

KHUTBA

Friday 10.02.12

English

Story of Prophet Moses (pbuh) Part 2

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 Moses (PBUH) story God willing.

Almighty Allah said: "And when he attained his full strength, and was perfect (in manhood), We bestowed on him Hukman (Prophethood, right judgment of the affairs) and religious knowledge (of the religion of his forefathers, Islamic Monotheism). And thus do We reward the Muhsineen (good-doers)." (Ch 28:14 Quran)

Allah had granted Moses (pbuh) good health, strength, knowledge, and wisdom. The weak and oppressed turned to him for protection and justice. One day in the main city, he saw two men fighting. One was an Israelite, who was being beaten by the other, an Egyptian. On seeing Moses, the Israelite begged him for help. Moses became involved in the dispute and, in a state of anger, struck a heavy blow on the Egyptian, who died on the spot. Upon realizing that he had killed a human being, Moses's heart was filled with deep sorrow, and immediately he begged Allah for forgiveness.

He had not intended to kill the man. He pleaded with Almighty Allah to forgive him, and he felt a sense of peace filling his whole being. Thereafter Moses began to show more patience and sympathy towards people. The next day he saw the same Israelite involved in another fight. Moses went to him and said: "You seem to be a quarrelsome fellow. You have a new quarrel with one person or another each day." Fearing that Moses might strike him, the Israelite warned Moses: "Would you kill me as you killed the wretch yesterday?" The Egyptian with whom the Israelite was fighting overheard this remark and reported Moses to the authorities. Soon thereafter, as Moses was passing through the city, a man approached and alerted him: "O Moses, the chiefs have taken counsel against you. You are to be tried and killed. I would advise you to escape." Moses knew that the penalty for killing an Egyptian was death.

Moses left Egypt in a hurry without going to Pharaoh's palace or changing his clothes. Nor was he prepared for traveling. He did not have a beast of burden upon which to ride, and he was not in a caravan. Instead, he left as soon as the believer came and warned him of Pharaoh's plans. He traveled in the direction of the country of Midian, which was the nearest inhabited land between Syria and Egypt. His only companion in this hot desert was Allah, and his only provision was piety. There was not a single root to pick to lessen his hunger. The hot sand burned the soles of his feet. However, fearing pursuit by Pharaoh's men, he forced himself to continue on.

He traveled for eight nights, hiding during the day. After crossing the main desert, he reached a watering hole outside Midian where shepherds were watering their flocks. No sooner had Moses reached the Midian than he threw himself under a tree to rest. He suffered from hunger

and fatigue. The soles of his feet felt as if they were worn out from hard walking on sand and rocks and from the dust. He did not have any money to buy a new pair of sandals, nor to buy food or drink. Moses noticed a band of shepherds watering their sheep. He went to the spring, where he saw two young women preventing their sheep from mixing with the others.

Moses sensed that the women were in need of help. Forgetting his thirst, he drew nearer to them and asked if he could help them in any way. The older sister said: "We are waiting until the shepherds finish watering their sheep, then we will water ours." Moses asked again: "Why are you waiting?" The younger one: "We cannot push men." Moses was surprised that women were shepherding, as only men were supposed to do it. It is hard and tiresome work, and one needs to be on the alert. Moses asked: "Why are you shepherding?" The younger sister said: "Our father is an old man; his health is too poor for him to go outdoors for pasturing sheep."

Moses (pbuh) said: "I will water the sheep for you." When Moses approached the water, he saw that the shepherds had put over the mouth of the spring an immense rock that could only be moved by ten men. Moses embraced the rock and lifted it out of the spring's mouth, the veins of his neck and hands standing out as he did so. Moses was certainly strong. He watered their sheep and put the rock back in its place. He returned to sit in the shade of the tree. At this moment he realized that he had forgotten to drink. His stomach was sunken because of hunger.

Almighty Allah described this event: "And when he arrived at the water of Midian (Midyan) he found there a group of men watering their flocks, and besides them he found two women who were keeping back their flocks. He said: "What is the matter with you?" They said: "We cannot water (our flocks) until the shepherds take their flocks. And our father is a very old man." So he watered their flocks for them, then he turned back to shade, and said: "My Lord! Truly, I am in need of whatever good that You bestow on me!" (Ch 28:22-24 Quran).

The young ladies returned home earlier than usual, which surprised their father. They related the incident at the spring which was the reason that they were back early. Their father sent one of his daughters to invite the stranger to his home. Bashfully, the woman approached Moses and delivered the message. "My father is grateful for what you have done for us. He invites you to our home so that he may thank you personally." Moses welcomed this invitation and accompanied the maiden to her father. Moses could see that they lived comfortably as a happy and peaceful household. He introduced himself and told the old man about the misfortune that he had befallen him and had compelled him to flee from Egypt. The old man comforted him: "Fear not, you have escaped from the wrong-doers." Moses's gentle behavior was noticed by the father and his daughters. The kind man invited him to stay with them. Moses felt at home with this happy household, for they were friendly and feared Allah.

One of the daughters suggested to her father that he employ Moses, as he was strong and trustworthy. They needed someone like him, especially at the water hole, which was visited by ruffians. The father asked her how she could be sure of his trustworthiness in such a short time. She replied: "When I bade him to follow me to our home, he insisted that I walk behind him so he would not observe my form (to avoid sexual attraction)." The old man was pleased to hear this. He approached Moses and said: "I wish to marry you to one of my daughters on condition that you agree to work for me for a period of eight years." This offer suited Moses well, for being a stranger in this country, he would soon have to search for shelter, and work. Moses married the Midianite's daughter and looked after the old man's animals for ten long years.

Almighty Allah recounted: "Then there came to him one of the two women, walking shyly. She said: "Verily, my father calls you that he may reward you for having watered our flocks for us." So when he came to him and narrated the story, he said; "Fear you not. You have escaped from the people who are Zalimeen (polytheists, disbelievers, and wrong-doers)." And said one of them (the two women): "O my father! Hire him! Verily, the best of men for you to hire is the strong, the trustworthy." He said: "I intend to wed one of these two daughters of mine to you, on condition that you serve me for eight years, but if you complete ten years, it will be a favor from you. But I intend not to place you under a difficulty. If Allah wills, you will find me one of the righteous." He (Moses) said: "That is settled between me and you whichever of the two terms I fulfill, there will be no injustice to me, and Allah is Surety over what we say." (Ch 28:25-28 Quran)

Time passed, and he lived in seclusion far from his family and his people. This period of ten years was of importance in his life. It was a period of major preparation. Certainly Moses's mind was absorbed in the stars every night. He followed the sunrise and the sunset every day. He pondered on the plant and how it splits and soil and appears thereafter. He contemplated water and how the earth is revived by it and flourishes after its death.

Of course, he was immersed in the Glorious Book of Allah, open to the insight and heart. He was immersed in the existence of Allah. All these became latent within him. The religion of Moses (pbuh) was the same as that of Jacob (pbuh), which was Islamic monotheism. His forefather was Jacob (pbuh) the grandson of Abraham (pbuh). Moses (pbuh), therefore, was one of the descendants of Abraham (pbuh) and every prophet who came after Abraham was one of Abraham's successors. In addition to physical preparation, there was a similar spiritual preparation. It was made in complete seclusion, in the middle of the desert, and in the places of pasture. Silence was his way of life, and seclusion was his vehicle. Allah the Almighty prepared for His prophet the tools he would need later on to righteously bear the commands of Allah the Exalted.

One day after the end of this period, a vague homesickness arose in Moses's heart. He wanted to return to Egypt. He was fast and firm in making his decision, telling his wife: "Tomorrow we shall leave for Egypt." His wife said to herself. "There are a thousand dangers in departing that have not yet been revealed." However, she obeyed her husband.

Moses himself did not know the secret of the quick and sudden decision to return to Egypt. After all, he had fled from their ten years ago with a price on his head. Why should he go back now? Did he look forward to seeing his mother and brother? Did he think of visiting Pharaoh's wife who had raised him and who loved him as if she were his mother? No one knows what went through Moses's mind when he returned to Egypt. All we know is that a mute obedience to Allah's destinies impelled him to make a decision and he did. These supreme destinies steered his steps towards a matter of great importance.