

THE STORY OF MOSES (PART 11 OF 12): THE DEATH OF MOSES

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Description: God punishes the idolaters and the death of Moses.

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Moses could not believe his eyes, even though God had just warned him that a severe punishment was about to befall his people for worshipping the golden calf. Moses heart was filled with shame and anger. His own people had witnessed the power and majesty of God yet they acted belligerently and without fear of God's punishment.

“God said, “Verily! We have tried your people in your absence, and As-Samiri has led them astray.” Then Moses returned to his people in a state of anger and sorrow. He said, “O my people! Did not your Lord promise you a fair promise? Did then the promise seem to you long in coming? Or did you desire the Wrath should descend from your Lord on you, so you broke your promise to me (disbelieving in God and worshipping the calf)?” (Quran 20:83-86)

Moses turned to his brother Aaron; he was angry and grabbed him by the beard, at the same time he pulled Aaron towards him by the head. He bellowed at his brother demanding that Aaron explain why he disobeyed the instructions he had given him, and why he allowed As Samiri to beguile the Children of Israel. Aaron explained that the people did not listen to him, and were about to kill him. He appealed to Moses not to let the idolaters separate them. Aaron was not as strong and as forceful as his brother and he feared that he would not be able to control the Children of Israel so he waited for his brother Moses to return.

God's promise is true and His punishment was swift. Moses confronted As Samiri and sent him into exile.

“Moses said, go away! And verily, your punishment in this life will be that you will say, ‘Touch me not’ (you will live alone exiled away from humankind); and verily (for a future torment), you have a promise that will not fail. And look at your god, to which you have been devoted. We will certainly burn it, and scatter its particles in the sea.” (Quran 20:83-98)

The punishment imposed upon the idol worshippers was severe.

“Remember when Moses said to his people: “O my people! Verily, you have wronged yourselves by worshipping the calf. So turn in repentance to your Creator and kill yourselves (the innocent kill the wrong doers among you), that will be better for you in the Sight of your Creator.” Then He accepted your repentance. Truly, He is the One who accepts repentance, the Most Merciful.” (Quran 2:54)

God is the Most Merciful and is forgiving. After the Children of Israel had purged themselves and killed the idol worshippers among them, God accepted their repentance. Even after their continuous belligerence and stubbornness, the Children of Israel once again felt God's favor upon them.

Moses then chose 70 men from amongst the most pious elders of the Children of Israel. He returned with them to Mount Tur. They were a delegation intending to apologise to God for their behaviour. They stood back while Moses moved into a low-lying cloud to speak with God while the elders waited. When he came back to them, instead of feeling repentant and apologising the elders informed Moses that they would not truly follow him until they had seen God with their own eyes.

“O Moses! We shall never believe in you till we see God plainly.” (Quran 2:35)

The ground shook and the seventy men were struck by a lightning bolt. They fell to the ground dead. Moses was astounded. He immediately wondered what he would say to the Children of Israel. These seventy men were the best of people; Moses felt that now the Children of Israel had no hope. He turned to God.

“O my Lord, if it had been Your Will, You could have destroyed them and me before; would You destroy us for the deeds of the foolish ones among us? It is only Your trial by which You lead astray whom You will, and keep guided whom You will. You are our Protector, so forgive us and have Mercy on us, for You are the best of those who forgive. And ordain for us good in this world, and in the Hereafter. Certainly we have turned unto You.” He said (as to) My Punishment I afflict therewith whom I will and My Mercy embraces all things. That (Mercy) I shall ordain for those who are the pious and give alms; and those who believe in our signs.” (Quran 7:155-157)

God is indeed the Most Merciful and His mercy embraces all things. When Moses beseeched God He raised up the seventy dead elders. For many years the Children of Israel wandered about in the desert and wastelands. Prophet Moses suffered greatly at their hands. He endured mutiny, belligerence, ignorance, and idolatry, they even inflicted personal harm upon him. He suffered purely for the sake of pleasing God. After many years Prophet Aaron died, so Moses was finally without his greatest supporter. Still he remained steadfast; still he remained in the wilderness never quite reaching the Promised land. Moses died, still surrounded by the belligerent Children of Israel. Still surrounded by people who refused to see the miracles before their eyes, yet God in His Mercy continued to give them chance after chance.

From the traditions of Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, comes the account of Prophet Moses' death. **“The Angel of Death was sent to Moses. When he arrived Moses punched him in the eye. The Angel returned to his Lord and said, ‘You have sent me to a slave who does not want to die.’ God said, ‘Return to him and tell him to put his hand on the back of an ox and for every hair that will come under it, he will be granted one year of life.’ Moses said, ‘O Lord! What will happen after that?’ God replied, ‘then death.’ Moses said, ‘Let it come now!’ Moses then requested God to let him die close to the Holy Land so that he would be at a distance of a stone’s throw from it.”**^[1]

Footnotes:

[1]

Saheeh Al-Bukhari

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