



## The story of the boy with the king, the sorcerer, and the monk

Suhayb ibn Sinān Ar-Rūmi (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Among the people who came before you, there was a king who had a sorcerer. When that sorcerer became old, he said to the king: 'I have become old, so send me a boy whom I will teach sorcery.' So, he sent him a boy to teach him. On his way whenever he went, there was a monk. The boy sat with him and listened to his speech and admired it. So, whenever he went to the sorcerer, he passed by the monk and sat with him; and on visiting the sorcerer, the latter would beat him. The boy complained about this to the monk. The monk said to him: 'When you fear the sorcerer, say to him: 'My family detained me,' and when you fear your family, say to them: 'The sorcerer detained me.' The boy carried on like that (for some time). One day he saw a huge beast that prevented people from passing. The boy said: 'Today I shall know whether the sorcerer or the monk is better.' So, he took a stone and said: 'O Allah, If what the monk is upon is dearer to You than what the sorcerer is upon, then let this beast be killed so that people can pass.' Then he threw it [with the stone] and killed it and people managed to pass. The boy came to the monk and informed him about that. The monk said to him: 'O son, today you are better than me, you have come to a stage where I feel that you would soon be put to a trial, and in case you are put to a trial, do not inform them about me.' The boy used to treat people suffering from congenital blindness, leprosy, and other diseases. One of the king's companions, who had become blind, heard about the boy. He brought many gifts for the boy and said: 'All these gifts are for you on condition that you cure me.' The boy said: 'I do not cure anybody; it is only Allah, the Almighty, who can cure people. If you believe in Allah, the Exalted, I will supplicate Him to cure you and He will cure you.' So, he believed in Allah, the Almighty, and Allah cured him. Later, that man came to the king and sat with him as he used to. The king said: 'Who gave you back your sight?' The man replied: 'My Lord.' The king then said: 'Do you have a Lord other than me?' The man said: 'My Lord and your Lord is Allah.' The king tortured him and did not stop until he told him about the boy. So, the boy was brought to the king and he said to him: 'O son! Your magic has reached the extent that enables you to cure congenital blindness, leprosy, etc.' The boy said: 'I do not cure anyone. Only Allah, the Almighty, can cure.' So, he tortured him also until he informed him about the monk. Then the monk was brought to him and the king said to him: 'Abandon your religion.' The monk refused and so the king ordered a saw to be brought, and it was placed in the middle of his head and he was split until he fell in two halves. Then the king's companion was brought and it was said to him: 'Abandon your religion.' He refused to do so, and so a saw was brought and

placed in the middle of his head and he fell, split in two halves. Then the boy was brought and it was said to him: 'Abandon your religion.' He refused and so the king turned him over to a group of his people and said: 'Take him to such-and-such mountain.

Ascend the mountain with him till you reach its peak, then see if he abandons his religion; otherwise throw him from the top.' They took him and when they ascended to the top, he said: 'O Allah, save me from them the way You wish.' So, the mountain shook and they all fell down and the boy came back walking to the king. The king said: 'What did your companions do?' The boy said: 'Allah saved me from them.' So, the king turned him over to a group of his people and said: 'Take him on a ship to the middle of the sea and ask him to renounce his religion, but if he refuses, throw him overboard.' So, they took him out to the sea and he said: 'O Allah, save me from them the way You wish.' So the ship capsized and they drowned. Then the boy came walking back to the king and the king said: 'What did your companions do?' The boy replied: 'Allah, the Almighty, saved me from them.' Then he said to the king: 'You will not be able to kill me until you do as I order you.' The king asked: 'And what is that?' The boy said: 'Gather the people in one place and crucify me; then take an arrow from my quiver and say: "In the Name of Allah, the Lord of the boy." Then shoot it at me. If you do this, you will kill me.' So, the king gathered the people in one place and crucified the boy; then took an arrow from his quiver and placed the arrow in the bow, then said: "In the Name of Allah, the Lord of the boy," then shot the arrow. It hit the boy in the temple, and the boy placed his hand over the arrow wound and died. The people proclaimed: 'We believe in the Lord of the boy!' The king was approached and was told: 'Remember what you were afraid of? By Allah, what you feared has happened; people have believed.' So he ordered that trenches should be dug at the entrances to roads, and they were dug, and fires were kindled therein. Then the king said: 'Whoever does not renounce his religion, throw him into the fire.' They did so until a woman came with her child, and she felt hesitant about jumping into the fire, so her child said to her: 'Be patient mother, for verily, you are on the right path!'"

[Authentic hadith] [Narrated by Muslim]

This Hadīth tells an amazing story. A king from the old time had a sorcerer whom he took as a counselor for his own benefit, even if that was at the expense of religion, because he was selfish, autocratic and made people worship him. On becoming old, the sorcerer asked the king to send him a boy whom he could teach magic. He wanted a boy, because at that age one could easily receive and memorize knowledge. However, Allah willed good for that boy. One day, this boy passed by a monk. He listened to him and his words pleased him, because this monk was a worshipper of Allah and spoke only what was good. The monk could have been a scholar too, but he was more monastic than scholastic. So whenever the boy set out from his family's house, he would sit for a while with this monk, and would be late for the sorcerer. Hence, the sorcerer used to beat him, wondering why he was late. The boy then complained to the monk and asked him for a way out of that trouble. The monk advised him to tell the sorcerer that his family was behind his delay whenever he feared his punishment; and to tell his family that the sorcerer was the cause of his delay whenever they asked him. This way could spare him the punishment of both the sorcerer and his family. The monk advised him to lie in that situation probably because he thought that the benefit here outweighed the harm of lying, or he used "detained" as an allusion to spiritual detention. The

boy acted on the monk's advice and he used to go to him and listen to him. One day, a huge animal, i.e. a lion, passed and held people from passing. The boy wanted to check who was better than the other, the monk or the sorcerer. So, he picked a stone and supplicated Allah, the Almighty, to let that stone kill that animal if the monk was better in His sight than the sorcerer. He, then, threw the stone and it killed the animal, and people were able to pass. Thus, the boy knew that the monk was better than the magician. He informed the monk of what had happened, and the monk told him that he was better than him, and that he reached a stage where he would be tested, and asked him not to inform on him. The boy used to treat people suffering from congenital blindness, leprosy, and other diseases. There was a companion of the king who had become blind and he heard about the boy. He brought him many gifts and told him that all these gifts would be his if he cured him. The boy told him that he could not cure anybody; it is only Allah, the Exalted, who cures. Moreover, he informed him that if he believed in Allah, he would supplicate Him to cure him. The man, thus, believed in Allah, the Exalted, and Allah cured him. The blind man who was once a companion of the king, and who believed in Allah was brought to the king and was ordered to renounce his new religion, but he refused. This indicates that one should have patience. Then the monk was brought and ordered to give up his religion, but he refused. So, he was sawed into two halves from the middle of his head. The boy, then, was brought and was ordered to renounce his belief, but he refused. So the king handed him over to a group of his people and ordered them to take him to the top of a mountain, then see if he abandoned his religion; otherwise they should throw him therefrom. They took him and when they ascended to the top, he supplicated Allah to save him from them by any means that He wishes. So, the mountain shook and they all fell down and the boy came back walking to the king and told him that Allah had saved him from them. So, the king turned him over to a group of his people and ordered them to take him on a boat to the middle of the sea, and if he refused to renounce his religion, they should throw him overboard. They took him out to sea and he said the same supplication again and the boat capsized and they all drowned. Then the boy came walking back to the king and told him that he would not be able to kill him except by following his instructions. The boy ordered the king to gather the people in one place and tie him to a trunk; then take an arrow from his quiver and say, 'In the Name of Allah, the Lord of the boy', then shoot it at him. The king did that and when he shot the arrow, it hit the boy in the temple, and he died. People believed in Allah and the king's worst fears came true. So, he ordered that trenches should be dug and fires should be kindled therein, and whoever refused to give up his religion should be thrown into the fire. A woman then came with her child and she was hesitant about jumping into the fire, out of pity for her child, but that child told her to be patient because she was on the right path.

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