

The Bedouin and His Camel

(This is the translation of a story written in Arabic and distributed as a tract amongst Muslimeen).

They say that a Bedouin tied up his camel in the twilight in front of his tent. Sleep came to him and he slept quietly and nothing disturbed him until it was midnight; in that hour his camel awakened him and said to him, "O my master, I have become very cold: do me the favour of allowing me to hide my nose in the tent". His master said to him "No matter", and covered himself again with his cloak and returned to rest.



A Bedouin's Tent

After a little while his camel awoke him again and said to him once more "May there be mercy upon thy parents O my master; my nose is now in a pleasant condition, it would not matter if I brought in my ears?" His master said "Very well, O camel, Good-night". The camel brought in his ears, but after a little while he began to shiver with cold till the tent shook, and awakened his master again, and when he awoke he said to him "What has taken thee?" for he was becoming weary of him. The camel said to him "Forgive me O my master, my neck is shaking with cold . . . add to

of his companions were conforming to the life of the heathen court, Daniel and his three companions took their stand and refused to conform. God honoured their stand.

Through all the years of Daniel's long and successful career at the court of the kings of Babylon, Daniel held firmly to his course, and when, under Darius the Mede, he knew that that course was leading to the lions' den he never wavered. He who in his youth had not been tempted by the king's dainties, would not now be frightened by the king's decree. He knew only one Lord, the Lord his God; and he knew only one path, the path of obedience. Even when he knew that the writing was signed and his enemies were watching, he kept right on, and God honoured him with the conversion of a world monarch, whose confession of faith was a royal decree to all people, nations, and languages in all the earth.

Are we willing to meet the challenge of Islam today? Are we willing to be the material for a demonstration of God's power to save? Then we must choose the path that Daniel chose; we must follow that path without wavering; and even when we know that the writing has been signed which will excommunicate, ostracise, and outlaw us, we must not hesitate, but keep right on, even though it may mean death for us. If we do, God will do the rest.

"I beseech you therefore, . . . by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice . . . unto God . . . And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:1, 2).

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me a favour". The master said to him "Bring in thy neck and leave me in peace".

But the camel did not leave him in peace: with the rising of the moon he began again to cry out louder than at first and said to him roughly "Rise, O man". His master sighed and said to him "What wilt thou, O camel?" The camel said "Thou art warm, and I am dying of cold. If thou wilt get out of the way a little, I wish to bring in my forelegs". His master said "Bring them in for I have had enough of thee", but now he was obliged to crouch up in the side of the tent, and remained in much discomfort. Notwithstanding, sleep again came to him till he heard his camel call loudly to him "O my master". The Bedouin answered and said to him "What hast thou, O fool?" The camel said to him "O my master, my body is dying of cold, I must bring it in". His master said "Bring it in, O mule".

And as the camel entered he nearly overturned the tent, and at once it became so suffocating that its master became obliged to push his head out from under the tent's edge to breathe. And without asking leave the camel went on to bring in his legs and lay down in the midst. And now the poor master could not move him and could only drag his arms and legs without and sleep in the cold.

Who was master now in the tent? The true master had given up his place and could not take it again. His strength was not sufficient for turning out his camel, and he let him stay on at his ease.

THE INTERPRETATION.

O boy, I think thou wilt say in thy thoughts "That man was a fool to let his camel enter till he was master of his tent". It may be that thou thyself art like him, for thy heart is like the tent, and thou dost let sin like the camel gain possession bit by bit. And now I will shew thee how it happens to a boy who lets the camel of sin enter his heart. At the first when he is a little fellow and going to school, before the bell rings he plays with dice to gain sweetmeats or half-pence: then he goes on to gamble and rejoices much for he gains money. Now see how sin gradually comes in like the head and forelegs of the camel in the tent.

After a while he delights in card-playing, and runs off for several days from school and lies to his father and to

the master of the school to save himself from the stick. And when he runs away, he keeps company with boys who are big and bad and they smoke tobacco and keef, and drink and eat majouna and opium. And he follows them till sometimes he becomes foolish and his reason leaves him or he gets angry till he blasphemes and fights with the other boys, and the police take him to prison, and there he comes into company with wicked lads and they become his comrades and they go together to bad places, and then he steals in order to live, for he does not choose to work, and thus sin takes possession of his conduct and his character, as the body of the camel entered altogether into the tent of his master.

O boy, it may be that as yet thou hast not got so far as this, but the nose of the camel has entered thy tent, that is to say, if only one sin has entered thy heart, it must increase in its power every day. If thou hast begun to lie, or to quarrel, or to steal little things, this shows that sin has begun to enter thy heart, and then little by little it possesses thy heart altogether.

Thou hast no power to resist thy sins, and if thy heart is filled with sin and Satan, how will God receive thee in the pure heaven?

There was One in this world Who conquered Satan altogether and God has sent Him to save thee : He is our Lord Jesus Christ. He is able to turn out this camel of sin from the tent of thy heart, according as it is said of Him in the Gospel that he was "manifested to destroy the works of the devil". Let Him enter thy heart and He will turn out Satan and all his works. Call to Him to come and save thee before the time passes for thee.

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