

Abú Nasr, in reply, briefly explained the tenets and ordinances of Islám. He then described this world as transitory, man as a frail being, riches as his bane, and infidelity as the cause of his ruin. He expatiated on the delights and pleasures of Paradise, and enlarged in comparison therewith upon the pains and torments of Hell. The one, he told his listener, was the reward of the Faithful who performed their five daily prayers; the other, he warned him, was the punishment of the Infidel, who neglected these prayers.

T.B.K.

Sátuk was gravely impressed by the speaker's words and earnest manner. A solemn awe took possession of his mind, and he wished forthwith to be of the Faithful. Abú Nasr bid him repeat the creed after himself. He did so, and straightway became a Musalmán. "Who is Muhammad?" then enquired Sátuk. "He is the friend of God, and the guide to all people in the right way to eternity," replied Abú Nasr. "He saves them from Hell, obtains God's pardon for their sins, and secures their entry into Paradise." Sátuk was next taught the doctrines of the faith, and then, in the first promptings of his zeal for it, summoned his forty attendants, and invited them to follow his example and become Musalmáns. Some did so of their free-will, and others through fear of Sátuk's sword; but that same day they all accepted Islám, and became Musalmán, and, returned to the palace, agreed to conceal the fact for fear of the revenge of the infidels.

During six months Sátuk and his forty, stealthily by night, used to visit Abú Nasr, and from him learn the Kurán, the prayers, and the ordinances of the religion, and to worship God according to the law of Muhammad. At this time Hárún Bughra Khan was troubled in mind by a dream he saw, in which he was seized and worried by a tiger cub. He assembled his wise men, priests, astrologers, and nobles, and consulted them as to its interpretation. They unanimously referred it to the apostacy of the King's nephew, and agreed on the necessity of killing him before he destroyed them and their religion.

The mother of Sátuk here interposed, and demanded that her son should first be put to the proof, and if, as suspected, he turned out to be a Musalmán, she would not oppose his execution. Her claim was acceded to as a just one, and it was decided to test the sincerity and loyalty of Sátuk by inviting him to lay the foundation of an idol temple they were about to build. Sátuk, warned of this, consulted Abú Nasr as to how he should escape the difficulty before him. His teacher bid him be of good cheer, and told him that, where personal safety was imperiled, the perpetration of certain prohibited acts was lawful, and that in the case of himself, provided he mentally avowed the foundations to be those of a mosque, the setting of the bricks would be an act meritorious in itself, and acceptable to God.

Thus fortified, Sátuk attended the assembly of the Royal Court, the grandees, nobles, priests, troops, and citizens at the time and place appointed, and, at the bid of Hárún, stepped forward, and with all solemnity set the first brick of the idol temple, mentally, the while, considering it to be a mosque. At the third brick Hárún, extending his arms, exclaimed "Hold! My son! No need to labour more. My mind is at rest now. You are free to act as you please." The assembly dispersed, and that same night Sátuk repaired to the residence of Abú Nasr, and asked how long it would be before they might openly acknowledge Islám. "That," he replied, "is best known to yourself." Sátuk, on this, proposed to attack the idolators immediately without further delay, content for himself to trust in God's aid for the victory. Abú Nasr applauded his zeal, but pointed to the paucity of their numbers.

Sátuk, nothing daunted thereby, now declared his resolve to at once make war upon the infidels, for his trust was in God, and, though few in numbers, their boldness would bring many to the standard of Islam. Seeing the zeal of his pupil for the cause Abú Nasr consented to his proposal. During six months, by converting two and three at a time, he had, on this night, about six hundred converts and followers about him, and it was decided that they should make their attack on the following night.

Accordingly, Sátuk and Abú Nasr, and all the Musalmáns set out together to surprise Hárún in his palace. Arrived at the city walls, Abú Nasr stretched forth