

Pharaoh as a Skillful Rhetor: Discourse Analysis of Pharaoh's Dialogues and speeches in the Holy Quran

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ABSTRACT

This study undertook analysis of Pharaoh's dialogues in the Holy Quran, which offer an exquisite specimen of rhetoric. Discourse analysis of his dialogues and speeches was carried out to understand the persuasive power and appropriate use of his language. The data was investigated and interpreted through qualitative analysis. The dialogues of Pharaoh, were evaluated on the basis of the effective use of Cicero's five principles of Rhetoric i.e. Invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery and Aristotle's principles of making appeal to people's *Ethos*, *Pathos* and *Logos*. The use of other principles propounded by the Greeks regarding Rhetoric was also identified and found elaborated in the dialogues. The long established principles of rhetoric were found operating inside his dialogues. Going through his dialogues was found to be no less than taking lessons of rhetoric. Through the superb use of language, Pharaoh simultaneously managed to refute the message of Moses on one hand and to convince and impress his courtiers on the other. It was only through this gift of gab that he manipulated his subjects to come out in multitudes and pursue the followers of Moses for avenging themselves. The analysis of the said dialogues revealed the resourcefulness of Pharaoh, his apt choice of words, his fine arrangement of words, his invention and arrangement of ideas, his timely response, his power of determining the direction of conversation, and his power of moving his ministers and the masses both.

Key Words: Rhetoric, Pharaoh, Quran, Invention, Arrangement, Manipulation, Miracle.

Introduction

According to the recent discovery made by Director Gunter Dreyer, German Institute of Archaeology, Cairo, one of the great world specialists in Egyptology, the use of writing in ancient Egypt arose in 3300 or in 3200 B.C.E., a hundred years or so, earlier than when writing developed in Mesopotamia (The Write Stuff). Although, according to Martin (1994), the ancient Egyptian culture is considered as standing first where writing assumed central role in the cultural life, yet it was in no way at the expense of their skill in rhetoric and oratory. Writing more or less was restricted to the elite, yet the rhetoric and oratory still had its importance for the King for effective administration over the uneducated masses.

The most striking feature of the ancient Egyptian civilization that exists till date is the invention of the concept of the perfect dictator. All Egypt was ruled over by a single ruler, the Pharaoh, who was at the same time a king, a high priest and a god (“Way of life in Egypt”, 2018). For the sake of management, he was supposed to be a good orator to act as king and god at the same time. King Pharaoh wielded utmost powers in his person in the ancient Egypt and led the people in the religious and the political spheres both (*Ibid*). The Pharaoh had mystified his role and status by amalgamating social and political power and thus getting an efficient and forced authority over all the land. With unlimited power and being the political and religious leader, he organized religion through a very well-educated and powerful priesthood. The king was supposed to be the image of god in the guise of human being, on earth and therefore the difference between god and man had been put to an end. This was the main cause at the root of the creation and backing of social and political hierarchy by the ancient Egyptian belief system (*Ibid*). The research paper is meant to see how well did Pharaoh align his political power with his gift of language and how best he performed his role of taking others along with him, in a civilization that was based on the following five rhetorical principles: 1) effective use of silence in communication 2) exercising control and restraint in communication, 3) sticking to truthfulness, 4) speaking fluently and 5) identifying the right moment to speak (Binkley et al, 2012). In order to see how well the conversation of Pharaoh qualified the Greek standards of rhetoric instead of Egyptian standards, the dialogues of Pharaoh were evaluated on the basis of the effective use of Cicero’s five principles of Rhetoric i.e. Invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery and Aristotle’s principles of making appeal to people’s *Ethos*, *Pathos* and *Logos*.

Literature Review

According to Cambridge Dictionary, rhetorical speech or writing “is intended to seem important or influence people”, and rhetorical strategy is one of the four forms of speech and writing i.e. description, narration, exposition, and persuasion.” The definition of rhetoric given in Merriam-Webster Dictionary is “the language that is intended to influence people and that may not be honest or reasonable. It is the art or skill of speaking or writing formally and effectively especially as a way to persuade or influence people.”

It is language intended to carry a persuasive and impressive influence, however, it lacks in sincerity and meaningful content. So the connotation is negative as the purpose may not be based on sincerity. This quality of rhetoric is demonstrated very finely in this article, in the dialogue under analysis.

Rhetoric involves the art of persuading in which persuasive language is used to convince audience for doing something, believing something, or thinking something. Rhetoric throughout most of history referred to the

arts of speechmaking and oratory. Historically it was the domain of oratory and oral speech. Ancient Egypt believed in five rhetorical principles: 1) effective use of silence in communication 2) exercising control and restraint in communication, 3) sticking to truthfulness, 4) speaking fluently, and 5) identifying the right moment to speak(Binkley et al, 2012).

Aristotle considered making effective appeal to three different areas of human existence necessary, for making one's speech a success. Higgins and Walker(2012) believe that by making appeal to these three areas namely, *Ethos*, *Pathos* and *Logos*, we can move our audience to get convinced for giving to us their consent to accept what we tell them, to believe and trust what we present before them and to follow the line of action that we demand of them.

Ethos relates to the conviction of the audience about the credibility and trustworthiness of the speaker and of the truth of the matter that they are going to pursue. Unless the audience is convinced of the uprightness, reliability, and authenticity of the speaker and also their cause, it is neither going to believe or follow something nor get mobilized for taking an action. A speaker's past record, present status, apparent outlook and lack of discrepancy between their deeds and actions are of prime importance in this area.

Pathos relates to feelings, desires and emotions. These are those things that distinguish a human being from a machine or a robot. A human being does not need food and shelter alone for living a life; Human beings' actions are determined by the satisfaction of their desires, expression of their feelings, and pursuit of their dreams. Unless these driving forces of human beings are engaged, they cannot be induced to perform something. Human beings can do wonders if their feelings, desires and dreams are synchronized with their actions.

Logos relates to the correspondence and relationship of a thing to logic, reason, objectivity and practice. When a thing fulfills the condition of logic and reason through figures, evidence and objective data then it becomes easier to follow it and to subscribe to it. Some claim, slogan, or call might appear very impressive and may appeal to one's emotions but if the criterion of logic and rationality is not met then people might turn their back upon it very soon.

There are five principles of rhetoric which are invention, memory, arrangement, style, and delivery that were identified and explained by the Roman philosopher, Cicero (2006). Invention entails creativity, resourcefulness, and presence of mind, due to which a speaker can come up with new ideas, can cope with an unexpected situation in a better way and can supply interesting and convincing solutions for a problem. Arrangement is imposing an order over ideas and points for the achievement of maximum effect. Best ideas

will not achieve the desired effects, if they are not arranged properly and systematically. Memory is related to oratory and oral speeches, basically. Nowadays we do not face the problem of memory due to the availability of pen and paper and due to the addition of written form of rhetoric to the oral form. Today memory is still important in making successful speeches and implies bringing to one's mind old references, recapitulating past information and situations to be exploited to make the speech more informative, relevant and persuasive. Style concerns the choice of words, syntax, the type of words, new usage of past words, grammatical features. Style is an important part of one's originality and is instrumental in achieving the goal of rhetoric. Delivery is the way words are conveyed. Some people have more eye contact, some walk around while making a speech, some sit in the middle of the crowd, some put questions and let the audience give their answers and then there is cross-questioning from the side of the speaker, some memorize speeches, some give them off the cuff, and some use notes while delivering a speech. All these different types of delivery have their own advantages and disadvantages, but a successful rhetorician gives talks in accordance with the situation and place, and gets maximum advantages.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Moses invited Pharaoh to take recourse to Allah and conveyed Allah's message to him as follows:

Then, go you two, to Pharaoh and say: 'The Master of the worlds has sent us as messengers to you that you let the progeny of Israel for accompanying us in going.' (26:17-18)

But instead of addressing the issue in hand, Pharaoh tried to beat about the bush and related Moses' past in which he was fed and brought up in his house and how he turned ungrateful by murdering a person of Pharaoh's tribe.

Pharaoh said: "Did we not bring you up among us when you were a child?

You spent many years of your life among us and then you committed that deed of yours. You are very ungrateful indeed." (26:18-19)

Pharaoh knew him well and recognized him well and did not put the question just to confirm whether he was really that very Moses, but rather it was a rhetorical question and was meant to remind him of his past status and circumstances and of his criminal record and also to let the people know his questionable past. On one hand, he is proving him guilty and on other hand he is trying to make him psychologically weak by insinuating at his crime. This rhetorical question has served several purposes for Pharaoh. Through it, he tried to hush Moses up in his demand by making him weak psychologically, through it he wanted to give impression to his courtiers that Moses was not someone unknown to him nor has he come from the skies to deliver the message of God. Through this, he also managed to show Moses' earlier poverty and helplessness,

his dependency over Pharaoh in the past, and through this, he showed his act of crime and ungratefulness. So the courtiers were made to believe that his demand was not to be taken seriously but rather as something based upon foolishness. After mentioning these things, he labeled Moses as ungrateful and helped the audience in drawing the only logical conclusion for them. That was the only best available effective weapon of attack at that time. After mentioning these things, he labeled Moses as ungrateful and helped the audience in drawing the only logical conclusion for them.

Pharaoh started attacking Moses on the front of *Ethos*, by questioning and shattering his credibility. The logic behind was that if the credibility of messenger could be made dubious, then the veracity of the message would become ineffective and dubious automatically. Then he starts using the principle of *Pathos* in rhetoric, as he is trying to build up his pressure by making appeal to Moses' feeling of fear. Instead of stating the crime, Pharaoh insinuates at his crime and tries to give the impression that the secret of his murder is known to him alone, and if he opens his lips to disclose it, then Moses would be in trouble. At last he resorted to the third strategy of rhetoric i.e. *Logos*, when, after presenting the past record of Moses as criminal and ungrateful, he presented the information and facts before the courtiers, to draw for themselves the logical conclusion, after objectively analyzing of the data.

Pharaoh could have immediately ordered attack over Moses as he had escaped death sentence, issued by his majesty's court in the past, for his committing a murder, and that too of a person belonging to the superior clan of Pharaoh. But just to remind it to the audience and to justify his future action against Moses in their eyes, Pharaoh very cleverly initiates and floats his case by showing the numerous blessings he had upon Moses and the type of reward he received for them. He tries to bring the court round and to convince his chieftains of Moses' ungratefulness and of his own generosity and fair play. Although Pharaoh and his wife had brought up Moses in anticipation of their own benefit and to satisfy their own desire, but here he tries to get an upper hand over Moses by appealing to *Pathos*, and by reminding him of the favours that he had had due to Pharaoh. He wants to oblige Moses by enumerating his favours upon Him, and then to disarm him, by reminding him of the murder committed by him as a reward for his favours. He refers to Moses' past record to assassinate his character and to prove him as an ungrateful liar, a murderer and a fugitive just to harm his credibility. Pharaoh wanted to make an appeal to the emotions and feelings of his audience, when he mentioned that his own countless blessings upon Moses were reciprocated by Moses in the form of ungratefulness, murder of his tribesman, and challenging his authority and rule.

Here, one thing that is worth-mentioning as appeal to *Logos*, and as a point of rhetorical excellence of Pharaoh, is that Pharaoh very deftly beat about the bush and changed the direction of the topic by converting

a collective issue into a personal and individual issue and instead of answering for his own injustice of captivating and persecuting the tribe of Moses for no crime of them, he turned the guns at Moses and instead made Moses the target of criticism and focus of attention.

Moses replied: "I committed that act erringly.

Then I fled for fear of you. Then my Lord bestowed wisdom and authority on me and made me one of the Messengers.

Now this is the favour that you tauntingly remind me of: that you enslaved the Children of Israel!" (26:20-22)

Moses did not hesitate in acknowledging his mistake and attributed his crime to the stage of his ignorance. It was a logical explanation and a challenging one too, because Moses made it clear to him that he did not fear Pharaoh any more than he used to do, when he did not know his real Sustainer. This was an open challenge conveyed to be read between lines by Pharaoh. When Pharaoh was exposed by Moses for his shying away from the basic issue of injustice with the tribe of Moses and focusing over the crime of Moses, Pharaoh sensed that he was being defeated logically and started cross-questioning Moses, as a way of gaining time and finding more opportunities of defeating him.

Pharaoh said: "And who is this Lord of the Universe?" (26:23)

The rhetorical device used here by Pharaoh is that instead of using a personal interrogative pronoun ‘who’ for asking about the creator of Moses, he used the inanimate interrogative pronoun “what” to imply that there is obviously no deity besides him, who can be worshipped by the citizens of his empire. By using the pronoun ‘what’ he tries to negate the possibility of another sustainer and tries to blame Moses of coming up with a naïve and preposterous idea of the sustainer of people. The offer of asking him to explain the Lord of Universe was made to find out some fault with the answer of Moses and hence to make a successful appeal to the *Logos* of the audience and hence Moses’ credibility could be affected.

Moses answered: "The Lord of the heavens and the earth and of all that is between them, if you were only to believe." (26:24)

Here Moses indicated that his Lord is one who is not only controlling the internal affairs of the world, but also the cosmic affairs of heaven and earth. Pharaoh knew that neither he was, nor could he be believed to be the originator of the entire universe, including its skies and the globe. Instead of cutting a sorry figure in front of the courtiers, he adopted a mocking attitude and threw the ball away into the court of his chieftains and the other audience present. In this case, he found that an appeal to the *Logos* of the audience was impossible to make.

Pharaoh said to the surrounding ones: "Do you hear (what he says)?" (26:25)

When Pharaoh finds himself in a fix then, then in order to seek agreement and to get the allegiance and support of his courtiers, he tries to take them into confidence by addressing them during the argument and gives them the impression that he considers them to be on his side. Addressing others and inviting them to participate in a discussion is actually a way of giving importance to their opinion. This also has a psychological effect of isolating the opponent in a discussion and giving him the impression that all the people present are not merely on-lookers but rather his party of supporters. He adopts a mocking attitude when he needs to wash away the impression created by Moses' presentation of his points over the audience. He is smart enough to understand that the allegiance of the courtiers must be maintained, if he wants to continue with his ruling the empire. We can find the strategy of appealing to the *Pathos* of the people in operation; every person possesses self-love and entertains a desire to be loved and given importance by others. When Pharaoh made an appeal to the judgment of his audience, and tried to involve them, he actually gave them importance.

Moses said: "(He is) Your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers of yore." (26:26)

Here Moses' point implies that if Pharaoh considers himself the sustainer of the present people, then who could have been the sustainer of his fathers and forefathers. This defuses Pharaoh's claim of being a sustainer and therefore now Pharaoh stoops low to attack his character.

Pharaoh addressed the audience: "This Messenger of yours who has been sent to you is simply mad." (26:27)

When appeal to *Logos* for defeating Moses did not work, then Pharaoh tried to harm the reputation and credibility (*Ethos*) of Moses directly, by labeling him as mad. In possession of no tangible argument, Pharaoh now turns to target Moses' person, so as to decrease the value of his statement and demand and make appeal to the *Ethos* of the audience. When verifiable and indisputable evidence pertaining to *Logos*, against the opponent, is unavailable, then it serves as a very effective propaganda tool, to taint the opponent's character and reputation for harming their cause. Appeal to *Ethos* in the shape of negative profiling of Moses, that had started earlier, finds an additional epithet of 'mad'. The label provided by him carried conviction with the courtiers. Seeing it in the perspective of the previous history of Moses related by Pharaoh, it gave the impression that the preposterous demand of letting go the whole servant class with him, made by a poor child basically belonging to the slums of the slave segment of society, bred and brought up in Pharaoh's house, with a criminal record of murder and fugitiveness, could be attributed to nothing but madness. The impression it made upon them was that how could such an ungrateful and criminal person,

cropping up all of a sudden from his long fugitiveness of ten years, be expected to have been chosen by God to be His messenger.

Inventiveness, considered as the first principle of rhetoric, can be seen amply displayed in his provision of timely directions and in his act of manipulating the masses. The second principle of rhetoric i.e. skillful arrangement of material also finds demonstration. The plan of Pharaoh is to increase pressure by degrees, by putting forward the less powerful weapons of attack earlier and the most lethal ones, later, at the end.

Moses added: "(He is) the Lord of the east and the west, and all between them. If you only had any understanding!"

Pharaoh warned: "If you take any God other than me, I will certainly make you one of those (who are rotting) in prison." (26:28-29)

Arranging his weapons of attack in an effective ascending order and beginning with exposure of Moses' past crime by insinuating at his murder, then character assassination, then cross-questioning with a view to get an opportunity of finding fault with his opponent by letting him bring up evidence in support of his claim, then mockery, and then labeling him as insane, finally, he comes to threaten Moses of imprisonment, when he finds himself answerless. The reason behind his first use of intimidation instead of dialogue was that he could not compromise over his status of being considered as god, as it was a status hard-earned and it ensured his unquestionable authority over his nation. So when he sensed menace to his authority, then he tried to brow-beat Moses, so as dissuade him from touching the sore part of the issue.

Moses expressed: "Even if I were to bring a Clear Sign to you?"

Pharaoh answered: "Then bring it if you are truthful at all." (26:30-31)

If Pharaoh had been alone, he could have used his threats and force more directly, without giving Moses a chance of proving his innocence and truthfulness. But the problem was that the audience and courtiers were around and the mode of argument employed by Pharaoh was the democratic process of debate and discussion. Pharaoh wants to make his rhetoric effective by making an appeal to the *Logos* of his people and he did not want to lose on account of appeal to *Ethos*. When Moses offered for the display of some signs brought by him, for establishing the veracity of his message, then Pharaoh had no option but to accept it. It pertained to the *Logos* as it offered to search the truth and to judge and evaluate logical data objectively and it pertained to *Ethos* because Pharaoh did not want to taint his credibility of being fair and rational. Besides, Moses had already impressed the courtiers and they themselves were in favour of listening to him completely. So here Pharaoh could not take the risk of losing his temper and using sheer force to stifle the voice of a claimant, who wanted to offer some manifest irrefutable proof. Pharaoh might also have been

enticed by the chances of attacking the evidence and proof, if that happened to be weak. So his hope was that he might be able to make appeal to the Logos and show the evidence of Moses as weak and faulty. He gave in to the request on the basis of fulfilling the requirement of Ethos. However, here Pharaoh uses a phrase (do it,) ‘if you are truthful’. The use of the phrase ‘if you are truthful’ is itself an effort to show him as giving consideration to the principle of Logos. Although he himself is convinced that he is wrong and Moses is true, yet he just wants to give this impression to his courtiers that he values truth only and bases his verdict upon truth and if he does not trust the words of Moses, it is because his words do not seem true to him. So here he wants to show that he is an upholder of the principle of Logos and is trying to attack Moses on the front of Logos. He tries to convey this message to his courtiers that what Moses has said till then was lies and that if he can show that he is not a liar and can prove himself true, then he is ready to allow him for the demonstration of his truthfulness. He wants to save himself against the criticism of his courtiers too, whose trust and confidence in his powers could get shattered.

Pharaoh is fighting a battle over two fronts. On one front he is trying to defeat Moses in his arguments and safeguard himself against his pricking rationale and on the other hand he is trying to maintain his hegemony and awe over his courtiers and citizens. Therefore in the selection of his words and points he keeps both the fronts in consideration and very resourcefully comes up with points that are effective on both fronts.

Pharaoh intimated the nobles surrounding him: "Indeed this person is an expert magician aiming to expel you of your area through his magic. Intimateus; in what way do you like us to respond (26:34-35)

The earlier label, ‘mad’, lost its efficacy when Moses was able to show something extraordinary by converting his staff into a pantheon. The whole court felt spell-bound and over-awed by the performance of Moses, which proved beyond doubt that Moses could not be a mad person; perhaps, they might have started considering him as a true messenger of God. However, before the idea of his truthfulness could find a way into their hearts and minds, Pharaoh shook them up by thrusting into their minds another effective label, i.e. a learned magician. By using the epithet, ‘learned’ with the noun ‘magician’, he wanted to give the impression that although giving such an astounding performance was beyond the reach of many common magicians, yet skilled and learned magicians well-versed in magic can be expected to give it quite easily. Immediately after calling him a learned magician he tried to cast suspicions over his intentions behind this show and tried to link it with his nation and country. Although the demand of Moses was only to be allowed to leave with the children of Israel, yet Pharaoh managed to link it with the possibility of the coming of the followers of Moses back, to oust them of their resources, positions and authority. The courtiers could be

made alert and their support could be elicited only, if they could be warned that the net result of all this show by Moses could lead to their ousting from power and their deprivation of their land and luxuries. By raising a security alarm, he tried to make their appeal to their patriotism and make it a national issue instead of personal. When the courtiers and ministers had been sensitized to the risk and their willingness had been secured, Pharaoh lost no time in asking them to give their suggestions for countering the enemy, so that their fear and willingness could be translated into action instantly. The quality of Pharaoh's invention and arrangement can be seen at work here. By making successful appeal to the *Logos* of his people he labeled him in the sense that the extraordinary performance might be impossible for a common person but it was quite easy for a skilled magician. After this, he made an appeal to both their *Logos* and *Pathos* in a single sentence; he attributed Moses' magical show to the logic of his future intention of driving people of Egypt out of their country and resources. In this way he made an appeal to their sense of fear and security for motivating them for an action as desired by him.

The act of asking for suggestions and advice at that time, too, can be interpreted as an epitome of rhetorical excellence and appeal to *Pathos*. Taking advice does not merely imply helplessness, confusion, dependency or lack of making decision, but sometimes it can serve as a psychological tool that can be used sagaciously by rhetoricians to take others into confidence, to get their moral support, to give them importance, and to stop them from disagreeing with the person who is asking for suggestions and advice. An enemy is not invited to give suggestion nor a fool. When a person is invited to give suggestion, then it gives them the impression that they are being considered as sincere, friendly, and wise; when they are considered worthy of giving suggestion, then automatically they are pleased for being given importance and they surrender their moral support automatically in favour of the person asking for suggestion.

Pharaoh uttered, "O eminent ones, I have not known you to have a God other than me. Then ignite for me, O Haman, [a fire] upon the clay and make for me a tower that I may look at the God of Moses. And indeed, I do think he is among the liars." (28:38)

Here Pharaoh, instead of asking whether they have a God other than him or whether they have any misgivings regarding his status as God, arranges his question as a statement and imposes it over them, as understood and above suspicion, that they have always considered him as their God. He manages to make a fraudulent appeal to their *Logos* by saying that since you had been doing it in the past so the logic is that you are right if you continue with it. Then very cleverly skipping to give evidence in support of himself being a God, he tries to prove that Moses was wrong in his claim of another God. Confusing them in their logic, he

is at the same time making an appeal to their Pathos, by appreciating their decision and belief as right, and to their Logos by inquiring Haman, his minister, to construct for him a tower, so that he could ascertain that the existence of another God as claimed by Moses was wrong.

Just in front of them, he directs Haman to construct a high structure for him so as to have a peep at the God of Moses. The basic purpose is to make an appeal to the *Logos* of the people with a faulty logic and to let it appear as logical. The basic point that he wanted to exploit was that if God really existed then they could have seen Him. This is a very powerful image that he uses to disenchant the audience without letting them to have a second thought for assimilating what Moses has given in his argument. By taking away the argument from the sphere of cognition and logic to the sphere of sight and observation, Pharaoh tries to win over his audience towards himself by effectively embodying his idea as an image drawn in words, that if God really existed then they could have seen him till that day or they could have observed Him from some high tower or mountain. After showing the impossibility of God's being seen from a height, Pharaoh very deftly and instantly couples it with the conclusion that what Moses is telling must be lies.

And Pharaoh called his people out and said, *"O my community, Is not the kingdom of Egypt owned by me, and these rivers running under me; then don't you witness? Or am I [not] better than this one who is insignificant and hardly makes himself clear? Then why have golden bracelets not been placed over him or why has not come with him angels in company?" Thus he tricked his community, and they complied. Verily, they were a trespassing folk(43:51-54)*

These verses again show the successful attempt of Pharaoh to make an appeal to the *Logos* of the people with a faulty logic and then to manage for letting it appear as logical. First, Pharaoh tried to link the visible with the invisible very tactfully for deceiving his people. Starting from the visible, like his being the king of Egypt, he let the people deduce for themselves that since the kingdom of Egypt belonged to him, so were the rivers flowing inside it. By hinting at it that no one other than him held sway over the natural resources of Egypt, he tried to prove his overall authority and say in the affairs of the kingdom. He tried to build confidence of his people as well as to intimidate them that within the kingdom of Egypt, there was no one other than him that could harm or benefit them. After indicating towards his power and authority, he proceeds to compare himself with an opponent that he manages to show as socially, economically, and physically weak. Here Pharaoh tries to make appeal to the *Logos* of people when he wants them to understand that compared to person who is the owner of whole Egypt, Moses could not have been chosen God as he is unable even to convey his message clearly. By targeting Moses' physical weakness he is actually making appeal to the

Ethos of the people for disbelieving such a person whose credibility is in question. He showed that if Allah had to choose some messenger at all, then at least he should have been having the competence of conveying His message clearly, without any handicap of stuttering in speech. Like a highly skilled and intelligent rhetorician, he exploits every apparent weakness of Moses towards his own advantage. He wants his people to judge that the obvious symbols of status, power and authority which can be seen in possession of Pharaoh were found sadly missing in the case of Moses and if Moses had been true, then he should definitely have come up with a lot of these worldly possessions to prove his power and authority and along with this some supernatural power, too, in the shape of assistance from angels; lack of these things proved, according to him, that Moses held out nothing instrumental in changing the circumstances of his people and could not be believed to be the messenger of God.

“O Moses! Have you come to drive us out from our land with your magic? We can also show you magic to match it, so set an appointment between us and you, which neither we nor you shall forget to keep, in a fair (open) place.”

Moses said, ‘Let the encounter be on the day (of the Festival) of Adornment, and let the people assemble at forenoon.’”(20:56-59)

Although Moses had come with a very decisive miracle i.e. a dreadful dragon and there was no way out but to accept what Moses was demanding, but it was through his power of speech and his presence of mind that Pharaoh steered clear out of this imbroglio and was able to put the encounter off, to a later occasion, when Moses would be contesting with his magicians.

Pharaoh could have held the contest just in front of a few courtiers but the news of Moses’ converting his staff into a snake might possibly have reached the corners of the country and people must have been impressed by both the audaciousness and miracles of Moses. For this purpose, proclamations were made and, to add to it, heralds were sent to the far-off villages for urging people’s participation in the event. The purpose was to defeat Moses at the hands of the magicians publicly, so that the influence of Moses over the masses could be washed away for good and it could be shown to them that Moses was nothing but a common magician and that the matter of converting a stick into a snake was not something extraordinary, beyond the reach of other magicians.

Probably we might follow the magicians’ religion if they become triumphant.” (26:40)

The masses were made to believe that after the contest, the victory of the magicians would be considered the victory of their own religion, and after that Moses, along with his religion, would be rejected once and for all.

Whether Pharaoh considered the message of Moses right or wrong, it is not for sure, but what can be guessed, is that he felt unable to answer the questions of Moses and was sure that if all the magicians could put their collective effort, then at least his big miracle could be countered and his voice could be hushed up to save his throne. Even Moses was feeling a bit worried, although he had a direct assurance of safety from the creator and had witnessed the signs of Allah. People were encouraged to gather on the specified date in multitudes, for siding with a large number of magicians and to look upon the magicians as their saviours and to look upon Moses as a traitor. When the magicians asked about the possibility of their getting rewarded, in case they dominated Moses, the answer of Pharaoh was not only based on acceding to what they were demanding, but also on motivating them for excellent performance. He made a very successful appeal to their *Pathos*. He answered their question by saying that not only was he ready to give them cash reward, but also will give them a very special place near him. It implied that they would be loved by Pharaoh, respected by all the people because of their special status in the court of Pharaoh, and would be able to get material benefits. In this way he made an appeal to their sense of respect and importance, to their emotions of avarice, and to their desire for power, love, and fame. Pharaoh had actually bribed them to defeat Moses, but to keep the masses in dark, the apparent impression given was that they were fighting a national cause. Having the masses of the whole country and a large number of magicians on his side, Pharaoh was confident that Moses would be defeated and disgraced publicly and that at least he himself would be able get rid of Moses.

When the magicians realized it was not the work of magic but rather a miracle of a true Prophet, they surrendered themselves before God and collectively proclaimed and embraced their new belief.

*Upon this the sorcerers stooped down prostrate,
saying: "We come to believe in the Sustainer of the Worlds,
the Lord of Mosa and of Haron." (26:46-48)*

When after witnessing the defeat of his magicians before the miracle of God, Pharaoh saw that his appeal to the Ethos and Logos of his people was at stake, he proved smart enough not to let the magicians explain their position before the audience and thereby let the audience get converted with them, too. Rather to maintain his power and to keep his subjects in the dark, Pharaoh declared the whole affair as a conspiracy against his empire, in which he termed these magicians as accomplices to Moses.

Pharaoh said: "You accepted the word of Moses even before I granted you the leave to do so. Surely he is your chief who has taught you magic. Soon shall you come to know. I shall cut off your hands and feet on opposite sides and shall crucify all of you." (26:49)

To implicate the magicians, and to deceive his people, he made appeal to the Logos of the people and devised the pretext that the magicians' getting converted in such large numbers to the religion of Moses, without Pharaoh's permission, was a clear sign that it was a planted affair which he instantly dubbed as a case of treason, for which the magicians would have to be awarded one of the severest punishments. Apart from terming their act as treason, he also made appeal to the *Pathos* of magicians and of the audience in general; he warned the magicians of being put on cross with their opposite hands and legs being mutilated, and indirectly warned the audience of following them or siding with them. All this was done to intimidate the magicians for reverting upon their decision and at the same time warning those citizens who would dare to follow the magicians. He thought that with his threats, he would be able to browbeat the magicians to revert to their previous position and safeguard his empire against decline and rebellion and in case the threats did not work, then by blaming them as conspirators, he would appear justified in punishing them for a very heinous crime and making them a lesson for the common public.

The foundations of Pharaoh's kingdom were shattered, when Moses proved publicly that, instead of Pharaoh, the God of the masses was someone else.

Then Pharaoh set out messengers for the cities

saying: "They are just a tiny group of folks,

who have indeed incurred our anger.

But we are a numerous host, always on vigil." (26:53-56)

Pharaoh was helpless before the messengers of God. God made his followers undergo different types of plights as warnings, and each time they promised of repenting of their earlier mode of life, if the plight were removed of them, but each time they reverted to their earlier sinful mode of life, when the plight was removed.

When their chances were over and Allah directed Moses to leave Egypt along with the children of Israel in the night time, Pharaoh could not accede to it. Firstly, his authority had already become dubious in the eyes of his nation and secondly, he was afraid of being attacked in the near future by the followers of Moses for avenging themselves. Thirdly, his whole kingdom was at stake, since the leaving of Moses' followers implied the coming of his whole government machinery to a standstill, resulting in the failure of his kingdom. Apart from it, seeing the absence of the working class, his people would attribute this failure to Pharaoh and his administration.

The problem faced by Pharaoh was that his people were already impressed with the power of Moses and Haaron and could not be persuaded to have head-on collision with their followers. The force of Pharaoh depended on his people, without whom he was nothing. Therefore, he had to play his cards very judiciously, so that he maintained his earlier status as their God and at the same time persuaded them to take action against the followers of Moses. The job pertained now totally to the area of Pathos. This needed the power of a rhetorician to infuse vivacity and courage into his depressed nation and to mitigate the risks of this enterprise. The first step was to remove their fear and to make them psychologically strong. For achieving this he said that the opponents were less in number and created the impression that although they may not be able to cope with the prophets, at least they can easily cope with their followers, on account of their small number. The second step was to make an appeal to their sense of honour and patriotism and to let them look at the enterprise as something quite legitimate. Downplaying their own record of exploitation and cruelty to the level of not even getting a mention and terming the harmless escape of the followers of Moses as a provocation and instigation to the people of Pharaoh, he managed to make them consider their pursuit of the followers of Moses as a duty and as an act to avenge their honour. To allay the fears of some, who could have termed the expedition as uncalled for and dangerous, he appreciated his people's quality of cautiousness and vigilance and gave the impression that they would do only those things and to such an extent that would ensure their future safety.

The power of persuasion of Pharaoh and the principles of invention and arrangement in the field of rhetoric, can be seen displayed here too, when Pharaoh is proceeding, gradually and systematically, to induce his nation into action, against the followers of Moses, whose miracles they had seen through their own eyes.

Ethos relates to the conviction of the audience about the credibility and trustworthiness of the speaker and of the truth of the matter that they are going to pursue. Unless the audience is convinced of the uprightness, reliability, and authenticity of the speaker and also their cause, it is neither going to believe or follow something nor get mobilized for taking an action. A speaker's past record, present status, apparent outlook and lack of discrepancy between their deeds and actions are of prime importance in this area.

Pathos relates to feelings, desires and emotions. These are those things that distinguish a human being from a machine or a robot. A human being does not need food and shelter alone for living a life; Human beings' actions are determined by the satisfaction of their desires, expression of their feelings, and pursuit of their dreams. Unless these driving forces of human beings are engaged, they cannot be induced to perform

something. Human beings can do wonders if their feelings, desires and dreams are synchronized with their actions.

Logos relates to the correspondence and relationship of a thing to logic, reason, objectivity and practice. When a thing fulfills the condition of logic and reason through figures, evidence and objective data then it becomes easier to follow it and to subscribe to it. Some claim, slogan, or call might appear very impressive and may appeal to one's emotions but if the criterion of logic and rationality is not met then people might turn their back upon it very soon.

The dialogues of Pharaoh show excellent employment of all the three principles of successful rhetoric, identified by Aristotle and all the five principles of successful rhetoric, identified by Cicero. Study of the dialogues of Pharaoh reveals that they are exquisite specimens of rhetoric by virtue of the three types of appeal namely, *Ethos*, *Pathos* and *Logos*. The principle of making appeal to the *Ethos* is that the audience must be sure of the credibility, uprightness, and trustworthiness of the speaker and what is being said. Pharaoh, by being the most powerful person and sole head of the kingdom, the head of all the ministers and chieftains, by having a reputation of being just and democratic in his affairs, by being accepted as ultimate source of authority and adored as a god, made an extraordinary appeal to the *Ethos* of the people. On this account, his words could induce maximum persuasion in the masses and the chieftains both. A subject might raise objections against a leader but not a god and therefore the words of Pharaoh made an extraordinary appeal to the masses and carried too much persuasive power in them. Appeal to the *Ethos* bound him that he must not say and do something that affects his credibility.

Pathos implies making appeal to the audience's emotions, passions, and feelings for exploiting them. Pharaoh applies this strategy a great deal very successfully. He appeals to his people's sense of superiority when he starts mocking at the words of Moses who basically hails from the subordinate and slave segment of the society. He applies to their sense of security when he terms Moses as a threat to the nation, who according to Pharaoh, wanted to drive its aboriginals away from their land. He appeals to their sense of honour when he instigates his nation for avenging themselves against the followers of Moses who, according to him, have enraged and provoked them. He makes an appeal to their feelings of ethnocentrism when he praises his nation for being cautious, ever on guard and higher in number as compared to the followers of Moses. Through these tactics Pharaoh was able to cast a spell over his people and instill courage in a nation that had been over-awed by the live performance of Moses, who had seen and undergone the plights brought about by the God of Moses several times, and had seen the public conversion of the magicians.

Appeal to Logos implies that the speaker should say things that are in consonance with logic, rationality, concreteness, mathematical evidence and objective proofs. Pharaoh made appeal to the *Logos* of his people because it was the need of his kingdom. He needed the support of his ministers and people both. He could not give the impression of a dictator to lose control over them. Therefore, he kept up the semblance of democracy and fair play in his court and tried to base his decisions on logic and rationale. He was wise enough to hide and downplay his personal interests and find out some logic and rationale for their fulfillment. He managed to give his personal interests a collective and national colour. The labels applied by him on Moses were based on logic and rationality. He succeeded in defusing the claim made by Moses and the impression created by Moses by providing apt and logical reasons for them e.g. when the magicians lost the contest and surrendered by offering to believe in the God of Moses and Haroon, he ascribed this act to a pre-planned conspiracy against his kingdom, in which he depicted Moses as the teacher of magicians and the magicians as his students. The reason presented was such that any person having common sense and intelligence could not have ruled out the possibility of this plan. Again the logic behind charging his magicians of such a serious crime and threatening them of such severe corporal punishment was that he wanted to stop the spill-over effect of the conversion of the magicians to the common masses. By punishing them so brutally, not only did he show them as actual conspirators, but also warned the masses of imitating them.

Applying the five qualities of rhetoric, identified by Cicero, over the dialogues of Pharaoh and seeing their profuse and skillful demonstration, one gets the feeling as if these dialogues were basically written to elaborate these five qualities.

The first quality identified by Cicero is invention that means creativity. Pharaoh is quick and resourceful. He is very quick in coming up with the most lethal weapon for winning the argument. He is inventive with his imagery e.g. He asks his minister, Hamaan, to build a tower for him so that he can have a peep at the God of Moses. This is a very powerful image that he uses to disenchant the audience, without letting them to give a second thought to what Moses has given in his argument. By taking away the argument from the sphere of cognition and logic to the sphere of sight and observation, Pharaoh tries to win over his audience towards himself by effectively embodying in words his idea that if God really existed then they could have seen him till that day or they could observe him from some high tower or mountain. After showing the impossibility of God's being seen from a height, Pharaoh very deftly and instantly couples it with the conclusion that what Moses is telling must be lies. He proves his inventiveness in profiling Moses, as per the demands of the occasion, as insane, fool, liar, murderer, sorcerer, conspirator, security threat and as one belonging to the

weak, subjugated and slave class. On every occasion he is trying to label Moses differently whenever Moses seems to give a convincing answer and justification for Pharaoh's preceding blame.

The second quality is arrangement, which is the process or manner of imposing order over the ideas in a speech. This last instance of joining his image of the impossibility of seeing God physically and then joining of this impossibility instantly with the possibility of Moses being a liar, is a superb manipulation of arrangement for achieving his end. He can manipulate the arrangement of ideas in an argument and deviate the opponent speaker from the set course. Instead of cutting a sorry figure, he is both inventive in finding new deviations and also in arranging and rearranging the ideas inside an argument to lead the opponent astray. Right from the very beginning, we find an instance of use of language in which different ideas have been arranged in such an ascending order that it creates a very powerful effect. When Moses brings the word of Allah to Pharaoh, then he beats about the bush and starts intimidating Moses by bringing forth his past by degrees. First he refers to his getting shelter and rearing up in the house of Pharaoh, then he just insinuates at his crime of murder to put a mild pressure and dissuade him from his demand. Then he uses mockery, after which he labels him as mad and then threatens him of imprisonment, and at last when he is left speechless by the display of miracles, he calls Moses a master magician.

In the end, an event that holds an example of excellent arrangement of ideas and sentences, is that when Pharaoh tries to persuade his people for attacking and controlling the followers of Moses; the people of Pharaoh have already been dominated and impressed by the power of Moses and his Creator; they have already seen practical demonstration of his force and truthfulness. To persuade such a nation for taking a very courageous and risky action, that is not indispensable also, is due to the proper selection and then arrangement of his ideas and the sentences embodying them. First he removes their fear of Moses' followers by terming them very less in number as compared to their own number. Secondly, he blames Moses' followers for provoking and angering them. Finally, he appreciates the quality of cautiousness of his nation to convince them that what they are going to do is not a reckless affair and it will not cross the limit of cautiousness.

The third quality identified is style which involves the choice and arrangement of words used by a speaker or writer. His language is replete with pithy clauses full of meaning. He uses a few words but they are always full of meaning. His words are very apt and less in number so that the resultant sentence is more precise and sharp in hitting its target. The words chosen, their suitability, their number and their effectiveness are superb. Each of the words chosen by him is geared towards carrying his goal further. He can very successfully

convert an idea to a metaphor and can cast a visual impression upon the mind of the audience by the selection of an apt and sensuous image.

The fourth quality is memory which not only involves recalling of the past events, detail by detail, but also implies the quality of presence of mind and the ability to exploit resources and precedents of the past, with agility, to one's benefit. His quick and retentive memory brings and presents each detail before his eyes, from the past, like an open book. He utilizes his memory in an effective way, by making very apt references to the past to dominate his opponent, both psychologically and logically. Pharaoh reminds Moses of his past life, his benefactor in the shape of Pharaoh, his act of murder to defuse his demand for letting the children of Israel go with him. His resourcefulness is due to his powerful memory due to which he can find satisfying answers to any type of argument.

Delivery is the fifth quality of rhetoric identified, which concerns the manner in which the message or words are conveyed. When Pharaoh is having a dialogue, he has his eyes over the response and status of the audience, as well. He does not focus only over the opponent or the argument, but also engages his audience and tries to win its moral support. Like, when he becomes speechless, he mockingly asks the audience of courtiers to listen to the words and explanation of Moses. He throws the ball into the court of his audience and gains time to attack the opponent afresh. His manner of delivery is such that the opponent is suppressed psychologically. His wit, presence of mind, and resourcefulness have given him the confidence to hold dialogue in front of the whole people, instead of holding one to one secret discussions.

Conclusion

Through his power of speech, Pharaoh diverted the attention of audience from Moses' legitimate demands and soul searching questions of collective nature to the individual issue of Moses' crime of murder. He managed diverting his dialogue to highlight Moses' act of murder and showed his demand for the children of Israel as an act of ungratefulness with respect to his own blessings upon Moses. To dominate Moses and to dissuade him from making a demand, he initially just insinuated at his crime, instead of stating it. When he was left with nothing tangible, then he tried to mock at Moses, started profiling him negatively and applied to him different labels most appropriate to win the contest. He tried to frame different convincing reasons for refuting the claim of Moses. Despite an open demonstration of powerful miracles by Moses, Pharaoh was still able to hide his fear under the façade of language and applied delaying tactics to avoid open confrontation and postpone the contest to an occasion that suited him. He used imagery to convey his message in a very forceful and convincing manner, like when he asked his minister, Haman, to construct a

tower, so that he could climb up to see the God of Moses. He was adept in psychological warfare of threatening, mocking and browbeating. At last when all his tactics failed and the magicians surrendered, he devised a very strong and convincing argument against the magicians, to maintain his rule and authority over his subjects. He involved the neutral audience and won them over to his side during a debate, for making his opponent feel isolated. When a quick and appropriate answer was unavailable, he threw the ball into the court of his courtiers, and accrued different benefits through it. Just to defuse a threat to his own kingdom and maintain his hegemony, he emboldened his nation that had been over-awed by manifest proofs and miracles of Moses and persuaded it, by making appeal to their powerful drives, to pursue and avenge, against sheer logic, his opponents.

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