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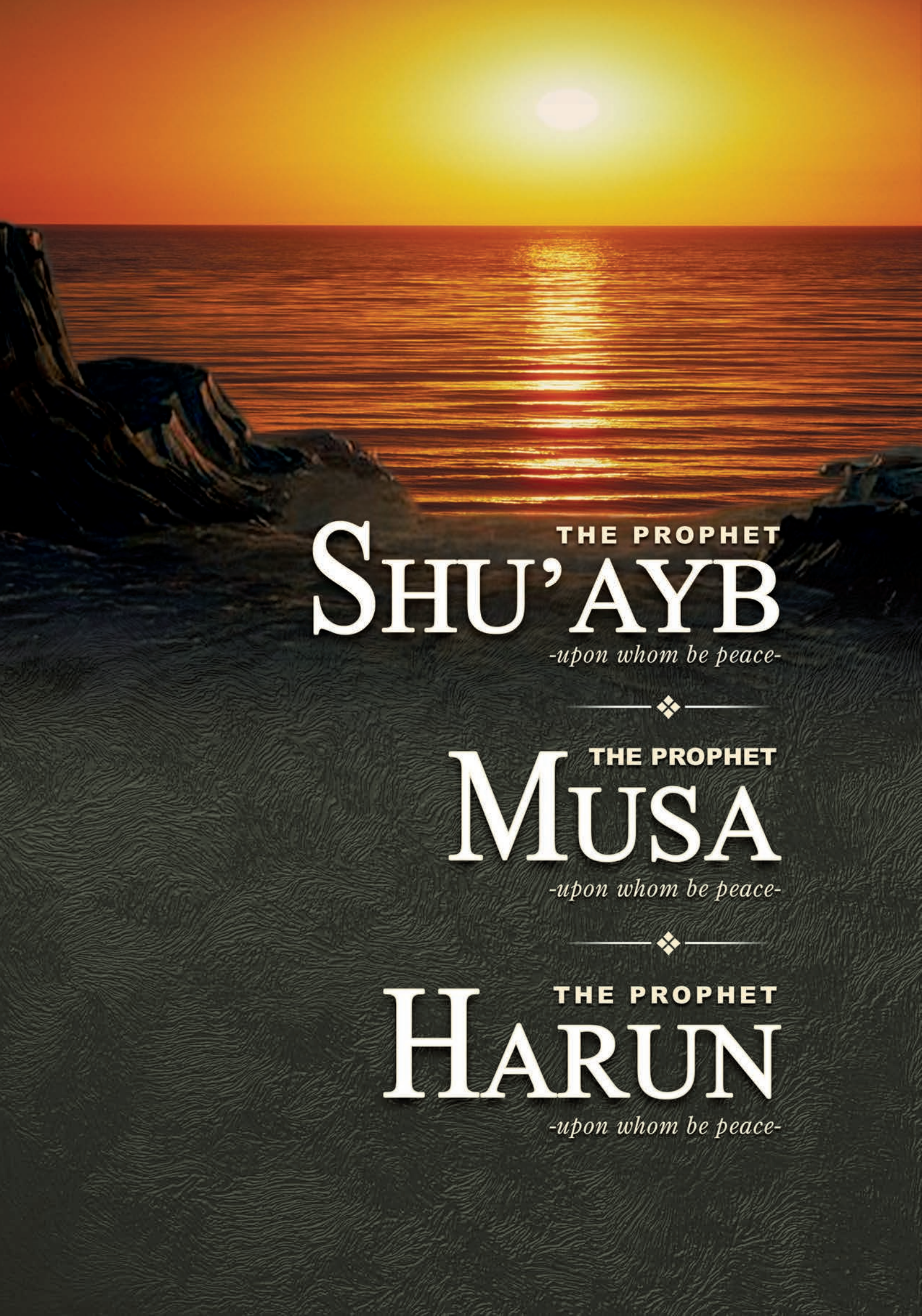
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STUDENT'S BOOK

**THE CHAIN
OF PROPHETS**

-II-

Osman Nuri TOPBAŞ



THE PROPHET
SHU'AYB
-upon whom be peace-

THE PROPHET
MUSA
-upon whom be peace-

THE PROPHET
HARUN
-upon whom be peace-



The prophet Shu'ayb (peace be upon him)

It is narrated that the prophet Shu'ayb came either from the lineage of the prophet Ibrahim or from that of the prophet Salih. On his mother's side his lineage reaches as far back as the daughter of the prophet Lut and he is also considered to be the cousin of the prophet Ayyub (Job). The prophet Shu'ayb is also the father-in-law of the prophet Musa (peace be upon him).

The prophet Shu'ayb was sent as a prophet to the people of Madyan and al-Aiyka, two neighbouring countries settled in a terrain amongst mountains and forests.

He was born and raised in Madyan and belonged to a noble family.

His youth was spent amongst the tribe of Madyan. This region was filled with a people who were misguided and astray however the prophet Shu'ayb lived a life distant from them, pure and clean. With this pure life, he was an example for the people and advised them and called them to good.

The prophet Shu'ayb would pray often and paid meticulous attention to the rights of others. Whenever measuring and weighing something in particular, he would do his utmost to make sure that no rights were infringed upon. He would advise others to do the same and in any case of injustice he would take great care in ensuring that the deserved got what was owing to them.

After these two tribes were destroyed, the prophet Shu'ayb settled in Mecca together with those who believed in him and spent the last part of his life there.

He passed away there and is buried at the Ka'bah, under the golden rainwater spout, that is located within the *hatim* (the semi-circular wall opposite, but not connected to, the north-west wall of the Kaaba and which is believed to contain the graves of the prophet Ismail and his mother Hagar).

The Madyans

Madyan is a region that extends from the gulf of Aqabah to the valley of Humus. This tribe took their name, Madyan, from a tribe who lived there. The Madyans had abandoned worship of and obedience to Allah and chose the paths of deviation and rebellion, worshipping instead idols and statues.





The city of the people of Madyan was located upon a caravan route and thus its people were occupied with trade. However trickery had become widespread amongst them and they had gone so far as to make it their trade and art. Whenever they purchased something they would weigh their item as less than it was, thus paying a lower price. But whenever they sold an item, they would show their scales to be great thus giving less product and accepting more money.

In fact, they would use different scales, one for purchasing and one for selling. The Madyans would ambush the people and lay hold of a portion of their goods. They would seize the goods of foreigners and strangers in particular, using various forms of intrigue.

In their dealings with other human beings they would be deceitful and unjust and cause much suffering. They did not appreciate the value of the abundant bounties that Allah had bestowed upon them nor did they show gratitude for them. They rebelled against Allah and showed ingratitude to Him by worshipping idols instead. In short, the creed of the Madyans consisted of the following: idol-worship; lack of compliance with the rules of trade; all forms of deceit, trickery and their favourite profession, profiteering.

That is, in Madyan, which was lacking in all elevated principles, could be found a complete collapse, in terms of belief, and also politically, economically and morally.

It was whilst they were in this state of dissipation, that Allah Most High sent them the prophet Shu'ayb. The prophet Shu'ayb gave them fine advice. He explained to them the commands and prohibitions of Allah.

He advised them to abandon associating partners with Allah and worship Him alone; to leave injustice when weighing in their trade; to believe in the last day; and to refrain from creating mischief on the earth.

He informed them of the severe nature of Allah's punishment and also of how His bounties were unable to be enumerated.

This event is explained in the Qur'an as follows:

'And to Madyan their brother Shu'ayb. He said, 'My people, worship Allah! You have no god apart from Him. Do not give short measure and short weight. I see you prospering and I fear for you the punishment of an all-encompassing Day' (Hud, 11:84)



‘And to Madyan We sent their brother Shu‘ayb who said, ‘My people, worship Allah! You have no other god than Him. A Clear Sign has come to you from your Lord. Give full measure and full weight. Do not diminish people’s goods. Do not cause corruption in the land after it has been put right. That is better for you if you are believers. Do not lie in wait on every pathway, threatening people, barring those who have faith from the Way of Allah, desiring to make it crooked. Remember when you were few and He increased your number: see the final fate of the corrupters!’ (A’raf, 7:85, 86)

‘And to Madyan We sent their brother Shu‘ayb, he said, ‘My people, worship Allah and look to the Last Day and do not act unjustly on earth, corrupting it’ (Ankabut, 29:36).

The tribe of Shu‘ayb made it a practice of weighing goods that they were to purchase as less and goods that they were to sell as greater than their actual weight. The prophet Shu‘ayb would continually visit his people and warn them about this. In addition he would caution them that if they did not abandon this behaviour and turn away from it, then all of the bounties that had been bestowed upon them would be taken back from them. Allah Most High had bestowed much property and bounties on this tribe. Thus they had no right to deceive others and overstep their limits in this way. After that the prophet Shu‘ayb taught them the principles of trade namely to give complete measure and weight in purchasing and selling and be content with what one would normally profit.

This is because in normal profit there was security and safety in trade and business and in observing the rights of others is virtuousness in the eyes of Allah.

The prophet Shu‘ayb continued in his advice as follows:

‘What endures with Allah is better for you if you are believers. I am not set over you as your keeper’ (Hud, 11:86)

That is, I cannot prevent you from your evil deeds, and neither can I prevent the bounties that you possess from being taken back from you due to your ingratitude. My duty is only to preach to you what I have been informed of.

In the above verses, the prophet Shu‘ayb invited his people to five things:

1. To accept belief in the oneness of Allah and to worship Him alone.
2. To accept him as their prophet.
3. To give complete measure and weight when weighing goods and to be just and avoid deceit.
4. To observe the rights of all human beings. To abandon all acts of extortion, thievery, bribery, brigandage, and all evil deeds both open and in secret.
5. To refrain from creating mischief and corruption in religion and in worldly matters.

These five principles that the prophet Shu‘ayb invited his people to can be summarised as a ‘reverence for Allah’s commands and mercy and compassion to His creatures’.

This invitation of the prophet Shu‘ayb brought about a great effect in the people around him.

People would come in groups to visit him and they would believe in him and comply with what he informed them of. Despite this, there still remained many people who did not believe in him.

These new rules began to disturb and anger those who did not believe. They belittled the lawful profit that they gained. By saying: “No one can become wealthy with this normal profit” they invited each other to injustice and wrongdoing.

This rebellious tribe would say:

‘Shu‘ayb, do your prayers instruct you that we should abandon what our fathers worshipped or stop doing whatever we want to with our wealth? You are clearly the forbearing, the rightly-guided!’ (Hud, 11:87)



By prayer they meant religion. This is because the ritual prayer is the most comprehensive and greatest acts of worship of the religion and in fact represents the religion itself.

‘(Shu’ayb) said, ‘My people! What do you think? If I do possess a Clear Sign from my Lord and He has given me His good provision, I would clearly not want to go behind your backs and do something I have forbidden you to do. I only want to put things right as far as I can. My success is with Allah alone. I have put my trust in Him and I turn to Him’ (Hūd, 11:88)

The prophet Shu’ayb continued in his duty, in the light of this standard tirelessly and without fatigue.

However his rebellious tribe did not listen to his counsel or his advice. In fact, they only increased in their rebellion. Because the prophet Shu’ayb belonged to a powerful clan, they were unable to harm him however they did not refrain from threatening those believers who did in fact believe in him.

Shu’ayb warned them as follows:

‘Do not lie in wait on every pathway, threatening people, barring those who have faith from the Way of Allah, desiring to make it crooked. Remember when you were few and He increased your number: see the final fate of the corrupters!’ (A’raf, 7:86)

Despite all his suffering the prophet Shu’ayb continued to guide his people.

He acted by the laws of the true religion of Ibrahim. News of his prophethood reached as far as Damascus.

Those hearts which burned with the love of Allah travelled to Madyan to see him.

The tribe of Madyan would wait in their path and try to prevent the believers from seeing him. This was a patent indication of following Satan. This is because when Satan was dismissed from the divine court, he said to Allah:

‘By Your misguidance of me, I will lie in ambush for them on your straight path. Then I will come at them, from in front of them and behind them, from their right and from their left. You will not find most of them thankful’ (A’raf, 7:17-18).

Shu’ayb:

1. tried to prevent his people from laying in wait in the path of people and threatening and causing them harm;
2. tried to distance them from preventing others to believe in Allah;
3. tried to distance them from making those who were new believers from falling into doubt and taking the way of misguidance.

Last warnings

The prophet Shu’ayb was saddened by the evil acts and rebellion of his people. This is why he struggled to awaken them from their deep ignorance with great patience.

‘My people! Do not let your breach with me provoke you into doing wrong so that the same thing happens to you as happened to the people of Nuh and the people of Hud and the people of Salih; and the people of Lut are not far distant from you’ (Hud, 11:89)

That is, they were destroyed at a time not so distant from you. Thus, in respect to time, they are the closest to you out of those nations who were destroyed. They were not so different from you in their unbelief, in their evil acts and other forms of deviance that brought about their destruction. And that is why they were destroyed anyway. You should take heed from them...

‘ (In that case) ask your Lord for forgiveness and then turn back to Him. My Lord is Most Merciful, Most Loving’ (Hūd, 11:90)



The leading pagans of this tribe did not accept this offer of the prophet Shu'ayb, and they said:

“Shu'ayb, We do not understand much of what you say and we see you are weak among us. Were it not for your clan, we would have stoned you. We do not hold you in high esteem!” (Hûd, 11 :91)

‘(Shu'ayb) said, ‘My people! Do you esteem my clan more than you do Allah? You have made Him into something to cast disdainfully behind your backs! But my Lord encompasses everything that you do!’ (Hûd, 11:92)

When the prophet Shu'ayb despaired of this rebellious people who refused to believe, he left them in the hands of Allah.

There was nothing left to do for them. However he still reminded them of the divine punishment to come so that they may yet take heed:

‘There is a group of you who have faith in what I have been sent with and a group who do not, so be steadfast until Allah judges between us. He is the best of judges’ (A'raf, 7:87)

The Madyans however slandered Shu'ayb and called him a liar. They threatened to cast him and those who wished to believe in him out of Madyan.

They now found it hazardous to have those who believed living amongst them:

‘The ruling circle of those of his people who were arrogant said, ‘We will drive you out of our city, Shu'ayb, you and those who have faith along with you, unless you return to our religion.’ He said, ‘What, even though we detest it?’ (A'raf, 7:88)

He then added:

‘We would be inventing lies against Allah if we returned to your religion after Allah has saved us from it. We could never return to it unless Allah our Lord so willed. Our Lord encompasses everything in His knowledge. We have put our trust in Allah. Our Lord, judge between us and our people with truth. You are the best of judges’ (A'raf, 7:89)

In this verse we can see that Shu'ayb rejected this people's suggestion to turn back to their religion; however he made an exception in the circumstance that Allah so willed.

This attitude of his is an expression of his absolute and unconditional submission to the will of Allah. This is because the prophets and the saints, their heirs, are ever in fear of the punishment of Allah and that their state in the eyes of Allah may change.

This is why for the prophet Shu'ayb to abandon the religion of Allah and turn back to the religion of his people was unacceptable.

It was his belief however that if Allah so willed his destruction, that there was nothing for them to do. Because all affairs were in the hands of Allah, He blesses a person whom he wills to be obedient and He punishes whom He wishes as a result of their sins.

Despite everything these rebellious people were not to be reformed. They did not believe themselves and they also could not tolerate those believers who did accept the faith. They held them in contempt and threatened them constantly. They waylaid the paths of those who came to Shu'ayb to confess their faith, speaking ill of him, and they tried to make them abandon their faith:

‘The ruling circle of those of his people who were unbelievers said, ‘If you follow Shu'ayb, you will definitely be lost’ (A'raf, 7:90)

The terrifying clamour that came from above

There was no longer anything left for the prophet Shu'ayb to do for this nation who had gone astray.

He said to them:



‘My people! Do as you think best. That is what I am doing. You will certainly come to know who will receive a punishment to disgrace him, and who is a liar. So look out. I will be on the lookout with you’ (Hud, 11:93)

‘When Our command came, We rescued Shu‘ayb and those who had faith along with him by a mercy from Us. The Great Blast seized hold of those who did wrong and morning found them lying flattened in their homes’ (Hud, 11:94).

‘So the earthquake seized them and morning found them lying flattened in their homes’ (A‘raf, 7:91)

‘As for those who denied Shu‘ayb, it was as if they had never lived there. It was the people who denied Shu‘ayb who were the lost’ (A‘raf, 7:92).

Thus the people of Madyan found their punishment for their ugly acts such as their deviance, trickery, injustice and rebellion against Allah and His Messenger

This punishment was the unavoidable consequence for these oppressors and one did not take pity on oppressors:

‘So he turned away from them and said, ‘My people, I transmitted My Lord’s message to you and gave you good counsel. Why should I grieve for a unbelieving people?’ (A‘raf, 7:93).

‘...as if they had never lived there at all. Yes indeed! Away with Madyan just like Thamud!’ (Hud, 11:95)

The people of Shu‘ayb did not listen to advice just as the Thamud did not listen to advice which is why they were destroyed with a frightening sound and uproar.

The punishment of these two tribes was the similar which is an indication that they resembled each other in terms of their foul behaviour. Both tribes were cursed with the same curse, as a result of their distancing themselves from the mercy of Allah and the people of Madyan were thus likened to the people of Thamud.

The people of Thamud were destroyed with a blast that came from beneath whereas the one that destroyed the people of Madyan came from above. By thus keeping themselves distant from the mercy of Allah they became subject to loss and punishment both in this world and in the hereafter



The people of al-Aiyka

Aiyka is the name given to a dense forest lush with trees. This is the region that extends from the coast of the Red Sea to Madyan. The people who lived here were called the Aiykans. The prophet Shu‘ayb was also appointed with the duty of guiding the Aiykans, who, like the Madyans, lived with all manner of plenty, bounties and wealth, and had strayed from belief in the oneness of Allah.

The Aiykans also accused the prophet Shu‘ayb of being a liar. Allah Most High informs us of this in the Qur’an as follows:

‘The Companions of the Thicket denied the Messengers’ (Shu‘ara, 26:176)

‘The Companions of the Thicket were also wrongdoers’ (Hijr, 15:78).

‘...when Shu‘ayb said to them, ‘Will you not have taqwa?’ (Shu‘ara, 26:177)

‘I am a faithful Messenger to you’ (Shu‘ara, 26:178))

‘...so have taqwa of Allah and obey me’ (Shu‘ara, 26:179).

‘I do not ask you for any wage for it. My wage is the responsibility of no one but the Lord of all the worlds’ (Shu‘ara, 26:180).



The prophets of Allah have always stood in front of their people with the following two characteristics:

1. They did not expect any reward or benefit from the people in return for the propagation of the faith and informed the people that reward and merit belonged to Allah.

Qisas: a form of punishment in which the punishment fits the crime, ie to kill a person who commits murder, or to wound a person who has wounded another.

2. They were an *al-uswat al-hasanah*, that is, they were a model and example of virtue. There was complete harmony between what they said and what they did in their lives.

The chapter Yasin draws attention to the importance of these two characteristics.

When the messengers came to invite the *ashab-i karyah* (the people of the town) to faith, Habib-i Najjar said to his people about them:

‘O people of this town! Have these people who have come to you asked you for any reward. Are these people upon guidance? Since they do not ask you for any reward, and live a life of virtue and direction, then you too should obey them’.

He thus invited them to be rational and reason with sound minds.

The prophet Shu’ayb continued to advise the Aiykans as follows:

‘Give full measure. Do not skimp’ (Shu’ara, 26:181).

‘Weigh with a level balance’ (Shu’ara, 26:182).

‘Do not diminish people’s goods and do not go about the earth, corrupting it. Have taqwa of Him who created you and the earlier creatures.’ They said, ‘You are merely someone bewitched. You are nothing but a human being like ourselves. We think you are a liar. So make lumps from heaven fall down on us if you are telling the truth’ (Shu’ara, 26:183-187).

The punishment that came from heaven; the scorching flames

When his people impudently insisted that the punishment come down from Allah, he said:

‘My Lord knows best what you are doing’ (Shu’ara, 26:188).

Then he prayed to Allah.

The prophet Shu’ayb prayed for the punishment that they so insisted on to arrive. Upon this, hot winds began to blow immediately. Flies of a blue colour suddenly began to appear everywhere plaguing the Aiykans.

The unbelievers were powerless in the face of this disaster. The temperature began to increase. People began to flock to the coasts, to forests and shady places. When the temperature became unbearably hot, the angel Gabriel appeared with a cloud and held it at a place outside of the city. When the unbelievers saw this cloud, they ran to it altogether, thinking that here was a cool place. When they had all gathered there, they heard a cry:

“O people of Aiyka! Now taste the painful punishment for denying your prophet, the punishment that you thought would never arrive. And ask the idols that you prostrated to, to save you if they can...”

Then immediately following that, the cloud that they had gathered under began to rain down fire upon them. Everything belonging to the believers was burned, even the trees and the rocks.

‘They denied him and the punishment of the Day of Shadow came down on them. It was indeed the punishment of a terrible Day. There is certainly a Sign in that, yet most of them are not believers. Truly your Lord is the Almighty, the Most Merciful’ (Shu’ara, 26:189-191).



Consequently the Madyan people to whom Shu'ayb had been sent as a prophet were destroyed by the blast and earthquake brought by the angel Gabriel whilst the people of Aiyka were destroyed by fire that rained down from a cloud which they assumed would bring them shade.

After the destruction

After these rebellious tribes were destroyed, the prophet Shu'ayb settled in Madyan. He married there and had two daughters. The prophet Shu'ayb was called '*Hatib al-anbiya*' ('the orator of the prophets') because he was a great orator whose speech was very influential in inviting his people to the religion of truth and who gave very convincing answers to the questions that were asked of him.

Another characteristic of the prophet Shu'ayb was that he was a prophet who shed many a tear out of his fear of Allah.

When he had reached an old age his body lost much of its strength and his eyes did not see very well. Even in this state he cried until he lost his sight altogether. However Allah returned his sight to him and asked him by way of revelation:

"O Shu'ayb! What is this crying for? Is it for the love of Paradise or the fear of Hell?" Shu'ayb answered:

"O my Lord! You know that it is not for any desire for Paradise nor the fear of going to Hell. It is only to have Your love established firmly in my heart and the fear of not being able to worship You. If I am able to look upon Your beauty in the hereafter then I will have nothing to grieve for".

Allah replied:

"Since you are true to what you say let your witnessing of My beauty be blessed for you O Shu'ayb! I am giving you Musa ibn Imran as your servant".

This is the state of those who are close to Allah. In contrast to the people of ignorance, they consider Allah's pleasure above all else and they leave pleasing creation until last.

Love for Allah has so engulfed their hearts that they do not even glance at worldly or even otherworldly bounties. Allah Most High sent the prophets to the people in order to obviate their ignorance and open up the eyes of their heart; to adorn themselves with good character and worship Allah in a state of ecstasy thus reaching Him.

Those who have the potential and desire to have the eye of their heart opened up, those who desire being trained and guided from their heart, will make efforts to advance in the path of Allah.

However those who do not wish so, and who are obstinate and proud, who take no heed of the teachings of the prophets and who do not wish to reach the state of certainty, will deviate, remaining in darkness and gloom. They are no different to a blind man who does not know where he wishes to go.

About their pitiful state, the prophet Shu'ayb said:

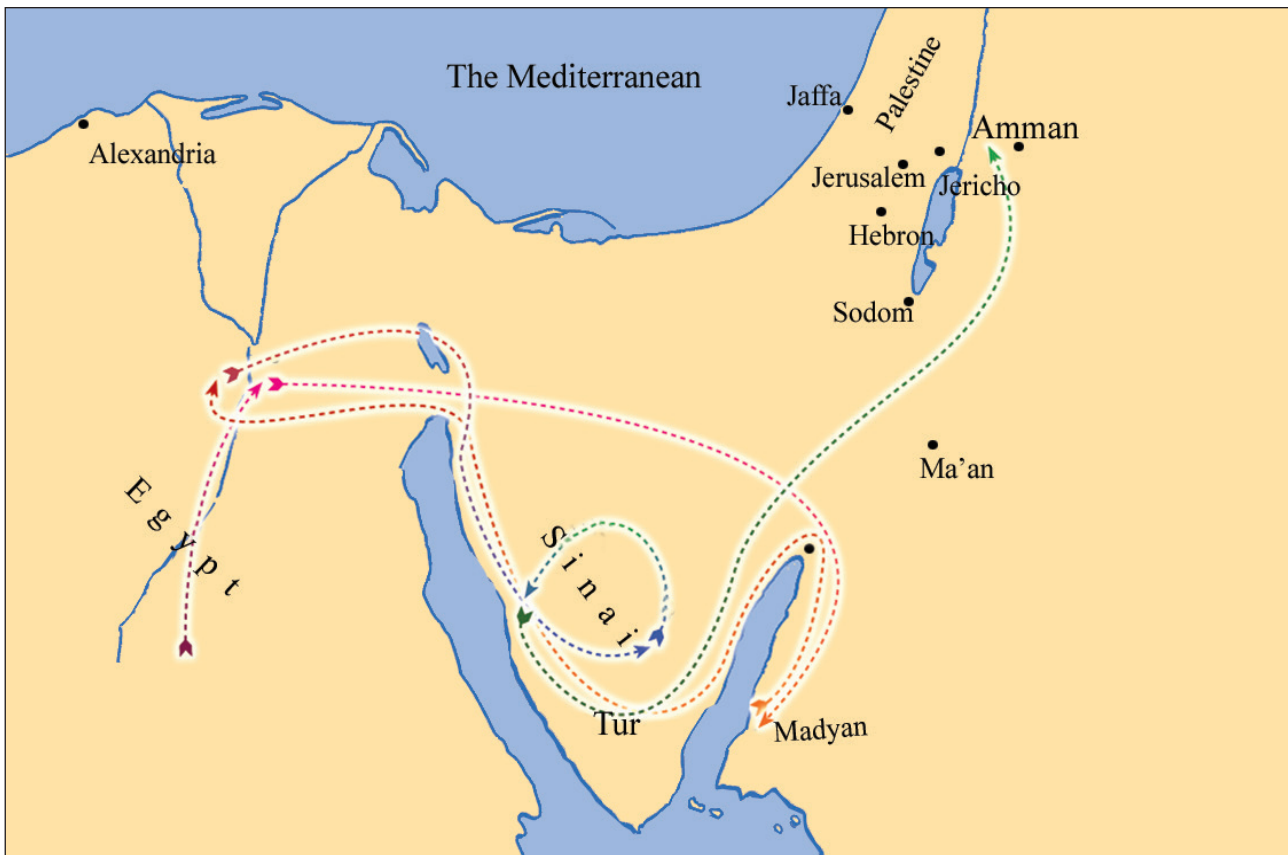
'So he turned away from them and said, 'My people, I transmitted My Lord's message to you and gave you good counsel. Why should I grieve for an unbelieving people?' (A'raf, 7:93)

The prophets Musa and Harun (Aaron) (peace be upon them)

The prophet Musa (peace be upon him), whose name is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an more than any other person, is one of the '**ulu'al azm**' (the Resolute Prophets) and was sent to the Israelites after the prophet Yusuf.

The prophet Musa is the son of Imran, and his lineage reaches as far back as Ibrahim through the prophets Yaqub and Ishaq. Harun (peace be upon him) is the brother of the prophet Musa.





The Egyptian pharaoh, Rayyan ibn Malik, who appointed the prophet Yusuf as minister for finance, was a person who believed in Allah. However, after him an individual named Kabus, ascended the throne. This man did not believe in the prophet Yusuf, however he did not remove him from his office.

The pharaohs that were to come after would give no importance to the Israelites whatsoever.

After the prophet Yusuf, the Israelites remained in Egypt. They remained faithful to the religion of Yusuf, Yaqub, Ishaq and Ibrahim (peace be upon them). The Coptics however, the local inhabitants of Egypt, were idol-worshippers. They worshipped the stars and idols. They would look down on the Israelites. The Coptic pharaohs were ruthless and oppressive.

They did not want the Israelites to increase in number.

They were worried that if the Sipti tribe of the Israelites proliferated then power would be transferred to them.

This is why the Coptics, with the Pharaoh at their head, began to oppress and tyrannise the Siptis. The Siptis were unable to bear their oppression which became more and more intense, and were wearied of the distress that they bore. They had also completely lost all of their social and political rights. They wished to migrate to Canaan, the land of their father, Yaqub; however they were somehow unable to do so. This is because the Pharaoh was making them work to construct the pyramids and other burdensome tasks. Thus they did not want them to leave.

The Pharaoh worked the Israelites under very difficult conditions. The Israelites were made up of twelve tribes, each of which reached back to one of the sons of Yaqub.

They were repressed and oppressed against.

He made those who could not work pay heavy taxes. For those who did not bring their taxes before the setting of the sun he would tie their arms and leave them like that for a month.



‘Pharaoh exalted himself arrogantly in the land and divided its people into camps, oppressing one group of them by slaughtering their sons and letting their women live. He was one of the corrupters’ (Qasas, 28:4).

‘... Certainly Pharaoh and Haman and their troops were in the wrong’ (Qasas, 28:8)

During this period of oppression and depression, Allah Most high sent Musa (peace be upon him) as a prophet to them.

‘We desired to show kindness to those who were oppressed in the land and to make them leaders and make them inheritors’ (Qasas, 28:5).

‘...and establish them firmly in the land and to show Pharaoh and Haman and their troops the very thing that they were fearing from them’ (Qasas, 28:6).

The dream that terrified the Pharaoh

One night in his dream the Pharaoh saw flames exiting from the Bayt al-Maqdis and burning up the houses of the Coptics. However they did not harm the houses of the Israelites.

When his dream was interpreted, he was told:

“A child will appear and ruin your kingdom”, upon which the Pharaoh commanded his soldiers to murder every child born to the soldiers of Israel. He would have tools made from reeds and would have the stomachs of women whose births were imminent pierced with these tools, causing them much pain. Thus they would make them go into labour as soon as possible. If the child born at that point was a male, they would immediately kill him.

Meanwhile Musa, the son of Imran, from the lineage of the prophet Yaqub was born. One of the midwives was a close relative of the prophet Musa. When he was born she saw a bright light upon his forehead and she was left in awe and amazement.

The midwives left the room after the birth had taken place. A short while later, the men of the Pharaoh appeared and entered the houses. When Musa’s mother sensed the dangerous situation outside, she hurriedly hid the child in a furnace.

When the soldiers did not find what they were looking for the mother of Musa very sadly opened the furnace door, believing that Musa would have been burned. However she saw her son standing in the centre of the fire, in a state of complete peace. His mother, who was very pleased at seeing him in safety, immediately embraced her child and thanked Allah. Later inspiration came to her to nurse her child and when she met with danger to leave him in the Nile. The good news came that Musa would become a prophet:

‘... We revealed to Musa’s mother, ‘Suckle him and then when you fear for him cast him into the sea. Do not fear or grieve; We will return him to you and make him one of the Messengers’ (Qasas, 28:7).

Upon this, the mother of Musa went with him to a carpenter to have a chest made into which Musa was placed. This chest was then put into the Nile. Realising what was happening, the carpenter who had made the chest went to the Pharaoh to inform him. However when he got there his tongue was tied and he was unable to say anything. Upon this, the Pharaoh’s sent him away.

Whilst the chest was floating on the waters of the Nile it suddenly got stuck in the gardens of the Palace.

The maid-servants grabbed it and took it Asiya.

The prophet Musa inside the Palace of the Pharaoh

Asiya, who came from the lineage of Rayyan ibn Walid, who had believed in Yusuf, was the wife of Pharaoh. When she saw Musa brought to her in the chest, love for him immediately sprung up in her heart.



The child was very beautiful. She took him and hugged him to her chest. Then she took him to the Pharaoh and said:

“This can be our child. He will help us in the future and protect us. We can consider him to be our own. Please do not sacrifice him!”

With such words was she able to convince her husband.

‘A source of delight for me and for you; do not kill him. It may well be that he will be of use to us or perhaps we could adopt him as a son.’ They were not aware’ (Qasas, 28:9)

When it was decided that the prophet Musa was to stay in the Palace, a wet nurse was then searched for.

Many women were called to the palace. However the child did not suckle any one of them. When Musa’s older sister, Maryam, heard what they were talking about she informed them that her mother could be a wet nurse for them if they accepted her.

This was because:

‘She (his mother) said to his sister, ‘Go after him.’ And she kept an eye on him from afar and they were not aware’ (Qasas, 28:11)

‘We first made him refuse all wet-nurses, so she said, ‘Shall I show you to a household who will feed him for you and be good to him?’ (Qasas, 28:12)

‘That is how We returned him to his mother so that she might delight her eyes and feel no grief and so that she would know that Allah’s promise is true. But most of them do not know this’ (Qasas, 28:13).

The mother of Musa had no doubt that the divine promise would come true. This is why she did not accept their offer of being wetnurse to Musa immediately so that they would not become suspicious.

“I have a son called Harun (Aaron). If you accept him together with me, I can nurse your son, otherwise I cannot accept...”

Thus they did not realise that she was Musa’s mother. They commanded her to nurse Musa for a wage. In desiring to adopt Musa as their son, the Pharaoh and his wife assumed that since he would be raised under their roof he would be obedient to them.

However there are two important factors in education that give direction to a person’s life: they are heredity and nurture.

The first are the genetic traits that are given to a person at birth and the second is the training or nurturing that they are given after birth.

This is why a human being is sometimes affected by nature, sometimes by nurture and sometimes by both.

This truth is subtly indicated in the 9th verse of the chapter Qasas:

‘They were not aware (of what he was to become)’.

Until he found Musa, the Pharaoh murdered 980,000 innocent children. Allah Most High allowed Musa to be raised in the palace in order for him to bring down the Pharaoh together with his thrown and his kingdom. This is because the prophets are under the nurture and will of Allah. The prophet Muhammad is reported to have said:

“My Lord educated me and how beautiful has he educated me” (Suyuti, al-Jaami’ al-Saghir, I, 12).

The mother of Musa thus began to nurse him in the palace of the Pharaoh. However his vizier Haman, began to be suspicious and asked Musa’s mother:

“Is this child your own? He does not accept milk from any other women, only from you”.



His mother replied:

“For some reason all children love me and I love them too because my milk is sweet”. She was able to convince him.

They eventually decided on a wage for her and rewarded her with gold.

This was a great favour of Allah, who says in the Qur’an:

‘On the morrow, however, an aching void grew up in the heart of the mother of Musa, and she would indeed have disclosed all about him had We not endowed her heart with enough strength to keep alive her faith (in Our promise)’ (Qasas, 28:10).

Whenever Asiya missed Musa, she would have him brought to her along with his wet nurse, that is, his mother, where she would greet them both with gifts.

One day Musa was taken to the Pharaoh’s room who took him in his lap. Musa harshly pulled at the Pharaoh’s beard and took out a hair and also slapped him. In another narration, he took the whip out of Pharaoh’s hand. The Pharaoh became angry and said:

“Here is the enemy I am looking for” and he gave a decree for Musa to be murdered. When Asiya heard this she came running and said:

“He is only a child, he does not know what he is doing. Let us test him if you wish. Let us place rubies and diamonds in one plate and fire in another. If Musa takes the ruby then he is able to understand, but if he takes the fire, then know that he is a child who does not understand”.

The Pharaoh accepted this suggestion. They had brought two plates, one full of jewels and the other full of fire and placed them in front of Musa.

Musa was about to extend his hand to the plate full of jewels, when Gabriel came, by the command of Allah, and pushed Musa’s hands towards the other plate. He then took the flaming ember and put it into his mouth. His tongue was thus burnt, and he began to speak with an impediment. This speech impediment continued until the prayer he made on Mount Sinai. Seeing this, the Pharaoh said:

“Yes, he did this because he is still a child” and he forgave Musa.

Allah most High made Musa loved by everyone around him:

‘I showered you with love from Me so that you would be brought up under My supervision’ (Ta-ha, 20:39).

As a result of this grace and favour, everybody who saw Musa felt love and a warmth for him in their hearts.

Allah Most High says in the Qur’an:

‘And when he reached his full strength and maturity, We gave him judgement and knowledge. That is how We recompense good-doers’ (Qasas, 28:14)

The term ‘*hukm*’ which is mentioned in the above verse has been given the meaning of ‘*hikmah*’ (wisdom) and in the majority of the commentaries, ‘*hukm*’ has been described as ‘wisdom’ and ‘wisdom’ has been interpreted as being ‘prophethood’.

After he was given judgement and knowledge Musa then began to proclaim openly the deviant and superstitious nature of the religion of Pharaoh.

The death of the Copt

The Pharaoh had a very tyrannical baker by the name of Fatun, who was from the Coptics. One day Fatun was beating a Sipti by the name of Samiri. Samiri asked for help from Musa who tried to separate



them. Musa pushed Fatun and hit him. Fatun fell to the ground due to this slight struggle, and consequently lost his life. Musa was very saddened by this event.

He had no intention of murdering Fatun. He only wished to protect Samiri.

He sought refuge in Allah in great sorrow and asked for forgiveness. The verse states:

‘He entered the city at a time when its inhabitants were unaware and found two men fighting there – one from his party and the other from his enemy. The one from his party asked for his support against the other from his enemy. So Musa hit him, dealing him a fatal blow. He said, ‘This is part of Satan’s handiwork. He truly is an outright and misleading enemy’ (Qasas, 28:15).

Because Musa had begun preaching belief in the oneness of Allah to everyone, everywhere, the coptics began to oppose him. This is why he had preferred to enter the city at a time when its inhabitants had retired to their houses. The words ‘This is the handiwork of Satan’, implicate not what Musa had done, but points to the crime of the one killed, who had anyway deserved the punishment of death for his crime.

Nevertheless because Musa had not received the command to slay the unbelievers these words of his may also express the act of ‘murdering the coptic’. However he did not intend for that to happen. When Musa came face to face with this unexpected consequence he prayed as follows:

‘My Lord, I have wronged myself. Forgive me.’ So He forgave him. He is the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Merciful’ (Qasas, 28:16)

‘(Musa) said, ‘My Lord, because of Your blessing to me, I will never be a supporter of evil-doers’ (Qasas, 28:7)

Meanwhile the Coptics wanted Pharaoh to find the murderer of the slain Coptic. The Pharaoh asked for witnesses to be brought forth as to who committed the act. However nobody could bring forth a witness.

Upon this, the Pharaoh went outside of the city search for the person.

The next day Musa saw the same Sipti fighting with another Coptic. The Sipti asked again for Musa’s help.

However Musa said:

‘I wronged myself because of you’. Hearing these words, the Coptic rushed to the Pharaoh and complained about Musa:

“The murderer of your slain baker, Fatun, is Musa”.

Firavun decided on retribution¹. The son of the Pharaoh’s uncle secretly informed Musa of this. He was one of those who were very fond of Musa. The state of Musa, after having slain the Coptic and praying to his Lord for forgiveness is explained in the Qur’an as follows:

‘Morning found him in the city, fearful and on his guard. Then suddenly the man who had sought his help the day before, shouted for help from him again. Musa said to him, ‘You are clearly a misguided man’ (Qisas, 28:18).

‘But when he was about to grab the man who was their common enemy, he said, ‘Musa! Do you want to kill me just as you killed a person yesterday? You only want to be a tyrant in the land; you do not want to be a reformer’ (Qisas, 28:19)

‘A man came running from the furthest part of the city, saying, ‘Musa, the Council are conspiring to kill you, so leave! I am someone who brings you good advice’ (Qisas, 28:20).

‘So he left there fearful and on his guard, saying, ‘My Lord, rescue me from the people of the wrongdoers!’ (Qisas, 28:21)

1 Qisas: a form of punishment in which the punishment fits the crime, ie to kill a person who commits murder, or to wound a person who has wounded another.



From Egypt to Madyan

Without wasting any time, Musa immediately set out for Madyan. He had never before left his city thus he did not know which way to go. He had not even brought anything with him to eat. Allah Most High then sent Gabriel to him who showed him the way to Madyan. At that time, Madyan was about eight days journey from Egypt.

‘When turned his face in the direction of Madyan, he said, ‘Hopefully my Lord will guide me to the right way’ (Qisas, 28:22).

It is believed that there is a blood relationship between the people of Madyan and Musa. The Madyans and Musa are in fact from the lineage of the prophet Ibrahim. In fact, Madyan was the name of one of the sons of Ibrahim and this city was not in fact under the rule of the Pharaoh.

The prophet Musa eventually arrived in the city of Madyan and when he reached a well there he waited. At that point, the people were leading their herds out of the fortress of Madyan. The herds were heading straight for the well. A little while later all of the shepherds had gathered around the well to allow their sheep to drink from the water.

Musa noticed that two girls had pulled their sheep to the side and were waiting there to avoid the crowd.

He asked them:

“Why are you waiting? Why do you not allow your animals to drink?”

The ladies replied:

“We cannot allow our animals to drink until the shepherds have gone...”

Musa asked:

“Do you have nobody (to look out for you?)”.

They replied:

“We have a very old and frail father. This is why we have to graze and water the sheep. However we do not want to mix with the men. We wait for them to leave before we let our animals drink. Because they water their animals first, sometimes we find that there is no water left and we are unable to water our animals...”

The verse from the Qur’an states:



According to narrations, the site shown in the photo is the site where the prophet Musa watered the animals of the daughters of the prophet Shu'ayb.

‘When he arrived at the water of Madyan, he found a crowd of people drawing water there. Standing apart from them, he found two women, holding back their sheep. He said, ‘What are you two doing here?’ They said, ‘We cannot draw water until the shepherds have driven off their sheep. You see our father is a very old man’ (Qisas, 28:23).

These two ladies were the daughters of the prophet Shu'ayb, Safura and Sufayra.

Even though he had been hungry for eight days, Musa still managed to draw water from the well, albeit with great difficulty, and gave it to their animals to drink. The women thanked him and parted from there.



‘So he drew water for them and then withdrew into the shade and said, ‘My Lord, I am truly in need of any good You have in store for me’ (Qisas, 28:24).

According to one meaning, the words “‘My Lord, I am truly in need of any good You have in store for me’ implied that he had fallen needy in the world.

When he was with the Pharaoh, he had lived in plenty. However, these words of Musa’s were in no way a complaint but rather a type of gratitude to Allah for allowing him to reach safety and a prayer for Him to rid him of his hunger.

When the prophet Shu’ayb saw that his daughters had returned early from watering the animals, he was surprised and he asked them the reason. His daughters told him that they had met a righteous man who had helped them, but that there was nobody like that in this town.

The prophet Shu’ayb calls for Musa

The prophet Shu’ayb called for Musa and asked him who he was. Musa replied:

“I am Musa, the son of Imran, from the lineage of the prophet Yaqub”. He then told him what had happened to him. Shu’ayb said:

“Do not fear! The Pharaoh’s rule does not apply here”.

The Holy Qur’an states:

‘One of them came walking shyly up to him and said, ‘My father invites you so that he can pay you your wage for drawing water for us.’ When he came to him and told him the whole story he said, ‘Have no fear, you have escaped from wrongdoing people’ (Qisas, 28:25).

The prophet Shu’ayb offered the prophet Musa some food. However, even though he was very hungry, he hesitated to eat. When Shu’ayb asked him the reason, he said:

“We are such a family that if they lay the world before us, we would not exchange it for any bounty of the hereafter! I helped your daughters not in expectation of any food but rather for the sake of Allah”

The prophet Shu’ayb was very pleased with this reply and said:

“This offer of ours is not in payment for your help but because you are our guest; come, eat”.

Upon hearing this, the very tired and very hungry prophet Musa ate and then laid down to rest. Safura advised her father to hire him:

‘One of them said, ‘Hire him, (as a shepherd) father. The best person to hire is someone strong and trustworthy’ (Qisas, 28:26).

And she added:

These traits can be found in this person. He is strong enough to hold a large rock and place it over the well and trustworthy so that he does not even look at our face but walks in front of us (See Haysami, *Majmau al-zawaid*, VII, 88).

This verse nicely summarises the traits to be found in a person to whom one wishes to appoint with a particular duty.

These traits are as follows:

1. Capability: To know how something is to be done and to be strong enough to do it.
2. Trustworthiness: To be a person whose essence and words are true and who instils trust in others.



In the book, *Arais-i Majalis*, two women of discernment are mentioned, in their correct analysis of the prophet Musa:



One of the woman is Asiya, the wife of Pharaoh. When Musa was brought to her in a chest, she immediately inclined towards him and taking him she went to the Pharaoh and said:

“This child can be the light of both your and my eye. Do not slay him”.

The other woman is the daughter of the prophet Shu’ayb. She said:

“Father dear! Hire this man to look after our sheep. He is the best person that you can hire. He is strong and trustworthy”.

Discernment (*firasah*) is a state of perception and discovery that can be found in the righteous believers of the community.

Firasah has the meanings of intelligence, acumen, and good judgment and is a spiritual capacity for perception that is found in the heart. The following event narrated about the caliph Uthman is noteworthy:

The caliph Uthman once saw a man whose eye had strayed towards something forbidden and he said to him:

“Protect your eye from the forbidden”. He replied:

“O caliph! How did you know that my eye looked upon something forbidden?” Uthman (ra) repeated the hadith of the prophet Muhammad (saw):

“Beware of the *firasah* of the believer, because when he looks, he looks with the light of Allah” (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 15) (Qusayhri, Risala, 238).

The Prophet Muhammad’s wives, Khadija and Aisha, and his daughter, Fatima (may Allah be pleased with them) were also excellent examples of people with *firasah*.

Khadija sacrificed her wealth and her life for the Messenger of Allah (saw). She attained the station of being the first believer to confirm him.

Aisha also possessed great skill in comprehending the Messenger of Allah (saw) and she had a deep perception and sensitivity which represented the character of the prophet.

In Fatima too was a state that reflected the mercy, compassion and piety of her father.

Even though they all possessed common traits, in each was a rare state particular to each.

The condition for gaining *firasah* is that one is nourished with lawful food and one develops their inner heart.

The marriage of the prophet Musa to Safura

The prophet Shu’ayb took a great liking to Musa and he wanted to keep him by his side. He thought of a solution and eventually suggested that he marry his daughter Safura.

The prophet Musa asked:

“How can I marry when I have neither wealth nor property?” Shu’ayb suggested that Musa look after their sheep for eight years in order to pay for the dowry of his daughter. However he told him that it would be better if he could look after them for ten years. His aim was to keep Musa with him for a longer period.

‘(Shu’ayb) said, ‘I would like to marry you to one of these two daughters of mine on condition that you work for me for eight full years. If you complete ten, that is up to you. I do not want to be hard on you. You will find me, Allah willing, to be one of the righteous’ (Qisas, 28:27).

‘(Musa) said, ‘That is agreed between me and you. Whichever of the two terms I fulfil, there should be no bad feeling towards me. Allah is Guardian over what we say’ (Qisas, 28:28).

In this verse is a matter that is frequently encountered in social life. Before agreeing upon a matter these two prophets, the most trustworthy of people, discussed everything before agreeing upon the matter. They



clarified each possible consequence that may arise. And lastly they left the matter to Allah and held Him witness to their words.



The prophet Shu'ayb was a prophet who was much given to weeping. As a result of this, he was blinded twice. Allah Most High asked him:

“Why are you crying? Is it out of desire for Paradise or fear of Hell?”

The prophet Shu'ayb replied:

“It is for neither o Lord. I only desire to meet you”.

Upon this, Allah Most High responded:

“If this is the case let your reunion with Me be blessed and bountiful for you. I have also made Musa your servant”.

As they had agreed upon, Musa began to serve the prophet Shu'ayb by herding his sheep.

Shepherding was a trade of practically all of the prophets. In this way, Allah allowed them to gain in certain traits relevant to management before he appointed them with the duty of spreading His religion.

Allah inspired Musa that wherever he wished to water his animals he should strike his staff and water would appear there.

It was due to this favour that Musa never had any problems in watering his animals.

Eventually when eight years had passed, Shu'ayb presented the sheep to his son-in-law and daughter as a gift.

However Musa continued to serve him for ten years. In the early years of his contract, the mottled sheep that was so valued by all used to be very few in numbers, But their number increased in the tenth year when all of them produced mottled twins in the tenth year.

Upon this, Shu'ayb said:

“This is Allah's favour to the family of Musa”.

The staff of Musa (peace be upon him)



Musa used to carry a staff to protect his sheep from wild animals. The end of the staff was pointed. There are various reports as to where this staff came from. According to one narration, it came from the prophet Adam to Shu'ayb, who gave it to Musa to graze his sheep with. The land where they lived was mountains on the right side and there was pasture on the left. There were wild animals on the mountainous side and these could attack the sheep.

Thus Musa was never without his staff.

The prophet Musa bore witness to many divine manifestations with this staff of his.

It was as if these were to prepare him for the great miracle that was to come about with his staff.

Return to Egypt from Madyan and the Valley of Tuwa

When the ten years were complete, Musa asked for permission from Shu'ayb to return to Egypt with Safura. They set out in the season of winter, with their sheep ahead of them.

Musa's aim was, together with Harun, to bring the Israelites out of Egypt.



On the journey it began to rain intensely. It was a winter's night and everywhere was pitch black. They sought refuge in a cave on the blessed Mount Sinai in order to spend the night there. The prophet's wife was pregnant; their child was about to come into the world.

On this cold, dark and rainy night, they were in need of fire and light. Musa was trying to light his lighter but it would not light. Whilst in this state of distress, he saw a light shining in the distance. He told his family that he was going to get a light for them and then come back and that they were not to abandon their place and then he left.

The light that he saw was in fact a divine sign to prepare him for prophethood.

The Holy Qur'an states:

'When Musa had fulfilled the appointed term and had set off with his family, he noticed a fire from one side of the Mount. He said to his family, 'Stay here, I can see a fire. Hopefully I will bring you back some news from it or a burning branch from the fire so that you will be able to warm yourselves' (Qisas, 28:29). 'Has the story of Musa not reached you?'

'When he saw a fire and said to his family, 'Wait here. I can make out a fire. Maybe I will bring you a brand from it, or will find guidance there' (Taha, 20:9-10). The prophet Musa went towards the light. When he arrived he saw a pillar of light upon a green tree.

'But when he reached it a voice called out to him from the right hand side of the valley in the part which was full of blessing, from out of the bush: 'Musa, I am Allah, the Lord of all the worlds' (Qisas, 28:30).

'I am your Lord. Take off your sandals. You are in the holy valley of Tuwa' (Taha, 20:12).

'I have chosen you, so listen well to what is revealed' (Taha, 20:13).

'I am Allah. There is no god but Me, so worship Me and establish salat to remember Me' (Taha, 20:14).

'The Hour is coming but I have concealed it so that every self can be repaid for its efforts' (Taha, 20:15).

'Do not let those who have no faith in it and follow their whims and desires debar you from it or you will be destroyed' (Taha, 20:16).

The commentators on the Qur'an have provided different explanations of the expression 'remove your sandals'. Indicative meanings² have also been given it as follows in *Qushayri*, *Lataif al-Isharat*, and *Ruhu al-Bayan* by *Ismail Hakkin Bursevi*:

"The two sandals represent the world and the hereafter.

Clean your heart of all matters relating to the world and the hereafter! Remove yourself from everything for the sake of Allah and look to annihilating yourself in Allah's forgiveness³ and witnessing.

Another meaning of "remove your two sandals" is as follows:

"Detach yourself from your nature and your nafs. Abandon thinking of your nafs and everything connected with it and come! Leave off pondering on proof. That is, once you have witnessed Allah's attributes and looked upon events with the eye of your heart, there is no benefit in searching out other external proofs"

It is narrated that this is why Shaykh Shibli was freed of language and speech after having come to know Allah and was able to experience the pleasure of attaining to the many mysterious meanings in the depths of the ocean of knowledge of Allah.

2 *Ishari* meaning: Various subtle and implicit meanings that are derived whilst preserving the outer meaning of the verses and remaining true to the contents of the Quran and the Sunnah.

3 To know Allah with the heart and with love.



Prophethood given with two great miracles

After being told to 'remove your sandals', the prophet Musa was commanded to throw his staff to the ground. When it was transformed into a large snake, Musa became frightened.

He was told that he need not fear as he was in safety.

The verses are as follows:

'What is that in your right hand, Musa?'

'(Musa) replied: 'It is my staff. I lean on it and beat down leaves for my sheep with it and have other uses for it' (Taha, 20:17-18). Allah then commanded him:

'Throw it down, Musa' (Taha, 20:19).

Musa immediately obeyed.

'He threw it down and suddenly it was a slithering snake' (Taha, 20:20).

'...Then when he he saw it slithering like a snake he turned and fled and did not turn back again' (Qisas, 28:31).

'(Allah) said, 'Take hold of it and have no fear. We will return it to its original form' (Taha, 20:21).

Abdulqadir Gaylani interprets these verses with the following inivative meaning:

"With these miracles Allah showed His strength and power to Musa so that Pharaoh's kingdom would not appear so great and mighty in his eyes. Another divine aim was to teach Musa to fight Pharaoh and his people.

Consequently Allah prepared him to fight Pharaoh and his family and made him aware of great and extraordinary phenomena.

Musa used to be very reserved and inhibited. Then Allah expanded for him his breast. He bestowed knowledge, wisdom and prophethood upon him".

In interpreting the verse in which Musa throws down his staff, some commentators say that this was required for the guidance of Musa's inner world, that is, it was needed for him to develop spiritually.

When Musa stated the benefits of his staff and his need of it, Allah commanded him to abandon them along with his staff. The nafs and everything related to it then took the form of a large snake. Thus Musa was shown the evils of the reality of the nafs. He then feared it and fled. It was told to him:

"O Musa, this snake represents your attachment to everything other than Allah. When these traits of the nafs are shown to their owner in their true form, he is horrified and flees".

In another interpretation the command to 'throw your staff down' has the following meaning:

"You are now endowed with the attribute of tawheed. How can it be right and true for you to claim that you are dependant on a staff and seek help from it and benefit from it? How can it be that you say that you do such and such with your staff and it also benefits me in other ways? Whereas the first step in the path of tawheed is to abandon all causes and depend upon Allah and only Allah. That is absolute reliance upon Allah and submission to Him. In that case abandon all demands and desires".



The second miracle given to Musa was that he was commanded to place his hand in his chest.

When Musa obeyed this command his hand became immune to all sickness and disease, and became as white as the shining sun. Musa was in shock and he was then told:



“You are anxious that your hand has become so bright and you think that others will fear this, now place your hand in your chest once more. Your hand will turn back to its former state”.

This miracle of the white hand is mentioned in the Qur’an as follows:

‘Now place your hand within your armpit; it will come forth (shining) white, without blemish, another sign (of Our grace)’ (Taha 20:22)

‘In this way We show you some of Our greatest Signs’ (Taha, 20:23)

‘Put your hand inside your shirt front. It will emerge pure white yet quite unharmed. And hug your arms to your sides to still your fear. These are two proofs from your Lord for Pharaoh and his ruling circle. They are a deviant people’ (Qisas, 28:32).

With these two great miracles, Allah Most High thus bestowed prophethood upon Musa and commanded him to go to Pharaoh and propagate His religion:

‘Go to Pharaoh. He has overstepped the bounds’ (Taha, 20:24) **Musa then said:**

‘My Lord, I killed one of them and I am afraid they will kill me’ (Qisas, 28:33)

Then he prayed:

‘O Lord, expand my breast for me and make my task easy for me. Loosen the knot in my tongue so that they will understand my words. Assign me a helper from my family, my brother Harun’ (Taha, 20:25-30).

Because:

‘My brother Harun is more eloquent than me...’ (Qisas, 28:34).

Then he supplicated as follows:

‘Strengthen my back by him and let him share in my task, so that we can glorify You much and remember You much, for You are watching us’ (Taha, 20:31-35)

Later Allah Most High reminded Musa of the bounties that He had bestowed upon him and informed him that he was ever under divine protection:

‘We were gracious to you another time when We revealed to your mother: “Place him into the box and throw it into the sea and the sea will wash it up on the shore, where an enemy of Mine and his will pick it up.” I showered you with love from Me so that you would be brought up under My supervision’ (Taha, 20:37-39).

‘When your sister went and said, “Shall I direct you to someone who will take care of him?” That was how We returned you to your mother so that she might delight her eyes and not be grieved. You killed a man and We rescued you from trouble and tested you with many trials. You stayed some years among the people of Madyan. Then you arrived at the pre-ordained time, Musa!’ (Tâhâ, 20:40)

Allah Most High gave Musa all that he asked for (see Taha, 20:36) and then said:

‘We will reinforce you with your brother and by Our Signs will give you both authority, so that they will not be able to lay a hand on you. You and those who follow you will be the victors’ (Qisas, 28:35)

He also reminded him of a precaution to take when going to preach to the Pharaoh:

‘Go, you and your brother, with My Signs and do not slacken in remembering Me’ (Taha, 20:42).



Almighty Allah commanded Musa and Harun to ever remember Him, even though they were prophets, so then it is apparent how important this divine command is to us. The training of the heart is essential for all believers. Just as the heart is the centre of the jewel of faith, so it is the centre of the jewel of dhikr (remembrance of Allah).

True servitude begins when dhikr becomes established in the heart. This matter is expressed in the Qur'an as follows:

'...those who have faith and whose hearts find peace in the remembrance of Allah. Only in the remembrance of Allah can the heart find peace' (Ra'd, 13:28).

As stated in the 28th verse of the chapter Nisa, the human being has been created weak.

When religious feelings increase in the heart, the desires of the nafs become distant. Religion does not look at a person's form. The human being is an elevated creature and is required to become ennobled and expand and grow spiritually. It is not possible to become a delicate, sensitive and fine-spirited Muslim without developing one's spirituality.

Almighty Allah does not desire that one performs one's worship in form only.

For instance, He desires that one performs the ritual prayer with khushu, which is a state of the heart. A verse from the Qur'an states:

'It is the muminun (believers) who are successful: those who are humble in their salat...' (Mu'minun, 23:1-2).

In contrast, Allah does not want a prayer that is far removed from the heart:

'Woe then unto those praying ones whose hearts from their prayer are remote' (Maun,107:4-5)

In another verse, Allah mentions those people who have failed to ennoble their spirits with dhikr of Allah as follows:

'Woe to those whose hearts are hardened against the remembrance of Allah! Such people are clearly misguided' (Zumar, 39:22)

Dhikr is essential to protect one from the dangers of the nafs. It is not possible to approach al-Latif (Subtle One) with a heart that is dark and impenetrable, and full of sin.



The prophets Musa and Harun found each other on the shore of the Nile and embraced. Musa said to his brother:

"Let us go to Pharaoh, Allah has commanded us with this duty".

Then they both said:

'Our Lord, we are afraid that he might persecute us or overstep the bounds' (Taha, 20:45).

Allah said:

'Have no fear. I will be with you, All-Hearing and All-Seeing' (Taha, 20:46).

'Go to Pharaoh and say, "We are the Messenger of the Lord of all the worlds to tell you to send the tribe of Israel away with us"' (Shu'ara, 26:16-17).

However when Allah Most High was giving these commands he informed them of a matter that they should take care with:

'But speak to him with gentle words so that hopefully he will pay heed or show some fear' (Taha, 20:44).

Even though Allah Most High knew that Pharaoh would not accept belief in His Oneness, He commanded Musa to speak to him with a gentle tone. These instructions apply to all believers on behalf of the



prophet Musa, who are obliged to command to good and prohibit from evil (amr-i bi'l ma'ruf wa nahy an al-munkar).

Almighty Allah praises the prophet Muhammad in regard to this matter for his gentle nature and manner of spreading His message as follows:

'It is a mercy from Allah that you were gentle with them. If you had been rough or hard of heart, they would have scattered from around you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them, and consult with them about the matter. Then when you have reached a firm decision, put your trust in Allah. Allah loves those who put their trust in Him' (Al'i Imran, 3:159).

Foolish Pharaoh

When the divine command came Musa and Harun went to Pharaoh together. Pharaoh asked Musa:

"Who are you?"

He replied:

"I am a messenger from the Lord of the worlds"

Pharaoh was very surprised and rebuked Musa for all of the good that he had done to him previously:

"You grew up in my palace and you murdered my baker. Now how can you embark on such a matter?"

'(Pharaoh) said, 'Did we not bring you up among us as a child and did you not spend many years of your life among us? Yet you did the deed you did⁴ and were ungrateful' (Shu'ara, 26:18-19)

Musa replied:

"I did not slay the Coptic intentionally".

'At the time I did it I was one of the misguided and so I fled from you when I was in fear of you but my Lord gave me right judgement and made me one of the Messengers. And anyway you can only reproach me with this favour because you made the tribe of Israel into slaves!' (Shu'ara, 26:20- 22)

Musa then continued:

"You separated me from my family and you oppressed me; but my Lord then gave me knowledge and wisdom and made me a prophet".

However:

'Pharaoh said, 'Who then is your Lord, Musa?' He said, 'Our Lord is He who gives each thing its created form and then guides it' (Taha, 20:49-50)

Then:

'(Musa) said, 'The Lord of the heavens and the earth and everything between them if you knew for sure' (Shu'ara, 26:24).

'(Pharaoh) said, 'What about the previous generations (those who worshipped idols)?' (Taha, 20:51).

'(Musa) said, 'Knowledge of them is with my Lord in a Book. My Lord does not misplace nor does He forget' (Taha, 20:52)

'(Pharaoh) said to those around him, 'Are you listening?' (Shu'ara, 26:25).

4 The 'deed that you did' refers to the accidental slaying of the Coptic by Musa.



‘(Musa) said, ‘Your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers, the previous peoples’ (Shu’ara, 26:26)

‘(The Pharaoh, who claimed to be a god) said, ‘This Messenger, who has been sent to you, is mad’ (Shu’ara, 26:27).

‘(Musa) said, ‘The Lord of the East and the West and everything between them if you used your intellect’ (Shu’ara, 26:28).

Pharaoh then threatened both Musa and Harun with imprisonment which amounted to a torturous death.

‘(Pharaoh) said, ‘If you take any god other than me, I will certainly throw you into prison’ (Shu’ara, 26:29)

‘(Musa) said, ‘Even if I were to bring you something undeniable?’ (Shu’ara, 26:30).

‘(Pharaoh) said, ‘Produce it then if you are someone telling the truth’

‘So He threw down his staff and there it was, unmistakably a snake’ (Shu’ara, 26:31-32).

Pharaoh was terrified and said:

“I beg you, restrain this and I will let all of the Israelites go free”.

Musa then took his staff in his hand and it returned to its former form. Then Pharaoh asked:

Is there any more?

‘And (Musa) drew out his hand and there it was, pure white to those who looked’ (Shu’ara, 26:33).

Pharaoh was again terrified. After witnessing these miracles, he was on the verge of believing in the prophet Musa. However his vizier, Haman prevented this from happening and inciting him he said:

“You are a god! It does not befit you to worship another. And everyone knows you as a god, do not come down from being a god to being a slave, we will find a solution for this”.

He quickly established a committee and they held a meeting.

‘(Pharaoh) said to the High Council round about him, ‘This certainly is a skilled magician. Who desires by his magic to expel you from your land, so what do you recommend?’ (Shu’ara, 26:34-35).

Magic versus miracles

The miracles that were displayed by the prophet Musa shattered Pharaoh’s feelings of arrogance and he was forced to leave to one side his claim of godhead and ask the opinion of the knowledgeable people around him.

‘They said, ‘Detain him and his brother and send out marshals to the cities, to bring you all the skilled magicians’ (Shu’ara, 26:36-37).

At that time magic was greatly developed. Hoping that a magician would appear who would defeat Musa, Pharaoh accepted this offer immediately.

Allah Most High says in the Qur’an:

‘We showed him (the Pharaoh) all of Our Signs, but he denied and spurned them. He said, ‘Have you come to us to expel us from our land by means of your magic, Musa?’ (Taha, 20:56, 57)

‘We will bring you magic to match it. So fix a time between us and you which neither we nor you will fail to keep at a place where we can meet halfway’. (Musa) said, ‘Your time is the



day of the Festival. The people should gather in the morning'. So Pharaoh went away and concocted his scheme and then he arrived' (Taha, 20:58-60).

'So the magicians were assembled for a meeting on a specified day. The people were asked, 'Are you all assembled' (Shu'ara, 26:38-39).

Every one gathered on the day of the competition. The people were impatient to see what would happen.

'...so we can follow the magicians if they are the winners?'

'When the magicians came, they said to Pharaoh, 'Will we be rewarded if we are the winners?'' (Pharaoh) said, 'Yes, and in that case you will be among those brought near' (Shu'ara, 26:40-42)

Pharaoh asked:

"So will you be able to defeat Musa?"

The leading magicians said:

"We are the ultimate magicians. There is nobody else on the face of the earth that can perform this act better than us? That is, we are the limit of the peak, such that we will definitely defeat him unless a destructive power comes down from the sky. We are most certainly more powerful and mighty".

Musa warned the magicians:

'...Woe to you! Do not fabricate lies against Allah or He will annihilate you with His punishment. Fabricators of lies are bound to fail' (Taha, 20:61)

However Pharaoh tried to prove to them that Musa was a magician in order to encourage them.

'They argued amongst themselves about the matter and had a secret conference' (Taha, 20:62).

'(They said): 'These two magicians desire by their magic to expel you from your land and abolish your most excellent way of life' (Taha, 20:63).

Musa then said:

'...so decide on your scheme and then arrive together in force. He who gains the upper hand today will definitely prosper' (Taha, 20:64).

Despite everything, the magicians did not abandon their courtesy and respect for Musa:

'They said, 'Musa, will you throw or shall we be the first to throw?' (Taha, 20:65)

'(Musa) said, 'No, you throw!...' (Taha, 20:66)

'They threw down their ropes and staffs and said, 'By the might of Pharaoh we are the winners' (Shu'ara, 26:44)'... **And suddenly their ropes and staffs appeared to him, by their magic, to be slithering about'** (Taha, 20:66)

'Musa experienced in himself a feeling of alarm' (Taha, 20:67) **'We said, 'Have no fear. You will have the upper hand'** (Taha, 20:68).

'Throw down what is in your right hand. It will swallow up their handiwork. Their handiwork is just a magician's trick. Magicians do not prosper wherever they go' (Taha, 20:69).

Musa then collected himself. The anxiety he felt within disappeared and:

'When they had thrown, Musa said, 'What you have brought is magic. Allah will certainly prove it false. Allah does not uphold the actions of corrupters' (Yunus, 10:81).

As can be gathered from the verse, magic is nothing more than a deception, a trick, a gilding, an illusion and dissention.



'But Musa threw down his staff and at once it swallowed up what they had fabricated'
(Shu'ara, 26:45).

The prostration of the magicians

The magicians threw down a few staffs and some rope in front of the Pharaoh and the Egyptian people. They then slithered up and began to appear as snakes. However when Musa threw down his staff, by the command of Allah, it became like a great dragon swallowing up all of the other magic items. The magicians realised that this was not the work and knowledge of humans but rather a divine miracle. This is because if it were magic the staff and rope would have remained where they were after the magic had worn out.

But the magic of the magicians was broken and annulled and their staffs and rope also vanished:

'So the Truth took place and what they did was shown to be false' (A'raf, 7:118).

'(Seeing this miracle), the magicians threw themselves down, prostrating. They said, 'We have faith in the Lord of all the worlds, the Lord of Musa and Harun' (Shu'ara, 26:46-48).

'(Pharaoh) said, 'Have you had faith in him before I authorised you? He is your chief who taught you magic. But you will soon know! I will cut off your alternate hands and feet and I will crucify every one of you' (Shu'ara 26:49).

A unity and togetherness based on benefit can only last as long as there are benefits to be shared. Had the magicians not believed and continued to support the Pharaoh they would have been acceptable people and they would have prospered in plentiful bounty.

However when their hearts were opened up and they were given guidance, they preferred eternal bounties over transient ones and they said:

'We will never prefer you to the Clear Signs which have come to us nor to Him who brought us into being. Decide on any judgment you like. Your jurisdiction only covers the life of the world' (Taha, 20:72)

Then:

'They said, 'We do not care! We are returning to our Lord' (Shu'ara, 26:50).

This was because the pain of having the hands and feet cut off alternatively and crucifixion all pertain to this world. At the end of the day the body is a sacrifice that is to be returned to the earth. The body is finite whereas the spirit is immortal. One does not prefer something transient over something eternal. This is why when they saw the clear miracle their attitude towards Pharaoh was one he did not expect and they said:

"Your tyranny cannot harm us. Any harm that comes from you is only limited to this world. The happiness of the hereafter is however eternal" dediler.

The verse continues:

'We have had faith in our Lord so that He may forgive us for our mistakes and for the magic which you forced us to perform. Allah is better and longer lasting' (Taha, 20:73).

'We remain hopeful that our Lord will forgive us our mistakes for being the first of the believers' (Shu'ara, 26:51).

And they prayed to Allah as follows:

'...Our Lord, pour down steadfastness upon us and take us back to You as Muslims' (A'raf, 7:126).



As a result, the magicians who that very morning competed against Musa in a state of unbelief appeared a very short time later with the honour of being believers, martyrs and saints, their arms and legs cut off on opposite sides after which they returned to Allah.

In his Mathnawi, Jalalludin Rumi gives an exegesis of these magicians and their being honoured with the faith of tawheed due to the compliment and respect they showed a great prophet and a servant dear to Allah, but at the same time being subjected to punishment for making the mistake of challenging so great a prophet.

In truth, the slight reverence they showed for the prophet Musa allowed them to be honoured with faith. Love for one who is worthy of it and hostility to one who deserves it is an important factor in elevating one's life.

Jalalluddin Rumi analyses the deeper aspect of this event in the following way:

“The damned and tyrannical Pharaoh threatened with death the magicians on account of their faith, saying “I will cut off your hands and feet diagonally. Then I will yet not forgive you and I will have you hanged. The Pharaoh assumed that the magicians would be afraid and bow down to him. But what he did not know was that they were freed of all fear and anxiety and had attained divine mystery and truth.

Even if they had been grinded in the mortar of destiny one hundred times and subjected to great misfortune, they now had the insight and wisdom to distinguish the shadows from reality. (That is, they realised that the spirit was the essence, and the body a mere shadow and thus they were able to immediately sacrifice this shadow and reach the station of ‘being annihilated in Allah’⁵

O man! This world is nothing more than a sleep and a dream. Do not be fooled by the its revelry and pageanty. If in that dream your hand gets cut off or your body becomes shredded do not fear. It has been said that ‘this is because this world is but a dream’.

Lady Mashita

Mashita was the name of the servant of Pharaoh's daughter. One day she uttered the word ‘Bismillah’ before taking up the comb to comb Pharaoh's daughter's hair. The daughter heard this and immediately ran to inform her father. Pharaoh called Mashita to him and called her to account. With the passion of her faith and bravely she said:

“You are a mortal just like us! How can you claim to be a god?”

Pharaoh was enraged:

“So you too have believed in Musa and followed him, is that so?”

He then had Mashita tortured. However, despite everything, she did not turn back from her faith. He then had her five year old daughter brought before her and threatened her saying:

“If you do not accept the godhead of Pharaoh I will have your daughter's throat cut”.

Mashita still did not turn back from her faith. They eventually brought her daughter and murdered before her very eyes and then wiped her blood over Mashita's face. She was still in a state of love and ecstasy and she said:

“Allah is one! Allah is One! Musa is the messenger of Allah”.

Pharaoh and his helpers lost their temper. This time they brought her three month old baby. He was crying from hunger when they handed him to his mother. The baby began to search for his mother's breast when they immediately grabbed him back and said:

“If you do still not turn back we will throw this baby into the oven?”

5 *Fana fi Allah: To lose one's self in Allah's existence*



Mashita endured this agony and still did not abandon her faith. Eventually they threw her three month old baby into the oven. According to one account, her baby spoke to her from amongst the flames: “Dearest mother. Do not abandon your faith and be patient. I can see that there is only one step between you and Paradise”

All of those who heard these words subsequently believed in the prophet Musa. Eventually Mashita was also martyred and she went to Paradise with her children.

There is a hadith about this lady Mashita:

According to a narration by Ubayy ibn Ka’b, on the night of the Mi’raj (The Ascension), the Messenger of Allah smelt a beautiful scent and asked:

“O Gabriel. What is this beautiful scent?”

Gabriel replied:

“This is the fragrance coming from the graves of Lady Mashita, her two children and her husband’ (Ibn Majah, Fitan, 23).

Asiya is martyred

After the torture of Mashita by Pharaoh, Asiya, his wife was very angry with him and took up a position against him, insulting him.

Pharaoh then realised that Asiya also believed in Musa.

Asiya no longer hid this and confessed it:

“Yes, I too believe in the Lord of Musa”.

According to a narration, Pharaoh had Asiya lie on her back and tied her hands and feet to four poles. He had a grindstone placed on her and tortured her with all forms of torture until she was eventually martyred.

One time when Musa was passing by the place where Asiya lay he saw her being severely tortured. Asiya indicated to Musa to express her pain. He then prayed for her. After that Asiya no longer felt any pain or agony.

She is praised in the Holy Qur’an as follows:

‘Allah has made an example for those who have faith: the wife of Pharaoh when she said, ‘My Lord, build a house in the Garden for me in Your presence and rescue me from Pharaoh and his deeds and rescue me from this wrongdoing people’ (Tahrim, 66:11).

According to accounts Asiya made this prayer whilst she was being tortured. At that point she was inspired with the following words:

“Raise your head”.

When she raised her head and looked up at the heavens, the veil was removed from her eyes and she saw a white palace made of pearls for her in Paradise.

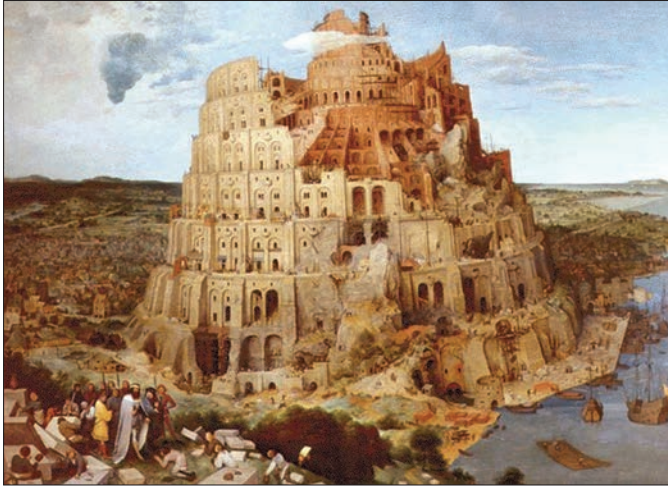
She then continued to look at her palace smiling no longer feeling any pain.

The tower

As Musa continued to preach the oneness of Allah, the number of believers increased.

In response to this, the rancour and tyranny of Pharaoh also increased. With great effort, Pharaoh had built a magnificent tower. It took seven years to complete. One could only climb it by mounting an animal.





An illustration of the tower of Pharaoh.

Pharaoh's plan was to climb to the top of it and meet with the god of Musa. Because he was ignorant of the meaning of tawheed, the image of a god he had in his mind was limited to the forms in this human world. His understanding was of an anthropomorphic nature.

This was why Pharaoh could only conceive of Allah by giving Him human form and traits.

This was just like the conception of the ancient Greeks who believed in many gods such as the god of the earth, the god of the heavens, the god of love etc.

Pharaoh was to look up at the heavens from this tower and tell the people that he could not

see the god of Musa.

He also wanted to cause dissension by claiming that: "We could not find a way to the heavens even with all our power and our technology. So how did Musa reach there and bring such news for us?"

The Holy Qur'an states:

'Pharaoh said, 'Haman, build me a tower so that perhaps I may gain means of access; access to the heavens, so that I can look on Musa's God. Truly I think he is a liar.' That is how Pharaoh's evil actions were made attractive to him and he debarred others from the Path. Pharaoh's scheming led to nothing but ruin' (Ghaafir, 40:36, 37)

According to narrations, Allah Most High commanded Gabriel who then struck the tower with his wings and the tower then broke into three pieces. Thousands of soldiers died alongside those who baked the bricks and tiles.

This failure of Pharaoh enraged him extremely. The oppression of the Coptics against the Siptis also reached its peak:

'The ruling circle of Pharaoh's people said, 'Are you going to leave Musa and his people to cause corruption in the earth and abandon you and your gods?' He said, 'We will kill their sons and let their women live. We have absolute power over them!' (A'raf, 7:127)

The Israelites then complained to Musa of this. He advised them to be patient:

'Musa said to his people, 'Seek help in Allah and be steadfast. The earth belongs to Allah. He bequeathes it to any of His slaves He wills' (A'raf, 7:128).

However his people slowly began to take up a stance against Musa. They became impatient and thus increased the burden and difficulty of the prophet.

'They said, 'We suffered harm before you came to us and after you came to us.' He said, 'It may well be that your Lord is going to destroy your enemy and make you the successors in the land so that He can see how you behave' (A'raf, 7:129)

In this way Allah indicated that the future was to be for those who believe.

The coptics continued in their tyranny. Musa prayed for the end of this tyranny.

After this the signs of calamity began to appear after each other and one by one disasters began to rain down upon the Coptics:

'We seized Pharaoh's people with years of drought and scarcity of fruits so that hopefully they would pay heed' (A'raf, 7:130)



‘Whenever a good thing came to them, they said, ‘This is our due.’ But if anything bad happened to them, they would blame their ill fortune on Musa and those with him. No indeed! Their ill fortune will be with Allah. But most of them did not know’ (A’raf, 7:131)

One by one the miracles appear

‘They said (to Musa): ‘No matter what kind of Sign you bring us to bewitch us, we will not have faith in you’ ‘So We sent down on them floods, locusts, lice, frogs and blood, Signs, clear and distinct, but they proved arrogant and were an evildoing people’ (A’raf, 7:132-133)

When the Coptics saw these calamities they began to address the prophet Musa as ‘a great scholar and a wise man but when the calamities were removed they went back to their rebellion and said: “These were passing events”.

Tribulations begin to appear when oppression becomes exorbitant.

As we are told in the Holy Qur’an, these numerous calamities befell the Coptics only when their oppression became excessive.

1. Flooding

Allah Most High sent down severe rains so that everywhere became covered with water. The houses of the Coptics were flooded. The water came up to their necks and those sitting were drowning. They were almost destroyed however nothing was happening to the Siptis. The Coptics immediately ran to the prophet Musa and said:

“O Musa! Pray to your Lord if this calamity is removed from us we will believe in you and your people and allow you to do as you wish:

Musa prayed and the waters receded. Then a period of abundance began. The Coptics again began to rebel:

“This water was not then punishment for us but rather a bounty. This flood was going to pass anyway. It did not occur because Musa prayed for us”.

2. Locusts



After that Allah then sent down on them swarms of locusts. These locusts ate up all of the crops and harvests.

They destroyed everything, but caused no harm to the Israelites.

The Coptics approached Musa once more:

“O wise man. Pray for us so that we can accept what you have brought and believe in you”.

Musa then prayed and the punishment was removed. Seeing this, the Coptics relaxed once more. They did not keep their word

and continued in their rebellion.

3. Lice

Allah then plagued them with lice and fleas. Their bowls would be filled with lice and fleas whenever they began to eat. This was a great disaster for them. They immediately ran once more to the prophet Musa, who once again prayed for them. They were thus freed from this calamity. But still they returned to their rebellion.



4. Frogs

When this latter calamity also did not wake them up, Musa went to the Nile river. With his staff he touched the water and then all of the frogs there began to invade Egypt.

The Coptics again ran to Musa and said:

“O wise man! We are truly sorry’.

When this calamity was removed through the prayers of the prophet Musa, they again returned to their old behaviour.

5. Blood

When the Coptics refused to be reformed, Allah Most High turned the waters of the Nile into blood. They could no longer find any water to drink. Whenever the Siptis drank from the Nile or wanted to use its water, however, the water retained its original clarity; but when the Coptics approached it, it turned to blood.

They again ran to the prophet Musa, begging him. This calamity was also removed from them and the deceitful and ungrateful Coptics once more returned to their rebellion.

In his mathnawi, Jalalluddin Rumi explains the event of the Nile turning to blood as follows:

“One time a Coptic arrived at the house of a Sipti burning with thirst and begged him at length: “I am your friend and relative. I am in great need of you today. Go and fill a cup with water from the Nile for yourself and then bring it to your old friend so he can drink from your hand!

If you fill it for yourself, there will be no blood in it. It will be freed of magic and will be nice and clear.

The Sipti then went to the Nile to fill his cup so that the Coptic could perceive the truth in the miracle. He took it to his mouth and drank half of it. Then he handed it to the Coptic and said:

“Come drink”.

The Coptic happily took the cup to this mouth. However (as soon as he did so) the water in the cup turned to crimson blood. When the Sipti then took the cup to drink from it, the blood became pure water once again. The Coptic was enraged about this. He sat down until his anger passed. Then he turned to the Coptic and asked:

“O my brother! How can this knot be undone? What is the secret in this?”

The Sipti replied: “Only those who believe in the religion of Musa can drink from the sweet and clear water of the Nile. If you leave the way of the Pharaoh and take the path of Musa, then you too can drink this crystal clear and sweet water.

The Sipti continued to advise him as follows:

“Be in a state of peace with the moon so that you can see the moonlight”. What is meant here by the moon is the prophet Musa and the moonlight represents the divine truth.

Your spite for the pure servants of Allah has made you deaf and blind so that thousands of veils have come between you and them. You are wandering about blindly in the valley of misguidance and unbelief but are blind to the truth. Melt your mountain of unbelief by seeking forgiveness from Allah so that you can be guided. Then can you take your share from the cup of those who have gained true knowledge.

Allah (glorified and majestic is He) has made the waters of the Nile forbidden to the unbelievers, so how can you drink from it using deceit, using me as a means?” O Coptic! Is the Nile capable of rebelling against the divine command and becoming pure water for the unbelievers?”



Everytime Pharaoh felt his powerlessness in the face of all of these manifestations he would say:

‘Let me kill Musa and let him call upon his Lord! I am afraid that he may change your religion and bring about corruption in the land’ (Mu'min, 40:26).

The manner in which Pharaoh spoke these words indicates that he was prevented, by those around him, from killing Musa.

Those around him said to him:

“This is not a person whom you need fear. You are a god. If you kill him, you will have placed a doubt in the hearts of the people. Everyone will think that you were left powerless in the face of Musa’s miracles”.

These words of Musa do however show how much Pharaoh was afraid of Musa.

In truth, Pharaoh did secretly believe that Musa was a prophet. However his pride and arrogance and his blind obstinacy prevented him from accepting the faith. In response to this attitude of Pharaoh:

‘Musa said, ‘I seek refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every proud man who does not have faith in the Day of Reckoning’ (Mu'min, 40:27)

This is why some commentators believe the secret in the fact that Pharaoh still rebelled against Allah after seeing all of these miracles, lies in these words of Musa: ‘Refusing to believe in the last day and being proud’ are the two most important factors that prevent a person from accepting faith.

A proud person wishes to see everyone else beneath him and this is why kibr (arrogance or pride) is mentioned in a hadith as being one of the major sins:

“It is enough of a sin for a person to belittle his Muslim brother” (Muslim, Birr, 32; Abu Dawud, Adab, 35; Tirmidhi, Birr, 18).

Another hadith states:

“Anyone who possesses a mustard seeds worth of faith in their heart cannot enter Hellfire and anyone who has a mustard seeds worth of arrogance in their heart cannot enter Paradise” (Muslim, Iman, 147)

The following words of the prophet Luqman to his son are a nice piece of advice about pride and arrogance.

He said:

‘Do not avert your face from people out of haughtiness and do not strut about arrogantly on the earth. Allah does not love anyone who is vain or boastful’ (Luqman, 31:18)

The 37th verse of the chapter Isra states:

وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَخْرِقَ الْأَرْضَ وَلَنْ تَبْلُغَ الْجِبَالَ طُولًا

‘Do not strut arrogantly about the earth. You will certainly never split the earth apart nor will you ever rival the mountains in height’

Allah Most High explains the wisdom in the punishment of the Pharaoh and his helpers, who had fallen to the pits of arrogance as follows:

‘We showed them no Sign which was not greater than the one before it. We seized them with punishment so that hopefully they would turn back’ (Zukhruf, 43:48).

These people, who were being trained with tribulation, were like sheep in their moments of distress and tribulation but then became like wolves at other times.

Allah Most High describes the inconsistency in their behaviour and their failure to keep their word as follows:



‘Whenever the plague came down on them they said, ‘Musa, pray to your Lord for us by the contract He has with you. If you remove the plague from us, we will definitely have faith in you and send the tribe of Israel away with you’ (A’raf, 7:134).

‘They said (to Musa), ‘Magician, invoke your Lord for us by the contract He has made with you and we shall certainly follow the guidance’ (Zukhruf, 43:49)

‘But when We removed the punishment from them, they immediately broke their word’ (Zukhruf, 43:50)

Pharaoh’s sordid propaganda

Powerless in the face of Musa’s miracles and fearing that his people were about to accept his religion Pharaoh set up a pavilion on the shores of the Nile. For two years he proclaimed:

“Do not believe in Musa. I am your lord alongside those idols you worship”.

‘Pharaoh called to his people, saying, ‘My people, does the kingdom of Egypt not belong to me? Do not all these rivers flow under my control? Do you not then see?’ (Zuhruf, 43:51)

‘Am I not better than this man who is contemptible and can scarcely make anything clear?’ (Zuhruf, 43:52)

Pharaoh’s desire was to show his own kingdom, power, wealth and pomp; thus he emphasised the poverty and weakness of the prophet Musa in contrast to this:

‘Why have gold bracelets not been put upon his arms and why is there not a train of angels accompanying him?’ (Zuhruf, 43:53). His claim was that such a person could not be a prophet.

‘In that way he swayed his people and they succumbed to him. They were a people of deviators’ (Zuhruf, 43:54)

Exodus from Egypt

Just as Pharaoh and his men refused to believe, they also oppressed those who did by using their worldly supremacy over them.

The prophet Musa was eventually forced to curse them:

‘Musa said, ‘Our Lord, You have given Pharaoh and his ruling circle finery and wealth in the life of the world, Our Lord, so that they may be misguided from Your Way. Our Lord, obliterate their wealth and harden their hearts so that they do not have faith until they see the painful punishment’ (Yunus, 10:88)

‘(Allah) said, ‘Your request is answered, so go straight and do not follow the way of those who have no knowledge’ (Yunus, 10:89)



The body of the oppressor of the Israelites, the cruel Pharaoh of Egypt. It is on display in the British Museum in London as a caution for all of mankind.

After that each Coptic family was subjected to various misfortunes. Drought took hold. A skin disease began to appear in them. As a result Pharaoh subsequently allowed the Israelites to leave Egypt. However it was certain that when the calamities abated, he would go back on his word.

Allah Most High says in the Qur’an:

‘We revealed to ‘Musa: ‘Travel with Our slaves by night. You will certainly be pursued’ (Shu’ara, 26:52)



'We revealed to Musa, 'Travel with My slaves by night. Strike a dry path for them through the sea. Have no fear of being overtaken and do not be afraid' (Taha, 20:77)

Abiding by the command of Allah, the prophet Musa set out at night for the Suez with Israelites.

That morning all of the girls in the family of Pharaoh succumbed to the contagious plague and died.

Already enraged, Pharaoh's anger increased with the death of his daughters and he said:

"Musa did this".

While Pharaoh was occupied with burying his daughters, Musa had made headway.

When Pharaoh learned of the situation, it was too late. He became alarmed and urged his soldiers:

'Pharaoh sent marshals into the cities: 'These people are a small group and we find them irritating and we constitute a vigilant majority' (Shu'ara, 26:53-56)

'So they pursued them towards the east' (Shu'ara, 26:60)

'And when the two hosts came into sight of one another Musa's companions said, 'We will surely be overtaken!' He said, 'Never! My Lord is with me and He will guide me' (Shu'ara, 61-62) In front of Musa was the Red Sea, and behind him the army of Pharaoh.

The Red Sea: the Sea of both peace and catastrophe

Allah says in the Qur'an:

'So We revealed to Musa, 'Strike the sea with your staff.' And it split in two, each part like a towering cliff' (Shu'ara, 26:63).



An illustration of the stormy waves that drowned and destroyed Pharaoh and his army.

The Israelites then began to pass between the waters, the two sides of which had become like two mountains. In fact the Israelites even asked the prophet Musa:

"O Musa! Open up such windows between us so that we can watch each other".

Musa prayed to Allah and windows opened up between the waves. They were able to see each other as they passed through.

Pharaoh was a man of *istidraj*⁶. He turned to his army and said:

"Look at the sea. It has parted and become a path for me out of my majesty in order for me to catch up to my slaves who have walked on ahead of me. I will kill them all. Walk on towards the sea".

Pharaoh did not see the parting of the sea as a miracle of Musa but rather due to his own magic. But at one point he doubted and feared and thought about turning back. At that point, Gabriel appeared on a horse before him and said:

"Come walk".

The angel Mikhail stood behind Pharaoh's army and said to those behind:

⁶ *Istidraj*: the extraordinary states and 'miracles' displayed by unbelievers and sinners. These states however deceive them and drag them to destruction



“Come do not lag behind; walk on”.

Thus the entire army was mobilised. Allah Most High describes this event as follows:

‘And We caused the pursuers to draw near unto that place’ (Shu’ara, 26:64)

Pharaoh and his army then stepped into the path opened up in the sea, after Musa and his people. However they were destroyed in the deep waters as a manifestation of divine vanquishing.

‘We rescued Musa and all those who were with him. Then We drowned the rest’ (Shu’ara, 26:65-66).

‘Then We took revenge on them and drowned them in the sea because they denied Our Signs and paid no attention to them’ (A’raf, 7:136).

‘We made them a thing of the past, an example for later peoples’ (Zuhuf, 43:56)

‘In this (story), behold, there is a message (unto all men), even though most of them will not believe (in it)’ (Shu’ara, 26:67).

By the grace of Allah, all of the Israelites were saved. That day was the 10th day of the month of Muharram; they fasted as a gratitude to Allah. Allah Most High reminds us of this favour of His in the Holy Qur’an:

‘Remember when We rescued you from the people of Pharaoh. They were inflicting an evil punishment on you – slaughtering your sons and letting your women live. In that there was a terrible trial for you from your Lord. And when We parted the sea for you and rescued you, and drowned the people of Pharaoh while you watched’ (Baqara, 2:49-50).

Pharaoh’s Faith: An unacceptable faith

‘We brought the tribe of Israel across the sea and Pharaoh and his troops pursued them out of tyranny and enmity. Then, when he was on the point of drowning, he said, ‘I believe that there is no god but Him in whom the tribe of Israel believe. I am one of the Muslims’ (Yunus, 10:90)

Pharaoh was forced to join the circle of faith having been about to be drowned in the Red Sea. Allah Most High says about him:

‘What, now! When previously you rebelled and were one of the corrupters?’

Today we will preserve your body so you can be a Sign for people who come after you. Surely many people are heedless of Our Signs’ (Yunus, 10:91-92).

The exegete Zamakhshari interprets this verse as follows:

“We will discard you in a corner on the shores of the sea. We will preserve your body, complete and intact, naked and unclothed, so that you can be a lesson for those who come centuries after”.

In recent times studies have shown that Pharaoh’s body was found on the shores, face down, (in a state of prostration). Even though the Pharaoh’s lifeless body was left in the water for centuries it did not decay as a sign of Allah’s power.

Allah Most High informed us of this truth in the Holy Qur’an and it is a miracle that will continue until the Day of Judgement.

After passing through the Red Sea

The prophet Musa led his people to the land of Canaan. On the way they encountered a tribe who were worshipping idols and cows.



Some of them said:

“O Musa! Make us something similar so that we may worship it”.

The prophet Musa advised them as follows:

“Allah has rescued you from tyranny. The Coptics were slaying your sons and using your daughters as slaves. Are you now going to rebel against Allah and fall into shirk despite all of this?”

Allah Most High says in the Holy Qur’an:

‘We conveyed the tribe of Israel across the sea and they came upon some people who were devoting themselves to some idols which they had. They said, ‘Musa, give us a god just as these people have gods.’ He said, ‘You are indeed an ignorant people’ (A’raf, 7:138).

‘What these people are doing is destined for destruction. What they are doing is purposeless’ (A’raf, 7:139).

‘(Musa) said, ‘Should I seek something other than Allah as a god for you when He has favoured you over all other beings?’ ‘Remember when We rescued you from Pharaoh’s people who were inflicting an evil punishment on you, killing your sons and letting your women live. In that there was a terrible trial from your Lord’ (A’raf, 7:140-141).

Musa prepared two armies of 12000 people and sent them to Egypt. No one other than children, the sick and the old were left behind.

He gave command of one of the armies to Yusha ibn Nun and the other to Kalib ibn Yukna. The armies returned victorious after their battles.

The Coptics were now completely destroyed. This situation is described in the Qur’an as follows:

‘We expelled them from gardens and springs, from treasures and a splendid situation’ (Shu’ara, 26:57-58).

‘And We bequeathed to the people who had been oppressed the easternmost part of the land We had blessed, and its westernmost part as well. The most excellent Word of your Lord was fulfilled for the tribe of Israel on account of their steadfastness. And We utterly destroyed what Pharaoh and his people made and the buildings they constructed’ (A’raf, 7:137)

‘So it was! And We bequeathed them to the tribe of Israel’ (Shu’ara, 26:59).

‘How many gardens and fountains they left behind, and ripe crops and noble residences. What comfort and ease they had delighted in! So it was. Yet We bequeathed these things to another people.

Neither heaven nor earth shed any tears for them and they were granted no reprieve’ (Dukhan, 44:25-29).

Almighty Allah describes the pitiful end of people who are subjected to divine vanquishment and how they are painfully lost to the refuse of history:

‘How many generations We have destroyed before them! Do you see a trace of any one of them or hear even a whisper of them?’ (Maryam, 19:98)

The revelation of the Torah

After the prophet Musa left Egypt with the Israelites and they were saved from their enemies, he told them that he would bring them The Book. He left his brother Harun as his trustee and said to him:

“Correct their mistaken ways. I am going to Mount Sinai by the command of Allah. I will return with a newly revealed Book from Allah”.



However this ungrateful people said to Musa:

“We want some witnesses from amongst us with you”

They then selected seventy people from amongst them who then went to Mount Sinai together with Musa.

Musa then asked for the promised ‘Book’ from Allah who commanded him to fast for thirty days. This period of time is the 30 days of the month of Dhu’l Qada. Then with the first ten days of Dhu’l Hijjah, this was extended to forty days. Thus by giving the prophet Musa a Book (The Torah) he was given the responsibility of guiding his people to the straight path.

Allah Most High says:

‘We appointed for Musa thirty nights (on Mount Sinai) and We added to them ten, whereby the term of forty nights set by his Sustainer was fulfilled...’ (A’raf, 7:142)

The prophet Musa was invited to Mount Sinai for forty days to fast, pray, contemplate, meditate, and be purified in order to acquire the maturity required for this responsibility. In this period of time Musa was to prepare himself for a conversation with his Lord.

He spent time on Mount Sinai in order to distance himself from worldly occupations and other human beings, to engross himself in the silence of the heavens, and to be annihilated in the endless depths of an ocean in order to approach the Supreme Creator.

His spirit was in need of being enlightened and becoming clear.

We see that in the first thirty days of fasting, the prophet Musa was refined purified by fasting, supplication, contemplation and other forms of worship and abstinence. Then in the last ten days came the conversation with Allah and the revelation of the Torah. That is, in this period of forty days, the prophet Musa rose to such an elevated spiritual rank that he was able to converse with Allah.

The reason why the verse cites forty nights and not forty days is that the day begins with nightfall and the rising of the moon.

Consequently days are included in this. Also, the night has qualities that are different to the day. The Holy Qur’an was revealed from the Lawh-i Mahfuz at night, and the Messenger of Allah (saw) experienced his ascension (Mi’raj) at night. In fact, most revelations were sent down at night.

The following conclusions can be made from the prophet Musa staying on Mount Sinai for forty nights:

The people of Allah must pass their nights in pain similar to the darkness of night in order to arrive at the manifestations of morning.

It is said that divine prosperity and bounty are generally brought down at night so that the predawns of nights of pain have always been followed by mornings of success. The first thirty days of these forty painful days of Musa were like one single night and then the last ten days were like the dawn of that night. And so it was that the last hours of that true dawn were the moments in which Musa was favoured with conversing with Allah.

The prophet Musa fasted thirty days straight on Mount Sinai, without a break (sawm-i wisal) but he neither felt hunger nor thirst.

He was then commanded to embark on a journey with Khidr. On this journey he was unable to tolerate his hunger for even half a day and he said to his friend:

“Bring us our food to eat”.

This was because his journey to Khidr was a trial in itself. When the trial of hunger was added to this, he immediately felt his hunger even after half a day on the journey that he made for a creature (that is, for Khidr). However because the journey on Mount Sinai was to reach his Lord and converse with Him, he for-



got all about eating and drinking, together with the majesty of the place he was in, and he was released of everything other than Allah.

The prophet Musa is called ‘Kalimullah” on account of him conversing with Allah.

Almighty Allah ‘spoke’ to Musa without language or any other means, beyond time and direction, with His attribute of Speech. None of His attributes resemble the attributes of His creation. He knows, but this knowing is not like our knowing. He has power but His power is not like ours. He speaks, but His speech is not like ours. We speak using a tool such as language and letters.

Allah exalted and majestic is He, is beyond and above all of these. Letters came into being after, they are created (makhluk). Allah’s speech however is not created, and is without letter or means.

And so it was that while the prophet Musa was conversing with Allah, none of the seventy people who were with him and not even the angel Gabriel heard or comprehended this conversation.

‘...and Allah spoke directly to Musa ‘ (Nisa, 4:164)

Allah Most High sent thousands of addresses to Musa to comfort his heart, such that with these favours he would be able to relax and be somewhat at peace. This was because Musa was a prophet whose life was filled with human tempests and whirlwinds and he was sent to a rebellious and materialistic people such as the Israelites in order to establish the sharia.

Battle with the Amalekites in the land of Ariha and Sahra et-Tih

‘Remember when Musa said to his people, ‘My people! Remember Allah’s blessing to you when He appointed Prophets among you and appointed kings for you, and gave you what He had not given to anyone else in all the worlds!’ (Maida, 5:20)

These verses refer to the Israelites of that time (i.e the time of the prophet Musa). This is why the reference to them being honoured with bounties that no one else had been given and the holy land being appointed as their homeland are all for that time only.

Otherwise there are numerous verses from the Qur’an and ahadith that state that there are unique bounties and favours of Allah for all human beings, past and future.

When it comes to the matter of who will inherit the holy lands Allah Most High’s designation is as follows:

‘We wrote down in the Zabur (The Psalms), after the Reminder (The Torah) came: ‘It is My slaves who are righteous who will inherit the earth’ (Anbiya, 21:105).

In this verse we are told that evil and those who commit it will not last forever and that goodness is the essence and evil is relative and rule will eventually pass to the good. This shows the universal perspective of Islam on the matter of the life of this world.



The prophet Musa set out to lead his people to the land of Can’aan (the area corresponding to today’s Palestine, Jordan and Israel). They were to settle at a place called ‘arz-i maw’ud’ which means the ‘promised land’.

Musa selected a representative for both of his armies. As leaders he sent Yusha ibn Nun (Joshua) and Caleb ibn Jephunneh to discover who was living there. They found the people there to be the tribe of Amalekites who were a very powerful nation. However they agreed not to tell their people this in order to avoid instilling fear in them and bringing down their morale.

In case of such a situation the prophet Musa had already cautioned them to act as such. However others apart from Joshua and Kalib broke this agreement and told their people the situation. The Israelites tried to avoid going to battle:



‘(Musa said): My people! enter the Holy Land (Jerusalem) which Allah has ordained for you. Do not turn back in your tracks and so become transformed into losers’ (Maida, 5:21).

‘They said, ‘There are tyrants in it, Musa. We will not enter it until they leave. If they leave it, then we will go in’ (Maida, 5:22).

‘Two men among those who were afraid, but whom Allah had blessed, said, ‘Enter the gate against them! Once you have entered it, you will be victorious. Put your trust in Allah if you are believers’ (Maida, 5:23).

‘(The ungrateful tribe of Israel) said, ‘We will never enter it, Musa, as long as they are there. So you and your Lord go and fight. We will stay sitting here’ (Maide, 5:24).

The Israelites thus forgot the time when they were being oppressed by Pharaoh and how they were saved from his tyranny and they had gotten used to their comfort. Their worldly desires and demands also increased.

They had asked Musa for manna and quail and they were given these bounties every day. In addition they had benefited from the twelve springs that gushed forth when the prophet Musa struck his staff upon the earth.

Almighty Allah says in the Holy Qur’an:

‘And We shaded you with clouds and sent down manna and quails to you: ‘Eat of the good things We have provided for you.’ They did not wrong Us; rather it was themselves they were wronging’ (Baqara, 2:57).

‘And when Musa was looking for water for his people, We said, ‘Strike the rock with your staff.’ Then twelve fountains gushed out from it and all the people knew their drinking place. ‘Eat and drink of Allah’s provision and do not go about the earth corrupting it’ (Baqara, 2:60)

Because the desires of the Israelites were never-ending and they were a people who did not show gratitude nor were they patient, they continued to be a burden upon their prophets and show ingratitude. The ingratitude of this people is described in the verse below:

‘And when you said, ‘Musa, we will not put up with just one kind of food so ask your Lord to supply to us some of what the earth produces – its green vegetables, cucumbers, grains, lentils and onions,’ he said, ‘Do you want to replace what is better with what is inferior? Go back to Egypt, then you will have what you are asking for.’ Abasement and destitution were stamped upon them. They brought down anger from Allah upon themselves. That was because they rejected Allah’s Signs and killed the Prophets without any right to do so. That was because they rebelled and went beyond the limits’ (Baqara, 2:61)

‘(Musa) said, ‘My Lord, I have no control over anyone but myself and my brother, so make a clear distinction between us and this deviant people’ (Maida, 5:25)

‘(Allah) said, ‘The land will be forbidden to them for forty years during which they will wander aimlessly about the earth. Do not waste grief on this deviant people’ (Maida, 5:26).

‘Allah made a covenant with the tribe of Israel and We raised up twelve leaders from among them. Allah said, ‘I am with you. If you establish salat and pay zakat, and have faith in My Messengers and respect and support them, and make a generous loan to Allah, I will erase your wrong actions from you and admit you into Gardens with rivers flowing under them. Any of you who are unbelievers after that have gone astray from the right way’ (Maida, 5:12).

But the tribe of Bani Israel continued to show ingratitude for the bounties Allah bestowed upon them and took up a stance against the prophet Musa, the third of the great prophets,.

In fact they even went so far as to conceive of Allah as having qualities of a created being and said to their prophet: “You go with your Lord and fight and be victorious. Then we will follow you”.



This is why Allah confined the Israelites to a narrow and constricting land such as the Sahra et-Tih (the Wilderness of Paran) for forty years.

They tried to escape this place but no matter how hard they tried they always ended up back where they started. This continued until a new generation appeared amongst them. Eventually this new generation, a vibrant and believing generation overcame a powerful and despotic tribe and were able to enter the 'promised land'.

In this way the eastern shores of the River of Jordan were taken and they settled in the promised land. Thus the promise of the prophet Musa came true. The prophet Harun had also passed away at that time.

The prophet Musa wishes to see Allah

When the prophet Musa conversed with Allah beyond time and space, the veils from his eyes had been lifted and he had reached an elevated station and rank. He received such pleasure from conversing with his Lord that his desire to see Him increased. A state never before seen in him appeared and he asked to see Allah. He was insistent in his quest but Allah said to him:

“You cannot see Me”.

When Musa persisted in his request, Almighty Allah said:

“Look at that mountain. If that mountain stays in its place, you will be able to see Me”

(This mountain was the great mountain of Zubayr in the land of Madyan). According to one account Almighty Allah showed only a dram of His much veiled light to Musa. The light manifested itself on the mountain and the mountain exploded. Musa was unable to withstand the magnificence of this power and might and he fainted.

‘When Musa came to Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said, ‘My Lord, show me Yourself so that I may look at You!’ He said, ‘You will not see Me, but look at the mountain. If it remains firm in its place, then you will see Me.’ But when His Lord manifested Himself to the mountain, He crushed it flat and Musa fell unconscious to the ground. When he regained consciousness he said, ‘Glory be to You! I make tawba (repent) to You and I am the first of the believers!’ (A’raf, 7 :143)

After this conversation of Musa, the Torah began to be revealed. It is narrated that it was revealed in seven or ten tablets.

A conversation on Mount Sinai

The prophet Musa asked :

“O my Lord! Which of your slaves are more beloved to You?”

Almighty Allah replied:

“Those of My slaves who remember me constantly and never forget Me”.

Musa asked once more:

“Which of Your slaves are more knowledgeable?”

Allah the Most High responded:

“Those who teach what they know to others; those who guide to what is right, who listen to what is right and who apply it to their own selves and avoid evil”.

The golden calf

As already mentioned, after crossing the Red Sea with Musa, the Israelites encountered a tribe who were worshipping idols in the form of a calf.





An illustration of the Golden Calf

His people said to him:

“You too make us such a god for us to worship”.

The prophet Musa had advised them and told them that this was a form of major shirk. They had then regretted what they said and repented.

However when Musa appointed Harun as his trustee and went to Mount Sinai, an ingrate Jew by the name of Samiri, who had hidden his unbelief from them, took the opportunity of Musa’s absence to gather gold from the people and construct a golden calf with it.

Then he said:

“This is Musa’s god! But Musa has forgotten him”. He then asked the people to worship it.

Samiri was a skilled craftsman. He made the calf so well that when the wind entered it it began to bellow as if it were alive. He managed to do this with the holes that he had made in the calf. In addition, according to the intensity of the wind, sounds would appear like those of a pipe.

Standing behind the calf Samiri would say: “Look your god is speaking with you”.

By suggesting that the calf was a god Samiri was thus able to cause some of the Israelites to deviate from the true religion. Despite Harun persistently warning them the people did not listen to him:

‘Harun had earlier said to them, ‘My people! It is just a trial for you. Your Lord is the All-Merciful, so follow me and obey my command!’ (Taha, 20:90)

‘They said, ‘We will not stop devoting ourselves to it until Musa returns to us’ (Taha, 20:91)

‘He said, ‘We tried your people after you left and the Samaritan has misguided them’ (Taha, 20:85)

‘After he left, Musa’s people adopted a calf made from their ornaments, a form which made a lowing sound. Did they not see that it could not speak to them or guide them to any way? They adopted it and so they were wrongdoers’ (A’raf, 7:148)

‘When Musa returned to his people in anger and great sorrow, he said, ‘What an evil thing you did in my absence after I left! Did you want to hasten your Lord’s command?’ He threw down the Tablets and seized hold of his brother’s head, dragging him towards him. Harun said, ‘Son of my mother, the people oppressed me and almost killed me. Do not give my enemies cause to gloat over me. Do not include me with the wrongdoing people’ (A’raf, 7:150)

‘(Musa) said, ‘What prevented you following me, Harun, when you saw that they had gone astray? Did you too, then, disobey my command?’ (Taha, 20:92-93).

‘Harun said, ‘Son of my mother! Do not seize me by the beard or by the hair. I was afraid that you would say, “You have caused division in the tribe of Israel and taken no notice to anything I said’ (Taha, 20:94)

The prophets Musa and Harun were brothers of the same mother and father. The reason that Harun addressed Musa as ‘son of my mother’ was to evoke some mercy in Musa. A mother is more compassionate than a father or brother. Moreover their mother was a righteous woman who had believed in Allah and gained the love and respect of her sons.

‘(Musa) said, ‘My Lord, forgive me and my brother and admit us into Your mercy. You are the Most Merciful of the merciful’ (A’raf, 7:151)



‘Musa returned to his people in anger and great sorrow. He said, ‘My people, did not your Lord make you a handsome promise? Did the fulfilment of the contract seem too long to you or did you want to unleash your Lord’s anger upon yourselves, so you broke your promise to me?’ (Taha, 20:86)

‘They said, ‘We did not break our promise to you of our own volition. But we were weighed down with the heavy loads of the people’s jewelry and we threw them in, for that is what the Samaritan did’ (Taha, 20:87).

At the suggestion of Samiri they threw their gold into the fire in order to make the calf.

‘Then he produced a calf for them, a physical form which made a lowing sound. So they said, ‘This is your god – and Musa’s god as well, but he forgot’ (Taha, 20:88).

The prophet Musa told them to repent from this ugly act of theirs. He told them that forgiveness from Allah was dependent on how sorry they were and their contentment with the death as a punishment.

They said:

“We will be patient”, and they awaited the judgement.

‘And when Musa said to his people, ‘My people, You wronged yourselves by adopting the Calf so turn towards your Maker and kill yourselves. That is the best thing for you in your Maker’s sight.’ And He turned towards you. He is the Ever-Returning, the Most Merciful’ (Baqara, 2:54).

Those who were to slay the others began to wait at the head of those who were to die with sword in hand When the command came a person was appointed to strike the neck of whoever had worshipped idols. Amongst these were those who were relatives to each other.

‘When they took full stock of what they had done and saw they had been misled, they said, ‘If our Lord does not have mercy on us and forgive us, we will certainly be among the lost’ (A’raf, 7:149)

Upon this out of their mercy, the prophets Musa and Harun began to cry and pray. Following that the following verse was revealed which indicated that their repentance had been accepted:

‘But as for those who do evil actions and then subsequently repent and have faith, in that case your Lord is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful’ (A’raf, 7:153)

‘Then We pardoned you after that so that perhaps you would show thanks’ (Baqara, 2:52)

Then Musa turned to Samiri and asked him:

‘What do you think you were doing, Samaritan?’ (Taha, 20:95)

‘He said, ‘I saw what they did not see. So I gathered up a handful from the Messenger’s footprints and threw it in. That is what my inner self urged me to do’ (Taha, 20:96)

According to the commentators what Samiri saw that the people did not see and the handful of earth from the messenger’s footprints was in fact the angel Gabriel who had come to Musa. Samiri saw that the place where he stepped had grown green and fresh and he then took a handful of its earth and threw it into the fire. It is also possible to understand this verse in a metaphorical sense in that “I used the knowledge that Allah inspired me with in such a way”.

‘(Musa) said, ‘Begone, then! And, behold, it shall be your lot to say throughout your life, “Touch me not!”. But, verily (in the life to come), you be faced with a destiny from which there will be no escape! And (now) look at this deity of yours to whose worship you have become so devoted; we shall most certainly burn it and then scatter (whatever remains of it) far and wide over the sea’ (Taha, 20:97)



According to one account, after this curse of Musa, Samiri succumbed to a harsh and contagious disease, and was forced to stay away from people for the rest of his life.

‘As for those who adopted the Calf, anger from their Lord will overtake them together with abasement in the life of the dunya. That is how we repay the purveyors of falsehood’ (A’raf, 7:152)

‘When Musa’s anger abated he picked up the Tablets and in their inscription was guidance and mercy for all of them who feared their Lord’ (A’raf, 7:154)

From these Israelites who repented after having worshipped the calf, Allah Most High asked Musa to select seventy people to represent their tribe and asked them to collectively repent in the presence of their Lord.

The prophet Musa once more went, by the command of Allah, to Mount Sinai with the seventy people he had selected. However these ungrateful people had the temerity to ask to see Allah. Upon this a severe earthquake shook them and they all fell down and fainted. When Musa pleaded with Allah this calamity was raised. The verse from the Qur’an says:

‘And when you said, ‘Musa, we will not believe in you until we see Allah with our own eyes.’ So the thunder-bolt struck you dead while you were looking’ (Baqara, 2:55)

‘Then We brought you back to life after your death, so that perhaps you would show thanks’ (Baqara, 2:56).

‘Musa chose seventy men from his people for Our appointed time and when the earthquake seized them he said, ‘My Lord, if You had willed, You could have destroyed them previously and me as well. Would you destroy us for what the fools among us did? It was only a trial from You by which You misguided those You willed and guided those You willed. You are our Protector so forgive us and have mercy on us. You are the Best of Forgivers’ (A’raf, 7:155)

For a period after that the Israelites lived in peace and upon the straight path. Then they rebelled once more. They told the prophet Musa that the commandments of the Torah were harsh and they found it difficult to apply them. They once again forgot the promise they had made when they repented. As a miracle Allah Most High then raised up Mount Sinai and left it hanging in the air. In dread and awe the people immediately prostrated. They waited for the mountain to fall:

‘Remember when We made the covenant with you and lifted up the Mount above your heads: ‘Take hold vigorously of what We have given you and pay heed to what is in it, so that hopefully you will have taqwa’ (Baqara, 2:63)

‘Then after that you turned away, and were it not for Allah’s favour to you and His mercy, you would have been among the lost’ (Baqara, 2:64)

Despite all of this, the Israelites continued in their old ways. Those who went to extremes were subject to divine punishment:

‘You are well aware of those of you who broke the Sabbath. We said to them, ‘Be apes, despised, cast out’ (Baqara, 2:65)

‘We made it an exemplary punishment for those there then, and those coming afterwards, and a warning to those who have taqwa’ (Baqara, 2:66)

Allah the Most High turned those of the Israelites who knowingly persisted in their evil into apes and then destroyed them. This event has nothing to do with the claim that the apes are the ancestors of human beings. The line of these people turned into apes did not continue. In fact they died out a little while later.

Allah the Most High says:

‘But because of their breaking of their covenant, We have cursed them and made their hearts hard. They distort the true meaning of words (of the Torah) and have forgotten a good portion of what they were reminded of. You will never cease to come upon some act of treach-



ery on their part, except for a few of them. Yet pardon them, and overlook. Allah loves good-doers' (Maida, 5:13)

At that time the Torah was in the form of mere scrolls and no one had memorised them in their entirety. When the Israelites fell captive to the Babylonians this single copy of the Torah was lost. Years later when the Israelites were freed from slavery, some parts of it were rewritten as much as was retained in memory. The Torah that exists today is in fact made up partly of these incomplete scripts and partly of the life of Musa.

The Sacrifice of the Cow

One day a very rich man from the Israelites by the name of Amil was found dead. His cousin had murdered him. There are various reasons narrated for why he was killed. The first reason is that his poor and miserly cousin was jealous of his wealth and so killed him. The second is that his cousin took a liking to the woman whom Amil had married and so he killed Amil in order to marry her. The murderer then placed Amil's corpse between two neighbouring villages to create hostility between them. The people then went to the prophet Musa and asked him to find the murderer and enact retribution. Musa was in doubt as to who the murderer was and he was unable to find a solution. He then prayed to Allah and Allah Most High commanded him to sacrifice a cow. The Israelites then said to Musa:

"What is the connection between finding the murderer and sacrificing a cow? Are you mocking us?"

Musa replied:

"I am informing you of my Lord's command". The Holy Qur'an states:

'And when Musa said to his people, 'Allah commands you to sacrifice a cow,' they said, 'What! Are you making a mockery of us?' He said, 'I seek refuge with Allah from being one of the ignorant!' (Baqara, 2:67)

'They said, 'Ask your Lord to make it clear to us what it should be like.' He said, 'He says it should be a cow, not old or virgin, but somewhere between the two. So do as you have been told' (Baqara, 2:68)

'They said, 'Ask your Lord to make it clear to us what colour it should be.' He said, 'He says it should be a red cow, the colour of sorrel, a pleasure to all who look' (Baqara, 2:69)

'They said, 'Ask your Lord to make it clear to us what it should be like. Cows are all much the same to us. Then, if Allah wills, we will be guided' (Baqara, 2:70)

'He said, 'He says it should be a cow not trained to plough or irrigate the fields – completely sound, without a blemish on it.' They said, 'Now you have brought the truth.' So they sacrificed it – but they almost did not do it' (Baqara, 2:71)

They found a cow with such traits belonging to a woman who lived with her orphaned child. The woman did not want to sell the cow as it was the only source of her livelihood. The woman thus asked for much more than the cow was worth, in fact 1000 silver coins.

The prophet Musa said:

"Give the woman the amount she asks for and buy the cow".

They were then content with giving 1000 silver coins. But this time the woman increased the price to 2000 silver coins. The Israelites found this price too high and they did not want to buy it and so again turned to Musa.

They almost did not sacrifice but the characteristics of the cow described by Allah are the same as the one belonging to the woman with the orphan child.

Seeing the high demand for her cow the woman again increased the price to 10000 silvers. And when they finally came back to her she said:



“You will take the animal, sacrifice it, turn its leather into a suit and then fill that with gold and bring it back to me. Only then will I sell it to you”.

The Israelites went to Musa and informed him of the situation. He said to them:

“Buy the cow at whatever price”.

His people then said:

“In that case let us buy it now and bring about the command of Allah, otherwise the price of the cow will rise so much that we will not be able to afford it...”

At last they bought the cow. Allah Most High says in the Qur’an:

‘Remember when you killed someone and violently accused each other of it, and Allah brought out what you were hiding’ (Baqara, 2:72)

However the Israelites did not want to pay the price of the cow. Musa said to them:

“If you do not pay the price, your dead will not be raised back to life”.

They were then left with no other choice than to sacrifice the cow, then strip its leather and make it into a suit which then they filled with gold and gave to the woman.

‘We said, ‘Hit him with part of it!’ In that way Allah gives life to the dead and He shows you His Signs so that hopefully you will understand’ (Baqara, 2:73)

The words ‘hit him with part of it’ is for emphasis. If we consider carefully we see that the raising of the dead has been linked with certain apparent causes, that is, the condition is that there is contact with the meat of the dead animal. However the reality is that Allah can create such a miracle without the need for such apparent causes or such ceremony.

Eventually the dead was brought back to life when it was brought into contact with the dead animal and it rose covered in blood. The dead man told them the truth of what happened:

“The following sons of my uncle murdered me”. He then told them their names and then fell back down dead. Retribution was enacted immediately from the two young men who had committed the crime.

There are various lessons which can be taken from this event:

If the Israelites had sacrificed any old cow as soon as they received the command from Allah they would have carried out their duty.

However they appeared to not want to carry out the command with all of the questions they asked, one after the other. Thus the matter became more difficult and the difficulty increased with each objection. Allah thus increased their punishment due to their objections and their failure to accept their limits. Consequently a believer should immediately comply with the commands of Allah and His Messenger.

To delay and postpone complying with these commands will lead to more difficult responsibilities and more severe punishment.

A believer should not ask unnecessary and needless questions. Each question in fact increases the burden upon a person.

The Israelites were commanded to sacrifice a cow, which they had previously worshipped as a god in order for them to understand that there is no such divinity in a cow. By nature the human being is created with the need to believe and worship and can sometimes mistake their feelings of servitude and perceive of God as being similar to their own human dimension and thus be misguided. Thus a person can fall into the trap of shirk (associating partners with Allah) with the things that he or she treasures and loves. The way to eliminate this hazard is to abandon the things that one loves and cherishes for the sake of Allah.

The inability to find the murderer led to the increase of friction and tension amongst the sons of Israel. After the cow was sacrificed and the murderer found, things settled down and the people found peace of



mind. The message here is that complying and submitting to the commands of Allah is necessary for the peace and harmony of a community.

Another matter is that some of the Israelites were doubting the idea of resurrection. However this event removed their doubts.

Qarun

Qarun was either the uncle of Musa or the son of his uncle. Before he came to believe in Musa he was a representative of the Israelites to the Pharaoh. He used to torture those who were under his command. After he accepted belief, he dedicated himself to learning and worship.

He was the best reciter of the Torah after the prophet Musa. Qarun used to be very poor but then Satan appeared to him in human form and befriended him. Then one day he took the opportunity and feigning friendliness he said:

“O Qarun! Instead of getting by on the provision that others provide for us, why do we not go and work one day of the week and we can worship our Lord on the other six days. This matter appealed to Qarun and together they went to the town and worked for a day. With the earnings from this day’s work they were able to meet their needs for six days in which they performed their worship. Satan had gained his first concession, Satan then said:

“Look Qarun! We were in need of nobody. Come let us work for half a week and earn our money and worship the other half. Then we will be able to give out the extra money to the poor and gain Allah’s pleasure”.

Having conceded to Satan once, Qarun then found this offer attractive too and he accepted it. Satan was thus successful in his deceit. He then increased the number of working days:

“Let us devote more time to working so we can earn more money. We can then continue in our worship and with more money we can make more poor people happy too”.

Gradually love for and inclination towards the world was implanted in the heart of Qarun.

Qarun was also given knowledge of alchemy as a result of a prayer of the prophet Musa, and thus in a very short time, he became very wealthy.

His heart was then overwhelmed by worldly desires and unending ambition. He then lost all of his good and decent traits and became a slave to his pride and arrogance.

He forgot that it was the prayer of the prophet Musa that made him wealthy.

A verse from the Qur’an says:

‘Qarun was one of the people of Musa but he lorded it over them. We gave him treasures, the keys alone to which were a heavy weight for a party of strong men. When his people said to him, ‘Do not gloat. Allah does not love people who gloat’ (Qasas, 28:76).

His heart now filled with love of the world, Qarun began to tire of the advice of Musa and eventually was unable to tolerate his counsel.

When Harun was appointed with the duty of sacrificing the animals, all of the evil feelings that had settled in his heart appeared. He was unable to tolerate it out of his envy and pride and he became enraged at Musa saying:

“O Musa! You gave your brother Harun this duty. But I have been given no such thing, while I am a very good reciter of the Torah. I am superior to Harun. How can I tolerate such injustice?”

Musa said to him:



“I was not the one to give Harun this duty and station. Almighty Allah gave it to him”. But Qarun resisted:

“I cannot accept this until a sign is shown to me”.

Musa gathered together the leaders of the Israelites and said:

“Bring me your staffs. Let us put them all in a particular place. Let us see which ones becomes green and alive and then whoever owns it is the person who is worthy of this duty”.

The staffs were brought and placed in the temple in which they worshipped. The only staff to grow green and have leaves was that which belonged to Harun.

In the face of this obvious miracle, Musa turned to Qarun and said:

“O Qarun! Did I do this?”

Qarun was in shock. Even though he understood the truth of the matter, he still listened to his nafs and said:

“This is nothing other than magic”. He then left them angrily.

Allah had commanded the Israelites to wear a blue ribbon on their clothes. Qarun objected to this too and said:

“This is only to distinguish between slaves and their masters” and he refused to wear it.

Eventually Qarun’s hatred and spite for Musa increased and the fire of envy burned inside him. He began to organise feasts in order to draw the people to him and hold discussions in which he demonstrated his own superiority.

One day Musa calculated the amount of zakat which Qarun was required to pay and asked him to pay it. Qarun said:

“And now have you set your eye upon my wealth? I earned this money myself”.

Allah addressed Qarun directly as follows:

‘Seek the abode of the hereafter with what Allah has given you, without forgetting your portion of the world. And do good as Allah has been good to you. And do not seek to cause corruption in the earth. Allah does not love corrupters’ (Qasas, 28:77).

‘Qarun said, ‘I have only been given it because of knowledge I have.’ Did he not know that before him Allah had destroyed generations with far greater strength than his and far more possessions? The evildoers will not be questioned about their sins (Allah knows them all)’ (Qasas, 28:78)

‘He went out among his people in his finery. Those who desired the life of the world said, ‘Oh! If only we had the same as Qarun has been given! What immense good fortune he possesses’But those who had been given knowledge said, ‘Woe to you! Allah’s reward is better for those who have faith and act rightly. But only the steadfast will obtain it’ (Qasas, 28:79-80).

The ugly accusation

One day Qarun gathered the Israelites together and then called Musa too and said: “Now o Musa! Inform us of these commands of Allah. What is the situation of the one who steals and the one who commits adultery?” If you were to commit these sins, what would happen to you?” Musa replied:

“The hand of the thief will be cut off and the adulterer shall be stoned”.

Qarun repeated:

“And what if you were to commit these sins?”

Musa replied:

“The punishment would be the same (for me)”.

Having already contrived his sordid plan, Qarun then called out to a woman from the crowd:

“O woman come. Tell us about the ugly act and indecency you committed with Musa”.

Musa was furious and enraged at this terrible slanderous accusation. By that time the woman appeared. When she tried to speak however, her tongue became tied and she was unable to say anything. Musa asked her angrily:

“O woman! Speak the truth for the sake of Allah, who parted the seas and revealed the Torah. Do I know you? Have I any relationship to you?”

In deep regret the woman said:

“O Musa! Qarun gave me a large sum of money and deceived me so that I would make this accusation against you”. She then repented in great sadness and regret. After this event, Musa prostrated and prayed:

“O my Lord. Give them their punishment”. After this curse, the land opened up and Qarun and all of those who followed him were swallowed up along with their treasures.

Almighty Allah says in the Qur’an:

‘We caused the earth to swallow up both him and his house. There was no group to come to his aid, besides Allah, and he was not someone who is helped’ (Qasas, 28:81).

The desire of Qarun for the world and his envy of others led to his destruction. The end affair of the envious is frustration and loss. Just as envious people prepare their own sad end affair, they also harm others around them.

The Qur’an informs us that we should seek refuge in Allah from the evil of those who envy:

‘Say: ‘I seek refuge with the Lord of Daybreak, from the evil of what He has created and from the evil of the darkness when it gathers and from the evil of women who blow on knots and from the evil of an envier when he envies’ (Falaq, 113:1-5).

When the people saw Qarun and his followers destroyed in such a way, those who had previously admired him were sorry:

‘Those who had longed to take his place the day before woke up saying, ‘Allah expands the provision of any of His slaves He wills or restricts it. If Allah had not shown great kindness to us, we would have been swallowed up as well. Ah! Truly the kafirun are not successful’ (Qasas, 28:82)

‘That abode of the hereafter – We grant it to those who do not seek to exalt themselves in the earth or to cause corruption in it. The successful outcome is for those who have taqwa’ (Qasas, 28:83).

This story of Qarun demonstrates the terrible end affair of those proud, envious people who forget the hereafter and delve into this world, having been deceived by it. There are many lessons to be taken from this story. Moreover the masters of tasawwuf have the following to say about this matter of the slander:

The action of Musa that he did, having no divine revelation as support, that is, his light push of Fatun and his subsequent death, made his conscience extremely uncomfortable and devastated him. In fact, as a result of this Allah directly addresses Musa in the Qur’an:

‘...You killed a man...’ (Taha, 20:40).

That is, Allah Most High was in effect calling him to account: “You murdered that Coptic without receiving any revelation from Us, and without Our permission and command”.

This thorn continued to prick Musa. In fact his intention was not bad. However one act such as this that he did on his own left him subject to many accusations of acts that he did not do himself. That is why our great scholars have advised that we always act and speak in accordance with the Quran and the sunnah and abandon any desire to act on our own.

The prophet Musa and Khidr (peace be upon them)

After the Pharaoh was drowned in the Red Sea the prophet Musa began to give very wise and stirring sermons to his people. His people were enraptured by and in awe of the wisdom and depth of his wisdom and knowledge (of Allah).

In fact one of them said:

“O prophet of Allah! Is there anyone on earth more knowledgeable than you?”

The prophet Musa replied:

“I do not know of anybody”.

At that point revelation came to him:

“There is a servant of mine at the place where the two seas meet, to whom I have given special knowledge of Myself. Take a chosen person from your people and go to him”.

The person indicated in this verse was Khidr (peace be upon him).

Musa prayed to Allah:

“O my Lord! How can I find that person?”

Allah (glorious and majestic be He) told Musa to place a salted, dead fish in his bag. When this fish came back to life and jumped into the water at a place where the two seas meet was the place where he would find Khidr.

Musa immediately set off with his companion, Joshua (Yusha bin Nun) to find Khidr.

According to one account, at one place when Musa was taking a nap Joshua saw the dead fish suddenly come back to life and jump into the sea.

When Musa awoke he said

“Come let us go, we have a long way to go”.

‘Remember when Musa said to his servant, ‘I will not give up until I reach the meeting-place of the two seas, even if I must press on for many years’ (Kahf, 18:60)

Jalalludin Rumi describes the wisdom and lessons to be taken from this event as follows:

“O noble person! Look and see this spiritual desire in Moses, Kalimullah. Look what Musa, the one who spoke to Allah is saying:

“Even though I have been given such rank I do not feel any superiority within me. I am looking for Khidr, so that he can hold a light for me to reach further beyond”.

When Musa set out to find Khidr, his people said to him:

“O Musa! You are abandoning your people and going after a man who is lower than you in rank. How long will you wander about, how long will you search for him? You already have what you are searching for. And you know this too.

O prophet who is as high as the heavens. How long more will you search on the earth?”

Musa said to his people:



“Please do not cut the path between the sun and the moon. I am the crescent of prophethood and Khidr is the sun of saints. Just as there are prophets who are above me, Khidr is at the highest station of the saints”. He then continued:

“I am going to converse with a saint, who is the sultan of time, at a place where the two seas meet. I am going to use Khidr as a means of reaching the truth and knowledge of Allah.

And I will journey long in order to find him.

‘But when they reached the junction between the two (seas), they forgot all about their fish, and it took its way to the sea, and disappeared from sight’ (Kahf, 18:61)

Joshua had in fact seen the fish jump into the sea but he forgot to tell Musa. They continued on their way together until they came to a tree and sat down under it.

‘When they had gone a distance further on, he said to his servant, ‘Bring us our morning meal. Truly this journey of ours has made us tired’ (Kahf, 18:62)

Joshua immediately remembered the fish and said:

“Oh no! I forgot it at the place where it jumped into the sea”.

‘(The young man)said, ‘Do you see what has happened? When we went to find shelter at the rock, I forgot the fish. No one made me forget to remember it except Satan. It found its way into the sea in an amazing way’.

‘(Musa)said, ‘That is the very thing that we were looking for!’ So, following their footsteps, they retraced their route’ (Kahf, 18:63-64).

‘They found a slave of Ours whom We had granted mercy from Us and whom We had also given knowledge direct from Us’ (Kahf, 18:65).

The knowledge mentioned here is ilm-i ledunn which is a type of knowledge that is bestowed by Allah after a journey in tasawwuf to train one’s spirit.

Because this knowledge is related to the heart, it can only be attained by purifying one’s nafs and cleansing one’s heart.

This knowledge cannot be attained with external facts and is only given to those friends of Allah, who have reached the state of ihsan.

However every person has a responsibility in accordance with their capabilities and potential. The servant must develop their potential for their own salvation.

Allah Most High says about Khidr:

‘...We had also given knowledge direct from Us’ (Kahf, 18:65).

Allah Most High also says in chapter Baqara:

‘Have taqwa of Allah and Allah will give you knowledge (teach you how and what to do)’ (Baqara, 2:282)

Eventually Musa found the person whom he had been informed of by revelation. He was enwrapped in his cloak sitting on a rock. He greeted him and said:

“I am Musa”.

Khidr replied:

“So you are Musa, the prophet of the Israelites”.

Musa asked:

“Are you the person whom Allah informed me was the most knowledgeable of people?”



Khidr replied:

“O Musa! Allah has given me such knowledge that has not been given you. And He has given you such knowledge that I do not have” (See Bukhari, Tafsir, 18/2, 3, 4; Anbiya, 27; Muslim, Fadail, 170).

Musa informed Khidr of his desire to learn this knowledge. He was thus to learn from Khidr of the wisdom behind certain strange and mysterious events which is not possible to understand with one’s own physical mind.

‘Musa said to him, ‘May I follow you on condition that you teach me some of the right guidance you have been taught?’ (Kahf, 18:66).

Khidr replied:

‘You will not be able to bear with me’ (Kahf, 18:67)

‘Behold, you will never be able to have patience with me – for how can you be patient about something which you cannot comprehend within the compass of your experience’ (Kahf, 18:68)

With these words, Khidr made his first analysis of the psychological state of Musa and was in fact describing him so that this state later became apparent. The lessons which Musa was to take from these events were to know his own state and to be patient.

That is, Khidr was in effect saying to Musa:

“It is not in your hands to be able to be patient with me. You have an excuse in this case. Because the perfection of this knowledge has not yet been given you”.

‘Musa said: **‘You will find me patient, if Allah wills, and I will not disobey you in any matter’** (Kahf, 18:69)

Khidr said to Musa:

‘Then if you follow me, do not question me about anything until I myself make mention of it to you’ (Kahf, 18:70).

Having agreed upon the matter, Musa and Khidr were then to embark on their famous journey together.

The Holy Qur’an describes their wisdom filled journey as follows:

‘They continued until they boarded a boat and he scuppered it. Then Musa said, ‘Did you scupper it so that its owners would be drowned? This is truly a dreadful thing that you have done!’He said, ‘Did I not say that you would not be able to bear with me?’Musa said, ‘Do not take me to task because I forgot. Do not demand of me something which is too difficult’ (Kahf, 18:71-73).

‘So they went on until they met a youngster whom he killed. Musa said, ‘Have you killed a boy who has done no wrong, without it being in retaliation for someone else? This is truly an appalling thing that you have done!’He said, ‘Did I not tell you that you would not be able to bear with me?’Musa said, ‘If I ask you about anything after this, then you should no longer keep me company. I will have given you excuse enough’ (Kahf, 18:74-76).

With these words, the prophet Musa meant to say that he was no longer in a state to apologise.

‘So they went on until they reached the inhabitants of a town. They asked them for food but they refused them hospitality. They found there a wall about to fall down and he built it up. Musa said, ‘If you had wanted, you could have taken a wage for doing that.’(Khidr) said, ‘This is where you and I part company. I will let you know the explanation of those things about which you were not able to restrain yourself.As for the boat, it belonged to some poor people who worked on the sea. I wanted to damage it because a king was coming behind them, commandeering every boat.As for the boy, his parents were muminun and we feared that



he would darken their days with excessive insolence and kufr. We wanted their Lord to give them in exchange a purer son than him, one more compassionate. As for the wall, it belonged to two young orphans in the town and there was a treasure underneath it, belonging to them. Their father was one of the salihun and your Lord wanted them to come of age and then to unearth their treasure as a mercy from Him. I did not do it of my own volition. That is the explanation of the things about which you were not able to restrain yourself' (Kahf, 18:77-82).



In kasbi knowledge, that is knowledge which is acquired through effort, one asks questions in order to gain more understanding of a topic. However this approach does not apply to the science of ilm-i ledunn because this knowledge consists of wisdom that is gained through the inspiration of the heart and in accordance with the student's personal abilities or capabilities.

This is why more importance should be given to training a student's nafs in addition to developing their mental skills. That is, a student must undergo training of his nafs in addition to developing the capabilities of his heart.

The fact that such a great prophet as Musa was sent to Khidr to learn this form of knowledge, that is, ilm-i leddunn, is very significant. It is not a deficiency on the part of Musa to have to learn this knowledge from somebody who is a master. We can give the example of an expert marble sculptor and the situation of the king of architects, Mimar Sinan; undoubtedly the knowledge and skill of Mimar Sinan in working marble cannot be at the same level of an expert marble worker.

But this is not a deficiency on the part of Mimar Sinan; for the marble worker is only skilled in working marble whereas Mimar Sinan was a genius without parallel in architecture and leader in the art of building. Likewise the situation of the prophet Musa in comparison to Khidr is like that of Mimar Sinan to the marble worker.

This truth shows us that the prophet Musa was a prophet who did not necessarily have knowledge of all things and that some of the knowledge of Allah was not given to him. This ilm-i ledunn was given to him through Khidr, who was at a much lower station. This is to inform us that even the prophets are powerless in the face of divine knowledge. Moreover this collective knowledge of Musa and Khidr also shows us the worth and elevated station of the prophet Muhammad (saw), the dhu'l janahayn (the possessor of knowledge of both this world and the next).

When the prophet Musa, the third of the great prophets, read about the attributes of the community of the prophet Muhammad (saw) in the scrolls of the Torah he amazingly admired them and said:

"O Lord! Make me from one of them" (Ibn Kathir, Tafsir, C.2. p 259).

Another subtlety in the story of Khidr is the fact that human beings can only understand events and circumstances through causes. When the causes and apparent means are removed the human mind becomes incapacitated and is unable to comprehend the deeper meanings and wisdom behind events.

The inability of the mind to perceive events beyond their means, in the absence of causes is like the inability of the eye to see beyond a certain distance and the ear to hear sounds below a certain intensity. Moreover there are limits to the ability of the mind to comprehend events. When the mind oversteps these limits, perception decreases and it is left incapacitated.

Imam Ghazzali came to the conclusion, after his own personal experiences that lasted a long time, that one cannot arrive at the divine secrets and mysteries with one's mind. He saw that one must pass over the mind, with the knowledge of the heart, in order to understand these divine mysteries and secrets that lie beyond this superficial realm. He said that this was the only way to reach Allah.

In his great work 'Tahafut al-Falasifa' (The Incoherence of the Philosophers), he rebuts the philosophical views of some philosophers and professes the incapacity of the human mind in which they trust so much in.



Ghazzali speaks of the stages that he went through in seeking this true knowledge and the end result as follows:

“I stretched my mind to such a degree that it came to a stage where it was about to break apart. After a point I came to see that it was in absolute helplessness. I then perceived that one must attain by the spiritual illumination and blessings of the Prophet Muhammad in order to understand the divine mysteries.

I prayed and sought refuge in Allah the Most High. The result of my spiritual training which consisted of contemplation, abstinence and dhikr, was that I attained the spirituality of the Messenger of Allah (saw) and I was saved from drowning in the pitfalls of the mind”.

Likewise if one tries to analyse with one’s mind the events in the story of Khidr, the act of putting a hole in the boat would appear to be oppression and injustice towards the owners of the boat. However the reality was that it was a way of preventing oppressors from seizing the boat which was the only source of income of that poor family.

Similarly the killing of the youth seemed to be an outright case of murder. However the truth of the situation was to protect the hereafter of the youth’s righteous mother and father.

Also, the repairing of the wall of a people who refused to host them seems opposed to logic. However, the truth of the situation was to protect a trust that belonged to those two innocent orphans. Had that wall been torn down, the gold would have found its way into the hands of the tyrannical villagers before the children had grown up.

The secrets behind these events could only become apparent through this ilm-i ledunn because, the secret of fate is not able to be comprehended with the mind. Understanding the wisdom behind fate is a matter that is above the level of human perception.

There is a hadith narrated in Bukhari that is related to this matter:

“May Allah have mercy on Musa, the son of Imran. If he had have been more patient, Khidr would have taught him the wisdom behind many more strange and extraordinary events” (Bukhari, Anbiya, 27; Ahmad bin Hanbal, V, 118)



QUESTIONS

A. Answer the following questions

1. How did the Madyans treat those foreigners who came to their land for trade?
2. Where did the prophet Shu'ayb spend the last part of his life?
3. About which act of the Madyans did the prophet Shu'ayb recite the verse: **'My people, worship Allah and look to the Last Day'** (Ankabut, 29:36)?
4. Why did those Madyans who did not believe in the prophet Shu'ayb threaten and try to misguide those who believed in him?
5. List the reasons for the destruction of the people of Madyan?
6. Compare the ways in which the people of Thamud and the people of Madyan were destroyed.
7. Which prophets are considered to be 'ulu al-azm', that is the Resolute Messengers?
8. Who do the terms Sipti, Coptic and Pharaoh refer to?
9. Why did Pharaoh order that all new born males from the Israelites be killed?
10. How does the Holy Qur'an describe Pharaoh, who had the male children of the Israelites murdered thus leaving them weak and powerless.
11. How was it that the prophet Musa was able to enter the palace of Pharaoh and grow up there when Pharaoh had all of the children of the Siptis murdered?
12. When we examine the lives of the prophets we find that almost all of them were shepherds. Is there a reason or wisdom in this?
13. When the prophet Musa arrived at the valley of Tuwa, he was asked to remove his sandals. Explain the wisdom in this.
14. Explain the reason why the prophet Musa wanted his brother Harun to be appointed his helper.
15. When the prophets Musa and Harun went to preach to Pharaoh Allah Most High told them to **'speak to him with gentle words so that hopefully he will pay heed or show some fear'** (Taha, 20:44) even though he knew that he would not believe in Him. Evaluate this in terms of our time now.
16. What reasons does Jalalluddin Rumi give for the Pharaoh's magicians became Muslim but then later being punished by Pharaoh?
17. Describe the state of mind of the magicians who, having failed to accept faith their entire lives suddenly were able to believe after witnessing the miracles of the prophet Musa, keeping in mind that their entire worldly fears and anxieties were consequently removed from their hearts.



18. When Pharaoh saw the waters of the Red Sea begin to close (after it had parted for the prophet Musa), he immediately claimed that he now believed in Allah. However the scholars state that this faith was not accepted by Him. What are the reasons for this?
19. Describe your thoughts about the corpse of the Pharaoh in a state of prostration which is on display in the British Museum today.
20. What is the wisdom behind the fact that when the prophet Musa was on Mount Sinai he was able to fast for forty days and nights without feeling any hunger whilst he was unable to stay hungry for even half a day on his journey to Khidr?
21. What were the reasons for the prophet Musa wanting to see his Lord but being unable to see Him?
22. What reaction did Qarun show when he was asked to pay zakat for his wealth?
23. Qarun considered himself superior to others because he recited the Torah better than anyone else. However this did not prevent him from meeting with an unfortunate end. Explain your thoughts on this.
24. The prophet Musa, one of the Resolute Messengers, set out to increase his knowledge on a journey with someone he did not know. What lesson is there in this for those who seek knowledge?

B. Fill in the gaps

1. Musa was a prophet sent to the
2. was appointed as a helper to his brother Musa.
3. The native people of Egypt are called
4. The prophet Musa was called on account of how he conversed with Allah.
5. A book that explains and interprets the Torah is called
6. The prophet Shu'ayb was known as amongst the prophets on account of his ability to speak beautifully and impressively and his skills at persuasion.
7. The reason why the prophet Shu'ayb lost his was due to his crying out of his
8. envelops the hearts of those who are close to Allah so much so that they look at neither worldly bounties nor otherworldly bounties even out of the corner of their eye.



C. Choose the correct option from the following

- 1. Which conclusion can not be made from the warning of the prophet Shu'ayb to his people: 'My people! Do not let your breach with me provoke you into doing wrong so that the same thing happens to you as happened to the people of Nuh and the people of Hud and the people of Salih; and the people of Lut are not far distant from you' (Hud, 11:89)**

 - A. The people of Madyan were biologically related to the people of Lut.
 - B. The people of Madyan were similar to the other tribes the prophet Shu'ayb mentioned in terms of their rebellion and rejection of faith.
 - C. The people of Madyan needed to take heed from the destruction of the people of Lut who lived at a time very close to them.
 - D. Intelligent and discerning people should learn their lesson from the unfortunate end-affairs of other people.

- 2. Which option below correctly states the prophets who are related to the prophet Shu'ayb?**

 - A. The prophet Adam and the prophet Ibrahim.
 - B. The prophet Isa and the prophet Musa.
 - C. The prophet Salih and the prophet Ibrahim.
 - D. The prophet Ayyub and the prophet Musa

- 3. The following answer of the prophet Shu'ayb to his people: 'Do you esteem my clan more than you do Allah? You have made Him into something to cast disdainfully behind your backs!' when they said to him: 'Were it not for your clan, we would have stoned you' (Hud, 11:91-92). shows what type of mentality of the polytheists?**

 - A. They regarded worldly powers to be greater than Allah's power and might.
 - B. They placed importance on human powers alongside the power of Allah.
 - C. They wished to cause suffering for the prophet Shu'ayb, however they feared the punishment of Allah.
 - D. They loved the people from the tribe of Shu'ayb.

- 4. Which of the following is not a virtuous trait that the prophet Shu'ayb called his people to?**

 - A. To observe others rights by not being deceitful in one's measurements and weighing.
 - B. To believe in Allah and His prophets.
 - C. To refrain from commanding that visitors and foreigners be killed
 - D. To keep away from thievery, bribery and profiteering.



5. **The people of Madyan were able to admit to the prophet Shu'ayb that 'You are clearly the forbearing, the rightly-guided!' (Hud, 11:87) even though they refused to listen to his advice. What does this say about their mentality?**
- Even though they appeared to reject faith they did in fact believe.
 - They admired the personality of the prophet Shu'ayb even though they still did not want to accept the faith and social principles that he brought.
 - They complimented the prophet Shu'ayb even though they did not like him.
 - They fully accepted the belief and social order that the prophet Shu'ayb taught.
6. **Which of the following was not a sign before the punishment that was to come to Aiykans?**
- The appearance of hot winds.
 - The proliferation of blue flies.
 - A great increase in temperature
 - Dark clouds completely enveloping the sky.
7. **When his people warned him saying: 'Were it not for your clan, we would have stoned you' (Hud, 11:91), the prophet Shu'ayb's replied: 'My people! Do you esteem my clan more than you do to Allah? You have made Him into something to cast disdainfully behind your backs! But my Lord encompasses everything that you do!' (Hud, 11:92) Which conclusion can not be made from this?**
- The prophet Shu'ayb relied, not on his people, but completely on his Lord.
 - The people of Madyan wished to harm the prophet Shu'ayb but were afraid of his clan.
 - The people of Madyan disregarded the power and might of Allah.
 - The prophet Shu'ayb wished for the destruction of his tribe.
8. **Which of the following is not one of the evil traits of the Aiykans?**
- They asked for a reward in response for their belief.
 - They denied their prophets and tyrannised them.
 - They rebelled against Allah and strayed from the belief of tawheed.
 - They were deceitful in their trade and business.
9. **Which of the following was not a reason for the forceful exile of the Israelites from Egypt?**
- They were subject to the oppression and tyranny of Pharaoh and the Coptics.
 - They lost their prestige and social rights amongst the people of Egypt.
 - The Coptics increased their torture and persecution of the Siptis whom they feared were increasing in number.
 - Pharaoh did not want to harbour the Israelites in Egypt and he drove them out.
10. **Embarrassing and ugly acts that would not even be attributed to ordinary people, are attributed to prophets in the Jewish sacred texts. What does this say about the Jews and their beliefs?**
- The information given in the Jewish sacred texts are quite reasonable and logical.
 - The Jews are given to seeing reality as it is.
 - The Jews attribute their own carnal desires and disgrace to their prophets.
 - Their belief in their prophets is very simple and consistent.



11. It is possible to take many lessons from the fact that Pharaoh raised the prophet Musa with his own hands in his own palace whilst not letting any other new born male child live. Which of the following is not one of these lessons?

- A. Allah Most High has subjected all of His servants whom he wished to become prophets to difficult tribulation even from when they were children.
- B. If Allah the Most High has decreed an affair, it is of no consequence if the will of certain human beings is contrary to this. This is why true believers do not fear the evil of creatures.
- C. If Allah has chosen to protect His servant then no one has the power to harm him. And so the prophet Musa was raised in Pharaoh's palace, safe from his tyranny and persecution.
- D. In all circumstances the only Being in which a person should take refuge in is Allah. He will definitely save those who seek refuge in Him.

12. Despite having been raised in the palace of Pharaoh, the prophet Musa submitted to the belief of tawheed and was given good morals and was not affected by their beliefs or character. What truth does this express in terms of educating the human being?

- A. To raise a child to be good or bad is entirely dependent on the desire of his mother and father.
- B. Allah the Most High educates all of His prophets at the hands of unbelievers.
- C. Allah Most High subjects those people He has chosen to be messengers to His own Divine education and nurturing and offers them special protection.
- D. A child's education and training is in no way influenced by seeing examples of correct belief and good character.

13. In the verse: 'I am your Lord. Take off your sandals. You are in the holy valley of Tuwa' (Taha, 20:12), which of the following is in-correct in relation to the sufi meaning of 'take off your sandals'.

- A. Cleanse your heart of all worldly and other worldly preoccupations.
- B. Completely withdraw yourself from your human traits by clinging to revelation and rise up to the realm of the angels.
- C. Free yourself of your nature and your nafs. Abandon thinking of your nafs and everything related to it and then come.
- D. What is indicated by the sandals are this world and the hereafter.

14. Which of the following options correctly shows the characteristics of those who desire the riches of this world and forget the hereafter; and those who prefer the bounties of the otherworld over the riches of this one?

- A. To be arrogant – to be spoilt
- B. To be selfless – to be patient
- C. To be greedily ambitious – to be content
- D. To love the wealthy – to despise the poor



15. In the verse '**But speak to him with gentle words so that hopefully he will pay heed or show some fear**' (Taha, 20:44) **Allah Most High commands that Pharaoh, who went to extremes in his unbelief and wildness, be spoken to with gentle words and a sweet tongue. Which of the following is not a lesson that we can take from this event?**

- A. Allah Most High advised His prophets to speak to Pharaoh in a gentle way in order protect them from his evil.
- B. One should address all those we speak to with gentle words and a kind manner, whatever their condition is in terms of belief and character.
- C. Gentle words, a sweet tongue and correct manner are very effective in changing a person's ideas and beliefs.
- D. If they had gone to Pharaoh in a harsh and challenging manner, this would have increased his rejection and unruliness even more.

16. **When we compare the notion of prophethood in today's Judaism with Islam which traits are present in both religions?**

- A. Trust
- B. Fetanet (Aptitude)
- C. Ismet (Virtue)
- D. Propagation

17. **Which psychological state of the magicians, who overcame all of their worldly fears and anxieties despite having accepted belief a short time earlier, is incorrect in the options below?**

- A. Because they had devoted themselves to Allah with certain belief, no trace of doubt remained in their heart.
- B. By experiencing the pleasure that arose from their belief they were able to grasp the divine mysteries.
- C. They knew that having believed in Allah, Pharaoh could no longer harm them.
- D. All anxieties and fears that were once present in their hearts gave way to fear of Allah and hope and complete trust in Him.

18. **Which characteristic below was the one that the prophet Musa was most in need of when asking for knowledge from Khidr, and which is most required for those who seek knowledge.**

- A. Intelligence
- B. Hard work
- C. Living in separation
- D. Patience

19. **In the verse: 'And do not walk on the earth with haughty self-conceit; for verily, you can never rend the earth asunder, not can you ever grow as tall as the mountains!' (Isra, 17:37) which truth has Allah emphasised so that we can more clearly understand how arrogance does not befit the human being?**

- A. The human body, which is made up of flesh and bones, is powerless to rival simple earth or a piece of rock.
- B. The value of the earth and the mountains are greater than the human being.
- C. The strength of a person's spirit is greater than the strength of their body.
- D. A human being has no power nor capacity to surpass the mountains nor penetrate the earth.



20. Which one of the following was not one of the calamities that befell the Jews?

- A. They were plagued by hordes of locusts and frogs
- B. Flooding and deluge
- C. The rivers of the Nile and their drinking water turned blood red.
- D. Their faces turned black as a result of their sins.

21. Before Pharaoh drowned he claimed to believe in Allah however this was not enough to save him and his body has been preserved intact until this day. Which of the following conclusions can not be made in regard to this?

- A. Pharaoh believed but because he did not perform any worship his faith was not sufficient to save him and he parted from this world with fruitless faith.
- B. Pharaoh's faith 'appeared' out of fear and a state of hopelessness and thus was not a valid faith.
- C. Pharaoh claimed to have faith on many other occasions when he was subject to various calamities but when they passed he abandoned his so-called faith. This situation is an indication that a person can take their last breath in a state of faithlessness.
- D. Allah Most High preserved Pharaoh's body until this day so that he could be a living lesson for people until the Day of Judgement.

22. Which of the following was not a factor in the distortion and alteration of the Torah that was revealed to the prophet Musa?

- A. At first only a single copy of the Torah was preserved.
- B. The single copy of the Torah was lost during the long years of bondage of the Israelites under the Babylonians.
- C. Most of the Israelites betrayed their sacred book by changing the places of many words in the Torah
- D. There are contradictions and unrealistic notions in the Torah.

23. In the journey of the prophet Musa with Khidr, we see that there was in reality no real cause and effective relationship between the events that they witnessed; and that there was a mysterious wisdom hidden behind each of those events. This can not be understood with mere intelligence and the mind but rather through a sensing of the heart and inspiration and thus this requires that people who are in search of knowledge need to possess certain characteristics. Which of the following is not one of these characteristics?

- A. Purification of one's nafs and cleansing one's heart.
- B. Attaining a certain level in the physical sciences.
- C. Being a person of taqwa and acting upon one's knowledge.
- D. Obeying the commands of Allah to the letter and being completely devoted to Him.





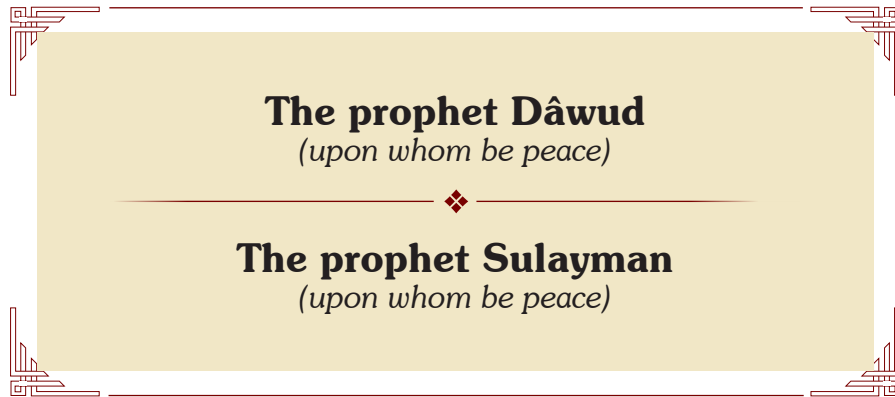
THE PROPHET
DÂWUD

-upon whom be peace-



THE PROPHET
SULAYMAN

-upon whom be peace-



The prophet Dâwud (peace be upon him)

The lineage of the prophet Dawud goes back to Yahuda, the son of the prophet Yaqub (peace be upon them). He was born in Jerusalem and passed away at the approximate age of 100 years. He was bestowed with prophethood and was also a commander.

Historians have estimated the period of his rule to be between the years 1015 and 975BC.

The name of the prophet Dawud is mentioned in the Qur'an 16 times.

He received the Zabur, the Psalms in the language of Hebrew.

Talut, Jalut and the Tabut

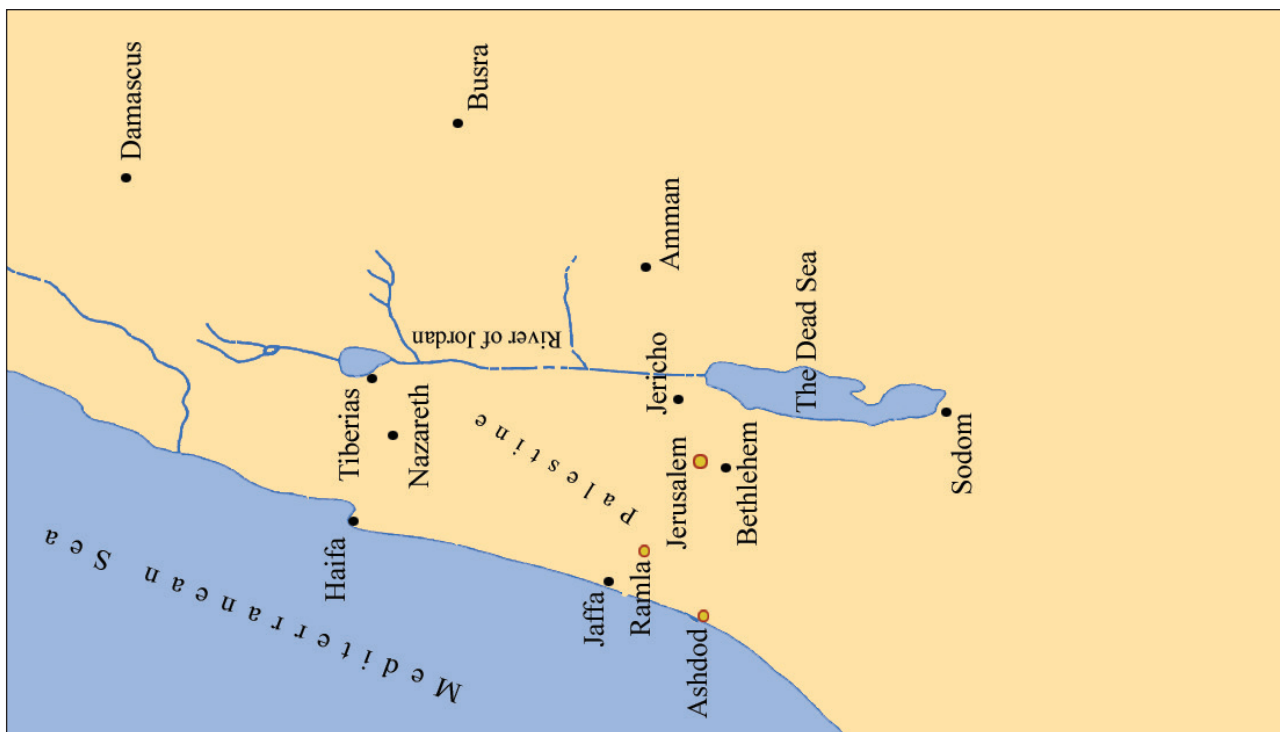
After the prophet Musa, the prophets that were sent to the Israelites were to act upon the commandments of the Torah. When the prophets who were sent to them and who called them to the straight path were alive the Jews would follow them. However in the short period after they passed away and until a new prophet came they would return to their own deviant ways. They would distort the divine commands that had come to them, interpreting them according to their own desires and whims. Thus the Jews would be reformed when a new prophet came but turn once more to dissipation at the first opportunity after that prophet passed away.

At that time between the lands of Egypt and Syria there lived a tribe of people called the Amalekites. They were ruled over by a leader named Jalut (Goliath) who was very strong and powerful. Allah had burdened the Israelites by making Jalut dominate over them. Jalut defeated the Israelites and took their women and children as their slaves. There was a chest in which were preserved some sacred valuables from the time of Musa. This chest (the Arc of the Covenant) is named 'Tabut' in the Holy Qur'an and it had passed into the hands of Jalut. As an insult to the Israelites Jalut threw this chest, which had spiritual value for them, into refuse.

This greatly offended the Israelites. They were very sad that they had lost the Tabut and now their only thought was to retake it.

At that time there was a prophet named Samuel. The Jews asked him to appoint a king over them who would save them from Jalut or Goliath. Samuel prayed and supplicated to Allah and Allah Most High





revealed to him that he should assign Talut (Saul) as a king over them. However some of the Jews did not accept Talut as a leader over them and protested saying:

“He is not from the lineage of kings”.

At that time all of the prophets who were sent to the Israelites came from the lineage of the Levi, one of the sons of Yaqub whilst the kings came from his son, Judah. Talut was from neither of these. This event is described in the Holy Qur’an as follows:

‘What do you think about the council of the tribe of Israel after Musa’s time when they said to one of their Prophets, ‘Give us a king and we will fight in the Way of Allah!’? He said, ‘Is it not possible that if fighting were prescribed for you, you would not fight?’ They said, ‘How could we not fight in the way of Allah when we have been driven from our homes and children?’ But then when fighting was prescribed for them, they turned their backs – except for a few of them. Allah knows the wrongdoers’ (Baqara, 2:246)

‘Their Prophet said to them, ‘Allah has appointed Talut to be your king.’ They said, ‘How can he have kingship over us when we have much more right to kingship than he does? He has not even got much wealth!’ He said, ‘Allah has chosen him over you and favoured him greatly in knowledge and physical strength. Allah gives kingship to anyone He wills. Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing’ (Baqara, 2:247)

According to the leading Israelites, power must go to those who possess wealth and capital. However this notion is against the benefit of society and contrary to justice. It is the one who is capable not wealthy who should be appointed king. The determination of who is worthy of being given such power looks to that person’s spiritual power, knowledge, experience, and his power and courage. Protesting against the rule of Talut, the Israelites now said:

“If he is truly a king, then show us proof”.

‘Their Prophet said to them, ‘The sign of his kingship is that the Ark (Tabut) will come to you, containing serenity from your Lord and certain relics left by the families of Musa and Harun. It will be borne by angels. There is a sign for you in that if you are believers’ (Baqara, 2:248).



There are accounts that claim that the Tabut was first brought down to the prophet Adam, and from him it passed to the prophet Seth and then to the prophet Ibrahim, and later on to the prophet Yaqub all the way to the prophet Musa (peace be upon them all).

The prophet Musa had placed some scrolls of the Torah and other valuable items inside this chest. During battle the Tabut would be carried in front of the soldiers thus increasing their moral and strength and spiritual power. Allah Most High eventually had the Tabut placed in front of Talut's house by the angels.

When the Israelites saw this, they were relieved and accepted the kingship of Talut.

The trial

After Talut became king, he reformed the army and brought it to order. A little while later he went to fight Goliath.

Due to the hot season, the soldiers were very thirsty. However Allah Most High had desired to test them and sent revelation to Samuel. Receiving this news Talut said to his soldiers:

“Allah will test you with water. Whoever drinks to his fill is not from my soldiers...”

In the command that had come, the soldiers were only allowed to drink a handful of water from a river which according to Ibn Abbas, was the river of Jordan (Ibn Kathir, Qisasu al-Anbiya, p. 511).

Eventually Talut and his soldiers arrived at this river. The army consisted of 80 thousand soldiers. 76 thousand of these did not follow the orders and drank water until they were satiated. Only four thousand soldiers obeyed the command not to drink too much water. A great number of these then turned back, thinking that their number was too little (to do battle). Only 313 people were left.

This is the same number of Muslims who had fought at the battle of Badr. Bara (ra) narrates:

“As Companions of Muhammad, we used to say: the number of men at Badr was 313, the same as the number of soldiers who passed the river with Talut” (Bukhari, Maghazi 6)

Those who drank more than a handful of water became even thirstier and their lips dried up. They became listless and exhausted. Those who obeyed the command however increased in their faith and also in their courage and strength.

The Holy Qur'an says:

‘When Talut marched out (from Jerusalem) with the army, he said, ‘Allah will test you with a river. Anyone who drinks from it is not with me. But anyone who does not taste it is with me – except for him who merely scoops up a little in his hand.’ But they drank from it – except for a few of them. Then when he and those who had faith with him had crossed it, they said, ‘We do not have the strength to face Goliath and his troops today.’ But those who were sure that they were going to meet Allah said, ‘How many a small force has triumphed over a much greater one by Allah’s permission! Allah is with the steadfast’ (Baqara, 2:249)

This verse draws attention to the discipline of the army. It is only possible for an army to be victorious if they follow the orders of their commander above all else. Becoming victorious in war is not related to the number of soldiers but rather to having a just cause, and the faith and spirituality of those fighting. The crown of victory is placed on the heads of those armies who are not greater in number but who have strong spiritual strength.

The prophet Dawud and victory

In the army of Talut was a youth by the name of Dawud who was eighteen years old. According to the exegete Baydawi, Dawud had enlisted in the army of Talut with his father and thirteen brothers. Dawud was a shepherd and an excellent sling thrower. He was also very brave. He would say to his father:



“All of the stones and mountains are glorifying Allah together with me”. His father would reply:

“O Dawud, good news for you!”

Dawud had a very beautiful and strong voice. This is why they made him stand before Talut. Talut took him as his friend and conversed with him. Dawud enlisted in the army which Talut had prepared to fight against the Amalekites.

Talut said:

“Whoever kills Jalut, I will give him my daughter in marriage”

‘When they (the army of Talut) came out against Talut and his troops, they said, ‘Our Lord, pour down steadfastness upon us, and make our feet firm, and help us against this unbelieving people’ (Baqara, 2:250)

From this verse we can understand that there are three important traits that those who go out to fight the enemy for the sake of Allah must possess: these are being steadfast in the face of difficulty, not losing one’s courage and patience, and not despairing of divine help [not losing hope that divine help will come].

Allah informed the prophet Samuel that Dawud would slay Jalut (Goliath). This is why when he went to battle he took Dawud with him. When the two armies met Jalut asked for a brave man to stand before him. Accepting this challenge Dawud stood before him.

Everyone was in amazement because Jalut was very well built and strong in comparison to Dawud. Jalut belittled Dawud:

“O lowly one, have you come? Why did you come?”

“I have come to fight you” replied Dawud. Jalut then mocked him. Dawud took out his

sling and flung the rock at Jalut. The fast flying stone hit Jalut right on the forehead, making him fall off his horse and killing him.

Jalut was a ruler who was very proud of his strength and his large build. However despite this strength he was overcome by Dawud.

Allah Most High thus shows that matters are not dependent on apparent causes but in reality they take place in accordance with His will.

He teaches us that the one who is strong in the eyes of people can be weak, and the one who appears weak can be made strong by the help of Allah. However strong those tyrants who deny Allah may appear, when the will of Allah is carried out, they can fall to a state more powerless than a little child.

There are many other instances of wisdom in this event that Allah Most High desired. Allah Most High desired that the prophet Dawud reign after Talut and that following him, his son Sulayman take his place.

‘And with Allah’s permission they routed them. Dawud killed Goliath and Allah gave him kingship and wisdom and taught him whatever He willed. If it were not for Allah’s driving some people back by means of others, the earth would have been corrupted. But Allah shows favour to all the worlds’ (Baqara, 2:251).

The verse speaks of the wisdom of the divine order that is present in worldly life.

Allah Most High has tied the establishment of harmony in social life to certain causes. This is why some people are wealthy whilst others remain poor; some are strong, some are weak; some are healthy some are sick; and whilst some have faith, others deny and the relationship between these ensures the order and continuation of life in this world. Just like the transfer of energy between the positive and negative poles, the battles that take place between people are a cause for continuing the social order.

Talut burnt all of the booty that was gained after the victory. This is because in the shariah of Musa, property that was taken from the enemy was to be burnt.



Talut returned to Jerusalem where he informed the prophet Samuel of the events that took place. Samuel said to him:

“Now you keep your promise”.

Thus Talut married his daughter to Dawud.

After Talut passed away Dawud became king.

A little while after that he was made a prophet.

Thus he became the first prophet who was given both kingdom and prophethood.

He was made superior in terms of his virtuous character and his spiritual capabilities. The Psalms (Zabur), one of the four major revelatory books, was revealed to him.

‘My Lord knows best everyone in the heavens and earth. We favoured some of the Prophets over others. And We gave Dawud the Zabur’ (Isra, 17:55).

For his entire life Dawud ruled over the people with justice. He would mix with his people, dressed in casual clothing, in order to ask whether they were content with the practices and activities of his rule and what their opinion was of the king. However he would never find a person who gave a negative answer nor complained (Qurtubi, Tafsiir, XIV, 266).

The following verse tells of how he became successful by relying upon Allah and thus obtaining His help:

‘(O my Messenger) Be steadfast in the face of what they say and remember Our slave Dawud, who possessed true strength. He truly turned to his Lord’ (Sad, 38:17)

According to narrations, the prophet Dawud was very fond of worshipping. He would fast on alternative days. He would only sleep one third of the night and pass the rest of it in worship. The prophet Dawud would try to determine the best and most virtuous times for worshipping Allah.

One day he asked the angel Gabriel:

“O Gabriel! which time is the most virtuous to spend in worship?”

Gabriel replied:

“O Dawud! I know of no slice of time more virtuous than the predawn (sahar) when even the throne shivers from Divine Mercy” (Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Zuhd, p 70).

‘We subjected the mountains to glorify with him in the evening and at sunrise. And also the birds, flocking together, all of them turned to Him’ (Sa’d, 38:18-19).



Almighty Allah bestowed upon the prophet Dawud a mighty and beautiful voice. Whenever he would recite from the Psalms, wild animals would gather around him and listen.

‘We gave Dawud great favour from Us: ‘O mountains and birds! Echo with him in his praise!’ And We made iron malleable for him’ (Saba, 34:10).

‘We taught him the art of making garments for you to protect you against each others’ violence, but do you show any thanks?’ (Anbiya, 21:80).

By making coats of armour the prophet Dawud was able to protect his army against the enemy and also earned his own livelihood.



Even though he was a prophet who possessed political authority and had great financial wealth, he preferred to earn his livelihood with his own hands which is very significant.

This was a good example for those who were under his rule and also for those generations who were to come after him.

Likewise the prophet Muhammad (saw) is reported to have said :

“No person consumes a better provision than that that he gains with his own hands. Dawud, the prophet of Allah would earn his livelihood with his own hands” (Bukhari, Buyu’, 15: Anbiya 37).

The verse from the Qur’an states:

‘Make full-length coats of mail, measuring the links with care. And act rightly, all of you, for I see what you do’ (Saba, 34:11)

‘Dawud, We have made you a viceregent on the earth, so judge between people with truth and do not follow your own desires, letting them misguide you from the Way of Allah. Those who are misguided from the Way of Allah will receive a harsh punishment because they forgot the Day of Reckoning’ (Sa’d, 38:26)

The prophet Dawud was supported with divine help and led great armies. He had many protectors. Besides being given prophethood and the Psalms he was also given great knowledge. He was a person of righteous action and also correct in his judgement.

He also spoke beautifully and with wisdom as mentioned in the verse below:

‘We made his kingdom strong and gave him wisdom and decisive speech’ (Sa’d 38:20).

Dawud, prophet and leader, would use his time well and divide it up into four parts:

The first part he would spend in worship. The second part he would devote to matters of the law. The third part he would preach to the people and advise them. In the fourth part he would see to his own personal matters.

The trial of the prophet Dawud (peace be upon him).

Like all prophets, prophet Dawud was also subject to certain tribulations. He was shown his own human weaknesses and any potential mistakes. He would then immediately repent and Allah would forgive him. Thus Allah Most High taught him the perils along the path to eternity.

When the prophet Dawud would retire to the temple for worship and remembering Allah he would be in a state of seclusion and no one would enter his presence. One time whilst he was in such a state of worship two men approached him. Dawud became anxious at this unexpected situation. He did not think that anyone was able to enter the temple whose doors were closed. Even though he told them that he was in his time of worship they said:

“You can worship any time”. They then told him their wish:

“Do not fear! We entered your presence in order for you to judge us. We are two claimants who have infringed upon each other’s rights. Judge between us fairly”. Dawud replied:

“In that case, go ahead”.

One of the two men said:

“My brother has 99 sheep while I have one.

Despite this he wanted to take this one sheep of mine and he defeated me”.

The prophet Dawud became agitated at this injustice and without asking the other claimant anything he said:



“If he wants to take your only sheep then he is transgressing against your rights. People who do not believe in Allah will violate others as such. And anyway it is hard to find a good person”.

They smiled and then went on their way.

The prophet Dawud had acted hastily in giving his judgement and pronounced his decision without listening to the other side.

Whereas a matter or part of a matter can change when the other party is listened to; in fact, the person considered right could turn out to be wrong and the person who was thought to be in the wrong could in fact be in the right.

The prophet Dawud immediately realised his mistake and prostrated right away when he realised that this was a divine test. He sought forgiveness from Allah and Allah forgave him⁷.

Such events are used to test the prophets take place in order for them to perceive their own weaknesses. This situation does not affect their prophethood or their attribute of them being protected from grave sins.

That is the mistakes that the prophets appeared to make in order to show us how we should behave if we make the same mistake.

There are important lessons for us to learn from this event in the prophet Dawud’s life.

Those who are in a position to judge amongst people or who have taken this responsibility upon themselves must act with great sensitivity and behave fairly.

A hadith relating to this matter states:

“On the Day of Reckoning those who judged justly will be upon pillars of light on the right of the Most Merciful...they are those who in their rulings were fair with their families and those whom they were responsible for” (Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Musnad, II, 160)

The Messenger of Allah (saw) is also reported to have said in another hadith:

“On the Day of Reckoning, the most beloved to Allah Most High and the nearest in proximity to Him are the just rulers. And the most displeasing to Allah and the farthest from him will be oppressive rulers” (Tirmidhi, Ahkam, 4; Nasai, Zakat, 77)

The event of the Companions of the Sabbath

There used to be a people who lived between Egypt and Madina Al-Munawwara, in a town called Ayla, on the shores of the Red Sea. These people were called the ‘Companions of the Sabbath’. They numbered approximately seventy thousand people. They would busy themselves with nothing but worship on Saturdays. On that day all other acts had been prohibited for them. They had also promised the prophet Dawud that they would not hunt on the Sabbath. However Satan did not refrain from whispering to them and deceiving them:

“You have not been prohibited from hunting but rather from eating your prey”, he said.

As part of divine wisdom the number of fish would increase on Sabbath and decrease in number on other days. This is why this suggestion of Satan’s was very enticing to some of them. Thus the people of Madyan were divided into three groups:

The first group refused to listen to the command of Allah and continued to fish on the Sabbath. They ate what they fished and they also sold them. They would throw their nets on Saturdays and pull them in on Sundays.

⁷ See chapter Sa’d, 38:21-25



The second group did not commit the sin of fishing on Saturdays but they also remained silent in the face of the sins of those who did not obey Allah. They did not advice or caution the people.

The third group obeyed the command of Allah and they cautioned and advised those who did not. They also cautioned those who remained silent, telling them that what they were doing was not right. They thus commanded others to good. Those who were silent said to those who cautioned them:

“Why do you tire yourselves and try to counsel a people who will be destroyed?

What a shame for your efforts?”

Those who commanded to good would reply:

“We are doing this in order not to be responsible in the presence of Allah and to carry out our responsibility as best as we can”.

Later those did obey the divine commands but were silent about the others’ sins built a wall between themselves and the others to protect themselves from the calamity that would befall the rebellious. As the days went by eventually no sound could be heard from beyond the wall and when they looked they saw that they had all been changed into monkeys overnight...

They walked amongst their relatives, who now appeared as monkeys, sad and helplessly. Three days later they all passed away.

In the commentary of Baghawi named ‘*Ma’alim at-Tanzeel*’, we are informed that those who did not hunt but also did not caution or advise those who did hunt were also changed into monkeys together with the first group.

The Holy Qur’an mentions this as follows:

‘Ask them about the town which was by the sea when they broke the Sabbath – when their fish came to them near the surface on their Sabbath day but did not come on the days which were not their Sabbath. In this way We put them to the test because they were deviators. When a group of them said, ‘Why do you rebuke a people whom Allah is going to destroy or severely punish?’ They said, ‘So that we have an excuse to present to your Lord, and so that hopefully they will gain taqwa’ (A’raf, 7:163-164)

‘Then when they forgot what they had been reminded of, We rescued those who had forbidden the evil and seized those who did wrong with a harsh punishment because they were deviators. When they were insolent about what they had been forbidden to do, We said to them, ‘Be apes, despised, cast out!’ (A’raf, 7:165-166)

Almighty Allah tells us that this event is a lesson and advice for people:

‘We made it an exemplary punishment for those there then, and those coming afterwards, and a warning to those who have taqwa’ (Baqara, 2:66)

Thus Allah Most High first of all transformed those miserable people who were insistent in their evil and then destroyed them.

Just as there is no relation between the claim that human beings came from the apes and this verse, there is also no proof for such a delusion.

A legacy from the prophet Dawud: the fast of Dawud

Sawm-i Dawud (the fast of Dawud) is a fast in which a person fasts on alternate days. It is a legacy of worship left over from the prophet Dawud for the community of Muhammad.

Because it is a practice particular to the prophet Dawud, it is called the ‘fast of Dawud’.



Abdullah ibn Amr al-As narrates:

“When I swore that I would fast during the day and pray the whole night, the people informed the Messenger of Allah.

He asked:

“Are you the one who said such and such?”

I replied:

“May my mother and father be sacrificed for you o Messenger of Allah, yes I said so”. He said to me:

“You do not have the strength for this! Fast sometimes and eat other times, sleep some nights and wake for the tahajjud prayer on other nights. Fast for three days out of every month! The reward for one act of good is ten times its worth. This is like fasting for the whole year”.

I replied:

“I can do more than that”. He said:

“In that case, fast one day and then do not fast for two day”.

“I can do more than that”.

“In that case fast one day and do not fast the next. This is the fast of the prophet Dawud. And it is the most moderate of fasts”.

I said:

“I can do more than that”.

“There can be nothing more than that”, he replied (Bukhari, Sawm, 55, 56, 57; Tahajjud 7, Muslim, Siyam, 181-193).

The death of the prophet Dawud

The Messenger of Allah (saw) is reported to have said:

“Dawud was very sensitive in matters of religion and was very careful about guarding his honour. Whenever he left the house he would make sure his door was shut tight. Nobody would be able to enter until he returned. One day, Dawud left home as usual and closed his door... when he returned he saw a man standing in the middle of his house” He asked him who he was and the man replied:

“I am such a one who is not fearful of kings nor can curtains and barriers prevent me (from entering)”.

The prophet Dawud then said:

“By Allah, in that case then you are the angel of death. Welcome by the command of Allah”.

A little while later his soul was returned to Allah...” (Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Musnad, II, 419)

The prophet Dawud’s rule lasted for forty years and was the most enlightened period of the Israelites. As a bounty, he was given both kingdom and prophethood. After he passed away, his son Sulayman took his place and he was also made a prophet.

The virtues of the prophet Dawud

- The prophet Dawud would turn to Allah for all of his affairs.
- One of the four major revelatory books, the Psalms, was revealed to him.
- When he made dhikr of Allah, the mountains and the birds would make dhikr with him.
- He understood the meaning behind the chirping of the birds and he knew their language.



- He had a very beautiful voice. Whenever he would recite from the Psalms, the mountains and the birds would listen to him attentively
- Even though he was a very wealthy ruler, he earned his livelihood with his own hands. He would work iron with his hands until it became like wax and he would make armour out of this.
- He was a man of discernment and wisdom, with the ability to distinguish truth from falsehood.
- His nation was the most majestic and powerful of nations of that period. He conquered Jerusalem and made it his capital.
- The prophet Dawud was a very grateful servant towards his Lord
- In short he was a very great prophet about whom Allah said in the Qur'an: **'We gave Dawud great favour from Us...'** (Saba, 34:10)

The contents of the Psalms

In the Holy Qur'an, the words 'Zabur' and 'Zubur' are mentioned in various places. 'Zabur' means book while 'Zubur' means books, that is, it is the plural form. In the Qur'an the word 'Zabur' is mentioned three times in relation to the prophet Dawud. The word 'Zubur' is mentioned, not in relation to the prophet Dawud, but as a divine revelation given to the prophets, just as in the following verse:

'It is certainly in the scriptures of the previous peoples' (Shu'ara, 26:196).

This verse is also a reminder that the name of **the Messenger of Allah (saw) is mentioned in the previous holy books brought down to the prophets and how the entire universe and prophets were blessed with the good news of his arrival.**

In regards to the Zabur revealed to the prophet Dawud, the Holy Qur'an says:

'We wrote down in the Zabur, after the Reminder (Torah) came: 'It is My slaves who are righteous who will inherit the earth' (Anbiya, 21:105)

There is no other information about the Zabur mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. When other Islamic sources provide information about the prophet Dawud, they mention that he was given the Psalms and they mention his superior characteristics. Islamic scholars state that matters related to rulings, that is, commands about what to do and what not to do in religion cannot be found in the Psalms. Rather it is a book of supplications and entreaties directed to Almighty Allah.

Thus because the prophet Dawud came after the prophet Musa, he acted upon the commands of the Torah, in bringing about the rulings of the religion. The Psalms are a book which leads those who read it to open up their hearts and love for Allah; it is a book of divine psalms in the form of poetry in which refuge is sought with Almighty Allah.

The 'zabur' that we have today are found in the 'Book of Psalms' in the Holy Bible (in The Old Testament). The term 'psalm' means poetry spoken to music which has subtle and touching meaning.

The number of psalms numbers 150. Approximately 70 of them are attributed to the prophet Dawud whilst the remaining 80 are believed to belong to other authors.

Thus the Book of Psalms that the Jews have today is not the psalms that the Qur'an mentions as being revealed to the prophet Dawud. Not all of the sections of the Holy Bible were recorded or preserved as they were originally revealed. The original psalms were later subject to much human intervention and alteration, thus removing all possibility of the existence of a first and original form.

In addition, today's Book of Psalms began to be written down about five hundred years after the death of the prophet Dawud. In addition to the life and preaching of the prophet Dawud, it is also reported that there are approximately 100 other poems of unknown authorship whose sources have not been identified.



Moreover the concept of God in the Psalms is anthropomorphic just as in the Torah.

That is, God has been given human characteristics which do not befit the His divinity. Just as in other sections of the Holy Bible, in this section too, God is considered to have a son, which his contrary to the notion of tawheed.

In today's Psalms, the prophet Dawud is reported to say in one of his supplications:

“My Lord said to me: You are my son! This day have I begotten you” (Psalms, 2/7)

Thus we can see that the Psalms that exist today are simply a book of poetry. It contains nothing more than a series of supplications which are attributed to the prophet Dawud and others.

It is impossible to distinguish how much of it is divine revelation, personal inspiration, or human addition.

The prophet Sulayman (peace be upon him)

The prophet Sulayman was born in the Gaza region of today's Palestine. When his father, Dawud, passed away he was approximately 12 or 13 years old. Even when he was a child the prophet Sulayman possessed great intelligence and perception. A hadith in relation to the prophet Sulayman is reported from the Messenger of Allah as follows:

“... One time there were two women who had two young sons. As they travelled on their way, a wolf came and snatched the child of the older woman. The older woman turned to her friend who was younger and said:

“The wolf has taken your child”.

The younger woman said (rightfully):

“No, it is your son he has taken”.

These two women disputed the matter and then took their case to the prophet Dawud for him to make his ruling. The prophet Dawud judged that the child who was with them belonged to the older woman. When the younger woman protested this ruling, they went to the prophet Dawud's son Sulayman.

They told him the ruling of the prophet Dawud. Sulayman said:

“Bring me a knife. I will divide the child into two and give you each one half”.

Upon this, the younger woman cried out:

“No please do not do that. May Allah's mercy be upon you. The child belongs to that woman”.

Receiving this reply, the prophet Sulayman then judged that the son was in fact the younger woman's (Bukhari, Anbiya, 40)

The compassion of a mother is such that she would be willing to lose her child to another woman rather than having him die.

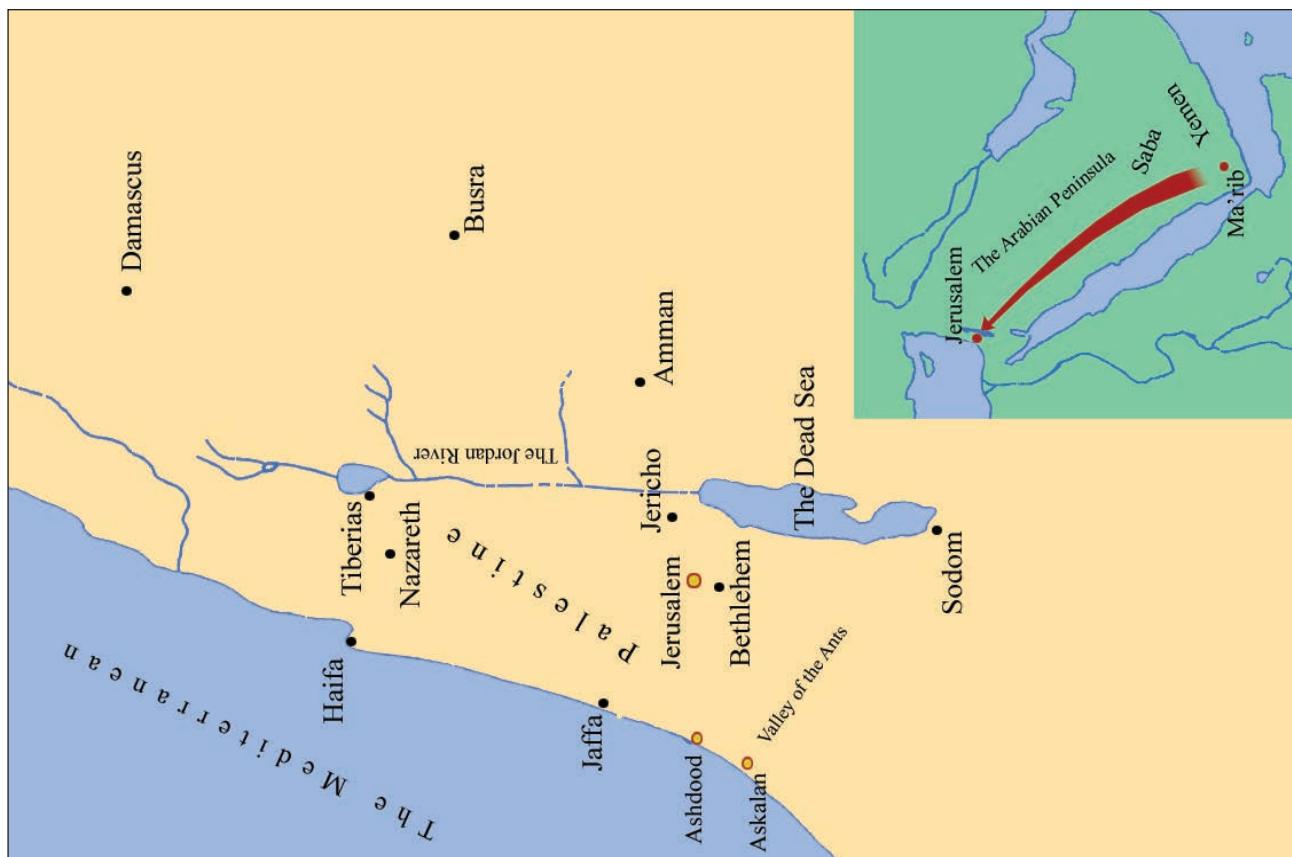


Another event that demonstrates the discernment of the prophet Sulayman is as follows:

One night a herd of sheep destroyed a field. The owners of the field went to the prophet Dawud and complained. The destroyed field was equal in value to the herd of sheep. Thus the prophet Dawud ruled that the sheep be given to the owner of the field. At that point, despite his young age, Sulayman said:

“Dear father, there is another way. Let the owner of the field be given the sheep as a loan and he can benefit from their milk and wool. Meanwhile he can repair his field and compensate for the damages. Let





the sheep remain with him until the field returns to its original condition. When this happens, then the sheep can be returned to their owner”. The prophet Dawud liked this suggestion very much and ruled according to it. This event is expressed in the Holy Qur’an as follows:

‘And Dawud and Sulayman when they gave judgement about the field, when the people’s sheep strayed into it at night. We were Witness to their judgement’ (Anbiya, 21:78)

‘... for (though) we made Sulayman understand the case (more profoundly), yet We vouchsafed unto both of them sound judgement and knowledge (or right and wrong)’ (Anbiya, 21:79).

The prophet Dawud chose Sulayman out of his 19 sons, to be his vicegerent due to his discernment and acuity and his sincere devotion to Allah. However the Israelites protested this appointment:

“Sulayman is still a child; there are older and better men amongst us”.

The prophet Dawud then prepared an examination, by the command of Allah, in the presence of the scholars. He then asked his son Sulayman:

“What organ makes righteous the other limbs if it is itself righteous and ruins the other limbs if it is itself ruinous?”.

Sulayman replied:

“The heart”

Those present were very fond of this reply.

Later the prophet Dawud, wrote the names of those who wished to be ruler upon their own staff and then locked the staffs up. After a period of time had passed they saw that it was only Sulayman’s staff that grew green leaves.

Allah bestowed this grace upon the prophet Dawud. Thus the Israelites willingly accepted Sulayman as their caliph.

Having managed the matter of vicegerent by the grace of Allah, the prophet Dawud then gave the following advice to his son:

- O my son! Beware of joking, because its benefit is little and it leads to regret.
- Beware of becoming angry because doing so debases the angry person. When you become angry, leave the place you are.
- Do not become too familiar with ill-bred and bad people.
- Do not expect anything from anyone. To covet a bounty that Allah has given to another and not to you is poverty for you.
- Habituate your nafs and your tongue to uprightness.
- Try to make today better than yesterday.
- Embrace taqwa because taqwa elevates a person.
- Never lose hope in the mercy of Allah Most High! His mercy encompasses all things.

After the prophet Dawud passed away, Sulayman became king:

‘We gave Dawud Sulayman. What an excellent slave! He truly turned to his Lord’ (Sa’d, 38:30).

The prophet Sulayman was given many bounties and disposal:

‘We gave knowledge to Dawud and Sulayman who said, ‘Praise be to Allah who has favoured us over many of His slaves who are believers’ (Naml, 27:15).

The prophet Sulayman could understand the language of the birds and their glorification of Allah.

‘Sulayman was Dawud’s heir. He said, ‘Mankind! We have been taught the speech of birds and we have been given everything. This is indeed clear favour’ (Naml, 27:16).

Human beings, the jinn, animals and the wind were at his disposal. They would obey his commands.

‘And to Sulayman We gave the fiercely blowing wind, speeding at his command towards the land which We had blessed. And We had full knowledge of everything’ (Anbiya, 21:81).

‘And We gave Sulayman power over the wind – a month’s journey in the morning and a month in the afternoon. And We made a fount of molten brass flow out for him. And some of the jinn worked in front of him by his Lord’s permission. And if a single one of them deviates at all from Our command, We let him taste the punishment of the Searing Blaze.

‘They (the jinn) made for him anything he wished: high arches and statues, huge dishes like cisterns, great built-in cooking vats. ‘Work, family of Dawud, in thankfulness!’ But very few of My slaves are thankful’ (Saba, 34:12-13).

The word ‘tamasil’ which is mentioned in the verse has been interpreted as being statues or pictures representing living and non-living creatures, made out of copper, earth, glass or similar materials. From this we understand that in the shariah of the prophet Sulayman, making statues, pictures and portraits of living or nonliving creatures was allowed. If this was allowed the reason was that there was no possibility of the people of that period worshipping idols.

The trial of the prophet Sulayman (peace be upon him)

There was one time when Allah Most High tried the prophet Sulayman. In one day he took away his entire material and immaterial power and strength.

‘But (before this), indeed, We had tried Sulayman by placing upon his throne a (lifeless) body; and thereupon he turned (towards Us)...’ (Sa’d, 38:34).

As is mentioned in the verse Sulayman was deprived of everything he had in one instant, and was left with nothing.

There are different interpretations of the terms mentioned in the verse such as 'fataana' ('We tested') and 'left him lifeless on the throne' Some of them are as follows:

1. The prophet Sulayman was tested with a severe illness such that he was left virtually lifeless on his throne.

2. Allah Most High placed a fear in the heart of the prophet Sulayman (peace be upon him) such that it led to such anxiety that he was left as if a lifeless corpse.

3. Some of the artists that the prophet Sulayman had brought in the construction of the Masjid al-Aqsa had evil intentions and formed a mutiny against him such that he lost his power for a period of time or he was separated from his throne.

4. The prophet Sulayman wished to have sons who would battle against the enemies of Allah for His cause. However whilst expressing this wish, he forgot to say 'inshallah', if Allah wills and he forgot to mention Allah's name. Consequently he only had one son from one of his wives, and this son was born disabled' (See, Bukhari, Anbiya, 40). He was thus left deprived of the continuation of his kingdom and throne.

In a similar manner when the prophet Muhammad (saw) was asked about the ruh (the spirit), the Companions of the Cave and Dhu'l Qarnayn, he replied:

"Come back tomorrow and I will inform you". However he forgot to say 'inshallah'. For this reason he was left without revelation for a period. Allah Most High says:

'Never say about anything, 'I am doing that tomorrow,' without adding 'If Allah wills.' Remember your Lord when you forget, and say, 'Hopefully my Lord will guide me to something closer to right guidance than this' (Kahf, 18:23-24)

The prophet Sulayman was returned to his former state a little while later. He then sought forgiveness from his lord as follows:

'He said, 'My Lord, forgive me and give me a kingdom the like of which will never be granted to anyone after me. Truly You are the Ever-Giving' (Sâd, 38:35)

When Sulayman asked that powers be given to him that others would not possess, it was not for him to boast about. It was in order to overcome and weaken the tyrannical kings of that time. The kings of that time were very proud and arrogant and had sunk to the depths of oppression.

The exegete Fakhruddin Razi also gives this following interpretation:

"I have been given such a glorious kingdom so that they could say about me after my death: "If there was any loyalty in the goods of this world, it would have been to Sulayman".

Thus let there be no greed and ambition for worldly kingdom".

Thus from this we can understand that the real desire of the prophet Sulayman was not worldly wealth but rather the wealth of the hereafter.

A verse from the Holy Qur'an says:

'If anyone desires to cultivate the hereafter, We will increase him in his cultivation. If anyone desires to cultivate this world, We will give him some of it but he will have no share in the hereafter' (Shura, 42:20).

Allah Most High accepted the prayer of the prophet Sulayman:

'So We subjected the wind to him to blow at his command, softly, wherever he directed. And the shaytans, every builder and diver, and others of them, yoked together in chains' (Sa'd, 38:36-38)



According to these verses, Allah Most High subjected the satans (jinn) to the command of the prophet Sulayman, for them to construct buildings and do dive underwater. Some of these jinns constructed large buildings, mosques, palaces, pools, and pots and large solid cauldrons for the prophet Sulayman, which humans would be incapable of constructing. Some of these jinns dived into the sea to bring out some of its diverse bounties, jewels and other beautiful items only found in the sea.

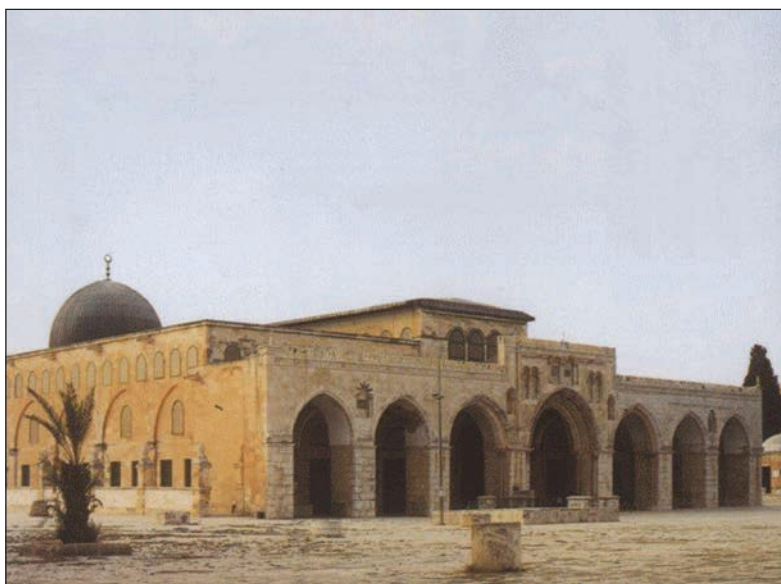
Allah Most High gave the prophet Sulayman such power and magnificence and comprehensive disposal:

‘This is Our gift: so bestow it or withhold it without reckoning. He will have nearness to Us and a good Homecoming’ (Sa’d, 38:39-40)

The construction of Masjid al-Aqsa

The prophet Dawud (peace be upon him) began construction of the Masjid al-Aqsa (the Sacred House) by the command of Allah however he did not live long enough to complete it. The prophet Sulayman (peace be upon him) then gathered together the jinn and together with them completed its construction.

He then established a city around it with twelve districts. At first this temple was known as the Sacred House (Bayt al-Maqdis) and later became known as Masjid al-Aqsa.



A view of the historical Bayt al-Maqdis

It is one of the three great mosques considered the holiest in Islamic culture and history.

The first of these mosques is the Masjid al-Haram (The Kaba’h), the second is the Masjid al-Nabawi (The prophet Muhammad’s mosque in Madina) and the third is this Masjid al-Aqsa.

The sacred trusts and the scrolls of the Torah which were preserved in the Ark of the Covenant (The Tabut) could also be found in this mosque since the time of the prophet Musa. However the Babylonian ruler Buhtunnasr burnt

and destroyed Jerusalem when he entered it and he took the jewels from the Masjid-al Aqsa and took them back to Babylon. Thus the Bayt al-Maqdis was left in ruins for years. Later in the year 123BC the Byzantines and then later Kaykhusraw repaired the Masjid al-Aqsa.

Walid, the sixth Ummayyad caliph then rebuilt the temple bringing it to the condition that it is in today. Due to its virtue, the Muslims turned to the Masjid al-Aqsa when they prayed until 16 to 17 month after hijra. In addition the terminal point of the event of the Isra and the beginning point of the Mi’raj (the Ascension of the prophet Muhammad (saw)) was also the Masjid al-Aqsa.

According to a narration by Abu Said al-Khudri (ra) the Messenger of Allah (saw) said:

“Three mosques should be travelled to in order to visit them: the Masjid al-Haram, the Masjid al-Rasul-lah, and the Masjid al-Aqsa”, (Bukhari, Fadail al-Salat, 6; Muslim, Hajj 288/827). In another hadith the Messenger of Allah (saw) is reported to have said:

“When Sulayman built the Masjid al-Aqsa he asked Allah to give him three distinctive privileges:



1. He asked for the ability to pass judgement that is in accordance with divine judgement; this was given to him.

2. He asked for a kingdom the likes of which would not be given to anyone else after him; this he was given also.

3. After the completion of the Masjid al-Aqsa, he asked that every person who comes to this mosque merely to perform the prayer there, be forgiven of all their sins and come out as pure as the day they were born; this prayer of his was also accepted” (Nasai, Masajid, 6; Ibn Majah, Iqamatu al-Salat, 196/1408)

The prophet Sulayman and the ants

‘Sulayman’s troops, made up of jinn and men and birds, were assembled for him, paraded in tight ranks. Then, when they reached the Valley of the Ants, an ant said, ‘Ants! Enter your dwellings so that Sulayman and his troops do not crush you unwittingly’ (Naml, 27:17-18).

The ant said: “The kingdom of Sulayman is a very great kingdom; you will be crushed underfoot. Retire to your houses”. Sulayman heard these words of the ant and replied:

“No, indeed my kingdom is passing temporary. My life in this world is also limited. However the divine bliss that can be gained with the word of unity (kalima-i tawheed) is eternal”.

‘(Sulayman) smiled, laughing at its words, and said, ‘My Lord, keep me thankful for the blessing You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and keep me acting rightly, pleasing You, and admit me, by Your mercy, among Your slaves who are righteous’ (Naml, 27:19).

The prophet Sulayman, the Hudhud⁸ bird and Bilqis, the Queen of Sheba

After completing the Masjid al-Aqsa, the prophet Sulayman, together with his army consisting of the wind, the jinn, human beings, the birds and other wild animals travelled to Mecca. They also brought the news that the prophet Muhammad (saw) would honour the town of Mecca with his presence. From there they went to the town of San’a. The prophet Sulayman wished to perform the prayer in a valley which was very pleasing to him.

At that point, whilst they prayed, the bird hudhud, parted from the army in order to wander around. He then intermixed with the other hudhud birds he came across there.

He was left in awe of the scenes he saw wherever he went. The other hudhud birds took him around the gardens of the palace of Bilqis, the Queen of Sheba. At that point the prophet Sulayman looked for hudhud so that he could find water to perform his ablution. The duty of hudhud was to locate sites where water was located. When he could not see Hudhud around:

‘He inspected the birds and said, ‘How is it that I do not see the hoopoe? Or is it absent without leave?’ (Naml, 27:20).

At first Sulayman began to look for the hoopoe bird with compassion, but when he learned that he had left the army without permission, he said in a way that showed how much importance he placed on discipline in his army:

‘I will certainly punish it most severely or slaughter it if it does not bring me clear authority’ (Naml, 27:21).

‘However, it was not long delayed, and then it said, ‘I have comprehended something you have not and bring you accurate intelligence from Sheba’ (Naml, 27:22).

Sheba is the name of a tribe from Yemen who were named after their grandfather. The town of Sheba was the capital of the country ruled by Bilqis. The Holy Qur’an says:

8 The *hudhud* bird is known in English as the hoopoe (translator’s note)



‘There was also a sign for Saba in their dwelling place: two gardens – one to the right and one to the left. ‘Eat of your Lord’s provision and give thanks to Him: a bountiful land and a forgiving Lord’ (Saba, 34:15).

The hoopoe bird continued to tell Sulayman of all that it saw:

‘I found a woman ruling over them who has been given everything. She possesses a mighty throne’ (Naml, 27:23)

‘I found both her and her people prostrating to the sun instead of Allah. Shaytan has made their actions seem good to them and debarred them from the Way so they are not guided’, (Naml, 27:24).

‘...and do not prostrate to Allah, Who brings out what is hidden in the heavens and the earth, and knows what you conceal and what you divulge. Allah – there is no god but Him – the Lord of the Mighty Throne’ (Naml, 27:25-26).

‘(Sulayman said to the hoopoe: ‘We will soon see if you have told the truth or are a liar’ (Naml, 27:27).

The prophet Sulayman then wrote a letter which began with the words: “Bismillahirrahmanairrahim’ (In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate) and placed his famous seal upon it.

‘Take this letter of mine and deliver it to them and then withdraw from them a little and see how they respond’ (Naml, 28:28).

The hoopoe took the letter and placed it upon Bilqis’ throne. Then he removed himself from them and began to watch what would happen. In the morning when she awoke from her sleep, Bilqis saw the letter which had been placed on her throne and was curious as to who sent it as all the doors had been closed. She called out to her bodyguards:

“Who brought this letter?”

They replied:

“We were keeping guard in front of the door. We saw nobody go in”.

Bilqis was unable to hide her shock and quickly opened the letter. She read it and her eyes widened in wonder once more. Then she called her leading men and said:

‘She said, ‘Council! A noble letter has been delivered to me. It is from Sulayman and says: “In the name of Allah, All-Merciful, Most Merciful’ (Naml, 27:29, 30).

Some commentators of the Qur’an indicate that Bilqis was guided to Allah due to the respect she showed to this letter.

Similarly the magicians who contested with the prophet Musa also showed him respect and courtesy by saying: “O Musa! Will you throw your magical staff first or shall we?” Consequently they were also honoured by then accepting faith in Allah.

In contrast, when the Chosroes of Iran received a letter of invitation to Islam from the prophet Muhammad (saw) he ripped it and threw it on the ground. As a result of this insult his own kingdom and sultanate was dismembered and he ended his life being deprived of faith.

Bishr-i Hafi, one of the friends of Allah, once took a piece of paper which had the name of Allah written upon it, cleaned it and scented it and then hung it in the best place in his house.

It was due to this respect and honour he showed that Allah rewarded him greatly and made him a member of the party of the righteous.

Bilqis continued to read the letter:

‘Do not rise up against me, but come to me in submission.’” (Naml, 27:31).



With the Basmala (In the Name of Allah) that the prophet Sulayman began his letter with, he was in effect demonstrating that servitude could be to Allah only. After explaining belief in Allah in this way, he then invited them to take their souls to account by saying: “Do not be arrogant towards me but submit” and declared that true happiness lies in Islam.

‘(The Queen) said, ‘Council! Give me your opinion about this matter. It is not my habit to make a final decision until I have heard what you have to say.’ They said, ‘We possess strength and we possess great force. But the matter is in your hands so consider what you command’ (Naml, 27:32-33)

‘She said, ‘When kings enter a city, they lay waste to it and make its mightiest inhabitants the most abased. That is what they too will do. I will send them a gift and then wait and see what the messengers bring back’ (Naml, 27:34-35).

After reading the letter, Bilqis consulted with her advisory committee and decided to send an envoy to the prophet Sulayman with valuable gifts in order to be safe from his control.

The prophet Sulayman sensed that they were trusting in their gifts and so seeing those gifts as a form of bribery he sent them back in order to demonstrate his seriousness.

‘When it reached Sulayman he said, ‘Would you give me wealth when what Allah has given me is better than what He has given you? No, rather it is you who delight in your gift’ (Naml, 27:36).

‘(O envoy) return to them. We will come to them with troops they cannot face and we will expel them from it abased and humiliated’ (Naml, 27:37).

The envoys returned to the queen and told her what the prophet Sulayman had said. She responded as follows:



An illustration of the throne of Bilqis

“He must have realised our intention. By Allah he is not just a mere king. We will not be able to withstand him”. She sent another envoy with the news that: “I am entering your presence with the leading men of my tribe. I wish to see this religion that you invite us to”.

Bilqis then locked up her most famous throne and had it placed in the safest and most protected part of her palace. She then set out to meet the prophet Sulayman with a great entourage.

Meanwhile the prophet Sulayman told those with him to bring Bilqis’ throne from Sheba to Jerusalem. According to the commentators of the Qur’an his aim was the following:

1. He wanted to show her a miracle that would demonstrate Allah’s power and his being a prophet and another proof in addition to the proofs that Bilqis had already noticed.
2. By changing the throne that he had brought, he wanted to determine how intelligent the queen was by seeing whether she would recognise her own throne.
3. Since a throne is a symbol of the magnificence of a kingdom, the prophet Sulayman wanted to learn how powerful was this throne of Bilqis by having her throne brought to her before she arrived.



‘(Sulayman) said, ‘Council! Who among you will bring me her throne before they come to me in submission?’ An ifreet⁹ of the jinn said, ‘I will bring it to you before you get up from your seat. I am strong and trustworthy enough to do it’ (Naml, 27:38-39).

It was the practice of the prophet Sulayman that whenever he woke in the morning, he would mount his throne and occupy himself with matters of the world and management of the affairs of the state. By noon he would descend his throne. Accordingly this ifreet thus told him that he would be able to bring him the throne in as short a time as between morning and noon.

‘He who possessed knowledge of the Book said, ‘I will bring it to you before your glance returns to you.’ And when he saw it standing firmly in his presence, he said, ‘This is part of my Lord’s favour to test me to see if I will give thanks or show ingratitude. Whoever gives thanks only does so to his own gain. Whoever is ungrateful, my Lord is Rich Beyond Need, Generous’ (Naml, 27:40).

According to the scholars the individual mentioned in the verse as the one who ‘possessed knowledge’ and who showed miraculous powers by being able to bring the throne in the blink of an eye was the prophet Sulayman’s vizier, Asaf ibn Barhiya.

Extraordinary powers (Karamaat)

The extraordinary powers or supernatural events that can be observed in the friends of Allah are of two types:

The first type is that which are related to knowledge of Allah’s essence, His attributes and His acts. This is also known as kashf.

This knowledge cannot be reached through such endeavours as thought or contemplation, which are acts of an entirely mental nature. Allah Most High bestows this knowledge on those of His righteous servants as He chooses.

The second type is extraordinary events that occur in the physical world with these friends of Allah being their instruments. Allah Most High also bestows such powers on His chosen servants. This second type occurs before the gaze of human beings and so they attract their attention since they are observable. And the people give them credit. But it is the first type which is more acceptable and worthwhile in the sight of Allah. In this form of knowledge is wisdom and profound meaning which address man’s emotions and thoughts. Karamaat could sometimes be observed in the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad (saw).

For instance in the 23rd year of the Migration during a battle with the Persians, the caliph Umar (ra) was on his pulpit in the Prophet’s Mosque and yet he gave directions to the commander of his army who was kilometres away in battle as follows:

“O Sariya! To the mountain! To the mountain!, thus aiding the Islamic army from a distance. (Ibn Hajar, al-Isaba, II, 3).

Another example is the following event narrated by Anas (ra):

Usayd ibn Khudayr and Abbad ibn Bashir (ra), two of the Companions of the Prophet, once left the house of the Prophet to go home on a very dark night when two lights like a flame appeared before them. These two lights illuminated each one’s way until they parted from each other and reached their homes. (Bk. Bukhari, Salat 79; Manakibu al-Ansar 13).

Those saints or friends of Allah who have taken the Prophet Muhammad (saw) as their guide and follow in the footsteps of the Companions have also demonstrated many such extraordinary powers in their lives.

⁹ *Ifreet* has the meanings of strong, skilled, and intractable. It also means a satan who has gone to extremes in evil and bad deeds. In regards to the meaning in this verse, it means the wildest, most damaging, evil, frightening and powerful of the jinn.



As an example the following event is narrated about Imam Ali Riza (may Allah have mercy on him). One time he was sitting next to a wall when a bird approached him and began to cheep next to him. Ali Riza said to those near him:

“This bird tells us that a snake has come to his nest. He is crying out to us: “Save my chicks”.

When those around him went to where the bird’s nest was they saw that there really was a snake who was waiting there about to eat the chicks. When they saw this scene they immediately killed the snake in order to protect the chicks.

The subtlety in having the throne of Bilqis brought not as a miracle of Sulayman but rather as a wonder of Asaf ibn Barhiya was to show the spiritual greatness of the prophet Sulayman. For a vizier even, who was under his command, to show such powers can only indicate his greatness.

Before the queen arrived, (Sulayman) said, **‘Disguise her throne. We shall see whether she is guided or someone who is not guided’** (Naml, 27:41).

‘Then when she came, she was asked, ‘Is your throne like this?’ She said, ‘It is as though it were the same’. ‘We were given knowledge before her and were already Muslims, but what she worshipped besides Allah impeded her. She was from an unbelieving people’ (Naml, 27:42-43).

‘She was told: ‘Enter the courtyard,’ but when she saw it she supposed it to be a pool and bared her legs. He said, ‘It is a courtyard paved with glass.’ She said, ‘My Lord, I have wronged myself but I have submitted with Sulayman to the Lord of all the worlds’ (Naml, 27:44).

According to narrations the prophet Sulayman had a palace built before the Queen of Sheba arrived. The courtyard of this palace was made of crystal, water flowed under it and fish were placed in it. Bilqis did not realise that the ground was transparent and because she thought she was walking through water she pulled her skirt up. All of these precautions and arrangements rocked her confidence in her own intelligence and knowledge and prepared her heart to accept the divine law.

Bilqis was thus able to realise that this was no human phenomenon, and she thus witnessed the power and greatness of Allah and she became Muslim.

The death of the prophet Sulayman (peace be upon him)

The prophet Sulayman passed away whilst he was leaning against his staff. At first those around him did not even notice that he had passed away. It was only after a long time had passed and a worm began to eat away at his staff making him fall to the ground, that they realised he had died.

A verse from the Holy Qur’an says:

‘Then when We decreed that he should die, nothing divulged his death to them except the worm which ate his staff; so that when he fell down it was made clear to the jinn that if they had truly had knowledge of the Unseen they need not have stayed there suffering humiliating punishment’ (Saba, 34:14)

It was only when the prophet Sulayman had migrated to the hereafter that they realised that he had been leaning on his staff in an upright position for a long time. The expression, ‘severe humiliating punishment’ used for the jinn refers to their having to work in difficult and troubling tasks.

Because they had not realised that the prophet Sulayman had passed away they continued in their tiring tasks just as they had when he was still alive. From this we can understand that the jinn do not know the unseen.

The fact that the prophet Sulayman, who possessed such a magnificent kingdom and sultanate, died while he was standing up is an event that should lead us to ponder and take heed. The words, way of life and events in the lives of all of the prophets are anyway a means for all communities to take heed from.



The following poem of Yunus Emre expresses this truth nicely:

Possessors of wealth, possessors of kingdom
Where is the first possessor of all that you have?
Wealth and kingdom, they are all lies
You are just passing your time

Kingdom and Modesty

The prophet Sulayman was very humble. When he woke in the morning the first thing he would do was visit the poor and needy and sit with them and say:

“It befits the needy one to be with the needy”

The following event that took place between the prophet Sulayman and a sparrow is now well-known:

One day the prophet Sulayman rebuked his sparrow. The sparrow then threatened him as follows:

“I will destroy your kingdom and your palace”. The prophet Sulayman then said:

“How can a tiny little thing like you destroy my palace?”

That little bird replied as follows:

“I will wet my wings and place them over some endowed earth. Then I will carry my earth-tarnished wings to the dome of your palace. In that way, even the dust that I carry will be enough to bring your palace down”.

From this story we can understand how important endowed property is and how we need to be mindful of its rights when using it.

After the prophet Sulayman

After the prophet Sulayman, the Israelites that were made up of twelve tribes later divided into two groups. The kingdom of Israel was established from ten of the tribes whilst the kingdom of Judah was established by the other two.

The kingdom of Israel, made up of the ten tribes, was destroyed by the Assyrians in 721BC. The kingdom of Judah, made up of the two tribes, was brought down by the Babylonian ruler, Nebuchadnezzar, in 586BC.

Nebuchadnezzar burnt and sacked Jerusalem and murdered most of its inhabitants, while exiling the rest to Babylon. After Nimrod, this tyrant was the second unbelieving king to have conquered the world.

He built Babylon and made it his centre. He left no one in the east or the west who could resist him. He then became arrogant and proclaimed his own divinity. He subsequently lost his mind and began to believe that he was an ox. For seven years he roamed the forest. During this time his wife ruled his kingdom.

However a year before he died he is said to have regained his sanity.

Nebuchadnezzar pillaged and sacked Jerusalem over and over again. He burned the Torah and the Psalms thus eliminating them.

As time went by, naturally many parts of the Torah were forgotten. By the time those parts that were remembered began to be written down, the Torah had completely lost its originality and many variant Torahs appeared which contradicted each other.

The prophet Uzair (Ezra), who lived in 500BC compiled these written scrolls. When the Persian king Cyrus defeated the Babylonians, he allowed the Israelites to return to Jerusalem. The Israelites, who then settled there in the year 515BC, repaired the Masjid al-Aqsa. First they lived under the rule of the Persians and then under the Macedonians. In the year 63AD, the Romans conquered Jerusalem and sent the Jews



into exile once more. The Masjid al-Aqsa was destroyed once more. Throughout their history the reason for the repeated misfortunes and living under oppression was their own rebelliousness. It was because of their rebelliousness that they changed certain verses of the Torah and Zabur which they found to oppose the desires of their nafs and thus the true religion was destroyed. In fact they martyred without remorse both the prophets Zacchariah and Yahya (John the Baptist) who tried to prevent them.

The story of Harut and Marut

Magic was widespread amongst the Jews. They began to claim and believe that the prophet Sulayman was a great magician and that magic was the reason he was able to establish his kingdom, and that he ruled over the animals and the jinn with his spells.

The Holy Qur'an which was revealed to the prophet Muhammad (saw) informs us that Sulayman was a prophet. This is why the Jews would say: "Muhammad thinks Sulayman was a prophet whereas he was in fact a sorcerer".

In response to this claim the following verse was revealed:

'They follow what the Satans recited in the reign of Sulayman. Sulayman did not become unbelieving, but the satans did, teaching people sorcery and what had been sent down to Harut and Marut, the two angels in Babylon, who taught no one without first saying to him, 'We are merely a trial and temptation, so do not become unbelieving.' People learned from them how to separate a man and his wife but they cannot harm anyone by it, except with Allah's permission. They have learned what will harm them and will not benefit them. They know that any who deal in it will have no share in the hereafter. What an evil thing they have sold themselves for if they only knew!' (Baqara, 2:102)

The exegete, Fakhruddin al-Razi, explains the reason for the sending down to earth of the two angels, Harut and Marut as follows:

At that time, without a doubt, the magicians had increased in number. They discovered many things which were previously unknown in the matter of magic. They went even further and even claimed to be prophets and began to challenge everybody. Thus Allah Most High sent down these angels, named Harut and Marut, to teach people magic so that they could recognise these false prophets and be able to withstand them. Without a doubt Allah knows best the inner nature of all things.

The virtues of the prophet Sulayman

1. **The wind was made subject to his command. Just as all the angels were responsible for serving the Messenger of Allah (saw), so too the wind would also obey him.**

2. **As is known, the prophet Muhammad (saw) ascended to the highest throne in an instant on the night of the Ascension.** Likewise when the prophet Sulayman so desired, he was able to traverse a distance of two months in one day by divine grace.

3. Just as the clouds would continually shade the Messenger of Allah (saw), so too the birds would shade the prophet Sulayman.

4. On the Day of Judgement, all of the prophets, the friends of Allah, the martyrs and the righteous will gather together under the liwa-al hamd¹⁰ of the Messenger of Allah (saw). Likewise all creation would gather together under the command and rule of the prophet Sulayman in order to serve him.

5. All worldly and otherworldly bounties were placed at the disposal of the Messenger of Allah (saw). Likewise all worldly wealth and kingdom was given to the prophet Sulayman.

¹⁰ *Liwa al-Hamd*: 'the banner of praise'. This is the banner which will be given to the Prophet Muhammad by Allah Most High on the Day of Judgement under which all the believers gathered together on the Day of Judgement.



QUESTIONS

A. Answer the following questions

1. Why were prophets so often sent to the Israelites? Evaluate this in terms of their devotion to their religion and their prophets.
2. What were the three things that the soldiers of Talut asked for in their prayers when they began to fight the army of Jalut?
3. We know that the prophet Dawud divided his day into four parts, one for his worship, one for justice, one for giving advice, and the other for his personal affairs. How would you use your time if you were to divide up your day into four parts?
4. How did Allah Most High test the prophet Dawud?
5. How did Satan deceive the Companions of the Sabbath?
6. According to one account, amongst the Companions of the Sabbath who were destroyed were those who did not obey the divine commands but also those who did obey the commands themselves but did not raise their voices against the rebellion of the others. What could be the reason for this?
7. How do we know that the Psalms that exist today are not the original Psalms?
8. According to the Qur'an what was the trial of the prophet Sulayman?
9. When the prophet Sulayman returned the gifts and envoys to Bilqis that she had sent him, what conclusion did she come to?
10. Why did Sulayman have the throne of Bilqis brought to him?
11. Explain the difference between a miracle and a karamah?
12. Describe the different types of karamaat.
13. Can the jinn know the unseen? How do we know this?
14. Describe Harut and Marut.

B. Fill in the blanks

1. The book that was revealed to the prophet Dawud was the
2. The first person to be given both kingdom and prophethood was
3. Even though the prophet Dawud was a king, he still earned his own livelihood by
4. The of Dawud, a fast in which one fasts on alternate days, is a legacy that was inherited by the community of Muhammad.



5. The Bayt al-Maqdis, which was begun by the prophet Dawud was later named by the people.
6. There are three great mosques in the history and culture of Islam which are considered the most virtuous. They are: Masjid al-, Masjid al-..... And Masjid al-
7. The extraordinary phenomenon displayed by the prophets are called
8. The extraordinary phenomenon displayed by certain of Allah's saints and friends are called

C. Choose the correct option from the following four

1. **Which of the following is not a requirement for the human being to be able to properly worship Allah Most High, who is continually glorified by everything in existence in the heavens and the earth?**
 - A. The heart of a person must become gentle and refined through purification of one's nafs.
 - B. One should recite the words of Allah with a loud voice.
 - C. One's heart should be filled with the remembrance of Allah at all times.
 - D. One's heart should be filled with the light of the Qur'an.

2. **Which of the following was not one of the daily routines of the prophet Dawud?**
 - A. Occupation with worship.
 - B. Teaching at 'religious' schools.
 - C. Ruling on matters of law.
 - D. Advising and counselling the people.

3. **Which of the following is not a lesson we can take from the slaying of Jalut by the prophet Dawud?**
 - A. Allah will never allow those who believe in Him to be defeated in battle.
 - B. If Allah so wills He can make His servants, no matter how weak and powerless they may be, victorious over those more powerful than them.
 - C. However powerful the oppressors and enemies of Allah may appear to be, in the face of Allah's Will they are in a state of complete powerlessness and helplessness.
 - D. A believer should take refuge in Allah and ask for help from Him only, then after he has done everything he can, he should place his trust in Allah.

4. **Which of the following was not one of the bounties bestowed upon the prophet Dawud by Allah Most High?**
 - A. He could transform iron that he held in his hands into gold.
 - B. The mountains and the birds praised and glorified Allah together with him.
 - C. He strengthened his kingdom and taught him wise and beautiful speech.
 - D. He taught him how to make armour in order to protect himself from the enemy.



5. **Which of the following is not one of the conclusions we can come to from the hadith of the prophet Muhammad:** “Nobody has ever eaten a better meal than that which one has earned by working with one’s own hands. The Prophet of Allah, David never ate anything but the earnings of his manual labor” (Bukhari, Buyu’ 15)?
- The best of lawful earnings is that which is earned by one’s own hands.
 - Islam does not look favourably upon those who depend on others for their livelihood.
 - Even if a person possesses wealth without having expended any effort, it is still more virtuous for him to eat from his own earnings.
 - It is more virtuous for a person to earn their livelihood by physical labour than by working at a desk.
6. **Which of the following cannot be considered a proof that today’s Psalms are not the original version?**
- Belief in an anthropomorphic god, that is a god with human characteristics.
 - The failure to record the Psalms by anyone when they were first revealed.
 - Its contents consist solely of wise words in the form of poems
 - It was written down approximately 5000 hundred years after the death of the prophet Dawud.
7. **The Companions of the Sabbath who were deceived by Satan were divided into three groups. Which of the following was not one of these groups?**
- Those who did not obey the commands of Allah but continued to fish.
 - Those who did not fish but who did not speak out against those who did.
 - Those who did not fish themselves and warned those who did.
 - Those who left Madyan because of the violation of the commands of Allah.
8. **When the prophet Sulayman passed over the valley of the ants together with his army a conversation took place between him and the leader of the ants. Which of the following conclusions cannot be made from this conversation?**
- The value and greatness of worldly wealth and kingdom is in accordance with a person.
 - Real wealth is not to boast of one’s wealth and kingdom, but it is to rely upon the True Possessor of wealth.
 - There is no benefit to be gained in desiring wealth in this world in which everything is transient.
 - The benefits and dangers of wealth change according to how a person uses it. Wealth which leads a person to show gratitude and perform righteous deeds is considered praiseworthy.
9. **In the verse: ‘We tested Sulayman and placed a lifeless body on his throne. Then he made tawba’ (Sâd, 38:34) which meaning can we not derive from the expression: ‘We tested Sulayman and placed a lifeless body on his throne’?**
- The prophet Sulayman lost his political power and throne for a short period as a result of a revolution set up against him.
 - A lifeless body was placed upon his throne for the times when he was absent so that the jinn would not sense his absence and in this way he could make the jinn work.
 - At one time the prophet Sulayman suffered a severe illness and was thus left weakless on his throne.
 - Allah Most High placed a fear in the heart of the prophet Sulayman which left him lifeless in anxiety of a calamity that would befall him.



10. Before Bilqis, the Queen of Sheba, appeared before the prophet Sulayman she was very impressed by the palace which he had built from crystal under which water flowed and fish could be seen and seeing her own throne. Which of the following is not a result of this impression?

- A. The things that she saw shook her confidence in her own mind and knowledge and made her perceive her own powerlessness.
- B. The things she saw made her realised that they were not constructed by the power of an ordinary person.
- C. She witnessed divine greatness and power in everything she saw and experienced and consequently became Muslim.
- D. When she saw a throne that looked like her own throne Bilqis thought that this was the work of the jinn.

11. Which of the following is not a reason for why the Masjid al-Aqsa is considered sacred?

- A. It is the end-point of the event of the Isra and the beginning point of the Miraj (Ascension).
- B. The graves of the both the prophet Sulayman and Dawud are found there.
- C. Muslims turned to the Masjid al-Aqsa in their prayers until the sixth year of the Hijra.
- D. Since the time of the prophet Musa the sacred trusts and scrolls of the Torah have been preserved there.

12. Which of the following was not a reason for why the prophet Sulayman had Bilqis' throne brought to him?

- A. The prophet Sulayman wanted Bilqis to accept him as a prophet.
- B. He wanted to know whether the jinn and other soldiers under his command would obey him or not.
- C. By changing the throne slightly he wanted to determine whether Bilqis would perceive this and thus to measure the level of her intelligence.
- D. Because a throne is an indication of a king's power, he wanted the throne in order to prove that he was more powerful.





THE PROPHET
UZAIR
-upon whom be peace-

—◆—

THE PROPHET
AYYUB
-upon whom be peace-

The prophet Uzair *(upon whom be peace)*

The prophet Ayyub *(upon whom be peace)*

The prophet Uzair (peace be upon him)

Uzair is from the lineage of the prophet Harun (peace be upon them). He is known as Ezra amongst the Jews. He was one of the few people of his time who had memorised the Torah.

Just as he is not expressly mentioned as being a prophet in the Holy Qur'an, even the prophet Muhammad (saw) is reported to have said about him: "I do not know whether Uzair was a prophet or not" (Ali al-Muttaqi, XII, 81/34087).

The Qur'an only mentions Uzair once. Here we are informed that by divine wisdom his spirit was taken back by Allah and he was then resurrected one hundred years later.

Uzair lived at a time when the rebelliousness and excessiveness of the Israelites had reached its peak. As a consequence, Allah Most High inflicted Nebuchadnezzar upon them as a tribulation and a misfortune. Nebuchadnezzar invaded Syria and Jordan. He burnt the Masjid al-Aqsa and ravaged the gardens and vineyards. He brutally murdered defenceless and innocent people. He enslaved those whom he saw as young and useful for him, taking them with him. Uzair was amongst these slaves.



According to accounts, when Uzair was fifty years old he fled and escaped from slavery.

He headed out for Jerusalem on a mount. When he approached Jerusalem he was very saddened to see the ruined buildings and devastated gardens. Since he was very hungry he tied his mount to a tree and gathered some figs to eat and he pressed some grapes and drank their juice. He then sat under a tree looking sadly and with heed, upon his destroyed and ruined city and the piled up bones. While he was pondering on the power of Allah and how He would bring things back to life he fell asleep.

Allah Most High says in the Qur'an :

'Or the one who passed by a town which had fallen into ruin? He asked, 'How can Allah restore this to life when it has died?' Allah caused him to die a hun-



dred years then brought him back to life. Then He asked, ‘How long have you been here?’ He replied, ‘I have been here a day or part of a day.’ He said, ‘Not so! You have been here a hundred years. Look at your food and drink – it has not gone bad – and look at your donkey so We can make you a Sign for all mankind. Look at the bones – how We raise them up and clothe them in flesh.’ When it had become clear to him, he said, ‘Now I know that Allah has power over all things’ (Baqara, 2:259).

Uzair had fallen asleep in the morning and when he awoke the sun had not yet set. However 100 years had passed and Nebuchadnezzar had died. All of the slaves had been set free and returned to Jerusalem. The Masjid al-Aqsa had been repaired and the whole town rebuilt.

After witnessing such great manifestations (of Allah’s power) Uzair then got on his mount and set out for Jerusalem. When he arrived he saw that everything had changed. The people there were not people the knew and the buildings were also different. He then began to look for his own neighbourhood amongst all this change. He stopped in front of a house which he guessed was his own. He saw a blind and crippled woman and asked her:

“Where is the house of Uzair?”

The woman responded sadly:

“This is Uzair’s house but he disappeared 100 years ago. I am his bondswoman”.

Uzair replied:

“I am Uzair”. He then introduced himself and explained what happened to him. His bondswoman was very happy to see him and asked him to pray for her to return to her former state. Grateful for all the bounties that Allah had bestowed upon him, Uzair then prayed for the woman. The woman then returned to her original state of health.

When Uzair first fell asleep and passed away he had an eighteen year old son. His son was now an old white bearded man 118 years of age and Uzair, his father, was 50. After so many years his son did not recognise his father and said:

“My father had a black mark on his back in the shape of a crescent”.

When they opened up Uzair’s back they saw this black crescent-shaped mark. Nobody was no longer in any doubt that this was Uzair.

When Nebuchadnezzar had ravaged and plundered Jerusalem he had burnt all copies of the Torah. Uzair then reordered the divine rulings that he knew from before and brought the old religion back to life.

According to an account by Ibn Abbas (ra), when Allah saw the Israelites abandon the Torah and begin to follow their own desires, He took the Torah from them and made them forget it. The Israelites were very distressed about this. Uzair, in particular, was a person who worshipped Allah frequently; he pleaded and entreated Him. A light that came down from Allah entered his heart and he remembered the Torah that he had forgotten. Then he retaught the Torah to the Israelites. Later when the ark was found that contained the scrolls of the Torah they saw that what Uzair had taught them coincided with what was in the original Torah and from then on they began to love Uzair. However even in the face of such great bounties that were bestowed upon them, the Israelites would later deviate again to a false creed and even went so far as to say that Uzair was the son of Allah (Taberi, Jami’u al-Bayan, X, 143).

This is described in the Holy Qur’an as follows:

‘The Jews say, “Uzair is the son of Allah,” and the Christians say, “The Messiah is the son of Allah.” That is what they say with their mouths, copying the words of those who were unbelieving before. May Allah destroy them! How perverted their minds’ (Tawba, 9:30)



‘They (The Jews) have taken their rabbis and monks as lords besides Allah, and also the Messiah, son of Maryam. Yet they were commanded to worship only one God. There is no god but Him! Glory be to Him above anything they associate with Him!’ (Tawba, 9:31).

Even though today’s Jews do not accept that they say that Uzair was the son of Allah, there were a group of Jews at that time who went overboard in their respect and praise of him and exaggerated in their praise and some even claimed that he was a god.

The prophet Ayyub (peace be upon him)

The prophet Ayyub (Job) is from the lineage of Esau, the brother of Yaqub. He lived in the area of Damascus. Due to a prayer that his grandfather Ishaq prayed for him, Allah Most High gave much property, wealth and children to Ayyub (peace be upon him). He had many fields, animals and servants. He used to help the poor, orphans and widows. He would not eat at a table at which there was no needy person to share his meal with. He would love to host his guests and make them many offerings.

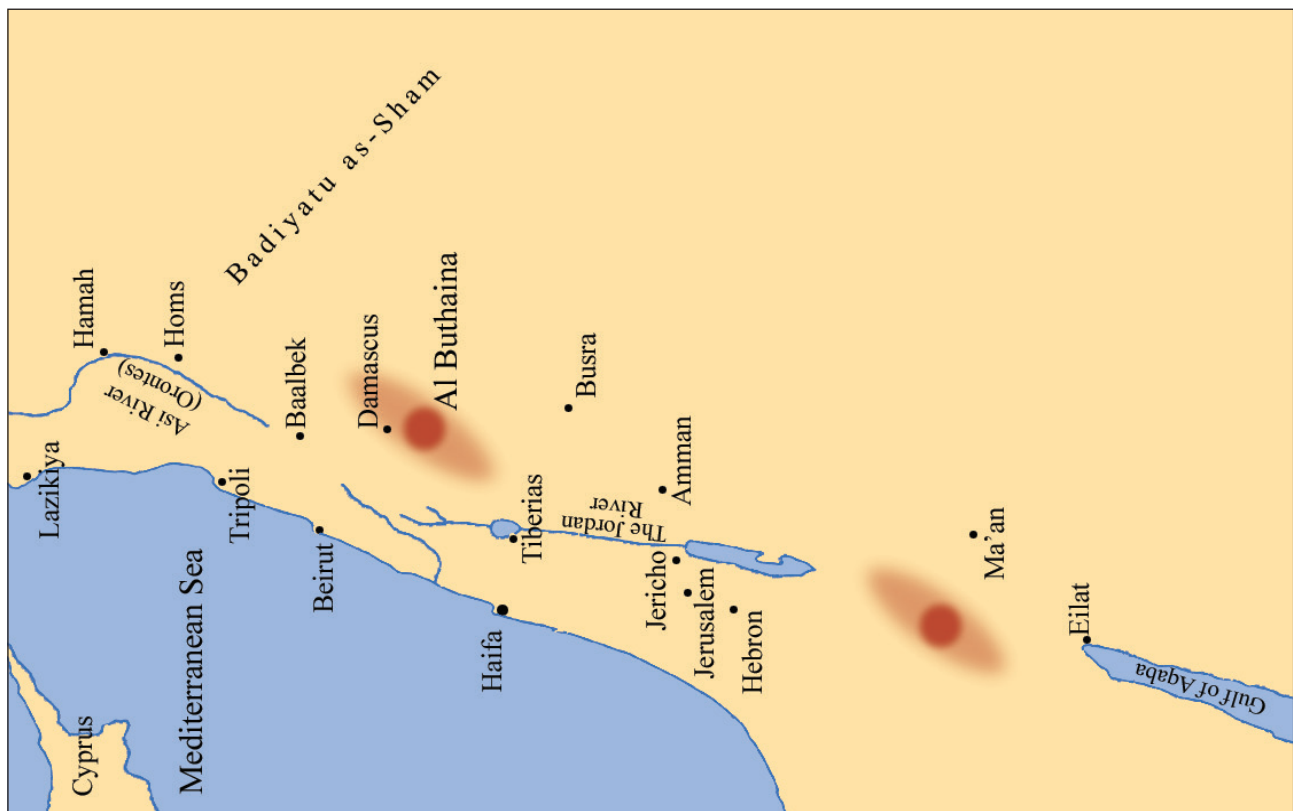
At the beginning of his life, Ayyub was very wealthy, but in the middle of it he had reached a state in which he became very needy and deserted by all. As a result of his gratitude and patience, towards the end of his life, he was granted divine bounty once more.

The Holy ‘Qur’an praises his forbearance in his patience as follows:

‘... we found him steadfast. What an excellent slave! He truly turned to his Lord’ (Sad, 38:44).

The prophet Ayyub was sent to the region of Damascus as a messenger for the people who lived there. The Qur’an mentions him as being a prophet subject to divine revelation as follows:

‘We have revealed to you as We revealed to Nuh and the Prophets who came after him. And We revealed to Ibrahim and Isma‘il and Ishaq and Ya‘qub and the Tribes, and ‘Isa and Ayyub and Yunus and Harun and Sulayman. And We gave Dawud the Zabur’ (Nisa, 4:163)



'We gave him Ishaq and Ya'qub, each of whom We guided. And before him We had guided Nuh. And among his descendants were Dawud and Sulayman, and Ayyub, Yusuf, Musa and Harun. That is how We recompense the good-doers' (An'am, 6:84)

Tribulation, patience and reward

One by one, every single bounty that had been bestowed upon the prophet Ayyub - his wealth, his children and all other bounties - were taken back as a divine trial. He was then subjected to a severe illness. However he showed great patience with great dependence on Allah and submission to Him in the face of all of these misfortunes that befell his body, his wealth and his children. He then became content with the decree of Allah. This patience and submission to Allah showed by the prophet Ayyub has become so famous that it is an example for those who wish to take heed.

These difficult trials of the prophet Ayyub belonged to the period when he was a prophet.

In every tribulation and trial that he was subject to Iblis, the accursed Satan who was unable to stomach his virtue was made a cause. Satan would appear in human form and mix amongst the people saying:

"It is easy to be a servant in so much bounty and plenty. Let us see Ayyub when he is in dire straits and facing tribulation..." He continually tried to disparage him. Upon this Allah Most High subjected his beloved prophet to various tribulations in order to show the people his reliance upon and devotion to Him.

When Allah willed to try Ayyub he first took away his wealth. He destroyed his sheep with a flood and his fields with wind. Seizing this opportunity Satan immediately ran to Ayyub dressed like a shepherd. Weeping, he informed him of all that had happened:

"O Ayyub! A major catastrophe has occurred. All of your wealth and property is lost".

The prophet Ayyub did not become anxious at this news and praised Allah in a state of deep calm and contentment. He then said to Satan:

"My Lord was the one who gave me this property and wealth. And now He has taken it back. He is the True Possessor of everything; If He so wills He will give, if He so wills, He will take back".

These words and attitude were enough to devastate Satan. Following this, the children of Ayyub then passed away in an earthquake that hit while they were studying.

Again Satan appeared wailing and lamenting. He shed a flood of tears in order to make the prophet Ayyub rebel:

"O Ayyub! Allah Most High destroyed your house with an earthquake. He took away all of your children. Their heartbreaking wailing was not something to be tolerated".

He explained the event in such a painful and sorrowful way that the mercy within the prophet Ayyub that overflowed from his heart, which had been kneaded with reliance upon and submission to Allah, began to wet his blessed eyes and he shed tears. However he showed great patience at this trial and was content with the divine ruling of Allah.

Failing to reach his aim once more, Satan became enraged. He was about to say something else to Ayyub when Ayyub said to him:

"O Accursed one! You are Iblis and you are trying to encourage me to rebel against my Lord! Know that my children were each entrusted to me. Their Master has now taken them back. He is the One who gives and the One who takes back. Why should I be hurt?

I am a servant who praises his Lord under all circumstances".

Aziz Mahmud Hudayi expresses the servitude of a righteous servant as follows:

'You are the One who takes, the One who gives and the One who makes.

Whatever we have is what You have given us.



Anas (ibn Malik) (ra) has said:

“Abu Talha (my step father) had only one son. Whilst he was on a journey his son succumbed to a serious disease and passed away. When Ummu Sulaym saw that her son had passed away she washed him and shrouded him and placed him in one part of the house.

Abu Talha then arrived and asked:

“How is our child?”

His wife replied:

“He has calmed down now and I hope that he has found peace”.

When they reached the morning, her husband Abu Talha performed the major ritual ablution (after laying with his wife). When he told her he would go out she informed him that their child had passed away.

In great sadness Abu Talha immediately went to find the prophet and performed the prayer with him. Then he told him what had happened. The prophet said:

“I hope that Allah Most High has blessed this past night that you (and your wife) spent together with another baby son” (Bukhari, Janaiz, 42, Adab, 116).

This event which was related by Anas ibn Malik (ra) shows the discernment, piety and above all the submission to Allah by Ummu Sulaym.

This event nicely illustrates how all that we possess – our mothers, our fathers, our children, our property and wealth are a trust and will be taken back by their True Owner as required. It was as if with her state Ummu Sulaym was saying to her husband:

“Our child has been called back to the Power that sent him to us in the first place. We will meet with him again in a short while on the Day of Reckoning. Do not be sad and do not raise your voice! Be content with what has come from Allah...”

And it was not long before Almighty Allah bestowed upon Ummu Sulaym a beautiful little child whom the prophet Muhammad (saw) named Abdullah.

As a last trial Allah Most High subjected the prophet Ayyub to a serious illness.

His sickness had worsened so much that only his wife Rahima Hatun, that model of compassion, continued to serve him with an unparalleled loyalty and fidelity.

She began to make hand crafts in order to earn their livelihood. She willingly served Ayyub in his every need.

The prophet Ayyub never once complained or wailed about this sickness. He sought refuge in his Lord and was patient and continued to praise and extol Him. In a display of prophetic character he attributed his illness and fatigue to Satan saying:

‘Remember Our slave Ayyub when he called on his Lord: ‘Satan has afflicted me with exhaustion and suffering’ (Sa’d, 38:41)

Satan envied the fine character of the prophet Ayyub and wanted to disturb and beleaguer him.

However the prophet Ayyub knew that everything was from Allah and he was in a state of reliance upon and submission to his Lord.

All efforts of Satan to whisper to Ayyub were in vain however so this time he began to whisper misgivings to the people:

“Beware! Do not meet with Rahima and try to help him otherwise his sickness will pass on to you. Exile him from your city without delay”.

The people of the town gave in to this sedition of Satan and they threatened Rahima:



“Leave this city together with Ayyub! Otherwise we will stone you and kill you”.

Rahima Hatun was left with no other choice and carrying the prophet Ayyub on her back she left the city. They set up a place for themselves on the outskirts of the city.

Rahima made a bed for Ayyub out of sand and she placed a rock on it for his pillow.

She then built a small hut and continued to serve Ayyub here with devotion

This most patient prophet of Allah continued in his duty of prophethood even in this condition. He continued to command to good and prohibit from evil all who passed by.

His wife continued to spin thread for the women of the city in order to earn their livelihood.

At one point she said to her husband:

“You are a prophet! Why do you not ask Allah Most High to give you back your health and well being so that He can remove these worries from you?”

The prophet Ayyub asked:

“How many years of health and well being have we already had?”

Rahima replied:

“Eighty years”

“O Rahima! I would be embarrassed to complain to my Protector when my time of difficulty and tribulation is not as long as my time of health and well being. Allah Most High has given us endless bounties so how can I not be patient in the face of the tribulations that come from Him?”

Just as this extraordinary patience of the prophet Ayyub has been praised in the Holy Qur’an so too has he been praised in the hadith of the prophet Muhammad (saw):

“The prophet Ayyub was the most gentle of people, the most patient and the one who most overcame his anger” (Ibn Abi Shayba, III, 201).

His contentment with his Lord was complete and without fault.

The following poem is a nice expression of his patience and submission:

“Whatever comes from You to me is pleasant
Whether it be a kaftan or a shroud,
Whether it be a rose or a thorn,
Your grace is good and so too is your compulsion”

Unable to ignite misgivings in the prophet Ayyub, Satan then began to pester his wife, Rahima. He would intercept her and try to lure her. When Rahima told Ayyub about this he warned his wife as follows:

“O my dear wife! The one who crosses your path is Iblis. Be careful, by giving you misgivings he wants to separate you from me”.

Rahima was from the lineage of the prophet Yusuf. She had a beauty that was reflected upon her by her forefather Yusuf.

There was no woman more beautiful where they lived. This is why one day Satan appeared before her in the appearance of a handsome young man and said:

“I have never seen anyone as beautiful as you. I am from that nearby village. I have endless wealth”.

“I am the wife of the prophet Ayyub who is ill. I am serving him and could never be tempted towards anybody other than that honourable prophet...” Then she walked off.

When Rahima returned to the prophet Ayyub, she told him what had happened. Ayyub was distressed by these words. He became angry and made the following oath:



“O my Lord! Did I not tell you to beware of him and stay away from him? If I am restored to my health I shall strike you with my stick 100 times”.

As the days went past, the illness of the prophet Ayyub increased. In order to find a cure, he raised his hands to the lofty court of his Lord and prayed as follows:

‘...Great harm has afflicted me and You are the Most Merciful of the merciful’ (Anbiya, 21:83).

He turned his heart to Allah so that the elevated mercy and compassion of Allah would manifest itself upon him.

One day a person entered the mosque of the prophet and asked the prophet Muhammad some questions about the prophet Ayyub. The prophet Muhammad (saw) began to weep and he said:

“I swear by Allah Most High that the prophet Ayyub neither complained nor moaned about his illness. However he was left subject to those tribulations for seven years, seven months, seven days and seven nights.

He wanted to pray standing but he could not and he fell. When he saw himself deficient in the way of serving Allah he said: “Truly sickness has afflicted me (See Qurtubi, Tafsir, XI, 323).

Though these words may seem like complaining they are actually prayer. Because to bewail and moan is to complain to other people. Turning to Allah does not involve this. Similarly when the prophet Yaqub was separated from his son Yusuf, he said in great pain and longing:

‘I make complaint about my grief and sorrow to Allah alone because I know things from Allah you do not know’ (Yusuf, 12:86)

Recovery from illness

One day Rahima hatun went out to find some food. At that point, the angel Gabriel came to Ayyub and informed him of the following news:

“O Ayyub! I gave you tribulation and you were patient. Now I am going to give you health and bounty”. He also brought the following command:

‘Stamp your foot! Here is a cool bath and water to drink’ (Sa’d, 38:42)

Obedying this divine command Ayyub stamped his foot to the ground. Immediately a spring gushed out. He washed himself with this water and miraculously he was freed of all inner and outer illnesses.

According to another account when the prophet Ayyub stamped his foot to the ground, two springs of water gushed out, one hot the other cold; he washed himself with the hot water and drank from the cold.

The fact that the verse commanded to ‘stamp your feet to the ground’ indicates that the servant must put in effort and struggle even if a miracle is to take place which is very significant. Thus the first step must come from the individual. In that case one must not refrain from resorting to causes and just sit back and rely on prayer. Moreover it is necessary to act in accordance with the requisites of prayer and bring about the required conditions.

Because the prophet Ayyub turned to Almighty Allah with a fine and delicate manner, his prayer was accepted and the doors of healing, mercy and grace were opened up to him:

‘We responded to him and removed from him the harm which was afflicting him and restored his family to him, and the same again with them, as a mercy direct from Us and a Reminder to all worshippers’ (Anbiya, 21:84).

Gabriel approached Ayyub who had his health restored to him and placed a crown upon his head, by the permission of Allah and dressed him in fine clothes. Then a cloud of grace came and dispersed pieces of gold all over him.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) is reported to have said:



“When Ayyub was washing in (the miraculous water), numerous golden coins fell in front of him. Ayyub immediately began gathering them up in his robe. **Seeing this Allah Most High said:**

“O Ayyub! You see, have I not made you wealthy once more by giving you back your wealth?”

Ayyub replied:

“Yes o Lord! You have made me thus wealthy. However I cannot remain without the need for your treasuries of goodness and bounty. This is why I accept whatever comes from You. (Because You are the giver. How can I reject anything that comes from You?)” (Bukhari, Ghusl, 20; Anbiya, 20; Nasai, Ghusl, 7).

Meanwhile Rahima had returned from the city. When she saw Ayyub she did not recognise him. Thinking that he was lost, she began running back and forth looking for him. She began to wail and weep. Ayyub called out to her:

“O lady! Who are you looking for?”

“There was an ill man here, he was my partner in life. I served him with pleasure even if it was difficult. Now I have lost that treasure, which was my heart’s content.

“What was he like?”

“He was very patient. In his health he looked like you”.

“O Rahima! I am who you are looking for. Allah Most High has given me back my health”.

They then both began to weep out of joy and they thanked Allah.

The prophet Ayyub was restored to his former vitality and youth. Allah Most High then bestowed on him even more wealth and children than before. He gathered together the members of his scattered family and then became subject to even greater divine bounties than before.

The first night after the prophet Ayyub was restored to his former health, in the predawn he gave a deep sigh. When he was asked the reason he said:

“Every dawn at this time I would hear a voice say: “O our ill one, how are you?”. Now that time has come once more, but I did not hear the same voice asking: “O our healthy slave, how are you?” This is why I am weeping”



QUESTIONS

A. Answer the following questions

1. Which verse mentions the Jews as believing that Uzayr was the 'son of Allah'?
2. Write down three of the virtues of the prophet Ayyub that are mentioned in the Qur'an.
3. Describe the thoughts and feelings of the prophet Ayyub when he replied to his wife who asked him to ask for a cure from Allah: "O Rahima. I would be embarrassed to complain to Allah of my state when my time of difficulty and tribulation is so much shorter than my times of health and well-being".
4. What was the reason for the prophet Ayyub being subject to tribulation in regards to his wealth, his children and his health?
5. How did the prophet Ayyub behave after losing his entire wealth, his children and his health?
6. What methods did Satan use to urge the prophet Ayyub to rebel against Allah? What was the response of the prophet Ayyub?
7. Who assumed responsibility for earning their livelihood and looked after the prophet Ayyub when he lost all his wealth and became ill?
8. Explain the reason for why the human being takes his place at the summit of all of the creatures created by Allah.
9. Even though being patient in the face of tribulations and misfortunes brings eternal rewards why should people still refrain from asking for them from Allah?

B. Fill in the gaps

1. Uzayr was from the lineage of He is known amongst the Jews as
2. The Qur'an mentions Uzayr as having his spirit taken back by Allah and then returned to him years later.
3. invaded Jerusalem, sacking and pillaging it and burning copies of the
4. The attribute of was used for (peace be upon him) by the Jews and for (peace be upon him) by the Christians.
5. During his illness, the prophet Ayyub's wife looked after him with compassion.
6. The state of of the servant of Allah is the final and most precious of fruits that arises from love of his Lord.
7. The prophet Ayyub lived in the region of
8. The trial of the prophet Ayyub in which his children, wealth and health were taken back from him occurred after he became a



C. Choose the correct option from the following four

1. **Which of the following is not a lesson that we can take from the life of Uzayr, who was resurrected after having been asleep for one hundred years?**
 - A. For Almighty Allah there is no difficulty in causing to die or bringing back to life.
 - B. Allah Most High has the power to resurrect rotten bones.
 - C. By the will of Allah He can protect His servants from their enemies by making them fall into a long sleep.
 - D. In actual fact, every human being experiences a type of death and resurrection every night when they fall asleep and when they wake up again in the morning.

2. **Which one of the following cannot be the basis for the love, sacrifice and mutual respect between the prophet Ayyub and his wife Rahima?**
 - A. Their attempts to resist the whisperings of Satan.
 - B. Their patience together in the face of their difficulties and struggles.
 - C. Their continual loyalty and selflessness towards each other.
 - D. Their reliance upon Allah and their submission to Him.

3. When the prophet Ayyub lost his entire wealth he was able to say: **“My lord bestowed upon me all of this wealth and property and now He has taken it back. He is the true and only possessor of everything. If He so wills He gives, and if He so wills He takes back what He has given”**. Which of the following virtues of the prophet Ayyub does **not** reflect this example?
 - A. He was a person of contentedness who did not place any value on worldly wealth.
 - B. He was a generous person who was able to give away the bounties that Allah had bestowed upon him.
 - C. He knew that it was his Lord who bestowed bounty upon him and that He was able to take it back and thus he was in a state of contentedness.
 - D. He endured all tribulations that came to him from his Lord and he submitted to him.

4. The prophet Ayyub was afflicted with many trials and suffering and when they became too difficult to bear, he said: **‘Satan has afflicted me with exhaustion and suffering’** (Sa’d, 38:41). He thus attributed his suffering and his exhaustion to Satan. Which of the following conclusions **cannot** be drawn from this attitude of the prophet Ayyub?
 - A. He truly loved his Lord and he knew that every tribulation that befell him was from his Lord and that his inability to bear these was due to his nafs.
 - B. He saw Satan as the cause of the difficult tribulations that befell him and he attributed his impatience to Satan.
 - C. He was pleased with the situation he was in and was content with being patient in spite of everything.
 - D. He had reached the limits of his patience and he feared that he would be unable to be patient any longer.

5. **Which of the following was not one of the trials that the prophet Ayyub had to undergo?**
 - A. He was afflicted with a severe illness.
 - B. His wife tortured and abandoned him.
 - C. His children died one by one.
 - D. Everything he possessed was taken away from him.





THE PROPHET
YUNUS
-upon whom be peace-

THE PROPHET
ILYAS
-upon whom be peace-

THE PROPHET
al-YASA'A
-upon whom be peace-



The prophet Yunus (peace be upon him)

The prophet Yunus was a prophet sent to the people of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire. He is believed to have lived in the eighth century before Christ.

His father was a righteous man by the name of Matta. The prophet Yunus was born and raised in Nineveh. When he reached the age of 30 Allah appointed him as a prophet.

A chapter was revealed about him in the Holy Quran. Ali (ra) said about him:

“The prophet Yunus became a prophet when he was 30 years old and invited his people to believe in God for years”.

The Holy Qur'an mentions his prophet hood as follows:

'Yunus too was one of the Messengers' (Saffat, 37:139)

'We sent him to a hundred thousand or even more' (Saffat, 36:147) **'We have revealed to you as We revealed to Nuh and the Prophets who came after him. And We revealed to Ibrahim and Isma'il and Ishaq and Ya'qub and the Tribes, and 'Isa and Ayyub and Yunus and Harun and Sulayman. And We gave Dawud the Zabur'** (Nisa, 4:163)

The Ninevites¹¹

The people of Nineveh were in the habit of worshipping idols and statues. They were a very tyrannical people. When the prophet Yunus began to invite them to belief in the oneness of Allah only two people believed in him. One of these was a man who had become very profound in his knowledge (alim) and who had become cognisant of the inner nature of events (hakim) and the other was a person much given to worship (abid) and who gave no importance to this world (zahid).

Those who did not believe in him said:

¹¹ The Ninevites were a people who lived on the shores of the Tigris river in the area which is now Mosul in Iraq.





“You appear here now all on your own when there are so many seers, scholars and artists amongst us and you tell us that the way of our fathers was wrong! You deny our gods! Do you wish to bind our feet with rules that nobody is accustomed to?”

They did not stop at these words only but tormented and harassed the prophet Yunus. The prophet Yunus however tolerated all that they did, and was patient with them, and because he pitied them he continued to invite them to belief in tawheed.

He continued to remind them of the severe punishment of Allah but they merely laughed at his warnings and said:

“If a severe punishment is going to come from Allah for the sake of one person and destroy everybody then let it come!”

The prophet Yunus was very saddened at his people and their persistence in remaining unbelievers. Not being able to tolerate them any longer he abandoned them before he was given permission to leave by Allah.

While he was on his way Allah said to him:

“O Yunus! Go back and invite your people to faith for forty days more”.

The prophet Yunus then went back to his people and explained to them the time that Allah had given them and the punishment that would follow.

However they still would not be reformed. Even though 37 of the 40 days period given to them had passed, they still had not come to accept faith.

The prophet Yunus said to them:

“In that case wait for the punishment that it is to befall you in three days! As a sign of this punishment you will see your faces become pale”. Without waiting again for the command from Allah he abandoned them once more in great sadness.



This abandonment was not a fleeing from his responsibility to Allah nor was it a revolt against the one who gave him this responsibility. It was a mere distancing himself from a rebellious people who refused to accept this elevated invitation.

Faith, Repentance and forgiveness

Finally the day that the prophet Yunus (peace be upon him) had informed his people of arrived. As a harbinger of this punishment all of the faces of the Ninevites became pale and ashen. At that point they realised what was happening and they said to each other:

“This is the sign of the punishment that Yunus warned us of! We have never once before heard him tell a lie”. They were then enveloped in fear of the terrifying punishment that was about to arrive.

At that point, the sky began to darken. Every one began to wail and lament, helplessly looking for a door of hope. They said to each other:

“If Yunus is with us, we have no need to fear! But if he has gone, the punishment will definitely destroy us”.

They felt the utmost of regret. This regret at what they had done made their hearts burn. The divine punishment had come even closer. They did not know what to do.

They ran to a righteous man in their desire to repent as soon as possible. He said to them:

“There are still two days left before the punishment arrives. Now the time has come for you to climb that high hill (the hill of repentance). Take those rights that you wrongfully took from others and return them and make amends with each other. Then sacrifice an animal for the Lord of Yunus and let every person eat from it, be he old or young, rich or poor. Then bare your heads and in your helplessness cry out:

“O lord of Yunus! We have repented. We believe in You. We accept the prophethood of Yunus. As soon as we find him, we are going to learn Your commands and Your prohibitions and follow them”.

Weeping, the Ninevites did everything they were told. And with His attribute of Al-Rahman (The Most Merciful) Allah Most High accepted their repentance and lifted the divine punishment from them. This matter is explained in the Holy Qur’an as follows:

‘How is it that there has never been a city that had faith, whose faith then brought it benefit, except the people of Yunus? When they came to believe, We removed from them the punishment of disgrace in the life of this world and We let them have enjoyment for a time’ (Yûnus, 10:98).

The only people who were on the verge of destruction on account of their unbelief but then saved when they repented were the people that the prophet Yunus was sent to. The salvation of these people is a different manifestation of divine grace. In many verses of the chapter Yunus, it is stated that Allah’s mercy overcomes his wrath.

The prophet Yunus leaves Nineveh

‘And (remember) Dhu’n-Nun when he left in anger...’ (Anbiya, 21:87)

Dhu’n Nun is another title of the prophet Yunus. It means ‘the Companion of the Fish’. This title was given to him when he was swallowed by the whale.

After Yunus left the city of Nineveh he boarded a boat. The Holy Qur’an states: **‘When he ran away to the fully laden ship’** (Saffat, 37:140).

In the verse the Arabic word for ‘ran away’ is the verb ‘abaqa’ which means a slave who has escaped from his master. It has been used metaphorically about the prophet Yunus who became angry with his people and abandoned them without first receiving permission from Allah. After the prophet Yunus boarded the boat it sailed away. A little while later it stopped in the middle of the sea and they could not make it move.





Those inside feared that the boat would sink. They believed this to be a bad omen and thought that somebody on board the boat must be a sinner. They cast lots as to find out who this was. The lot fell to the prophet Yunus who realised that this was a trial for him as he had not waited for permission from Allah to leave his people.

He then placed his trust in his Lord and said:

“Yes I am that rebellious slave”.

However those on the boat realised from his state that he was a righteous person so they recast the lots a few more times. However each time it fell to the prophet Yunus. Eventually they said helplessly: “This person must have committed some crime”.

And they then left the prophet Yunus in the open sea. The Holy Qur’an states:

‘(those in the boat) cast lots and lost’ (Saffat, 37:141).

‘(when he left without permission from Us) and thought that We had no power over him...’
(Anbiya, 21:87)

‘Then the fish devoured him and he was to blame’ (Saffat, 37:142)

The prophet Yunus was now in the belly of the whale. He was still alive in the darkest of places and he was conscious.

Almighty Allah had commanded the whale not to harm Yunus nor damage his bones.

Yunus was content with the divine decree and submitted himself to his Master. He remained in the belly of the whale in total darkness and presented his state to his lord in a very saddened state:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

‘There is no god but You! Glory be to You! Truly I have been one of the wrongdoers’ (Anbiya, 21:87).

At that point he began to hear certain sounds while in the belly of the whale and was curious as to what they were. Allah Most High then revealed to him that he was in the stomach of the whale and said:

“O Yunus! These sounds that you hear are the creatures of the sea making dhikr of Me”.

The prophet Yunus glorified his Lord as always, under these difficult circumstances and struggled not to lapse in his remembrance of Him. He occupied himself with prayer and seeking forgiveness from Allah.

When the angels realised his condition they pleaded with Allah to forgive him. Eventually after the prophet Yunus continued to glorify Him and ask forgiveness from Him, Almighty Allah forgave him his slip.

‘We responded to him and rescued him from his grief. That is how We rescue the believers’
(Anbiya, 21:88).

The sole reason for his being forgiven was the frequent glorification he made of Allah.

‘Had it not been that he was a man who glorified Allah, he would have remained inside its belly until the Day they are raised again’ (Saffat, 37:143-144).

The prophet Yunus was saved from the dire state that he was in due to the remembrance that he made of His Lord, his recognition of his mistake and his reliance upon Allah.



This was for him a great mercy and favour.

In addition another important matter is that the prophet Yunus was patient for 37 of the 40 days given until his people were to be destroyed. He was unable to be patient for three more days. Allah Most High then taught him patience while he was in the belly of the whale subjecting him to a great tribulation.

The whale preserved the prophet Yunus in his stomach as a great trust, and then left him upon the shore by the command of Allah:



‘So We cast him up onto the beach and he was sick; and We caused a gourd tree to grow over him’ (Saffat, 37:145-146)

When the whale left him upon the shore, the prophet Yunus was weakened, exhausted, sick and in need of care. His body was like jelly and the weather was quite warm. Allah Most High then made a tree grow up beside him whose broad leaves would protect him from the burning heat of the sun. Under the shade of this tree, there were no flies, bugs or other similar insects to bother him.

Also Almighty Allah nourished the prophet Yunus by dropping the milk from the fruit of this plant into his mouth. When the prophet Yunus recovered he set out once more for Nineveh. When he approached the city he encountered a shepherd. He asked about his people. The shepherd told him what had happened. He told him that his people had accepted faith and repented and Allah subsequently forgave them. He also told him that they were all waiting for the prophet Yunus to inform them of the commands of Allah.

Hearing the news that the prophet Yunus had returned to his town, his people immediately gathered around him. He was performing the prayer. After he had finished, they embraced him with longing and apologised for their wrongdoing.

The prophet Yunus then acted in accordance with forgiveness and tolerance and taught them the commands and prohibitions of Allah.

From then on, they lived in a state of obedience to Allah and His Messenger and lived their lives in complete happiness and righteous deeds.

‘...and (this time) they believed (in him) – and so We allowed them to enjoy their life during the time allotted to them’ (Saffat, 37:148).

It befalls those who act for the truth to act calmly and resolutely. The prophet Yunus abandoned his people because he had become weary and he then abandoned them without waiting for divine revelation. In one respect this is impatience and haste. For him this act was a slip on his behalf even though he was in very difficult circumstances.

As is known the prophet Muhammad (saw) also tolerated incredible torment, pain and cruelty from the pagans of Mecca. However he waited patiently for the command from Allah to migrate. In the 80th verse of the chapter Isra, Allah Most High gives permission to the prophet Muhammad (saw) which is also a type of prayer:

‘Say: ‘My Lord, make my entry sincere and make my leaving sincere and grant me supporting authority direct from Your Presence’.

Almighty Allah uses the prophet Yunus’s abandoning his people without permission as an example and asks the prophet Muhammad to be patient with the distresses and trials of his messengership:



‘So wait steadfastly for the judgement of your Lord. Do not be like the Companion of the Fish when he called out in absolute despair. Had a blessing from his Lord not overtaken him, he would have been thrown up on the naked shore, for he was at fault. But his Lord chose him and made him one of the righteous’ (Qalam, 68:48-50).

Lessons to be learnt from the story of the prophet Yunus (peace be upon him).

- The importance of being meticulous in teaching the divine commandments and being patient and forbearing;

- The necessity of remembering Allah in all circumstances and seeking forgiveness after realising that one has sinned;

- Repentance made in sincerity is always accepted and the need to seek refuge in Allah and not despair of Him;

- Repentance made after one realises one is about to die is not accepted, the only exception being the repentance of the people of the prophet Yunus. This is because when the prophet Yunus’ people repented their punishment had not yet arrived and they had merely seen its signs. Believing that the prophet Yunus would never lie they then reasoned that the punishment that he promised would come true and so they immediately repented. The situation of the other nations was different. For instance Pharaoh felt regret and claimed to believe in Allah but this was after his punishment had already begun. Because this was a case of the psychology of fear (a state of despair) his repentance and his belief were not accepted.

O Allah! Make remembrance of You be constant in our hearts. Let us turn to you and seek refuge in You in our times of hardship and ease...

Amen!...

The prophet Ilyas (Elijah) (peace be upon him)

Allah Most High says in the Qur’an:

‘Ilyas was one of the Messengers’ (Saffat, 37:123)

When the Israelites conquered Palestine, one of their tribes settled in Baalbek. At the head of this tribe was a despotic ruler.

According to accounts this tyrant had an idol called Baal whom he forced his people to worship. The name of this city was formerly Bek. Later on the name Baal was added to it and it became known as Baalbek.

The prophet Ilyas (Elijah) was sent to this city in order to invite to the Truth, those who had distanced themselves from the creed of tawheed and fallen into shirk.

The idol that these people worshipped was 10 metres high and made of gold.

The prophet Ilyas said to his people:

“Desist in your worship of this idol Baal. Believe in and worship Allah, the creator of all things”.

The Holy Qur’an states:

‘When he said to his people, ‘Will you not fear taqwa? Do you call on Baal and abandon the Best of Creators?Allah is your Lord and Lord of your forefathers, the previous peoples’ (Saffat, 37:124-126)

However the Israelites did not listen to this advice of the prophet Ilyas. They cast him out of their city. As a consequence they met with various tribulations and calamities. However before long they realised the truth. They found the prophet Ilyas and accepted him. Thus they were saved from the calamities that had befallen them.





However this nation was a rebellious nation. They went back on their word and abandoned their faith, dragging themselves to rebellion once more and leaving the straight path.

The prophet Ilyas counselled them time and time again but they would not listen. Upon this the prophet Ilyas then left them when he received the divine command to do so. Abandoned by a prophet of Allah these people were then left deprived of divine mercy and forgiveness. They were thus subject to the punishment of Allah and ruined. They met with the punishment that they deserved both in this world and the next.

‘...they denied him and so they will be among those arraigned – except for Allah’s chosen slaves’ (Saffat, 37:127-128).

After the prophet Ilyas left Baalbek he stopped by a village. He invited the people there to faith in Allah. They accepted his invitation. .

They asked the prophet Ilyas to stay with them and he accepted and stayed as a guest in the home of an old woman there. The woman had a son who was ill. The prophet Ilyas performed two cycles of the ritual prayer and prayed for her son to be cured. The son eventually recovered and from then on he never left the prophet Ilyas’ side.

He learnt the Torah from him. The name of this child was Elisha (al Yasa).

The prophet Ilyas spent the remaining part of his life spreading the teachings of the religion of Allah and calling the people to good and discouraging them from evil.

According to accounts one day the prophet Ilyas saw the angel of death, Azrail and was terrified. Azrail was curious as to the reason for this and he asked him:

“O prophet of Allah! Are you afraid of death?”

The prophet Ilyas replied:

“No, it is not that I am afraid of death but rather that I am to farewell this world...”

He then continued as follows:



“Whilst I was in this world I struggled in my efforts to try and worship my Lord. I commanded the people to good and restrained them from evil. I spent my time in worship and performing good deeds and tried to live my life upon good character. This state was my source of peace. My heart was full of peace and spiritual joy. Now when I die I will not experience these pleasures and joys and I am sad that I will be made hostage in my grave until the Day of Judgement”.

In short, the prophet Ilyas left a pleasant trace, and a nice memory in this world and was reunited with his Lord. He was subject to divine grace and favour:

‘We left the later people saying of him, Peace be upon the family of Ilyas!’ That is how We recompense good-doers. He truly was one of Our slaves who are muminun’ (Saffat, 37:129-132).

May Allah allow us to meet with the bliss of the hereafter and not be deceived by this worldly life and these fleeting pleasures and live upon the straight path, being servants who are ever close to Him...”

Amen...

The prophet al-Yasa’a (Elisha) (peace be upon him)

The prophet al-Yasa’a (Elisha) was one of the prophets sent to the Israelites. During his childhood he was subject to a severe illness and was cured as a result of the prayer of the prophet Ilyas (peace be upon him).

After that he never left the prophet Ilyas’s side and learnt the Torah from him.

The prophet al-Yasa’a made much effort to reform the rebellious Israelites just like the prophets that came before him. The Israelites would sometimes follow him and sometimes oppose him.

The Holy Qur’an mentions him in two verses:

‘Remember Our slaves Isma’il, Al-Yasa’ and Dhu’l-Kifl; each of them was among the best of men’ (Sa’d, 38:48)

The word ‘remember’ in the verse is used to indicate that just like the other prophets, these prophets were also praiseworthy in their struggles to spread the religion of Allah. Another verse that mentions the prophet al-Yasa’a is as follows:

‘And Isma’il, al-Yasa’, Yunus and Lut. All of them We favoured over all beings’ (An’am, 6:86)

During the prophethood of al-Yasa’a there had begun a battle between the tribes as to who would head the state and take over the rule of the tribes. None of the tribes listened to the advice of al-Yasa’a and they fell out with each other. The mischief, fighting and conflict was ongoing. Allah Most High then plagued them with the Assyrians who defeated by them. They were thus ruined and disgraced.

As a result of their evil they were distanced from the mercy of Allah.

In the book Mir’at-i Kainat by Nisancizade Muhyiddin Mehmed Bey the miracles of the prophet al-Yasa’a are explained:

The drinking water of the people of the city of Eriha had become scarce. The people immediately ran to the prophet al-Yasa’a and asked him for help. He took an amount of salt and placed it into the water which had become bitter saying: “Be sweet”. By the permission of Allah the water then became fresh.

In another related account a widow in debt approached the prophet al-Yasa’a and told him about her poverty.

The prophet al-Yasa’a asked:

“What do you have in your house?” She replied:

“A little bit of butter”.

The prophet al-Yasa'a said:

“Go and place that butter into the containers in your house”.

The woman went home and did as she was told. A little while all of the containers were filled with butter.

As a result of this miracle she was able to pay back all of her debts. The butter that she had did not finish and remained with her.

When al-Yasa'a was about to pass away he called Dhu'l Kifl to him. In accordance with the command of Allah, he appointed Dhu'l Kifl with the duty of prophethood after him.

O Allah! As you have made Your prophets above all else, allow us too to reach such high stations in our worship of You...

Amen...

QUESTIONS

A. Answer the following questions

1. Even though the repentance that is made when all hope is lost is not accepted why was the repentance made by the people of the prophet Yunus accepted?
2. What lesson can we learn from the prophet Yunus who, while he was in the belly of the whale, was in a state of remembrance of Allah and continued to ask for forgiveness from his Lord, not despairing of His mercy?
3. Can the abandonment of his tribe by the prophet Yunus before the appointed time be considered failing to obey a command or escaping from his duty?
4. What did the scholar of the people of Yunus suggest the people of Nineveh do in order to escape punishment?
5. Why didn't the prophet Yunus resist when they wanted to throw him off the boat and instead said: "I am the rebellious slave amongst you?"
6. How was the prophet Yunus saved after he was thrown off the boat?
7. What do you understand from the verse: **'We left the later people saying of him, 'Peace be upon the family of Yasin!' That is how We recompense good-doers. He truly was one of Our slaves who are believers'** (Saffât, 37:129-132).
8. Describe the lifestyle of the people to whom Ilyas was sent as a prophet.
9. What response did the prophet Ilyas receive when he tried to invite his people to the path of truth?
10. What was the response of the prophet Ilyas when he saw the Angel of Death?
11. Discuss the results of the political contention, mischief and conflict that was rife amongst the people of al-Yasa'a.
12. Which prophet did the prophet al-Yasa'a grow up with and from whom did he learn the Torah?
13. What sort of dissension arose during the time of the prophet al-Yasa'a amongst the Israelites?

B. Fill in the gaps

1. Yunus was a prophet sent to the
2. The prophet Yunus did not complete the period appointed to him by Allah and abandoned his people on the day.
3. The epithet of the prophet Yunus is
4. The reason why the prophet Yunus was saved after being thrown into the sea and being swallowed by a whale was the fact that he Allah frequently and glorified Him.



5. When the prophet Yunus was in the belly of the whale he heard sounds of in the sea.
6. The prophet Ilyas was from the lineage of
7. The prophet Ilyas was sent to the city of..... in order to invite the people there to the Truth.
8. When the prophet al-Yasa'a suffered a severe illness as a child, he was cured by the prayer of
9. Allah Most High plagued the Israelites who refused to listen to the prophet al-Yasa'a with

C. Choose the correct option from the following four

1. Which of the following is not a lesson we can learn from the life of the prophet Yunus?

- A. We should seek refuge in Allah without losing hope even after we make a mistake.
- B. Repentance will be accepted even if it is made at the point of death.
- C. We should be very careful and meticulous when it comes to explaining Allah's rulings.
- D. After committing a sin we should immediately ask for forgiveness from Allah.

2. Which of the following is one reason for why the prophet Yunus abandoned his people who persisted in their rejection of faith?

- A. His people had reached a stage where they were about to abandon their unbelief and rebellion.
- B. His people tried to force the prophet Yunus out of his homeland.
- C. Allah Most High gave the prophet Yunus permission to leave.
- D. Despite all the efforts and patience of the prophet Yunus, his people were obstinate in their unbelief.

3. Which of the following was not a reason for why the prophet Yunus was forgiven while he was in the belly of the whale?

- A. He repented and constantly asked for forgiveness.
- B. He regretted that he had acted unjustly towards his people.
- C. He made much remembrance of and glorified his Lord.
- D. He was in a state of constant prayer and seeking refuge with Allah.

4. Which of the following was not a method that the people of Yunus used to save themselves from divine punishment?

- A. They returned items that they had taken unlawfully to their rightful owners
- B. They slaughtered an animal in order to draw nearer to Allah and then distributed the meat to everyone.
- C. They asked for help from many people for their salvation.
- D. They pleaded with Allah in a state of regret and they promised to obey Him.



5. **The people of the prophet Yunus were saved from divine punishment. Which of the following is not a lesson we can learn from this?**
- The people of Yunus were the only nation whose punishment was suspended however if they were to have made the same mistake again they would have been punished.
 - Those people who do not obey their prophet and accept his guidance are dragged to destruction.
 - One should never despair of the mercy and forgiveness of Allah even under the worst circumstances.
 - The presence of righteous people within a community is so important that it can affect the fate of that people.
6. In the verse: **‘When he ran away to the fully laden ship’** in which sense is the expression ‘ran away’ used?
- He escaped
 - He abandoned his duty
 - He departed without permission
 - He migrated to another place
7. **Which of the following cannot be a primary attribute of people who have taken it upon themselves to spread the teachings of Islam?**
- To waste one’s breath and direct one’s efforts towards tasks that are difficult to accomplish.
 - To continue in one’s struggle in the face of difficulty and be patient without giving up.
 - To preserve a state of calm in the face of people’s reactionary words and behaviour.
 - To have no doubt that Islam will be successful.
8. When the prophet Yunus tried to invite his people to belief in the oneness of Allah, he was told: **“You appear here now all on your own when there are so many seers, scholars and artists among us and you tell us that the way of our fathers was wrong! You deny our gods! Do you wish to bind our feet with rules that nobody is accustomed to?”** In regards to this statement, which of the following is **not** an influential factor for a people to accept correct belief?
- The beliefs and attitudes of the scholars, thinkers, and artists within a community.
 - The beliefs and traditions that a people have come to accept.
 - The increase in the strength of a person’s imagination when they go from belief in tawheed to belief in the trinity.
 - The old beliefs and rulings of a people to which they have become accustomed to are easier for them to accept.
9. **When we consider that the people of Ilyas worshipped idols made of gold and Samiri deceived the people of Musa with a golden calf, along with other similar examples which conclusion can we come to about the substance gold?**
- Gold is a malevolent metal which has been the cause of much conflict throughout history.
 - Gold is a metal that impresses people on account of its appearance and its value.
 - The fact that idols were made of gold is an indication of their spiritual power.
 - Throughout history all human beings have believed in the mysterious powers of gold.



10. Which of the following was **not** a characteristic trait of the people to whom the prophet Ilyas was sent?

- A. They lived in a land called Baalbek.
- B. When they realised that Ilyas was a prophet they believed in him and were never again disobedient towards him.
- C. They worshipped an idol named Baal which was made out of gold.
- D. They were ruled by an oppressive and idol-worshipping king.

11. In the verse: ‘...they denied him (Ilyas) and so they will be among those arraigned (thrown into Hell) – except for Allah’s sincere slaves’ (Saffât, 37:127, 128) the emphasis is on the fact that it is those who denied Ilyas who will go to Hell. When it comes to those who will go to Heaven, these are not described as being ‘those who believe’ but rather ‘those who are sincere’. Which conclusion can we draw from this?

- A. All servants of Allah who believe in Him but whose sincerity is lacking are destined for Hell.
- B. Those sincere people who do not accept belief in tawheed will go to Heaven.
- C. Sincere servants who do not believe will go to Hell.
- D. Sincere servants of Allah who believe and who perform righteous deeds will go to Heaven.

12. When the Angel of Death appeared before the prophet Ilyas he became anxious. What was the reason for this?

- A. He was afraid of death and the hereafter.
- B. He thought his people were going to be destroyed.
- C. He thought that punishment was about to arrive from Allah.
- D. He was sad that after his death, he would no longer be able to worship Allah, spread His word or perform righteous deeds.

13. In the verse: ‘Remember Our slaves Isma‘il, al-Yasa‘ and Dhu‘l-Kifl; each of them was among the best of men’ (Sâd, 38:48) which of the following is **not** one of the meanings of the word ‘remember’

- A. Ismail, al-Yasa and Dhu‘l Kifl were prophets who lived in the same period.
- B. The mentioned prophets advised to good and forbade from evil just like all the other prophets.
- C. These prophets struggled against difficulties to spread belief in the oneness of Allah, just like all the other prophets.
- D. The prophets mentioned in this verse were Allah’s beloved righteous servants.

14. Allah Most High bestowed certain miracles on al-Yasa‘a just as He supported many previous prophets with miracles. Which of the following is **incorrect** in regards to the phenomenon of miracles?

- A. A miracle makes it easy for a person who is in doubt to believe in something they cannot see.
- B. When a people do not immediately believe once they see a miracle, they are immediately destroyed.
- C. Miracles strengthen a believing person’s faith and submission to Allah.
- D. Miracles are extraordinary acts which nobody other than the prophets can perform.





THE PROPHET
DHU'L KIFL
-upon whom be peace-



THE PROPHET
**LUQMAN
HAKIM**
-upon whom be peace-

The prophet Dhu'l Kifl
(upon whom be peace)

The prophet Luqman Hakim
(Luqman the Wise)
(upon whom be peace)

The prophet Dhu'l Kifl (peace be upon him)

Dhu'l Kifl was a prophet sent to the Israelites He is believed to be a son of the prophet Ayyub (peace be upon him) (See Hakim, Mustadrak, II, 636). According to accounts his real name is Bishr, whilst Dhu'l Kifl is his epithet. This title was given to him to state that after the prophet al-Yasa, he was appointed to inform the Israelites of the commands of the religion of Allah, and that he performed all of the righteous deeds of the prophets of that time and earned reward many times over. In arabic the word 'dhu' means the one who possesses and 'kifl' means responsibility, portion, fate and a multiple of something. This title does not indicate worldly wealth but rather his superior traits and high rank in the hereafter.

Ibn Abbas (ra) narrates the following:

“Allah Most High bestowed upon one of the prophets of the Israelites (al-Yasa'a) prophethood and also kingdom and wealth. When this prophet's death was near Allah Most High informed him via revelation that He would take back his spirit.

“Give My property and wealth to some one from the Israelites who prays in the night until the morning, who fasts during the day and who rules amongst the people without getting angry”.

This prophet then informed the Israelites of this command given to him.

A youth from amongst them rose and said:

“I am a guarantor for this task! I will take up this responsibility”.

The prophet al-Yasa'a said to this youth:

“There are men in this tribe who are older than you, sit down”.

Then he repeated his offer a second time and again that youth rose and said “I am a guarantor for the task”. When he repeated the offer again for the third time, the youth was the person who responded to the call. The prophet al-Yasa'a then left this young man as his guarantor and gave him his wealth and kingdom. The name of this youth was Bishr”.

However Satan coveted this young man. He tried to deceive him into failing to carry out his responsibility. But the young man did not listen to the whisperings of Satan and carried out his responsibility as required. His efforts were great indeed. This is why he was called 'Dhu'l Kifl'.



There are two verses in the Qur'an that mention Dhu'l Kifl:

'And Isma'il and Idris and Dhu'l-Kifl – each one was among the steadfast. We admitted them into Our mercy. They were among the righteous' (Sa'd, 38:48).

Just like the Israelite prophets that came before him Dhu'l Kifl acted by the commandments of Musa and informed the people of the commandments and prohibitions of the Torah.

According to accounts he passed away in one of the cities of Syria.

O Allah! Give us aspiration and fortitude to comply with the commandments of Your religion and to possess the virtues that You praise.

Amen!



Luqman Hakim (Luqman the Wise) (peace be upon him)

The accounts about the lineage of Luqman Hakim indicate that he is a relative of the prophet Ayyub (peace be upon him).

According to one account he is the son of Ayyub's sister and according to another account he is the son of his auntie¹².

Luqman Hakim was either a prophet or a saint. He is the patron saint of physicians. However the majority of Islamic scholars believe that he was not a prophet but rather a person who was given much wisdom (hikmah). What is meant by 'hikmah' is the state reached after one has attained the theoretical sciences (metaphysics, logic etc) and as a result of the spiritual maturity one reaches by one's spiritual ascension, each word and act becomes righteous.

The holy Qur'an mentions him in the chapter Luqman as being one who was given wisdom:

'We gave Luqman wisdom: 'Give thanks to Allah. Whoever gives thanks only does so to his own good. Whoever is ungrateful, Allah is Rich Beyond Need, Praiseworthy' (Luqmân, 31:12)

Almighty Allah states elsewhere in the Qur'an that one who has been given wisdom has been given much good:

'He gives wisdom to whoever He wills and he who has been given wisdom has been given great good. But no one pays heed but people of intelligence' (Baqara, 2:269).

Hikmah, or wisdom, is to perceive the reality of matter and its mysteries. This is only possible when the divine light manifests itself in the heart. Zamakshari narrates the following event which illustrates the wisdom of Luqman:

One day Luqman was asked to slaughter a sheep and bring the two choicest cuts of its meat. Luqman then took the tongue and heart of the animal. After a few days had passed he was asked to bring the two worst cuts of the animal. Luqman again brought the tongue and the heart. When he was asked the reason for this, he said:

"If these two organs are good then there can be nothing better than them, but if they are bad, then there can be nothing worse" (Zamakshari, Kasshaf, V, 18).

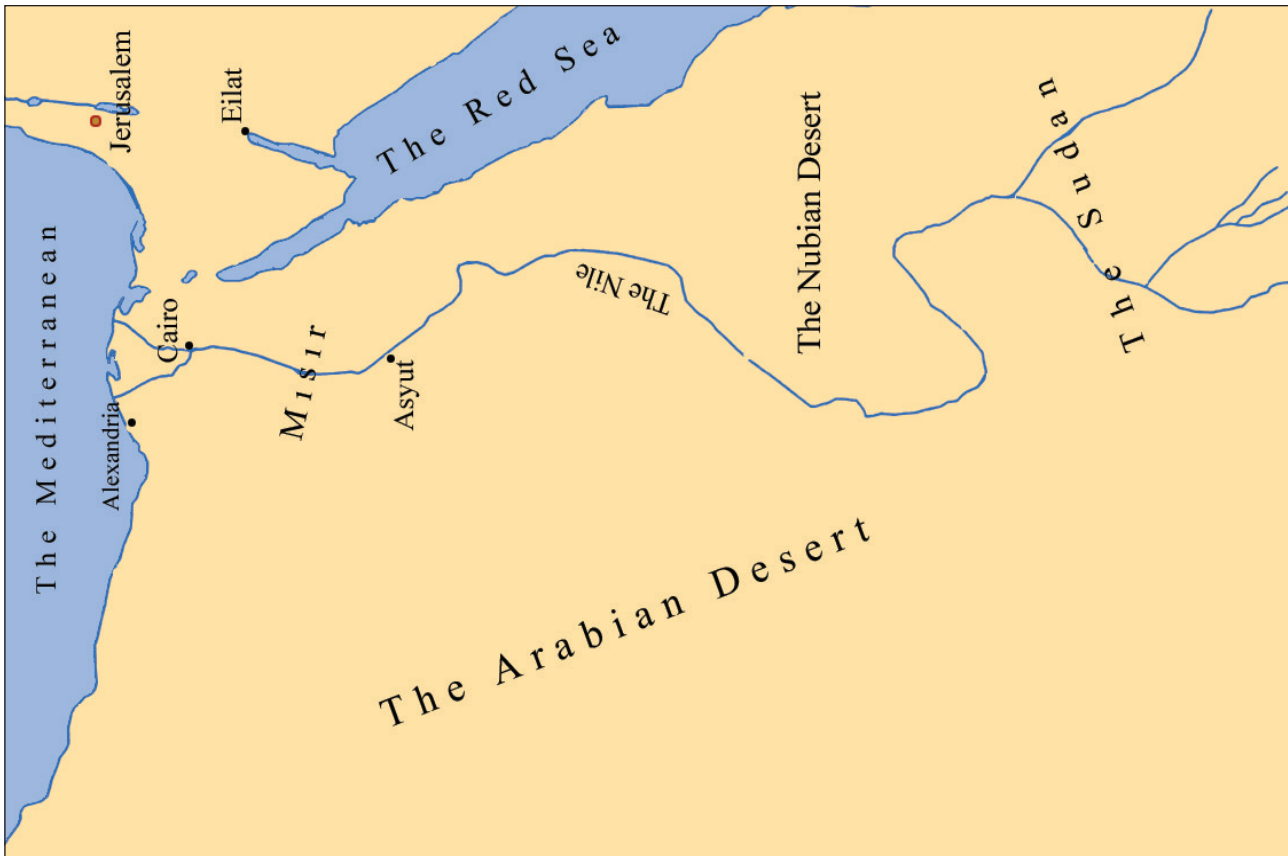
According to an account mentioned in the Muwatta of Imam Malik Luqman was asked:

"How did you attain this virtue that we see in you?"

He replied:

¹² See Sa'labi, Arais, p 391





“By speaking the truth, carrying out my trust, abandoning that which does not concern me and being true to my word” (Muwatta, Kalam, 17).



The wise sayings of Luqman Hakim and the advice he gave to his son are mentioned in the Qur’an as follows:

‘When Luqman said to his son, counselling him, ‘My son, do not associate anything with Allah. Associating others with Him is a terrible wrong’ (Luqman, 31:13).

Zulum or injustice is the opposite of justice.

And justice is to give the value to a creature that it deserves. To associate partners with Allah Most High, the Creator of the worlds and the One True Master of all things amounts to not giving Him the value and worth that He deserves. This is why the result of shirk, or associating partners with Allah, is to remain in Hellfire forever.

Luqman continues in his advice as follows:

‘My son, even if something weighs as little as a mustard-seed and is inside a rock or anywhere else in the heavens or earth, Allah will bring it out. Allah is All-Pervading, All-Aware’ (Luqman, 31:16).

‘My son, establish salat and command what is right and forbid what is wrong and be steadfast in the face of all that happens to you. That is certainly the most resolute course to follow’ (Luqman, 31:17).

Salat, or the ritual prayer, is the ascension of the believer. It is one of the most important duties of a servant of Allah. The act of prayer cannot be abandoned even if one is fighting the enemy on the battlefield. Allah Most High says about those who prostrate to Him:

‘Their mark is on their faces, the traces of prostration’ (al-Fath, 48:29)



In another verse He says: ‘...**prostrate and draw near**’ (Alaq, 96:19)

Aisha, the prophet Muhammad’s wife, has said:

“Whenever the Messenger of Allah (saw) would stand to prayer the sounds of boiling of water coming from his heart could be heard” (Abu Dawud, Salat, 157; Nasai, Sahw, 18).

Commanding others to good and prohibiting them from evil is one of the most important duties of the believer. It is a duty of gratitude whereby one transmits to others the spiritual bounties that Allah has bestowed upon them.

Allah Most High informs all of the believers of the method of this preaching as follows:

‘It is a mercy from Allah that you were gentle with them. If you had been rough or hard of heart, they would have scattered from around you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them, and consult with them about the matter. Then when you have reached a firm decision, put your trust in Allah. Allah loves those who put their trust in Him’ (Al-Imran, 3:159)

In another verse Allah Most High teaches us the method of advising others to good as follows:

أُدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ...

‘Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair admonition... (Nahl, 16:125).

When it comes to the matter of being patient, sabr is one of the most mentioned words in the Qur’an. The result of being patient in this world can be very painful; however the reward to be gained in the hereafter will be very sweet indeed. All of the prophets were tested with patience.

This is why Almighty Allah said:

‘(o my Messenger) ... give good news (of Paradise) to the steadfast’ (Baqara, 2:155).

Abdullah ibn Mughaffal (ra) narrates:

“One day a man came to the Messenger of Allah and said:

“O Messenger of Allah! I love you”.

The Messenger of Allah replied:

“Be careful about what you say”. The man repeated three times:

“I swear by Allah that I love you”.

The Messenger of Allah then said to him:

“If you love me then prepare yourself an armour against poverty. Because the one who loves me will have poverty come to them faster than a flood rushing towards its goal”. (Tirmidhi, Zühd, 36).

With these words the prophet Muhammad was saying in effect:

Since you love me for the sake of Allah, in that case the price of this love is to be prepared for and content with the trials of one’s tribulations, calamities and distress.



Luqman Hakim continues in his advice:;

‘Do not avert your face from people out of haughtiness and do not strut about arrogantly on the earth. Allah does not love anyone who is vain or boastful’ (Luqman, 31:18).

Strutting about arrogantly and being vain and boastful are like the branches of a tree whose roots reach hellfire. Kibr, or greatness, is particular to Allah Most High only.



The reason why Satan was thrown out of Paradise after he took on the duty of deviating people from the straight path, was his being conceited towards the prophet Adam and going against the command of his Lord.

In the same way Qarun was given knowledge of the spiritual sciences but he coveted the prophet Harun (Aaron) and was destroyed as a result of his envy of him.

Luqman continued in his advice to his son:

‘Be moderate in your tread and lower your voice. The most hateful of voices is the donkey’s bray’ (Luqman, 31:19).

These verses show the believers the standards of courtesy and delicacy in behaviour and action. Courtesy, which is seen as something very trivial and unimportant in this world, will gain great importance on the Day of Judgement when people will receive their true rights from each other.

The following two verses which are from the chapter Luqman, but do not include his advice to his son, are important in showing us our direction.

According to accounts these two verses were revealed in regard to Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqas (ra) and his mother.

The event took place as follows:

Sa’d (ra) was a son who was very obedient towards his mother. When he became Muslim, his mother said to him:

“O Sa’d! What have you done? If you do not abandon this new religion I swear that I will not eat or drink and then I will die. And you will be known as ‘killer of his mother’...”

Sa’d replied:

“Do not do so dear mother! I will not abandon this religion for anything”. His mother did not eat or drink for two days and two nights and she lost her strength. Seeing this Sa’d said to his mother:

“Mother dear! Know that even if I had one hundred lives and each one of them was taken out of me, I would not leave this religion for anything. Now eat or do not as you so wish”.

Sa’d’s mother then began to eat and then the following two verses were revealed:.

‘We have instructed man concerning his parents. Bearing him caused his mother great debility and the period of his weaning was two years: ‘Give thanks to Me and to your parents. I am your final destination’ (Luqman, 31:14)

‘But if they try to make you associate something with Me about which you have no knowledge, do not obey them. Keep company with them correctly and courteously in this world but follow the Way of him who turns to Me. Then you will return to Me and I will inform you about the things you did’ (Luqman, 31:15) (Muslim, Fadaïlu al-Sahaba, 43-44, Ibn Asir, Usud al-Gaba, c.II pg 368).

In another piece of advice Luqman said the following:

“I have served many prophets. I have chosen eight of their wise words. If you attain these eight virtues then you will be saved:

Protect the following:

1. Your heart whilst in prayer;
2. Your tongue when you amongst people;
3. Your hand while you are eating;
4. Your eyes when you go to somebody else’s house;



5. Remember Allah always and never forget Him;
6. Remember death always and never forget it;
7. Forget the good you have done to others'
8. Forget the evil others have done to you.

Some of the advice of Luqman Hakim that has been transmitted in some of the well known books is as follows:

O my son! Make your taqwa your capital for the hereafter! Because taqwa is a form of trade that is not made with either money or wealth.

O my son! Be present at other people's funerals. Because they will remind you of the hereafter. The forbidden things and sins will only increase your inclination towards this world.

O my son! The light of one who lies will disappear. The worries and anxiety of a person with bad character will increase.

O my son! Do not send an ignorant man as an envoy. If you cannot find a wise and intelligent person then go yourself.

O my son! This world is like the deep sea. Many people have drowned there. Let your taqwa be your boat, your faith your load, your reliance upon Allah your state and your righteous deeds be your provision. If you are saved it will be by the mercy of Allah Most High, but if you drown it will be a result of your own sins.

O my son! Do not let the rooster be more intelligent than you. It remembers and praises Allah every morning. But what do you? You sleep.

O my son! Choose such friends that when you part, they do not talk about you and you do not talk about them.

O my son. Preserve your friendships. Visit your relatives.

O my son! Three things will be clear in the following three places:

Gentleness in a time of anger; bravery in times of war; and brotherhood in times of need.



QUESTIONS

A. Answer the following questions

1. To which people was the prophet Dhu'l Kifl sent?
2. What was the reason for so many prophets being sent to the Israelites?
3. Why was the prophet Dhu'l Kifl given this title?
4. Which of the pieces of advice that Luqman Hakim gave his son impress you the most? Why?
5. Under what circumstances may a child not obey his mother and father? Evaluate your answer in light of the verses from the Qur'an and the hadith.
6. What were five of the eight pieces of advice Luqman Hakim gave to his son?
7. When Luqman Hakim was asked to bring the best and the worst cuts of meat, he brought the tongue and the heart of the animal on both occasions. Explain the reason for this.
8. Describe the nature of the patience that Allah desires from His servants and the reward for this patience.

B. Fill in the gaps

1. Dhu'l Kifl was the son of
2. The real name of Dhu'l Kifl was
3. Dhu'l Kifl ruled by the sharia of the prophet
4. is when the divine light becomes manifest in the heart and a person can then perceive the true nature and mystery behind everything.
5. Luqman said to his son: "O my son! Make your capital for the hereafter".



C. Choose the correct option from the following

- 1. When Al-Yasa'a wished to leave his wealth and kingdom behind he sought out certain characteristics in the person who would inherit them. Which of the following is not one of these characteristics?**
 - A. He should spend the night in prayer.
 - B. He should spend the days fasting.
 - C. He should compensate for any property taken unjustly from a person.
 - D. He should judge amongst the people without becoming angry.

- 2. Which of the following is not a reason for why Dhu'l Kifl was given the title 'Dhu'l Kifl'?**
 - A. He possessed superior virtues in this world and would be raised to high ranks in the hereafter.
 - B. He had taken on the responsibility of informing the Israelites of the commands of the religion.
 - C. He was fortunate in his destiny so that he gained great worldly wealth in a short period of time.
 - D. He received reward many times over by performing all of the righteous deeds of the other prophets.

- 3. Which of the following is a reason for why Dhu'l Kifl took on the responsibility of spreading the religion of Allah?**
 - A. He desired to be resurrected with the prophets and be the first to enter Paradise..
 - B. He saw the teaching of the religion of Allah to the people as his own responsibility.
 - C. People respected and honoured him.
 - D. He believed that he would not encounter any difficulty in inviting people to the right path.

- 4. Which of the following is not a part of the advice that Luqman gave to his son regarding a person preserving oneself.**
 - A. Protect your eyes while you are in another person's house.
 - B. Protect your property while in the marketplace.
 - C. Protect your hand while eating.
 - D. Protect your tongue when you are amongst the people.

- 5. Which of the following is not a part of the advice given by Luqman to his son in regards to remembering and forgetting?**
 - A. Remember Allah always and never ever forget Him.
 - B. Forget the good deeds that you have done for others.
 - C. Remember death always and never forget it.
 - D. Never forget the evil that others have done to you.

- 6. According to Luqman three things became clear in three situations. Which of the following is not one of these?**
 - A. Gentleness in times of anger.
 - B. Courage on the battlefield.
 - C. Intelligence in trading.
 - D. Brotherhood in times of difficulty.



7. Which of the following is not a trait of the people of wisdom?

- A. The spirit reaches a state of perfection after one has acquired knowledge of the theoretical sciences.
- B. In debates about religion his views are always accepted.
- C. The nafs is purified and the divine light becomes manifest in the heart.
- D. One speaks the truth in conversations with people and there is correct action in one's behaviour.

8. Which of the following is not one of the tasks performed by Luqman in order to attain virtue?

- A. Being loyal to one's promise.
- B. Abandoning affairs which do not concern one.
- C. Curing all sick people.
- D. Keeping one's trust and speaking the truth

9. In the hadith: "When the Messenger of Allah stood to pray a sound like the boiling water could be heard from his heart" (Abu Dawud, Salat, 157) which conclusion can we not come to about the way the prophet Muhammad prayed?

- A. Whenever he prayed he would disconnect from his surroundings and give himself to the meaning of his prayer.
- B. He would pass the time from when the adhan was read until he prayed in contemplation.
- C. Whenever he prayed his heart would tremble out of deep reverence and emotion.
- D. When he prayed he would lose himself and would only be able to give the salams with the help of those near him.

10. Which of the following is not an act forbidden by the Qur'an?

- A. To consider oneself superior to others who are at a lower level in terms of education and economical status.
- B. To boast of one's own actions and think that no one can do them better than oneself.
- C. To know that the faith that one possesses is a favour from Allah and to remain humble before atheists.
- D. To believe that one's knowledge and worship will raise one to a level above all others.

11. Which conclusion can we not come to from the following piece of advice of Luqman to his son: "O my son. This world is like the ocean. Many people have drowned there. Let your piety be your ship, your faith your load, reliance upon Allah your state and righteous deeds your provision. If you are saved it is from the mercy of Allah, but if you drown it is due to your own sins".

- A. Fearing Allah and seeking refuge in Him will save a person from drowning in the whirlpool of sin.
- B. Before embarking on any task one should be in a state of complete reliance upon Allah and wait for the decree of Allah to become manifest.
- C. A person should see their successes as a favour from Allah and their failures as a result of one's own deficiency.
- D. What a person can take from this world to the hereafter is good character and righteous deeds strengthened by faith.





THE PROPHET
ZACHARIAH

-upon whom be peace-



THE PROPHET
YAHYA

-upon whom be peace-



THE PROPHET
ISA

-upon whom be peace-



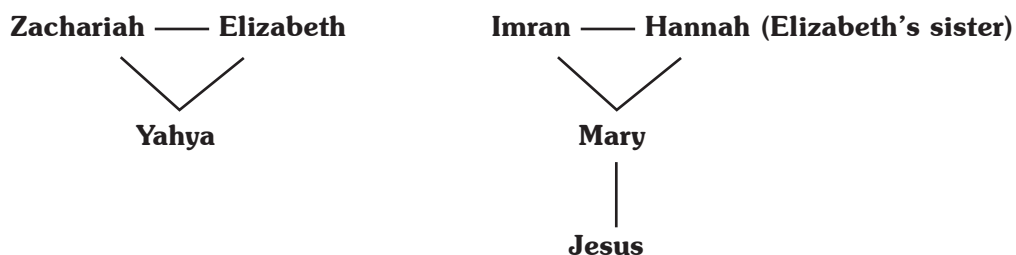
The prophets Zachariah, Yahya and Isa (peace be upon them)

The three prophets, Zachariah, Yahya and Isa were very similar to each other in terms of the difficulties that they encountered, in their pain and in their struggle to establish the creed of tawheed.

They strove very hard to bring the Jews, who had become very dissipated after the prophet Musa passed away, back to the straight path. However despite a few people who believed in them, they were continually despised and tormented by the majority who did not accept them and their lives in this world passed in distress and pain.

Both the prophets **Zachariah** and Yahya were mercilessly murdered and martyred. The prophet Isa too was about to be killed when he was raised to the heavens by Almighty Allah.

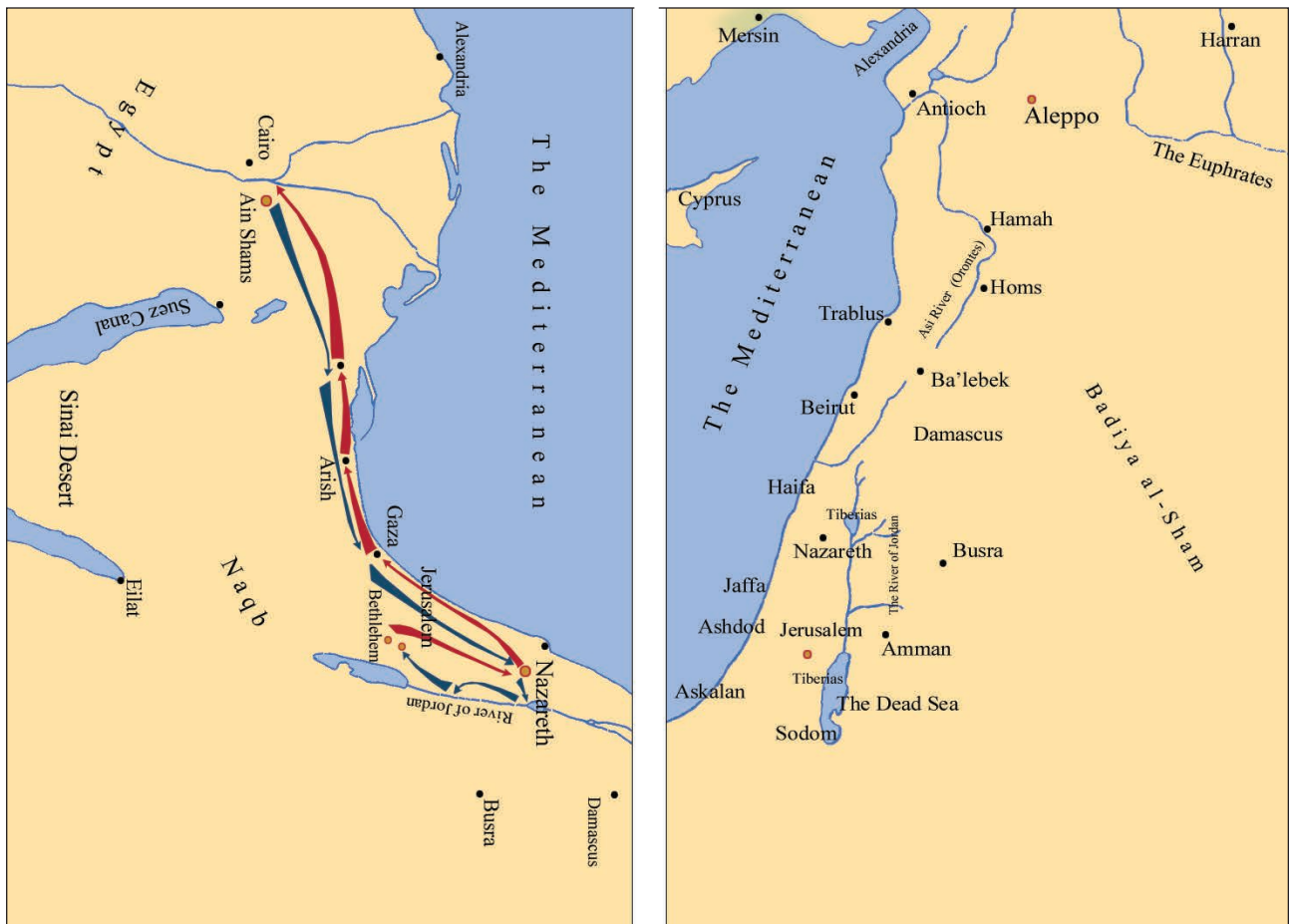
In addition to the similarities of these three prophets in terms of the events that befell them in carrying out their duties, they were also related to each other biologically.



The prophet Zachariah (peace be upon him)

Zachariah was a prophet from the Israelites. His lineage reaches back to the prophet Sulayman (peace be upon him). He used to write the scrolls of the Torah in the Bayt al-Maqdis in Jerusalem and he was in charge of the duty of sacrificing the animals. He ruled by the shariah of the prophet Musa and this was the religion he tried to propagate. He was a carpenter and earned his livelihood through his own hands.





The prophet Zachariah was martyred by his own people. His tomb is in Aleppo on the border of Syria.

During the time of Zachariah, Damascus and Jerusalem were in the hands of the Ptolemaic dynasty. These people respected the Bayt al-Maqdis and treated the Israelites well. The leading men of this nation would remain in the temple and worship, without ever leaving it. The Israelites did not have a prophet so they prayed to Allah to send them one and eventually Zachariah as their prophet at the time were four hundred freed worshippers in the Bayt al-Maqdis. Whenever a wife of any one of the Israelites became pregnant, in order to become esteemed in the sight of Allah they would pray as follows:

“O our Lord! If I have a son I am going to consecrate him to you so that he can worship You”. In this way sons were promised to the temple. This tradition had been in place since the time of the prophet Musa.

Allah Most High said to Musa:

“O Musa! I love the slave of mine who spends his life, from his youth to his old age, worshipping me. That slave of mine has never sinned in his youth and has dedicated his heart solely to Me and has gained My love”.



Zachariah married Elizabeth who was from the lineage of the prophet Sulayman. Elizabeth was the sister of Hannah, the mother of Mary. Hannah was married to Imran. Zachariah and Elizabeth had a son whose name was Yahya.

The prophet Zachariah lived his life devoted to gaining the pleasure of Allah and as a righteous prophet. He was later cruelly martyred at the hands of the tyrannical and rebellious Jews which will be explained in detail later.



The prophet Yahya (peace be upon him) (John the Baptist)

John the Baptist is the cousin of Mary. He learned the Torah and was appointed a prophet at a very young age, when he had just reached the age of maturity.

The Holy Qur'an tells of how Yahya was bestowed upon Zachariah:

'Then and there (in the Bayt al-Maqdis) Zachariah called on his Lord and said, 'O Lord, grant me by Your favour an upright child. You are the Hearer of Prayer' (Al-i Imran, 3:38).

'...and said, 'My Lord, my bones have lost their strength and my head is crowned with white, but in calling on You, My Lord, I have never been disappointed. I fear my relatives when I am gone and my wife is barren, so give me an heir from You to be my inheritor and the inheritor of the family of Ya'qub, and make him, my Lord, pleasing to You' (Maryam 19:4-6).

Allah accepted this most sincere of prayers and said:

'The angels called out to him while he was standing in prayer in the Upper Room: 'Allah gives you the good news of Yahya, who will come to confirm a Word from Allah, and will be a leader and a celibate, a Prophet and one of the righteous (Al-i Imran, 3:39).

'Zachariah! We give you the good news of a boy named Yahya, a name we have given to no one else before' (Maryam 19:7)

The fact that the verse states that the name Yahya had not been given to anyone else before is in order to elevate the status of the prophet Yahya. The name 'Yahya' was given to him by Almighty Allah Himself. This also includes the other unique virtues given to the prophet Yahya. Yahya means 'the living one'. To bring a son into the world from two elderly people is like bringing to life from the dead.

'(Zachariah) said, 'My Lord, how can I possibly have a son when I have reached old age and my wife is barren?' He said, 'It will be so. Allah does whatever He wills' (Al-i Imran, 3:40).

'(Allah) said, 'It will be so! Your Lord says, "That is easy for me to do. I created you before, when you were not anything"' (Maryam, 19:9).

A sign that the prayer of the prophet Zachariah would be accepted was that he was not to speak to anyone for three days, only to communicate by sign and he was to make constant remembrance of his Lord.

'(Zachariah) said, 'My Lord, appoint a Sign for me.' He said, 'Your Sign is that you will not speak to people for three days, except by gesture. Remember your Lord much and glorify Him in the evening and after dawn' (Al-i Imran, 3:41).

The prophet Zachariah did not speak to any person for three days. He preached to his people by writing in the earth and by gesturing.

'(Zachariah) came out to his people from the Upper Room and gestured to them to glorify Allah in the morning and the evening' (Maryam, 19:11)

In another chapter in the Qur'an Almighty Allah states:

'We responded to him and gave him Yahya, restoring for him his wife's fertility. They outdid one another in good actions, calling out to Us in yearning and in awe, and humbling themselves to Us' (Anbiya, 21:90).

When the prophet Yahya had grown up and reached the age of maturity Allah Most High commanded him to learn the commandments of the Torah and practise them.

'Yahya, take hold of the Book with vigour.' We gave him judgement while still a child, and tenderness and purity from Us – he had taqwa – and devotion to his parents – he was not insolent or disobedient' (Maryam, 19:12-14)

The prophet Yahya, himself given prophethood, continued to follow the shariah of the prophet Musa until the prophet Isa brought the Gospels.



According to the laws of Musa, it was forbidden to marry the wife of one's brother. The punishment of a person who committed such an act was castration (Leviticus, 18/6-18; 20/19-21).

In the Torah the punishment for adultery is death; whilst the punishment for adultery between two people who are not allowed to marry each other is different (Deuteronomy, 22/22-27; Leviticus, 20/11, 12, 14, 17).

The following event is narrated as the cause for the prophet Yahya being martyred.

During the prophethood of Yahya, King Herod had illicit sexual relations with his brother's wife. When the prophet Yahya announced that this was against the divine laws he was thrown into prison by the king. Later during the celebrations of the king's birthday, the woman he fornicated with and her daughter danced in the celebrations. This girl virtually bewitched and enraptured the king with her performance. He promised the girl that he would do what ever she asked for. Instigated by her mother, the girl asked for the head of the prophet Yahya. Though he was not happy about this, the king was forced to keep his promise. The prophet Yahya was then beheaded and he became a martyr. This girl later married Herod and was then disgraced and ruined (Luke, 3/19-20; Matthew 14/1-12).

This corresponds to the time when the prophet Isa was raised to the heavens. The Jews of that time had rebelled to such a degree that they were even able to murder their own prophets. For this and other similar sins Almighty Allah cursed them:

'Because of the fact that they broke their covenant, and rejected Allah's Signs, and killed the Prophets without any right to do so and said, 'Our hearts are already full of knowledge'. Allah has stamped them with unbelief, so they do not have faith except for very few' (Nisa, 4:155).



The prophet Yahya was approximately thirty years old when he was martyred.

As we are told by the verse, he was protected by the mercy of Allah on three days of potential danger:

'Peace be upon him the day he was born, and the day he dies, and the day he is raised up again alive' (Maryam, 19:15).

The commentator Baidawi interprets this verse as follows:

Satan, the one who plagues the human being will not harm him while he is alive. And may he be free from punishment in the grave. And may he not fear being taken to account and not see the punishment of hellfire.

The prophet Isa (Jesus) peace be upon him

The prophet Isa was born in Jerusalem six month after the prophet Yahya. He was the last prophet to be sent to the Israelites.

He is the fourth of the five prophets known as 'ulu al-azm' (the resolute messengers) who had reached the highest degree.

He is called 'Ruhullah' (the spirit of Allah) as an expression meant to elevate his status but also because he was created just like the prophet Adam, by Allah breathing into him of His spirit.

Isa was appointed a prophet at the age of 30 and he was given the Gospels. When he reached the age of 33 he was raised to the heavens whilst still alive.



Maryam, the mother of Isa, was from the lineage of the prophet Dawud. Her mother was Hannah and her father was Imran.



According to sources, Hannah was barren. She made a promise to her lord: O my Lord! If you give me a child I will dedicate him to the service of the Bayt al-Maqdis". Hannah fell pregnant soon after she made this covenant. The verse from the Qur'an states:

'Remember when the wife of 'Imran said, 'My Lord, I have pledged to You what is in my womb, devoting it to Your service. Please accept my prayer. You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing' (Al-I Imran, 3:35).

A little while later Hannah gave birth to a girl. She named her Maryam:

'When she gave birth, she said, 'My Lord! I have given birth to a girl' – and Allah knew very well what she had given birth to, male and female are not the same – 'and I have named her Maryam and placed her and her children in Your safekeeping from the accursed Shaytan' (Al-I Imran, 3:36).

Until that time only boys would be consecrated to the temple and this was considered highly meritorious. Boys consecrated in such a manner would remain in service there from their birth until the age of puberty. When they reached the age of puberty they were given the choice to remain in service there or go elsewhere as they desired.

However it was not acceptable for a child to leave the Bayt al-Maqdis before the age of puberty.

This consecration would only be made for male children. After Hannah sought refuge in her Lord and consecrated her child to Him and Allah Most High gave her a daughter it was then allowed for female children to be consecrated in the Bayt al-Maqdis.

Hannah entrusted her daughter Maryam to those in charge of the Bayt al-Maqdis.

They drew lots as to who would take charge of Maryam. Allah Most High says in the Qur'an:

'This is news from the Unseen which We reveal to you. You were not with them when they cast their reeds to see which of them would be the guardian of Maryam. You were not with them when they quarrelled' (Al-i Imran 3:44).

The lot fell to the imam of the Bayt al-Maqdis and Hannah's brother-in-law Zachariah.

Zachariah said: "Her aunt is my wife" and he took responsibility for Maryam.

When Maryam was weaned they assigned a room for her in the Bayt al-Maqdis. In the verse this room is called the 'mihrab'. A mihrab is a room assigned for strengthening a person's faith. It also has the meaning of a place of worship. Only the prophet Zachariah would enter her room. This continued until she was twelve years old. Zachariah would open her door with the key and lock it after he left. Every day he would leave a day's worth of food there. However he would be amazed to see all manner of fruits inside (that he had not left there). When he asked Maryam where they came from she would reply that Allah sent them. Amongst these could be found winter fruits in the summer time and summer fruits when it was winter. Allah Most High says in the Holy Qur'an:

'Her Lord accepted her with approval and made her grow in health and beauty. And Zachariah became her guardian. Every time Zachariah visited her in the Upper Room, he found food with her. He said, 'Maryam, how did you come by this?' She said, 'It is from Allah. Allah provides for whoever He wills without any reckoning' (Al-i Imran, 3:37).

Allah Most High's great blessings upon Maryam were as follows:

- Up until her time only male children were consecrated to the Bayt al-Maqdis but with her mother Hannah's prayer, Maryam was also accepted.
- Allah Most High allowed her to grow up under the protective care of her auntie's husband Zachariah.
- He bestowed upon her bounties from Paradise while she was still in this world.
- He allowed her to see the angel Gabriel





- He protected her and her son Isa from the evil of Satan.

Messiah is a Hebrew word which means 'blessed'. It is a title of the prophet Isa. He was called 'Messiah' in order to demonstrate his honour and virtue.

- Her son Isa spoke whilst he was yet a baby in the cradle and defended his mother against the accusations made against her.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) is reported to have said:

“Maryam, daughter of Imran, was the best of the women of her time. And the best of the women of my community is Khadijah” (Muslim, Fada'il al-

Sahaba, 69).

Maryam would spend her days and nights in worship. Amongst the Israelites she became famous for her taqwa. She was one of Allah's chosen servants from whom extraordinary phenomena could be observed.

She is praised in the Holy Qur'an as a 'siddiqah' that is someone who has become surpassed in their servitude and devotion to Allah.

Allah Most High says:

'And when the angels said, 'Maryam, Allah has chosen you and purified you. He has chosen you over all other women.

Maryam, obey your Lord and prostrate and bow with those who bow' (Al-i Imran, 3:42-43).

Upon these commands Maryam went so far in her taqwa that she would perform the ritual prayer until her feet became swollen.

One who creates out of nothing can certainly create without a father

When Maryam was fifteen years old she was engaged to a man named Yusuf Najjar. However before she married him Allah Most High gave her the good tidings of a son to be born from her without the need for a father.

'When the angels said, 'Maryam, your Lord gives you good news of a Word from Him. His name is the Messiah¹³, 'Isa, son of Maryam, of high esteem in the world and the hereafter, and one of those brought near' (Al-i Imran, 3:45)

The angels once again said to Maryam:

'He will speak to people in the cradle, and also when fully grown, and will be one of the righteous' (Al-i Imran, 3:46)

Upon this Maryam asked:

'My Lord! How can I have a son when no man has ever touched me?' He said, 'It will be so.' Allah creates whatever He wills. When He decides on something, He just says to it, 'Be!' and it is' (Al-i Imran, 3:47).

¹³ *Messiah* is a Hebrew word which means 'blessed'. It is a title of the prophet Isa. He was called 'Messiah' in order to demonstrate his honour and virtue.



The angels continued to speak about Isa to Maryam:

‘He will teach him the Book and Wisdom, and the Torah and the Injil’ (Al-i Imran, 3:48)

‘Mention Maryam in the Book, how she withdrew from her people to an eastern place’ (Maryam, 19:16).

Before too long Allah Most High sent Gabriel to Maryam:

‘...and veiled herself from them. Then We sent Our Ruh to her and it took on for her the form of a handsome, well-built man’ (Maryam, 19:17)

However when Maryam saw this foreign man before her, she withdrew out of her modesty and chastity.

She was afraid as she did not know that it was the angel Gabriel:

‘She said, ‘I seek refuge from you with the All-Merciful if you have fear of Allah’ He said, ‘I am only your Lord’s messenger so that He can give you a pure boy.’ She said, ‘How can I have a boy when no man has touched me and I am not an unchaste woman?’ He said, ‘It will be so! Your Lord says, “That is easy for Me. It is so that We can make him a Sign for mankind and a mercy from Us.” It is a matter already decreed’ (Maryam, 19:18-21).



As willed by Almighty Allah:

‘So she conceived him (Jesus) and withdrew with him to a distant place’ (Maryam, 19:22).

The birth pains of Maryam began to increase and she approached a dried date tree and leaned against it.

The Holy Qur’an states:

‘The pains of labour drove her to the trunk of a date-palm. She said, ‘Oh if only I had died before this time and was something discarded and forgotten!’ (Maryam, 19:23).

Eventually the prophet Isa came into the world under the date tree. Allah Most High had created him without a father. Possessor of infinite power, Almighty Allah had created Adam out of earth, with no father or mother; and had created Eve without a mother, from Adam; and now he had created Isa from Maryam with no need for a father. The birth of Isa and the creation of Adam are both similar in that they both took place by the command of ‘Be’.

إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَىٰ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

‘The likeness of ‘Isa in Allah’s sight is the same as Adam. He created him from earth and then He said to him, ‘Be!’ and he was’ (Al-i Imran, 3:59).

This verse is an indication of the infinite power of Allah and a proof of Maryam’s chastity in the face of the ugly accusations that the Jews were to make against her, after being shocked at this event.



There is no information about the date of Isa’s birth in the literature. And nor can one find any data on this matter in the Bible. Even though in one Bible, it writes that Isa was born in the time of the Jewish king (Matthew, 2/1), the Roman sources indicate that this king died before Christ.

Thus all of the information contradicts each other. Consequently the date of Christmas can be nothing more than a speculation.

Whilst the Catholics celebrate Christmas on the 24th-25th of December, the Armenian churches celebrate it on the 6th of January.



In fact some Protestants do not celebrate Christmas at all on the basis that the date is not definitely stated in the sacred texts.



After the prophet Isa was born:

‘A voice called out (Gabriel) to her from under her, ‘Do not grieve! Your Lord has placed a small stream at your feet’ (Maryam, 19:24).



The voice that addressed Maryam continued:

‘Shake the trunk of the palm towards you and fresh, ripe dates will drop down onto you’ (Maryam, 19:25).

Maryam shook the branch of the date palm tree and even though it was not date’s harvest season suddenly it began to drop down from the dry tree.

Maryam began to eat the fresh dates and drink the water from in front of her.

The giving of dates of this tree was to console Maryam. It was said to her:

‘Eat and drink and delight your eyes. If you should see anyone at all, just say, “I have made a vow of abstinence to the All-Merciful and today I will not speak to any human being.”’ (Maryam, 19:26).

As we understand, in the time in which Maryam lived, it was possible to fast by not eating and drinking, but also by not talking.

Or just as one refrained from eating and drinking whilst fasting, one also refrained from speaking.

With the birth of Isa, great mischief-making and gossip began to spread amongst the people.

‘She brought him to her people, carrying him. They said, ‘Maryam! You have done an unthinkable thing! Sister of Harun, your father was not an evil man nor was your mother an unchaste woman!’ (Maryam, 19:27,28).

The Harun that is mentioned in this verse is not the prophet Harun, the brother of the prophet Musa. This closest opinion to the truth about this matter is that Harun was the true brother of Maryam. This is because they would name their children after righteous people who went before them (See Muslim, Adab 9).

He too was a modest and righteous person just like his mother and father. This is why his people made it clear that they could not attribute the act of fornication to Maryam, the sister of such a person. The Israelites continued to insult and abuse Maryam. She listened to them in patience and did not speak as commanded.

However when the inappropriate behaviour of her people grew too much the help of Allah arrived:

‘She pointed towards him. They said, ‘How can a baby in the cradle speak?’ (Maryam, 19:29).

Then the prophet Jesus, the future messenger of Allah, was rendered verbal with the capacity of speech given to him by Allah and he spoke whilst still in his cradle:

‘He said, ‘I am the slave of Allah, He has given me the Book and made me a Prophet. He has made me blessed wherever I am and directed me to do salat and give zakat as long as I live, and to show devotion to my mother. He has not made me insolent or arrogant. Peace be upon me the day I was born, and the day I die and the day I am raised up again alive’ (Maryam, 19:30-33).



When Isa began to speak like this everybody present was in shock. Maryam was absolved of all immodesty and sins and congratulated by the people.

Whenever the rebellious people would ask Maryam: “Where did you get this child from”, she would always indicate her child and say: “Let the child tell you”.

Isa was still a baby in his cradle when he was able to say:

“My mother was a chaste and decent woman. O ignorant people! Do not rebuke my mother who is a chaste and honourable woman. Know that Allah Most High has brought me into this world without a father. This is a miracle of Allah!

Upon this many of the people said:

“This is a miracle of Allah. Otherwise no baby still in its cradle can talk. In truth this is by the grace of God. This is an event which shows the greatness of Allah”.

On the other hand others continued in their treachery. The Holy Qur’an states:

‘That is ‘Isa, son of Maryam, the word of truth about which they are in doubt’ (Maryam, 19:34)

In this verse the word of truth which is mentioned is on account of his being a product of Allah’s command of ‘Be!’

This truth is explained in another verse as follows:

‘And she who guarded her chastity. We breathed into her some of Our Ruh and made her and her son a Sign for all the worlds’ (Anbiya, 21:91).



When the prophet Isa spoke as a baby it suppressed many of the accusations. However it was not too long before mischief and accusations began to appear once more. Those ignorant people said:

“How can a child be born without a father?” Then they began to say:

“If anybody the culprit of this could only be Zachariah”.

Whilst the prophet Zachariah was alone in the Bayt al-Maqdis they approached him and accused him and attacked him saying: “You have committed adultery with Maryam”.

In order to protect himself from their evil, the prophet Zachariah hid in the hollow of a tree. Appearing in human form Satan showed those miserable people the tree where Zachariah was hiding and he said to them:

“Cut that tree into two with a saw! You will lose nothing. Zachariah is inside it”.

They then began to saw the tree in half. When the saw cut at Zachariah’s head the innocent prophet began to cry out ‘ahh’. However he heard a voice saying:

“O Zachariah. Do not complain”.

And thus the prophet Zachariah was cut into two, and became a martyr, patiently relying upon Allah and not saying as much as ‘ah’.

He reached an elevated rank in the sight of Allah.



Almighty Allah then took Maryam and her son Isa under His protection so that those miserable Jews who killed the prophet Zachariah could not harm them.

‘And We made the son of Maryam and his mother a Sign and gave them shelter on a mountainside where there was a meadow and a flowing spring’ (Mu’minun, 23:50).



It is believed that this place was Egypt. Maryam and Isa stayed there for twelve years. During this time they experienced many extraordinary events. They were staying in a house which housed poor and needy people. One day the owner of the house in which they were staying lost an amount of money. The owner of the house did not know who took the money. Everybody in the house was under suspicion. This situation was very difficult for Maryam. In the house they were staying in was a blind person and a crippled person. When the prophet Isa saw that his mother was very hurt, he said to these two people:

“Take the money out from where you have hidden it”.

They were then forced to bring the money they had taken. After this event the esteem of Isa increased amongst the people.

The prophethood of Isa

After the prophet Isa remained in Egypt for twelve years, he returned to Jerusalem and settled in the district of Nazareth. This is why the Christians are called ‘Nazareans’ which means one who comes from the town of Nazareth. When he was thirty years old Isa was made a prophet. He immediately began to call people to the oneness of Allah.

Allah Most High says in the Qur’an:

‘We sent Noah and Ibrahim and placed Prophethood and the Book among their descendants. Some of them are guided but many of them are deviators’ (Hadid, 57:26).

The four major books that are mentioned in the Holy Qur’an were revealed to the prophets that came from their lineage.

‘Then We sent Our Messengers following in their footsteps and sent ‘Isa son of Maryam after them, giving him the Injil. We put compassion and mercy in the hearts of those who followed him. They invented monasticism – We did not prescribe it for them – purely out of desire to gain the pleasure of Allah, but even so they did not observe it as it should have been observed. To those of them who had iman We gave their reward but many of them are deviators’ (Hadid, 57:27).

Monasticism is an understanding and way of life that appeared after Christianity. According to accounts unbelieving tyrants tried to eliminate the believers. There were three wars fought between the unbelievers and the believers during which the believers had many casualties. After these wars those believers who survived began to worry that there would be nobody left to invite to the true religion if they too were killed so they decided not to fight and began to occupy themselves only with worship. This is why these sincere and devoted people, who fled from dissension and trouble, abandoned all worldly pleasures, including eating and drinking to excess and marrying. They spent their time in worship in mountains, caves and cells. With time those who remained apart from these lost their identity and began to deny the religion of the prophet Isa, and they entered the religion of the rulers.

As time passed belief in the trinity (the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost) began to appear in a people amongst whom belief in many gods was prevalent.

The same situation occurred when the last of the prophets, the prophet Muhammad (saw) arrived and there were people who rejected his prophethood and denied him, deviating in the same way.



The prophet Isa continued to teach the religion to the people. However a lot of people persisted in their unbelief.

The prophet Isa showed them many miracles. He told them that he had come to confirm the Torah brought by the prophet Musa but that Allah had changed certain rulings:



‘(Isa said): I come confirming the Torah I find already there, and to make lawful for you some of what was previously forbidden to you. I have brought you a Sign from your Lord. So have taqwa of Allah and obey me.

Allah is my Lord and your Lord so worship Him. That is a straight path’ (Al-i Imran, 3:50-51)

‘And when ‘Isa son of Maryam said, ‘Tribe of Israel, I am the Messenger of Allah to you, confirming the Torah which came before me and giving you the good news of a Messenger after me whose name is Ahmad.’ When he brought them the Clear Signs, they said, ‘This is down-right magic’ (Saff, 61:6)

In the 14th book of John, Isa is reported to have said:

‘And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter (Paraclete), that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth’ (John 14:16-17)

In the 16th book of John, it says:

‘Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

‘I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now’.

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come’ (John, 16:7-9, 12-13)

The word ‘Paraclete’ is a word that indicates ‘praise’ however some Christians have interpreted this word as being the ‘saviour’ and some have interpreted it as meaning one who is very grateful or who praises much [‘hammad’ or ‘hamid’]. Thus the word ‘Paraclete’ fits the root meanings of the words ‘Ahmad’ and ‘Muhammad’.

In the Gospel of Barnabas in the 39th chapter, the following is written:

“Then said the priest: “How shall the Messiah be called, and what sign shall reveal his coming?” Jesus answered: “The name of the Messiah is admirable, for God himself gave him the name when he had created his soul, and placed it in a celestial splendour. God said: “Wait Muhammad; for your sake I will to create paradise, the world, and a great multitude of creatures, whereof I make you a present, insomuch that whoever shall bless you shall be blessed, and whoever shall curse you shall be accursed. When I shall send you into the world I shall send you as my Messenger of salvation, and your word shall be true, insomuch that heaven and earth shall fail, but your faith shall never fail.” Ahmad is his blessed name.” Then the crowd lifted up their voices, saying: “O God send us your Messenger: O Muhammad, come quickly for the salvation of the world!” (Barabas, 97:6)



The anger and spite of the unbelievers against the prophet Isa was increasing day by day. Realising this, Isa chose twelve disciples from amongst those who believed in him and said to them:

“Who will help me in serving and preserving the religion of Allah?”

All of the disciples replied:

“We are your helpers. We will help to the path of Allah with our all. Because we have given our hearts to His religion. Bear witness that we are true Muslims devoted to your religion.

‘When ‘Isa sensed unbelief on their part, he said, ‘Who will be my helpers to Allah?’ The disciples said, ‘We are Allah’s helpers. We believe in Allah. Bear witness that we are Muslims’ (Al-i Imran, 3:52).

‘You who have faith! Be helpers of Allah as ‘Isa son of Maryam said to the Disciples, ‘Who will be my helpers to Allah?’ The Disciples said, ‘We will be the helpers of Allah.’ One faction



of the tribe of Israel had belief and the other were unbelievers. So We supported those who had faith against their enemy and they became victorious' (Saff, 61:14)

The word 'disciple' ('hawari') is of either Arabic or Ethiopian origin whose real root is 'hawarya' which has the meaning of 'helper'.

It also means a person who has been chosen.

'hawari' is a particular term which was used for those twelve sincere and pure believers who first believed in the prophet Isa and who helped him.

In the Holy Qur'an they were called the 'ansarullah' that is, the 'helpers of Allah'. The disciples were chosen by the prophet Isa to spread the teachings of Christianity.

Barnabas, the writer of the famous Gospel of Barnabas was one of these disciples.

The Table sent down from Heaven

The Disciples asked the prophet Isa to pray that a table be sent down to them from the heavens.

'And when the Disciples said, "Isa son of Maryam! Can your Lord send down a table to us out of heaven?" He said, "Fear Allah if you are believers!"' (Maida, 5:112)

The prophet Isa said to them: "Do you doubt the power of Allah? With what audacity do you ask for such a thing?"

The Disciples replied:

"We have no other aim only to be subject to the favour of Allah and for our hearts to be content".

The Holy Qur'an says:

'We want to eat from it and for our hearts to be at peace and to know that you have told us the truth and to be among those who witness it' (Maida, 5:113).

Upon this the prophet Isa performed the major ritual ablution and then prayed two cycles of prayer. In the presence of his Lord he then petitioned Allah in all helplessness. He asked Allah that the day that this table was bestowed upon them to be a day of celebration.

'Isa son of Maryam said, "Allah, our Lord, send down a table to us out of heaven to be a feast for us, for the first and last of us, and as a Sign from You. Provide for us! You are the Best of Providers!"' (Maida, 5:114).

This prayer was accepted and a table was sent down from heaven. According to accounts there was fried fish and salt and vinegar on the table. There were olives, honey and cheese spread over bread. The table was also filled with greens.



Isa and the Disciples go to Nusaybin

According to accounts by Salman Farisi the prophet Isa was sent to Nusaybin to invite the ruler there, known for his arrogance and oppression, to Islam.

He thought of first sending some of his disciples to go before him and he asked:

"Who will go?"

Jacob answered: "I will go".

Tevman and Simon joined him.



Simon said to Isa:

“O Spirit of Allah! I will go by your permission however if I meet with distress and I call you please do not deprive us of your help”.

The three of them then set off together. Simon remained outside the city and said:

“If you need help I will come”.

Jacob and Tevman then entered the city.

They gathered the people there together and invited them to the belief in the oneness of Allah.

Because the people believed in the accusations and slander against Maryam and the prophet Isa they rejected their invitation and in fact cursed them. Then they took Tevman to the ruler. The ruler had his hands and feet cut off.

He had metal rods thrust into his eyes and then threw him into prison. Meanwhile Simon had disguised himself and entered the city. He approached the ruler and became friends with him. He became one of his conversants. One day he asked permission from the ruler to tell Tevman something. They acted as if they did not know each other. Simon said:

“O man, what is your word?” Tevman replied:

“Isa is the servant and messenger of Allah”.

Their conversation then continued as follows:

“What is your evidence for the truth of your words?”

“His curing every illness”

“Physicians can do that too. What other proof do you have?”

“He knows what people eat and hide in their houses”.

“Seers know this too. What else?”

“He can make birds from clay and make them fly”.

“Magicians can do that too”.

“He can bring the dead back to life”.

“Now this is above the human being. In that case let us call Isa. If he can truly bring the dead back to life let us believe in him”.

The ruler approved of these words of Simon and they immediately sent news to the prophet Isa who arrived in Nusaybin.

He acted as though he did not know Simon at all. Simon said to the ruler:

“If you like we can test these abilities with Tevman”. They brought Tevman and when the prophet Isa rubbed his feet and hands his body was restored to its former state. He then rubbed his eyes with his hand and they too recovered. Simon looked at the ruler and said:

“Now this is a sign of a true prophet”.

Then Simon asked:

“O Isa! What did those who are present with us now eat last night in their houses and what did they hide?”

The prophet Isa enumerated all that they had eaten and hidden. Then he was asked to make a bat from clay. He did so and let it fly.

He was asked to cure some ill people all of whom recovered from their illnesses.



They asked him to revive a dead person. They assigned Sam ibn Nuh as the one who was to be revived. Isa brought him back to life. They asked Sam’:

“Were you this old when you died?” He replied:

“No but I thought that Doomsday had arrived and I aged out of my fear”.

Then Sam ibn Nuh confirmed the prophethood of Isa and passed away again.

In the face of such clear and numerous miracles the ruler and his soldiers all believed in Isa. From here we can understand that a Muslim must be intelligent and incisive and act with discretion and insight. Every truth should not be stated everywhere. The right time and place must be prepared.

Habib an-Najjar

The prophet Isa once sent two of his disciples to the region of Antioch. They invited the people there to abandon their worship of idols and come to have faith in Allah. However there lived there an idol-worshipping king who captured these two disciples and had them thrown into prison.

The prophet Isa then sent Simon, his leading disciple there. Simon first befriended the king and after he had increased his positive standing with him and those around him he then began to nicely invite them to belief in tawheed. The king and those around him accepted him willingly.

However the people did not. A man by the name of Habib an-Najjar who heard about the objections of the people ran from his home which was in distant part of the city. He invited them all to faith telling them that he too had accepted the faith that these messengers had come to inform them of.

However the ignorant people did not listen to him and then submitted to the rage that had built up inside them, martyring Habib an Najjar there and then. This event is explained in the Qur’an as follows:

‘Make an example for them of the inhabitants of the city when the Messengers came to it. When We sent them two and they denied them both, so We reinforced them with a third. They said, ‘Truly We have been sent to you as Messengers.’They said, ‘You are nothing but human beings like ourselves. The All-Merciful has not sent down anything. You are simply lying.’They said, ‘Our Lord knows we have been sent as Messengers to you.We are only responsible for clear transmission.’They said, ‘We see an evil omen in you. If you do not stop we will stone you and you will suffer a painful punishment at our hands.’They said, ‘Your evil omen is in yourselves. Is it not just that you have been reminded? No, you are an unbridled people!’A man came running from the far side of the city, saying, ‘My people! Follow the Messengers!Follow those who do not ask you for any wage and who have received guidance’ (Ya’sin, 36:13-21).

At this suggestion of Habib an-Najjar’s they turned to him and said:

“Are you from their religion too?”

He replied:

‘Why indeed should I not worship Him Who brought me into being, Him to Whom you will be returned?Am I to take as gods instead of Him those whose intercession, if the All-Merciful desires harm for me, will not help me at all and cannot save me?In that case I would clearly be misguided.I have faith in your Lord so listen to me!’ (Ya’sin, 36:13-25).

However these rebellious and miserable people did not listen to him and they stoned him. Whilst he was dying he was told:

قِيلَ ادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ قَالَ يَا لَيْتَ قَوْمِي يَعْلَمُونَ * بِمَا غَفَرَ لِي رَبِّي
وَجَعَلَنِي مِنَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ



‘Enter the Garden!’ He said, ‘If my people only knew how my Lord has forgiven me and placed me among the honoured ones!’ (Ya’sin36:26-27).

The prophet Isa is raised up to the heavens

The Israelites had become lax in the religion brought by the prophet Musa. They had many objections to their prophets and they had completely strayed from the straight path.

Even though the prophets that came after continually warned them, these rebellious people were not to be reformed and even resorted to violence. They had gone to such extremes that they were even capable of murdering their own prophets. Thus was the situation of the tribe of Israelites that the prophet Isa was sent to – wretched, abject and in deviation from the truth. They were in expectation of a saviour. They wanted their awaited prophet to be a fighter, resolute, brave and strong. Their prophet had to be one who saved them from their slavery and brought them great benefit.

The Jews to whom Isa had come to guide found him to be too soft and gentle and so they did not accept him.

However the prophet Isa was patient with them, despite everything, and struggled to bring security and calm to the earth and reconcile the people to peace. He tried to save the Jews from their deviation and misguidance. However these Jews, who had the blood of the prophets on their hands, were unsettled by this invitation. They eventually decided to kill Isa. They first began to torture both Isa and those around him. Their torture was so extreme that the disciples Judas, Ishar and Yehuda turned back from their faith. In fact Judas even went so far as to inform the Jews, who had murdered the prophets Zachariah and Yahya, of Isa’s whereabouts.

He thus became one of those who had attracted the wrath of Almighty Allah and as a punishment for his crime he appeared to the Jews in the form of Isa and was then crucified as a result. The prophet Isa however was raised to the heavens.

Another opinion about the raising of the prophet Isa to the heavens is as follows:

When the Jews entered the house that Isa had been living in, Almighty Allah showed them Judas in the form of Isa. They then murdered him in place of the Spirit of Allah.

Allah Most High says in the Qur’an:

‘And on account of their kufr, and their utterance of a monstrous slander against Maryam, and their saying, ‘We killed the Messiah, ‘Isa son of Maryam, Messenger of Allah.’ They did not kill him and they did not crucify him but it was made to seem so to them. Those who argue about him are in doubt about it. They have no real knowledge of it, just conjecture. But they certainly did not kill him. Allah raised him up to Himself. Allah is Almighty, All-Wise’ (Nisa, 4:156-158).

Thus Allah protected the prophet Isa from the Jews and prevented them from killing him. It is certain that He raised him up to Himself. However there are diverse accounts of how this was done and when.

According to most opinions Allah Most High raised him up with His power to a particular place in the spiritual heavens. Before the day of Judgement arrives He will send him back to earth.

Then all Christians will come to accept belief in the oneness of Allah and become Muslims.

The Holy Qur’an says:

‘They plotted and Allah plotted. But Allah is the best of plotters’ (Al’i Imran, 3:54)

‘When Allah said, ‘Isa, I will take you back and raise you up to Me and purify you of those who are unbelievers. And I will place the people who follow you above those who are unbelievers until the Day of Rising. Then you will all return to Me, and I will judge between you regarding the things about which you differed’ (Al’i Imran, 3:55)



'As for those who are unbelievers, I will punish them with a harsh punishment in the world and the hereafter. They will have no helpers. As for those who have faith and do right actions, We will pay them their wages in full. Allah does not love wrongdoers' (Al-i Imran, 3:56, 57)

After the prophet Isa was raised to the heavens

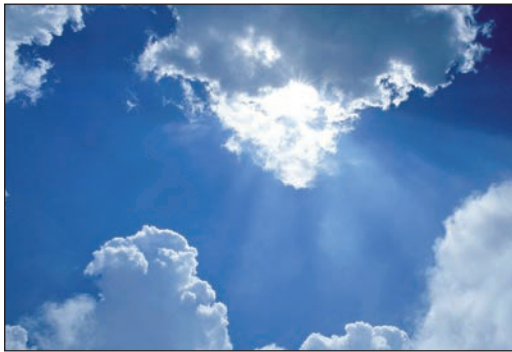
After the prophet Isa was raised to the heavens the Christians split up into many factions. This is when belief in the trinity appeared.

The Jacobite sect of Christians claimed that Allah took shape in the prophet Isa's body and appeared in his form. That is, they claimed that Allah was Isa. The word 'khulul' means to enter or to settle. It is the entering of one body into another or the coming together of two things.

This is a false and misguided belief which idolises a human being by claiming that Allah has taken form in them. This idea comes from Hindu philosophy. Jerusalem was under the influence of both Indian civilisation and Roman culture. In Hindu philosophy God came down to the world and entered the body of 'Krishna', a man born of a mother and a father. In this way Krishna became 'the Creative God'. It is of course impossible for a god to enter another body. If god was a substance then perhaps he could enter another body. The thing that entered the other body would then become a body too and the two objects would intertwine which would lead to the dissolution of the god. This is impossible for Almighty Allah.

In that case Allah Most High has never become embodied in any other being.

The Holy Qur'an states:



'Those who say that the Messiah, son of Maryam, is Allah are unbelievers. The Messiah said, 'Tribe of Israel! Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. If anyone associates anything with Allah, Allah has forbidden him the Garden and his refuge will be the Fire.' The wrongdoers will have no helpers' (Maida, 5:72).

'The Messiah, the son of Maryam, was only a Messenger, before whom other Messengers came and went. His mother was a woman of truth. (Like every human being) both of them ate food (So how can they be gods?). See how We make the Signs clear to them! Then see how they are perverted!' (Maida, 5:75)

As can be seen in these verses Allah declares the falsehood of belief in the trinity which consists of nothing but shirk.



The Jews continued to persecute Isa's disciples. Sincere in their faith the disciples showed great patience and tolerance in the face of this persecution and pain.

One of these disciples, Barnabas, informs us of the last days of Isa in the 221st and 222nd chapter of the Gospel.

When the Roman soldiers entered the house of Isa in order to capture him, four great angels took him out from the window and raised him up to the heavens by the command of Almighty Allah.

The Roman soldiers then captured Judas saying 'You are Isa'. Despite all of his pleading they hung him up on the cross and crucified him.

Later the prophet Isa appeared to his mother Maryam and his disciples.

He said to Maryam:



“See dearest mother that I have not been crucified. They hung Judas up on the cross instead of me. Beware of the whisperings of Satan for he will try to deceive you by showing you the glitter of this world”.

Then he prayed to Allah to protect the believers. He turned to his disciples and said:

“May the grace and mercy of Allah be with you”. After these words he was raised once more to the heavens by the four great angels.



In the year 70AD, approximately forty years after the prophet Isa was carried up to the heavens, the Romans raided Jerusalem under the command of Titus. They murdered a number of the Jews and took others of them captive.

They burned the Torah and all of their other books. They destroyed Jerusalem so that it became ruins and they burned the temple of Solomon. Only a small wall was left behind.

The Jews today call this wall the ‘Wailing Wall’ (or the west wall). They stand before it and remember those days crying and weeping before it. After this calamity the Jews were never able to come together once more nor were they to recover. They continued to live despised and disgraced. After Judas betrayed his religion and was crucified on the cross the disciples chose Mathew as their leader.

Then they continued to spread the teachings of the prophet Isa once more to their surroundings.

When Christianity began to be propagated once more the Jews, Romans, Greeks and idol worshippers united against it.

They threw the first Jews who accepted Christianity to the lions and tortured them.

The Jew Zoonawaas and his men threw the Najran Christians, who refused to accept Judaism, into pits which they then set alight. They then watched them burn. Despite all of this the sincere believers of Isa did not abandon their faith, and met their death fearlessly in fighting for their cause.

These people are called the ‘Ashab-i Ukhduud’ or the ‘Companions of the Pits’ in the Holy Qur’an.

‘By Heaven with its Houses of the Zodiac, and the Promised Day, and the witness and the witnessed, cursed be the Companions of the Pit – the fire well stocked with fuel – when they were seated right beside it witnessing what they did to the believers’ (Buruuj, 85:1-7).

The Jews were not satisfied with this tyranny.

They made plans to eradicate Christianity from its roots.

A Jew by the name of Paulos (St Paul) wrote various books adding his own fabrications.

He showed himself to be a Christian but also claimed that the prophet Isa was the son of God, and that it was permissible to drink wine and eat pork. He also claimed that circumcision was unnecessary as was abiding by the prohibition to work on the Sabbath.

St Paul moderated the Christian belief of God in three ways, that is, that he was three: Allah, His ‘son’ Isa and the Holy Spirit. Accordingly Allah was one but His attributes were three.

Thus the belief in the trinity of today’s Christianity was born.

The conditions of that time for belief in the trinity were suitable for acceptance amongst the people. The people of that time believed in traditional multi-gods and they were very fanatic which led them to dislike Judaism with its belief in one god.

They found this new creed to be closer to their own belief in multiple gods which they had inherited from their forefathers.

Subsequently the Christians were divided into two factions:



1. The followers of Saint Paul: After distancing this new religion from its source Saint Paul changed it into a system of faith based on belief in the trinity. He then wrote 14 different books which would constitute an important part of today's Bible and and the source of the first four gospels. In their sacred texts Christians place as much importance on these as they do the four gospels. There were also kings who accepted this faith which is why it gradually gained power.

2. The followers of Barnabas: They believed that Isa was a human being and a prophet and was in no way to be worshipped. The Ebionites under the leadership of the disciple Jacob also advocated this belief. Because they did not receive support from kings they eventually weakened and lost influence. Meanwhile the hostility of the followers of Saint Paul increased every day and began to eradicate Barnaba's followers.

Later in the year 325 in the first Council of Nicaea convened by the emperor Constantine the council of Bishops declared the gospel of Barnabas null and void. They also accepted the four canonical gospels amongst many others as being the most similar to one another. These gospels are the gospel of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

All other gospels were considered unacceptable by the Church and were destroyed.

From then on only these four distorted gospels were written down and read officially.

Thus despite its being the most trustworthy along with others, the Barnabas gospel was eradicated.

Barnabas was in fact the earliest of the disciples. He truthfully wrote what he heard and saw from the prophet Isa.

However this situation did not suit Paul of Tarsus and his followers and they eliminated him. Today's Christians in fact do not even consider Barnabas to be a disciple, even though he was martyred in Cyprus 30 years after the prophet Isa was carried up to the heavens, basing this on the conclusions of the Council of Nicaea.

They accept in his place Thomas as a disciple.

After Barnabas, a priest by the name of Arius began to oppose the followers of Paul. He was however excommunicated. He then went to Egypt where he was killed whilst spreading the belief of tawheed. The answers that the official Church gave to the criticisms that Arius directed towards Christianity have not been able to satisfy Christians throughout history. Similar criticisms appeared at every period throughout the history of Christianity when the time and place seemed suitable and shattered the authority of the official Church and its accepted creed.

Christianity's men of religion convened many councils in order to provide answers to these criticisms and to reunite Christianity and most important of all to identify the principles of Christianity. Many various rulings were agreed upon. The first council was convened in 325 in Nicaea (Iznik in modern Turkey) in which the divinity of Christ was formally declared. In the council of Constantinople in 381 the divinity of the Holy Spirit was added, thus completing the trinity. In the First Council of Ephesus in 431, belief in Maryam as being the mother of God was adopted and in 451 in the Council of Chalcedon (modern Kadikoy) the nature of Isa was debated and divisions began to appear in the Church. Again in 869 in modern day Istanbul in the 8th Council the origins of the Holy Spirit began to be debated.

As a result of these lengthy debates, in 1054 Christianity split up into two main branches, the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox.

In the 16th century the Protestant school was born as a revolt against the oppressive and scholastic Catholic school.

The fact that the most fundamental principles of the faith and its most essential beliefs which concern all Christians were identified by human beings at a much later time, shows how much that religion has been distorted and how much it has deviated from its origins.

Moreover the declarations made at these councils would later controvert each other.



No other religion on the face of the earth has undergone so much change and having had so much added and later removed from it.

The return of the prophet Isa to earth

Towards the end of time the prophet Isa will come back down from the heavens.

There are many hadiths that mention this. The Holy Qur'an also states:

'He is a Sign of the Hour. Have no doubt about it. But follow me. This is a straight path'
(Zukhruf, 43:61)

In this verse the prophet Isa is mentioned as being a sign of the arrival of the Day of Judgement which is an indication that he will return to the earth at the end of time.

The word 'ilm' in the verse has also been read as 'alam' which has the meaning of 'sign'.

When the prophet Isa returns to the earth he will act by the shariah of the prophet Muhammad (saw). He will unite with the Mahdi who will remove the Dajjal from the face of the earth.

The Mahdi will come from the lineage of Hashim (the lineage of the prophet Muhammad (saw) and will hand over the caliphate to the prophet Isa.

Allah's Messenger (saw) has said:

"If my life is extended I would like to meet with Isa. However if my life does not allow it whoever meets him let him send him my salam (greeting of peace)" (Ibn Hanbal, II, 298).

In another hadith he is reported to have said:

"I swear by Allah who holds my soul in His hand of power, that the time is near when Isa the son of Maryam will rule by the shariah of Islam and will return as a just judge, breaking the crucifix and killing the swine, and removing the jizya tax from the People of the Book (which is interpreted as meaning that the People of the Book will become Muslim, and Judaism and Christianity will no longer exist). At that time wealth will be so great that no one will take it. One single prostration will be better than the world and everything in it".

Abu Huraira (ra) who narrated this hadith has added that:

"If you wish you can read this verse: 'There is not one of the People of the Book who will not believe in him before he dies; and on the Day of Rising he will be a witness against them'
(Nisa, 4: 159); (Bukhari, Buyu, 102, Anbiya, 49; Muslim Iman, 242)

The miracles of the prophet Isa

1. He resurrected the dead
2. He cured the ill
3. He knew what people ate and the food they hid in their homes
4. He could make birds out of mud and make them fly as living birds
5. A table of food was brought down to him and his people from heaven
6. He knew what was spoken and done around him even whilst he was sleeping.
7. Food and fruit would be sent down to him from heaven whenever he desired.
8. He could hear what was spoken at a great distance and in secret.

All of these miracles that Allah Most High bestowed upon the prophet Isa are described in various verses in the Holy Qur'an:



‘(Isa) as a Messenger to the tribe of Israel, saying: ‘I have brought you a Sign from your Lord. I will create the shape of a bird out of clay for you and then breathe into it and it will be a bird by Allah’s permission. I will heal the blind and the leper, and bring the dead to life, by Allah’s permission. I will tell you what you eat and what you store up in your homes. There is a Sign for you in that if you are believers’ (Al’i Imran, 3:49).

‘On the day Allah gathers the Messengers together and says, ‘What response did you receive?’ they will say, ‘We do not know. You are the Knower of unseen things’ (Maida, 5:109)

‘Remember when Allah said, “Isa, son of Maryam, remember My blessing to you and to your mother when I reinforced you with the Purest Ruh (Gabriel) so that you could speak to people in the cradle and when you were fully grown; and when I taught you the Book and Wisdom, and the Torah and the Injil; and when you created a bird-shaped out of clay by My permission, and then breathed into it and it became a bird by My permission; and healed the blind and the leper by My permission; and when you brought forth the dead by My permission; and when I held back the tribe of Israel from you, when you brought them the Clear Signs and those of them who were unbelieving said, “This is nothing but downright magic” (Maida, 5:110).



QUESTIONS

A. Answer the following questions

1. What were the common characteristics of the prophets Zachariah, Yahya and Isa?
2. Who were the five Resolute Messengers (the ulu'l azm)?
3. How would you explain the irrationality of the belief that "Allah entered the body of Isa and became represented in him"?
4. Describe the return to earth of the prophet Isa.
5. When was the prophet Isa born? Is Christmas celebrated on his birthday?
6. What did Maryam do when accusations were made against her? How was she absolved of these accusations?
7. What is monasticism?
8. What did the prophet Isa say about the prophet Musa who came before him, and the prophet Muhammad who was to come after him?
9. What did the prophet Isa say about the prophet Muhammad when his disciples asked him: "How are we to recognise the comforter who is to come in the future?"
10. How and why was Habib an-Najjar martyred?
11. How was the prophet Isa raised to the heavens?
12. When and how did the belief in the trinity appear in Christianity?
13. Describe the 'wailing wall' of the Jews of today.
14. What were the differences between the followers of Saint Paul and the followers of Barnabas?
15. Name five of the miracles of the prophet Isa.
16. Why have the Jews and the Christians been unable to accept the prophethood of the prophet Muhammad even though he is foretold in their books as the last prophet?
17. Why is every human being considered a sinner in Christianity?
18. How are sins forgiven in Christianity?
19. What is the reason for the fact that even though the prophet Isa spoke Aramaic, none of today's bibles are written in this language?
20. What are the reasons for the contradictions and inconsistencies between the different Bibles today?
21. Give three examples of contradictions and inconsistencies between different Bibles
22. Why was the prophet Isa crucified according to today's Christians?
23. Is it logical that in Christianity a person who has committed a major sin can be forgiven by a priest but the prophet Isa had to pay for the sin of his forefather Adam eating an apple in Paradise with his life? Why?



B. Fill in the gaps

1. The prophet Zachariah ruled according to the shariah of
2. The characteristics of the prophet Isa are.....
3. The prophet Isa became a prophet at the age of Thewas revealed to him and he was carried up to the heavens when he was 33 years old.
4. was the best woman of her time.
5. is the best of the women of the community of Muhammad.
6. The mother of Maryam was.... and her father was
7. The word 'hawari' means and
8. The hawaris were called in the Qur'an.

C. Choose the correct option from the following

- 1. Which of the following is not a reason for why the prophet Zachariah asked for a son from Allah?**
 - A. He wanted a righteous son who would be his heir in both knowledge and prophethood
 - B. He wanted the lineage of prophets that went back to the prophet Yaqub to continue.
 - C. He had reached an age when he was so old and weak that he needed a son to serve him
 - D. There would be no people after him worthy of ruling with justice.
- 2. Which of the following is not one of the five Resolute Messengers?**
 - A. The prophet Nuh
 - B. The prophet Ibrahim
 - C. The prophet Sulayman
 - D. The prophet Isa
- 3. Which of the following is the reason why the prophet Isa is called 'the Spirit of Allah' (Ruhullah)?**
 - A. He lived his life on earth only in spirit
 - B. He was able to bring the dead back to life
 - C. Allah Most High created him without any apparent cause such as a father, by blowing into him of His spirit.
 - D. His body and his spirit were created at the same time
- 4. Which of the following is not one of the bounties bestowed upon Maryam by Allah?**
 - A. She knew what people ate and what they hid in their houses
 - B. She and her son were saved from all manner of evil and mischief
 - C. Various fruits were sent down to her from heaven
 - D. Even though she was not a prophet she saw the angel Gabriel



5. Which of the following statements about Christmas is incorrect?

- A. It is a special night which has spiritual meaning and is celebrated by people of all religions.
- B. There is disagreement amongst the various sects of Christianity as to the date of Christmas
- C. It is a day in which most Christians celebrate the birth of the prophet Isa
- D. There is no information as to the date of the prophet Isa in the present day Bibles.

6. To whom does the term '*paraclete*' refer to in the saying of the prophet Isa: **"I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter (Paraclete), that he may abide with you for ever..."** (John 14:16)

- A. The prophet Isa
- B. The prophet Zachariah
- C. The Mahdi
- D. The prophet Muhammad

7. Which of the following is not a wisdom and lesson for us to take from the calling to guidance of the disciples Yaqub, Sem'un and Tevman of the oppressive ruler?

- A. In order to be successful at some task one must take the necessary precautions and work in an orderly manner.
- B. The patience shown and struggle fought in serving the religion of Allah will never be in vain
- C. A believer should be intelligent and act with discretion. He should know what to do where, when and how
- D. Those people who are devoted to the religion of Allah will never face any misfortunes.

8. Which of the following is not a characteristic of the disciples of Isa?

- A. They were people who were given authority to write the gospels and make rulings in the religion.
- B. They were helpers to the prophets in serving the religion of Allah.
- C. They were sincere Muslims who believed in the religion of Allah and were devoted to Him.
- D. They were very loyal to their prophet and loved him greatly.

9. Which of the following is not a reason why the Jews wanted to kill the prophet Isa?

- A. The aggression and oppression of the Jews knew no limits in its iniquity.
- B. The peaceful approach of the prophet Isa towards the Israelite animosity.
- C. The prophet Isa was not sent to the Israelites.
- D. The prophet Isa invited all people to his religion, be they friend or foe.

10. Which of the following statements about the 'death' of the prophet Isa is incorrect?

- A. The prophet Isa was not killed but rather a person by the name of Judas who looked like him was murdered in his place.
- B. The prophet Isa was raised to the heavens, the nature of which we have no knowledge of..
- C. The prophet Isa was raised to the heavens to return to the world at the end of time.
- D. The prophet Isa was not killed by the Jews but rather passed away on his own at a later date.



11. After the 'death' of the prophet Isa only four gospels were chosen out of many that were written. The New Testament that we have today consists of these four gospels.

Which of the following is not one of these?

- A. Matthew
- B. Luke
- C. Barnabas
- D. John

12. Who does the 'Ashab-i Ukhdud' refer to?

- A. The Christians of Najran who refused to accept Judaism and were thrown into pits and burned or those who burned them.
- B. The Disciples of the prophet Isa.
- C. The believers who retired to the caves and tried to practice their Christianity there.
- D. Those who tried to practise Judaism after the advent of Christianity.

13. Which of the following is not a belief of the followers of Barnabas?

- A. Belief in the trinity is false; God is one and He has no like or peer.
- B. Isa cannot be the son of Allah. He is merely a prophet.
- C. Judas was not crucified in place of the prophet Isa, rather it was Arius who was crucified.
- D. A final prophet by the name of Ahmad will come towards the end of time.

14. Which of the following is not a miracle of the prophet Isa?

- A. Knowledge of the sex of a child still in his mother's womb.
- B. He brought the dead back to life.
- C. He created birds out of mud and made them fly.
- D. He could hear and know what was taking place around him even while he was sleeping.

15. Which of the following is not a belief in today's Christianity?

- A. Every human being can relate to Allah directly.
- B. All human beings are born in sin. They are only free of this sin when they are baptised.
- C. The world is a place of pain and struggle. There can be no pleasure and enjoyment here.
- D. Allah crucified Isa to cleanse human beings of the sin that arose out of Adam's mistake.

16. Which of the following is a reason why Jews do not accept the religion of Islam?

- A. They do not find the principles of belief and rulings to be logical.
- B. They do not believe that the prophet Muhammad has the necessary characteristics of prophethood.
- C. They expected the last prophet to be of Jewish lineage.
- D. The prophet Isa is written down as the final prophet in their sacred texts.



17. Which of the following is not a conclusion that can be drawn from the following verse: 'If anyone desires anything other than Islam as a deen, it will not be accepted from him, and in the hereafter he will be among the losers' (Al'i Imran, 3:85)?

- A. The only religion that a person seeking in place of his own religion will find is Islam.
- B. There is no other system of belief that will take a person to the truth other than the religion of Islam.
- C. The features of servitude that Allah Most High wishes to see in His servants can only arise after following the religion of Islam.
- D. There is no other religion other than Islam that is in conformity with the nature of the human being and with rationality.

18. The concept of 'original sin' in Christianity does not conflict with which of the following principles of Islam:

- A. Every child born comes to the world pure with a nature conforming to Islam.
- B. No human being can bear the burden of another; every one is responsible for their own actions.
- C. The coming to the world of human beings was a result of the sin that the prophet Adam committed in Paradise.
- D. A person's becoming responsible for their own actions begins when they reach puberty.

19. Which of the following is not a reason for belief in the trinity being established in Christianity?

- A. Under the guise of believers, Saint Paul and other men of religion were hostile to religion and tried to deceive people.
- B. Christianity was under the influence of ancient Greek and Hindu culture in which belief in many gods was prevalent.
- C. Many changes were made to their sacred texts and so the principles of belief lost their original form.
- D. Christians were unaware of the belief in tawheed that Islam advocated.

20. The fact that there does not exist today any copy of the earliest Bible written in Hebrew and Aramaic, the languages spoken by the prophet Isa is an indication of which of the following:

- A. The Disciples did not know Hebrew or Aramaic.
- B. The Gospels were written by people very distant to the prophet Isa and at a much later time.
- C. The prophet Isa did not know how to read or write.
- D. Copies of the Hebrew and Aramaic gospels have been hidden very well.

21. Which of the following can not be said about the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John that exist today:

- A. The events written about in one of the gospels compliment the others.
- B. The gospels were written to reflect the views, thoughts and wishes of their authors.
- C. The Gospels began to be written years after the prophet Isa.
- D. There is no open statement about the creed of the trinity in the gospels.



22. When the gospel of Barnabas is examined it can be seen to contain different contents to the other gospels. Which of the following is not one of these?

- A. The prophet Isa was not God nor was he the son of God.
- B. The prophet Isa was not crucified.
- C. The gospel of Barnabas was a gospel written by the prophet Isa himself.
- D. The awaited Messiah was the prophet Muhammad.

23. Which of the following conclusions can not be made in the comparison and analysis of the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John?

- A. The gospels give conflicting and contradictory accounts of the same event.
- B. The prophet Isa is called a son of man and a slave of God and he is also attributed with divinity.
- C. Sometimes Christianity and Judaism are claimed to be the final religion.
- D. Actions which an ordinary human being would not do are attributed to the prophet Isa.

24. Which of the following is not a characteristic of the prophet Isa?

- A. He never fought against his enemies who did not accept his religion.
- B. He abandoned all desires of his nafs and lived a spiritual life.
- C. He placed great importance on purification of the nafs and cleansing the heart.
- D. He counselled his people to mercy, compassion and peace.



ANSWERS

The prophets Shu'ayb, Musa and Harun

B. Fill in the gaps

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1- <i>Hatib al-anbiya</i> | 2- His eyes – Love for Allah |
| 3- Love for Allah | 4- Israelites |
| 5- Harun | 6- Coptics |
| 7- <i>Kalimullah</i> | 8- A Talmud |

C. Multiple Choice answers

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1- A | 2- D | 3- A | 4- C | 5- B |
| 6- D | 7- D | 8- A | 9- D | 10- C |
| 11- A | 12- A | 13- B | 14- C | 15- A |
| 16- D | 17- C | 18- D | 19- A | 20- D |
| 21- A | 22- D | 23- B | | |

The prophets Dawud and Sulayman

B. Fill in the gaps

- | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1- <i>Zabur</i> | 2- The prophet Dawud | 3- Making armour |
| 4- <i>Sawm-i Dawud</i> | 5- <i>Masjid al-Aqsa</i> | 6- <i>Haram – Nabawi – Aqsa</i> |
| 7- Miracle | 8- <i>Karamah</i> | |

C. Multiple Choice answers

- | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1- B | 2- B | 3- A | 4- A | 5- D | 6- C |
| 7- D | 8- C | 9- B | 10- D | 11- B | 12- B |



The prophets Uzayr and Ayyub

B. Fill in the gaps

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|
| 1- Harun – Ezra | 2- 100 | 3- Nebuchadnezzar – Torah |
| 4- Son of God - Uzayr – Isa | 5- Rahima | 6- Contentment |
| 7- Damascus | 8- Prophet | |

C. Multiple Choice answers

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1- C | 2- A | 3- B | 4- C | 5- B |
|------|------|------|------|------|

The prophets Yunus, Ilyas and al-Yasa'

B. Fill in the gaps

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|------------------|
| 1- Ninevites | 2- 37 th | 3- Dhu'Nun |
| 4- Made <i>dhikr</i> of Allah. | 5- Creatures carrying out <i>dhikr</i> | 6- Harun |
| 7- Baalbek | 8- The prophet Ilyas | 9- The Assyrians |

C. Multiple Choice answers

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1- B | 2- D | 3- B | 4- C | 5- A |
| 6- C | 7- A | 8- C | 9- B | 10- B |
| 11- D | 12- D | 13- A | 14- B | |



The prophets Dhu'l Kifl and Luqman Hakim

B. Fill in the gaps

- 1- The prophet Ayyub 2- Bishr 3- Musa
4- Wisdom 5- Piety (Taqwa)

C. Multiple Choice answers

- 1- C 2- C 3- B 4- B 5- D
6- C 7- B 8- C 9- D 10- C
11- B

The prophets Zachariah, Yahya and Isa

B. Fill in the gaps

- 1- The prophet Musa 2- Ruhullah 3- 30 – The Gospels
4- Maryam – Khadijah 5- Hannah – Imran 6- Helper – chosen person
7- *Ansarullah*

C. Multiple Choice answers

- 1- C 2- C 3- C 4- A 5- A
6- D 7- D 8- A 9- C 10- D
11- C 12- A 13- C 14- A 15- A
16- C 17- A 18- C 19- D 20- B
21- A 22- C 23- C 24- A



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