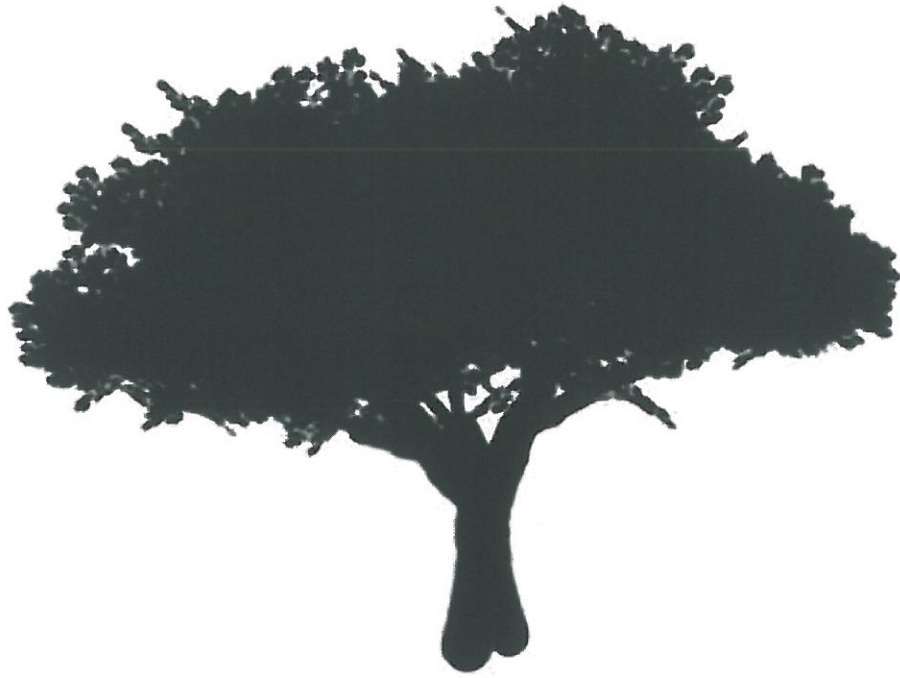


بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Most-Merciful



Road of the Shepherds

Abu Muhammad, Qasim ibn Inayat Ali

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I set off on a journey to recognise my Lord.

I hoped his friendship would be my reward.

Little did I know when I took my first stride,

My Lord was already standing by my side.

- Abu Muhammad, Qasim ibn Inayat Ali -

وَكُلًّا نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الرُّسُلِ مَا نُثَبِّتُ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ وَجَاءَكَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَقُّ وَمَوْعِظَةٌ
وَذِكْرٌ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“And We narrate to you all such stories from the events of the messengers as We strengthen your heart therewith. And in these (stories) there has come to you the truth, a good counsel and a reminder to those who believe.”

- Qur'an 11:120 -

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ مَا بَعَثَ اللَّهُ نَبِيًّا إِلَّا رَعَى
الْغَنَمَ فَقَالَ أَصْحَابُهُ وَأَنْتَ فَقَالَ نَعَمْ كُنْتُ أَرْعَاهَا عَلَى قَرَارِيطَ لِأَهْلِ مَكَّةَ

It has been narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger (Allah's peace and salutations be upon him) said, "Allah did not send any messenger except that he used to herd sheep." So the companions enquired, "And you?" Thus the Messenger (Allah's peace and salutations be upon him) replied, "Yes, I used to herd them for the people of Makkah in lieu of qarareet (money)."

- Narrated by Imam Bukhari (may Allah have mercy upon him) -

*What day is a day upon which the sun does not shine?
What man is a man who is not enlightened with imaan?*

*How dark is the night which does not bring the moon to guide?
How dark is the road of the traveller who does not choose Rasulullah ﷺ as his guide.*

*How frightening is the night sky which is not beautified with stars?
How frightening is the man who is not beautified with good character.*

*How barren is that land which bears no fruit?
How barren is that life in which the land of the hereafter is not ploughed?*

*What sea is a sea that has not a drop of water?
What eye is an eye that has not shed a tear out of fear for Allah?*

*What clouds are clouds that bear no rain?
What moments are those in which the mercy of Allah we do not gain?*

*What trees are trees that have no roots?
What heart is a heart that has no faith?*

*What mountains are mountains that have no rocks?
What faith is faith that has no firmness?*

*What river is a river which does not flow?
What belief is belief that to make others believe man does not go?*

How desolate is the heart which is not inhabited by Allah's love?

How blind are the eyes which do not see Allah's greatness?

How clouded is the mind which does not recognise Allah's oneness?

How paralysed is the body which does not bow to Allah's commands tirelessly?

How withered is the tongue which does not remember Allah continuously?

How deaf are the ears which do not listen to Allah's words attentively?

How futile is that word spoken which does not increase one's love for Allah?

How frivolous is that word heard that does not bring one closer to Allah?

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Rasulullah ﷺ said, "He who does not thank the people has not truly thanked Allah."

Therefore, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to my beloved mother and father, to my dearest wife and my cherished siblings, Anas, Faizal, Umm Adam and Bint Inayat for their moral support and assistance during the years I took to write this book.

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And finally I would like to mention Sufyan Mohmed, because he wanted to be mentioned in this book which contains stories of some of the accepted servants of Allah; hoping that he too can be named with them on the day of Judgement and gain entry into Paradise alongside them.

May Allah accept their efforts, grant them His divine pleasure and make their final abode amongst the messengers, the sideeqeen, the martyrs and the pious.

Author's Foreword

الحمد لله نحمده ونستعينه من يهده الله فلا مضل له ومن يضلل فلا هادي له واشهد ان لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له وان محمدا عبده ورسوله اما بعد

"All praise belongs solely to Allah. We praise Him and seek His assistance only. Whomsoever He guides none shall ever mislead him, and for whomsoever misguidance He decrees, none shall ever be able to guide him. I bear witness that there is no deity but Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad ﷺ is the servant and messenger of Allah."

All praise is for Allah, the Lord of the worlds, who has saved us from the darkness of disbelief and has illuminated our hearts with the light of imaan. Glorified is ar-Rahman who sent the messengers, the best of men, to guide humanity towards the path of righteousness which leads to the pleasure of the Creator. Greatest is ar-Rahim, whose complete and all-encompassing mercy did not leave mankind blind in the depths of darkness, in which they would have been ignorant of the enlightened road to salvation. Majestic is as-Saboor, who gives mankind opportunity after opportunity to turn to Him in repentance despite mankind's persistent disobedience and sinning. Magnanimous is al-Gaffar, who anticipates the moment his servants turn to Him in repentance and eagerly forgives all the sins of the sinners.

May His salutations be on His beloved Rasul ﷺ, who is a mercy to mankind and an exemplary role model who laboured tirelessly throughout his life to ensure each individual from his Ummah can reach man's ultimate goal. He who constantly worried and made concern about how every person can be saved from the flaming fires of Hell and be granted entry into the gardens of eternal bliss. I pray that each of our actions is done solely for the pleasure of Almighty Allah.

I start by praising Allah for the uncountable, immeasurable, infinite blessings He has bestowed upon me even though I have not proved to be worthy of them. I beseech Allah to send peace and salutations upon Rasulullah ﷺ, the mercy to mankind and the perfect teacher, who never

left a stone unturned in explaining the deen of Allah to his Ummah.

Since I was a child I have had a passion for reading, it was my greatest source of entertainment. My father would buy me books which I would read with great fervour, but none so much as the books he brought which told the stories of the messengers. I found them to be inspirational and would read them again and again. My copy of the translation of 'Stories of the Messengers' by Moulana Abul-Hasan Ali an-Nadwi رحمہ اللہ was read so frequently that its pages hung from the strings that bound it together.

I loved the stories of the messengers to such an extent that I had an inner desire burning within me. I used to day-dream about this aspiration coming true, to the point where I would imagine how it could happen and even as to where it could happen. I was still young and had only been attending madrasah for a few years, but I had not reached an age where I could fully understand the fundamentals of deen. When I could no longer keep this wish to myself I decided to confide in someone and thus approached my eldest sister one day. I can still distinctly remember I disclosed my ambition to her whilst she was in the kitchen at the sink. I divulged, "When I grow older I want to become a messenger." My sister whipped around and scolded me saying the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ is the last Messenger and no messenger is to come after him. I am eternally grateful to my sister for imparting to me this essential and fundamental belief.

I now pray that as I could not be with the messengers in this world, Allah unites me with them in the hereafter. The Messenger ﷺ said, '*A man will be with whom he loves (in the hereafter)*'. May this book serve as a witness to the love I have for the messengers of Allah and a means of me being enveloped in the mercy of Allah with them on the Day of Resurrection.

I decided to name this book 'The Road of the Shepherds' due to the hadith of Rasulullah ﷺ in which he mentions that every single messenger tended sheep at some point in their lives, as well as the hadith in which Rasulullah ﷺ refers to every individual as a shepherd, each of whom has his own flock for which they are accountable. I also hope this book can serve to be like a shepherd in which the reader can contemplate

over the lives of the messengers and take account of their own lives, by which they can be led towards the path of righteousness. Furthermore, I pray it serves as a reminder that each individual is going to be held accountable for every moment of his life in the court of Allah.

I pray to Allah to accept my humble efforts and pray that He makes this book a means of guidance, a source of gaining closeness to Him and a cause of acquiring love for the messengers and their way. And I ask Allah to forgive all of my shortcomings.

اللهم اليك اشكوا ضعف قوتي وقلة حيلتي ...

'O Allah, only to you do I complain of the feebleness of my strength and my lack of resources...'

Abu Muhammad, Qasim ibn Inayat Ali

Introduction

Allah created and fashioned Adam ﷺ, who is the first man and our father, from clay. It is to this soil that we, his progeny, will return and from it we will once again be raised. It is perturbing how man knowing that he was made from clay and that is where he will inevitably return is haughty and proud of himself. If man was to contemplate on the reality of his origins he would come to an understanding that at first he was nothing.

We learn from the Qur'an that Shaytaan refused to bow to Adam ﷺ when Allah commanded him. This was due to the fact that Adam ﷺ was made from clay whereas Shaytaan was made from fire. Shaytaan believed that fire was superior to clay as it rises when it is lit, whereas clay falls when it is dropped. Using this reasoning Shaytaan thought he should not fall prostrate to a being made of clay and he refused to bow. Thus we learn that due to the substance that Shaytaan was made of, i.e. fire, he had the quality of pride in him. So then as men, being made of clay, are we not supposed to have the quality of humbleness within us?

Moreover, if one contemplates on his origins and how Allah describes the beginning of man in the holy Qur'an, he will realise that all the components of man are insignificant and of a low, meaningless disposition. Yet if we reflect on these profound verses of the Qur'an we perceive the greatness of Allah in that He created the noblest of creations from things that have no value to us.

هل اتى على الانسان حين من الدهر لم يكن شيئا مذكورا. انا خلقنا الانسان من نطفة امشاج نبتليه فجعلناه سميعا بصيرا

“Did a long period of time not come upon man wherein he was nothing, not even mentioned? Verily we created man from a drop of mingled sperm in order to test him, thus we gave him the ability to hear and see.”

(Surah al-Insaan, verses 1-2)

From the stories of the messengers, we are able to understand the height of humbleness in them. Even though they are the greatest of personalities, the best of creation and those most beloved to Allah, they

never show an iota of pride to those to whom they were sent. Rather, they tolerated and endured with great forbearance all the hardships, which their people meted out upon them. At no point in their lives do we find that they felt more worthy or better than their people. Rasulullah ﷺ mentions in a hadith, *“He who humbles himself for the sake of Allah, then Allah will raise him (in status), and he who is proud, Allah will degrade him.”*

People denied the truth of the messengers due to the pride which came with their wealth, position and power. Their pride resulted in their unwillingness to accept the truth. How sad is our state of affairs that after having accepted the truth of the messengers and claiming to believe in them, our actions are contrary to what we believe and they portray the same denial as that of the disbelievers?

We further learn that after Allah had fashioned Adam ﷺ, He left him in that state for a certain amount of time. He did not immediately give him life. We should take a lesson from this that for Allah to bring something into existence, all He has to say is, “Be”, and it is. However Allah did not create Adam ﷺ in haste, in the same manner that Allah took six days to create the heavens and the earth and that which is between them. Had Allah wished, He could have said “Be,” and it would have all been brought into existence.

Haste in matters is not a commendable quality. Moreover the greatest misfortune and grief is upon those people who decide they want to enjoy this life. They hurry and exert all their effort and time in order to enjoy the pleasures of this world and take nothing with them into the eternal life of the hereafter except regret and remorse.

Was the life of those disbelievers who denied the messengers not the same, wherein their purpose in life was to enjoy it and be merry? They were unwilling to give up the pleasures of this world for those of the hereafter. Have we not degraded to that level wherein we have forgotten about the hereafter and run hastily after our share of this world? The sad difference is we have believed in the hereafter whereas those people had denied it. The unfortunate reality of it is that our actions contradict our words.

Man works all his life to build himself an empire in this world. He spends hard laborious years to buy his dream house, which he is never satisfied with and always wants a bigger home. He will always want a bigger garden, better food, more money, greater respect, higher authority and power. Before he knows it he has reached old age and it his time to leave this world. He leaves behind all his worldly efforts only to regret he did not plough the fields of the hereafter.

Take this simple allegorical example. A father gives his two sons a plot of land and some money with which they have to earn their living. They will not be given any more money after this and they need to make use of what is given to them and live off it for the rest of their lives. The first son decides to spend his money on buying exquisite food, luxurious items, expensive clothing and uses it all up on enjoying the varieties of life. Within a year his money is exhausted and his land, overgrown with weeds, is of no use to him.

The second son bought seeds and sowed them in the land. He bought livestock and made them graze in his pastures. He spent time, effort and money on cultivating the land. He only spent a minimal amount of money on the bare necessities and forsook the pleasures, which were enticing and easily available. Within a year his land was lush and green and he had a very profitable harvest. Now he had enough food and goods to maintain a luxurious life and for the remainder of his life he lived off that which his land produced.

If asked which son was wiser, anyone with even the slightest common sense will answer the second one. The money they were initially given represents our time on this earth, we have all been stipulated our amount, which we need to invest as we cannot get anymore. The land they were given are our open, vast and empty fields of Paradise in the hereafter and the seeds which were sown are our deeds. Though at first we cannot see the harvest of that which we have sown, when we go to Paradise we will see the fruits of our efforts.

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: " لَمَّا كَانَ لَيْلَةَ أُسْرِي بِي لَقِيتُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي السَّمَاءِ السَّابِعَةِ، فَقَالَ: يَا مُحَمَّدُ، أَفْرَأُ عَلَى أُمَّتِكَ السَّلَامَ، وَأَخْبِرُهُمْ أَنَّ الْجَنَّةَ عَذْبٌ مَائُهَا، طَيِّبٌ شَرَابُهَا وَأَنَّ فِيهَا قِيَعَانًا، وَأَنَّ

عَزَسَ شَجَرَهَا سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ، وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

Abdullah ibn Masood رضي الله عنه narrates from the Messenger ﷺ, that he said, "On the night in which I was taken for the night journey (to the heavens), I met Ibrahim عليه السلام in the seventh sky. Ibrahim عليه السلام said "O Muhammad, send salutations upon your nation, and inform them that the water of Paradise is sweet, its wine is delicious, and verily in it is a land without vegetation, and the planting of its trees are (to say) 'Subhana-Allah' and 'Alhamdu-lillah' and 'La-ilaha-illal-lah' and 'Allahu-akbar'."

(Musnad Bazzar)

To earn the pleasures of this life can be painstakingly difficult. On the other hand, though great sacrifices are required to attain Paradise, some of its blessings can be acquired through simple deeds. Ibrahim عليه السلام told the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to inform us that Paradise is an empty land and it is up to us to build our empire and our eternal abode through our deeds. There are simple ways of building palaces and gardens in paradise as has been enumerated in the following two ahaadith.

إِنَّ نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: مَنْ قَرَأَ قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ عَشْرَ مَرَّاتٍ، بُنِيَ لَهُ بِهَا قَصْرٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ، وَمَنْ قَرَأَهَا عِشْرِينَ مَرَّةً، بُنِيَ لَهُ بِهَا قَصْرَانِ فِي الْجَنَّةِ، وَمَنْ قَرَأَهَا ثَلَاثِينَ مَرَّةً، بُنِيَ لَهُ بِهَا ثَلَاثَةُ قُصُورٍ فِي الْجَنَّةِ

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Whoever prays 'Qul huww-Allahu ahad' (i.e. Surah Ikhlaas) ten times a palace is built for him in Paradise because of it. And whosoever prays it twenty times, two palaces are built for him in Paradise because of it. And whosoever prays it thirty times three palaces are built in Paradise for him because of it."

(Sunnan ad-Darmiy)

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ . مَرَّ بِهِ وَهُوَ يَغْرِسُ غَرْسًا فَقَالَ " يَا أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ مَا الَّذِي تَعْرِسُ " . قُلْتُ غِرَاسًا لِي . قَالَ " أَلَا أَدُلُّكَ عَلَى غِرَاسٍ خَيْرٍ لَكَ مِنْ هَذَا " . قَالَ بَلَى يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ . قَالَ " قُلْ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ يُغْرِسُ لَكَ بِكُلِّ وَاحِدَةٍ شَجَرَةً فِي الْجَنَّةِ " .

Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه narrates that verily the Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed by him whilst he was planting seedlings. The Messenger ﷺ said, "O Abu Hurayrah, what is it that you are planting?" I replied, "Seedlings for me." The Messenger ﷺ said, "Should I not direct you

towards plants that are better for you than this?" I replied, "Surely, O Messenger of Allah." The Messenger ﷺ said, "Say 'Subhana-Allah' and 'Alhamdu-lillah' and 'La-ilaha-illal-lah' and 'Allahu-akbar', a tree will be planted for you in Paradise for each one (of these phrases)."

(Sunan ibn Majah)

The world is a farm of the hereafter. Ibrahim ﷺ informed Rasulullah ﷺ to tell us that our Paradise is a vast open plain land. It is up to us to cultivate it in this world and enjoy its eternal pleasures in the hereafter. There are numerous verses of the Qur'an and a vast number of ahaadith which accentuate the beauty and allure of Paradise. Suffice it to say, it is that which no eye has seen, no ear has heard and that which cannot be comprehended by the heart of man.

It has been said that there were four kings who ruled the entire world. Two were believers and two were disbelievers. The believers were Sulayman ﷺ and Zhul Qarnayn and the disbelievers were Bukhtanahr and Namrud.

Man at first desires wealth. When he has accumulated wealth to the highest degree he aims to gain prestige amongst the people. When he feels he has accomplished this he wants authority. When he has expanded his authority over the people he craves for power, after which he yearns for kingship. Namrud had gained kingship to the highest degree as he ruled the known world. So he had no further worldly means of progression. Thus he claimed divinity and challenged the King of kings.

With regards to the manner in which Allah destroyed Namrud, it is mentioned that he challenged Allah against his army and questioned Ibrahim ﷺ where the army of his Lord was, to which Ibrahim ﷺ replied, "Soon you will see the doing of His weakest army."

Allah sent upon them a cloud of mosquitoes which ate them and their animals to such an extent that their bones were gleaming white. However it was destined for Namrud to survive. A mosquito entered through his nose and went into his brain. It attacked him internally and drank the

blood from his brain.

To find relief from the pain of the mosquito he would tell someone to hit his head with force. When he was hit on the head the mosquito would desist from attacking his brain, but then his head would hurt from the severe beatings. Like this he suffered greatly for a very long time, when the internal pain would become too hard to bear he would order someone to beat his head until the external pain was too much to bear.

Finally Namrud found no alternative and called for a servant. "Strike my head!" he ordered his servant.

The servant drew his sword and split Namrud's head in two. Unfortunately the mosquito was also struck by the sword and lost one of its wings. It cried out, "O my Lord, I entered in compliance to your command, and now my wing has broken."

Allah replied, "Do you wish for recompense or do you desire your wing back?"

The mosquito asked, "What is the recompense?"

Allah answered, "The equivalent of the world since I created it until I destroy it."

The mosquito replied, "I do not desire that, I want my wing."

Usually a man who conquers and kills the king of a land becomes the owner of the previous king's kingdom. The mosquito too could have asked for the kingdom but only asked for its wing to be repaired. We must take heed from this, that the ruler of the world, who was considered the greatest man alive and who himself thought he was a god was killed by a tiny and weak mosquito. Moreover, this mosquito had the sense to realise that this world was only temporary and therefore only asked Allah for its needs rather than its desires.

عَنْ سَهْلِ بْنِ سَعْدٍ، قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: لَوْ كَانَتِ الدُّنْيَا تَعْدِلُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ جَنَاحَ بَعُوضَةٍ مَا سَقَى كَافِرًا مِنْهَا شَرْبَةً مَاءً.

Sahl bin Sa'd رضي الله عنه narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "If to the Allah the value of the world was equal to that of the wing of a mosquito he would not give a disbeliever from

it (i.e. the world) one sip of water to drink.”

(Sunan at-Tirmizhi)

The mosquito, a creation which is considered as insignificant and weak, realised that the value of the world was worthless if it meant it had to lose its wing. What use is this life going to be, if it meant having to sacrifice its wing? Why then cannot man, who is the best of creations and has been honoured with intelligence, not realise that the value of the world is worthless if it means having to lose the eternal pleasures of the hereafter? What use is this fleeting world going to be to us if we have to sacrifice Paradise for it? What use is this temporary world going to be to us if we are going to have to endure the unbearable torments of Hell because of it?

The fulfilment of your needs will satiate you whereas to fulfil your desires will only make you hungry for more. Allah gave Namrud a kingdom the likes of which no one had received before, and Namrud claimed divinity which no one had done before. Initially he had waged war against the kings of the world but now he waged war against the King of kings, the King of the heavens and the earth, by claiming divinity. Observe his final end, how could he have stood against Allah when he was annihilated by a mere mosquito.

Rather than chasing this world and its temporary pleasures, its wealth, prestige, honour, governance and status we need to truly acknowledge that whatever we are to earn in this world has already been stipulated for us even before we were born. The world was created for us, and we are created for the hereafter. So rather than foolishly trying to attain what is already ours, we need to make an effort for that which needs to be earned.

Once, King Namrud summoned Ibrahim عليه السلام to his court, in order to question him regarding his beliefs. Namrud claimed to be a god and he feared that Ibrahim's عليه السلام faith would put his divinity to question. The dialogue which ensued between the two of them is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an:

'Have you not reflected upon the one to whom Allah gave a kingdom who argued

with Ibrahim ؑ regarding his Lord. When Ibrahim ؑ said, "My Lord is He who gives life and causes death." He replied, "I too give life and cause death.'

Namrud then called for two men, he killed one and spared the other. He attempted to prove that he also had power over life and death. When Ibrahim ؑ realised that this reasoning would not work against the clouded mind of Namrud he resorted to reasoning with a power which Namrud could not claim.

'Ibrahim ؑ said, "Verily Allah causes the sun to rise from the east, you then cause it to rise from the west." Thus the one who disbelieved was confounded.'

Here the question could be posed that how Namrud was foolish to claim that he had power over life and death, similarly, why didn't he claim that he was the one who caused the sun to rise from the east? Why did he not ask Ibrahim ؑ to tell his Lord to cause it to rise from the west instead? The reason for this is that even though he claimed to be a god, he knew within his heart that Allah is the one true Lord of the heavens and the earth. He truly believed that if he was to put the same challenge forward to Ibrahim ؑ then Allah would have changed the whole system of the world by causing the sun to rise from the west, due to which he would have lost his claim to divinity.

Ponder over the conviction of Namrud. A man who claimed to be god had so much conviction in Allah that he was convinced if he challenged Allah, then Allah would have made the sun rise from the west. We face obstacles in our lives in which science, experience and knowledge tells us that to overcome such an obstacle is impossible. We need to have firm faith that Allah is capable of all things. He has power over everything. Allah can make the extraordinary happen. How miracles used to happen at the hands of the messengers, if we were to make an effort on our imaan, we too will see miracles happening in our everyday lives.

Contemplate on the faith of those magicians of Firown who had been enlightened with imaan. Prior to affirming their faith in Allah, they had been summoned to compete against Moosa ؑ in a magic contest because Firown considered the miracles of Moosa ؑ as nothing but

magic tricks. The magicians were desirous of the wealth and luxuries of the temporary world, so they asked Firown, *“Will we be rewarded if we gain the upper-hand?”*

Firown replied, *“Yes, and indeed you will then be amongst those who are near (to me).”* Firown considered himself as a god who had palaces under which rivers flowed. He did not stipulate a certain countable reward for the magicians. Rather he promised them something they deemed much greater than any material reward. If the magicians were made from amongst those who were near and dear to Firown, then he would give them whatever they desired whenever they desired it.

When the contest began the magicians threw their ropes and sticks which began moving like snakes. They were ecstatic and believed that they had outdone Moosa عليه السلام. When Moosa عليه السلام threw his staff it transformed into a huge snake which devoured the magic of the magicians. The magicians were awestruck and immediately fell into prostration to Allah, having recognised that what Moosa عليه السلام had done was not magic. They proclaimed loudly, *“We have believed in the Lord of the Worlds, the Lord of Moosa and Haroon.”*

Firown was furious. The truth of Moosa عليه السلام and Haroon’s عليه السلام apostleship and message had been made clear to all. To undermine the magicians and their faith he bellowed, *“You believed in Moosa before I gave you permission? He is indeed your leader who taught you magic, but soon you will know. I will surely cut off your hands and your feet from opposite sides and I will hang you on the trunks of palm trees. Then you will know which of us is more severe in torment and ever-lasting.”*

Firown had threatened to sever either the right hand and left foot or the left hand and right foot of each magician and then have them crucified, whilst they were suffering from this unbearable pain. However the magicians had been blessed with true faith, they had been enlightened with it mere moments before. Such faith cannot be swayed by even the strongest winds of disbelief. They boldly answered back to Firown, *“We will never give you preference over that which has come to us of clear proofs and over that Being who has created us. So decree whatever you are to decree, you can*

only decree for this worldly life.”

The magicians, who had minutes before been promised the greatest reward that Firown could give, had now been threatened with the severest punishment that Firown could mete out. The strength of their imaan did not incline them towards the promised riches, nor did it allow them to feel any fear for the pain and agonies they would have to endure.

Now reflect upon our imaan. Many of us have been blessed with faith from birth. We have had more time, opportunities and chances to strengthen our imaan. Taking this into account how many of us forsake our obligatory duties to Allah and His creation in trying to attain our allotted portion of this world? How many of us would tremble or forsake Islam if we were threatened with death?

Sulayman عليه السلام once prayed to Allah for a kingdom the likes of which had not been given to anyone before him, nor would be surpassed by anyone after him. Allah granted him this kingdom. He was able to understand the language of animals. He was given control over the wind, which would carry his throne allowing him to travel a journey of a couple of months in mere hours. The wind would also carry voices to his ear allowing him to hear words spoken a long distance away.

He was given command over the jinn. They used to construct architectural masterpieces, strong forts, palaces and beautiful cities for him. They would make statues of immense beauty and bowls as large as ponds for people to eat from. They would build large firm pots for cooking. Some would dive deep into the oceans to mine for precious jewels.

It has been narrated that once Sulayman عليه السلام was travelling upon his throne with his grandeur and dignity. He happened to pass by a man from Banu Isra'eel. The man was overwhelmed by the power and kingdom which had been granted to Sulayman عليه السلام. He exclaimed, *“Subhana-Allah! (Glory be to Allah) Indeed the family of Dawood has been gifted with a unique kingdom!”*

The wind carried the voice of the man and placed it at the ear of Sulayman ﷺ. He ordered for the man to be brought in his presence. He enquired from him why he had exclaimed what he had uttered. He then said to him, “The reward for one ‘Subhana-Allah’ on the day of judgement shall be far greater than whatever the family of Dawood has been given in this earthly life.”

Deliberate over the similarity of Sulayman’s ﷺ kingdom with today’s technology. The travelling on the wind can be likened to aeroplanes, the wind carrying voices to mobile communication, the architectural masterpieces to the large cities with skyscrapers, large pots for cooking to industrial factories and the diving jinn to submarines. If we were given these today we would control the land, the sea and the air. Who can truly say they would give up all of this for one ‘Subhana-Allah’? We have become such that we are willingly disobeying the acts Allah has made incumbent upon us for the pennies of this world. Messengers were sent to guide us and assist us in realising that the wealth and power of this world will definitely come to an end, but the rewards of good deeds will last forever.

We need to make an effort on our imaan such that one ‘Subhana-Allah’ becomes more precious to us than all the riches and wealth of this world.

I pray that by reading the stories of the messengers, we are reminded of our true purpose in life. And I hope that these narratives serve as a means of strengthening our faith. We should further realise from these stories that Allah is not bound to use means. Allah does with means, without means and against means to help his servants. If we were to make an effort on our imaan then we will also experience similar miracles which the messengers and their companions experienced.

*Life is an opportunity; only once does it come.
It flies by so many and is only seized by some.*

خلق الله تعالى آدم من طين وتركه في هيئته حتى حين
يا أسفاه علي الناس المتكبرين وعلى الذين في أمورهم معجلين

*“Allah Ta'ala created Adam ﷺ from clay,
And left him in that state for a while,
Misfortune upon those people who are proud,
And upon those who are hasty in their matters.”*

- Abu Muhammad, Qasim ibn Inayat Ali -

Adam عليه السلام

The Creation of Man

To create Adam عليه السلام, Allah sent Jibra'eel عليه السلام to the earth to get some clay.

"I seek Allah's refuge from your decreasing or disfiguring me," the earth did say.

Upon hearing this, Jibra'eel عليه السلام returned to Allah without taking one bit,

And said, *"My Lord, the land sought refuge in you, so I granted it."*

Allah then sent Mika'eel عليه السلام; and the same thing did occur.

He returned to Allah; from the earth, clay he did not procure.

Allah then sent the Angel of Death عليه السلام; Allah's refuge was sought by the land.

He replied, *"I also seek Allah's refuge that I return without fulfilling His command."*

From different lands, different types of dust did he take.

The children of Adam عليه السلام, from different compositions of clay Allah did make.

White, red, black and yellow people make up mankind.

In life good and evil, ease and sorrow and everything between them we find.

"I am going to place a vicegerent upon the earth," to the angels, Allah said.

They replied, *"Will You place those who will cause mischief, and blood, they will shed?"*

The angels told Allah that they praise Him and only Him do they glorify.

"I know that which you do not know," was Allah's reply.