

I got up on the Wrong Side of Bed

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November 15, 2008

If life hands you lemons, make lemonade

It was Saturday, November 15, 2008. I had just finished recuperating from a surgery. Chores had piled up. Since I was feeling rejuvenated, I decided to take care of some of my chores. I got up and went to the bath room. As I entered the bath room, I found myself looking in the mirror. It was then I realized that I should start with a haircut. It had been months since I had gone to the barber. If I had any doubt about evolution, it was all removed that day. I headed straight to my barber and that was where things started to go down hill.

The barber sign was not turning and there was a big sign on his door saying that out of no reason my barber had taken off that day promising to be back on November 18th. Now that I had realized that my hair had grown too big, I could not wait anymore. It was making me itch, all over my head. Recalling that there was another barber shop down the street, I headed there. As I entered the shop, I was shocked. It was full. There were about five customers waiting for a haircut including a small kid. I had not seen so many customers in my own barber's shop. However, the first issue for me to resolve was how much was he going to charge. Luckily he had the same rate, which meant I was not going to pay any extra there. Feeling the itch all over my head I decided to take a number and sat down. When the kid's turn came, he started crying at the top of his lungs and started shaking his head in all directions. I thought if that was the way he was going to behave, we were going to be here all day. Having just recovered from surgery, I was feeling little cranky. To put it into one word I was feeling annoyed, but the itch kept me glued to the seat. Luckily with a lot of struggle, the barber was done with the kid and the line started to move again. After an hour and a half of wait my turn came. While settling in the chair, I pulled the visiting card of my own barber from my wallet and while looking at it, I told the barber two on the side and three and a half on the top. He asked if I was sure because that would make my hair too small. Feeling confident I replied in the affirmative. Since I have a vintage van, and I care about my pocket book, the first thing I do, when I move to a new city, is to find a cheap barber and a good mechanic. After moving to Charleston, when I went to my own barber for the first time and upon being satisfied with his haircut, I asked him what I should tell him when I come the next time. He told me two on the side and three and a half on the top. I scribbled it down on his visiting card and put it in my wallet. It worked all the time.

When the barber started running the trimmer over my head like a lawn mover, and the hair started falling in my laps, I felt exhilarated as if a heavy load was coming off my head. I then slipped into daydreaming. When he woke me up and turned my face towards the mirror, I was horrified. There was no hair left on my head. It looked like I had just completed my Hajj and had been cleansed of all my sins. I don't know about my sins, but my head was cleansed of all my hair. Realizing that there had been a miscommunication and the damage to my good looks had been done, I had no choice but to swallow my pride. I got up from the barber's chair, paid the barber – no, I did not pay any tip – and reminding myself of a scene from the movie "The Man Who would be King," in which Sean Connery walks into death with his head high, I walked out of the shop like a brave soldier.

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My next stop was an oil change for my van. My van is not just a van, it is a family van. It is a member of the family; except that I cannot claim it as a dependent on my tax form and cannot take any tax deduction on it. It feels the woes of the family. It is a 1991 Dodge Caravan and has 205,000 miles on it. All I have to do is change the transmission every few years and it is ready to go again. When my wife had an eye surgery about six years ago, I used this van to go to the hospital. When we pulled out of the hospital with my wife in great pain, my van could not bear her pain and stalled. We had to come home by taxi. Last year my wife had to go through the same surgery in her other eye. Going to the hospital in the same van, while my wife was moaning and groaning, its slide door popped out and it stalled again after her surgery. It had never exhibited this kind of behavior on other occasions. It feels my wife's pain and empathizes with her misery, especially her eyes. Since then it has become a part of our family.

As the luck would have it, the oil change place was crowded too and the parking lot was full. I had to wait for a while to find a parking spot. After waiting in line for about fifteen minutes, the clerk filled out the ticket with an estimated charge of \$21. I handed him the key and was about to settle in the waiting room, when he came back and gave me the bad news. The rear tires were gone and the new estimate was \$211. Realizing that I could not abandon my beloved for few hundred dollars, I consented and settled in a chair. The waiting time was three hours. Luckily I had brought a thick book and started reading it. But I lost patience after two hours and called my son for rescue. He was heading to Wal-Mart for shopping, so I offered him a company. When he picked me up, he was shocked to see my head. I had to do some explaining. On the way to Wal-Mart, he told me that he was going to have a haircut there. Having just gone through a long wait for my haircut, I was not ready for another wait. I lost my cool for a while, but then calmed down. At Wal-Mart my son headed for the haircut and I headed to the restroom. I had been to this Wal-Mart hundreds of times, shopping is my wife's favorite hobby, and had been to that restroom almost all the time. I never had to wait to use the stalls. But that day was different. The restroom was crowded. There were about three people ahead of me and both of the stalls were occupied. It seemed like somebody had fallen asleep in one of the stalls. Two legs were on the floor, but there was no movement. Considering that my son was taking a haircut, I had all day to wait, so I got in the line. By the time my turn came, the sleeping man had woken up, there was some movement in his legs. Even then I counted six flushes, before the man popped out of the stall.

By the time my son was done with his haircut and shopping, it was more than six hours I had been away from home. Hoping that the work on my van had been finished, we stopped by at the oil change place. As the luck would have it, the clerk gave me some more bad news. The front brakes were gone and the new estimate was \$350. For the sake of my beloved van, I consented again and headed home. It had been almost past Zohr, and I had not prayed Zohr yet. Postponing the shower, I made wudu. While I was still drying myself, the phone rang. It was my brother inquiring about my health. One thing led to another, before I realized it the conversation turned towards his upcoming Hajj. Since I had been to Hajj about a couple of years ago, he started asking about the details of the Hajj. When the conversation ended, I had not only missed my Zohr prayer, I was about to miss my Asr prayer too. By the time I finished my prayers, the phone rang again. It was the oil change guy again. He now informed me that the rotor was gone too and the new estimate was \$482. It was then I realized that it was not my day. I slipped back into my bed and waited for the sun to go down.

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About the Writer:

The writer has authored "Secrets of Angels, Demons, Satan, and Jinns – Decoding their Nature through Quran and Science," and "Atom to Adam – How, When and Where in the Light of Quran, Bible and Science (A Study of Human Origin)," both published by InstantPublishers.com (<http://instantpublisher.com/>) and "Lessons from the Qur'an," published by Ta-Ha Publishers (<http://www.taha.co.uk/>). These books are available from Amazon.com (<http://www.amazon.com/>) and Ta-Ha Publishers (<http://www.taha.co.uk/>), respectively. He has also published many essays on religious issues in the Charleston Gazette, West Virginia and written quite a few Islamic satires. He is a Chemical Engineer and possesses Master of Science degrees in Chemical Engineering and Chemistry and has Professional Engineers license from the State of Texas. His e-mail address is mnajawaid@yahoo.com.