

The Story of al-Waleed ibn al-Mugheerah

Perhaps one of the most famous stories is the story of al-Waleed ibn al-Mugheerah. Al-Waleed was the most eloquent and highly esteemed poet of Makkah at the time of the Prophet (pbuh). He once passed by the Prophet (pbuh) and heard him reciting the Qur'aan. This had a visible effect on him, and he went away shaken and startled by what he had heard. The news of this incident spread throughout Makkah. Aboo Jahl, afraid that the people of Makkah might be affected by this news and convert to Islaam, rushed to al-Waleed and told him, "O my uncle! Say something (against Muhammad) so that the people will know that you are against him and hate (his message)."

Al-Waleed replied, "And what can I say? For I swear by Allaah, there is none amongst you who knows poetry as well as I do, nor can any compete with me in composition or rhetoric – not even in the poetry of *jinn*s! And yet, I swear by Allaah, Muhammad's speech (meaning the Qur'aan) does not bear any similarity to anything I know, and I swear by Allaah, the speech that he says is very sweet, and is adorned with beauty and charm. Its first part is fruitful and its last part is abundant (meaning that it is full of deep meanings), and it conquers (all other speech), and remains unconquered! It shatters and destroys all that has come before it (of poetry, because of its eloquence)!" Aboo Jahl responded, "Your people will not be satisfied until you speak against him!" Al-Waleed therefore requested Aboo Jahl, "Leave me for a few days, so that I may think of an appropriate response to give to the Quraysh." After the few days were over, Aboo Jahl came back to him and asked him what he had prepared. Al-Waleed, during this time, could not think of any explanation to give except, "This (the Qur'aan) is a type of magic that has an effect on its listeners." In response to this, Allaah revealed,

كَلَّا إِنَّهُ كَانَ لِآيَاتِنَا عَنِيدًا ﴿١٦﴾ سَأَرْهُقُهُ صِعُودًا ﴿١٧﴾
إِنَّهُ فَكَّرَ وَقَدَّرَ ﴿١٨﴾ فَقِيلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ ﴿١٩﴾ ثُمَّ قِيلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ ﴿٢٠﴾ ثُمَّ نَظَرَ ﴿٢١﴾
ثُمَّ عَبَسَ وَبَسَرَ ﴿٢٢﴾ ثُمَّ أَدْبَرَ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَقَالَ إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ ﴿٢٤﴾
يُوَثِّرُ ﴿٢٥﴾ إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا قَوْلُ الْبَشَرِ ﴿٢٥﴾ سَأُصْلِيهِ سَقَرَ ﴿٢٦﴾

"Nay! Verily he (i.e., al-Waleed) has been stubborn in opposing our verses and signs...Verily, he thought and plotted; So let him be cursed, how he plotted! And once more let him be cursed; how he plotted! Then he thought! Then he frowned and was irritated; then he turned back and was proud! Then he said, 'This is nothing but magic from old; this is nothing but the word of a mortal!' I will cast him into the Hell-fire..." [74:16-26].

This, then, is the testimony from the greatest poet alive at the time of the Prophet (pbuh)!