

السَّلَامُ عَلَى مُوسَى كَلِيمِ اللَّهِ

PROPHET MUSA ^[A.S]

نبي الله موسى (ع)

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 3

Lesson 1: Prophet Mūsā

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Discuss the events in the early parts of the life of Prophet Mūsā (as)
- Understand that Prophet Mūsā (as) was ma'sūm or sinless
- Discuss the event of the first revelation to Prophet Mūsā (as)
- Discuss the story of Prophet Mūsā's (as) meeting with Khiḍr (as)

Towards the end of his life, Prophet Yūsuf (as) invited his family to Egypt to live with him and to settle there. Slowly, they grew into a big tribe of people, who came to be known as the Bani Israel (the Children of Israel, which was another name for Prophet Ya'qūb)

After several centuries, a man called Fir'awn (also known as Pharaoh) came to power in Egypt. When he saw that the Bani Israel had become so many he was fearful that they might become powerful and be a threat to him so he made life very difficult for them.

A royal astrologer once informed Pharaoh that soon a boy would be born from Bani Israel who will destroy Pharaoh's kingdom. On hearing this, Pharaoh ordered that every male child born to Bani Israel should be killed.

HIS SECRET BIRTH

Prophet Mūsā's (as) mother became pregnant. Fearing her son would be killed, she kept this a secret, and when her son was born, Allah (SWT) inspired Moses' mother to put her baby in a box and place him into the river of the Nile. He assured her that Allah Himself would look after Prophet Mūsā (as). As hard as it was for a mother to place her baby in a river, she put her trust in Allah (SWT) and did this.

"And We inspired the mother of Moses, (saying): "Suckle him, but when you fear for him, then cast him into the river and fear not, nor grieve. Verily! We shall bring him back to you, and shall make him one of (Our) Messengers." (28:7)



FOUND BY PHARAOH

The box floated towards the palace of Pharaoh, where his men fished it out and brought the baby to him.



Pharaoh wanted to kill the boy immediately fearing it might be a child of Bani Israel, but his wife Āsiyah, who was a pious woman, stopped him and asked him to adopt the child as their own.

“And the wife of Pharaoh said: "A comfort of the eye for me and for you. Kill him not, perhaps he may be of benefit to us, or we may adopt him as a son..."(28:9)

Pharaoh agreed to his wife's request and then summoned some women to breastfeed the crying child. However, the baby refused milk from all the women who came to feed him. At this point, the sister of Prophet Mūsā (as), who worked as a servant in Pharaoh's palace, suggested she could take him to a woman who would feed him. Of course, she knew this was her little brother, and so she

took him to their mother. Prophet Mūsā's (as) mother now had her baby back in her arms, and she could breast-feed him and look after him. She was rewarded for her trust in Allah (SWT).

“...until she (his sister came up and) said: "Shall I direct you to a household who will rear him for you, and sincerely they will look after him in a good manner?" So did We restore him to his mother, that she might be delighted, and that she might not grieve, and that she might know that the Promise of Allah is true. But most of them know not.” (28:12-13)

THE INCIDENT WITH THE SOLDIER

As years passed Prophet Mūsā (as) grew strong and healthy in the palace of Pharaoh.

Once Prophet Mūsā (as) saw two men fighting. One was a soldier working for the Pharaoh, while other was one of the oppressed people of Bani Israel. Prophet Mūsā (as) attempted to stop the soldier from hurting the other person by striking him. However, when Prophet Mūsā (as) struck the soldier, the soldier died, even though Prophet Mūsā (as) had not meant to kill him.

This story is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. When this happened, Prophet Mūsā (as) asks for forgiveness from Allah (SWT). Some people think this is because killing that soldier was a sin.

“And he entered the city at a time of unawareness of its people, and he found there two men fighting, - one of his tribe, and the other of his foes. The man of his (own) tribe asked him for help against his foe, so Moses struck him with his fist and killed him. He said: "This is of Satan's doing, verily, he is a plain misleading enemy. He said: "My Lord! Verily, I have wronged myself, so forgive me." Then He forgave him. Verily, He is the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.”

However, it is important to understand that what Prophet Moses (as) did was not a sin. There are many reasons for this why it was not a sin:

Prophet Mūsā (as) had not meant to kill the soldier, he simply wanted to stop him from unfairly hurting another person

The soldier was an evil person who perhaps deserved to be killed, but Prophet Mūsā (as) asked for forgiveness because it was not the right time to have attacked the soldier

Once news got out that Prophet Mūsā (as) had killed a soldier of Pharaoh, his life was in danger. He quickly fled Egypt and travelled through the desert to another country. His journey to leave Egypt was very difficult, and he reached a place called Madyan exhausted and with absolutely nothing.

IN MADYAN

When Prophet Mūsā (as) reached Madyan, he decided to rest near a well. Soon he noticed shepherds had gathered to water their sheep, but there were two ladies who could not push through the men to water their sheep.

Prophet Mūsā (as) decided to help these ladies. He took the sheep and took them to drink water. He then handed the sheep back to the ladies, who went home and informed their father of what had happened. Their father happened to be another great prophet- Prophet Shu'ayb, who we will learn about in future years.

Prophet Shu'ayb sent one of his daughters to bring Prophet Mūsā (as) to him. She went back to the well and asked Prophet Mūsā (as) to follow her to father's house. When telling this part of the story, the Holy Qur'an says that she approached Prophet Mūsā (as) shyly, as a lady should. In turn, Prophet Mūsā (as) did not walk behind her. Instead, he walked in front of her and asked her to give him directions towards her house.

“Then there came to him one of the two women, walking shyly. She said: "Verily, my father calls you that he may reward you for having watered (our flocks) for us."(28:25)

Prophet Mūsā (as) met Prophet Shu'ayb. Eventually, he ended up marrying one of the daughters of Prophet Shu'ayb, and he worked for his father-in-law for ten years.

During this period, Prophet Mūsā (as) learnt a lot from this older prophet. After this time, he felt ready to go back to Egypt and help his people.

THE FIRST REVELATION

Prophet MŪSĀ (as) took his wife and family and headed back to Egypt. In the desert, he lost his way, and he and his family were in some distress. Suddenly, he saw a fire in the distance. He asked his wife to remain where she was and headed towards the fire thinking maybe he could bring some back to relieve his family from the cold.

When he reached towards the fire he saw that the fire was coming out from a tree but was not actually burning the tree. He then suddenly heard a voice saying:

“And when he came to it (the fire), he was called by name: "O Mūsā (Moses)! Verily! I am your Lord! So take off your shoes, you are in the sacred valley, Ṭuwa. And I have chosen you. So listen to that which is inspired to you. Verily! I am Allah, there is no Lord but Me, so worship Me, and establish Ṣalāt for My Remembrance.”(20:11-14)

Allah (SWT) was speaking to Moses (as) through this tree, by making sound to come from that tree. Next, Allah (SWT) showed Moses (as) a couple of miracles:

"And what is that in your right hand, O Moses? He said: "This is my stick, whereon I lean, and wherewith I beat down branches for my sheep, and wherein I find other uses. (Allah) said: "Cast it down, O Moses! He cast it down, and behold! It was a snake, moving quickly. Allah said: "Grasp it, and fear not, We shall return it to its former state, And press your (right) hand to your (left) side, it will come forth white (and shining), without any disease as another sign.” (20:17-22)

Having been shown these miracles, Prophet Moses (as) was now given his mission. His mission, which we will learn more about in the next lesson, was to go back Pharaoh and urge him to obey Allah (SWT) and stop treating the Bani Israel badly.

"Go you and your brother with My *ayāt* (signs) and do not, you both, slacken and become weak in My Remembrance. Go, both of you, to Pharaoh, verily, he has transgressed.” (20:42-44)

Review Questions

Q1. What miracles was Prophet Mūsā (as) given?

- His Staff would change to a snake
- Bright light would shine from his hand
- Both of the above

Q2. How long did Prophet Mūsā (as) stay with Prophet Shu'ayb?

- Eight years
- Ten years
- Five years

Q3. Where did Prophet Mūsā (as) end up after leaving Egypt?

- Iraq
- Palestine
- Madyan

Lesson 2: Return to Egypt

When Prophet Musa returned to Egypt from Madyan he informed his brother Aaron (Hārūn) that his mission had begun and they prepared themselves to go to the court of Pharaoh.

Prophet Mūsā (as) and his brother entered the court of Pharaoh. They were wearing the clothes of shepherds and look poor. They walked into the extravagant palace of Pharaoh and started their mission. Their mission had two main parts:

Teach Pharaoh and the people of Egypt about the Oneness of Allah (SWT)

Free the Bani Israel from the oppression of Pharaoh

"So go you both to him, and say: 'Verily, we are Messengers of your Lord, so let the Children of Israel go with us, and torment them not; indeed, we have come with a sign from your Lord! And peace will be upon him who follows the guidance! Truly, it has been revealed to us that the torment will be for him who denies and turns away.' Pharaoh said: 'Who then, O Moses is the Lord of you two? (Moses) said: 'Our Lord is He Who gave to each thing its form and nature, then guided it aright.' (20:47-50)

Unfortunately, Pharaoh acted arrogantly and stubbornly. He denied the existence of Allah (SWT), and declared himself as god. He also refused to let the Bani Israel go free, or even to treat them better.

At this point, Moses (as) showed the Pharaoh and his people his two miracles. Even after having seen the miracles of the staff and the bright hand, the people refused to believe. They accused Moses (as) of being a magician, and asked him to meet to challenge the magicians on a day of celebration in Egypt.

MEETING THE MAGICIANS

The festival day came and the magicians came to challenge Prophet Moses (as) in return for some reward. All the people of Egypt were gathered, in anticipation of this event.

Prophet Moses (as) asked them to begin the challenge. The magicians used their tricks to create illusions for people- it seemed to people like the sticks had turned into live snakes. Then it came the turn of Prophet Moses (as) to strike his staff against the Earth. As soon as he did this, his stick turned into a real live snake. It ate the illusions the magicians had created. Everyone, including the magicians and the audience, were mesmerised by this.

The magicians realised this was not magic, but a true miracle from God. They immediately believed in Moses (as) and prostrated to Allah (SWT). Even though Pharaoh threatened and eventually killed them, they did not give up this faith they now had.

"And throw that which is in your right hand! It will swallow up that which they have made. That which they have made is only a magician's trick, and the magician will never be successful, no matter whatever amount (of skill) he may attain. So the magicians fell down prostrate. They said: 'We believe in the Lord of Aaron and Moses. Pharaoh said: 'Believe you in Moses before I give you permission? Verily! He is your chief who taught you magic. So I will surely cut off your hands and feet on opposite sides, and I will surely crucify you on the trunks of date-palms, and you shall surely know which of us can give the severe and more lasting torment. They said: 'We prefer you not over the clear signs that have come to us, and to Him (Allah) Who created us. So decree whatever you desire to decree, for you can only decree (regarding) this life of the world.'" (20:69-72)

THE PLAGUES

After this event, Pharaoh became even angrier and treated the Bani Israel worse even than he had before. Now Allah's punishments started coming towards Pharaoh, giving him more chances to repent. Yet Pharaoh remained stubborn and refused to submit to Allah, despite all the warning. Eventually, the order came from Allah (SWT) to Moses (as) to take his people and leave Egypt.

Prophet Mūsā (as) gathered the Bani Israel and they headed out of the city and towards the River Nile. Soon, the soldiers of Pharaoh were right behind them. Suddenly, they found themselves stuck between the vicious army of Pharaoh and the huge river Nile. They thought they were surely finished.

However, Moses (as) kept his trust in Allah (SWT), and said:

“surely, my Lord will guide me”

At this point, Allah (SWT) inspired Moses (as) to strike his stick against the water. Suddenly, a dry path appeared in the middle of the sea. The Children of Israel all crossed the sea.

When Pharaoh and his people tried to cross it, the miraculous path sank and they all drowned and died. Pharaoh himself began to shout that he now believed in Allah (SWT), but at this stage it was too late.

“And indeed We inspired Moses) (saying): "Travel by night with my slaves and strike a dry path for them in the sea, fearing neither to be overtaken nor being afraid. Then Pharaoh pursued them with his hosts, but the sea-water completely overwhelmed them and covered them up. And Pharaoh led his people astray, and he did not guide them. O Children of Israel! We delivered you from your enemy..." (20:77-80)

Review Questions

Q1. What did the magicians do upon seeing the miracle of Allah (SWT)

- They ignored it
- They tried to fight it
- They immediately submitted

Q2. The mission of Prophet Moses (as) was to:

- Save the Bani Israel from Pharaoh
- To teach the people about Allah (SWT)
- Both of the above

Lesson 3: The Contemporaries of Prophet Moses (as)

The Holy Qur'an mentions a number of people who lived at the same time as Prophet Mūsā (as). The Qur'an discusses these other people so that we can learn lessons from their lives. In this lesson, we will have a look at Prophet Mūsā's (as) interactions with these people.

QĀRŪN

Qārūn was a very wealthy man who lived at the time of Prophet Moses (as). Even though some narrations say he was related to Moses (as), Qārūn was an evil person, who did not use his wealth for the right reasons.

Instead, he boasted about his wealth and would often show it off in front of people. He refused to pay any charity or to help his people. Instead he helped the Pharaoh in oppressing the poor Bani Israel.

The Holy Qur'an recalls the story of Qārūn.

“Verily, Qārūn, was of Moses' people, but he behaved arrogantly towards them. And We gave him of the treasures, that of which the keys would have been a burden to a body of strong men. When his people said to him: "Do not be glad (with ungratefulness to Allah's Favours). Verily! Allah likes not those who are glad (with ungratefulness to Allah's Favours). But seek, with that (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on you, the home of the Hereafter, and forget not your portion of legal enjoyment in this world, and do good as Allah has been good to you, and seek not mischief in the land. Verily, Allah likes not the sinners. He said: "This has been given to me only because of knowledge I possess." (28:76-78)

Qārūn refused to take the good advice given to him. Instead, he claimed he was attained his wealth because of his own knowledge, and he went out in front of the people, showing off his great wealth. Some people were envious, wishing they had what Qārūn had. However,

others were wiser, knowing that the ending of such a person could only be evil. Sure enough, Qārūn's arrogance reached such an extent that Allah (SWT) finally punished Him by causing the earth to open up and swallow him. Now, those who wanted to have what Qārūn had were glad they were not like him.

“So he went forth before his people in his pomp. Those who were desirous of the life of the world, said: "Ah, would that we had the like of what Qārūn has been given? Verily! He is the owner of a great fortune. But those who had been given knowledge said: "Woe to you! The Reward of Allah (in the Hereafter) is better for those who believe and do righteous good deeds, and this none shall attain except those who are patient. So We caused the earth to swallow him and his dwelling place. Then he had no group or party to help him against Allah, nor was he one of those who could save themselves.” (28:79-81)

The lessons that we can learn from the story of Qārūn are:

- Do not boast or act arrogantly
- Do not take blessings for granted. We have not earned the blessings we have, rather they are a gift from Allah (SWT)
- No matter how wealth or powerful a person is, they remain completely under the control of Allah (SWT), who can overpower them any time he wishes
- Do not look at the supposed comforts and riches of other people with longing. Often there is deep unhappiness and a bad ending if we look deeper into the lives of such people. Instead, we should be happy with whatever Allah (SWT) has destined for us.

THE MEETING WITH AL-KHIDR

The story of the meeting of Prophet Mūsā (as) with Khidr (as) is one of the most interesting stories in the Holy Qur'an. According to some narrations, Allah (SWT) told Prophet Mūsā (as) that there was someone on earth with more knowledge than even Prophet Mūsā (as). This interested Moses (as) and he went in search of this person.

He finally found Khidr at the junction of two seas and this was the conversation that took place between the two of them. Khidr was a person who was given special knowledge by Allah (SWT). Most of our scholars agree

that he was not a prophet. However, he still had this special knowledge and would be given special instructions by Allah (SWT) to help people in this world through his special knowledge.

Prophet Mūsā (as): May I follow you on the condition that you teach me from your wisdom?

Khidr (as): You will not have patience with me and you will not understand the knowledge of my actions...

Prophet Mūsā (as): if Allah pleases, you will find me patient and I shall not disobey you in any matter.

Khidr (as): if you follow me then do not question me about anything until I myself speak to you about it. If you agree to this then come on to the ship with me.

The two boarded a boat which was used by a group of poor fishermen to make their livelihood. Suddenly, Khidr made a hole in this boat.

Prophet Mūsā (as): have you made a hole in the ship to drown its passengers? Certainly you have done a grievous thing

Khidr (as): did I not say that you will not be able to have patience with me?

Prophet Mūsā (as): forgive me, for I forgot.

Then the two left the ship and were walking through a town. Again suddenly, Khidr attacks a young boy and kills him.

Prophet Mūsā (as): you have murdered an innocent person. Certainly you have done an evil thing.

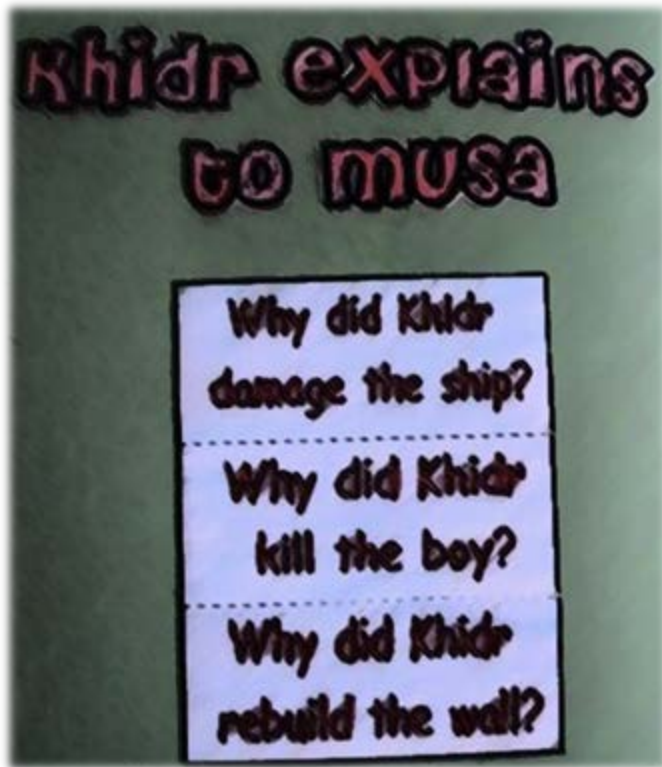
Khidr (as): did I not say, you will not be able to have patience with me?

Prophet Mūsā (as): Forgive me, if I ask you anything after this you may leave me.

The two then moved on to another town. When they arrived, they were hungry and had no money. They asked the people there for food, but those people were stingy and refused food them. They continued their journey through the town, until they passed by a wall that was falling down. Khidr decided to repair the wall without asking for any wages in return.

Prophet Mūsā (as): Why do you not ask for wages to mend this wall?

Khiḍr (as): O Mūsā it is time for us to part, before you go let me explain my actions to you.



As for the boat, it belonged to a poor man. I damaged it because the king was going to seize all the good boats. By making a hole in the boat, I stopped it from being taken by the king, so the poor man could keep the boat and repair this minor damage and be able to maintain his livelihood.

As for the boy, he was so disobedient that he would have even made his good parents disbelievers. Instead, Allah will now bless them with a better child.

As for the wall, it belonged to two young orphans. Their parents had hidden for them a treasure under it. If the wall fell completely, the treasure would become apparent, and the people of that town, who were stingy, would take that money from the orphans. So I repaired it in order that they might grow up before finding the treasure and be able to protect it.

ⁱWe learn a number of lessons from the story of Prophet Mūsā (as) and Khiḍr (as)

- We should be humble in seeking knowledge, just as Moses (as), who was a great prophet, was willing to search for a teacher and follow him in order to learn.
- That most of the mishaps/disasters that occur on earth are concealed blessings from Allah. Surely Allah is the Most Merciful.
- We should trust Allah as we do not know the reason behind everything that happens to us and we should have patience and not lose hope.
- We should not judge a situation until we have the whole story.
- Things that seem bad often turn out good and vice versa:

“It may be that you hate something and it is good for you, and it may be that you like something but it is not good for, and Allah surely knows but you do not know”

(2: 216)

Review Questions

Q1. Qārūn was punished because:

- a. He was arrogant and used his wealth for the wrong purposes
- b. He was wealthy and worked too hard
- c. He killed an innocent boy

Q2. Khiḍr was:

- a. A person given special knowledge by Allah (SWT)
- b. A prophet
- c. An ordinary person who was smart

ⁱReferences:

- The Holy Qur’an
- SML lectures on prophet Musa
- <http://www.madressa.net/tareekh/class9/343-prophet-musa-a-part-1-3>
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