

'Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn narrated:

- 1 I visited the Prophet (peace be upon him) and tied my she-camel at the door.
- 2 Some people from the Tamīm tribe came in and he said to them: 'Accept the happy news, Banī Tamīm'.
- 3 They said: 'You have given us happy news, so give us'. They repeated it twice.
- 4 Then people from Yemen came in, and he said: 'Accept the happy news, people of Yemen, as the Tamīm people have not'.
- 5 They said: 'We accept it, Messenger of God'.
- 6 They then said: 'We have come to ask you about this matter'.
- 7 He said: 'There was God, and there was nothing other than Him.
- 8 His throne was on water.
- 9 He wrote everything in the Record,
- 10 and He created the heavens and the earth'.
- 11 Someone called out: Ibn al-Ḥuṣayn, your she-camel has gone. I went out, and it was not to be seen.
- 12 By God, I wish I had abandoned it.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3191.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿He it is who has created the heavens and the earth in six aeons, whereas His throne has rested upon water, so that He may test you [to make manifest] which of you is best in conduct.﴾ (11: 7)
- ﴿It is We who will bring the dead back to life. We record whatever [deeds] they send ahead, as well as the traces they leave behind. We keep an account of all things in a clear record.﴾ (36: 12)
- ﴿Say: 'Do you indeed disbelieve in Him who has created the earth in two Days? And do you claim others to be His equals? It is He who is the Lord of all the worlds. (9) He it is who placed on the earth firm mountains towering above it, and bestowed His blessings on it, and measured out its varied provisions in four days, ensuring equity for all who seek [such provisions]. (10) Then, He applied His design to the sky, which was but smoke; and said to it and to the earth: 'Come, both of you, willingly or unwillingly'. They both said: 'We do come willingly'. (11) So He decreed that they become seven heavens in two days, and assigned to each heaven its task. We adorned the sky nearest to the earth with lights, and made them secure. Such is the design of the Almighty, the All-Knowing.﴾ (41: 9-12)
- ﴿We have created everything in due measure.﴾ (54: 49)

The Narrator

'Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn ibn 'Ubayd's appellation was Abu Nujayd. He belonged to the Khuzā'ah tribe. He embraced Islam in Year 7 AH, 629 CE, which witnessed the Battle of Khaybar. He carried the banner of the Khuzā'ah in the Muslim army which took over Makkah. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb sent him to Basrah to teach Islam to its population. He was known to have his supplication answered. He did not participate in the events and troubles that led to the assassination of the third caliph, 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān. He died in Year 53 AH 671 CE.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) speaks about some matters known to God only, including some of His attributes and actions. He mentions that God was always in existence, before the creation of anything, and that His throne was on water before He created the heavens, earth and the universe. He also mentions that God wrote in the Imperishable Tablet all that will happen to His creation. He then created the universe.



Message and Meaning

1

'Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn visited the Prophet (peace be upon him), but before he entered he tied his camel's front leg with its back leg so that it would not be loose or run away.

2

As 'Imrān was sitting with the Prophet (peace be upon him), a delegation from the Tamīm tribe came in. The Prophet said to them that he had some happy news for them. They would have done well to accept the Prophet's happy news whatever it might have been. This is particularly true as he intended to give the news that whoever accepts Islam shall not remain forever in Hell, no matter how grave his sins may be.

3

When the Tamīm people heard the happy news they became inclined to request some gain. They said to the Prophet: 'You have given us happy news; now give us'. The Prophet was displeased with them because they did not show much care for the happy news, but rather hoped for some immediate material gain. The only happy news they understood was such gain.

4

A little later, the Ash'arīs, who were Abu Mūsā's people, came in and the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to them: 'Accept the happy news, people of Yemen, as the Tamīm people have not'. The people of Tamīm had accepted Islam, but because they were newcomers to Islam, they did not show the proper acceptance of the good news the Prophet wanted to give them. They coupled their acceptance with a request for money. As such, they were in the same position as that of rejecting it.

5

The people of Yemen were better informed than the Tamīm people. They accepted the happy news without making any conditions or putting forward any requests. The Prophet says: 'Faith is Yemeni and wisdom is Yemeni'.⁽¹⁾

6

Having accepted the happy news, they asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) about the universe, or what is seen of God's creation. Their question did not express what they were actually asking about, but it became apparent through the Prophet's answer.

7

The Prophet (peace be upon him) answered their question saying that God existed but there was nothing of the universe we see, including the heavens and earth. This does not preclude that God had created other things. God's throne was created before that and it existed as appears later in the hadith. God creates what He wills.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3499; Muslim, 52.



The Prophet then informs them that God's throne was on water before He created the heavens and earth. God says: 'He it is who has created the heavens and the earth in six aeons, whereas His throne has rested upon water, so that He may test you [to make manifest] which of you is best in conduct'. (11: 7) When God created the heavens and earth, He established Himself on the throne above the heavens. God says: 'Your Lord is God who has created the heavens and the earth in six aeons, and is established on the throne'. (7: 54)

God's throne is the highest, greatest and largest of all God's creation. The word 'throne' means the 'seat of dominion'.



The Prophet then explains that God wrote the events that would happen to people and what takes place throughout the universe. This written record is in the Imperishable Tablet. 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ said: I heard God's Messenger (peace be upon him) say: 'God recorded the destiny of His creation fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and earth. He said: His throne rested on water'.⁽¹⁾



The Prophet then tells us that God Almighty created the universe after He had created water and the throne, and that He recorded the destiny of His creation in the Imperishable Tablet. God gives us some information about the creation of the heavens and the earth. He says: 'Say: Do you indeed disbelieve in Him who has created the earth in two Days? And do you claim others to be His equals? It is He who is the Lord of all the worlds. (9) He it is who placed on the earth firm mountains towering above it, and bestowed His blessings on it, and measured out its varied provisions in four days, ensuring equity for all who seek [such provisions]. (10) Then, He applied His design to the sky, which was but smoke; and said to it and to the earth: 'Come, both of you, willingly or unwillingly'. They both said: 'We do come willingly'. (11) So He decreed that they become seven heavens in two days, and assigned to each heaven its task. We adorned the sky nearest to the earth with lights, and made them secure. Such is the design of the Almighty, the All-Knowing'. (41: 9-12)



Someone then told 'Imrān that his she-camel had broken loose and gone. He went out to look for her, but she was not to be seen. Something like a mirage prevented him from seeing her.



'Imrān regretted having left God's Messenger without listening to the rest of the Prophet's hadith.

1 Related by Muslim, 2653.

Implementation

1

'Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn tied his she-camel at the door of the Prophet's mosque. This is what is required to rely on God, the Exalted. We should always take the necessary measures and then rely on God's care. In this way, 'Imrān did not just leave the camel loose and say that he relied on God.

2

The Prophet (peace be upon him) liked to give his companions some happy news. It is good to add all types of good news when one speaks to other people. One may highlight the happy news of what God has prepared for people of faith and perseverance when they encounter adversity. They will experience a taste of heaven in this life and will be in Heaven in the life to come. Another happy news is that distress and worries will certainly disappear. Teachers and scholars must not limit their discourse to explaining Fiqh rulings in different matters, but rather need to add what appeals to people's hearts.

3

Success in the life to come cannot be matched by any other success. This explains why the Prophet disliked the Tamīm people's attitude when they were not content to have the happy news but requested some gifts. We lose much when we look for reward in this life and pray for the luxuries of this world, ignoring the life to come and its far greater world.



4

It is important not to be too shy in asking about anything related to religion, whether it relates to its rulings of what is lawful and what is unlawful, or about what happens on the Day of Judgement or about the accounts of past communities.

5

Expect much good from your Lord, for He is the One who is able to give you all that you wish for. We should always be mindful that the One who has created this vast universe and holds it in His hand is able to answer prayers.

6

Since God, Mighty and Exalted, wrote what would happen to people before He even created the heavens and earth, it is not right for anyone to lament any good thing he has missed or to worry about some evil he may encounter. Anyone who does so expresses displeasure with God's will.

7

'Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn regretted having left during the Prophet's hadith in order to look for his camel. This shows that learning about Islam and understanding its principles and details is better than being occupied with worldly matters, however important these may be. It would be wrong for anyone to ignore this excellent accomplishment.



