

# وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ

37:181

## ANCIENT PROPHETS

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 4

### Qur'anic Prophets: Lesson 1

#### Objectives >>>

#### Students should:

- Discuss the Prophets who are mentioned briefly in the Holy Qur'an
- Discuss the lessons to be learnt from the lives of the Prophets
- Engage in an analytical research activity related to Prophets in the Qur'an

In our syllabus so far, we have come across many prophets and discussed their stories.

We will dedicate this final lesson to Prophets who are mentioned in the Qur'an briefly, and whose stories we have not had an opportunity to discuss.

The Qur'an mentions these Prophets with only a few sentences related to them. The reason for this is that the Qur'an wants to teach us lessons and values from their lives, rather than telling us historical facts about them which may not benefit us.

The other important point to remember is that for most of these Prophets, we have a great number of narrations which tell strange and mythical stories. These narrations are weak and unauthentic, and often based on Biblical stories. In general, we do not see these narrations as valid, and we should not relate the stories we hear within them.

In this lesson, we will briefly look at the remaining Prophets mentioned in the Qur'an, and look at the traits for which each of them was praised.

### PROPHET ISMĀ'ĪL

وَأذْكُرُ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ ۚ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صَادِقَ  
الْوَعْدِ وَكَانَ رَسُولًا نَبِيًّا وَكَانَ يَأْمُرُ أَهْلَهُ بِالصَّلَاةِ  
وَالزَّكَاةِ وَكَانَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ مَرْضِيًّا

“And mention in the Book Ismā'il. Verily! He was true to what he promised, and he was a Messenger, (and) a Prophet. And he used to enjoin on his family and his people *As-Salat* (the prayers) and the *Zakat*, and his Lord was pleased with him.” (19:54-55)

It is noteworthy that there is a difference of opinion here about who this āyah is referring to. It may be one of the following:

- Ismā'īl, the son of Abraham (as), who is mentioned separately here due to his special status<sup>i</sup>
- Ismā'īl ibn Hazqeel, one of the Israelite Prophets<sup>ii</sup>

Ismā'īl (as) was given the title of being 'true to his promise' because he once he uttered his word, he would keep it. The other quality he is praised for by Allah (SWT) is that he enjoined his family to do good.

## PROPHET IDRĪS

وَأَذْكُرُ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِدْرِيسَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَبِيًّا  
وَرَفَعْنَاهُ مَكَانًا عَلِيًّا

“And mention in the Book (the Qur'an) Idrīs. Verily! He was a man of truth, (and) a Prophet. And We raised him to a high station.” (19:56-57)

Prophet Idrīs is one of the more ancient prophets. According to the Old Testament, he is one of the forefathers of Prophet Noah (as). He was given this name because of how much he studied books (his name is derived from the root word 'dars', meaning 'to study') His name in the Testament is Akhnukh, and in English he is referred to as Enoch.

He is given the title of being raised to a high status. This is to indicate the level of spirituality and proximity to Allah that he reached.

He is also given the title of being Truthful. In fact, this attribute is mentioned before the attribute of being a prophet, highlighting its importance.

He is also mentioned in another passage in the Qur'an, where he is described as being patient and virtuous.

We have narrations that indicate the following about Prophet Idrīs (as):

- He was the first to write
- He studied many book and mastered many sciences, and this is where he got his name from
- His people did not accept his teachings. So he left with a group from Iraq to Egypt, where he taught many people and helped them establish cities and sciences.
- He was the first to understand astronomy

While these narrations are merely historical and may not have much weight, the fact that this great man is held in high

regard among scientists and philosophers indicates that he was a great scholar who was among the first to lead people to the intellectual sciences.

There are also many narrations about Prophet Idrīs which tell stories which clash with the infallibility of angels and his own infallibility. These are Israelite narrations which should be rejected.<sup>iii</sup>

## PROPHET ILYĀS

وَإِنَّ إِيَّاسَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ (123) إِذْ قَالَ  
لِقَوْمِهِ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ (129) ... (124) سَلَامٌ  
عَلَىٰ إِيَّاسِينَ (130) إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي  
الْمُحْسِنِينَ (131) إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ  
(132)

“123. And verily, Ilyās (Elias) was one of the Messengers.

124. When he said to his people: "Will you not fear Allah?

...

130. *Salamun* (peace) be upon Ilyās (Elias)!"

131. Verily, thus do We reward the good-doers

132. Verily, he was one of Our believing slaves.” (37:123-132)

Prophet Ilyās (as) is mentioned twice in the Holy Qur'an. We know the following about him from the Holy Qur'an:

- He was deputed to a community
- He enjoined them to piety and to worshipping Allah alone
- A group of his people were purified and believed in him, while most of them rejected
- He is given the honour of being greeted in the Holy Qur'an
- He is given the title of 'al-Muḥsin' –the doer of good- in the Qur'an

As with many other prophets, we have many strange and conflicting narrations about Ilyās (as). We cannot consider these narrations true or base any beliefs on them.

There are weak narrations that indicate that Ilyās remains alive till today and will not die until the Day of Judgment. We have no evidence in the Qur'an or authentic narrations to support this, and so it is not part of our belief in this prophet.

It seems likely that he was a Prophet sent to the Bani Israel, and at least for a part of his life he was deputed to Ba'albak in modern day Lebanon. <sup>iv</sup>

“And remember Ismā'īl, Al-Yasa' (Elisha), and Dhul-Kifl (Isaiah), all are among the best.” (38:48)

## **PROPHET AL-YASA'**

- This is another holy Prophet mentioned in the Qur'an
- From the narrations, we understand that he was sent to the Bani Israel, to enjoin them to the worship of Allah alone
- We have narrations from the Imams indicating he performed great miracles similar to those Prophet Isa' (as)<sup>v</sup>

## **PROPHET DHUL KIFL**

- Another holy prophet mentioned in the Qur'an
- He is praised for being virtuous and patient
- We have narrations indicating he was a messenger as well as a prophet, and that he was sent to the Bani Israel after Prophet Solomon (as)<sup>vi</sup>

This was a summary of the Prophets mentioned briefly in the Qur'an whose missions we were unable to discuss in detail in future lessons.

The remainder of this unit consists of a research task which students can begin today and complete before the next lesson. It is outlined in lesson 2.

## **Qur'anic Prophets: Lesson 2**

### **Research Task**

This lesson consists of a research task. Write a 700-1000 word essay, or deliver a presentation, based on the Qur'anic passages related to the Prophets. In this essay, focus on the attributes for which these holy prophets are most often praised in the Holy Qur'an. Also discuss why some prophets are praised individually, and others in groups. Another point to explore is why some attributes are uniquely mentioned in relation to some prophets, while others are mentioned in relation to many prophets. Finally, make note of āyāt which praise the attributes of the Seal of the Prophets Muḥammad (saw).

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<sup>i</sup> Al-Amthal, Ayat Makarem Shirazi

<sup>ii</sup> Al-Mizan, Allamah Tabatabai

<sup>iii</sup> Al-Mizan, Allamah Tabatabai

<sup>iv</sup> Al-Mizan, Allamah Tabatabai

<sup>v</sup> Al-Mizan, Allamah Tabatabai

<sup>vi</sup> Al-Mizan, Allamah Tabatabai