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HADHRAT MUSA (ALAYHIS SALAAM) AND THE TAQDEER OF ALLAH



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FIR'OUN, HADHRAT MUSA AND THE TAQDEER OF ALLAH

“Verily, Fir'oun exalted himself (with arrogance and oppression) in the land (Egypt), and he classified its population into different groups (high and low classes).

He had suppressed one group (Bani Israaeel) of the population, slaughtering their sons and leaving their daughters alive. Verily, he was among the anarchists.”

(Surah Qasas, aayat 4)

THE CONCEPTION AND BIRTH OF NABI MUSA

FIR'OUN, THE PHAROAH of Egypt, the self-proclaimed 'almighty god', was forewarned by his astrologers and magicians that a boy would be born in Bani Israaeel, who would eliminate his kingdom. The astrologers had predicted the exact moment of a certain night when a lady from Bani Israaeel would conceive the boy. Despite the most elaborate measures instituted by the Pharoah to prevent this conception, by the Qudrat and Decree of Allah Azza Wa Jal, Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) was conceived in the womb of his mother that very night and at the precise moment predicted by the astrologers. And this momentous episode took place right in the palace of Fir'oun.

The next morning, the astrologers and magicians informed Fir'oun that all his measures to prevent the conception of the child had failed and that the event had already occurred as they had predicted. Despite his rage, his fear was overwhelming. He assembled his advisors and officers to plan the next move for eliminating the threat which faced him. It was decided that every boy born to the women of Bani Israaeel henceforth would be put to death.

Fir'oun enlisted the services of thousands of midwives who were called in from all parts of the land. A midwife was appointed to every household of Bani Israaeel, and soldiers were permanently stationed in all areas where Bani Israaeel resided. As soon as a boy was born, the midwife wrote her report. Soldiers were called in to take away the baby who was then slaughtered. The aforementioned aayat of the Qur'aan Shareef refers to this brutality of Fir'oun. 90,000 male

infants were slaughtered in Fir'oun's plan of horror to thwart the Decree of Allah Ta'ala. Not a single male infant of Bani Israaeel was spared.

Nine months after conception, the wife of Imraan gave birth to the baby boy who was destined to bring the downfall of Fir'oun. Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) was born and as the midwife appointed by Fir'oun took the infant in her hands she was overwhelmed by love for this beautiful baby. She had never set eyes on such a beautiful infant before. She told the baby's mother not to be worried and scared. She would inform the soldiers that a dead girl was born and buried by her.

When the midwife left, she informed the guards outside that she had buried the dead girl baby. After the midwife left, the guards entered the house to confirm her report. When Hadhrat Musa's sister saw the soldiers entering the house, fear drove her into a state of panic. She rushed to her mother's room, grabbed the infant and blindly, not knowing what she was doing, cast him into the kitchen stove which was at that time blazing with fire.

After searching the place and questioning Nabi Musa's mother, the soldiers were satisfied and left. By Allah's fadhil, it never occurred to the soldiers to seek the 'grave' where the 'dead baby girl' was allegedly buried. The mother asked her daughter: 'Where did you conceal your brother?' She replied: 'O my mother, I panicked and cast the baby into the blazing oven.' The mother almost lost her senses. She rushed to the fire. When mother and daughter reached the oven, the fire was blazing. Both wailed and cried profusely. While they were grieving, they heard from inside the oven the pleasant gurgling sound of a baby. In sheer elation, the mother reciting *Bismillaahir Rahmaanir Raheem* thrust her hand into the fire and retrieved her baby. Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) was unscathed. The fire had no effect on him. The baby was full of smiles.

Now commenced the dangerous task of caring for her infant in utmost secrecy. She knew that the danger was ever present. The slaughter of babies meanwhile continued unabated. Day by day Hadhrat Musa's mother became more fearful and apprehensive. She always feared that her secret would be somehow revealed. Then Allah Ta'ala inspired her with the assurance:

“And We revealed to the mother of Musa: ‘Suckle him. When you

are overwhelmed by fear for his safety, then cast him into the river. Fear not! Grieve not! Verily, We shall return him to you, and We shall make him among the Messengers."

(Surah Qassas, Aayat 7)

This inspiration brought peace and tranquillity to Nabi Musa's mother. Meanwhile the brutality of Fir'oun increased. A systematic search of the homes of Bani Israaeel was underway and Hadhrat Musa's mother now feared detection and the slaughter of her baby. She asked a carpenter to make a small wooden box for her. The carpenter immediately made the box and handed it to Imraan, the father of Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam). Imraan, trusting the carpenter, told him that the box was for concealing his baby from Fir'oun. The baby would be concealed in the box and sent to a safe place.

When the carpenter left Imraan, he set off straight to the palace to inform Fir'oun of his discovery. He knew that he would be munificently rewarded by Fir'oun for this information. On reaching the palace, he was ushered into the presence of Fir'oun.

THE CASKET AND THE FIRST MUSLIM

When the carpenter learnt that the casket he had made was to conceal the baby (Hadhrat Musa-alayhis salaam), he set off to the palace of Fir'oun. In Fir'oun's presence, as much as the carpenter endeavoured to explain what he knew, he was unable to do so. Miraculously he became dumb and could not utter any intelligent word other than make incoherent and incomprehensible sounds. The carpenter's demeanour greatly annoyed and angered Fir'oun. Thinking that the carpenter was jesting, he ordered him to be whipped and expelled. After receiving a severe whipping, the carpenter was expelled.

On reaching his home, the carpenter resolved to inform Fir'oun of the hidden baby by means of a letter. As he set down to write his contemplated letter, he suddenly became blind. Overcome with panic, the carpenter understood that the baby for whom he had made the casket was in reality that very same infant about whom the astrologers had predicted would be the doom of Fir'oun. This baby would be the Nabi.

The carpenter sincerely repented. As he repented, Allah Ta'ala restored his vision. He immediately accepted the baby as the Nabi.

He was the first person from among the Qibt (Fir'oun's nation) to accept Imaan.

Nabi Musa's mother examined the casket and blocked the slightest opening or crevice to prevent any water entering. After she had prepared the casket, she bathed her infant, dressed him up beautifully, hugged and kissed him lovingly and with tears in her eyes she assigned him to the casket. She closed and locked the lid. During the middle of the night, carrying the casket on her head, she set off for the River Nile as she was inspired by Allah Ta'ala.

At a certain spot on the banks of the river, she lowered the casket from her head. Suddenly she saw a huge poisonous serpent coiled up. The serpent spoke clearly in her language and said: 'If you assign the casket to the river, I shall swallow the baby.'" Hadhrat Musa's mother was a very saintly and intelligent lady. She said: 'This appears to be shaitaan.'" As she spoke, the serpent suddenly vanished. In fact, the serpent was shaitaan who had appeared to deceive Hadhrat Musa's mother. Taking the Name of Allah Ta'ala, Hadhrat Musa's mother assigned the casket to the waters of the Nile. With tears cascading down her cheeks her eyes followed the casket until finally it disappeared from her sight. Full of grief and with tears gushing in profusion she returned home.

Meanwhile the casket sailed along the path decreed for it by Allah Ta'ala. Fir'oun had only one daughter. Who was stricken by the disease of leprosy. She was bedridden for many years. The astrologers had predicted to Fir'oun that in a certain year, on a certain day at a certain time in the morning, a living being will be acquired from the River Nile. If the saliva of that living being is applied just once to the ailing girl, she will immediately be cured of her affliction.

The momentous occasion had arrived and Fir'oun was waiting with great anxiety in expectation of retrieving some living object from the river. The astrologers could not predict what type of living being it would be. Fir'oun had ordered thousands of his men to be on the watch along the banks of the river. Suddenly the people saw a wonderful sight. A huge tree with the casket caught in its branches was flowing forcefully against the current and was moving towards the palace of Fir'oun. Meanwhile, Fir'oun and his wife Hadhrat Aasiyah (rahmatullah alayh) were viewing the scene from above the

palace balcony. They were also scanning the river in the hope of sighting the living being which the astrologers had predicted and whose saliva would instantaneously cure Fir'oun's ailing daughter.

MUSAIN FIROUN'S PALACE

Hadhrat Aasiyah (rahmatullah alayh) was from among the Bani Israaeel. She was the paternal aunt of Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam). The casket was now on top of the tree-trunk which had miraculously risen so high that it was in line with the window of the palace where Hadhrat Aasiyah was sitting. She thrust out her hands and carefully brought it inside the palace. The casket was immediately opened up. All the onlookers who were present instantaneously fell in love with the beautiful baby which their eyes beheld. Although Fir'oun too was overwhelmed with the beautiful baby, fear suddenly overtook him. He reflected: "Is this not perhaps the child predicted by the astrologers, who would destroy my land?" He voiced his apprehension to his wife, Aasiyah. Hadhrat Aasiyah however convinced him of the error of his suspicions, and of the good fortune of the baby. She reminded him that this baby's saliva would cure his ailing daughter. How could he be the cause for destruction, she said to Fir'oun.

The hearts of people are in the control of Allah Ta'ala. Convinced by the explanation of Hadhrat Aasiyah, the love of the baby became entrenched in Fir'oun's heart. Mentioning the speech of Hadhrat Aasiyah (rahmatullah alayh), the Qur'aan Majeed says: "*And the wife of Fir'oun said: 'He is the cooling of my eyes and your eyes. Do not kill him. Soon will he benefit us or we shall adopt him as our son.'*"

Fir'oun lifting the baby in his hands said: 'O Aasiyah, I have no need for this child. If you wish, you may adopt him as your son. I have happily given him to you.' Hadhrat Aasiyah engrossed herself very diligently in nurturing Musa (alayhis salaam). The other ladies in the palace conferred with Hadhrat Aasiyah (rahmatullah alayh) regarding a name for the baby. Hadhrat Aasiyah said: 'I shall name him Musa because we have acquired him from the water and the tree.' In their language the word *Mu* meant timber, and *Sa* meant water.

Meanwhile, Hadhrat Musa's mother was smitten with grief and was crying profusely. After she had reached home, she instructed her

daughter to walk along the banks of the Nile to ascertain the fate of the casket.

On the desperate instructions of her distraught mother, Hadhrat Musa's sister walked along the banks of the River Nile to ascertain the fate of the casket containing the baby Musa (alayhis salaam), which had been assigned to the water of the river. Mentioning this episode, the Qur'aan Majeed says: "*And she (the mother of Musa) said to his sister: 'Follow it (the casket). Thus (she went) and observed it from a distance whilst they (the people) did not know (that she was the sister of Musa).'*"

She had observed from a safe distance the enactment of the entire episode of the retrieval of Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) from the river. She hastened home to report to her mother. The safety of the baby brought considerable peace to the distressed and grieving mother of Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam).

Meanwhile a search for wet nurses to suckle the baby was initiated at the palace of Fir'oun. Women in droves applied for this honourable duty, but the infant refused to be suckled. Referring to this Scheme of Allah Ta'ala, the Qur'aan Majeed states: "*We had prohibited for him (the infant) (the milk) of all the wet nurses (hence the baby refused to drink from anyone of them).'*"

Refusing to be suckled, the baby began sucking his own thumb. Eight days passed without this wonderful baby destined to be among the *Ulul Azam (the greatest)* Ambiya, drinking a drop of milk. The baby's sister would appear frequently and discreetly make enquiries about his condition. Finally she mustered up courage, and despite her fear, she presented herself at the palace of Fir'oun and in the words of the Qur'aan Majeed said: "*She said (to the people of Fir'oun): 'Should I inform you of a home whose inmates will take well care of him and treat him with love and affection?'*"

On hearing the proposal made by the baby's sister, Haamaan, Fir'oun's prime minister, in a state of shock jumped up from his chair and announced: "Arrest this girl! She appears to be aware of the house where this baby was born. Undoubtedly, this is the boy who will be the cause for the demise and destruction of Fir'oun and his land."

Allah Ta'ala fortified the heart of Musa's sister. Maintaining her

composure, she said: "I am merely offering good advice out of sympathy for Fir'oun for the sustainment of his son. I don't know who you are nor who the baby is." The hearts of men are in the control of Allah Azza Wa Jal. On observing the firmness of the girl, Fir'oun spoke and said to Haamaan: "She spoke out of goodwill for me. She has no relationship with the baby." This enemy of Allah and enemy of Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) spoke up in defense of Musa's sister although hundreds of babies were still being slaughtered in the insane scheme to destroy the one whom the astrologers had predicted would be the cause of Fir'oun's demise.

Turning to the baby's sister, Fir'oun said: "O girl, go and bring the lady who will care for the baby with affection and love." Musa's sister was sent off with honour in a royal coach to bring her mother. On reaching home, she hastily explained the position. Thus, with honour, Hadhrat Musa's mother was transported to the palace of Fir'oun. When she was ushered into the presence of Fir'oun, the baby was being lovingly fondled in the lap of Fir'oun. Hadhrat Musa's mother appeared in the presence of Fir'oun with her face covered.

Fir'oun handed the baby to his wife Aasiyah (rahmatullah alayh) to pass him on to Hadhrat Musa's mother. The baby immediately began to drink from his mother. Fir'oun was flabbergasted. He thought: "The baby had not drunk a drop of milk for the past eight days. He had refused to be suckled by innumerable wet nurses. What could be the reason for his immediate attraction to this woman?" He then interrogated Musa's mother. "Woman who are you? Are you perhaps not his mother?" The pious and intelligent lady spoke with courage and said: "I am a pure and chaste woman who is fragrant with perfume. My milk is extremely wholesome and sweet. This is why your son has taken to my milk. This phenomenon is not restricted to your infant son. Bring any baby to me and he/she will react in the same way."

Convinced by the reply, Fir'oun said: "Good, take the baby to your home and tend to him affectionately. I shall compensate you handsomely. Once a week bring him to my palace so that I and Aasiyah may cool our eyes." With profound gratitude in her heart for Allah Ta'ala and with delight, she was returned home with her baby, Musa (alayhis salaam). Thus, Allah Ta'ala fulfilled His promise

which the Qur'aan mentions in the following aayat: "*Then We returned you to your mother so that her eyes be cooled and that she does not grieve.*"

One day when Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) was three years of age, he was sitting on the lap of Fir'oun. Suddenly, the child grabbed the beard of Fir'oun and powerfully tugged it. A few hairs were uprooted. With his free hand, Musa very forcefully slapped Fir'oun. Fir'oun was now enraged. He issued an order for the immediate slaying of Musa (alayhis salaam). Hadhrat Aasiyah (rahmatullah alayh) who happened to be present, pleaded that the child was merely displaying childish boisterousness, and that his action was not motivated by any malice.

It was the practice of Fir'oun to adorn his beard with expensive pearls which glimmered. Aasiyah said: 'O Fir'oun! The child was attracted by the glimmer of the pearls, hence he acted in this manner. Do you not know that burning embers and pearls are the same to a little child?' Fir'oun said: 'Well, we shall soon see.' He ordered a tray with burning embers and a tray of pearls and diamonds to be brought to him. Both trays were placed in front of the boy, Musa (alayhis salaam). As Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) stretched his hand towards the tray of pearls, Hadhrat Jibraeel (alayhis salaam) in invisible form appeared and diverted his hand to the tray of burning embers. Musa (alayhis salaam) took a burning ember and placed it into his mouth. The ember burnt his tongue and this was the cause of the lifelong stutter with which Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) spoke. His hand too suffered burns. Allah Ta'ala later transformed this hand into what is known *Yad-e-Baidha* (the glittering hand) which was one of the *Mu'jizaat* (Miracles) which was bestowed to Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam).

Observing this episode, Fir'oun was not only satisfied and convinced with the argument of Aasiyah (rahmatullah alayh), but his affection for Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) increased. He lifted Musa on to his lap and displayed profound affection for him. He spared no effort in the endeavour to treat and cure the injuries of Musa (alayhis salaam).

THE TASBEEH OF THE COCK

One day when Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) was 8 years of age,

and sitting very respectfully in the presence of Fir'oun, the latter instructed a slave to open up his fighting cocks. When the first cock which was a massive bird, was released, it furiously flapped its wings and crowed very loudly. Immediately Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) responded: "You have uttered the truth." Astonished, Firoun said: "O my son! What did the cock say?" Musa: "The cock recited the praises of Allah Ta'ala." Fir'oun: "What relationship has the cock with this type of issue? My son, you are merely being witty and fabricating such stories."

Immediately, Musa (alay-his salaam), the 8 year old boy, said to the cock: "Repeat in our language the very same praises of Allah Ta'ala which you had proclaimed in your tongue." In obedience the cock recited the praises of Allah Ta'ala in human language. Musa (alayhis salaam) again said: "You have stated the truth."

The colour of Fir'oun's face changed. Full of fear he said to Haamaan, his chief minister: "Musa has bewitched this cock. Slaughter it immediately." The cock was slaughtered instantaneously. But, Allah Azza Wa Jal restored the cock to life. Coming to life, the cock repeated its proclamation of Allah's praises. It then flew in Fir'oun's court which was crowded with noblemen and dignitaries, and disappeared from sight.

FIROUN HUMILIATED

When Musa (alayhis salaam) was nine years of age, Fir'oun seated him along his side on the throne. All the court dignitaries were present. Fir'oun arrogantly commenced a discourse of his greatness, uttering many statements of kufr. Musa (alayhis salaam) could not tolerate all the kufr which Fir'oun was gorging out. In anger he leapt off and kicked at the throne. By Allah's Qudrat two legs of the throne broke. The throne collapsed and Fir'oun fell to the ground in humiliation. Blood trickled from Fir'oun's nose.

The court personnel were enraged. As they attempted to grab Musa (alayhis salaam), he fled into the palace to Hadhrat Aasiyah (rahmatullah alayh) and apprized her of the situation. He took refuge on her lap. Fir'oun, overwhelmed with rage, pursued Musa (alayhis salaam) into the palace. When he saw Musa (alayhis salaam) sitting on the lap of Hadhrat Aasiyah, Fir'oun bellowed: "O Aasiyah! You had prevented me from killing this child. Today he has wounded me

and broken my throne. In the crowded court he challenged my godhood." Hadhrat Aasiyah softly said: "He is still a small child. He is only being mischievous with his parents. In fact, his attitude displays signs of future greatness. He will be such a courageous man who will safeguard your land after you."

Aasiyah's pleadings and assurances dispelled Fir'oun's fears and anger. In reality, Allah Ta'ala was blinding the intelligence of Fir'oun. The hearts of people are in His control. He protects His servants in the lion's den and even in the lion's mouth.

THE MIRACLE OF THE LAMB

One day when Musa (alayhis salaam) was ten years old, he was sitting for meals with Fir'oun. A whole roasted lamb was brought to the table. Looking at the roasted lamb, Musa (alayhis salaam) commanding it said: "Get up by the permission of Allah!" Instantaneously, the lamb became alive, stood up and ran about the hall. Fear overcame Fir'oun. With fear in his eyes and dumbfounded, he stared at Aasiyah who said: "O Fir'oun! This son of yours is marvellous. He will bring great fame to you. The world will admire this wonderful son of Fir'oun." Aasiyah's assurance allayed the fears of Fir'oun. However, Fir'oun despite sensing the danger which Musa (alayhis salaam) posed, irrationally accepted the assurance of Hadhrat Aasiyah. Taqdeer was taking its course. Regarding the protection of Musa, the infant, the Qur'aan Majeed states: "...My enemy and your enemy (O Musa!) will take you (from the floating casket), and I have cast My Love on you so that you may be reared under My supervision." Despite Fir'oun's misgivings regarding Musa (alayhis salaam), he relented and felt convinced of the far-fetched explanations which Aasiyah offered for the 'insubordination' and 'rebellion' of the child, Musa (alayhis salaam).

SALAAT

When Musa (alayhis salaam) was 20 years old, he began to clandestinely perform Salaat. One day while performing Salaat on the banks of the river, a companion of Fir'oun saw him. He threatened to report to Fir'oun that Musa (alayhis salaam) was worshipping a Deity other than Fir'oun. In anger, Musa (alayhis salaam), commanded the ground: "O earth! Swallow him!" The earth split open and the man

sunk in until his knees. The earth gripped him tightly. He screamed and pleaded, promising not to mention the Salaat of Musa (alayhis salaam) to anyone. Musa (alayhis salaam) supplicated to Allah Ta'ala, and the man was released from the clutches of the earth.

Since Musa (alayhis salaam) was regularly performing Salaat, the news spread and finally reached the ears of Fir'oun. Fir'oun instructed his people to report to him immediately they see Musa (alayhis salaam) performing Salaat. On one occasion the spies reported to Fir'oun that Musa (alayhis salaam) was engrossed in worship. Fir'oun immediately went to the scene and found Musa (alayhis salaam) absorbed in Salaat. Fir'oun stood watching in amazement until Musa (alayhis salaam) completed his Salaat. Then he interrogated: "O Musa! Who were you worshipping?" Musa (alayhis salaam) responded: "I was worshipping my Master Who nourishes me and who has nurtured me."

Fir'oun said: "Musa, you have spoken the truth. It is I who nourishes and nurtures you. I have reared you since infancy. But people are falsely misconstruing your actions. You are my beloved son." Musa (alayhis salaam) remained silent. Fir'oun was satisfied and Musa (alayhis salaam) accompanied him back to the palace.

BANI ISRAEEL

At the age of 23 years, Musa (alayhis salaam) began to associate with his oppressed people, Bani Israaeel. The elders of Bani Israaeel poured out their grievances to him and narrated the episodes of Fir'oun's oppression and cruelty. The following discussion took place between Musa (alayhis salaam) and the elders of Bani Israaeel at this first meeting:

MUSA: "Since when is Fir'oun oppressing you in this manner?"

ELDERS: "Long before you were born. The oppression is continuing unabated to this day. When will there be succour for us? When shall we be saved from this punishment?"

MUSA: "This oppression is the consequence of your transgressions. Allah Ta'ala is not unjust to anyone. Supplicate to Allah Ta'ala that He should release you from this punishment and pledge that you will express your gratitude to Him."

ELDERS: (Unanimously pledging they said): "We wholeheartedly accept. We shall fast for Allah. We shall feed the poor for His Sake."

MUSA: "This is insufficient. Repent for your fisq and fujoor (rebellion and immorality). It will then not be surprising that Allah Ta'ala will remove your hardships. He is the Hearer and The One Who Accepts."

MUSA STRIKE THE QIBTI

Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) had not yet been appointed the Nabi but in the community he was regarded with honour and respect. Everyone thought of him as the son of Fir'oun. One day, at the time of *Qailoolah* (the midday siesta) when all the people were having their nap. Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) happened to be in the marketplace. Referring to this episode, the Qur'aan Majeed says: "He entered the city when its people were taking a nap....." He found two persons fighting with each other. One was a member of Bani Israeel, and the other one was a Qibti (the nation of Fir'oun). The Bani Israaeli implored Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) to assist him. Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) stepped forward and delivered one devastating punch to the Qibti who forthwith fell down dead.

When Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) realized what had happened, he was smitten with profound regret. He lamented his hastiness. The Qur'aan recording the regret and repentance of Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) says: "He said: 'O my Rabb! Verily I have committed an injustice to myself. Forgive me.' Then He (Allah) forgave him. Verily, He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

The Qibti who had died was the chief chef of Fir'oun. This chef had always oppressed the Bani Israaeli whose duty it was to collect firewood for the chef. On this particular occasion, the Bani Israaeli had collected some wood and was trying to sell it in the market place to enable him to buy some food for his family. The chef had appeared on the scene and tried to apprehend the Bani Israaeli. As a result, the Bani Israaeli resisted. Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) went to the aid of his oppressed kinsman. The Qibti's oppression had angered Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam), hence he struck him in anger without the intention of killing him.

Both Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) and his kinsman left the scene in haste. There was no one who had witnessed what had transpired. Nevertheless, Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) was fearful. Perhaps someone had witnessed and had reported to Fir'oun. The

next day, he again went to the marketplace full of fear and apprehension. When he arrived at the marketplace, he was surprised and annoyed to see the very same Bani Israaeli quarrelling and fighting with another person. Once again he called on Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) for aid. In response, Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) severely rebuking him, advanced to separate the two. However, the Israaeli misunderstood Musa's intentions. He thought that Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) was going to beat and kill him as he had killed the Qibti yesterday. In fear, the Israaeli exclaimed: "O Musa, will you now kill me as you had killed the Qibti yesterday? It appears that you are determined to kill people." Thus, the Israaeli, under a misapprehension, revealed yesterday's secret. Meanwhile the Qibti adversary heard what had been said.

The Qibti hastily set off to the court of Fir'oun and reported that it was Musa who had killed the chef. A search was already underway to trace the person who had killed the chef. Fir'oun immediately convened a special session of his court officials. Haamaan, the chief minister said: "I had my suspicions from the very beginning that Musa is the boy whom the astrologers had predicted would be the cause of your destruction. Now here is the opportunity for executing him. He is guilty of having killed a man. Musa should be immediately put to death."

MUSA LEAVES EGYPT

A unanimous decision to execute Musa (alayhis salaam) the following day was taken. Among the officials of the court was a sympathizer of Musa (alayhis salaam). He swiftly conveyed Fir'oun's verdict to Musa (alayhis salaam). He urged Musa (alayhis salaam) to flee during the night time. Musa (alayhis salaam) understanding the gravity of the situation bid farewell to Egypt that same night. As he departed, he supplicated: "O my Rabb, save me from the people of oppression."

On the command of Allah Ta'ala, unknown to Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam), Hadhrat Jibraeel (alayhis salaam) was sent to accompany Musa (alayhis salaam). This was prior to Nubuwwat. Hadhrat Jibraeel (alayhis salaam) appeared in human form as if he was a traveller. Musa (alayhis salaam), lonely and fearful was pleased to meet the 'traveller' along the journey. Whilst walking, the

'traveller' broached the subject of the City of Madyan. He spoke highly of Madyan and that it would take eight days to reach it. Soon thereafter, the 'traveller' (i.e. Hadhrat Jibraeel – alayhis salaam) disappeared, and Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) followed the road leading to the City of Madyan, supplicating to Allah Ta'ala. Mentioning his dua, the Qur'aan Majeed says: "Soon will my Rabb guide me to the right road."

IN MADYAN

After a gruelling walk of eight days, he reached the fields outside the City of Madyan. Here was a well where many people had gathered to water their animals. While he was sitting under a tree, in contemplation, he observed two young ladies with covered faces holding back their goats. Musa (alayhis salaam) enquired from them the reason for standing aloof with their goats. One of them responded that they were waiting for the others to complete their tasks of watering their animals, and that they would water their goats after the others had left. Their father was very old and sickly, hence they had to tend to the goats.

Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) went to the shepherds and reprimanded them for their inconsideration, and for not assisting the young ladies with their animals to enable them to leave for their home early. Offended by the Musa's reproach, the men spitefully lifted a huge slab of stone and covered the mouth of the well. Several men had to lift the slab of stone. They mockingly said to Musa (alayhis salaam): "If you are so kind and chivalrous, let us now see how you will assist them." Then they stood at a distance to see the 'fun'.

Musa (alayhis salaam) despite the tiresome journey of eight days, with hardly anything to eat besides whatever he could acquire from trees, went to the well and reciting '*Bismillaahir Rahmaanir Raheem*,' removed the huge slab effortlessly. He lowered the huge water-container into the well. Several men would retrieve the filled container from the well. But, Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) alone managed to draw it from the well. He continued drawing water until all the goats were fully satisfied. The two young ladies then departed with their goats.

The young ladies were the daughters of Hadhrat Nabi Shuaib

(alayhis salaam). He had reached a very old age and was also blind. On this day, the ladies had arrived home with their goats well before their expected time. Surprised at their early return, Hadhrat Shuaib (alayhis salaam) queried the reason. They narrated the episode which had transpired, and the kindness of the Musafir (Musa – alayhis salaam). Meanwhile Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) dejected and lonely sat down under a tree pondering his fate.

Having been apprized by *Wahi* of Hadhrat Musa's arrival and condition, Nabi Shuaib (alayhis salaam) said: "Alas! He is in dire straits. He is sitting all alone under a tree imploring Allah Ta'ala for some food. Go! Make haste! It appears to me that he has not eaten for eight days. Bring him here. Make haste! I fear that if we do not feed that Musafir, a calamity will descend on this city."

On the instruction of Hadhrat Shuayb (alayhis salaam), his daughter went to call Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam). When she reached the place where the well was, she found him sitting under the same tree where he had earlier rested. Describing the scene, the Qur'aan says: "*Then one of the two daughters (of Shuayb- alayhis salaam) came walking bashfully. She said: 'My father calls you so that he may remunerate you for having watered our goats.'*"

Adopting an interesting mode of accompanying her, Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) being a man of lofty moral attributes and spiritual excellence, his profound sense of modesty and shame constrained him to instruct her to walk at a distance behind him to avoid his gaze falling on her. Obviously he was not aware of Hadhrat Shuayb's residence. To solve this problem, he said to the girl to take a handful of pebbles. When direction should be changed, she should throw a pebble indicating the direction to follow, right or left. Since the voice of the female too is *Satr* (to be concealed), Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) exercised every precaution to avoid unnecessary hearing of the voice of Nabi Shuayb's daughter.

When they reached Hadhrat Shuayb's home, Musa (alayhis salaam) was warmly welcomed. After he narrated his entire story, Hadhrat Shuayb (alayhis salaam) said to himself: "This person is most certainly from the Family of Ambiya." Hadhrat Shuayb (alayhis salaam) comforting Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) told him to relax and not to fear. Fir'oun's jurisdiction did not extend to this land. He

therefore need have no fear of being pursued by the men of Fir'oun.

After Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) had meals, Hadhrat Shuayb's daughter requested her father to employ this stranger to tend to the goats. She said that he was a man of considerable strength and honesty. Hadhrat Shuayb (alayhis salaam) asked her to explain the basis of her conclusion regarding the stranger. She said that Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) alone lifted the huge slab covering the well. It was a stone which ten men would lift. Then he swiftly drew water from the well with a huge bucket which would be hauled up by five men. From this she understood his phenomenal physical strength.

The mode he had adopted when accompanying her testifies to his honesty, uprighteousness and integrity. Hadhrat Shuayb (alayhis salaam) was elated at this explanation of his daughter. Hadhrat Shuayb (alayhis salaam) told Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) that it was his intention to marry one of his daughters to him. The condition however was that Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) had to be the shepherd to tend to the goats for eight years, and if he voluntarily agrees to ten years, it will be appreciated. When Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) accepted the terms, Nabi Shuayb (alayhis salaam) performed the Nikah the same day.

THE MIRACULOUS STAFF

Hadhrat Shuayb (alayhis salaam) presented an Asaa (staff) to Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam). There was much significance in this presentation. He had in his possession the staffs of seventy Ambiya (alayhimus salaam) of bygone times. One of these staffs was the Staff which Hadhrat Aadam (alayhis salaam) had brought with him from Jannat. It was a wonderful Staff which had passed from Nabi to Nabi until it was inherited by Hadhrat Shuayb (alayhis salaam).

At the time when he had received this Staff, he was instructed to present it to Musa, Kaleemullaah, i.e. Hadhrat Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam). It was an *amaanat* (trust) which had to be entrusted to Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam). Without Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) being aware or understanding the significance of the Asaa (he had not yet been appointed the Nabi), and without Hadhrat Shuayb (alayhis salaam) having been informed that this stranger was that Musa Kaleemullah, he instructed him to go into a small room

where the seventy Staffs were stored and to bring one. Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) entered the room, took a Staff and presented it to Hadhrat Shuayb (alayhis salaam).

Hadhrat Shuayb (alayhis salaam) being blind, carefully ran his hand up and down the length of the Staff. He then said: "O Son? Return the Staff to its place and bring another one." Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) went into the room, replaced the Staff. When he attempted to take another staff, the first Staff miraculously leapt up and landed in his hand. He returned to Hadhrat Shuayb (alayhis salaam) with the Staff. After closely examining the Staff, he said: "This Staff is of no use for you. O Musa! Return it to its place, and bring another one." He returned to the room, replaced the Staff. As he attempted to take another staff, the same Staff miraculously landed in his hand.

Describing this episode, Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said that this scene was enacted seven times. After the seventh time, again the Staff landed in Hadhrat Musa's hand. Finally he said to Hadhrat Shuayb (alayhis salaam): "Each time I place this Staff apart from the pile of staffs. When I attempt to take another staff, this Staff forcefully leaps into my hand.

Hadhrat Shuayb (alayhis salaam) was bewildered and thought: "What is the mystery? I have to keep this Staff for Kaleemullah. While he was reflecting in bewilderment, Hadhrat Jibraeel (alayhis salaam) appeared. The Staff which was by Hadhrat Shuayb (alayhis salaam) miraculously penetrated four inches into the ground. Hadhrat Jibraeel (alayhis salaam) said: "Allah Ta'ala has decreed that the Staff belongs to the one who pulls it out from the ground."

Despite Hadhrat Shuayb's repeated efforts, he was unable to extract the Staff from the ground. After he was exhausted, he said to Hadhrat Musa: "O Son! If you are able to pull the Staff from the ground, it will belong to you." Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) retrieved the Staff effortlessly. In fact, the Staff of its own accord landed in Hadhrat Musa's hand. Hadhrat Shuayb (alayhis salaam) was now convinced beyond any shadow of doubt that this stranger would be appointed the Nabi, Musa Kaleemullah. With extreme delight and happiness, he exclaimed: "O Kaleemullaah! Congratulations! Blessed is this Staff for you. This is no ordinary

Staff. It is something wonderful. This Staff will come to your aid in all situations."

After Hadhrat Shuayb (alayhis salaam) had cautioned Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) regarding the significance of the Staff of Nabi Aadam (alayhis salaam) which had now come into Hadhrat Musa's possession, he (Hadhrat Musa) commenced his duty of tending to the goats of Nabi Shuayb (alayhis salaam). When Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) was about to leave with the goats on the first day of his duty, Hadhrat Shuayb (alayhis salaam) warned him: "O Musa! You may take the goats anywhere to graze, but stay away from a certain location (which he explained). Never go near to that place nor ever turn your face in that direction. It is the abode of an extremely dangerous serpent which will harm the goats.

When he reached the grazing field, he observed that all the goats suddenly turned in the direction of the prohibited location. He repeatedly tried to drive the goats from that direction, but in vain. They ran wildly towards the forbidden zone. In pursuit of the goats when he reached the forbidden area, he observed beautiful lush pastures. The goats were grazing contently. Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) reposing his trust on Allah Ta'ala, sat down on a rock. Soon he was overcome with sleep. He placed the Asa (Staff) by his head and fell asleep.

As soon as Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) fell asleep, the serpent appeared. As the serpent was about to plunge among the goats, the Staff of Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) by the command of Allah Ta'ala became a huge serpent and devoured the serpent of the jungle. The Staff assumed its original form and returned to its position alongside Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam).

When Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) opened his eyes he saw some bones and blood of the serpent nearby. Bewildered and surprised, he saw his own Staff stained with blood. This increased his bewilderment.

In the evening after he returned with the goats, he narrated the episode to Hadhrat Shuayb (alayhis salaam). Hadhrat Shuayb (alayhis salaam) realizing the miraculous powers of the Staff was immensely pleased. In happiness he said to Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam): "This year all rams born to the flock will be for you, and all

females will be mine.” That year, only rams were born. The following year, Hadhrat Shuayb (alayhis salaam) said to Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam): “O Musa! This year, all females will be for you, and all rams will be mine.” By Allah’s decree only females were born in the flock that year. The third year, Hadhrat Shuayb (alayhis salaam) said: “O Musa! This year, all goats born with two colours will be for you, and all born with one colour will be mine.” By the command of Allah Ta’ala, that year only two-tone goats were born. The fourth year, Hadhrat Shuayb (alayhis salaam) said: “O Musa! This year all single coloured goats will be for you, and all goats with two colours will be mine.” By Allah’s decree that year only single coloured goats were born.

In this manner ten years passed by. Hadhrat Musa’s (alayhis salaam) goats numbered a few thousand. Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam), instead of the agreed 10 years, spent 18 years in Madyan in the service of Hadhrat Shuayb (alayhis salaam). The desire to meet his mother and brother, Haroon (alayhis salaam) developed intensely in Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam). One day Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) approached Hadhrat Shuayb (alayhis salaam) and very humbly and respectfully said: “If you permit me, I wish to make a request.” Hadhrat Shuayb (alayhis salaam) said: “Feel free to say whatever you wish.” Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) expressed his desire to visit his mother and brother. He also requested to take with him his wife.

MUSA DEPARTS FROM MADYAN

Hadhrat Shuayb (alayhis salaam) happily consented. Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) set off on the journey with his wife. Ultimately he reached a wilderness which was a journey of three days from Egypt. Here Musa (alayhis salaam) lost the way. At nightfall he was more confused and totally lost. It was actually the desert where Mount Sinai is located. He was at the foot of a huge mountain. It was an intensely dark night. Flashes of lighting appeared in the sky and it began to rain heavily. Hailstones were falling. His wife was expecting, and in this pitiful state she gave birth. However, Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) did not panic. He proceeded fully composed to do what had to be done.

He found a place of refuge in a mountain cave. After settling his

wife and the new-born baby in the cave, he set out in search of fire. He struck together stones to create a spark, but in vain. While he was engaged in this exercise, the rain abated. He suddenly saw on the mountain a bright fire burning. On seeing the fire, he informed his wife, and hurried towards it. As he proceeded, he broke some tree branches which he would ignite in the fire. When he finally reached the spot of the Fire, he was astonished to see a very lush tree. Despite the flames of the fire, not a single leaf was burnt. Bewildered, he proceeded to the tree to light his branches. As he stretched his branch towards the flame, it leapt out of his reach. Musa (alayhis salaam) went ahead towards the flame. But again it leapt out of his reach.

Now overcome with fear, he stood riveted. The flame increased so much that it reached out to the sky. Then the flame receded and returned to the tree. He now understood that this was no ordinary fire. He was convinced that it was some divine mystery. Full of fear, he resolved to leave the place. As he was about to leave, he heard the Divine Voice calling him. The Voice said: “*Verily, I am your Rabb. Remove your shoes, for verily, you are in Tuwa, the holy valley.*”

NUBUWWAT

Here in the Valley of Tuwa did Allah Ta’ala appoint Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) as His Nabi. Addressing Musa (alayhis salaam), the Divine Voice asked: “What is that in your right hand?” Musa (alayhis salaam) replied: “It is my staff. I lean on it; with it I break leaves from trees for my goats, and for me there are other uses too in the staff.” The Divine Voice said: “Throw it down.” After he threw the staff on the ground, Nabi Musa in astonishment saw that the staff was transformed into a massive serpent which slithered around very noisily. The sight of the serpent overwhelmed Nabi Musa with fear. Musa (alayhis salaam) turned and began to flee. Allah Ta’ala commanded: “Grab it and fear not.” As Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) touched the serpent, it reverted to its original form, the staff.

Allah Ta’ala then ordered him to insert his hand in his garment and place it under his armpit. He did as commanded. When he withdrew his hand, it dazzled fiercely like the sun. Allah Ta’ala instructed him to proceed to Fir’oun and to invite him to Imaan and to set free Bani Israaeel whom he (Fir’oun) had enslaved. On the request of Nabi Musa, Allah Ta’ala conferred Nubuwwat to his

brother, Haroon (alayhis salaam) as well.

Musa (alayhis salaam) professed his fear for Fir'oun and mentioned the incident of the Copt whom he had killed. He feared Fir'oun would apprehend him. Allah Ta'ala instructed him not to fear. Allah Ta'ala ordered that both should go to Fir'oun and announce their Nubuwwat (Prophet hood).

After the communion with Allah Ta'ala ended, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) descended from Mount Sinai and went to the valley where he had left his wife who had just given birth. When he reached the place, he was astonished to observe a number of strange women engaged in serving his wife. They were from among the Houris of Jannat. Finding his wife in excellent state, and under Allah's protection, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) was overcome with gratitude and happiness.

He announced to his wife that Allah Ta'ala has appointed him the Nabi and has commanded him to go to Fir'oun. He said: "I now assign you to the care of Allah and shall proceed alone to the city to deliver the Message to Fir'oun." His wife proffered her wholehearted consent. Having witnessed the wonderful and miraculous decrees of Allah Ta'ala, she was confident that Allah Ta'ala will care for her and the baby. She said: "O Musa! Discharging the command of Allah Ta'ala is of utmost and prior importance. Make haste towards Fir'oun." After all, she was the daughter of Shuayb (alayhis salaam).

Very soon after Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) set off in the direction of Egypt, a caravan from the City of Madyan happened to pass by the spot where Nabi Musa's wife was. The caravan was on its return journey to Madyan. Recognizing her, they took her and delivered her to her father, Hadhrat Shuayb (alayhis salaam) in Madyan.

BACK IN EGYPT

Meanwhile Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) was making haste on his journey. When he reached Egypt, it was late in the night. He went straight to his mother's home. When he knocked at the door, his very aged mother asked: "Who is it?" He responded: "I am a traveller." His aged mother opened the door, and welcomed him in, not realizing who he was. She immediately made preparations for meals. While Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) was eating, his brother, Haroon

(alayhis salaam) entered. Seeing Musa (alayhis salaam), he asked his mother: "Who is he?" She said: "He is a poor wayfarer who is tonight our guest." Hadhrat Haroon (alayhis salaam), welcoming the 'wayfarer', said: "Brother, regard this as your own house. Eat, relax and rest here."

Haroon (alayhis salaam) was looking very intently at the 'wayfarer' and was mystified. There was something which drew him irresistibly to the 'wayfarer'. But he maintained silence. After a few moments, Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam), breaking the silence, said: "Why are you staring at me so intently? I am your brother, Musa." Pandemonium followed. Brother, mother and sister with tears of delight and joy embraced Musa (alayhis salaam). When the situation normalized, Musa (alayhis salaam) narrated his recent history, the events on Mount Sinai and that Nubuwwat had been bestowed to him and Haroon (alayhis salaam). It was Eid in their home.

Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) said: "O my Brother! It is now not the time to remain in the house. Nubuwwat has been conferred to you so that you guide people to the Path of Righteousness." Then they set off to the palace of Fir'oun. When the two arrived at the palace, Fir'oun was in session in his court. The court was packed with courtiers and the nobility.

Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam), after an absence of 18 years, returned to Egypt having been appointed the Nabi. Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam), together with his elder brother, Haroon (alayhis salaam) who was also appointed a Nabi, arrived at Fir'oun's palace at a time when the royal court was in full session. Haroon (alayhis salaam) was fearful. He said to Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) that the oppression and cruelty of Fir'oun had increased manifold since he (Nabi Musa) had departed. At the slightest annoyance caused to him, he would order the hands and feet of people to be cut off. Without hesitation he would order people to be impaled on the gibbet. Haroon's (alayhis salaam) grim portrayal of Fir'oun's wrath made Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) fearful.

While the two were overwhelmed by fear, Hadhrat Jibraeel (alayhis salaam) appeared. After conveying Allah's salaam, he presented the revelation: "*Both of you, do not fear, I am with you. I hear and I see. Go both of you to him, and say: "Verily, we are the*

Messengers of your Rabb, therefore, send with us Bani Israaeel, and do not torture them. Verily, we have come to you with a sign from your Creator, And peace on those who follow the guidance (of Allah).” (Surah Taahaa, verses 26 and 27)

Immediately on receiving this Wahi (Revelation) Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) and Hadhrat Haroon (alayhis salaam) stood up and without any fear proceeded to Fir'oun. When they were in Fir'oun's presence, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) very loudly proclaimed that he was Allah's appointed Messenger. He delivered the divine message. Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) added: "O Fir'oun! If you reject this Message, Allah's wrath and punishment will overtake you."

Astounded by the sudden appearance and temerity of Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam), Fir'oun scrutinized him with searching eyes. Interrupting Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam), Fir'oun exclaimed: "O Musa! You are the one whom I have nourished. You lived for 30 years in my home. Then, you repaid these favours by murdering one of my guards. Then you fled, fearing execution. Now after 18 years you appear in a new guise.

Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) responded: "I was unaware that the Qibti would expire with a single blow of my fist. His death was accidental. Allah has forgiven me. I had departed from here fearing your cruelty, and I lived in the Land of Madyan where Allah Ta'ala bestowed His bounties to me munificently. On my return, my Rabb bestowed Nubuwwat to me on Mount Tur."

After a lengthy address, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) reiterated the message of Allah Ta'ala.

Awed by the address, Fir'oun asked: "Who is your Rabb, O Musa!" Musa (alayhis salaam) replied: "Our Rabb is He who has created entire creation and Who guided all things to their functions." Mockingly Fir'oun said: "If I accept your Rabb, what will He give me?" Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) said: "He will award three things to you. Perpetual youth, sovereignty of the world, and He will increase your life span by another hundred years."

When Fir'oun heard these wonderful awards, he mellowed a bit and said: "Go now, and return tomorrow. I shall first consult with my advisors." Nabi Musa and Nabi Haroon (alayhimas salaam) thereupon departed and returned to their home.

The awards promised by Musa (alayhis salaam) were very attractive and tempting. Fir'oun was very restless. He convened his council of ministers and expressed his desire for perpetual youth. Hamaan, his chief minister said: "Have you so quickly fallen victim to Musa's promises?" Hamaan convinced Fir'oun to reject Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam).

When Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) returned the next day, Fir'oun mockingly asked: "What is the proof of your Nubuwwat? On what basis should I believe that you are the appointed Messenger of the Creator?" As Fir'oun was speaking, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) cast down his staff. A mighty fearsome serpent appeared with its mouth wide open. Its lower jaw was on the ground and its upper jaw against the ceiling. The scene was set for it to swallow Fir'oun, his throne and the entire palace. There was absolute pandemonium in the place. Everyone was running and screaming. Fir'oun descended from his throne and was looking for an escape route.

Describing this scene, Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said that several hundred of Fir'oun's men were killed in the ensuing mad stampede. Everyone was dashing madly to escape from the giant serpent. Fir'oun while running, cried out hysterically: "O Musa! By that One God Who has appointed you the Messenger, I implore you to save us all from destruction. I believe in you and I shall release Bani Israaeel to go with you." Taking pity on Fir'oun, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) placed his hand on the serpent, and lo, it was transformed into the staff.

Everyone was shuddering, dumbstruck and in total confusion. Fir'oun resumed his position on the throne, and said affectionately: "O Musa! You have demonstrated a most frightful miracle. Now show us something beautiful." Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) inserted his hand in his garment under his arm. When he removed it, it was dazzling like the sun. It was the same hand which had burnt when as a child he had placed his hand in the burning embers.

Profoundly impressed by the two *Mu'jizah* (Miracles) of Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam), Fir'oun said to his ministers: "Is there any reason why I should now refuse accepting Musa's message and embracing his Deen?"

There was complete silence in the court of Fir'oun. Fir'oun was

on the verge of accepting Islam, but Hamaan spoke: "Alas! What has happened to your intelligence? Do you not understand that in his 18 year absence, Musa has acquired expert proficiency in the science of magic. With his magic he plots to overwhelm you. Assemble the expert magicians from all over the land to confront Musa. First let there be a confrontation with all your magicians, thereafter you should ask our view regarding your intention of embracing Musa's Deen." Once again Fir'oun was convinced of the correctness of Hamaan's advice. He thus cancelled his intention of accepting the Deen.

THE MAGICIANS

Orders were issued to summon all the expert magicians from every part of the country to appear in the court of Fir'oun. Magicians began arriving in droves at the royal palace. There were two brothers who were famous magicians. They lived in the town of Saediyyah. When Fir'oun's men approached them with the royal summons, they were hesitant. They had already heard about Musa (alayhis salaam) and his miraculous staff. They were apprehensive. They asked the messengers to wait while they went into consultation with their aged mother.

The two highly qualified expert magicians consulted with their aged mother who was also an expert magician. The two sorcerers requested their mother to accompany them to the grave of their father. When the three reached the grave, the mother, employing her magic, addressed her dead husband. When the inmate of the grave spoke, one of the sons explained the purpose of their mission. The father's voice from the grave informed them that all the magicians of the world would be defeated by Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam). His Staff changing into a deadly serpent was not an act of magic.

Despite this message the two experts together with their 72 students who were all qualified sorcerers had no option but to respond to the summons of Fir'oun. When they arrived at Fir'oun's palace, thousands of sorcerers from all over Egypt had already assembled. Four sorcerers who were the most famous and the best qualified were selected to lead the thousands of other magicians. The two brothers were included in the four who would be pitted against Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam).

According to the Qur'aan, Fir'oun promised the sorcerers huge sums of wealth and high positions of proximity to him if they defeated Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam). Fear and shame for Fir'oun and the thousands of sorcerers had constrained the two brothers into the arena to confront Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam).

The day for the confrontation was announced. It was the nations day of festival. According to some narrations it was the Day of Aashura (10th Muharram). Thousands of people from all parts of the country and from even beyond assembled to witness the event. It was a great and tumultuous occasion. A huge stadium had been erected. Fir'oun surrounded by his noblemen was seated on a throne on an elevated place. The thousands of sorcerers marched with great fanfare. They prostrated at the throne of Fir'oun. The awe-inspiring scene of the thousands of sorcerers adorned in their splendid and colourful robes had boosted the morale of Fir'oun. He and his men were in high spirits. They were convinced that Musa (alayhis salaam) would today be defeated and humiliated.

When all the sorcerers were in the arena standing in ranks, the announcement was made for Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) to present himself. Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) donning a simple black woollen qamees (kurtah) appeared in the arena with his brother Haroon (alayhis salaam). The two mendicants were a pitiful sight in front of the thousands of sorcerers. When they faced the sorcerers, a group advanced from their ranks and exclaimed: "O Musa! Will you begin to cast (your staff) or shall we begin?" Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam), responded: "You begin the casting."

The thousands of magicians, with signs of their fingers and eyes transformed their thousands of rods, staffs, wands, swords and spears into serpents and huge scorpions. An ocean of slithering serpents and scorpions had appeared. It was indeed a fearful sight. As far as the eyes could see, there were only serpents and scorpions. The thousands of spectators screamed in terror. Describing this event, the Qur'aan says: "Indeed they produced a mighty *sihr* (display of magic)." Even Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) and Hadhrat Haroon (alayhis salaam) became fearful. Suddenly he heard the Divine Voice: "Don't fear! Most assuredly, I am with you. I hear and I see. Cast your Staff, O Musa! It will swallow what they have fabricated."

Musa's heart was inspired with confidence. He threw down his Staff. Instantaneously there appeared such a gigantic serpent which no one had ever seen. The sight of Hadhrat Musa's serpent sent chills of horror down Fir'oun's spine. According to the narrations, when the serpent opened its mouth, it was 40 metres wide. The huge fangs were several metres. Its eyes were like huge flames of fire. The first act of this miraculous monster was to raise its mouth towards the sky, then bring its head down in prostration. It made its Sajdah for Allah, The One, Who has no partner. After its prostration, the mighty serpent moved like a dark storm. It opened its mouth and with two or three gasps it swallowed the thousands of serpents and scorpions fabricated by the sorcerers. The field in front of it was bare. The magic of the sorcerers had disappeared.

After eliminating the serpents and scorpions, the Serpent of Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) turned its gaze towards Fir'oun and his army. There was panic and pandemonium. The panic-stricken Fir'oun screamed in terror and pleaded with Musa (alayhis salaam) to grab his Serpent. Hadhrat Musa's mission was only to defeat the sorcerers and to demonstrate the triumph of the Truth. His mission was not to take the lives of people. He therefore placed his hand on the serpent which instantaneously was once again transformed into the Staff.

THE MISSION OF NUBUWWAT

Despite Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) having the powerful weapon of the Asaa (the Staff) which could instantaneously be transformed into a massive python which could devour Fir'oun and his armies, enabling Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) to either leave with Bani Israaeel without any hindrance or to capture the kingdom of Fir'oun and establish the Law of the Deen, this did not occur. On the contrary, the *Mu'jizah of the Asaa* was put to very limited use.

Primarily the purpose of the Staff was the protection of Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) and Nabi Haroon (alayhis salaam) to enable them to continue with their Tableegh of the Deen which is the primary fundamental of Nubuwwat. The objective was not to kill Fir'oun and his people nor to impose Imaan on them by force. The objective was the propagation of the Deen and the willing acceptance of Imaan by the people. Allah Ta'ala says in the Qur'aan Majeed:

"If Allah willed, He would have gathered them all on the guidance (of Imaan)."

If it was Allah's will that every person on earth be a Mu'min, like every Angel is a Mu'min, He had no need to despatch so many thousands of Ambiya and constrain them to undergo so much persecution and suffering in the execution of the mission of Nubuwwat. Allah Ta'ala had the power to create all people Believers. But His wisdom chose otherwise. He does not need the Serpent to ensure guidance for the people of Fir'oun. With His command the incorrigible kuffaar, namely, the *Saahireen (Magicians)* of Fir'oun accepted Islam and instantaneously became Auliya and Aarifeen. This was the effect of Allah's Will and Power.

However, in terms of the Divine Plan, Imaan is not to be imposed on the people of the world by means of *Mu'jizah*. The Divine Plan ordains that people accept the Deen voluntarily, of their own free accord after seeing the Signs of Truth. *Mu'jizah* is a rare exception to bolster the Truth of the Nabi. Its purpose is not to force people to accept Imaan against their wishes.

Thus, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) utilized the *Mu'jizah of the Serpent* only by the command of Allah Ta'ala to display a sign of his Truth, and for his protection against Fir'oun. As much as Fir'oun had attempted to apprehend and execute Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam), he was unable to execute his plots since the Asaa was constantly guarding Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam).

After the defeat of the magicians, when the Serpent directed its attention to Fir'oun and his followers, and pandemonium broke out, Allah Ta'ala commanded Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) to apprehend it and return it to its original form, the Staff. The time for Fir'oun's punishment and destruction had not yet arrived. His fate was his doom in the Red Sea.

The sorcerers were the first to understand the manifestation of the Truth. They all fell down in prostration proclaiming their Imaan in Allah and Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam). It was a wonderful sight. Thousands of sorcerers prostrating to Allah Ta'ala, not to Fir'oun. They exclaimed: "We believe in the Rabb of Musa and Haroon." They specifically mentioned the names of the two Nabis to convey to Fir'oun that the prostration was not for him. Fir'oun in anger

bellowed: "Do you believe in him before I have permitted you?" He accused them all of having learnt magic from Musa (alayhis salaam) and being in a conspiracy with him. He threatened to nail them to trees.

According to tafseer narrations, 80,000 sorcerers had accepted Imaan on that day. All had prostrated to Allah Ta'ala in defiance of Fir'oun. When Fir'oun threatened to nail them to trees, they said in unison: "We shall surely be returning to our Rabb." The threats of Fir'oun had no effect on them. Allah Ta'ala had transformed all the sorcerers instantaneously into *Aarifeen* (Auliya of lofty status). Jannatul Firdous was shown to them. They said to Fir'oun: "Do as you please." Fir'oun issued orders for the execution of the sorcerers. Their hands and feet were cut off and they were nailed to trees.

The grief-stricken Musa was shedding tears profusely when he beheld the scene of this brutality. But he was helpless. Without the command of Allah Ta'ala, he could not utilize the Staff at will. Mu'jizaat (Miracles) are rare exceptions. They are not the rule and the norm of earthly life. The celestial veils were removed and Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) was shown the wonderful and lofty status of the souls of the sorcerers. The soul of every sorcerer who was killed had taken up its abode under the Divine Arsh in a wonderful celestial form of indescribable beauty. This wondrous celestial scene brought solace to the heart of Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam).

Besides the sorcerers a group of others had also accepted Imaan. But they were very fearful of Fir'oun. Nevertheless, with the encouragement of Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam), they persevered and continued to worship Allah Ta'ala in their homes. Allah Ta'ala commanded that Bani Israaeel construct places of worship in their homes. When Fir'oun was informed that the followers of Musa (alayhis salaam) had constructed prayer rooms and were worshipping Allah Ta'ala, he ordered the places of worship to be demolished. His persecution of Bani Israaeel increased while Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) imparted the lesson of repentance and patience to his people.

THE PUNISHMENT

Fir'oun's oppression and tyranny did not exempt even his wife, Hadhrat Aasiyah (rahmatullah alayha). She had accepted Imaan in

secret with Hadhrat Haroon (alayhis salaam). She was from Bani Israaeel. She had accepted Imaan after Fir'oun had tortured and brutally killed the wife of his treasurer who had concealed his Imaan for a hundred years. His name was Kharbeel bin Nauhabeel. He had met the companions of the companions of Nabi Yusuf (alayhis salaam). In other words, he was a Taabi-ee of Nabi Yusuf (alayhis salaam). He and his wife were Mu'min. His wife was the chaperon of Fir'oun's daughter. Once while she was combing the girl's hair, the comb slipped from her hand. Saying '*Bismillaah*' the chaperon picked up the comb. Fir'oun's daughter was stunned by this exclamation. She asked: "Is there another god besides my father?"

Kharbeel's wife (the chaperon) said: "My God, the God of your father and the God of the heavens and the earth is the One God Who has no partners." The princess hastened to report to her father what had happened. Fir'oun summoned the chaperon and demanded an explanation. She repeated what she had said to his daughter. When Fir'oun ordered her to renege from her Deen, she emphatically refused. Then began the process of torture.

Four steel spikes were driven through her body and she was impaled on the ground. Snakes and scorpions were let loose on to her. She was then ordered to renounce Imaan and she would be set free. But she refused. Her infant son was brought and slaughtered on top of her. As the baby's rooh (soul) took flight, it said to its mother: "O Mother! Have sabr (patience)."

Aasiyah had witnessed this brutality and by Allah's permission had heard the soul of the baby speaking to its mother. This was the episode which led to her acceptance of Imaan. When Fir'oun discovered that Hadhrat Aasiyah had embraced the Deen of Nabi Musa and was worshipping Allah, he summoned her into his presence and interrogated her. She said: "O Fir'oun! You are the most contemptible and most despicable person in creation. You tortured and killed the chaperon." Fir'oun said: "It appears that the insanity of the chaperon has afflicted you." Aasiyah said: "There is no insanity afflicting me. Verily, my God, her God, your God and the God of the heavens and the earth is the One God Who has no partner."

Fir'oun tore her garments and struck her. He sent for her parents

to admonish her. The pleading of her parents had no effect on Aasiyah. She resolutely proclaimed the Kalimah Tauheed. Fir'oun endeavoured to tempt her with wealth, and he said: "O Aasiyah! Abandon the religion of Musa otherwise I shall chastise you severely. If you abandon the religion of Musa, I shall erect for you a palace of gold and silver and bestow all my wealth to you. If you refuse and choose to retain the religion of Musa, I shall have you skinned alive."

Imaan was entrenched in her heart. The degree of her *yaqeen* made her Imaan unshakeable. She fearlessly said: "O Firoun! I shall need your gold and silver palace and wealth only if in Jannat my Rabb will deny me palaces of *yaqoot* and *zamard* (these are precious stones in Jannat). I shall fear your fire only if my Rabb has not prepared for me the wonderful bounties of Jannat – the lush orchards and cool rivers. Since all these bounties have been prepared for me, why should I worship a weak, imbecile paralyzed being such as you?"

Fir'oun's rage overwhelmed him. He summoned the executioner and ordered: "Undress this woman! Skin her alive! Lay her prostrate on the ground and knock spikes through her body! Place a huge tray of fire on her breast! When the torture commenced, Hadhrat Aasiyah supplicated: "O my Rabb! Erect for me a mansion by You in Jannat..." – (Qur'aan) At that time, Allah Ta'ala removed all veils and displayed Jannat to her. He unravelled such spiritual mysteries and His Proximity to her, that she was deriving immense delight from the torture. This is the Qudrat (Power) of Allah Ta'ala.

Just as Nabi Ibraaheem (alayhis salaam) found the fire of Namrood a cool garden, so too did Hadhrat Aasiyah find the torture of Fir'oun. Her joyous laughter mystified and perplexed Fir'oun. He approached and asked her the reason for her 'insane' laughter while she was undergoing such terrible punishment. Harshly she barked: "O Evil One! Get away from me. You can never understand the joy and delight of Divine Proximity which I am right now experiencing."

Frustrated and angered beyond limit, Fir'oun ordered a huge boulder to be placed on her to crush her to death. As the boulder was being lowered on her, her gracious rooh (soul) too flight from her noble earthly body and returned to the highest levels of Divine Proximity.

The following interesting episode is recorded in Tafseer Mawaahib Ladunniyah:

A man by the name Zakiel, a carpenter by trade, was a member of Fir'oun's race. He was the same person who had constructed the casket in which Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) was placed when he was a baby, and the casket deposited into the River Nile to escape the tentacles of Fir'oun. One day, he admonished his people for denying the truth of Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam). When this was reported to Fir'oun, orders were issued to apprehend Zakiel. When he was ushered into Fir'oun's presence, Zakiel proclaiming the truth admonished Fir'oun. Fir'oun ordered him to be immediately put to death. As attempts were made to kill him, he disappeared from sight.

Zakiel miraculously landed on a mountain. He remained there and engrossed himself in ibaadat. Fir'oun sent a party of soldiers to search for him. After sometime when the soldiers reached the mountain and saw Zakiel engrossed in ibaadat, they observed that on all sides there were lions and wolves prowling and guarding Zakiel. The soldiers were astonished at this scene and reported the matter to Fir'oun. Fir'oun instructed them to maintain silence and not to inform others because this type of information adds strength to the Deen of Musa (alayhis salaam).

Meanwhile Fir'oun's advisers and henchmen were goading Fir'oun to kill Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam). Narrating their mischief, the Qur'aan says: "*A group from the nation of Fir'oun said: "Will you leave Musa and his people to spread anarchy in the land and to abandon you and your gods?"*" The 'gods' mentioned in this Qur'aanic aayat were the idols, the smaller gods' while Fir'oun had elevated himself to be the 'great god'. They advised Fir'oun to have Musa (alayhis salaam) put to death. Fir'oun, however, said to himself: "It is not possible to kill Musa nor to apprehend him." To placate his people, he said: "We shall kill their sons and leave alive their females." He assured his people that he would prevail over Musa and Bani Israaeel.

Although Fir'oun was at this time not inclined to again initiate a mass slaughter of Bani Israaeel, he was pressurized by his people to unleash a reign of terror. Thousands of male children of Bani Israaeel were once again slaughtered. Bani Israaeel was overwhelmed with

grief. They came complaining to Musa (alayhis salaam). They wailed and poured out their hearts with grief. They cried and said: 'O Musa! We were persecuted before you came to us and even after you have come to us.' In fact, they pointed out that since his arrival from Madyan, the persecution has increased. Thousands of babies were torn from their mothers and put to death. Musa (alayhis salaam) was also overwhelmed with grief. He cried profusely. In this state of grief, he entered his cloister of worship and supplicated to Allah Ta'ala. Allah Ta'ala accepted his supplication, and then commenced the series of punishments which overtook Fir'oun and his nation.

THE SERIES OF PUNISHMENT

The very moment Musa (alayhis salaam) invoked Allah's curse on Fir'oun and his people, the heavens became intensely dark. Within a short time the whole of Egypt was engulfed in darkness. A fierce storm erupted with cyclones and rains lashing the country for seven days. All the houses of the Copts were destroyed. Thousands of Fir'oun's people were killed in this mighty storm. Their bodies were floating in heaps on the floodwaters.

Allah Ta'ala demonstrated His Qudrat by protecting Bani Israaeel from the storm. While the storm was ravaging all the areas of the Copts, the sun was pleasantly shining nearby in all places where there were the homes of Bani Israaeel. Not a single one of Bani Israaeel was affected by this punishment.

"Then We sent on them the flood, the locusts, the lice, the frogs and blood as detailed signs." (Al'A'raaf, aayat 133)

The people of Fir'oun understood that the storm was a punishment from Allah Ta'ala. They sent a delegation to plead with Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam), promising to accept his Deen if he supplicated for the cessation of the storm. Without the slightest hesitation Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) made dua. The storm abated immediately and the sun began to shine pleasantly.

The homes and fields of the Egyptians were utterly inundated and destroyed by raging floodwaters. According to some Sahaabah the "Toofaan" mentioned in the aayat as the first punishment refers to a plague of smallpox.

After the ending of the punishment, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) went to Fir'oun's people and reminded them of their promise. They

mockingly said: "We have seen this type of sorcery before as well." They jeered Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) and rejected him.

Almost immediately after their rejection, the whole of Egypt was overtaken by massive swarms of locusts which settled everywhere and on everything. Within an hour or two they left orchards and farms barren. Every attempt to combat the locusts failed hopelessly. Their numbers were so vast that for miles the ground was not visible. They literally darkened the regions where they were divinely despatch to wrought havoc. They annihilated all the crops and not a blade of grass or vegetation was left. The locusts even ate the wooden roofs of the buildings. Not a single garden or house of Bani Israaeel was attacked by the locusts.

Realizing that they would be destroyed, Fir'oun's men again hastened to Musa (alayhis salaam) and pleaded. They solemnly promised to accept Imaan if the calamity of the locusts was removed. Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) went to the outskirts and pointed his Staff to the east and west. Spontaneously the locusts formed into two swarms, one heading towards the east and one to the west. But not a single one of these incorrigibly corrupt Copts accepted Imaan. Again they mocked and rejected Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam).

The series of punishments which descended on Fir'oun and his people was at monthly intervals. A month after the ending of the locust calamity, commenced the punishment of lice and ticks. Massive clouds of lice and ticks rained on the Egyptian kuffaar. The lice and ticks infested their hair, eyebrows and eyelashes. The immense pain caused by these blood-sucking lice and ticks constrained the people to scream like insane persons. In addition, all the water and food of the Copts were filled with lice and ticks. Any bowl of food or cup of water taken by a Copt became immediately filled with lice and ticks. However, not a single member of Bani Israaeel was afflicted with this calamity.

Once again, the Copts came running, wailing and crying to Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam), pleading and promising. They appealed to Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) to supplicate to Allah Ta'ala for the removal of the calamity. They pledged that they would this time accept the Deen and set free Bani Israaeel. Again Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) supplicated to Allah Ta'ala for the removal of the calamity.

But again, after the ending of the punishment, the kuffaar reneged and mocked at Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam). In fact, they averred that Musa (alayhis salaam) had no equal in the science of magic. They attributed the calamities they suffered to magic.

A month thereafter, Allah Ta'ala afflicted the Egyptians with the punishment of frogs. Suddenly the entire land was overrun by millions and millions of frogs. Their houses were invaded by frogs. Their beds, utensils, food and everything were filled with frogs. The place had become a world of frogs. Every empty vessel became filled with frogs. The situation deteriorated so much that when a Copt would open his mouth to speak, it would suddenly be invaded by frogs. But there was not a single frog in any home of Bani Israaeel.

Driven to hopelessness and helplessness, the Copts once again petitioned Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) for succour, renewing their pledge and promise. Again Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) made dua and the punishment ended as suddenly as it had arrived. The Egyptians, instead of abiding by their pledge, reacted in their same incorrigible manner of rebellion, mocking and rejecting Musa (alayhis salaam).

After lapsing of a month, Allah Ta'ala afflicted the Copts with the punishment of blood. All water had transformed into blood for the Copts. Even the water which a Copt would bring from Bani Israaeel would become blood as soon as the water reached his mouth. Every utensils and every other item of the Copts became soiled with blood. They began to perish because of hunger and thirst.

Driven to abject misery by this deplorable state of affairs, Fir'oun resorted to a stratagem which he believed would save the day for the Copts. He ordered that with every Copt, one Israaeeli should join when drinking water and eating. The two had to participate in one utensil. By this ruse Fir'oun thought that the water and food would not become blood. However, the share consumed by the Israaeeli would remain unaffected while the share of the Copt would become blood. When the Israaeeli drank from the utensil, the water remained unaffected. But when the Copt desired to drink, the water would become blood.

A woman from the Copts pleaded with her Israaeeli neighbour saying: 'I have been suffering from thirst for the past few days.

Please take some water into your mouth and transfer it into my mouth with your mouth." The dire straits of the Copts had driven this woman to this state of subservience to one who was held in contempt by the Copts. She cried for mercy. However, as soon as the Israaeeli woman would spit out the water, it would turn into blood thus depriving the Copt from water.

Fir'oun too was suffering. He did not have a drop of water for several days. When he attempted to chew the leaves of trees, the juice would become blood in his mouth. Again the Copts came to Musa crying for mercy. They again promised to honour their pledge. They pledged that if they again reneged from their pledge, then Allah Ta'ala should kill them all. Taking pity on them, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) supplicated to Allah Ta'ala, and the punishment was lifted immediately. But these rebellious people who were confirmed to remain kuffaar in eternity, once again reneged and made a mockery of Musa (alayhis salaam).

Allah Ta'ala thereafter halted the series of punishment for some time. The people of Fir'oun became even more rebellious. Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) would daily invoke Allah's curses on Fir'oun and his people, and Nabi Haroon (alayhis salaam) would say: 'Aameen'. But no further punishment descended on Fir'oun and his people. In consequence they became more rebellious. Their worldly pomp and splendour multiplied considerably as a result of the immense wealth they enjoyed. Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Abbaas (radhiyallahu anhu) narrated that according to Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) in the land of Egypt until the mountains of Abyssinia there flourished numerous mines of gold, silver and diamonds. All these mines were under the control and domination of Fir'oun. This was the primary source of the immense wealth enjoyed by the Copts, and it was this wealth which increased their rebellion.

The oppression of Fir'oun and his people exceeded all bounds. Then one day Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) supplicated with great fervour. Hadhrat Jibraeel (alayhis salaam) appeared and said: "Allah Ta'ala sends His Salaam with the message that He is listening to your supplication. Fir'oun's oppression is not hidden from Allah. The cries of agony of Bani Israaeel are shaking the Divine Throne. Despite this, O Musa! How can I punish Fir'oun while he daily feeds

ten thousand destitute persons? O Musa! As long as Fir'oun perpetuates his generosity on the poor I shall not destroy him.”

It was the daily practice of Fir'oun to feed ten thousand poor and destitute people. This was the mystery underlying the protection Fir'oun enjoyed from destruction by Divine Punishment. Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: “Sadqah extinguishes the Wrath of Allah.”

However, Haamaan, who was Fir'oun's chief minister and advisor, said to Fir'oun that due to the effects of Nabi Musa's *'sihr'* (*magic*) and the resultant calamities, the economic situation of the Copts has suffered grievously and their hardships were incremental. Due to these unforeseen calamities, the royal treasury was rapidly becoming depleted. He advised Fir'oun to exercise caution with regard to expenditure. It was not known how long would Musa (alayhis salaam) remain an adversary, hence it was imperative to ensure that the economy is sustained. This advice was accepted by Fir'oun. The daily feeding scheme was drastically curbed and incrementally reduced until the day when Fir'oun and his men were destroyed, there was not a single destitute who was being fed by Fir'oun.

After the cessation of the series of calamities, Nabi Musa (Alayhis salaam) continued with his mission of Da'wat and Tableegh. He repeatedly proclaimed the Message of Islam to Fir'oun and his people. However, these people were incorrigibly intransigent and confirmed kuffaar. They refused to heed any of the callings of Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam). On the contrary, their transgression and rebellion increased considerably. This process of incremental rebellion continued until the time for Fir'oun's destruction had arrived.

THE MIGRATION

Allah Ta'ala instructed Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) to assemble his people and to depart from Egypt during the night time. Musa (alayhis salaam) ordered Bani Israaeel to gather at a particular spot on a certain night. The various chieftains of the tribes of Bani Israaeel were ordered to advise, educate and gather all their people for the final departure from Egypt.

Since every member of Bani Israaeel had to be informed, this

secret plan did not remain long hidden from Fir'oun. When Fir'oun was informed that Bani Israaeel would be assembling, he summoned their leaders and questioned them about this planned event. They explained that the Day of Ashura was a holy day of happiness in their culture because it was the day when Hadhrat Nabi Aadam (alayhis salaam) was created. The gathering of Bani Israaeel was to celebrate this happy occasion. Fir'oun was relieved and he sanctioned the gathering.

Finally, the momentous day arrived and the entire nation of Bani Israaeel began assembling from the morning. When he was satisfied that everyone had gathered, he issued orders for the great march to commence. It was midnight when they began the migration. Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) began the march reciting, *Bismillaahir Rahmaanir Raheem*. The large concourse of Bani Israaeel consisted of 670,000 persons. Nabi Haroon (alayhis salaam) was appointed to lead the vast procession while Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) remained right in the rear.

When this huge gathering reached a certain point, it appeared to them that they had lost the road. The march halted while Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) conferred with Nabi Haroon (alayhis salaam). They were mystified by their inability to find the way leading out of Egypt. The road was well known. What was the mystery of this conundrum? Immediately Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) summoned all the aged persons for a meeting. He asked: “This road is well known to us. Why are we lost? Why can we not find the way?” One extremely old person (according to some narrations it was a lady), spoke: “O Musa! I know the reason. A very important task has been left unaccomplished. The road will not be found as long as the obligation is not fulfilled.”

“At the time of the demise of Hadhrat Yusuf (alayhis salaam), he had directed his heirs and brothers that when Bani Israaeel depart from Egypt they should take with them his coffin. O Musa! You have not fulfilled this directive of Nabi Yusuf (alayhis salaam), hence you are unable to find the way out of Egypt.”

Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) immediately made an announcement on this matter and urged whoever was aware of the whereabouts of Nabi Yusuf's grave to come forward. In the entire Ummah of Bani

Israaeel there was only one person who was aware of the location of Nabi Yusuf's grave. A very old lady stepped forward.

Nabi Musa: "Mother do you know where Nabi Yusuf's grave is?"

Old Lady: "Yes, but I shall not divulge this information gratis. I want something in return."

Nabi Musa: "What is it that you want? Ask!"

Old Lady: "Take me along with you as your close companion out of Egypt so that on the Day of Qiyaamah I shall be regarded as your companion. I shall then show you where Nabi Yusuf's grave is."

Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) immediately had the old lady seated on his mount. She indicated the location of the grave which was in the bed of the River Nile. Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) with a few companions retrieved the coffin. As soon as they had taken possession of Nabi Yusuf's coffin, the road ahead was seen. Bani Israaeel thus resumed the journey out of Egypt.

Just as Bani Israaeel had resumed the journey, Fir'oun was apprised of their flight. When Fir'oun realized that the purpose of Bani Israaeel's assembly was not to celebrate a festival, but was in preparation for their flight, he was enraged. He immediately issued orders to his army to pursue Bani Israaeel. He too accompanied the army. Fir'oun had issued orders to massacre every single soul, and not to leave alive even one person of Bani Israaeel.

Fir'oun set out in pursuit of Bani Israaeel with a massive army consisting of 100,000 men with spears, 100,000 archers, a cavalry of 70,000, and an infantry of 300,000. The army moved swiftly in the bid to overtake Bani Israaeel. Fir'oun and Haamaan were right in front leading the army. At the same time, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) was also moving ahead swiftly with Bani Israaeel overwhelmed by fear. The fear of Fir'oun's sudden appearance was uppermost in the minds of all.

Suddenly and surprisingly Bani Israael found themselves on the shores of the Red Sea. This was not the contemplated route to lead them out of Egypt. Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) was astonished and dumbfounded. He was heading towards dry land, but by the decree of Allah Ta'ala found himself with his Ummah on the shores of the sea. To aggravate their despair, the sea on this day was excessively stormy. It was humanly impossible to traverse the sea. Mountainous

waves were rising furiously in the sea.

The journey came to an abrupt halt. Fear and anxiety created panic among Bani Israaeel. How will they ever cross the sea? From where will they be able to acquire thousands of boats to transport them across the sea?

While Bani Israaeel were transfixed in fear and bewilderment, they heard the roar of Fir'oun's approaching army nearby. There was absolute pandemonium and panic among Bani Israaeel. They lamented to Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam): "O Musa! Most assuredly, we have been overtaken (by Fir'oun)." – Qur'aan. Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) assuring them of Allah's protection. *"Then when the two groups (Fir'oun's army and Bani Israaeel) saw each other, the companions of Musa said: 'Verily, we have been overtaken.' He (Musa) said: 'Never! Verily, my Rabb is with me. He shall surely show me (the way).'*" – *As-Shu'raa, ayat 62*

When Fir'oun caught sight of Bani Israaeel stranded on the shores of the Red Sea, he was overwhelmed with delight. He issued orders for the assault and the final massacre of Bani Israaeel. While the army was formulating the plan for the massacre, suddenly an intensely dark fog surrounded the entire area totally concealing Bani Israaeel. The intensity of the darkness did not permit Fir'oun's army to advance. Helpless, Fir'oun issued orders for a halt until the fog lifted. He said that in front of Bani Israaeel was the Red Sea and behind them was his army. Bani Israaeel was trapped. Convinced that there was no escape for Bani Israaeel, Fir'oun patiently waited for the fog to clear up. Fir'oun was over-confident that death had surrounded Bani Israaeel on all sides. It was only a matter of time before every soul would be put to the sword.

Meanwhile Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) was crying and supplicating in Sajdah, making dua for Allah's aid. While Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) was still wrapped in Sajdah, Wahi descended from the Arsh of Allah Azza Wa Jal. Allah said: "O Musa! We have made the Red Sea subservient to you. Strike it with your Staff. It will provide a road for you."

Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) lifted his head from Sajdah. Addressing his people, he said: "O my people! You have been saved from the Sea and from Fir'oun." He then went to the sea, struck it

with his Staff and commanded: "O Sea! With the permission of Allah, split open!" As Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) struck the sea with his Staff, suddenly they beheld an amazing sight. Twelve pathways opened miraculously in the sea. Each pathway had the dimensions of the sea, 11 miles long and two miles wide.

Nabi Ya'qoob (alayhis salaam) had twelve sons. The entire Bani Israaeel was the progeny of these twelve sons, hence the twelve pathways to accommodate the twelve tribes. As the pathways opened up, the sun suddenly shone with such fierceness that the sea bed was instantaneously dried to enable Bani Israaeel to move swiftly and easily. Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) ordered them to express their gratitude to Allah Ta'ala and to immediately commence the journey across the sea. But, everyone was scared. No one was prepared to enter the pathways in the sea. They protested: "O Musa! If we enter and the water closes up, what shall we do?" This they said despite observing that the sea along the entire length of the pathways had become solid ice. The pathways were like roads between mountains.

Whilst the people were in a state of trepidation, Nabi Haroon (alayhis salaam) rode deep into the pathway with his horse. Now encouraged and assured, the twelve tribes entered their respective pathways and began the journey across the sea. Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) was the last one to follow. The group with whom Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) was, suddenly complained: "O Musa! We are with you. But what is the state of the other tribes. Are they safe or drowning?" Immediately Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) supplicated to Allah Ta'ala to put them at ease. As he was supplicating, miraculously huge windows opened up in the walls of ice separating each tribe. Now they were delighted. Their compatriots were clearly visible.

The entire Ummah of Bani Israaeel crossed safely to the other side. Once they had traversed the sea, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) ordered them to set up tents for their stay.

When the sun had emerged to dry the sea-bed for Bani Israael's sojourn, the fog which had stalled Fir'oun's army had also cleared up. Fir'oun issued orders for the army to immediately advance. The army quickly reached the shores of the Red Sea. The sight of the twelve pathways in the sea struck them with wonder. They were

bewildered at the amazing spectacle. The pathways with the walls of ice with windows were magnificent and awe-inspiring. When Fir'oun saw this amazing scene he proclaimed to his army that this was a manifestation of his divine power. The sea had opened up to welcome him. He claimed that the sea had opened up for him to enable him to punish his enemy (Bani Israaeel). The only reason why the sea had allowed Bani Israaeel to cross safely was to enable him (Fir'oun) to inflict his punishment on them. If they had drowned, they would have been saved from his chastisement.

But Haamaan whispered to Fir'oun: "O Fir'oun! What utter nonsense are you speaking? Do you not realize that Musa's God has prepared these pathways for Musa. Musa has crossed safely. Alas? You are dwelling in deception by believing that these pathways are for you. Don't dare commit the error of entering these pathways. You and your entire army will be drowned."

Fir'oun understood this warning. He turned his horse away from the sea. As Fir'oun began moving away from the sea dejectedly, Hadhrat Jibraeel (alayhis salaam) suddenly appeared seated on a beautiful mare and entered one of the pathways. Fir'oun's stallion bolted after the mare. Fir'oun lost control of his horse. The horse with Fir'oun on its back wildly pursued the mare into the sea-path. Despite his desperate struggle, Fir'oun was unable to control his horse.

Meanwhile the army observing the entry of Fir'oun into the pathway, followed him. From the rear, Hadhrat Mikaa-eel (alayhis salam) appearing in human form on a horse, encouraged the army to follow Fir'oun. Soon the entire army had entered the sea. While they continued their march on the dried ocean-pathways, the soldiers expressing their amazement became convinced of Fir'oun's divine power. "The sea was subservient to Fir'oun, hence it split open so miraculously at his command", they said.

When Fir'oun and his forces had reached the middle of the sea, the appointed time for their destruction had arrived. With thunderous sounds the solidified sea walls suddenly began crashing on Fir'oun and his army. Fir'oun too understood that this was the ultimate moment of his doom. Hadhrat Jibraeel (alayhis salaam) arrived and showed him the document which he had at one time signed. The

declaration read: "The slave who disobeys his Creator should be drowned in the Red Sea."

THE FINAL DESTRUCTION OF FIR'OUN

As the raging water commenced the drowning sojourn, the panic stricken Fir'oun cried out in horror: "I believe that there is no deity but The One in whom Bani Israaeel believes, and I am among the Muslimeen." Jibraeel (alayhis salaam) meanwhile shoved clods of mud into Fir'oun's mouth and exclaimed: "(Only) Now! Verily, you have been rebellious since before, and you were among the anarchists." The sea covered Fir'oun and his forces. Thus they became history and a lesson for posterity.

Allah Ta'ala says in the Qur'aan Majeed: *"Today, shall We salvage your body so that it be a sign for those after you."*

The news of the destruction of Fir'oun and his forces had not yet reached Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) and his people. While the enemy had all perished in the sea, Bani Israaeel was still afflicted with the fear of Fir'oun's sudden appearance with his army. The news was conveyed to them in a peculiar manner. During the reign of Fir'oun, a lady from Bani Israaeel was subjected to extreme hard labour. She had to wash selected stones brought from the mountains. Fir'oun would not pay her any remuneration whatsoever. For years she slaved washing the stones. This woman ventured alone to the shore of the Red Sea to fill her container with water. Suddenly she saw in the distance a corpse floating. The corpse was drifting in her direction. Soon the body was thrown out on to the shore close to the woman. To her amazement she saw that it was Fir'oun's corpse. His beard was still studded with the most expensive pearls with which he used to adorn himself.

Hastily the woman tugged at the beard of the corpse and pulled out the hairs with the pearls. As she took possession of the pearls, she heard a Voice saying: 'You have now obtained your wages for the labour of the stones.' Delighted, the woman quickly returned to the camp and apprized Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) and Nabi Haroon (alayhis salaam) of the episode. Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) accompanied by the chiefs of Bani Israaeel immediately went to the spot indicated by the woman.

When they reached the scene, there they saw the corpse of Fir'oun

lying ignominiously. Wild animals had begun to devour the body. This scene brought tears to the eyes of Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam). He recalled that for thirty years he was reared and nourished in Fir'oun's palace. Nevertheless, he exclaimed: "O Fir'oun! Alas! You were not blessed with Imaan. You have thus died a humiliating death."

Addressing Bani Israaeel, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) said: "He was the one who claimed: 'I am your almighty god'." After Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) and his people had seen Fir'oun's corpse and derived the incumbent lessons from his ignominious fall and destruction, a wave came and swept the body into the sea. The body floated until it reached the other shore in proximity to Egypt.

After the departure of Fir'oun and his forces, there were still people of the Qibti and Aad nations in Egypt. A variety of rumours was circulated about Fir'oun. Some said that Fir'oun together with his army had drowned. Some said that he and his army had gone to the mountains and islands. While they were conjecturing, some fishermen arrived with the information that they had seen Fir'oun's corpse on the shore. In haste a crowd of people accompanied the fishermen to the spot. When they reached the place, they were shocked and astounded to observe that indeed it was Fir'oun's corpse which the vultures were devouring. There, in utter humiliation, laid the mutilated, decomposing corpse of the once mighty tyrant who proclaimed himself god and who was worshipped by his people. Now all the people conceded that Fir'oun was defeated and Musa (alayhis salaam) was victorious.

When Bani Israaeel was convinced that Fir'oun and his forces were totally defeated and obliterated, they requested to be allowed to return to Egypt to take possession of Fir'oun's land and wealth. They argued that since they had suffered in humiliation for ages, they should now be installed with honour in Egypt. Granting their request, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) placed 24,000 men under the command of Hadhrat Yoosha' (alayhis salaam). This army was dispatched to Egypt. The army captured the land of Fir'oun and sent all the spoils of war to Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam).

Among the remaining Qibtis (the people of Fir'oun) there was one Qibti who had accepted Imaan during the time of Fir'oun. Hadhrat

Yoosha' (alayhis salaam) appointed him the king while he returned with the army to Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam). In compliance with the command of Allah Ta'ala, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) with his entire nation set off for the Land of Shaam. Along the journey through the desert and wilderness during the extreme heat, a huge cloud providing shade would move with the vast concourse of Bani Israaeel. At night, a miraculous pillar of celestial light would appear, brightening up the darkness for the people. In this wonderful manner, the nation of Bani Israaeel proceeded along the journey stage by stage.

On the fourth day of the journey which was along the shores of the Red Sea, they reached a place where the water was extremely brak and undrinkable. As a result of the Dua of Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) the water became sweet and fresh. After journeying on, they arrived at a place inhabited by a community of the Amaaliqah race. These people were worshipping golden and silver calves. Attracted by the glitter of gold and silver, the ignorant masses requested Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) for permission to make similar calves of worship. Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) was extremely infuriated by this request of shirk. In the words of the Qur'aan, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) castigated them: "What! Shall I search for you a deity other than Allah while He has honoured you over (the nations) of the world?" Threatening them, he said: 'Beware! Never ever utter such profanity again.'" They sincerely regretted, repented and promised never to make such ridiculous requests. Allah Ta'ala accepted their Taubah.

Finally Bani Israaeel arrived in the Land of Shaam. They settled in an extremely fertile place. Here Allah Ta'ala blessed them with a variety of fruits and a variety of bounties. When they had settled in that place, Allah Ta'ala summoned Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) to go to Tur Saina' (Mount Sinai). Hadhrat Jibrael (alayhis salaam) arrived and said: "O Musa! Allah Ta'ala conveys His salaams to you. A Kitaab will be revealed to you. You have to proceed to Tur Saina'."

THE TAURAH

Before departing for Mount Sinai, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) promised his people that he would be bringing to them a divine

scripture which would narrate the episodes of Fir'oun and his destruction. Jibrael (alayhis salaam) had instructed Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) to immediately begin a fast of thirty days. After the thirtieth day, he should depart for Mount Sinai. After completing the 30 days fasting, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) departed for Tur Saina'. On his way to the Mountain, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) felt the need to cleanse his mouth with a miswaak. After he used a miswaak, Jibrael (alayhis salaam) arrived and lamented: "O Musa! Before you used the miswaak, the fragrance of musk was emanating from your mouth (the effect of the 30 days of fasting). Now you have eliminated that fragrance. Allah Ta'ala therefore commands that you fast another ten days to gain that sweet fragrance of musk." Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) halted at the spot and fasted for ten days. Allah Ta'ala mentions in the Qur'aan the thirty days of fasting as well as the additional ten days.

At the time of departing from his people, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) appointed Haroon (alayhis salaam) as his Khalifah (Representative). When he reached Mount Saina', Musa (alayhis salaam) removed his shoes, and proceeded up the mountain with great humility and reverence. Suddenly he observed huge multitudes of Malaikah in space. All were reciting the Tasbeeh: *Subboohun Quddoosun*. Then in amazement he saw the wonderful and majestic Arsh of Allah Azza Wa Jal. In this rapturous state the Divine Talk with Musa (alayhis salaam) took place. According to some narrations 24,000 words were spoken with Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) on this occasion. The Divine Communion with Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) was for forty days.

It was during this state of ecstasy that Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) requested: "O my Rabb! Show Yourself to me so that I see you." Came the Divine Response. "O Musa! Never can you see Me." Nevertheless, Allah Ta'ala instructed him: "Look towards the (peak of) the mountain. If it remains in its place, then you will see Me."

Then from behind 70,000 veils of the Divine Arsh, Allah Ta'ala manifested an infinitesimal speck of His Illumination (*Noor*) on the mountain to the extent of the eye of a needle. Mentioning the effect of this speck of Divine Illumination, the Qur'aan Majeed states: "When his Rabb manifested (His) Illumination on the mountain, It

reduced the mountain into particles, and Musa fell down unconscious.” The devastating impact of Allah’s Noor split the mountain into bits with such force that huge boulders and pieces of rock went flying in all directions. Three huge pieces of rock landed in Madinah Munawwarah. These three rocks became known as Uhud, Radhwi and Faani. Another three pieces of rock landed in Makkah Muazzamah and became known as Hiraa’, Sheereen and Thaur. Meanwhile the surrounding wilderness turned into a blazing inferno.

This episode of Divine Illumination occurred on a Thursday evening on the Day of Arafah. Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) meanwhile remained unconscious until the following Friday. When he revived, he was shuddering uncontrollably with fear, and he spontaneously cried: *“Subhaanaka! I repent. I am the first of the Mu’mineen.”* Thereafter Allah Ta’ala said to Musa: *“O Musa! Verily, I have chosen you over the people with My Risaalat (i.e. being a Rasool) and My Speech.”*

The Tauraah which was presented to Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) here, consisted of seven large tablets made of precious heavenly red-stone. The Tauraah had 1000 Surahs. Only four persons had committed the whole Taurah to memory: Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam), Hadhrat Yusha’ (alayhis salaam), Hadhrat Uzair (alayhis salaam) and Hadhrat Isaa (alayhis salaam). An elaborate and grand arrangement was made for preserving the Tauraah. A special casket of gold was made to encase the Tauraah. A domed structure wherein the casket was kept, was erected, and Haroon (alayhis salaam) was appointed the trustee. The trusteeship remained in his family.

THE GOLDEN CALF

While Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) was in communion with Allah Azza Wa Jal on the mountain, his people, Bani Israaeel, lapsed into worshipping a golden calf which they had built on the advice of a man called, Saamiri. Who was Saamiri? Saamiri was born at the time when Fir’oun had proclaimed the mass slaughter of all male infants of Bani Israeel. His mother, fearing the imminent killing of her baby, hid him in the bushes along the River Nile. Allah Ta’ala commanded Jibraeel (alayhis salaam) to tend to the baby and nurture him. Thus, Saamiri was nourished in this miraculous way by Hadhrat Jibraeel (alayhis salaam). As a result of this affinity, Saamiri in later years

would be able to perceive the presence of Jibraeel (alayhis salaam) when he would appear in human form to execute divinely imposed tasks.

On the day when Bani Israaeel was crossing the Red Sea, Jibraeel (alayhis salaam) on horseback was leading Fir’oun and his army into the pathways of the sea. Saamiri observed that wherever the horse of Jibraeel (alayhis salaam) set foot, grass would spring up. He was therefore convinced that the rider was Jibraeel (alayhis salaam) and that the soil on which the horse trampled held miraculous effects. He gathered an amount of this soil and treasured it.

After Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) had departed for Mount Toor, Saamiri approached Nabi Haroon (alayhis salaam) and said: *“O Haroon! All the gold, silver, precious stones and wealth which we had captured from Fir’oun’s people as booty should not be utilized by our people without Nabi Musa’s permission. However, I am seeing that our people are misappropriating all this treasure.”* Saamiri’s proposal appealed to Nabi Haroon (alayhis salaam). He immediately instructed the people to hand over all of this treasure and await the decision of Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam). Nabi Haroon (alayhis salaam) appointed Saamiri to be the treasurer and trustee in whose custody all the treasure was placed. Thus, Saamiri’s dark plot succeeded.

Saamiri was an expert goldsmith and sculptor. He silently went about his plot to build the golden calf. The golden calf which he constructed was a huge form which he emblazoned with diamonds and other precious stones. In was a ‘beautiful’ structure which would amaze onlookers when they beheld it. Then Saamiri cast into the golden calf some of the miraculous sand which he had brought along with him, and immediately the calf displayed signs of life and began making sounds like a cow. Referring to this episode, the Qur’aan-e-Kareem sates:

“And, after the departure of Musa, they (some people of Bani Israaeel) made from their jewels a calf which was a body which emitted sounds. What! Did they not realize that it could not speak to them nor guide them to (the Straight) Path. They took it (as their god), and indeed they were oppressors.”

(Aayat 148, Surah A’raaf)

Saamiri had built his calf in secret. When it was completed, he enclosed it in a chamber adorned with silk and velvet veils. Addressing the people he said: "If you obey me, I shall show you Musa's god right here." The ignoramuses fell into Saamiri's trap. They pledged obedience to him. After obtaining the pledge of obedience, Saamiri lifted the veils. When their eyes fell on the glitter, dazzle and beauty of the golden structure they were rendered speechless with amazement. The incomprehensible sounds emitted by the idol added a mysterious dimension. All the people fell down in prostration and thousands began worshipping the golden calf.

Seventy thousand people of Bani Israaeel took to the worship of the calf. When this shocking development reached Nabi Haroon (alayhis salaam), he rushed barefoot to the scene, and vociferously remonstrated and reprimanded them for commission of shirk. But the people were intoxicated by the golden calf. They declared with confidence that this calf was the same god whom Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) was searching in the mountains and wilderness. Despite Haroon's pleas and admonition, they not only refused to heed him, but threatened to kill him if he continued to pester and interfere with their worship. Dejected and lamenting, Haroon (alayhis salaam) secluded himself in his tent, waiting for Nabi Musa to return.

Meanwhile on Mount Toor, Allah Ta'ala had informed Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) that his people had taken to worshipping the golden calf. This had immensely grieved and angered Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam). Grief-stricken and full of anger, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) returned to his people and with great haste went to the scene where the worship of the golden calf was taking place. When he personally witnessed this shirk and idolatry, his rage and fury had no bounds. He put down the Tauraah Tablets and in a fit of rage grabbed hold of the hair and beard of his brother, Nabi Haroon (alayhis salaam). He shook his brother by the hair and accused him of having allowed Bani Israaeel into idolatry. Referring to this episode, the Qur'aan Majeed says:

"And, when Musa returned to his nation in anger and grief, he said: 'Indeed evil is it that you have perpetrated after me. Do you desire to hasten the command of your Rabb?'

Then he put down the Tablets, seized the head of his brother and

pulled him to himself.

Haroon pleaded: 'O son of my mother! Verily, the people considered me weak and almost killed me. Therefore, do not let the enemies make a laughing stock of me, and do not include me among the oppressors (the transgressors).'"

(Aayat 150, Surah A'raaf)

After hearing his brother's plea, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) realizing his error, supplicated to Allah Ta'ala: *"O my Rabb! Forgive me and my brother. Enter us into Your mercy. And, you are the Most Merciful of all merciful ones."* (Aayat 151, Surah A'raaf)

When Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) was informed by Allah Ta'ala of the *shirk* of his people, he was immensely grieved and hurt. But when he observed the *shirk* with his own eyes, his fury overwhelmed him. Commenting on the aggravated rage of Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) when he personally witnessed the perpetration of shirk by his people, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: *"The receipt of information is not the same as personally witnessing the incident."* Thus, when Allah Ta'ala had informed Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) of the crime of his people, his anger was not beyond control. But when he personally saw the enactment of the evil of *shirk*, he cast down the Tablets of the Tauraah in utter disbelief and his rage drove him to seize his senior brother, Haroon (alayhis salaam), also a Nabi, without first instituting an investigation. This was the effect of Nabi Musa's *Bughd fillaah* (Hatred and anger for the sake of Allah), hence there was no divine reprimand for Musa's action.

Turning his attention to his people, Musa (alayhis salaam) reprimanded them with great vehemence and sounded the dire threat of everlasting punishment in Jahannum for the shirk they were committing. His admonition exercised a profound effect on the people. They finally realized and acknowledged their error and were ready for Taubah and to make amends. Referring to this episode, the Qur'aan states: *"And, when they expressed their regret and realized that they had gone astray, they said: 'If our Rabb does not have mercy on us and forgive us, then we shall be among the losers.'*

(Aayat 149, Surah A'raaf)

Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) meanwhile supplicated to Allah Ta'ala to forgive his people who were sincerely repenting. However,

the crime of shirk is the worst of all acts of treason committed against Allah Ta'ala. Also, despite having emancipated them from Fir'oun's bondage, brutality and oppression, and despite them having miraculously crossed the Red Sea and observing Fir'oun's ignominious destruction, they had requested Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) to construct an idol for their worship. This episode has already been narrated earlier. Now after Nabi Musa's departure to Mount Toor, they had indulged in a worst act of *shirk* although they had earlier solemnly pledged never to turn to shirk. Forgiveness for these transgressors was therefore no longer a simple and easy option. They were incorrigibly prone to idol-worship, hence there had to be a severe trial to expunge all vestiges of idolatry from their hearts and to purify the perpetrators from the evil of *shirk* in which they had indulged.

Jibraeel (alayhis salaam) appeared and said to Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam): "O Musa! Allah Ta'ala sends Salaam to you and said that the crime of your people was not insignificant. They had committed *shirk*. The only form of Taubah (Repentance) for this vile act of oppression is execution. They all will have to be killed." Stunned by this divine pronouncement, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) gathered Bani Israaeel and explained to them that the only way for their repentance and redemption was to submit to Allah's command. All the perpetrators of shirk will be put to death. They should now choose between this form of repentance or the everlasting stay in Jahannum from which there will never be release.

The transgressors had realized their error and even before this announcement, inclined to repentance. When they heard the form of their taubah, they wholeheartedly submitted and said that they choose this temporary punishment to the everlasting perdition of Jahannum. The day for the execution was appointed. In a vast plain all the thousands of people, men and women, the old and the young – all who had worshipped the calf, assembled to offer their lives at the altar of Taubah to gain the mercy and pleasure of Allah Ta'ala. This was indeed a supreme gesture of sincerity and sacrifice.

Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) addressing them instructed that they should be prepared to meet their Rabb in the state of purification. They were ordered to sit in the kneeling position in ranks with their

necks lowered to facilitate swift execution with the sword. Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) ordered his brother, Hadhrat Haroon (alayhis salaam) to move into position with 12,000 men with extremely sharp swords to accomplish the command of Allah Ta'ala.

As a punishment for having worshipped the golden calf, Allah Ta'ala had commanded the mass slaughter of those among Bani Israaeel who had indulged in this despicable act of idolatry. Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) had ordered a contingent of 12,000 executioners under the command of Nabi Haroon (alayhis salaam) to fulfil this divinely imposed sentence.

The guilty were all assembled in a vast field and the task of execution commenced. From Fajr until midday, rivers of blood flowed. Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) was immensely grieved, but the command of Allah Ta'ala had to be executed. Shedding tears in abundance, he mounted a hill, removed his *amaamah* (turban) and fell into Sajdah. He remained crying and supplicating in Sajdah. His lament and grief moved even the Malaaikeh who joined him in supplicating to Allah Ta'ala. Allah Ta'ala opened up the Doors of all the Heavens to enable the Malaaikeh to witness the supreme sacrifice which the sinners had voluntarily chosen to offer to cleanse them from the filth of idolatry to ensure their salvation in the Aakhirah.

After 70,000 persons were executed, Allah Ta'ala granted a reprieve for tens of thousands of others who had also indulged in the calf-worshipping.

The originator of the calf-worshipper, namely, Saamiri, still had to be dealt with. He was summoned to appear before Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) who had resolved to cut this evil person into bits. However, before Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) could execute Saamiri, Hadhrat Jibraeel (alayhis salaam) appeared and conveyed Allah's command that Saamiri was not to be executed. His actual punishment will be in the Hereafter. Meanwhile, the worldly punishment for Saamiri was banishment and the affliction of a strange disease. He was expelled from the community and told that he will be forever afflicted with a malady. Any person who touched him would be smitten by a severe fever. Saamiri was banished to the wilderness. He roamed the wilderness like a wild animal, fleeing from human beings. Whenever he would see a human being, he

would exclaim: *'Don't touch me! Don't touch me!'*. People would flee from him on sight. This ends the episode of the calf-worship and Saamiri.

THE TALK OF ALLAH

Referring to this fearful episode, the Qur'aan Majeed says: *"Musa chose from his people seventy men for Our appointment. When the earthquake struck them (and destroyed them all), he (Musa) said: 'O my Rabb, if You had wished, You could have destroyed them and me before (this destruction)'."*

Allah Ta'ala ordered Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) to select seventy men from his people and proceed to Mount Toor where they would be provided with further admonition for the evil of cow-worship which Bani Israaeel had practised. Musa (alayhis salaam) selected seventy of the best men and proceeded with them to Mount Toor. Although they were the intelligentsia, they too were guilty of creating doubts. They had spread the rumour that perhaps Allah Ta'ala did not speak to Musa (alayhis salaam) as he claimed.

When they reached the mountain, there appeared a wondrous cloud of noor (celestial light) which took up a position right in front of Musa (alayhis salaam). After a short while, Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) miraculously disappeared into the cloud. Beholding this miraculous event, all seventy men fell into Sajdah. Whilst in prostration they heard the Divine Voice speaking with Musa (alayhis salaam). They could clearly hear the numerous advices and admonition which were being imparted to Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam). In the state of prostration all seventy were deriving immense spiritual delight from the Divine Conversation.

After they raised their heads from Sajdah, they saw Musa (alayhis salaam) nearby. The glittering cloud had vanished. Musa (alayhis salaam) addressing them said: "O chiefs of my people! Have you seen and heard the Talk of My Rabb?" In response these obstinate and misguided intellectuals said: "Yes, we heard the talk, but did not see the speaker. We shall be convinced only if you show us the Speaker." They had just completed this rebellious utterance when a violent earthquake erupted. One thunderbolt destroyed the seventy, transforming them into burnt charcoal. All had perished.

Observing what had happened, Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam)

loudly wailed and supplicated frantically to Allah Ta'ala. He was overwhelmed with the anticipated reaction of Bani Israaeel. What would they say? They would accuse him of having plotted the destruction of those whom they had regarded as the best among them. How will he face his people if he returned alone to them? After prolonged crying and supplicating, Allah Ta'ala accepted his dua and restored the seventy to life. All of them stood up reciting the Kalimah.

THE COMMAND TO WAGE JIHAAD

After returning with the seventy men, Allah Ta'ala ordered Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) to deliver the Message of Tauheed to the Amaalikah nation. If they rejected the Kalimah, he was to wage Jihad against them. These people lived in the Baitul Maqdis. They were a very powerful nation of oppressors. The Qur'aan describes them as *Jabbaareen*. Allah Ta'ala assured Musa (alayhis salaam) of victory.

Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) immediately made arrangements to confront the Amaalikah. He set off with a very large force of many thousands. He took the pledge of obedience from the army before setting out. He had divided his army into twelve divisions, each division with a separate commander. When the army entered the territory of the Amaalikah, Musa (alayhis salaam) selected twelve men – one from each division – and sent them ahead on a reconnoitring mission. The entire army was ordered to halt and wait for the return of the group of 12.

Immediately on their return to the army, they spread the story of the Amaalikah's might and power. The entire army of Bani Israaeel was overcome with terror. They flatly refused to advance when Musa (alayhis salaam) ordered them. Referring to their cowardice and disobedience, the Qur'aan states: *"O Musa! Never shall we enter that city as long as they (the Amaalikah) are there. Therefore, go, you (i.e. Nabi Musa) and your Rabb and fight. Verily, we shall sit (and wait) just here (where we are)."*

Dejected and full of grief when he heard these statements of kufr of his people, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) supplicated: *"O my Rabb! Verily, I have no control over anyone except myself and my brother. Therefore, separate us from a nation of transgressors."* The Divine Voice came in response to Musa's supplication. Every member of

Bani Israaeel heard the Divine proclamation. "O Bani Israaeel! How long will you continue with your disobedience and deny Our bounties? You fear not that in a moment I can destroy you all, and substitute you with a better nation to obey Musa."

When Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) heard the Divine Reprimand, he hastily again supplicated, imploring Allah Ta'ala to forgive his people. Allah Ta'ala responded: "O Musa! We shall forgive them. But since you have in your dua branded them faasiq, they shall wonder aimlessly in the wilderness. We shall exempt four persons from this punishment: Yourself, Haroon, Yusha' and Qaalib Ibn Qayyah. With the exception of these four, the punishment for the entire nation is mentioned in the following aayat of the Qur'aan Majeed: *"Verily, the Holy Land is forbidden for them for forty years. They will wonder aimlessly in the land. Therefore, do not grieve for a nation of faasiqeen."*

Besides the saved four, the entire army set off in the direction of Egypt. They would wander aimlessly in that direction from morning until evening. In the evening they would find themselves at the very site where they had been in the morning. They had not progressed an inch despite struggling through the wilderness in great difficulty and hardship the entire day. They suffered in the wilderness wandering aimlessly for forty years.

At this juncture the historical narratives are extremely vague and there is no continuity in the story. Authentic narrators such as Ibn Kathir, are silent regarding certain important episodes following Bani Israaeel's entrapment in the Valley of Teeh where they wandered aimlessly for forty years according to the Qur'aan. According to Ibn Kathir, the entire nation perished within the forty year period and only Hadhrat Yusha' (alayhas salaam) and Hadhrat Kaalib (alayhis salaam) emerged safely. There is no mention of Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) and Hadhrat Haroon (alayhis salaam), whether they too were wandering with their flock in the Valley of Teeh nor is it explained why Hadhrat Yusha' (alayhis salaam) and Hadhrat Kaalib (alayhis salaam) were also banished and imprisoned in the Valley despite the Qur'aan speaking glowingly of them and confirming their uprighteousness. In fact these two had tried their best to motivate Bani Israaeel to submit to Musa's command and enter the city of the

Amaalikah. Nevertheless, it is confirmed that Jerusalem was finally conquered by Hadhrat Yusha' (alayhis salaam) who had lived for 27 years after the demise of Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam).

MANN AND SALWAA

"And We shaded you (O Bani Israaeel!) with the cloud and We sent down for you Mann and Salwaa." (Baqarah, Aayat 57)

The *Ardh-e-Muqad-dasah* (The Holy Land) which Allah Ta'ala had promised, was forbidden to Bani Israaeel for forty years as a punishment for their flagrant transgression and insolence to their Nabi. After Allah Ta'ala had released them from the bondage and persecution of Fir'oun, and gave them victory in Egypt, they were ordered to wage Jihaad against the Amaaliqah race who were occupying the Holy Land. This was the Land of Shaam (Syria and Baitul Maqdis).

The Land of Shaam (Syria and its environs) was the ancestral land of Bani Israaeel. During the time of Nabi Yusuf (alayhis salaam), Bani Israaeel had migrated from Shaam to Misr (Egypt). The Amaaliqah had taken control of the Land of Shaam. The Amaaliqah were the descendants of the Nation of Aad who were a race of giants. Allah Ta'ala had ordered Bani Israaeel to wage war against the Amaaliqah. Bani Israaeel was also assured of victory. Despite being divinely assured of victory, the people of Bani Israaeel were overwhelmed with fear by the physical stature and power of the Amaaliqah, hence they flatly declined to engage in Jihaad. They insolently said to Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam): *"You and your Rabb go fight (the Amaaliqah). We shall sit just here (waiting for you)."*

Punishment is commensurate with the crime. Since they said that they would "sit just there", Allah Ta'ala entrapped them in the Valley of Teeh where they dwelled, lost in bewilderment, for forty years. The Valley of Teeh is a small area approximately 19 square miles between Egypt and Shaam. They wandered aimlessly for 40 years in circles in the Valley of Teeh without finding their way to Egypt where they had intended to go. Many wonderful and miraculous incidents occurred to Bani Israaeel during their 40 year sojourn in the Valley of Teeh. Teeh was a barren wilderness. The heat and cold were extreme. There was no shade, no water and provisions whatsoever. However, by virtue of Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam), Nabi

Haroon (alayhis salaam), Hadhrat Yusha' Bin Noon (alayhis salaam) and Hadhrat Kaalib (alayhis salaam) who were also with their people in Teeh, Allah Ta'ala fulfilled all the needs of Bani Israaeel miraculously.

For food, *Mann* and *Salwaa* were miraculously made available. There are many narrations describing *Mann* variously. It is quite possible that *Mann* which would daily descend from the skies consisted of different varieties of food which was known by the common name, *Mann*. This food would descend like snowflakes. It was white and sweet. It would descend daily, from Subh Saadiq until sunrise, and then stop, except on Saturdays. They gathered sufficient to suffice for the whole day.

Salwaa was a bird about the size of a pigeon. These birds would miraculously appear from the south with a soft breeze blowing. The southerly breeze would herald the arrival of the flocks of *Salwaa*. The birds were extremely tame. The people would simply take hold of these birds without them (the birds) making any attempt to escape. They would *thabah* (slaughter) the birds. *Salwaa* was provided after Bani Israaeel complained to Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam). They were tired of consuming only the sweet food, *Mann*. Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) supplicated to Allah Ta'ala, and the provision of *Salwaa* was made available for them. Like *Mann*, these birds would also daily appear.

On Fridays they gathered double the amount for use on Saturday as well. With the exception of Fridays when they were permitted to gather sufficient *Mann* and *Salwaa* for two days in view of the prohibition of engaging in mundane affairs on the Sabbath (Saturday), they were not allowed to gather more than one day's provision. However, greed constrained many to gather more than a day's provision. When they did so, the *Mann* would become mouldy, and the *Salwaa* decayed. Thus, they were unable to consume what they had gathered by greed.

THE WHITE CLOUD

When they complained of the extreme heat, Musa (alayhis salaam) supplicated to Allah Ta'ala. A special white cloud unlike normal clouds was created to shade them on their journey. As they trudged on, the beautiful cloud would move along, shading them.

GARMENTS

Their clothing too was miraculous. Neither did their garments become dirty nor worn and torn. Their garments retained their original form. The garments of children would grow along with them.

WATER

Whenever they required water, Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) would strike a rock with his Staff, and twelve fountains would gush out. Since there were twelve tribes in Bani Israaeel, each tribe had its own stream of water. This rock was transported on a buffalo and sometimes on an ass. There are different narrations describing this miraculous stone which was square in shape, the size of a buffalo's head. However, according to Hadhrat Hasan Basri (rahmatullah alayh), it was not a particular stone. Whenever water was required in the wilderness, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) would strike any rock, according to Hadhrat Hasan's narration, and twelve fountains would gush out.

Before striking the stone, Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) would instruct the twelve chiefs of the tribes to take up positions around the rock. When he struck the rock with his Staff, twelve fountains would gush forth, and twelve streams would form. A stream would flow in the direction of each chief. In this manner every tribe had its own stream of water.

It is also narrated that this stone was brought down from Jannat by Hadhrat Aadam (alayhis salaam). It passed from Nabi to Nabi until it reached Hadhrat Shuaib (alayhis salaam) who presented it and the Staff to Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam). Allah knows best.

THE PILLAR OF LIGHT

In the intense darkness of the wilderness, Allah Ta'ala created a marvellous pillar of light in their midst. This pillar of celestial light would brighten up the entire area for Bani Israaeel.

HAIR AND NAILS

Among the miraculous bestowals to Bani Israaeel during their sojourn in the Valley of Teeh was that neither their hair nor nails would increase, but would remain in their original state.

DEMISE OF HAROON (ALAYHIS SALAAM)

One day in the Valley of Teeh, Allah Ta'ala informed Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) that the time for the Maut of Haroon (alayhis salaam) had approached. The eyes of Musa (alayhis salaam) welled up with tears. However, he did not inform Nabi Haroon (alayhis salaam) of this Wahi (revelation). Allah Ta'ala informed Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) of the time and place where Malakul Maut would be meeting Nabi Haroon (alayhis salaam). He set off with Haroon (alayhis salaam) and his sons to the appointed place which is known as Mount Shuwaiq. As they neared the appointed place, they perceived a wonderful fragrant breeze. They were amazed to see a beautiful mansion. The mansion was luxuriously furnished. Huge, beautiful trees emitting a wondrous fragrance were casting their shade over the mansion.

This was Hadhrat Haroon's abode of Maut. He was therefore irresistibly attracted to the mansion, However, he hesitated to enter as the owner was unknown and they had no permission. By means of Wahi he was instructed to enter. He was struck by the beauty and comfort of the interior. He went to lie down on a beautiful throne-like bed. As he laid down to sleep, his Rooh departed from this earthly abode.

When Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) returned with Nabi Haroon's sons to Bani Israeel, the insolent and rebellious people accused him of having murdered Haroon (alayhis salaam) and dumping his body in some remote place in the wilderness. They claimed that Musa (alayhis salaam) motivated by envy perpetrated such a heinous deed because of the affection which Haroon (alayhis salaam) had for the people. Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) was naturally grieved by these slanders. He supplicated to Allah Ta'ala. He was commanded to take members of the nation to the location where Nabi Haroon's body was. When they reached the spot, the people were amazed to see Nabi Haroon (alayhis salaam) as if he was in a deep peaceful sleep. Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) said to Haroon (alayhis salaam): "*Stand up with the permission of Allah!*". Instantaneously Nabi Haroon (alayhis salaam) came to life, stood up and recited the Kalimah. Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) ordered Nabi Haroon (alayhis salaam) to explain the circumstances of his demise. Haroon (alayhis

salaam) said: "*Allah Ta'ala has taken me with His Qudrat and has allowed me to remain sleeping here in peace and comfort until the Day of Qiyaamah.*" Immediately thereafter he lapsed into his everlasting tranquil sleep of comfort.

DEMISE OF MUSA (ALAYHIS SALAM)

When the time of Hadhrat Musa's demise approached, he called his two companions, Hadhrat Yusha' Bin Noon and Hadhrat Kalib Bin Yuqana (alayhimas salaam). He instructed them to prepare a number of copies of the Tauraah for distribution among his people. The work was immediately initiated. Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) himself wrote one complete copy of the Tauraah. The checking and proof-reading of this copy was done by Hadhrat Jibraeel (alayhis salaam). This special copy was entrusted to the offspring of Nabi Haroon (alayhis salaam). On the occasion of handing them his copy of the Tauraah, Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) said: "*My age is now three hundred years. The time is near for me to depart from this earthly abode. I desire to appoint the ablest among you to be my vicegerent (Khalifah) after me. The best among you for this position is Yusha whom I am appointing to be my Khalifah.*" The nation of Bani Israeel happily and wholeheartedly accepted the appointment of Hadhrat Yusha' (alayhis salaam). Everyone pledged obedience to him.

Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) thereafter became more engrossed in Thikrullaah. He set off to Mount Tur for the last time. Here he engaged in conversation with Allah Ta'ala. After he returned to his people from Mount Tur, he engaged in counselling Bani Israeel, giving them many farewell advices and admonition.

Allah Ta'ala had informed Hadhrat Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) of his imminent Maut (Death). After he had presented numerous farewell advices to Bani Israeel, one day Malakul Maut appeared unannounced in human form. When he stated his purpose, viz. taking Musa's life, he (Hadhrat Musa) became enraged. He struck Malakul Maut who was in human form, such a fierce blow which damaged his (Malakul Maut's) eye. Malakul Maut departed and complained to Allah Ta'ala.

Allah Ta'ala sent Jibraeel (alayhis salaam) with the message: "O Musa! If you desire longer life, then place your hand on the back of a ram. I take oath by My Might and Splendour! Your life will be

extended in years for as many hairs of the ram which are covered by your hand.”

After Hadhrat Jibraeel (alayhis salaam) delivered this divine message, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) commented: “O Jibraeel! After I have done so and my lifespan is extended to the number of hairs which my hand covers on the back of a ram, and after the expiry of all those years, then what will happen?” Jibraeel (alayhis salaam) said: “Thereafter is Maut.” Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) said: “Since the ultimate fate is Maut, why should I not be presently pleased with Maut? Go, send Malakul Maut to me. With the greatest pleasure I submit and hand over my soul.” Jibraeel (alayhis salaam) departed.

Immediately Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) set off for the wilderness. On arriving in the desolate place he suddenly saw seven men in a beautiful lush area. They were preparing a beautiful grave. Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) said: “Whose grave is this?” A spokesman for the seven men said: “It is the grave of one of Allah’s beloved devotees. His height is your height.”

Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) stood there whilst they were preparing the grave. He then said: “May I lay down in this grave for a few moments?” They happily consented. Who were these seven persons? They were Jibraeel, Meekaaeel, Israafeel, Izraaeel and another three Muqarrab Angels (Angels of high rank enjoying very close divine proximity). Allah Ta’ala had dispatched them to prepare the grave in honour of Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam).

Lying down in the grave, he exclaimed: “What a wonderful abode, Subhaanallaah!” Immediately Malakul Maut (Hadhrat Izraaeel – alayhis salaam) stepped forward and placed a wonderfully fragrant flower to the nose of Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam). At that very moment the blessed Rooh of Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) took flight from his earthly body. Inna lillaahi wa inna ilayhi Raaji-oon.

TEARS OF A STONE

“Whoever is in the heavens and the earth and whatever is therein recites His praises (Tasbeeh). Everything recites His praise, but you do not understand their Tasbeeh.” (Qur’aan)

ONCE NABI MUSA (alayhis salaam) passed by a stone which was shedding tears in profusion. When Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) asked the stone to explain why it was crying so much, it said: “I was overwhelmed with fear since the time I heard the aayat: *“Its (i.e. Jahannam’s) fuel will be people and stones.”* The stone feared that it would also be cast into Jahannam.

Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) supplicated to Allah Ta’ala to save this stone from being cast into Jahannam. Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) comforted the stone, and it stopped crying. After a considerable period of time when Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) happened to again pass by the spot, he was surprised to see the same stone crying in profusion. He asked: “Why are you now crying?” The stone said: “O Musa! The glad tidings of my salvation was because of my crying. Why should I now abandon crying? It was by virtue of this crying that I had achieved the treasure of salvation.”

THE SECRETS OF DIVINE OPERATIONS

ONCE HADHRAT Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) supplicated to Allah Ta’ala to reveal some of His secrets and mysteries which underlie the Wisdom of His operations. Allah Ta’ala instructed Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) to proceed to a certain venue in the wilderness. The area in the wilderness where he went was an oasis. There was a fountain of water and a clump of trees. He sat down concealing himself among the trees. Soon a horse-rider appeared. He stopped by the fountain. Alighted and drank from the water. After resting for a while, he departed, forgetting his bag of gold coins at the spot.

After his departure, appeared a youth. The youth drank some water, saw the bag of gold coins and promptly took the bag and left. Then appeared a man with a bundle of wood on his head. This person was a slave. The slave put down his bundle, drank of the water and fell asleep besides his bundle of wood. While he was asleep, the horse-rider who had discovered that his treasure was missing, returned in haste. When he did not see his treasure-bag, he was overwhelmed with grief and anger. He concluded that it could only have been this slave who had taken and hidden his gold. He struck the slave with his whip. The slave’s eyes opened, and the rider

demanded his treasure. The slave denied all knowledge of the bag and protested his innocence. The protestation and pleas of the slave did not convince him. In anger he drew his sword and killed the slave.

Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) was astonished at this series of events. He was intrigued by the ostensible injustice which played out in front of him. Then Allah Ta'ala revealed the mystery underlying this episode of seemingly inexplicable injustice.

The horse-rider was an employee of a very wealthy person. He had stolen the gold from the wealthy man who was the father of the youth. The father had died. In this mysterious way Allah Ta'ala restored the gold to its rightful owner, the youth.

The horse-rider was the son of a man whom this slave had murdered. He thus received the punishment he deserved at the hands of the murdered man's son. Thus, was justice meted out to all parties. Allah Ta'ala operates in mysterious and wonderful ways which cannot be fathomed by people.

NABI MUSA AND HADHRAT KHIDHR

ONCE HADHRAT NABI MUSA (alayhis salaam) delivered an extraordinarily eloquent *khutbah* (lecture) which reduced the audience to tears. Afterwards when he was asked: "Who is the most learned man on earth today?" Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) responded: "I". Allah Ta'ala was displeased with this response. Although, undoubtedly, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) was the greatest Aalim on earth at that time, he was supposed to have said: "Allah knows best."

Simultaneously with his response, Allah Ta'ala revealed to him that at the juncture where the two seas meet, there is one of Allah's servants who has more knowledge. Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) supplicated: "O Allah! How can I meet him?" It was revealed to him to set off on a journey and to take with him a whole fried fish. He will meet the person at the juncture of the two seas where the fish will miraculously disappear.

Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) set off on the journey together with his companion, Nabi Yusha' Bin Noon (alayhis salaam). Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) instructed his young companion, Nabi Yusha'

(alayhis salaam) to immediately inform him when the fish becomes alive and disappears. Hadhrat Yusha' (alayhis salaam) responded that this was a very simple matter, and he would most certainly notify him. Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) resolved to continue walking to find this great Aalim even if the journey should take him many years. And, so the two walked the entire day and the night without feeling any tiredness. The arduous journey did not tire them in the least. When they reached a certain place on the shores of the sea, they felt weary. Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) halted by a rock and took a short nap.

When some splashes of the water fell on the fish, it became alive and jumped out from the food basket and disappeared into the sea. It is said that this was the splashes from the water or fountain of life. The fried fish miraculously became alive and miraculously left a solid tunnel drilled through ice in the water. Although Hadhrat Yusha' Bin Noon (alayhis salaam) had witnessed this miraculous incident, he completely forgot to mention it when Nabi Musa woke up from his sleep. They continued along the journey. However, now Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam), unlike the previous day, felt extremely tired and hungry. He instructed his companion to bring the food from the basket. It was at this moment that he recalled the miraculous episode and the wonderful method in which the fish had disappeared into the water. Despite this event being an extraordinary episode, in fact a miracle, it was out of the mind of Nabi Yusha' (alayhis salaam). He therefore said to Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) that it was shaitaan who had caused him to forget this important episode.

In astonishment Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) said that the place where the fish had disappeared was in fact their destination where they would find the great Aalim. Thus, they retraced their steps. When they reached the place where they had rested they saw a man sitting on the rock. This was Hadhrat Khidhr (alayhis salaam). Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) made Salaam. Khidhr (alayhis salaam) said: "From whence has Salaam come in this desolate abode? Who are you?"

Nabi Musa: "I am Musa".

Khidhr: "The Musa of Bani Israaeel?"

Musa: "Yes".

Khidhr: "Why have you come here?"

Musa: “To acquire knowledge from you.”

Khidhr: “Is the Tauraah and the Revelation you receive not sufficient for you?” O Musa! Allah Ta’ala has bestowed to me such knowledge which He has not bestowed to you, and He has granted you such knowledge which he has not granted me.”

During this conversation a tiny bird came and dipped its beak in the sea to drink water. After it removed its beak from the water, Hadhrat Khidhr (alayhis salaam) said to Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) that the combined knowledge of them both and of entire creation in relation to the Knowledge of Allah Ta’ala does not have even the comparison which the moisture on the bird’s beak has with all the waters of the oceans. In relation to all the waters of the oceans what is the proportion of the moisture on the tiny beak of that tiny bird? The Knowledge of entire creation in relation to Allah’s Knowledge does not have even this infinitesimal relationship.

Hadhrat Khidhr (alayhis salaam) told Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) that he (Nabi Musa) will not be able to tolerate him since he (Nabi Musa) lacked the knowledge necessary to comprehend his (Khidhr’s) actions. However, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) promised to have patience and to obey. Hadhrat Khidhr then said that he (Nabi Musa) should not question him about anything. Accepting this condition, the two walked along the coast until they reached a ferry boat which ferried people to the opposite shore. Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) and Hadhrat Khidhr (alayhis salaam) sat in the boat. The owner of the boat being acquainted with Khidhr (alayhis salaam) did not charge the passenger fee.

While they were in the boat, Hadhrat Khidhr surreptitiously removed a plank in the bottom of the boat. Only Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) saw this act being committed. However, Allah Ta’ala did not permit the boat to sink. Astonished at this sinful act of ingratitude, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) remonstrated, asking Khidhr (alayhis salaam) if he intended to drown the people. Hadhrat Khidhr (alayhis salaam) responded: “Did I not say that you will not have patience with me?” Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam), apologized for his forgetfulness.

After disembarking from the boat, the two walked on until they came to a place where some boys were playing. Hadhrat Khidhr

(alayhis salaam) took one boy aside and severed his head. This was beyond Nabi Musa’s tolerating capacity. He burst out: “You have killed an innocent child...You have most certainly perpetrated a heinous misdeed.” Again Khidhr (alayhis salaam) reminded him of the condition he had made and the pledge Musa (alayhis salaam) had given.

Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) on this occasion said: “If I again question you after this, then do not keep me with you, for then you will have a valid reason forthcoming from me for terminating the association.” After walking for a while, they became very tired. When they entered a town they requested the people for some food. The popular version is that this was the town of Antioch in southern Turkey. The inhospitable people refused to give them anything. They continued walking and in the town they found a wall about to collapse. Hadhrat Khidhr with his hand miraculously straightened the wall. Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) said in surprise that despite the people having been inhospitable, he (Khidhr) reciprocated with the good act of repairing the wall in their town. He asked Khidhr (alayhis salaam): “Why have you done this favour for them?”

Hadhrat Khidhr (alayhis salaam) responded: “This is the parting between us. However, I shall unravel the mystery of the issues for which you had no patience.” Explaining the reasons for the three actions, Hadhrat Khidhr (alayhis salaam) said:

1) The boat belonged to some poor persons. It was their means of earning a livelihood. A king was approaching on the high seas and seizing every good boat. The king would not seize the damaged boat. The owner would repair the boat and continue earning his livelihood.

2) While both parents of the boy were pious Muslims, the boy was a kaafir and destined to remain one. The parents loved their son dearly. There was the fear of them inclining to his rebellion and transgression, hence he was eliminated to safeguard the Imaan of his parents. Allah Ta’ala later blessed the parents with an extremely pious daughter in whose progeny seventy Ambiya (alayhimus salaam) were born.

THE GENEALOGY OF NABI MUSA (alayhis salaam)

3) The wall belonged to two orphaned boys. Their pious father had buried a treasure for them under the wall. If the wall had collapsed, the people of the town would have usurped the treasure. When they would come of age, they will discover the treasure.

Finally Hadhrat Khidr (alayhis salaam) assured Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) that he did not commit these acts of his own desire, but by the command of Allah Ta'ala. This confirms the view that Hadhrat Khidr (alayhis salaam) was a Nabi. He acted in terms of Allah's commands received by way of Wahi, not Ilhaam.

When Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) recited the ayat: *"This is the parting between us."*, he commented: "May Allah have mercy on Musa. If only he had been patient, he would have been able to report to us more (of the mysterious assignments of Hadhrat Khidr)."

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THE GENEALOGY OF NABI MUSA (alayhis salaam)

HADHRAT NABI MUSA (alayhis salaam) was the son of Imraan, the son of Qaahit, the son of Laadi who was the son of Nabi Ya'qoob (alayhis salaam), the son of Hadhrat Ishaq, the son of Hadhrat Nabi Ibraaheem (alayhis salaam).

Nabi Musa's mother's name was Yookabid.

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NABI MUSA AND QAARON

QAARON was the paternal cousin of Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam). He is famed for his wealth and notorious for his arrogance. He did not accept Imaan. He had so much wealth that according to the Qur'aan, carrying only the keys of his treasure vaults would exhaust men of strong physique.

Qaaroon exceeded all bounds of arrogance and pride. He held in contempt those who had accepted Imaan. Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) constantly admonished him and exhorted him to be grateful to Allah Ta'ala for all the wealth, and to fulfil its rights. Qaaroon retorted that

NABI MUSA AND SHAITAAN

the wealth he had was not a bestowal by the Rabb of Musa, but was the consequence of his intelligence and expertise.

One day Allah's chastisement overtook him. The earth swallowed Qaaroon, his wealth and his palace. He disappeared underground forever with all his possessions.

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NABI MUSA AND SHAITAAN

ON THE OCCASION when Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) was on his way to Mount Tur to observe I'tikaaf of 40 days, to commune with Allah Ta'ala, and to receive the revelation of the Tauraah, he met an old man sitting on a rock crying profusely. Pitying the old man, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) enquired of the reason for his grief.

The old man replied that he was Shaitaan and he was crying because Allah's mercy extended on all beings except him. Although he too was Allah's creature, he is being excluded from Allah's mercy, hence he was shedding so many tears. Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) promised to raise the matter with Allah Ta'ala on Mount Tur.

Meanwhile on Mount Tur, Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) had forgotten about the promise he had made to Shaitaan. After spending forty days on Mount Tur and being favoured with the wonderful treasures of communion and speech with Allah Ta'ala, when he was departing, Allah Ta'ala reminded him of his promise. It was then that Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) recalled the episode. He explained the circumstances and plight of Shaitaan. Allah Ta'ala responded that His mercy would enshroud even Shaitaan. However, he had become accursed on account of his refusal to prostrate for Nabi Aadam (alayhis salaam). While Nabi Aadam (alayhis salaam) was no longer alive, his qabr (grave) still existed. Shaitaan only has to go to Nabi Aadam's qabr and perform one prostration, and he will be forgiven. Bygones will be bygones, and he too will be the recipient of Allah's rahmat (mercy).

Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) was absolutely delighted. He had secured forgiveness for even Shaitaan. This forgiveness was dependent on a very simply act. He only had to make one Sajdah at the grave of Nabi Aadam (alayhis salaam), and Allah's mercy will be bestowed to him. When Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) on his return

journey reached the place, he found Shaitaan still crying. Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) announced the glad tidings and explained the simple method of Taubah (repentance) and gaining forgiveness and the mercy of Allah Ta'ala.

When Shaitaan heard that he had to prostrate to the grave of Nabi Aadam (alayhis salaam), his tears suddenly dried up. He stood up and said with pride: "When I had refused to prostrate to Aadam when he was alive, how can I ever prostrate to his grave?" So saying, he walked away arrogantly with a huff.

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ALLAH'S LOVE FOR THE FUQARA

ALLAH TA'ALA revealed to Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam): "O Musa! There are some such servants if they ask Me for the entire Jannat, I shall award it to them. But if they ask me for something of the world, I shall deny it to them. This denial is not because they are despised by Me, but I intend to pile up treasures for them in Jannat, and I save them from this world in the way a shepherd saves his sheep from the wolf."

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BUGHD LILLA AH (HATRED FOR ALLAH'S SAKE)

ONCE ALLAH TA'ALA asked Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam): "O Musa! Did you ever do a good deed solely for My Sake?" When Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) said: 'Salaat.' Allah Ta'ala responded: "You perform Salaat for your own benefit." Then Nabi Musa said: "Saum". Allah Ta'ala said: "Saum too is for your benefit."

Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) then mentioned Zakaat and some other deeds. For each one Allah Ta'ala replied in the same way. Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) then professed his unawareness. Allah Ta'ala said: "Did you ever display *Bughd (hatred)* only for My Sake?" Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) then realized the value of *Bughd lilla ah*, and what a great ibaadat it is.

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ALLAH, THE FORGIVER, THE MERCIFUL THE CONCEALER

ONCE A severe drought and famine had overtaken Bani Israaeel during the time of Hadhrat Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam). With more than 70,000 followers, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) went into the wilderness to supplicate for rain. During the course of the dua, Allah Ta'ala revealed to Nabi Musa: "Among you is a man who has opposed me with sins for forty years. Make an announcement for that person to leave from amongst you. I have withheld rain because of him." Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) said: "O Allah! I am a weak servant. How will I be able to make this announcement to such a huge crows? My voice will not reach them all."

Allah Ta'ala said: "Make the announcement. I shall ensure that your voice reaches them all." Thus, Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) made the announcement requesting the sinner (whose name Allah Ta'ala had not revealed) to leave the assembly.

The man looked around with fear and in consternation. He thought: "If I leave, I shall today be disgraced. If I remain, the rain will not come." In this dilemma he covered his head with his shawl, and from the innermost depths of his heart he silently cried: "O Allah! For forty years you had not disgraced me. I have now come to you with repentance. O Allah! Forgive me! Accept me!"

Even before he had completed his dua, the rain clouds began gathering and soon it rained in torrents. Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) was astonished. He supplicated: "O Allah! No one had left the gathering, yet the rain came!" Allah Ta'ala responded: "O Musa! The one who was the cause of the drought was the cause of the rain." He had repented, hence the rain came. Then Nabi Musa (alayhis salaam) said: "O Allah! Show me this person." Allah Ta'ala said: "When I did not expose him during his state of disobedience, how can I disgrace him by exposing him in his state of obedience? O Musa! I abhor gossipers. How is it possible for me to gossip?"

NABI SULAIMAAN (ALAYHIS SALAAM), HUD-HUD AND BILQEES

“And (when) he (Nabi Sulaimaan) inspected the birds, he exclaimed: ‘Why do I not see Hud-Hud or is he among the absentees? Either he brings to me a valid proof (explanation) or I shall most certainly give him a severe punishment or slaughter him. The Hud-Hud stayed away for just a short time. (Upon his return) he said: ‘I have discovered what you have not discovered, and I come to you from (the land of) Saba with reliable information. Verily, I found a woman ruling over people. She has been given everything (of worldly wealth) and she has a wonderful throne. I have found her and her people prostrating to the sun besides Allah. Shaitaan has adorned for them their deeds and has prevented them from the Path of Allah, hence they do not derive guidance.’”

(Surah Namal, Aayat 20 – 24)

THESSE ARE THE Qur’aanic aayaat commencing the story of Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) and Queen Bilqees, the ruler of Yemen at that time. The story begins with an inspection of the birds by Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam). Allah Ta’ala had bestowed to Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) the ability to understand and speak the variety of languages of even the birds. Mentioning this, the Qur’aan Majeed records the statement of Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) who said: *“O people, we have been taught the speech of the birds and have been granted from everything. Verily, this is a clear bounty (of Allah).” – Aayat 16, Surah Namal*

On his expedition from Baitul Maqdis (Jerusalem) to Yemen, at one stage his army requested water. There was no water in sight and the soldiers were extremely thirsty. Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) ordered the variety of birds to form their rows for an inspection. The purpose of the inspection was to issue a command to the bird Hud-Hud. What bird is the Hud-Hud? Some say that it is the woodpecker whilst others say it is the hoopoe. Allah knows best. The reason for the search for the Hud-Hud was the bird’s inherent ability to locate water. Irrespective of how deep the water may be underground, the Hud-Hud would fly into the air, and from a height detect the presence

of water. It would descend to the ground and indicate the location with its beak. Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) would then order the Jinns who had been made subservient to him by Allah Ta’ala, to dig for the water. In this manner fountains and streams would form.

At that time, the bird known as Kulang (heron) was appointed the king of the birds. When he did not find the Hud-Hud in the ranks, Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) was extremely annoyed. He demanded an answer from the Kulang who expressed unawareness of the Hud-Hud. He said that the Hud-Hud had in fact departed without even informing him. Thus, Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) threatened to slay the Hud-Hud or punish him severely if he did not present a viable excuse for his absence. The severe punishment mentioned in the aayat refers to Nabi Sulaimaan’s cutting the wing feathers of birds to prevent them flying for a year. When he discerned the need to punish a bird, this would be his ‘severe’ punishment.

However, the Hud-Hud after a brief absence made his appearance. His companions among the birds informed him of the anger of Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) and the threatened severe punishment. Then the Hud-Hud hastened into the presence of Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam), prostrated and offered a supplication (dua) for Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam). It pecked at the ground with its beak in submission and obedience. Simultaneously, it looked at Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) and explained that it has come with such reliable news of which Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) was unaware.

The Hud-Hud continuing with its story said that it discovered in the City of Saba’ a queen ruling over her people. It was a prosperous land. She had a massive, magnificent throne. She and her people were sun worshippers. According to some narrations her throne which was beautifully adorned with precious stones, diamonds and pearls was about 40 metres wide and 40 metres high. On hearing this news, Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) instructed the Hud-Hud to locate water while he reflected on what he had just heard. After the army had quenched their thirst, Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) handed the Hud-Hud a letter which he had written for Queen Bilqees.

The Hud-Hud flew with the letter and reached the City of Saba’ at midday when it was the time of *qailoolah* (the midday nap). All the

NABI SULAIMAAN (ALAYHIS SALAAM), HUD-HUD AND BILQEES
doors of the magnificent palace were closed while Bilqees was taking her nap. Nothing and nobody could reach her in the securely closed palace. Guards were stationed all around the palace. Her huge army had 12,000 officers. It was her practice to emerge from the innermost recess of the palace every Friday to attend to the affairs of her people. Her massive and magnificent throne rested on four huge pillars of solid gold. She sat on this huge throne in such a position which enabled her to see all the people gathered while no one could see her from where they happened to be. Whoever had any petition, request or problem was granted permission to step forward. He/she would advance and prostrate at the foot of the throne and remain in prostration until the Queen made her announcement.

At the end of the day after having attended to the affairs of the state, she would return inside her palace, and no one would see her again until the next Friday.

The Hud-Hud could find no way of entry. After prolonged search around the palace, it finally found an opening through which it entered. After passing through seven huge chambers, the Hud-Hud reached Bilqees who was deep in slumber. The bird dropped the letter close to her. When Bilqees finally rose from her slumber, to her surprise and astonishment she saw the letter. After opening the letter, she read: *"In the Name of Allah, The Most Kind, The Most Merciful. This letter is from Sulaimaan. Don't rebel against me and come to me in submission."* She went out and questioned the guards to ascertain if anyone had entered the palace while she was taking her nap. The guards assured her that no one had entered and all the doors were still securely closed and locked.

She assembled her army generals, courtiers, and advisors. She read the letter to them and sought their advice. They assured her of their allegiance and their power. They were prepared for war and only awaited her command. Bilqees was not in favour of war. She explained that when kings invade a land, they lay it to utter waste. They pillage, plunder, kill and humiliate the honourable citizens. She decided to send expensive gifts to Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) to see his reaction. This course was decided on.

A large procession left Saba' with valuable gifts and a letter from Bilqees. In the letter, Bilqees had posed many intricate questions to

NABI SULAIMAAN (ALAYHIS SALAAM), HUD-HUD AND BILQEES
ascertain the integrity of Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam). When the impressive delegation with its entourage arrived, Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) paid no heed to the valuable gifts. On the contrary, he instructed them to return with the gifts and convey to Bilqees that he would come with such armies which they will not be able to confront, and he will expel them from their land with humiliation. When the delegation returned with the gifts and described to her the pomp and splendour of Nabi Sulaimaan's palace and kingdom, she decided to answer his summons. She then commenced her journey to Nabi Sulaimaan.

After Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) rejected the gifts which Bilqees, the Queen of Saba' had sent, she set out in person to meet him. Before she set out on her journey, she assembled her council members and explained that it was clear to her that Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) was no ordinary worldly king. He was backed by divine power and confrontation with him would be disastrous.

She made extraordinary arrangements for the protection of her throne. She arranged for many more soldiers to guard the seventh chamber of the palace where the throne was. This chamber was securely locked and no one would be able to enter in her absence.

Meanwhile the Hud-Hud had informed Hadhrat Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) of the journey of Bilqees towards him. Addressing the chiefs who consisted of men and jinn, and who were all his subordinates, Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) enquired whether any one of them was able to bring the throne of Bilqees to him before her arrival. Present in the gathering was *Ifreet*, a giant and the most powerful of all the jinn. He said: "I shall bring her throne to you before you end the proceedings of your court." Usually, Hadhrat Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) court proceedings endured until about midday. The jinn added that he would execute the task with honesty, therefore trust should be reposed on him in this matter.

Immediately after the jinn advanced his proposal, *Aasif Bin Barkhaya* who was an Aalim of the Allah's Book, and who had the knowledge of the *Ism-e-A'zam* (A Name of Allah Ta'ala known to only a few select Auliya), said that he would make dua to Allah Ta'ala, and he was confident that he would deliver the throne quicker than the jinn. Although some Mufasssireen say that Aasif was also a

NABI SULAIMAAN (ALAYHIS SALAAM), HUD-HUD AND BILQEES
jinn, the majority view is that he was a human being. The name of his mother was Baatura and she was from Bani Israaeel.

Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) said to Aasif: 'If you are able to accomplish this feat, you will be victorious. If you fail, you will humiliate me among the jinn although I have been appointed the ruler of men and jinn.'

Aasif renewed his wudhu, went into Sajdah, recited the Ism-e-A'zam and supplicated to Allah Ta'ala. As he supplicated, the throne of Bilqeess disappeared into the earth, and instantaneously appeared outside where Hadhrat Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) was seated on his throne. Referring to the miraculous appearance of the throne of Bilqeess in the presence of Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam), the Qur'aan Majeed says:

"When he saw it (the throne) lodged firmly in his presence, He (Nabi Sulaimaan) said: 'This is of the fadhil (grace) of my Rabb to test me whether I am grateful or ungrateful. And, whoever is grateful is grateful for his own good, and whoever is ungrateful, then verily, my Rabb is Independent (and) Gracious.'" (Surah Namal, aayat 40)

Then Hadhrat Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) ordered some changes to be effected to the throne. The purpose for this exercise was to gauge the intelligence of Bilqeess to see if she recognized her throne or not. The desire to test her intelligence was because some of the jinn told Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) that she was of defective intelligence. There are several stories surrounding this episode and the reason for this claim made by the shayaateen who were under the control of Hadhrat Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam). Some of the stories pertaining to Bilqeess are weird and far-fetched. These stories are the narrations of Bani Israeel. It is alleged that her mother was a jinn. But this is not supported by reliable evidence whether narrational or rational.

Regarding the variety of queer stories related to Bilqeess, Imaam Ibn Abi Shaibah (rahmatullah alayh) said: "Although the story is interesting, I have to say that it is to be rejected totally. It is extremely weird. It is the imagination of Ata Bin Saaib which constrained him to ascribe the story to Ibn Abbaas (radhiyallahu anhu). In all likelihood these stories have been acquired from the volumes compiled by Bani Israaeel. These stories are unreliable. Bani

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Israaeel were fabricators of novelties (fairy tales). It was their profession to change, interpolate, add and delete. We are grateful to Allah Ta'ala that He has not made us reliant on them (for ascertaining the Truth). He has bestowed to us His Kitaab via His Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). He has delivered to us such information which is beneficial. This divine information transcends greatly what they (Bani Israaeel) narrate while at the same time it is very beneficial and cautious. All praise be unto Allah."

After Bilqeess had arrived, Hadhrat Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) asked her: *"Is your throne like this?" She said: 'It appears to be the very one.'* (Surah Namal, aayat 42) When Bilqeess saw the throne whose appearance had been slightly altered, she responded with caution. She did not blurt out an emphatic affirmation to the effect that it was her throne. On the one side, she felt certain that it was her throne. However, she had left her throne securely locked and under 24 hour guarded protection. How could her throne be here? From her guarded response Hadhrat Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) understood that she was not deficient in intelligence as claimed by the jinn.

The first and foremost proposal in his dialogue with the Queen was Hadhrat Sulaimaan's *Da'wat of Tauheed*. He emphasized to her the belief in Allah Azza Wa Jal. Referring to his invitation, the Qur'aan Majeed says: *"He prevented (prohibited) her from (worshipping) what she used to worship besides Allah. Verily she was from a nation of kaafireen."* (Surah Namal, aayat 43).

This dialogue took place in a glass palace which Hadhrat Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) had ordered the jinn to construct before the arrival of Bilqeess. It was a palace of exquisite beauty constructed with the highest quality glass. The floor of the main hall where visitors would enter to meet Hadhrat Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) was made of solid glass with water flowing underneath. The water was filled with fish and other forms of sea life. The glass floor was so magnificent and transparent that it created the illusion that the entire hall was filled with water. Nabi Sulaimaan's throne together with the seating arrangement of his courtiers and the other members of his counsel were set out in this hall.

Bilqeess was told to enter. As she entered, she believed the floor was a river. Although she could not understand why Hadhrat

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Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) had instructed her to walk through water, she nevertheless obeyed. But she raised her dress and her calves were exposed. As she did so, Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) said: *“Verily, it (the palace) is constructed of glass.’ She said: “O my Rabb! Verily, I have wronged myself. I submit with Sulaimaan to Allah, the Rabb of all the worlds.” (Surah Namal, ayat 44)*

The objective of the glass palace was to impress Bilqees and to shatter the image of her own grandeur and the glory of her kingdom. When she witnessed the external/material pomp, splendour and power of Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) she understood the inferiority of her own kingdom. This had convinced her that Hadhrat Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) was indeed the Nabi of Allah Ta’ala, hence she readily accepted Islam and surrendered her kingdom to him.

According to some narrations, Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) married Bilqees while according to other versions he did not. However, he had entrusted a kingdom to her. In all likelihood it was Saba’ in Yemen which she had ruled. But now she ruled as a vassal of Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam).

Hadhrat Sayyid Abdul Qaadir Jilaani (rahmatullah alayh) states in his famous book, *Ghunyatut Taalibeen*: “Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) married Bilqees. A son was born and named Daawood. However, this child died during the lifetime of Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam). After a short while, Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) also died. A month thereafter, Bilqees too departed from this world. Hadhrat Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) would visit her once every month in the kingdom which was assigned to her.”

His monthly journeys were made possible by a wonderful *Mu’jizah (Miracle)* which Allah Ta’ala had bestowed to him. Describing this *Mu’jizah*, the Qur’aan Majeed say:

“We made subservient to Sulaimaan the wind. (Its travel) in a morning was the equivalent of a month’s journey, and (its travel) in the evening was the equivalent of a month’s journey.” (Surah Saba’, ayat 12)

Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) would command the wind to transport him and his entourage along with his throne wherever he wished to go. In a single morning or evening he would accomplish a

THE MAA-IDAHAH OF NABI ISAA (alayhis salaam)

journey which would normally take a month. Hadhrat Hasan Basri (rahmatullah alayh) narrated that Hadhrat Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) would depart from Damascus in the morning and reach Istakhar by the evening. From there he would reach Kabul by the next morning. At times he would have breakfast in Ray and supper in Samarqand. *(Ma’aalimaatut Tanzeel)*

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THE MAA-IDAHAH OF NABI ISAA (alayhis salaam)

“(Remember) When the Hawaariyyeen said: “O Isaa, Son of Maryam! Can your Rabb send down for us a Maa-idah from the sky?’ He (Nabi Isaa) said: “Fear Allah if indeed you are Believers.” They said: “We wish to eat from it to satisfy our hearts and so that we know that you have been truthful to us, and so that we become witnesses to it.”

Isaa, the Son of Maryam said:”O Allah! Send down to us a Maa-idah from the sky so that it becomes a festival (Eid) for those of us present and for our posterity, and a sign from You. And feed us. You are the best of sustainers.

Allah said: “Verily, I shall send it down to you. Then whoever among you who is ungrateful thereafter, verily, I shall punish him with such a punishment with which I shall not punish anyone in the worlds.”

THE Hawaariyyeen (Sahaabah/Disciples) of Nabi Isaa (alayhis salaam) requested him for a miracle. They asked that a tablecloth laden with food should descend for them from the heaven. When they made this request, Nabi Isaa (alayhis salaam) was extremely perturbed since such a request displayed deficiency of Imaan and a consequence could be the destruction of those who made the request in the event of them showing ingratitude. Thus, when they made this preposterous request, Hadhrat Nabi Isaa (alayhis salaam) said to them: *“Be contented with the food of the earth which Allah has bestowed to you and do not ask for a Maa-idah from heaven. Verily, if it descends upon you, it will be a decree*

from your Rabb. Verily, the Thamud were destroyed when they had asked their Nabi (Hadhrat Saalih – alayhis salaam) for a Miracle. They were then involved in a trial which ultimately led to their destruction.”

Despite Hadhrat Isaa’s *naseehat* and admonition, the Hawaariyyeen persisted with their request. When Nabi Isaa (alayhis salaam) observed their insistence, he removed his woolen cloak, made Wudhu, entered his musalla (cloister of Ibaadat). In his musalla he stood facing the Qiblah with his head lowered with humility, hands folded on his chest and with tears gushing down his cheeks in profusion. When his beard was drenched with his tears, he supplicated to Allah Ta’ala:

“O Allah! Our Rabb! Send down for us a Maa-idah from the sky so that it be an Eid (Day of Happiness) for us—for those present and for our posterity. Let it be a naseehat (good counsel) for us and a Sign from You. Grant us food on it (the Maa-idah), You are the Best of providers.”

Allah Ta’ala accepted the supplication. A huge red tablecloth between two white clouds descended from the sky. One cloud was above and the other one below the Maa-idah. All the people looked in wonder at the descending Maa-idah moving towards them. As the Maa-idah descended, Hadhrat Isaa (alayhis salaam) continued crying. He feared the condition which was attached to the fulfillment of his dua, namely the destruction of those who will react with ingratitude after having observed this wondrous event.

Whilst the Maa-idah was descending, Hadhrat Isaa (alayhis salaam) continued supplicating: *“O my Allah! Make it a rahmat (mercy). O my Allah! Do not make it a punishment. O my Allah! You have fulfilled numerous of my supplications for miracles. O my Allah! Make us grateful unto You. O my Allah! I seek refuge with You from that You are sending it (the Maa-idah) with Wrath and Punishment. O my Allah! Make it a peace and protection, and do not make it a trial.”*

Hadhrat Isaa (alayhis salaam) continued with his supplication throughout the duration of the descent of the Maa-idah until it

came to a rest in front of him. The Hawaariyyeen and all others present perceived the wonderful fragrance and aroma of the food emanating from the Maa-idah. Such fragrance was never perceived before by any of them. As the Maa-idah came to a halt on the ground in front of Hadhrat Isaa (alayhis salaam), he and the Hawaariyyeen fell down in Sajdah expressing their *shukr* (gratitude) to Allah Ta’ala.

A group of the Yahood witnessing this wonderful event left the scene with envy and wrath. Hadhrat Isaa (alayhis salaam) and his Hawaariyyoon and others sat down around the Maa-idah. A beautiful cloth was covering the food. Hadhrat Isaa (alayhis salaam) said: “Who among us will remove the cloth?” The Hawaariyyoon said: “O Ruhallaah, you are more entitled than us to open the cloth.”

Hadhrat Isaa (alayhis salaam) stood up and made a fresh Wudhu. Then he entered his musalla and performed a few raka’ats Salaat. Then he cried profusely for a long while. He supplicated to Allah Ta’ala for permission to open the Maa-idah (i.e. to remove the covering cloth), and for barkat (blessing) in the food. After his dua he returned and sat at the Maa-idah. As he removed the cloth he recited: “In the Name of Allah, the Best of Raaziqeen (Providers).”

Among the variety of foods on the Maa-idah was a huge fried filleted fish. Sham’oon, the leader of the Hawwaariyyoon, asked: “O Ruhallaah! Is this food from the food of this world or from Jannat?” Hadhrat Isaa (alayhis salaam) responded: “Why do you not derive lesson from what you have seen of the Signs. Refrain from disputing these issues. I fear that you will be punished because of this Miracle.” Sham’oon said: “O Son of the Truth! I did not intend any disrespect.” Hadhrat Isaa said: “What you see is neither food from Jannat nor from this world. It is something which Allah has created in space with his power. Eat with the Name of Allah from that which you had asked for, and praise your Rabb, for He will increase it for you.”

Sham’oon then said: “O Ruhallaah! We love that you show us a miracle within this miracle.” Nabi Isaa (alayhis salaam) said:

“Subhaanallaah! Is this what you have seen not sufficient for you that you ask for another miracle?” Hadhrat Isaa (alayhis salaam) then turned towards the fish and instructed: “O Fish! With the permission of Allah become alive as you were.” Allah Ta’ala gave life to the fish. The huge fish moved and became alive. Its scales and fins returned, and it began roaring noises like a lion. Its eyes glowed fiercely. The people were shocked with fear. Hadhrat Isaa (alayhis salaam) said: “What is wrong with you? You ask for a miracle. When your Rabb showed it to you, you detest it. O Fish! With the permission of Allah become as you were.” Once again the fish became a fried fish as it was earlier.

The Hawwaariyoon said: “O Isa! First you initiate the eating. We shall follow you.” Hadhrat Isaa (alayhis salaam) said: “I seek refuge with Allah. All those who had requested the Maa-idah should begin eating.” However, when the Hawwaariyoon saw that their Nabi abstained from eating, they developed a fear. They thought: Perhaps the Maa-idah has descended with Wrath and eating will result in their disfigurement. Thus they abstained. When Nabi Isaa (alayhis salaam) observed their attitude, he invited the poor and the sick, and ordered them to eat and praise Allah Ta’ala. 1,300 persons ate on this first occasion. Despite having eaten to their satiation, there was no decrease in the food on the Maa-idah.

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NABI DAANYAAL, ISRAEL, IMAAM MAHDI AND NABI ISAA

Nabi Daanyaal (alayhis salaam) was among the *Ulul Azam* (prominent, great, most senior) Ambiya of Bani Israaeel. He flourished centuries before Nabi Isaa (alayhis salaam).

When the sins and transgression of the Yahoood exceeded all bounds and they degenerated into the abyss of immorality, vice, bid’ah, fisq and fujoor, Allah Ta’ala sent the Babylonian (Iraqi) king, Nebuchanezar against them. From Iraq he invaded with his

army the land of Bani Israaeel. He pillaged, plundered and utterly destroyed Jerusalem. Musjidul Aqsa was shockingly desecrated and defiled, and all the manuscripts of the Tauraah were reduced to ashes. The Qur’aan refers to this occasion of destruction of Bani Israaeel, Musjidul Aqsa and Jerusalem in Surah Bani Israaeel.

The Yahoood were subjected to mass slaughter. Thousands were driven in chains to Iraq to be reduced to slavery. Among them was Nabi Daanyaal (alayhis salaam) as well. During their years of captivity and slavery, Allah Ta’ala appointed Daanyaal (alayhis salaam) the Nabi who consoled Bani Israaeel and kept alive the flame of the Deen. Like Yusuf (alayhis salaam), Allah Ta’ala had bestowed to Nabi Daanyaal (alayhis salaam) the expertise of dream interpretation. Despite the yoke of persecution and oppression which the rulers had imposed on Bani Israaeel, Nabi Daanyaal (alayhis salaam) resolutely proclaimed the Haqq of the Deen.

After the death of Bukhtnasr (Nebuchanazer), Neebushanezaar ascended the throne. The new king saw a dream which perplexed him. All the astrologers, fortune-tellers and sorcerers of the land failed to present a comforting and reasonable interpretation. The perplexity and concern of the king increased immensely. Someone then informed the king of a very pious wiseman among Bani Israaeel, namely, Daanyaal. The king sent for Hadhrat Daanyaal (alayhis salaam).

When Hadhrat Daanyaal (alayhis salaam) arrived, the king said: “I have heard the spirit of divinity is in you and that you are a man of perfect wisdom. The wisemen and astrologers have failed to interpret my dream. I have heard that you are able to interpret intricate dreams and solve such problems. If you are able to interpret my dream, you will be garbed with regal attire. You will be garlanded with a golden chain, and you will be the third highest officer in the empire.” Hadhrat Daanyaal (alayhis salaam) responded: “Retain your prizes by you. Present your awards to

someone else. I shall explain this dream to you.”

After the king explained his dream, Hadhrat Daanyaal (alayhis salaam) presented the interpretation which related to the rise and fall of empires. The specific one of interest to us at this juncture relates to the rise of an evil regime thousands of years after Hadhrat Daanyaal (alayhis salaam). He described that future regime as the ‘Reign of Abomination’ (a hated reign of terror), and the ‘Kingdom of Sin’. The establishment of this Reign of Abomination would initiate the process of the end of the world. It will open the era of total immorality and sin. At that juncture in time will appear two great, holy personalities and two great evil anarchists.

Armies will be despatched from the north. The sacred fortress will be defiled and the daily acts of sacrifices will be prohibited. Then the Reign of Abomination will be established. Continuing his explanation, Hadhrat Daanyaal (alayhis salaam) said: “I heard two sacred Voices speaking. First Voice: “When will this event of the sacred abode being trampled and defiled under the feet (of these oppressors) occur?” The second Voice answered: “Two thousand and three hundred days. Thereafter this holy place will be purified.”

In the prediction made by Hadhrat Daanyaal (alayhis salaam), is also mentioned that the ‘Reign of Abomination’ will be terminated after 45 days.

In an attempt to unravel the mystery of the predictions made by Hadhrat Daanyaal (alayhis salaam), the Saudi Shaikh Safar Bin Abdur Rahman Al-Hawaali presented the following theory:

The two holy personalities refer to Imaam Mahdi (alayhis salaam) and Nabi Isaa (alayhis salaam). The two forces of anarchy are Dajjaal and Ya’jooj and Ma’jooj. The Reign of Abomination and Sin is the state of Israel. The big conundrum or mystery is the time periods mentioned in the prediction of Hadhrat Daanyaal (alayhis salaam) and which is mentioned in the Tauraah.

This mystery, according to the venerable Shaikh Al-Hawaali, is solved when the style of the Tauraah is taken into account. ‘Day’ in terms of the Taurah refers to a year. On this basis, the prediction records that the Reign of Abomination would be established 2300 years later. Hadhrat Daanyaal had made this prediction 333 years before the advent of Nabi Isaa (alayhis salaam) according to historians. Minus 333 from 2300. The answer is 1967. This was the year that Israel had defeated the Arab armies. Although Israel was established in 1948, its invasion of Jerusalem occurred in 1967, and the prediction pertains to the establishment of the evil regime in Jerusalem. Israel did not have possession of Jerusalem prior to 1967. Thereafter Musjidul Aqsa was desecrated by the conflagration enacted by the Israelis.

The Reign of Abomination and Sin, according to the prediction, will be for 45 years:

$1967 + 45 = 2012$. According to this hypothesis of Shaikh Al-Hawaali, the state of Israel will collapse in the year 2012 or its final demise will commence in that year.

COMMENT: While this theory seems plausible there is no certitude regarding the times stated. The only absolute certitude is the fact that Israel and the U.S.A. will crumble and be destroyed by the Command of Allah Ta’ala. The Qur’aanic dictum is explicit and emphatic: “*For every nation there is an appointed time. When that appointed time arrives, it will neither be procrastinated nor advanced.*” Thus, no empire endures forever. But the drunken oppressors are too blind to see the lessons of history. They will perish like vermin.

The year 2012 does not have Shar’i substantiation. There is no certitude that the prediction was made 333 years before Nabi Isaa (alayhis salaam). These dates are clouded with ambiguity. The only absolute certainties in the prediction are the following:

- * Imaam Mahdi and Nabi Isaa (alayhimas salaam)
- * Dajjaal, Ya’jooj and Ma’jooj

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- * Establishment of Israel, the Reign of Abomination & Sin
- * Establishment of Israel by the western powers, viz. The armies from the North
- * Occupation of Jerusalem by the Israeli regime of terror
- * Desecration of Musjidul Aqsa
- * The ultimate destruction of Israel, 45 years from the time of its occupation of Jerusalem.

Even Nabi Daanyaal (alayhis salaam) did not fully understand the mystery in what he had interpreted, hence he supplicated to Allah Ta'ala to unravel the conundrum. According to the Tauraah, Allah Ta'ala informed him: *“O Daanyaal, concern yourself with your mission. A lock has been placed on the words and the matter has been decreed. The mystery will be solved at the appointed time.”* And, Allah knows best.

MAUT WILL APPREHEND YOU, WHEREVER YOU MAY BE

“And, no soul will die except with the permission of Allah at the appointed time (decreed for its death).”

(Aal-e-Imraan, aayat 145)

“Wherever you may be, Maut will find you even if you are in powerful towers.”

(An-Nisaa', aayat 78)

Once a raja (Indian king) was the guest of Hadhrat Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam). While he was in conversation with Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam), there suddenly appeared a man who cast a penetrating gaze at the king. The fearsome stare of the man sent a chill down the spine of the king. The king, trembling, asked Hadhrat Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam): “Who is

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that man who is staring at me so intently?” Hadhrat Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) responded: “He is Malakul Maut (the Angel of Death).”

The king panicked and implored Hadhrat Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) to instruct one of his jinns to deliver him (the raja) immediately to India. Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam) complying with the king's request, commanded a powerful jinn to take the king to India. Within a few moments the jinn landed in India with the king. As he placed the king in his palace, he (the raja) was shocked to see the same 'man' looking at him with a smile.

Malakul Maut was now smiling with satisfaction. He said to the king: “Allah Ta'ala had commanded me to take your soul within a few moments in India. When I saw you in Jerusalem with Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam), I was perplexed and wondered how will I ever be able to fulfil the Divine Command when you are thousands of miles away from India. Allah Ta'ala thus arranged for you to be delivered to the place where your Maut will occur at the precise decreed moment.” So saying, Malakul Maut captured the soul of the king.

*“And, everything we narrate to you of the stories of the Messengers, is that which strengthens your heart.
(Surah Hood, aayat 120)*

