

Musa (Moses) - The Israelites after Pharaoh's Defeat

The Moses's People Desire an Idol

In spite of Pharaoh's death, he left a bad influence on the souls of the children of Israel. It was difficult for the years of oppression and intense humility to pass easily. He had made them accustomed to humbling themselves and submitting to someone other than Allah. He had so suppressed their souls and spoiled their nature that they began to torture Moses out of ignorance and obstinacy.

The miracle of the parting of the sea was still fresh in their minds, damp sea sands were still stuck on their soles, when they passed by a people worshipping idols. Instead of manifesting their indignation at the idolaters' oppression of the intellect by celebrating the praises of Allah for His guidance, they looked to Moses for him to specify a god for them to worship as those other people did. They were jealous of the other people and their idols, and they desired the same. They missed the ancient idolatry which they had lived with during the reign of Pharaoh.

Moses's People Desire an Idol - Qur'anic

Allah the Exalted revealed: And We brought the children of Israel (with safety) across the sea, and they came upon a people devoted to some of their idols (in worship). They said: "O Moses! Make for us an ilaha (a god) as they have aliah (gods)."

He said: "Verily, you are a people who know not (the Majesty and Greatness of Allah and what is obligatory upon you, i.e. to worship none but Allah Alone, the One and the Only God of all that exists)."

(Moses added): "Verily, these people will be destroyed for that which they are engaged in (idols-worship). And all that they are doing is in vain." He said. "Shall I seek for you an ilaha (a god) other than Allah, while He has given you superiority over the 'Alamin (mankind and jinn of your time)."

And (remember) when We rescued you from Pharaoh's people, who were afflicting you with the worst torment, killing your sons and letting your women live. And in that was a great trial from your Lord. Surah 7: 138-141

The Favors of Allah on Moses's People

The children of Israel were favored with Allah's grace and bounty. They were saved from oppression and had witnessed the drowning of their cruel ruler Pharaoh. When they needed water in the dry land, Allah commanded Moses to strike a rock, which parted and sent forth twelve springs of water for the twelve different tribes so that they need not dispute over a shortage of water. Allah also kept the skies cloudy to protect them from the scorching sun. To relieve their hunger manna (the dried exudate of certain plants) and quail were provided for them.

In spite of Allah's generosity, the mean spirited ones began to stir Moses's people to object that they were disgusted with this food; they desired onions, garlic, beans, and lentils, which were traditional Egyptian foods. That is why the children of Israel asked Prophet Moses to pray to Allah to make the earth produce these foods. Moses again admonished them for oppressing themselves and for their desire to return to a life of humiliation in Egypt. He also pointed out that they were ungrateful for the best and most abundant food. They wanted the worst instead of the best.

Allah's Favors on Moses's People - Qur'anic

Allah the Exalted said: And (remember) when Moses asked for water for his people, We said: "Strike the stone with your stick." Then gushed forth therefrom twelve springs. Each (group of) people knew its own place for water. "Eat and drink of that which Allah has provided and do not act corruptly, making mischief on the earth."

And remember when you said: "O Moses! We cannot endure one kind of food. So invoke your Lord for us to bring forth for us of what the earth grows, its herbs, its cucumbers, its Fum (wheat or garlic), its lentils and its onions." He said: "Would you exchange that which is better for that which is lower? Go you down to any town and you shall find what you want!" Surah 2: 60-61

The Cowardice of Moses's People

Allah had also directed Moses to lead them to the Promised Land (Palestine) which had been promised to Abraham as a land in which the pious and Allah-fearing of his offspring would live and uphold Allah's law. The children of Israel were an ungrateful people. In spite of all of Allah's favors, they could not stay away from evil and continued to reject Allah's laws. When Moses ordered them to conquer the town of the Canaanites and Hittites (their enemies who had hounded them), the children of Israel were cowardly and made excuses: "O Moses, a great people dwell therein. We will not go in unless they leave." Ancient books tell that they were six hundred thousand men. Moses did not find among them but two men who were ready to fight. These two said to the people: "Once we enter through the door, Allah will make us victorious." However, all the children of Israel were an incarnation of cowardice and quivered from within.

Allah Keeps Moses's People Wandering

Moses knew that his people were fit for nothing. Pharaoh was dead, but his effect upon their souls still remained. Their recovery needed a long period of time. Moses returned to his Lord, telling Him that he was responsible only for the actions of himself and his brother. He prayed to his Lord to judge between his people and himself.

Allah the Exalted issued His judgment against this generation whose nature was corrupted by the Egyptians: they must wander restlessly in the wilderness until this generation had died or become senile and had created another generation, a generation which had not been defeated from within and which could fight and score victory.

The Cowardice of Moses's People - Qur'anic

Almighty Allah revealed: And (remember) when Moses said to his people: "O my people! Remember the Favor of Allah to you, when He made Prophets among you, made you kings, and gave you what He had not given to any other among the Alamin (mankind and jinn), in the past. O my people! Enter the holy land (Palestine) which Allah has assigned to you, and turn not back (in flight) for then you will be returned as losers."

They said. "O Moses! In it (this holy land) are a people of great strength, and we shall never enter it, till they leave it; when they leave, then we will enter."

Two men of those who feared (Allah and) in whom Allah had His Grace said: "Assault them through the gate, for when you are in, victory will be yours, and put your trust in Allah if you are believers indeed."

They said: "O Moses! We shall never enter it as long as they are there. So go you and your Lord and fight you two, we are sitting right here." Surah 5: 20-24

Moses's People are Kept Wandering - Qur'anic

He (Moses) said: "O my Lord! I have power only over myself and my brother, so separate us from the people who are the Fasiqeen (rebellious and disobedient to Allah)!"

(Allah) said: "Therefore it (this holy land) is forbidden to them for forty years; in distraction they will wander through the land. So be not sorrowful over the people who are the Fasiqeen (rebellious and disobedient to Allah)." Surah 5: 25-26

Moses Fasts for Forty Days

The days of restless wandering began. Each day ended where it began and began where it ended. They started walking to no destination, day and night, morning and evening. They entered Sinai. Moses came to the same place where he had spoken to Allah for the first time. He appealed to Allah for guidance in judging over his people. Allah instructed him to purify himself by fasting for thirty days, after which he was to go to Mount Sinai, where he would be given the law by which he would govern his people.

The ancients said that after Moses fasted thirty days, he hated to speak to his Lord because of the odor of his mouth. He ate a plant of the earth and then his Lord said to him: "Why did you break your fast?" Moses said: "O my Lord, I disliked to speak to You with my mouth not having a pleasant smell." Allah said: "Do you not know, Moses, the odor of the faster's mouth is more fragrant to Me than the rose. Go back and fast ten days; then come back to Me." Moses did what Allah commanded.

Moses Speaks to Allah - Qur'anic

Almighty Allah declared: And We appointed for Moses thirty nights and added (to the period) ten (more), and he completed the term, appointed by his Lord, of forty nights. And Moses said to his brother Aaron: "Replace me among my people, act in the Right Way (by ordering the people to obey Allah and to worship Him Alone) and follow not the way of the Mufsideen mischi ef makers)."

And when Moses came at the time and place appointed by Us, and his Lord spoke to him, he said: "O my Lord! Show me (yourself), that I may look upon You."

Allah said: "You cannot see Me, but look upon the mountain if it stands still in its place then you shall see Me." So when his Lord appeared to the mountain, He made it collapse to dust, and Moses fell down unconscious. Then when he recovered his senses he said: "Glory be to You, I turn to You in repentance and I am the first of the believers."

(Allah) said: "O Moses, I have chosen you above men by My Messages, and by My speaking (to you). So hold that which I have given you and be of the grateful."

And We wrote for him on the Tablets the lesson to be drawn from all things and the explanation of all things (and said): "Hold unto these with firmness, and enjoin your people to take the better therein, I shall show you the home of AlFasiqeen (the rebellious, disobedient to Allah). I shall turn away from My Ayat (verses of the Qur'an) those who behave arrogantly on the earth, in a wrongful manner, and (even) if they see all the Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.), they will not believe in them. And if they see the way of righteousness (monotheism, piety, and good deeds), they will not adopt it as the Way, but if they see the way of error (polytheism, crimes and evil deeds), they will adopt that way, that is because they have rejected Our Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) and were heedless (to learn a lesson) from them. Those who deny Our Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) and the Meeting in the Hereafter (Day of Resurrection), vain are their deeds. Do they expect to be rewarded with anything except what they used to do?" Surah 7: 142-147

The Ten Commandments

Earlier scholars said that The Ten Commandments of the Torah are included in two verses of the Qur'an. Say: "Come, I will recite what your Lord has prohibited you from: Join not anything in worship with Him; be good and dutiful to your parents; kill not your children because of poverty - We provide sustenance for you and for them; come not near to shameful sins (illegal sexual intercourse, etc.) whether committed openly or secretly; and kill not anyone whom Allah has forbidden, except for a just cause (according to Islamic law). This He has commanded you that you may understand. And come not near to the orphan's property, except to improve it, until he (or she) attains the age of full strength; and give full measure and full weight with justice. We burden not any person but that which he can bear. And whenever you give your word (i.e. judge between men or give evidence, etc.), say the truth even if a near relative is concerned, and fulfill the Covenant of Allah. This He commands you, that you may remember." Surah 6: 151-152

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