

وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ

37:181

ANCIENT PROPHETS

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 3

Prophet Ṣāleḥ (as)

Prophet Ṣāleḥ (as) was sent to an Arab tribe called thāmūd. His tribe lived in a valley called al-Ḥajr in the north of Arabia. It was a fertile land where plenty of vegetation grew, and so the people lived very comfortable lives. Unfortunately, they slowly strayed from the path of worshipping Allah (SWT), their Sustainer, and began to worship a part of a mountain which they considered holy.

Allah (SWT) sent Prophet Ṣāleḥ (as) to guide them back to the right path of worshipping Allah (SWT) alone.

Prophet Ṣāleḥ (as) told the people to remember Allah but a lot of people just laughed at him and would not listen. He tried to teach them how useless it was to worship a mountain, which could not harm or help anyone.

He said: "You are all my brothers. I am not saying anything that will harm you. Come and seek the forgiveness of Allah and He will answer your prayers and grant your wishes."

However, the people of Thamud turned a deaf ear to him. They said: "O Ṣāleḥ, we thought you were a sensible man. We saw in you signs of goodness and wisdom, and wanted to rely on your advice in difficult times. Why have you started talking this nonsense now? Do you want us to stop worshipping what our ancestors worshipped for a long time? We will never listen to you!"

His words were accepted by only a few people. Most of the people of Thamūd called him names, saying he was a madman or a liar.

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- The story of Prophet Ṣāleḥ
- The message of Prophet Ṣāleḥ to his people
- That the signs of Allah should be respected
- Know the story of Prophet Hūd (as)
- Understand the approach Prophet Hūd used to guide his people and the end result of their stubbornness
- Learn some of the lessons from the story of Prophet Hūd (as)

The leaders of Thamūd stood against Prophet Ṣāleḥ (as) because they were afraid that he might become powerful and they would lose their positions in the community. They wanted to embarrass Prophet Ṣāleḥ (as) so they asked him to produce a miracle.

They said: "If you're Allah's Messenger, can you bring a pregnant she-camel out of the centre of this rock?"

HIS MIRACLE

Therefore, they challenged him to prove his words by bringing out a female camel from the side of their holy mountain. Prophet Ṣāleḥ (as), with the permission of Allah (SWT), made this miracle happen.



The people were amazed by this miraculous act. However, because of the hardness of their heart, some of them still did not want to believe in Prophet Ṣāleḥ (as) and submit to him.

This camel was very special. The people had never seen such a camel in their lives. On one day, it would drink all the water in the town and on the next it would allow the people to drink the water. On the day that the she-camel drank all the water, it would give the people as much milk as they wanted.

"And to (the people of) Thamūd, (we sent) their brother Ṣāleḥ. He said, "O my people, worship Allah. You have no God but Him. Indeed a clear proof from your Lord came to you. This she-camel of Allah is a Sign for you. Leave it free to graze on Allah's earth and do not harm it, otherwise you will be overtaken by a painful punishment." (7: 73)

THE CRIME

This powerful miracle made a lot of people believe the words of Prophet Ṣāleḥ (as) and they embraced his faith. It also made the leaders of the tribe worried because they knew that as long as the people could see the she-camel, they would listen to Prophet Ṣāleḥ (as).

The cruel leaders decided to kill the animal, although Prophet Ṣāleḥ (as) had warned them that the punishment of Allah would certainly come if they harmed the she-camel.

A few wicked men ambushed the she-camel when it was returning after drinking the water, and one particularly evil person killed this special camel. Then they came to Prophet Ṣāleḥ (as) and proudly said: "O Ṣāleḥ, bring us the punishment if you really are a Prophet."

Prophet Ṣāleḥ (as) told them that they had committed a great sin and asked them to return to their homes for three days and beg for Allah's forgiveness. But the people only laughed at him.

ALLAH'S PUNISHMENT

After three days, Prophet Ṣāleḥ (as) received a command from Allah to leave the town with his followers. Then the punishment of Allah came down on the people of Thamūd.

A great thunderbolt came from the sky and a powerful earthquake shook the town and totally destroyed the buildings and houses. The people fell down dead in their homes.

When Prophet Ṣāleḥ (as) saw the tragic end of the people of his own tribe, he turned to their remains and said,

"O People, I delivered to you the message of Allah and guided you to the right way, but you always thought I was your enemy."

The Holy Prophet (saw) has said:

"The most wicked person from the ancient times is the one who killed the innocent she-camel of Prophet Ṣāleḥ (as) and the most wicked person in these times is the one who will murder Imam 'Ali (as)."

RESPECTING THE SIGNS OF ALLAH

"And He shows you His signs: Which then of Allah's signs will you deny?" (40:81)

Allah, the Almighty has referred to the 'signs' of Allah several times in the Holy Qur'an. The 'signs' have been places, events, personalities, and many other things. The important thing to note is that each of these 'signs' are meant to remind people of Allah, His Bounties, His Mercy, His Wrath, and His other attributes.

Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Qur'an:

"and whoever respects the signs of Allah, this surely is of the piety of hearts." (22:32)

It is natural that if you love someone/something then you will show similar respect to any symbol associated with your loved one. For example, if you are a teacher and you love teaching and education then you will respect your books and the blackboard and anything else associated with knowledge.

The signs of Allah (SWT) are unlimited and we should respect to all of them. However, there are some special things that Allah (SWT) has bestowed special significance to. It is part of being pious to show respect to these things. Some examples are:

- The Holy Qur'an
- The Holy Ka'bah
- The shrines of the Prophet and holy Imams
- Some mosques with special significance, such as Masjid Kufah

We must understand that we don't worship the sign itself but what it represents. When we walk around the Ka'bah we are showing our submission to Allah (SWT).

History has shown us that whenever the signs of Allah have been disrespected a punishment has come down. One of the clearest examples of this was in the story of Prophet Şāleḥ (as), where the she-camel, which God has given special significance to, was killed. Hence, it is our responsibility and obligation as Muslims to defend and preserve the signs of Allah at all times.

Review Questions

Q1. What was the name of the tribe Prophet Şāleḥ (as) was sent to?

- 'Ād
- Thamūd
- Quraysh

Q2. Why should we respect the signs of Allah?

- This increases piety
- We don't need to respect them
- Because we worship the signs

Q3. What was the punishment sent down to the people who disrespected the she-camel?

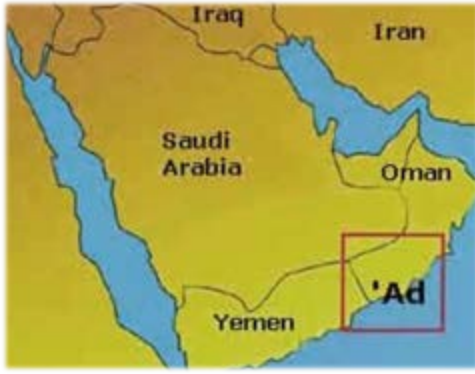
- Plague
- Thunder and Earthquake
- Tsunami

Prophet Hūd (as)

In this lesson, we will learn about one of the ancient Prophets who was sent to a community of pagans and idol worshippers to guide them to the right path. It is important to understand that the even though this is a story about a Prophet and people who lived a long time ago, the lessons are still useful today. This is because many of the mistakes in belief and action that people made even thousands of years ago, are the same mistakes people make up till today. Let's now have a look at who Prophet Hūd (as) was and what community he was sent to – so we can learn not to make the same mistakes they did.

THE PEOPLE OF 'ĀD

A very long time ago, there was an Arab tribe called 'Ād, who were related to and ancestors of another Arab tribe known as Thamūd. Both tribes were reported to be descendants of the Prophet Noah (as). 'Ād were a powerful nation in their day, mainly because of their location at the southern end of the African/Arabian trade routes. The tribes of 'Ād lived in a green grassy area. It rained during the different seasons. So the earth became fertile. Brooklets and small streams were full of water, and their fields were pretty



The people of 'Ād were particularly tall, handsome, and strong people. They were excellent architects and skilled builders. They liked to build castles and magnificent buildings which they used to carve out of rocks in the mountains and hills of the area. They also planted beautiful gardens and orchards. But they didn't realize that their abilities and the natural resources around them were gifts. In spite of all these gifts from Allah (SWT), they denied His power.



Even though the people of 'Ād were great builders, they had no morals and many false beliefs. They worshipped many idols each of whom they believed fulfilled one of their needs. There were idols that they thanked for giving them rain, preserving them from danger, providing food, and restoring them to health after sickness. When this became their way of life, Allah (SWT) decided to guide these people by sending them a Prophet who would teach them to believe in the One and True God, who gave them all their needs. Allah (SWT) sent to the people of 'Ad, a Prophet by the name of Hūd (as).

وَالِىٰٓ عَادٍ أَخَاهُمْ هُوْدًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مَا لَكُمْ
مِنْ اِلٰهِ غَيْرِهٖۗ اَفَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ

“And to 'Ād (We sent) their brother Hūd. He said: O my people! Serve Allah, you have no god other than Him; will you not then guard (against evil)?”

PROPHET HŪD AND HIS MISSION

Prophet Hūd (as) was a righteous person who had a good heart and loved goodness. He tried to call his people to the worship of One God, to whom they should give thanks for all their bounties and blessings. He criticized his people for their arrogance and tyranny, and called upon them to give up the worship of false gods which were only useless stones.



They challenged him to bring the anger of God upon them. The people of 'Ād suffered through many years of famine, but rather than take that as a warning, they considered themselves unconquerable and they remained stubborn against the teachings of Prophet Hūd (as). The strong and wealthy people mocked the prophet and his message and said that Hūd was foolish and mad. They hurt and threatened him.

The many years of famine destroyed most of their green and rich fields, their animals died and food ran short. The land was slowly becoming a dry desert.

Prophet Hūd (as) went on inviting his people to believe in Allah. He always preached to them. He reminded them of Allah's blessings and favours, but all his efforts were in vain.

وَيَا قَوْمِ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا اِلَيْهِ يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ
مِدْرَارًا وَيَزِدْكُمْ قُوَّةً اِلَىٰ قُوَّتِكُمْ وَلَا تَتَوَلَّوْا مُجْرِمِيْنَ

“And, O my people! ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn to Him; He will send on you clouds pouring down abundance of rain and add strength to your strength, and do not turn back guilty” (11:52)

THE PEOPLE OF 'ĀD REJECT GUIDANCE

Most of the people of 'Ād rejected Prophet Hūd's (as) message. However, he continued to tell his people that only Allah, the Glorified, is able to create rain and enliven the dry land. Allah, the Most High, is able to create plants in the valleys and plains. These Idols are useless stones that cannot control anything.

Yet they continued to ignore him stubbornly, saying:

قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ إِنَّا لَنَرَاكَ فِي سَفَاهَةٍ وَإِنَّا
لَنُظُنُّكَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ

“The chiefs of those who disbelieved from among his people said: Most surely we see you in folly, and most surely we think you to be of the liars.”

After many years of preaching and guiding his people, Prophet Hūd (as) asked Allah (SWT) to deliver him from this community of people who were so stubborn and arrogant. Allah (SWT) accepted his prayers and the promise which He had asked Prophet Hūd (as) to deliver to his community was now going to come true – the promise of punishment.

ALLAH (SWT) SENDS HIS PUNISHMENT

One day, a huge cloud advanced toward their valley, which they thought was a rain cloud coming to bless their land with fresh water. Instead, it was a devastating sandstorm which ravaged the land and destroyed everything.



Prophet Hūd (as) and the believers sought protection in the mountain. The punishment was close at hand. The pagans were gazing at the black clouds waiting for rain. However, there was no rain. A cold wind blew. Then a destructive storm started.

The wind was strong, cold, and dry and did not carry clouds nor did it carry rain, rather it carried cold and thick sand.

The people of 'Ād were proud of their strength. They thought that they would overcome the drought, dryness, and the storm. They thought that the storm would stop at night or in the morning of the next day, but the destructive wind went on blowing for seven nights and eight days and in the end it had filled the fertile valley with sand.

The wind buried the wonderful city of the people of 'Ād under the sand. It had destroyed its houses and their strong marble pillars. It had also knocked down the people who disbelieved in the message of Prophet Hūd (as). Those people fell on the sand. They were tall, so they looked like dry date-palms.

وَأَمَّا عَادٌ فَأُهْلِكُوا بِرِيحٍ صَرْصَرٍ عَاتِيَةٍ

سَخَّرَهَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَبْعَ لَيَالٍ وَثَمَانِيَةَ أَيَّامٍ حُسُومًا فَتَرَى الْقَوْمَ

فِيهَا صِرَعَى كَأَنَّهُمْ أَعْجَازُ نَخْلٍ خَاوِيَةٍ

“And as for 'Ād, they were destroyed by a roaring, violent blast. Which He made to prevail against them for seven nights and eight days unremittingly, so that you might have seen the people therein prostrate as if they were the trunks of hollow palms.” (69:6-7)

The idols fell on their faces and broke into pieces. The pagan temples became ruins.

For this reason, Allah destroyed the people of 'Ād. He saved Prophet Hūd (as) and the believers from them.

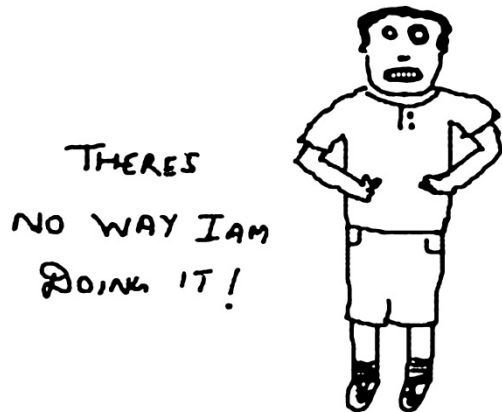
DO NOT BE STUBBORN AGAINST THE TRUTH

From the story of the people of 'Ād, we can see that even today it is possible to behave like them. Today we see scientists and intelligent people who reject God and His blessings thinking that they don't need God and science explains everything! This is the same attitude of the people of 'Ād who rejected God because of a different type of blessing that God had given them which was wealth and physical strength and natural resources.

Today we see people building huge and tall sky scraper buildings and making cities on the sea like the Dubai

Palm. Sometimes, people think they are too strong, too smart or too wealthy to be punished by God. They take God's promises lightly.

WE must be careful never to make that mistake. Alla (SWT) is All-Powerful, and He can take whatever blessings He has bestowed on us whenever He wills. Therefore, we must be humble to Him and to His creatures, no matter how strong, rich or smart we may be.



Today Allah (SWT) has provided mankind with all sorts of blessings and gifts of knowledge through which we have been able to advance so much with technology and science. However we *must* remember that all these things are blessings from God. Today, if Allah (SWT) decided to take away from people the blessing of electricity – the whole world would just stop working and people's lives would come to a standstill!

ⁱⁱTherefore, we must be grateful that Allah (SWT) has provided us with all these gifts and we must remember to use them to worship Him and to achieve the goals and purpose He has intended for us to achieve through these blessings. We should not think that we are responsible for our success – otherwise we will become losers and Allah (SWT) will have to punish us to make us know that this way of thinking and action is wrong.

Lastly, we should learn to accept the truth when we learn it or know it no matter how we do that. If we knowingly reject the truth, we will not be fair to ourselves or to anyone else and especially to Allah (SWT) Who has blessed us with so much goodness.

Review Questions

Q1. Which community of people was Prophet Hūd (as) sent to?

- d. Thamūd
- e. 'Ād
- f. India

Q2. What Punishment did Allah (SWT) use to destroy the people of 'Ād?

- d. Water
- e. Fire
- f. Cold violent wind

Q3. Why did Allah (SWT) destroy the people of 'Ad?

- d. Because they disbelieved in Allah and were proud of their own strength and blessings
- e. Because they did not thank Allah (SWT) for the blessings that they had
- f. All of the above

ⁱ References:

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