

KHUTBA

Friday 23.03.12

English

Story of Prophet Mosa (Moses) (pbuh), part 5

All thanks are due to Allah, the Most-Generous. I bear witness that there is nothing worthy of worship except him. He has no partners. May Allah send peace and blessings upon his final messenger.

And then, Servants of Allah, today we will complete the Prophet Mosa (PBUH) story and how Mosa Defeats the Magicians and the death of Pharaoh.

Pharaoh's amazement turned to terror. Fearing that his rule was in danger, he addressed his advisors: "These are two wizards who will strip you of your best traditions and drive you of the country with their magic. What do you advise?" they counseled Pharaoh to detain Mosa and his brother while they summoned the cleverest magicians in the country. Then they too, could show their skills of magic and change sticks into serpents. In this way they sought to reduce the influence of Mosa's miracles on the masses.

Pharaoh detained Mosa and Aaron. He dispatched couriers all over the land to enlist the best magicians. He offered each successful magician a big reward, including appointment as a royal courtier. On the customary festival day, which attracted citizens from all over the Egyptian empire, Pharaoh arranged for a public contest between Mosa and the magicians. The people came in droves when they heard of the greatest contest ever between Pharaoh's many magicians and a single man who claimed to be a prophet. They had also heard of a baby who had once floated down the river Nile in a basket, landed on Pharaoh's palace grounds, been reared as a prince, and who later had fled for killing an Egyptian with a single blow.

Everyone was eager and excited to watch this great contest. Before it began, Mosa arose. There was a hush in the huge crowd. Mosa addressed the magicians. "Woe unto you, if you invent a lie against Allah by calling His miracles magic and by not being honest with the Pharaoh. Woe unto you, if you do not know the difference between the truth and falsehood. Allah will destroy you with His punishment, for he who lies against Allah fails miserably." Mosa had spoken sincerely and made the magicians think. But they were overwhelmed by their greed for money and glory. They hoped to impress the people with their magic and to expose Mosa as a fraud and a cheat.

Mosa asked the magicians to perform first. They threw their magical objects down on the ground. Their staffs and ropes took the forms of wriggling serpents while the crowd watched in amazement. Pharaoh and his men applauded loudly. Then Mosa threw his staff. It began to wriggle and became an enormous serpent. The people stood up for a better view. Pharaoh and his men sat silently as, one by one, Mosa's huge serpent swallowed all the snakes. Mosa bent to pick it up, and it became a staff in his hand.

The crowd rose like a great wave, shouting and screaming with excitement. A wonder like this had never been seen before! On witnessing the power of Mosa, the magicians prostrated themselves to Allah, declaring: "We believe in the Lord of Mosa and Aaron." Pharaoh was angry and began plotting his next move. He charged that the demonstration had been arranged secretly between Mosa and the magicians. He demanded that the magicians confess to their

scheme, threatening them with death. They refused to denounce Allah and stuck to their sincerity of their belief. No longer hiding his cruel nature, Pharaoh threatened to cut off their hands and feet and to crucify them on the trunks of palm trees as an example to his subjects.

The magicians represented the elite of the Egyptian society. They were its scholars. They prostrated before righteousness, but the people abandoned them and left them to their fate. The path of righteousness was plain, but in spite of this, the people did nothing but stand by and watch. If every one of the Egyptians had stopped to pick up a piece of brick and had thrown it at Pharaoh, he would have fallen dead and the history of Egypt would have been changed. This obviously did not happen. None of the people moved. Each one stood motionless in his place. The people did nothing but watch, and they paid the price of this inactivity: they were drowned later as the price for the cowardice of one day. Mosa and Aaron left, and Pharaoh returned to his palace.

Pharaoh was completely stupefied when he faced the two miracles. When Mosa went out of his presence his emotions changed from amazement and fear to violent rage. He quarreled with his ministers and men, reviled them bitterly for no reason, and commanded them to get out of his presence. When he was left alone, he tried to think more calmly. He drank several cups of wine, but his anger did not abate. Then he summoned all the ministers, leaders, and responsible men for a serious meeting. Pharaoh entered the meeting with a rigid face. It was obvious that he would never surrender easily. He had established a kingdom on the basis of his being a god worshipped by the Egyptian people. Now Mosa came to destroy what he had built. Mosa said that there was no Lord other than Allah in existence. This meant that Pharaoh was a liar. After a discussion between Pharaoh and Haman, the Prime Minister, Haman moved and raised his hand to speak. Pharaoh permitted him and Haman asked: "Will we leave Mosa and his people to corrupt the rest of the people on the earth so that they leave your worship?" Pharaoh said: "You read my thoughts, O Haman. We will kill their sons, rape their women, and conquer them." He issued commands, and Pharaoh's men rushed to slay the sons, rape the women, and imprison whoever objected to these acts. Mosa stood watching what was happening. He could not interfere, nor did he have the power to forbid these acts. All he could do was to advise his people to be patient. He ordered them to ask Allah the Almighty for a calamity on the Egyptians. He pointed out to them the model of the Egyptian magicians who endured for Allah's sake without complaint. He helped them to understand that Pharaoh's soldiers behaved on earth as if they were its private owners.

Pharaoh's terrorism infused the children of Israel with a spirit of defeat. They complained to Mosa: ***"We (children of Israel) had suffered troubles before you came to us, and since you have come to us." He said: "It may be that your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you successors on the earth, so that He may see how you act."*** (7:129) Mosa began to face a difficult situation. He had to confront Pharaoh's anger and his plots, while at the same time he had to deal with the mutiny of his people.

It appeared that Pharaoh would never believe in Mosa's message, nor would he stop the torture of the children of Israel. Therefore, Mosa prayed to his Lord thus: ***"Our Lord! You have indeed bestowed on Pharaoh and his chiefs splendor and wealth in the life of this world, our Lord! That they may lead men astray from Your Path. Our Lord! Destroy their wealth, and harden their hearts, so that they will not believe until they see the painful torment."*** Allah said: ***"Verily, the invocation of you both is accepted. So you both keep to the Straight Way (keep on doing good deeds, and preaching Allah's Message with***

patience), and follow not the path of those who know not (the truth, to believe in the Oneness of Allah, and also to believe in the Reward of Allah: Paradise etc.)." (10:88-89)

Allah inspired Mosa to conduct his people of Egypt, but only a few of his people believed in his message. Allah revealed: ***"But none believed in Mosa except the offspring of his people, because of the fear of Pharaoh and his chiefs lest they should persecute them; and verily, Pharaoh was an arrogant tyrant on the earth, he was indeed one of the Musrifeen (polytheists, sinners, and transgressors, those who give up the truth and follow the evil, and commit all kinds of great sins). And Mosa said: "O my people! If you have believed in Allah, then put your trust in Him if you are Muslims (those who submit to Allah's Will)." They said: "In Allah we put our trust. Our Lord! Make us not a trial for the folk who are zalimeen (polytheists, and wrong-doing) (do not make them overpower us). And save us by Your Mercy from the disbelieving folk."*** (10:83-86)

Almighty Allah decided to put an end to Pharaoh's crimes after He had given him several chances. Allah commanded Mosa to depart, and the children of Israel received reluctant permission from the Pharaoh to go out of the city for the feast. They prepared themselves to leave Egypt. This later became known as Exodus. They carried with them their jewels and borrowed a lot of jewels from the Egyptians.

In the darkness of night, Mosa led his people towards the Red Sea, and in the morning they reached the beach. By then Pharaoh was aware of their departure, so he mobilized a huge army to pursue them. The impatient children of Israel soon became agitated and Joshua (Yusha), Ibn Nun, exclaimed: "In front of us is this impassable barrier, the sea, and behind us the enemy; surely death cannot be avoided!" Mosa replied that he would wait for further guidance from Allah. These words filled them with some hope, but man is always impatient for results: they were willing to surrender themselves back into slavery. At that moment Allah revealed to Mosa: "Smite the sea with your staff!" Mosa did as he was commanded. A fierce wind blew, the sun shone brightly, and in a flash the sea parted, the crests of the waves standing like mountains on each side.

Mosa led his people across. This miracle proved Mosa's oft-repeated claim. "Verily! My Lord is with me!" As they looked back, they saw Pharaoh and his army approaching, about to take the very path which had been opened for them. In great fear and panic, they pleaded with Mosa to ask Allah to close the sea. However, Allah commanded Mosa not to smite the sea with his staff again, for Allah's decree was already in action.

Pharaoh and his army had seen the miracle, how the sea had parted, but being the pretender that he was, Pharaoh turned to his men and proclaimed: "Look! The sea has opened at my command so that I may follow those rebels and arrest them!" They rushed across the parted waters, and when they were midway, Allah commanded the sea to return to its former state.

Terror-stricken Pharaoh, realizing his end had come, declared out of fear: "I believe that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah in Whom the children of Israel believe, and I am of those who surrender to Him." But Allah did not accept this declaration from the tyrant, and the waters closed over him, drowning him and his entire army.

References:

Stories of the prophets by Ibn Kathir.