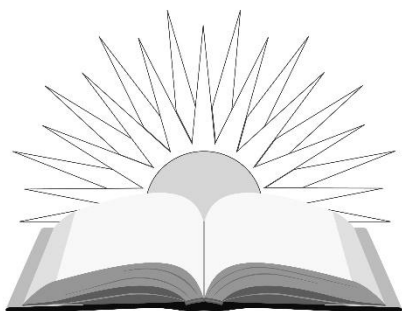


A Change Of Heart



**"I will not leave you as orphans; I will
come to you" (John 14:18).**

**By
Robert E. Jordan**



JORDAN PUBLICATIONS LLC.

Resolutions Of Faith

A Change of Heart

By Robert E. Jordan

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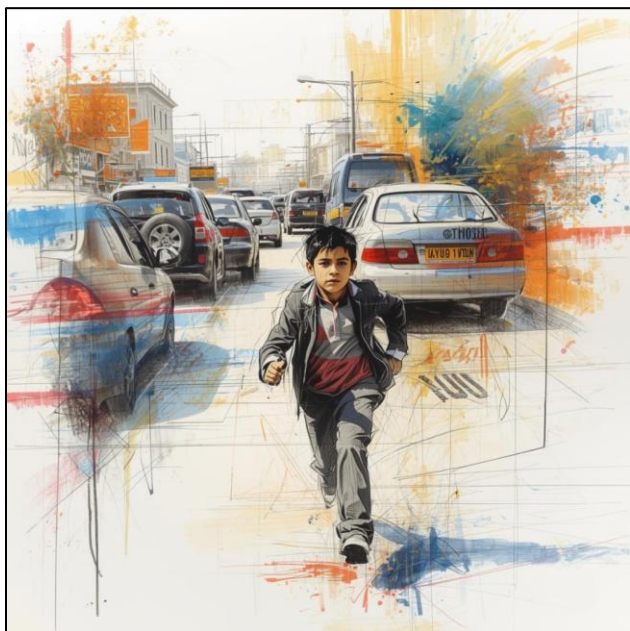
To my darling Apo and her children's children.

The author wishes to thank *The Spirit of Truth* and *The Guiding Light*, his wife, Milagros Jordan, for her support and devotion, and his granddaughter and darling Apo for their assistance and input. Their input enabled the creation of a vision that converted a concept into a completed work, transforming an idea into this book. For this, I am incredibly grateful.

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Resolutions Of Faith



A Change of Heart

Preface...Nowhere to Turn

As a forethought, this story will be harrowing to read, as it was challenging to write. It will offer the reader a glimpse into a life of hardship, torment, abandonment, and being left for dead, and into how, somehow, one finds reprieve, seeks revenge, and finds reconciliation.

This story will be one of planned revenge. Here, the main character, Malik, is a boy who knows only pain and hardship. His life is on the run from his captors, from wild beasts, from evil men, all seeking to ensnare Malik. Day and night, Malik is consumed by a desire for survival and revenge. He balances the two as he outwits those who would prey upon him.

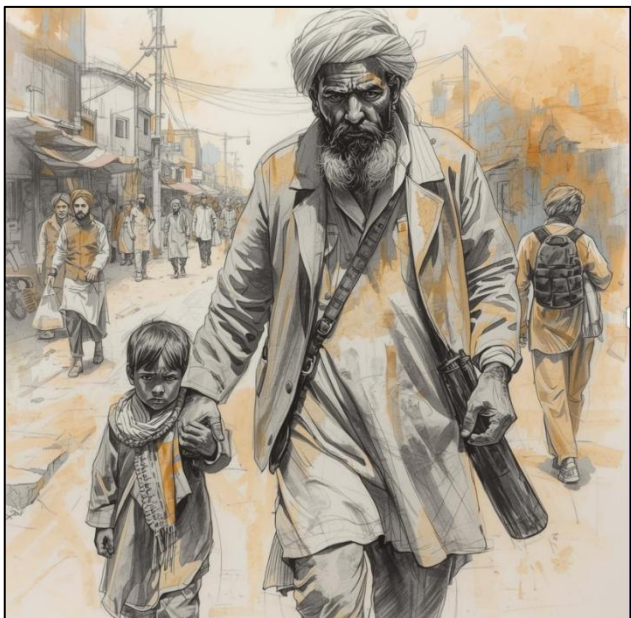
Weeks turn to months and then years. Malik will grow into a man who, without an education, has learned much on his own. He has learned to survive through thievery, taking only what he needs. Malik is aware of the consequences of his actions. The sword would take a hand if caught, and prison for

a young man would certainly be hell, for now, left with only one hand to defend himself. But through the years, Malik has remained kind and respectful to others. He knew right from wrong. He sought menial work to earn money for his needs.

Revenge was always on his mind. It was consuming Malik. He knew that he would need to grow stronger and become more able to take on the villain, Abdul-Khaleq, the man who married Malik's mother only to gain what little property she owned after the death of Malik's father. Shortly after marriage, Abdul-Khaleq accused Malik's mother of adultery. These accusations were unfounded, but were substantiated by the Sharia court, and Malik's mother was sentenced to stoning for her crime. Later that afternoon, Abdul-Khaleq beat Malik unmercifully and threw him down a garbage pit to rot amongst the trash.

Abdul-Khaleq thought Malik was dead. He was wrong. When Malik regained consciousness, he made his way out of the

pit and hobbled out of the compound and out into the city.



Abdul-Khaliq assumed that wild dogs carried Malik's body away and just left it at that, no remorse, not a care at all. The only matter on Abdul-Khaliq's mind was where to acquire black market Russian vodka and

where to find female companionship for the evening. He didn't even consider bathing the stench away from the night before because he was a man of influence, so in this city, what he smelled like truly didn't matter.

The following pages will detail Malik's life of struggle—one bent on revenge, ultimately leading to reconciliation.

Chapter 1...A Life of Nightmares

Malik loved his father very much. Abdul-Ali worked hard to provide for his family. He worked as a mechanic and was very skilled in refurbishing heavy equipment. Abdul-Ali earned enough money to provide for his wife and son, Malik. They were a happy family, having what they needed, and at times, Abdul-Ali would surprise his wife and child with something special.

One day, Abdul-Ali was repairing a heavy piece of industrial equipment when a chain snapped and the piece of equipment fell on him, crushing me and killing him instantly.

At that moment, Abdul-Ali's wife, Hira, and their son, Malik, were left with nothing. Without the means to support herself or care for her son, Hira knew it was only a matter of time until both she and her son would be without a place to live or food to eat. Regrettably, there are men like Abdul-

Khaleq who are opportunistic and see victims of circumstance as prey. Abdul-Khaleq moved in to take Hira as his wife. In this society, Hira had no other choice but to agree. It was a terrible arrangement, as Abdul-Khaleq was a brute of a man, with a savage bestial appetite, who ravaged Hira nightly. Worse yet, he was very abusive toward Malik and used the boy as leverage to fulfill his carnal desires, satisfied by Hira.

Abdul-Khaleq would beat Hira and then beat Malik, threatening to kill the boy if Hira did not fulfill his demented appetite. He would boast to other men of what he did to Hira and how he used her. The other men reveled in Abdul-Khaleq's erotic tales. This is Pakulisburg, a place where men are cruel, and women are kept silent. The city is as cold as these men's emotions. Drunkards, womanizers, and deviants, they conspire to foster an environment that inculcates young men to follow their lead in the way they handle their women. Pakulisburg is a pitiful place indeed.

Chapter 2...The Death of Mother

Hira was a brave woman. She stood up to the beast, Abdul-Khaleq. Hira would take a beating to defend her honor rather than willingly submit to his animalistic desires. One night, after consuming large amounts of forbidden alcohol, Abdul-Khaleq stumbled home. His carnal urges were inflamed by the alcohol burning in his belly.

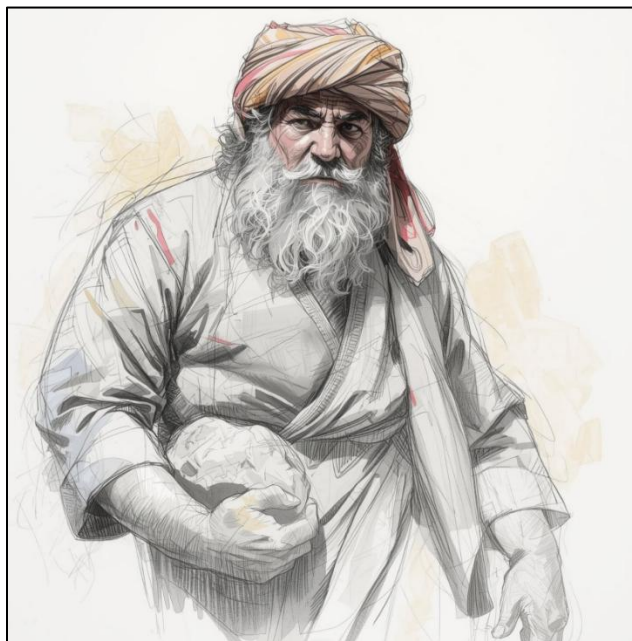
Abdul-Khaleq attempted to enter Hira's room, but she had barricaded the door. In the state of intoxication, Abdul-Khaleq could not break down the door. Though he tried several times, he failed. His rage was only calmed when he fell unconscious on the floor. There he lay, like a pile of filth, lying in his own vomit and urine.

In the morning, Abdul-Khaleq awoke, realizing his condition. He vowed to punish Hira because he believed it was her fault. Her disobedience caused him this shame and dishonor. Hira would pay for this!

Later that morning, Abdul-Khaleq could not find Hira in the compound where they lived. This infuriated him further. Hira and Malik had gone to the market to seek temporary refuge.

Abdul-Khaleq went to see the local council of elders, first speaking to each of them separately to discuss his grievance against his wife, Hira. He told lies and made slanderous accusations with fervent vigor, which provoked anger and outrage among the elders. When the elders convened their council, Abdul-Khaleq lodged allegations of adultery against his wife, Hira. Of course, these assertions were untrue, but no matter, as the council found Hira guilty as charged and sentenced her to be stoned to death, without appeal. Abdul-Khaleq was to find Hira and bring her to the public square, where she would be put to death.

Later that afternoon, Abdul-Khaleq found Hira and dragged her to the public square, where a hole had been dug. Hira was bound and tossed into the hole, and then dirt



was shoveled into the hole. Council elders read the court's finding, and the stoning proceeded. Hira was stoned to death. Abdul-Khaleq threw the last stone. Malik was made to watch the horrific death of his mother. Malik fell to his knees, weeping.

Abdul-Khaleq turned and saw the boy crying and grabbed him, lifted him, and with a closed fist, struck him directly in the face. Malik was flung several feet into the air and landed motionless in the dirt. Abdul-Kaliq grabbed the boy's hand and left the public square, dragging Malik's lifeless body alongside him.

Abdul-Khaliq disposed of Malik's body in a trash pit, as if the boy was nothing more than garbage. Malik lay there amongst the rat-infested debris.

Chapter 3...Run For Your Life

It was the stench that woke Malik, then the pain set in. He opened his eyes, and there before him, a large rat was near to him, lured by the dried blood on Malik's face. Malik swatted at the ravenous rodent. Attempting to stand, the world was spinning, but Malik knew this trash pit was no place for him. He climbed out of the pit, stumbled along a path, and sat down under a tree.

Gathering his thoughts and through the pain, he knew he could not go home. Malik had to go elsewhere. He had no money, no place to live, and no other relatives. The situation was bleak. There was just one thing to do, and that was to get up and run, and so he did.

Malik ran, pushing through the pain, hunger, and heat of the day. Not knowing the direction, he just kept going...somewhere, anywhere.

Malik came across a farmer's grape patch. He stood and looked at the plump

grapes hanging from the vines. Malik was unsure what to do. Should he pick some of those grapes, risking being caught?

Suddenly, a man yelled, "Boy, come here, what are you doing there?"

Malik was terrified. He froze in place. Had he run far enough? Could this man know Abdul-Kaliq?



Again, the man called out, "Boy, come here, now!"

Fear overtook hunger, and Malik turned and ran as fast as he could. He could hear the man yelling at him, cursing him. Malik ran as fast and as far as he could. There was no turning back.

Finally, Malik came upon a small village. It was getting dark, and Malik had no place to stay. He was very hungry and spotted a shop where naan was being sold. Malik cautiously went to the shop and saw the owner getting ready to close for the evening. There was naan that had not sold that day, and he was going to prepare it to give the bread to a local orphanage.

The shop owner noticed Malik peeking through the window and motioned him to come inside. Malik entered the shop. He was filthy from the day spent running on the dusty roads.

The shop owner asked Malik, "Boy, you look like you are hungry."

"Yes, sir, I am."

“Would you like some naan?” the shop owner asked.

“I have no money, sir,” Malik responded.

The shop owner inquired, “Where are your parents, boy?”

“I have no parents,” Malik replied, “They’re dead, I’m alone in this world.”

“Go wash your hands and face around the back, you’ll find a spicket, then return and have some shir-e garm as I just milked the goats and eat some naan,” said the shop owner.

“Thank you, Sir, you are very kind.”

The shop owner then inquired, “You will need a place to stay tonight. I can arrange for you to stay at the orphanage.”

Malik considered the option of having nowhere to stay and someplace to sleep and again thanked the shop owner.

After eating naan and drinking shir-e garm, Malik felt much better. He again thanked the shop owner for this generosity. That night, Malik rested at the orphanage, where he had hoped to find peace.

Chapter 4...Another Nightmare

For a small boy, this orphanage was a bitter place. The older, bigger boys took advantage of the more petite boys. There was a pecking order. If there were humanitarian organizations offering food or supply deliveries, the boys would line up outside, and supplies would be issued to each boy. Once the boys received their allotted gifts of food or supplies, they were ushered into the orphanage. The smaller boys were then forced to hand over their allotment to the bigger boys.

At mealtime, the smaller boys would devour their meals like animals before the bigger boys could take what they wanted from their plates. And at night, the weaker boys would be terrorized by the bigger, stronger boys who would satisfy themselves upon those who could not put up a defense.

Malik lived in constant fear. It was only a matter of time before he would meet his match. If Malik were to resist one older boy,

then another bigger boy would join in. The orphanage was a place of constant fear, fights, and open wounds. Malik spent much of his time cowering in a corner.



The orphanage was a walled compound. The area was gated, and a security guard was stationed at the entrance. There was no

way a small boy like Malik could escape. For now, he would have to endure the pain and the terror. But he knew that one day, he would be among the bigger boys, and he would first take revenge on those who were so brutal to him, and he would plot an escape.

Little did Malik know that as the bigger boys grew into men, their brutal ways would go with them into the world. There was no escape; they just left, angry, bitter, hungry, ready to take what they thought was due them. But Malik would not wait until the day he would be forced to leave; he would escape after taking his revenge on those who had hurt him so.

Chapter 5...The Just Right Time

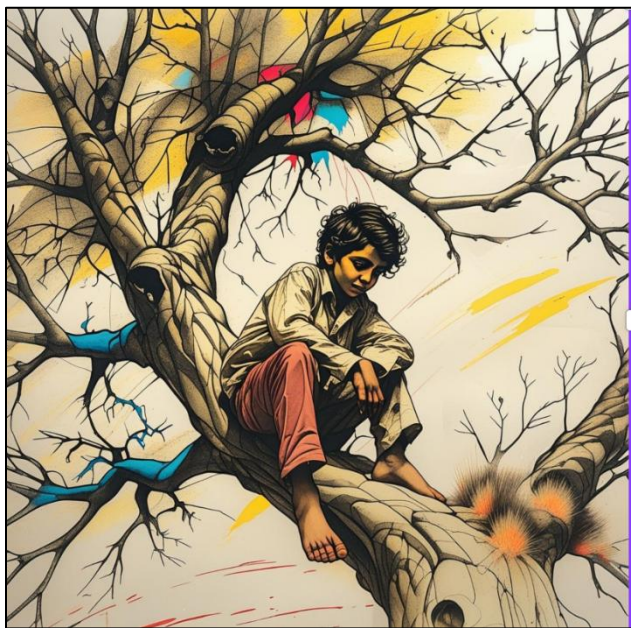
The days passed, as did the years. Malik grew into a young man. He began to stand up for himself. However, he was also challenged more, but that was the order of things. Malik became an aggressive fighter and learned how to hurt his opponents. He became enraged at the sight of blood. He was no longer defending himself; he was punishing others savagely. Malik reveled in walking around the orphanage with blood-soaked clothing as a badge of honor. As the weeks passed, fewer boys attempted to attack Malik.

The administrators at the orphanage tried their best to care for the boys, but there were so many boys that, in fact, the boys ran the orphanage. The administrators ensured the boys were fed and received mandatory religious instruction from the local cleric, who was very strict with them. The boys dare not defy the cleric, as he also brought with him two men as enforcers who carried

long, flexible sticks that acted as whips. If a boy acted out, fell asleep, or was in any way disobedient, then he felt the sting of the lash. So, the boys were obedient automatons, reciting texts out loud, hours on end each day. But when the cleric and his enforcers departed, it was back to the old ways of brutality and trespass.

Then came the time when Malik decided to make a break for his freedom. He had no idea where he would go, but he had to get out of this hellhole. Sometime after midnight, Malik got out of bed, put on his shoes and an extra sweatshirt, and made his way out of the orphanage through the yard and toward the guard shack. There, the guard was face down at his desk, sound asleep. So, without incident, Malik slipped through the gate and was off running into the night. He did not know what direction he was headed. Malik ran and ran. He did know that wild dogs were about as the occasional howl startled him. After some time, Malik was exhausted. He found a tree

to climb, which would secure a place to rest. Malik found a tree with sturdy branches high enough off the ground for safety and, using his belt, secured himself to the limb on which he sat. With the dogs about, he had to protect himself this night. At dawn, he would begin running again, looking for a place to lie down and rest, perhaps find fruit,



and, importantly, water to drink. But for now, Malik needed to sleep, for danger lurked near in the dark.

With the dawn, Malik continued to run, hoping to find food. Some time later, he saw a stream and carefully followed it, looking for signs of any decaying carcasses in the water. The water was flowing, and after quite a while, he thought it safe to drink. The water was cool and refreshing. He also knew that with water, that meant crops would be nearby. So, he continued to follow the stream and soon located a farmer's row crops, vegetables, and grapes. Malik watched for anyone working in the fields, but saw no one. He carefully grabbed a handful of carrots pulled from the ground and a bunch of grapes from the vine. He kept low and made his way from the farm with his bounty, and when he thought it safe, he enjoyed the pilfered produce with a sense of accomplishment.

Chapter 6...The Enforcers

As Malik continued to wander and live off the land, his fate would soon take a turn for the worse. One day, he was resting under a tree when suddenly, he was kicked in the ribs. He winced in pain and opened his eyes, and standing over him were two men with cartridge belts draped over their shoulders and holding rifles. These men wore Afghan shemagh scarves.

The men were straightforward, telling Malik, "Get up, you lazy dog, you're coming with us!"

Malik complied with their order, and it was not long before the trio entered an encampment. Malik was escorted into a tent and thrown to the floor.

One of the escorts spoke, "We found this lazy dog asleep under a tree, Commander."

"Well, well. Nothing to do but sleep. No longer will this dog sleep. First, take him, beat him, then cage him, feed him, and let

his wounds heal. Do you understand?" said the Commander.

The escorts lifted Malik from the floor and followed through with the Commander's orders. Malik found himself beaten and thrown into a dark cell. As he sat there in the dark, he heard footsteps approaching. Suddenly, the cell door opened, and another man stepped forward with a large plate of Kabuli Palau –a fragrant rice dish, kabobs, naan, and chai. As Malik saw it, this was a meal fit for a king! But why?

Over the next several weeks, Malik would receive military style training. He would be given an AK-47 and would be taught to follow orders without question and to kill. If Malik or members of the insurgent group did not perform to standards, they were beaten. If they performed well, they were rewarded.

Their first mission was to attack a government military outpost. This was the first such encounter Malik had been

involved in. He was terrified, as this was not training but reality, with real bullets and real consequences. The Commander instructed his men to take no prisoners.

“Ensure you retrieve all weapons, but you will take no prisoners, is that understood?” demanded the Commander.

The men affirmed the Commander’s orders. Malik wondered if he could do what was asked of him. Just then, one of the battle-hardened men stepped behind Malik and said, “If you cower, you’re a dead man.”

A few minutes later, Malik and several others were loaded into the back of pickup trucks and off they went on a dirt road, somewhere. Malik had no idea where he was, but he was surrounded by men he did not know, but men who were determined to kill other men. Some of the men were chewing tobacco or naswar, while others sat quietly, whispering prayers to themselves. The road was rough, and progress was slow. After thirty minutes, the truck came to a halt, and the men were instructed to dismount.



This was it, the moment of truth. The men were told that just over the ridge line was a government outpost and checkpoint. That was the objective. The men, including Malik, were to attack it from three different angles. Malik was to attack from the right flank. Once the battle began, Malik followed

through, knowing it was a matter of kill or be killed. And so, he chose to kill.

Chapter 7...The Great Escape

One night, while Malik was on guard duty at the compound of his comrades, he decided that he had had enough of killing. There was just no sense to it. He did not know what, in fact, he was fighting for. There were talks and speeches of unity, of history, and of legacy, but Malik owned nothing, could not read or write, had no family; in fact, he did not know what ground he was fighting and killing others for. The Commanders spoke of great leaders and of religious figures, of one's duty and destiny. But Malik didn't understand these ideals. All he wanted was a plate of Kabuli Palau and a cup of chai, and he was satisfied.

With his weapon, people respected him, which, for the first time in his life, people didn't turn him away. He could walk into a shop and take anything he wanted, and the shopkeeper would not complain. And if

someone did complain, Malik would do as the other fighters did, slap the complainer into submission, until they begged for mercy.

But Malik had had enough. Killing other men over nothing, ground neither owned, often ground that was worthless, ground that couldn't be tilled, or ground that young men like Malik would never own. Yet, they killed other men for it, not for themselves but for older men, who themselves did not fight, but gave orders, and metered out harsh discipline for those who did not kill enough.

That night, he thought he had nothing to lose. If he fled and was later found, the Commander would kill him. Malik figured he'd die soon enough in battle. So, this night, he walked the perimeter of the camp when everyone was asleep, and at just the right moment, he propped his rifle against a tree and ran as fast as he could. Once again, Malik did not know in which direction he was running. He ran for several minutes

until he realized he might encounter government soldiers. Surely, they would capture and likely kill him. So he just kept running. Whatever happened in the distance was about to happen. Malik just kept on running. He felt as if there was a purpose to his running; a direction, a need to keep on



going. Malik didn't know where he was, had nothing to his name, but as he looked up at the night sky, it seemed as if he was being led somewhere, as if he had an intention in his life... in running.

The cool night air felt sharp against his skin. But Malik had no outer clothes to keep warm with. So, he kept on running. He hoped he would not run into a government patrol, for surely they would question who he was — with no identification and no money — and why he was out at this time. Malik came up with excuses, but none made sense. He thought he could tell the soldiers that he was a shepherd looking for lost sheep. But although he hadn't bathed in a long time, he didn't smell like livestock. The soldiers would know he was lying. If he told the soldiers he had left the Commander's camp and run away, the soldiers would make him backtrack and force an attack. Surely, he would be killed. There was nothing else Malik could do but keep

running and hope that luck would favor him.

Chapter 8...A Change of Heart

By the grace of God, Malik ran all night without encountering government soldiers or insurgent forces. After several hours, Malik was exhausted, and in the predawn hours, he collapsed along a stone wall.

Suddenly, Malik was awakened by a woman's voice saying, "Boy, what are you doing here?"

Malik opened his eyes and saw an older woman standing beside him. "I am resting here. I am sorry if I am trespassing," Malike said.

"Boy, you're in a sorry state. Please follow me, and I will care for you," said the woman.

Malik thanked the woman and followed her around the wall and into her compound. There, she lived alone in a modest dwelling. Malik could smell the freshly baked naan and the slow-boiled shir-e garm.

“First, you must wash, because you smell worse than those goats. Let’s burn those rags you’re wearing. I have some of my son’s clothes that you’re welcome to wear. He was martyred years ago,” the woman instructed.

Malik thanked the woman, bathed himself, burnt his old clothes, and put on a fresh new shalwar kameez. He then entered the older woman's home, thanking her for her hospitality, and was greeted with a plate of freshly baked naan, yogurt, cheese, pomegranates, and a cup of milk chai.

Malik expressed his appreciation by saying, “Khānum-jān, thank you for your generosity, you have been most kind.”

“You’re welcome, young man. There must be a reason for you to be in the state that you’re in, but that is your business, the woman said.

Malik ate and thanked Khānum-jān, saying, “I’ll be on my way now.”

“Oh no, young man, you must rest, lie down and sleep.”

Malik hadn't slept comfortably in months. So, he couldn't refuse this offer of generosity.

Malik lay down on a soft mattress, and Khānum-jān covered him with a lapghan, a simple throw blanket. Malik fell into a deep sleep.

Malik woke several hours later to the smell of spices and barbequed meat. He folded the blanket and walked to the kitchen area. Khānum-jān had prepared a meal for both to share. Malik was overwhelmed with emotion and began to cry.

"Young man, what is wrong and why do you cry?"

Malik wiped away his tears and said, "You are so kind, thank you. My name is Malik. You've been like a mother to me."

"If I am like a mother, then why are you running, my son?"

"Bad men are after me, and I fear for my life. I have nowhere to go. My stepfather is an evil man whom I hope to avenge the death he caused to my mother. I run to one

day kill that man. That is all I think of," said Malik.

"Son, do you know that the anger that you have in your heart is consuming you? As you run, your fire in your heart is being fanned," Khānum-jān explained.

"But what am I to do?" asked Malik.

Khānum-jān described further, "There is a better way. God loves you. He offers you love, mercy, and grace if you follow him. Revenge consumes you. Hope will provide you salvation. You must be better than killing those who have killed. You must love thine enemies."

"How is that possible, Khānum-jān? That's not possible! How can I forgive the man who is responsible for the death of my beloved mother?" Malik retorted.

"Son, just let go, open your heart to the Lord, and He will grant you peace and a fresh start. Cast off this anger and hatred and learn to love and live life again. Stop running," Khānum-jān told Malik.

Malik responded, "You say stop running, I don't know where I am? I don't know how far I've run. And I don't know how far I am from home," Malik said with tears in his eyes.

"Where did you grow up?" Khānum-jān inquired.

"It was a village of Jalahar."

"Do you know that you are only a mile from Jalahar?" I know the way. But you must first do as I say," Khānum-jān told Malik.

"What must I do?"

"We will pray that God grants you the strength to forgive and face the man who hurt you. Pray that God opens your heart to confront this man and offer him mercy. Free yourself of this consuming hatred and liberate yourself, Malik."

"I've hated Abdul-Khaleq for so long, I don't know if I can. This man is such an evil person; he deserves to die!" Malik shouted.

"What he deserves is to be forgiven, my son. God will judge him one day. Please,

open your heart, and accept the grace that the Lord offers you and extend it to those who need it from you.” Khānum-jān pleaded with Malik.

“Tell me more about this Lord you speak of,” Malik bade Khānum-jān.

“I will walk with you to Jalahar, my son, but first I will tell you about the Lord who is



loving and kind, one who offers redemption and eternal life.”

Chapter 9...Reunion & Deception

Khānum-jān and Malik walked into Jalahar, and she inquired about the residence of Abdul-Khaleq. After receiving the address, Khānum-jān instructed Malik on the route, but told him he was on his own to decide his fate and what he would do to Abdul-Khaleq. She offered Malik one last prayer, blessed him, and bid him farewell.

Malik watched as the older woman slowly turned away. He felt as though he was about to lose a dear friend, but realized he had to move forward in his life. Malik had to encounter Abdul-Khaleq after all these years. So much hatred had festered in his heart, Malik wondered if he could forgive him or if he would kill Abdul-Khaleq with his bare hands.

Malik walked to Abdul-Khaleq's residence. He entered the residence, and there before him was Abdul-Khaleq, an old, frail man, alone, dirty, and withered.

“Who are you who entered my home?” Abdul-Khaleq summoned.

“It is me, Malik, you devil, I am here to settle the score today,” Malik said scornfully.

“Malik. I thought you were dead? Now you’ve returned to finish me off, have you?”

“I want you to know that I have waited for this moment for years, and there you are before me, and today, you shall not beat the little boy I once was; not today, Abdul-Khaleq,” Malik spoke with authority.

“So, you are going to kill an old man, are you?”

“As much as I want to punish you slowly and make you feel the pain you inflicted upon my mother, I should send you to hell, you devil, Abdul-Khaleq.”

“How will you do me in, by the knife, by rope, by your hands then?” Abdul-Khaleq said, trembling.

Malik stepped forward and extended his hand. Abdul-Khaleq looked with terror, then puzzled. “What is this, boy? “

Malik said, “Take my hand, Abdul-Khaleq, and let us pray for your salvation, as I forgive you of your evil and sinful ways.”

“Really? Are you serious? You are not here to kill me? Is this a trick? Abdul-Khaleq asked.

“No, I’m here to offer you mercy and extend to you grace.” Please take my hand, Abdul-Khaleq.

With this, the two men clasped hands, and Malik looked into Abdul-Khaleq’s eyes and said, “Thank you, kind sir.”

“Abdul-Khaleq, you are forgiven,” said Malik.

“But how could you do such a thing as this, Malik?”

“I have received the life-changing love of the Lord, and found a better way in life than hate, Abdul-Khaliq.”

Malik smiled at Abdul-Khaliq, turned, and walked out of the house. “Where are you going?” asked Abdul-Khaliq.

“I have no particular direction to follow other than a righteous path set before me. Goodbye, Abdul-Khaliq.”

As Malik walked away, Abdul-Khaliq withdrew his cellphone from his pocket and dialed the insurgent Commander to inform him that Malik was in Jalahar. Knowing the Commander wanted to kill Malik for deserting his forces, the insurgent leader instructed



Abdul-Khaliq that if Malik ever returned, he should be notified.

Within minutes, Malik was walking down the road when a pickup truck approached. As it pulled alongside, men jumped out of the back, surrounded Malik, and the Commander exited the truck.

Abdul-Khaliq stepped out of his home and heard the sharp crack of automatic weapon fire just up the road from his home. In the coolness of the night air, Abdul-Khaliq thought to himself, “If the Commander doesn’t dispose of Malik tomorrow, I’ll ensure his body is dumped in the trash pit where it belongs and where it should have stayed many years ago.”

Chapter 10...The Final Word

This is a fictitious story with characters known only to the author. The locales do not exist. But the sentiments do, as humans truly learn to hate one another, conspire to harm each other, take advantage of the weak, and exact revenge when it serves no purpose.

The author has traveled the world and witnessed abject poverty. I have seen the worst of humanity in war. I have seen humans debase themselves. I’ve seen how depravity can destroy another person. I have seen sad eyes pleading for salvation. And I have witnessed indifference to killing.

The author has witnessed acts of kindness extended, only to have their hand slapped away. I have offered smiles only to be sneered at. I have told enemies that I would pray for them and their families, only to receive blank stares.

Although the characters in this story are fictitious, they are an amalgam of individuals I have interacted with; some I have loved, some were my enemies, some I felt compassion for, some I did not understand, and others sought to take advantage of me.

But for many, I prayed to my Lord and Savior, for them all; that better days were in store for them, that the killing would stop, that peace would be achieved, that respect for one another would be granted, and that all would find a better way in life.

Honestly, I don't understand why much of this is so elusive, but I continue to pray for friends and foes alike. May God bless you.



About The Author



Robert E. Jordan is a retired disabled veteran and author of the internationally renowned *Faith, Flag, and Family: A Purposeful Guide for Selfless Service*, the historical account *In Defense of The Home Front: The War Service of My Parents During World War II*, the philosophical and poetic *My View of What Others Perceive*, and the well-received *The Warmth Of The Gospel: An Anthology of Short Stories*. Robert also collaborated with his granddaughter to write three biblically based teen novellas and four children's books. Titles are available from jordanpublicationsllc.bigcartel.com. Titles are also available from Amazon.com.



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