have internet back then, especially in Iraq. I was devastated. Years passed. Many years."

"Then in 1998 I met Rafi in Iran. I'd moved there to simply escape Iraq. Rafi was a disciple to the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam, and he'd found me when I was lost. The next year, we were married, and I was giving birth to Hawa in 1999. We lived in the mosque for several years. It was my duty to clean the mosque and I kept Hawa by my side up until she reached the age of puberty at a late thirteen. A representative of the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam said that he prophesied Hawa delivering a child that shall rule the Arab, Jewish and Christian Nations. I know it sounds crazy," Salima dug her head in her hands. "I know, I know, but you have to understand. To be raised in that culture and to actually see the miracles of Allah be manifested within that mosque. People came in with all kinds of sicknesses and the disciples of the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam were able to relieve them upon their departure, of course with the power of Allah. Is that not from Allah?" she asked.

"Uhm," Judah shrugged his shoulders, knowing Satan had power too. "This 12<sup>th</sup> Imam, you believe him to be who he is? Till this day?"

"I mean, I grew up in the sect of Shia. I grew up believing in the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam. He is hidden from the public though and is manifested through his disciples and Divine representative, who is supposed to be Muhammad Hasan," she spoke. This Muhammad Hasan kept popping up and

every time he did, he was attributed to something different, rather it be the actual 12<sup>th</sup> Imam, a representative of the 12<sup>th</sup>, a Grand Ayatollah, or the antichrist.

“Muhammad Hasan?” Miriam almost jumped from her sitting position. “The man on the news? The one that recently signed a peace treaty with Israel?”

“Oh, I have not seen the news recently, I’m sorry,” Salima responded.

“Lord have mercy. My poor niece,” Miriam referred as if Hawa was really her niece. Judah decided to ignore his mother’s responses and dig deeper into who this Muhammad Hasan was. Judah knew he and Hawa were done. All that lying during their whole ‘best friend’ phase said enough about who Hawa really was. But Judah feared it was deeper than that. He may have to accept the child as his own. It was an unpleasant idea, but still, if God wanted it, Judah was definitely going to do it.

“I remember you freaking out a bit when you saw this Muhammad Hasan on the news, mother. What was that about?” Judah asked.

“I told you I knew him!” she confessed. “Maybe not personally, but” she tried to find the words. “Ok,” she gave in. “I was encountered by a homeless man near the Natural Foods co-op. I felt it in my heart to pay zakat. Upon him receiving what I gave him, he went into a crazed temper and began to yell things like, *‘Benjamin will defeat Muhammad! Judah will defeat Muhammad!’* It struck me at first. Was he speaking on Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him? No! How do I know? Because the same night I dreamed of who this Muhammad was. It was the man from the television! I remember his face,” Judah’s mother sounded crazy, but she may have been on to something. “And now, you’re telling me that this same Muhammad Hasan, the *‘divine representative of the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam’* is the one that took your daughter?” she asked Salima.

“Uhm mm,” Salima shook her head and kept it peered down in embarrassment.

“I can now see how clearly we are all in this together. We are all being given dreams, signs and vision from our Lord to complete something we may not even understand yet,” Judah spoke. “So, back to this Muhammad Hasan. He came to you, forcing you to hand over your daughter because the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam said so? You never heard it directly from the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam? Who is to say this Muhammad Hasan isn’t lying and took Hawa for himself? Because I thought the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam wasn’t to have any children or spouses?” Judah gathered the latter information from Fatima’s teaching.

“Right,” Salima commented. “Muhammad Hasan is my son-in-law. I know this to be true. Somehow he is getting younger, or at least appearing it.”

“Getting younger? Is the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam supposed to be some sort of god who is blessing Muhammad Hasan?” Judah asked.

“Of course not. Allah is the only God. Allah is over everything,” Salima answered. “But, I believe Muhammad Hasan has his hand in some sort of experimental measures,” she added.

“Uhm. Is this why the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam is so important to Shia?” Judah asked. “Because he bestows gifts and inventions on the earth?”

“Perhaps. The same can be said about Christians relationship to Jesus. But as we all know, God the Father is the Judge. God the Father is over all. Ya?”

“Of course. But, the Quran doesn’t mention 12 Imams coming after Prophet Muhammad,” Judah stated.

“The Bible doesn’t mention the Trinity yet...”

“Ok,” Judah had cut it short. “We can go on and on with who said what. I’m just trying to get some background information so that I know what I’m getting myself into.”

“Ok, Judah,” it seemed as if Salima had her guard up now.

“Now. You gave Hawa to the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam at age 13. Then what happened?” Judah asked.

“I gave her to Muhammad Hasan, the Divine Representative of the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam who looked to be much younger upon me finding me in another deteriorated state,” she corrected. “I gave her to him and within a year, Hawa was pregnant. Hawa claimed she was drugged and being kept hostage from me. Of course, that’s not how the mosque nor the disciples of the Imam interrupted it; this was divine revelation, right? I’d attempted many times to rescue my own daughter from that mosque once the truth begin to reveal.”

“Which was?” Judah asked.

“Which was that everything was a lie. *That* in which I found myself, could not have been the truth. Muhammad Hasan is older than fifty years old. He is using something to make him look younger. They have power of some sort, I don’t know. They were a carnal minded people providing a carnal minded experience rather than a spiritual one. I tried to run away with Hawa but always came up short until we basically had enough. We orchestrated to murder one of the sentries, right there in the mosque, just to get my daughter back and escape. And that’s just what we did. Hawa and I, blood on our hands, just to escape the religious dogma of that particular

people. Muhammad Hasan, the Representative, saw it with his own eyes. He let us escape while he held onto my grandson, Ali Hasan, like he'd already had his prized possession. Allah yarham," she bowed her head again, thinking on the troubled waters they had to cross. "Hawa was torn when she was separated from her son, Ali. But we had to leave. It wasn't right. They tried to imitate the story of our beloved Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam, and it wasn't righteous in the smallest sense. It didn't feel right in our spirits. She was drugged and monitored 24/7. That is not normal," Salima pleaded us to understand. Miriam understood, but Judah didn't.

"Wait, why not save both your daughter and your grandson?" he asked. Salima bowed her head in disgrace. She began to softly cry.

"I know Allah will forgive me," she whispered to herself and then looked up at Judah. "Ali was born with deformities," she admitted. "I didn't want that for my daughter. I," she exhaled, shaking her head in defeat. "His back, the way his eyes were formed, his face is mutilated. He was not pleasing to the eye. This made Hawa cry every day. Then she found out that Muhammad Hasan wasn't a young man, rather an older man. She was deceived by some magical whatever!" Salima was about to lose it just thinking about the past. "I needed to remove her from that. He was brought into this world by Shaytan!"

"Yet, he shall be taken and used by God," Judah announced as he realized the boy from his visions with the disfigured face, the one who is to walk with Benjamin, was indeed, the son of Hawa through a sick man named Muhammad Hasan. Salima and Miriam stared upon Judah for a moment. "You shall see. Please, continue."

"So I, uhh," she tried to gather her thoughts. "I stole some money from the mosque, I went to a friend of mine to get us some passports and within about a month of hiding, we boarded for San Francisco, California, United States of America. The Muslim Mosque Association took us in and gave us a place to stay, food to eat and even jobs within the community. I wouldn't say I was looking for Tamir, but the only information I had on America came from learning from Tamir. I prayed to run into him, and Allah simply told me to get within proximity. I figured moving to Sacramento was the best bet. I got a job at the N Street Café and after about six months of working there and home schooling Hawa, Tamir walked right back into my life. Just like the first time, a meeting with someone that looked like that delved in the realms of the Black Market. But, whatever," she tried to wave it off all the while smiling. "I told him

every single thing because I still loved him and was sort of unconsciously looking for him. He decided to take us in without hesitation.”

“You told him about Hawa being with child?” Judah asked.

“Yes. And he wanted to go back and get him. By force. But that wasn’t smart, and I pleaded with Allah to let us know when the time was right. We promised him to keep it a secret. Now, the secret is out. That is why he flipped out earlier. Now Hawa feels as if she’s been lying to you the whole time,” Salima tried to plead for her daughter.

“She has been lying to me the whole time.” Judah argued. “I thought Hawa to be a virgin, nothing to the magnitude of having a whole child who will rule the Arab Nations by a man much older in which you had to murder to escape from. And then also, nothing to the magnitude of being related to her. What?” it seemed as if Judah was becoming more earthly by the minute. He corrected himself, to himself. “And how did you find out you were sisters? The timing couldn’t have been more perfect!” he was being slightly sarcastic.

“I do not know if this is my sister. My father had many children by many different women in the name of Islam. Upon issuing some equity from the CBD cannabis shop to your parents, Miriam mistakenly put her family name down. It jumped out to me because it’s my family name! Waly! It’s not a common name. Then we start talking about our families, or that in which we knew, and the possibility is there,” Salima shrugged her shoulders.

“But it is not definite. Then why the commotion with you telling me Hawa and I are cousins?” Judah pointed to his mother.

“I was afraid, and the possibility may be there. Then your father told us what happened when he walked in on you guys. Then you show up glowing, like you lost your virginity,” the mothers giggled together.

“Not even,” Judah shook his head in embarrassment. Everybody was being put on blast.

“Tamir suggested we throw it out there to scare you. He knows what Hawa has been through, and he doesn’t want to cause any more confusion with Hawa or you in your journey with the Church. It was foolish for him to jump to conclusions like that, but it made sense and it scared your mother,” Salima told Judah. “But look at the bigger picture. The Lord rescued Hawa and I from a man who claimed to be something he wasn’t. The Lord reconnected me with Tamir. The Lord enabled you and Hawa to create a bond so that you may help her, Judah,” Salima stood

and sat by Judah in her satin red Chador that showed nothing but her face. She smelt like roses and honey. Her energy was humbling as she was clearly aware of tests of Faith.

“I agree,” Judah nodded. Salima took the hand of Judah and held it within hers.

“Judah. Hawa is my only child. She is my most prized possession,” Salima said with much empathy. “I do not know how you feel about this whole situation, but I can believe it’s quite frightening. Coming to truths and whatnot. Yet, Hawa doesn’t know any better so do not condemn her for it. Judge not, that you be not judged,” Salima respectfully quoted from Scripture. Judah knew he had the best lawyer in the Spiritual and Physical Universe, so if he were to be judged, he’d be ok. Still, he bit his tongue. He already felt himself getting a bit holier-than-thou and knew he had to humble himself as well.

“Yes, ma’am,” was all Judah could reply.

“I talked to Fatima. She’d been telling me about those dreams of hers since we all first met. It’s amazing to see such things manifest. The truth shall set us free,” Salima continued. “I am honored to be the grandmother of a child prodigy. I know I need to repent and ask for forgiveness. I honestly cannot wait to reunite with Ali. I’ve only laid eyes on him once and heard of the smaller deformities from Hawa,” she confessed.

“That’s crazy,” Judah admitted and stood up. “Trust me. With the help of our God, I will fix this. Ok?”

Salima and Judah’s mother, Miriam, shook their heads in approval.

“Please, Mother. Give my phone number to Mrs. Greene here. Mrs. Greene, if you need anything, be it check-ups, a prayer, anything, since I’ll be looking after your daughter on this trip overseas, you give me a call. Please,” Judah pleaded with Salima, trying to make her feel as comfortable as possible.

“I will,” Salima responded, and Judah saw himself out.

\*\*\*

Before reaching the top of the stairs, Judah peeked into his little brother, Ben.

“Looking good, Benjamin,” Judah smiled at his brother, trying to hide the task at hand.

“I know what’s going on,” Ben told Judah in much confidence, arms folded across his plaid dress shirt.

“Oh really. And what is that?” Judah assessed him.

“The Lord has called you,” Ben stated, and it took Judah by surprise. Neither of them said anything for a moment.

“The Lord has called me to do what?” Judah questioned, heart racing knowing Benjamin has been called as well.

“To baptize the ones coming in the Light of Isaac and Ishmael,” he spoke with no hint of joking in him. “We will cause the people to love each other. I have already been studying,” this 7-year-old boy made claim. Judah could only guess what Ben was talking about. After all, Judah knew he had to bring his faith with him, wherever he was going and with whatever he was to do. Why? Because Christ said so. Judah vividly remembered the vision of Christ saying, *‘Bring them salvation. In substitution, they will exchange for Ali to be paired with Benjamin.’* This pairing of the two was not the end result. Judah knew in his heart that much work had to be done because he knew not how to win over a people whose culture and religion, in which is also imbedded in their government, dictated their lives. How was he to sway the hearts of anybody? Maybe that wasn’t his job. Maybe his job was just going to get Ali and bringing him to Ben.

“Oh really,” Judah came back to reality, responding to Judah being a baptizer. “First question, then. Who are the ones coming in the Light of Isaac and Ishmael?”

“Well, Isaac is already here. You must go rescue Ishmael,” Ben moved closer to his brother and touched his chest where his heart was. Judah felt a jolt of energy hit him, like something had been released from his little brother. It frightened Judah just a bit as he stepped away.

“Ben,” Judah almost shouted.

“Do not be afraid. This is only the beginning of what God will bestow upon His children. The Lord speaks directly to me, big bro. I told you this,” Ben finally broke out into a smile once he figured he was getting to Judah. Benjamin, clearly being ahead of his time, motioned Judah to bend down. He wanted to whisper something to him.

“Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from Him. Like Arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one’s youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver,” Benjamin slowly displayed a hand-made wooden arrow from his backside and equipped it with another hand-made arrow. The tip of the arrow was a rock made sharp, fastened by hemp, it looked like. Ben equipped the bow with the arrow and pulled back. Then he continued to whisper

to his big brother, Judah. “Is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their opponents in court. Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in the name of Jesus shall receive Him. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Jesus,” Benjamin outstretched the bow and took aim at his very own bedroom door, “it were better for him that a milestone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”

“Pssh!” he released the arrow and it stuck to the door.

“*Impressive,*” Judah thought and stood up. “Welp, you sure do know your Scripture,” Judah smiled.

“I am serious, Judah,” Ben said, becoming annoyed and going to retrieve his arrow.

“Your mission to the land of the Persians involves me to a huge degree,” Ben argued.

“How do you know that?” Judah asked, remembering Christ referencing to the land of the Persians.

“The time has come!” Ben stomped his feet. “I know it. I can feel it.”

“Ok. Well, what are you assigned to do?”

“I will know as soon as you bring Ali,” Ben stated, continually shocking his big brother.

“Who have you been talking to? Mom? Mrs. Greene?”

“No. I keep telling you. The Lord speaks to me. He tells me these things,” Ben said.

“The Lord told you Ali was going to help you accomplish what?”

“His will! Yes! Go get him before I do,” Ben threatened. Judah stared at his little brother, not even being able to comprehend how tasked his whole family was with the assignments from God. Everyone had an assignment. Benjamin held his stare. After a moment, Ben spoke up. “Now,” he iterated. “Please.”

# 1 Shemuel

---

Judah sat and waited for the rest of the gang by the side of Hawa as she rested in the guest room of his parent's house. Hawa's parents were still downstairs, trying to gather their thoughts and coming to truths. It was getting late. It was already 8pm. Benjamin kept creeping past the guest room, pointing to his invisible watch as if time were running out and Judah needed to hurry up and get moving. In actuality, Benjamin couldn't wait to be used by God, to be a vessel by which God shall reveal His rule over all the Earth. To be called and so young, Benjamin felt truly blessed.

Judah sunk his face into the palm of his hands. The heavenly glow was fading and the corruption of this world, even if unconsciously, began to weigh in on Judah. The thoughts he used to have, he needed to rid when it came to Hawa. She wasn't going to be Judah's wife anytime soon. That was going to be the hardest part of this mission, one's own mind. He was still trying to swallow the pill of being lied to. Still, Judah felt as if he had a mission to complete, yet how he went about it needed some deciphering. Then, after all that mayhem was completed, all attention may then be turned to Benjamin and Ali. Not that it mattered to Judah, it was just the hardships he knew he had yet to face, even after visiting that visionary realm.

"Judah," Isaac entered the room to comfort his son. "How are you feeling?" he asked.

"I'm ok," Judah shook his head, but Isaac knew better.

"That light starting to fade," Isaac reached for his sons face, inspecting it, but Judah moved away just a bit. The last encounter they had was not very comforting. Judah remembered having to put his hands on his father, since Satan seemed to have his way in that time and place. But Judah knew his father prayed in an abundance and was more so of the reason why things were falling into place. The power of prayer. Still, something deep within Judah knew his father was troubled and it affected everyone.

"Right," Judah agreed as his father took notice of his moving backwards.

"Son, I apologize for everything, man," he began to get teary eyed as they sat next to each other. Judah didn't respond. He felt it was ok not to. Then Isaac looked upon Hawa.

"I knew there was something oddly special about her," Isaac admitted. "I would've never guessed that it would be this catastrophic, but..."

“Catastrophic?” Judah questioned. “What makes it so catastrophic?”

“You guys having to change how you feel about one another...”

“Oh my God,” Judah was getting fed up already. “Are you seriously running with that cousin crap?” Judah was livid.

“Watch your mouth,” Isaac gave his son a fierce look. Judah returned the stare but said nothing. He wanted to say so much. He wanted to tell his father to watch his mouth! But he held his tongue. “Your mother and the mother of Hawa have the same maiden name.”

“And?” Judah responded, beyond furious. The light had surely faded. Isaac felt his son becoming a problem and wished to take control.

“Son. Are you really thinking about flying to Iran, in the middle of a pandemic, to reunite this girl with her son that she’s lied to you about for so many years? What has gotten into you? Leave her alone before she gets you killed,” he whispered the latter. “That’s not even Tamir’s daughter. You have no idea what you’re getting yourself in to.”

“It’s not Tamir’s daughter, but her mother and my mother are sisters?” Judah was clearly able to see through his troubled father.

“Listen...” Isaac exhaled but Judah couldn’t take it any longer.

“No. Stop,” Judah placed his hand up. “I’ve been assigned this by the Lord. There is no stopping it. I will fight you if I have to,” Judah threatened his father.

“Welp, put them hands up,” Bishop Isaac Masod squared up with his son. Judah couldn’t believe it. Judah was so livid; he wouldn’t mind putting his paws on his father. So, in an instant, Judah took his fighting stance in the limited space they had to wrestle. Judah allowed his father to get the best of him. Isaac allowed Satan to get the best of him and it all trickled down.

“Oh my God,” Hawa was heard from waking up and witnessing the men in fighting stances, ready to go to war.

Isaac reached in to grab Judah by his shirt with both hands as Judah was able to grip the wrist of his father. This was the second time in Judah’s life that his father ever put his hands on him, the first being that same day at Mr. Greene’s house. Isaac was losing it because he thought he was going to lose the Church to the pandemic. He wanted his son to be the upmost respectful man in order to take over the Church, but the way Judah was acting, he was clearly not ready.

“Get off me,” Judah was able to throw his father’s hands from off him and gain separation by stepping back, fists still up in the air.

“Wait,” Judah stopped when he thought on the visions. “Wait,” Judah remembered Grandma Ruthie and the Bull. “I saw Grandma Ruthie in Heaven. I saw your mother. She had a mission for you,” Judah became less aggressive and found the solution to the problem that his father seemed to have.

“Grandma Ruthie?” Isaac always referred to his mother as his children would, *Grandma*. “You taking this too far,” Isaac disbelieved as Judah had hit a soft spot. Isaac stepped forward and before he could cock back his arm, Judah snuck in a quick jab, courtesy of the Holy Spirit. In no way did Judah relish in defending himself from his father, yet something would come over Judah when he was being attacked physically.

“Agh,” Isaac stumbled and stopped, peering at his son. It stung, but Isaac wasn’t bleeding. “Where in God’s name did you learn to fight?” Isaac became amazed that he couldn’t get to his son for the second time today.

“I’m serious. I wouldn’t lie about this stuff, Pops,” Judah decided to ignore the irrelevant questions and dig into what was real.

“Uhm. Mama,” he finally smiled after feeling the presence of his mother. “Yes,” his eyes became teary all over again.

“She instructed you to continue to run the Church. Even if it is against the Law of the Land, she said it is necessary that you continue to operate New Jerusalem,” Judah told his father.

“That was not my mother. She would never tell me to against the Land of the Law,” Isaac fought.

“How so? Is not civil disobedience permitted when the government’s laws or commands are in direct violation of God’s laws and commands?”

“How is the government in direct violation, Judah?” Isaac asked in all seriousness.

“Is it not unconstitutional infringement on our First Amendment right to free exercise of religion?”

“Uhm,” Isaac stood there, still rubbing his beard and thinking deeply. In his mind, Isaac was out-of-it, but with this good news, maybe he was able to dig himself out his own little miserable hole. It was actually sad, seeing Bishop revert to such child-like behavior. “Is that right?” he found himself smiling, finding joy in the idea of opening the Church again. Judah shook his head.

“It’ll help us in our journey. I can assure you that,” Judah said, noticing Hawa waking up.

“Very well,” Bishop Masod’s whole attitude changed “So, wait? That must’ve been what that light was. That shining light from earlier. That in which brought out my inner demons,” Isaac got deep really fast.

“Inner demons?” Judah asked.

“No man is good, Judah. No man is good in the eyes of the LORD,” Isaac began to cry. “Wait. What happened? Were you shown a vision? Did you visit the Heavenly Realms?” his father asked.

“Yes, Father. A vision. The Heavenly Realms. New Jerusalem on both the outsides of the gate and on the inside. Lights. Colors one can’t fathom. Everyone and everything had a degree of light to it. Everything was colossal, gems, diamonds, all kinds of jewels, a river coming from the throne of God. Unusual species of cat-like people on other planets with the same Savior, Christ, yet I believe a different story being attributed to them. Gardens encompassing the First Priest King of the human species, Adam, then Adam given his dominion over to Lucifer. An Arab man praising Satan to an extent and offering two olive trees and two candlestands. Satan giving quite valid excuses of his actions and fate. Grandma’s mansion. The massiveness of the New Kingdom. Christ instructed me and even touching,” Judah sounded like a diehard fan as he was ready to cry just thinking about the love that emitted from Jesus Christ.

“Oh Lord,” Isaac hit his knees and lifted his hands to the sky. “My firstborn,” he called out then looked upon his son. “Come here, Judah,” Isaac called his son and Judah came and knelt with his father. They hugged like none other. “Forgive me, son. I allowed Satan to play with my mind. But I am stronger than that, I know it. You know it,” he hugged his son tighter.

“I know, father.”

“Thank you for defending yourself as a man and continuing to find elation in the light. I prayed for God to use you, way before I gave my life to the Lord,” Isaac broke their hug and gripped his son by the shoulders. “Therefore, do what God has told you to do, as we listen to God and not men,” he pointed to himself.

“Amen,” Judah concluded and stood up with his father. Isaac wiped his tears from his eyes and gathered himself where he stood.

“So, tell me, please, in short, what more was seen in these visions?” Isaac asked.

“Uhm,” Judah tried to gather his thoughts. “A lot of symbolism. Like, Grandma had a bull in her house and the bull ran throughout her house but destroyed nothing. Instead, this bull

showed me visions within a vision. Like,” he looked over at Hawa and witnessed her going in and out of sleep. So he whispered, “Hawa screaming in a puddle of blood. Then, upon returning back to this realm, I find myself exorcising demons from her as she screamed and fought back. Then I discovered she abandoned her child in Iran which would define her laying in the pool of blood and screaming, right?” Judah tried to explain.

“Uhm,” his father simply thought about it as he looked back at Hawa. “I want to say I told you,” they still whispered.

“I see, yet God’s timing is better than man’s. You should trust me more, Pops,” Judah tried to soothe his father. “Or, how I saw Benjamin and Hawa’s child walking together in the vision. Ali, Hawa’s child, had a disfigured face. Salima confirmed, that Ali has a deformity in his face in which was shown in my visions and even in the dreams of Lamont! These deformities in this boy’s face was another reason Salima and Hawa left him in Iran. They thought him to be a curse,” Judah spoke silently.

“*Hnff,*” both Judah and Isaac heard Hawa sniff. Maybe she heard everything because now she was crying.

“Hawa. How are you feeling?” Judah asked her but she didn’t respond. Judah then turned to his father.

“We must fasten ourselves to head on out.”

“Sure thing. I’ll be with your mother,” Isaac saw himself out.

“Judah!” he heard his mother call his name from the main house. Judah opened the front door again and his mother was standing beside Kareem as Isaac approached them. Judah waved for Kareem to come.

“Asalamualaykum,” Kareem greeted Judah.

“Wa alaykumusalam,” Judah returned the greeting.

“I have this for you and Hawa. It’s traveler’s insurance and your negative covid test. Now everything is complete,” he said handing him the forms.

“Thank you, Kareem,” Judah shook Kareem’s hand.

“Insha’Allah. Fatima is on her way here. I have to make a quick run and I’ll be right back,” Kareem told him and went his way. Just like that. Doing his duty. If he weren’t so strung out on trying to be right all the time, maybe he’d be called for higher purposes. Judah admired Kareem in that instance.

“I can’t believe any of this,” Hawa could finally talk and caught Judah by surprise.

“What do you mean?”

“Going to go rescue Ali,” she admitted.

“Welp, there was no way in this Earth you were going to get away with that, especially with a man of God,” Judah made clear. Hawa didn’t respond, rather embarrassed. “Let us get ready, please. Shower and I will find clothing for you,” Judah instructed and with a long pause and stare down, Hawa followed instructions.

As soon as she closed the door, Judah sat on his bed, head delved into the palm of his hands. This was almost unreal; the magnitude of the situation and the accuracy of the circumstances were phenomenal. He smiled through his thoughtful reflection.

“Judah,” he heard knocking at the door. He was unable to even get 5 minutes to himself.

“Yes?” he answered his mother. She opened the door.

“Firstborn,” she came in with clothing that looked as if it was from her culture. “I have prepared proper clothing for you, blessed by the hands and prayers of the Presbyterian from long ago. You shall not remove these clothes for as long as you are traveling, for they will provide you with extra protection from negative spiritual forces. I made them lavender, a darker color, to keep from blemishes,” she handed the clothing to Judah. “I believe all you will need is a small bag. Take your Bible and Quran. Make sure you have your cell phone and your wallet. These are your necessities,” she rubbed her oldest son head to provide comfort. “I peeked at your bank account today and you are well equipped to purchase just about anything upon arrival in Iran. Read up on the Iranian culture during your flight. Remain faithful and respectful and you shall return unharmed. All of you,” Miriam instructed her oldest son.

“Yes, ma’am,” Judah bowed and embraced his mother.

“Get a sim card for your phone when you get out there so I can keep in contact,” she continued to instruct.

“We’re going to be in and out. Three days max,” Judah took a wild guess. Afterall, the tickets were one way.

“Very well. Simply do what the Lord has ordained you to do,” Miriam rose to exit. “Keep the faith, Judah. I believe you know more than us now, just from your recent experience, so it shall be harder for Shaytan to interfere. I trust you to do what is right. You got this,” Miriam hugged her son close for a long time then exited the tiny house.

Judah didn't waste any time. He jumped in the shower when Hawa was finished and quickly contemplated his next moves. He thought deeply on Fatima and Kareem and how they were capable of setting something like this up. Was there a hidden motive? He'd love for his fellow Muslims to join him but knew that in his search for something within Islam would get much backlash.

Upon removing himself from the shower and taking to his underclothes, Hawa was sitting on the bed with an Al-Mira covering the top of her head. It was a two-piece veil made with a head cap and a tubular scarf. It was an elegant and shiny lavender color and matched with her Abaya. Her Abaya was a long lavender cloak made for Muslim women and decorated with gold embroidery and sequins.

Hawa arose and raised her hand towards his clothing.

"This is a Shalwar Kameez," Hawa spoke trying to subdue her recent acts of impurity as she pointed to a matching lavender loose trousers with a long tunic. Judah looked closely.

"Gold dust?" he noticed the gold sparks from here and there.

"Indeed," Hawa responded very lightly. It looked comfortable and made Judah look as if he came from royalty. The embroidery mixed in with the gold dust almost made the attire look like one fit for a superhero. An Islamic or Jewish superhero. It also reminded Judah of the bracelet he wore, given to him by the stranger.

Judah changed into his clothes and felt like a new man. He wouldn't mind wearing his new wardrobe for a few days as it fitted him perfectly.

"Nice," Judah said to himself and peeped outside his curtain when he heard chatter. His mother Miriam, Salima and Fatima were coming their way. Judah opened the door before they were close enough to enter.

"Judah," Fatima, from the Islamic Daycare Center, yelled, smiled, ran, and embraced Judah with a hug. She was genuinely happy to be a part of this transformation. No one knew how big this would be, if big at all.

"Fatima. Like a thief in the night, huh?" Judah smiled, but Fatima wasn't well vexed in Biblical Scripture. She paused and gave Judah a look of discomfort before speaking.

"Like a thief?" she asked.

"It's Scripture. That's how the Lord comes back. Like a thief in the night. Apologies," they all laughed together.

“I prayed,” Fatima began. “This fire inside of me has not subsided yet, therefore my job is not complete until the fire subsides. The releasing of jinn when Hawa vomited didn’t do it. The dreams coming true did not do it, which will confirm my purchasing of all these tickets. You, Me, Hawa, Kareem, Pita and Lamont. We were all there,” she spoke without the slightest bit of uneasiness.

“Praise be to God!” the Mothers called out in their languages. It was like witnessing a miracle when Judah suddenly thought on what Christ had told him. *‘Take the six and meet the 7<sup>th</sup>. Everything is prepared for your departure.’* What did this mean? Judah counted only five people. Where was the other supposed to come from? Was he the sixth? He couldn’t be if he were to *take the six and meet the 7<sup>th</sup>*. There was one more person, but Judah promised himself to not go overboard.

Just then, Kareem and Pita were seen coming to the tiny home, dressed in clothes that were similar to what Hawa, Fatima and Judah wore. Kareem held up his luggage and entered with smiling faces.

“We all ready,” he stated. “We fly out of San Francisco in about 5 hours, at 2:30am. We should get going now. We fly into Qatar and then take another flight to The Imam Khomeini International Airport. About 21 hours in total,” Kareem said tapping his ticket on his palm lightly. “I even have an extra outfit for Lamont. So he’ll fit right in.”

It appeared as if Kareem was now excited to go.

“I am fluent in Arabic,” hailed Fatima. “I take on the name of Prophet Muhammad’s sallallahu alaihi wasallam youngest daughter. According to some sects, Fatima was the founder of Islam. I believe I have a separate assignment to accomplish while attending this journey with you all. It will not interfere, rather it may supplement.”

“You believe? How well aware are you of this assignment?” Judah asked because she had yet to know Judah’s full purpose of visiting Iran besides reuniting Hawa with her son.

“I am surely aware. I will have to look for signs and jump at the tiniest opportunities like, helping someone cross a street, or zakat by giving to the poor. Hopefully, something prospers from just lending a hand. I’m not sure, but this fire will not subdue unless I partake in this journey,” she responded. Judah thought maybe Fatima would interfere, with her deep admiration for Islam. Maybe she was there to try and stop Judah from fulfilling his purpose. Judah happily took the challenge to himself.

“Very well. Let us not waver,” Judah decided to be the ‘leader’ of the group. He peered at Pita as she wore a light green Khimar that covered everything but her face. It was made of a material that Judah wasn’t familiar with. Looking back into her face, they locked eyes. Before too much time elapsed, Judah simply bowed his head and acknowledged Pita.

“Judah,” Pita bowed back.

“This is amazing,” Miriam spoke in excitement in the now crowded tiny home.

“Right,” Isaac entered into an already packed house. “Let us pray in the living room before you all leave. Then I’ll take you all down to the airport after picking up Lamont. Cool?” Isaac asked and everyone agreed.

They prayed and Kareem coughed on purpose when Isaac said ‘in Jesus name’ at the end. This irked Judah a bit. He knew Kareem was probably going to be a problem just as much as Fatima.

Judah packed his Bible, Quran, his wallet, underwear, and everything his mother told him to pack. He figured every other necessity would be provided to him, from God and his bank account. He peered at his wooden bracelet and wondered what potential it held within his journey.

The band gave farewell hugs and kisses to everyone and began to exit when Benjamin stopped them all.

“Stop!” he shouted standing at the top of the stairs in the main house. “Let me tell you what the LORD said to me last night!”

“Speak!” Judah replied as Ben had everyone’s attention. Isaac noticed how Benjamin and Judah, even though through regular conversing, were citing Scripture in a sense.

“This journey will change your life forever,” Ben spoke as if it wasn’t him speaking. He spoke not like that of a child. Rather, he stood firmer, eyes situated and some sort of presence about him made everyone listen attentively. “God has chosen you, out of America Babylon, to make way for the return of the Lord. Stay strong Scar,” he pointed to Kareem. “Stay strong, Mufasa,” he pointed to his big brother, “and bring back Simba. I love you,” he smiled and went back to his room. That quick. No long preaching. Simply a word from God. Creepy wouldn’t be the right word, but to someone not enlightened, definitely creepy. It was as if Benjamin had turned robot. Either that or he was still trying to process his gifts. Whatever it was, no one knew what he was talking about. Except for Judah.

“I love you too, little bro,” Judah waved Ben off.

Isaac stopped to get Lamont from his house. Lamont still could not believe what was going on. But a free trip to Iran didn't sound too bad. At least he could say he'd been around the world.

“I can't believe it,” was all Lamont said when he entered the Escalade. Kareem handed him an Arabic tunic to wear.

The whole 2-hour Escalade ride was enjoyed by the symphonies of Berlioz in *Symphonie Fantastique* from the year 1830. Isaac accompanied the group all the way up until International security check. He blessed his son first, then the rest of the group.

“Return safely, son,” was the last Isaac said before returning back home.

\*\*\*

After going through International security check and finding their gate, they had less than an hour before boarding flight.

As everyone sat, Judah began to peer at each individual he was traveling with. He barely knew any of them, except Lamont. He'd just met Pita and Kareem, even more recently Fatima. He thought he knew Hawa, but he was mistaken. Hawa had a whole family on the other side of the world. The guilt could still be seen on her face. Hawa no longer held her head up, rather she always looked down in shame now. Judah tried talking to her, but it only made things worse. Those feelings were hard to rid, but not as hard as her secrets being blasted into everybody's ear.

“I'll give her some time,” Judah told himself pertaining to Hawa. “I guess I'm single now,” he thought again, gazing upon Pita, even though him and Hawa never were officially boyfriend/girlfriend. He knew gazing upon women and even thinking of having a girlfriend is what sort of got him into this mess. The parents of Judah urged him to marry when the relationship between Hawa and him surpassed dating.

As soon as Judah brought Hawa to their house, Isaac and Miriam were adamant about Judah marrying. They didn't believe in that boyfriend/girlfriend collective and really didn't want it to be displayed in the Church. It was cute, nonetheless. It was innocent. It was preparing Judah for marriage. It was showing the congregation that everyone can be saved, even Muslims. But deep down, Judah knew it was wrong, therefore he never referred to her as girlfriend. Judah

knew sex was sacred and marriage was ordained by God. Judah was to lead a people into salvation. All that girlfriend/boyfriend play was going to get in the way of what Judah was destined to do. It was time for Judah to get serious, more serious. This involved the salvation of humanity. Yet, in the same breath, do we marry someone who we do not know? The boyfriend/girlfriend ordeal was to prepare one for marriage, no? Or was that being engaged? Or simply friends first?

*“At least she’s covered,”* Judah thought, trying not to wander with his eyes as his flesh told him to. The covering of women was something Judah much respected about Islamic tradition. It prevented evil men, with their evil thoughts, from sexually abusing women unconsciously.

Judah looked away and tried to continue his thoughts. He thought deeply on his visions, especially bringing the six and obtaining the 7<sup>th</sup>. Was he a part of the six? What did that mean? Just then, Judah witnessed a brother from a far off, sitting down with a red hat on that simply had the number 6 on it. Judah recognized the hat from somewhere as it was iconic in the hip-hop community. Red hats with the number 6 on it. Judah began to get up but thought otherwise. He didn’t want to look like a mad man.

*“Is this man demon-possessed?”* Judah thought of himself while reciting Scripture. He continued to look about.

Then there was Fatima. It felt as if Judah never really even saw Fatima, the way she’d keep herself covered. Fatima was stunning in the way the Lord called her. Her light brown skin tone had shown through just her face.

Still, was Fatima going to be as much trouble as Pita turned out to be? Judah immediately began to do away with his thoughts pertaining to women and the pursuit thereof. His glow had vanished, and it seemed he was more worldly now than ever. He found himself trying to resist temptation more now than ever, just from his own mind. The devil was surely at work. Or was it even the devil?

Then he looked upon Kareem, who was already staring him down the whole time, reading his thoughts like a book. Not in anger or anything, just staring him down. Almost contemplating. Before another second passed, Kareem got up to move closer to Judah.

“Looking good, man,” Kareem lightly dusted off Judah’s Islamic clothing.

“Thank you,” Judah responded, them both smiling.

“Aye, tell me this. How did you meet Hawa?” Kareem asked. “I’m just curious.”

“Her and her mother came to the Church seeking Jesus. They came with Tamir. Or Mr. Greene.”

“You mean big OG? With the gold teeth?” Kareem asked. Judah shook his head agreeing. “Oh wow. Go on.”

“Hawa came to a bible study that my Pops allowed me to assist on Tuesday night. We were teaching *God is Love*. I was 14 years old. She was fifteen. ‘*Let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God,*’” he recited from the teachings. “She came to question me on the teachings after everyone was let out. But she wrote the questions in English so I could understand them. Her English was bad back then. The questions she wrote were like, ‘*How can God be love and allow such tragedies to happen like death, rape and distortions to the young and innocent?*’ And such matters. I could tell she was struggling with something, so with the help of my mother, I decided to extend my hand to her at that youthful age without fully grasping the messages through the questions she’d write down. I didn’t have all the answers, if any. With the approval of our parents, we exchanged addresses and began to write back and forth to help with her English reading and writing. We did this for a year. We were driving at 15 and 16, me being the younger and that’s when we really kicked off. Her English was becoming. I still hadn’t seen her full face around this time. I guess I fell in love with her mystery, and she fell in love with my maturity. In all respects of best friends, of course. Falling in love with these aspects of each other, of course.”

“Uhm hmm. Come to find out, y’all related? That’s crazy,” he shook his head. “Y’all mothers didn’t know they were sisters?” he asked.

“I don’t know what to believe when it comes to us being related, bro,” Judah exhaled.

“Right. Well, let us not dabble like children when we used to do it before. This trip is bigger than our differences. And I apologize for coughing after Jesus’s name during your fathers prayer earlier. I’m still struggling trying to correct myself,” Kareem admitted.

“Come to Christ,” Judah offered, for the first time.

“I have come to Jesus.”

“Yet you still struggling to correct yourself?”

“That’s what Jesus told me to do,” Kareem responded, and Judah wanted to agree and drop I, but he couldn’t.

“You sure we referring to the same Jesus? Last I read, whoever believes on His name shall have life and have it more abundantly. That free gift. The free gift of Salvation. Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to Christ. Get away with Him and you’ll recover your life. He will show you real rest. Walk with Him and work with Him, watch how He does it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. He won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. For His yoke is easy and His burden is light,” Judah preached.

“Matthew 11,” Kareem added.

“And you know Scripture, Kareem. I do not know why you aren’t adherent to the Word? Y’all don’t even believe He died and rose again. Y’all take away from the whole message. Death, Resurrection and Him being the Son of God.”

“Right? I mean, come on man. The altering of the Scriptures by the Man. You know about the Jesus ship dropping off the slaves in America. The biggest ship! Named Jesus! Africans waving for the ship to take them back home. ‘*Jesus! Jesus!*’ they would call out. These crackas then messed up a lot, Judah. Just to be real. It’s the white man’s religion.”

“No, it’s not,” Judah intervened calmly. “Long before Europe even heard of Jesus, Africans were being baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Simon of Cyrene was from Libya. Africa! The man that helped carry the cross for Christ was from Africa. In Acts we find Africans from Egypt and Libya at the Pentecost when the Holy Spirit arrived. Again, in Acts, an Ethiopian Eunuch believes in Jesus and then Paul baptizes him. The Early Church began in the Motherland. So how is it the White’s man religion?”

“The amount of change they attributed to the religion, man,” Kareem tried to argue. “This whole concept of the trinity...”

“The term being coined by Tertullian who is also the founder of Western Theology and being from Carthage, North Africa,” Judah interrupted and waited. It seemed as if they always argued when the slightest start of a normal conversation would emerge. These arguments eventually lead to a robust heap of knowledge. “You believe the idea that Christianity is the White Man’s religion because early American slave masters used the Bible to justify their actions. Because of this ship named ‘*Jesus.*’ Well, brother, you and I both know, His name was not Jesus...”

“Yet, you continue to call him Jesus,” Kareem argued as Judah simply shrugged his shoulders.

“Bad habit?” he white-flagged admitted. “Nonetheless, how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears Him and does what is right?”

“Acts,” Kareem nodded. “You sure do know how to defend your beliefs,” he smiled at Judah. “You’d be a perfect Muslim!” they both laughed together.

The band waited until it was boarding time and was shocked to find out they all had different seats. Ironically, Kareem shared a row with Judah with someone in the middle.

Despite the Covid restrictions, the airlines still packed the rows out due to limited routes. Judah sat by the window and Kareem had an aisle seat.

“Excuse me, brotha,” another man announced. “I believe I’m seated here,” he pointed to the middle seat. It was the brother with the number 6 on his red hat.

“I’d be...” Judah almost cursed himself. Kareem removed himself so the brother could take his seat. He was dressed down in a white sweatsuit, had long brown dreadlocks and wore a smile on his face that seemed irremovable. “salaam alakhim,” he greeted in bad Arabic. Both Judah and Kareem responded simultaneously, paying more attention to his respect in trying to greet them correctly. Then as soon as he sat, they smelt him.

“God! You got it on you?” Kareem asked, flagging, and waving away at his face.

“Hahaha! To Iran? Of course not. But this is a long plane ride. I had to sacrifice the herb, calm mi nerves,” he smiled. “My name is Jah,” he extended his hand. One could tell that he code switched between his urban American accent and his phony Caribbean one.

“Judah.”

“Kareem,” everyone introduced.

“Wow. Jah, Judah, and Kareem. Wait,” he pointed and looked at Judah. “I know you from somewhere,” he tried to think. “What do you do?” he asked.

“New Jerusalem Church of God in Christ with my Father in Sacramento,” Judah was brief.

“That’s right. Masod!” Jah hit it right on the head.

“Boy big famous!” Kareem commented towards Judah.

“Right? Biggest Christian Church in Northern California. My ole lady and I visited a time back. I believe your Father, the Bishop, right?” Jah asked and Judah nodded. “He spoke on the Resurrection. How important it was and what it really meant. It stuck with me; I’m not going to lie.”

“That’s amazing. We were just talking about the Resurrection. What stuck with you?” Judah asked. “Like, what do you remember specifically, maybe even something that you never knew, that you remember from that sermon?” Judah tried to evaluate the man.

“Wow! Uhm...” Jah thought. “Your father mentioned God being perfect. Holy. He is not the author of sin. It struck me because I thought God was the author of everything. Your father argued that God does not commit sin in willing that there be sin, rather, God has established a world after the Fall in which sin will indeed necessarily come to pass by God’s permission, but not by His perfect actions,” Jah began as Judah and Kareem shook their heads in amazement. “The permitter of sin, yes, and at the same time, a disposer of the state of events, in such a manner, for wise, holy, and most excellent ends and purposes, that sin, if it be permitted, will most certainly and infallibly follow. It was deep. Which lead to the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. How God took something perfect and casts all of man’s sins on Him, and those sins shall be put to death along with the cross on whoever believes and endures,” Jah was sharp and actually really impressed both Kareem and Judah. Jah was honored to get the chance to relay his education on the men, Judah specifically.

“Ok,” Kareem shook his head in approval, being lost after the mention of *‘disposer of the state of events.’*

“But wait. You have Islamic attire on. What’s going on?” Jah laughed, eyes red and low.

“Long story,” Judah shook his head.

“Well, we got a long flight,” Jah looked at his watch and continued to smile. But Judah was tired. He couldn’t remember the last time he had a goodnight’s rest.

“Indeed we do. Maybe I’ll go there. Want to get some shut eye first,” Judah professed. “I been up since I can’t remember,” he mentioned when the flight attendant took to intercom.

During take-off and without thought, Judah fell asleep.

\*\*\*

Waking up 5 hours in, Judah noticed Jah to be listening to music from his phone and Kareem eating peanuts and watching a movie from his chair. Judah yawned and tried to stretch as much as he could. He looked for Hawa, Pita, Lamont, and Fatima as they all sat separately and appeared to be in their own little world. He also noticed someone else as if his spirit told him to

pay attention. He looked to be someone not from America and this man looked upon Judah as if he were watching him. Judah became suspicious and made a mental note to keep an eye on him.

Upon turning back around in his seat, Jah held out an earbud.

“Bob Marely?” he asked, and Judah immediately thought on his Father and how he used to keep records of good ole Bob Marely. Judah took the earbud.

‘Haile Selassie is the Chapel, Power of the Trinity. Build your mind on this direction, Serve the living God and live. Take your troubles to Selassie, He is the only King of Kings,’ and before Bob Marely could finish singing, Judah returned the earplug.

“I understand now. I understand why my father deserted Bob Marley,” Judah said more so to himself than to anyone else.

“Deserted?” Jah asked.

“Apologies. I’m thinking aloud,” Judah tried to brush him off, not wanting to start any mess when it came to ones beliefs. Judah didn’t know how well equipped this Jah was.

“Naw. Tell me. That must make you believe Haile Selassie I is not the King of Kings, right?” Jah seemed all interested. Judah gave his new brethren a look of distaste. “Naw, don’t give me that look,” he refused to be in the unknown.

“My father, Bishop Masod, used to be a Rastafarian back in the day,” Judah started. “He used to smoke the herb; he believed the Burning Bush was a Marijuana plant. He believed Haile Selassie I was the return of Jesus Christ.”

“It was. He was,” it seemed Jah shook his head in agreement.

“What do you mean? Please, elaborate.”

“For instance, The Burning Bush. The Rastaman himself believe that Moses saw God from burning the bush. Not God being seen from a burning bush. Remember, God denied Moses request to be seen. Therefore, Moses must’ve taken a spliff. We read the Bible biblically, prophetically, literally, and so on. Within that now we find the divinity in man, and you become aware that God is one. We know God is One but is also found in man, and it is out of that consciousness and presence of God that the Rastaman function and go live day by day, that God is directing his path. And the Rastaman can sit down with his own herb and his consciousness with him, and you find that the brethren walk five, ten miles to share that with his brethren just to burn a spliff. You understand? Knowledge is derived from a process that involves the ritual reasoning under the facilitating and sharing of the holy herb. Reasoning is discourse, but

discourse elevates above the political, the mundane,” he started to sound like Pita from a Rastafarian perspective.

“Ok,” Judah tried to follow.

“The sharing of the herb transports the I an’ I to a plane where the I an’ I finds and becomes One with the God within. It is here that true knowledge is revealed, whether about politics, economics, or the state, or how to interpret the meaning of the Holy Bible. Thus, Moses could not have seen God from the burning bush, as this passage from the Bible is traditionally interpreted, but the Burning Bush, the weed, the Holy Herb of Wisdom being a manifestation of God, through man. The need to attain such heights of knowledge will cause a brother to journey far distances to commune with his brethren in holy reasoning. And then you frown your forehead when I speak on the plant in which your God said it was good. Do you know about the cannabis plant? How we are able to manipulate it into many strains and cross breed to come out with all these different strains and colors and densities or different bud ranging from THC to CBD, to CBH, to Delta 8. This is natural medicine. This is what will heal the people and earth. This stuff heals the people from cancer and tumors and every other manufactured disease that we are faced with on this earth. God knew this would happen, high blood pressure, anxiety, depression and so forth. But there is more! The reasoning for my trip. But think about it. This was our first career given to us by God, to tend the Garden,” Jah professed his faith. It didn’t sound too far off.

“Wait a minute,” Judah had Jah pause for a bit. “So in summary, Marijuana, the Holy Herb, is a ritual used to commune with God and also makes one walk far places to go share the good news, like Moses did when he traveled from Midian to Egypt to share the good news with the Israeli elders?” Judah asked.

“In part,” Jah nodded.

“That’s crazy,” Judah wanted to laugh at the fact that Moses was smoking weed back in the day. “The Bible clearly states that Moses saw a burning bush. He went to inspect, and God called out his name.”

“Inspect,” Jah raised his hand, insinuating inspecting meant smoking.

“Ok, you know what,” Judah couldn’t help it and giggled a bit.

“Ahhh, you getting a whiff of the herb from me, ya?” Jah asked jokingly, or spiritually in his realm.

“Maybe,” Judah responded.

“Y’all believe Haile Selassie I was the return of Christ. Am I correct?” Kareem asked and Judah knew his was trying to start some mess.

“We do,” it seemed as if Jah knew so also. Judah decided to step in and intervene.

“Well, the Bible, something I know Rastafarians read, says Jesus will come back riding on a cloud to retrieve all believers, dead and alive and the 144,000 remnant Jews. Every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess,” Judah stated.

“Do we all not know who the Emperor Haile Selassie I is? When he was born, did not every King from every corner of the world come to visit him and give him gifts, as was done to Christ? Was not his army the whole animal kingdom when he fought off the Italians? When he stood atop a nuclear missile that Mussolini tried to denote at Ethiopia, did not Halie Selassie I conquer the missile by placing his foot on it and prove his divinity?” Jah tried to argue.

“Just because someone is touched by Jah, God or Allah, doesn’t make them God,” Kareem butted in. “Even Christ said He could do nothing without His Father in Heaven. Right?” he looked upon Judah.

“Right. Not to diminish what you believe, brother, but as I said, my Father was a Rastafari. He gave up the belief when he realized Selassie I ran away from the British government. Our God doesn’t run,” Judah stated.

“Amen,” Kareem sided.

“Why doesn’t He?” Jah answered. Then he pointed to Judah. “John 8 states Jesus claiming He existed before Abraham. The Jews found this so offensive, they picked up stones to throw at Him and what did He do?”

“Run,” Kareem laughed aloud.

“He didn’t run,” Judah intervened. “The Bible clearly states that He hid himself and went out the temple, going through the midst of them. He passed right by them, probably changing how He looked because He was divine. Or simply hid by the covering on the head, you know, keeping a low profile as he simply went out the Temple. Afterall, there were thousands of people following Christ when he roamed and taught. Not just twelve and a few others. He had a large following,” Judah made corrections. “But He stayed within the country where he was to preach. He didn’t move to another country like Selassie I did.”

“Selassie ran!” Kareem was the first to antagonize. Then the Rasta Jah turned to Kareem.

“In September of the year 622, Prophet Muhammad, Peace be upon Him, took that flight from Mecca to Medina to escape persecution. He ran too!” Jah was adamant. “The World is ruled by the Prince of Darkness. The Ruler of the Air is Satan. Right?” he asked, and the men agreed. “Therefore, in order to complete ones journey, one’s mission, sometimes running for your life is the best option,” he tried to explain but Judah disagreed. “The people of this world have killed all of God’s people. The so-called ‘Prophet’ Muhammad was poisoned. Marcus Garvey was poisoned. Jesus was crucified. Martin Luther King and Malcolm X were gunned down,” Jah taught.

“So-called Prophet? Wait,” Kareem stopped laughing and caught offense once he realized what was said. “But let me guess. Halie Selassie I was spared from persecution and died peacefully at his bedside, right? That’s odd. When your Christ came back, He was supposed to die a peaceful death? But wait? Halie Selassie didn’t die a peaceful death! He was strangled! Yet you say this was your Christ?” Kareem tried to provoke and was clearly getting to Jah. Jah tried to keep his cool. “*So-called prophet!*” Kareem said more to himself then returned to the conversation at hand. “In the mid seventy’s, under Selassie’s rule, it was discovered that the new reforms, brought forth by your savior, were mostly dependent on New Babylon. Huh?” Kareem mocked. “His lost touch with his subjects to the point where he began to love his pet cheetahs and dogs more than his human entourage. Is this an example of what Christ-like behavior?”

“Get behind me, Satan,” Jah shot at Kareem. Both Judah and Kareem were shocked to see Jah erupt in such behavior, and so quickly. Judah instantly took a liking to Jah and knew him to be the sixth that Christ talked about, right then and there. Judah had just told the same thing to his father when he realized Satan was near.

“Pardon me,” Kareem was clearly offended as he touched his chest.

“Satan!” Jah barked under his breath again, trying not to cause too much attention. “You of all people follow a murderous, thieving God! I have researched your beliefs and they are barbaric at best!”

“Hmm,” Kareem kept his cool. “Please, elaborate because I know enough about you potheads to realize where your dependency really lies.”

“Ok. *Allah hates those who do not accept Islam*; Family of Imran verse thirty-two. My God loves everyone; John 3:16. He who lives by the sword dies by the sword, but according to Islamic Hadith, Prophet Muhammad had been commanded to fight against people until they

testify that there is no god but Allah, and that Muhammad is the messenger! Jesus preached let he who is without sin cast the first stone yet, according to your hadiths, Muhammad stoned women for adultery and then took them for sex slaves!” Jah continued to chastise. Judah began to understand a little more about his mission. God was still working even through this heated debating.

“Ok,” Kareem sat and simply smiled.

“Jesus never owned slaves, sex slaves at that. Muhammad did. Jesus never beheaded anyone, Muhammad did. It is even permitted to steal from unbelievers. Do you think Jesus stole?”

“You act as if Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon Him, was supposed to be perfect,” Kareem politely interrupted. “No prophet was perfect. In fact, they were all murderers, thieves, liars, and everything else sinful up under the sun. Also, you are quoting most of your accusations on hadiths.”

“Indeed, I am,” Jah politely interrupted back. “We can go back to the Quran. I apologize, for the Quran does state that it is a Holy and Perfect book, correct?” Kareem simply shook his head in approval, awaiting Jah’s next attack. “The Cow, verse 194. *Whoever has assaulted you, assault them in the same way they assaulted you!* Yet what does Christ tell us?” he turned to Judah.

“Turn the other cheek,” Judah spoke in whispers.

“Exactly! Muhammad ordered sixty-five military campaigns. Jesus ordered none. Mind you, this is all after Christ said it was finished. The Quran teaches fight those until all believe in Allah while the bible teaches us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute you. Christ was crucified, yet the Quran teaches that if you don’t believe in Allah or His Messenger, then you should be crucified. That’s crazy! Then, when you die, Allah promises you how many virgins? Seventy-two is the bottom number. You get way more. Allah makes your penis always erect and renews the woman’s virginity every day! This is a very carnal minded God, and not my God, for my God is Spirit and doesn’t think like a man. We will not be having sex in heaven, I am sorry,” Jah stood his ground. Judah admired Jah’s perspective.

“You know what is even crazier?” Kareem asked Jah. Jah was all attentive. “The Bible says the same thing about your God. Sort of contradictory accounts you ask me. In Psalms it is written that the Israelites will be happy upon smashing the skulls of Babylonian infants into

rocks! But we are a barbaric people? Lot, a revered man of God, speaking with divine angels, offered his virgin daughters to rapists, then slept with them after his wife turned to a pillar of salt. Solomon, the wisest man to ever live, had a thousand wives and concubines! Yet, we treat women like crap? God deliberately killed Egyptian babies in the bible. A bunch of young boys called Elisha bald-headed, and God commanded two bears to maul forty-two of them! Then Jesus comes and even He is a tad bit awkward. He saw what the people were doing in the Temple, made actual whips and went in swinging! Then left the temple, was hungry, found a fig tree with no figs on it, touched it and told it to never grow figs again! O' how petty!" Kareem made great arguments. "A mad man at best. *Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life!* Even the Jews called him demon possessed and mad!"

"Hmm," Judah shook his head from both accounts. He waited until they settled down.

"Josiah went on a killing spree! God commands the purchasing of slaves from foreigners living nearby in the Bible, the same as the Quran. Slaves, obey your master and serve them as you do Christ. That's Ephesians! The New Testament!" Kareem was making his point very clearly. "Your God enslaved His very own people for four hundred years! In bondage in Egypt! Then had them run around in circles for another 40 years. Huh? Ha! What? Your God rested on the seventh day, right? Allah mounted His Throne on the seventh day! When does God become tired and need rest? Jacob wrestled with your God and won! How does that happen? How does God repent of the evil He thought to do to His people in Exodus 32? 2 Chronicles you hear about your God putting lying spirits in the mouth of His prophets. Yet, you calling me Satan? Telling me to get behind you? When in fact, we may very well serve the same God? How dare you ignorant ass!" Kareem stepped out of bounds.

"Kareem," Judah called out, but Rastamon Jah simply held the stare of Kareem. They both held that same stare for at least 15 seconds. A long 15seconds before Judah spoke up.

"Jesus never ran," he wrapped back around to the original debate, somewhat repeating himself. The last verse in chapter 8 states: *'They picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.'* He never ran. You have to think about it," Judah tried his best to subdue the tension by retracing some of the earlier topics. "Where Christ preached, there were hundreds, if not, thousands of people coming to the temple to worship. Christ never ran. He just, how y'all say it? Got up outta there!" Judah repeated and smiled. Jah

knew what Judah was doing and decided to break the tension with a smile. Kareem released his tensions too by sitting back. Both the men felt relieved at the same time.

“Kareem,” Jah continued to smile then looked to Judah to place his hand up, as to tell him not to worry. “I apologize, brother. I really do,” he extended his hand. Kareem took it without thought, but still had an emotion of wanting to verbally combat.

“Apology accepted. I guess.”

“No. Really,” Jah seemed to ease the tension. “You speak from conviction and much knowledge. I am actually extremely impressed,” Jah couldn’t hold back his smile. “You are truly a student of your religion. It makes me have to go back and do some studying.”

“It’s funny you say that. Because only the most intelligent scholars can set me on fire like this. Even in a crowded environment,” he pointed around the plane, yet no one was really listening. They were able to keep their inside voices despite the noise of the plane. “And you, coming from a knowledgeable background of Rastafarian, and then to know so much about Islam is quite impressive in itself,” Kareem bowed his head and at once, they became friends.

“Thank you, Kareem,” Jah then turned back to Judah. “I apologize for reacting like that in front you, brotha,” Jah apologized. Judah simply waved his hand as to say all is well.

“Wait, tell me,” Kareem started. “Where you going?”

“Iran,” Jah responded.

“What makes a Rasta go to Iran?” Kareem was confused.

“Ha. Good question,” he said digging in his backpack that sat at his feet. “I am looking for the plant that Qutab ad-Din Haydar, or Heyder, found and ate when he attained ascetic discipline. That certain strain grows naturally in Iran with a THC level of 75% and a CBD level of 125%. That is an insane amount of THC and CBD,” Jah boasted. “I was only given this in my dreams,” he showed them a piece of paper that read: *35°41'40.9"N 51°28'42.4"E*.

“Coordinates,” Judah suggested.

“Indeed they are.”

“Why would you want to get higher?” Kareem asked.

“It’s not just about getting high. It’s about taking a deeper spiritual journey and more healing, my brotha,” Jah affirmed. “Judge not, lest ye be judged,” they laughed amongst each other.

The rest of the plane ride was flown in small talk and Judah doing quite a bit of studying of Islam and Iranian culture. Judah still had a lot to digest. Going into something with a blindfold on was done solely on faith. Judah simply took a deep breath and appreciated the freedom to travel and be amongst good people seeking truth. Judah appreciated being called by God and knew that there was so much more in the Lord.

*“Dinosaurs though!”* Judah thought on his visions and laughed to himself at the goodness of God. Nothing goes extinct in God’s creation.

## 2 Shemuel

---

Rastamon Jah decided to join the group once they were transferring. But Judah paid attention to how fond Jah was for Pita. Judah had caught Jah basically drooling over Pita once she had removed her head dress to wipe her face. “She with us?” Jah was caught asking Judah when Judah questioned the ‘us’ more than anything else. After that, Jah stood up and proclaimed once they’d all joined together: “God put it on my heart to follow you. I shall find what I am looking for a long my journey with you,” he spoke to the crowd but was staring upon Pita the whole time.

So now there were seven and all of them had landed and taken off from the beautiful Doha, Qatar all in under 3 hours. That mysterious man that Judah took notice of on the plane had the same route, along with various others on that plane from San Francisco International Airport. Judah thought it to be coincidence and simply made a mental note to continue to keep his eyes open.

Arriving in Isfahan, Iran was a sight to see. Mountains on top of mountains. Then a city would appear out of nowhere then disappear just as fast as it’d appeared.

After the gathering of their luggage, they all ended up with each other. Everyone looked to Judah.

“Did you even get a room, bro?” Lamont asked Judah. It had slipped Judah’s mind. He was busy either being sleep, thinking about what he had to do and whom he had to do it for, or he was studying.

“I did not. I plan for us to move with the Spirit,” Judah tried to speak with authority.

“Ok. That’s cool and all. But we should still have a place to put our things away. No?” Lamont tied to get support from the rest of the group. They nodded in agreement. “And,” he took out his phone. “Wait, you got a budget?” he held on to his phone until he got an answer.

“Budget for what, Lamont?” Judah asked.

“Exactly! I know what them pockets looking like, boy,” he smiled jokingly. “Allow us to enjoy ourselves here as well, no?”

“Ok, Lamont. What you got?” Judah laid his hand out to retrieve Lamont’s phone when in his peripheral he saw that mysterious man from the plane. He continued to eye Judah and the rest of the party. Then Judah managed to catch this man discover Hawa as his eyes widened. It looked as if he almost dropped his luggage when recognizing Hawa. Judah wanted to do or say something but decided to keep to himself, for now.

“The Hasht Behesht Palace,” Fatima shouted and caught everyone’s attention. “I dreamt it! My uncle is part private owner of The Hasht Behesht Palace,” she was adamant.

“The Eight Heavens,” Hawa spoke. “They will find us there.”

“They are supposed to find us there,” Fatima made clear and looked to Judah for approval. “It will be free. I think. No, I know! We will simply go there and gain admittance, somehow,” she tried to not struggle with her faith. It had gotten her this far.

“Ok. To The Eight Heavens we go,” Judah announced, and they began their journey to their place of rest.

The band was able to get two taxi vans to escort them to The Eight Heavens. The journey through the streets of Iran was a revelation. It was a lot greener and modern than Judah and Lamont had anticipated. A lot of trees, brand new looking apartment buildings that looked as if they touched the sky.

Coming more into the city, buildings were stacked everywhere with calligraphy written all over the place. Judah wouldn’t be able to distinguish the buildings if his life depended on it. A Mosque was located at almost every corner as Judah admired the people of Iran; how they dressed, walked, and simply carried themselves. Banners of the beautiful and young-looking Muhammad Hasan were erected on almost every light pole in some areas of Iran. It was as if he as running for Office. Judah recognized him from the News and from the visions. Judah hoped to not face such a magnitude of problems in dealing with someone of Muhammad Hasan’s stature.

It was around noon as the sun was high in the sky. The Eight Heavens was magnificent, the way the sun reflected on the building at this time. In front of the two-story mansion stood palm trees accompanied by an antique-like vanity pool that stretched the length of a football field.

“Wow!” was all anyone could say. The Hasht Behesht Palace used to host a Royal Family over a thousand years ago. Therefore, the century old architecture that occupied the home

was one of a kind. The shapes, colors, the many doors, and windows that could be seen from the street was magnificent. It was absolutely amazing.

“It’s closed,” Kareem said, tugging at a barrier that barred access as they began to gather their luggage.

“It’s supposed to be closed,” Fatima exited the van and looked about.

“Covid,” Lamont added as to why this tourist attraction was closed.

“Someone is coming,” Fatima pointed as everyone looked on. A man, dressed similar to the band emerged from the garden.

“Assalamwaalakum,” he greeted, and the band greeted back all together. This man was tall and sturdy in appearance. He was exceptionally clean in all white linen. His hair, beard, mustache, everything was trimmed almost to perfection. He was cheerful in the face and smiled with much grace.

“Alhamdulillah!” Fatima was almost immediately in tears when she seen this man. “Jalil!” she ran in place with her hands gathered at her chest. “It is I. Fatima Shabani Fallah!” she bowed.

“Fatima!” this man looked shocked then looked about the crew. He witnessed Hawa and Judah heard his heart drop. There was just something there that only Judah was able to catch onto. “Inshaallah! Subhanallah!” he rejoiced and went to hug Fatima.

“This is my uncle, Jalil! Uncle, these are my dearest friends,” she went on to introduce everybody. Judah and Kareem were the only ones to smell deceit upon uncle Jalil. They kept to themselves though, due to the beauty of the place in which they were staying.

“What are you doing here?” Jalil asked Fatima in Arabic.

“Allah has brought us here to complete a mission. Allah is surely with us,” she told him.

“It is very dangerous for you to be here,” Jalil warned and somehow, Judah, along with Hawa and Kareem, were able to understand what they were saying.

“I understand. But it is meant for us to be here. We must know where to find him,” Fatima fought back.

“No. I beg you. Come to my place and we will find another way. It is extremely dangerous. The things I saw. Muhammad Hasan. Her,” he pointed to Hawa. “She is still a fugitive,” Jalil professed.

“I know. Allah is with us, uncle Jalil. We will come out on top. My word. Even if we look defeated, we will come out on top. We are equipped with some of the best spiritual people in the world. Believe me,” she countered but her uncle was not moved. Then Kareem stepped up.

“Uncle Jalil?” it was all coming back to Kareem. Even though Kareem was born in America, he had family in the Middle East. Even though this was his first time in the Middle East, he’d remember pictures of family members and stories being told from both his parents and his sister Fatima.

“And who is this young brother?” Jalil asked.

“This is your nephew, my brother, Kareem Fallah,” she introduced.

“I’ve heard so much about you, nephew,” Jalil smiled. Judah was able to read the heart of Jalil and it was pure. As pure as can be. “Please, everyone. Follow me,” he let everyone in.

As they walked the beautiful garden toward the front entrance, everyone had the chance to introduce themselves.

Before they approached the front entrance, something told Judah to look back. When he did, he discovered that they were certainly being followed by that same mysterious man that was on the plane. That same man that looked terrified when he saw Hawa at the airport. They were already targets in these faraway lands.

Jalil, so engulfed in seeing some distant relatives and forgetting all about the severity of the situation, took them on a tour of the palace that he was part owner of. It was so huge that it stretched at least three blocks. The Hasht Behesht Garden provided parks within the vicinity open to the public, but Judah and the crew got lucky because due to covid, everything was shut down. Even the shopping mall, cafés and the Theological school wasn’t open to the public due to the pandemic.

“Iran, Iran,” Rastamon Jah announced, as he was just as amazed at the landscaping and absence of people. “And to think, I assumed this place to be deserts and mudbrick buildings,” he said as he was clearly mistaken.

They were led into the medium-sized Palace and shown the rooms that were decked out in all kinds of ancient art and calligraphy. The first floor was decked out in Iranian paintings and fascia architecture with four rooms. The second floor was occupied by four more rooms and windows and doors with cachet designs on them. There was even a pool on the inside of the

Palace called The Pearl Pool. The water from the pool seeps through holes that are within it, similar to a pearl. It was truly something amazing to see.

It seemed as if a modern touch was added to the antique-like structure as all the tables, the beanbag cushion sofas, the beds, just about everything was knee high and exceptionally low to the ground. The whole place, in its massiveness, was incredibly unique. Something only Fatima and Hawa were used to.

The women settled upstairs and in the back of the mansion, occupying its rooms while the men stayed downstairs in the front taking rooms to themselves.

“Wow!” Lamont mentioned to Judah when discovering the interlinked rectangular and octagonal formations of the ceiling that displayed colorful plasterwork in his room.

“Right?” Judah smiled and marveled at the mirrorwork, the calligraphic friezes and brocade panels, marble slabs and stucco moldings, and even the gilded mosaics that displayed.

“This is happening so fast,” Lamont argued. “One day, I’m in the house chilling and the next day, I’m in Iran with the Holy Rollers!” he laughed at himself.

“That’s how God moves. One day to Him is a thousand years to us.”

“Amen,” Lamont agreed. “Let me jump in this shower,” he excused himself just as Jah the Rasta asked to come in.

“I need a spliff,” Jah commented to Judah before pulling out a bag filled with weed.

“Jesus,” Judah jumped a bit.

“Do not be afraid of the plant, my friend,” Jah smiled.

“It’s not that. How’d you get it here?” Judah asked, thinking of all the security they had to go through.

“They not tripping off a lil weed, man,” Jah blew him off. “They looking for explosives and hard drugs. Even out here, they not tripping off a lil ounce of weed,” he tried to convince but Judah was not convinced.

Jah bowed and began to roll up. Judah began to think whether this was a promising idea or not. Allowing strangers to be amongst him, even if these strangers were pure in energy and possessed an abundance of knowledge. He didn’t feel any evil coming from any of the people he surrounded himself with. Maybe he just had a personal vendetta towards smoking marijuana. Maybe because he didn’t understand it.

“Aye,” Jah sparked up a different conversation. “What’s up with ole girl?” he asked. “Is it Pita?”

“Yes, that is Pita,” Judah responded.

“What is her purpose?”

“What do you mean? Like, why she here?” Judah questioned.

“Yeah. She is beautiful, man. Wait, my bad. Does she belong to anybody?” Jah excused himself.

“Yes, Kareem,” Judah smiled and motioned toward where Kareem was. Jah quickly fixed himself.

“My bad. Just between us, please. I apologize,” Jah apologized to Judah.

“All good,” Judah continued to smile. “We all…” then Judah stopped himself before he told on himself.

“We all what?” Jah wanted him to continue. “Please tell me,” he puffed.

“That smoke,” Judah found an excuse to leave. “I’m sorry. I’m not used to it. I’ll catch you around,” Judah waved the smoke from around him and removed himself from the room.

He needed time for himself to think. He decided to roam the mansion, contemplating on the legitimacy of this stay based on the swift transactions on getting here. It was all too easy. All done in advance and off the whim. It was amazing how a taxi van dropped them off right where Kareem and Fatima’s uncle was. Judah began to believe this was a set up. Fatima and Kareem must’ve had something up their sleeves. Judah began to contemplate on the authenticity of both Kareem and Fatima. How Fatima was able to urge people to get their passports, purchase tickets so far in advance, and so on. She had yet to show signs of discord, so Judah allowed himself peace. Kareem, on the other hand, was a different story.

Judah decided to take the steps up and entered into a large foyer that was riddled in white marble and carved with calligraphy. Pillars outlined the upstairs area with doors leading to rooms appearing as if they belonged in a museum. A collection of porticos and arcade arches that were entryways into the rooms were breathtaking to say the least. At the end of the hall, Judah witnessed a patio in which he could see outside trees swaying from afar. It called him.

Judah swiftly made his way to the patio doors that were cracked open. The wind blowing the white linen curtains displayed the physical aspects of a breeze from Iran. He could see the

vast backyard garden before getting close to the patio. After witnessing all this beauty, still, something wasn't right.

Upon entering the small patio, Judah breathed in the fresh air of Iran, peering into the garden that grew all types of plants. Judah witnessed trees of all sorts from Date Palms, Figs, Pomegranates to Melon Tress that were grown in a decorative way. Bushes, vines, ornamental plants, water fountains that displayed cherubim's and much more. Judah took it all in. He admired how man tended to the garden. Like Jah said, our first career was tending to the Garden. Judah smiled on that Biblical fact.

"Boo!" Pita made Judah jump in his skin as she snuck up on him.

"Pita!" Judah lightly yelled in excitement from the scare.

"Hahahaha! I'm sorry," she apologized having a hardy laugh. "Beautiful isn't it?" she asked referring to the garden. But to Judah, she was more beautiful. Just her presence was a breath of fresh air.

"It is," Judah agreed and focused back on the backyard. Pita took Judah in with her eyes and then her mind. He was powerful, she knew it. Even though Pita tried to keep her distance, in secret, she always wanted to be around Judah. He was touched by the hand of God, and she knew it; she saw it. The things he was able to do, the things he knew, his upbringing was all something rare. Pita became weak at the knees just thinking about it.

"Hey, I got a serious question," Pita stated, this question being on her mind for quite some time.

"Yes?" Judah smiled.

"The 16 Crucified Saviors. Have you heard of it?" she asked referring to a book written by Kersey Graves.

"Yes. I am very aware," Judah smiled. He knew where she was going.

"How then, can you say Christianity is not a copied religion? Not only from the Egyptians, but also from Dionysus of the Greeks, Buddha or Krishna of the Asians and Indians, Tammuz of the Syrians, Mithra of the Persians, Quetzalcoatl of the Mexicans and many more. From being born of a virgin to the resurrection and everything in between. Turning water into wine, having twelve followers, performing miracles, born on December 25<sup>th</sup>, dying, and raised themselves after the third day. How do you explain this?" Pita honestly wanted to know. Judah

gave her a look of discomfort. She always did this; tried to discourage Judah from following his faith.

“I can go through just about all of them,” Judah was not afraid of the knowledge he possessed, both from studying and also being obtained supernaturally from visions and recent visits to other realms. Pita listened eagerly. “Let’s start with Dionysus of the Greeks. He was actually born to Zeus and a mortal woman named Semele. She was actually tricked into sleeping with Zeus. There is another story attributed to his birth written in Pseudo-Hyginus’s *Fabulae*, yet the Gospels were written well before this. This other story says that Jupiter gives her a potion to drink that makes her pregnant. Nowhere can we find the words that Semele was a virgin from credible historical texts. Then the December 25<sup>th</sup> birth. Greeks did not use a Roman calendar and December is on the Roman calendar which came after the Greek calendar. And just to subdue this December 25<sup>th</sup> date; there is actually nothing about Jesus having being born on December 25<sup>th</sup> anywhere in the canonical scriptures or in any of the earliest surviving Christian writings. It was highly likely that Christ was born in September. A Virgo, like me,” Judah smiled and got laughs from Pita.

“Krishna and Buddha together are very different from that of Christ,” Judah continued. “Many say Christ and Krishna means the same thing. This is false. No etymological connection between Krishna and Christ actually exist. Christ is the Greek equivalent of messiah. Both mean ‘anointed one’ yet Krishna is an unrelated personal name, which derives from a Sanskrit term meaning ‘black, dark, dark-blue.’ Krishna was not born of a virgin as the Hindu texts clearly state that his mother Devaki had already conceived seven other sons, the first six of whom were executed by the evil prince Kamsa after their births. Krishna was born in a prison cell. Jesus wasn’t even born in a manger like many people believe. He was placed there after his birth. We need to reread Scriptures.”

“Ok. You can go on and on with the debunking of these religious and theological theories, but how can one say that Jesus is the correct one out of all the 16 Saviors, and maybe more unknown to us at this moment,” Pita continued. She either tried to deter him or strengthen his faith. But Judah knew better. He had gone through numerous doctrines about this manner.

“This is the Devil’s playground,” Judah outstretched his arms into the garden. “Am I not recognized in the understanding of and faith in the Scriptures by those forgeries which he who is called Satan is said to have accomplished among the Greeks, as well as fashioned by the Magi in

Egypt, and others by the false prophets in Elijah's days? For when the stories arise about Dionysus's birth, that he was the discoverer of the vine; and when they are able to relate that being torn into pieces, and having died, being rose again and ascending into heaven, also introducing wine into his mysteries, do I not notice that the devil has copied the prophecy proclaimed by Jacob and recorded by Moses? Wine was not a representation of blood when it came to Dionysus; it was simply wine. Or when they tell us that Hercules was strong and traveled all over the world, was begotten by Jove of Alcmene and ascended to heaven when he died, do I not perceive that the Scripture which speaks of Christ being 'strong as a giant to run his race' from Psalm 19 is being imitated? Even when the devil brings fourth Asclepius as the raiser of the dead and healer of all diseases, may I not say that in this matter likewise he has imitated the prophecies of Christ? Did not Christ extend his healing to sinners? He did! Asclepius, as a god, refused to heal those who were ritually impure and confined his healing solely to those who thought pure thoughts. This is the true knowledge of God, the other fables being that of the Gentiles who have eyes yet saw not or having a heart, understood not. Even to the ones worshipping the images of wood, Scripture prophesied that they would renounce these vanities and hope in Christ. It is written in Isaiah:

'Rejoice, thirsty wilderness: let the wilderness be glad, and blossom as the lily: the deserts of the Jordan shall both blossom and be glad: and the glory of Lebanon was given to it, and the honor of Carmel. And my people shall see the exaltation of the Lord, and the glory of God. Be strong, you careless hands and enfeebled knees. Be comforted, you faint in soul: be strong, fear not. Behold, our God gives, and will give, retribute judgement. He shall come and save us. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall hear. Then the lame shall leap as a hart, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be distinct: for water has broken forth in the wilderness, and a valley in the thirsty land; and the parched ground shall become pools, and a spring of water shall rise up in the thirsty land.'

"This spring of living water which came from God in the land of destitute, or the land of the Gentiles, was Christ, whom by His word, healed the deaf, the blind, the dumb, and the lame. Having raising the dead and causing them to live by His deeds, He compelled the men who lived at that time to recognize Him and not Krishna, Apollo, Thammuz and such fourth," Judah taught as Pita listened intensively. All the while, Hawa had spotted both Judah and Pita conversing and decided to hide in the room adjacent to the patio, just to eavesdrop.

Judah continued, “Then those who record the mysteries of Mithras say that he was begotten of a rock, and the place where those who believe in him are initiated in a cave, do we not perceive here the sayings of Daniel, *that a stone without hands was cut out of a great mountain*, has been imitated by them? That they have also imitated the whole of Isaiah’s words? For they contrived the words of righteousness be quoted by them. Isaiah says, *‘Hear, you that are far off, what I have done; those that are near shall know my might. The sinners in Zion are removed; trembling shall seize the impious. Who shall announce to you the everlasting place? The man who walks in righteousness, speaks in the right way, hates sin, and unrighteousness, and keeps his hands pure from bribes, stops the ears from hearing the unjust judgement of blood, closes the eyes from seeing unrighteousness. He shall dwell in the lofty cave of the strong rock. Bread shall be given to him, and his water shall be sure. You shall see the King with glory, and your eyes shall look far off. Your soul shall pursue diligently the fear of the Lord. Where is the scribe? Where are the counselors? Where is he that numbers those who are nourished – The small and great people? With whom they did not take counsel, nor knew the depth of the voices, so that they heard not. The people who have become depreciated, and there is no understanding in him who hears.’* Now, we both know this is illusionary. The bread Christ gave us to eat, in remembrance of His being made flesh for the sake of His believers, for whom also He suffered; and to the cup which He gave us to drink, in remembrance of His own blood, with giving of thanks. This prophecy proves that we shall behold this very King with glory; and the very terms of the prophecy declare that the people prevised to believe in Him were prevised to follow assiduously the fear of the Lord. So, basically, the Scriptures are saying that those who are esteemed to know the writings of the Scriptures, and who hear the prophecies, have no understanding. Therefore, Lupita, when I hear that,” Judah looked to the sky for an example to use from his studies. “Perseus for example, who was begotten of a virgin, I understand that the deceiving serpent counterfeited also this.”

“Wow,” Pita gave in after Judah was clearly on fire. “You quote Scripture similar to the way the Muslims recite the Quran,” she was utterly amazed. “I wish I was recording this.”

“It’s all up here,” Judah pointed to his mental. “Plus, I have a feeling you knew this,” Judah smiled.

“Yes, but not Old Testament prophecies and their pertaining to allegories,” Pita added paying close attention to everything Judah had ever said. “But you have to admit, those early church fathers have altogether taken away many Scriptures from the translations.”

“Like what?” Judah asked of Pita.

“For instance in Jeremiah, ‘The Lord God remembered His dead people of Israel who lay in the graves; and He descended to preach to them His own salvation.’ Or in Psalms between 95 and 96 it says: ‘Sing unto the Lord a new song; sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord and bless His name; show forth His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the nations, His wonders among all people. For the Lord is great and greatly to be praised: He is to be feared above all the gods. For all the gods of the nations are demons but the Lord made the heavens. Confession and beauty are in His presence; holiness and magnificence are in His sanctuary. Bring to the Lord, O you countries of the nations, bring to the Lord glory and honor, bring to the Lord glory in His name.’”

“Uhm!” Judah was amazed. “I think that’s what Psalms 96 does say. But that Jeremiah verse,” Judah knew he had to go back and study what Pita had brought to his attention. “Wait, to come from such an intellectually world view, you sure as heavens remember Scripture too. Even that in which may be considered sacred,” Judah clapped his hands in excitement. “You starting to sound like a born-again Christian,” he confessed.

“Maybe I am,” she hinted. “I simply try to grasp the extent of your intellectual capacity. It is surely overflowing,” they laughed together. Hawa envied the conversation as she continued to eavesdrop in the next room. She knew she had no right to be envious, but she still had these unfathomable feelings towards Judah.

Judah and Pita locked eyes just for a second. Pita appeared to be a different person in this Middle Eastern attire. It made her glow even more. Pita reached for the hands of Judah and asked, “Pray for me. Not right here, right now. But pray for me, please,” she confessed.

“What’s the matter?” Judah assumed he detected worry.

“Here,” she pointed to where they currently were. “All of this. It is quite scary. We have no idea as to what will unfold. Simply, pray for me. Pray for us all,” Pita rubbed the hands of Judah.

“Yes ma’am,” Judah nodded, all while trying to control his mind from becoming too excited at the touch from Pita. “Allow me to freshen up so I may discover what literally needs to be done,” Judah needed to excuse himself from fighting with the flesh.

“We will be waiting,” Pita said and sat on the bench occupying the patio as Judah began to leave.

“Wait,” Judah remembered Pita also having dreams. “Are not your dreams coming to fruition? Are not you excited?” Judah asked her. She turned and replied.

“They are, just not fully,” she spoke truth. Judah wondered what that meant as he walked back towards her.

“That’s right. You did prevent yourself from reading the rest of that dream from your journal. What else did it say?” Judah remembered from their first encounter at her place. He was attentive. Pita looked him in the eye the way a companion would do her significant other.

“Well, upon discovering who Hawa is, I guess it is only right to inform you on what may come to past,” Pita sat up. “I dreamt we married. In the Biblical fashion,” she expressed.

“Married? Biblical fashion?” Judah was taken for a loop.

“Yes. A mere agreement between you, I and my father,” Pita noted without a hint of falsehood in her. She didn’t even flinch. She knew what was in store for her and she claimed it. The first time Pita had laid eyes on Judah was when he sat in the pulpit as his father preached. Just a mere laying eyes on him in all his demeanor, was when she knew she’d spend the rest of her life with him; be it in marriage or in communion with church despite her beliefs.

“Is that right?” Judah couldn’t have been more excited but withheld it with all his might.

“So, now you know. But please, do not force anything. Meditate on the words I’ve spoken to you and then come see me,” Pita instructed.

“Where is your father?” Judah asked.

“He passed away some years ago,” she confessed. “So, I believe it just becomes a matter of choice between you and I.”

“Indeed, it does,” Judah smiled, shook his head, and removed himself from her. He did not know how to respond to matters of that magnitude. He got cold feet and removed himself without a proper farewell. Hawa heard the whole thing from the other room and was furious for no reason. She watched Judah walk past the room as she hid in the corner. She had already devised an evil plan. Demons seemed to flow in and out of Hawa.

There was no way Judah was in a mansion in Iran with his peers if something big wasn't calling. People don't go to Iran to vacation, do they? The heavens called on this young man to revolutionize a major religion. Or at least, this is what was interpreted by Judah. What if he was wrong?

Judah had much on his mind when he returned to his room to find Kareem and Jah arguing while admiring the various aspects of the architecture.

"Prophet Muhammad never performed miracles, man. What do you mean?" Jah was replying to Kareem. "What? He split the moon according to the Hadiths? The moon already splits itself, man. What else was a quote-on-quote miracle by the prophet Muhammad? Didn't he say, *'Look at how amazing my poetry is! I spit hot fire from the heavens! My words is golden, boy! Therefore they are from God!'* What? Jay-Z has amazing poetry, does that mean his lyrics are inspired by God? Even if he wasn't rapping about God or referring to himself as the Most High? Muhammad came with no supernatural signs, besides what you all call the Quran, and even that is filled with corruption and lies," Jah was on fire. Kareem must've said something out of pocket. "Jesus raised people from the dead. Paul raised people from the dead. Elijah raised people from the dead. Moses parted the Red Sea. What did Muhammad do? Write a book? I thought he couldn't write? The angel Gabriel told him to write, and Muhammad replied he could not. So then, how do we get the Quran? The Hadiths produce all kinds of miracles attributed to Muhammad though. Like, what? When people became thirsty, Prophet Muhammad shot water from his finger to quench their thirst? Nigga please. Or Muhammad's Night Journey when he is taken supernaturally to Jerusalem to visit the heavens. No. This was a vision. Merely a dream. Muhammad was in his bed. It was a dream, I tell you. Nothing supernatural about it. The only thing that could have come from Muhammad is the Quran and in it, it would have to be supernatural. But how is that when the Quran promotes violence to those who do not believe like them? Who puts the woman beneath the man as her word is only half a man's word? You say you agree with the Jews and the Christians, but you take away from the Resurrection, the whole reason for salvation! Man was never perfect except through Jesus. Solomon, the most wise King in this Earth, died worshipping an idol. We all fall short of the glory! Prophet Muhammad had black slaves and in the Hadiths was mentioned as being the Whitest of all the prophets. So you telling me, as a Black Man in America who preaches Black Liberation, you pay homage to the Whitest prophets of them all, according to your Hadiths which you must adhere to?"

“Hmm,” Kareem simply said and shook his head in disgrace.

“Sahih Bukhaari 4:56:767,” Jah began as if it was something he was used to studying.

“This was narrated by Abu Juhafa: By chance I went to the prophet at noon while he was at Al-Abtah (resting) in a tent. Bilal came out of the tent and pronounced the Adhan for the prayer, and enter again, he brought out the water which was left after Allah’s Apostle had performed the ablution. The people rushed to take some of the water. Bilal again went in and brought out a spear-headed stick, and then Allah’s Apostle came out. As if I were now looking at the whiteness of his leg. Bilal fixed the stick, and the Prophet offered a two-Rakat Zuhr prayer and a two-Rakat ‘Asr prayer, while women and donkeys were passing in front of the Prophet (beyond the stick).’ I tend to place emphasis on reciting the whole hadith so that which whom I speak to, knows I know what I’m talking about,” Jah stated and left both Judah and Kareem astonished.

“Or,” Jah continued, “Sunan Abu Dawud 20:3200: I still seem to see the whiteness of the forearms of the Apostle of Allah when he rolled up his sleeves.’ Or Sahih Bukhari 8:78:631 where it mentions: ‘Then Allah’s Apostle raised his hands so high that we saw the whiteness of his armpits.’ Or ‘I saw that the dust was covering the whiteness of his abdomen.’”

“It’s funny,” Kareem interrupted, “how you are mentioning parts of the body that were covered and hidden from the sun. Why else are the Muslims mentioning it? Because it is different from his original color. We are talking about tanning here,” Kareem tried to argue.

“Oh, Lord,” Jah dropped his head into his arms. “Abu Tufail in Sahih Muslim 30:5777 says, ‘Prophet Muhammad had a white handsome face.’ Or Sahih Bukhari 1:3:63, ‘This white man reclining on his arm.’ Referring to the Prophet Muhammad. 4:56:744, he was white, and his beard was black with some white hair.’”

“It was referring to him in the form of a character, not his actual skin color. He was white, like glorious. He’d shone, like white light. Bright or dull was the description of the face of people and these attributes could be applied to any one of any color,” Kareem argued. Kareem knew the Sahih Bukhari was the most authentic source of the Hadiths, and the Quran gave evidence to follow the Hadiths. “Plus, if you think an Arab man who lived over a thousand years ago in the middle of the desert had white skin, I invite you to reconsider. From the times of the Prophet, calling him white does not consider the whiteness in an American context but takes on a quite different particular meaning. People will draw on their experience of whiteness in their own context and as they’ve come to understand it to determine what that may have looked like

on the Prophet and how he may have carried himself among others,” Kareem argued and left Jah feeling a bit discomforted. Before Jah could speak, screaming was heard, but the men in the room didn’t notice it immediately.

“Agggghhhhh!” one of the women screamed for a second time. Jah, Judah, and Kareem ran to the hallway as all three of them peered towards the back, then each other. More screaming.

“Agggghhh!” it sounded like Pita as the young men ran up the stairs and towards the back of the mansion.

Upon Kareem entering the room, men dressed in black Iranian ninja-style clothing were equipped with machine guns and trying to get a hold of the women.

“They got Hawa!” Pita yelled as she struggled with a masked man. Kareem was the first to fling himself forward onto the masked man that tried to get a hold of Pita.

“*Tatatata!*” another masked man shot towards Kareem but missed horribly. Judah froze at the sound of gunshots. Was this really happening? Jah was seen trying to subdue another man as these intruders looked to be clearly outnumbered when the rest of the crew came.

Judah witnessed Fatima with her knee on the neck of another masked man. She locked eyes with Judah.

“Go get Hawa!” she yelled and pointed towards the window. Judah gazed out the window, in all this mayhem, and witnessed Hawa being carried away outside of the broken glassed window. A hook attached to a rope looked as if it was shot from outside and clung to the base of the window. Judah couldn’t move. This was all happening too fast. He was at fear for his life but knew his mission from the visions would somehow save him. Or would they?

“*This is all wrong,*” Judah instantly thought about the situation as a whole. Maybe he was listening to others too much. So much that he found himself in the middle of Iran with guns blazing. This may’ve been it. Judah giving his life to restore a family. Naw, that’s nonsense. Judah had purpose. Or did he?

“*Tatatata!*” a machine gun went off bringing Judah back to reality. “*Tatatattata!*” it went off again as Judah realized Kareem had just killed two intruders with their own weapons. Judah instantly thought of the first murder ever committed. Cain killing his own brother, Abel. He was in shock, even after Fatima yelled for him to get Hawa.

Jah suddenly gasped for air when he witnessed the dead bodies. He instantly tried to remove himself, screaming, “The Vow! The Nazirite Vow!” Then he ran out the room, clinging to his hair.

“GOOOO!!!” Fatima yelled her loudest for Judah to get Hawa. Judah looked down and tried to think within the mayhem when he noticed his wooden bracelet beaming and burning his wrist. The lavender Halueve within the spherical ball lit up when Judah automatically felt a surge of energy. Even the gold dust was sparkling as the spherical ball began to spin. Judah knew it was time to man up on a superhero tip.

Without another thought, Judah ran and jumped towards the rope through the window like he was a professional stuntman. He was no longer thinking on his own safety. He knew he was chosen so he must act accordingly, but he never assumed things would escalate to this magnitude. It didn’t matter now. Judah knew Christ was with him every step of the way.

Judah slid down the rope with ease, burning his hands slightly and then planted his feet on the pavement like he was ready for action.

He examined the humongous backyard of this Palace as he witnessed the masked men throw Hawa into the bed of a pick-up truck. They placed a cover over the bed to hide Hawa as they were about two football fields away from where Judah was.

“Lord, give me wings!” Judah prayed aloud and began to run like he’d never run before. He didn’t know what to expect, he didn’t know what to do or how to do it. He just knew he needed Hawa. Judah ran through the garden that occupied the back of this huge estate, jumping bushes and avoiding trees and rocks boulders by an inch. Judah found himself enjoying the ride, as it felt like an angel was right there with him, guiding his every step.

“*Scrrreecch,*” the truck had taken off, but Judah still had his eyes glued to the vehicle. He didn’t feel himself getting tired because his blood was rushing was rapidly and he had a divine piece of energy attached to him, straight from the heavens. He ran with conviction; he ran with the Lord as he was gaining closure.

The truck managed to leave the premises as Judah was less than 50 feet away. He’d jumped the fence that stood at shoulders height with his sandals fitting him so perfectly, it was as if they persuaded him to run.

Now they were in the streets, and it was packed. Older-looking white, grey, and brown cars were everywhere. Kids were seen in Judah’s peripheral playing in the parks that were

nearby as everyone wore masks. Judah was more than alert. He needed to place mental notes on where he was traveling to, so he knew how to get back. Banners of that ‘Muhammad Hasan’ were seen again. It was as if the man was speaking to Judah through all kinds of medium. The banners were all the same photo but when Judah ran pass them, it appeared that the photos were coming to life and trying to talk to Judah.

“*Turn back,*” the banners of Muhammad Hasan would come to life and speak to Judah. It didn’t bother Judah as he would simply laugh at the devil. Judah felt as if he could see straight through the devil, but he knew he was also to be incredibly careful.

Judah would spot a tall brown statue of a man with an umbrella. There was a sprinkler system at the top of the umbrella to give off the impression that it was raining. The statue of a man was also reading something. Judah made a mental note to remember this statue as a way back.

The truck sped down a very narrow street as Judah ran through the adjacent park that was situated in the middle of the two opposing roads. Fountains were everywhere as children and families had no idea what was going on. Judah ran by at least ten fountains, most of them with springs shooting from them before getting close to the truck. He ran like Will Smith ran in the beginning of the first Men in Black movie. No, Judah ran like Forrest Gump ran when he broke them walkers off his leg. And it felt good.

Amazingly, Judah was able to keep up as the truck was coming to a dead end. The truck then made a sudden right, away from the fountains and more so into a more commercial area. Judah was quickly able to identify a pathway that lead up to the roofs of the adjacent buildings. He took it. He was able to jump on a couple of crates that led to the top of a Halal stand in which gave access to the top of the commercial buildings that were meshed together.

Judah was able to keep track of the truck from above. He saw the intruders trying to locate him by looking back from the drivers and passengers seat, unknowing that he was right above them. Once they thought they discovered losing Judah, they began to obey the laws of the road a bit by slowing down. Upon approaching a street to whereas the buildings disconnected, Judah hesitated. He knew not what was on the other end of the building, but something propelled him to continue to run. Something told him that it would be ok. Actually, something told him to jump the furthest he could. Judah closed his eyes and sped up to get a good jump into wherever he was going to end up.

As soon as he opened his eyes, he was near the tip of the last building on this block. Then without a second thought, he jumped. Being at least six stories in the air, he jumped, and time slowed down, but only for Judah. With his momentum, he was able to determine where he would land and he thanked God, mid-air. Then the slow motion suddenly switched back to reality and Judah found himself crashing into the bed of a fruit truck. The whole truck shook as pomegranates squished everywhere on Judah. Still, he managed to get up and look around quickly to discover the truck in which held Hawa going the opposite way.

The driver of the truck exited and began to curse in Farsi. Judah ignored him, exited from the back of the truck, and continued to run for Hawa.

Just then, Judah witnessed a motorcycle come from an alley and began to ride along the truck that kidnapped Hawa. It was clearly Kareem as Judah smiled at his brother's ability to get things done. But then Kareem exposed a gun and aimed it at the intruders while driving the motorcycle. This slowed down Judah a bit as Kareem allowed bullets to fly into the truck.

***"Tatatata!"*** he shot, and the truck returned fire.

***"Tatatatatatatata!"*** they released causing Kareem to skid off the motorcycle.

"No!" Judah huffed and ran to Kareem's aide. But Kareem was already getting up and boarding the motorcycle again.

"I got one! I got one!" Judah heard Kareem talking to himself.

"Reem!" Judah called out and got his attention. "You ok?"

"Come on. Board," Kareem ignored and tapped the seat as he started the motorcycle back up. Judah jumped on. "I haven't lost sight of them. I got the passenger," he said again, but Judah didn't want to respond. He then thought otherwise on even traveling with Kareem anymore because the man was committing murder. "Look at em!" Kareem said focusing on the swerving of the truck now. "I probably wacked both of them," he confessed, and Judah could even feel him smiling. For some reason this didn't bother Judah much, even though he was well aware.

"They going to the Mosque," Judah pointed as something told him they were headed to the largest structure seen in the distance.

"Right," Kareem could still be heard through the traffic and the bike as he continued to follow the truck. Judah closed his eyes, only for a second.

*"What is going on?"* Judah tried to have a quick chat with the Lord. *"Did I witness murder today?"* he thought. Judah looked at the back of Kareem's head as he drove this

motorcycle, probably stolen from someone, no one wearing helmets. But maybe this was necessary because maybe Judah didn't have the experience or even the heart to kill and steal at the magnitude Kareem did. Like, when Peter cut off the ear of one of the Roman soldiers. Or like when Judas would steal from the treasury. Judah took a deep breath and realized Kareem was needed, despite the sin acquired on the way. After all, Kareem didn't believe in sin the way Judah did. Allah was the almighty judge.

Kareem sped down the streets of Iran, gaining distance on the truck that had Hawa. Judah looked up and noticed they were approaching a huge mosque-like building structure with many people around. Horses pulling chariots could be seen in the distance followed by a dome decorated with calligraphy and accompanied by towers and other architectural building structures. Simply approached the building was absolutely beautiful. The gardens, ponds and waterfalls that occupied the pre-runway to this Musjid was detailed to perfection. Judah knew it was this beautiful Mosque where the mission was to take place. So much for enjoying their stay. It seemed destiny was already calling them to complete their mission.

The truck suddenly made a turn and looked as if it was moving away from the Mosque, but it wasn't. The truck was merely going around to another entrance to avoid much public presence. Dirt roads occupied these 'backways' towards another entrance to the mosque. Only a handful of people were scattered, minding their own.

"Just tail them," Judah said as Kareem gripped the sub machine that he took off an intruder.

"You just sit back," Kareem shot back as the truck continued to swerve. Before they reached whatever destination, the truck ended up losing control and crashing into tree, only slightly. Judah and Kareem jumped off the motorcycle to inspect the truck.

"No," Judah lowered Kareem's gun for him. "No more murder," Judah pleaded.

"Ok," Kareem was quick to accept, then opened the driver's door to the truck and pistol whipped the driver more than a couple times. Kareem then pulled him out and went to the other side to finish off the already wounded passenger. Judah, being at the back of the truck witnessing everything, went to uncover the bed and discovered Hawa there, laid out and unconscious.

"Hawa!" Judah called out but got no response. Kareem was heard beating the passenger to a pulp. "Hawa! Wake up! Now!" Judah said with conviction, but she still slept. "In the name

of Yeshua, the Christ. Rise, woman!” he spoke with authority and sure enough, by the power invested in Judah from the Most High, she rose. She was never dead, just passed out from shock.

“Judah?” Hawa tried to perceive her surroundings. Then she remembered where she was and began panicking. Then she peered upon the Mosque for the first time after regaining conscious and almost fainted again. Her eyes unnaturally closed and opened as she was trying to control herself. Memories erupted into her mind that she could not get rid of. The dogmatic religious rhetoric that was practiced by a selected few was almost unbearable to stomach.

“No. I can’t,” Hawa almost ran away until Judah kept her. “I can’t! I CAN’T!” she began to raise her voice. This once quiet and calm female, being filled with wisdom was now a loud and confused mess. Simply embarrassed by her mere existence.

“Hawa. Get it together,” Kareem tried to ease her as Judah looked on to realize what was making Hawa so afraid. He looked upon the Mosque to see the banners of Muhamad Hasan again. They were everywhere and they were trying to tell Judah something.

“Fill your Spirit with that of the Lord’s!” Judah made mention out of nowhere. “The demons that lay dormant in you, I pray they cease from your body. They be released from you in the name of the King of Kings from Nazareth!” Judah stated.

Hawa looked into the eyes of Judah and Judah saw even more demons. This reminded Judah of Mary Magdalene and how seven demons were casted out of her.

Hawa’s eyes were blood-shot red as tears flowed like a faucet, but she didn’t have a face of sadness, rather anger. She was really angry!

“Daeni ‘akunul! Al’aswad alkafari!” Hawa yelled, causing a few onlookers to look their way. Judah understood what she’d said in Arabic and wondered why she didn’t speak in Persian.

“She is saying *leave her alone*,” Kareem was able to interpret. As seconds passed, Hawa became more violent, trying to vigorously remove herself from Judah and Kareem.

“We waiting,” Kareem announced, as Judah stood there, still processing this whole ordeal. “Get them demons out, boy!”

“Ok,” Judah moved closer towards Hawa who was now foaming at the mouth and trying to bite both Kareem and Judah. *‘And to think I already casts out some of her demons,’* Judah thought to himself.

“A`udhu billahi minash-Shaitan nir-rajim!” Judah spoke in Arabic telling Satan to get behind them. This aggravated Hawa even more as veins began to pop from her neck leaving

Kareem to use all his force to keep Hawa from going wild. Some small onlookers now had their cell phones out and were video recording the whole thing.

Kareem began to pray in Arabic. Judah decided to get closer to Hawa and placed his hand over her head. Kareem had to hold her head just to keep her from biting them. She was clearly possessed, again. *'Even the devil comes as an Angel of Light,'* Judah thought.

“בשם האב, הבן ורוח הקודש. שחררו את עצמכם ממנה.” Judah spoke in Hebrew and immediately, Hawa fainted. Kareem released her and she fell to the ground.

“InshaAllah, she sure is going through it,” Kareem felt sorry for her. Judah didn't respond, rather kept his eyes on Hawa's body. He was focused. The Spirit was on Judah all over again.

“Now, rise in the Name of Yeshua,” Judah spoke in English and Hawa woke up. “Now, repent,” Judah instructed more than anything and Hawa began crying once again. Not a cry for help, but a cry of praise. She smiled in the mist of wailing and gave praise to the Most High for relieving her of the rest of her demons and fears. In a matter of minutes, her life was transformed.

“Thank you, Son of God!” she yelled and reached to the Heavens as some of the onlookers found this to be offensive. “Samihni! Samihni!” she kept repeating which meant *forgive me*. “Ana 'astahiqu faqat ean tariq aldam!” she yelled as it felt like she was giving something up from inside of her. Whatever she had, without delay, it was released. All of it. Hawa fell into the arms of Kareem, exhausted, and was renewed right then and there. The crowd that stood and watched were amazed and it was there that began the journey to Christ for some of these onlookers; going on to live their lives yet living for Jesus in time, due to this incident in which they observed.

“What now?” Kareem asked and Judah looked off onto the Mosque.

“Something is calling me there,” he pointed. “But more trouble is at hand,” he had deep feelings for how he felt.

**“Psshh! Psshh!”** gunshots could be heard from a far off and felt right at about the feet.

“Place your guns down! Now! Place your weapons down, Americans!” someone announced coming fourth with at least twenty men, armed to the teeth. Judah and Kareem looked upon each other and did what was best to do. Give in.

“Yup. Your God got us, right?” Kareem asked Judah.

“Always,” Judah smiled and awaited the soldiers to come forth as Kareem placed the gun down. The men then ran and apprehended Judah and Kareem.

“So, I see you have returned,” a familiar voice sounded. It was him, Muhammad Hasan, in the flesh. Judah had seen him communing with Satan. Hawa was supposedly his son’s mother.

Hawa said nothing. She simply let her head down.

“Take her to my prayer room,” Muhammad Hasan notified the officers. They moved without reply. “Take this one to the bathhouse. He is a true Muslim. Wash him. He shall collaborate with me,” Muhammad Hasan was referring to Kareem. Kareem didn’t light up like a Christmas tree, but he also didn’t refuse. The men didn’t even touch Kareem. Kareem simply followed them.

“And this one, Master?” another one asked, a general look-a-like.

“To the chambers. He has come to destroy Islam. He may be a spy for the American government. We shall find out soon,” Muhammad Hasan instructed. Judah then noticed how when the soldiers came out, they blocked off all on-lookers making it impossible for them to even try and record anything.

“This isn’t the end. Endure!” Judah shouted to his comrades. The guards took them one by one and separated them all. Judah seemed to get the bad end of the stick, but he relished in it. He felt like the saints when they were being persecuted, yet he felt he was going to live through this. Christ promised life after this in a way, so Judah was strong.

The group entered the Mosque through the backside of the dome that lead to a series of stairs. Kareem and Hawa were escorted upstairs, and before Judah was taken downstairs, he was blindfolded, and his mouth was stuffed with gauze. He was handcuffed and being guided to a place he could not see.

Then suddenly, after going through many doors, Judah’s arms were erected above his head. He could feel someone trying to take off his wooden bracelet, but they were unsuccessful. It was like it wouldn’t come off. The handcuffs were then attached to a beam above his head in which Judah hung by the arms. He was then lifted by this beam attached to his handcuffs. It was very painful to his wrists and shoulders.

“Arrgghh!” Judah screamed a bit at the pain of being lifted by his mere wrists and arms. He felt his clothes come from off his body. He felt the nakedness of his body. He was now cold.

He still didn't know what was going on, let alone what to think. He wanted to cry but crying wouldn't have solved anything. He knew his God was all powerful and that there was a way out.

Judah waited once he heard the soldiers leave. He tried to notice sounds and heard nothing but water dripping a far off. He tried to shrug himself off of the beam hanging him up, but it was no use. He was locked into a position. His arms started to feel weak and go numb.

“JESUS!” he tried to call out but mumbled due to the gauze.

Before he could think of anything else to do, he heard the door open, followed by many footsteps. Persian was being spoken with a mix of Arabic. It sounded as if various people from various backgrounds were in the room. It sounded like they were debating. Judah could only understand bits and pieces, a gift he still attained from the residue of visiting the Heavenly Places in his vision.

“Judah Masod,” someone announces as the gauze from Judah's mouth and blindfolds were removed. “You place a messenger at the right hand of God and call Him the Son of God. Why? Because he performs miracles? Because He embodies the prophecies foretold in the Torah? But when I perform miracles and embody the prophecies told through Islam, that of which our beloved Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, has never done, how come then am I not exalted? Yet, I am put to shame, just like Jesus,” this man gave himself a self-righteous, egotistic praise. Judah regained his eyesight and was able to look upon the man who spoke. It was him again, Muhammad Hasan, the Jesus look-a-like. In reality, a middle-aged Arab man that looked like he aged years just within a couple of days. He had a full black beard with small white hairs in them when just a few days ago, he was on television looking like he was 21 years old. It was very odd. He wore a green turban with a long green satin coat that was equipped with sleeves and buttons. Each button was a precious jewel of expensive value. He smelt like a fragrance only produced in this part of the world.

Judah looked up and tried to locate his wooden bracelet at his wrist and it was still there, but it wasn't glowing and beaming like it was when someone had taken Hawa. He wondered if this bracelet gave him some kind of ability and tried to activate it with his mind, but to no avail.

“These prophecies given to us shall come to past. No way shall we even attempt to reinvent the sacred religion of Islam or try...”

“But you are,” Judah interrupted. “You are reinventing the sacred religion of Islam. You all have! Since the time of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him,” Judah said knowing this

was the man in the vision that was speaking with Satan. It was this man in the vision that whispered to Judah, ‘One day they will ask you, “*Who is like the beast? Who can wage war against it?*” Judah was certain.

“I am not. We are not! I am Mullah Hujjat al-Islam Muhammad Hasan, Grand Mufti of the Highest and Immortal 12<sup>th</sup> Imam after our beloved Prophet Muhammad, salaaa allah ealay,” Muhammad Hasan announced. “I am a descendent of Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Muhammad al-Samarri, of the Four Deputies. Now, our very own prophet here has prophesied on your arrival and your purposes of *enhancing* Islam. Now tell me, what is it that you plan to do to *enhance* Islam?” he asked Judah.

Judah tried to think and take in the crowd. Everyone was dressed as if they were Islamic in some way. Some more elegant than others as there was close to twenty people occupying the space in front of Judah. Then he saw what looked like the prophet that was being referred to. This old raggedy looking man made his way to the front of the crowd to witness everything firsthand. Judah intuitively knew this to be a false prophet.

“I thought Prophet Muhammad was the last prophet?” he asked. “How then does another prophet stand here within Islam? Wouldn’t he then be considered a false prophet?”

“Precisely!” someone from the crowd answered in an opposition of sort. Attention was then gathered to him who spoke, and the old-looking prophet approached the man.

“Precisely?” the prophet asked, then touched him. The man that shouted that opposition instantly fell to the ground. Was he dead?

“Yeah. This is evil,” Judah thought.

“Now. Back to you,” the prophet spoke trying to instill fear into the heart of Judah. “Prophet Muhammad is the Seal of the Prophets. Not the last prophets. He is ultimate in status, not last in time,” the frail looking prophet made clear. “Now you answer me. How are you enhancing what our livelihood is, coming from a Black American? You aren’t even respected in your own country, yet you aim to enhance anything belonging to our religion, our culture?”

Judah wondered if he should tell the truth. Why was 1 Kings chapter 22 coming to Judah’s mind. ‘*A lying spirit?*’ he tried to argue with himself. This only happened when King Ahab was steady disobedient. Then Romans chapter 3 came to the forefront of Judah’s mind. But why? These verses speak on falsehoods giving glory to God, which Paul disagrees with because of the true and good nature of God. Judah was confusing himself. Was he to let his evil fellow

brothers know why he was really there, even though he didn't know the specifics? Matthew 7:6 came to Judah's head: *'Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to swine. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.'* Then again, verses from 1 Kings sprang into his head. *'Who will entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said one thing, and another said another. Then a spirit,'* Judah stopped to think further. *'This is a mischievous spirit, or a spirit from evilness, no?'* he thought to himself again.

"Please, elaborate as the prophecies of our prophet today are vague, at best," Muhammad Hasan spoke. Judah, again, thought deeply and carefully on what to say. He bowed his head and again, asked the Lord to guide him.

"You are mentioned and even seen in Heavenly places," Judah spoke towards Muhammad Hasan, causing the attention of everybody in the room to listen with much attentiveness. Maybe Muhammad Hasan wasn't really there, and everything was in the mind of Judah. But whatever it was, it was truthful, if only to Judah. "Your name and title is recognized amongst the Greats: Jesus, the Angels, even Satan," Judah continued. "There are creatures from other planets that have seen you and witnessed your pleading. You are somewhat of a representation in other worlds."

"In a manner of ill-will or of righteousness?" the prophet asked. The prophet was incredibly old and not comely to look upon once Judah got a better look. A cold stare was given to him from Muhammad Hasan.

"Who am I to determine what is ill-will and righteousness? Allah knows best," Judah tried his best to speak their type of language.

"What do they speak of me?" Muhammad Hasan asked in delight.

"Parables," Judah answered. "Through your son, Ali Hasan," Judah confessed to an extent. The crowd gasped and looked upon the Grand Mufti in awe.

"What about my son?" he asked, wanting to know more, and ignoring the crowd.

"Allow me to ask you a question," Judah started. "If I come to deliver you good news, why am I hanging from a beam like a criminal?" he asked.

"Because you came and killed those who were assigned to bring you here. Because you are casting out demons in the name of Jesus in an Islamic State," the Prophet announced. "We must tread carefully," he added towards Muhammad Hasan.

“No. Release him, he is right,” the Grand Mufti Muhammad Hasan order and Judah was released immediately. Just then, Judah realized how human Muhammad Hasan and his immediate people were rather than how spiritual they were.

Falling to the ground with force, Muhammad Hasan and his crew helped Judah up and placed him in a chair. “We can never be too sure on who is who. Many assassination attempts have failed me, and I simply wish to prevent further,” he added. Judah did not come to assassinate, rather he came to save.

Judah searched for truth in the face of Muhammad Hasan after his sayings and found partial truth in him. Yet, it was better to play it safe when dealing with such men. Best not to tick them off. Judah’s spirit caused him to look off into the crowd when he noticed someone else of importance that was covered from head to toe. Only the eyes of this person could be seen. Judah knew it was Hawa. Once Hawa noticed Judah had caught glimpse of her, she carefully placed her finger to her mouth. Judah knew to say nothing else and to simply go along with what God will place him through.

“Grand Mufti,” the Prophet called out to Muhammad Hasan. “Please allow me to speak my mind.”

“Very well,” all attention was then given to the Prophet.

“We must adhere to the prophecies. If not, you and all your successes and miracles would become mere humiliation, perhaps given power by Satan himself,” it seemed as if he spoke some truth. “Hawa is here. She has come with him,” the prophet pointed to Judah. “In the prophecies; *he who has come with the mother leaves with the son,*” he said as many remembered the prophecy. What prophecy though? The prophet was clearly evil. He looked like it. He resembled a witch with a long sharp nose and wrinkles round him bout. He spoke with a rattling to his voice and was covered from head to toe like that of a necromancer rather than a Muslim.

“He who has come with the mother, leaves with the son and strengthens Islam in all facets all around the world,” Muhammad Hasan attests.

“Also, the one who strengthens Islam shall put away with all imams and call them new names,” the Prophet debated.

“Children of God,” they spoke simultaneously.

“Exactly! This is not us! We are Sons of Allah. These prophecies must not come from one who travels from America. No! Not in this time! Not in this era because this would cause a

downfall on our behalf, do you not see?” the prophet steady tried to warn. “So, the best thing that we can do is kill him. Here and now. Him, Hawa and the other boy they came with.”

“No!” Muhammad Hasan continued to fight. I am well aware that this particular prophecy pertains to our very own 12<sup>th</sup> Imam, Muhammad ibn ‘Ali al-Mahdi al-Hujjah al-Muntazar who is still concealed in the Living Chambers,” Muhammad Hasan spoke, and everyone erupted into a shock. To know where the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam was hidden was a noticeably big deal.

“No!!” the prophet was about to lose it. “Naked shall the Grand Mufti of the Highest and Immortal 12<sup>th</sup> Imam be when he expresses his trust and belief in the ones they call Christ!” the prophet screamed in anger as Muhammad Hasan was realizing, especially at the naming of Christ. “These shall not come to pass. Therefore, listen,” the prophet stressed pointing to his ears. This baffled Muhammad Hasan. He looked to the floor in thought then looked to Judah.

“No. I will listen to you no longer,” Muhammad Hasan resisted. “I will only listen to our 12<sup>th</sup> because it is you prophesying these things. And what will happen when they do come to pass? If they don’t come to pass, this makes you a false prophet. If it is coming to past, why are you trying to fight it from happening? Because the prophecies also entail; *Our 12<sup>th</sup> shall announce that Christ is God,*” he said as the posse, again, gasped with air. “*The 12<sup>th</sup> show no resistance. The 12<sup>th</sup> ceased to live, and his Grand Mufti shall be utterly destroyed. Their legacy shall exist within the histories of this world. From a bad tree springs fourth a good fruit.*” Muhammad Hasan followed up quoting prophecies from God knew where. “So, then, tell me, shall I not sacrifice myself for the crimes I have done in order to bring my culture and my religion into something that will change the world? Shall we be remembered for attributing to the betterment of Islam through Christ? I wish for the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam al-Muntazar to interpret or react to these prophecies,” Muhammad Hasan answered his own question. “He knows what is best for us. If he confesses that Christ is God, then I will give myself up and all that I have done,” it seemed as if Muhammad Hasan was coming or the light. Or was he?

“Only Allah knows what is best!” the prophet tried to combat. “Not some robotic-man attached to a life-tube sucking the blood of...”

“Silence!” Muhammad Hasan shot! Judah smiled on the inside. Maybe this was going to be easier than anticipated with these wishy-washy prophecies. Even though they may’ve been

true, they may've also been inevitable and with that came a renewal, God's plan coming to fruition.

"Do not silence me! They've killed our men at the Hasht Behesht Palace," the prophet stressed.

"I ordered for you all to secure the one who brings the mother to retrieve the child in the calmest of manner. Only did you," he pointed sharply to the Prophet, "order for our men to enter the Hasht Behesht with weapons!"

"For our own safety," the prophet countered.

"For your own will! I knew the day the prophecies came into fruition that you would object," Muhammad Hasan revealed a sword from his hip that looked as if it was used in Islamic wars. The rest of the crew moved aside to whereas only Judah, Muhammad Hasan and the prophet were front and center.

"The rest of the prophecies read: the false prophet and all his wise counsel shall oppose to the coming of The Bringer of the Mother and Retriever of Child. Shall they be consumed by the fire." How does this come from your mouth? Are you not the false prophet? Shall we not be consumed by fire? I say bring it. I know what I have done for my own glory with my own power."

"I am not the false prophet," the old man testified. "And even if I were the false prophet, he shall be consumed to simply become refined," the prophet argued. *"To be shaped into perfection. We shall be consumed by the fire, like all men and only for a certain period of time."* The prophet recited from a prophecy that Judah knew nothing about.

Muhammad Hasan bowed his head and lowered his weapon in thought, then they all focused their attention to Judah. To an extent, the prophecies they kept referencing made sense to Judah.

"Allah will utterly destroy all things in due time!" the prophet was referring back to a statement Muhammad Hasan made about the prophecy. "Allah wills as He pleases. Maybe it is in His will to have you be misled. When do we allow Islam to make an equal with Allah in pertaining to Christ?" the prophet continued to give his interpretations.

"You are wrong," Muhammad Hasan exhaled. "This is bigger than us and the legacy," he frowned, frustrate that his prophet would not adhere to their destruction. Judah could not

decipher rather Muhammad Hasan was serious or not. He seemed eager for Judah to fulfill his destiny here yet was it a trick? Was it destiny for Muhammad Hasan and the prophet to disagree?

“How am I wrong? Are you to be trampled over because you gave your faith to blasphemy? Equating a prophet with that of Allah? Praising a man, instead of God? This is exactly what Iblis wants! Allah will destroy all things and you must hearken to the words of Allah! Not a man that roamed the Earth,” the prophet yelled.

“Get him cleaned up and bring him to the Sahn,” Muhammad Hasan ignored the prophet and ordered the men with him to clean Judah. They came to Judah and oversaw him with care even though Judah could feel the cold stare of the prophet.

“This is a mistake. He will try to transform Islam into something else with the help of your son,” the prophet was consistent and right to a degree. “It is only OUR job to transform Islam. Not a Western American Christian worshipping Isa!” he continued to yell. Everyone ignored him for a time.

Judah was escorted to an upper room filled with calligraphy and Islamic architecture. A shower the size of a whole room occupied this space. Judah was ordered to wash himself while he was given more clothes.

“No. My original clothes please,” Judah pleaded, and the Islamic men obeyed. They washed the clothes of Judah and dried them all before he was done taking his long shower. He’d simply let the water run down his head in thought, until the men guarding him considered it enough time. Judah was sort of in a trance, not believing what was going on. Judah would think upon Daniel being captured by the Babylonians and tried to imitate a modest presence like the Hebrew prophet. Judah wondered where his friends were and if they were safe.

As he was getting dressed, Judah decided to ask some fundamental questions to the men that comfortably surrounded him.

“English?” Judah asked one of the men.

“Yes. What is the matter?” he replied in perfect English.

“You all stand around me like I am going to run. Like I am being held captive. According to Muhammad Hasan, I am here fulfilling prophecy. But according to this so-called prophet, I am an imitator. Therefore, what I am?” Judah quizzed.

“I have a job and a family. Everything else is miniscule to me,” he sternly stated.

“What are your thoughts on the prophet?” Judah asked.

“The prophet is a prophet,” was all he replied, and Judah saw that this was getting nowhere.

“What will they do with me?”

“I am not sure, young man. Whatever the prophecy says, I suppose. Whatever be the will of the Mahdi.”

“The Mahdi? Muhammad Hasan is the Mahdi?” Judah asked knowing Mahdi meant the Redeemer of Islam.

“No. The Mahdi is hidden. Only the prophet and Muhammad Hasan have seen the Mahdi, or the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam,” this man continued to answer the questions respectfully.

“Where is he hidden?” Judah asked.

“If something is hidden, do we know where it is?” he asked. Judah didn’t respond, rather sat in thought, and continued to clothe himself in his clothing from America. The man guarding Judah took notice of his reasoning. “He hides here,” this man gave Judah the information. “If the prophecies are correct, you and I along with the entire world shall see him very soon,” this man smiled and then returned to his original position. Then he added, “But when we do see him, it will not be what we expected. It shall either break the faith of Muslims or strengthen it. Seeing you here, it will definitely strengthen my faith,” he spoke.

Just then, Muhammad Hasan walked into the room, accompanied by a child. It was Ali Hasan. The first thing Judah saw was the boy’s eyes as they blew up. They screamed ‘hope!’ The boy, in his hideousness, pointed to Judah.

“It is him. In my dreams, Papa,” the boy yanked at his father’s clothing. Muhammad Hasan was the father of this boy. It was just proven to Judah. “The Tribe. The Lion,” the boy approached Judah.

“Yes, I know, son,” Muhammad Hasan smiled. The boy ran up to Judah and leaped in to hug him. In the midst of slight confusion, Judah cried a silent cry. Everything seemed to be on the right path. Even the boy didn’t look normal, his presence could be felt like none other. Just being in his presence would send chills down anyone’s back; not because of how he looked, but because of the innocent, loving power that he bestowed.

“Please, save me,” the boy whispered to Judah. This took Judah by surprise. He knew what had to be done, but how? Take him now and just run? Judah shook his head and silently promised Ali that he’d help him. Ali smiled through his craniofacial defects and it warmed

Judah's heart as he remembered some ancient writings on Jesus describing him as looking somewhat like Ali Hasan since Isaiah 53:2 prophesied so.

Judah then stood up with the boy in his arms. "Take me to the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam for further instruction," Judah ordered like he was as important as he really was. Muhammad Hasan bowed and obeyed when the prophet walked in before they could leave.

"He will take your son and we will all be destroyed," the prophet said raising up a crystal ball that resembled something a magician would have. "Look," he ordered Muhammad Hasan as Judah decided to look as well. But before an image could be displayed within the crystal ball, it was shattered to pieces. Judah looked and Ali Hasan had his hand stretched fourth. Judah was the only witness of Ali having something to do with the destruction of the crystal ball.

"Ha!" Muhammad Hasan laughed. "Every day that passes I tend to doubt you more and more," he claimed.

"How so? Because this will happen to us," the prophet pointed at the shattered glass. "Destruction!"

"It is needed, isn't it not?" Muhammad Hasan asked then motioned for Judah to follow him.

Stepping over the shattered glass went Judah with Ali in his arms. Judah made sure to watch Muhammad Hasan closely because he was sure this was the same man from his vision making deals with the devil. He may be acting all calm and collective now, but maybe a darker plan was ahead.

"Where are we going?" Judah asked once they were away from everyone and walking down the stairs.

"To see the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam. He shall decide the fate of everything being brought to us today," Muhammad Hasan replied. Ali Hasan jumped in Judah's arms with joy, awaiting this day since his birth.

"What? Have you ever seen the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam?" Judah asked Ali.

"Never. Only the prophet and Papa," he pointed.

"Do not fear, Judah. I will only do as the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam asks and he is a gentle man, full of knowledge and wisdom. He's never asked me to do anything which causes harm upon another," he added. That last statement irked Judah because he knew of the atrocities that was placed upon Salima and Hawa.

“You liar,” Judah spoke without thinking. “How was Ali conceived? By force?” Judah asked as Muhammad Hasan stopped in his tracks.

“Careful,” he pointed.

“No. I cannot believe what you’ve placed Hawa through. Where is she? How come Ali cannot see his mother?”

“My mother?” Ali’s face lit up. “My mother is here?” he asked.

“Yes she is,” Judah hurried to answer before anything else.

“Where is she?” he asked.

“You will see her soon,” Judah assured, staring down the eyes of Muhammad Hasan.

“I see she informed you,” Muhammad looked upon Judah. “Uhm,” he rubbed his beard. “Did she also tell you that she is wanted for murder? Her and her mother.”

“Yes. I am aware.”

“And yet you bring her right to our doorstep. This is nothing but the will and justice of Allah,” Muhammad Hasan made clear. “Now, continue to follow me for our very own judgement,” he ordered, and Judah simply shook his head knowing God the Father was the only judge, not some man hiding in a basement.

They were led to an elevator that was situated at the very bottom of the masjid. The elevator was only accessible through face recognition security. Once Muhammad Hasan scanned his face, the elevator opened.

Just then, a scuffling was heard from behind them. Before Judah could turn around, Kareem jumped from behind some food cannisters and bum rushed Muhammad Hasan into the elevator. He had an assault rifle as he entered the elevator and held it to the head of Muhammad Hasan.

“Get in!” he ordered Judah as Judah followed Kareem orders.

“iina quat allah lan tasmah lak bialtaghalub!” Muhammad whispered to Kareem.

“You know not the power of Allah,” Kareem suggested. “You know the power of the evil one. The one they call Satan,” Kareem professed. “You and your false prophets and false Imams. Shame to you,” he thrusts the barrel of the gun to Muhammad’s temple.

“Shame to us all, brother,” Muhammad Hasan answered as elevator went further down into the ground.

“Hawa is in hiding, amongst though,” Kareem winked at Judah. “Safe and sound. I do not know where my sister is nor the rest of the crew.”

“We shall all be reunited,” Judah didn’t hesitate to say. His faith was more abundant than anything right about now.

“Please don’t hurt my papa,” Ali said.

“For the love of...” Kareem was shocked to recognize Ali in Judah’s arms. “This is Hawa’s child? This man being the father?” Kareem asked driving the gun deeper into Muhammad’s skull. Judah shook his head yes. “Look what you have done,” Kareem shoved him.

“It is fine. I was supposed to come into this world looking the way I do,” Ali tried to calm Kareem. “The gun is not needed from here on out,” Ali raised his hand, and the gun immediately began to turn red.

“Agghh!” Kareem dropped the gun as it became hot. When this happened before, when Ali raised his hands and the glass crystal broke, Judah thought it was mere coincidence, but now he realized that this child was special.

Kareem looked upon the boy, just as Judah and even his father did the same. Judah placed the boy on his feet, releasing him from his grasps.

“What? You got some sort of powers or something?” Kareem asked the boy. Ali didn’t answer.

“Ali,” Muhammad called on his son, as he’d never saw his son do such things. What they knew not was that Ali was only to show his signs upon the young African American boy coming to rescue him. He’d seen it in his dreams. He listened to his mother speak with him in his dreams about Judah. Ali knew both he and Judah was special. Ali even practiced his gifts when no one was around. His mind was fixated on goodness; hence God granted these gifts to him. But what was the bigger picture?

# 1 Melakhim

---

The elevators opened. Judah, Kareem, and Muhammad Hasan were in shock after witnessing what Ali Hasan was able to do. He'd just melted Kareem's assault rifle with the stretching fourth of his arm.

What was more shocking was what Judah and Kareem saw once the elevator doors opened. It looked like the Cerebro room out of the X-men movie where Professor X would communicate with other mutants. But what Judah and Kareem witnessed looked more antique-like and traditional-styled than anything. Pillars that looked as if they were made from sand occupied the roundness of this room. These sand-like pillars had all sorts of images and symbols on them. The ground was made from marble and the place looked detailed down to the millimeter.

"Go!" Kareem made Muhammad Hasan be the first to exit by gripping the back collar of Muhammad's clothing.

"Wow!" Ali commented upon taking in the view of this underground palace. Aside from the marble path, on the outskirts were fine sand that looked as if it was shifting. The air was lighter in here and Judah immediately sensed it. The lighting structure looked as if the sun seeped through various holes in the ceiling and was being reflected by colorful mirrors. Therefore, it looked as if the Northern lights occupied the upper space with shots of sun light beaming down. It was hard to explain, but something never seen by anyone expect Muhammad Hasan and the '12<sup>th</sup> Imam.'

"Please. Let go of me," Muhammad Hasan ordered. "You are in the presence of holiness."

"I doubt it," Kareem replied and never removed himself.

There was a large laboratory in the middle of the room, surrounded by large sand-pillars with various calligraphy inscriptions on them. The laboratory was equipped with all kinds of experimental equipment as Judah specifically noticed a chair. This chair had all sorts of wires and tubes hooked up as some kinds of liquid were circulating through them all.

"What is this place?" Kareem asked Muhammad Hasan. "This where the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam is hiding?"

“It is,” they all heard a different voice that sounded as if it echoed. This frightened Kareem just a bit as he gave up on his grip towards Muhammad Hasan. Before anyone could react, a small boy walked into the mist of them, coming from the outside of the pillars. No one saw him until he appeared within the beams of sunlight. He was dressed well and strode with sophistication with a tube in his hand.

“Oh my,” the little boy jumped when he noticed the company, speaking in Persian. Again, somehow Judah was able to understand. “I thought I heard my Father call out,” he spoke and even now, Kareem was able to understand, even though he only understood Arabic.

“Shareef,” Muhammad Hasan called out to the boy. “Go get your father,” he spoke in Persian.

“Who are our guests?” he asked in astonishment, a smile wider than anything on his face.

“Do not worry about it. Go get your father,” Muhammad sounded through gritted teeth. Still, all smiles, the little boy ignored Muhammad Hasan and was fixed on both Judah and Ali Hasan.

“The American,” he pointed, looking no more than 7 years old himself.

“Now!” Muhammad Hasan yelled.

“Calm down,” a man showed himself from the shadows. It was almost like these people appeared out of thin air, how they revealed themselves. A man that looked like the American artistry of Jesus had shown himself. Tall, light brown, a comely face with long chestnut brown hair. He looked like the Jesus on the walls of many Americans. It took Judah for a loop because of course Jesus didn’t have a comely face. His clothing was all white and he looked really good and healthy. Still, Judah had mixed feelings about the whole situation.

“Oh, Abu al-Qasim, al-Mahdiy, al-Qa’im, al-Gha’ib,” Muhammad Hasan began to praise.

“Cease,” who everyone supposed was the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam spoke. “The time has come. The revealing,” he raised his hand towards Judah and Ali.

“My spirit doesn’t sit right in here,” Kareem shouted.

“Mine either,” little Ali spoke, then directed his attention back to the boy, all while ignoring the request of the supposed 12<sup>th</sup> Imam. “In the last letter Muhammad al-Mahdi wrote to Ali ibn Muhammad al-Samari, the last deputy: *“whoever claims seeing me before the rise of Sufya-ni and the call, he is a liar and a slanderer!* So I know this is not the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam,” he stated boldly.

“Your spirit doesn’t sit right here because this is unfamiliar to you. I’ve had to exaggerate in order to bring into this world more gifts from Jannah. They call me the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam, but I am no 12<sup>th</sup> Imam,” he confessed, and this statement appeared to break the heart of poor Muhammad Hasan. His whole face shifted from that of excitement and praise to that of making the hugest mistake of his life. This was no mistake though.

“Then who are you?” Kareem asked.

“You are unable to pronounce my name. But they call me *The Green One*. I am from another world sent here to manifest Jannah on Earth. Like that of Melchizedek.”

“False,” Judah shouted, not knowing he was actually speaking in Farsi “Christ is High Priest forever in the order of Melchizedek according to Hebrews.”

“Correct. I mentioned a likeness, not a lineage. My mission here is complete. For we have successfully drafted a natural age regeneration cream,” he held up from a nearby lab table like he was a salesperson. “This is what I rub on you,” this mysterious man pointed to Muhammad Hasan.

“You may have perceived this as divineness and while you are right, you have attributed too much divinity unto me a person rather to that of which we bring from Jannah. This is the error of Man. You are steady looking for a King, looking for someone to come and save you when you must save yourselves. Or perhaps, you have already been saved and need to access the Kingdom of God to restore this planet,” he spoke and instantly Judah knew who this was. Not literally, but Judah knew this person to be of another world like the Cat-like Beings he encountered when he visited the pearly planet.

“Why do you call him father?” Judah asked the little boy that was already here.

“This has been my father for the last 13 millennium. Again, we are not of this world. He and all my siblings are scientist,” the little boy spoke truth.

“Uhm,” Kareem was left dumbfounded.

“We don’t age,” the boy continued. “Or at least it doesn’t show because we have something quite different than physical earthly bodies,” he spoke with intellect. “So, along with catering to the Children of Ishmael into the covenant of Israel, we also bestow gifts from the Kingdom. Many more gifts and inventions shall come into the Earth, but only through the ones producing fruit. No favoritism is at hand, only the faithful that endure shall bring into this earth the things that make it into the New World. It doesn’t matter anymore, who you are or where you

are from. Status and the like shall be washed away. All that come freely to receive the free gifts that Love has to offer will inherit the Throne in Jannah,” the little boy spoke truth.

“Haram!” Muhammad Hasan yelled in fury. Apparently he was upset on how things were playing out.

“How is it haram, father? Even you told me to study Sunan Ibn Majah, Hadith 4077. This is just one of the Hadiths that I do remember. Not only you, but in my dreams my mother was there telling me also to study Sunan Ibn Majah Hadith 4077. It speaks of Isa coming to defeat the evil one and restore peace on the earth. It was this Person whom I would build a relationship with,” Ali Hasan spoke, knowing this Green One to be of great assistance.

“Elaborate,” Judah was intrigued.

“It reads: *When their leader has stepped forward to lead them in subh prayer, 'Eisa bin Maryam (Jesus) will come down to them in a lavender robe.. Their leader will step backwards so that 'Eisa can come forward and lead the people in prayer, but 'Eisa will place his hand between his shoulders and say to him: "Go forward and pray, for the Iqamah was given for you."* Then their leader will lead them in prayer. When he has finished, 'Eisa (as), will say: *"Open the gate."* So they will open it and behind it will be Dajjal with seventy thousand Jews, each of them carrying an adorned sword and wearing a greenish cloak. When Dajjal looks at him, he will start to melt as salt melts in water. He will run away, and 'Eisa (as), will say: *"I have only one blow for you, which you will not be able to escape!"* He will catch up with him at the eastern gate of Ludd and will kill him. Then Allah will defeat the Jews, and there will be nothing left that Allah has created which the Jews will be able to hide behind, except that Allah will cause it to speak - no stone, no tree, no wall, no animal - except for Al-Gharqad (the boxthorn), for it is one of their trees...”

“Uhm,” Judah pondered.

“You are the Lion. The Isa that comes to fulfil,” the little boy with the Green One spoke to Judah.

“I am not Isa,” Judah knew that to be the name of Christ in Islam.

“No. We are not saying that you are. If everything were plain and simple, the evil and ignorant would grasp hold and destroy everything we are trying to relay to earth. Therefore things are reveled in parables and mysterious poetry of sorts,” The Green One spoke.

“Well, it doesn’t make sense: *When Dajjal looks at him, he will start to melt as salt melts in water.* If I am supposed to be representing Isa, who is representing the Dajjal?” Judah asked.

“Right. Shouldn’t it be this cat,” Kareem pointed to Muhammad Hasan.

“He has yet to come,” Ali made known. No one understood this, not even Ali. He just knew what to say and when to say it.

“Also, your prophet is a false prophet,” The Green One continued. “Even though he is accurately able to predict some future events, they come from a place of darkness. Dark Mediums are contacted.”

“That’s him,” Ali Hasan made known. “The Dajjal. It has to be. The prophet,” he lit up as if all this information were just being revealed to him.

“He will be utterly destroyed,” The Green One assured. “Very well. It is time for our departure from this planet. I will bless you, Kareem, for the fire you possess will transform the world,” he threw Kareem a bottle of the age regeneration cream. “That is all you need in order to create an unlimited supply of the cream. Allow the Light to shine through you, brother,” The Green One smiled and Kareem was shocked. He was being gifted something to him by an imitation Jesus and he couldn’t even start to believe how much power was in his hand. A whole new invention. Something that was unexpected since Kareem believed himself to be an Imam himself.

Just then, Judah peered upon his bracelet, and it was shining and beaming that lavender color within the Halueve. The gold dust would beam from the bracelet and Judah knew it was time for something active to take place.

“It’s happening again,” Kareem spoke, looking upon Judah as he pay attention to his bracelet beaming.

“What you mean again?” Judah asked.

“When they came to kidnap Hawa,” Kareem pointed to Muhammad Hasan. “Before you took off and jumped out the window, you transformed into an angel. Either that or there was an angel with you, bro. But I think that’s a signal of sort. Is something else bad about to happen?”

“I’m not sure,” Judah was semi-clueless.

Suddenly, numerous children began to pace into the Main Hall with the rest of the company. In the midst of The Green One was a portal as small as a baseball. But as more

children came into the Hall, the bigger the portal became. It was truly a sight to see, something you could only see in the movies. But it was real, at least to everybody in attendance anyway.

“Wait! No!” Muhammad Hasan yelled. “You can’t just leave! What will we do now that you are gone?”

“The answer lies within your own interpretation. The answer also lies within Judah and Ali when it comes to your fate. Before anyone could blink, they were gone, as if the portal absorbed them instead of them walking through it.

Now it was just Kareem, Muhammad Hasan, Judah, and Ali Hasan. Kareem stood there; mouth wide open as he’d just experienced humanoid creatures from a different realm.

“Am I tripping?” Kareem asked himself and looked around at everything. “What’s really going on?” he asked, but no one was able to answer. Perhaps Judah was, but Judah still tried to figure out how he was going to proceed.

Muhammad Hasan was just as stunned. He couldn’t believe his whole life’s ministry had just disappeared. His son, Ali, knew the destiny of his father from his dreams. He hated to accept the fact, but fate was fate. Some days Ali would wake up crying, even though his father has been the strictest of strict towards him when it came to just about everything. Ali Hasan couldn’t breathe without his father knowing. This was because Muhammad Hasan also knew of his son’s destiny, despite his deformities, and believed in these half-true prophecies that spoke on his seed being elevated in the realms of Islam.

“He seeks a place in history for himself. You disgrace me, Father. It is all making sense now,” Ali pondered. “He wants to be remembered in the books and in the realms of Islam for being the one who helped purify the religion. He will be remembered in the books and in the realms.”

“You do not know what you speak, young one,” his father told him. “Now give me that cream,” Muhammad Hasan placed his hand out in front of Kareem. Without thought, Kareem slapped his hand down, harder than what he had done to Judah before.

“But I do know what I speak,” replied Ali as the slap was played out.

“Get over here, now!” he told his son in anger, but Ali didn’t listen.

“Why would I come to you? Allah is Holy. Not you. Not some title attributed to other beings. Allah is wholly Holy. Unapproachable by man. Can God save you when you cannot even come near Him? When by nature we think ill will can we then approach Allah? Why no! Why

not? Will we not simply cease to exist? Does not Allah want us to have life?” Ali kept asking questions and answering them himself.

“Allah is all forgiving,” Kareem spoke trying to be a part of the conversation while also still amazed at the supernatural things that have just transpired.

“Allah is Just! Allah is Order! Was not the Law given to us through the Hebrews? Yet, according to our religion, our bad deeds are weighed against our charitable deeds. Who knows how much a specific sin weighs in comparison to a good deed? Even Prophet Muhammad did not know whether he was going to heaven or hell. Where is the certainty in one’s salvation?” Ali spoke with sophistication. Even though he looked the way he did, he spoke softly but with conviction.

“Allah is our Salvation,” Muhammad spoke.

“Again, Allah is Just. Allah is Order. The wages of sin is death! Sin hath no place near God. Therefore, how can God save you if you aren’t permitted near Him?” Ali turned with upturned hands towards Judah.

“God would have to become like me, to save me,” Judah spoke. “He would have to dumb it down. Maybe even be born through a woman to become a man.”

“Ahhh,” Ali smiled the best he could. “There it is.”

“Haram!” Muhammad Hasan spoke, knowing where this was going.

“Allah is love. But He is also Just and never changes. His very nature is good, therefore evil simply disintegrates in His presence. That means we disintegrate in His presence because our nature is evil, no matter if you think you’ve lived a perfect life or not. Even if you are unaware of your transgressions, you will still be held accountable for them. But does God really want that? No! He doesn’t want to judge us. He wants to forgive us. He doesn’t want us to disintegrate in front of Him, therefore we must be made Holy,” it seemed like Ali was giving his father a philosophical and theological reasoning session rather than going to war with him.

“But the Quran says...”

“But the Quran has been interpreted differently! For hundreds of years!” Ali interrupted his father. Muhammad and Kareem slightly gasped for air. “We must rectify the Surahs with the most elite theologians! We must not take away from the Scriptures or the Surahs and say they were altered. Everything alters as the days pass. How can a book, namely the Quran tell a people to follow another book, namely the Scriptures, while also condemning it? It doesn’t make sense.

We say: *Woe to those who write the book with their own hands in exchange for a small amount of money, woe to them by what their hands have written and woe to them from what they were doing.* Yet in the same breath we say: *Allah has sent down before you the Book of Truth, confirming what was before it. He revealed the Torah and the Gospel. Before, as guidance for the people. And He revealed the Quran.* So how it is that we hold the Bible to be a work of God and to be true when the Bible tells us that Christ is the Son of God, that He died for the sins of man and that He defeated death through resurrection. Yet, we do not believe the basic fundamentals of what the Bible is trying to teach us. We call the Christians blasphemers for simply listening to what Yeshua said in the Bible,” it seemed as if Ali were making very bold claims. “So, now. Therefore and how can we be saved so that we can stand in front of God? Does Allah will it? He can. But He is Order! He is Just. We are children of god, able to decipher right from wrong. If God forgave all the time, then we would downplay the consequences of sin and continue to drown in our own ignorance. Therefore, something must be done for a remission of sins. What is that?” Ali pointed to Judah again.

“Life for a life,” Judah answered.

“Innocent life for a guilty one,” Ali corrected. “And why? Because life is in the blood. Sin is purified with blood. Why?” he continued to ask and answer his own questions. “How do you think Allah felt when He had to kill an innocent animal in order to make clothes for the first King and Queen of the Earth, because they’d dressed themselves in leaves? Do you think he flinched?” Ali looked around the room. Judah was the only one to agree while everyone else attentively listened.

“The animals death was not only a reminder of sin’s tragic consequences, but its life was also offered as a symbolic substitute,” Judah decided to jump in. “If sin vandalizes God’s world with death and pain, God has every right to make people face the consequences, because as the people, we chose it. God already tells you what it is, but He also loves His creation and does not want man to die nor to kill man, so the animal’s life is symbolically offered as a ransom payment that would cover the sins of man.”

“But God did not breathe life into animals to make them living beings. He only breathed life into Adam. So how could animals be used as a substitution. Because they’re innocent?”

“But animals are living beings. In the judgement of the Flood, we see that animals and people were judged. But you right in a sense though. The breath breathed into Adam by God was that of something personal. It elevated Man above all creation,” Judah tried to explain.

“But when Muslims kill an animal, it is not for remissions of our sins. It is Halal, for food. So, therefore, what cleanses us of the bad deeds we’ve done so that we may be with Allah? Sacrificing animals and not simply asking God for forgiveness?” Kareem asked.

“I’m all about asking God for forgiveness, confessing my sins and whatnot. But I don’t do it so I can be forgiven. I am already forgiven. Me confessing my sins is simply protocol because I walk in the Spirit. I wish to do nothing that offends God. I don’t believe it’s biblical to say that it is a requirement or even a commandment to ask for forgiveness in order to be forgiven or restore fellowship with God.”

“Right!” Ali shouted but then Judah interrupted quoting from Scripture.

“And then with the sacrifices. Isaiah reads: The multitude of your sacrifice – what are they to me? Says the LORD. I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs, and goats.”

“Therefore, He must become like us. Experience like us. He must walk with us, teach us the Way, resist temptation as an enormously powerful Person, then be the perfect sacrifice for the sins of man to grant us access to the Kingdom of God. Only a perfect man from a perfect God could do this. A man that knew no sin. Born from the seed of God and not through the seed of Man. An aspect of Allah. The Godhead sending a part of Himself,” Ali preached but it all sounded alien to Muhammad Hasan.

“He should not send an angel as angels are creatures like us,” Judah spoke up. “Neither shall man be sent to die because he too is a sinner. The One, who is God, must become a Human Being to intervene and grant us salvation. It is in the Order of Man, of God.”

“And to think, why did Allah create such a gruesome payment for sin? Having to kill an innocent animal in replace of the bad we do. Shall we then ignore the life and death seriousness of sin? Anything less than blood would’ve devalued forgiveness of sin. The blood of Christ did it once and for all,” Ali preached. “Come to Christ!” he ordered both his father and Kareem.

They both laughed at Ali, but Judah stood beside him.

“Cute story,” Muhammad Hasan told his son. “Now, what is it that I shall do with you?” he said with malice in his voice.

It seemed as if his son preached that of which was heresy to Islam and his father instantly disproved it. Islam was to reign through the Prophet Muhammad, not through Jesus. Jesus was merely a Prophet and Ali spoke of Him as a sacrifice. Muhammad Hasan, being a descendant of Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Muhammad al-Samarri, had to fix this mess before it got out of hand.

Muhammad Hasan suddenly ran behind a pillar and caught the attention of everyone. He ran towards where there were decorations of weapons on one of the pillars. He jumped and equipped himself with a sword. He appeared furious, but for what? Because Ali spoke a forbidden doctrine.

“You come into my country, rid the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam, take what was left for me, my child and the divine product that had been assessed on me for years! I guaranteed you and over my dead body, you will not leave here alive,” Muhammad Hasan displayed his sword and approached the boys slowly.

Kareem didn't think twice. He ran towards the same pillar, sweeping past Muhammad to throw him off guard a bit. Kareem jumped the pillar and snatched a spear off. Again, without thought, he threw the spear as hard as could towards Muhammad Hasan hitting him in the thigh. It played out so fast, that again, Judah was overwhelmingly thankful for Kareem and his aggressive behavior.

“Aggh,” Muhammad Hasan grunted when he was speared, causing the sword to flee from his hands. Judah went to retrieve the sword Muhammad dropped, but Muhammad was right behind him, being quicker than the average for his regenerated age and with a spear in his leg. As soon as Judah picked the sword up, was he driven towards another pillar by Muhammad's force. Judah was hemmed up against the wall as Muhammad attempted to take his sword back. Judah held on for dear life as Kareem was making his way over, but Muhammad knew Kareem was coming.

“Agghh!” Kareem screamed in agony, as Muhammad swung his arm backwards once he got close enough. Muhammad then threw Judah to the ground, yet Judah retained possession of the sword. Kareem and Judah regained their composure as Muhammad Hasan began to limp away from them slowly. He quickly grabbed another spear-like weapon from another pillar.

“Father! Stop it!” Ali screamed but Muhammad Hasan looked as if he’d become possessed in an instant. This yelling caught the attention of Judah, which caused Muhammad to try and attack. Muhammad felt as if he could go for the weakest link.

“Judah! Watch out!” Kareem yelled as Judah unconsciously ducked, uplifting the sword to block Muhammad Hasan’s strike. Their weapons clanged as Muhammad Hasan tried to overpower Judah. Muhammad pushed down on what looked like a spear. In fact, it was an Anazah; the exact same Anazah Prophet Muhammad had possession of in his days. Prophet Muhammad held this same Anazah while attending festivals and he used to place it in front of him when he led the prayer, using it as a sutrah. Sometimes, Muhammad walked while holding this specific spear.

“Agghhh!” Muhammad Hasan tried to press with force unto Judah when he was knocked down by Kareem who’d come from the back with only his fist.

Almost like magic, Muhammad Hasan recouped as if he trained in the martial arts. He swung the Anazah with regained composure as the tip of the spear side-swiped Kareem in the face, causing him to fall back. At once, Judah knew this was in reference to Ben’s dream about Scar and Mufasa. Then Muhammad looked directly at Judah with evil in his eyes. He’d allowed Satan to overthrow him, to enter into him and attempt to destroy what was yet to come. But God reigns.

Muhammad Hasan screamed as he charged Judah with the Anazah.

With his sword, Judah lifted himself from his knee and timed when the spear was close enough to chop it with the sword. It was risky but he had no other option. What good was running when a spear would be coming through your back?

“Agh!” Muhammad decided to throw the spear instead of charge it into Judah. Before Judah could even think to swing the sword, the spear had hit him dead in the chest.

“Judah!” Kareem yelled out, seeing the spear hit him. Continuing to look on, Kareem also noticed the spear bounced off him. It didn’t penetrate Judah.

Judah almost blacked out from shock but when he realized he felt nothing, he simply stumbled there in his place, amazed and shocked. He had to process what happened, and fast.

Muhammad Hasan witnessed in awe and had stopped storming towards Judah from his amazement that the spear did not penetrate. Everything and everyone stopped.

“What is it that you are?” Muhammad asked, walking slowly towards Judah, yet Judah knew the Spirit of the Lord was present as his bracelet was spinning at a thousand lightyears per second. He knew he had an assignment and he had to rescue Ali.

“Ali,” Judah looked about but couldn’t find him.

“He will deceive you,” Muhammad Hasan smiled and continued to get closer to Judah, as if Satan had reintroduced himself unto Muhammad Hasan. Kareem stood and ran towards Muhammad. “Allah deceives those who He wills,” he continued to speak as he heard Kareem running from behind. But just from that statement, it seemed, is when Kareem stopped running. As if Kareem had received a revelation just from what Muhammad had spoken.

*“Allah deceives those who He wills,”* Kareem thought to himself and took a good and literal look at himself. All eyes were on Kareem as if he were about to do something, but instead Kareem kneeled and began to cry. He tried to fight it, but the tears would not stop. He sniffed and whimpered trying his hardest to not give in to an all-out hail of crying.

He looked upon Judah and Muhammad Hasan. He realized why he was here, right then and there. His inner child came out, right then and there.

“O Allah!” he screamed to his lungs, something Judah never seen Kareem do. All up until now, Kareem was afraid. He was afraid for his life. He was afraid for his beliefs. He was simply afraid. But now, he cried unto the Lord. “Allah!” he screamed again and stood up, pleading with his God. “Have we not wronged ourselves?” he screamingly asked, saliva dripping from his mouth, veins popping from his neck. “Allah!” he screamed again and this time around it had really caught the attention of Muhammad Hasan to whereas he turned to face Kareem.

“Shut up!” Muhammad Hasan roared through gritted teeth, like Kareem’s yelling was aggravating him.

“If you do not forgive us and have mercy on us, we will surely be the losers!” Kareem shouted; eyes blinded by the tears cast upon him by the Lord.

“I said shut up!” Muhammad Hasan repeated, now slowly walking towards Kareem, yet Kareem was in a deep meditational prayer as he paced the floor back and forth. He was conversing with his Maker, be it through Jesus, directly to Allah or YWHW.

“Repent!” Kareem pointed to Muhammad. *“Repent to Allah with sincere repentance. Perhaps!”* Kareem stopped his pace and pointed to Muhammad Hasan as he was now being seen removing a dagger from his backside. “Perhaps, I repeat!” Kareem looked up into the sky,

talking concurrently with God and the ones present. “*Perhaps your Lord will remove from you your misdeeds and admit you into gardens beneath which rivers flow,*” Kareem quoted from The Prohibition in the Quran. “Perhaps!? Who wants a perhaps?” he continued to cry. “What about a promise?” he called out in which Judah’s attention was truly captured. “No perhaps, but a promise!”

“I will cut your tongue from your mouth,” Muhammad threatened, raising his dagger. Judah looked about and Ali was still nowhere in sight. He could’ve stopped this.

“*Lord, help!*” Judah cried to himself. Kareem continued to pray and chastise as Muhammad Hasan still made his way towards Kareem.

“We say: *Our Lord, so forgive us our sins and remove from us our misdeed and cause us to die with the righteous.* But I tell you, with the faith endowed on the Islamic community, we do not have to see death! Has not death been defeated at the cross!?” he exclaimed. This foreign preaching was irking Muhammad Hasan the most. “*O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah, for Allah forgives all sins, for He is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful!* But I tell you, does not the Son also forgive sins?” Kareem said which made Muhammad stutter-step a bit. Judah had a small window to attack, but he hesitated. “Has not all power been given to the Son, in whom Allah exist, and in turn has been given to us through belief and faith? In whom Allah is the Father of, both us and the perfect sacrifice? In whom Allah sent to restore humanity through the Kingdom of Allah? In whom is the seed of Allah, a new creature, different from Man knowing sin?”

“Silence!” Muhammad yelled to Kareem while moving about, preparing to attack. The Quranic verses Kareem began to interpret were heavily distracting Muhammad Hasan.

“Indeed, they who conceal what Allah has sent down of the Book and exchange it for a small price – those consume not into their bellies except the Fire. What is this Book?” Kareem was still yelling, so that everyone could hear him. “This is the Torah! The Scriptures! For they are complete! The Quran is also complete, but how have we interpreted them all? With carnal or spiritual minds?” Kareem yelled. It was all making sense now. “There is no power that can alter the fulfillment of His promises. Perfected is the Word of thy Lord in truth and justice. There is naught that can change His words,” Kareem was clearly reciting surahs, but then he would venture into his own commentaries and interpretations. “Yes, the eternal Words which are associated with Allah are immutable and unalterable. We do not speak on the words written in

copies of books for the words in copies of books are not associated with God but inspired by God and associated with man. Word means promise and God's Word, or Promise, can never be changed! And what is this promise? Redemption! Salvation. From what? The evil one! Hate, death, destruction, and disease! This is the case in all monstrous religions!" he threw shade.

"..." Muhammad was ready to attack as Judah began to move closer with his sword drawn. But was he supposed to kill this man? Kareem was totally out of it, filled with the Spirit.

"*Heavens no!*" Judah thought about taking Muhammad's life, then remembered what happened in the visions. He had some sort of weapon and was seen striking a man with it. Then, in that same vision, after striking the man, Judah was seen giving the weapon to Kareem and Kareem taking it with delight.

"We have permitted the enemies of every prophet – human and jinn devils – to inspire in each other fancy words, in order to deceive. Had your Lord willed, they would not have done it. You shall disregard them and their fabrications! This is to let the minds of those who do not believe in the Hereafter listen to such fabrications, and accept them, and thus expose their real convictions! Wait," Kareem stood up with the most conviction in his heart. "Listen to the next verse," he tried pleading with Muhammad Hasan. "Shall I seek other than God as a source of law, when He has revealed to you this book fully detailed? Those who received the Scripture recognize that it has been revealed from your LORD, TRUTHFULLY! YOU SHALL NOT HARBOR ANY DOUBT! The word of your LORD is complete, in truth and justice. Nothing shall abrogate His words. He is the Hearer, the Omniscient," Kareem had tears rolling down his eyes as it seemed some sort of revelation was being revealed to him.

"Enough!" Muhammad Hasan threw his spear at Kareem this time, but it was deflected by a source unknown to man. A white shield had shown around Kareem when the spear got near him and successfully blocked it. Everyone saw it and Muhammad became even more shocked now. Some loving force was protecting both these young men.

"God took a covenant from the Prophets, saying, 'I will give you the Scripture and Wisdom. Afterwards, a Messenger will come to confirm all existing scriptures. You shall believe in him and support him.' But what did this Messenger tell us? Huh? Who was this Messenger in whom Allah promised covenants with to Him and His lineage? Christ! And what was it that Christ told us? Does He not say that He is the Way, the Truth and the Light?" It seemed Kareem substituted Christ as the Messenger within the Quran rather than Prophet Muhammad.

“The words *I am* in the Greek language is a very intense way of referring to oneself, like saying *I myself and only I, am. Truly, truly I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.* This is what Christ stated. The Quran tells us to obey the Scriptures for it is true, correct?” Judah pointed to Muhammad Hasan, trying to use his words rather than his sword to disarm. Muhammad didn’t respond, rather he began to look upon the both of them not knowing his next moves. Hasan knew these men were covered by something or Someone far greater than him. Judah continued with Scripture. “*Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.* Therefore He is the Way! This is the exclusive nature of the only path to salvation. Therefore pay homage to the King of Kings!”

“Allah saves!” breathed Muhammad in anger.

“Is not Christ and Allah One?” Judah tried to level the playing field. “The law of the Jews are the truth. *But I say unto you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgement.* Christ is equating Himself with the Law Of God, the Word of God. How can you uphold a Man of such great stature yet take away from Him what He said?”

“The Jews have taken away the real message of the Scriptures. There is only One God!” Muhammad charged Kareem and threw his spear again, but the same thing happened. Kareem was protected. The anger of Muhammad Hasan did not bother Kareem, nor did it bother Judah.

“That is correct. Jesus teaches us this also. Mark 12:29, Jesus answered, *Hear O’ Israel! The LORD our God is One LORD!* Huh? Why not delve into the Scriptures with an open heart like your Quran commands you instead of the division? *You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder!*” Judah added and pointed to Muhammad Hasan when he mentioned the devil. Right then and there, Muhammad shuddered. He fell to his knees and began to sweat repulsively.

“What is going on?” Muhammad Hasan asked himself. Blood began to drip from his face. Then Kareem took the floor in all his glory.

“We point to the Bible to cross-reference Scripture to try and disprove, but yes! The Quran tell us these Scriptures are from God! *And imagine when thereafter Allah will say: ‘Jesus, son of Mary, did you say to people: ‘Take me and my mother for gods besides Allah?’ and he will answer: ‘Glory to You! It was not for me to say what I had no right to. Had I said so, You would surely know it. You know all what is within my mind whereas I do not know what is within Yours. You, indeed You, know fully all that is beyond the reach of human perception.’* Yet,

nowhere in the Bible do they worship Mary. They are seen worshipping Jesus as He enters Jerusalem on an ass! Jesus depended solely on God and showed nothing but humility, what we are made to be, humble. The way God works- in the spirit realm; so, when one depends absolutely solely on God, does that not make them One? Is the man now Divine since he is connected to the spirit realm or no?" Kareem asked Muhammad. "You have riches, underground passageways to hi-tech stations. And for what? To fulfil a prophecy not given to you by the Almighty?" Kareem was on fire, literally. He glowed like a fire was being shown from him. His eyes lit up like never before and a certain light radiated from him.

"The prophecies are true," Muhammad Hasan said with uncertainty in his voice, as he tried to look up and speak. But some other power was forcing him to subdue.

"Are they?" Kareem challenged, then eyed Judah. A slight tilt to Kareem's head notified Judah to attack Muhammad as Muhammad Hasan tried to pick up his spear for a third time, yet still trying to perceive all that was happening.

"I know not," Muhammad Hasan began to say, but could hardly breathe. "...what evil jinn you possess, but you shall die a gruesome death," he said and raised his hand as he still knelt to the ground.

The whole place began to shake. This was the time for Judah to strike, but he couldn't. Even after being attacked and fearing for his life, Judah still could not find the heart to harm this man. Even after an 'on-fire' Kareem motioned for Judah to attack, he simply could not.

*"But the visions,"* Judah thought as the ground began to tremble.

Then Judah witnessed Kareem also placing his hand forward. It was as if there were two forces working against each other now because the rumbling of the place in which they were in began to cease from shaking at the raising of Kareem's hand. Muhammad Hasan peered at Kareem, realizing the power coming from that particular way.

"Who are you all?" Muhammad Hasan asked them both, still trying to figure out how to defeat these young men and continue with the things that were falsely promised to him. Neither of them answered. Then, suddenly, before anyone could think of what was next to do, a swift *swoosh* was heard when Judah suddenly felt a sharp pain hit his buttocks. He turned to see the ugly so-called Prophet who had a bow and arrow in his hand. Judah hit the floor going in and out of consciousness as he removed the arrow from his right butt cheek in terror. He was too shocked to even say anything. The Prophet loaded his bow again and shot at Kareem, but the same thing

happened when Muhammad Hasan tried to throw the spear. It deflected. Why had it not deflected when it hit Judah. Then, after another 5 seconds, Judah passed out.

\*\*\*

Judah woke up with his whole right leg numb. He was still dazed. No dreams. No visions. Just a simple unconscious state then back conscious.

“Finally!” Kareem announced. “I knew you weren’t dead, but that is a mighty wound,” Kareem pointed. Judah witnessed his leg and buttocks to be wrapped around his thigh. He questioned the methods used to wrap his wound up.

“Kareem,” Judah announced. “You put this on?” he pointed to the bandages around his thigh going up to wrap around his buttocks.

“Yes. Thank me later,” Kareem said with folded arms and directing Judah to look beyond them. “Question is, what to do with them.”

“Uuuhhm,” Muhammad Hasan and the Prophet sat against a pillar, tied up in all their nakedness. They squirmed and tried to get away but there was no use.

“Something has to be done to them. I have a strong conviction to not hurt them anymore,” Kareem stated as Judah tried his best to stand and walk towards them. Kareem now possessed the spear, the bow and arrow and the sword that was once both held by Muhammad Hasan, Judah, and the Prophet. It looked as if Kareem had everything under control.

“How long was I out?” Judah asked.

“The longest hour of my life,” Kareem confessed. Judah came close to Muhammad Hasan and the Prophet. Muhammad had a look of fear in his eyes, something different from initially meeting him and from fighting with him. The Prophet continued to try and simmer his way out of being tied up with a look of dissatisfaction on his face. “What should we do?” Kareem asked. Judah then thought on the visions he’d had.

“I remember striking him. With something,” Judah looked around and tried to remember what it was. “Then I remembered given it to you as you received it as a gift, graciously,” he added.

“Is that right?” Kareem made that same smile from the visions.

“It is this,” Ali came from the shadows. He was holding a book with the title *The Book of the Wars of the Lord*. “This is what you are to strike my father with,” he walked to Judah and handed him the book. Judah said nothing and looked upon Muhammad Hasan in his defeat.

There was no more power coming from Muhammad nor his prophet. They were powerless, dead to the spiritual power they once possessed. Judah saw this and was satisfied. He didn't mind at all slapping Muhammad Hasan across the face with a book that read *Book of the War of the Lord*.

“The present and future humiliation of a man that puts on himself titles and lineage promises shall be cut down. His intentions were not pure. His interpretations were far from the truth. Now, he is to be humiliated and you, Judah, must proceed,” Ali stated. “I know not why or how. I do know that Allah is all wise,” he nodded, and Judah nodded back.

Without a second thought, Judah approached Muhammad Hasan.

“Wait! What are you...”

**“POW!”** Judah slapped Muhammad Hasan across the face with this specific book.

“AAGGGHHHHH!” Muhammad Hasan screamed unusually awkward and loud. Then he ceased and bowed his head. Judah looked at the prophet and did the same thing to him. The same thing happened. The prophet cried out, unusually for a time, then bowed his head. It looked as if they were passed out for a moment's time, but Judah knew not to hold back. He had put some strength behind striking Muhammad Hasan and his prophet.

“Here,” Judah gave the book to Kareem, as Kareem still wore that smile on his face. Judah wondered what significance the book had and made a mental note to delve into it later, but for now, he had to rescue Ali somehow, somehow. Judah also wondered what took place in order for the prophet and Muhammad Hasan to be tied up and so helpless. What exactly did Kareem do because neither of them looked as if they fought? The Prophet was not harmed, and Muhammad Hasan only had dried blood on his face from when his face bled.

Looking upon Muhammad Hasan and the prophet, one could tell that they were in a dazed state. No one knew what actually took place, but something had definitely changed. They were no longer hostile. It almost looked as if they humbled themselves to an extent.

“We've merely defeated them here, a story that is only true to us. If not killed, they will continue to go about their business and cause strife amongst the people,” Kareem made plain.

“No,” Judah and Ali contested simultaneously then Judah continued. “That would not be right, Kareem. We shall merely bring them to the porch of the Mosque, where prayer is. In their current form, in all their nakedness. We will cover their private parts and bring them to prayer.

Then the Holy Spirit shall intervene and cause these men to renounce their titles and positions,” Judah prepared to stand the men up and dressed them to only cover their private parts.

Afterwards, they boarded the elevators with ease, no signs of resistance from Muhammad or the prophet as Kareem and Ali simply went along. Judah looked upon Kareem and saw a different man. A man that shone with light instead of being impacted by knowledge.

“So, what happened back there?” Judah asked. Kareem looked.

“The Prophet snuck in and shot you with a bow and arrow that was dipped in some type of liquid that knocked you out. Then...”

“No, I meant about you reciting Surahs from the Quran and giving them different interpretations. Was there something revealed to you?” Judah asked.

“Oh. Yes,” Kareem bowed his head and left it at that. Judah understood.

Upon them exiting the elevator, the band of five discovered all the guards of this mosque to be on the ground, asleep.

“What happened?” Judah asked.

“Ali,” Kareem assured. Judah looked towards Ali at all smiles. When Ali was gone, this is what he must’ve been doing. “Yeah, they’re just asleep,” Kareem added.

“Good. Now, lead us to the front of the Masjid,” Judah ordered Muhammad Hasan and the prophet. Before the captives could even think to respond, the calling happened.

“Allahu akbar! Alllllllaaaaaahhhhhhhh akbar! Ashadu an la ilaha illa llah!” the voice blared throughout the Mosque. Everyone looked at each other.

“Adhan,” Kareem spoke, meaning it was the Call to Prayer. “Asr,” he added giving which prayer it was.

“Perfect,” Judah pushed the hostages along and was led by the Spirit on where to direct them. Judah didn’t know what was to happen, he simply allowed himself to be led.

“Here,” Kareem pointed as they walked down a hallway and up some stairs, the call to prayer getting louder. They soon entered a narrow hallway when Muhammad Hasan tried to stop them.

“Son,” he called out to Ali in their tongue, but Ali ignored him. “Son,” he called out again when Ali looked up to his father.

“Only Allah can say to me: *Son*,” Ali responded. Then he walked to Judah in all his youthfulness. “They shall be guided to the patio, where the call of prayer is being announced.

There, is where the Holy Spirit will dwell whom is not Gabriel,” Ali pointed to Kareem, “but the Spirit of God.” Then he pointed down the hall to where the patio porch was.

Ali Hasan then turned to his father and was overwhelmed with grief.

“You must recite the Ayatul Kursi after Salah,” he instructed. “You will lead the people, but in a very different way. Everything will be taken from you, father. You shall see me no more in my personal for as long as Allah wills it. As you are now, is as you shall be. Naked and truthful,” Ali raised a book towards his father. Muhammad Hasan immediately began to cry. Judah gawked at the book and noticed it to be a Bible.

“Is that Aramaic?” Judah asked himself more than anyone else.

“And you,” Ali pointed to the prophet. “No more a Prophet you shall be called, but a false prophet be your real identity. You shall be condemned, here on earth now and forever as with the serpent that tricked the first Man-Priest of God,” it seemed as if Ali Hasan was making promises.

“Curse you! Wicked, ugly little child,” the false prophet spoke vile. Ali Hasan did not let his words deter him. Rather, he motioned for Judah and Kareem to follow him with Muhammad Hasan and the false prophet in their grasps.

The Call to Prayer was finishing when the band approached the patio from behind the scenes. Judah and Kareem peeked beyond the curtains and could see thousands of people praying in unison with one another. It was a sight to behold.

“Take this,” Ali came to Judah with the Aramaic Bible that he had. “This is now your new weapon. Use it to strike both man and beast,” Ali told him in code language. Judah simply shook his head in agreement and was handed the book.

“What happened to Hawa? Where is your mother?” Judah asked while graciously taking the Aramaic Bible.

“She is escaping imprisonment,” it seemed as if Ali was speaking in prophecy. Judah understood to an extent and allowed whatever happened to play out.

As The Call was finishing, the Muezzin, or the man who proclaims the call to prayer, was coming from off the balcony to make way for the Imam to recite a surah to the people. This is where Ali told his father to recite Ayatul Kursi.

“Go,” Ali ordered once the Muezzin passed out after coming through the curtains by something Ali had said. Just his mere abilities caused his father and the false prophet to obey. Or so it seemed.

The false prophet was the first that was released, and he ran to the patio faster than anyone anticipated. He ran straight to the microphone, just his privates being covered and with his hands still tied behind his back. Everyone could hear the crowd gasp for air when viewing the false prophet in nearly no clothes. Many people knew him not, but just the mere sight of an old frail near naked man at the patio during prayer was haram in the highest sense.

“The Christians have come! They have infiltrated our precious Masjid! I call all real Muslims to come inside the Mosque now, armed and ready to go to war with the Christians that deem to destroy our Faith!” he spoke in Persian. Judah looked upon Ali as Ali simply looked at the Bible then motioned his head towards the false prophet.

“This shouldn’t hurt,” Judah was more than ready to knock false prophet in the head, for a second time and this time with the Bible.

“They are trying to rewrite our Quran and discredit our beloved Prophet Muhammad and 12<sup>th</sup> Imam,” the false prophet spoke as Judah entered the patio from behind him. Judah could see various Muslims entering the Mosque from below, coming to the rescue. It occurred to him that he had to hurry.

Without thought and while the false prophet was mid speech, Judah lifted the Bible and swung it towards the head of the false prophet, disregarding the aftereffects. Was he lead to murder?

“**Pow!**” the sound could be heard through the microphone as the false prophet took the blow with more impact than one could imagine. A thunderbolt shot from the sky shortly after the false prophet was hit and it became cloudy, fast. The false prophet tumbled over the patio that stood at one of the highest points of the Mosque, but as he fell, Judah could see a change. It wasn’t a man falling, rather something else. Judah ran to the edge of the patio to get a better glimpse and witnessed a snake falling. The false prophet had somehow transformed into a snake that fell from the patio. Judah watched as this snake landed on a person, this person becoming terrified and moving about screaming in fear just for the snake to slither away. This troubled Judah.

Kareem then brought Muhammad Hasan to the patio as dark clouds now covered the sky.

“Speak,” Kareem forced Muhammad Hasan to recite the Ayatul Kursi.

Muhammad Hasan, in all his might and nakedness, was able to stand in front the hundreds of thousands of people that stood before him. This was supposed to be his city, his country. He was well known as Muhammad Hasan was steadily in the News, signing peace treaties and trying to fulfill prophecies. Now he was subjected to some young cats from Sacramento, California. The crowd erupted in mayhem and some even began to throw things into the patio on high.

“Allah – there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of all existence,” Muhammad Hasan began to recite the ayat while coming face to face with sandals and pieces of bread being thrown at him. Yet he continued, “Neither drowsiness overtakes Him nor sleep. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission?”

“And yet Who has He granted permission to?” a loud voice could be heard in the middle of the small mayhem that began to erupt within the praying crowd. “To intercede with Him! Has He not appointed anyone?” she could be heard by many through a megaphone. Judah looked and saw Fatima in the midst of the crowd, speaking through the megaphone. Muhammad Hasan also saw her but ignored her and continued reciting.

“He knows what is presently before them and what will be after them, and they encompass not a thing of His knowledge except for what He wills. His Kursi extends over the heavens and the earth, and their preservation tires Him not. And He is the Most High, the Most Great,” Muhammad Hasan recited just as military personal began to storm the courtyard in front of the Musjid.

Muhammad Hasan saw this happening and peered at Kareem and Judah. Both the young men had a look of disdain on their faces and Muhammad saw this. With that, Muhammad Hasan had instantly deserted his new life of lowly, humble living and preaching the Islamic Gospel and tried to restore his presence as a political figure and heir to false prophecies. In that instance, Muhammad Hasan allowed evil to enter once again.

“It is her! She is one of them!” Muhammad Hasan pointed to Fatima holding the megaphone. The military personal immediately took hold of Fatima.

“My sister!” Kareem ran to the edge of the patio to see what was taking place. He then studied the structure of the Mosque and saw it was eligible for climbing with stone edges that

stuck out. Kareem ran and literally jumped onto the building and began to climb down like he was some professional rock climber. It was amazing, seeing the courage that Kareem displayed on the regular. Judah watched as the authorities took Fatima away and Kareem ridding everything to save his own sister. Judah admired him.

“I came to make way of the Lord!” Judah heard Muhammad Hasan say before he could turn around to focus attention on him. He said the same thing in Judah’s vision.

Muhammad Hasan was coming in for a head butt to Judah’s face, but Judah caught on and moved quickly, causing Muhammad Hasan to stumble onto the edge of the patio. Without thought, Judah lifted the Bible, waited till Muhammad turned around and smacked his face with it.

A loud sound erupted from the impact of the Bible smacking the face of Muhammad Hasan, sending a shockwave throughout the area. Even the people that were once praying felt the wave as they ceased throwing rocks and food at the patio. They were once angry that something unholy was being displayed in a holy place at a holy time, but this shockwave sent a message.

“Allahuakbar!” Ali shouted into the microphone with only a few people responding. Then he sung it, loudly. “AlIIIIIIllaaaaahhhhhuuuuuaakkkkbbbaaaarrrrrrrrr!!!” and the whole place roared to whereas the people began to praise Allah.

“Ali,” Judah took slight old of him, and Ali smacked his hand down, similar to what Kareem did not too long ago. Judah took that as a sign to back off. Surely Ali knew what he was doing.

“*To Jesus, the son of Mary We gave clear Signs, and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit!*” Ali quoted from a surah in the Quran. “Our beloved Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon Him, tell us to respect the Gospels. Does He not?” Ali spoke to the crowd who simultaneously praised God and listened to Ali sway them in the Spirit. “Ali al-Tabari, Amr al-Ghakhiz, Bukhari, Al-Mas’udi, Abu Ali Husain Bin Sina and Al-Ghazzali, our great teachers all believed that the Gospels in which the Christians have today are authentic! Why continue to fight with our brothers and sisters? When will peace be brought forth by us, the gods of the land? No one is coming back until we get it right! No Mahdi! No Jesus! Nothing! Jannah is here! The Kingdom is here! Reach up into the Kingdom and secure your blessings, subhanallah! Mashallah!” Ali preached.

Muhammad Hasan looked distraught. He knew not what had taken place. But in that split second, he realized something. He stood up, in all his nakedness, and looked upon his people as they continued to praise Allah and disregard him as any type of political anything.

Muhammad Hasan realized his defeat. They were bowing to Allah and the words of Ali Hasan as he preached truth. They weren't concerned about Muhammad Hasan's nakedness, his faults, nothing. He didn't matter right now.

He also realized that he had intentionally followed certain interpretations of the Quran in order to gain political and religious control, based on his lineage. He realized the false prophet knew his destiny as it was surely playing out, but still misunderstood why.

'*A snake?*' Muhammad Hasan thought and looked down on where the false prophet may've fallen. Even though he dabbled in the works of magic, everything happening was shocking to him as well. He realized that Judah and Kareem were here to help a people understand something that already existed, something they already possessed. Muhammad Hasan had sinned greatly, but Allah was All-Forgiving. He had sinned when he went into Hawa and produced Ali, yet Allah used that great sin to establish His promises and bring fourth peace before the End of Days.

"Shalom!" Ali Hasan called out as it sounded like the ancient language of the Iranian people. They began to wail like none other and praised the Lord as the sun began to shine through the clouds. Ali then removed himself from up top the patio and took a hold of Judah's hand. "This way."

Judah looked back at Muhammad Hasan one last time, knowing this may've been the last seeing him. He continuously stood in front of the crowd, amazed at what had transpired. He was in a daze. Whatever happened to him now was up to Allah.

"Judah," Ali called out as they paced. "Do not be afraid," he slowed down and pointed around the corner.

"Afraid of what?"

"The guards and the false prophet," Ali notified. "The serpent," he added, and Judah knew what he was talking about.

"Uhh. Ok," Judah replied still unsure about things until a real life Komodo dragon creeped from the shadows, displaying his might. Judah was not shaken, because the Holy Spirit was upon him, but wondered why this sort of creature was here and not in the Indonesian islands.

“Wa-la!” Ali presented. “Behold, the serpent. The one who shall be cast into the Lake of Fire,” Ali cursed when the Komodo dragon stood up on hind legs.

“He went from old man to snake to Komodo dragon. Why and how?” Judah asked as the beast crept closer to him. Judah did not fear as the beast roared and peered straight at him.

“The Holy Ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that The Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone He wishes and sets over them the lowliest of people,” Ali responded.

“That’s Daniel’s dream,” Judah replied, feeling the breathing of this beast on his skin as the dragon was literally inches away. Judah simply stood up to the dragon, gave him a stare back and prepared for any sudden moves.

“It is,” Ali nodded at the head and then it hit Judah. King Nebuchadnezzar was tuned into that of an animal when he disobeyed God. Maybe this was merely history repeating herself. “He is to help us escape.”

“Escape?” Judah asked but then was immediately reminded when he heard a band of people coming up the stairs. The dragon turned when he heard the ruckus and lowered himself for Judah and Ali to board his back.

“No way,” Judah smiled, and Ali was the first to board.

“Come on. We don’t have much time,” helped Judah onto who was once the false prophet. The dragon performed a quadrupedal when racing towards the company. As soon as both parties came into contact, the Komodo dragon stood on his hind feet again with Judah and Ali hanging on for dear life.

**“Bwhaaaaa!”** the beast roared when confronting the militia, armed with guns.

“Agghhh!” the men literally screamed and ran the other way, dropping their weapons at the sight and sound of this beast.

The beast continued to run and trample over the men that fell while running. This beast that felt as if it was traveling at 35 miles per hour, swiped away at other men as they mistakenly came close. The dragon was also able to grasp the bodies of men with his jaw, as he ran, to puncture them severely. Ali and Judah held on for dear life, admiring the things taking place.

“Aaaagghhhh!!” many men ran in fear for their lives as this gruesome beast ravaged through the Mosque, not allowing anything to touch Ali or Judah. The beast only seemed to care

for Judah and Ali. Were the powers of Ali Hasan controlling the dragon? If so, what was this power that Ali held? How well trained was Ali to both possess and use these powers?

“This way,” Ali Hasan yelled amongst all the mayhem, causing him and Judah to fall from the beast. They ran inside a door and all mayhem seemed to have stopped for a minute. They continued to walk into the room and exited out through yet another door of this confusing Mosque. “He shall die where he has lived for centuries,” Ali Hasan spoke pertaining to the beast. “Come on, this way,” Ali pointed to a vent like tunnel that was big enough for a body to do the bidding.

Judah crawled into the cubby hole with Ali and followed him for a long time through a tunnel that seemed as if it was underground. They crawled until their knees were bruised.

“Almost there,” Ali Hasan said, coming to a gate. “Oh no,” he mouthed.

“What?” Judah asked, being fine with Ali Hasan leading the way.

“The waters have receded,” he said plainly. “We were to...” Ali Hasan searched for something and noticed it afar off. “Good grief,” he tried to curse, pointing to a floating device that they were to use to get across. Then, the stench finally hit Judah.

“Eww. Is that sewage water?” Judah asked.

“Yes. We may have to jump in it to escape,” Ali offered.

“Jump?” Judah moved alongside Ali to look down. It was a long jump and the only time Judah jumped anywhere near this high was from a diving board. Judah didn’t even jump from the diving board, rather made himself slip. He wasn’t too fond of heights, let alone heights to be jumped into water; dirty water at that. “Can’t you just use your powers to make them sleep, like you did the others?”

“I did not do that,” Ali admitted.

“Who did it then?” Judah asked and received a look of bewildering.

“The Lord our God, you know this,” he tried to smile through his deconstructed face. Judah could do nothing but be brave for this young kid. He’d already been through enough. Now wasn’t the time to back away from one’s fears.

“I do,” Judah accepted. “Ok, ready when you are,” he took a deep breath.

“Kick it open if you may.”

“What about this Bible?” Judah asked, removing the special Bible from his waist side.

“Ahhh. Yes. It’s supposed to get wet,” it seemed as if something came to the mind of Ali. “Leave it once we hit the waters below,” he instructed. They agreed and Ali moved aside so Judah could kick the gates open leading to the sewage water.

It didn’t take much as the gates went flying at Judah’s third kick.

“I could sit on the ledge, and you could jump on my back so we could fall together,” Judah insisted.

“Ok,” Ali liked that idea and jumped on Judah’s back as he sat on the ledge. Judah looked down again at the large dirty pool within this sewage system. He noticed a ladder at the other end of the wall and knew he had to get there. Just as he thought it, Ali pointed to it. They shook their heads in agreement.

Judah scooted closer to the edge, preparing for the jump with Ali on his back and an Aramaic Bible in his hand.

“Wait,” Ali stopped him. “Allow us to jump at the same time the Bible is thrown. Then, with faith, imagine us descending slowly and resting into the waters in a calm manner. Please,” Ali suggested, and Judah agreed. Judah knew what Ali was trying to do and Judah was with him one hundred percent.

“Ok. Lord be with us,” Judah said with the most faith and jumped as soon as he threw the Bible. With closed eyes, Judah and Ali fell with force at the same speed as someone normally falling. Even though it felt as if they were going to hit the dirty water with force, Judah nor Ali lost faith.

They fell and fell and as time passed, Judah assumed they would’ve been hit the water. With the force of gravity continuously bringing them down, Judah decided to open one eye to check his surroundings. Even though it felt as if he was falling, when he opened his eyes, that feeling went away. Now, he stood on top of the waters.

“Do not lose your faith!” Ali spoke in excitement. “Boutros and Isa!” he said mentioning Peter and Jesus as they’d both walked on water by faith. “To the ladder,” Ali pointed.

Now Judah tried his best to avoid the *‘I don’t believe this’* thought and found pleasure in replicating that of which was found in his faith. He directed the path of the Bible so it would reach the ladder and it seemed the Bible had mind of its own. What they both experienced was something miraculous, yet again. He could actually believe it and began to push at the waters with Ali attached to his back. Judah smiled, amidst all the mayhem. Ali smiled and even laughed

amidst the same. Judah knew his whole life was about to change with the arriving of Hawa's son, Ali.

Judah reached the ladder with Ali and climbed. They came into a steam room of sorts and maybe by divine intervention was Ali being guided on where to go. Being let off Judah's back, Ali continued to run through a maze of steam pipes, boilers, and everything else associated.

"Here," Ali pointed. "Kick this door open," he commanded Judah and Judah obeyed. The first kick sent the door flying open and made the one on the other side jump in his skin.

"Shoot!" he shouted then recognized the man who'd bust in. "Judah!" he saw Judah and shouted for joy but then saw the little one. "Ugh," he mentioned at the sight of Ali.

"Don't do that," Judah found offense in Lamont's disgust at Ali. Judah then noticed Lamont having on some type of bulletproof vest. Before he inquired, Judah introduced. "This is Hawa's son, Ali Hasan. This is my best friend, Lamont."

"Oh, my bad, little man," Lamont bent down and out spread his arms to receive a hug from Ali. Ali smiled and embraced Lamont. "Yes, it was you," Lamont pointed to Ali after giving him a hug. "In my dreams, it was you! Finally!" Lamont rejoiced.

"Finally, indeed," Ali smiled.

"Come on, get in," Lamont looked as if he had possession of a vehicle now. Judah entered the passengers and Ali got in the back. This is what Lamont was talking about the whole time. It all made perfect sense now. Was the bulletproof vest a representation of the breastplate seen in the visions with the initials LMT on them? Judah allowed to let things flow while also inquiring about the immediate.

"How did you get a vehicle?" Judah asked Lamont.

"Right," Lamont simply answered, implying he knew not how he got it either. Judah didn't like when he did that. "But naw," Lamont began. "You remember them vivid dreams I been telling you about? Of traveling by car in the sand? It was like a continuous dream on repeat. Like, I'll dream it one night, and then a couple nights later, it'll pick up from where the last dream left off. I remember telling you this, but I forgot where I left off with you. Remember? Driving in the middle of the desert, seeing crazy Fatima yelling at something invisible and so on. Of course, before all this, I thought Fatima to be crazy but I'm realizing it's some sort of prophetic calling," he said as Judah remembered when Fatima spoke with the loudspeaker and was taken away. "Then after meeting Kareem in real life, I'd dreamt of driving past him as he

was killing people. I attributed this to my hatred towards him after the incident that night. But I never thought too much about it,” Lamont said when Judah thought about Kareem killing those people back at the palace. Lamont had seen none of this happen as he was in the shower when the kidnappings took place.

“I mean, I remember the dreams, but never thought about bringing it to your attention like that. Never thought it involved you, or us, to this extent. Remember I kept looking for him,” Lamont pointed to Ali. Judah shook his head in agreement. “I was scared at first because,” Lamont didn’t mean to point to his face and tried to hide it as soon as he did it. “But his presence is most pure,” Lamont smiled back at Ali and Ali returned the smile. “Then when I began to drive off, he told me to stop. I asked why and he said because we were waiting for Judah. I never saw you in my dreams though, so that’s why I tried to ignore it. Fast forward to today, only when I went looking for the crew outside the Palace, was when I discovered this car running with the driver’s door wide open. It was the same car from my dream. A white Peugeot 405,” Lamont spoke speaking on this old looking car that drove them to God knew where. “See,” he forced Judah to look. “This phone was left here with the GPS going to two destinations. That Mosque where we just came from and a place in the 5<sup>th</sup> District. I don’t know how to read these addresses,” he admitted.

“That is my great grandmothers house. Allah is All Wise,” Ali praised the latter to himself.

“Why do we have to go to your great grandmothers house, Ali?” Judah asked.

“Two things. She knows the art of illusion and a ceremony is to take place,” and those words spoken by Ali struck Judah and Lamont simultaneously.

“The art of illusion?” they both shouted.

“What does that mean, little man?” Lamont asked.

“It means she knows how to get us back to the United States supernaturally. Judah,” Ali called his name and caused him to turn in his seat. “There is much we have to talk about,” Ali assured him. “How is Benjamin? As a person?”

“Benjamin,” Judah smiled thinking about how his brother and Ali would pair to be something great. “Ben is great. The both of you shall do remarkable things,” Judah assured.

“Greater than you can imagine,” Ali assured.

“What about the ceremony?” Judah asked.

“Oh, you’ll see. Big bro,” Ali smiled, and it was the purest smile coming from a boy which such deformities. It literally melted the heart of Judah and Lamont.

## 2 Melakhim

---

Lamont drove for nearly 30 minutes from the Mosque, through the Iranian mountains and out until they reached a residential area. All the townhomes were smashed together. They mirrored the way San Francisco housing is structured, but much older, looking as if the housing were made from mudbricks.

As they drove, Judah peered at the divine bracelet that was given to him by the mysterious man who worshipped the Lord with him right after his visions. He figured it helped him in more ways than some. It helped him to run fast at extreme speeds without tiring. It helped him stand up against Muhammad Hasan and the false prophet. But how? And who was he changing into, based on accounts from Kareem, every time the bracelet glowed and spun?

“This is it,” Ali pointed as they parked. “Come,” he hurried out the car. Lamont and Judah began to follow.

“Bro,” Lamont whispered to Judah as they followed.

“Wassup?”

“Aye,” Lamont shook his head in amazement. “This. All this! It’s crazy, B,” he still couldn’t believe it.

“You have no idea,” Judah thought about the Komodo dragon ravaging through people, the so-called 12<sup>th</sup> Imam bringing something from the Kingdom, the false prophet turning into a serpent, Muhammad Hasan being gifted aging renewal and even his son displaying his majestic doings. Lamont had no idea.

“Naw. You got it all wrong. You have yet to know what I went through during the days of y’all’s disappearance,” he attested.

“Days?” Judah inquired.

“Yes. And many more shall pass here, at the ceremony. Oh, and here,” Lamont held his hand out for Judah to retrieve something. “I got this from a woman beggar for a little bit of nothing,” he said dropping ring in his hand.

“A ring?” Judah asked.

“Yeah,” Lamont simply assured. It was beautiful though. It did not have one blemish on it, absolutely flawless.

“What made you approach a beggar and buy a ring?” he asked.

“The Lord,” Lamont smiled and laughed with Judah.

“I don’t understand. Who am I marrying?”

“Hawa?” Lamont shrugged his shoulders, but that statement didn’t sit well with Judah at all. Would the Lord want Judah to do such a thing?

“Where did you say you got this car from?” Judah stopped Lamont from going fully up the stairs with Ali.

“Right,” he said that word again which antagonized Judah a bit.

“Right what?” Judah asked.

“Man, like, it fell from Heaven, G. I mean, a car sitting there, door open, engine running with a GPS system in there telling me everywhere in which I needed to go. I drove for so long, that the sun went away and came back a couple times. I don’t even think I slept,” he admitted, and this shocked Judah. What was really going on? Lamont continued.

“But this is accurate with my dreams, bro. Being with you, I should know to listen to God, even if it doesn’t seem right. Like, seriously, there was no one around, no housing, no store, no nothing. Just a car ready for me to drive. I looked, Judah. I did. I looked for any evidence leading to who car this may’ve belonged to. But after about 10 minutes of walking back and forth, and realizing the GPS leading to a mosque, it was only destined. The strong pull at the heart,” he pointed.

“Yes, I am familiar,” Judah stated, and they both shared a laugh.

“The Lord, boy!” Lamont shook his head, still in shock and disbelief about the whole situation. This made Judah feel better about taking the ring. After all, he was supposed to be agreeing to a marriage here in Iran.

They followed up the stairs into a home that didn’t look like much. Ali busted in the door without knocking, like he’d lived here.

“Grandmother!” he yelled in Persian. “They are here!”

“Oh my God! Judah! Lamont!” Pita yelled in excitement. Jah, the Rastamon, was next to her, all smiles.

“I found it! The plant. She’s growing it,” Jah pointed to the woman in the kitchen. The homeowner’s back was turned as they spoke, but she knew new arrivals were present. Judah immediately began to ponder on Jah’s feelings towards Pita. He tried to do away with them, but

something deep down inside of Judah felt the need to grow closer to Pita. Right then and there, Judah felt the need to do something, not knowing something was already being done.

“How did you guys get here?” Judah asked.

“Right,” Lamont tagged.

“The coordinates. Remember I showed you on the plane. The coordinates led me to here,” Jah said. “She is a direct line from the Qutb ad-Din Haydar tribe. The bunker, Christ!” Jah shouted randomness from joy. “Because it’s illegal here. So she has a whole bunker dedicated to this specific plant. Such an inspiration. I’m set,” he held up a small bag full of seeds. Judah suddenly began to dwell on the cannabis store his father and Mr. Greene ran. Hopefully, uniting Jah with his and Hawa’s parent would bring fourth beneficial results.

“Fatima instructed me to follow Jah for the time being,” Pita interrupted, still looking amazed at what was all happening. “Who is this?” she kneeled and outstretched her arms to Ali. Ali ran to the beautiful woman in full speed and gave her a hug. It was like Ali was finally home.

“That is Ali Hasan, the son of Hawa,” Judah announced.

“Oh my God! He is so beautiful,” Pita kissed Ali on his face, despite his deformities. Ali blushed so hard, it looked as if his face was going to bust.

“Thank you,” he almost whispered because he was so fluttered. Jah bent down and joined the hug like it was a family gathering. It made Judah a little jealous, but Judah would have never showed it on his face. What was going on? Why was Judah becoming so jealous when he was away from home doing God’s work? How could the Lord allow him to have such feelings when the Lord had shown so much to him? Judah didn’t understand and tried to subdue the feelings, but they appeared to be stronger than Judah. He began to say something to Jah when Pita spoke.

“Where is Hawa?” she asked to Judah. Judah looked and pointed to Ali, not knowing where Hawa was. He was also amazed that she didn’t mention Kareem as well. They barely showed affection, Pita and Kareem, but now a new player was in town and Judah had to...

*“No, stop it,”* Judah thought to himself.

“She is imprisoned with the other two,” Ali mentioned.

“Fatima and Kareem?” she asked, and Judah and Ali confirmed.

“Do we save them?” Lamont asked.

“They will save themselves,” Ali said and moved towards the woman in the kitchen.

“Great Nana,” he called out, but she didn’t flinch. Ali did not approach so readily either and it actually took the woman in the kitchen a while to respond. She was dressed in regular Iranian women’s attire, and one could tell she was a bit heavy set.

“My one and only great Grandson! One who has come to make a new denomination of Islam,” she turned with a slow grace to face Ali, Lamont and Judah for the first time. She was absolutely adorable. She reminded Lamont of his Grandmother back home even though they barely saw her face.

“Grandma!” Ali Hasan ran and finally hugged his Great Grandmother. They hugged with passions as this woman seemed unaffected by anything going on. She was genuinely happy to see her great grandson whom she too dreamt about meeting. She belonged to a lineage that would prosper all over the world. God had revealed the fate of Benjamin and Ali to her long ago.

After they were done greeting, she turned to Judah.

“You,” she came to him and rubbed his face. Judah felt a soothing energy.

“Yes, ma’am,” he answered with a smile.

“You are so special, darling,” she whispered to Judah, even though everyone could still hear her. “Allah has called you into His place and have appointed you to lead the little ones,” she continued to rub his face while pointing to Ali and referring to Ben also.

“Lead the little ones?” this being the first time Judah heard that.

“Yes. In fiery debates that will bring the slaughtered lamb to the forefronts of the minds of Muslims, Christians, and Jews everywhere. We will not lose our faith nor practices; we will simply accept that in which was once misunderstood,” she spoke, but then took notice of Judah’s wrist. “Oh my,” she took his arm and studied his wrist. “The True Cross. It has been transformed into a bracelet and decorated with gold dust from the 7th heaven. Oh how gracious is our Lord,” one could tell she smiled and was extremely grateful for some reason.

“The True Cross?” Judah asked.

“Yes. It will help you all return to your homes. I will manipulate the energy to help the others you travel with. For now, a calling is at hand.”

“Amen!” Ali Hasan sounded, looking for laughs, but everyone was playing close attention to the words Ali’s great grandmother was saying.

“Ali knows everything there is to bring his people to the knowledge of the true Christ. Someone young in your family knows everything there is to make the transition as smooth as

possible. Together they will be like Elijah and Elisha, the Two Witnesses, Prophet Muhammad and Abu Bakr, peace be upon them all,” she informed them while motioning them to follow her into her backyard.

All 6 of them went through the back of the kitchen and out the back door, except for Pita and Judah.

“You go there, and you go there,” Great Grandma pointed Judah to go to one room and for Pita to go to another. They obeyed and once Judah entered the room in which he was assigned, there was a traditional freestanding copper bath in the middle of the room with two women at each side. The room was decorated to look like the King’s master bathroom straight out of a citadel. It was humongous and shocking to Judah because he couldn’t imagine a room this big on the inside of a house this small. The ceiling stretched to about 30 feet in the air when the house was only a one-story traditional building reaching only 10 feet at best. It was absolutely breathtaking. The banners that were made from a rug material stretched from the ceilings, colored in red and gold. The plants that thrived throughout the outline of the walls were of all different colors, shapes, and sizes. Then, concentrating back at the women, they waved for Judah to come over and to remove his clothes for a proper bath.

“I already took a bath today,” he remembered on when he showered in the Mosque. It seemed the people here were big on hygiene.

“This is a holy bath,” one of the women spoke English. “Something special is happening and you would want to be physically and spiritually clean for it,” she confessed. Judah did not resist anymore and removed his clothes, having an idea on what was about to transpire. He laid his clothes out neatly and allowed the women to bathe him. He did not become aroused nor did the women send any sexual energies. This was a pure bath being given to two special people.

After Judah was done bathing, he was clothed in an all-white woven art silk Jacquard Sherwani jacket with matching woven khakis and white sandals with golden decorations.

Judah felt extra clean as the women had done their duty of cleaning and moisturizing Judah’s body with some type of Iranian butter. Even though Judah had an idea of what was going on, he didn’t want to jump to conclusions. God seemed full of mysteries and marvels.

Judah was met in the kitchen by Great Nana.

“This way,” Great Nana led the way to the backyard.

Going through the door, Judah was hit with a mist from all sides. Then everything appeared to be made whole. Peering out, Great Nana had prepared a wedding ceremony at the back of her house. More people than just Ali, Lamont and Jah occupied the backyard, all dressed in different Iranian and Islamic clothing. Judah wondered where these people who interacted with his friends came from as he noticed florals of all unusual colors everywhere along with elegant fruits and dessert displays. The lavish décor within this small backyard was truly something to adore.

“What is going on?” Judah asked in awe, looking back at Nana.

“You should know,” she smiled and motioned Judah to attend the festivities. Judah did not hesitate and went through the kitchen’s back door with Great Grandma.

“Judah! Meet my mother,” Lamont was overjoyed when he tried to introduce Judah to his mother. Lamont never knew his mother, only through photos, but even Lamont was changed. It was surely Lamont, but he didn’t look the same. He looked like he’d been touched by God, he looked alive!

“Your mother?”

“Right!” Lamont confessed. “There is something special here,” he lifted his arms up roundabout looking different than just a few minutes ago. “My mother passed at my birth, but now I know she lives through the Lord,” he cried genuine tears.

“Preach, baby,” they hugged as if his mother was real flesh. “Nice to meet you, Judah,” Lamont’s mother shook his hand and it felt like a real hand. “The Ones in Heaven rejoice at your faith,” she added and smiled. What Judah didn’t know was that here, in this backyard, sat his former ancestors and the ancestors of Lamont, Ali, Jah and Pita. Jah was being introduced to people he’d only heard about. Ali had also changed and no longer had the deformities in his face nor body. He appeared to be healed and refreshed. Ali received knowledge from his Iranian ancestors who knew what death was and how to defeat it.

“The ceremonies are about to begin,” Great Nana announced, and everyone began to move to their seats. Great Grandma took the pedestal and Judah stood at her right side with Lamont right behind as his best man followed by Jah and a host of other ancestors that Judah did not know but knew. On the other side stood the ancestors of Pita.

One wouldn’t call this event a resurrection or even a play on the mind. These ancestors were literally here in spirit and Judah’s posse could see them and interact with them because the

Spirit of God had descended upon them. Similar to Jesus meeting Moses and Elijah at the Mount of Transfiguration. Judah could see how the faces of his friends had changed. Ali Hasan no longer had his deformities, Jah and Lamont looked much older but wiser. It was amazing. It was as if everyone had transfigured.

“This way,” Great Nana pointed to an altar. Everyone began to take their seats as Nana approached the alter.

With Judah at the right side of Great Nana, the bride emerged from the house. She began to make her way down the aisle accompanied by a man whom Judah assumed to be her father. She sobbed the whole way to the pedestal, realizing that this was actually her real father, and she was really getting married to a man whom she knew wasn't going to bring her harm nor discomfort, yet offer her peace, love, and truth. Pita had seen what Judah was able to do, from the first time they interacted to now. And even though this was moving at the speed of a bullet, it was the most magical either of them had experienced. It was dream-like.

Pita's father reminded Judah a lot of his very own father. He was built and appeared to be strong, clean, and appeared to be Hispanic. He walked with stride beside his daughter, Lupita.

“This is still my Nina for as long as she lives,” Pita's father told Judah once he reached the departing of Pita.

Of course and like always, Lupita was gorgeous in a matching all-white bride's dress. And exactly like the Songs of Solomon, Pita's cheeks were lovely with ornaments, her neck with strings of jewels. Only Judah was able to see her eyes literally flying like doves behind her veil, her hair was literally flowing like a flock of goats leaping down the slopes of a hill. When she smiled, her teeth appeared as a multitude of shaven sheep with their young, all white, healthy, and damp like they'd just come up from a bath.

She came and stood in front of Great Grandma and Judah Masod with a bouquet of flowers in her hand. The tears continued to fall, yet they were tears of pure joy. Judah believed Pita was more excited about seeing her father and just being able to hear him and touch him than anything else. But Judah was wrong because Pita knew after this, she wouldn't be able to physically call on her father like she could now. She did know that Judah was capable, and she cried because she was happy about having a wedding the way she actually wanted. Pita wanted her wedding to be small with some strangers and having her father walk her down the aisle in a faraway place. She knew this would never happen, so she gave up hope until now. Now was

almost too much. She wanted a mystical wedding just like this and it surely became possible through all her readings and meditation. Her passions became dreams and then they became reality within a different reality.

Looking upon Judah was a sight to remember. Pita looked and saw an Angel of the Lord, even though it was just Judah. He'd shown with such brightness that he resembled the sun. He looked like King within his own Kingdom. He looked like a Gazelle, radiant and ruddy, distinguished among ten thousand. Judah's arms appeared to be rods of gold set with jewels, his body polished ivory bedecked with sapphires. Then his legs appeared to be alabaster columns set in bases of gold. His head then transformed into that of a Lion. Pita did not know what she was looking at, but it was very unusual and even comforting. She knew what she was seeing was symbolic and decided not to interpret right then and there. Rather, she would enjoy what the Lord was allowing the Spirit to do.

Once everyone was settled, Great Grandma began her opening statement.

"Dearly Beloved, we are gathered here today in the presence of these witnesses, to join Judah Masod and Lupita Guevara in matrimony commended to be honorable among all; and therefore is not to be entered into lightly but reverently, passionately, lovingly and solemnly. Into this – these two persons present now come to be joined. If any person can show just cause why they may not be joined together – let them speak now or forever hold their peace." No one raised their hand so Great Grandma continued.

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always preserves. Love never fails," Great Grandma recited from 1 Corinthians. "This is what you both must exemplify. Through your marriage and through your roles in the community."

"Vows, Lupita," Grandma left the floor open. Pita cleared her throat and raised her head.

"I have not known you for a month, but before knowing you, I saw you. You did not see me, but I saw you," Lupita began. "I saw you sitting on the pulpit, alongside your father. You paid close attention to only him the whole time. I wished for you to just look my way, but you didn't. Oddly, that inspired me. Then and there I knew you were the one for me, because your sole focus was hearing the word of God and not meddling in the congregation. I did nothing but

pray that I got the chance to meet you because something deep down inside of me wanted you more than anything in the world. A good man,” she reached up and fixed his collar with a smile. “A believing man. A handsome, believing man fearing God and remaining humble is what I got from you before I even met you. Then I met you, and everything I’d wished for had come to pass. Not only had it come to pass, but it superseded what I originally thought of you. Therefore, Judah Masod, my love,” she took hold of Judah’s hand. Judah was literally melting. Not literally, but that’s what he felt. “I choose you to be mine. I choose you to be my husband to have and to hold from this day forward. I pledge my faithfulness to show to you the same kind of love as Christ showed the Church when He died for her, and to love you as a part of myself. In His sight, we shall be one. Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm. For love is as strong as death, its jealousy as enduring as the grave. Love flashes like fire, the brightest kind of flame. Many waters cannot quench love, nor can rivers drown it. This is the love we’ll share forever and ever more,” she finished and had the whole crowd emotional.

“Very well,” Great Grandma was almost at tears at the beauty of Pita’s words. “Judah Masod,” she opened the floor for him.

“Yes,” Judah cleared his throat. To be honest, Judah knew not anything of this woman. He actually feared for their marriage because he was so unsure about them being together. They have never been together. So Judah decided to be honest here.

“Lupita,” he bowed his head trying to find the right words to say. “You have captivated my heart, my sister, my bride; you have captivated my heart with one glance of your eyes, with one jewel of your necklace. How beautiful is your love, my sister, my bride! How much better is your love than wine, and the fragrance of your oils than any spice! Your lips drip nectar, my bride; honey and milk are under your tongue; the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon. A garden licked is my sister, my bride, a spring locked, a fountain sealed. Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates with all choicest fruits, henna with nard, nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh, and aloes, with all choices of spices – a garden fountain, a well of living water, and flowing streams from Lebanon. Awake, O north wind, and come,” Judah rose his voice and turned, while lifting his hands towards the audience. “O south wind! Blow upon my garden, let its spices flow,” he spoke with vigor as the winds literally began to flow from the north, then from the south. Then he turned back to his

bride. He had realized, then and there, that they both had recited Songs of Solomon, some of the first verses they shared with each other when they first met.

“There is a reason you are here with us, all the way across the world and if it be by the means of us joining together, then who can stop us but God? Does not God speak to us in our dreams? Has not God spoken to us in our dreams? This be the will of God and if God joins us together, who can separate us? If God tells me to love you, and I already believe you to be beyond beautiful and beyond wise, how foolish of me would it be to disobey God? The mysteries that we will encounter will be joyous instead of anything of the opposite. I want to learn you. I want for our love to grow and to be an example to all the ones whom we come into contact with. I promise to never let you go because the day I let you go is the day I let God go,” Judah finished and reached for his pockets, but he didn’t have pockets. His mind immediately tried to search for the ring as he figured it was in his other clothes.

Before Judah could even become upset, Lamont tapped him on the shoulder.

“Looking for this?” Lamont handed Judah the ring, for the second time.

“Nice. Thank you, Lamont,” Judah told his friend.

“I, Judah Masod, give you, Lupita Guevara, this ring as an eternal symbol of my love and commitment to you,” he said and placed the ring on her finger. Again and miraculously, it fitted her ring finger perfectly.

“And I, Lupita Guevara, give unto you, Judah Masod, this handfasting as an eternal symbol of my love and commitment to you,” Pita said displaying a colorful wool-like scarf material and tied their hands together. “This symbolizes the binding of our lives together.”

“By the Power vested in me by the State of Iran, I now pronounce you husband and wife. You may kiss the bride,” Grandma motioned for Judah. Even though everyone here knew this wedding to be a bit unorthodox, Pita and Judah still smiled as they came close for their first kiss as newlyweds. That sharp stream went through them again; that same sharp stream that went through them when they first shook hands at a house party in Sacramento. Now they were married in Iran. Never in a quarter of a million years would someone imagine this to happen. But it was and Judah could finally breathe now. No more confusion. No more contemplating keeping a girlfriend. He went in headfirst and got married and made a promise to himself to always be a servant to Lupita.

“Ugghhh,” Ali Hasan sounded at the kissing of the two.

“I present to you the newly married couple, Judah Masod and Lupita Guevara,” she stated as the guests stood and applauded for the couple.

They came down from the pedestal and immediately the festivities began, yet for an extremely limited time. There was food for everyone even though everyone did not eat. The Jazz that was perceived here was played by a band not seen by the eyes, yet the parties danced and ate. Time passed as if it were a blur, a blissful blur.

Then suddenly, the ones who were revived for this event automatically disappeared. Then the ceremony was over. Everyone lost their glow and returned to their regular selves. Ali was transformed back into his deformities; Pita, Jah, Lamont, and Judah lost their light and returned to flesh. Ali was most disappointed because he was having so much fun with his ancestral Iranians who were once Persians and interacting with them. Within this gathering, he received more discreet information on what he was supposed to be doing when the time came.

Judah and Pita were led to change back into their original clothing. Great Grandma came into the room where Judah was. She’d known she’d done her part.

“I see you as one of mine now, baby,” she rubbed his face and got nothing but blushes from Judah. “Now then, you have the True Cross therefore you’ll be able to get back home through something known as the Art of Illusion. Popular to Islamic belief, some followers of the Faith believe Christ was substituted at the Cross.”

“But He wasn’t substituted. The Quran doesn’t say this. I will explain once we unite with Benjamin,” Ali interrupted.

“Yes, Ali. But this phenomenon has gained its energy from what the Believers believe and therefore this piece has attained that ability. You saw it at the wedding, did you not? You see how everyone was changed? This is how God works. He uses the bad for good. Therefore, you shall travel like regular citizens. This is what is on my heart. I see the power of God manifesting everywhere and I believe you shall travel as regulars. Nothing will happen to you, only the same thing that happened here. A transformation. You got here safely, therefore you shall return safely. Like I mentioned, I doubt you all are in the Interpol criminal systems yet, thus an easy traveling experience is what you shall have.

“I agree,” Ali said, creeping up from behind. “That bracelet changes you,” he told Judah then looked to his Great Grandmother. “Plus, we did nothing wrong but self-defense. We are not criminals. Why would we be in a system?”

“The world is a criminal, baby. They would probably book you for kidnapping,” she pointed to Judah. “Even if it is within the realms of your calling, will the people not seek to destroy you?”

“Fear not. We will...”

“Fear not,” Great Grandma laughed at Judah. “This is my Great Grandson whom I’d only seen once before. And just as quick as he has come to me will be just as quick as he will leave,” she kneeled in closer to Ali. “His name shall give glory to the Most Merciful Allah. His name shall give glory to the Savior of humanity, Christ. He will soften the hearts of stone and make new light of the Quran,” she prophesied while also rubbing his face.

“Amen,” Judah praised. “We are saved, Great Nana. Like you said, and like I also believe, we’ll buy the tickets and board the plane like regular citizens. We will be all right. I doubt we will be stopped by airport security or anyone of that matter.”

“How then do you think they found you at the Hasht Behesht Palace?” she asked, wanting to itch at Judah’s mental. “How do you think they were able to kidnap Hawa in the first place? Do you not believe the Islamic country of Iran works hand and hand to protect its culture and religion? There are targets on your head, son.”

“My God is great,” Judah responded. “No weapon formed against us shall prosper,” Judah said, and those words struck a nerve with Great Grandma. She froze.

“No weapon formed against us shall prosper,” she repeated and remembered on the Iranian Iraq war, when her and Salima escaped Iraq when Salima was a child. The husband of Great Grandma always told this to them. It was the last thing he had told them before he died trying to protect his family. He was an Arab Christian and believed the same thing in which Ali and Benjamin were to do. She raised herself up, her face still in a shocking manner, moving slowly and thinking deeply on her late husband.

“You are right,” Great Grandma finally gave in, continuously shaking her head up and down. “You are very right,” she opened a closet door that was located inside the room. “Therefore, the tool you’ll need to assist with the art of illusion.”

“The Art of Illusion. It sounds like something not from God,” Judah made clear. “Illusion is of magic and sorcery, no?”

“You just got married in one of the most magical ways known to man. Is this of God? Since you all were in an illusion?” Great Grandma said as she went through the closet. “*They*

*killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them,*” she quoted from the Quran. “This verse shall be interpreted differently throughout the world once you realize of what is written instead of what shall be remembered to be recited. But the prior surah from the Quran shall be attributed to this bracelet,” she revealed a wooden box from a shelf in the closet. She placed it on a table and opened it for everyone to see.

“Holy Water?” Lamont read the label.

“Yes. From the Dead Sea anointed with salt from Lot’s very own wife,” she claimed. “This is what sprayed you when you entered into the backyard,” she confessed. “It will help with the transfiguration even if doubt arises.

“Anointed?” Judah asked. “Lot’s wife questioned God and turned into a pillar of salt. This was punishment. How is this water anointed?” it seemed regular debating Judah was back.

“Holier than thou, huh?” she pointed to Lamont and they both shared a laugh.

“Tell me about it,” Lamont added, but Judah could care less.

“Honey. It is true that Lot’s wife violated the angels command to not look behind, but doesn’t her punishment seem a bit extreme? Particularly when we notice that Lot, too, ignores the angels by tarrying in the city and yet he faces no punishment. Then, not only does he not receive no punishment, but he receives a reward, and a city is saved so that it can become his future home. But, you see, according to the Torah, this is the only event in which God transfigures someone into something else as a result of sin. The punishment is a bit uncharacteristic, and Lot’s wife alone suffers this unique fate. Therefore, was it so? Are we interpreting right? Sodom represented sodomy, or selfishness. Remember, the Lands of Sodom were lush and plentiful. When Lot’s wife looked back she saw the sulfur and salt that befell the city while Abraham saw the smoke that came up from the city,” Great Grandma spoke.

“Understand?”

“Uhh,” Judah tried to comprehend what Great Grandma was trying to say. “Ok.”

“Ok, then,” Great Grandma ended it there. Judah looked at Pita, Lamont, and Jah for clarification but neither of them had anything to add. “Just a sprinkle of this and a prayer in the name of Yeshua,” she used His Hebrew name.

“Sounds good to me,” Ali smiled and looked to Judah for approval. Lamont, Pita and Jah shook their heads in approval and so did Judah, even though he wanted more clarification on that Lot’s wife ordeal.

Then and there, Great Grandma, an Iraqi Christian prayed for her company and her grandson, Ali. She prayed that their enemies be made dumb upon their traveling and that, again, no weapon formed against them shall prosper.

“Amen,” Great Grandma ended the prayer. “I have arranged a vehicle for you. They will be armed to protect you. They will take you to retrieve your things from wherever you were staying and take you directly to the airport. And you,” she pointed to Ali. “Do you have your identification or anything of that matter?”

“I do,” Ali Hasan reached into his clothing and revealed a small handbag. He removed his Iranian passport along with other forms of identification.

“Good. Collectively, how is the money looking?” she asked.

“Very good,” Lamont answered for Judah.

“Purchase tickets for your people,” she pointed to Judah. “Add Ali Hasan in replaced for the other girl that came with you. Not Hawa. Not here,” she pointed to Pita. “But another one,” she spoke about Fatima.

“Why not for Fatima?” Judah asked.

“You shall see,” she said when the doorbell rang. It was the escorts.

The band made their peace with Great Grandmother, received her blessings and prayers, and went their way.

\*\*\*

The ride to Hasht Behesht Palace was silent. Judah simply tried to comprehend everything that had taken place. Just two blocks away from the Palace, Pita screamed from the back of the SUV.

“Kareem! It’s Kareem and Fatima right there!” she pointed to a group of people. “And Hawa!” she sounded.

“Mother?” Ali could be heard saying as he stared out the window. Judah could tell it was them because they had everyone’s luggage, which was only a bag per person. Other than that, it was exceedingly difficult to decipher who was who.

“Kareem!” Pita yelled from the window and Kareem was most attentive. He hurried to the car with a smile as Hawa and him got in, but Fatima did not.

Once Hawa saw Ali, she couldn't hold back. She didn't even sit down before becoming discombobulated and crying, but no tears were manifest. She was all out of tears. She just made and expressed the face of extreme emotion. Ali also cried. He cried tears and wondered if he should approach his mother, Hawa. He'd never known her, but Ali knew who she was as soon as she entered the truck. They spoke to each other without saying anything nor touching each other for a while and everyone allowed them to vent in silence. Kareem, Hawa and Fatima looked the same as when they landed, if not better and Judah wondered just where they were and what they'd been through.

"Ali," she softly whimpered and held out here hands.

"Mother," he cried silently and simply sat where he was. He did not approach his mother. Once Hawa saw him not approach, she flung herself onto him with love followed by hugs and kisses. Ali Hasan ate it up. Hawa, in this moment, decided to allow truth and happiness to prosper. She's seen and been through so much.

"I am so sorry, Ali," she sought honest forgiveness. "I thought about you every single day, I promise," then the tears came from nowhere, but they were blue tears instead of what regular tears would look like. It left a blue residue on her face, but she wasn't wearing mascara or any make-up for that matter. It was almost as if they were tears given to her by God. They glistened as her tears cascaded down her face and everyone saw it, but no one said anything. Everyone here had experienced the glory of God through revelation or miracle.

"I thought about you too, Mommy," Ali's tears were also a bright blue that appeared as if they had sparkles of some sort of light variation in them. It seemed as if the reuniting of Hawa and Ali led to some sort of phenomenal river of life flowing from their eyes. It was most beautiful in the least.

"Hawa," Fatima called from outside the truck's window. Hawa softly released herself from Ali and turned to Fatima, face resembling something tribal with the blue streaks falling down her face. "I am giving the torch to you," she said and handed Hawa some keys. "Those are the keys to the Islamic Daycare Center. I've refiled the LLC to ensure you owned 33% of the business, along with myself and Kareem.

"A task, indeed. Count on me, sister," Hawa spoke in Persian to Fatima, and they hugged like never before.

“Girl, get in. Come on,” Pita seemed a bit uneasy and simply wanted everyone to return home.

“I cannot travel back with you all. I am destined to stay here,” she said, strapping on herself the only backpack she’d brought. “The ancestors at the wedding showed me the light. And it was beautiful.”

“Alhamdulillah,” Hawa and Kareem spoke at the same time, joining hands.

“Wedding ceremony?” Judah thought. “I know Kareem did not marry Hawa in the same manner?” Judah thought and quickly got rid of his mild jealousy.

“Stay here and do what, Fatima? We believe they still may be looking for us. By the Grace of Allah have we managed to escape the Church. And now you fussing about staying?” Kareem got angry. Judah wondered just what had transpired between them because it sounded similar to what happened to Judah and Pita. But a Church?

“Yes. I am destined to visit the places of terror to proclaim what has been revealed to me. Just have Ali write me,” she waved at Ali Hasan. Instead of waving back, Ali hurried to the window and reached out to hug Fatima.

“I love you,” Ali Hasan told Fatima. “You will be the mother of what is yet to come,” he promised her. “The message will reach the Prophet’s homeland because of you,” Ali kissed Fatima on the cheek in all his youthfulness.

“Wait,” Kareem said jumping back out the SUV. “I am not leaving here without you.”

“But you have to. This is my life,” Fatima refused him. “This is what I’ve been destined to do. It will all make sense later, brother. I promise,” Fatima seemed extra cool and collective, almost like she was happy.

“What about money? How will you survive? Where will you lay your head?”

“*But we plan, and Allah plans and Allah is the best of Planners,*” Fatima quoted from the Quran. After that, Jah, Judah, Pita and Hawa exited the car to bid Fatima a farewell. Pita and Hawa cried

“You need anything, you contact me. I will fund your expedition,” Judah told Fatima.

“I’m going to hold you to that,” Fatima smiled and went her own way. Even she knew not what was to be transpired but the saving of a people.

The gang checked for their belongings, and everything was intact.

They arrived at the airport and Hawa and Ali continued to speak, mainly in Persian, about everything up under the sun while Judah purchased the tickets. Hawa had admitted her faults. She told her mature son that she partook in deserting him because of the mistreatment of the women in the mosque under a corrupted leadership and his deformities didn't make it any better. She went on to reveal how she continued to lie to everyone and how she had demons that she had to rid. Only Judah understood, miraculously, of course.

Judah paid close to \$20,000 for everyone's plane ticket back into San Francisco Airport. Once everyone received their itinerary, Judah called his father to leave a message, letting him know when they'd arrive home.

Going through Customs was going to be scary, but Judah insured to put their faith in God, as their God is one of miracles and greatness. They all sprinkled the Holy Water on themselves and believed with faith. Then they began their walk to Customs.

"Judah," Ali stopped them before going through Customs. Judah looked at him, but thought he was mistaken. "I feel the Spirit on me," he smiled. He was completely healed, but Judah knew it was for a limited time because it immediately reminded him of the wedding and even the glory of Moses behind the veil when he left the mountain.

"I do too," Judah felt the same thing as Judah looked much older than he actually was, much wiser also. Ali decided to take a look at his passport and discovered his face to have changed therein. He no longer had the deformities he was used to seeing in the mirror and on his passport. Everything had changed for a while.

"Judah looked upon the faces of Kareem, Jah and Lamont and they were changed for a time. Hawa and Pita he could not see, but he knew they were also changed. This was the power of God.

The band went through Customs with ease. They still glowed when they transferred from the Hamad International Airport in Qatar, but as soon as they were on American soil, they were changed back to what they originally looked like.

# Dibre Hayyamim

---

Pita could not believe any of what was happening as she still had to digest the whole thing, especially her now being married to Judah. She now had purpose. She knew that confusion would soon vanish from her knowledge base with a true knowledge from God. She now knew that with Judah, an abundance of fruition was upon her life. She had witnessed Judah successfully complete a calling in the most spiritual way. She could only imagine what was next.

Rastamon Jah was beyond excited about being a part of something miraculous and this trip strengthened his faith in God more than anything else. He'd discovered some of his ancestors at Judah's wedding and they told him the following: *'God almighty has granted you as a special favor, an awareness of the virtues of this leaf so that your use of it will dissipate the cares that obscure your souls; and you shall free your spirits from everything that might hamper them and keep carefully, then, the deposit that He has confided in you.'*

Lamont knew the Lord, and this simply proved Him to be real. Lamont learned how to trust in the Lord because the Lord used him to be a vessel within something much larger than he would ever anticipate. Lamont knew his calling was with whatever Judah, his brother, had called for him to do. He devoted himself a servant, not only to Judah and his family, but to people as a whole. Afterall, this is what Jesus wanted.

Kareem could've been labeled a Muslim for Christ now. The way he shouted interpreting surahs and scriptures when they fought with Muhammad Hasan was legendary. He attended another mystical wedding in the desert in which he was the groom. Guess who the bride be?

Hawa was always fond of Kareem. They had to run the Daycare Center, in place of Fatima, but Hawa also had to deal with, deep down, the marriage of Judah and her professor, Lupita. Even though no one knew of Hawa's and Kareem's wedding yet, with only Fatima mentioning another wedding, Kareem and Hawa were still happy. Hawa displayed gratitude on her outer side and even tried to fully rid that inner loathe for Judah being happy with someone else. She still had feelings for Judah even though she was married now.

Fatima was still fulfilling her mission in Iran just as Judah was closer to finishing his mission. Fatima was actually the one who married Hawa and Kareem within the same realms in which Judah and Pita were joined together. Yet, Fatima had more work to do. In her spirit she'd

known that more had to be done in Iran. She still didn't know exactly what to do, but she had an idea. *"Religion in a chokehold. Culture reigns, but not Supreme. Allah is supreme,"* she would dwell on.

Ali knew there was much work to be done and he felt, even at the early age of 7, that he was ready. With the right teaching, he sought to interpret Islam to have it reflect the Hebrew Savior who came to free the world from the grips of sin. He somewhat knew how the mind worked and also knew his young mind was still developing. Yet, since birth had he been called. Forced to digest the Quran, front to back from memorization. This caused him to find inconsistencies with the verbal teachings and universal theological stances on certain subjects versus what the Quran actually said or meant. His findings produced the Holy Spirit to manifest and little Ali was urged to remove himself from his home country and release his interpretations.

"Wow! America!" Ali was ecstatic as he looked out the window of the San Francisco Airport.

"Welcome," Judah told Ali as they went to meet Isaac at the pickup area. Judah was only able to text him and the fact that Isaac was texting in all caps notified Judah of something suspicious.

"Son!" Isaac jumped out his Escalade and ran towards him. "Are you crazy!" he looked mad.

"Am I crazy?" Judah had to repeat the words to understand. "No, father. What is wrong?" he asked.

"Did you get my text messages?" Isaac spoke loudly. The band looked afraid.

"Yes. Ha," Judah shuttered. "Father. Please, tell me. What happened?" he asked.

"What do you mean? You were gone for two whole months! Sixty-something days and nobody heard a word from you! You! You! Any of you!" he pointed to everyone in the crowd. "With the same clothes on as when you all left," he couldn't believe it. "You only have one transaction on your card and that's the tickets back. I even sent Deacon Banks to Iran to look for you all after two weeks of no hearing from you and he comes back with no traces! You had everybody worried sick! Your mother is in the hospital!" it was all coming so fast as Isaac was yelling, veins popping at the neck.

“Two months? Pops, we were only gone for about 3 or 4 days,” Lamont butted in, looking at his G-shock watch while everyone else agreed. Isaac looked to see everybody agreeing with Lamont. He then peered at Ali.

“Ah,” he mouthed then realized who he was. “Ahhhh, Ali,” he knelt and opened his arms. You can call me Uncle Isaac. Give me some love,” Isaac outspread his arms, but Ali was afraid of him. Isaac’s introduction was a tad bit aggressive, especially towards Judah. He then stood up after realizing what he had done. He took a deep breath and bowed his head.

“Apologies, children,” he said. “You have to understand. We thought we lost all you. Our faith was surely being tested. So much so that my wife is in the hospital from Angina. That’s when there is a decreased blood flow to the heart causing chest pain. High blood pressure. Worrying. It has been more than sixty days and then you suddenly call hours before now to tell me you are on the way. What? Tamir and I fighting every day because he believes his daughter is gone, off the face of the earth.”

“I have a Step-Granddad?” Ali asked pertaining to Tamir.

“Yes,” Isaac tried to smile. “He’s quite the...” Isaac forbade himself from speaking ill.

“And who is this?” he pointed to the dread head Rastamon, Jah.

“I am Jah,” Jah stepped up and extended his hand. “I have something for you. When we all get settled, I’ll go over it with you,” Jah made a promise then stepped back.

“Uhm,” Isaac looked upon everyone else. “Where is Fatima?”

“She stayed,” Judah spoke. “She had more to do out there.”

“Two months, son?” Isaac couldn’t get over it.

“Father. Unless we were sent through some type of warp hole or sent through some type of time traveling mechanism, I don’t know,” Judah didn’t have an explanation. “I mean, we did experience some crazy stuff. You wouldn’t believe it. I also got married. Lupita,” Judah held his hand out and Lupita came with grace.

“Father-in-law,” she gracefully bowed and smiled. This made Isaac suspicious. Then he suddenly looked at Hawa with concern in his face.

“It’s fine,” Hawa rubbed them off. “I want my cousin to be happy,” she sarcastically mentioned, and it rubbed some of the people there off the wrong way. “Plus, I am now joined with Kareem,” she made mention to everyone. Everyone was happy, even Judah and Ali. Ali liked Kareem.

“This is crazy! I don’t believe it,” Isaac continually shook his head. “Everybody in the truck. Now,” Isaac ordered, and everyone followed.

The rest of the ride was in silence as Isaac drove the band to his house instead of Judah’s. Isaac wanted for Benjamin to meet Ali at once, even though he was beyond upset for Judah not being able to connect with them. Judah, along with everyone else that traveled with him had no idea on what Isaac was talking about when it came to the time lapse. This made everyone quite uncomfortable yet feel a sense of divineness.

Before they pulled up to the house, Judah asked, “Is mother in the hospital now?”

“Yes,” Isaac answered sternly.

“Can we go see her?” he asked.

“I am going to go pick her up after I drop you all off,” he said through gritted teeth. Judah caught on to the hostility his father was displaying and decided to let him know about it.

“Pops. The things that have happened in Iran were extraordinary,” he started. “From the weddings to Kareem and I fighting off Muhammad Hasan and his false prophet. We saw the transformations of men into snakes then into Komodo dragons that helped us escape the Mosque. We saw Ali displaying signs from God, I’d been given extra strength, sort to say, from this,” he lifted his wrist to display his bracelet, but it wasn’t on him anymore. “What?” he looked in his seat and tried to remember where he took the bracelet off? “Anybody seen my bracelet?” he asked and got a response from no one. What Judah didn’t know is that his bracelet had ran its course. It slipped from him like a thief in the night.

“Sounds good,” Isaac eyeing his son, hoping that he wasn’t on drugs or going insane.

“It’s true,” Ali spoke and began to notice Isaac’s energy. Ali began to read Isaac, even from the back seat, he could simply look upon Judah’s father and discover solutions to problems.

“Really?” Isaac looked upon Ali from the rearview mirror.

“Do not be afraid of not knowing,” Ali spoke on a whole different topic. “Just because someone is unable to interpret the Trinity Godhead or struggling with the views of the Church on marijuana, doesn’t deter someone from the Salvation,” Ali spoke nothing but truth. He’d really hit the inner parts of Isaac’s heart. These were the most problematic challenges that Isaac dealt with in the present.

“Is that right?” Judah’s father continued to look back at Ali. “Do you have an understanding of the Trinity?”

“Is it not in the Bible?” Ali asked and actually waited for an answer.

“We got another one of those, huh?” Isaac tried to joke with Judah, pertaining to Ali and his arguable spirit, but Judah didn’t appreciate his father’s gestures.

“One of those?” Judah asked. “Pops, ha!” he tried to laugh it off. “You have no idea.”

“I do have an idea!” Isaac got loud but checked himself. “I did a week in jail for listening to you,” Isaac pointed to his oldest. “You told me your grandmother spoke to you...”

“True,” Judah agreed.

“And she told you to tell me to re-open the Church, regardless of any worldly government, right?”

“Correct.”

“The Stay-at-Home order that the State initiated went into effect about a month ago. This prevented in-person religious gatherings to form, and the Church was mandated to shut down all its facilities in order to prevent the spread of the virus. But, having received word from above through my son, I decided to keep the Church open and had whoever wanted to come worship the Lord to do so, with a mask, of course. But see,” he wanted to get his point across. “This is a burden to the State’s residents in our right to exercise religious freedom, this is the Free Exercise Clause of the U.S. Constitution’s First Amendment. Before I sued the State of Sacramento, the police raided the Church. The people continued to praise and worship when the police forcefully tackled us to the ground with the Church filled with tear gas! Coughing, screaming, the kids being terrified, it was a mess! I stood for the people and got beaten by the police and was charged with Resisting Arrest and Unlawful Assembly and Violation of a Public Health Emergency Order. Judge Acquisto, a catholic brother, withheld bail from me until I was appointed another Judge through my lawyer and misconduct on behalf of belief systems,” Isaac said, remembering all the horrible events that took place while Judah was gone. In Isaac’s mind, Judah had the nerve to act like he wasn’t gone for two months, while the devil wrecked the homes of everyone near. Isaac didn’t understand it. He thought he was protected by God. But he was protected by God. Again, Isaac was leaning on his own understanding, and he needed to stop it.

“Christ,” Judah whispered and bowed his head.

“Yeah. Christ is right,” Isaac drilled as they pulled into the driveway. “It made the papers. The Church has been on a downhill ever since. To be honest, it’s looking like we’ll lose the church.”

“How will we lose the church? We have the congregation,” Judah suggested.

“I will lose my Minister License if the State agrees to countersue,” Isaac made plain.

“When did we need licenses to minister to the people?” Judah asked.

“Since the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Now go. I have to get your mother. We’ll be back tonight,” Isaac said. “Your tiny house in the back should be suitable for everyone until we get back. We need to figure out what happened to you all and we’ll need to draw up a blueprint for the near future,” Isaac ordered, and everyone agreed as they exited the truck.

Benjamin, Judah’s little brother, like clockwork, was at the front door, with it wide open as soon as the first person made their way into the house.

“Kareem,” Benjamin bowed with pressed prayer hands and allowed Kareem through.

“Little bro,” Kareem smiled and went in.

“Hawa, sweetheart,” Ben bowed to her and Hawa returned the gesture. “Pita, my dearest,” he bowed to her.

“Too cute,” Pita smiled and followed Hawa in.

“You stay,” Ben held Judah with him at the front door looking outwards. “I know this one,” he walked towards Ali when he saw him. “A strange one indeed,” Ben said inspecting the deformities of Ali with his arms folded.

“Strange indeed. Life is infinitely stranger than anything which the mind of man could invent,” Ali responded. It was a shocking reply to Benjamin, and they instantly linked.

“Yes! You are him,” Ben cheered and hugged Ali. Ali, even though put off a bit by the hug at first, embraced it once he discovered Ben’s energy and intent to be pure.

“And who may this be?” Ben asked pointing to Jah.

“My name is Jah,” he bent down and extended his hand.

“You’re a Rastafarian?” Ben noticed his dreadlocks, colorful clothing, and stench.

“I am. How did you know?” Jah was surprised.

“I smell you,” Ben laughed and led Ali into the house. Judah motioned a guilty Jah to follow him into the back, where Judah’s old tiny house was.

“We will join you soon,” Ben told his bigger brother as him and Ali went to Ben’s room. Judah nodded and continued to the back.

“This is a delightful place,” Jah commented, admiring the artwork and infrastructure of the interior of Bishop’s home.

“Thank you, Jah. You live in Sacramento?” Judah asked.

“Naw. I’m in Oakland.”

“Oh,” Judah stopped and turned, knowing they passed Oakland on their way to Sacramento.

“It’s ok. I needed to meet you father and speak with him, firsthand. But it seems like everything has spun out of control,” he said looking at his phone for the up-tenth time. “Yeah. My phone keeps displaying January 2021,” he stated. We left in October of last year, bro,” he was becoming worried. “Hold on, let me call my sister,” Jah said once they reached the backyard. Judah let him be and went into his tiny home where Kareem, Hawa and Pita were.

Once Judah entered, they all looked upon each other. Kareem was the first to say something.

“What we playing? Wife swap?” he tried to lightened the mood. One could tell he was a different man. Lamont soon emerged from the restroom.

“Friends!” Lamont outstretched his hands. “It is true. We’ve been gone for two months,” he looked to Judah. “Can you explain this?”

“Uh, no,” Judah was just as confused as everybody else.

“Special Theory of Relativity determines time is relative,” Hawa spoke up for the first time in a long time, bringing her knowledge out of suppression. It seemed as if she was getting over everything and learning to let go of her past. “So, the rate at which time passes depends on your frame of reference. One second in one reference frame may be longer compared to one second in another reference frame.”

“The same can be said for 2 days equating to 2 months!?” Lamont asked and Hawa simply shrugged her shoulders. They didn’t know how to feel. What did they miss?

“Well, let us relax, please. Everybody is more than welcome to stay, freshen up,” he pointed to the bathroom, “I can have a fresh set of clothes for everyone, and we can discuss what really happened and what we really experienced,” Judah tried to comfort.

“Sounds good, but I have to check on my space,” Lamont said. “I’ll be back later. My uber outside,” he said looking at his phone. Lamont gave Judah a hug along with everyone else and promised he’d be back later on that night.

“Ladies first,” Kareem outstretched his hand towards the bathroom.

“Go ahead, Hawa. I’ll go after you,” Pita told her friend. Hawa listened and went gracefully. Just then, Jah entered the tiny house.

“That was my sister,” he said pointing to his phone. It’s true. We’ve been gone for over sixty days,” he stated.

“Is everything ok with you?” Judah asked, now concerned that he had his friends join him with his calling and now their personal lives being affected.

“Oh yeah. I’m a minimalist. I live in a camper van equipped with everything I need,” he stated. “It’s parked at my sister’s house. I’m good. Matter of fact, she only had to take care of my plants while I was gone,” he fixed himself a bit, in a manner as of to present something. “Thank Jah, I taught her how to grow from the earth. Mind you, this is the first job God gave us; to tend to the Garden, no?” he asked. Judah could only shake his head in approval. “Now, when I left, they were entering flowering stage. I was only supposed to be gone for a week at most. But now that a whole two months have surpassed, they are ready for harvest. The anger yet fascination behind my sister’s voice when she began to describe the process, yet beautiful outcome of the process, I can’t wait to get back home. So, check it,” he seemed all too excited. “You have my number,” he pointed to Judah. “Call me anytime you need me. I will most certainly be back to discuss things with your father. But I need to see my babies,” he literally jumped for joy.

“Please. Be my guest. Our door is always open,” Judah said and gave Jah a hug. Jah said his farewells and left.

“Wow,” Pita said being in the midst of only Kareem and Judah. She was still taken aback from everything that’d transpired. “You mean to tell me; we catch a flight to Iran and stay at a Palace only to be targeted by a cult of a sector of Islam. Then I’m left with Jah, and we run for our lives, leaving everything behind. I mean, I was tripping, but,” she shook her head trying to explain. “So, I’m running with Jah. Then we get tired and start walking. Then he began to comment on how beautiful I am and that you were lucky to have me,” Pita pointed to Kareem. “That made me feel eerie,” she confessed. “In my mind, at that time, you didn’t have me. I don’t know where it fell off,” she wanted closure.

“It fell off the first time you saw Judah at his church,” Kareem made a strong suggestion, being seated on Judah’s Ballina Sofa. “I found your name all in her search bars and what have you. But it’s fine. I’m over it. I loved you though. Oh, I’m sorry,” he stood up. “I still love you. As a sister in Christ. None of us did any wrong towards each other. My walk with the Love and Hawa will shed a new light on my life. To learn from her son is something that has been placed on my heart,” he confessed. “My step-son,” he smiled at the fact of having his own son, even if he was only a stepson.

“I’m sorry, Kareem,” Pita reached for Kareem to hug him. Judah admired them and the ability for them to forgive each other.

“All good, baby girl,” they hugged and that was their closure.

“But wait,” Pita wanted to continue on what happened to her and Jah when they separated from the group. “We began to walk, and I ask Jah where we are going. He says, ‘*Trust me.*’ And I’m like, in my head, ‘*Boy, I don’t know you!*’ But I remember in my dreams on that marriage, on our marriage,” she pointed to Judah. “And I remembered right then and there a man walking me down the aisle that I didn’t know. At that point, I figured it to be Jah leading me to my destination. I don’t know, symbolically. I don’t know,” she tried to put the pieces together. “But I followed him. We began to go through a field, one not cultivated by man, and there he found some strange plant. It was a really small flower, the size of my thumb, but it radiated a light. It was beautiful. Jah thought it to be the plant he was looking for, so he picked it up and placed in the bowl of his pipe. Had his lighter ready...”

“Oh Lord,” Judah sounded.

“And he smoked it. At first, it didn’t do anything. Then he wanted me to smoke it. And you knew me,” it seemed as if she referred to herself in the past. “So I took a toke and as soon as I inhaled, we both went into this trance. I knew we did it simultaneously because he was there with me, tripping out. Then we ended up at Great Grandma’s house more dirty than anything in this world,” she was disgusted from just remembering. “Then we took a holy bath, they washed our clothes, we spoke with Great Nana as Jah discovered she had the plant he was looking for. Then you and Lamont pop up with Ali. And you know what’s weird,” she still pondered on everything.

“What’s that?” Kareem asked.

“There was a certain person on our journey who, when we came out of the trance, told us that we had treaded pass him 7,957 times. Each time we treaded pass him; we spoke a verse from the New Testament. We came out the trance when we finalized and recited, *‘The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God’s people. Amen.’* He mentioned thousands of people following us and some of them even catching on to what we were doing and therefore reciting the verses with us. I mean,” she put her head down trying to remember all of what happened. “I barely remember any of it. This mysterious man said we’d moved thousands of people as they began to accept Christ for who He said He was. But it only comes to me in pieces. I’m confused because I don’t remember eating anything. And, like, it doesn’t look like I’m starving. I don’t understand,” it seemed as if Pita was beginning to freak out.

“This is our Lord, Pita. We were all in a trance. God’s trance but everybody in their own unusual way,” Judah began to try and piece it together.

“I understand that, but really? Like, two months no food and I still look as if I’d been eating well all my life. No signs of malnourishment whatsoever. For two months!” she spat.

“That’s what Christ meant when He said whoever drinks the water He gives will never be thirsty again?” Kareem asked more than anything.

“That, exemplified by us and more,” Judah shook his head in approval.

“The whole wedding, it was all a blur. My father,” she tried to stop herself from crying but couldn’t help it. She quickly wiped her tears and simply couldn’t talk anymore.

“You think that’s something,” Kareem started. “Fatima and I ended up in jail and Isa showed Himself to us,” Kareem smiled. “Remember when I went to go rescue my sister, jumping from the Mosque?” he reminded Judah as Judah surely remembered. “We got arrested and were placed in some kind of rinky-dinky jail cell. Hawa kept yelling they were going to persecute us, but remember, the Spirt had fell on us beforehand. The Spirit revealed Herself to me.”

“Herself?” Judah asked.

“Right,” he mimicked Lamont and they both shared a laugh. “The Spirit, it is an emotional...” he moved his hands trying to find the words to describe the Holy Spirit. “It is wonderful. A feeling of...” he continued to search. “I don’t know. It’s impressive,” he laughed to himself a bit. “And then Christ appearing to both Fatima and I, in the middle of Iran was something I’d never expected. Just looking in the eyes of Christ, there was a love there like none

other. I still can't fathom that feeling," he gripped his fist as his eyes became watery. "But a feeling of undying love," he shook his head still trying to put a finger on it.

"What did He say?" Judah asked.

"He said, *'The person older in days will not hesitate to ask a child seven years old about the place of life, and he will live.'* Then we sat and actually ate," he remembered. "Fatima and I ate with the Lord and neither of us had to say anything. Just being in His presence was more than enough, I mean," Kareem began to shed tears when he remembered what happened. His words began to tremble, and it looked like he wanted to just hit his knees and cry. So, to keep up with his manly image, he simply sat down and shook his head in the Lord's goodness.

"I know exactly how you feel," Judah told Kareem.

"How? Have you seen Christ face to face?" he asked, when in fact Judah did see Him and yet not sharing it with anyone but his father.

"How can you say that I haven't? Have you not seen God work throughout our travels? What do you think propelled everyone to even go?" Judah asked but Kareem was still unsure.

"Dreams, visions, convictions," Pita spoke up and she was right.

"But why? Why us? Why me? I'm a Muslim by birth, by nature," Kareem tried to argue.

"A Muslim you are. No one is here to take that away from you. Your culture and religion is beautiful, no doubt, I have seen it. But we will make known who the Christ really is, as your Quran does," Judah shared without even knowing where to begin. Then he was given his first task by Kareem.

"As my Quran does," Kareem mocked. "Ha. Judah. Have you even read the Quran?"

"Skimmed," Judah spoke truth.

"Exactly. Let us not begin with this mess again," Kareem tried to prevent arguing as they shared a small laugh.

"We may have to. You see where our last arguments led us," Judah stood up because he thought he heard someone in the yard.

*'Boom Boom Boom!'* somebody knocked at the door followed by a "Judah! Hawa! I know y'all in there!"

Everyone looked upon each other when Judah was the first to discover.

"It's Mr. Greene. Hawa's step-father," he said matter-of-factly and opened the door.

“Where is my daughter?” he asked once face to face with Judah, trying his hardest to be as calm as possible.

“Tamir,” Salima, Hawa’s mother, was there to keep him at bay. “Judah, how are you?” she gracefully asked.

“I am well, thank you. Please, come in,” he moved aside.

“Forgive my husband,” her words broke because she too, was worried sick about the whereabouts of Hawa and the crew for the last two months.

“I would be just as worried,” Judah understood. “The Lord used us to...”

“Aught,” Salima raised her hands and pointed to the television. “It’s all on the News now,” she said and went for the remote control herself. “Lupita, Kareem,” she hugged and kissed, proud to see them back. “I can’t believe what is happening,” she shook her head and turned the television on to the World News. An oil leak in Syria was currently being storied.

“Wait,” Salima held her hand up. “Read the ticker. At the bottom,” she pointed to the News being told in complete sentences at the bottom of the screen.

After a couple of headlines, it had shown: “Ali ibn Hasan has been kidnapped by Christians from the United States of America with the help of his father, Muhammad ibn Hasan. The State of Iran is charging Muhammad Hasan with multiple counts of kidnapping and apostasy.”

“Apostasy?” Pita questioned.

“That’s when a Muslim crosses from Islam to another religion,” Kareem informed.

“You all made him convert?” Salima asked as both her and Tamir looked upon Judah in awe. “Muhammad Hasan?” she asked Judah, but Kareem answered.

“Yup.”

“That’s crazy! It’ll just be a never-ending battle now! You want to Christianize the Middle East and they want to Islamize the West. You’re acting just like the bad ones from the beginning!” Salima was clearly upset.

“Wrong,” Judah intervened. “We are not Christianizing anyone. We are not taking from anyone, merely deepening some knowledge. We will provide a different interpretation as to not deem the Quran anything less than what it says it is; prophetic.” Judah had more of an understanding of his universal calling.

“As well as elevating Christ to God status, making Him the Son of God, et cetera,” Salima tried to argue.

“But does the Quran argue the opposite?” Kareem butted in. “I mean, I received revelations when we were in their fighting with Muhammad Hasan and his false prophet,” Kareem remembered his self-conversion; all his life’s studies coming to him from an unfamiliar perspective. Like, the way he perceived the things he knew were different now.

“It very much does so,” Salima stood her ground, but before she could say anything, the door to the bathroom some feet away opened. Hawa stuck her head out.

“I need some clothes,” she sounded and Tamir and Salima breathed a sigh of relief. Salima ran towards the bathroom.

“My baby,” she ran towards her only child. Judah moved towards his closet and removed some sweatpants and a tee shirt he’d left back. He gave the clothes to Salima, and she took them inside with Hawa. Judah then gathered more clothes and passed them to Pita and Kareem. Then he came face to face with Tamir.

“We good?” Judah held out his arms.

“No,” Tamir stood his ground. “You leave for two months and tell no one and you expect everything to be all right?” he was serious. “Naw, we ain’t good. There is no explanation for you to be gone for two months, all of you,” he pointed to everyone, “and none of you contact us.”

“Right,” Kareem began to notice Lamont’s saying. “The truth can be an illusion sometimes. What was in actuality two months only felt like three days to us,” Kareem spoke truth for everybody. “Like, we could sit and explain everything that happened to us, and I bet you’ll be able to point out when God intervened; that, is when time became irrelevant.”

“Is that right?” Tamir asked. “You speak differently,” he told Kareem.

“Right?” Judah and Kareem said simultaneously and laughed.

“Alright, well,” Tamir said as his phone rung. “It’s your father,” he lifted his phone then answered it.

“You on speaker. I’m with Judah and his friends,” Tamir answered.

“All y’all come to the Church. Now. Bring Ali and Benjamin. I called all the deacons and preachers in my district to come immediately. It all makes sense now,” it seemed as if Isaac had caught on.

“Yessir,” Tamir answered. “Anything else?”

“That’s all. I’ll see you all there,” he said and hung up.

“Guess we better get going,” Tamir looked upon Judah. Judah simply shook his head and went towards his front door. “We got bathrooms inside the main house. We can shower in there,” he told Pita and Kareem. They got up and went to the main house with him.

Judah motioned Kareem to use the bathroom downstairs while he took Pita upstairs.

“Nope. I’m showering with you. It’ll be a perfect pre sex type of thing,” she said. It came out of nowhere. It caught Judah off guard, completely. Were they even really married? Of course they were. Wait, so that meant...

“No way,” Judah felt weak at the knees when he discovered it was good in God’s eyes to make love to Pita, now that they were married. He didn’t even have time to think about it. It wasn’t forefront, the topic of sex, and that was good, but now that he thought about it, he couldn’t wait.

“Don’t tell me you’ve just thought about it!?” Pita could already read his face.

“Uhm,” Judah functioned as if he was a child. His whole demeanor changed. He now acted younger than Benjamin.

“Come on,” she took his hand as they entered Judah’s parents bathroom. Lupita began to remove her clothes and Judah looked as if he was paralyzed. He couldn’t move. He thought he was in the wrong, but they were just taking a shower together to save time, right? Would the parents approve of it?

“Don’t be ashamed,” Pita moved towards Judah and began to remove his clothes. And it was there, when they saw each other, naked, for the first time and they were satisfied.

\*\*\*

“Ooooo,” Benjamin and Ali sounded when they witnessed Judah and Pita emerge from the bathroom, fully clothed, after their shower.

“Oooo, what?” Judah asked.

“They’re married,” Ali told his new friend.

“Married?” Benjamin was even more confused. “So that’s where you were! Off on a honeybee-moon!” Benjamin sounded jealous.

“Honeybee-moon?” Pita laughed whole heartedly.

“Hasten yourselves,” Judah told the young ones. “We are meeting everybody at the Church in a few minutes,” he told them as Benjamin went away with shock and joy in his eyes for his big brother, but Ali stayed.

“Things will change. They may appear bad, but it will all work out for the good. Believe in God so that thou does not perish,” Ali said and joined Ben without giving Judah time to respond.

They did as was told and within the hour, everybody was preparing to leave Bishop’s house. Hawa and Kareem rode with Salima and Tamir.

*‘Honk! Honk!’* a horn sounded as everyone was figuring out rides. A large camper van pulled up.

“Aye mon!” Jah yelled from a venting window since it appeared his driver’s window didn’t roll down. “I can take some heads!” he claimed as Judah and the little ones came around to check the van. Jah had custom-designed the van to have a shower, a toilet, a stove, a refrigerator, a microwave, a sink, and a bed. The bed was laid out and made perfectly.

“Awwhh! Cool!” Benjamin and Ali jumped inside.

“It smell like...”

“Yeah, yeah, yeah. It’s just a smell that will pass. I’m not smoking in front of the little ones. Let them ride, please,” Jah smiled to Judah. Judah decided to let it slide and decided to ride with them to the Church.

Lupita entered behind Judah, and they were off.

Before they even got close to the Church, Lupita asked, “What is all this for?”

“What you mean?” Judah responded.

“It has to be something bigger than what we’ve already done. Like, Ali is here for a reason. We got married for a reason. Hawa and Kareem got married for a reason. And I believe these reasons are something we may not even be able to fathom yet. Make sense?” she was looking for answers.

“Of course it makes sense,” Judah answered as Ali listened, yet insisted on not saying anything.

“And I know you’ve mentioned bringing Muslims to Christ, or re-interpreting the Quran, and that’s big, don’t get me wrong. But there is something else,” she kept seeking with her heart.

“Speak whatever you feel,” Judah could use more insight because he knew little about the Quran and what it exactly said.

“I don’t know. That’s what it is. I have no idea. Usually, I’ll dream something, and it’ll come to fruition, but, nothing of the like recently.”

“Why don’t you just prepare for a life filled with joy and happiness. You ever thought about having children?” Judah asked out the blue. Pita smiled at the thought of having children.

“Aww,” she moaned.

“Don’t stress it. Maybe everything divine that was ordered by you is done. Maybe not. We’ll see,” Judah shrugged his shoulders. “But God is always speaking to us because we want Him to and because we obey. Love defeats. Through faith and love we were able to rescue Ali. Through humbleness have we experienced miracles. As children in the eyes of society, we have been blessed. So whatever is on your mind, I will always have an open ear for you,” Judah caressed Pita’s shoulder as she simply shook her head.

“Will do,” she smiled and sat back peering out the window. “Aww, Hawa!” she lightly shouted as everyone saw Kareem and Hawa driving beside them.

Pita, along with Hawa, were now dressed down in sweatpants and matching sweatshirts. Hawa still wore her hijab but to Pita, it was back to normal. Her long, thick, black locks hang in front her face like a princess being imprisoned by her own self. Judah smiled on the inside, knowing he’d been blessed.

Pulling up to the Church, the parking lot was a quarter way full. Judah was able to recognize some of the cars belonging to the Deacons and other Ministers that would often visit to preach.

Judah was the first to get out the van when he began to help everyone else out. First was Pita, then Ben. But when Ali came out, it happened again. There he was, transformed into a regular boy again. No more deformities. No more hideous look. He transformed in a split second when no one was looking. How many times was God going to keep playing with Ali’s appearance? Or was Ali even human?

“Ali,” Judah called out and Ali looked.

“It’s fine,” Ali tried to calm Judah down before anything happened. “This was supposed to happen for the gathering ahead of us,” Ali made plain. “I shall remain like this until I die,” he

told them all while trying not to be all too excited. “Neurological pathways had to be open in Benjamin’s brain in order for him to converse with the Presbyterian. But not here.”

“Neurological pathways? Not here? What?” Judah asked, confused.

“Oh my God!” Pita almost freaked out, seeing Ali transform again.

“Ali!” Ben dropped his phone, along with his mouth.

“Do not be tempered,” Ali Hasan assured Judah Masod. “Let us attempt to proceed into the Church,” he exited and paid no attention to Pita and Ben’s admiration.

Judah felt as if he could do nothing but go along with all that was happening. He had no idea what his father had planned.

“Oh my God. Are you able to transform at your own will?” Pita bent down to talk with Ali as they walked. She was amazed at the phenomenon that she continuously witnessed.

“No. Only the will of I AM,” Ali bowed and smiled. Everyone, again, was amazed.

“Hey!” Lamont yelled from his car as he parked it. He knew to meet the rest of the crew at the Church. “Judah,” he called out as he joined the group walking towards the entrance of the Church. “The Feds at my house,” he whispered.

“Feds?” this stopped Judah and the crew from walking.

“Yes! Federal Agents!” Lamont looked terrified.

“What happened?”

“I don’t know. I ran!” Lamont grabbed a hold of Judah’s arm. “Think about it. Kidnapping,” he pointed to Ali. “Murder at the Palace. I saw them dead bodies, bruh,” Lamont was losing it. “Grand theft auto. I stole that car. But most importantly kidnapping!”

“Jesus,” it had finally hit Judah. Lamont was right. They’d committed crimes in the eyes of the law. “Maybe my father has a remedy,” Judah pointed to the Church.

“Or maybe he got the Feds in there!” Lamont pointed to the street, and everyone witnessed a black-on-black SUV. Then another one down the street.

“That’s Deacons Phillip’s truck,” Judah attested.

“Deacons Phillip’s truck has 666 in it. Remember?” Lamont had successfully reminded Judah of the time when they discovered that together. Lamont may’ve been right.

“If the Feds are in there, God got y’all, right?” Tamir sounded as if he had a part in this.

“Uhm,” Judah simply sounded and began to feel a bit off. He almost abandoned his calling right then and there. From fear. But he held on.

“Why don’t you go check,” Judah told Tamir. “You didn’t come with us overseas, so you’ll be off the hook.”

“You don’t think they’re already watching you,” Tamir pointed to yet another black SUV behind them with a person that could be seen, in a suit, in the driver’s seat.

“Sleep,” Ali said towards the man in the SUV, and everyone suddenly saw his head drop into his chest. He was sleep. “Now no one is watching us. But we must move fast,” Ali made clear.

“But what about the meeting,” Judah pointed. “This is our time to reveal our plan, through the Holy Spirit. No?”

“No,” Ali stood his ground.

“Did he just make him go to sleep?” Tamir was still amazed at what Ali had done.

“Faith,” Ali pointed and smiled. “Now, please, Grandpa. Check out the Church for us,” Ali was still as youthful as can be. Tamir had just realized that this was his grandchild. The thought of it made him smile.

“Grandson,” Tamir smiled slightly like he’d been hypnotized. “Yes. Right?” he looked to Salima and hugged and kissed her. His whole attitude flipped. “Grandson!” he shook his head, dwelling on the thought. “Wait, if you can do that to him, through faith, why can’t you do the same to the Agents inside?”

“Agents inside?” Lamont asked, worried to death now.

“God’s will be done,” Ali simply said. That was all Tamir had to hear before entering the Church.

“I’ll go with him, then excuse myself when I discover what is going on,” Salima said.

“Ok. Good. We’ll be in the...”

“Campervan!” Jah interrupted. “I parked on the other side of the Church, out of sight,” he pointed.

“Very well,” she bowed, and the rest of the crew went towards the van.

“So we running away from the Police now?” Pita asked Judah.

“Right,” Judah commented.

Upon entering the Campervan, Kareem and Hawa walked up behind them.

“Y’all see these agents out here right?” Kareem asked.

“We sure do. Where y’all coming from?” Judah asked, assuming they were here first.

“We bent the block a couple times once we saw them trucks. What’s going on?” he asked.

“I don’t know yet. Get in,” Judah made way. So now it was Jah, Pita, Judah, Ben, Ali, Hawa, Kareem and Lamont. They all had room to sit or lay. Ben looked terrified, like he didn’t know what was going on. It was true, he didn’t know what was going on. Ali did though. Jah was high off his medicine and went along with whatever life threw him. Pita and Hawa were quiet, simply following their man. Kareem was distraught and it was seen on his face. Lamont was even more distraught with fear shown all over.

“Now what?” Jah asked as everyone was in.

“We jet,” Lamont made known that he was afraid.

“Jet to where?” Jah responded.

“Right.”

“Better yet, let me call my father,” Judah took out his phone and dialed Isaac. He picked up on the first ring.

“Hey, Son.”

“Father. Are there Federal Agents in the Church?” Judah was straight to the point.

“Yes,” Isaac didn’t hesitate. “They just want to talk to you.”

“What’s going on?” Judah’s words began to break.

“...” Isaac breathed a long inhale and exhale. “I don’t know what has gotten into you, Son. But you have clearly lost your mind,” his father’s words were hitting him like bullets. “I dropped y’all off at the airport and waited outside for hours, believing y’all were coming right back out. This was all supposed to be a pun.”

“A pun?” Judah was unaware of the word.

“Hawa is not your cousin. Salima and Miriam are not sisters. It was a pun to get a reaction out of you. To help you straighten up. I don’t know. It was Tamir’s idea. At first we thought it was true, no lie. Salima and your mother being sisters, but then we found the truth before you even came to Tamir’s place with that weird glow. It was a lesson to bring you to a realization of something, but...” Judah hung up the phone before his father could finish. He didn’t know what to believe now. His father sounded like he was pleading, and it sounded pitiful. I sounded like lying. It sounded disgusting.

“Agghh!” Judah threw his phone down and cracked the screen. Everyone jumped.

“Oh my God, Judah. What’s wrong,” Pita came to his side. Judah simply huffed and puffed; angrier than even Lamont had ever seen.

“Judah,” Ben called to his brother. “Father betrayed us, huh?” he asked. Judah calmed down only a bit to look at his baby brother in awe. Ben looked back with innocence in his eyes.

“I don’t know, Ben. Don’t say that,” Judah held his respect for his father. “We’re leaving. Do you want Mama and Papa?” Judah asked Ben.

“No! I’m grown! Almost! I know enough to survive,” Ben stood up. “I can hang. Man does not live on bread alone. God takes care of the birds and feeds them every day. He dresses the flowers every day. Aren’t we more important than birds and flowers?” Ben had made his mind up. Judah then looked to Hawa.

“Do you wish to be with your parents, here?”

“I’m married now. I’ve become one with Kareem,” Hawa stated boldly.

“Very well. Kareem? Lamont?”

“We following you for now,” Kareem spoke, and Lamont agreed.

“For sure. Let’s go, Jah!” Judah commanded.

“Where to?”

“East,” Judah stated.

“Even when Fatima came with authentic tickets and paperwork, our parents deemed them fake,” Hawa remembered. “I guess they believed it to be some joke. But I remembering seeing Fatima wink at the parents, like she was in on it, but it wasn’t that,” Hawa continued. “Fatima winked at them because Fatima knew she had done right by the Lord by doing everything in advance. She was excited! Not in on any game or joke being played by our reckless parents.”

“I don’t believe it,” Judah shook his head. “It’s something else. When Salima was telling me those stories.”

“No, that was true. But now, I don’t know because they could not have stopped it, the way God had manifested this. I think it’s when you came back with that glow to your presence. It threw them off, they didn’t know how to respond and wanted to play along only to find out it was real. Then for us to be gone for so long and for so much stuff to happen. Wow. I don’t know,” Hawa shook her head in confusion as well.

“Or maybe it wasn’t a game. Maybe they really thought y’all were related and then found out later that it wasn’t true…” Kareem started.

“Uhm. It sounds like they initially believed us to be related but then found out it wasn’t true, but still decided to get a reaction out of me,” Judah attested.

“How could they do that?” Benjamin spoke up, looking directly in the eyes of Judah.

“A bigger purpose,” Judah sat back on the van’s couch. “I’m married now,” he pointed to Pita. “No more boyfriend/girlfriend play. Everything is working out for the better. Let’s just move forward and deal with this later,” Judah continued to lead.

“It’s probably that weed,” Hawa joked of their parents but then realized something. Then she looked to Kareem. “Wait. Did you have anything to do with this?”

“Of course not,” Kareem answered but Judah and Hawa knew immediately that he was lying. “Why would you say such a thing?” Kareem tried to get closer to Hawa, but Hawa snatched away from him.

“Why would I say such a thing? Why would you DO such a thing?” she was convinced that Kareem had something to do with it.

“Hawa. Calm down,” Kareem tried to tame his wife.

“No! You and Fatima! Trying to control everything within your little power,” she spat. “I remember seeing the way you used to look at me, the things you used to say. Calling me *Earth* like you some type of Five Percenter. Touching the bottom of my back to excuse yourself, trying to be polite yet sending unwanted energies. Causing strife between Judah and I,” Hawa was clearly angry.

“Hawa,” Kareem called out but couldn’t say anything afterwards. He knew he was caught, but he just didn’t know to what extent. “Hawa,” he repeated.

“I’m listening,” she folded her arms. Kareem hated to lie. He wanted to lie no more, but he also knew the truth would hurt. Everyone was silent and waited till Kareem spoke, but he just couldn’t do it.

“I have no idea what you’re talking about. Yes, I called you Earth because that what you reminded me of. I gave every woman in there a nickname fitting. I touched the bottom of your back to excuse myself most of the time because you were in the way, perhaps on purpose,” Kareem was telling the God’s honest truth. “I caused no strife between you and Judah, only provided to him what was true, following Fatima’s request,” he remained honest.

“Don’t lie to me. You had a thing for me!” Hawa commanded.

“And vice versa!” Kareem fought back, acknowledging he had a thing for her. Hawa couldn’t deny it. Judah remembered on how Hawa could recite a teaching taught by Kareem on the beginnings of the Universe, or where God came from. Judah remembered how Hawa would ponder on the things Kareem had told her and even remembered a bad dream he had about her mentioning Kareem.

“Welp, we married now,” he tried to smile and Hawa gave in. She burst into a smile through her mild anger and discoveries.

“But Judah,” she looked upon him as he lay, listening to everything.

“But Judah what?” Judah sat up. “You lied to me this whole time. I still feel some type of way about that,” he was stern. Hawa said nothing, rather she rested her head against a window.

“Judah,” Pita tried to say so many things through her tone with just saying his name. Judah looked at Pita as if whatever she had to say was irrelevant. “Aye, don’t look at me like that,” she folded her arms.

“Ooooo. Already!” Benjamin yelled and smiled, pertaining to the married couple arguing. Yet only Ben and Ali found it funny. Everyone else seemed to take the matter seriously. So serious, that everyone decided to not say anything at all. They deemed it better to think within their own minds while Jah drove east.

Judah couldn’t believe his father. So childish. To play into a trick like that. Judah almost wanted to punch something; he was so angry. Then for his father to be collaborating with Federal Agents, after Judah revealing to his father what the Lord instructed them to do. How could a man leading a congregation into salvation play such silly games? He could not have been that bored. Then Judah remembered Matthew 16:23 when Jesus turned to Peter and said, *‘Get thee behind me, Satan. Thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.’*

Pita knew her life was to be adventurous from now on. She wondered if she was even still employed at Sacramento State as a Professor. She didn’t care much, but when she did care, it ran deep. She studied most of her life to become a young professor at Sacramento State. Things were changing and they were changing fast. Perhaps, Pita was able to keep up with the pace.

Benjamin and Ali became best friends instantly. They became so close so fast, that they practically were able to read each other’s mind. They couldn’t wait until Judah took the lead into more of an understanding of what was to take place.

Lamont knew why he was there. Lamont knew he was Judah's protector and didn't mind at all. Admiring Judah to the fullest extent wiped out all doubt in following him. Lamont was able to see Judah's faith actually work and it was truly something to be amazed at.

Jah was high. Jah found a new strain and was high as a kite. The high seemed to never go away, but it wasn't a regular high. It wasn't a high one would receive from the regular cannabis. Jah wasn't able to put a finger on it yet, but he knew he had something in his possession that would potentially change the world in the medical field.

Hawa still loved Judah. She loved and was married to Kareem, but Judah still had a special place in her heart, despite the miraculous wedding. She knew what she'd done to Judah was horrific and doubted a full forgiveness this soon. Afterall, they were both divinely married to other people, so did it really matter? Hawa continued to wonder why God toyed with her emotions so much; or was it her own self toying with her emotions?

Kareem yearned to learn more of what was yet to come. Reinterpreting the Quran sounded more than exciting but Kareem wondered how they would produce such interpretations. He looked upon Ali assuming he was the one with the answers since Kareem had seen this little boy do things that were clearly supernatural. He was just a child.

So there they were, riding by faith and not by sight. Why did Judah run from his father and assumed Federal Agents to be after him? Had it been the devil playing tricks on him the whole time, intertwining good with bad? Afterall, they were all guilty of kidnapping, murder, grand theft auto and more.

*'Yet, God is not the author of confusion,'* Judah would think to himself, while shaking his head. Pita would catch on to his gestures and could only pray for her husband.

## Azaryahu

---

Six hours later and Judah had awoken to a debate between Ali and Kareem. Judah looked out the window and discovered mountains that looked quite different from the mountains of California.

“Where are we?” Judah interrupted the debate.

“Battle Mountain, Nevada,” Jah announced from the driver’s seat. “Four more hours and we’ll be in Salt Lake City. Ali suggested that this was the best option,” he pointed to Ali shaking his head as a manner of yes.

“Like I was saying,” Ali continued to Kareem, “Surat An-Nisa verse 157 has been translated in many ways. Many Muslims use it to deny the Crucifixion. But the Quran is right. The Jews did not kill Jesus, nor crucify Him. It was not customary for Jews to crucify people, but it was made to appear that the Jews did kill Him. The Romans actually did it. But to be completely honest, even the Romans did not kill Him,” Ali spoke with warm enthusiasm. “Yeshua gave His life as the ultimate and perfect sacrifice for humanity, so that we can come to God as Holy and Pure Beings. The Quran attests to this.”

“But another was made to resemble Him to them. And indeed, those who differ over it are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it except the following of assumption. And they did not kill him, for certain,” Kareem read from the Quran.

“The substitution theory,” Ali smiled, being in his reformed body, looking and sounding better than ever. “Shubbiha Lahum,” Ali spoke in Arabic. “This verse is taken out of context: *But another was made to resemble Him to them* actually is to be translated into, *But it was made to resemble another to them*. This *another* actually attests to the actual crucifixion, not the death of Christ.”

“You can’t just change what the Surahs say,” Kareem attested.

“Is it that? Or is it that Muslims shouldn’t believe the most dubious interpretations of that Surah? Is it that we are all sheep, blindly following what the elite tells us? Or do we become the intellectual beings God allowed us to be, by falling into sin? The phrase being used here is *shubbiha* which means *it, or he, appeared as such* and it is taken to refer to Jesus. But this is incorrect as Jesus appearing as anything other than Himself would be written as *mu-shabbahu bi-hi* not *mu-shabbiha*. And if *shubbiha* refers to anybody that is supposed to take the place of

Jesus, the Quran mentions no such person. So what was it being referred to here when one reads: *But it was made to resemble another to them?*”

“The Crucifixion.” Ben stated as the answer was already clearly given.

“Correct,” Ali smiled. *“And those who differ therein are in doubt about it; they have no knowledge of it, but follow only conjecture,”* Ali recited some of the same verse from memory. “This simply means the people who made up various explanations of the crucifixion are in doubt and clearly throwing hypothesis’ out there. The Jews claimed they killed Christ. The Christians believed He was crucified; Barnabas wrote that Judas Iscariot was taken in his place. Even the views of the Corinthians and Basilidans believed that Joseph Simon was taken in the place of Christ. The Quran simply says that all these views were conjectures.”

*“And they did not kill Him for certain?”* Kareem repeated the last sentence of the verse they were discussing.

“Means he was not killed properly as killing should be done. Or, it could mean that He was not killed for sure because he resurrected, and people still didn’t believe it. Haha. Some scholars like to take away from the power of the Most High. Some interpretations even point to Christ fainting on the cross because they claim 3 hours was not sufficient to cause death. Are they forgetting the scourging whip that had iron balls and sharp sheep bones that ripped through the flesh of Christ?” Ali’s voice began to break. “The depths of the cuts reaching into the muscle tissue of our Lord and Savior. His flesh literally falling to the ground covered in His precious blood. He was whipped from the back and the front, and you have to imagine that anyone taking that kind of beating, losing that amount of blood would be near death before even being nailed to the cross. Think of how easily annoyed we get when we get a cut or splinter, let alone open wounds all around the body. A cut of the foot is pain felt with every single step!” he sounded like he was now preaching and even touching the souls of the ones in the van.

“We get it,” Kareem tried to stop Ali from going there, the women getting teary eyed just from remembering what Christ went through during His crucifixion. Ali checked himself and continued while clearing his throat. He was so adorable. Him and Ben. Ali finished.

“That would conclude verse 157 but in the next verse, 158, it says: *Bal rafr ‘a-hu Allahu ilia-hi* which means *God made Him die*. This also attests to the death of Christ. The Quran tells us this elsewhere in the Quran in The Heifer verse 55 it reads: *O Jesus, I will cause you to die and raise you to Myself*. The verse seems to get switched a lot to mean that God will first raise Jesus

and when Christ comes back, He will die. But there is no backbone or evidence for this anywhere. It provides nothing substantial and actually contradicts with what Christ claimed. In another Quranic Surah it is made even more clear. *When Thou didst cause me to die, Thou wast the Watcher over them.* This is Christ telling the Father that when He died (*maut*), The Father became the Watcher over His followers. And we know that God takes souls at the time of death. So yes, the Quran actually alludes to the Crucifixion and the death of Christ.”

Judah was amazed at hearing Ali speak from theology for the first time.

“So, the crucifixion was made to appear so to them? I don’t get it. God hardened their hearts? The ones who follow conjecture. The people were confused about the crucifixion and not about the death of Christ?” Kareem asked.

“Yes, or, the crucifixion was made unclear to them, not the death and resurrection of Christ. Again, in 19:33 we read Jesus saying: *Peace upon Me on the day I was born, on the day I DIE, and on the day I will be sent fourth alive!* The Table Spread verse 17 reads: *Then who could prevent Allah at all if He had intended to destroy the Christ, the Son of Mary, or His mother or everyone on the earth?* This alludes to His death as an actual event in history. The Quran is implying that the death of Christ was an act of God. A careful examination of the precise wording of the Quran shows that verse 157 is not directed against Christian belief,” Ali finished and allowed the posse to ponder on his words. It was revolutionary indeed.

“In that same chapter, verse 75 I believe, it says: *Jesus, son of Mary, is only a Messenger. Messengers have passed away before Him,*” Kareem tried to test Ali.

“Yes. This is a *modus operandi*. A *modus operandi* is a particular way or method of doing something that is well established. Like the surah *al-ma’ida* verse 17 asks, *‘If God desired to take the life of Jesus, the Son of Mary, and his mother, and everyone on earth, who could resist Him?’* Does this not imply that the death of Christ was an act of God, just like all deaths that occur upon men? Is not also the surah of Christ being a Messenger used as a *modus operandi*? Prophet Muhammad, the Quran’s own prophet, in 3:144 states, *‘Muhammad is only a Messenger. Messengers have passed away before him.’*”

“Uhm, naw,” Kareem gave him an unusual look. “The Quran clearly over emphasizes Christ’s humanity. They claim He ate food and was nothing more than a messenger just like the ones before Him. What does a *modo operando* have to do with this?” he tried to say ‘*modus operandi*.’ Ali deemed Kareem wasn’t satisfied with his answer. “The Quran always refers to

Christ as the Son of Mary, rather than anything else, relating more to His humanity than anything. This term, Son of Mary, is only used one time in the bible, in Mark, right?” Kareem pointed to Judah for clarification.

“Yes. And it were a people asking if He was indeed the Son of Mary, as a way to try and identify Him,” Judah made clear.

“Exactly. Does this not emphasize that Christ had no divine status?” Kareem asked.

“How about I ask you this. Does the Quran place Christ above all other prophets?” Ali asked.

After a long second or two, Kareem shook his head. “Why yes, but what surah and verse?” Kareem tested Ali’s knowledge. Ali smiled because he knew what Kareem was doing.

“The Cow verse 253. ‘Those are the messengers some of whom We have given excellence over some others. Among them there are the ones to whom Allah spoke directly and He raised some of them steps higher, and We gave clear signs to Isa, the son of Maryam and supported Him with the Holy Spirit.’ I come to learn why Christ was given this excellence and learn the importance of the Sacrifice,” Ali was making known. “We can go deep,” he rubbed his hands together and the small band offered to hear what he had to say.

“Please, delve,” Kareem left the floor open.

“Very well. I will be straightforward. I know the language Arabic, so I am able to decipher different words and their meanings, for example, the word *walad*. The Quran never uses the word *walad* as it pertains to begotten son. It never even uses the word when it denies the sonship of Jesus. And *walad* means *son*. At the same time there are a number of verses that reject the concept of God adopting a son, which is the Arabic term *yattakhidu waladan* which means to *take a son*. But Christ existed in the beginning. God didn’t take a son, did He? When we say Son of God, are we referring to the Father actually conceiving how Man does? No! Haram! And the Quran never refers to the denial of Christ in the form of sonship in Orthodox view, rather in the views of heresy Christianity where God actually impregnates a woman. Right?” he asked the crew. Judah was most amazed even though he tried his hardest to not show it. “So therefore, when the Quran makes these claims on the rejection of Christ’s sonship, it should be comprehended as a denial of the concept of God physically sleeping with a woman to produce Christ, be it here or in Heaven. It was meant to dismiss the notions that Christ is not God’s *walad* because God did not begot Christ by sexual intercourse with a female. Orthodox Christianity

doesn't believe this," Ali finished as Benjamin tried to stand but was sat back down by the movement of the van.

"Also, you have to take into consideration the relationships between Jews, Muslims and Christians back in their time. If you think there are many sects of each religion now, you have no idea on the history of sects in religions, most of which have died out. Without saying that Prophet Muhammad misunderstood Christian and Jewish doctrine, it may very well be him using those scriptural polemics towards sects that preached a different scripture. Christ did come to deliver a message of Love, no?"

"Christ came to give His life as a perfect sacrifice," Ben intervened. "We've mentioned this. It is all throughout the Old Testament."

"We did. And you are correct," Ali spoke. "But along with the crucifixion and resurrection, there were attributes being attributed to Christ that either took away from His humanness or added too much to His godliness. For instance, some say that Christ is God in the sense that Christ has no one above Him."

"He doesn't have anyone above Him. He is equal with God," Kareem stated.

"Correct, yet all glory was given to Christ from who? The Father. Christ said He could do nothing through Himself, only through the Father and the fact that He did all things according to the will of the Father, coming from the seed of the Holy Spirit who is equal with the Father just as the Son is. Christ called out to His Father when He was dying on the cross. Even in the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed: *Father, if you are willing, Let this cup pass before me!*" Christ was afraid of what was about to happen to Him, right? He asked the will of the Father be done. Christ can claim to be one with the Father because Christ came from God, through the precious womb of Mother Mary. Christ displayed God to the fullest. Without fault, without sin. Christ didn't come through human seed, man's sperm, which was and is inflicted and cursed with sin. This made Him one with God. Also, the fact that He came through a woman could attest that He was fully human. It's called the Hypostatic union. He is God from the essence of the Father, begotten before time; and He is human from the essence of His mother, born in time; completely God, completely human, with a rational soul and human flesh; equal to the Father as regards divinity, less than the Father as regards humanity," Ali preached.

"Uhm," Judah really felt what Ali was speaking. He spoke so well in the English language that Judah became more inspired by Ali Hasan than his own father.

“Wait. So we are having the Quran attest to the validity of the Christian faith?” Kareem tried to argue. “They are in direct contrast with each other.”

“It don’t sound too bad,” Judah decided to jump in.

“Right,” Lamont agreed, looking puzzled.

“Think about it,” Benjamin spoke up. “I believe as if the Quran is attacking Christian heresies rather than orthodox Christianity. For example, when the Quran claims that Christians said, ‘*God is Jesus the son of Mary*’ or ‘*God is the third of three,*’ is it not a contentious rhetoric intended to support a specific position by forthright claims and/or to undermine the opposing position? Of course the Quran is aware that Christians did not say that. It may even seem like the Quran made a mistake, rhetorically speaking, but that is not the case. Rather a polemically inspired description of a person in which certain striking characteristics are exaggerated in order to create this grotesque effect are presented in the purpose of which to highlight, in Islamic terms, the absurdity and wrongness of certain Christian beliefs, again, from the Islamic perspective. Even when Muslims accuse their opposition to be polytheists, they use the term for a polemical purpose,” Ben spoke as if he had a degree in Theology. He left everybody in the van baffled, except for Ali. Ali knew where he was going.

“What?” Judah asked his little brother. “Why would the Quran attack heresies...” Judah stopped himself and thought. “Uhm,” it may’ve finally hit him. “That’s all Christ did. Attack heresies,” Judah agreed.

“Correct! It’s evident. In surahs involving the Christian faith within the Quran, we should look for the Quran’s creative use of rhetoric, and not for the influence of Christian heretics. Another instance,” Ali sat up and continued. “Uzayr in the Quran is supposedly the same person as Ezra in the Bible. In 9:30 the Quran says, ‘*The Jews say Ezra is the son of God while the Christians say Christ is the son of God. This is what they say, from their very mouths, thereby agreeing with the speech of the unbelievers who came before. May God strike them down! How they pervert the truth!*’ Yet, there is no historical evidence that proves that any Jewish sect, however heterodox, ever mentioned Ezra being the son of God.”

“Well, read the following the surah,” Benjamin lifted a Quran from his lap. Judah had just noticed this, his brother having a Quran. “9:31 states, ‘*They have taken their rabbis and monks as lords apart from God.*’ Maybe it was that Jews venerated Ezra so much that it was as if

he were a god to them. This is why Christ always verbally fought with the rabbis and monks, wolves in sheep clothing, venerating men and not God.”

“Maybe,” Ali shook his head. “This may also be said of Enoch as they were both revered as sons of Allah. But we must take into consideration the language in which *sonship* is used. I am still learning a ton myself. That’s why we are all here. To learn from each other, despite what any person may try to do to stop us. Allah will protect us.”

“Amen,” most of the men stated.

“And, let’s not forget, Ezra reintroduced the Torah to the People after they came back from the Babylon Exile. This word ‘reintroduced’ may very well be termed ‘recited from memory,” Judah tried to make clear. “So we must also take into consideration what these revered men, or sons of God have done to be coined such names. We may be able to call them to us.”

“That!” Ali jumped up and pointed at Judah. “They will come!” he got excited at the mentioning of sons of God appearing to them. “Also, the term ‘sons of God.’ It is an overly complex matter,” Ali admitted. “It seems when early Christians applied the term ‘son of God’ to Christ, it was done so in a literal and physical manner, but when others are coined sons of God, like Enoch, Ezra, King David, King Solomon, then it is used figuratively. Even now. But, when pertaining to Christ, the term ‘son of God’ has a soteriological meaning: the ‘son of God’ frees us to become ‘sons of God.’”

“Soteriological?” Lamont asked.

“Means a doctrine relating to salvation. Or The Doctrine of Salvation.”

“I don’t think we believe Jesus was the son of God in a physical sense because the idea of that would be repugnant. It would make God physical when God is far beyond physical,” Judah mentioned.

“As it would also be to Muslims,” Ali added. “Yet, did these early Christians misunderstand their scriptures when it came to ascribing the physical conception of fatherhood to God? Is not the conception of fatherhood from God supposed to be metaphorical, a relationship of love and intimacy? When did God have a physical son and when was Jesus the only son of God? In the Gospels, Christ refers to God as *My Father* while the disciples refer to God as *Our Father*. This distinction between *My Father* and *Our Father* is understood to indicate a special relationship of Christ with God.”

“True, and the fact that none of Jesus’ disciples claimed the divine sonship for themselves that they claimed for Jesus,” Judah interrupted nicely. “But is there not more? More to the *My God vs Our God* reasoning to distinguish a special relationship between God and Christ? Like, Psalm 89 reads, ‘*You are my Father, my God!*’ Where are the clear distinctions that eludes to Christ having a special relationship with the Father here when we see King David using *My Father*? And if that singular pronoun by the speaker indicates a physical sonship, then that title of son of God must also be given to King David, and first to King David.”

“Indeed. Yet, let us not misunderstand. The physical fatherhood of God does contradict reasoning and therefore must be understood metaphorically to mean God’s mercy, honor, and intimacy. We should not deny that Jesus deserves the highest level of intimacy compared to others such as Jacob, David, and Solomon to whom the title *son of God* has been given. Frequent references from the Quran add to Christ being more distinguished than others. The Muslims do not deny this specialty as they appraise Him more than his predecessors such as Israel, David, and others. But we must reason,” Ali took a breath.

“Reasoning the nature on the sonship of Christ seems to be problematic in simply explaining,” Lamont upped his intellectual spice.

“Maybe arguing the divine sonship of Jesus is inconceivable and a mystery. Maybe it is not for us to know. That is where faith comes in,” Benjamin chimed in.

“I like that,” Ali told Benjamin.

“And I think the reason we don’t use the term ‘*son of God*’ being applied to ourselves is because we believe it to be a symbol of self-pride, which eventually led people, like the Jews, who would refer to themselves as the ‘*sons of God*’ to become the most distinguished people on earth. These are arrogant claims, this is why the Quran states, ‘*Why then does He torment you on account of your sins?*’” Pita butted in.

“Uhm hmm. For the wages of sin is death. That’s intertwined within nature. God doesn’t punish us for our sins. We allow Satan to cause havoc in our lives because that is his livelihood; kill, steal, and destroy. When we sin, we become removed from God’s holiness. You know this,” Judah told Ali matter-of-factly.

“I do know this,” Ali admitted and waited. No one said anything for a while, each pondering on the information they just received. Kareem looked at Ali and Ali simply smiled, but Kareem was far from finished. He still wanted to understand.

“Don’t try to run from what’s going on here,” Kareem blurted with a smile. “I’m going to come with it,” he nudged Ali.

“Run? Hahaha!” Ali laughed with his heart. “I left my homeland by way of kidnapping in order to bring to us unfathomable truths. I would argue that if we understand the Quran or its surahs as polemical, then perhaps the problem of inaccuracies can be put aside. We must understand that polemical writings are intended to prove one’s viewpoint and disapprove the other viewpoint even to the point of distorting descriptions so as to make them unacceptable. Polemics flourish in a specific communal milieu where individuals require the psychological assurance that their understanding of reality is the only right one,” Ali tried to explain deeper.

“Or, to keep the Quran authentic, maybe we take it for what it is. Like with the Jews venerating Ezra to god like status mentioned in the Quran. Since it is quite alien to Judaism and since the idea didn’t just drop in the head of Prophet Muhammad, it is obvious that a slanderous accusations were made against the Jews by their protagonists. These defamers were none other than the Jews old enemies, the Samaritans, who hated Ezra above all because he changed the sacred Law and its holy script,” Kareem spoke.

“Ezra didn’t change the holy script, he recalled it all from memory after the Babylonian exile. God sent the Holy Spirit onto him, and he drank from a cup of fire and spoke for forty days, truth,” Judah intervened.

“Where is that written?” Lamont asked Judah.

“The Second Book of Esdras. Or the Fourth Book of Ezra,” Judah stated.

“Wretched too are those who write Scripture with their own hands and then claim it to be from God, they may sell it for a small price! Woe to them for what their hands have written! Woe to them for the profit they made!” Kareem quoted from the Quran.

“Kareem,” Judah called out to his friend. “The fire you have inside of you, bro,” he shook his head in disbelief. “It’s amazing. You want the truth so bad, not realizing that you’ve found it.”

“Indeed I have,” Kareem told Judah then looked back at Ali awaiting an answer.

“The Judaism Prophet Muhammad had daily contact with which was not the true Jews. Those Jews from Medina were a deliberately falsified form of the true Judaism, both in teaching, and in the basis of the teaching, namely the Torah,” Ali announced.

“I thought, at least for the most part, that Muhammad had a good relationship with the Jews and Christians. I even heard some of the Jews and Christians were adherent to the words of Prophet Muhammad,” Jah sounded from the driver’s seat.

“This is correct,” Ali started. “Yet also, there were sectors of false Jews that were targets of accusations about the concealing and the falsification of the Torah by Muhammad. In fact, these accusations were really the only escape out of a dangerous situation in which he would meet the Jews in Medina. When he had first appeared to the People of Scripture, Prophet Muhammad was actually firmly convinced that the contents of the Old and New Testament coincided with what he preached on the basis of his revelations. But these false Jews claimed that Muhammad’s *ideas* and *misunderstanding* of the Old Testament Laws were so distorted, that this naturally provoked criticism and ridicule from the Jews and therefore Muhammad was put in a false position. These accusations were understood as a result of the Prophet’s disappointment with the Jews in which he came into contact with. Muhammad first appealed to the evidence of the earlier Scripture, but when the Jews ridiculed his claims, he began to accuse them of corrupting the Scriptures. Therefore, the contradictions between the Quranic and Biblical stories and the denial of both Jews and Christians that Muhammad was predicted in their Holy Scriptures, gave rise to the Quranic accusation of the falsification of the texts.”

“So, if the Quran is the confirmation of the earlier scriptures, why do the Jews and Christians, who read those Scriptures, not accept the Quran as revelation and therefore acknowledge Muhammad as a Prophet?” Kareem asked.

“Do you really expect them to believe in the message sent to you, when a group among them would hear the speech of God and then pervert it, knowingly, after having grasped its meaning?” Ali quoted from the Quran. “Or 2:79 in which I just recited speaking on those writing the book with their own hand and then claim it to be from God and then sell it for a small price! Wretched are those! Or even later in the chapter, in verse 101 it says, ‘When there has come to them a messenger from God confirming what was with them, the Scripture, a group of them that were given the book throw the book of God behind their backs, as if they did not know.’ There are more surahs that reflect these. Therefore, there is nothing wrong with the Torah or the Gospels in themselves, rather the problem lies with the way in which the Jews and Christians approach these Scriptures. Actually, the Quran seems to echo traditional themes of Christian

anti-Jewish polemics where the Jews were charged with falsifying and misinterpreting the Bible.”

“Don’t beat up on the Jews,” Pita made a remark. Laughs scattered.

“Not at all...” Ali began but was interrupted by Kareem.

“Wait! Wait! Here’s another speaking on the Trinity,” he interrupted trying to get the most out of Ali while he could. “It says... Wait,” Kareem began to read the verse to himself before aloud. Then he giggled at himself a bit. “Right,” he told himself, reassuring something. “I mean, it says it right here, *‘The Christ Jesus son of Mary I indeed the prophet of God and His Word which He cast into Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in God and His Messengers, and DO NOT SAY: ‘Three!’ Desist, for this would be best for you. God in truth is One-glory be to Him, that He should have a child!’* Of course God did not have a child. He operates in the spiritual. The prior is what some sects believed. Or even when the Quranic Christ speaks to God at the end times as to disown the errors of the Christians. *‘O Jesus, son of Mary! Did you ever ask the people to worship you and your mother as gods besides Allah? And then Christ replies how He could ever do such a thing. In fact, the Mother Mary in the Bible followed Christ and was more so His mother through faith rather than blood. In the same surah *The Table Spread*, the Quran declares that it is blasphemy when they utter that God is the third of three. God is head!’* Kareem preached.

“Can you not see who they are talking about now?” Ali asked. “What is the Trinity?” Ali asked him back.

“The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit,” Kareem answered successfully.

“Right. Not The Father, The Son, and The Mother Mary. The surahs here concluded that Christian doctrine of the Trinity consisted of God, Jesus, and Mother Mary. Did Prophet Muhammad misunderstand the Trinity? Or rather was he dealing with heretical sects? Let us maintain this,” Ali sat up in the bed in which most of them sat. “Let us maintain that the Quran does not deal with the biblical doctrine of the Trinity but with the Trinity of heretical sects. We should not hold the Quran as hostile to orthodox Christianity but rather only to certain distortions of it. Yet, there are so things that itch my brain sort to speak,” Ali spoke gaining everybody’s attention. “The Table Spread is an extraordinarily complex surah because in it, it says, *‘They have forgotten a portion of what they were asked to remember.’* That is verse 13. I believe this is referring to when the Jews came out of exile from the Babylonians, the Torah was destroyed

then. This is where in the Bible we see Ezra being gifted the Holy Spirit in reciting the Torah. The Quran claims they have forgotten portions. What are these portions? Are they important?" Ali asked us.

"You know what? I do not know. Maybe that is something for us to find out. Maybe they could be the missing Gospels, like the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Judas, the Gospel of Mary and so on," Judah answered.

"Maybe," Ali was now able to sit back, leaving everybody in the van simply amazed.

"But what would it all mean?" Hawa asked. "Like, the Quran pointing to the authenticity of Christ. Because it sounds like the true message of the Quran is to validate what was already given to the prophets," she made a point.

"That and so much more. Think about it. Prophet Muhammad's only miracle or prophecy was the Quran, correct?" Ali asked everyone and they agreed. "Then, why have it to be dogmatic religion towards all other people who worship the One True God? Why not bridge the gap?" Ali asked. "There is far more in these texts and books than we know. Far more! There are Beings, everywhere, working and fighting for the Good of humanity. 90% of the universe is invisible to us. What does that tell you? That there is more! And we have been blessed by the Hand of God to help manifest Heaven on Earth.

Everyone was left with nothing more to say. They simply pondered on thoughts in their heads, wondering what exactly was to take place. Some feared for the authorities being on their tail. Others were in shock at the observance of the way Ali interpreted the Quran.

"Look," Jah caught the attention of a young white male on the side of the road with his thumb out. He was dressed as if he came from Church.

"Mormon," Kareem guessed right. "What you doing?" he asked once noticing Jah pull over.

"We got room for one more. Nine times out of ten, he going to Salt Lake City," Jah smiled and pulled over.

No one said anything as Jah parked in front of him and got out to greet.

"Hey! I'm Jah! You need a ride?" he asked.

"Why yes. Salt Lake? Is there room?" he asked looking off into the van.

"Yup. Come on," Jah lead the way.

"I'm Luke Chaplin by the way," he introduced himself.

“Luke,” Jah bowed and introduced him to the rest of the crew. Jah knew exactly what he was doing. Throwing more wood in the fire.

“Wow. The energy in here is amazing,” Luke commented. “I am a Mormon from the Salt Lake Temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Do we know who Jesus really is?” he offered.

“Awww nawww. Not again!” Lamont laughed along with everyone else.

They went in. All the way to Salt Lake City. What happens next has yet to happen. Until next time.

**To Be Continued....**