

STORIES FROM THE QURAN

# The companions of the Ditch

Activities  
Included



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**“Cursed were the companions of the ditch [Containing] the fire full of fuel, When they were sitting near it. And they, to what they were doing against the believers, were witnesses. And they had no fault except that they believed in Allah, the Almighty, Worthy of all praise!”  
(Al Burooj, 8-4 :85)**

Al Ukhdud is a ditch dug in the ground. Poeples of Ukhdud (ditch) were cursed. The companions of the ditch were a group of disbelieving people who were among the disbelievers. They went after those among them who believed in Allah and they attempted to force them to give up their religion. However, the believers refused to disbelieve. The disbelievers dug a ditch in the ground, lit a fire in it and prepared some fuel for it in order to keep it ablaze. They sat around the ditch testing the believers by threatening to throw them into it. Those who accepted their call and turned back from their religion were spared. The believers, who remained steadfast on their faith were thrown into the fire. This act was the height of extreme aggression against Allah and His believing group. Allah cursed them, warned them and then destroyed them

Companions of the ditch disbelieved in Allah’s ayat (Signs) and resisted them, in addition to opposing people of faith and torturing them in a manner that rips the heart apart. They also came together (congregated) when the believers were thrown into the fire.

The only “mistake” they held against the believers is that they believed in Allah - The One True God.

The story of the companions of ditch started with a young boy. There lived a disbelieving king who had a (court) sorcerer. As he (the sorcerer) grew old, he said to the king: 'I have grown old, so send some young boy to me so that I may teach him magic.' He (the king) sent a boy to him so that he might train him (in magic). On his way to the sorcerer he (the boy) met a monk and sat with him. He (the boy) listened to his (the monk's) talk and was impressed by it. So whenever he went to the sorcerer he would pass by the monk and sit with him. And when he came to the sorcerer, he (the sorcerer) beat him. He complained about it to the monk and he said to him: 'When you feel afraid of the sorcerer, say: My family made me late. And when you feel afraid of your family, say: The sorcerer made me late.'

It so happened that there came a huge beast (of prey) and it blocked the way of the people. He (the young boy) said: I shall find out today whether the sorcerer or the monk is superior. He picked up a stone and said: O Allah, if the affairs of the monk are dearer to You than the affairs of the sorcerer, bring death to this animal so that the people will be able to move about freely. He threw that stone at it and killed it and the people were able to pass freely. He (the boy) then came to that monk and told him (what had happened). The monk said: My son, today you are better than me. Your affairs have reached a stage where I think that you will be soon put to the test, and in case you are put to the test do not reveal my identity. That young man began to heal the blind and those suffering from leprosy and he began to cure people of (all kinds) of illness.

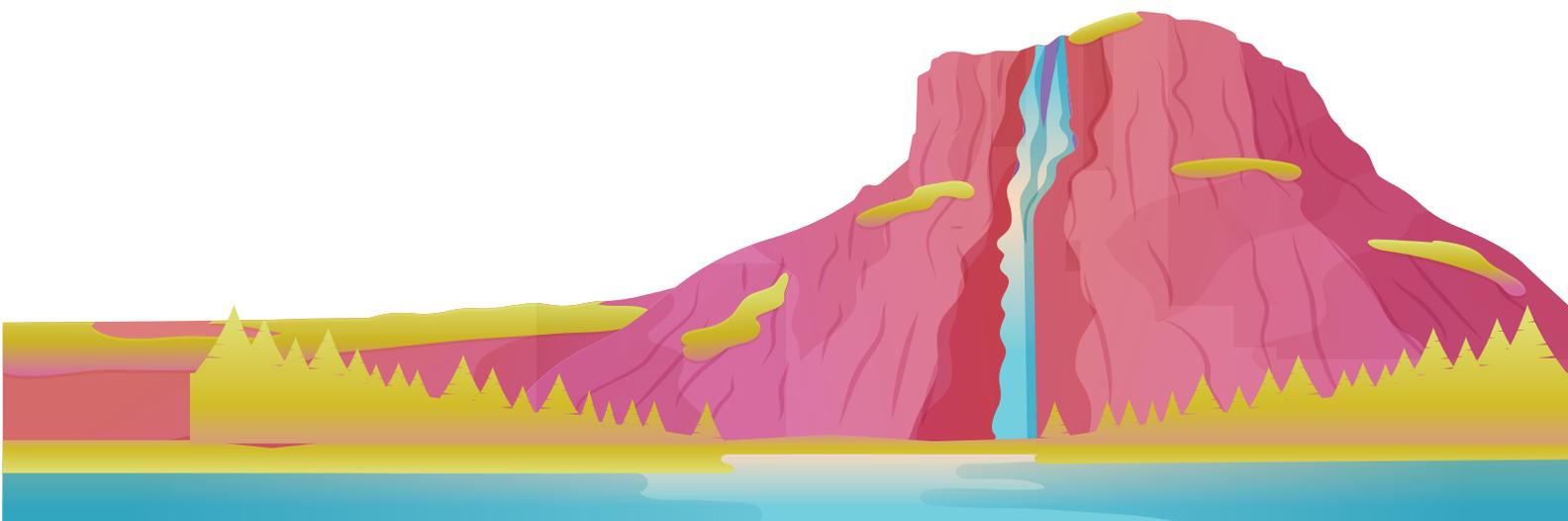
When a companion of the king, who had become blind, heard about him, he came to him with numerous gifts and said: If you heal me, all these things here will be yours. He said: I myself do not heal anyone; it is Allah Who heals. If you believe in Allah, I shall also pray to Allaah to heal you. He believed in Allah and Allah healed him. He came to the king and sat by his side as he used to sit before. The king said to him: Who restored your eyesight? He said: My Lord. He asked, Do you have any Lord other than me? He said: My Lord and your Lord is Allah; so he (the king) took hold of him and tortured him until he revealed the identity of the boy.

The boy was then summoned and the king said to him:  
O boy, it has been conveyed to me that you have become so proficient in your magic that you heal the blind and those suffering from leprosy and you do such and such things. Thereupon he said: I do not heal anyone; it is Allah Who heals. He (the king) took hold of him and began to torture him. So he revealed the identity of the monk. The monk was thus summoned and it was said to him: Turn back from your religion. But he refused to do so. He (ordered) a saw to be brought and he (the king) placed it in the middle of his head and cut it until it fell apart.



Then the courtier of the king was brought and it was said to him: Turn back from your religion, but he refused to do so. So the saw was placed in the middle of his head and it was cut until it fell apart.

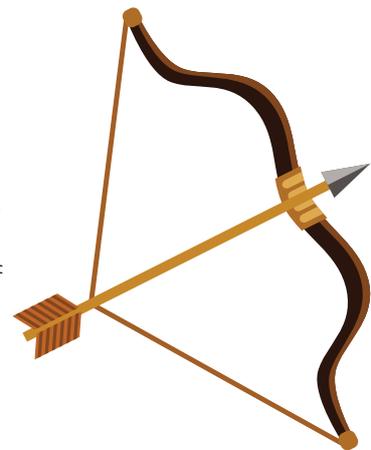
Then the boy was brought and it was said to him: Turn back from your religion. He refused to do so and he was handed over to a group of his courtiers. He said to them: Take him to such and such a mountain; make him climb that mountain and when you reach its top (ask him to renounce his faith) but if he refuses to do so, then throw him (down the mountain). So they took him and made him climb the mountain and he said: O Allah, save me from them however You will. The mountain began to shake and they all fell down, and the boy came walking back to the king. The king said to him: What has happened to your companions? He said: Allah has saved me from them.



The king again handed him to some of his courtiers and said: Take him and carry him away in a small boat and when you reach the middle of the ocean (ask him to renounce) his religion, but if he does not renounce his religion throw him (into the water). So they took him and he said: O Allah, save me from them and what they want to do. It was not long before the boat overturned and they were drowned but he came walking back to the king. The king said to him: What has happened to your companions? He said: Allah has saved me from them.

The boy said to the king: You cannot kill me until you do what I ask you to do. And he said: What is that? He said: You should gather people in a plain and crucify me on the trunk (of a tree). Then take an arrow from my quiver and say: In the name of Allah, the Lord of the boy; then shoot an arrow and if you do that then you would be able to kill me. So he (the king) called the people to an open plain and crucified him (the boy) on the trunk of a tree. Then he took an arrow from his quiver, placed the arrow in the bow and then said: In the name of Allah, the Lord of the boy; he then shot an arrow and it hit his temple.

He (the boy) placed his hands upon the temple where the arrow had hit him and he died. The people said: We believe in the Lord of this boy, we believe in the Lord of this boy, we believe in the Lord of this boy.



Some people came to the king and said to him: Do you realize that what you feared has happened? All the people now believe (in the Lord of the boy). The king commanded ditches to be dug at the entry-points of the roads. When these ditches were dug, and fires were lit in them it was said (to the people): He who does not turn back from his (the boy's) religion will be thrown in the fire or they will be told to jump in it. So they started to do that until a woman came with her child and she hesitated to jump into the fire. Then her child said to her: O mother, be patient, for you are following the Truth."



# Comprehension questions

★ Who were the companions of the ditch?

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★ In which Surah is this story mentioned?

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★ Why did the companions of the ditch throw the believers in the fire?

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★ What will happen to the disbelievers who tortured the believers in the Hereafter

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★ What will happen to the believers in the Hereafter?

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★ Why did Allah mention this story in the Quran?

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★ How did the people come to believe in the Lord of the young boy?

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★ Why was the king not able to kill the young boy the first two times but could kill him the third time?

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★ What does remaining steadfast on your faith mean?

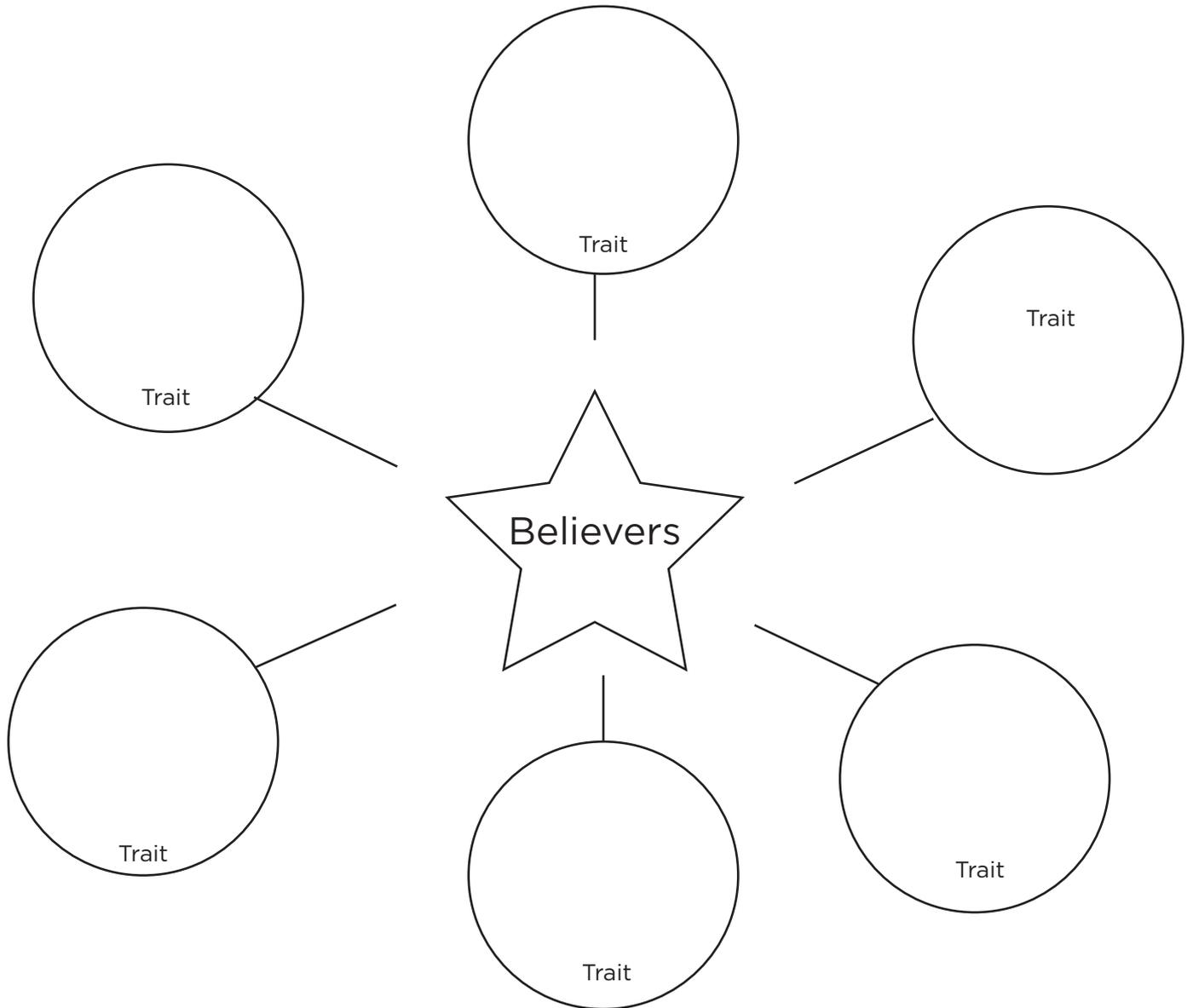
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# Activity

Which traits come to your mind when you think about the believers in this story?

Traits are adjectives that describe a person.



# Activity

## Are the following statements true or false?

1. If the disbelievers that tortured the believers sincerely repented Allah would have forgiven them. \_\_\_\_\_ (Refer to Surah al-Burooj)
2. Allah did not truly love the believers as He did not save them from the disbelievers. \_\_\_\_\_
3. The baby that told the mother to jump in the fire had miraculously spoken so that the mother would feel her faith strengthened and be patient. \_\_\_\_\_
4. The young boy could heal all kinds of diseases because he had learnt magic. \_\_\_\_\_
5. When Allah curses someone it means that he is removed from the mercy of Allah and will never enter Paradise unless he repents. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Allah may or may not punish the disbeliever in this life but He will definitely be punished in the Fire in the Hereafter. \_\_\_\_\_

## Write numbers next to the events of the story to show their correct order:

- A. The disbelieving people make a ditch and lit it with fire. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Allah gives the boy ability to cure people from diseases. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. The boy learns about Allah from the monk. \_\_\_\_\_
- D. The people believe in the Lord of the boy. \_\_\_\_\_
- E. The disbelievers throw every one who believed in Allah in the Fire. \_\_\_\_\_
- F. The king comes to know that the boy believes in a Lord. \_\_\_\_\_
- G. He tries to kill the boy but fails each time until he kills him in the name of Allah. \_\_\_\_\_