

For Fast 25

Chapter 28

- 16** He (Moses) said: My Lord, surely I have done harm to myself, so protect me; so He protected him. Surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.
- 17** He said: My Lord, because You have bestowed a favour on me, I shall never be a backer of the guilty.

Note: This was the prayer of Moses after he had struck an Egyptian who was attacking an Israelite, and the Egyptian was accidentally killed as a result. Moses prays for God's forgiveness, and says that, as God had bestowed so many favours on him, he could never act in support of a guilty party.

- 21** So he went forth from it (the city), fearing, awaiting. He said: My Lord, deliver me from the unjust people.

Note: The Egyptian authorities now wanted to catch and punish Moses for killing an Egyptian. So Moses left the city in fear, and prayed as above for deliverance.

- 22** And when he turned his face towards Midian, he said: Maybe my Lord will guide me in the right path.

Note: Moses fled to a place called Midian, praying that it turns out to be the right decision.

- 23** And when he came to the water of Midian, he found there a group of men watering, and he found besides them two women keeping back (their flocks). He said: What is the matter with you two? They said: We cannot water until the shepherds take away (their sheep) from the water; and our father is a very old man.

- 24** So he watered (their sheep) for them, then went back to the shade, and said: My Lord, I stand in need of whatever good You may send to me.

Note: Moses was a stranger in the land, all by himself, on the run from the Egyptians. He needed some place of stay, refuge, means of livelihood, etc., but not knowing wherefrom this would come and in what form. So he prays in these general terms: "whatever good You may send me". As a result of the prayer, he was taken in by the women's father (called Jethro in the Bible) when they told him how Moses had helped them. He gave Moses employment and later married one of the daughters to him. Moses stayed in Midian for ten years, just as the Holy Prophet Muhammad stayed in Madina for ten years. Curiously, Madina's former name before the Holy Prophet came to it, Yathrib, sounds like the name Jethro.

Chapter 29

30 He said: My Lord, help me against the mischievous people.

Note: This was Lot's prayer in the face of various types of evil that his people indulged in.

45 Recite what has been revealed to you of the Book and keep up prayer. Surely prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil; and certainly the remembrance of Allah is the greatest (force). And Allah knows what you do.

Note: The reciting of the Quran and the remembrance of Allah are both part of prayer, the regular *salat*. During prayers, these exert such a strong influence that it keeps one away from evil of all kinds.

46 And do not argue with the People of the Book except by what is best, save such of them as act unjustly. But say: We believe in what has been revealed to us and revealed to you, and our God and your God is One, and to Him we submit.

Note: We are required to conduct debates with the best of behaviour and motives, rather than rudely, arrogantly, or trying to belittle the other side. We must use the best arguments, those which are full of knowledge and appeal to human reason, sense and heart, employ the best speech, and not seek cheap popularity by pandering to people's prejudices and appealing to low, crude tastes. Prayer, mentioned in the previous verse, will equip us morally to conduct arguments without self-seeking motives.

Note that the argument presented here, following the words "But say", seeks to establish harmony between Muslims and the People of the Book. Muslims say to them: We believe in the revelation that has come to us, but we also believe in the revelation that came to you as having come from God; our revelation confirms, clarifies and re-establishes what were the basic principles taught by your revelation. The God Whom both of us are talking about is the same Being. We and you worship the same God, but you have ascribed some of His attributes to other beings, making them His partners.
