

An Account Of The Makers Of The Pit

Almighty Allah says in the holy Qur'an:

***'Killed (or cursed) be the makers of the pit, of the fire (kept burning) with fuel, when they sat by it, and were witnesses of what they did with the believers (that is, they give witness before their King or on the Day of Judgment or their own limbs and organs will testify against them), and they did not take vengeance on them for aught except that they believed in Allah, the Mighty, the Praised.'* (85:4-8)**

'Ali ibn Ibrahim has narrated that the man who had incited the people of Abyssinia to fight against the people of Oman was Zoonawaas, the last of the kings of himyar. He had adopted the religion of Jews and the himyar tribe had also become Jews. He had also adopted the name Yusuf for himself. They continued to follow that religion for quite some time. Then the people informed them that there was a group of people in Najran who followed the religion of Jesus. Of course they had remained steadfast in the religion of 'Isa and were acting according to the commandments of Injeel (Bible). Their leader was 'Abdullah bin Yamin. The flatterers of Zoonawaas incited him to attack Najran and to destroy them or to force them to revert to Judaism. So Zoonawaas entered Najran, gathered the people and forced them to enter the Jewish faith. They refused to do so. He applied much force but still the people did not agree. Finally, zoonawaas got pits dug in the ground, filled them with wood and put it on fire. He threw many people in that fire, killed many with swords and tortured some to painful death. Thousands were killed in this way. One of the oppressed, Doos, mounted a horse and fled. The king's men followed him but could not catch him. Then Zoonawaas returned to Sana'a with his army. The above verses of the Holy Qur'an refer to that event.

It is recorded from authentic chains from Imam Muhammad al-Baqir that once Amir al-Mu'minin called a Christian priest from Najran and inquired about the story of the makers of the pit from him. He narrated it in his own way. 'Ali said, No, it is not like that. Listen, I tell you what had happened. Allah had appointed a Prophet for the people of Abyssinia from among themselves. But the people rejected him and fought with him. He killed many companions of the Prophet and arrested many along with the Prophet. Then he dug pits in the ground, filled them with fire and announced that safe will remain the one who rejects the

religion of this Prophet and those who do not do so will be burnt in this pit. Many rejected the faith of the Prophet and many were hurled in the fire. At last, a woman was brought forth who had a babe in arms (aged only one month). The king was informed that the woman refuses to obey the king's order. So she was threateningly asked whether she was prepared to obey the king or was prepared to be burnt alive. They intended to fling her in the fire. On looking at her child, the woman hesitated. The child according to Divine commandment spoke up: O my kind mother! enter the fire with me. By Allah, this burning will please Him. So the woman jumped into the fire with her child.

According to another tradition, 'Ali said that the faith of Majus (fire worshippers) was also ordained in a book and that they too had a king. One day that king in a moment of passion indulged in adultery with his own mother and sisters. When he came to his senses, he abhorred this misdeed but to save his face told his people that this deed of his was proper and admissible. When the people refused to agree with him he made pits in the ground and hurled them into the fire ignited in those pits.

Maytham al-Tammar has reported from 'Ali that Amir al-Mu'minin said, the makers of the pit were ten people who were burnt in the fire. Likewise ten persons will be killed by people in this bazaar of al-Kufah. He intended to say that the cursed man Ibn Ziyad had, after his arrival in al-Kufah, ordered a group to oppose 'Ali and that those of them who did not fulfill his wish were killed. As will be narrated henceforth, Inshallah-Maytham al-Tammar and Rashid Hujri were also among that group.

It is recorded in reliable sources that Imam al-Baqir said that Umar sent a man as the head of an army to a Syrian city. That city was captured and its residents accepted Islam. A mosque was built for them. When it was completed, it fell down. It was reconstructed, but again fell down. This happened thrice. When this strange happening was reported to caliph Umar, he called the companions of the holy Prophet. When none of them could explain this happening he asked 'Ali who said that the reason was that in the old days Allah Almighty had appointed a Prophet for the residents of this place but they killed the messenger of Allah and buried him at the spot where the mosque is being constructed. The body of that Prophet is still wet with blood. Write to the commander of the army to dig that place and take out the body of that Prophet which they will find fresh. Ask them to offer prayer on him and to rebury the body at such and such place. Thereafter if the Masjid is rebuilt it will not fall. When 'Ali's assertion was complied with the mosque remained safe. According to another tradition, 'Ali asked them to write to the army chief to construct the Masjid on the right side where they would find a man sitting with his hand on his nose. Umar asked 'Ali as to who he was? 'Ali said, just do what I say. When that person appears, I will tell who he is. In short the army chief was asked to do what 'Ali said, After some time the commander wrote to the caliph to inform him that the instructions of 'Ali were carried out and now the Masjid did not fall. Then Umar asked 'Ali about that man. Amir al-Mu'minin informed him that he was the Prophet of the Makers of the pit and his events have been mentioned in detail in the holy Qur'an's commentary.

It is mentioned in a reliable tradition that one day 'Ali climbed the pulpit of the mosque and announced: Ask me whatever you want to before you do not find me. The cursed hypocrite Ashash bin Qais rose

and said, O Amir al-Mu'minin! Why is jizyah tax being collected from the Majus when they are not Ahl al-Kitab and when they do not have any Prophet among them? He said, It was not like that. They are the people of the book and Allah did send a Prophet for them. They had a king who, one night being intoxicated, called his daughter to his bed and indulged in adultery with her. The next morning when his people came to know about it they gathered before him and scolded him saying: O King! You have dirtied our religion. Now come with us so that we may stone you to death in the forest. The king replied, "All of you should assemble and hear what I have to say. If you can accept what I say then believe it. Otherwise you may do whatever you like." All the residents of the city gathered and, addressing them, the king said, When Allah created human race no one was dearer to Allah than Adam and Hawwa' (Eve). The people said, Yes, it was so. Then the king asked: Did Adam not marry his sons with his daughters? The people replied, "He did." "So I have followed his practice," said the king. The people said, "O King! You are right. This is a true religion." They were pleased with his explanation and mutually decided that marriage with the nearest kin was permissible. Allah removed all knowledge from their hearts and lifted His Book from them. Now they are infidels and will go directly to Hell.

Many reliable traditions mention that the Majus had a Prophet who was called Jaamaasp. He also brought a Book for them from Allah. That book was inscribed on the skin of twelve thousand cows. They killed their Prophet and burnt down that Book.

According to a reliable tradition, a miscreant asked some questions to Imam as-Sadiq and then became a Muslim. One of his questions was did the Majus also have any Prophet because I see that they possess weighty volumes, impressive sermons and precious maxims. They also believe in reward and punishment after death and they have a code of life too which they follow. Imam replied, "There is no community for whom Allah did not send a Messenger. A Messenger was sent to Majus also with a Book. But they neither obeyed the Prophet nor followed the Book." He asked, "Who was that Prophet? That people say he was Khalid bin Sinan?" Imam replied, "Khalid was a Bedouin Arab. He was not a Prophet. People always talk such nonsense." Then he inquired whether Zoroaster was a Prophet? Imam said, "Zoroaster circulated some wrong deeds and claimed to be a Prophet. Some believed in him and some rejected him. Then they left him in a forest where the animals killed him." He asked, "During the times of ignorance (pre-Islam) who were nearer to the Truth, Majus or Arabs?" He said, "In the time of ignorance the Arabs were nearer to the pure religion of Ibrahim compared to the Majus. The latter denied all Prophets and had rejected all miracles and Divine Books. They never acted according to the ways of the Prophets. The king of the Majus had killed three hundred kings in the past. Majus did not perform the bath after sexual intercourse whereas the Arabs used to do so. This bath is one of the distinct conditions of the Abrahamic religion.

The Majus were also not circumcising their males whereas the Arabs were. It is the way of the Prophets and the first person to be circumcised was Prophet Ibrahim. The Majus neither covered their dead with coffin cloth nor bathed them whereas the Arabs did so. The Majus were throwing away their dead in forests and lakes and caves but the Arabs were burying them after digging graves for them as was the

way of the Prophets of Allah. The first man for whom a grave was dug was Adam. The Majus permit marriages with mothers, sisters and daughters but the infidels of the Arabs do not allow it. The Majus denied importance of Ka'bah whereas the Arabs perform hajj of the Ka'bah. The Arabs consider Ka'bah as the house of Allah and Torah and Injeel (bible) as Books of Allah and keep asking answers to their problems from the People of the Book (Ahl al-Kitab). In short the Arabs were nearer to the true religion in every aspect of human life." He said, "They considered marriage with mothers and sisters permissible because it was the way of Adam." Imam said, "How do they regard it permissible when they say that Adam, Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, 'Isa and all Prophets have declared it haram (prohibited)?"

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