

«to something other than what they had been told». So instead of saying *hiṭṭatun* «Relieve us [from the burden of our sins]», they said *habbah fee hintah* (a grain of wheat), making fun of and mocking the command of Allah. Since they changed the word, even though it was easy for them to say it, it is more likely that they changed the actions required of them. Hence they entered the gate shuffling on their bottoms. Furthermore, since this transgression was the greatest reason for the punishment that befell them, Allah said: «so We sent down upon the wrongdoers» among them «a plague» that is, a punishment «from heaven, because of their defiant disobedience» that is, because of their evil-doing and transgression.



﴿وَإِذْ أَسْتَغِيثُ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ فَانْفَجَرَتْ مِنْهُ اثْنَتَا عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ أُنَاسٍ مَّشْرِبَهُمْ كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا مِنْ رِزْقِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْتُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٦٠)

- 2:60. And [remember] when Moosâ prayed for water for his people; We said: Strike the rock with your staff. Then twelve springs gushed forth from it and each tribe knew its own drinking place. So eat and drink of the sustenance provided by Allah, and do not strive to spread mischief in the land.

Moosâ prayed for water from which they could drink.

«We said: Strike the rock with your staff.» This refers either to a specific rock that was known to him, or to any rock.

«Then twelve springs gushed forth from it»; the number of Israelite tribes was twelve.

«and each tribe» among them «knew its own drinking place» among these springs, so that there would be no pushing and shoving; rather they would be able to drink easily, without any disturbance. Hence