

السَّلَامُ عَلَى عِيسَى نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ

PROPHET 'ĪSĀ [JESUS A.S.] AND OTHER STORIES

نبي الله (ع) عيسى

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Be introduced to Prophet 'Īsā (as)
- Be introduced to Maryam (as)
- Briefly discuss the story of birth of Prophet 'Īsā (as) and the miracles in his early life
- Discuss the main messages of Prophet 'Īsā (as)
- Briefly discuss the Injil
- Briefly discuss the miracles of Prophet 'Īsā (as)
- Discuss the story of Prophet Yūnus (as)
- Discuss the lessons to be learnt from the story
- Memorise the words of remembrance of Prophet Yūnus (as)
- Learn the story of Ashābul Kahf as from the Holy Qur'an
- Briefly discuss the lessons from this story

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 2

LESSON 1: Prophet 'Īsā (as)

As we have learnt before, Allah (SWT) sent every community a prophet, in order to teach them how to live the best possible lives, and how to best worship Allah (SWT).

Some of these prophets were Ulul Āzm prophets - special messengers of Allah (SWT) whose missions were greater than those of other prophets. One of these especially great prophets was Prophet 'Īsā (as). As Muslims, we believe in him as a prophet, and we honour not only him, but his mother, Maryam or Mary (as).

MARYAM, THE MOTHER OF PROPHET 'ĪSĀ(AS)

Lady Maryam, the mother of Prophet 'Īsā (as) is one of the four best chosen women in Islam. She was pious, infallible, truthful and modest. A chapter (surah) of the Qur'an is named after her. She is the only lady whose name is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. She is the one to whom angels spoke.



Her father 'Imran and her mother Hanna had already decided to give their unborn baby in the service of Allah. So when Maryam was born, in keeping her vow to Allah (SWT), Hanna gave away her daughter in Allah's service. Maryam lived her life in a place of worship and worked in it, and she spent her time in the worship of Allah (SWT). Because her father, Imran, had died by then, Prophet Zakariyyah was made Maryam's guardian.

While living in the mosque, Maryam (as) experienced many miracles. She would be visited by angels, who would bring her the fruits of summer in winter, and the fruits of winter in summer. She always had plenty to eat and was looked after especially by Allah (SWT).

THE BIRTH OF PROPHET 'ISĀ

One day, Maryam was visited by the angels who gave her some news: that she was about to have a son, who would be a prophet. However, Maryam was worried about this news. The angels comforted her by saying that Allah had willed this and so it would happen.

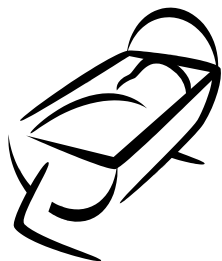
Maryam went away in a quiet place realising she was pregnant. When the time of childbirth approached, she was guided to a date-palm. She was asked not to grieve but drink water from the river and eat the dates from the palm tree. The Holy Qur'an narrates:

“Do not grieve; shake the date palm; eat and drink and be happy. If any people ask you, then tell them that you have made a silent fast.” (19:26)



Soon, Prophet 'Īsā (as) was born, and his mother took him back to her town. People began to annoy Maryam (as) and ask a lot of questions. Instead of answering them, she just pointed at the baby. They started to laugh at her, asking how a baby could answer them.

However, Prophet 'Īsā (as) had been given the miraculous power of speaking eloquently even as a baby.



“He said: Surely I am a servant of Allah; He has given me the Book and made me a prophet...” (19: 30)

From that time, people understood that this was a special person, sent by Allah (SWT) to guide them.

THE MESSAGES OF 'ISĀ (AS)

BELIEVING IN ONE GOD

Prophet 'Īsā (as) was sent by Allah (SWT) to the Jewish people, the Israelites. These were the people of Prophet Moses (as). They believed in God originally and worshipped him. However, later on they were influenced by other cultures and religions and left the path of worshipping Allah (SWT) correctly. They cared not for piety, charity or equality. Instead they scorned and laughed at the weak and poor. They were full of pride and did not love or fear Allah at all. Prophet 'Īsā's (as) main mission was to bring people back to the path of Truth and worshipping of One God.

TEACHING PEOPLE TO LIVE A SIMPLE LIFE

One of the missions of Prophet 'Īsā (as) was to teach people to lead a simple life. He himself lived very simply to set an example. He wore clothes made out of unwoven wool; he ate raw food from the plants...He was very patient and often had little to eat. He called himself a servant of Allah (SWT) devoting his time to the poor, common people.

NEWS OF THE COMING OF MUḤAMMAD (SAW)

The final mission of Prophet 'Īsā (as) was to give the good news of the coming of Prophet Muḥammad (or Aḥmad) after him. Prophet 'Īsā (as) told his followers that Prophet Muḥammad (saw) would come after him to complete and perfect his message. Even in today's Bible, there are references to Prophet Muḥammad (saw).

MIRACLES OF PROPHET 'ISĀ

A miracle is a sign from Allah given to his prophets. It is something that a prophet can do that no one else can do. Prophet 'Īsā (as) was given the power to perform many miracles by Allah (SWT).

- His first miracle was as a baby when he spoke from the cradle.
- In the time of Prophet 'Īsā (as), leprosy was an incurable disease; it was so bad that no one went close to a leper. There was no cure for this

disease then. One day, a man came limping towards Prophet 'Īsā (as). Allah (SWT) granted Prophet 'Īsā (as) the power to heal people suffering from this terrible illness and other illnesses.

- Prophet 'Īsā (as) brought the dead back to life with the permission of Allah. He could even make a statue of something like a bird, and then blow into it and it would come to life. All this was done with the permission of Allah (SWT).

“...and you healed the blind and the leprosy by My permission; and when you brought forth the dead by My permission...” (5:110)

- Once, the students of Prophet 'Īsā (as) insisted that he ask Allah for a table spread of delicious food. Prophet 'Īsā (as) supplicated to Allah to send food that will be a festival and a sign from the Lord to them. The angels brought down the food on a piece of material. People were astonished! Hundreds and hundreds of people ate from that food; but there was no sign of food diminishing.

“'Īsā, the son of Maryam, said: O Allah, our Lord! send down to us food from heaven which should be to us an ever-recurring happiness, to the first of us and to the last of us, and a sign from You...” (5:114)



THE INJĪL

Allah (SWT) also blessed Prophet 'Īsā (as) with a holy book, called the Injīl. This book contained Allah's (SWT) teachings for the people of the time. It taught them correct beliefs and rules of life.



ⁱUnfortunately, we do not have the original version of Injīl with us today. After Prophet 'Īsā (as) was raised to heaven by Allah (SWT), the original form of this book was lost, and people began making their own books in place of it, which were not truly the word of God.

Class Activity

1. Write down the names of the five **Ulul 'Azm** Prophets:

Prophet N..... AS

Prophet Ib..... AS

Prophet Mu..... AS

Prophet Is..... AS

Prophet Muh..... AS

2. Match by drawing a line:

Heavenly Books	Prophets
Zabūr	Prophet 'Īsā (as)
Taurāt	Prophet Dāwūd (as)
Injeel	Prophet Muḥammad (as)
Qur'an	Prophet Moses (as)

Lesson 2: Prophet Yūnus (as)

Each Prophet that Allah (SWT) sent to humans had a different challenge that they had to deal with. Prophet Yūnus (as) is one of these prophets. He is known as Prophet Jonah in English. He was sent to a group of people in a place called Nineveh that used to pray to idols. This meant that they would build a statue or something similar, then worship it, believing it had the power to change their lives.

Prophet Yūnus (as) tried over and over to teach the people that there was only *One* God and that He was Allah (SWT). However as much as he tried his people simply would not listen.

After trying for a long time Prophet Yūnus (as) decided to leave the people because he thought that soon Allah (SWT) would punish them.

Prophet Yūnus (as) left the city and not long after, dark clouds started rolling in. It appeared that a huge storm was going to take place.



The people of Nineveh started to get worried and realised that Prophet Yūnus (as) was right. However it was too late as he had already left.

They began to pray directly to Allah (SWT) and realised that their idols could not help. Because they prayed from the bottom of their hearts and realised that Allah (SWT) is the One True God, Allah (SWT) removed the dark clouds and nothing happened to them.

PROPHET YŪNUS' JOURNEY

Although the people of Nineveh had become believers, there were no mobile phones for anyone to call Prophet Yūnus (as) and ask him to return.

By now he was on board a boat sailing to another land. However something terrible happened. Huge waves appeared and the boat started to rock from side to side. The people realised that if they didn't do something the boat would sink.



They started throwing their entire luggage off. However the boat was still too heavy. They decided that someone had to get off the boat and jump into the ocean. They wrote the name of every person on a piece of paper and decided to have a ballot. The name that came out was Prophet Yūnus (as). However because these people knew he was a good man they decided to try again. Once again his name came out. On the third time the same thing happened and then Prophet Yūnus (as) realised that Allah (SWT) wanted him to get off the boat. He jumped into the ocean and a huge whale rose to the surface and swallowed him into its stomach.

INSIDE THE WHALE

Whilst Prophet Yūnus (as) was inside the stomach of the whale, he realised that he had made a mistake by leaving his people without Allah's (SWT) permission.

He started to ask Allah (SWT) to forgive him and recited the following words

**“la ilāha illā anta subḥanaka innī
kuntu min al ḍālimīn”**

(21:87)

“There is no god but You, glory be to You; surely I am of those who were unfair to themselves.”

(21:87)

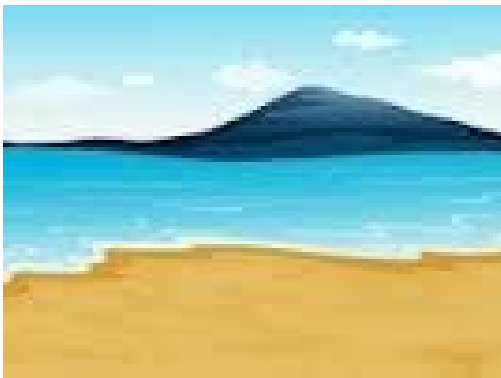


Memorisation Activity:

Continue to repeat the above Qur'anic phrase until you memorise it. You can use this prayer when you have done something wrong and you want Allah (SWT) to forgive you.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT

Because Prophet Yūnus (as) prayed to Allah (SWT) sincerely, he was forgiven.



Allah (SWT) ordered the whale to remove Prophet Yūnus (as) from its stomach and place him on the shore. Allah (SWT) made the environment safe for Prophet Yūnus (as) and provided him with what he needed until he was healthy again to leave the seashore.

GOING BACK HOME

Prophet Yūnus (as) eventually found his way back home and was surprised to see that people had changed and were now believers in Allah (SWT). He was very happy and together they prayed and thanked Allah (SWT) for his blessings.

MORALS FROM THE STORY

Every prophet leaves us with great stories to learn from. Prophet Yūnus (as) taught us many things through his story. Circle the things that you think Prophet Yūnus (as) has taught us.

- a. To give people many chances

- b. To ask Allah for forgiveness if we make a mistake.
- c. To run away from people if they do not listen to us.
- d. To always believe that Allah (SWT) will help us.
- e. To swim inside the stomach of a whale.

Review Questions

1. Why did Prophet Yūnus (as) leave Nineveh?

- a. People did not want to believe in Allah (SWT)
- b. He wanted to live somewhere nicer
- c. He went back home

2. Why did he come back to Nineveh?

- a. He missed his home
- b. People became believers
- c. He was sick

Lesson 3: The Companions of the Cave

The 18th surah of the Holy Qur'an is called "Al-Kahf" meaning "The Cave". This surah tells us about a group of young men who took shelter in a cave to hide away from an oppressive and tyrant ruler

"(Remember) when the young men fled for refuge (from their disbelieving folk) to the Cave, they said: "Our Lord! Bestow on us mercy from Yourself, and facilitate for us our affair in the right way!" (18:10)

The Roman emperor at that time was a fierce oppressor and the people of that time were idol worshippers who used to sin openly. During this time, anyone who believed in Allah (SWT) was punished and practising Islam seemed very difficult. In this city, a group of young men believed in Allah (SWT), but they were not allowed to practice their religion or to declare their beliefs. Therefore, they decided to leave the city and head to the mountains. They had no specific plan. They were simply leaving and hoping Allah (SWT) would look after them. Their faith was so strong that they left all their affairs to Allah (SWT) as mentioned in the above verse.

So they left the city and headed into the wilderness. After a while, they became tired, and decided to sleep in a cave. Here, a miracle happened. Allah (SWT) caused them to sleep for a very long time- for many years.

“Therefore we covered up their (sense of) hearing (causing them, to go in deep sleep), in the cave for a number of years” (18:11)

After a number of years, which is unknown to us, the men woke and asked each other how long they had been in the cave for. According to the Qur’an, one of the men replied that they had only been there for a day or part of a day. However, only Allah (SWT) knows how long they had been sleeping for.

They sent one person from their group to go back to the city to get them food and supplies. He went in to the city secretly. After a while, though, he realised everything had changed. The city looked completely different, and the people now all believed in Allah (SWT) and worshipped him.

After a while, the men realised that they had been sleeping for hundreds of years, and that in that time when they were asleep, Allah (SWT) had caused the city they lived in to change from a disbelieving city to one where people worshipped Allah (SWT).

LESSONS FROM THE STORY

There are many lessons we can learn from the story of these faithful men:

1) God helps those who are pious and adhere to their religion, even if by a miracle. These men were not prophets or Imams; rather they were men who had strong faith and were willing to travel far and sacrifice all they had in order to practise their religion. Due to this strong faith and dedication they had to their religion, Allah (SWT) by a miracle helped. Therefore, if we stay true to our religion and stick to our Islamic principles, Allah (SWT) will help us in whatever we do.

2) God has power over all things – At the end of the day, the fierce and cruel Roman emperor who was a disbeliever did not have any power over the pious men. Allah (SWT) protected them. We therefore learn from this story that no status in this world can overpower Allah (SWT) – He has power over all things.

3) We never know what Allah (SWT) has in plan for us – The young men to left their town to go live elsewhere had no idea that Allah (SWT) will put them into deep sleep. In fact, when they woke they thought they had only been sleeping for a day. Therefore, whenever we plan for something we should always say In Sha’a Allah to acknowledge the fact that Allah (SWT) is the planner of everything and nothing will take place against his will.

Class Activity: Role Play

Your teacher will split you into two groups. Each group will have roles, and we will act out a play showing what happened to the ‘Companions of the Cave.’

Review Questions

1) al-Kahf means:

- a) The mountain
- b) The cave
- c) The village
- d) The town

2) The men went out to the mountains because:

- a) They could not find jobs in the town
- b) They could not practice their belief in Allah (SWT) in the town
- c) They needed to leave because they were criminals
- d) They left the town to get married

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