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Stories of the sages and pious personalities of The Israelites

Shaykh Tabarsi and other commentators have narrated from Ibn ‘Abbas that there was a worshipper named Barseesa among The Israelites who worshipped his deity so much that whatever he asked for was granted. People used to bring to him the ill and the lunatic and they became healthy through his prayers. By chance the wife of a nobleman became mad and she was brought to him. She had a number of brothers. They left her for treatment with the worshipper. The devil misguided the worshipper and he indulged in adultery with that mad woman. When she became pregnant he killed her for fear of being caught.

On the other hand the devil approached the brothers of that woman and told them everything and also showed them where the worshipper buried her body. They consulted among themselves and the news reached the king who along with the others went to the place of that worshipper (worshipper). He confessed to his crime. The king ordered his execution. When the people brought him for being crucified Satan appeared before him in the form of a man and informed him that he had brought this trouble onto him. Satan said, I have disgraced you but if you are prepared to obey me I can relieve you from this sentence.

The worshipper asked in what matter he should obey him The Satan said, Prostrate before me (make Sajdah for me). The worshipper said, How I can bow while I am bound in chains. The devil said, Just make Sajdah by bowing your head a little. I will accept it. The worshipper did so but the Satan left him and ran away. The worshipper was killed. Allah Almighty says in the holy Qur’an: But when he disbelieves he says: I am surely clear of you; surely I fear Allah, the Lord of the worlds. (59:16)

It is recorded in reliable sources from Imam al-Baqir that there was a worshipper in the Israelites named Juraih. He was always in the worship hall busy in worshipping Allah. Once his mother came to the worship hall and called out to him but as he was busy in his prayer she went back. She came a second time and a third time and called out to him but he did not respond. Finally she said, I request the Allah of

The Israelites not to help you. The very next day an adulteress woman came to him. She developed labor pains and delivered a child then and there and announced that the child was the son of the worshipper Juraish. The news spread to the people of The Israelites. They said this is the man who used to scold others for adultery but has himself indulged in it. The king ordered him to be executed. Hearing this, his mother came to him weeping and crying.

Juraih said, "My mother! Why are you crying now? Keep quiet. This trouble has been brought on by you through your cursing." When the people heard this conversation they made inquiries. After knowing more they asked Juraih how could they rely on what he said, Juraih said, Bring that child to me. He himself will speak out the truth. So the child was brought to him. Juraih took the child in his arms and prayed to Allah. Then he asked him: Who is your father? The child began to speak by the order of Allah and said, Such and such shepherd is my father who belongs to such and such tribe. In short, Allah exposed their plan and Juraih was saved from execution. Then Juraih swore not to be away from his mother in future and to always serve her.

The same Imam is reported to have said in other traditions: A king of The Israelites expressed his desire to build a city which would not have any kind of defect that could be detected by any observer. So it was built and the people said it was so perfect that no such city was ever built by anyone in the past. But one man said if I am given protection I will point out its defect. The king said, You are sage. Tell us what is its defect. He said, There are two defects. The first is that you the king of this city will die one day and it will pass into the hands of others and secondly after you this city will be ruined. The king said what can be worse than these two defects. Now tell us how these defects can be avoided. That man said, Build such a house which will remain intact forever and which will never be ruined and you too may live in it forever in youth, without growing old. After hearing this when the king narrated it to his daughter she said no one in your domain has ever said any thing truer than what this man has told you.

In a good tradition it is narrated from the same Imam that there was a man in The Israelites who had two daughters. He gave one of them in marriage to a farmer and another to a potter. One day he left home with an intention to visit both of them. First he went to the farmer's house and inquired with his daughter as to how she was doing. She said that: This year my husband has sown much grain, if there is good rain our condition will be better than all of The Israelites. Then he went to the house of his daughter married to a potter. On inquiry she said that: My husband had molded many earthen pots and if there is no rain then all our merchandise will remain safe and we will be better than all of The Israelites. That man returned therefrom saying: My Lord! you alone know what is best for both of them so please do so accordingly.

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq authentically that he said there was a worshipper in the Israelites who always recited these words: meaning all praise is for the Lord of the worlds and good end is for the pious. Iblis was very hurt with this recitation of Truth so he sent one of his followers to him in the form of a man to tell the worshipper that good end is for the rich and the wealthy. That cursed

creature came to the worshipper and tried hard to convince him of his misguidance but the worshipper did not believe him. After a confrontation it was decided that they should seek a decision from whoever met them first. The party in whose favor the arbitrator would decide would cut off one hand of the other party.

They went to a man who decided that of course lucky are those who are rich. Hearing this, the Satan cut off one hand of the worshipper. They returned back but the worshipper continued to recite the same words of wisdom. The Satan argued with him and again they went to another person for arbitration who too gave the same decision as before. The Satan cut off another hand of the worshipper. Still the latter continued his recitation whereupon the Satan insisted on going to a third person for his decision. The party against whom he decided would lose his head. Agreeing with this proposal they went further. Allah sent an angel in the form of man. When the two narrated their matter before him the angel put his hand on the cut off hands of the worshipper at the proper places and scanned them and the worshipper was healed at once. Then he decapitated Satan and said, Such is the good end for the pious people.

It is mentioned in a reliable tradition that Imam al-Baqir said there was a Qadi (judge) in The Israelites who would always pass Judgments truthfully. When the time of his death drew near he told his wife: When I die do bathe me but do not put a coffin cloth on me. Then put my corpse on a board. Allah willing, no undesirable deed will be committed by me. After his death the Qadi's wife did as he had said and waited for the result. One day she looked at the head of the corpse and found a worm eating the dead man's brain. She was frightened to see it. Next night she saw her husband in her dream who said to her: Were you frightened to see this? She said, Yes. He said, By Allah! this happened due to a wish that I had entertained in my mind regarding your brother who had quarreled with somebody and both had come to me for judgment. Then I had wished the case should go in your brother's favor. When I heard both the parties it was proved that your brother was right. Yet I am suffering this fate only because of my undesirable wish (longing).

It is authentically narrated from Imam as-Sadiq that a group from The Israelites came to their Prophet and requested him to pray to Allah that He may send rain whenever they wished. The Prophet prayed and Allah accepted his supplications. Consequently it used to rain whenever and to whatever extent they desired for. So their growth was better than past years but when they began to harvest (cut) they got nothing except grass (no grain at all). The people rushed to the Prophet to complain that they had desired rain for their benefit but what we got is only loss because not a grain has grown. Allah revealed to the Prophet that: They were not pleased with My planning. This is the outcome of their planning.

The same Imam says, "A dove built a nest on a tree. But when its chicken grew a man used to catch them and take them away. The dove complained to Allah. Allah revealed to it that: I will save you from the evil of that man. The dove produced eggs and little birdies hatched from it. The man came as usual to take away the birds. He had two loaves of bread with him. On the way a beggar asked him for a loaf and he gave him one. Then he climbed up the tree and took away the birdies. Allah saved him due to his

charity.

There was another man in The Israelites who prayed for thirty-three years to get a son but to no avail. Finally he said in his supplication: My Lord! Are You too far away to hear me or despite being near are not answering my prayer? Finally one night he saw a man in his dream who said to him: You are praying to Allah but with a shameless tongue and a dirty materialistic heart and mind. Your intention is not pure. First of all make your soul clean by avoiding undesirable and indecent thoughts and words. Then only will your prayer will be answered by Allah. He did so accordingly and Allah gave him a son.”

It is recorded in reliable sources from Imam as-Sadiq that there was a wise man in The Israelites who was very wealthy. He had a very good-natured (like himself) son from a chaste woman. When the time of his death drew near he told his sons: All of my wealth is only for one of you. After his death his eldest son said that he was the one of his father's choice. The middle one said it was him and the youngest said that their father had willed only in his favor. So all three went to a Qadi for a decision. He said, I do not know your affair. Go to the three brothers who are sons of Ghanaam. They went to one of the sons who was aged and narrated their case to him. He told them to go to his elder brother whom they found to be a middle-aged man. When they told him their case he asked them to go his eldest brother whom the found quite young.

Surprisingly they first asked him to explain as to how he was looking more youthful than his two younger brothers and how his middle brother appeared more youthful than the youngest brother and how the youngest brother appeared more aged than both of them? He explained that: The one whom you saw first is younger than both of us but his wife is bad-natured and is always bothering him. Yet he bears all with patience so that something more unbearable might not occur and that has made him old. My second brother who looks like a middle-aged man has a wife who sometimes makes him happy and sometimes gloomy and sorrowful. So he looks between the young and old age. But I have a wife who always keeps me happy and who until today has never bothered me and therefore I am still youthful. Then after listening to their story, said that for deciding your case you should first go and dig out the bones of your father from his grave and burn them down in the fire. Thereafter you may return to me to hear my judgment.

So the two sons who were born of an unchaste woman went to dig their father's grave but the youngest boy who was from the pious lady said holding his sword: I can forgo my share of inheritance but will never allow my father's grave to be dug up. Finally all the three brothers went to that man and told him what had happened. He said, It is enough. Bring all of your property here. It was brought and the arbitrator gave all of it to the youngest brother and told the other two that: Had you been real sons of the deceased you too would have become restless like the youngest and you would have never agreed to burn the bones of your dead father.

It is narrated from Imam Musa al-Ka'im through reliable sources that there was a pious man in The Israelites. His wife was also good-natured. Once in his dream a person told him that Allah has decided

to give you this much life. From that half of will be spent in ease and satisfaction and the other half in poverty and restlessness. Now you yourself decide which part you want first and which the next. Allah has given you a choice in this matter. That pious man said let me first consult my good-hearted wife because she is my life partner. The next morning he narrated his dream to his wife. She advised him to ask for a prosperous life first and to make haste in obtaining safety as perhaps Allah may be kind to them and conclude His bounties on them.

The next night he saw the same person in his dream who asked him about his choice. He said he desired a satisfactory life first. So all sorts of comforts and bounties were showered on them from all sides. His wife again advised him to spend the money bestowed on him by Allah on his poor relatives, needy persons, neighbors and such and such persons. She continued to give him good counsel about spending his wealth and Allah's bounties for good causes. Finally the first half of his life passed and the other part began which was to pass in poverty. Again the same person appeared in his dream to inform him that the Kind and Merciful Allah had made the other part of his life also restful and comfortable as a reward of his good and generous deeds of the earlier half.

According to another narration Imam as-Sadiq said a man was very restless in The Israelites. His wife told him very emphatically to look for means to earn money. He earnestly and tearfully prayed to Allah for maintenance. In his dream he saw a man asking him whether he preferred two dirhams of lawful earning or two thousand dirhams of unlawful earning. He said, I want two lawful coins. He was informed to take up the two dirhams lying beneath his bed. When he woke up the next morning he found two coins on his bed. He picked them up, bought a fish with one dirham and gave it to his wife. She began to condemn him and said she would not even touch it. So he began to cut the fish himself and found two big pearls in it which he sold for forty thousand dirhams.

It is related from Imam Muhammad al-Baqir that a scholar from the Israelites died. After burial the angels put his soul in his body, made him sit up in his grave and told him that they would give him a punishment of a hundred lashes. He said he did not have the strength to bear that much punishment. The angels said, All right! We will reduce it by one lash. (in this way the matter came down to only one lash). Yet the scholar said he could not tolerate even that. The angels said it was unavoidable. The scholar asked about the sin which drew this punishment. The angels replied, "One day you offered prayers without making ablution and on another occasion while you were out on a walk you saw one person being oppressed by others but you did not care to relieve him from them. Then he was given a lash which filled his grave with fire."

It is narrated by Wahab bin Munabbah that a man from The Israelites built a grand and solid palace and invited the rich and wealthy people for a feast. He denied entrance to the poor in that party telling them that the costly foods were not prepared for worthless people. Allah sent two angels in the form of two poor beggars. That man prevented them from entering his palace and scolded them too. Then the angels were asked by Allah to go there in the form of wealthy and fabulous men. Then the angels in the

guise of wealthy men were escorted with much respect and honor and were given a high seat at the party. Allah ordered the angels to press down that city along with all its residents into the earth. The angels complied with the Divine order. It is mentioned in another narration that thereafter the people of The Israelites carried small and big sticks so that they may not walk with pride and arrogance on Allah's earth.

It is recorded in reliable sources that Imam al-Baqir said there was a scholar among the Israelites who always suffered a loss in whatever he did. He could not undertake any worldly affairs. His wife was maintaining him until whatever she had too was spent. One day they were very restless due to hunger. The woman did not have anything except a rope which she had woven by herself. She gave it to her husband and asked him to sell it and bring something to eat. When he reached the market all the shops were closed and all the merchants had gone home.

Returning empty-handed from there he went towards the seashore to make ablution and to pour some water on himself. There he saw a fisherman who had cast his net in the sea to catch fish. But when he took out the net there was nothing in it except a rotten fish. The poor scholar requested the fisherman to sell the fish to him in exchange for the rope. The fisherman thought it worthwhile and gave him the fish. The scholar took that fish to his wife and narrated what happened. When his wife cut the fish she found a big pearl in its belly. She showed it to her husband who sold it for twenty thousand dirhams and kept the money in his home. In the meanwhile a beggar came to his door and asked for alms. He called the needy beggar into his house and gave him half the amount. Seeing this, his wife exclaimed: Wonderful! You have spent half your earnings in one go. After some days the beggar came back and returned the bag of money to the scholar saying: Keep it for yourself. He clarified that he was an angel sent by Allah to test him in order to see whether the scholar was thankful to Allah or not. Allah is pleased with you said the angel.

According to authentic sources Hamraan asked Imam al-Baqir when his kingdom and regime was to appear? He replied, "O Hamraan! You too have your friends and relatives and can understand what kind of people they are and can also recognize what kind of people they are in the matter of faith. This is not that time when Imam can appear." In those days there was a scholar who had a son who was not inclined toward learning nor was he ready to learn anything from his father. But one of his neighbors always used to question the scholar and in this way learned much from the scholar so that in due course he also became a scholar. When the original scholar reached the time of his death he called his son and told him: You did not learn anything from me but our such and such neighbor has learnt a lot from me. So whenever you are in need of my knowledge you should obtain it from him after introducing yourself to him. After making this will he died.

Thereafter the king of that time had a vision and called for that scholar to learn its meaning. He was informed that that scholar had passed away. He asked them whether he had a son? When they told him that he had a son the king immediately called for him. The son of the scholar thought to himself: I will not

understand what the king ask of me. I will not be able to give him a satisfactory answer as I am without knowledge. Then he remembered his late father's will and went to that neighbor who had acquired knowledge from his late father. He told him that the king had called him but that he did not know why and what he would ask? Then he told his neighbor that his late father had advised him to approach him whenever need be regarding his knowledge. The neighbor told him: I know why the king has called you. I can tell you that but on condition that you should give me half of whatever you get from the king. The son of the scholar replied that he would surely do so. Then the neighbor made him swear and give the promise in writhing. Then he informed him that the king had a vision and has called you to tell him what kind of time (period) is this. So tell him that this time is like a wolf. The boy (son of the late learned man) went to the king's court. The king asked him: Can you tell me why I have called you? He replied, "It is because you had a dream and you want to know what kind of time is this." The king said, "You are right. Now tell me what kind of time is this?" He informed the king that the time was like a wolf. Hearing it the king rewarded him. He took that reward and returned home but did not give anything from it to his neighbor thinking that this wealth will fulfill the needs of my entire life and I will never require the neighbor's assistance again.

After sometime the king had another vision and again called that boy. The boy was perplexed thinking that as he had not kept his promise given to his neighbor how could he approach him again for the required knowledge. Anyway he thought let me go to him. I will swear again and promise that this time I will keep my word. Perhaps he will give me the answers to the king's questions. So he went to his neighbor and said, I broke my promise because whatever I had got from the king had been expended and nothing of it was left with me. But I am in need of your help once again and request you not to deprive me of your knowledge for the sake of Allah. I swear and promise to give half of what I get from the king. He has again called for me and I do not know what he will ask me. The scholar said, He (the king) has seen another dream and he will ask you what kind of time is it now. You should reply that this time (age or period) is like the sheep (example). So the boy went to the king's court and like earlier the king asked him: Tell me why have I summoned you? The boy replied, "You have dreamed again and want to know what kind of time is this." The king said, Yes that is correct. So tell me what kind of age is this? The boy said, This age is like the sheep. Hearing this, the king rewarded him even more. The boy brought all of it home and began to think whether he should give a part of it to his scholar neighbor or not. At last he decided not to give him anything thinking that if he kept the reward for himself henceforth he would never be in need again.

After some time the king had a third vision and again called for him. The boy felt very ashamed of himself thinking that he had cheated his neighbor twice by not keeping his word. Now how could he go to him a third time for getting the answers to the king's questions. Finally he decided that he must approach him a third time. So he went to him and promised in the name of Allah that this time he would most definitely keep his promise and give him half of what he got from the king and appealed to him to tell him the answer to the king's question. The scholar again responded to his earnest requests, took it in writing about his oath and told him that the king had called him again because of yet another vision and

to ask what today's time is like. So tell him that the allegorical name of this time is 'balance'. The boy went to the king's court and answered as taught by the neighbor. The king became much pleased and rewarded him more.

This time the boy took all the reward money to the scholar neighbor and told him: I have brought to you the entire reward. Please divide it yourself between us. The learned neighbor replied, "The earliest time was like a wolf you too had a wolf-like nature and hence you decided not to keep your promise. The period following it was like the sheep. Sheep are always in hesitation whether to do something or not. Hence you also acted like that. Now this age is that of balance meaning justice and equity. So you have behaved justly and kept your word. Now you may take away all this wealth. I am in no need of it at all."¹

It is narrated with authentic chains that Imam al-Ridha said, "A man from The Israelites worshipped Allah for forty years and then brought forth a sacrifice before Him so as to know whether or not his worship was acceptable to Him. But his sacrifice was not accepted so he understood that he must have committed some sin or misdeed and imagined himself responsible for it. Allah revealed to him that: Your condemnation and criticism of yourself is better than your worshipping of me for forty years."

According to another tradition there was a king in The Israelites who founded a city the like of which was never seen by anybody before. He arranged a general feast and invited all. He also appointed a person at the gate to ask every person as he was leaving as to what defects he saw in that city. Nobody pointed out any shortcomings except three worshippers (worshipper) who wore thick clothing.

They said we saw two defects: One, it will be ruined one day and secondly, its king will also die one day. The king asked if they knew of any place not having those defects? They replied, "Yes, the house in the Hereafter will never be ruined nor will its owner ever die." Their admonition affected the king's heart who left his kingship to join them and remained busy in worshipping with them for quite a long time. Then when he intended to part from them, they asked him whether he saw any evil or any indiscipline in them due to which he wanted to separate from them? The king replied in the negative and said, You know me and therefore respect to me. Now I want to live with those who do not know me.

It is narrated from Imam Muhammad al-Baqir that some persons from the progeny of olden day kings had engaged themselves in Allah's worship and were touring the world to get admonition from the events and the conditions of people all around. Once they passed by a grave on which the people had dumped much earth leaving only a little sign of it. They consulted among themselves and decided to pray to Allah and ask him to make the man in the grave alive so that they could find out from him how death tasted. Then they prayed: O Lord! You alone are our Lord and Nourisher. There is no Allah except You. You are the Creator of everything and you alone are to last forever and will never perish. You are aware of everything. You are ever Alive and will never die. You are continuously engaged in planning the affairs of Your creations and know everything without being taught by anyone. Please make this corpse alive for us. Instantly a man with white hair on his head and beard came out of that grave. He was shaking off the dust from his head and was looking toward the heavens fearfully. Then he asked

them: Why are you standing on my grave? They said, We have troubled you so that you may tell us how death tastes? The man said, I have been buried in this grave for ninety-nine years and yet the pain of death has not been removed from me and the bitterness of death has not yet left my throat. They asked him: Whether his hair was white like this when he died? He said, No, but now when I heard a sudden call to get up all my bones joined with one another and I became alive. I frighteningly imagined that the Day of Judgment has arrived. This fear turned my hair white and my eyes wide open.

It is recorded in reliable sources that there was a man in The Israelites who had no son. Allah gave him one. One day he dreamed that his son would die at the time of his marriage. At last the marriage of his son was fixed. On the night of his marriage that boy saw an old and weak man. He helped him and gave him food. That old man said, You have given me life so Allah may give you life. That night the father of that boy dreamed that someone told him: Ask your son what kind of good deed he did on the night of his marriage? The next morning he asked his son and came to know how his son helped the old man. At night again that same person appeared in his dream and told him: Allah kept your son alive as a reward of that good deed which he did to the old man.

It is authentically narrated that Imam as-Sadiq said, "There was a man in The Israelites who spent most of his time in worship. Once while he was busy praying he saw two boys holding a bird and pulling out its feathers. As he was busy in prayer he did not stop those boys from that misdeed. Allah ordered the earth to swallow that worshipper who at once went down in the earth and who will continue to go down until the Day of Judgment."

It is mentioned in another reliable tradition that Allah sent two angels to destroy the residents of a city. In the dark of the night they heard the voice of a man standing worshipping and praying earnestly. One of the two angels said, Let us return and report about this man to our Lord, perhaps the Most Merciful may forgive him or due to him will forgive all the residents of this city. The other angel said, No, we must carry out whatever order we have been given. It does not befit us to go back. But that angel went back to the court of Allah and narrated the event of the worshipper. Allah did not pay attention to the angel and ordered the other angel to destroy all the residents of that city along with the worshipper who had angered Allah as he did not condemn those people who indulged in sins in front of his eyes. Allah also became angry with the angel who had come to plead the case of the residents of that city and threw him in an island where he is still undergoing Allah's punishment."

It is recorded in reliable sources from Imam al-Ridha that in The Israelites nobody was recognized as a worshipper until and unless he did not worship continuously for ten years without speaking. Another narration says that only after fully performing extreme worship among The Israelites was he called saalik (trader of the true path) and mujtahid as only then he would be able to help and reform people attentively.

It is recorded in reliable sources from 'Ali bin husayn that a man rode on a ship with some other people. The ship broke up and all drowned except the wife of a person. She reached an island floating on a

wooden board. There was a person of bad character on that island who used to indulge in every evil and who would never refrain from committing any sin. Seeing that woman all alone he asked her whether she was a human being or a jinn? She replied that she was a human being. He at once caught her and tried to seduce her. The women began to shiver and tremble restlessly. He asked her the reason whereupon she said pointing towards the heavens: I fear Allah. he asked her whether she had ever indulged in such thing? She swore by the Honor of Almighty Allah and said, Never. That evil man said, You fear so much despite having never done such a thing and even though saving yourself now is beyond your power whereas I indulge in it willfully and sometimes through force. Instead of you it should be me who should fear Allah and he arose discarding his bad intention. Then he went away to his home without saying anything to that woman thinking that he would perform repentance as he was regretful. On his way he met a monk who joined him. After walking for some time it became very hot. The monk told his companion: Pray to Allah so that He may send a cloud to give us its shade. The other man said, I have never done a good deed and hence I dare not ask anything from Allah. Then the monk said, All right, I will pray and you just go on saying 'Amen'. So the monk said a prayer and after a few moments a cloud came above them and they continued their walk under its shade. Then they came to a cross road. The youth went on one side and the monk on another. The cloud went with the youth. The monk told him: You are better than me. Really speaking not mine but your prayer was answered by Allah. Now tell me what good work did you perform which earned Divine Mercy for you? The youth related to the monk what happened on that island. Then the monk said, You left committing a sin fearing Allah so now He has forgiven you all of your past sins.

According to an authentic narration from Imam, as-Sadiq there was a king in The Israelites. His Qadi (judge) had a brother who was very pious and honest. His brother's wife also belonged to the family of Prophets. She too was very pious. Once the king needed a man trustworthy enough to send out on a job. He told his Qadi to provide him with a reliable and trustworthy man. The Qadi said in my view nobody is more reliable than my brother. So he called his brother and informed him about the king's wish. But he refused the offer telling him that he could not leave his wife alone.

The Qadi insisted saying that the king was in urgent need of his services. His brother said, I have nothing to do with anybody except my wife. So you will have to take care of my wife, see to her needs and take care of any job that needs to be done until my return. The Qadi agreed and his brother left on the king's job even though his wife was not happy over his departure. Thereafter as desired by his brother the Qadi used to go to his house and do the jobs required by his wife until he fell in love with her to such an extent that he desired that she should indulge in adultery with him. But she rejected.

The passion-blinded Qadi threatened to complain to the king if she did not agree saying that he would tell the king on oath that she had indulged in adultery with him. But she retorted: Do whatever you want but I will not spoil my honor and chastity. The Qadi despaired for fear of what would happen once his brother got to know of his intention so he himself went to the king and informed him that the wife of his brother had indulged in adultery and on making inquiries he had found the allegation to be correct. The king said, Then stone her to death.

The Qadi went and told her that he had complained to the king who had ordered her to be stoned to death and that if she did not fulfill his desire he would see that she was stoned to death. But the woman still said, Do whatever you wish but I cannot fulfill your evil desire. At last the Qadi gathered the people and took her to a forest where he made her sit in a pit and stones were rained on her until he was sure she had died. Then only did they return home. After nightfall, as some life still remained in that woman she removed the stones from all around her, got out of the pit and with much difficulty reached a monastery and fell asleep at its door. The next morning the monk of that monastery opened the door to find a weak and wounded woman lying there. He inquired with her as to what had happened. Hearing her story the monk felt pity on her and took her into the monastery.

The monk was very wealthy. He treated the lady and soon all her wounds healed. This monk had a young son and he entrusted his son to that lady for training. The monk also had a slave in his service who fell in love with that chaste woman and asked her to satisfy his passion. He also threatened to kill her if she did not fall in line with his wishes. The oppressed lady replied that he could do whatever he wanted but she would never commit a sin like that. So the slave killed the son of the monk and told him the monk that in response to his kindness the woman had killed his son whom he had entrusted to her for training. The monk called the chaste and faithful lady and asked her about the murder of his son. She told him the full truth about the slave but the monk did not believe her. He told her that now he would not allow her to stay there. He gave her twenty dirhams as traveling expenses and drove her out of the monastery.

The poor lady walked the whole night and reached a village the next morning. There she saw a man hanging on the gallows but still alive. She inquired with him and the half dead man told her that he was indebted to the extent of twenty dirhams and that according to the rules of that place those who were indebted to that extent were to be hung and not released until they paid up their debt. Hearing this, the kind lady gave him her twenty dirhams and he was then released. That man told her: O kind lady! You have been merciful to me and have saved me from sure death. Now I will remain in your service. Walking together they reached seashore where they saw some ships. The man told the lady: Wait here. I am going to do some job for the ship owners to buy us something to eat. Then he went to the shipmen and asked them what goods did they have in their ships. They replied that one of the ships was loaded with very valuable materials like jewels and that the other ship was vacant for their own voyaging. He asked them what was the total value of their goods? They replied that it was so valuable that they could not evaluate it fully.

Then that person said, I have a thing which is even costlier than your valuables. They asked: What is it? He said, A very beautiful slave girl. So beautiful that you might never have seen anyone like her before. They said, Sell her to us. He proposed: First someone must go to see her but in such a manner that she does not know the intention behind it. Then return and pay me her price. Then when I go away you may take her in your control. The seafarers agreed and one of them went to see that lady. He came back to report that he had never seen a more beautiful woman before. So the wicked man sold that chaste woman for ten thousand dirhams and went away with the money. When he disappeared the shipmen

came to the lady and said, O slave girl! Come with us on this ship. She asked: Why? They said, We have bought you from your owner. She said, He is not my owner or Lord. They said, Do not make excuses and come along. Otherwise we will take you forcibly. So she had to accompany them up to the seashore. However each and everyone of them vied for that lady so much so that to settle the dispute they made her sit in the ship which was full of jewelry and all of them rode in the other vessel.

When the ships reached mid sea Allah sent a storm which overturned the ship which carried the men and all of them drowned. The stormy winds carried the ship in which the lady was sitting to an island. She came out of the ship, tied it on the shore and began to walk on the island. She saw a beautiful house near a water spring. All around were trees bearing fruits. She told herself: I will stay here, eat these fruits and drink this fresh water and pass the rest of my life in worshipping only one Allah. Allah sent a revelation to one of the Prophets of that time to go to the king (by whose order the Qadi had stoned the lady) and tell him: On such and such island is a pious slave girl. Go to her along with all of your people, confess all your past sins and request her to pardon you. If she forgives you I will also forgive you. Otherwise I will chastise all of you severely. On getting this message from the Divine Messenger the king went to that island along with his people where they saw the woman. He approached her respectfully and said, "This Qadi had complained to me that the wife of his brother had committed adultery. I ordered her to be stoned to death without making proper inquiries and without calling for appropriate witnesses. I am afraid I have behaved unjustly in this matter. Kindly pray to Allah to pardon me." She said, Sit down. Allah will forgive you. Then her husband came before her (she recognized him) and said, I had a very pious wife. I had to leave town on a job for the king and so had to leave my wife on her own even though she did not wish me to do so. I had asked my brother to look after her and to see to her needs. After returning I came to know that my brother had her stoned to death as she had indulged in the misdeed of adultery. I am afraid I was at fault in this matter. So kindly pray that I may be pardoned by Allah.

She said, "May Allah pardon you too. Sit down." She made him sit by the side of the king. Then came the Qadi who also narrated his mistakes and begged her to pray to Allah for his pardoning. She told him also to sit down and said, May Allah forgive you too. Then she turned toward her husband and said, Listen. Then that monk also submitted his misdeed and she told him too to sit down and told him that Allah will forgive him. Then the slave of the monk appeared before her and narrated his excesses and oppressions and pleaded for her prayers so that he may also get salvation. She said, Sit down. May Allah pardon you also. Thereafter she asked the monk to listen. Last of all came the man who had been freed from the gallows by her. He also confessed his crimes and prayed for pardon for his thanklessness. Then the chaste lady turned toward her husband and said, I am your wife. All that you have heard is related to me. Now I am in no need of a husband. I wish this ship which is full of jewelry to be taken away by you for your requirements and let me remain here only for worship of Allah. You have seen how much torture I have received from the hands of men. Her husband agreed to her wish of staying on that island. He then took charge of the ship and returned with the king and all the people back to the capital.

Ibn Babawayh has narrated from 'Ali bin husayn that there was a thief among The Israelites. His habit was to open freshly dug graves and steal the coffin cloth from their dead body. One day his neighbor fell ill and feared that he might steal his coffin cloth also. So he called that thief and asked him how did he find his behavior toward him? The other person said he was a very good neighbor indeed. Thereafter he said, I am in need of something. The thief asked: What? He put two pieces of coffin cloth before him and asked him to take up the one of his choice and to let the other remain for his corpse. He asked him not to dig his grave after his death and make him naked by stealing the cloth from his body.

The neighbor agreed and told him to rest assured that he would not behave like that. The ill man insisted on giving him the better cloth. When he died and was buried the thief thought, how will the corpse know whether I steal his cloth or not. So he went to dig his grave. As he was digging he suddenly heard a voice as if someone was telling him not to dig the grave. He became frightened and went back home, gathered his sons and asked them what kind of a father was he to them? They said he was very kind to them. Then he told them: I wish something from you. They said, Do tell us so that we may carry it out. Then he said, When I die burn my body down to ashes, then crush my bones and when a strong wind blows scatter the ash away throwing half towards the mountains and the other half towards the sea. The sons said, All right, we will do as you wish. So when he died his sons did as he wanted.

Allah commanded the forest to collect whatever of the bones had fallen there. Similarly He ordered the sea to collect whatever was thrown into it. Allah made him alive and asked him as to why he had made such a will. He replied, "It was due to my fear of Thee." Allah said, "All right if it was only for the sake of My fear then, I swear by My Honor I will please your debtors on the Day of Judgment and will turn your fear into satisfaction and peace and will pardon your sins."

It is recorded in reliable sources that Imam al-Baqir said, "There was a prostitute in The Israelites who used to lure youths toward her. Once a man told her: If such and such worshipper (worshipper) sees you he will surely fall in love with you. She said, By Allah, I will go to his house and bring him on the true path. She reached his house the same night, knocked on his door and said, O Worshipper! Give me shelter for one night. He denied her shelter. She said, Some youths from The Israelites are following me with the intention of adultery. I have run away from them and require shelter. If you do not open your door they will catch me and rape me. Hearing this, the worshipper opened his house. The woman entered the house and took off her veil. When the worshipper saw her beauty he lost his sense and felt passionate towards her. When he came to sense he saw his hand on the body of that woman. He felt a shock and pulled his hand off her. There was a water vessel in his room beneath which a fire used to burn constantly. He ran to that fire and put his hand in that fire. The woman asked him what he was doing? He replied, "I am burning my hand in the worldly fire, perhaps I will be saved from the Hell fire in the Hereafter." The woman ran away from there and asked the people of The Israelites to take care of the worshipper as he was burning his own hand. The people rushed there but by that time his hand was burnt."

It is reliably related from Imam as-Sadiq that a worshipper from The Israelites had kept himself totally away from women and had become fearless of the evils of the devil. One night a devil in the guise of a woman came to his house as a guest and began to make evil suggestions to his heart. With every evil suggestion made by that woman the worshipper pushed one of his fingers into the fire so that he be reminded of Hellfire. This happened repeatedly until morning and in this way he suppressed his evil passions by burning his fingers one after the other. In the morning he said to the lady: You have proved to be a bad guest for me. Please leave this place now.

It is recorded in reliable sources that a man went to Imam as-Sadiq and began to praise someone's worshipping and religiousness. Imam asked: How much intelligence does he have? He said he did know that. Then Imam said, "Reward is in proportion to the intelligence (wisdom) of a person. There was a great worshipper in The Israelites. He spent all his time worshipping on an island. It was a very fertile island with clean water springs and fruitful trees. Once an angel passed by that man. The angel was very pleased with his worship and he prayed to Allah: My Lord! Please let me know the reward of this man's worshipping. Allah told the angel what he thought was that man's reward. The angel felt that the reward was much less compared to his worship. So Allah asked that angel to go and live with that worshipper for a while. The angel went to that person in the form of a man. The worshipper asked him: Who are you? He replied, "I am also a worshipper like you. When I learned about this place and heard your praise I thought of coming here and worshipping along with you."

Next morning the angel said to the man, "Your house is very spacious and very suitable for worship." He said, "There is a defect in it." "What is it?" the angel asked. He replied, "My Allah does not have a donkey of His own. Had He one He would have made it graze here so that this grass might not go to waste." The angel told him that Allah does not require an ass. The worshipper replied, "Had He a donkey this grass would not have wasted." Allah revealed to the angel, "I have fixed the reward of this man's deed proportionate to his wisdom."

It is reliably reported by Hafas bin al Bakhtari that, "Once I was late in attending Imam as-Sadiq. He asked the reason for my delay. I said, May I be sacrificed for you. I had stood surety for a person who did not keep his promise and did not pay up his debt and so it was demanded from me and that is why I could not come for hajj (in advance). Imam said, Why did you stand as surety for others. Do not you know that in the past people were destroyed for standing as surety for others! Then he narrated: A group committed many sins and then became very fearful because of it. Another group (as a gesture of sympathy) told them: We undertake the responsibility of all your sins. Allah chastised the latter group telling them: They feared My Anger but you dared so much (became fearless of Me)."

It is reported in authentic traditions from Hamza Thumali that in the distant past there was a very rich man in the progeny of Prophets. He would spend his wealth on the needy and the poor. After his demise his wife also continued to spend like him. Soon all of the wealth was spent. Now that man had a son who would always hear people (Wherever he went) praying for peace upon his late father and

benefaction for him. He asked his mother the reason for such prayers being made by people wherever he went. His mother told him that: Your father was very pious. He was a benefactor of the poor. Being rich he would spend his money on fulfilling the needs of the poor people. After his departure I also continued to spend his wealth on the needy. Finally all the wealth is spent. The son said, My dear mother! My late father is getting the reward for whatever he did but you did not have the right to do what you did and hence you have earned Allah's displeasure. The mother asked him what he meant.

The son said, "My father was spending his own wealth but you spent away the wealth of others (meaning his)." The mother replied, "My son! You are correct. But I did not think that you would object to what I did and would declare that wealth lawful for me." The son said, "I do so now and declare it lawful for you. But is there anything left so that I may make it a means of earning and may seek Allah's Grace. Maybe He will make us rich again." The mother said, "I have a hundred Dinars." The sons said, "If Allah wills He will provide abundance in it even if the capital is little." Then he went out for earning their livelihood.

On his way he found the dead body of a man whose face showed signs of being a pious and virtuous person. He thought what can be better than spending my money on bathing, covering and coffining this corpse and praying for him and burying him. So he spent twenty dirhams for this good deed. Now he had only twenty dirhams. He walked further for finding Allah's graceful provision. Along the way a man met him and asked him where he was going. He said, For finding livelihood and Allah's Grace. He asked how much capital he had. He replied, "Twenty dirhams." The man said, "Of what use can this little amount be?" The boy replied, "When Allah wishes He gives abundance in little capital too." "You are right of course," said the man. Then he asked, "You must do exactly what I say? But I will tell you what to do only on condition that you give me half of the earnings."

The boy agreed. That man told him, "On the path on which you are proceeding you will find a house. The residents of that house will invite you as a guest. Do accept their invitation. When their servant brings food for you he will be accompanied by a black cat. You should ask that man to sell that cat to you. He will refuse. But you must go on asking. Finally he will agree to sell it for twenty dirhams. You must pay him the amount and obtain that cat. Thereafter you should slaughter that cat, burn its head and remove its brain and go to a certain city. The king of that place has become blind. Tell those people that you can treat their king. Be not afraid on seeing the dead bodies of people whom the king had killed earlier for having failed to cure him. You may ask any amount you like as your price for his treatment. On the first day sting the king's eyes with the brain of that cat. He will find it effective and will ask for more medicine. Do not do so but apply only one needle on the second and third day too." So that boy went on his way, became a guest of the residents of that house, bought the cat, reached the king of the said city and engaged in treating him. On the first day he applied only one needle to sting his eyes. It proved effective and the king could see a little on the following day. He felt even better on the second day and was completely healed on the third day. The king was now able to see everything like before.

He told the boy: You have done me a great favor. You have earned a right on me. You have returned my kingdom to me. As a reward I give you my daughter in marriage. The boy replied, "My mother is alive whom I cannot separate from." The king married his daughter with that boy and told him that he could live there as long as he desired and could go to his mother's place along with the princess whenever he wished. The boy lived with the king with honor and respect for one year and then prepared to go. The king gave him much wealth and goods and cows and camels and sheep. The boy departed with all that along with his wife. First he went to the place where he had met the man who showed him how to cure the king. He found that man sitting there. Seeing the boy he asked: Boy: Why did you not keep your promise? The boy replied, "Whatever I got and enjoyed while I was with the king may please be declared lawful for me. Whatever is with me now is this. You may take half of it."

He divided his wealth equally and asked that man to take the part of his choice. The man said, "You have not acted with justice." "How is that?" the boy asked. The man said, "The woman also is a part of your earning." The boy said, "You are right. Take away all the wealth and leave the woman for me." He said, "No, I want half of that woman too." The boy called for a saw and put it on the head of the woman to give half of her to that man." The man said, "Now you have kept your promise and word. This woman and all this wealth is yours. Take them away. I need nothing of it. I am an angel. Allah sent me only to give the reward of that good which you had done to the dead body on your path."

It is related reliably from Imam as-Sadiq that there was a worshipper in The Israelites who never indulged in worldly affairs. This hurt Iblis (the big Satan) very much. So he whistled through his nose hearing which his entire army came around him. Then he asked who from them would be able to mislead that worshipper? One of them said he would. Iblis asked: How? He said, Through women. Iblis said, It will not work as the worshipper is neither inclined towards women nor is he aware of their taste. Another Satan stood up and said he would mislead him through wine, drinking etc. Iblis said, You cannot deviate him in that way also. Then a third one arose and claimed that he would mislead him by pretending to be pious and a worshipper of Allah. Iblis said, You can win. So that Satan entered the house of the worshipper in the form of a man and went to the area where the worshipper used to pray. He stood beside him and began praying.

The worshipper after worshipping for a long time would stop to take some rest but the Satan never rested. Seeing this the worshipper considered himself very inferior to the newcomer and with much humility asked him what gave him this much strength in worshipping Allah tirelessly? The cursed one did not give any reply. The worshipper approached him again and tried to make him talk and explain how he could worship so long at a stretch. He asked the Satan what gave him such a high status. Then the agent of Satan said, O slave of Allah! I had committed a sin. I repented over it but always keep that sin mind. This thing has given me the power for praying tirelessly. The worshipper asked what was that sin so that he may also commit it. The Satan told him to go to a certain city and enter the house of a certain prostitute and give her two dirhams. The worshipper said I do not even know what a dirham is? The Satan took out two dirhams from beneath his foot and gave it to the worshipper.

The worshipper turned towards that city in his prayer (holy) clothes and inquired about the residence of that prostitute. The People thought he had come there to give guidance to that prostitute and so they showed him her brothel. When the worshipper entered her place he threw those two dirhams and asked the woman to get up. The woman rose and took him into her room and told him: O gentleman! You have come to me in attire in which nobody comes. So first please tell me why and how you became inclined to come to me of all people. The worshipper narrated his whole story. The woman said, O slave of Allah! Giving up a sin is much more easier than repenting after committing it. It is not possible for anyone to deliberately commit a sin and then repent and attain higher status as said by you. Surely one who sent you is a Satan in disguise who has come to deviate you. Go back and you will surely not find him there. The worshipper returned home. That woman died the same night. Next morning the people saw writing on her door saying that all the residents of the town should gather for her funeral prayer because she is from those who will enter paradise. The people were confused and did not bury her for three days. Allah revealed everything to the Messenger of that time. According to the narrator Imam said that he (the Messenger) was Musa.

(Allah commanded): Go and pray in the funeral of such and such woman because I have pardoned her and reserved paradise for her because she prevented my servant from disobeying Me.

1. The purpose of Imam behind describing this story was to make you understand that times are similar to the above description. When you observe that your own friends are conspiring against you how can the Imam rely on their promises and how can he rise against the enemy. So when the time comes when people will keep their words, and Allah knows that they will remain loyal to the Imam, then will He make the Imam appear and lead the uprising and thus bestow the reformed society as a mediator gift to Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, grant this award to them as a grand fortune.

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