

# Story of Prophet Musa/Moses and Haroon/Aaron (pbuh)

Ibn Kathir

The pharaoh who ruled Egypt was a tyrant who oppressed the descendants of Jacob (pbuh), known as the children of Israel (Bani Israel). He used every means to demean and disgrace them. They were kept in bondage and forced to work for him for small wages or nothing. Under this system the people obeyed and worshipped the pharaoh, and the ruling class carried out his orders, thereby authorizing his tyranny and crazy whims.

The pharaoh wanted the people to obey him only, and to believe in the gods of his invention. Perhaps, during that time, there were many classes of people who did not believe in or practice polytheism; however, they kept this to themselves and outwardly did as they were expected to do, without revolting or revealing themselves to anyone.

Thus, successive dynasties came to Egypt and assumed that they were gods or their representative or spokesmen.

Years passed, and a despotic king, who was adored by the Egyptians, ruled Egypt. His king saw the children of Israel multiplying and prospering. He heard them talking about a vague vision that one of Israel's sons would dethrone the pharaoh of Egypt. Perhaps this vision was only a daydream that persisted within the hearts of the persecuted minority, or perhaps it was a prophecy from their books.

Another tradition states that it was Pharaoh himself who had the vision. Ibn 'Abbas narrated: "Pharaoh saw in his vision a fire, which came from Jerusalem and burned the houses of the Egyptians, and all Copts, and did not do harm to the children of Israel. When he woke up, he was horrified. He then gathered his priests and magicians and asked them about this vision. They said: "This means a boy will be born of them and the Egyptian people will perish at his hands.' That is why Pharaoh commanded that all male children of the children of Israel be killed."

Either way, this vision reached the ears of the Pharaoh. He then issued a decree to slay any male child that would be born to the children of Israel. This was carried out until the experts of economics said to Pharaoh: "The aged of the children of Israel die and the young are slaughtered. This will lead to their annihilation. As a result, Pharaoh will lose the manpower of those who work for him, those whom he enslaves, and their women whom he exploits. It is better to regulate this procedure by initiating the following policy: males should be slaughtered in one year but spared to live the next year." Pharaoh found that solution to be safer economically.

Moses's mother was pregnant with Aaron (pbuh) in a year that boys were spared; thus she gave birth to the child publicly and safely. During a year in which boys were to be slain, she gave

birth to Moses (pbuh); thus his birth caused her much terror. She was afraid he would be slain, so she nursed him secretly.

Allah the Almighty revealed: *These are Verses of the manifest Book (that makes clear truth from falsehood, good from evil, etc.). We recite to you some of the news of Moses and Pharaoh in truth, for a people who believe (those who believe in this Quran, and in the Oneness of Allah). Verily, Pharaoh exalted himself in the land and made its people sects, weakening (oppressing) a group (children of Israel) among them, killing their sons, and letting their females live. Verily, he was of the Mufsideen (those who commit great sins and crimes, oppressors, tyrants, etc.).*

*And we wished to do a favor to those who were weak (and oppressed) in the land, and to make them rulers and to make them the inheritors, and to establish them in the land, and We let Pharaoh and Haman and their hosts receive from them that which they feared. And We inspired the mother of Moses, saying: "Suckle him (Moses), but when you fear for him, then cast him into the river and fear not, nor grieve. Verily! We shall bring him back to you, and shall make him one of (Our) Messengers." (Ch 28: 2-7 Quran).*

No sooner had the divine revelation finished that she obeyed the sacred and merciful call. She was commanded to make a basket for Moses. She nursed him, put him into the basket, then went to the shore of the Nile and threw it into the water. Her mother's heart, the most merciful one in the world, grieved as she threw her son into the Nile. However, she was aware that Allah was much more merciful to Moses than to her, that He loved him more than her. Allah was his Lord and the Lord of the Nile.

Hardly had the basket touched the water of the Nile than Allah issued His command to the waves to be calm and gentle while carrying the child would one day be a prophet. She instructed her daughter to follow the course of the basket and to report back to her. As the daughter followed the floating basket along the riverbank, she found herself right in the palace grounds and saw what was unfolding before her eyes.

The basket came to rest at the riverbank, which skirted the king's palace. The palace servants found the basket with the baby and took it to the Pharaoh and his queen. When the queen beheld the lovely infant, Allah instilled in her a strong love for this baby. Pharaoh's wife was very different from Pharaoh. He was a disbeliever; she was a believer. He was cruel; she was merciful. He was a tyrant; she was delicate and goodhearted. She was sad because she was infertile and had hoped to have a son. Hardly had she held the baby than she kissed him.

Pharaoh was much amazed when he saw his wife hugging this baby to her breast. He was much astonished because his wife was weeping with joy, something he had never seen her do before. She requested her husband: "Let me keep the baby and let him be a son to us."

Allmighty Allah said; *Then the household of Pharaoh picked him up, that he might become for them an enemy and a cause of grief. Verily! Pharaoh, Haman, and their hosts were sinners. And the wife of Pharaoh said; "A comfort of the eye for me and for you. Kill him not, perhaps he maybe of a benefit to us, or we may adopt him as a son." And they perceived not (the result of*

that). (Ch 28:9 Quran)

The queen summoned a few wet nurses to suckle the baby Moses, but he would not take any of their breasts. The queen was distressed and sent for more wet nurses. Moses's sister was also worried, as her baby brother was without milk for a long time. Seeing the queen's anxiety, she blurted that she knew just the mother who would suckle the child affectionately. They asked her why she was following the floating basket. She said she did so out of curiosity. Her excuse sounded reasonable, so they believed her. They ordered her to rush and fetch the woman she was talking about. Her mother also was waiting with a heavy heart, worried about the fate of her baby. Just then her daughter rushed in with the good news. Her heart lifted and she lost no time in reaching the palace.

Allah the Almighty narrated: *And the heart of the mother of Moses became empty (from every thought, except the thought of Moses). She was very near to disclose his (case, the child is her son), had We not strengthened her heart (with Faith), so that she might remain as one of the believers. And she said to his (Moses's) sister: "Follow him." So she (his sister) watched him from a far place secretly, while they perceived not.*

*And We had already forbidden (other) foster suckling mothers for him, until she (his sister came up and ) said: "Shall I direct you to a household who will rear him for you, and sincerely they will look after him in a good manner?"*

*So did We restore him to his mother, that she might be delighted, and that she might not grieve, nor that she might know that the promise of Allah is true. But most of them know not. (Ch 28:10-13 Quran)*

As the child was put to her breast, he immediately started suckling. Pharaoh was astonished and asked; "Who are you? This child has refused to take any other breast but yours."

Had she told the truth, Pharaoh would have known that the child was an Israelite and would have killed Moses instantly. However, Allah gave her inner strength and she replied: "I am a woman of sweet milk and sweet smell, and no child refuses me." This answer satisfied Pharaoh.

Forward, she was appointed as Moses's wet nurse. She continued to breast-feed him for a long time. When he was bigger and was weaned, she was allowed the privilege of visiting him. Moses was raised in the palace as a prince.

*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. Allah the Exalted recounted: *And he entered the city at a time of unawareness of its people, and he found there two men fighting, one of his party (his religion, from the children of Israel), and the other of his foes. The man of his own party asked him for help against his foe, so Moses struck him with his fist and killed him. He said, "This is of Satan's doing, verily, he is a plain misleading enemy."*

*He said: "My Lord! Verily, I have wronged myself, so forgive me." Then He forgave him. Verily, He is the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.*

*He said: "My Lord! For that with which You have favored me, I will never more be a helper for the Mujrimeen (criminals, disobedient to Allah, polytheists, sinners, etc.).!"*

*So he became afraid, looking about in the city (waiting as to what will be the result of his crime of killing), when behold, the man who had sought his help the day before, called for his help again. Moses said to him: "Verily, you are a plain misleader!" Then when he decided to seize the man who was an enemy to both of them, the man said: "O Moses! Is it your intention to kill me as you killed a man yesterday? Your aim is nothing but to become a tyrant in the land, and not to be one of those who do right."*

*And there came a man running, from the farthest end of the city. He said: "O Moses! Verily, the chiefs are taking counsel together about you, to kill you, so escape. Truly, I am to you of those who give sincere advice."*

*So he escaped from there, looking about in a state of fear. He said: "My Lord! Save me from the people who are Zalimeen (polytheists, and wrong-doers)!" (Ch 28:15-21 Quran)*

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 king 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.

Moses left Midian with his family and traveled through the desert until he reached Mount Sinai. There Moses discovered that he had lost his way. He sought Allah's direction and was shown the right course. At nightfall they reached Mount Tur. Moses noticed a fire in the distance. "I shall fetch a firebrand to warm us."

As he neared the fire, he heard a sonorous voice calling him: "O Moses, I am Allah, the Lord of the Universe." Moses was bewildered and looked around. He again heard the strange voice. "And what is in your right hand, O Moses?"

Shivering, Moses answered: "This is my staff on which I lean, and with which I beat down branches for my sheep, and for which I find other uses." (This question was asked so that Moses' attention would focus on the staff and to prepare him for the miracle which was to happen. This

was the beginning of Moses's mission as a prophet -pbuh).

The same voice commanded him: "Throw down your staff!" He did so, and at once the staff became a wriggling snake. Moses turned to run, but the voice again addressed him: "Fear not and grasp it; We shall return it to its former state." The snake changed back into his staff. Moses's fear subsided and was replaced by peace, for he realized that he was witnessing the Truth.

Next, Allah commanded him to thrust his hand into his robe at the armpit. When he pulled it out, the hand had a brilliant shine. Allah then commanded Moses; "You have two signs from Your Lord; go to Pharaoh and his chiefs, for they are an evil gang and have transgressed all bounds."

However, Moses feared that he would be arrested by Pharaoh, so he turned to Allah saying: "My Lord! I have killed a man among them and I fear that they will kill me."

Allah assured him of his safety and set his heart at rest.

Almighty Allah narrated this event: *And has there come to you the story of Moses? When he saw a fire, he said to his family: "Wait! Verily, I have seen a fire, perhaps I can bring you some burning brand therefrom, or find some guidance at the fire."*

*And when he came to it the fire, he was called by name: "O Moses! Verily! I am your Lord! So take off your shoes, you are in the sacred valley, Tuwa. And I have chosen you. So listen to that which is inspired to you. Verily! I am Allah! La ilaha illa Ana (none has the right to be worshipped but I), so worship Me, and offer prayers perfectly, for My Remembrance. Verily, the Hour is coming - and My Will is to keep it hidden - that every person may be rewarded for that which he strives. Therefore, let the one who believes not therein (in the Day of Resurrection, Reckoning, Paradise and Hell etc) but follows his own lusts, divert your therefrom lest you perish. And what is that in your right hand, O Moses?"*

*He said: "This is my stick, whereon I lean, and wherewith I beat down branches for my sheep and wherein I find other uses."*

*Allah said: "Cast it down, O Moses!"*

*He cast it down, and behold! It was a snake, moving quickly.*

*Allah said: "Grasp it, and fear not, We shall return it to its former state, and press your right hand to your left side, it will come forth white and shining, and without any disease as another sign, that We may show you some of Our Greater Signs.*

*"Go To Pharaoh! Verily! He has transgressed (all bounds in disbelief and disobedience, and has behaved as an arrogant, and as a tyrant)."*

*Moses said: "O my Lord! Open for me my chest (grant me self-confidence, contentment, and*



*boldness). And ease my task for me; and make loose the knot (the defect) from my tongue, (remove the incorrectness of my speech) that they understand my speech, and appoint for me a helper from my family, Aaron, my brother; increase my strength with him, and let him share my task (of conveying Allah's Message and Prophethood), and we may glorify You much, and remember You much, Verily! You are of us Ever a Well-Seer."*

*Allah said: "You are granted your request, O Moses! And indeed We conferred a favor on you another time before. When We inspired your mother with that which We inspired, saying: "Put him (the child) into the Tabut (a box or a case or a chest) and put him into the river (Nile), and then the river shall cast it up on the bank, and there, an enemy of Mine and an enemy of his shall take him.' And I endured you with love from Me, in order that you maybe brought up under My Eye, when your sister went and said; "Shall I show you one who will nurse him?" So We restored you to your mother, that she might cool her eyes and she should not grieve. Then you did kill a man, but We saved you from a great distress and tried you with a heavy trial. Then you stayed a number of years with the people of Midian. Then you came here according to the term which I ordained (for you), O Moses!*

*"And I have Istana'tuka (chosen you for My Inspiration and My Message) for Myself. Go you and your brother with My Ayat (proofs, lessons, verses, evidences, signs, revelations, etc), and do not, you both, slacken and become weak in My Remembrance.*

*"Go, both of you, to Pharaoh, verily, he has transgressed all bounds in disbelief and disobedience and behaved as an arrogant and as a tyrant. And speak to him mildly, perhaps he may accept admonition or fear Allah."*

*They said: "Our Lord! Verily! We fear lest he should hasten to punish us or lest he should transgress all bounds against us."*

*He (Allah) said: "Fear not, Verily! I am with you both, Hearing and Seeing. So go you both to him, and say: "Verily, we are Messengers of your Lord, so let the children of Israel go with us, and torment them not; indeed, we have come with a sign from your Lord! And peace will be upon him who follows the guidance! Truly, it has been revealed to us that the torment will be for him who denies (believes not in the Oneness of Allah, and in His Messengers, etc), and turns away' (from the truth, and obedience of Allah)." (Ch 20:9-48 Quran).*

Moses (pbuh) and Aaron (pbuh) went together to Pharaoh and delivered their message. Moses spoke to him about Allah, His mercy and His Paradise and about the obligations of monotheism and His worship.

Pharaoh listened to Moses' speech with disdain. He thought that Moses was crazy because he dared to question his supreme position. Then he raised his hand and asked: "What do you want?"

Moses answered: "I want you to send the children of Israel with us."

Pharaoh asked: "Why should I send them, as they are my slaves?"

Moses replied: "They are the slaves of Allah, Lord of the Worlds."

Pharaoh then inquired sarcastically if his name was Moses. Moses said "Yes."

"Are you not the Moses whom we picked up from the Nile as a helpless baby? Are you not the Moses whom we reared in this palace, who ate and drank from our provisions and whom our wealth showered with charity? Are you not the Moses who is a fugitive, the killer of an Egyptian man, if my memory does not betray me? It is said that killing is an act of disbelief. Therefore, you were a disbeliever when you killed. You are a fugitive from justice and you come to speak to me! What were you talking about Moses, I forgot?"

Moses knew that Pharaoh's mentioning his past, his upbringing, and his receiving Pharaoh's charity was Pharaoh's way of threatening him. Moses ignored his sarcasm and explained that he was not a disbeliever when he killed the Egyptian, he only went astray and Allah the Almighty had not yet given him the revelation at that time. He made Pharaoh understand that he fled from Egypt because he was afraid of their revenge upon him, even though the killing was an accident. He informed him that Allah had granted him forgiveness and made him one of the messengers.

Allah the Almighty revealed to us part of the dialogue between Moses (pbuh) and Pharaoh: *Allah said: "Nay! Go you both with Our Signs, Verily! We shall be with you, listening. And when you both come to Pharaoh, say: "We are the Messengers of the Lord of the Alamin (mankind, jinn and all that exists), and So allow the children of Israel to go with us.""*

*Pharaoh said to Moses: "Did we not bring you up among us as a child ? And you did dwell many years of your life with us. And you did your deed which you did (the crime of killing a man) and you are one of the ingrates."*

*Moses said: "I did it then, when I was an ignorant (as regards my Lord and His Message). So I fled from you when I feared you. But my Lord has granted me Hukman (religious knowledge, right judgments of the affairs and Prophethood), and appointed me as one of the Messengers. And this is the past favor with which you reproach me, and that you have enslaved the children of Israel."*

*Pharaoh said: "And what is the Lord of the Alamin (mankind, jinn and all that exists)?"*

*Moses replied: "Lord of the heavens, and the earth, and all that is between them, if you seek to be convinced with certainty."*

*Pharaoh said to those around: "Do you not hear what he says?"*

*Moses said: "Your Lord and the Lord of your ancient fathers!"*

*Pharaoh said: "Verily, your Messenger who has been sent to you is a madman!"*

*Moses said: "Lord of the east, and the west, and all that is between them, if you did but understand!"*

*Pharaoh said: "If you choose an ilah (a god) other than me, I will certainly put you among the prisoners."*

*Moses said: "Even if I bring you something manifest (and convincing)."*

*Pharaoh said: "Bring it forth then, if you are of the truthful!" (Ch 26:16-31 Quran)*

The degree of the conflict expressed in this dialogue reached its apex; thus, the tone of dialogue changed. Moses used a convincing intellectual argument against Pharaoh. However, Pharaoh escaped from the circle of dialogue based on the logic and began a dialogue of another type, a type which Moses could not bear to follow; a dialogue of menacing and threatening. Pharaoh deliberately adopted the style of the absolute ruler. He asked Moses how he dared to worship Allah! Did he not know that Pharaoh was a god?

After declaring his divinity, Pharaoh asked Moses how he dared to worship another god. The punishment for this crime was imprisonment. It was not permitted for anyone to worship anyone other than the Pharaoh. Moses understood that the intellectual arguments did not succeed. The calm dialogue was converted from sarcasm to mentioning charity, then to scorn, then to the threat of imprisonment.

*Moses said: "Even if I bring you something manifest and convincing." Pharaoh said; "Bring it forth, then, if you are of the truthful!" So Moses threw his stick, and behold, it was a serpent, manifest. And he drew out his hand, and behold, it was white to all beholders! (Ch 26:30-33 Quran)*

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 Moses 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 Moses's miracles on the masses.

Pharaoh detained Moses 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 Moses and the magicians. The people came in droves as near before 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, Moses arose. There was a hush in the huge crowd. Moses 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."

Moses had spoke 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 Moses as a fraud and a cheat.

Moses 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 Moses threw his staff. It began to wriggle and became an enormous serpent. The people stood up, craning their necks for a better view. Pharaoh and his men sat silently as, one by one, Moses's huge serpent swallowed all the snakes. Moses 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 Moses, the magicians prostrated themselves to Allah, declaring: "We believe in the Lord of Moses and Aaron." Pharaoh was angry and began plotting his next move. He charged that the demonstration had been arranged secretly between Moses 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.

Almighty Allah recounted this event: *He (Pharaoh) said: "Have you come to drive us out of our land with your magic, O Moses? Then verily, we can produce magic the like thereof; so appoint a meeting between us and you, which neither we, nor you shall fail to keep, in an open wide place where both shall have a just and equal chance (and beholders could witness the competition)."*

*Moses said: "your appointed meeting is the day of the festival, and let the people assemble when the sun has risen (forenoon)."*

*So Pharaoh withdrew, devised his plot and then came back. Moses said to them: "Woe unto you! Invent not a lie against Allah, lest He should destroy you completely by a torment. And surely, he who invents a lie (against Allah) will fail miserably."*

*Then they debated with one another what they must do, and they kept their talk secret. They said: "Verily! There are two magicians. Their object is to drive you out from your land with magic and overcome your chiefs and nobles. So devise your plot, and then assemble in line. And whoever overcomes this day will be indeed successful."*

*They said: "O Moses! Either you throw first or we be the first to throw?"*

*Moses said: "nay, throw you (first)!" Then behold, their ropes and their sticks, by their magic,*

*appeared to him as though they moved fast. So Moses conceived a fear in himself.*

*We (Allah) said: "Fear not! Surely, you will have the upper hand. Throw that which is in your right hand! It will swallow up that which they have made. That which they have made is only a magician's trick, and the magician will never be successful, no matter whatever amount of skill he may attain."*

*So the magicians fell down prostrate. They said : "We believe in the Lord of Aaron and Moses."*

*Pharaoh said: "Believe you in him (Moses) before I give you permission? Verily! He is your chief who taught you magic. So I will surely cut off your hands and feet on opposite sides, and I will surely crucify you on the trunks of palm trees, and you shall surely know which of us (I Pharaoh,) or the Lord of (Moses) (Allah), can give the severe and more lasting torment."*

*They said: "We prefer you not over the clear signs that have come to us, and to Him (Allah) Who created us. So decree (regarding) this life of the world. Verily! We have believed in our Lord, that He may forgive us our faults, and the magic to which you did compel us. And Allah is better as regards reward in comparison to your (Pharaoh's) reward, and more lasting (as regards punishment in comparison to you punishment)."*

*Verily! Whoever comes to his Lord as a Mujrim (criminal, polytheist, disbeliever, in the Oneness of Allah and His Messengers, sinner, etc.), then surely, for him is Hell, therein he will neither die nor live.*

*But whoever comes to Him (Allah) as a believer (in the Oneness of Allah, etc.), and has done righteous good deeds, for such are the high ranks (in the Hereafter), - Everlasting Gardens (And Paradise), under which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever; such is the reward of those who purify themselves (by abstaining from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which Allah has forbidden and by doing all that which Allah has ordained). (Ch 20:58-76 Quran).*

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.

Moses and Aaron left, and Pharaoh returned to his palace. Pharaoh entered to his palace. Pharaoh was completely stupefied when he faced the two miracles. When Moses 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 Moses came to destroy what he had built. Moses said that there was no Lord other than Allah in existence. This meant that Pharaoh was a liar.

Pharaoh opened the session by throwing a sudden question at Haman: "Am I a liar, O Haman?"

Haman fell to his knees in amazement and asked: "Who dared to accuse Pharaoh lying?"

Pharaoh said: "Has he (Moses) not said that there is a Lord in the heaven?"

Haman answered: "Moses is lying."

Turning his face to the other side, Pharaoh asserted impatiently: "I know he is a liar." Then he looked towards Haman (and cried): *"O Haman! Build me a tower that I may arrive at the ways, - the ways of the heavens, and I may look upon the Ilah (God) of Moses but verily, I think him to be a liar."*

*Thus it was made fair seeming, in Pharaoh's eyes, the evil of his deeds, and he was hindered from the Right Path, and the plot of Pharaoh led to nothing but loss and destruction for him. (Ch 40:36-37 Quran).*

Pharaoh issued his royal command to erect a lofty tower, its height to reach the heavens. Pharaoh's command depended fundamentally upon Egyptian civilization and its fondness for building what Pharaoh wanted. However, he ignored the rules of engineering. In spite of this, Haman assented (hypocritically), knowing that it was impossible to erect such a tower. He said that he would issue a command to build it immediately. "However, your majesty, let me object to Pharaoh for the first time. You will never find anyone in the heavens. There is no god but you."

Pharaoh listened to a settled fact. Then he declared in the famous meeting his historic line: *"O chiefs! I know not that you an ilah (a god) other than me."* (Ch 28:38 Quran).

Pharaoh was absorbed in his new problem. A series of serious meetings began in his palace. He summoned those responsible for the army, the police and, what we call today his director of intelligence. He also summoned the ministers, princes, and priests. He called whoever had a powerful effect on the direction of events.

Pharaoh asked his director of intelligence: "What do people say?"

He said: "My men have spread among them that Moses won the contest because of a plot and that a major magician had joined with him in this plan. The plot had been disclosed, and we

believe an unknown authority financed it."

Pharaoh asked his director of police: "What about the magicians' corpses?"

He said: "My men hung them in public squares and markets to terrify the people. We will spread a rumor that Pharaoh will kill whoever had anything to do with the plot."

Then Pharaoh asked the commander of the army: "What does the army say?"

He said: "The army hopes that commands will be issued to move in whatever direction Pharaoh desires."

Pharaoh said: "The role of the army has not come yet. Its role will come."

Pharaoh fell silent. Haman, the Prime Minister, moved and raised his hand to speak. Pharaoh permitted him and Haman asked: "Will we leave Moses 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 whomever objected to these acts.

Moses 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 Moses: *"We (children of Israel) had suffered troubles before you came to us, and since you have come to us." He said: "It maybe that your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you successors on the earth, so that He may see how you act." (Ch 7:129 Quran).*

Moses 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. In the midst of all this, Korah (Qaroun) moved. Korah was one of Moses' s people. He was very rich and lived in a magnificent mansion. He wore only the most expensive clothes. Numerous slaves waited on him and he indulged in every known luxury. His enormous wealth made him arrogant. Korah treated the poor with contempt and told them that their poverty was due to their lack of intelligence. He believed that what he owned was due to his own cleverness and business ability.

Moses reminded Korah to pay alms (zakat) on his wealth, a portion of which was rightfully due to the poor. Alms are compulsory upon all the believers. Korah was annoyed by this advice and told Moses that his being wealthy was proof that he was favored by Allah, Who approved of his life-style and increased his wealth daily. Moses argued with him and warned him of the result of

his wicked thoughts.

When Korah did calculate the alms due on his wealth, he was shocked at the large amount he had to part with. He not only refused to give alms, but spread a rumor that Moses had invented the law of zakat for his own gain. He even bribed the people to oppose Moses and to spread wicked rumors about him.

Allah warned Moses of Korah's plot. Moses appealed to Allah to punish him for his stinginess and for defying His laws. Allah's anger fell on Korah. The earth opened up and swallowed him, his mansion and all his wealth, as if he had never existed.

*Almighty Allah revealed: "Verily, Korah was of Moses's people, but he behaved arrogantly towards them. And We gave him of the treasures, that of which the keys would have been a burden to a body of strong men. When his people said to him: "Do not be glad with ungratefulness to Allah's Favors). Verily! Allah likes not those who are glad (with wealth) which Allah has bestowed on you, the home of the Hereafter, and forget nor your portion of legal enjoyment in this world, and do good as Allah has been good to you, and seek not mischief in the land. Verily, Allah likes not the Mufsideen (those who commit great crimes and sins, oppressors, tyrants, and mischief-makers, corrupts)."*

*He said: "This has been given to me only because of knowledge I possess." Did he not know that Allah had destroyed before him generations, men who were stronger than him in might and greater in the amount of riches, they had collected. But the Murimun (criminals, disbelievers, polytheists, sinners, etc.) will not be questioned of their sins (because Allah knows them well, so they will be punished without account). So he went forth before his people in his pomp. Those who were desirous of the life of the world said: "Ah, would that we had the like of what Korah has been given! Verily! He is the owner of a great fortune."*

*But those who had been given religious knowledge said: "Woe to you! The Reward of Allah (in the Hereafter) is better for those who believe and do righteous good deeds, and this none shall attain except those who are patient (in following the truth)."*

*So We caused the earth to swallow him and his dwelling place. Then he had no group or party to help him against Allah, nor was he one of those who could save themselves. And those who had desired (for a position like) his position, the day before, began to say; "Know you not that it is Allah Who enlarges the provision or restricts it to whomsoever He please of His slaves? Had it not been that Allah was Gracious to us, He could have caused the earth to swallow us up also!" Know you not that the disbelievers will never be successful? (Ch 28:76-82 Quran).*

When the Egyptians and children of Israel examined the miracle, the conflict between Moses and Pharaoh again reached a crisis because Pharaoh believed that Moses was threatening his kingdom.

Pharaoh was afraid that the people would be misled by Moses. He suggested to his ministers and notable men that Moses be killed. We believe that Haman supported the idea along with a front of disbelievers. It was on the verge of approval, except for the vote of one of the notable men of



the state, whose name is not mentioned in the Quran. The Quran says only that this man was a believer.

This believer spoke in the assembly where the idea of killing Moses had been introduced. He proved that it was not a good idea: "Moses did not say more than that Allah is his Lord. Later, he came with clear evidence that he is a messenger. There are two possibilities; either Moses is righteous or a liar. If he lies, he will be responsible for his lie. If he is righteous and we slay him, where is the guarantee that we will be rescued from the torment of Allah? Either way, he neither says nor does anything that merits our killing him."

This angered Pharaoh and his counselors and they threatened to harm the man, but he refused to budge from his stance. Then they tried to woo him back, but he still warned them that they were inviting their doom. This angered Pharaoh more, and he now threatened to kill the man. However, Allah protected His believer.

Almighty Allah revealed their dialogue: *Pharaoh said: "Leave me to kill Moses, and let him call his Lord (to stop me from killing him)! I fear that he may change your religion, or that he may cause mischief to appear in the land!"*

*Moses said: "Verily, I seek refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every arrogant who believes not in the Day of Reckoning!"*

*And a believing man of Pharaoh's family, who hid his faith said: "Would you kill a man because he says: My Lord is Allah, and he has come to you with clear signs (proofs) from your Lord? And if he is a liar, upon him will be (the sin of) his lie; but if he is telling the truth, then some of that calamity wherewith he threatens you will befall on you. Verily, Allah guides not one who is a Musrif (a polytheist, or a murderer who shed blood without a right, or those who commit great sins, oppressor, transgressor, a liar! O my people! Yours is the kingdom this day, you are uppermost in the land. But, who will save us from the Torment of Allah, should it befall us?"*

*Pharaoh said: "I show you only that which I see correct and I guide you only to the path of right policy!"*

*And he who believed said: "O my people! Verily, I fear for you a fate like that day of disaster of the confederate of old! Like the fate of the people of Noah, and 'Ad, and Thamud, and those who came after them. And Allah wills no injustice for His slaves. And, O my people! Verily! I fear for you the Day when there will be mutual calling between the people of Hell and of Paradise."*

*A Day when you will turn your backs and flee having no protector from Allah, and whomsoever Allah sends astray, for him there is no guide. And indeed Joseph did come to you, in times gone by, with clear signs, but you ceased not to doubt in that which he did bring to you, till when he died you said: "No Messenger will Allah send after him." Thus Allah leaves astray him who is a Musrif (a polytheist, oppressor, a criminal, sinner who commits great sins) and a Murtab (one who doubts Allah's warning and His Oneness). Those who dispute about the Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, revelations and signs, etc.) of Allah, without any authority that has come to them, it is greatly hateful in the Sight of Allah and in the sigh of those who believe. Thus*

*does Allah seal up the heart of every arrogant, tyrant. (So they cannot guide themselves to the Right Path).*

*And Pharaoh said: "O Haman! Build me a tower that I may arrive at the ways, - the ways of the heavens, and I may look upon the Ilah (God ) of Moses but verily, I think him to be a liar."*

*Thus it was made fair seeming, in Pharaoh's eyes, the evil of his deeds, and he was hindered from the Right Path, and the plot of Pharaoh led to nothing but loss and destruction for him.*

*And the man who believed said: "O my people! Follow me, I will guide you to the way of right conduct (guide you to Allah's Religion of Islamic Monotheism with which Moses has been sent). O my people! Truly, this life of the world is nothing but a (quick passing) enjoyment, and verily, the Hereafter that is the home that will remain forever. Whosoever does an evil deed, will not be requited except the like thereof, and whosoever does a righteous deed, whether male or female, and is a true believer (in the Oneness of Allah), such will enter Paradise, where they will be provided therein (with all things in abundance) without limit."*

*"And O my people! How is it that I call you to salvation while you call me to the Fire! You invite me to disbelieve in Allah (and in His Oneness), and to join partners in worship with Him, of which I have no knowledge, and I invite you to the All-Mighty, the Oft-Forgiving! No doubt you call me to worship one who cannot grant me my request or respond to my invocation in this world or in the Hereafter. And our return will be to Allah, and Al-Musrifeen (polytheists, and arrogants, those who commit great sins, the transgressors of Allah's set limits)! The shall be the dwellers of the Fire! And you will remember what I am telling you, and my affair I leave it to Allah. Verily, Allah is the All-Seer of His slaves."*

*So Allah saved him from the evils that they plotted (against him), while an evil torment encompassed Pharaoh's people. (Ch 40:26-45 Quran).*

Moses repeated his demand that Pharaoh release the children of Israel from slavery. In response, Pharaoh called his subjects, including the children of Israel, to a huge gathering where he reminded them that he was their lord and provided all their needs. Moses, he said, had no gold amulets nor angels following him; he was just a poor man.

Being a people who had been oppressed for a very long time, they lacked vision. Their judgment were limited to what they could see in the material world. They regarded their ruler to be wealthy and able to provide all their worldly needs. In ignorance, they obeyed Pharaoh and ignored Moses's call. Allah commanded Moses to warn Pharaoh of a punishment in this world for his faithlessness and his persecution of the children of Israel. As a portent of the punishment which Allah would meet out, the Nile did not flood its banks to soak the dry land as it normally did. As a result, crops failed, leading to famine. However Pharaoh remained arrogant, so Allah caused a huge flood, which devastated the land.

As often as they were troubled grievously, they appealed to Moses thus: *"O Moses! Invoke your Lord for us because of His Promise to you. IF you will remove the punishment from us, we indeed shall believe in you, and we shall let the children of Israel go with you."* (Ch 7:134

*Quran)*

Moses prayed to his Lord and He relived the suffering caused by the flood. The surging water ceased and withdrew from the land, and it became cultivatable. But when Moses bade them to fulfill their promise to release the children of Israel, they did not respond.

Then Allah sent swarms of locusts which ate whatever corps they had grown. The people hurried to Moses, asking him to invoke Allah to remove this affliction and promising they would send the children of Israel with him this time. The locusts departed, but they did not fulfill their promise.

Then another sign came, the sign of lice, which spread amongst the Egyptians, carrying diseases. Their refuge to Moses and their promise to him was repeated. His prayer to Allah was repeated and so, too, their breach of promise, as usual.

A sign of frogs was revealed. The land suddenly filled with frogs. They jumped on the food of the Egyptians, shared their houses, and distressed them greatly. The Egyptians went to Moses again, promising him to release the children of Israel. He prayed to his Lord, and Allah relieved them of the problem of the frogs, but they again broke their promise.

Then the last sign was revealed, the sign of blood. The Nile water was changed into blood. When Moses and his people drank the water, it was, for them, ordinary water. However, if any Egyptian filled his cup with the water, he discovered his cup full of blood. They hurried to Moses as usual, but as soon as everything returned to normal, they turned their backs on Allah.

Almighty Allah said: *And indeed We punished the people of Pharaoh with years of drought, and shortness of fruits (crops, etc.), that they might remember (take heed). But whenever good came to them, they said: "Ours is this." And if evil athem, they ascribed it to evil omens connected with Moses and those with him. Be informed! Verily, their evil omens are with Allah but most of them know not. They said to Moses: "Whatever Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) you may bring to us, to work therewith your sorcery on us, we shall never believe in you." So We sent on them: the flood, the locusts, the lice, the frogs, and the blood: (as a succession of) manifest signs, yet they remained arrogant, and they were of those people who were Mujrimeen (criminals, polytheists, sinners, etc.) (Ch 7:130-133 Quran)*

Almighty Allah also said: *But when We removed the punishment from them to a fixed term, which they had to reach, behold! They broke their word! (Ch 7:135 Quran)*

Pharaoh became ruder and more arrogant. He proclaimed to his people. "Pharaoh is the only god. Has he not the kingdom of Egypt and rivers flowing under it?" He declared that Moses was a liar, a magician, and a poor man who did not wear even one bracelet of gold.

Almighty Allah declared: *And indeed We did sent Moses with Our Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) to Pharaoh and his chiefs (inviting them to Allah's Religion of Islam). He said: "Verily! I am a Messenger of the Lord of the Alamin (mankind, jinn*

*and all that exists).*

*But when he came to them with our Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) behold! They laughed at them. And not an Ayah (sign, etc.) We showed them but it was greater than its fellow, and We seized them with torment in order that they might turn from their polytheism to Allah's Religion (Islamic Monotheism).*

*And they said to Moses: "O you sorcerer! Invoke your Lord for us according to what He has covenanted with you. Verily, we shall guide ourselves aright."*

*But when We removed the torment from them, behold! They broke their covenant (that they will believe if We remove the torment for them).*

*And Pharaoh proclaimed among his people, saying "O my people! Is not mine the dominion of Egypt, and the rivers flowing underneath me. See you not then? Am I not better than this one (Moses), and who is Mahin (has no honor nor any respect, and is weak, and despicable) and can scarcely express himself clearly? Why then are not golden bracelets bestowed on him, or angels sent along with him?"*

*Thus he (Pharaoh) befooled and misled his people, and they obeyed him. Verily, they were Fasiqeen (rebellious, disobedient to Allah).*

*So When they angered Us, We punished them, and drowned them all. And We made them a precedent (as a lesson for those coming after them), and an example to later generations. (Ch 43:46-56 Quran).*

It appeared that Pharaoh would never believe in Moses's message, nor would he stop the torture of the children of Israel. Therefore, Moses 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.)." (Ch 10:88-89 Quran)*

Allah inspired Moses to conduct his people of Egypt, but only a few of his people believed in his message. Allah revealed: *But none believed in Moses 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 Moses 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." (Ch 10:83-86 Quran).*

Almighty Allah decided to put an end to Pharaoh's crimes after He had given him several chances. Allah commanded Moses 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, Moses 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!"

Moses 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 Moses: "Smite the sea with your staff!" Moses 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.

Moses led his people across. This miracle proved Moses'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 Moses to ask Allah to close the sea. However, Allah commanded Moses 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.

Almighty Allah narrated: *And We inspired Moses, saying: "Take away My slaves by night, verily, you will be pursued." Then Pharaoh sent callers to all the cities. Saying: "Verily! These indeed are but a small band. And verily, they have done what has enraged us; but we are host*

*all assembled, amply fore-warned."*

*So, We expelled them from gardens and springs, treasures, and every kind of honorable place. Thus (We turned them Pharaoh's people) out, and We caused the children of Israel to inherit them.*

*So they pursued them at sunrise. And when the two hosts saw each other, the people of Moses said: "We are sure to be overtaken."*

*Moses said: "Nay, verily! With me is my Lord, He will guide me."*

*Then We inspired Moses saying: "Strike the sea with your stick." And it parted, and each separate (part of that sea water) became like the huge, firm mass of a mountain.*

*Then We brought near the others (Pharaoh's party) to that place. And We saved Moses and all those with him. Then We drowned the others. Verily! In this is indeed a sign (or a proof), yet most of them are not believers. And verily, your Lord! He is truly the All-Mighty, the Most Merciful." (Ch 26:52-68 Quran)*

*In another surah Almighty Allah narrated: And We took the children of Israel across the sea, and Pharaoh with his hosts followed them in oppression and enmity, till when drowning overtook him, he said: "I believe that La ilaha illa huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but) He, in whom the children of Israel believe, and I am one of the Muslims (those who submit to Allah's Will)."*

*Now (you believe) while you refused to believe before and you were one of the mufsideen (evildoers, corrupts, etc.). So this day We shall deliver your dead body out from the sea that you maybe a sign to those who come after you! And verily, many among mankind are heedless or our Ayah (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.). (Ch 10:90-92 Quran)*

The curtain fell on Pharaoh's tyranny, and the waves threw his corpse up to the western seashore. The Egyptians saw him and knew that their god whom they worshipped and obeyed were mere slaves who could not keep death away from their own necks.

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 (pbuh) 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.

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, 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 idol-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 give you superiority over the Alamin (mankind, and jinn of your time)."*

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

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 the 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 the Exalted said: *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 what which Allah had 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!" (Ch 2:60-61 Quran).*

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 the 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.

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.

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 give 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."*

*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)." (Ch 5:20-26 Quran)*

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 spoke 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.

Almighty Allah declared: *And We appointed for Moses thirty nights and added to the period ten more, and he completed them 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 (mischievous makers)."*

*And when Moses came 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 Al Fasiqeen (the rebellious, disobedient to Allah). I shall turn away from My Ayat (verses from the Quran), 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?" (Ch 7:142-147 Quran)*

Earlier scholars said that The Ten Commandments of the Torah are included in two verses of the Quran. 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 (judge between men or give evidences, 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." (Ch 6:151-152 Quran).*

Moses (pbuh) had been gone for forty days and his people were becoming restless, for they did not know that Allah had extended his time by a further ten days. Samiri, a man who was inclined towards evil, suggested that they find themselves another guide, as Moses had broken his promise. He said to them: "In order to find true guidance, you need a god, and I shall provide one for you."

So he collected all their gold jewelry, dug a hole in which he placed the lot, and lit a huge fire to melt it down. During the casting, he threw a handful of dust, making actions like a magician's to impress the ignorant. From the molten metal he fashioned a golden calf. It was hollow, and the wind passing through it produced a sound. Since superstition was imbedded in their past, they quickly linked the strange sound to something supernatural, as if it were a living god. Some of them accept the golden calf as their god.

Moses's brother Aaron (pbuh), who acted as their leader in Moses' s absence, was grieved and spoke up: "O my people! You have been deceived. Your Lord is the Most Beneficent. Follow and obey me."

They replied: "We shall stop worshipping this god only if Moses returns."

Those who had remained steadfast in belief separated themselves from the pagans.

On his return Moses saw his people singing and dancing around the calf statue. Furious at their paganistic ritual, he flung down the Tablet of the Law he was carrying for them. He tugged Aaron's beard and his hair, crying: "What held you back when you saw them going astray? Why did you not fight this corruption?"

Aaron replied: "O son of my mother, let go of my beard! The fold considered me weak and were about to kill me. So make not the enemies rejoice over me, nor put me among the people who are wrong-doers."

Moses' s anger began to subside when he understood Aaron's helplessness, and he began to handle the situation calmly and wisely.

Almighty Allah narrated: *They said: "We broke not the promise to you, of our own will, but we*

*were made to carry the weight of the ornaments of the Pharaoh's people, then we cast them into the fire, and that was what As-Samiri suggested."*

*Then he took out of the fire, for them a statue of a calf which seemed to low. They said: "This is your ilah (god), and the ilah (god) of Moses, but Moses has forgotten (his god)."*

*Did they not see that it could not return them a word (for answer), and that it had no power either to harm them or to do them good?*

*And Aaron indeed had said to them beforehand: "O my people! You are being tried in this, and verily, your Lord is Allah the Most Beneficent, so follow me and obey my order."*

*They said: "We will not stop worshipping it (the calf) until Moses returns to us." (Ch 20:87-91 Quran)*

*Allah the Exalted revealed some of the dialogue that took place between Him and Moses on Mount Sinai: "And what made you hasten from your people, O Moses?"*

*He said: "They are close on my footsteps, and I hastened to You, O my Lord! That you might be pleased."*

*Allah said: "Verily! We have tried your people in your absence, and As-Samiri has led them astray."*

*Then Moses returned to his people in a state of anger and sorrow. He said: "O my people! Did not your Lord promise you a fair promise? Did then the promise seem to you long in coming? Or did you desire the Wrath should descend from your Lord on you, so you broke your promise to me (disbelieving in Allah and worshipping the calf)?" (Ch 20: 83-86 Quran)*

*Allah the Exalted revealed what happened further on Moses's return. Moses said: "O Aaron! What stopped you when you saw them going astray, that you followed me not (according to my advice to you)? Have you then disobeyed my order?"*

*He (Aaron) said; "O my son of my mother! Seize me not by my beard, nor by my head! Verily, I feared lest you should say: 'You have caused a division among the children of Israel, and you have not respected my word!'"*

*(Moses) said: "And what is the matter with you, O Samiri? (why did you do so?)"*

*Samiri said: "I saw what you saw not, so I took a handful of dust from the hoof print of the Messenger (Gabriel's horse) and threw it (into the fire in which were put the ornaments of the Pharaoh's people, or into the calf). Thus my inner-self suggested to me."*

*Moses said: "Then go away! And verily, your punishment in this life will be that you will say: 'Touch me not' (you will live alone exiled away from mankind); and verily (for a future torment), you have a promise that will not fail. And look at your ilah (god), to which you have been*

*devoted. We will certainly burn it, and scatter its particles in the sea." (Ch 20:83-98 Quran)*

However, the punishment which was imposed upon the calf worshippers was severe, death. *Remember when Moses said to his people: "O my people! Verily, you have wronged yourselves by worshipping the calf. So turn in repentance to your Creator and kill yourselves (the innocent kill the wrong doers among you), that will be better for you in the Sight of your Creator." Then He accepted your repentance. Truly, He is the One Who accepts repentance, the Most Merciful. (Ch 2:54 Quran)*

Therefore, the crime of worshipping the calf did not pass unpunished. Moses commanded the elite of the children of Israel to pray to Allah for forgiveness and demonstrate their repentance. He chose seventy men out of them and ordered them: "Rush towards Allah and repent for what you did and ask His forgiveness for what you left."

Moses returned to Mount Sinai with the seventy elders and there he communicated with Allah. The elders heard Moses speaking with his Lord. (Allah spoke to Moses directly.) This was, perhaps, the last miracle that they would see, and it was hoped that it would be sufficient enough to convey the religion to their hearts forever. However, the seventy elite who heard the miracles were dissatisfied. They said to Moses: *"O Moses! We shall never believe in you till we see Allah plainly." (Ch 2:35 Quran)*

This was a tragedy that amazes one. It was a tragedy that indicated those who were hard-hearted and who continued to hold onto sensual and material concerns. Their stubborn demand was rewarded with punishing lightning bolts and a violent quaking that stupefied their souls and bodies at once, leaving them dead.

Moses knew what had happened to the seventy elite and was filled with sorrow. He prayed to his Lord, entreating Him to forgive them, for they were fools. Foolishness is only expiated by death. Allah forgave the elders and revived them after their death.

Allah the Exalted declared: *Moses chose out of his people seventy of the best men for Our appointed time and place of meeting, and when they were seized with a violent earthquake, he said: "O my Lord, if it had been Your Will, You could have destroyed them and me before; would You destroy us for the deeds of the foolish ones among us? It is only Your Trial by which You lead astray whom You will, and keep guided whom You will. You are our Wali (Protector), so forgive us and have Mercy on us, for You are the Best of Those who forgive. And ordain for us good in this world, and in the Hereafter. Certainly we have turned unto You."*

*He said (as to ) My Punishment I afflict therewith whom I will and My Mercy embraces all things. That (Mercy) I shall ordain for those who are the Muttaqun and give Zakat; and those who believe in our Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.); Those who follow the Messenger, the Prophet who can neither read nor write (Muhammad) whom they find written with them in the Torah and the Gospel, (Ch 7:155-157 Quran , Deut. 18:18; Psl. 118:22-23; Isa 42:1-13; Hab, 3:3-4, Matt 21:42-43, Jn 14:16-17, 26-28, 16:7-14) he commands them for Al Ma'ruf (Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam has ordained); and forbids them from Al Munkar (disbelief, polytheism, of all kinds, and all that Islam has forbidden); he allows*

*them as lawful At Tayyibat (all good and lawful) as regards things, deeds beliefs, persons, food, etc. and prohibits them as unlawful Al Khabaith (all evil and unlawful as regards things, deeds, beliefs, persons, food, etc.), he releases them from their heavy burdens (of Allah's Covenant), and from the fetters (bindings) that were upon them. So those who believe in him (Muhammad), honor him, help him, and follow the light (the Quran) which has been sent down with him, it is they who will be successful. (Ch 7:155-157 Quran)*

Moses (pbuh) stayed among his people calling them to Allah. It seems their souls were uneasy in a way that the observant eye could not mistake. Their obstinacy and chattering about what has become known as "The Story of the Cow" was unwarranted. This topic did not need so many negotiations between Moses and the people, nor did it need all their bias.

It was said that among the children of Israel there lived a pious man. He was poor but very careful about how he earned the living; it had to be honestly earned. Everything that he did was done for the sake of Allah, never for selfish gain. On his deathbed his last words were: "O Allah, I place my wife, my little son, and my only possession, a calf, in Your care." Strangely, he asked his wife to lead the calf to the forest and leave it there. He did this because he did not trust the children of Israel, for they were a selfish and greedy folk.

After a few years when the boy had grown up, his mother told him: "Your father has left you a calf in the trust of Allah. It must have grown into a cow by now." The son was surprised. He did not know of any calf all these years and asked his mother where it was. She replied: "Be like your father and say: 'I trust in Allah,' then go look for it."

With a rope in his hand, he went to the forest and prostrated himself before Allah: "O Allah, Lord of Abraham and Jacob and Job, return to me my father's trust. " As he raised his head, he saw a cow coming towards him. It stopped submissively beside him. He tied the rope around its neck and led it to his house. The cow would not allow anyone else come near it except the young man.

The youth was as pious as his father. He earned his living by cutting wood. Whatever he earned he divided into three equal portions; one he gave to his mother, one he used for his needs, and the last he gave as charity. His nights, too, were divided into three parts; during the early part of the night he helped his mother, the middle part he devoted to the worship of Allah, and during the last part he rested.

About this a wealthy man died, leaving behind an only son, who inherited his father's wealth. His cousins envied his good fortune, and secretly killed him so that they could inherit it.

The dead boy's other relatives came to the Prophet Moses (pbuh) and asked his help in tracing the boy's murderer. Moses instructed them to slaughter a cow, remove its tongue and place it on the corpse. This would reveal the murderer, he told them. They accused Moses of joking. He replied: "Allah forbid that I be foolish!" They questioned him about the type of cow they should slaughter, and he said: "This cow is neither young nor mature, but in between the two conditions, so do as you have been commanded."

Instead of following his direction, they asked him more questions. "What color must it be?"

He replied: "Verily, it is yellow in color."

They still were not satisfied with his answer and asked for more details. Moses replied: "It is an unyoked cow; it does not plow the soil nor water the tilth, and is entirely without marks."

They went out in search of such a cow. The only one that matched the description was the one owned by the orphaned youth. They met him on the way and asked the price for which he would sell his cow. He told them he would have to consult his mother first, so they accompanied him to his house and offered her three gold coins. She refused their offer, saying that the cow was worth much more.

They were on increasing their offer and the mother kept on refusing. Finally she urged the son to speak to his mother to be reasonable. He told them: "I will not sell the cow without my mother's approval, even if you offered me its skin filled with gold!" On hearing this, his mother smiled and said: "Let that be the price: its skin filled with gold." They realized that no other cow would do; they had to have it at any price. They agreed to buy the cow and paid with its skin filled with gold.

Allah the Almighty narrated: *And remember when Moses said to his people: "Verily, Allah commands you that you slaughter a cow."*

*They said: "Do you make fun of us?"*

*He said: "I take Allah's Refuge from being among Al Jahileen (the ignorants or the foolish)."*

*They said: "Call upon your Lord for us that He may make plain to us what it is!"*

*He said: "He says, 'Verily, it is a cow neither too old nor too young, but it is between the two conditions, so do what you are commanded.'"*

*They said: "Call upon your Lord for us to make plain to us its color."*

*He said: "He says, 'It is a yellow cow bright in its color, pleasing to the beholders.'"*

*They said: "Call upon your Lord for us to make plain to us what it is. Verily to us all cows are alike, and surely, if Allah wills, we will be guided."*

*He (Moses) said: "He says, 'It is a cow neither trained to till the soil nor water the fields, sound, having no other color except bright yellow.'"*

*They said: "Now you have brought the truth." So they slaughtered it though they were near to not doing it.*

*Remember when you killed a man and fell into dispute among yourselves to the crime. But*

*Allah brought forth that which you were hiding. So We said: "Strike him (the dead man) with a piece of it (the cow)." Thus Allah brings the dead to life and shows you His Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) so that you may understand.*

*Then after that your hearts were hardened and became as stone or even worse in hardness. And indeed, there are stones out of which rivers gush forth, and indeed, there are of them stones which fall down for fear of Allah. And Allah is not unaware of what you do. (Ch 2:67-74 Quran).*

One day Moses (pbuh) delivered such an impressive sermon that all who heard it was deeply moved. Someone in the congregation asked: "O Messenger of Allah, is there another man on earth more learned than you?" Moses replied: "No!", believing so, as Allah had given him the power of miracles and honored him with the Torah.

However, Allah revealed to Moses that no man could know all there is to know, nor would one messenger alone be the custodian of all knowledge. There would always be another who knew what others did not. Moses asked Allah: "O Allah, where is this man? I would like to meet him and learn from him." He also asked for a sign to this person's identity.

Allah instructed him to take a live fish in a water filled vessel. When the fish disappeared, he would find the man he sought. Moses set out on his journey, accompanied by a young man who carried the vessel with the fish. They reached a place where two rivers met and decided to rest there. Instantly, Moses fell asleep.

While he was asleep, his companion saw the fish wriggle out of the vessel into the river and swim away. However, he forgot to relate the incident to Moses. When he awoke, they continued their journey until they were exhausted and hungry. Moses asked for his morning meal. Only then did his companion recall that the fish they had brought with them had gotten away. Hearing this, Moses exclaimed: "This is exactly what we are seeking!"

They hurriedly retraced their steps to the place where the rivers met and where the fish had jumped out. There they found a man, his face partly covered with a hood. His bearing showed he was a saintly man. He was Al-Khidr, the guide.

Allah the Almighty narrated: *And remember when Moses said to his boy servant: "I will not give up (traveling) until I reach the junction of the two seas or until I spend years and years in traveling."*

*But when they reached the junction of the two seas, they forgot their fish, and it took its way through the sea as in a tunnel. So when they had passed further on (beyond that fixed place), Moses said to his boy servant: "Bring us our morning meal; truly, we have suffered much fatigue in this, our journey."*

*He said: "Do you remember when we betook ourselves to the dock? I indeed forgot the fish, none but Satan made me forget to remember it. It took its course into the sea in a strange way!"*

*Moses said: "That is what we have been seeking." So they went back retracing their footsteps.*

*Then they found one of Our slaves, unto whom We had bestowed mercy from Us, and whom We had taught knowledge from Us.*

*Moses said to him (Khidr) "May I follow you so that you teach me something of that knowledge (guidance, and true path) which you have been taught by Allah?"*

*He (Khidr) said: "Verily! You will not be able to have patience with me! And how can you have patience about a thing which you know not?"*

*Moses said; "If Allah will, you will find me patience, and I will not disobey you in aught."*

*He (Khidr) said: "Then, if you follow me, ask me not about anything till I myself mention it to you."*

*So they both proceeded, till, when they were in the ship, he (Khidr) scuttled it. Moses said: "Have you scuttled it in order to drown its people? Verily, you have done Imra- a Munkar (evil, bad, dreadful) thing."*

*He (Khidr) said: "Did I not tell you, that you would not be able to have patience with me?"*

*Moses said: "Call me not to account for what I forgot, and be not hard upon me for my affair with you."*

*Then they both proceeded, till they met a boy, he (Khidr) killed him. Moses said: "Have you killed an innocent person who had killed none? Verily, you have done Nukra a great Munkar (prohibited, evil dreadful) thing!"*

*Khidr said: "Did I not tell you that you can have no patience with me?"*

*Moses said: "If I ask you anything after this, keep me not in your company, you have received an excuse from me."*

*Then they both proceeded, till, when they came to the people of a town, they asked them for food, but they refused to entertain them. Then they found therein a wall about to collapse and he (Khidr) set it up straight. Moses said: "If you had wished, surely you could have taken wages for it!"*

*Khidr said: "This is the parting between me and you, I will tell you the interpretation of those things over which you were unable to hold patience.*

*"As for the ship, it belonged to poor people working in the sea. So I wished to make a defective damage in it, as there was a king after them, who seized every ship by force.*

*"And as for the boy, his parents were believers, and we feared lest he should oppress them by*



*rebellion and disbelief. So we intended that their Lord should change him for them for one better in righteousness and near to mercy.*

*"And as for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the town; and there was under it a treasure belonging to them; and their father was a righteous man, and your Lord intended that they should attain their age of full strength and take out their treasure as a mercy from your Lord. And I did it not of my own accord. That is the interpretation of those (things) over which could not hold patience. (Ch 18:60-82 Quran)*

The story of Moses and Al-Khidr is also told in a hadith. Said Ibn Jubair said: "I said to Ibn' Abbas, Nauf Al Bukah claims that Moses, the companion of Al Khidr, was not Moses (the Prophet) of the children of Israel, but some other Moses.' Ibn Abbas said: 'Allah's enemy (Nauf) has told a lie. Ubai Ibn Kab told us that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Once Moses stood up and addressed Bani Israel. He was asked who was the most learned man amongst the people. He said: "I." Allah admonished him as he did not attribute absolute knowledge to Him (Allah). So, Allah said to him: "Yes, at the junction of the two seas there is a slave of Mine who is more learned than you." Moses said; "O my Lord! How can I meet him?" Allah said: "Take a fish and put it in a large basket and you will find him at the place where you will lose the fish."

Moses took a fish and put it in a basket and proceeded along with his servant boy, Joshua (Yusha Ibn Nun), till they reached the rock where they laid their heads (lay down). Moses slept, and the fish, moving out of the basket, fell into the sea. It took its way into the sea straight as in a tunnel. Allah stopped the flow of water over the fish and it became like an arch (the Prophet pointed out this arch with his hands). They traveled the rest of the night, and the next day Moses said to his boy servant: "Give us our food, for indeed, we have suffered much fatigue in this journey of ours." Moses did not feel tired till he crossed that place which Allah had ordered him to seek after. His boy said to him: "Do you know that when we were sitting near that rock, I forgot the fish, and none but Satan caused me to forget to tell you about it, and it took its course into the sea in an amazing way?" So there was a path for the fish and that astonished them. Moses said: "That was what we were seeking after."

So both of them retraced their footsteps till they reached the rock. There they saw a man lying covering with a garment. Moses greeted him, and he replied saying: "How do people greet each other in your land?" Moses said: "I am Moses."

The man asked: "Moses of Bani Israel?" Moses said: "yes, I have come to you so that you may teach me from those things which Allah has taught you." He said: "O Moses! I have some of the knowledge of Allah which Allah has taught me and which you do not know, wyou have some of the knowledge of Allah which Allah has taught you and which I do not know." Moses asked: "May I follow you?" He said: "But you will not be able to remain patient with me, for how can you be patient about things which you will not be able to understand?" Moses said: "You will find me, if Allah so will, truly patient, and I will not disobey you in aught."

So both of them set out walking along the seashore. A boat passed by them, and they asked the crew of the boat to take them on board. The crew recognized Al-Khidr, so they took them on board without fare. When they were on board the boat, a sparrow came and stood on the edge of

the boat and dipped its beak once or twice into the sea. Al Khidr said to Moses: "O Moses! My knowledge and your knowledge have not decreased Allah's knowledge except as much as this sparrow has decreased the water of the sea with its beak." Then suddenly Al Khidr took an adz and pulled up a plank, and Moses did not notice it till he had pulled up a plank with the adz. Moses said to him: "What have you done? They took us on board charging us nothing; yet you have intentionally made a hole in their boat as to drown its passengers. Verily, you have done a dreadful thing." Al Khidr replied: "Did I not tell you that you would not be able to remain patient with me?" Moses replied: "Do not blame me for what I have forgotten, and do not be hard upon me for my fault." So the first excuse of Moses was that he had forgotten.

When they had left the sea, they passed by a boy playing with other boys. Al Khidr took a hold of the boy's head and plucked it with his fingertips as if he were plucking some fruit. Moses said to him: "Have you killed an innocent person who has not killed any person? You have really done a horrible thing." Al Khidr said: "Did I not tell you that you could not remain patient with me?" Moses said: "If I ask you about anything after this, don't accompany me. You have received an excuse from me."

Then both of them went on till they came to some people of a village, and they asked its inhabitants for food but they refused to entertain them as guests. Then they saw therein a wall which was just going to collapse and Al Khidr repaired it just by touching it with his hands. (Sufyan, the sub-narrator, gestured with his hands, illustrating how Al Khidr passed his hands over the wall upwards.) Moses said: "These are the people whom we have called on, but they neither gave us food, nor entertained us as guests, yet you have repaired their wall. If you had wished, you could have taken wages for it."

Al Khidr said: "This is the parting between you and me, and I shall tell you the explanation of those things on which you could not remain patient."

The Prophet (pbuh) added: "We wish that Moses could have remained patient by virtue of which Allah might have told us more about their story." (Sufyan, the sub-narrator, said that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "May Allah bestow His Mercy on Moses! If he had remained patient, we would have been told further about their case." (Sahih Al-Bukhari)

Moses (pbuh) suffered terribly from his people and endured much for the sake of Allah. Abdullah Ibn Umar narrated: "Once the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) distributed something (among his companions). A man said: 'This distribution has not been done (with justice) seeking Allah's Countenance.' I went to the Prophet (pbuh) and told him of that. He became so angry that I saw the signs of anger on his face. Then he said: 'May Allah bestow His Mercy on Moses, for he was harmed more (in a worse manner) than this; yet he endured patiently.'" (Sahih Al-Bukhari)

The children of Israel mistreated Moses (pbuh) a lot. His agony was not limited to mutiny, stupidity, chattering, ignorance, and idolatry; it exceeded this and went as far as inflicting personal harm on him.

Almighty Allah commanded: *O you who believe! Be not like those who annoyed Moses, but*

*Allah cleared him of that which they alleged, and he was honorable in Allah's sight! (Ch 33:69 Quran).*

Abu Hurairah narrated that Allah's Messenger Muhammad (pbuh) said: "Prophet Moses was a shy person and used to cover his body completely because of his extensive shyness. One of the children of Israel hurt him by saying: 'He covers his body in this way only because of some defect in his skin, either leprosy or scrotal hernia, or he has some other defect.'

Allah wished to clear Moses of what they said about him, so one day while Moses was in seclusion, he took his clothes and put them on a stone and started taking a bath. When he had finished the bath, he moved towards his clothes so as to take them, but the stone took his clothes and fled. Moses picked up his stick and ran after the stone saying: 'O stone! Give me my garment!' till he reached a group of children of Israel who saw him naked then, and found him in the best shape of what Allah had created, and Allah cleared him of what they had accused him of. The stone stopped there, and Moses took and put on his garment and started hitting the stone with his stick. By Allah, the stone still has some traces of the hitting, three, four, or five marks. This was what Allah the Almighty refers to in His saying: *O you who believe! Be not like those who annoyed Moses, but Allah cleared him of that which they alleged, and he was honorable in Allah's sight!*" (Ch 33:69 Quran) (Sahih Al-Bukhari)

Aaron (pbuh) died shortly before Moses (pbuh). His people were still wandering in the wilderness when he died.

Abu Hurairah narrated: "The Angel of Death was sent to Moses (pbuh). When he came to Moses, Moses slapped him on the eye. The Angel returned to his Lord and said: 'You have sent me to a slave who does not want to die.' Allah said: 'Return to him and tell him to put his hand on the back of an ox and for every hair that will come under it, he will be granted one year of life.' Moses said: 'O Lord! What will happen after that?' Allah replied: 'then death.' Moses said: 'Let it come now!' Moses then requested Allah to let him die close to the Holy Land so that he would be at a distance of a stone's throw from it." Abu Hurairah added: "Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said: 'If I were there, I would show you his grave below the red sandhill on the side of the road.'" (Sahih Al Bukhari)

Moses (pbuh), Prophet of Allah and the one to whom Allah spoke to directly, met his death with a contented soul and a faithful heart that looked forward to righteousness and made haste to meet with Him Who bore tidings of peace.

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