

enemies power over them” (Mālik, Jihād, mā jā’a fi-l-ghulūl).

Cheating is Contrary to Justice

The basic characteristic of all kinds of cheating is injustice, which is contrary to the objective of the Sacred Law for “Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear in His Law that the objective is to establish justice among His servants and fairness among people, so the path that leads to justice and fairness is part of the religion” (Ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Ṭuruq al-ḥukmiyya*, 1:13). Allah recompenses the believer fairly and accurately: one should not fear a diminishment of one’s rewards, nor an increase in the counting of one’s bad deeds (Ibn ‘Abbās in Qurṭubī, *sub* Q 72:13); every believer will be rewarded with the most perfect and complete reward (*al-jazā’ al-awfā*) and should not fear humiliation (Rāzī). *Those who sell Allah’s covenant and their oaths for a paltry price* (Q 3:77) have stinted or shortchanged themselves by not honoring the agreement in which they were guaranteed that they would be *paid in full*: Allah Most High is just, He repays even those who desire the life of this world only and deny the Hereafter: *Whoever desires the life of this world and its adornment—We fully repay them for their deeds therein, and they will not suffer loss (lā yubkhasūna)* (Q 11:15) but they are those for whom there is nothing in the Hereafter but Fire (Q 11:16, also Q 42:20).

Abū Umāma Iyās b. Tha‘laba al-Ḥārithi, Allah be pleased with him, narrates: “The Prophet said,” Whoever seizes the right of a Muslim by taking a false oath, Allah will condemn him to Hell and will forbid Paradise for him.” A man asked: “O Messenger of Allah, even if it is something insignificant?” He replied: “Yes, even if it is a twig of the Arak tree.” (Muslim, Imān, *bāb wa’id mani-qtata’ ḥaqq muslim biyamīn fajira bi-nār*).

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See also: ADULTERY AND FORNICATION; BELIEF; BUYING AND SELLING; BELIEVERS; DAY OF RECKONING; DISBELIEF; GAMBLING; HEREAFTER; MADYAN; ORPHANS; PATH OF ALLAH; RESURRECTION; SHU‘AYB, UPON HIM BE PEACE; USURY.

CSABA OKVATH

CHEST

ṬĀBŪT

The Qur’anic noun *tābūt* is defined as “a chest or box, as things are placed in it and they return to it after use. It was originally *tabūwa*, like *tarquwa*, on the pattern of *fa’lūwa*; when its *waw* was made quiescent, its feminine *ha* [*ha-tanūtha*] changed into *ta*” (Ibn Manzūr). “It is said that it was originally *tābūwa*,” (Jawharī; Fayrūzabādī) or *ta’būwa* (as per Fayrūzabādī). It is also used for ribs and all that is between them, such as the vital organs of the heart, the liver, and the lungs, [the hollow space thus] being likened to a chest or a box (Zabīdī).

According to Al-Qāsim b. Ma’n (d. 175/791), the foremost jurist and Arabist from among the Successors, “the dialects of the Quraysh and Anṣār do not differ in any way, except for *tābūt*; in the Qurayshī dialect, it is pronounced with *ta* [that is, *tābūt*] and the Anṣār pronounced it with a final *ha* [that is *ta’būwa*] (Jawharī); the most prevalent reading is *tābūt*, as per Abū Bakr b. Muḥāhid (d. 324/936) (Ibn Manzūr).

Tābūt is directly mentioned twice: once in the Divine command to the mother of baby Mūsā (Q 20:39 and once in the context of one of the transgressions of

the Children of Isrāʾīl (*q.v.*), who—after the demise of Mūsā, upon him peace—demanded of their prophet the appointment of a king (Q 2:248). It is indirectly alluded to in Q 28:7, where the mother of baby Mūsā is instructed to put him in the river, if she feared for his life, and she is reassured *indeed, We will have him come back to you.*

The *Tābūt* of baby Mūsā

The command to put baby Mūsā in the Chest and cast the Chest into the river appears in a fast-moving passage that describes the details of the unique honor granted to Mūsā—the station of Kalīm Allāh, “the one who spoke to Allāh”, or, according to Abū Maṣṣūr Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Azharī (d. 369/980), “He to whom Allāh spoke” (*Tahdhīb, sub k-l-m*)—when he was returning to Egypt (*q.v.*) with his family, after having fulfilling his contracted service of eight or ten years in Madyan (*q.v.*) with his father-in-law, Prophet Shuʿayb, upon him peace (*q.v., cf. Q 28: 27-28*).

It was a dark and cold night and he had lost his way—as per Ibn ʿAbbās—when suddenly *he saw a fire and said to his family: “Wait here, I have just seen a fire; perhaps I will bring a brand from it for you, or I will find some guidance at the fire”* (Q 20:10). The fire he perceived was, actually, a light from “the Light of Allah (*min nūr Allāh*)” (Ṭabarī). As he came near,

a voice called out, ‘O Mūsā, indeed I, I am your Lord, so take-off your sandals; you in the sacred valley of Ṭuwā and I Myself have chosen you, so listen to what is revealed. Verily, I am Allah, there is no deity beside Me, so worship Me and establish Prayers to remember Me. Indeed, the Hour is coming; I have willed to keep hidden the time of its coming so that every soul is recompensed for what it strives. (Q 20:11-15)

In the ensuing conversation, Allah Most High shows him some of *His great signs* and commands him to go to Pharaoh *who has transgressed* (Q 20:24). In response, Mūsā, upon him peace, makes nine requests in rapid succession:

O my Lord, expand for me my breast; and ease for me my task; and untie the knot from my tongue, so that they may understand my speech; and appoint for me a helper from my family; Hārūn, my brother; increase through him my strength; and let him share my task; that we may exalt You much; and remember You much; indeed, You are ever Seeing. (Q 20: 25-35)

All of these are immediately granted (Q 20:36; see SUPPLICATION AND ANSWER) and he is reminded of previous

favours:

Recall when We revealed to your mother what We revealed: ‘Cast him into the chest and throw the chest into the river, and the river will cast it onto the bank; there My enemy and his enemy will take him.’ And I bestowed upon you love from Me that you would be brought up under My eye. [And We favored you again] when your sister went and said, ‘Shall I direct you to someone who will take care of him?’ So We restored you to your mother that she might be content and not grieve. And you killed someone, but We saved you from retaliation and tried you with a [severe] trial. And you remained [for some] years among the people of Madyan. Then you came [here] at a time decreed. (Q 37-40)

It was a small chest, made from sycamore wood. The mother of Mūsā had put pieces of leather in it, sealed it with tar and cast it into the Nile. It is also said that she lined the chest with carded wool (Qurṭubī). The chest travelled to the vicinity of the palace of Pharaoh through a tributary of the Nile River; Pharaoh was sitting in the garden of the palace with his wife Āsiya when he saw the chest and ordered his servants to take it out and bring it to him. When it was opened, they found a beautiful baby in it. She said he will be a source of joy for me and you; do not kill him; perhaps he may benefit us, or we may adopt him as a son, and they knew not (Q 28:9); The Pharaoh immediately felt a very strong love for the baby (Ṭabarī; Qurṭubī; Rāzī). This is so because Allah Most High had cast love upon Mūsā, from Him, so that he was beloved of all the creation—as per Ibn ʿAbbās (in Qurṭubī, *sub Q 20:39*).

The *Tābūt* of Banī Isrāʾīl

After the demise of Prophet Mūsā, upon him peace, the Children of Isrāʾīl (*q.v.*) demanded of their prophet the appointment of a king so that we may fight in the path of Allah, but when their Prophet said to them: “Allah has appointed Tālūt as your king, they said, “How can he be our king, when we are more deserving of kingship, [their prophet] said, “Allah has chosen him above you, and has granted him abundant knowledge and bodily prowess; Allah grants His authority to whom He pleases. Then their prophet told them, the sign of his authority is there shall come to you the *tābūt* in which is *sakīna* from your Lord, and the relics left by the family of Mūsā and Hārūn, carried by angels; in it, is a sign for you if you indeed have faith.” (Q 2:248)

“The Chest measured three by two cubits (Māwardī); “it was made of gilded boxwood, measuring three by two