

Understanding “Banī Isrā’īl”, the “Jews”, “Judaism” and the
Religious Sects of the Jews (6)

The Argument of Mūsā with the Arrogant, Oppressive Fir‘aun Regarding Rubūbiyyah and Ulūhiyyah



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Fir‘aun¹ laid claim to ulūhiyyah (the right to worship) and arrogantly denied the existence of any deity deserving

¹ Fir‘aun was not an Egyptian (Qibṭī) ruler, but a descendent from the ‘Amālīqah tribe of Arabs who had conquered various lands according to Muslim historians, biographers and exegetes. A series of seven rulers ruled over the area from the coastal region at the top of what is today known as Syria, down to Lebanon, Palestine, the Sinai, and the top eastern part of what is Egypt for a period of around 180 years starting from 1720 BC. They pushed the Qibṭī rulers—who are commonly and incorrectly referred to as “Pharaohs”—further down into Egypt and those Egyptians would refer to those ‘Amālīqah as “al-‘Ammū” as is evident in their

to be worshipped besides himself. He said, **“I am your Lord most high.”** (79:24) and **“I know of no other deity for you besides me.”** (28:38). Regarding the verse:

written records that still exist. They are referred to in Western scholarship as “Hyksos” but not identified as the Pharaohs of Ibrāhīm, Yūsuf and Mūsā (عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ), as they are in Islāmic sources. The last of them was called “Fir‘aun” and this title was extended to all of them as the “Farā‘inah (Pharaohs)”. Afterwards, this title was mistakenly applied to all the rulers of Egypt—including the builders of the pyramids—from well before the time of Ibrāhīm (عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ), till before the time of ‘Īsā (عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ). Jews, Christians, archaeologists and egyptologists investigating the alleged “Pharaohs of Egypt”—each for their own ideological motives—have failed to find anything in the historical record or archaeological studies to support the story of Musā and Fir‘aun. This is because they are looking at the wrong set of rulers and because the truth is contained in Islāmic sources. It is also why many of them (already having a secular leaning) dismissed these stories as fictitious. Refer to Part 3 of this series for more details on this matter of the ‘Amāliqh Fir‘auns. Also, among the Jews are academic fraudsters who extend the period of the existence of Mūsā (عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ) from around 1600 BC to well past 1300 BC to the era of Ramesses II to make it appear that these Egyptian (Qibṭī) “Pharaohs” had oppressed them for that lengthy period of time and that they were on that land for five hundred years or so. They then use this to claim that the eastern region of the Nile Delta belongs to them because they have a right to it!

وَقَالَ أَمْلَأْ مِنْ قَوْمِ فِرْعَوْنَ أَتَدْرُ مُوسَى وَقَوْمَهُ لِيُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَيَذَرُكَ وَالْهَيْتَكَ قَالَ سَنُقَتِّلُ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَنَسْتَحْيِي نِسَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّا فَوْقَهُمْ
قَاهِرُونَ

“And the eminent among the people of Pharaoh said, ‘Will you leave Moses and his people to cause corruption in the land and abandon you and your gods?’ [Fir’aun] said, ‘We will kill their sons and keep their women alive, and indeed, we are subjugators over them.’” (7:127).

Al-Qurṭubī (d. 671H) said: “He denied that he has a Lord and a Deity, so it was said to him about Mūsā causing the people to ‘**abandon you and your gods**’ with the meaning that the people will abandon you and your worship.” He cites al-Zajāj, “He used to have small idols that were worshipped by people as a means of nearness to him, and so they were ascribed to him [as his gods], and it is for this reason that he said, ‘**I am your Lord most high**’. He also cites Ismā’īl bin Ishāq that the statement of Fir’aun, ‘**I am your Lord most high**’, means that they used to worship other things besides him.² Al-Baghawī (d. 450H) cites from al-Suddī: “Fir’aun had set up idols for his people and ordered them to worship them and said to his people: ‘These are your gods, and I am their lord and your Lord’, and this is his statement, ‘**I am your Lord most high**.’”³

² Refer to his al-Jāmi’ li Ahkām al-Qur’ān.

³ Refer to Ma’ālim al-Tanzīl.

Thus, fearing a change in this situation, Fir'aun said that he will kill their sons and keep their women alive. This is because Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام) and his people were upon Tawhīd, upon the way of their forefathers, which they had clung to during the generations that had passed.

In the course of events, a debate took place between Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام) and Fir'aun which is covered in numerous places in the Qur'ān. In Sūrah Shu'arā' an exchange between them is related in relation to ulūhiyyah:

قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَا رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ قَالَ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا
 إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُوقِنِينَ قَالَ لِمَنْ حَوْلَهُ أَلَا تَسْتَمِعُونَ قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبُّ آبَائِكُمْ
 الْأُولِينَ قَالَ إِنَّ رَسُولَكُمْ الَّذِي أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ لَمَجْنُونٌ قَالَ رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ
 وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ قَالَ لَنْ اتَّخَذَتِ الْهَاءُ غَيْرِي
 لِأَجْعَلَنَّكَ مِنَ الْمَسْجُونِينَ قَالَ أَوْلَوْ جِئْتُكَ بِشَيْءٍ مُبِينٍ قَالَ فَأْتِ بِهِ - إِنْ
 كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ

Fir'aun said, “And what is the Lord of the worlds?” [Mūsā] said, “The Lord of the heavens and earth and that between them, if you should be convinced.” [Fir'aun] said to those around him, “Do you not hear?” [Mūsā] said, “Your Lord and the Lord of your first forefathers.” [Fir'aun] said, “Indeed, your 'messenger' who has been sent to you is mad.” [Mūsā] said, “Lord of the east and the west and that between them, if you were to reason.” [Fir'aun] said, “If you take a god other

than me, I will surely place you among those imprisoned.” [Mūsā] said, “Even if I brought you proof manifest?” [Fir’aun] said, “Then bring it, if you should be of the truthful.” (26:23-31).

We will summarise the explanation of this debate by using the commentary of Imām al-Sa’dī (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) as a foundation:

Fir’aun asked his question about the “Lord of the Worlds” out of arrogant rejection of his Lord and out of oppression and seeking highness, despite his certainty in the correctness of what Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام) called him to. So Mūsā gave him an answer, “The Lord of the heavens and earth and that between them”, meaning: The One who created the upper and lower world and organised it with many types of organisation, nurturing it with numerous types of nurturing, all of which is evident to the physical senses and is known intuitively. And from the sum of all of that which is observed, how can you reject the Creator of all created things, the Originator of the earth and the heavens, if you have conviction [in anything]. With the meaning, that if you are able to have conviction in any single thing, then conviction in the heavens and earth having a creator is automatically established.

So Fir’aun arrogantly said, “**Do you not hear**” to those around him, trying to make his people to be surprised, and using what is a non-argument. So Mūsā’s

response was to say, **“Your Lord and the Lord of your first forefathers”**, whether you are amazed by this or not, where you are arrogant towards it or accept and submit to it. Meaning, whatever your response, it does not change the empirical facts that you are created, nurtured by a creator, who created you and your forefathers. So the argument here is establishing the rubūbiyyah of Allāh, which is evident and plain to the physical senses and to basic reason and what follows on from that of the falsehood of Fir‘aun’s claim to ulūhiyyah. One who is created, needy, cannot ever lay claim to ulūhiyyah.

Then Fir‘aun—in rejection of the truth—said to his people that **“this messenger of yours who has been sent to you is mad”**. This is also a false argument because it is based upon Mūsa merely differing with him and his way. Someone differing from you is not a valid argument for the truth of what you are upon and the falsehood of what they are upon. In other words, Fir‘aun is claiming that intelligence, reason and rationality are with him and his people, those who claim that they were not created, that the heavens and earth do not have an originator and that they, Fir‘aun and his people, were created without a creator. And reason (‘aql) to him is that they worship a created thing that is deficient from all angles and possesses no attributes of a Lord. And in contrast madness to him is to affirm a Lord and Creator

for the world, its upper and lower part, one who confers favours, apparent and concealed, and to call to His worship. Fir'aun beautified this flowery speech, and this reasoning to his people, and they were foolish-minded, light in intellect. **“So he bluffed his people, and they obeyed him. Indeed, they were [themselves] a people defiantly disobedient [of Allāh].”** (43:54).

Then Mūsā replied, continuing to provide evident truths to non-answers and false arguments used by Fir'aun to reject a Lord and Creator, **‘Lord of the east and the west and that between them, if you were to reason’**. So here Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) is alluding to the fact that it is they who are mad and that they are simply accusing one who is pure and complete in knowledge and intellect with respect to this matter (Mūsā, the Messenger of Allāh) with what they are guilty of, which is foolishness and madness. This is because they are in rejection of the most obvious and most apparent of all existing things, the Creator of the heavens and the earth and what is between them. So if you feign ignorance of Him, what besides Him can you claim to establish? And that if you do not believe in Him and His signs, then what else will you believe in?

Then, after Fir'aun was unable to establish any evidence for his arrogant disbelief and was unable to contradict Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ), he made use of his authority and power, stating, **“If you take a god other than me,**

I will surely place you among those imprisoned”. So having despaired of being able to win over Mūsā and his people through rational arguments that he alone is their deity, he resorted to threat of imprisonment. This was really an admission on his behalf that he had lost and that the truth was with Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) and those with him.

Then Mūsā said to him—after having established that the evidence of reason failed to satisfy Fir‘aun—that even if I bring you some clear evidence, meaning one that is observed to be out of the ordinary and which is witnessed and felt by the senses, will you then still disbelieve? And Fir‘aun requested for this sign to be presented. And from here the two signs of the staff turning into a serpent and the hand turning white were shown to Fir‘aun. When these signs were shown, Fir‘aun then claimed that this was magic through which Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) was trying to expel them from this land of theirs (by rejecting worship of Fir‘aun). Then Fir‘aun proceeded to gather the magicians from his land to counter what he claimed was magic.

From the above commentary we can summarise the following about Fir‘aun and his people:

1. The arrogance of Fir‘aun, who having power and authority in the land, thought he was a deity, worthy of being worshipped and obeyed, despite his knowledge that he is created, nurtured and dependent. He

misguided his people who themselves were deficient in intellect and also sinners in that they were happy pursuing lusts and pleasures, and preferring them to worshipping Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) alone and doing righteous, beneficial deeds. Their intellects and emotions had been played with by Fir'aun similar to how the intellects of people today are played with using imaginative fairy tales about the origin of the universe and the origin of man and how they are distracted by pursuits of lusts and pleasures, happy and blissful in all of that and unconcerned about the realities that are glaringly obvious to their physical senses and the most basic reason: that they are created, made and have a purpose and a destination, a resurrection and an accounting and that there is true justice which is founded upon the rubūbiyyah of Allāh and His ulūhiyyah, and that this is the truth upon which the heavens and earth were created.

2. His use of false arguments and methods, such as mockery of what he was hearing, making claims of madness against his opponent, playing with the minds and emotions of his audience by saying that Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) wants to expel them from the land, and then threatening Mūsā with imprisonment when his own arguments failed. And this is the nature of falsehood.

3. Then after seeing manifest signs, he made the claim of magic and claimed that he could do better than

these signs by calling upon the magicians of his land. Even that did not convince him. Then after that, came the great signs, the plagues, and right at the very end, reluctantly, even though he was convinced of the truth, he let Banī Isrā'il go.

4. The above shows that there are some disbelievers who even after they see every possible sign, they simply will not believe. Not because they are not convinced, but because of arrogance, pride and the greatness they see in themselves and because Tawḥīd reduces them to their true status: Created beings who have to eat, sleep, drink and relieve themselves and are dependent upon the vast, interconnected systems of causes and effects which bring them tremendous, innumerable favours which they enjoy on a daily basis, making them to be the ones in need and the One who originated all of this and controls it to be **al-Ghaniyy**, the free of all need, **al-Hamīd**, worthy of all praise. They simply cannot accept that there is an authority over the universe because of their arrogance. And in the story of Fir'aun there is the greatest of lesson in this respect.

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10 Muḥarram 1440 / 20 September 2018 v1.1