

السَّلَامُ عَلَى مُوسَى كَلِيمِ اللَّهِ

Prophet Mūsā^[A.S]

نبي الله موسى (ع)

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 5

Lesson 1: Mūsā Kalīmu Allah

THE MISSION OF MUSA (AS)

As we have learnt in previous years, Prophet Mūsā (as) was sent to Egypt with two missions:

1. To call the people to worship the One True God.
2. To stop the Pharaoh from oppressing the Children of Israel (Bani Israel) and using them as slaves.

This was met with the refusal of the Pharaoh and his followers, and after enduring many hardships in trying to guide them, Prophet Mūsā (as) was commanded by Allah (SWT) to take the Bani Israel and flee by night. The Pharaoh and his army pursued them till the edge of the sea where Prophet Mūsā's (as) community where they thought they are trapped. However, Prophet Mūsā (as) demonstrated his uncompromising trust in Allah (SWT), saying:

“He said: By no means; surely my Lord is with me: He will show me a way out...” (26:62)

It was only after he said this that Allah (SWT) commanded him to strike the sea with his staff, and Allah divided the sea, saving Prophet Mūsā (as) and the believers, and drowning Pharaoh and his army. The Children of Bani Israel were now free.



They were no longer slaves and could head back to their homeland of Palestine and practice the True Religion of

Objectives >>>

Students should:

Lesson 1

- Briefly review a summary of Prophet Mūsā's mission
- Discuss the title of Prophet Mūsā' (as): Kalīmu Allah
- Discuss in detail the incident of God speaking to Prophet Mūsā (as)
- Discuss the important role of Aaron (as) in Prophet Mūsā's (as) message
- Discuss the similarities in their relationship between that of Prophet Muḥammad and Imam 'Ali
- Discuss the wisdom behind Prophet Mūsā's (as) request for his mission to be shared with his brother
- Discuss the importance of brotherhood and having a partner on a spiritual journey
- Discuss the wisdom of God giving his message to 'families'
- Discuss the incident of Prophet Mūsā's (as) departure and the Israelites worship of the golden calf,
- Briefly review the struggles of Prophet Mūsā's (as) with his people after crossing the sea
- Discuss the Qur'an's teachings on Judaism and the Israelite people

submission to Allah. However, even after crossing the sea and freeing his people, the struggles of Prophet Mūsā (as) did not end.

MŪSĀ (AS) - KALĪMU ALLAH

وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ مُوسَى تَكْلِيمًا

“And to Moses Allah spoke a kind of speaking.” (4:164)

A special title of Prophet Musa (as) is ‘Kalīmu Allah’, which means “the one who was spoken to by Allah (SWT)”. This is because Allah (SWT) ‘spoke’ to him in a unique manner. Perhaps the best way to explain it is to say that Allah (SWT) did this by causing soundwaves to emanate from a burning tree. Allah (SWT) only speaks to human beings in three ways:

1. By revelation
2. From behind a veil
3. By sending a messenger to reveal what He Will.

It is important to remember that Allah (SWT) certainly did not enter the tree somehow or take on any physical form. Allah (SWT) is beyond matter, and is too Exalted for such an event. Rather, He simply caused sound to emanate from a tree in a unique way.

Prophet Mūsā (as) and his family (as) had left Madyan at night and were on their way towards Egypt. Prophet Mūsā (as) then saw a fire in the distance, and told his family to stop and wait till he goes to the fire. When he reached near it, a voice came from the tree:

“... O Mūsā: Surely I am your Lord, therefore put off your shoes; surely you are in the sacred valley, Ṭuwa, And I have chosen you, so listen to what is revealed: Surely I am Allah, there is no god but I, therefore serve Me and keep up prayer for My remembrance: Surely the hour is coming– I am about to make it manifest– so that every soul may be rewarded as it strives: Therefore let not him who believes not in it and follows his low desires turn you away from it so that you should perish; And what is this in your right hand, O Mūsā! He said: This is my staff: I recline on it and I beat the leaves with it to make them fall upon my sheep, and I have other uses for it. He said: Cast it down, O Mūsā! So he cast it down; and lo! it was a serpent running. He said: Take hold of it and fear not; We will restore it to its former state: And press your hand to your side, it shall come out white without evil: another sign: That We may show you of

Our greater signs: Go to Pharaoh, surely he has exceeded all limits.” (20:11-24)

SPIRITUAL DIMENSIONS OF THIS CONVERSATION

- The command "to take off the shoes" is interpreted as a mark of humility for self and respect for Allah, or to renounce the thought of family, so as to be present before the Lord in utter devotedness and concentration of heart and mind.
- The conversation between Allah (SWT) and Prophet Mūsā (as) is like a conversation between two close friends who love one another. Some of these signs include:
 - Allah (SWT) uses the first person repeatedly
 - Allah (SWT) describes Himself to Prophet Mūsā (as) as ‘your Lord’ rather than ‘the Lord’. All this is to emphasise the close relationship
 - Allah (SWT) says: ‘I have chosen you’. In other parts of the Qur’an, Allah (SWT): ‘I have fashioned you for myself’
 - Allah (SWT) asks Prophet Mūsā (as) a question to which the answer is obvious (what is in your right hand?) Prophet Mūsā’s (as) answer in turn is quite long. Some of our scholars indicate that the purpose of the question and the long answer despite the obviousness is to prolong the conversation between the two intimate friends.

Review Questions

1. Undertake further research and explain the meaning of God ‘speaking’ to the Prophet in your own words.

Lesson 2:

The Brother of the Prophet

THE ROLE OF HĀRŪN (AS)

After being spoken to by Allah (SWT) and given the grand mission of going to the Pharaoh, Prophet Mūsā (as) made a special request to Allah (SWT):

25. (Moses) said: "O my Lord! Open for me my chest. And ease my task for me;" And make loose the knot from my tongue, That they understand my speech, And

appoint for me a minister from my family, Hārūn (Aaron), my brother; Increase my strength with him, And let him share my task. That we may glorify You much, "And remember You much, Verily! You are of us Ever a Well-Seer." Allah said: "You are granted your request, O Musa (Moses)!" (20:25-36)

Knowing that his task will not be easy, Prophet Mūsā (as) asked to have his brother, Aaron (as), as his minister, and asked that they may share the mission. The role of Prophet Aaron (as) was very important in that he was always at the aid of Prophet Mūsā (as). He supported his brother during the difficult encounters with the oppressive Pharaoh, and was the leader of the community when Prophet Mūsā (as) was summoned to the mountain for 40 days. Note the following points about the relationship of these two prophets and brothers:

- Prophet Mūsā (as) says that his strength will be increased through his brother Aaron (as)
- He states that his mission is shared with Aaron (as)
- Prophet Mūsā (as) states he and Aaron (as) will glorify Allah (SWT) together
- Allah (SWT) accepts the request of Prophet Mūsā (as)

A VERY SIMILAR BROTHERHOOD

Prophet Muḥammad (saw) said to Imam ‘Ali (as): “Your position to me is like the position of Aaron to Musa, except that there will be no prophet after me.”

Both Prophet Mūsā (as) and Prophet Muḥammad (saw) had difficult and hazardous tasks ahead of them, one being sent to the evil Pharaoh and one being sent to the ignorant and dangerous tribal chiefs of Mecca. However, both had great supports in carrying out their tasks. While Prophet Mūsā (as) had Aaron (as) as his support, the Prophet of Islam had Imam ‘Ali (as). It is important to note that whatever task or status mentioned for Aaron (as) in the Qur’an, would also apply to Imam ‘Ali (as), on account of the authentic and recurrently narrated Ḥadith above.

Aaron (as) was the brother of Prophet Mūsā (as). Although Imam ‘Ali (as) was the cousin of the Holy Prophet (saw), announced ‘Ali (as) to be his brother on many occasions. One such occasion was after the migration to Medina where brotherhood was established and paired between each of the Muhajirīn and Anṣār,

with the only exception being the brotherhood declared between Prophet Muḥammad (saw) and Imam ‘Ali (as). In this way the Prophet (saw) made clear that none could ever be regarded as his brother other than ‘Ali (as).¹

As the people of Musa (as) violated their oath of loyalty to Aaron (as) and followed al-Sāmeri, the people of Prophet Muḥammad (saw) also turned their back upon ‘Ali (as) and pursued their own fancies. In this way the faith of both communities was tested, and they were found doing injustice to themselves.

WISDOM OF SHARING THE MISSION

“And my brother, Aaron, he is more eloquent of tongue than I, therefore send him with me as an aider, verifying me: surely I fear that they would reject me.”

(28:34)

During such a difficult task, having an older brother who he trusted completely would ‘strengthen his back’ and be of great help to him. Aaron (as) was older, very eloquent, and could support Prophet Mūsā (as) during the encounter with the Pharaoh. He could have led the community in the absence of Prophet Musa (as).

In the same way we should learn not to be proud of our selves or think that ‘I’m a man and can do it all by myself’ when faced with challenging situations, seeking a trustable and worthy companion is the wisest and most intelligent thing to do. The Holy Prophet (saw) asked for such a companion as well, in the form of Imam ‘Ali (as).

ABANDONING THE SUCCESSOR

“And We appointed with Mūsā a time of thirty nights and completed them with ten (more), so the appointed time of his Lord was complete forty nights, and Mūsā said to his brother Hārūn: Take my place among my people, Do right and do not follow the way of the mischief-makers.” (7:142)

As we have learnt in previous years, Prophet Aaron (as) was the successor of Prophet Mūsā (as) and was given the task of leading the community while Prophet Musa (as) had gone to Mount Sinai. His meeting with Allah (SWT) was extended by 10 days, so when he was late in returning the community became agitated. A person by the name of al-Sāmīri took advantage of this. He created a cow made of gold, and made it so it would emit a sound. The people began to worship this idol.

When Prophet Mūsā (as) returned, he was furious with his people. He destroyed the idol and punished al-Sāmiri. Yet again, though, his people had failed their test.

Another interesting aspect of the story is that Prophet Musa (as) approaches his brother Prophet Aaron (as), asking him as to why he allowed such a disaster to happen.

“And certainly Aaron had said to them before: O my people! you are only tried by it [the cow], and surely your Lord is the Beneficent Allah, therefore follow me and obey my order. They said: We will by no means cease to keep to its worship until Musa returns to us. (Musa) said: O Aaron! What prevented you, when you saw them going astray, So that you did not follow me? Did you then disobey my order? He said: O son of my mother! Seize me not by my beard nor by my head; surely I was afraid lest you should say: You have caused a division among the children of Israel and not respected my word.” (20:90-94)

The answer of Aaron (as) is that he feared that the Children of Israel would have divided into two groups of believers and disbelievers, with the strength and unity destroyed, and perhaps even fighting and bloodshed occurring. He therefore tried to respect the command (“do right”) of Prophet Mūsā (as) and keep the community united.

Another part of Aaron’s (as) response is given in Surah al-A’rāf:

“... He said: Son of my mother! Surely the people reckoned me weak and went near to killing me, therefore make not the enemies to rejoice over my misfortune & count me not among the unjust people.” (7:150)

An important lesson from this story is that when people do not follow the divinely appointed successor, they are led astray. A similar such situation occurred when the people abandoned Imam ‘Ali (as) after the demise of the Holy Prophet (saw), where Imam Ali (as) had to bear patience for the sake of the unity of Islam. These āyāt also shed light on why Imam ‘Ali took the patient stand he did after the demise of the Holy Prophet.

Review Questions

Q1. Discuss the role of Prophet Aaron (as) in the absence of Prophet Mūsā (as), and compare it with that of Imam ‘Ali (as).

Q2. Discuss the wisdom of the mission being shared between Prophet Mūsā (as) and Prophet Aaron (as).

Lesson 3: Struggles with the Israelites

MISCHIEF OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

The community of Prophet Mūsā (as) brought much pain and grief to him on a variety of occasions:

- When they saw a group of people worshipping idols, they asked Prophet Mūsā (as) to make for them an idol to worship. They also asked him to show Allah (SWT) to them. They did not realise that Allah (SWT) was beyond vision and hearing and shape.ⁱⁱ
- Asking for a variety of foods: as the Children of Israel travelled through the desert towards Palestine, Allah (SWT) supplied them with fresh meat and pleasant sweet food (al-mann wal salwah). However, soon, they began to complain, asking Prophet Mūsā (as) to provide them with a variety of foods such as onions, garlic and so on. This was a sign of their rejection (and ungratefulness) of the blessings of Allah (SWT).ⁱⁱⁱ
- Refusing to fight to regain their land from idolaters: Upon reaching the promised land of Palestine, almost all of the community refused to fight to remove the occupiers (who were fierce warriors) despite the promise of victory from Allah (SWT), and even mocked Prophet Mūsā (as). As punishment for this, Allah (SWT) made them to wander the desert as a homeless tribe for forty years.^{iv}
- Worshipping the Calf: the people began to worship the cow made of gold by al-Sāmiri after Prophet Mūsā (as) was late in returning to them.^v
- Their persistent, futile questions: there is a famous incident related in the Holy Qur’an which shows the attitude of the children of Israel. It so happened that a person among them was killed, but his murdered could not be found. So they came to Prophet Mūsā (as) for judgment. He ordered them to slaughter a cow, and that if they did so, he could resurrect the dead person who could then reveal his murdered. Instead of following this simple order, they continued to ask futile questions about the colour, age and

other characteristics of the cow. Because of this stubborn attitude, Allah (SWT) made their task harder, forcing them to find a very rare and expensive cow.^{vi}

JUDAISM AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE

Often, Muslims view Jews negatively because we generalise and see them all as evil. Some people even accuse the Qur’an of being anti-Semitic (against Jews). However, the message of the Qur’an is that people - including Jews - are only respected if they follow their Holy Book properly. Otherwise, whether they are Jews or not, they are not accepted.

However, the Qur’an:

- does not generalise: it says there are some great people among the Christians and Jews (who stand up for truth and stay up at night praying), but also some very evil people who corrupt God’s religion
- does not see one nation as better than another
- talks so much about the Jews in order to teach us, because they were very similar to us

The only time the Jews are criticised the Qur’an is because they ignored their faith. Even the Torah (the Jewish holy book) criticises the Jews for this. Therefore, it is always the belief and good actions which are judged.

“Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good, they shall have their reward from their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve.” (2:62)

JUDAISM vs. ZIONISM

It is important to distinguish between Judaism and Zionism.

	Judaism	Zionism
Belief Type	A monotheistic religion	A secular ideology
Origin	~35 centuries ago	1897, in Switzerland
Ideas Regarding Statehood	Having own state is forbidden while awaiting the Messianic era.	A political party with the excuse of returning the Jews to their holy land.

ⁱ Video: The Brother of the Prophet | Hajj Hassanain Rajabali [3 minutes] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8SZLZz6QpHs>

ⁱⁱ Holy Quran 7:138-139

ⁱⁱⁱ Holy Quran 2:61

Support	Not all Jewish support Zionism	Not all Zionists are Jewish
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Zionism is a racist ideology, where Moses Hess, one of its founders, describes the Jewish race as “superior and chosen”. In 1975 the United Nations adopted a resolution which equated Zionism with racism, which was revoked later in 1991 under the right of veto of the United States. While Zionists are clear enemies of Islam and Muslims, we must remember that many Jews are not so.

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES AGAINST THE ZIONIST PROPAGANDA MACHINE

Most parts of global politics and mass media are under the control of Zionism and as Muslims we have certain responsibilities against their propaganda machine, which include:

- Using social media to spread true news (text, images and videos) and to expose lies.
- Talking with friends, classmates, colleagues, and university students and telling them the truth.
- Establishing and supporting independent Muslim media.
- Supporting and standing behind public figures (including journalists) that stand up to Zionism.
- Writing respectful letters to the editors when a newspaper publishes false propaganda (or comments on online media)
- Supporting the oppressed wherever they be, and attending rallies and demonstrations to raise awareness.
- Boycotting Zionist media outlets, public figures, and products.

Review Questions:

Q1. Describe the mischief of the Children of Israel against Prophet Musa (as).

Q2. Outline the differences between Judaism and Zionism.

^{iv} Holy Quran 5:20-26

^v Holy Quran 20:86-97

^{vi} Holy Quran 2:67-72