

The Junction of the Two Seas: An Isthmus Between Two Lives *The Story of Moses Who Lost His Fish*

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مجمع البحرين.. برزخ ما بين حياتين

Come with me, let us soar high into the vast expanses, filling baskets with light, necklaces from the vigilant stars of the night. And deep into the abyss of the sea, a longing takes us, we uncover a veil and many of its hidden secrets. So let us not be content with anything from the ocean but coral as harvest, and add to it pearls, the hidden treasure of slumbering shells. We explore the third dimension of the word, not satisfied thereafter with its length, breadth, or beautiful rhyme.

*For some meaning hides in the shadows, just as nectar disappears between the petals of a tender flower. The text is Qur'anic, and the Speaker is of immense power, there is nothing like Him in the earth or the high heavens. **Allah Almighty said:** "And [mention] when Moses said to his boy, "I will not cease [traveling] until I reach the junction of the two seas or continue for a long period." But when they reached the junction between them, they forgot their fish, and it took its course into the sea, slipping away. So when they had passed beyond it, [Moses] said to his boy, "Bring us our meal. We have certainly suffered in this journey of ours fatigue." He said, "Did you see when we retired to the rock? Indeed, I forgot [there] the fish. And none made me forget it except Satan, that I should mention it. And it took its way into the sea amazingly". [Moses] said, "That is what we were seeking!" So they returned, retracing their footsteps." (Quran 18:60-64).*

It is valid that the Messenger Moses set out with his companion aiming for a specific meeting point of two specific seas in a specific place on this earth. It is even more valid that they took a fish as provision for their arduous journey. It is also valid that the boy forgot their provision at that rock where they sat for a moment to catch their

breath from the fatigue of the long path they had traveled. No less valid than that is finding the boy regretting the forgotten provision, so he and his master were left stranded with relentless hunger. No less than that is the two returning on their tracks after reaching the goal, for the mission was accomplished and all that remained was to achieve the noble purpose that followed.

It is difficult for understanding that the fish found its way back to the sea, it who was previously a prisoner in a containing bag hanging from the boy's shoulder. The boy himself was not devoid of bewilderment at this cunning action of the fish, he even expressed this great astonishment to his master. "The fish took its way into the sea amazingly," said the boy. However, the event is undoubtedly real, evidenced by the Qur'anic text itself and by reality, which indicates the possibility of such news.

This is the reading of the rational, analogical mind and all the righteous predecessors. They detailed the narrative based on the analogy of the words and the clarity of the explicit statement. I can almost see their faces, with confusion swirling in their aspects, finding no one to relieve it. "What did the Almighty, the Omnipotent, want with such a narrative?" they kept murmuring. "The tale doesn't suggest much, it is almost devoid of lessons and great guidance," they kept disputing.

And lest they fall into the abyss of their confusion, they spoke of the prophets' fervent striving for knowledge despite their great understanding and precious knowledge. Here is Moses, the one who spoke to Allah, traversing deserts seeking knowledge and greater empowerment. He does not care for weak provision or the hardship of the journey. Hope drives him to meet a chosen one of Allah's elect, those whom Allah has endowed with much of the sciences of life and the details of religion. They cast this statement and then closed the debate, for that is the intent and its full knowledge remains with the Lord of the worlds.

Did they content themselves with what they wrote, or are they still plunging in perplexity and doubt?! And what of the matter of their fish? Is it an unnecessary detail, or did they neglect it deliberately and with great purpose?! They did not find the purposes, so they cast it into the pit of neglect, and there, with deep knowledge, they left it. The Almighty does not cast light words, but the meaning is what we missed. I see them whispering the talk among themselves.

As for the abstract mind, it was not satisfied with the narrative of the predecessors, so it wanted its own specific narrative of the event, hoping it would aid those who would come later. Moses is you, and he, and I... He is mankind. He is mankind, regardless of his race, color, or place. He is the man of yesterday and today, and he is the man of the time to come. He is Sham, Oshin, and Kahraman; he is Tsu, Peter, and Adnan... says the abstract mind.

And the boy is the self, the inseparable companion as long as this human resides upon it. It is the eternal one, from eternity, until the Almighty decrees the death of the body and the collapse of the structure. It is the memory of the body, it is the immortal one, forever, as long as the Almighty has willed for it to defy annihilation... to challenge time. It is a life tape, from which no detail is absent, be it ugly or adorned with virtue.

It is the compliant one, it does not disobey your command nor deviate from a path you charted for it in a past or a future time. If you soar with it, it soars, and if you descend with it, it descends. It has no bearer but you, O wretched one... the one called human.

It is the betrayer on the day the Judge makes it speak, the day the Record is placed and the Scale is established. It is radiant and seeing when the deeds are sound, and the Scale bears the weight. And it is gloomy and despairing if you will it to be crooked, so your burden from the heavy weight and measures becomes little. So glad tidings for he who purifies it and sincerely saves for his morrow, before resolve weakens and before failure overcomes him. And woe and perdition for he who plunges it into the mire of base action and whose striving in this world goes astray, so what he never reckoned befalls him.

In this context, it is valid for the Fish to be the provision of a traveler. A provision of thought, resolve, and many actions. A provision for a long journey that, I swear, does not end. A journey that begins with your death, and I don't believe it ends at your gathering, O man. A provision that is a metaphor for what is in the bag from the harvest of the past time of your life on this earth. A provision that is what is inside the self from the rubble of bygone time. An action after which is an action, and a resolve after which is a resolve, all equal in building and storing. Truth

rendering falsehood void, or black obliterating white, all equal in action and burden. A provision that is the product of the eternal conflict simmering inside you. A conflict that incessantly shapes your conscience and the image of your days as long as you remain balanced. A conflict whose champions are the dichotomies of existential anxiety and diminishment, and you are the victim in it. Dichotomies that are merciless, tirelessly tossing you between two palms; one intensely white and a second intensely black. They toy with you for years of your life, amusing themselves, and they only leave you when you are a singular body with no spirit.

As for the Junction of the Two Seas, it requires from you and me much imagination and great attention. The abstract mind sees in the Junction of the Two Seas only an isthmus connecting two worlds; one lived and a second whose state and conditions are in the obscurities of the Unseen.

A world whose details we live, and we collect, panting, the elements of its exposition. And a second, sparingly, it oozes to us from the pores of the coming time, and with intent it sneaks to us from the grasp of the Unseen and its mysteries.

It sees it as a passage tunnel connecting two lives; the first, the truest of its descriptions is "this world," and the second, "the Hereafter" is the least of its descriptions. One is characterized by the transient as a description, and the second, one only sees it after it has become eternal. One rests on a league of time between birth and death, and a second, its knowledge begins with your death, and its end is unknown.

Now, after the description of the stage of action is complete, it becomes easy to discern the significances of the actions mentioned in the narrative. There is the Fish that took its way into the sea as a tunnel, it who was in the bag a secure trust... or nearly so. And there are Moses and his boy, having turned back on their footsteps, retracing their story, they who were within a hand's span or closer to reaching the goal and the objective.

The Fish that took its way into the sea amazingly is the fate of this human's works when intentions spoil, piety weakens, and faith diminishes. The Fish that went far into the deep sea corresponds in meaning to the ashes scattered by a strong wind on

a stormy day. In both cases, you cannot avail yourself of anything you have earned.. O wretched one.

Allah Almighty said: *"The example of those who disbelieve in their Lord is that their deeds are like ashes over which the wind blows hard on a stormy day; they are unable to get anything of what they earned. That is the farthest misguidance." (Quran 14:18).*

And thus, Allah has taken account of what you have done and made it as scattered dust. So, you end up empty-handed, as if you never strove in it, nor traversed its expanses seeking livelihood. You build castles of illusion, raising the structure hoping, while the foundations are void. You accumulate gold and silver, and I do not withhold from you false glory and arrogance. And the harvest is a mirage in a lowland where the winds of disgrace wallow, and such is always the store of the wretched. So, you find in the bag no good to benefit you when circumstances worsen, nor any white to erase the dread of a frowning, grim day when blackness envelops this earth and those heavens.

Said He, Glorified and Exalted be He: *"And We will regard what they have done of deeds and make them as dust dispersed." (Quran 25:23).*

Is there any loss and misguidance more grievous than that? You spend most of your life toiling, working, filling containers with the harvest of deeds. Then you discover at the final outcome, while pantingly searching in the bag for a little that might benefit or a savior from a severe punishment that deters, that you possess in the bag not even the speck on a date stone, nor a little that has any value, even the weight of a thin membrane.

Said He, Glorified and Exalted be He: *"Say, "Shall we inform you of the greatest losers as to their deeds? Their effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work." (Quran 18:103-104). "And none made me forget it except Satan, that I should mention it." (Quran 18:63).*

Such is your state, on the verge, when actions spoil, sound innate disposition is erased, and you submit to the whisper of a rebellious devil. He embellishes for you what you are about to do, and based on a delusion, you do all that he wants. So you

spend a lifetime boasting of freedom of thought, speech, and action, while the truth is that you are a slave to a devil who drives you to evil and you never deviate from his command. He misleads you and never tires of misguidance, and you see him lying in wait for you, preventing you from good and from everything that benefits you. So, you end up blameworthy; you have reaped neither freedom of thought and action in your world, nor salvation from the severe punishment in the Hereafter. The situation, as you see, is slavery to an accursed devil in the immediate life, and slavery to the Sovereign of the Command in the final outcome, the destiny.

Said He, Glorified and Exalted be He: "And We had attached to them companions who made attractive to them what was before them and what was behind them, and the word has come into effect upon them among nations which had passed on before them of jinn and men. Indeed, they were losers." **(Quran 41:25).**

Crossing or Regression?

Allah Almighty said: "I will not cease until I reach the junction of the two seas or continue for a long period." **(Quran 18:60).**

At the Junction of the Two Seas, where the Angel of Death resides, all paths end. And there, on the right side perhaps, a sign stands, written on it: "The Gate of Paradise." Behind the gate stretches a tunnel, and at the end of the tunnel, a light glimmers and a fragrance wafts. There, the traveler stands, exhausted by the long journey, apprehensive and terrified. The guards of the gate are busy, preoccupied, searching in the Book for the finest details. They measure your fish, and in measuring and weighing, they never do injustice. The news is coming, the decision is inevitable. So, either a crossing, then eternal peace and bliss, or a regression, then a return to the beginning, and who knows, perhaps it will be in a different form and a different method and teaching.

For the Junction of the Two Seas, everyone will reach it. Whether the burden is light or it is characterized by precious weight. You lost your fish or you were its preserver, for Death is your reaper as long as you reside in it, even if you reach a thousand years. A birth certificate is merely the passport for arrival, whether the lifespan was long or Allah granted you a shorter one. This is a concern that enfolds all of

humanity under its wing, the righteous among them or the one who is marked by evil.

And there also, at the Junction of the Two Seas, the servants are sorted into the fortunate and the sorrowful. As for the first, he is the one who provisioned himself with piety and his provision was quintals of love and charity, and his fish came as the Scale loves and the Weigher adores, so he continues for epochs. He crosses the isthmus of immortality, he crosses to where his Creator has appointed him to reside temporarily. He crosses, blessed, awaiting the gathering and after it the Garden of Eternity, where the eternal abode is and where bliss lasts forever.

As for the second, who willed it to be crooked, so he lost his fish, or its weight and value are deemed low, he ends up at the gate disgraced, with his forehead in the dust. He is prevented from crossing and is turned back on his heels, retracing his steps. He is returned to the worldly life where he found the abode pleasant, and he sinfully believed that there is no promise or anything promised. He behaved arrogantly in it, whether victorious or defeated, and he transgressed in it, while everything is recorded for him and everything is recorded against him.

*He begins a new life, and no sooner does he end one than he begins another anew. And thus he spends his lifetime running, beginning and repeating. In a different form, and perhaps he is in another creation, new, which we do not know. He knew the first creation, but the subsequent ones are known only to the One who began the creation and who repeats it. And in all matters, the Junction of the Two Seas remains an unattainable goal. He heads towards it fervently, and is turned back from its gate disappointed. He begins with the isthmus of crossing ahead, then he is turned back from it and the isthmus is closed behind him. **Said He, Glorified and Exalted be He:** "[For such is the state of the disbelievers], until, when death comes to one of them, he says, "My Lord, send me back. That I might do righteousness in that which I left behind." No! It is only a word he is saying; and behind them is a barrier until the Day they are resurrected." (***Quran 23:99-100***).*

The Resulting Vision

There, at the limits of contact between one life and another, the self stands perplexed after it has departed from a body and the separation between them has intensified. It

stands there alone, struck by terror, it asks about an outcome and is questioned about provision. A hand of hope extends from it, searching in the bag for something precious that might benefit, searching for the fruit of a wasted lifetime that it never sees returning.

And there.. at the gate of immortality, a decision is made, and between the successful and the failed, I see the servants are sorted. The fortunate one rejoices at his great success, and the sorrowful one fails, for there is nothing in the pocket to pay the debt. The saved one crosses, and I do not see the wrongdoer of his own soul winning anything but remorse, regret, and much trembling. He is prevented from crossing and burdened with threat, and is returned to where he was wandering in the lands. He spends a time he does not know, and from one creation to another, I see him constantly shifting.

It is the story of Moses and his boy after thought worked on it, and the abstract mind took it far to where it believed. You knew the old narrative, and here is another for you, with another dress and another basis. With it, we discover the third dimension of every element of the tale. It is a dimension that has long hidden in the shadow, and has always eluded understanding and the core of sensation. The general public has never been able to uncover the true meaning of the Qur'anic narrative, and such was the fate of all the predecessors of the analogical mind.

For everyone was preoccupied with the apparent aspect of the tale, and contented themselves with its breadth and length, and the depth was absent from them. Had they taken it as an ascent, it would have raised them to just below the stars. For the mind, once freed from the shackles of the body and the constraint of analogy, rides the imagination on ascending currents to where meaning refines, doubt vanishes, and the clouds disperse.

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