

The Crying Camel

An Islamic Story About Justice.

It was a very hot day. The people who lived in the city of Medina were trying to find somewhere to keep cool. There were many beautiful gardens in the city with tall, shady trees. People came to the gardens to sit under the branches of the trees before mosque. They sipped refreshing drinks whilst they talked, told stories and laughed.

The Prophet Muhammad was walking in one of the gardens. He loved to walk in the shade under the trees where it was green and cool in comparison to the baking heat of the sun. He liked to think quietly as he walked, often smiling at the people he knew.

While he was walking, Prophet Muhammad heard a strange noise. It sounded like someone crying or like someone howling. It sounded like someone was very upset. As he came closer to the crying and howling, The Prophet could see it was not a sad person at all, it was a camel.

Muhammad felt very sorry for the camel. It was tied to a post, out in the sunshine. It was very hot, and looked very thirsty. Tears were running down the camel's cheeks, its fur was very wet. No one seemed to notice the camel's howls. Muhammad stroked the camel, and it became calmer. After a while the howls became grunts and the grunts became snorts of pleasure. The tears stopped running down the camel's cheeks since he knew Muhammad was his friend.

Then Muhammad became angry. He strode along the pathways calling, "Who owns this camel?" At last a voice said, "I do," and a man stepped out from under the shade of the biggest tree in the garden. Muhammad looked at the man. He was not hot, he was not thirsty and he most certainly was not thinking about his camel. Muhammad spoke quietly to him. Consequently, as he realized what he had done, the camel owner's head began to droop. Muhammad reminded him that the camel was one of Allah's creatures. The animal would work hard for the man. It would carry heavy loads and travel to places far away therefore the man should take great care of the camel in return for its hard work.

The camel owner felt very bad. He had been cool, comfortable and happy while the camel was hot, bothered and upset. His behaviour had even upset the Prophet Muhammad. He was so ashamed. However, from that day on, he looked after his animals with great care and always made sure they had enough to eat and drink. Moreover, the camel never cried again.