

Nabi YUNUS (Jonah) *AS

*(We must always say Alayhis Salaam when we mention the name of a Prophet. It means, "May ALLAH -Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala's blessing and mercy be on him")

Story Number

26

My Dear Children

In the previous lesson on Prophet Sulaiman (alayhis salaam) we read about the message of the ants, the pretty hoopoe bird, Queen Bilqees, and the moving of her throne from one area to another. These acts were not as the result of magic but attributed to the power of the All Mighty, WHO is capable of anything. HE is the Sovereign, the Powerful and the Greatest. Every time a great deed was performed Nabi Sulaiman (alayhis salaam) would show his gratitude to the Creator by showering all the praises on HIM. He was also very mindful to perform all the correct actions as he often prayed to ALLAH (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) to guide him to perform such deeds that would please HIM.

Nabi Yunus (alayhis salaam)

In this issue of Al Mujaddid we will be talking about Nabi Yunus (Jonah - alayhis salaam) who is also known as 'Dhun-Nun' meaning the 'lord of the fish' (21:87) or 'Sahib-ul-Hut' meaning the 'Companion of the Fish.' The incidents described in this beautiful lesson from the Glorious Qur'an captures our attention and we get involved in the difficulties and hardships of this Messenger or Warner from ALLAH (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala). Although this incident took place 800 BC it still has a wonderful message for us today. Our Creator's message is for all of mankind. If you have the ability to reflect and understand HIS ayat (signs) you have a simpler task of developing your belief and faith and become steadfast in the path of truth. If your awareness of Al Malik (The Sovereign) is accompanied with doubts and difficulties or even if some are living on a very lowly life of degradation and abomination Al Hafiz (The Protector) has a way reaching all. HE sends HIS Warners or Messengers to reach all the people and touch their hearts in the language that they understand as well as through someone from their own community whom they accept as their own. This lesson is well illustrated in Surah Yunus, chapter 10 of the Glorious Qur'an. After reading what he went through we would advise all to go to this chapter and ponder over this message. Now let us read about the hardships as well as the mercy that was showered on Nabi Yunus (alayhis salaam) and his people.

Delivering the Message

He was sent to the people of Nineveh, the capital of then Assyria. It was an ancient town situated on the left bank of the Tigris River and opposite the town of Mosul in Iraq. The people of Nineveh were involved in all the vices: of prostitution, robbing people, drinking alcohol, killing the innocent, depriving the poor of their basic needs and even worshipping idols. Nabi Yunus (alayhis salaam) spoke to the people on a number of occasions to leave off their wicked ways and come back to the path of truth by worshipping the ONE and ONLY Creator and Sustainer. As usual the people were having great fun and enjoying themselves with the pleasure of this world than to listen to the wisdom of Nabi Yunus (alayhis salaam) and the guidance he brings from ALLAH (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala).

Tossed into the Sea

After a while Nabi Yunus (alayhis salaam) got tired, worn out and very frustrated with his people. He called on the Creator to punish these people as they are refusing to listen to his message. After invoking the wrath of the Supreme Being he abandoned the people of Nineveh and left without waiting for further commandments and direction from ALLAH (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala). His anger also clouded his mind that the LORD had no power over him, (Qur'an 21:87). He went to the seaside and boarded a boat that was setting out to the open sea (37:40). As soon as the boat reached the open sea it met with a fierce storm, which tossed the boat from one side to another. The storm lasted for a number of days and was so violent that the sailors became concerned with their safety and the destruction of the boat. They had suspected that the person who brought this displeasure of the Lord was Nabi Yunus (alayhis salaam). However all the people on the boat decided to draw lots (37:141). It happened that Nabi Yunus (alayhis salaam) was drawn and he had to leave the boat for its safety. He was tossed into the rough sea.

While he was frantically fighting and splashing around in the very choppy sea to keep above the water a huge whale came along and swallowed him (37:142). Although the whale saved him from drowning in the wild sea he spent the next 3 days and nights in total darkness in the belly of this huge fish. In this situation he soon came to his senses and realised the grave error of his action of getting angry and

turning his back on the serious work that he was appointed to do for his LORD. He fell to his knees and clasping his hands in prayer cried out to ALLAH (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala), "There is no God but YOU ALLAH, glory be to YOU, I was indeed wrong," (21:87). If he had not repented and ask for forgiveness (37:143 he would have remained in the belly of this fish until the day of Judgement, 37:144). ALLAH (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) WHO has the attributes of being the Most Merciful and Most Beneficent accepted his prayer and reacted with these words, "So WE listened to him. And delivered him from distress. And thus do WE deliver those who have faith," (Qur'an 21:88)

He was Commanded

The whale spat him out on a shore that was barren (37:145). He was feeling ill from spending 3 nights in the belly of the fish and he was also in a state of great grief as the thoughts of neglecting his duty of guiding his people was preying on his mind and soul. ALLAH (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) showed further mercy and compassion towards him by letting a gourd plant grow quickly next to him to shade and protect him while he was recovering from his physical and mental illness (37:146). When he had regained his full strength and fit again, he was commanded (37:147) to return to Nineveh to continue his mission, he was chosen for. When he reached Nineveh he started preaching and pleading with his people to leave off their wicket ways and to follow the path of the truth in their belief and worship of ONE GOD.

Every time he got up to deliver the message of the Creator he found to his relief that some people listened to what he was saying and followed his guidance (37:148). Alhamdoelillah! Alhamdoelillah! All Praises to ALLAH was his reaction as he realised that the help of the Creator was with him all the time, as more and more people started mending their ways and believing and praying to the ONE and ONLY GOD. When a number of people believed in the message that Nabi Yunus (alayhis salaam) preached ALLAH (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) removed the punishment and allowed them to enjoy living for a little while longer. However there were some who did not believe in the ayat (signs) of the Creator and whatever Nabi Yunus said did not make any difference in the way they were living as they did not want to understand (10:100). Over a period of 200 years and long after the death of Nabi Yunus (alayhis salaam) the new generations gradually went back to their wrong and evil ways. They were eventually destroyed.

This example of Nabi Yunus (alayhis salaam) quoted in the Glorious Qur'an has a very strong message for all the people living in this present 21st century. Here are only a few reminders of the message of this incident.

CONCLUSION

1. Patience. One is taught that ALLAH (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) is with those who have patience (2:153, 2:249, 8:46, 8:66 etc). Even when we have reached the end of the road and are utterly discouraged our frustration should not drive us away from what we are set to do but exercise the patience and have faith as ALLAH (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) has the power over us as well as the the power to change the environment that is frustrating us.
2. Faith. Man is weak and in need of ALLAH (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) grace, help and mercy. If the Creator does not help in strenthining our faith our doubts and difficulties will increase. Every person born is given the free will to decide on the path they wish to foillow. Man is endowed with various faculties and capacities for them to strive, explore and move in the direction of getting closer to the harmony of his Creator. Thus man has to develop his faith by the active use of his will. If ALLAH (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) made all alike, their faith would have no merit as it would be forced on them.
3. The darkness in the belly of the fish may be interpreted as both of physical and spiritual harm. Physically he was imprisoned in total darkness, in the rough sea and within the unpleasant and offensive smell of the belly of the fish. Spiritually he was reminded of the darkness of his soul and the extreme distressing mental agony that he has brought on himself by forgetting his mission as a Warner to his people.
4. When you recognise the error of your ways and repent sincerely and turn your faith to ALLAH (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) you will regain God's pleasure, and overcome all the obstacles and difficulties. Our Creator forgives sins on true repentance whether they are in a righteous person or even in a wicked person. His mercy spreads out to all HIS creations.
5. If you recognise any other lessons please forward your input to us so that we could include them in our book of lessons from the Glorious Qur'an.