

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ كَمَا هُوَ أَهْلُهُ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ الْوَلَدِ أَدَمَ كَمَا يُحِبُّ وَيَرْضَى بِأَنْ يُصَلَّى عَلَيْهِ

In The Name Of Allah The Most Compassionate Very Merciful
All Praise Due To Allah And Peace And Blessings Be Upon His Beloved Messenger

12,000 Jews Turned into Monkeys – A Quranic Story

It is narrated that 70,000 people of the Ummah of Hazrat Dawood – peace be upon him – used to live at the place called “Aqabah” situated near the ocean in the village of “Ela”. They used to lead a very lavish and happy life. Allah Almighty put them through a trial by forbidding to fish on Saturdays and kept its permissibility in the remainder days of the week but the fact that fishing was forbidden on Saturdays because the fish used to come in abundance only on Saturdays compared to other days of the week. The devil misled them and advised them to dig a few streams from the ocean turning their ends into ponds, and when the fish enter into the pond on Saturdays then close their exit without having to fish that day, and by doing this they can catch them the next day. They liked the manipulative strategy without thinking that if the fish are trapped by closing their exit in Saturdays then it is actually a form of hunting which was made forbidden for them.

The Jews were split into three groups that day:

- I. Some abstained from fishing on Saturdays and tried to reform the ones that were eager to do it. They were angry at them and cut ties with them.

2. Some remained silent deliberately despite knowing and acknowledging that it was an evil idea and they even try to stop the first group from preaching to them to abstain from fishing by saying, “Why are you advising a nation which is about to be perish by Allah’s wrath or punishment?”
3. Some were those cruel unjust people that went against Allah’s Commands openly and went out fishing on Saturday believing in the devil’s manipulative strategy, ate the fish and sold them too.

When the disobedient went for fishing after being stooped then the people that tried to stop them said, “We will not have any relationship with these transgressors.” Hence, they divided the village into two portions by erecting a wall from the middle and also built a gate for entrance and exit. Hazrat Dawood – peace be upon him – cursed the fishermen in the state of anger. The effect of it was such that none of them came out the whole day. When people crossed the wall to find out, they saw that all of them turned into monkeys. When they opened the gate and entered the premises, they found out that they still recognized their relatives’ faces and came closer and sniffed their clothes and immensely cried, but people did not recognize the ones that were turned into monkeys. The number of those who were turned into monkeys was 12,000. They lived for three days and were not able to eat or drink anything during that time, and died in this state of hunger and thirst. The group that stopped them from fishing was saved and according to authentic narrations, the ones that remained silent and considered it bad were also saved from Allah’s punishment.

(Tafseer Saawi, Vol. 1, p. 72)

The summary of this event is mentioned in Surah Baqarah as follows:

وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ الَّذِينَ اعْتَدَوْا مِنْكُمْ فِي السَّبْتِ فَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُونُوا قِرَدَةً

خَسِيفَ

And, undoubtedly, you surely know, those among you who rebelled in the matter of Saturday (Sabbath). So We said to them, "Be Apes, despised."

(Al-Baqarah 2, Verse 65)

The detailed story is mentioned in Surah A'raaf as follows:

وَسَّأَلُهُمْ عَنِ الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ حَاضِرَةَ الْبَحْرِ إِذْ يَعْدُونَ فِي السَّبْتِ إِذْ
تَأْتِيهِمْ حِيتَانُهُمْ يَوْمَ سَبْتِهِمْ شُرَّعًا وَيَوْمَ لَا يَسْبِتُونَ لَا تَأْتِيهِمْ
كَذَلِكَ نَبْلُوهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿١٦٣﴾

And ask them the condition of the town that was on the seashore; when they crossed the limit in the matter of sabbath, when on the day of Sabbath their fish came swimming before them, and the day that was not of Sabbath, they did not come. Thus We used to try them on account of their disobedience.

وَإِذْ قَالَتْ أُمَّةٌ مِّنْهُمْ لِمَ تَعِظُونَ قَوْمًا لَا إِلَهَ مِثْلُكُمْ أَوْ مُعَذِّبُهُمْ عَذَابًا
شَدِيدًا ۖ قَالُوا مَعذِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٦٤﴾

When a group among them said, 'Why do you admonish those whom Allah is to kill or to chastise with a severe torment'. They said, 'as an excuse before your Lord, and that haply they may fear'.

فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ أَنْجَيْنَا الَّذِينَ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ السُّوءِ وَأَخَذْنَا
الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا بِعَذَابٍ بَّيِّنٍ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿١٦٥﴾

Then when they forgot what they had been admonished, We rescued those who forbade from evil, and caught the unjust in a vile torment the recompense of their disobedience.

فَلَمَّا عَتَوْا عَنْ مَّا نُهُوا عَنْهُ قُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُونُوا قِرَدَةً خَاسِئِينَ ﴿١٦٦﴾

Then again when they rebelled against the Command of prohibition, We said to them, 'be you apes, driven away.'

(Al-A'raaf 7, Verse 163-166)

Lesson:

It creates awareness for us to realize the horrific consequences of going against Allah's Commands, and also that the curse of a Prophet can destroy anyone's life

and bring forth the wrath of Allah Almighty and he becomes disgraced in this world and in the hereafter. We seek Allah's refuge from this!

The heart-rendering incident of the people of Ela contains a great deal of wisdom and counsel. May the Muslims travel the straight path of fearing Allah Almighty and they abstain from going against the Commands of Allah and Rasool – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – and gain the goodness of both the worlds. Ameen!