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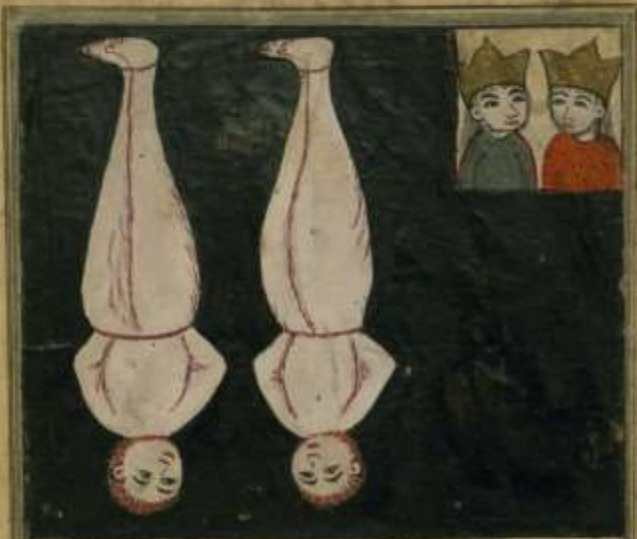
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Author: Zakariya ibn Muhammad Qazwini (ca. 1203-1283)
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Islamic
Illustration: The Angels Harut and Marut Hanging as a Punishment for Being Critical of Adam's Fall
Leaf from Turkish Version of the Wonders of Creation
Text Title: Tercüme-yi 'Aca'ib ül-mahlukat
illuminated manuscripts; folios (leaves)
Ottoman Dynasty
1121 AH/AD 1717 (Ottoman)

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Harut and Marut



Harut and Marut (Arabic: هاروت وماروت) are two Angels mentioned in the second Surah of the Qur'an, who were sent down to test the people at Babel or Babylon by performing deeds of magic. (Sura Al-Baqara, verse 102). The Qur'an indicates that although they warned the Babylonians not to imitate them or do as they were doing, some members of their audience failed to obey and became sorcerers, thus damning their own souls.

In the Qur'an

The story of Haarwut and Maarwut is told in the second Surah (chapter), of the Qur'an, entitled "Al-Baqara" or "The Cow" . It appears in the 102nd Ayah, or verse, and forms part of a narrative concerning the people who followed sorcery.

{They followed what the Shayatin (devils) gave out (falsely of the magic) in the lifetime of Sulaiman (Solomon). Sulaiman did not disbelieve, but the Shayatin (devils) disbelieved, teaching men magic and such things that came down at Babylon to the two angels, Harut and Marut but neither of these two (angels) taught anyone (such things) till they had said, "We are only for trial, so disbelieve not (by learning this magic from us). "And from these (angels) people learnt that by which they caused separation between man and his wife, but they could not thus harm anyone except by Allah's Leave. And they learnt that which harmed them and profited them not. And indeed they knew that the buyers of it (magic) would have no share in the Hereafter. And how bad indeed was that for which they sold their own selves, if they but knew. And if they had believed and guarded themselves from evil and kept their duty to Allah, far better would have been the reward from their Lord, if they but knew!}. (Al-Baqarah, 102, 103)

Muslim interpretations

Ibn Kathir

The 14th century scholar Ibn Kathir interpreted the story of Harut and Marut and goes into depth about what exactly the angels had taught to the people of magic in his book, *Stories of the Qur'an*:

Narrated Al-`Ufi in his interpretation on the authority of Ibn `Abbas (May Allah be pleased with him) pertaining to Allah's Statement {They followed what the Shayatin (devils) gave out (falsely of the magic) in the lifetime of Sulaiman (Solomon). Sulaiman did not disbelieve, but the Shayatin (devils) disbelieved, teaching men magic and such things that came down at Babylon to the two angels, Harut and Marut but neither of these two (angels) taught anyone (such things) till they had said, "We are only for trial, so disbelieve not (by learning this magic from us)."...} When Sulaiman lost his kingdom, great numbers from among mankind and the jinn renegaded and followed their lusts. But, when Allah restored to Sulaiman his kingdom and the renegade came to follow the Straight Path once again, Sulaiman seized their holy scriptures which he buried underneath his throne. Shortly after, Sulaiman (Peace be upon him) died. In no time, the men and the Jinn uncovered the buried scriptures and said: This was a book revealed by Allah to Sulaiman who hid it from us. They took it as their religion and Allah the Almighty revealed His Saying: {And when there came to them a Messenger from Allah confirming what was with them, a party of those who were given the Scripture threw away the Book of Allah behind their backs as if they did not know!}. (Al-Baqarah, 101) and they followed what the devils gave out, i.e. musical instruments, play and all that blocks the remembrance of Allah.^[2]

Legends about Harut and Marut

According to Muslim scholar Ansar Al-'Adl, many interpretations of the verse originate from alleged Judeo-Christian sources that came to be recorded in some works of Quranic exegesis, called *Tafsir*.^[3] Numerous tales have been transmitted about these verses, yet all center around the same basic story:

The angels [who, in Islamic theology, do not possess free will and cannot sin]^[4] had become astonished at the acts of disobedience committed by the human beings on earth. They began to curse the humans, and could not understand how they could be so sinful. Allah informed the angels that they would have also sinned if they were in the position of human beings. So the angels elected Harut and Marut from amongst themselves and God gave them human attributes and sent them to earth after commanding them to avoid wine, idolatry, fornication and murder. Harut and Marut eventually succumbed to their human lusts and fell into all of these sins. Consequently, God punished them for their transgressions.

Abdullah Yusuf Ali, noted translator of the Qur'an into English, asserts that the source of this story may be the Jewish Midrash:

Among the Jewish traditions in the Midrash was a story of two angels who asked Allah's permission to come down to earth but succumbed to temptation, and were hung up by their feet at Babylon for punishment. Such stories about sinning angels who were cast down to punishment were believed in by the early Christians, also (see II Peter 2:4, and Epistle of Jude, verse 6).^[5]

According to Umm al-Qura University professor Abdul Aziz al-Harbi, Harut and Marut were merely human beings described with qualities often attributed to angels, rather than being actual angels, a view which originates with `Abd Allah ibn `Abbas, one of the prophet Muhammad's companions.

Non-Muslim interpretations

European interpretations

English Orientalist and scholar David Samuel Margoliouth asserted that Harut and Marut were none other than Jannes and Jambres, the two magicians mentioned in II Timothy 3:8 as being the Egyptian magicians who withstood the Prophet Moses in the court of Pharaoh in Exodus 7:8-12.^[6]Wikipedia:Verifiability

References

- [1] <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Template:Islam&action=edit>
- [2] www.islambasics.com/index.php?act=download&BID=80 IslamBasics (<http://www.islambasics.com/index.php?act=download&BID=80>)
- [3] Ansar Al-'Adl, Can Angels Disobey? The Case of Harut and Marut (<http://www.islamawareness.net/Angels/disobey.html>). Retrieved on 2010-01-20.
- [4] Ibrahim B. Syed, Ph.D., The Muslim Belief in Angels (http://www.irfi.org/articles/articles_1_50/muslim_belief_in_angels.htm). Retrieved on 2010-01-20.
- [5] Ali, Abdullah Yousf, *The Meaning of the Holy Quran* (<http://www.thegodisone.com/koran.pdf>), eleventh edition (2006), note 104, pg. 45.
- [6] David Samuel Margoliouth. Originally published in *The Muslim World*, Vol. XX, 1930, pp. 73-79.

External links

- (French) Sunni point of view about Harut et Marut (*at-tawhid.net*) (<http://www.at-tawhid.net/article-tafsir-sourate-2-al-baqarah---verset-102-sur-harut-et-marut-al-qadi-iyad-al-qurtubi-et-at-tabari-107380839.html>)

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