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بِسُوا لله الرَّحْمِن الرَّحِبُو

#### In the name of God, the beneficent the merciful We send the messengers only to give good news and to warn: so those who believe and mend (their lives), upon them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. (6:48)

In every community of men wherever it may be or might have been in the past there have been individuals who have been providing guidance to the common members of the community as leaders, thinkers, reformers, teachers or sages. This is so because the common man is ever in need of guidance for leading a proper life both as an individual and as a member of the society amidst which he happens to be. Islam as a religion tells us that Almighty God has ever been sending guides for teaching men the proper way of life. These guides are called prophets. As matter of fact the first man created by Almighty God namely Adam was a Prophet which means that Almighty God made arrangements for the guidance of mankind before the human race as such came into existence on the surface of the Globe. The Holy Quran makes it clear that human race has never been left without Prophets to afford it proper guidance for leading a controlled life which may enable men not only to live a proper life in this world but also earn him eternal blissful life in the Hereafter.

When a machine is produced it is accompanied by a set of instructions for its use. An engineer is also commissioned to give a practical demonstration of how the machine functions. Man is an even more intricately designed but animated machine. When he is born, he suddenly finds himself in a world where no mountain bears an inscription answering questions concerning the nature of the world, or explaining how he should live on earth. No educational institution produces experts who know the secret of life or who can provide man with practical guidance. To satisfy this need felt by man, Almighty God sent His prophets to the world, every one of whom brought with him the word of God. In the scriptures revealed to them, God has explained the reality of life to man, and has made it clear what man should and should not do. They showed man what sentiments and ideas he should adopt; how he should remember his Lord; how he should live with his fellows, what he should associate himself with and disassociate himself from. The prophets' lives are a practical demonstration of how a person should live a God fearing life. God has given everyone the power to distinguish between right and wrong. He has also placed countless signs in space and on earth from which man can learn. Moreover, His revelations have been set down in human language and several of His servants chosen from amongst mankind as prophets, so that there should be no doubt as to the true path.

It is believed that about one hundred twenty four thousand (124, 000) prophets came on this earth for guidance of various communities and people during different periods. Names of some of them have been mentioned in the Holy Quran. A study of the life and performances of these holy persons together with trials and tribulations suffered by them for the sake of truth and righteousness provides useful material for giving encouragement to every man to lead a virtuous life and to face the hardships of this world that one may have to encounter in the path of truth, virtue and etc.

islamicoccasions.com has therefore prepared this brief compendium called as "**Men of God**" on the lives of the prophets before the last Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) mentioned in the Holy Quran for the benefit of the general reader who may see, by a glance through it, how these Divine Guides have been regularly striving through the ages to guide man to the right path.

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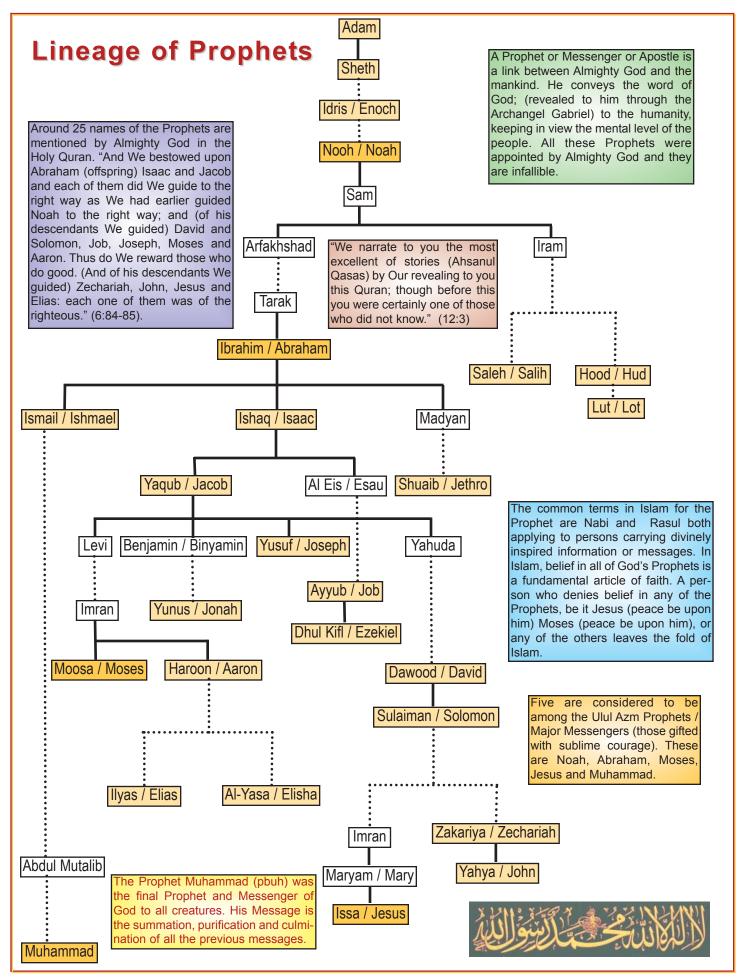
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Say (O Muhammad): O Almighty God, Possessor of the Kingdom! You give the kingdom to whom You will, and You take away the kingdom from whom You will, and You endue with honor whom You will, and You humiliate whom You will. In Your Hand is the good. Verily, You are Able to do all things. (3:26)



## ADAM THE PROPHET

The Holy Quran says: Your Guardian-Lord is Almighty God, Who created the heavens and the earth in six days (sittati ayyamin), and is firmly established on the throne (of authority): He draweth the night as a veil over the day, each seeking the other in rapid succession: He created the sun, the moon, and the stars, (all) governed by laws under His command. Is it not His to create and to govern? Blessed be Almighty God, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds! (7:54)

Almighty God created the universe millions of years ago by saying 'Kun' (be). Then created this earth and made mountains to balance it. Then brought to the earth all that needed for the sustenance of the people who dwell in it. Then covered the earth with its environment, the Sun and the Moon as appointed. Then He created angels to praise His glory from light and the Jinn from fire.

The earth was not the same as it is today. It was basically water. Waves were rough. The wind blew strongly. Volcanoes were ablaze. Huge meteors attacked the earth. Then life developed gradually. Animals like reptiles and amphibians appeared on the surface of the earth. Dinosaurs of various kinds appeared, too. From time to time, ice covered the earth. So, plants and animals died. New kinds replaced them. From time to time, the ice melted, thus life returned to the earth again.

Almighty God took earth from heights, plains, salt marshes, and fertile land. He mixed the earth with water, so the earth became special clay with solid molecules. From that clay, God, the Glorified, created a shape like man and the water steamed. The man-like shape became as solid as the stone. The wind was whistling through it. That shape remained sleeping for a long time. Nobody knows the length of time except God, the glorified.

**Azazeel:** Also known as Iblis. He used to pray a lot and even used to give lectures to the angels. One day there was a notice in the heavens which said that someone was going to be ordered out of the heavens. All the angels were very worried because they thought it might be one of them.

They went to Angel Gabriel (Gibraeel) who was one of the most important angels to ask him whether he could do anything. Gabriel said he too was worried because it might be himself. Gabriel suggested that they go to Azazeel because he was very clever.

Azazeel told them not to worry at all for he would pray to God for all of them. He forgot himself thinking he was the best and it could never be him. Because he had pride (Kibr).

Then Almighty God willed to appoint a representative or vicegerent on earth (higher in rank than angels). So He talked it over with the angels.

The angels said: "Do You wish to have a representative on the earth to cause corruption and commit murder there while we always extol You."

The angels said this because they had seen the Jinn act in this way on the earth. However, a few of the Jinn were very pious and some like Azazeel or Iblis used to worship God with the angels.



Almighty God replied to satisfy them: "I know something of which you are not aware."

At a moment of divine favor and mercy, Almighty God breathed a bit of Heavenly Soul into the clay statue. The statue sneezed and said: "All praise is to Almighty God (Al-hamdolillah)." The spirit crept into Adam. He breathed, opened his eyes, and moved his hands and legs. He became a perfect human being of flawless beauty.

Then the angels were all ordered to prostrate (Sajdah) before Adam. They all did so, except the Jinn Iblis.

The Almighty asked him: "What prevented you from prostrating before Adam, to whom I created with My hands? (38:75)" Iblis replied, "I'm superior to him. You have made me from the fire and Adam from the mud. Thus I shall never obey him."

As we can see, Iblis was only looking at the outside and not the inside and more important, He disobeyed Almighty God. It was clear that by refusing the orders of God and adopting an attitude of arrogance and impudence and showing the first seed of rebellion against God, his sin was the greatest of all and he was immediately dropped to the rank of an infidel (Kafir) and ordered out of heaven.

This way, Iblis's jealousy deprived him from Almighty God's perpetual blessings and he was thereafter deserted and cursed by Almighty God to become "Satan (Shaitaan)", the Devil (Lucifer).

**Sajdah (Prostrate/Submission):** It is an action that exhibits highest degree of humility from a creature towards his Creator - the Almighty. During the process of Sajdah, man acknowledges that his creation, return and coming back to life is related to dust. Man therefore is nothing but an inferior creature in front of the Almighty.

Sajdah is a physical action, which gets the soul of a servant closer to the Almighty. "Perform the Sajdah and get closer to Me." (96:19)

Prolonging the Sajdahs reminds the Satan about his disobedience to the Almighty and the reason for his banishment from Paradise.

Imam Sadiq (pbuh) said: "Indeed when a servant prolongs his Sajdah in a manner that no one sees him, Satan says: Woe unto me! They are obedient and I disobeyed; they prostrated and I refused."

Hence Sajdah of a creature is meant for Almighty God only. Above the word 'Sajdah' conveys the meaning of obeisance or respect to Adam in whose seed the lights of Divine Glory were to be manifested.

After being cursed and sent away from Almighty God's Divine portal, Satan hopelessly begged Almighty God to give him time to be alive until the Resurrection Day or Judgment Day (Qiyamat) and the Almighty God accepted Satan's request and let him live till that specified day.

Then Satan asked three questions: (1.) Where will I live? (2.) Where will I eat? (3.) Where will I sleep?

Almighty God told him that he, Satan would live with the person who did not say: Bism illah ir rah-





man ir raheem (In the name of God, the beneficent the merciful) before he/she entered his/her house.

Satan would eat with the person who did not say: **Bism illah ir rahman ir raheem** (In the name of God, the beneficent the merciful) before he/she started to eat.

Satan would sleep with the person who did not say: **Bism illah ir rahman for an and set of a state of a stat** 

Instead of being grateful to God, Satan said: "Now that You have driven me away from Your Divine portal, I shall be waiting for any opportunity to mislead Adam and for doing so I will attack him and his generation from all sides. Now it's time You come to notice that most of them won't be thankful to You."

But hold this firmly and understand this properly: all your actions of turning good people from the right path would further add to your sins and consequently enhance your punishment. I will see that all those who follow you shall go to the eternal damnation of hellfire (Dozakh). Then Almighty God warned Adam and his generation of the fact that Satan is their open enemy and they shall be careful not to deviate from the right path and accordingly get miserable and sinful on the earth.

After that Almighty God taught Adam His Divine attributes as well as some secrets and realities unknown to other creatures [The words taught to Adam were the names of the Holy Five (Panjatane-Pak). The Holy Prophet Muhammad his cousin and son-in-law Imam Ali, his daughter Fatima and

his sons (i.e. grandsons) Imam Hassan and Imam Hussain (Peace be upon them all)]. Almighty God then turned to the angels and asked them to recite some of these attributes, if they knew any of them. The angels said: "You are glorified and exempted from all the evil, and we have no knowledge but for what You have taught us. And truly You are the Knower and the Wise."

Adam required many things to continue his life and the Divine Will had put some potential and desires



into him which were a part of his instinct and hidden somewhere inside him. On the other hand, the sole purpose of creation was not just bringing Adam "The father of Mankind" to the world but Almighty God has also wished to create other generations of mankind through the creation of Adam. To achieve this goal, the Almighty God then needed another creature of the same kind to be a proper couple for Adam, so that together they can produce human generation in the world. In this way Eve (Hawwa) was created to serve as Adam's spouse.

According to Almighty God's will they were settled in Paradise temporarily and fed themselves with abundant heavenly fruits.

But they were ordered not to touch a certain tree for otherwise, they would be considered evil and cursed. Satan could not bear to see how happy Adam and Eve were in Heaven or Paradise (Jannat). He blamed Adam for his bad luck and wanted revenge. His jealousy made him decide to mislead Adam into making a mistake. Hence, Satan was waiting for an opportunity to deceive Adam and Eve.

Although Satan was not allowed to live in Heaven anymore, he had not been stopped from visiting.

One day he entered the Heaven and started talking to Prophet Adam. He pretended to be his friend and when he had convinced Prophet Adam that he meant him no harm, he said, "Did you know that you have been kept away from the best thing in Heaven? If you eat the fruit of that tree you will remain in Heaven forever or you can even become angels." This was the beginning of the story of deception and cheating. Once Satan enters into the hearts of man as a sincere friend to know his weakness or his hidden desires, he exploits that person to the full. Adam was after all a human being. He had everything in Paradise for his enjoyment and satisfaction. But one thing was curiously burning inside him: Why has God forbidden him to go near that tree or enjoy its fruit?

When Prophet Adam and Eve heard these words they remembered God's command to stay away from that tree and they became frightened. But Satan was very clever and he swore by the Name of God that he was their real friend and he would not tell them something that would harm them.

Prophet Adam and Eve had never heard a lie before and because Satan swore by God, they believed him. Satan finally succeeded in tempting them to eat the fruit which he brought from the forbidden tree [This act is called 'Tark-e-Awla' (leaving the better work for a less desirable thing), but not a sin]. At that moment, a wonderful event occurred. The clothes of the garden disappeared, and they became naked and hid themselves in with wide leaves of fig and banana tree. Having done this they got quite remorseful of what they did. Both of them told God how sorry they were & begged for his forgiveness.

The Almighty God accepted their repentance (7:23) but Adan and Eve could not enjoy the life of ease and comfort in Paradise and from then on Adam, Eve and their generation were destined to live on the earth with all its difficulties, hardship and tried to survive. All this was meant to redound to Adam's own advantage, for he was to be raised to a higher position in Almighty's grace.

We must keep in mind that Adam was created to represent Almighty God on earth as His Vicegerent and not to remain in the Paradise enjoying the life of ease and comfort. It was the original plan that Adam should live and die on earth.

When a man commits a sin (i.e., an offense, from the Shariah point of view) he is given a punishment. Then if he repents and his repentance is accepted, the punishment is completely waived off, and he is returned to his previous position as through he had not committed the sin at all. If Adam and his wife were guilty of such a sin, they should have been returned to their place in the Paradise soon after repentance was accepted. But they were not returned to the Paradise which shows that the prohibition did not have the force of an ordained law, it was only an advice. Neglecting it had its natural effect on both of them and they had to come out of the Paradise.

The removal from Paradise was not a punishment for any crime or sin; it was the natural consequence of the wrong they had done against their own selves.

Since, Adam (Safvatullah) was ordained to give a new significance to the life on earth; this mission could not have been fulfilled, had he not fallen out of the Paradise.

Adam landed on the top of a Mountain in Sarandib. Eve landed on Marwa Mountain in Makkah. Satan landed in the lowest land. Thus, human life started on the face of the earth, and the conflict between man and Satan began.

Almighty God taught them that there were two paths in life. One is the path of obedience to God which leads to faith, happiness and Heaven and the other path is that of the sinner's the followers of Satan

which leads to infidelity, sorrow and Hellfire.

He also warned them that Satan would always try to make them and their children take the second path and that he was their enemy. The choice would have to be made by the children of Adam themselves. Which path to choose; the path of salvation or the path of damnation?

Prophet Adam raised his hands in prayer (dua) saying, "O God! Satan was able to deceive me, what defense does my progeny have?"

Prophet Adam was praying for all mankind who are his progeny. God replied, "O Adam! I have given them the following:

- 1. If they have a bad intention but do not commit the act, I will not record it.
- 2. If they commit a bad deed I will record one sin for them.
- 3. If they do a good deed, I will reward them ten virtues (thawabs) for them.
- 4. If they have a good intention, I will reward them for it."



Prophet Adam requested more defenses from God. God said, "O Adam! The door of repentance (tawba) is always open and I always accept the sincere repentance of my servant."

# CAIN (QABIL) AND ABEL (HABIL)

The Holy Quran says: And relate to them the story of the two sons of Adam with truth when they both offered an offering, but it was accepted from one of them and was not accepted from the other. He said: I will most certainly slay you. (The other) said: Almighty God only accepts from those who guard (against evil). If you will stretch forth your hand towards me to slay me, I am not one to stretch forth my hand towards you to slay you surely I fear Almighty God, the Lord of the worlds: Surely I wish that you should bear the sin committed against me and your own sin, and so you would be of the inmates of the fire, and this is the recompense of the unjust. Then his mind facilitated to him the slaying of his brother so he slew him; then he became one of the losers. Then Almighty God sent a crow/raven digging up the earth so that he might show him how he should cover the dead body of his brother. He said: Woe me! Do I lack the strength that I should be like this crow and cover the dead body of my brother? So he became of those who regret. (5:27-31)

Slowly, Prophet Adam and Eve got used to their new home and God blessed them with children which made them very happy, following the marriage of Prophet Adam with Eve, which was performed through Almighty God's command. Eve gave birth to two sets of twins. Cain and his sister Iqlima were born first and then Abel and his sister Loza some years later. Hence the total population on earth consisted of six (6) people.

Prophet Adam and Eve loved their children very much and watched proudly as they grew up strong and healthy. Daughters learnt with their mother organization of the household work and sons learnt from their father to bring food and sustenance for the family. Cain become interested in agriculture and his younger brother Abel liked sheep farming.



When their sons grew to be young men, Adam chose Abel, the younger son to be his successor after his death, because of his piety and virtues. But from that time on he found that Cain got quite jealous of his brother, because he was the elder son and thought that his rights were trampled upon. Adam thought of a way to show that God had appointed Abel to this position and to cool down Cain somehow. So he called his sons and addressed them as follows:

"You shall both go and bring a sacrifice or offering or present (Nazar) for Almighty God and leave it on top of a certain hill. The one whose sacrifice will be accepted by Almighty God shall have a higher merit and superiority over the other. Now go and do your best." The sign of Almighty God's acceptance at that time was that a fire would show up and take their sacrifice in.

Thus both Cain and Abel went to bring a sacrifice for Almighty God. As Cain was a farmer, his sacrifice was nothing but a mass of low quality wheat, but being a shepherd, Abel brought one of his

best and fattest rams as his sacrifice. The fire finally appeared and took Abel's sacrifice in but didn't even approach that of Cain. This caused Cain to get terribly furious this time. So he turned to Abel and said, "I will kill you." Abel answered, But it wasn't my fault. It was up to Almighty God and He accepts sacrifice from the pious. Now even if you start beating me I shall never even touch you for I fear the Almighty God of the whole universe. I want to prevent myself from committing any sins. So you will have to bear the sin of killing me as well as that of your rejection all alone. Thus you shall be sent to Hell and reside there which is of course a due punishment for oppressors.

But Cain didn't listen to him and was looking forward to a proper opportunity to kill Abel. Finally he found the chance when Adam was not around and killed Abel by bumping a piece of rock on his head.

When he found Abel dead, he felt somehow lost for he had no idea how to cover up and hide his brother's lifeless corpse.

The Almighty in order to honor the sacred and pure body and to make a moral from these two brothers for the future generations and to guide this foolish and proud young man. Since he was not worthy of receiving direct instructions from God, charged two crows with the mission of teaching him, and he had to learn from these crows.

Therefore, the two crows sat in front of Cain and start-

ed to fight terribly to death. When one killed the other crow, it dug a hole with its feet, put the carcass in the hole and covered it with soil.

Cain suddenly shouted: "Shame on me. I'm even less competent than this crow. Look how it is hiding the corpse. I shall do the same thing now." Following that, he buried the dead body of his brother and this was the first unjust murder on the earth.

When Abel did not return home, Prophet Adam was very worried and he asked Cain if he knew where his brother was. Cain replied rudely, "Did you leave him in my care?" This reply made Adam suspect that his son was dead and he was full of grief at the loss.





Prophet Adam was shocked when he came to know about this cold-blooded murder. He went and lamented for quite sometime (according to some reports forty days); Prophet Adam and Eve missed Abel very much because he had been a good son. They prayed to God



to give them another son like him. At last their prayers were answered and they had a son Prophet Sheth, whom he nominated as his successor.

As per one report two women from Paradise were brought down to become wives of the brothers to continue their progeny further. Adam (father of human race) lived almost thousand years and died.

# **IDRIS (ENOCH/ANDREAS) THE PROPHET**

The Holy Quran says: Also mention in the Book the case of Idris: He was a man of truth (and sincerity), (and) a prophet: And We raised him to a lofty station. (19:56-57)

The prophet was one of the great grandsons of Prophet Sheth, and in the 5th generation of the Prophet Adam. He was born a century after the death of Prophet Adam, in Babylon. He was the third Prophet of Almighty God. He was called Idris because he used to teach about the wisdom of Almighty God, by inviting people to worship the Unique God and avoid committing sins. He preached the true religion (Islam).

It has been stated that Prophet Idris introduced the art of writing and the art of stitching (Tailoring). He was the first man to make weapons. He also explained measuring the weights by a balance, unknown to the people.

It was Prophet Idris who spoke to the people about the mysterious knowledge of the planets. He explained to them about the earth, the sky, the phenomenal creation, the sun, the moon, the stars, the clouds and instructed them to worship the Creator of all these things.

In his early Prophethood, a cruel oppressing king was ruling over Idris's tribe. He forcefully and oppressively dispossessed people of their lands and properties. Once, when the king went out of his palace for merrymaking, he happened to reach a green beautiful meadow. So he asked his ministers: "Who is the owner of this meadow?"

One of his ministers replied, "Your Highness, it is possessed by a faithful man who believes in the Unique God. He lives some where around here."

King: "Anyway, it's a nice land, and we shall possess it."

Minister: "You shall have whatever you wish, Your Majesty."

King: "Bring him to my presence but right away."

The agents of the king found the faithful man and brought him to his presence.

The king, giving him a glance proudly, said: "Is this land yours?"

Faithful man replied: "Yes, it is."

King: "All right, you must cede this land to me."

Faithful man: "But I have a family who needs it and its benefits much more than you do."

King: "So sell it to me and get the money."

Faithful man: "I can't, my whole family depends on this land."

The more the king insisted on buying the land, the stronger rejected the idea. Finally the King got angry and ordered to kill the faithful man and dispossessed his land.

The news of this event was over spread until Prophet Idris was also informed of that. Coming to know that, he went to the King and said, "Was not it enough to kill a subject of God? You then dispossessed him of the land, his only property, and put his family into misery too. Beware! For Almighty God will take revenge on you and you shall be deprived of your kingdom."

The king said: "Get out of here before I order to kill you too!" Prophet Idris left, but the queen decided to send some men after him to kill him.

Prophet Idris learnt that his life was in danger so he left the town and hid himself. He took shelter in a cave on a mountain and an angel used to provide him with food. He prayed to Almighty God saying, "My God! Send not your blessings unto this land until I shall request you to." Prophet Idris's prayer was granted and Almighty



God punishment descended on the king. He lost his throne and died a shameful death. His capital was destroyed and his wife's flesh was eaten by wild dogs. The kingdom passed into the hands of another cruel king.

Twenty (20) years passed after the disappearance of Prophet Idris. During this time not even a drop of rain fell and the people suffered terribly, because of the famine and drought. They realized that their troubles were due to the curse of Prophet Idris and they prayed to Almighty God to forgive them.

The remorseful people went to Prophet Idris and repented in his presence and promised that they would obey him and worship God. Prophet Idris then asked Almighty God to send down rain on them. After his prayers, there came a productive rain and the drought ended. And Prophet Idris took the responsibility of leading his tribe thereafter.

Prophet Idris and his followers left Babylon for Egypt. There he carried on his mission, calling people to what is just and fair, teaching them certain prayers and instructing them to fast on certain days and to give a portion of their wealth to the poor for many years. Finally, Prophet Idris did not die but was taken bodily to paradise to spend eternity with God where he is alive even today, after spending three hundred and fifty six (356) years on earth.

# NOAH (NOOH) THE PROPHET

The Holy Quran says: We (once) sent Noah to his people, and he tarried among them a thousand years less fifty: but the Deluge overwhelmed them while they (persisted in) sin. (29:14)

Here is name was Abdul Ghaffar or Abdul Malik or Abdul Aala or Sakan, but he is generally known as Noah (One who shed tears) for fear for God, he wept for five hundred (500) years, and he lived for nine hundred and fifty (950) years. In spite of his long life Noah did not construct any house or a permanent dwelling for himself. He lived in a small hut. When he laid himself in it, half of his legs would be out of it. Prophet Noah lived in the land of the two rivers (Tigris and Euphrates).

The people of Noah's tribe were worshipping idols for many years. Idol worship was so deeply rooted in the minds of the people that they would not like to give it up at any cost. They had accepted idols as their Gods and hoped these idols would make them prosperous and fortunate in their lives. They used to take refuge in them at the time of misery and call them with various names such as Wadd (idol in the form of a Man), Yaghus (idol in the form of a Lion), Ya'ooq (idol in the form of a Horse) and Nasr (idol in the form of an Eagle).

So, at such a time of disbelief, Almighty God appointed Noah to be a Prophet among this tribe and to guide them. Noah was a patient, eloquent and wise man. He was inviting people to worship Almighty God but they turned their faces away and tried not to see or hear anything. Despite all these rejections, Noah was trying to guide them with much patience and tolerance as possible and was always kind and tender while talking to them.



This way, Noah an arch Prophet continued to invite people to wor- / ship Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent One God through

disputation, reasoning and offering logical proofs for them. Consequently a few people believed in him. But some extremely rude cruel aristocrats and arrogant rich people of the tribe refused to believe him and together started disturbing him. They mocked at him when he preached to them. They would even beat him and pelt stones at him and would even bring their children and ask them to throw stones at the Prophet.

At times Prophet Noah was buried under the heap of stones. Angel Gabriel (Gibraeel) would come and remove the stones and heal up the Prophet's wounds. In spite of Noah's earnest efforts, people refuse to believe in his Divine Mission.

Prophet Noah refers to the various stages through which a child has to pass; later on he is bestowed by His grace various faculties moral as well as social. If a person ponders over his, creation he is bound to believe in Almighty who is all powerful. Prophet Noah also throws light on His marvels "Do you not see how he has created the seven heavens (in layers) one above the others?" "And made the moon, in it a light, and the sun as a lamp." There are stages fixed for the moon and the sun, along with its solar system is moving towards some destination. He also said, a man is born from the earth (clay) and returns to it, after his death. He shall come back to life again, on the Day of Judgment.

The people were puffed with pride; hence they did not pay any heed to the Divine Messages. According to the deep rooted belief of the people only an angel could be a Prophet, and not a human being. Hence the people were astonished when Noah declared that he was a Prophet. They said that he wanted to show off his importance hence he claimed to be a Prophet, but he is a human being just as we are and a member of our tribe.

Another man said: "If God wished to send us a Prophet, He would surely send us an angel so that we could pay attention to him and respond to his invitation."

Another man said: "Who are these poor people? See who have become your followers? If you are interested in guiding us, neither rejects these poor ruffians who believe in you for we cannot follow the same routine nor have the same belief as they do. How can we accept a religion which considers the high and the low, the rich and the poor equal?"

Prophet Noah answered: "I've brought you the way of salvation but you've treated me with great grudge and obstinacy."

One of the men said: "We don't consider you and your followers superior to us. Yes, you are no higher than us from the viewpoint of wisdom, foresightedness and conservatism and we believe you're liars." "You Noah, you had a lot of disputations with us. Now if your words are true make your promises about torment (Azaab) come true and send down calamity on us."

When Noah made sure that the people of his tribe were quite misled and their hearts were filled with disbelief and corruption and even offering logical proofs and reasoning was of no use to them, he couldn't keep his patience any more. Therefore he said: "O' my Lord! Leaves not even one of these atheists (non-believers) on earth for if they continue living, they shall mislead your subjects and reproduce sinful and atheist offspring." (71:5-10, 26-28)

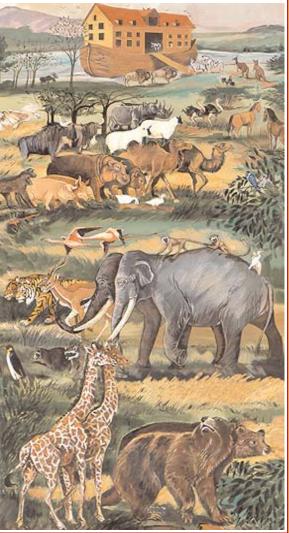
Almighty God then responded to his request with a divine revelation, which said: "Make a ship under My supervision and do not talk about these oppressors anymore."

Prophet Noah started making the ship but the people of his tribe kept mocking him and said: "Noah! You used to keep saying that you were a Prophet, but how come you've become a carpenter today? Perhaps you've come to hate the Prophethood and got interested in carpentry!"

Noah answered: "You ridicule us now but do know that we shall soon laugh at you and your destiny. You will soon understand who receives the humiliating torment and eternal misery."

Prophet Noah was consistent in his work, joining large and small pieces of the ship together. He then made the ship fast and it was completed. The Ship/Ark was constructed at the place, now known as 'Kufa Mosque' in Iraq. It was 1200 yards in length, 800 yards in width and 80 yards in height. It had three floors; bottom floor was for animals, middle floor for the birds and the top floor for 80 believers along with the necessary articles.

After building the Ship, Noah waited for some time to receive God's command. Finally Almighty God sent down a revelation to Noah. It said: "When the signs of torment appear, get onto the ship and take some of your relatives (Noah's wife, his three sons Ham, Sam and Yafes and their wives), your followers (72) and a couple of each species of



the animals and birds with you on board." Noah's other wife was an unbeliever, she did not believe in the message of her husband. Noah's son Kan'an was a hypocrite at heart and did not get into the Ship.

An old woman with her little daughter came to Prophet Noah. She asked him about Salvation Day: "When will God save us from the wickedness of the unbelievers?"

Prophet Noah did not know the time of the Salvation Day. So he looked at the sky. Indeed only God knew that day.

At that moment, an angel came down from the sky. He said to Prophet Noah: "When water gushes from the house of the old woman the time of the flood will be close."

Noah said to the old woman: "God's specified a sign for the Salvation Day. He has inspired me that water will gush from your house. The water will be like a fountain. This will be the sign of the Salvation Day."



The old woman rejoiced at this miracle. The little girl smiled at this hope.

The believers went to the old woman's house every day. They looked at the place of the water, but there was no water. Prophet Noah also went there. However, the water had not gushed yet.

One day, the sky became over clouded. It got very dark. Prophet Noah was looking at the sky waiting for God's order.

The unbelievers increased their oppression and corruption. They killed people and robed their houses. Their evil deeds and wickedness increased day by day. The little girl came running to Prophet Noah and said to him: "The water has flowed out!" So Prophet Noah went there quickly. Almighty God was truthful in his promise. The water was like a fountain. The water was flowing out with force. The old woman was bewildered, not knowing what to do.

The believers went to the old woman's house to look at God's sign. Some of them looked at the water in astonishment. Some of them were looking at the sky. They all were weeping with joy.

Following the revelation a heavy rain started and water began to gush up from the earth. There was solar eclipse. Nothing was visible except the sky and the water. A flood overflowed and gradually covered the hills and mountains. At such a time, Noah rushed towards his Ship and saw the disbelievers of the tribe who were struggling with death to overcome it but despite their effort, the victory was of the death.

At that time Prophet Noah suddenly saw his son Kan'an who was plunging among the roaring waves, Noah said to his son: "Where are you going? Believe in Almighty God and come to the Ship to be saved." "I shall take refuge in a mountain to protect me from the danger of the flood." "My dear son! Today you can not find shelter to save you from God's command." Noah's son



drowned inside the waves, and then Noah said to his God: "O God! My son is among my relatives and you promised to save all those relatives of mine who believed in you."

And Almighty God sent him a revelation saying: "Noah! This son is not of your relatives for he has denied your Prophethood."

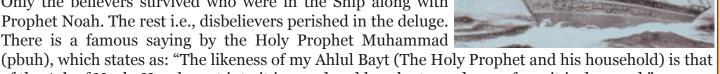
The above Paragraph throws light on the fact that it is merit and virtuous deeds which count and not the blood relationship. It demands close affinity in character and spiritual attainment. Therefore birth does not convey any importance. Salman Farsi a villager in Isfahan, obeyed God and His Messenger Muhammad (pbuh). He was honored with being one of the Prophet's companions. But the son of Prophet Noah disobeyed God and His Messenger and he was drowned.

In an apologetic manner Prophet Noah said: "O' my Lord! Verily I seek refuge in You from asking you that of which I have no knowledge; and if You forgive me not and have Mercy on me, I should be of the losers."

It is related that the Ship made turns and the waves shoved it forward till it reaches Makkah, where it made rounds of the shrine of Kaaba. The whole earth was submerged with water except the spot where Kaaba stood. The Holy house is known by the name of 'Baitul Atique'.

The Ship was not moving steadily and smoothly. Movement was with jerks and Noah began to fear drowning, at this moment he began the recitation: La Elaha IllAllah (There is no God but Almighty God).

Only the believers survived who were in the Ship along with Prophet Noah. The rest i.e., disbelievers perished in the deluge. There is a famous saying by the Holy Prophet Muhammad



of the Ark of Noah. He who got into it is saved and he who turned away from it is drowned."

After forty (40) days, raining stopped. The clouds dispersed gradually. The sun rose and a beautiful rainbow appeared in the horizon. The colors were beautiful and they made the believers hopeful. Noah's Ship was placed on the Judy mount (the mountains of the region of Ararat/Turkey) safe and sound. The earth starts swallowing the water slowly.

Prophet Noah released a crow. The crow flew high in the sky. It turned in space, and then it returned, for it found no land to sit on. Then Noah released a white pigeon. The pigeon set off. It flew over the water till it disappeared. After awhile, the pigeon came back. It was carrying an olive tree twig in its pink beak. Noah and the believers rejoiced at that. The flood ended. Thus Almighty God protected the believers from the wickedness of the unbelievers.

Then Noah was commanded to get off the Ship, step on the earth and start a new life once again under God's divine blessings and providence. And Noah laid the foundation of the city of 'Madinatus Samanin' or 'Soogus Samanin' (The city of eighty people or the market of eighty persons who survived the deluge). The world is indebted to the progeny of Prophet Noah; hence he is known as Adam-e-Sani (The second Adam).



Prophet Noah lived for quite some time, after the deluge. When his life was drawing to its close Angel Gabriel informed him that he should hand over the Ministry to his son Sam along with the signs of the Prophetic knowledge. Because, other two sons Ham and Yafes are not virtuous and mock the Prophet. Prophet Noah had given to the people the good news of the coming of Hud the Prophet.

At the end of his life, the angel of death (Ezraeel) appeared, when Prophet Noah was standing in the Sun and asked the angel the purpose of his visit. The angel replied that it was to take his soul out of this Corporal world. Prophet Noah asked: Is there time for him to return from the Sun to the Shade? 'Yes', said the angel. Returning from the Sun, Prophet Noah said that his stay in the world was only as much as his passing from the Sun to the Shade and the likeness of the life in this world is like entering through a door and getting out by another.

## Noah and the ugly Dog

ne day, long before he built the Ark, Prophet Noah was passing by a lonely road. He saw a Dog. The Dog was not good to look at. In fact, it was very, very ugly. The Dog was so ugly that Noah did not even like to look at it again. Noah felt disgusted at the sight of the ugly Dog. He said to himself, "Oh My God! What an ugly Dog!"



Immediately, by the will of Almighty, the Dog began to speak. The Dog said to Noah, "Oh Noah, I am ugly. It is sad, no doubt. But, if you have power, create one even as ugly as myself. Can you?"

Noah was a good man. He was humble and sincere. He realized that he should not have said what he had said. He began to cry with tears of repentance. He cried begging forgiveness of Almighty God.

**Moral:** Never hate any creature however bad looking it may be, because it is also created by Almighty God only.

## Logical answers to the following two questions:

#### 1. The Prophet Noah's flood was a local or global disaster?

The Quran looks at the flood from a very different viewpoint than do the Pentateuch (a name for the first five books of the Old Testament) and the other flood legends narrated in various cultures. The Pentateuch, says that the flood was cosmic and that it covered the whole world. Yet the Quran does not offer such as assertion, indeed on the contrary, the relevant verses imply that the flood was regional and did not cover the whole world but only drowned Noah's people who had been warned by Prophet Noah and so were punished.

It is not God's way to destroy people whom He has not sent any messengers. As a Warner, Noah had been sent only to his people. Therefore, God did not destroy the communities who had not been sent a Warner, but only Noah's people.

"Nor was thy Lord the one to destroy a population until He had sent to its centre a messenger, rehearsing to them Our Signs; nor are We going to destroy a population except when its members practice iniquity." (28:59)

#### 2. What was the location of Noah's flood?

The Mesopotamian Plains have been suggested as the location of the flood. In this region were the oldest civilizations known to history. Besides, being between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, this region

geographically is a suitable setting for a great deluge. One of the contributory factors to the effect of the flood is most probably that these two rivers overflowed their beds and overwhelmed the region. Many excavations have been made in investigation of the flood which covered the Mesopotamian plains. In excavations made in the region, in four main cities (Ur, Erech, Kish and Shuruppak) there are found traces of what must have been a particularly large flood.

## HUD (HOOD) THE PROPHET

The Holy Quran says: And the Aad, they were destroyed by a furious Wind, exceedingly violent; He made it rage against them seven nights and eight days in succession: so that thou couldst see the (whole) people lying prostrate in its (path), as they had been roots of hollow palm-trees tumbled down! Then seest thou any of them left surviving? (69:6-8)

oday, when we travel through southern Arabian Peninsular, we will most frequently come across is the vast desert. Most of the places, with the exception of the cities and regions that have been later afforested, are covered with sand. These deserts have been there for hundreds and

maybe thousands of years. This area is void of all marks of life. There are neither plants nor water. However, was this area a desert thousands of years ago? No. There were green fertile areas in this desert land. Archeologists have found the ruins of a city with springs & gardens buried under the sand.

Ahqaf means "sand dunes" in Arabic and it is the plural form of the word "Hiqf" which means a "sand dune", a raised spot in the desert. This shows that the people of Aad lived in a region full of "sand dunes", which provided the most logical ground possible for the



fact that they were buried by a sand storm. According to one interpretation, Ahqaf lost its meaning of "sand hills" and became the name of the region in south Yemen where the people of Aad lived. The people of Aad lived here in the pre-historic ages, and used to erect high building on any elevated pieces of land to serve as a sign. They were specialists in building palaces, castles, and forts. They had constructed underground canals, and were engaged in agriculture and farming, they had grown gardens.

In that period of time, the people of Aad built the greatest and wonderful city in the world. It was the city of Iram: "Seest thou not how thy Lord dealt with the Aad (people), of the Iram, with lofty pillars, the like of which were not produced in (all) the land?" (89:6-8) It was full of palaces and gardens.

**Shaddad** - a strong, pagan man ordered the city to be built. He wanted it to be a garden to live in. He thought that he would never die. He was very strong, so he thought that he would be immoral.

Prophet Hud was sent to correct the people of Aad. Prophet Hud was not a stranger but one of their own brethren from the tribe of Aad itself as the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was to his brethren Quraishites. He was enjoining a great patience in guiding people and was tolerant enough against their ignorance. He was respected because of his noble family and his good manners. He was the son of Abdullah, grandson of Sam and the great-grandson of Prophet Noah.

People of Aad were mostly well off and were enjoying a high income. Who were very flourishing and physically a very strong people with huge structure. And also they were idolatrous, having abundant wealth as well as a long life made each and every of them to be rebellious. Thus, together, they formed a revolting proud tribe and used to say, People: "Who is mightier than us in power?" When anything good happened to them they would thank their idols and when they were in trouble, they used to pray to these idols for help.

Prophet Hud used to say, "You people! Shall worship the unique God, for there is nothing greater than Him. Why don't you adopt the way of piety and virtue? I don't expect any reward from you for I shall be rewarded only by the Great God who has created me. Why don't you ponder more about it? I only declare my God's messages for you and I shall be a trustworthy and benevolent guide for you." "O Brothers, why do you worship stones that you have carved yourself? The idols can not give you anything or take anything away from you. You are not fools but what you are doing is against your intelligence. Your Lord is only One, and He alone should be worshipped. He has created you, given you health and wealth, and made you a powerful nation. Do not rebel against God in case you meet the fate of the people of Prophet Noah."

A man of Aad tribe answered: "Whether you advise us or not, it's all the same because idolatry is a tradition coming to us from our ancestors during thousands of years." The other man added, "We consider you a fool and shall think of you as a liar."

Prophet Hud replied: "You the people of Aad tribe! I'm not a fool but a messenger from the Lord of the world. Now pray and ask forgiveness from the Almighty and do repent to His Greatness so that fruitful and plentiful rain would descend and increase your present strength to a great extent." However Prophet Hud tried his best to correct their faith and behavior to bring them to the right path but all in vain. The people were extremely arrogant and proud. They harassed Prophet Hud and even beat him. In spite of all the odds, he kept on delivering the message of Almighty God.

The people were punished with a drought & famine for three or seven years. Prophet Hud used to con-

tinuously admonish the people saying. Believe in Almighty God and repent you for your sins, you will have rain from Almighty God. Prophet Hud kept on preaching the Oneness of God; though he met with little success. But all this proved to be futile since the people were not prepared to give up idol worship prevalent from their forefathers.

People were facing great hardships; so they assembled at Prophet Hud's place and a black woman with ugly face and a bold head came out and coming to know that the people had assembled to pray to God for rain said: What! If the prayer of Hud was so sure to be heard by God, he would have prayed for himself, for his own cornfields are totally burnt and destroyed by the Sun. The people however requested Prophet Hud to pray for rain. Prophet Hud prayed and asked them to return to their places. The people then asked who the old ugly woman was, who appeared at his door and spoke to them? Prophet Hud said that she was his wife for whom he prayed to God to give her the longest life possible. When they asked as to why he prayed so, Prophet Hud replied; she is my enemy. It is better to have an enemy under us then being under an enemy. After the rain the people prospered very much but did not correct their faith. The people not only refused to listen to the preaching of Prophet Hud but they transgressed their limits.

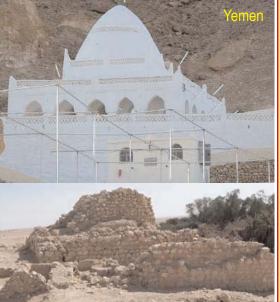
One of them said: "There shall be no torment for us and your advice will never have the least effect on us." Another one said: "If your words are true, bring us the torment which you're threatening us to."

Then the people of the tribe were destined to suffer the heavenly torment (Azaab-e-Ilahi). So God selected some hurricane like winds, called Sarsar and Aghim, to destroy them. And one day those who were expecting rainfall notice a black cloud appearing in the horizon and then through God's permission, there was a strong and terrible wind that uprooted their houses and tossed the animals into the air and destroyed everything on its way. The violent storm continued for eight successive days and seven nights and by the end of it the proud people of Aad were totally destroyed. The wind buried the wonderful city of Iram, under the sands. It had destroyed its houses and their strong marble pillars.

Prophet Hud and his virtuous followers (very few in numbers) who had left the place were saved.

The arrogant people of Aad were wiped out of existence. After the destruction of the Aad people, Prophet Hud migrated to some place in Hadramaut and died near the valley of Barhoot and is buried there, after spending two hundred and sixty five (265) years on earth.

**Note:** At the beginning of 1990, there appeared press-releases in the well-known newspapers of the world declaring "Arabian city of Legend found", "The Atlantis of the Sands, Ubar." Hence Ubar has been identified as the city of Iram mentioned in the Quran.



What one should do in looking at those remains buried in the sands is to take warning just as the Quran stresses that the people of Aad went astray of the right path because of their arrogance and said "What! Did they not see that God, Who created them, was superior to them in strength?" (41:15)

What a person has to do is bear this unchangeable fact in mind all the time and understand that the greatest and the most honored is always Almighty God and that one can only prosper by adoring Him.

## SALEH (SALIH) THE PROPHET

The Holy Quran says: The Thamud (also) rejected (their) Warner's. For they said: What! a man! a Solitary one from among ourselves! Shall we follow such a one? Truly should we then be straying in mind, and mad! "Is it that the Message is sent to him, of all people amongst us? Nay, he is a liar, an insolent one!" Ah! They will know on the morrow, which is the liar, the insolent one! (54:23-26)

Hereit of Syria.

The Muslim soldiers walked for miles and miles. They became tired and thirsty. So Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) ordered them to stop at the valley of the villages (Wadi al-Qura) near Tabuk.

The Muslim Army camped near the mountains. There were ruins and wells. One Muslim asked about the ruins: "Whose ruins are they?" The answer was: "They're Thamud's ruins. The tribe of Thamud lived at this place."

Holy Mohammed (pbuh) prevented the Muslims from drinking water from the wells. Then he showed them a spring near the mountain. He said to them: "Saleh's She-camel drank from this spring."

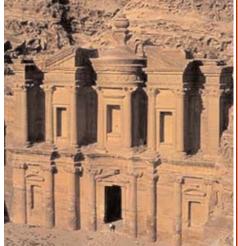
Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) prevented his soldiers from entering the ruins. He wanted them to learn a lesson from that tribe on which a curse of God befell and it was destroyed. Then He said, "The most wicked person from the olden times is the one who killed the innocent She-camel of Prophet Saleh and the most wicked person in these times is the one who will martyr Ali son of Abu Talib."

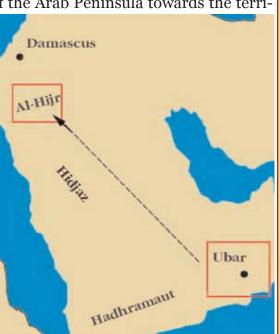
## Who is the tribe of Thamud? What is the story of prophet Saleh (pbuh)?

The tribe of Thamud is among the forgotten Arab tribes. History has not mentioned it. The Holy Quran has mentioned its story. Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) has mentioned it in his traditions.

The tribe of Thamud known as second Aad was living happily in the land of Al-Hijr. The other name of Thamud is Ashab Al-Hijr. They were well to do people, enjoying the green gardens, big springs and rivers, the productive land and beneficial animals of this country. In order to protect themselves they used to carve buildings of the huge rocks in the mountains. But gradually idolatry and corruption got over spread among the people of this tribe like their predecessors. They worshipped a piece of the mountain and offered sacrifices to it, annually.

And consequently Almighty God appointed Saleh at the age of sixteen (16) years as a messenger, a pious man of a noble and respect-





ful family in Al-Hijr, who was quite well-known for his knowledge and wisdom in the tribe to guide the people. He preached up to the age of one hundred twenty (120) years but it was of not avail at all.

Therefore, Prophet Saleh addressed the whole tribe and said: "O' my people! Worship the Almighty for he is the most kind and there is no God rather than him. It is He who has created you from the clay and made this land productive for you. Ask forgiveness from Him and repent to His greatness for He is so close to you and the only one that will respond to your prayers. Remember the time when He made you the successor of Aad tribe and placed you on the earth where you now build your palaces on its flat lands and form houses out of its mountains. Remember God's favors and do not choose the way of the corrupt." To avoid any misunderstanding, Prophet Saleh reminded them of his sentiments of kinship and ties of ancestral relationship saying: "All of you are kith and kin, and we are from the same ancestors. I am your well-wisher, and have no evil intentions against you. Come, let us seek God's forgiveness and repent for our sins; for people who call Him will find Him very close to them. He always responds to the people who implore Him; and He forgives those who repent."

The people of Thamud were extremely surprised at the preaching of Prophet Saleh and said: "O' Saleh! You used to be a wise and logical man in this tribe and we thought we could depend on your wisdom at the time of terrible events and calamities. Now you are asking us to reject what our fathers used to worship. We shall thus be quite dubious about what you are inviting us to."

Prophet Saleh: "You have to fear God. Accept my words and don't obey the immodest people for they spread corruption on the earth and never try making any reformation."

People: "You're undoubtedly bewitched and have lost your wisdom and sense of logic. You are a human being just as we are, Aren't you? What advantage or superiority have you got over us that have made you wiser than us and enabled you to claim that you are a Prophet appointed by God? If your words are true, bring us a sign or a miracle to prove the righteousness of your claim."

However, they said they would believe in his mission, if he could cause woolly red She-camel to come out of the mountain. Prophet Saleh said: "I'll ask God for that. If He does that, will you believe that there is only one God? Will you believe that I'm His Apostle for you?"

"Yes," they answered. "When will the promise be fulfilled?" they asked.

Prophet Saleh replied: "The promise will be fulfilled at this place tomorrow."

At dawn Prophet Saleh set out to the mountain where a big rock was situated.

The people of Thamud gathered about the rock. Some of them doubted Saleh some of them were looking at the rock; some of them were looking at Saleh.

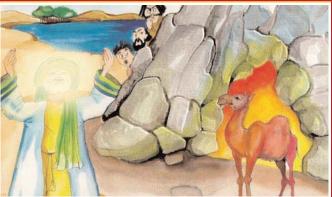
Prophet Saleh sat down. His eyes were full of tears. He asked Almighty God for a sign to convince his people. For he wanted his people to return to their own nature and to serve only God.

Suddenly, Prophet Saleh rose. He pointed with his finger to the rock.

All the members of the tribe heard a fearful sound. They heard the rock break. Then they saw it break into pieces. Then a wonderful She-camel (Naqatullah), with those characteristic, stepped out of the rock before them with the will of Almighty.

But even then the people refused to believe in his Divine Mission. He reminded his people of the boons Almighty had given them, for which they should be grateful to Him.

At this time God sent Saleh a revelation saying: "Inform your tribe of the God's wills which permits you to use the water of this town alternatively with this She-camel, which is one day the people of Thamud shall use the water and one day the She-camel would



drink all the water of the spring (the first spring in the world to gush forth from the earth)." On the day the She-camel of God drank the water, she gave sufficient milk for the people of the town. It was a blessing for the people.

So the Prophet Saleh said to the tribe: "You people! This is the She-camel of God which shall serve as a token of His presence and a miracle to prove the righteousness of my Prophethood and invitation. So leave this camel on its own to graze in God's land and feed on the grass and vegetables. Don't do it any harm for otherwise a great torment will soon fall upon you."

However, the well-to-do and mischief-mongers didn't leave their obstinacy and revolt and revealed their disbelief in Prophet Saleh quite clearly and as strong as they could, except for a few people who accepted his invitation and believed in him.

Finally people decided to kill the She-camel, but each time the fear of torment prevented them from taking any action. One day, some young men who were motivated by women of the tribe got determined to kill the camel and set out to do so. While the camel was busy drinking water, they shot her by an arrow which hit it in the leg and caused her to fall down. Then they drew their swords, attacked and killed her.

Prophet Saleh coming to know this turned to people and said: "Repent within three (3) days lest there will be chastisement from Almighty. This is certain and exact promise that will not be belied or delayed." The people of the tribe neglected his words and went on with their revolt and disobedience. They even decided to kill Prophet Saleh but didn't find the time for God. On the fourth (4) day God responded to their trickery and conspiracy with His torment, there came a lightning on them which changed them to lifeless corpses in their houses. And this was a due punishment for their oppression and revolt.

Prophet Saleh and his followers survived and the disbelievers of the tribe of Thamud could not escape the inevitable, and were destroyed. After the destruction of the tribe of Thamud, Prophet Saleh moved to Makkah and devoted his life in worship.

When Prophet Saleh left his nation he was middle-aged, with a big belly, a fine body, a dense beard and of medium height. When he returned after some years, he looked youthful and there were no signs of aging. As a result, the people could not recognize him. Prophet Saleh found the people divided into three (3) groups.

The first group was in doubt about whether he was the same Saleh who had left the nation many years ago. The second group denied him completely. They did not believe for a moment that he was the same Saleh who left the nation years ago. The third group of people was steadfast in its belief and

accepted Prophet Saleh as the prophet of their nation.

Prophet Saleh first approached the group that doubted him. When he claimed to be Saleh, they refused to accept him and instead abused him and turned him away. Then he went to the group that denied him. Even they did not believe in his claim and abused him. Both these groups denied Prophet Saleh's Prophethood by saying, 'The Saleh we knew looked different from you.



You cannot be the same Saleh.' ProphetSaleh explained, 'Almighty God gives the appearance to whomsoever He Pleases. He is the One who has given me this appearance to test you.' But they remained stubborn in their disbelief.

Finally Prophet Saleh turned his attention to the third group. This group was steadfast in its faith. Prophet Saleh approached them and introduced himself as Saleh - the same prophet who had left their nation years ago. The group asked him, 'If you are Saleh, then inform us about past.' Prophet Saleh revealed, 'I got the She-camel for you. She used to drink water for one day and you used to drink water on the next day.' The group replied, 'We accept you as the same Prophet Saleh. We only wanted to test you before accepting you.' In this manner, only one small group accepted, while the majority rejected him. He lived on this earth for five hundred and eighty six (586) years.

## **ABRAHAM (IBRAHIM) THE PROPHET**

The Holy Quran says: Abraham was certainly a model of faith for the people, obedient to God and upright, and was not an idolater but grateful to Him for His favors; so He chose him and guided him on the right path, and gave him what is good in this world, and in the hereafter he will be amongst the righteous ones. (16:120-122)

King Namrud son of Canaan ruled the city of Babylon; he was a proud man and forced the people to believe in him as their God. He used to imprisoned and killed people. He took whatever he wanted of their crops. Since the people were idolaters, who already worshipping idols of wood and stone, they accepted this additional chain of slavery around their necks because they were afraid of his power. After some time, Almighty God decided to send Prophet Abraham to these people so they may be guided.

A short while before Prophet Abraham was born; Namrud was told by his high rank astrologers that a

child would soon be born in this country. He would stand against him and tell the people to stop worshipping idols. Instead he will invite people to a new religion.

Namrud who was terribly horrified, commanded his agents to somehow prevent his birth. To prevent such danger arising in his kingdom, Namrud ordered all male babies born in that year killed. Contact between men and women should be avoided, and if pregnant women bore boys, they boys should be killed. But in spite of the extreme alertness of Namrud's cruel agents, through God's will the embryo

of Abraham developed in the womb of his mother, she had shown no signs of pregnancy when she carried him, so she knew that her baby was special.

Abraham's mother who was very much afraid of Namrud's agents had left the city before giving birth

to her kid. She hid herself in a cave in the desert. This was the cave in which Abraham was born in the city of Kawthariya, near Ur and Babylon. She then covered the child with a cloth, closed the mouth of the cave with stones and returned home without the child. She told nobody of what had happened.

The child was all alone in the cave with no one to care for him. When he become hungry, he used to suckle his own

fingers. Almighty God caused milk to flow from his fingers and thus provided him with a source of food. The child grew up under God's protection. From time to time, his mother would come secretly to the cave to watch him.

Abraham gradually grew up in this cave and when he was thirteen (13), he secretly came back to the city with his mother. His father, Taraq, had already died, so he was adopted by Azar, uncle (his father's brother). Azar was a famous sculptor who used to make idols out of stone. His sons used to sell these idols to the people. Azar gave Prophet Abraham the same job as his sons.

Even in his young age, Prophet Abraham already believed in God and he hated idols. On the first day of his job, he tied a rope around some idols and dragged them through the dirt to the market-place. He then called to the people, "Come and buy these lifeless idols who have no understanding and wisdom and no power to do any good or cause you any loss."

The people looked at the dirty idols and were angry at the disrespect that Prophet Abraham had shown to their Gods. They complained to Azar and Prophet Abraham was not allowed to sell any more idols.

As time passed, Prophet Abraham tried to show the people the error of their ways. He first approached his uncle, who was like a father to him, and advised him to worship God and abandon the idols. The Holy Quran records his conversation with Azar in the following verses:

O my father! Serve not the Satan; surely the Satan is disobedient to the Beneficent God: O my father! Surely I fear that a punishment from the Beneficent God should afflict you so that you should be a friend of the Satan. He said: Do you dislike my Gods, O Abraham? If you do not desist I will certainly revile you, and leave me for a time. He said: Peace be on you, I will pray to my Lord to forgive you; surely He is ever Affectionate to me: (19:44-47)

Although he was unsuccessful with Azar, Prophet Abraham did not lose hope and began preaching to the people. He used to tell them, "Can your idols hear you? Can they ever help you or harm you?" They would say, "We worship them because our forefathers worshipped them." Prophet Abraham would then teach them that only God, the Creator of the heavens and earth, should be worshipped.

Although the people could not answer Prophet Abraham's arguments against their idols, they were stubborn and only a few people listened to him and began worshipping unique God.



#### Abraham and a sign of Resurrection

he Almighty God appointed Abraham to guide the deceived people and idolaters. So He was honored to be granted the high position of Prophethood. Abraham had a faithful heart, he had no doubt about his God's power but he wanted the reality of things to become clear to him and thus invest his insight. So he sincerely asked his God to show him how His greatness could revive the dead and bestow life upon them. He was so addressed by God: "Haven't you believed resurrection (giving life to the dead) yet?"



Abraham said: "I do have faith but I am eager to see the reality of things to make certain and strengthen my faith." Since, Abraham had no intention but being reassured.

The Almighty sent him a revelation: "Catch four (4) birds and after killing them, mash them all together into a pile then, divide the pile to four different parts and put each part on the peak of a mountain, call them one by one and you shall see that they will be revived at our order and shall come to you."

Prophet Abraham did so and when he called them by saying, come to me with the permission of Almighty, the pieces gathered from the piles and joined together to make four birds once again alive through God's will. Abraham observed one of the greatest manifestations of God's power in making

the dead alive. His heart already full of faith was then even more reassured. He prostrated to God, the Almighty.

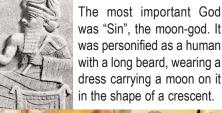
## Abraham the leader of the monotheists

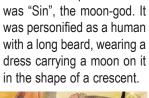
Then Abraham noticed that people didn't accept to leave idolatry, he decided to break idols and prove their inability and weakness. He got his chance during the annual festival, which was held outside the town, young and old, had left the town to celebrate the day.

Prophet Abraham pretended to be sick and stayed home. When he found the city deserted of people and the idol temple without any guards as he easily stepped in the idol temple (Ziggurat), and walked around. Idols were decorated with different ornaments and were placed all around the idol temple according to their ranks

and importance. Then, joking and with contempt, he showed them the food and said: "Don't you eat food?" He got no answer, so he asked again jokingly: "Why don't you say something?" Again he heard no answer. Abraham, who was determined in carrying out his mission, shattered all the idols into pieces except the big one (Mardukh, the God of Gods) then hung his axe on its shoulder and left the temple.









People having performed the ceremonies, returned to the city, but when they saw the mess in the temple as well as the broken idols, they became so shocked and angry. You could hear some saying: "We know the young man who's done this. He is the one, who always insults the idols, his name is Abraham. He believes it's foolish to worship idols and he reproaches us for doing that, we believe he has broken our idols."

Namrud came to the temple because something dangerous had happened. He feared for his throne, so he ordered Abraham to be arrested. He ordered him to be tried in the temple. The Judge sat beside Namrud in the temple, which was full of people. The soldiers brought the young man, Abraham. They made him stand before Namrud and the Judge.

The trial started with the Judge's questions.

The Judge asked Abraham: "We know that you mock our Gods. We also know that you don't celebrate the arrival of spring as the people of Babylon do. Now, tell us who has broken our Gods. Have you broken them, Abraham?"

Abraham answered firmly: "How do you know, it must have been done by the biggest idol, which is standing safe. Ask him about it and get reassured of course if he is able to answer your question."

All the people looked at the biggest of the gods, which was carrying an axe on one of its shoulders. They knew that it can not speak.

The Judge said: "But our idols do not talk or answer questions." Now Prophet Abraham took the opportunity to make the people understand how useless their idols were. He said, "Shame on you! How can you worship pieces of wood and stone, instead of great unique God? They do not know any-thing and can neither harm nor benefit you."

Namrud remembered the prophecy of astrologers: "A person will be born, and he will destroy your kingdom." Thus, he said with anger: "Abraham has committed a crime! Judge you must punish him to please our idols!" All the people stood up for Namrud and supported him.

Then Namrud said: "We must protect our sacred God's! We must punish Abraham by throwing him into the fire!" The people began to shout, "Burn him alive! Let him be with his Lord."

Very few people felt sad for Abraham. Among them were Sarah, Abraham's cousin, and Prophet Lut Abraham's nephew. Sarah believed Abraham's words. Prophet Lut was a wise man. He believed in God, the One and only, and the message of Prophet Abraham.

## Abraham on fire

**P**rophet Abraham was arrested and imprisoned. Then Namrud ordered that wood be collected to make a huge bonfire. Soon after a heap of firewood was prepared they set it on fire and made a huge fire out of it in the middle of the desert. The fire burnt fiercely and widely for days and days. It had generated so much heat that no bird dared to fly nearby. The dancing flames of fire were so outstretched and hot that nobody could even get close. The people of Babylon retreated so that the fire would not burn them. Abraham's hands were tied. The fortune tellers thought that he would be afraid of the fire, and that he would apologize to them for destroying their Gods. However, Abraham

was waiting calmly for his fate, for he believed in God and was not afraid of anybody or anything except Him. It is related that when Prophet Abraham was being thrown into the fire, the angels in the heaven and the birds in the air cried in protest.

At the appointed day on which Prophet Abraham was to be put in the fire and burnt, Namrud with his large army and followers came out to that place to watch. On seeing the huge fire and the intense heat, he began to ponder as to how it would be possible to convey Prophet Abraham into the fire.

In the mean time a lizard slithered as close to the fire as he could get. With water in his little mouth he spit it at the fire trying to douse it. The other animals around him seeing him said, **"What differ-ence will it make?"** The lizard replied: "On the day of Judgment (Qiyama), when I will come before my Creator, I will say that I tried my best."

Namrud decided to build a large catapult and Prophet Abraham was thrown into the fire using this catapult. So they used a large catapult to throw Abraham into fire to console themselves and decrease their rage. When Prophet Abraham was flying in the air towards the fire, the angel Gabriel (Jibraeel) came to ask him if he needed his help. Prophet Abraham replied, "It is a matter between my Lord and me I do not want any one to intervene." As God the Glorified, created fire and gave it the ability to bum, He was able to take that ability away from it.

At first, Abraham was disappeared in the fire and people thinking that he was burnt, started to shout happily. But it was through God's will that the flames of fire got cold for Abraham and did not harm him. The area on which Abraham fell became a beautiful garden of flowers, but the fire surrounded the garden. Namrud and his followers were amazed to see Prophet Abraham sitting calmly and comfortably in the middle of the

burning fire, realized that fire had done no harm to Abraham. While they were all gazing admiringly of this heavenly miracle and sign of God, they understood the righteousness of Abraham's invitation and the truthfulness of his words and claims. But even then they did not learn any lesson and had something up their sleeves, especially Namrud, remained proud and stubborn.

## The dispute between Namrud and Abraham

fter Abraham was unbelievably saved from that huge fire Namrud's followers and especially he himself become very much surprised by this divine miracle. So Namrud called Abraham and asked him: "Who is this God that you invite people to and you want them to worship?"

Prophet Abraham replied to Namrud, "I worship Almighty God Who gives life to the dead and brings death the living." Namrud said, "This is nothing, I can also do that. Do you want to know how? I'll show you right away. Just watch it."

He clapped his hand and commanded his guards: "Bring me two prisoners? One who has been sentenced to imprisonment and the other has been sentenced to death." The guards brought him two chained prisoners to his presence.

Namrud commanded the swordsman: "Cut off the head of the prisoner. Then release the one who has sentenced to death."



Namrud turned to Abraham and asked him: "Did you see what I did. I brought death to the prisoner who was only sentenced to imprisonment and gave life to the one sentenced to death." Namrud himself know this is not true. Because, He wanted to burn Abraham but God saved him from the burning.

Prophet Abraham refrained from discussing with Namrud on such a matter, for what Namrud had done was incorrect. For this reason he asked him: "I worship my Lord, for He makes the sun rise in the east. Can you make it rise in the west?"

Namrud was astonished at Abraham's question, for no one had asked him such question before. However, Namrud kept silent. He was unable to answer. But remained stubborn and did not accept the religion of Prophet Abraham.

After some years, our Prophet Abraham married his believing cousin, Sarah. Sarah was a beautiful, wise and rich young lady; she owned land and cattle, so she gave everything to her husband Abraham. Prophet Abraham worked on his farms and grazed cattle. God blessed him, so his land bloomed, and his cattle increased.

Namrud knew that he could not harm Prophet Abraham, because he was under the protection of God. So he ordered Prophet Abraham to leave his kingdom and stopped everybody from following his religion. Prophet Abraham thus left his homeland with his family and sheep. He took with him his wife Sarah and his nephew Prophet Lut and left for Egypt.

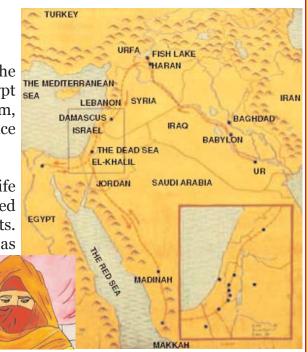
After some time, Namrud the tyrant king had expressed his desire to fight the army of God. And there was a host of mosquitoes, descended from above, which ate the flesh and drank the blood of the people. It is stated that one of the mosquito entered the nostrils of Namrud and reached his brain and he met a painful death.

## **The Migration**

fter this eventful episode, Prophet Abraham left the city of Babylon in disgust and migrated towards Egypt to start the monotheist community. Prophet Abraham, his wife Sarah, and his nephew Prophet Lut arrived at a place known as Ghazaza in the kingdom of the Egypt.

During this journey Prophet Abraham had kept his wife Sarah in a box. At Ghazaza the custom officer Al-Ashir asked Prophet Abraham to open the box and show its contents. Prophet Abraham asked the officer to take as much duty as

he liked but not to open it. In spite of persistent request by Prophet Abraham the officer opened the box and found Sarah she was extremely beautiful. He informed the king of Egypt.



King on seeing Sarah could not resist his temptation. He stretched his hand towards her.

Prophet Abraham asked Almighty to protect Sarah from the wicked King. God, the Glorified accepted his prayer. He supported His Prophet Abraham and paralyzed the King's hand. The King of Egypt was unable to touch Sarah. He knew that the Lord of Abraham prevented him from doing that. Thus, he asked Abraham: "Has your Lord prevented me from doing this?" Abraham replied: "Yes. Indeed my Lord is Merciful."

The King of Egypt explained: "Your Lord is Merciful. You are also merciful, so ask your lord to heal my hand, and I'll never do anything like that again."

Prophet Abraham asked God to heal the King's hand and He, the Glorified, healed his hand. But the king again repeated what he did in the beginning. Abraham's prayer again cursed him and again for the third time the king did what he did before. This time Abraham took a promise from the king not to repeat in which case he would not invoke God. Then Abraham prayed, "O my Lord, if this man is truly sorry, then change his hand to its original form."

Through this prayer, the king was cured. He was impressed with the power of Prophet Abraham, and accepted his faith. He treated Prophet Abraham with great respect & presented him with a beautiful well-behaved maid Hagar (Hajira), to serve Sarah, and allowed them to go wherever they wanted.

## Abraham and the star worshipers

Then again Prophet Abraham migrated towards Palestine (Baytul Muqaddas), from Egypt after growing rich and possessing enough livestock and wealth. On his way to Palestine and Jerusalem, Abraham happened to see a group of star worshipers who were praising stars instead of Almighty God. These people were called the Magi. Abraham, getting aware of their great mistake, decided to show them God's way and save their lives. To achieve his goal. Abraham pretended to have the same religion as theirs.

At night when everything had gone under a veil of darkness, Abraham said: "My God is this star." But soon afterwards, the star set and disappeared from the views. Abraham said: "I don't like the God who sets down."

After a while, the moon appeared from a corner in the horizon. Abraham, while the star worshipers were listening to him, looked at the moon and said: "This is my God. This one is bigger than that star." By the end of the night the moon set too. Prophet Abraham said: If my God doesn't guide me, I'll surely be misled. The next morning Prophet Abraham pointed to the sun rising from the east. He stared at Sun's glory and brightness and said: "This should be my God. This one is bigger and brighter than all the stars."

And finally, at the time when the sun, like the moon and all the stars set and disappeared in the horizon he pretended to be very much discouraged and showed great displeasure from idolatry, he said: "I disgust these ever-changing things. I shall praise the God who is the creator of the earth and heavens. I only worship Him and I shall reject all these dualists in this way."

Abraham justified the way of God and draws their attention towards the real deity. But those misled men in stead of accepting Abraham's words, opened up a dispute with him. Prophet Abraham Said: "Are you arguing about the God who has guided us and showed the right path to His creatures."

The star worshipers, releasing that they could not have any influence on Abraham, and had failed to make him charge his idea regarding God, so they started to threaten and warn him against the stars' anger. For Abraham, these threatening were only ridiculous because he was fully aware that there was no power in the world more effective than that of God and stars were only powerless things under the command of the creator of the earth and heavens. Then Prophet Abraham continued his journey towards Palestine. When he arrived at the coast of the Dead Sea, he left Prophet Lut at the land of

Sodom to summon its people to believe in God and to do good. As for Abraham, he went to the city of al-Khalil in Palestine and lived in that city for many years.

## **ISHMAEL (ISMAIL) THE PROPHET**

**P**rophet Abraham saw a beautiful valley surrounded by hills, in Palestine. So he stopped to rest and pitched his tents in that wide valley. Then he let his cattle graze. This valley was used by travelers, so for this reason travelers visited Abraham. Prophet Abraham received them well and talked with good words, and then he supplied them with fresh water and delicious food to eat and bed to sleep. This good quality of his is described in the Quran. Every morning Prophet Abraham stood by the main road near his house and waited for travelers to pass. As soon he saw them he invited them to his house to be his guests. Prophet Abraham liked this good deed very much. It pleased him to make other people happy and comfortable.

Thus, Prophet Abraham would everyday bring home one guest at least. If he came across no traveler even for a day he would become unhappy. Without having a guest, he would not touch food himself. Prophet Abraham preached to his guests. He wanted the people to worship God, the One and only. He did not want them to associate any partner with God. Days and years passed. People understood that Abraham was a good, generous person. They were familiar with his morals, generosity, and love for guests. They knew his righteousness, worship, and piety.

## Prophet Abraham and the old man





nce it so happened that no traveler passed that way for three days running. This, naturally, upset Prophet Abraham. It made him sad. Without having a guest on his table he would not eat. Each morning

Prophet Abraham went to the main road hopefully. He would strain his eyes far away to the horizon. Yet no traveler was to be seen. Each evening he would return to his home disappointed.

Three days passed. One morning an old man appeared on a camel. Prophet Abraham was happy. He invited the old man to his home to eat with him The old man accepted the invitation.

In the house they set to eat. Prophet Abraham recited **BISMILLAH** (In the name of Almighty God) before taking the food, but the old man did not say anything. Prophet Abraham asked why he did not remember Almighty God before taking his meal. Was not Almighty our Creator, our Nourishing Master? Was it not proper to remember Him before partaking of the food provided by Him?

The old man said that it was not the custom in his religion. Prophet Abraham asked him what his religion was. He said that he was one of those who worship fire. Prophet Abraham was very much annoyed and turned the old man out.

As soon as the old man went away, the Angel Gabriel (Gibraeel) came to Prophet Abraham, from Almighty God. Gabriel told Prophet Abraham that Almighty had been feeding this unbeliever person for seventy years. Could not Prophet Abraham tolerate him for even one meal! Prophet Abraham felt very sorry for this. He immediately ran after the old man. Finally he reached him and persuaded him to return to his house to have food together. He finally succeeded in getting the old man to his home.

**Moral:** (1.) However good you may be, it does not give you right to judge other persons. (2.) You should always seek the forgiveness and pleasure of God. (3.) Always entertain and please a guest.

Prophet Abraham and his wife Sarah became old and Sarah was a barren woman. Sarah loved her husband. She did not want him to be sad, thus she asked him one evening: "Do you want to have children?" "That's up to God's will," replied Prophet Abraham "I'm satisfied with that." Sarah, the righteous woman, explained: "I want to have a baby. I want to look after him. I will love it." "How will that happen?" asked Prophet Abraham.

Sarah answered: "Friend of the Merciful (God), I will give you my slave girl Hagar. Marry her. May God give you children from her." "Sarah, I don't want you to be sad because of me," explained Abraham.

"Friend of the Merciful (God), I will not be sad. Rather, I will be glad," commented Sarah.

Sarah gave Hagar to her husband and Prophet Abraham married the slave girl Hagar, so at this stage he prayed My Lord! Grant me of the doers (son) of good deeds. Prophet Abraham's prayers were granted by Almighty, So We gave him the good news of a boy, possessing forbearance. Prophet Abraham was eighty six (86) years old when Prophet Ishmael was born. Prophet Abraham was very happy and delighted to have this son and was very proud of him. The new-born son was the apple of his father's eye and when Sarah watched the two of them, she was sad that she could not have a child. So, she grew jealous of Hagar. Sarah wanted to get rid of her jealousy. She did not want to bear malice against Hagar. So she said to her husband Abraham: "Now, I don't want to see Hagar. When I see her, I'm jealous of her. I don't want to enter the fire because of jealousy."

Hence she asked Prophet Abraham to take Hagar and her son to some other place out of her sight and Abraham accepted her request. God, the Most High, ordered Prophet Abraham to take Hagar and Ishmael to the land of Hijaz (Saudi Arabia). Prophet Abraham obeyed God's order. He took his wife Hagar and Ishmael and headed for the south to an unknown place.

They walked through barren, wide deserts. When Prophet Abraham saw a beautiful place or a grassy valley, he looked at the sky, and hoped that he arrived at the promised place, but the angel told him that he had not reached the land of Hijaz yet.

After many long days and nights, Prophet Abraham arrived in a barren land. The land was a dry valley. It had neither trees nor water. It was full of sand and stones. Rocky Mountains surrounded the valley. The angel came down to Prophet Abraham and said to him: "You have arrived in the Sacred Land. You should leave Hagar and Ishmael here. Return back to Palestine."



Prophet Abraham knew nothing except obedience to God. The

sight of Hagar and Ishmael all alone in that wild place was moving, so he wept for them. Hagar asked her husband: "Why do you leave us in this wild place?" Prophet Abraham answered with sadness "Surely, God has ordered me to do this" Hagar believed in God and the message of her husband, so she said in confidence: "As God has ordered you to do this, He will not forget us!"

Prophet Abraham went back to Palestine to Sarah after making a small shelter to Hagar and her one year old infant. According to the Holy Quran, he prayed: "O our Lord! I have made some of my off-spring to dwell in a valley without cultivation, by Thy Sacred House; in order, O our Lord, that they may establish regular Prayer: so fill the hearts of some among men with love towards them, and feed them with fruits: so that they may give thanks." (14:37) Refer (14:35-38, 40-41) for further prayer.

Abraham disappeared in the distant horizon. Hagar was unable to see him. She firmly believed that God would look after her and her baby. During the day she collected some wood. When the evening came, she burnt the wood and made a loaf of bread. She spent most nights looking at the sky full of stars. Several days passed. She used up all the water in her water-skin and food supply. The thirst as well as hunger gradually weakened them both. Hagar walked about the valley to look for water but unfortunately she found no trace of water. No body passed

through the valley and no bird flew in its sky.

Ishmael, the baby, wept because he was thirsty. Hagar looked at her baby with kindness. Then she asked herself. "What will I do? Where can I get water in this desert?"

Suddenly her heart was full of the feelings of motherhood. She said to herself. I must do something. I must find water in this land. "Perhaps there is a small stream or a spring of water



beyond that mountain. Perhaps a good person has dug a well beyond that hill for travelers." Hagar rose again to find water. She was afraid that a wolf or a hyena would eat her baby. However, she saw nothing except some thistles here and there, so she ran towards al-Safa Mountain quickly. She hoped that she would find water. Hagar stopped at the top of the mountain. She looked at the valley and saw something like the waves of water, thus she descended towards the valley. However, there was nothing except sand. What she saw in the middle of the valley was a mere mirage.

Hagar came back running to her baby. Then she looked at al-Marwa Mountain. She hoped that she would find water beyond it. She ran very quickly. Sand was rising under her feet. She saw something like water. So she ran quickly but she saw nothing except a mirage. She did not hear Ishmael cry because she went far away. So she came back quickly feeling quite miserable. She heard him crying bitterly in the distance. She thought that he was looking for her or that he was afraid.

This caused her to go and search again though she did not have enough power for that. Again she began running between the al-Safa and al-Marwa Mountain. She was repeated again and again for seven (7) times until there was no strength left for her. Thus, she put together all her efforts to get back to her son and be by his side in those last minutes, watching her dying son with broken heart. Then she looked at the sky and said at the top of her voice: "My Lord!" she suddenly noticed a current of water gushing up like a big spring from beneath Ishmael's little feet out of sand. This filled her with great heavenly joy and praying to God, she quenched his son with that cold water.

She made a small wall all around the water because she wanted the water to be a well. Later people called the well Zamzam (meaning abundant water).

Note: And thereafter Sayee became a religious tradition and each year pilgrims run between al-Safa

and al-Marwa Mountain seven times in memory of Hagar as she run for her infant Ishmael's thirst.

Little by little the birds came flying over this spring and the Bedouins people of Jarham tribe, a nearby village, noticing the flock of birds flying over special spots rushed to the place, found the spring as well as Hagar and her son. Upon enquiring Hagar replied to them: "I'm the wife of Abraham, the Friend of the Merciful (God)."



The members of the tribe of Jarham were good people, thus they asked Hagar the permission to reside over there. Hagar replied: "You have to wait till I ask the Friend of the Merciful (God) for permission." The, members of the tribe of Jarham pitched their tents near the valley. They waited till prophet Abraham came.

Prophet Abraham asked his wife Sarah to allow him to visit his second wife and see his son. Prophet Abraham came. He saw the tents and camels grazing around. He rejoiced at the arrival of that Arab tribe and the area was full of life.

The members of the tribe of Jarham came and asked Abraham to permit them to inhabit the valley. Abraham permitted them. In turn they gave Ishmael many lambs. They pitched a tent for him and his mother to protect them from the sun's heat and winter rain and thus a new town flourished by leaps and bounds around the spring of Zamzam.

Hagar gradually became used to them and living peacefully among them, she no more had the fear of being left alone. This was the fulfillment of Abraham's pray to God asking him to take care of them. Ishmael grew up and learned the language of the Arabs. He was a good young man. He inherited the manners of his father, Abraham.

When some time has passed, Ishmael became friendly with the tribe of Jarham and married a girl from there tribe. On one occasion when Prophet Abraham had come to see his son and by chance Ishmael was not at home, he did not like the attitude of Ishmael's wife and considered her unsuitable for Ishmael. He left a message for Ishmael to change the threshold of his home. Ishmael understood the real meaning of this message. He divorced his wife, and then married another woman who was suitable in all respects; and God granted him several sons from this wife. He lived on this earth for One hundred and thirty seven (137) years

## **ISAAC (ISHAQ) THE PROPHET**

ne day three (3) guests came to Abraham and greeted him politely. Prophet Abraham went quickly to his cattle and brought back a fat ram. He slaughtered the ram and made a good meal (roasted calf) for his guests. Now, a wonderful thing happened. Prophet Abraham saw that his guests did not eat the food. When the guests understood that Prophet Abraham became worried, they said to him: "Abraham, don't worry. We are God's angels to the land of Sodom. He has sent us to punish the people of Sodom." (11:69-76)

Prophet Abraham felt tranquility. However, he thought about the fate of the people of Sodom. So be disputed with the angels, saying: "Lut is in the land of Sodom." The angels explained: "We know the people of Sodom. God has ordered us to destroy this village and its people, except Lut and his daughters." The people of Sodom were unbelievers and behaved badly. They attacked travelers and they hurt their Prophet Lut.

Prophet Abraham asked himself. "Why have the angels come here, instead off going directly to Sodom?" The angels gave good news to Prophet Abraham. They said to him: "Your old wife, Sarah, will bear you a son."

Sarah heard the good news of the angels, so she wondered at that and said: "Shall I bear a son when I am such an old woman and when my husband is such an old man? Most surely this is a wonderful

thing." The angel said: "Do you wonder at God's order? The mercy of God and His blessings are on you, O people of the house. Surely He is Praised, Glorious."

Sarah and Prophet Abraham rejoiced at the good news of the angels. However, Prophet Abraham was sad for the people of Lut. He wanted to turn away God's wrath from them, but the angels told him that God's wrath would befall on them.

The angels left the house of Prophet Abraham and went away to carry out their task in the land of Sodom. After some time God rewarded Sarah for her patience and though she was very old, she gave birth to a son, Isaac (Ishaq). He was five (5) years younger than his elder brother Ishmael. Prophet Abraham was one hundred (100) years old and Sarah ninety (90) years at the birth of their son Isaac. Sarah died at the age of one hundred twenty seven (127) years.

Prophet Isaac at the age of forty (40) years got married to Rebecca, the daughter of Bethuel son of Nahor (brother of Prophet Abraham). By this wife Isaac had twins both sons. They were Esau (Al Eis) and Jacob / Isreal (Yaqub). He lived on this earth for one hundred and eighty (180) years.

## **Reconstruction of the Kaaba**

fter coming to Hejaz (Makkah), Abraham said to his son: "I have been commanded by God to re-build a house in this desert." Abraham was referring to Kaaba, the house which had been built by Prophet Adam the Sacred House of God to be the mark of God's Oneness in the world, and now he was going to reconstruct it. Hearing this, Ishmael informed his father of his readiness to accompany him in God's name.

With their firm wills, they started to reconstruct the house. There is a spot near the Kaaba where Prophet Abraham stood while erecting the Holy house and where he offered his prayers to God saying: "Thou Great God do accept this very trivial service of ours. Thou art the knower and the Hearer. Thus, with this divine aid place us among your faithful followers and make a superior generation from our family. Thou the most Magnificent; teach us the pilgrimage rituals and accept our repentance for thou art the only Merciful God who accepts repentance."

The process of reconstructing of Kaaba the house of God was going on, Ishmael, the young man was gathering big pieces of stone and rocks from the desert and Abraham, the old man was busy putting them one upon the other until the walls were set up.



After they completed the house Gabriel, God's favorite angel, who was

all the time guiding Abraham brought the black stone (Hijr-ul-Aswad), from the heavenly garden and inserted it in its proper place. Then Abraham started praying to God: "My God make this land a safe peaceful place and feed its residents with different fruit and edible things."

Prophet Abraham further prayed: Our Lord! And make us both submissive to Thee and (raise) from our offspring a nation submitting to Thee, and show us our ways of devotion and turn to us (mercifully), surely Thou art the Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful... (2:127-129)

The above mentioned verse throws light on the fact that there had always been some men and women in the Progeny of Prophet Abraham, who were "true



Muslims." He further prayed: Our Lord! And raise up in them a Messenger from among them who shall recite to them Thy communications and teach them the Book and the wisdom, and purify them; surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise. (2:129) Almighty God granted Prophet Abraham's prayer and raised Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) from amongst them, Peace be on Prophet Abraham.

Therefore, the foundation of theism and unity was set in Makkah by the endeavor of Abraham, the forerunner of monotheism, and his noble son, Ishmael. Following this, Abraham was appointed to invite people to perform the ritual of encompassing the house of Kaaba. He was obeying God's orders which said: "And thou Abraham! Invite people to perform pilgrimage rituals so that all types of people from every place, for and close, come to you and be the witness of the benefits granted to them. Tell them to say God's name on special days and We will grant them sustenance from Our earthly animals. Thou tell them to eat from these edibles and feed the poor too. Tell them to abandon the prohibited deeds keep their promises and vows and perform the ritual of encompassing the house of Kaaba." Abraham announced what God had commanded him to all the people and after that pilgrimage became one of the obligatory rituals for all Muslims.

Thus, the Kaaba was the first house to be built for people according to God's order a place for worshipping (3:96-97). In it there are clear signs such as the standing place of Abraham. Whoever enters it is safe. The Kaaba had two doors one facing the east, the other facing the west. Prophet Abraham gathered plants with good smell and hanged them on the doors of the Kaaba. Hagar, Ishmael's mother, came and gave cloth as a gift to cover the Kaaba.



In that year no one performed the Hajj pilgrimage except Prophet Abraham, Ishmael, and Hagar. The angel Gabriel come down to Prophet Abraham and taught him how to perform the Hajj. They took water from the Zamzam Well and washed their bodies. They wore white clothes and went around the Kaaba seven times. They performed their prayers and asked God to accept their deeds.

Then they went to cross the valley of al-Safa and al-Marwa Mountain. There Hagar remembered her terrible state on that day twelve years ago. That was when Ishmael was a baby.

She remembered the time when Ishmael was crying and she was looking for water. She also remembered when she crossed the valley seven (7) times looking for water, and when she supplicated to God. Moreover, she remembered the time when God, the Glorified, made water gush out at Ishmael's feet.

God, our Lord, wanted these events to stay alive in the memory of people. He wanted them to remember that God, the Glorified, had power over all things.

Prophet Abraham and his son Ishmael went up on al-Safa Mountain. They humbly looked at the House of God and said: "There is no God but God. He is One and only. There is no partner with Him. Kingdom and praise belong to Him. He gives life (to creatures) and makes (them) die. He has power over all things."



### **Sacrificing Ishmael (Zabiullah)**

Abraham's love for Himself and so ordered Abraham to give Ishmael back to Him as an offering. The angel Gabriel came down to Prophet Abraham and ordered him to take water and go to the Arafat and Mina Mountains. Prophet Abraham spent the night there looking at the sky full of stars. He looked at the stars which looked like lamps. He knew that God created them, so he prostrated to God, the Creator. All good attributes belong to God. God gives life to (creatures) and makes (them) die.

Prophet Abraham closed his eyes and slept. He dreamt that he is slaughtering his thirteen (13) years old son Ishmael by his own hands. When he woke up, he saw that his son was sleeping. So he slept again. Since then the eighth (8) day of Dhul Hijjah has been called the Day of Quenching (Yawm-e-Tarwiyah / The Day of the First Dream). Prophet Abraham often received God's commands in his dreams, but because he was being asked to actually kill his son, he wondered whether it was real.

On the next day he saw the same shocking dream and was now quite sure that his dream was a divine inspiration from God and was far from the devilish temptations of Satan. Knowing this truth, and with a heart full of faith, he tried to prepare himself to obey God's command accordingly. Prophet Abraham loved his son Ishmael very much. However, he loved God even more. Thus, the ninth (9) day of Dhul Hijjah is known as The Day of Sure Knowledge (Yawm-e-Arafa).



However, was Ishmael ready to sacrifice himself for God? This made Prophet Abraham sad. When Ishmael saw his father sad, he asked him: "Father, why are you sad?"

Abraham turned to his obedient, pious, and good son, and said: "I'm sad because I saw a dream, in which I had sacrificed you. Do you know the meaning of it?"

Ishmael understood that God, the Glorified, ordered his Apostle Abraham to sacrifice his son. Ishmael loved his father very much. He knew that his father behaved according to God's orders. So he asked "Do you want to slay me father?"

Abraham had no time to think, for God had ordered him to sacrifice his son Ishmael. So, he said "yes."

Ishmael who was the son of a faithful and honorable man and himself a pious subject of God said: "Father! Carry out your mission just as you were commanded and in God's will you shall find me to be among the most patient subjects." Prophet Abraham rejoiced at Ishmael's words. Ishmael was loyal and obedient to his father, He believed in God and His Apostle.

Prophet Abraham asked his wife Hagar to prepare her son for a journey. Before departing, Abraham asked Hagar to let him have a knife and a rope, which might be of use in case had to offer some sacrifice. Hagar thought that Abraham and Ishmael are going to collect wood.

When Prophet Abraham took his son outside to carry out the sacrifice, Satan the 'cursed one' met him in the form of wise man and said to him, "Oh, good Abraham, you are so old and this boy can help you in your old age. How can you lose him so easily?" Abraham took seven (7) small stones and threw it at Satan. After going further again, Satan came again in a different form and talked to Ishmael. He said, "O' young boy, why do you obey this old man and allow him slay you? Run away and go back to your sad mother!"

Ishmael and Abraham again threw stones at him and he ran away. He came back again and tried for a third time but failed to make them change their minds and disobey God, the Almighty.

And thereafter Ramy Jamrah became a religious tradition and each year pilgrims throw seven (7) pebbles at each Jamrah in memory of father and son.

In the desert of Mina Abraham laid his son's head down on the ground and prepared to perform his heavenly mission. Ishmael looked at his father. He saw that his eyes were full of tears. He also wept for his father, who was an old man. He wanted to end the matter quickly. So he said to his father: "Dear father now that I am destined to die tie the rope so tight that while my soul is parting from my body. I won't struggle much lest I would enjoy less reward for obeying this divine command. I shall also ask you not to stand too close to me for my blood may splash up on you and your clothes and mother noticing the blood stains won't be able to keep her patience. Also blind fold your eyes to avoid seeing me dying. Meanwhile, sharpen your knife as much as possible so that I have the least pain

while my head is being cut off because death is far too hard to stand."

Prophet Abraham wept and said: "My little son, you're the best helper against God's order." He tied Ishmael's hands & legs strongly. Ishmael completely submitted to God's order and closed his eyes.

Prophet Abraham then took out the knife put it on the neck of Ishmael and passed it several times with his great heartily sorrow. Thus Prophet Abraham acted on the Command of His Lord. When

Prophet Abraham removed the fold from his eye, he noticed his son standing safe and a ram lay slain.

Prophet Abraham was rather disappointed thinking that his Lord did not accept his sacrifice. At that juncture God sent him the divine revelation which said: "We called out to him O Abraham! Thou hast already fulfilled the vision! thus indeed do We reward those who do right. For this was obviously a trial. And We ransomed him with a momentous sacrifice: And We left (this blessing) for him among generations (to come) in later times." (37: 104-108) The Almighty God having examined Abraham's devotion sent a ram to be sacrificed instead of Ishmael. The great sacrifice is actually Imam Hussain's (who belonged to the pedigree of Prophet Abraham through Prophet Mohammad) martyrdom in the battle of Karbala and for the sake of Islam's survival. After his son had been saved, Prophet Abraham left for Palestine to return to Sarah.

And thereafter sacrificing an animal became a religious tradition in Mina and each year pilgrims sacrifice an animal in that desert in memory of Ishmael's sacrificing day. Muslims go to Makkah every year to perform the Hajj pilgrimage (Eid-ul-Adha). They remember the story of Abraham, Ishmael and Hagar, who were loyal and obedient to God. They do it according to Abraham's religion. Abraham's religion is the religion of Islam.







The Holy Quran says: Abraham was not a Jew nor yet a Christian; but he was true in Faith, and bowed his will to God's (Which is Islam), and he joined not God's with God. Without doubt, among men, the nearest of kin to Abraham, are those who follow him, as are also this Prophet and those who believe: And God is the Protector of those who have faith. (3:67-68)

Jews, Christians and Muslims believe in God. This is one of the favors of our Prophet Abraham. Prophet Abraham is called the father of the Prophets because; Prophet Moses (Moosa) is from the progeny of Prophet Isaac, son of Abraham. Prophet Jesus (Issa), son of Virgin Mary is also from the progeny of Prophet Isaac. Our Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) is from the progeny of Prophet Ishmael, son of Abraham. The Imams, from the members of the House (Ahlul Bayt), also belonged to the progeny of Ishmael (pbut).

For this reason we say: "O God, bless Mohammed and the family of Mohammed as YOU blessed Abraham and the family of Abraham. YOU are the Most-Praised, The Most-Glorious. O God, bestow YOUR grace on Mohammed and the family of Mohammed as YOU bestowed it on Abraham and the family of Abraham. YOU are the Most-Praised, The Most-Glorious."



"I am the Son of the two Slaughtered Ones." Do you know who said this phrase?

It was Prophet Mohammed (pbuh). Why did he say it? He said it because he belonged to Ishmael's progeny.

bdul Mutalib, the grandfather of Prophet Mohammed (pbuh), belonged to Ishmael's children. Abdul Mutalib asked God, the Glorified, to give him ten sons. He vowed that if God gave him ten (10) sons he would sacrifice one of them for Him. God, the Glorified, gave Abdul Mutalib ten sons, so Abdul Mutallb said: "God has given me ten sons, so I must fulfill my vow."

He drew lots between sons, and the lot fell upon Abdullah, the father of Prophet Mohammed (pbuh). He wanted to sacrifice him. The people of Makkah loved Abdullah very much, thus they said to Abdul Mutalib: "Don't slay your son. Draw lots between him and camels. Give your Lord till He is satisfied."

Abdul Mutalib drew lots between his son Abdullah and ten (10) camels. However, the lot came to Abdullah. When Abdul Mutalib increased the number of the camels to one hundred (100), then the lot fell upon them. God was satisfied with this number.

Abdul Mutalib ordered his people to slaughter the camels and divide their meat among the poor and the hungry. Abdullah was about to be sacrificed, but Almighty God was satisfied with the camels. So Abdullah was like Ishmael in this situation.

For this reason Prophet Mohammed said: "I am the son of the two slaughtered ones." That is because he

was the son of Abdullah son of Abdul Mutalib who was among the children of the Slaughtered One, namely Ishmael. "I testify that there is no god but Almighty God, Almighty God is One (and eternal) and has no partner, I also testify that Muhammad (pbuh) is a slave and the messenger of Almighty God."

#### Prophet Abraham made an Imam for Mankind

nd when his Lord tried Abraham with certain words, he fulfilled them. He said: Surely I will make you an Imam of men. Abraham said: And of my offspring? My covenant does not include the unjust, said He. (2:124)

The above mentioned verse plays an important role in the doctrine of Islam. Prophet Abraham was a great Prophet of God and had stood many tests. But before he could be offered Imamate, he had to undergo some more tests. This verse throws light on the fact that every Prophet can not be an Imam. Even great prophet like Abraham coveted for it. It is also crystal clear from the above mentioned verse that an 'IMAM' can be appointed by Almighty only; and he must also be infallible. The prayer of Prophet Abraham was granted and there were twelve (12) Imams, from his pedigree.

**Note:** Prophet Abraham is one of the greatest Prophets of Almighty God. God, the Glorified, had known that Abraham was loyal, obedient, and submissive to His orders. He had also known that Abraham was not afraid of anybody except Him. So he chose him as a friend. The title of Prophet Abraham is **"Khalilullah"**, which means "Friend of Merciful God."

It was said that Abraham lived for two hundred (200) years. Then he became a very old man. So he was unable to go to Makkah again to visit God's House and to meet his son Ishmael. For this reason Ishmael went to Palestine to visit his father Abraham, the Friend of the Merciful (God).

When the time came for his death, he told the angel who had come to take his soul, "Ask God, Does a friend take the life of his friend?" He meant that God should not order Prophet Abraham's death because he was His friend. The angel of death (Ezraeel), could not answer this question, so he returned to God, Who commanded him to go back to Prophet Abraham and say, "O Abraham, does a friend refuse an invitation to meet his friend?" Abraham closed his eyes and to took a rest. He passed away. He departed to God, his Friend and Creator.

Prophet Abraham ordered his two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, to summon people to believe in God, the One and only, just before joining the Most High.

We ask Almighty God, the Glorified, to help Muslims free the land of Palestine, and the Mosque of Jerusalem. Then we will be able to visit the Holy Shrine of our father Abraham in the city of al-Khalil.

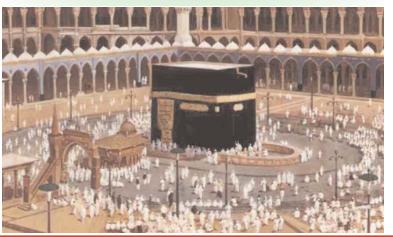






Almighty God says in the Quran: "Salam (peace) be upon Abraham!" (37:109) And further says at one more place: Who can be better in religion than one who submits his whole self to Almighty God, does good, and follows the way of Abraham the true in Faith? For Almighty God did take Abraham for a friend. (4:125) **TOP** al-Masjid al-Ibrahimi (al-Khalil): A beautiful Roman style Mosque built on the holy site of the 'Cave of the Patriarchs'. This is the Cave in which Prophet Abraham, his wife Sarah, son Prophet Isaac, Prophet Jacob, Prophet Joseph and their wives were buried.

**LEFT** Hateem beside the Holy Kaaba: Where the Prophet Ishmael and his mother Hagar were buried.



# LUT (LOT) THE PROPHET

The Holy Quran says: And We sent Lut who said to his people: Why do you commit such indecent acts that have never been committed by anyone before? In preference to women you satisfy your lust with men. Indeed you are a people who are guilty of excess. His people had no answer to his remarks but they told one another, "Expel him from our town, he and his people profess to be pure" We saved Lut and his family except his wife who was one of those who stayed behind. (7:80-83)

**P**rophet Lut was the nephew of Prophet Abraham. He embraced the faith of Prophet Abraham and migrated from Babylon with him to Egypt. Again Prophet Abraham migrated towards Palestine from Egypt after growing rich and possessing enough livestock and wealth. When he arrived at the coast of the Dead Sea, he left Prophet Lut at the land of Sodom in borders of Jordan to summon its people to believe in God and to do good, as per the command of the Almighty God. Thus Prophet Lut settles down in Sodom after getting married and God gave him believing daughters.

The people of this place were wicked, bad-tempered, indecent and lustful as they indulged in abominable and immoral things. Social and moral corruption was quite prevalent among them. For instance, if any traveler passed by the town, these people used to come one by one and robbed him of his properties, goods or whatever he had and leave him alone in that miserable situation. People of Sodom, using vulgar language, gambling, playing dirty music, and throwing stones at the passers by, and indifference to filth and dirt were among their common habits. Their custom was to throw stones at guests. Whoever was the first to hit a guest, the guest would be his share.

Once Prophet Abraham's wife, Sarah sent her slave to the district of Sodom to report about the welfare of Prophet Lut. When this slave reached there a man struck him in his head with a stone and it started bleeding. That man then grabbed his collar and said, If this blood had remained inside your body it would have been harmful to you and, therefore, you should pay me for doing you this favor. The slave refused to pay anything to the man. The matter was referred to the court of law. The Judge decreed against the slave and asked him to pay the man for the trouble he took for him. When the slave saw this high-handedness and the gross injustice, he hit the Judge with a stone and his head also started bleeding. At this he said to the Judge, "You should pay this man whatever is due to me for the trouble I took for your sake."

Thus the people of Prophet Lut were guilty of such abominable sins the example of which was never heard before. One of such despicable acts was that they openly indulged in sodomy (homosexuality). Besides, they committed all sorts of wanton and lewd acts including merry-making, singing, gambling and throwing of filth on passers by.

Prophet Lut was a very noble person. He started to preach to them about the Unique God, informing them of the punishment awaiting evil people, and advising them and guiding them to the way of eternal bliss and happiness. He did his utmost to guide his people to give up their abominable habits and perform noble deeds. But they had gone to the extreme of moral degradation so much so that Prophet Lut's preaching's had no effect on them. Prophet Lut lived in that corrupt society, thus, he led a life full of sufferings.

About thirty (30) years of Prophet Lut's teachings and guidance yielded no tangible result. Only a handful of people who could be counted on finger tips received the guidance while the rest of them remained disgustingly mean with lewd deeds. When they saw that Prophet Lut was frequently inter-

fering with their affairs they decided to expel him and his handful of followers from the town. But Prophet Lut increased his efforts to bring them to the right path and warned them that the Wrath of God would some day overtake them without prior notice.

The condemned people as they were, they unabashedly taunted Prophet Lut to let the Divine curse befall them as they did not care at all about it. Corruption increased day by day. Lut's sufferings also increased day by day. The people of Sodom hurt the feelings of Lut.

Prophet Lut became extremely disappointed with the insolent behavior of the people and he realized that they were the group of misguided fools and it was not appropriate to pursue with them anymore. They had become like malignant tumor in the society and just as an organ suffering from malignancy needed amputation from the body they deserved extermination from the society. Prophet Lut then raised his arms high in the air in invoking God to send down upon them His torment.

The Almighty God granted Prophet Lut's prayers and He deputed His angels to chastise the stubborn people. First of all these three (3) angels in the guise of human beings called on Prophet Abraham in his house. He thought they were travelers who were passing by his house and who had come for an overnight stay and rest. Thus Prophet Abraham welcomed them with an open arm and served them with nicely cooked dishes but they did not even touch the meals. At this Prophet Abraham got fright-ened and worried. Because there were some customs at that time, among them was that the guest should eat the food offered to him. If he refused the food, he refused entertainment and bore malice against the entertainer.

Then the angels in the human form introduced themselves to the exalted Prophet and said, "We pass on to you glad news. By the Grace of God, you will be blessed with a son whose name will be Isaac."

They also told Prophet Abraham that they were on an important Divine Mission of destroying the people of Prophet Lut and were heading towards Jordan.



When Prophet Abraham identified his guests his fear vanished and he interceded with them so that God's Wrath on Prophet Lut's people might be condoned. But the angels in reply said, "You should better keep off as God's command has already been final now and the destruction of Prophet Lut's people is a foregone conclusion. Only Prophet Lut family people will remain safe except his wife who is from amongst the transgressors and who will be perished along with the rest."

After coming out of Prophet Abraham's house, the angels assumed the shape of extremely handsome and youthful male persons and reached Sodom and knocked the door of Prophet Lut's house. Prophet Lut became much perplexed by seeing such beautiful persons. On the one hand he desired to welcome them wholeheartedly and be hospitable with them and on the other he feared a great risk as he knew of his people's debased mentality. There was no alternative left for Prophet Lut but to welcome them in his house and treat them nicely.

No sooner had the guests arrived at the house than the wife of Prophet Lut (Wahela) signaled to the people the arrival of beautiful young men in the house of her husband. All of them then swarmed round Prophet Lut's house and started demanding him to hand over his guests to them for their

night's great pleasure of enjoying the company of handsome young men.

Prophet Lut pleaded with the people not to disgrace him before his noble guests and advised them to take women folk as their wives and put an end to the indecent practice of homosexuality. But the people paid no heed to his imploration and broke into his house like beasts. Prophet Lut could not help it and instead he said, "If I had any power I would have given you a good lesson by bringing you to your senses?"

When the angels who had come to him realized the gravity of the situation, they revealed to Prophet Lut and said, "O Lut! We are sent by God to protect you and to punish these people." Not a moment had passed that these people ran amok out of sheer fright and from there ran up to take shelter in their abodes. Prophet Lut then returned to his original condition as his fear was allayed by the angels. The angels counseled Prophet Lut to leave the town by midnight and go to a safe place with his family people except his wife so that the Divine Wrath and God's terrible torment might befall his rebellious people soon. Angel Gabriel waved his arm and the people who were surrounding the house of the Prophet Lut became blindfold. In the mean time, Prophet Lut and his followers left the city of Sodom.

When Prophet Lut along with his daughters and followers had gone away to a safe place out of the town, a terrible earthquake overtook the town and rocked the earth in a terrific upside down motion and thereafter the people were hit down by pebble-stones. By this Divine Power they met with a dis-

graceful end. The ruins of Sodom are still standing. They are salt and burnt stones. One should learn lesson, from such eventful episodes and try to reform himself.

The punishment of sodomy in Islam is either to cause both the individuals crushed by bringing them under a wall and affecting it to fall upon them or stone them to death or to slay them.

nce a slave was brought to Imam Ali (pbuh) with the

Charge of murdering his master. Imam Ali asked the slave as to what he had to say about the charge against him. The slave confessed and said that he could not help doing what he had done for his master wanted to commit sodomy with him and when he did not agree with his master, he committed the loathsome act by force. Imam Ali asked if he had any witness in support of his state-

ment. The slave replied that where could there be a witness when he and his master were in a house and the act was committed in the midnight at which he decided to murder him and he did murder him. Imam Ali asked if the master at receiving the wound repented and sought the pardon of Almighty God. The slave replied, 'No'.

Imam Ali hearing this exclaimed. 'Allah-o-Akbar' and said that the slave was uttering the truth but ordered the people to go and open the grave of the slain master of the slave and if the body was there in the grave, the slave shall be punished and if not the slave should be acquitted. People went and found the grave empty; the body of the man, just then buried had disappeared and the

people returned and reported the matter to Imam Ali. Who decreed that the slave be let off. People wondered and said that unto then Imam Ali ruled over the alive and now his rule had extended also over the dead and asked Imam Ali from where did he know about the secret of the grave, Imam Ali replied 'from the Holy Prophet Mohammad (pbuh)' for he had said that the body of the sodomist who had not repented before his death be that buried any where is removed to the graves of the sodomists





in Sodom to remain there to be resurrected along with the sodomists on the Day of Judgment. This instance can be as a heavenly sign given to the world through Imam Ali, so reassure them of the gravity of unnatural filthy crime compared to the other sins.

The Holy Quran says: The people of Lut rejected (his) warning. We sent against them a violent Tornado with showers of stones, (which destroyed them), except Lut's household: them We delivered by early Dawn - As a Grace from Us: thus do We reward those who give thanks. And (Lut) did warn them of Our Punishment, but they disputed about the Warning. (54:33-36)

rchaeological studies reveal that the city Sodom is located in the area of the Dead Sea which stretches along the Israel-Jordan border. The lava and basalt layers constitute the greatest evidence that a volcanic explosion and earthquake had once taken place here. The catastrophe depicted in the following expression as "we rained down on them brimstones hard as baked clay, spread, layer on layer" in the Quran most probably points to this volcanic explosion, and God knows

best. The expression "When Our Decree issued, We turned (the cities) upside down" which occurs in the same verse, must be referring to the earthquake which caused volcanoes to erupt over the surface of the earth with devastating impact, and to the fissures and debris brought by it, and only God knows the truth of it.

The Lake of Lut, as well as the incidents that have taken place around it, deserves attention geologically. The Lake is approximately 400 meters below the surface of the Mediterranean. Since the deepest place in the Lake is 400 meters, the bottom of the Lake is 800 meters below the surface of the Mediterranean. This is the lowest point on the earth. In other areas which are lower than sea level, the depth is at

most 100 meters. Another property of the Lake of Lut is that the salt content of its water is very high, 5 times as salty as a typical ocean, the density being nearly 30%. Because of this, no living organism, such as fish or moss, can survive in this lake. This is why the Lake of Lut is called the "Dead Sea" in Western literature.

# Pompeii Had a Similar End

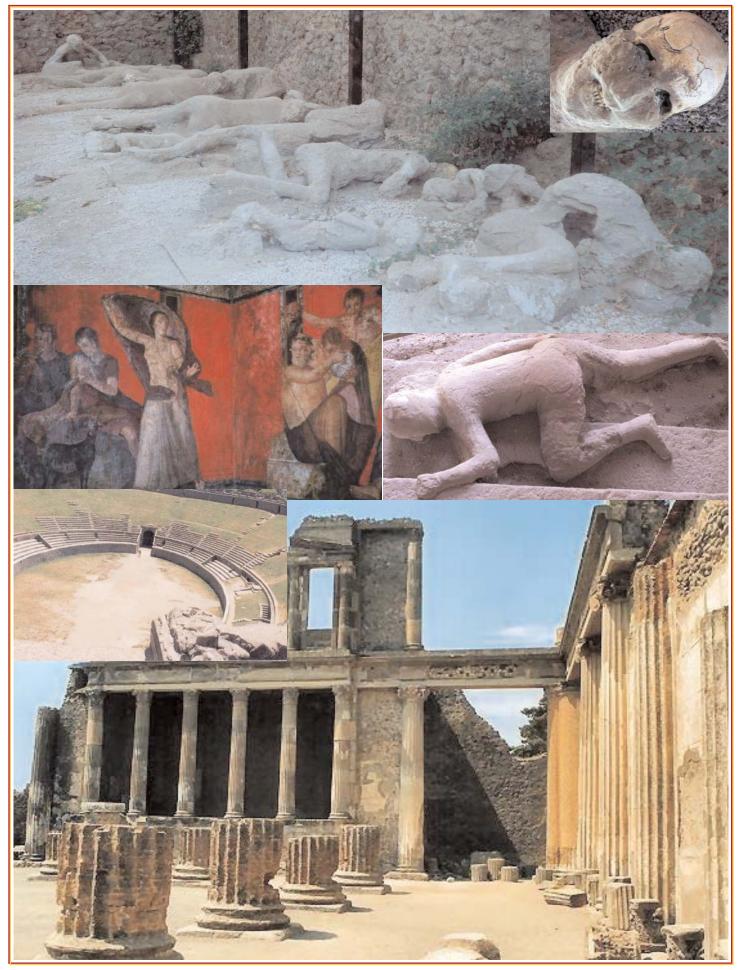
The Quran tells us in the following verses that there is no change in God's laws;

They swore their strongest oaths by God that if a Warner came to them, they would follow his guidance better than any (other) of the Peoples: But when a Warner came to them, it has only increased their flight (from righteousness) - On account of their arrogance in the land and their plotting of Evil, but the plotting of Evil will hem in only the authors thereof. Now are they but looking for the way the ancients were dealt with? But no change wilt thou find in God's way (of dealing): no turning off wilt thou find in God's way (of dealing). (35:42-43)

The destruction of Pompeii came by means of the eruption of the volcano Vesuvius. The volcano Vesuvius is the symbol of Italy, primarily the city of Naples. Remaining silent for the last two millennia, Vesuvius is named the "Mountain of Warning." It is not without cause that Vesuvius is known as such. The disaster that befell Sodom and Gomorrah is very similar to the disaster that destroyed Pompeii.







# JACOB (YAQUB) THE PROPHET

The Holy Quran says: And We bestowed on him Isaac and, as an additional gift, (a grandson), Jacob, and We made righteous men of every one (of them). And We made them leaders, guiding (men) by Our Command, and We sent them inspiration to do good deeds, to establish regular prayers, and to practice regular charity; and they constantly served Us (and Us only). (21:72-73)

Prophet Isaac was the younger son of Prophet Abraham, by his first wife Sarah. Prophet Isaac married his uncle's daughter Rebecca (Rafqa), and they were blessed with twin sons, Esau (Al Eis) and Prophet Jacob / Isreal (Yaqub). Prophet Jacob, like his father Isaac and his grandfather the Friend of the Merciful (Almighty God), was generous. He helped the poor. He entertained guests and strangers.

Prophet Jacob was much loved by his parents and this made his twin brother jealous. To prevent trouble between the brothers, Prophet Isaac advised Prophet Jacob to migrate from their home in Palestine to Haran (Fidaan Aram), where his maternal uncle Laban (Layyan) son of Shorael lived. In Haran he went into the service of his uncle. His uncle Laban had two daughters. The elder one was called Leah (Lia) and the younger one was Rachel (Rahil). Leah was weak-sighted, while Rachel was lovelier. His uncle Laban agreed to marry his daughter to him on the condition that Jacob pasture his sheep for seven years. After a period of time, his uncle prepared a feast and gathered people for the wedding. He married Leah, his elder daughter, to him at night. Jacob worked for another seven years and then married Rachel, the younger daughter. Laban gave a female slave to each daughter. Leah's slave was called Zilpah (Zulfa) and Rachel's slave was called Bilha.

Almighty God compensated Leah's weakness by giving her sons, the first one was named Rueben (Robel), after whom there were Simon (Shamun), Levi (Lawi), and Judah (Yahuda). Rachel felt jealous of Leah's having sons, as she was barren. She gave her slave Bilha to her husband and Bilha give birth to two sons Don and Naphtali (Toftali). Leah in turn gave her slave Zilpah to Jacob and Zilpah gave birth to two sons, Gad (Had) and Asher. Then Leah gave birth to her fifth and sixth sons, Issaacher (Yashjar) and Zebulun (Zialoon). Thus, first wife Leah had total six (6) sons from Jacob. Then Rachel prayed Almighty God to give her a son from Jacob. God heard her call and responded to her prayer. She gave birth to two sons, Joseph (Yusuf) and Benjamin (Binyamin) and a daughter named Diana (Dinah). Thus, second wife Rachel had three (3) issues from Jacob. Thus, Prophet Jacob was blessed with twelve (12) sons and one daughter. His twelve sons became famously known as the "grandchildren of Isaac".

All of this happened when they were in the land of Haran and Jacob was pasturing his uncle's sheep, which he did for a period of twenty (20) years.

After the period of service was over, Prophet Jacob left with his family and property to return to Palestine. In Palestine, Prophet Jacob sent presents to his brother to indicate good-will, and his brother accepted them and welcomed him warmly. In time, the grudge between the brothers was forgotten. Prophet Jacob decided to make his home in the land of Kanaan.

Prophet Jacob second wife, Rachel died early and therefore Prophet Jacob always regarded her sons Benjamin and especially Prophet Joseph with particular affection. His love for Prophet Joseph was later to become a source of jealousy for his older sons who determined to do away with their younger brother. But Almighty God chose Prophet Joseph to be His Messenger and protected him from the evil intentions of his brothers.

# **JOSEPH (YUSUF) THE PROPHET**

The Holy Quran has mentioned Prophet Joseph story in a beautiful chapter entitled "Surah Yusuf (Chapter 12)." This is the most detailed and fascinating story in the Quran, involving both human weakness such as jealousy, hatred, pride, passion, deception, intrigue, cruelty & terror as well as noble qualities such as patience, loyalty, bravery, nobility and compassion. Prophet Joseph from childhood was very smart, handsome, respectful and obedient. His behavior and personality were much better than all the rest of his eleven (11) brothers.

His father Jacob, one of the great prophets of God, was living in the city of Kanaan. Prophet Jacob loved Prophet Joseph very much and from his smartness and kindness he knew that one-day Prophet Joseph would become a great man. On the other hand, Joseph's brothers were very jealous of him and treated him very badly.



Prophet Jacob had a tree in his house. Whenever a son was born to him, a new branch used to came out of the trunk of the tree and when the child grew, Prophet Jacob used to detach the branch and give it to the son to use it as a staff. But on the birth of Prophet Joseph, no new branch came out. He therefore invoked Almighty God and He sent a heavenly staff through Gabriel especially for Prophet Joseph.

#### The Dream

When Prophet Joseph was nine years old, he dreamt that eleven stars along with the sun and the moon were prostrating before him. The matter was wonderful. Joseph was astonished. He thought that those heavenly bodies smiled at him and glorified him. The dream enlightened his heart. It shook his feelings. He woke. However, the dream was still controlling his feelings. His heart, chest, and entity were full of that dream. The pictures of the stars, the sun, and the moon were still in his mind, as if they were before his eyes. He related the dream to his father. Prophet Jacob realized that the dream outlined his son's destiny and greatness and cautioned him not to tell his brothers about the dream, lest they plot against you. Surely Satan is an open enemy to man.

His ten brothers got envious of Prophet Joseph firstly because of Prophet Joseph's dream about the Sun, Moon and Stars prostrating before him, secondly of the special gift of a heavenly staff to him and thirdly he had another vision in which he saw that his staff was planted in the earth with those of his brother and his staff rise high into the sky and those of his brothers remained where they were.

#### The Plot

Rerhaps, they heard about the dream. Perhaps they knew that their father loved Joseph more than them. Whenever they took their goats out for grazing they would ask their father if Joseph could accompany them. Prophet Jacob always refused, saying that the boy was too young. When Prophet Joseph reached the age of sixteen (16), his brothers insisted that he was now old enough to accompany them.

Jacob did not want Joseph to go with his brothers. He firmly believed that they would envy him, and that Satan would deceive them. For this reason Jacob said to them with sadness: "Surely it grieves me

that you should take him off, and I fear lest the wolf devour him while you are heedless of him."

His ten sons said: "We're ten persons. How will the wolf eat Joseph? We're strong men, so we'll guard him well." The ten brothers swore that they would guard Joseph well till they returned him safely. Jacob kept silent. With reluctance, agreed to let them take him with them.

Joseph was glad to go with them. They smiled at Joseph. Thus Joseph loved them very much. He was like an angel. There was nothing in his heart except love, mercy, and good.

All the brothers took their cattle and went away. They arrived at the pastures. They were unable to see their tents. So that smile disappeared. It melted as salt melts in water. Yahuda came and hit Joseph hard and shouted at him: "Rachel's son, hurry up!"

Joseph was astonished at this act. He looked at his brother with astonishment. He thought that his brother was joking with him. However, his brother was not joking. His eyes were flashing with wickedness. His teeth appeared. They were like those of a wild wolf.

Joseph was afraid of his brothers. He walked quickly. Suddenly another brother hit him. He fell on his face. Then he looked at the brother who hit him. It was Simon who hit him.

Joseph said with pain: "Simon, why've you hit me? I'm your brother. I'm Jacob's son." Rueben shouted at Joseph. "Be silent! Don't say anything! You're Rachel's son!"

Joseph burst into tears and wept. He said to his brother: "I'm your young brother Joseph!" His brothers gathered about him and shouted at him: "You're our enemy! You've controlled Jacob's heart!"

One of them drew his dagger to kill Joseph. Joseph ran, not knowing where to go. They chased and caught him. They began hitting him. Joseph's nose bled. The ten brothers exchanged looks. One of them said: "What're you waiting for? This is a good opportunity to get rid of Joseph."

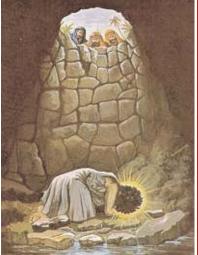
Another brother said: "Let's take him a distant place. There the wolves will eat him." One of them opposed this view, saying: "Perhaps he's able to return. So he'll expose us before our father."

Simon said: "Listen to me. Let's take him to the way of passengers. There's a deep well. We'll throw him into the well. He'll die in the well. If he won't die, passengers will take him out of the well. They'll sell him as a slave." All the brothers listened carefully to Simon's plan and they all agreed on that plot.

### In the Deep Well

Till that moment Joseph did not believe that his brothers would betray him. However, he found himself at the edge of the well. So he knew that Satan had controlled his brothers. His brothers were like wolves. They were merciless. They took his beautiful white shirt, which his father had given him.

Joseph shouted aloud: "I'm your brother! I want to return to my father, mother and my tent! Brothers, I love you! Simon, Rueben, Yahuda, why are going to throw me into this dark well?" Joseph called his brothers by their names. However, no one of them showed mercy towards Joseph.



One of them began hitting Joseph. Joseph was unstable on the edge of the well, so he fell into the deep well. The air in the well was wet. The space in it was dark. Joseph fell wounded and unconscious. Ignoring their young brother's pleas, they heartlessly left him to die of hunger.

Joseph became calm, for he believed in Almighty God. He was confident that Almighty God wanted to test him. For this reason he became patient. He waited for the final result.

Silence covered the place. Joseph was in the well now. He sat on the rock from which water came out. He looked at the sky. It got dark. He thought that his brothers would go home. He wept for his father, and then he slept.

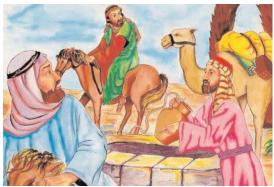
On the way back, they slaughtered a goat and stained Prophet Joseph's shirt with its blood. The dark covered the land. They wanted to go home during the dark so that their father would not see the marks of lying on their faces. They arrived home weeping loudly without tears and told their father that while they were grazing their sheep, a wolf came and ate their brother. Jacob looked at the shirt. The shirt was sound. There was no tear in it. Jacob understood that his sons were liars. He wept and said taunting: "The wolf was kind to my son. It swallowed my dear Joseph as a whole but it did not tear his shirt." Then tears began to flow from his eyes.

The ten brothers looked at each other. They said to themselves: "How stupid we are! Why were we heedless of this matter? If we had torn Joseph's shirt, our father would have believed us."

Prophet Jacob could do nothing but remain patient and wait for Almighty God to reunite him with his beloved son. On that night, Prophet Jacob did not sleep. He asked himself: "Where's Joseph? Where's my obedient son?" Jacob's long sadness began from that night.

### A Pearl in the Well

Almighty God, the Glorified, did not leave Joseph alone. He supports all good people. Three days passed. Joseph had not eaten anything. He drank only water. Joseph was used to fasting. He fasted with his father. So he bore the pain of hunger with patience.



eanwhile a caravan of traders passing by the well stopped to draw some water. The waterdrawer threw his bucket into the well. Joseph was waiting for this moment. When he saw the rope of the bucket, he was full of happiness. He thought that the rope would save him from the well. So he caught it strongly. Almighty God did not forget his servant, so He saved him from that dark well.

They were surprised to see Prophet Joseph come up holding the bucket. They hid him with their merchandise and sold him to some slave traders for a few pieces of silver.

# Prophet Joseph in Egypt

Thus, Prophet Joseph arrived in Egypt, where the Nile River flows. At the slave market the buyers were all attracted by him, because he was a very handsome young man. News of this remarkable youth swept through the city. The al-Aziz (Governor of Egypt and Chief Officer of the King),

whose name was Potiphar (Qatfar), offered a price that none could match. He brought Prophet Joseph home and told his wife beautiful lady Zulaikha that they would adopt him as their son. Thus, Joseph lived in one of the most magnificent palaces in Egypt.

Years passed. Joseph was eighteen (18) years of age. The truth lighted his heart. He felt the truth day by day. The truth became as bright as the Sun and the stars. Joseph believed in Almighty God. He adored him. He was God-fearing.

Zulaikha, however, was so taken by Prophet Joseph's beauty that she sought to have an illegal association with him. A Prophet of Almighty God could never be part of such an evil deed and Prophet Joseph backed away from the advances of Zulaikha. She looked at an idol in the palace. She was ashamed of herself. So she covered the face of the idol with a piece of cloth. When Joseph saw her doing that, he asked her: "What are you doing?"

Zulaikha replied: "I'm shy before my God. I don't want him to see me in this state."

Thus, Joseph scolds Zulaikha, saying: "Are you shy of an idol that doesn't understand anything? If so, then why don't I feel shy in front of my Lord, Who's created and honored me?" Joseph said that and tried to escape towards the door. However, Zulaikha chased him quickly. She seized his shirt from behind and tore it. Joseph was able to open the door. At that moment he saw Zulaikha's husband at the door.

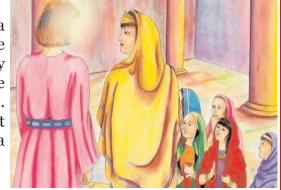
On seeing her husband, Zulaikha tried to blame Joseph by claiming that he had tried to lay a hand on her. Joseph wanted to defend himself, so he said: "She wanted to tempt me!" The al-Aziz was perplexed, not knowing what to do. Then he asked himself: "Which one's truthful Zulaikha or Joseph?"

There was a person with al-Aziz and he was Zulaikha's cousin. He said to al-Aziz: "Look at Joseph's shirt. If the shirt is torn in the chest, then Zulaikha's truthful. If it's torn in the back, then Joseph is truthful."

The shirt was, of course, torn from behind, and the al-Aziz was extremely angry with his wife for attempting such an act of indecency. Every thing was over. Joseph and Zulaikha continued life as usual. However, Zulaikha went on bothering Joseph. She threatened him, saying: "If you don't response to what I want, I'll torture and imprison you!" She always thought of Joseph. (12:23-33)

The women of the city heard about Zulaikha's actions and began to gossip and make fun of her. To explain her attraction she decided to let them see Prophet Joseph themselves.

She called forty of them to the palace for a meal. Then Zulaikha asked them to eat fruit. All the woman took knives to skin the fruit. They were busy talking with Zulaikha. They forgot why they came to her. As soon as they all had a knife to cut some fruit, she called Prophet Joseph into the room on some excuse. So dazzled were they by his beauty and presence, that they cut their fingers in their distraction and exclaimed, "This is not a human being - he must be a noble angel!"



Joseph saw the women looking at him with astonishment. His test doubled when he heard Zulaikha say: "This is he with respect to whom you blame me, and certainly I want him to yield to me, but he

abstained, and if he does not do what I bid him, he shall be certainly imprisoned, and he shall certainly be of those who are in the state of ignominy."

There was nothing before Joseph except two choices - the way of Satan or the way of prison. Joseph looked at the sky and said humbly: "My Lord, the prison is dearer to me than what they invite me to!" Joseph preferred prison and torture to that life of corruption.

Zulaikha was furious with Prophet Joseph because he had caused her to be ridiculed. In her anger and frustration, she caused him to be imprisoned on false charges of assault.

#### **Prophet Joseph in Prison**

Use to continued pressure from his wife Zulaikha, the al-Aziz of Egypt decided to imprison Prophet Joseph, despite his innocence. The reason he gave was that people would forget the actions of his wife while Prophet Joseph lay in prison, and her dignity would be restored.

The jailer saw Joseph's morals and qualities, so he said to him: "I love you, Joseph. You're a good youth. It is an act of oppression that they've imprisoned you." The jailer's words moved Joseph. Thus, Joseph said to the jailer: "Cousin, I don't want anyone to love me except Almighty God, for this love has caused me many troubles: My aunt loved me, and she ascribed theft to me. My father loved me, and my brothers envied me and threw me into the well. The al-Aziz's wife loved me and ordered me to be imprisoned." Joseph was now in prison. Days and months passed. Joseph was still in prison. He bore all that torture to be pure.

Two people were imprisoned; one used to serve the king wine, while the other was the royal cook. Both men had been accused of trying to poison the king. Joseph's morals and qualities affected the two people, and they made friends with him. On the following day, the wine-server said to Prophet Joseph, "I saw in a dream that I was crushing grapes to make wine for the king." The cook said, "I dreamt that I was carrying some bread in a basket on my head and birds were pecking at the bread."



Both men saw that Prophet Joseph was a noble and pious person and asked him if he could interpret their dreams. Prophet Joseph took this opportunity to preach the religion of Almighty God to his prison-mates. He promised to tell them the meaning of their dreams and informed them that this was a special power given to him by Almighty God. Before he did so, however, he explained to them how senseless it was to believe in various Gods and explained to them about the Oneness of Almighty God and the Day of Resurrection. "I've followed the religion of my fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." Finally he said, "O my prison-mates! The man who dreamt that he was crushing grapes will soon be released from here and will go back to his previous post. The second one, who carried the bread on his head in the dream, will be executed and the birds will start to eat his brain."

Prophet Joseph thought of getting himself released from prison through the wine-server, and told him to remind the king of his innocence when he saw him. The dreams of both men came true just as he had foretold. One of the captives was released while the other was hanged. Unfortunately, the wine-server forgot all that Prophet Joseph had told him to convey to the king.

At this Angel Gabriel appeared in the prison and made him look at the floor of the prison. When Prophet Joseph did so he could see the bottoms of the earth and sea. He also saw in the bottom of the earth an Ant with a particle of grain in its mouth. Angel Gabriel said, "Do you think that your Lord who does not forget even this Ant at the bottom of the earth and feeds it, would let you go out of His mind?" "Now for this **impatience** of yours you are ordered to remain in prison for seven more years."

### **Prophet Joseph's Release from Prison**

ne night the King went to his bed to sleep. He had a wonderful dream. He saw seven beautiful fat cows grazing in the green fields on the bank of the river. Suddenly, seven ugly thin cows appeared. They walked toward the seven fat ones and ate them all. The King awoke with fright from the dream. Then he slept and dreamt again.

He saw seven green stalks full of grain. Beside them, he saw seven dry empty stalks. The seven dry empty stalks swallowed up the seven green stalks. Again the king awoke from his dream. The dream made him worried. The king's dream became a means of the liberation of Prophet Joseph from prison. Thus, he sent for his statesmen. Then he held a



meeting with them. The King talked about his wonderful dream. When they saw that the King was grieved, they said to him: "We don't know the interpretation of dreams."

Suddenly, at those moments, while the King was looking for an interpretation to his dream, the wineserver who was filling the cups with wine said: "I'll inform you of its interpretation, so let me go."

The King wondered at the wine-server. However, the wine-server told the King of what had happened to him some years ago. He said to him: "My friend, the cook, and I were in prison. We had wonderful dreams. We related our dreams to Joseph. Joseph interpreted them, and his interpretation was true."

Thus, the King sent the wine-server to Joseph. Prophet Joseph interpreted the dream by the power given to him by Almighty God. He said, "For seven years the crops will yield abundant food-grain for the people of Egypt. After that there will be a famine for seven years during which all the food-grain lying in the storehouses will be finished and people will starve. Therefore, the people should try to grow as much extra grain as possible so that it would stand them in good stead during the time of famine."

On hearing this very reasonable and sensible interpretation of his dream from the wine-server, the king was delighted. He ordered that Prophet Joseph be brought before him so he could make good use of his wisdom in solving his problems.

Although he had been in the dark dungeon for so long, Prophet Joseph refused to leave the prison until he proved his innocence. He said to the courtiers, "I will not come out of the prison until the king makes enquiries about my case. Tell the king to ask the wives of the noble men about the time when they cut their fingers on seeing me."

The courtiers passed on this message to the king who called the concerned women to him for an explanation. They all confessed the truth and Zulaikha, the wife of the al-Aziz, also testified that Prophet Joseph was innocent of any guilt. Thus, Prophet Joseph was released from the prison with his dignity and honor restored.

### **Prophet Joseph in the Royal Court**

The Holy Quran says: The king ordered his men to bring Joseph before him; he wanted to grant him a high office. The king said to him, "From now on you will be an honored and trusted person amongst us." Joseph said, "Put me in charge of the treasuries of the land, I know how to manage them." (12:54-55)

When the king met Prophet Joseph, he found him to be a wise and broad-minded man. In response to the request of Prophet Joseph as related in the verse above, the king made him in charge of finance and food and ordered his ministers and officials to treat Prophet Joseph's commands as his own.

Prophet Joseph thus became the al-Aziz of Egypt and began his new duties without delay. He was determined that when the drought and famine arrived, nobody should starve.

The river Nile flooded its banks regularly to provide fertile soil for the growth of food grain and Prophet Joseph was aware that the famine would be caused by the decrease of the water in this river. He decided to make a brief tour of Egypt to assess the best locations where intensive cultivation could be carried out. He allocated extra money to the farmers in the most fertile areas of the Nile, so that they would be able to grow the maximum amount of grain. He also ordered the construction of huge storehouses (granaries), capable of storing several hundred tons of the surplus grain.

During the first seven years, he supplied grain to the people according to their minimum needs, and stored the rest in the newly-built granaries. By the time the seven years were over, the granaries were full. The water level of the Nile fell tremendously and the country was hit by a severe drought. However, due to his foresight and planning, the country did not face a shortage of food.

When the whole Kanaan was in the grip of famine, people flecked to the king to arrange for the supply of grain. Prophet Joseph arranged the sale of the grain in the following stages:

(1) Firstly the grain was sold far cash. All the cash of the people fell into royal treasury.

- (2) When the people had spent all the cash, grain was sold for jewels.
- (3) When the people had spent all their jewels-grain was supplied for cattle and the animals.

(4) When all the cattle and the animals became the royal property, grain was issued for slaves-males and females.

(5) When all the slaves had been surrendered, grain was supplied in exchange for their houses, their household furniture and all other belonging.

(6) In the sixth stage the lands, rivers, streams and wells were taken to supply food grains.

(7) Lastly, the supply was given with a pledge of peoples' body and souls. Thus the whole land of Kanaan was rendered enslaved to Prophet Joseph (pbuh).

He did this to drive the people as a whole towards the worship of One True God and Godly life.

The famine also extended to the lands of Palestine and Kanaan where Prophet Jacob lived with his sons. One day he called them and said, "My sons! We are in great distress due to the famine. You may go to the al-Aziz of Egypt whose reputation as a kind and just person has spread everywhere in the country. Leave Benjamin with me for company so that I may not be lonely." As commanded by their father, the brothers of Prophet Joseph set off for Egypt to purchase grain and bring it back to Kanaan.

#### **Prophet Joseph's Brothers in Egypt**

hen his ten brothers arrived in Egypt, they bowed to him, and then they stood before him. Joseph rose, looked at them, and greeted them. Prophet Joseph was very pleased to see them. They did not recognize him at all, never expecting that he was alive. Also Joseph had grown up. He was thirty years of age. Joseph was now the powerful man of Egypt. He wore the royal uniform. Guards and soldiers surrounded him. In his band were the keys of stores full of wheat.

Prophet Joseph was disappointed not to see his full brother, Benjamin, and asked his brothers to tell him about themselves. They introduced themselves and told him about their father and mother. Prophet Joseph was relieved to hear that Prophet Jacob was alive, and he welcomed his brothers sincerely. Prophet Joseph asked his brothers about their homeland. They also told him that their father Jacob was sad. They told him that their father wept for Joseph till he lost his sight. They told him that their father's eyes became white because of sadness. They told him that their father loved Joseph whom a wolf had eaten twenty years ago. Prophet Joseph provided them with enough wheat for their needs and had their money put back in their bags secretly. He also asked them to bring their other brother the next time as proof that they were speaking the truth about their family. If you don't bring him, don't come to Egypt.

The Holy Quran narrates this episode in the following words: Joseph's brothers came to him and when they entered his court, he recognized them. They did not know him. And when he gave them the provisions, he said, Next time, bring me your other brother from your father. As you can see, I give each of you a certain amount of grain, I am a polite host. If you do not bring him, do not come to us for we shall not give you any more grain. (12:58-60)

On their return home, the brothers related their experiences to their father, praising the generosity and hospitality of Prophet Joseph. When they opened their bags they were delighted to see that their money had been returned. Soon they were out of grain and were impatient to go back to Egypt to get more. However, they could not go back without Benjamin, so they tried to convince their father to let him come with them. Prophet Jacob refused to let them take Benjamin, saying that they would do the same thing with him as they did with Prophet Joseph. After repeated promises the brothers finally convinced him that they would sincerely look after Benjamin, so he let him accompany them to Egypt.

The ten brothers and Benjamin were prepared to go to Egypt. Jacob came to see them off. Then he advised them: "Sons, do not enter Egypt through one gate. Enter it through different gates. I am afraid that (people) will envy you. However, this will not avail you against the will of Almighty God, the Glorified." The advice of Prophet Jacob to enter by different gates was to avoid an evil eye of others for they were all fair and large in numbers.

When they reached Egypt, the brothers proceeded to the court of Prophet Joseph and presented their brother Benjamin to him. Prophet Joseph was extremely happy to see his younger brother and invited all of them to dine with him. Later he gave them all accommodation at his own house, and asked Benjamin to sleep in his room.

During the night, Prophet Joseph revealed his identity to Benjamin. He explained how he had been raised from a lowly slave to a position of great power by the Grace of Almighty God. However, he asked Benjamin not to tell their brothers anything of their conversation. Also said, I'll do my best to make you stay in Egypt. I'll make a plan, so don't be sad on account of the plan.

### Prophet Joseph's plan to detain Benjamin

fter they had received their requirement of wheat, the brothers of Prophet Joseph began to prepare for their journey home. Meanwhile, according to the command of Almighty God, Prophet Joseph put into action a plan to detain his full brother Benjamin. He ordered his men to put a gold cup belonging to the king in Benjamin's baggage.

The Holy Quran describes the incident in the following words: When he (Joseph) had furnished them with provisions, (someone) placed the (king's) drinking cup in his brother's baggage. Then someone shouted, "People of the caravan, you are most surely thieves." (12:70)

The brothers of Prophet Joseph had not gone very far when they were stopped and accused of stealing. They denied this, and said that if anyone of them was found guilty of theft, he could be held as a slave by Prophet Joseph. The caravan was searched, and the cup was found in the bag of Benjamin.



When the brothers were brought before Prophet Joseph, he said, "According to your own words, we will now detain Benjamin with us." They replied, "O al-Aziz of Egypt! Our father is old and weak. You may detain any of us, but not Benjamin." However, Prophet Joseph said that he could not detain anyone who was not guilty. The brothers had no choice but to leave for Kanaan. The eldest brother, Yahuda, refused to return without Benjamin. He remained behind in Egypt, rather than face his father.

Prophet Joseph plan was to remind his family of their misuse of the law. Once before when Prophet Joseph was a child living with his aunt who did not like to send him to his father Prophet Jacob in spite of his earnest demand. She tied a belt of her round the waist of the child (Prophet Joseph) and sent him to Prophet Jacob and then she claimed that the child had stolen the belt from her and as a penalty she withheld Prophet Joseph. Thus Prophet Joseph wanted just to warn them that twisting a law and the misuse of it always results in unpleasant circumstances for those who commit. The stealing of belt by Prophet Joseph which was not a fact (mentioned above) is given out by their brothers.

They said: If he steals, a brother of his did indeed steal before; but Joseph kept it secret in his heart and did not disclose it to them. He said: You are in an evil condition and Almighty God knows best what you state. (12:77)

#### The Reunion of the family of Prophet Jacob

hen the brothers returned to Kanaan and told Prophet Jacob what had happened, he was heartbroken. He had already lost his eyesight crying for his beloved son Prophet Joseph, and this second loss was almost too much for him to bear. He now recalled the memory of his lost sons and wept.

He asked his sons to immediately return to Egypt to look for both Prophet Joseph and Benjamin. According to their father's instructions, the brothers came to the al-Aziz of Egypt for the third time, and pleaded for the release of Benjamin as well as some grain for food.

A wonderful thing drew the attention of the brothers. They saw Benjamin sitting with the Chief of

Egypt (Joseph). They saw him wearing an excellent linen garment. In those moving moments, Joseph, who was merciful, asked them: "Do you know how you treated Joseph when you were ignorant and caused separation between him and his father?"

Joseph forgot all those pains and sufferings his brothers caused to him and his father. He wanted to say to them: "Your ignorance has driven me to this position. Almighty God has chosen me and made me a favor. He's rewarded me for my patience and faith."

At those moments the nine brothers were amazed to hear their secret from the al-Aziz, who now spoke in the language of the people of Kanaan, understood the truth. They said to each other: "That Chief, whom the guards have surrounded and whose word is the first in Egypt, is Joseph. He's our brother Joseph, whom we had plotted against. He's our good, pure brother Joseph, who rewarded us with kindness for mistreatment. He's our brother, who had filled our bags with wheat and returned the silver dirhams to us."

The brothers said with astonishment: "Surely, you're Joseph!"

Joseph, whose eyes were full of tears because of fear of Almighty God, said: "Yes. I am Joseph and this is my brother. Almighty God has indeed been Gracious to us. Surely he who guards (against evil) and is patient (is rewarded) for surely God does not waste the reward of those who do good."

On hearing this, the brothers hung their heads in shame and asked him for his forgiveness. He said, "You need not be frightened of me. Almighty God may forgive you your sins. Now take my shirt and cover my father's face with it, so that he may regain his lost sight. Then return to me with all your family." They wanted to go back to their father as quick as possible to gladden his sad heart. Thus, the caravan set off and began crossing the desert. This caravan did not carry wheat. Rather, it carried Joseph's shirt and good news.

The Holy Quran says: When the caravan had left the town (from Egypt), their father (in Kanaan) said, "I smell Joseph's fragrance." I hope you will not think that I am weak in judgment (due to my love for him). They said, "By Almighty God! You are still making the same old error." When someone brought him the glad news, Joseph's shirt was placed on his face and his eyesight was restored. He said, "Did I not tell you that I know about Almighty God that which you do not know?" (12:94-96)

One of Jacob's sons went ahead of the caravan to give him good news of Joseph. He said to him: "The wolf did not eat Joseph! Joseph has not been dead for the past twenty years!" And cast Joseph's shirt on Jacob's face. So a wonderful thing occurred. Light returned to Jacob's eyes. Thus, Jacob found the world bright and beautiful after he had found it black and sad. So he wept for joy and said to his sons: "Did I not say to you that I know from Almighty God what you do not know?" He told his wife, about the good news, and she rejoiced.



After getting his eyesight back and hearing the good news of his son, Prophet Jacob decided to proceed to Egypt immediately. Prophet Joseph was delighted to meet them and embraced his father and mother. As a token of their gratitude to Almighty God at this reunion, his parents and brothers prostrated themselves on the ground. Thus Almighty God made true the dream of Prophet Joseph, when he had seen eleven stars along with the sun and the moon in prostration in front of him. After many trials, Almighty God raised him from the position of a slave to the highest rank in the land.

Then Joseph raised his hands towards the sky, He thanked Almighty God for His blessings, saying: "My Lord, You have given me the kingdom and taught me of the interpretation of sayings. Creator of the heavens and the earth, You are my guardian in this world and the hereafter. Make me die a Muslim and join me, with the good."

At the request of his son, Prophet Jacob settled in Egypt with his family, and their clan came to be known as the Bani Israel (Children of Israel).

# Marriage of Prophet Joseph with Zulaikha



s per one of the tradition is that during the years of famine, the ruler of Egypt died. Zulaikha became helpless and miserable. Prophet Joseph had become the king of Egypt. The sympathizers advised, Zulaikha to see Prophet Joseph. She met him on his way to palace one day and said: "Hallowed is Almighty God Who took away from the king his kingdom for his sins and bestowed kingdom to His obedient slave." Prophet Joseph inquired from her whether she was Zulaikha. She replied in affirmative.

He then asked: "Was it not your guile that led me to prison?" She said: "Please forgive and forget." Prophet Joseph then asked his servants to take her to his home. Zulaikha had become quite old at that time. She said to him, "There were three reasons which led me to my mischief."

- 1. There was none so beautiful as you. It was excellence of your beauty that made me mad after you.
- **2.** I amongst women was second to none in beauty and wealth.
- **3.** My husband was impotent.

Prophet Joseph then inquired about her wish. She asked him to invoke Almighty God to make her young again. His invoking Almighty God made her young again then. Prophet Joseph takes Zulaikha in his matrimonial alliance.

Prophet Jacob lived in Egypt for seventeen (17) years and died at the age of one hundred forty seven (147). Prophet Joseph breathed his last some years later at the age of one hundred twenty (120) years, and his kingdom passed into the hands of rulers whose titles were Pharaoh (Firaun).

# **Conclusion of the Story**

ccording to one of the Egyptian writers, if anyone wishes to study and learn higher ethics, the best lessons are in this story of unwavering perseverance and steadfastness and in the explanation of the natural effects: From the point of view of psychology also the story contains valuable arguments and deep conclusions. If a psychology scholar wishes to write a book on psychology, ethics and morality, and bases all his subject matter and discussions on extracts from this story of Prophet Joseph, he will not go wrong.

Lots of lessons can be learnt from the story of Joseph. We mention here but a few concerning these lessons:

1- Man is able to endure the burden of hardships by his strength of faith which makes him accustomed to enduring troubles and hardships. Thus, because of his faith in his principles, Joseph surmounted all the problems and difficulties, and emerged successfully with his head held high.

**2-** One should always take refuge under God in all hardships, and seek help from Him. For example when Joseph was trying to avoid and escape from Zulaikha and found himself in serious difficulty, he turned to God for protection and refuge, and the Almighty God saved him from that dreadful abyss.

**3-** The love of faith and religion: In spite of all his worries and depression in, the prison, Joseph did not fail to call people to believe in God and did not neglect to propagate it. Thus with reference to the interpretation of the dreams of the two prisoners, he first explained his religion then he invited and persuaded them to give up polytheism.

**4-** The importance of honor and reputation. Any oppressed and wronged person who has spent years in a prison would leave the prison with all haste as soon as the orders for his release are issued. But Joseph declined to leave the prison, saying: "Before my release, my innocence must be proved and my purity of character ought to be indisputably established and accepted. Only then shall I accept my freedom, so that my reputation and honor may remain secure in the society."

**5-** Patience and fortitude: Joseph suffered the torments of his brothers with forbearance. He remained patient in the face of the inhuman behavior of the people who brought him out of the well but sold him off. He successfully resisted all sensual desires and inclinations. And he suffered the hardships of the prison with fortitude. God rewarded him by raising him to the highest positions man can attain.

Above all else, the story of Joseph teaches us forgiveness and overlooking of others' mistakes. Joseph's brothers came to his court dishonored and humiliated. He would have been justified in executing the hardest punishment. But with utmost tolerance he overlooked their misdeeds, and granted them his complete pardon.

These useful lessons are but a drop in the limitless ocean and only a very small part of the vast beneficial conclusions that we can learn from the story of Joseph.

# **JOB (AYYUB) THE PROPHET**

Prophet Job's mother is said to be descendant of Prophet Lut (pbuh) and his father is said to be

descendant of Esau (Al Eis) and his wife was Raheema (Rahmat) daughter of Ephraim, son of Prophet Joseph (pbuh). He lived in the land of Hawran. Almighty God gave him many blessings. He was a wealthy man with large flocks of sheep and a lot of land. He had many children and was well respected by his people.

Prophet Job was generous with his wealth and took care of orphans and used to provide food for the poor. He was mindful of the needs of all and especially his relatives, whom he always treated kindly. For all his bounties, Prophet Job remained ever grateful to Almighty God.



Prophet Job (pbuh) is well-known for his patience which has passed into a proverb, **'Sabr-e-Ayyub'** (the Patience of Job). He was tested with the loss of every thing he possessed. He used most of his time in prayers and meditation. In spite of the loss of all his wealth, health and children to a miser-able extent he did not falter in his patience. He became a pattern of humility, patience and reliance on the Will of the Lord. At every kind of loss, he thanked Almighty God. and remained patient. Lastly he was tried with the sickness of his body.

The Holy Quran does not tell us much about Prophet Job except his long illness and his extreme patience in bearing pain. In one of the tradition it is reported that once Abu Baseer asked Imam Jafar Sadiq (pbuh) as to why Prophet Job was gripped in a variety of calamities. Imam replied that Almighty God had bestowed upon him a variety of bounties and he used to thank Almighty God as he should thank in proportion to the bounties Almighty God, because of his thanksgiving has called him 'Excellent Servant'. During his time Satan was allowed to go high up in the heavens. One day he was surprised to see that Prophet Job was vary much respected for his thanks to Almighty God. Satan became very much envious of him. He (Satan) submitting to his Lord said:

"O' my Lord! Job thanks You because You have blessed him with abundance of bounties. Give me authority over the wealth and children, You will then see that he will forget You (by not thanking)." Almighty God was fully aware of the patience and steadfastness of Prophet Job, but as a trial for His Prophet and as a lesson for mankind, he granted Satan's request. The Satan then destroyed all his wealth and his children also died. At every loss, Prophet Job became more and more thankful to Almighty God.

Satan then submitted: O' Lord! give me authority over his agricultural land! Almighty God granted that. Satan and his army destroyed the agricultural land with its products. But Job thanked Almighty God on this loss also. Then Satan said: "O' my Lord! give me authority over his livestock." Almighty God granted that too. Satan getting this authority destroyed the livestock also but Prophet Job thanked Almighty God on befalling this calamity also. So Satan said: "O' my Lord! I am sure that what has been destroyed, will be restored to him again, so give me authority on his body." Almighty God said: I give you authority on his whole body but not on the faculty of reasoning (Aql), eyes, ears and tongue. Satan somehow or other through the heat of his body which is made of fire, caused a variety of diseases on the surface of his body in like boils, abscesses, blisters, ulcers, etc. The whole of the external surface was affected but yet Prophet Job did not falter in his thanks to Almighty God. It is said that there were millions of minute worms in his diseased skin. It is also reported that whenever a worm used to come out of his body, he used to lift it up and put it back to the place from where it came out saying - "O' God's creation! go back to the place which Almighty God has destined for you in my body."

Those who lacked faith in Almighty God suspected Job to have committed some sin and some who were good at heart said that Job as a Messenger of Almighty God was being made to manifest ideal patience. His disease lasted for a long time until his visitors felt disgusted with him. His friends kept away from him, and people abstained from visiting him. No one felt sympathy for him except his wife. She took good care of him, knowing his for-



mer charity and pity for her. At last Satan once more tried to make Job lose his patience and doubt Almighty God being Merciful to Him. Prophet Job prayed to Almighty God against Satan's endeavor to disturb his faith in Him and referred to about people talking about his having committed some sin which had drawn the chastisement to him. While petitioning to Almighty God Job submitted:

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"Lord! Did I ever sleep bellyful without feeding any hungry one? Did I not provide the naked with clothes? Did I not pay the debt of the debtor when he was under the pressure of the demand from the Creditor? And were You not always merciful to me?"

A voice from heaven called him saying, "Who was that Who guided you with the inclination to do all the good which you did?" Prophet Job felt ashamed and immediately shouted, "You O' Lord! it was You who did guide me to do everything good."

Prophet Job's prayer was not due to any lack of patience on his part but against the continued effect and endeavor of Satan to entice him through various methods and means. When Satan failed in every effort of his to make Prophet Job impatient and force him to pray to Almighty God for his recovery and thus to deprive him of being called the patient one in the way of Lord, Satan thought of employing the services of Job's wife in leading Job astray from his purpose.

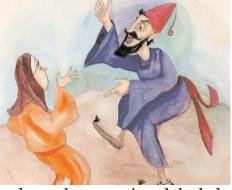
Once Satan appeared to her in the guise of an experienced physician and somehow convinced the lady that if she took the sheep which he had with him and sacrificed it in his name, Job would immediately regain his health. The good hearted lady who was interested in Job's welfare came over to her husband and related the suggestion of the physician. Prophet Job warned his wife not to get beguiled by the man for he was none but Satan. Again the devil appeared as a beautiful young man riding a horse and said: "I am the monarch of the earth and since your husband worshipped not me but Almighty God the king of the Heavens, I caused the loss of your children and wealth. And if you prostrate before me once, I shall grant your husband his lost health and restore all his lost wealth to him." The Godly

lady said that she would consult her husband and act as he would bid her to do. Satan said: "If this be not possible, I would be content if you make your husband avoid mentioning **'BISMILLAH'** (In the name of Almighty God) before he starts taking his food and make him avoid mentioning **'AL-HAMDO LILLAH'** (all praise is to Almighty God) when he finishes his food." When the lady reported the matter to her husband Job, he got angry and said: "You have been listening to

Satan all the day. If Almighty God grants me health, I will strike a hundred (100) sticks on you." The poor lady departed sorrowful and when Job was left alone and could not himself stand up to offer his prayers, it is said that it was then that he submitted to Almighty God saying: 'Indeed affliction has affected me'.

There is another version which in its nature is sure to affect any respectable one, that once when there was no food for him, his wife went to fetch something for him. A man struck with the attractive curling lock of her head agreed to give the provision only in return for it. The poor lady, could not avoid the condition and brought food in exchange for the locks of her head. The custom of the age was that the locks of the women who commits fornication were removed. When Prophet Job saw his wife losing the locks, he fell very much grieved and said: If Almighty God grants me health, I would strike you with hundred sticks.

Job's prayers got incurable patients, the cure they needed. But when people asked him why he did not pray for himself, he said: "I have enjoyed Almighty God's Grace and Bounties for eighty (80) years and it would be unbecoming of me to complain to him when I have been made to taste this distress for a time." He suffered for seven (7) years and only against Satan's continuous efforts to entice him, did he complain to Almighty God and not for the loss of his health or wealth.





Almighty God records his prayer thus:

And (remember) Job, when he cried to his Lord (saying); "Verily distress has touched me and You are the Most Merciful of the merciful ones." (21:83)

And remember Our servant Job, when he cried unto his Lord; "Verily Satan has caused me an affliction and pain." (38:41)

In response to his cry Almighty God said to him: "Stamp with your feet: this (spring) is (for you) to Wash with (it is) cool and a (refreshing) drink." (38:42)

Prophet Job was commanded by Almighty God to strike at the rock and out of at gushed fort two springs, one of hot water far him to wash his body of all his physical ailments, and the other of cold water for him to drink and refresh his soul. He was cured and his health was restored in full.

The water of the fountain flowed and irrigated the burnt fields filled with ashes, so it made them green. The Holy Water flowed into the land. It irrigated the graves of Job's children who died before. Job's children were raised from the dead. Everything returned to how they were seven years ago when Job was sound, rather more.

Almighty God wanted people to know that he had the ability to make them sick and heal them, make them poor and give them wealth. Also, that they had no right to dismiss the poor because of their poverty, the weak owing to their weakness, and the old on account of their old age.

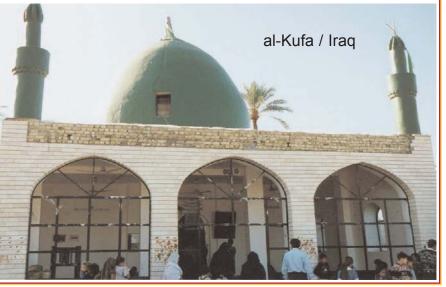
Almighty God says: And We gave him his family and the like of them with them, as a mercy from Us, and as a reminder to those possessed of understanding. (38:43)

Prophet Job had taken an oath that he would punish his wife with a hundred sticks (for listening to) Satan or for removal of her curly locks of hair given in exchange of food). To be true to his solemn commitment in Almighty God's holy name, Job was commanded by Almighty God to strike her with a bundle of hundred sticks just to fulfill the oath.

And take in your hand a green branch and beat her with It and do not break your oath; surely We found him patient; most excellent the servant! Surely he was frequent in returning (to God). (38:44)

Prophet Job died at the age of two hundred and twenty six (226) years.

Prophet Job's story is a sign and lesson for all people. It indicates that Almighty God has power over all things: There is a great lesson for us in the proverbial patience of Prophet Job. He suffered his hardship without bitterness, and submitted himself to the will of Almighty God, Who rewards plentifully those who remain steadfast in seeking His pleasure.



# JETHRO (SHUAIB) THE PROPHET

The Holy Quran says: And to Madyan (We sent) their brother Jethro. He said: O my people! serve God, you have no god other than Him; clear proof indeed has come to you from your Lord, therefore give full measure and weight and do not diminish to men their things, and do not make mischief in the land after its reform; this is better for you if you are believers. (7:85)

Madyan was the name of one of the sons of Prophet Abraham (pbuh). Madyan was married to one of the daughters of Prophet Lut (pbuh) and God blessed this union with abundance of male issues and wealth. The place where the children of 'Madyan' had settled was named after Madyan. Madyan was located in the outskirts of Hijaz but within the border of Syria near Red Sea. The city of Madyan comprised of 40 houses. Prophet Jethro (pbuh) belonged to the family of Madyan and he was the fatherin-law of Prophet Moses. The people of Madyan were passing a peaceful life. Their profession was trade; buying and selling goods. Though they had been blessed with all the bounties of God, yet they altogether ignored the Almighty God and started worshipping things created by God.

The Almighty God appointed Prophet Jethro to his people. He forbade them to commit sins and unlawful things and frightened them of God's torment.

One of the miracles of Prophet Jethro was that whenever he wanted to get upon the peak of any mountain, mountain used to lower its height and Prophet Jethro got upon it. The Miraculous staff which Prophet Moses had, is reported to have been given to him by Prophet Jethro.

Besides the great Prophets like Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbut) who were commissioned with general and more comprehensive reforms of human life, the others seem to have been commissioned to reform a particular aspect of human life more than a general one. For example, Prophet Hud was commissioned to divert the attention and the efforts of his people from the temporal to moral strength by admonishing them to give up polytheism and turn to One God. Prophet Salih was sent to warn his flourishing people against indulging in extravagance, luxury and greed for accumulation of wealth. Prophet Lut was commissioned as a divine Messenger to reform sexual relation and warn them of the misuse and unnatural sex life.

Prophet Jethro was sent to reform economic life through honesty, fair play and justice in their daily transactions. But what is worthy of note is that all the Messengers were unanimous in presenting polytheism as the cause of all the evils, social, economic and others. The sole remedy has been preached as a strong faith in God submitting to His will in obedience and worship.

Prophet Jethro preached his people besides oneness of God, to be honest in their dealings for they were notorious for two main vices:

(1) Use of wrong measures of weight; they used to take more in weight and give less when they measured and weighed for others. (2) Robbery.

The commentators of the Holy Quran have named Prophet Jethro as Kahtibul Anbiya that is, the best deliverer of sermons (excellent orator), as he used to make preaching in a beautifully-worded language which was very appealing to the listeners. He

emphasized that his people should worship God and avoid giving torture to fellow-beings. But the wicked people of Madyan turned a deaf ear to Prophet Jethro's sermons and used to mock him.

Prophet Jethro said to them: And I do not ask you any reward for it, my reward is only with the Lord of the worlds. (26:180)

They used to say: "O Jethro! Do the prayers that you offer tell that we should sever our connections with the gods, whom our forefathers worshipped, and also change our customs regarding money and property to adopt an altogether different mode? Do you want us to abandon under weighing goods in sales transactions and bear the loss? No, most of your things that you talk about are not understood by us. You are a weak and vulnerable person. If you had not your family we would have stoned you to death."

But despite the hostile attitude of his people Prophet Jethro did not change his stand and continued preaching his people in an affectionate manner like an affectionate father who teaches his sons wise things. At the same time the people also did not give up opposing Prophet Jethro's preaching's and interfering in his Divine mission. They sat on the thoroughfares and let loose dogs and boars to chase the followers of Prophet Jethro and threatened to kill them. Ultimately the people's differences with Prophet Jethro turned so grave that they, threatened to expel him and his handful of followers from the town.

At last Prophet Jethro became disappointed with his people and understood that his preaching's were going to have no effect on them. Thus he invoked the Almighty God to curse them by sending His torment on them as a punishment for their infidelity (Reference 7:89). The Almighty God granted his invocation and a severe earthquake overtook the people of Madyan. The earth shook with such great intensity that in a moment their abodes were razed to ground and they met their miserable end. Only Prophet Jethro and his followers were saved from the wrath of God.

After the devastation of the people of Madyan, Prophet Jethro was entrusted the mission of preaching the people of al-Aikah who lived near Madyan. Prophet Jethro performed his Divine duty and called the people to worship God but they said in reply: "You have been charmed. There is something wrong with you. You are a human being like us. We do not give any credence to what you say. If you are truthful let a piece of heaven fall on our heads to destroy us."

Prophet Jethro's efforts were in vain as not a single man amongst those people embraced his religion. But the Almighty God treated them with an unbearable heat. It was so intense that water began boiling down. For seven (7) days they remained in great torment of heat. Then a piece of cloud appeared on the sky and the people rushed under its shadow to take shelter from the scorching heat. Meantime, the cloud rained fire on them and thus those people were destroyed in no time.

Often the caravans of people who passed the place lying between Arabia and Syria saw the punishment the people had met in the total destruction of places lying in ruins. According to some traditions Prophet Jethro lived for eight hundred and eighty two (882) years.



# **MOSES (MOOSA) THE PROPHET**

A lthough God sent to each people their prophet, and Although all peoples have different stories to tell about their conditions and characteristics. The people of Israel - Moses people - have too many diverging stories, since their conditions have constantly been changing as they were constantly subjected to God's trial before the advent of Moses. Then when Moses came with the evidence and ayats that God supported him with, they were very reluctant to accept the truth as they were urged to do by their Prophets and their divinely learnt people. On the contrary they used to be very easily tempted to listen to hypocrites and tyrants.

A researcher would feel even more confused when he notices how much they are referred to as well as their Prophet Moses in the Holy Quran. Moses story with Pharaoh (The title of the ancient Egyptian kings) and with his people is a long one with many different chapters, multiple episodes and sudden turns of events.

Prophet Moses (pbuh) son of Imran (Amram) son of Qamat (Kohath) son of Levi son of Jacob, was born during the reign of Minfatah son of Ramses II (about 1292 BC). Aaron (Haroon) is the elder brother of Prophet Moses.

### Birth of Moses (pbuh)

The Egyptian civilization was based on the fertility of the river Nile. Egyptians had settled in the Nile valley due to the abundant water of this river, and because they could cultivate the land with the water supplied by the river without being dependent on rainy seasons. The Ancient Egyptians were largely influenced by the natural environment in which they lived. The natural geography of Egypt protected the country against external attacks perfectly. Egypt was surrounded by deserts, mountainous lands and seas on all sides.



It is said that Pharaoh was informed and warned by the scholars of the ancient scripture that son born to the Israelites would bring perdition to his kingdom. He appointed informers to find out the children born to the Israelites. The midwives were under orders to kill the male children and spare the female ones.

One of the women the Glorious Quran makes mention of, is Jochebed, mother of Prophet Moses, God' interlocutor (**Kaleemullah**). She was a Unitarian who in the abyss of polytheism, was among those nearest to God.

After the demise of Jacob, the children of Israel were under the leadership of Joseph whom the Egyptians loved very much. The Jews procreated and grew in number and lived in grandeur, but this was short-lived. When Joseph passed away, the Jews were humiliated and oppressed by the Egyptians. The ever-increasing Jewish population had horrified the Egyptian pharaohs who had mounted the throne after Joseph; therefore they oppressed and slew the Jews. The worst of them was the pharaoh in whose reign Moses was born.

When the wife of Imran Jochebed conceived Moses, no midwife could make out the pregnancy. And when Moses was born the midwife was so enchanted by his beauty and Divine Light that radiated from his face that she advised the mother to hide it from the sight of the people and reported to the king that a dead daughter was born and buried.

Mother of Moses Jochebed did not know as to how to save the child - So Almighty God revealed to her: "And We revealed to Moses mothers, saying: Give him suck, then when you fear for him, cast him into the river and do not fear nor grieve; surely We will bring him back to you and make him one of the messengers." (28:7)

Saying: Put him into a chest, then cast it down into the river, then the river shall throw him on the shore; there shall take him up one who is an enemy to Me and enemy to him, and I cast down upon you love from Me, and that you might be brought up before My eyes. (20:39)

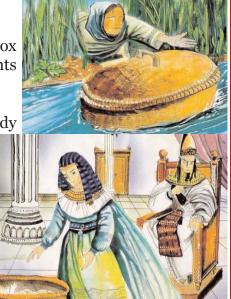
The mother of Prophet Moses approached a carpenter named Hazqeel son of Saboor to make a small box for her. On being asked by Hazqeel, she could not tell lie and disclosed her plan to him. Hazqeel made the box and went to inform the informers what he heard from the mother of Prophet Moses, but he became dumb when he reached the informers who drove him away as a mad man when he began to convey by sings to them what was in his heart. When Hazqeel returned to his ship he found himself to be all right. Again he went to inform but this time he became both dumb and blind and was again driven away. When he returned he found that he was all right. Hazqeel was then convinced that the child must be promised deliverer of the Israelites, went to the mother of Prophet Moses and declared his belief in God and Prophet Moses as His Messenger. Hazqeel is titled as "Momin-e-Aal-e-Firaun" i.e. believer in God among the people of Pharaoh.

After the box was made Prophet Moses mother put him into it as commanded by God and threw the box into river. The river threw the box into the channel leading to the palace garden of Pharaoh. It is said that one of daughters of Pharaoh suffered from leucoderma (Vitiligo). It was predicted that it would be cured by the application of Saliva of a child coming floating in the river Nile. The girl was stationed at the shore waiting for the child's arrival. The box came floating when Pharaoh, his wife Asiya daughter of Muzahim and their daughter were there. The box was picked up by them who found in it a lovely child with extraordinary beauty.

Prophet Moses elder sister Mary (Maryam) who was following the box along the river bank, seeing that the box was caught by Pharaoh's agents and taken to Pharaoh's palace became very sad and disappointed.

Pharaoh's wife Asiya was a very beautiful, gentle and good-hearted lady and Pharaoh used to love her dearly; she was so dear to his heart that he always fulfilled all her wishes.

God had chosen her to provide refuge to Moses. She insisted to Pharaoh that she wanted to adopt that infant as a child: The wife of Pharaoh said: "(Here is) joy of the eye, for me and for thee: slay him not. It may be that he will be use to us, or we may adopt him as a son." And they perceived not (what they were doing)! (28:9)



No sooner had Pharaoh seen the baby than he commanded to kill him. But his wife ran toward him and said: "No, don't kill this beautiful baby. Let us adopt him as our child. He may prove to be quite beneficial for us some day." Hence Pharaoh decided to adopt the baby as his own son. The saliva of the child was tried and the white patches on the body of the daughter of Pharaoh disappeared. Thus Pharaoh was charmed by the appearance of Prophet Moses who was brought up under the Divine Care in the lap of God's enemy.

The baby was hungry and started crying. The courtiers sent for many nannies but the baby accepted none of them and did not stop crying. Mary was asked to quietly watch as to what would happen. She ran and reported the matter to her mother.

Reminding Prophet Moses of his bounty Almighty says to him. "When your sister went and said: Shall I direct you to one who will take charge of him? So We brought you back to your mother, that her eye might be cooled and she should not grieve..." (20:40)

Since Prophet Moses refused to suck any of the nurses, Prophet Moses sister Mary after reporting the matter to her mother returned and went to Pharaoh. There she offered her services to the wife of Pharaoh to get a nurse whose milk the baby would surely take. Thus Prophet Moses real mother became the nurse for him and for years together, he was brought up in the lap of God's enemy.



And how could Prophet Moses suck any milk except that of his mother? God says: And We ordained that he refused to suck any foster mother before...(28:12)

This was a Divine Plan to restore the baby of the restless mother.

## **Childhood of Prophet Moses (pbuh)**

Once during childhood, when Moses was in the tap of Pharaoh playing with him, he caught hold of the beard of Pharaoh and gave him a slap an his face. He became wild and wanted to kill him saying that he smelt something evil for himself.

Once again Asiya, persuaded him not to kill the child and said that he was innocent and there was nothing of the sort he suspected. She said that he could test him. Pharaoh then got two dishes - one full of red burning fire and the other full of red precious stones. He placed these dishes before Prophet Moses who was removed from Pharaoh's lap and put on the floor. Prophet Moses being a Messenger of God approaching the dishes was about to catch one full of red precious stone and discard the other. At this moment Angel Gabriel descended and appearing on the spot made Prophet Moses catch fire and put it in the mouth. This is how he was not able to talk fluently by his tongue and used to stammer.

Prophet Moses was brought up in the Royal Palace and when he was in the prime of his youth, he looked handsome and quite sturdy.

And when he attained his maturity and became full grown, We granted him wisdom and knowledge; and thus do We reward those who do good (to others). (28:14)

Here the words "full grown" is the state of complete balance in viewing both aspects of creation- manifest and hidden. That is, when he reached to the age of maturity and puberty, the Almighty God gave him enough wisdom and knowledge and appointed him to be His prophet.



#### **Moses leaving Egypt**

Moses grew up as a prince in Pharaoh's palace. In return to abundant blessings of God Moses decided to help the oppressed and the poor. He wished to relieve the poor from suffering, and satisfy the needs of the poor people.

ne day it so happened that Prophet Moses went to the city, where Pharaoh's cook was beating an Israel. The latter sought help from Prophet Moses who asked the Egyptian to give up beating the Israel but the Egyptian did not pay any heed hence Prophet Moses gave him a blow by his fist (not with the intention of killing him); and he died. Seeing the man dead Moses was very distressed. So he rose his head and said: "My God! I



shouldn't have rushed to this extent in defending the oppressed." And now there was the possibility that Moses would himself get into trouble.

The following day Prophet Moses went to the city again and noticed the same hot-headed Israel quarrelling with an Egyptian. The Israel again sought the help of Prophet Moses.

Moses went ahead this time and said: "And truly you are one of the misled." Saying this, he advanced to settle the quarrel down. So when he desired to seize him who was an enemy to them both, he (Israelites) said: O Moses! do you intend to kill me as you killed a person yesterday? You desire nothing but that you should be a tyrant in the land, and you do not desire to be of those who act aright. (28:19)

Hearing this, Moses found himself in danger and therefore attempted to hide himself in a safe place. The Pharaoh was informed that Prophet Moses had killed his cook, so he decided to kill him (Moses) Meanwhile Hazqeel (Momin-e-Aal-e-Firaun) came running to Prophet Moses and said: "And a man came running from the remotest part of the city. He said: O Moses! surely the chiefs are consulting together to slay you, therefore escape; surely I am of those who wish well to you..." (28:20-21)

Having no other choice, Moses decided to leave the city, praying to his Lord for deliverance, from the unjust people and reached Madyan quite tired and hungry. For a week or so he had been eating green leaves and the bark of the tree.

And when he came to the water of Madyan, he found on it a group of men watering, and he found besides them two women keeping back (their flocks). He said: What is the matter with you? They said: We cannot water until the shepherds take away (their sheep) from the water, and our father is a very old man... (28:23-24)

Prophet Moses offered to help the girls, drew water from the well and gave it to their flocks.

Moses too, tired of his long trip, took shelter in the shade of a tree in order to rest for a while. He also raised his head toward the sky and said: "You the most High! I need thy blessing and favors in this desert and as long as I'm lonely and defenseless here, I shall seek refuge in You."



After some time one of the girls came and requested Prophet Moses to accompany her to her father who wanted to recompense him for his help in giving water to the flocks. Prophet Moses went to the house of the girls where the table was already spread for dinner and narrated to him (the girls' father) his story.

Then one of the two women came to him walking bashfully. She said: My father invites you that he may give you the reward of your having watered for us. So when he came to him and gave to him the account, he said (the old man): Fear not, you are secure from the unjust people. (28:25)

The old man [Prophet Jethro (Shuaib)] requested the young man to sit down for dinner. Moses replied that he could not partake of the food, so the great Prophet Jethro asked Moses if he was hungry. Moses replied he was hungry, but was afraid that the dinner before him was in recompense for his previous good deed. He said we are of a family who will not even exchange a bit of our good deeds for the Hereafter, even an earth full of pure gold. Jethro said: "O, young man! I swear to God that this was not what I had in mind when inviting you to dinner. I didn't intend to recompense your divine deed with food from my table. It is my father's and my custom to entertain guests and serve them

food." After this discussion, Moses sat down at the table to eat.

**Note:** It is very astonishing that Prophet Moses had left Egypt some time ago and been wandering around in the wilderness, but during that time was not able to find any suitable food. He had eaten the sweet plants of the desert and upon entering Jethro's house he saw a prepared and pleasant table of food. Even though he was terribly hungry, he would not partake of the food because he thought that this deed only for God's sake (watering the sheep) might possibly be lessened in the sight of



God. However, when Jethro insured Moses that he also intended to please God and had sincere intentions in entertaining his guest, then Moses sat down to eat. Jethro's sincerity was the reason why Moses became Jethro's shepherd for the next eight or ten years. And Moses sincerity was the reason why the Prophet Jethro (pbuh) became Moses father-in-law.

Prophet Jethro (pbuh) had two daughters Zipporah (Safura) and Safra. One of them suggested to her father to employ Prophet Moses since he was strong and trustworthy. Prophet Jethro agreed to her suggestion and said to Prophet Moses.

He said: I desire to marry one of these two daughters of mine to you on condition that you should serve me for eight years; but if you complete ten, it will be of your own free will, and I do not wish to be hard to you; if God please, you will find me one of the good. (28:27)

### **The Prophethood of Moses**

rophet Moses married Zipporah, and after serving Jethro for ten (10) years and fulfilling his promise, decided to take away his wife and the sheep which Jethro had given him to Egypt to see his mother and sister after so long a time.

As they were walking in the desert in a cold night, a strong wind started blowing and a lot of dust went up in the air. In the wilderness Zipporah gave birth to a son (Gershom or Eliezer), and there was no protection or sufficient provision against the chill of the night in the open desert. Prophet Moses went in search of fire, chill which he perceived at some distance.

So when he came to it (fire), a voice was uttered: O Moses: Surely I am your Lord, therefore put off your shoes; surely you are in the sacred valley, Tuwa. (20:11-12)

**Note:** 'Tuwa' may be the name of a sacred valley just below Mount Sinai, which was located in Sham (Damascus) between Madyan and Egypt.

Moses was surprised; he did not expect that God would talk to him. He was very happy that he wished that the meeting would go on and on. He was then ordered to carry out the mission and God began to provide him with the ayats that would enable him to face Pharaoh. In addition to the verbal confrontation there was the miracle - challenge: The cane/staff that would turn into s snake and the hand that would turn white.



There are a number of versions to the taking off shoes'. Probably it means that the heart of Prophet Moses should be free from the love of worldly affairs so that he could devote himself solely to what was revealed to him.

And I have chosen you, so listen to what is revealed: Surely I am God, there is no god but I, therefore serve Me and keep up prayer for My remembrance. (20:13-14)

And saying: Cast down you staff. So when he saw it in motion as if it were a serpent, he turned back retreating, and did not return. O Moses! come forward and fear not; surely you are of those who are secure. (28:31)

And press your hand to your side (armpit), it shall come out white without evil: another sign (Miracle). (20:22)

After arming Prophet Moses with these two miracles, God commanded him to proceed to Egypt to Pharaoh and his people-who were transgressors. Prophet Moses gave out that he had killed one Egyptian (the Pharaoh's cook) and the people would kill him. As Prophet Moses used to stammer he requested that his brother Aaron who was more eloquent than him should also be sent with him to testify him (Prophet Moses). Refer (20:25-32)

(God) said: "We will strengthen your arm with your brother, and We will give you both an authority, so that they shall not reach you; (go) with Our signs; you two and those who follow you shall be uppermost." (28:35)

From that time on, Moses was appointed to be the prophet of Israelites to guide people to the right path and to remove injustice and corruption which had been over spread among the people of that land. Prophet Moses and Aaron started preaching the Oneness of God but people refused to believe and termed it as sorcery forged. They informed Pharaoh.

### **Prophet Moses encounter with Pharaoh**

When Prophet Moses reached Pharaoh, he ordered the custodians of the lions and other wild animals to bring some beasts in chains, far it was his habit to throw the victims of his anger to the beasts which

devoured the men and ate them away before his eyes. When Prophet Moses was before the wild beasts they began to wag their tails expressing love for Prophet Moses and began rubbing their faces at his feet. Pharaoh wondered and said: "I have never seen a man of this kind!" When Prophet Moses turned his face towards the throne and introduced himself as God's Messenger. He also demanded from Pharaoh to allow the Israelites to go away with him.

Pharaoh recognized him and demanding a miracle said: "Did we not nourish you and brought you up?" He ordered Prophet Moses to be handed over to be beheaded by the executioner. When the executors raised his sward upon him, angel Gabriel caused the sword to slay the executioner himself and thereafter every one deputed to slay him met the same fate. Prophet Moses was then released. He then took out his hand from the pocket; it shone like a bright star. Prophet Moses said: "This is the sign of being God's Messengers. And then he Cast his staff/rod which became a huge serpent with its mouth wide open to swallow Pharaoh and his throne. Pharaoh got frightened and ran out from the throne terribly awestricken requesting Prophet Moses to hold the serpent back. He held the serpent and it assumed its original state.

Then Pharaoh tried to play on Moses sentiments and affect his conscience. It was as if he was saying that since it was he and his wife who had brought him up, it was Moses who should obey them. Moreover, Moses had killed an Egyptian. All these acts required heavy penalties according to the Egyptians. This emotional atmosphere which Pharaoh tried to create, was also directed at influencing the leaders of his people, so that they would also agree with Pharaoh.



On the other hand, the message of the religion of truth proclaimed by Moses undermined Pharaoh's power, and reduced him to the level of ordinary people. From then on, it would be revealed that he was not a god, and moreover he would be compelled to obey Moses. Besides, if he set the Children of Israel free, he would loose some important manpower and thus could fall in great distress.

When Prophet Moses preached oneness of God to Pharaoh he said: "And who is the Lord of you two? O' Moses!" (20:49)

Prophet Moses said: "Our Lord is He Who gave to every thing its (suitable) form and then also guided it (aright)." (20:50)

For all these, Pharaoh did not even listen to what Moses said. He tried to make fun of him and his Lord, and attempted to change the subject by asking meaningless questions. He also took pride that he had plenty of lands and was a great Sovereign. At the same time, he tried to represent Moses and Aaron as anarchists and accuse them of being politically motivated.

There were great Sorcerer during the regime of Pharaoh, and he had promised great awards to the Sorcerer if they could over power Prophet Moses.

On the day of the Festival, about twelve thousand magicians had assembled in the Court of Pharaoh, on his order to compete with Prophet Moses. Prophet Moses and Aaron also went there.

Prophet Moses allowed the magicians to take the initiative. They cast their ropes which bewitched the eyes of the people who had gathered there. Thus the magicians who were trying to convince the peo-

ple that the ropes they have thrown are moving. But when Moses threw his cane they knew that it was not magic. This was the real thing. They were terrified when they noticed snakes running about.

And We revealed to Moses, saying: Cast your rod; then lo! it devoured (swallowed one after another all) the lies they told. (7:117)

And the enchanters were thrown down, prostrating (themselves). They said: We believe in the Lord of the worlds, The Lord of Moses and Aaron. (7:120-122)

A number of Egyptians also embraced the True Faith. Pharaoh got enraged as to why the magicians had accepted the Lord of Moses and Aaron, before his permission could be accorded. He said to them as "I'm your exalted god" and threatened to cut off their hands and feet then crucify all of them. But the magicians were not frightened of Pharaoh, since they had seen the light of the True Religion (Islam) they boldly said:

They said: We do not prefer you (O' Pharaoh!) to what has come to us of clear arguments and to He Who made us, therefore decide what you are going to decide; you can only decide about this world's life. Surely we believe in our Lord that He may forgive us our sins and the magic to which you com-

pelled us; and God is better and more abiding. (20:72-73)

Hell is the abode for the transgressors and the guilty persons. And Gardens of Eternity, shall be bestowed to the Believers (in Him) and the virtuous people.

They said: Surely to our Lord shall we go back: And you do not take revenge on us except because we have believed in the communications of our Lord when they came to us! Our Lord: Pour out upon us patience and cause us to die in submission (to you as Muslim). (7:125-126)



After the defeat of the Pharaoh and his magicians the Egyptians started persecuting the Israelites. The Egyptians who had embraced the True Faith were imprisoned at the behest of Haman (Pharaoh's Vazier).

#### Fate of Asiya daughter of Muzahim (The Pharaoh's wife)

Asiya the wife of Pharaoh had declared her faith in the message of God after witnessing the miracle of Moses in the Court of Pharaoh.

The holy Quran has presented Asiya daughter of Muzahim as one of the best role models for women. "And God sets forth an example to those who believe the wife of Pharaoh when she said: My Lord! build for me a house with Thee in the garden and deliver me from Pharaoh and his doing, and deliver me from the unjust people." (66:11)

Now, Asiya heard about Prophet Moses religion and began to pursue its news and that of those who embraced it. But she was very distressed to know that they were punished severely for clinging to it.

Asiya liked this new religion, and was convinced by its concepts. She even started to sense the effects of injustice on the pure souls who worshiped Almighty. She felt also that her devotion to her husband

was beginning to wither away little by little, as his violence & tyranny grew more & more intolerable.

A big wall of hatred rose between the tyrant Pharaoh and his God-fearing wife, who now spent most of her time worshiping and praying to Almighty God.

All the gifts and pleasures of life which her husband laid in front of her, could not change Asiya's stern beliefs. She stood firm in her opposition to tyranny and disbelief, and turned away from Pharaoh's world. She renounced too, her prestige as a queen to all the people, and took the path of Jihad and suffering so as to win God's contentment and His eternal heaven.

Pharaoh knew that his beloved wife had abandoned his religion and had adhered to the religion that declared God's Oneness. He was very angry indeed, and wondered how his wife had turned away from him. But try as he could with all the power and temptations he possessed, he was unable to dissuade her from her new religion. After witnessing the death of another believing, woman under torture, Pharaoh tried to turn her away from the God of Moses and sought her mother's help. But Asiya refused to reject the God of Moses. On Pharaoh's order, she Was tortured to death.

The faithful woman martyred for the sake of her Creator, and in that, she became a great example of the believers' bravery.

Asiya's greatness lies in the fact that although she was the wife of one of the most Powerful, arrogant and tyrant rulers of Egypt, she was able to see and accept the truth in message of Prophet Moses. For her, wealth, beauty or status was not the main criterion of human excellence; she realized that without faith in God, a human being has nothing.

In this lady, we see the example of supreme sacrifice: By marrying Pharaoh, Asiya became the Queen of Egypt, she gained everything that she wanted in this worldly life from the materialistic point of view: the best of clothes, food, palaces, jewels, servants and maids, etc. But she sacrificed all that to be closer to God. And that is why we see her included by the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in the list of the four women who attained the level of perfection.

### The miracles of Moses in Egypt

Pharaoh refused to release them in spite of the efforts of Prophet Moses. He consoled his followers and asked them to seek help from God and be patient. May be God brings destruction to the enemy.

Prophet Moses camped outside the city, along with his followers. And there was a storm which leveled the houses of the people of Pharaoh hence the people stayed in the forests.

Pharaoh, promised Prophet Moses to release the believers, if the storm subsided. The storm did subside but Pharaoh did not keep his word. Then there was a storm of locusts which destroyed

L the gardens and the fertile lands of the Egyptians. It was followed by a pestilence of small worms which spread all over the atmosphere. The worms entered the nostrils of the people & their clothes. The water of Nile was also converted into blood.

The Nile was the main source of life for the Egyptians. Any harm done to this source could mean death for the whole of Egypt. If the bacteria had covered the River Nile so fully as to turn it red,



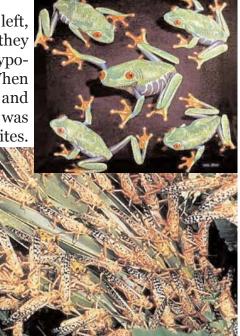
this would cause every living thing using this water to be infected by these bacteria.

Therefore We sent upon them widespread death, and the locusts and the lice and the frog and the blood, clear signs; but they behaved haughtily and they were a guilty people. (7:133)

In Pharaoh's time, this kind of chain of disasters appears to have occurred. According to this scenario, when the Nile was contaminated, fish also died, and the Egyptians were deprived of an important source of nutrition. Without predator fish, the frogs could initially breed freely in both ponds and the Nile and thus overpopulate the river, eventually escaping the anoxic, toxic, and putrefying environment by migrating to land, hence dying on land and decomposing along with the fish. The Nile and adjacent lands thus became fouled, and the waters dangerous to drink or to bathe in. Moreover, the extinction of frog species causes bugs such as locusts and lice to reproduce excessively.

Finally, no matter how the disasters took place, and what effect they left, neither Pharaoh, nor his people turned to God by paying heed, but they went on in their arrogance. Pharaoh and his close circle were so hypocritical that they thought to deceive Moses and thus, God forbid! When the dreadful penalty fell upon them, they at once called for Moses and asked him to save them from it. But when the chastisement was removed, Pharaoh proved obstinate and refused to release the Israelites.

Pharaoh's followers revolt and oppression increased day by day and reached to an extent that they neglected the Heavenly verses informing people of Divine rage and they were not advised by them. So they remained in their ignorance and considered to be of the misled. Everyday, they increased pressure to bother the Israelites who have by then become harassed and out of patience. At such circumstances God commanded Moses to leave Egypt along with Israelites over night and immigrate to Palestine.



And certainly We revealed to Moses, saying: Travel by night with My servants, then make for them a dry path in the sea, not fearing to be overtaken (by Pharaoh), nor being afraid (of getting drowned). (20:77)

As per instructions Prophet Moses left along with his followers at night. Pharaoh was informed of the departure of Prophet Moses and the Israelites. Pharaoh said: "Now prepare an army as soon as possible and follow them immediately. They couldn't have gone a long way." At dawn he along with his army reached them within the striking distance.

At the same time, the Israelites who were on the way to Palestine reached the seashore and had to stop. The Pharaoh's army, having found Israelites trace were approaching them until a man from Israelites saw them and said, "look! look! Pharaoh's army. They are coming after us. They're approaching." Israelites: "Pharaoh's army is approaching now. You Moses! What happened to your promises? If they capture us, they will definitely kill us all." Moses replied, "Never become disappointed from God's mercy. My God! In You shall we trust."

Prophet Moses struck at the Sea with his 'Rod' and the water split and there appeared twelve dry paths, through which the twelve tribes of the Israelites marched to safety. **Note:** There is no common agreement on the place where Moses divided the sea. Since no detail is given on the subject in the Quran, we cannot be sure of the correctness of any of the views on the subject. Some sources show the Mediterranean shores of Egypt and other Red Sea as the place where the sea was divided.

The Pharaoh and his people who were chasing Prophet Moses and his followers, also entered the Sea and were consequently drowned. There is reference in the Holy Quran about it.

So We caught hold of him and his hosts, then We cast them into the sea, and see how (bad) was the end of the unjust. (28:40)

In the final moments of his life Pharaoh

recognized the supremacy of God and he desperately offered his repentance saying. **"I solemnly declare that there is no god but the Lord of Moses, and I am one of the believers."** 

But We will this day deliver you with your body that you may be a sign to those after you, and most surely the majority of the people are heedless to Our communications. (10:92)

However, it was too little too late. Pharaoh and his people drowned under the deep sea. And this was the story of how Pharaoh and his followers' lives come to an end in the middle of the sea and among its roaring waves. Then in the Almighty's will the dead body of rebellious Pharaoh was thrown to the seashore so that it would be an obvious example for the people who were still rejecting the Unique God. The preserved body of Pharaoh can be seen in the Cairo museum even today, a lasting lesson for humankind.

After being relieved from Pharaoh and his followers Israelites

thanked the Great God with a heart full of joy. So with a strong confidence they continued their journey until they arrived in a land where they decided to rest for a while.

While resting they saw the people of that land worshipping idols, and demanded Prophet Moses to allow them to worship idols. One of them said: "Yes, like these people who have got a god to worship, Bring an idol for us to worship." Moses angrily replied, "What foolish people you are! Are you turning away from the God who has treated you with that much kindness? Did you forget the God who has changed your miserable state to a blissful and honorable one? It is mere foolishness to leave the Great God and instead show submission to a lifeless and inanimate idol or be its subject and bow to it."

Another one said: "But idolatry was our religion in the past too." Prophet Moses replied: "Did you not see what happened to Pharaoh, didn't you take a lesson from his fate? And were not you suffering from hard and severe torments in the past? You should have been guided to the right path by now." Then Moses reminded them of all that had happened to them. He started to reproach them for what they were asking for. People, feeling quite ashamed of their deed, admitted to be wrong again and continued their journey while they were still remorseful of what they had requested.





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This was a tough job for Moses and Aaron. They tried to convince the people that God would surely help them if they did not give up obeying His commands. They also explained, that a life of freedom and true faith, was better than a life of humiliation at the hands of the Pharaoh.

People who are suppressed for too long lose their confidence and initiative. Such people, are like birds in a cage, who know nothing about freedom and the outside world and, as soon as they are exposed to nature, they long for the 'safety' of the cage. It is difficult for them

to fly to tree-tops and build nests of their own.

The same thing happened to the Israelites. As soon as they were out of Egypt, they began to complain, 'Moses, where have you brought us? There is no water here. What are we going to drink? We will die of thirst.'

Moses prayed to God, and God told him to hit his stick (the famous Asa), on a rock. Moses did so, and twelve springs of water flowed out of the dry rock, so that there was plenty for everyone.

The Israelites turned to Moses and said, 'We have water now but what about food? We are hungry too. What will we eat?' Moses prayed to God again. And God answered, 'Don't worry Moses, you will get food too.'

O children of Israel! indeed We delivered you from your enemy, and We made a covenant with you on the blessed side of the mountain, and We sent to you the manna and the quails. (20:80)

When the people woke up the next morning, they saw something soft and white on the shrubs (small plants). This was Mun (manna) - a food that had rained down like dew from the sky. It tasted sweet.

In the daytime a strong wind blew, and with it a large flock of quails (small birds) flew in. They sat all over the ground. The people caught them with their hands and roasted them for food. This was Salwa.

From then on, the Israelites got Mun and Salwa everyday. But God strictly forbade them to store food for the next day.

After God had provided food and water to them, the people turned to their prophet once again and said, 'We have neither houses nor any shade here, Moses. We are afraid we will die of the heat.'

So Moses prayed to God again. He sent heavy clouds to protect them from the heat. Moses tried to meet his people's needs as much as he could with the help of God. But their demands increased everyday. It became difficult to control them, and to explain to them, that it was for a good cause that they had left Egypt; that they would eventually reach the Promised Land - the land of their forefathers and that their difficulties would soon be over. The ungrateful Israelites didn't understand this, and started arguing and fighting amongst themselves.

They said, 'Moses, Mun and Salwa are not enough. We want onions, garlic, pulses, and greens. We can't wait. Ask your God to give us these.'





Moses was sad at their ingratitude. 'Do you want these ordinary things instead of such good food? All right, then you can go and live in a town where you will get whatever you want.'

The Israelites insisted. They were really an ignorant and ungrateful lot, except for the very few who truly believed in God.

### Torah given to Prophet Moses (pbuh)

t the time when Israelites were living in Egypt and Pharaoh had complete control over them, Moses promised that after Pharaoh's death he would bring them a book from the Unique God to guide them to the right path So God sent him a revelation through which he was commanded to go to the Sinai (Toor) mount and stay there for thirty nights so that he would receive the heavenly book. Prophet Moses (pbuh) left his brother Aaron (pbuh) to act as his deputy, in his absence.

Therefore Moses turned to his brother, Aaron and said: "You Aaron, my brother! You have to take over in my absence and take the charge of guiding people. Preach to them on the right path and do not let them be a follower of the corrupt and the wicked." Aaron replied: "Sure, I shall do just what you said."

When the Holy Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) migrated from Makkah to Medina he left Imam Ali (pbuh) in his bed. When the Holy Prophet left for Tabuk, he appointed Imam Ali (pbuh) as his deputy hence the tradition: **"You are to me as Aaron was to Moses with the difference that there would not be any Prophet after me."** 



Thus Moses left the Israelites at the foot of mountain and went to a place where he was supposed to communicate with his beloved God. There he suppose to pray thirty nights and started praying for ten more nights after which the Great God sent him this revelation:

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

And when Moses came at Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said: My Lord! show me (Yourself), so that I may look upon Thee. He (God) said: You cannot (bear to) see Me but look at the mountain, if it remains firm in its place, then will you see Me; but when his Lord manifested His glory to the mountain He made it crumble and Moses fell down in a swoon; then when he recovered (his senses), he said: Glory be to Thee (O' My Lord!), I turn to Thee, and I am the first of the believers (that You can by no means be seen). (7:143)

**Note:** The desire of Prophet Moses to see God was not motivated for any lack of belief in him; but it was at the insistence of the Israelites who wanted to see Him with their naked eyes.

After this eventful episode God said: "O Moses! surely I have chosen you above the people with My messages and with My words, therefore take hold of what I give to you and be of the grateful ones. And We ordained for him in the tablets admonition of every kind and clear explanation of all things; so take hold of them with firmness and enjoin your people to take hold of what is best thereof; I will show you the abode of the transgressors." (7:144-145)

Prophet Moses was asked to convey to his people to stick firmly to the Best lessons and those who venture to belie His Signs shall be doomed.

## The Israelites started Golden Calf worship

Samaritan (Samiri) was a disbeliever though he was of the followers of Prophet Moses who had moved out of Egypt. During the absence of Prophet Moses he tempted the people to make a Calf of gold and Jewels which they brought it from Egypt.

S amaritan managed to create some sound from the hollow of the golden calf and the Israelites began to worship it. Aaron forbade the people from worshipping the Calf and said: "O my people! you are only tried by it (the image) and surely your Lord is the Beneficent (God), therefore follow me and obey my order." (20:90)

But they persisted in worshipping the Calf till the return of Prophet Moses from the mount Sinai.

God kept His messenger (Moses) informed about this incidence "So surely We have tried your people after you, and the Samiri has led them astray." (20:85)



So Moses came back to his people after forty (40) nights with the tablets on which

divine verses had been caved. But when he returned back to his people he found them busy worshipping a golden Calf. He threw the tablets on the ground and warned them about the grave consequences and said to his brother: "You Aaron! What did you do with these people." Aaron replied: "Dear brother! They turned away from my words and whatever I have preached to them and meanwhile Samaritan made a statue of a calf from the people's gold and invited them to worship it."

Prophet Moses then turned towards Aaron and asked him why he had failed to do his duty. "So that you did not follow me? Did you then disobey my order?" (20:93)

Aaron gave out that he did forbid the Israelites from worshipping the calf but they did not listen to him since they were under the (evil) influence of Samaritan.

At this juncture Prophet Moses enquired from Samaritan his motive for this. "He said: I saw what they did not see, so I took a handful (of the dust) from the footsteps of the messenger (angel Gabriel), then I threw it in the casting (image of calf); thus did my soul commend to me." (20:96)

It was the earth under the hoof of the horse of angel Gabriel (pbuh). Samaritan had seen something extraordinary in that earth. (It is said that in it grew green grass from which he concluded that it had the power of creating life so he put it in the image of a calf which after addition of the image became a real calf and started using its tongue with some words or sound not peculiar to ordinary calf).

Then Prophet Moses went to his people and said: "Did you not promise God to be steadfast in your faith until you will be granted the eternal bliss? Do you want God's anger to destroy you because of your disobedience and false vows and promises you gave me and His greatness."

People said: "We did not want to deviate from the path you and your God had shown us but it was not our own choice. If Samaritan had not encouraged us to follow him and had not insisted that it was the

same path you were showing us, we would have been steadfast in the way of God. The Israelites who were remorseful of their deeds sought forgiveness of God."

So Prophet Moses said: "Begone then, surely for you it will be in this life to say, Touch (me) not; and surely there is a threat for you, which shall not be made to fail to you, and look at your god to whose worship you kept (so long); we will certainly burn it, then we will certainly scatter it a (wide) scattering in the sea." (20:97)

**"Touch me not"** is the words of Samaritan, who was afflicted with a painful torment from God. He used to say these words for when some one touched him he used to get the heat of the touching person and he himself has fever and by the touching of any person it aggravated. He thus became "untouchable." This curse of Prophet Moses continued in his descendents and it is said that even now his descendants in Syria and Egypt are victims of this curse. This is because they may not deceive and lead astray the people. Then, Moses threw the golden calf into the sea and this way he destroyed even the signs of that sin.

When Moses calmed down at last, he remembered that he had thrown the Torah Tablets. He picked them up and went back to calling for God: "And when Moses anger calmed down he took up the tablets, and in the writing thereof was guidance and mercy for those who fear for the sake of their Lord." (7:154)

Resuming the struggle for the cause of God. Moses read the tablets upon his people. He ordered them to adhere to their commands firmly. Yet it is amazing that they began to bargain him on their content. They told him: "Give us the tablets, to read. And if we find them easy to adhere to, we will accept them." "No," Moses said: "You have to accept them as they are." They argued for quite a while. God then ordered his angels to lift the mountain and position it right above them to act as a cloud over their heads. They were told: "Either you accept them or the mountain will fall on you. It was only then that they yielded, and they were ordered to kneel, and they obeyed."

Thus the people of Moses proved that they do not surrender themselves to God unless they were intimidated by a physical miracle which would leave them no alternative. They had been raised in an oppressive environment, and they could not be driven to the path of Right except by force.

#### **Israelites demand to see God**

Israelite to ask God's Forgiveness and to repent to Him. He chose seventy (70) men and told them to repent to God and ask Him forgiveness for what they had done. He asked them to fast and pray.

One day the people of Israelites came to Moses and said: "You Moses! You're telling us that there is the Unique God who is everywhere and who sees all of us and whatever we do. We also wish to see Him." Moses said: "Do you want to see God?" People replied: "Yes! Shouldn't we see our own Creator?" Moses said: "But God is too Glorious to be seen by us." People



said: "We believed in you and your God because we thought you could show us this God obviously."

Moses rose his head and said: "My God! I do know that you can't be seen but these people are asking me for something quite impossible."

Moses led his people to an appointment with God. God talked to Moses. and they heard Moses talking to his God. Yet they demanded to see God with their own eyes to believe in Him.

And when you said: O Moses! we will not believe in you until we see God manifestly (with our own eyes), so the punishment overtook (thunderbolt struck) you while you looked on. (2:55)

They were dead on the spot, but Moses, who knew that they deserved the punishment of death for what they have done, asked God to forgive them and have mercy on them.

God, the most Merciful, pardoned them and returned them back to life. It was at this glorious moments that the announcement of the advent of the seal of the Prophets, Muhammad son of Abdullah (pbuh) was made:

And ordain for us good in this world's life and in the hereafter, for surely we turn to Thee. He said: (As for) My chastisement, I will afflict with it whom I please, and My mercy encompasses all things; so I will ordain it (specially) for those



who guard (against evil) and pay the poor-rate, and those who believe in Our communications. Those who follow the Messenger-Prophet, the Ummi (unlettered), whom they find written down with them in the Torah and the Gospel (who) enjoins them good and forbids them evil, and makes lawful to them the good things and makes unlawful to them impure things, and removes from them their burden and the shackles which were upon them; so (as for) those who believe in him and honor him and help him, and follow the light which has been sent down with him, these it is that are the successful. (7:156-157)

We notice in these verses the way the past is interrelated with the present. God, the Almighty, moves from talking to His Prophet back into two previous periods, that of the Torah and that of the Gospel to state that He prophesied the advent of Muhammad (pbuh) in these two Holy books.

## Wandering in the land of Tih

Moses, after saving Israelites from the state of captivity imposed on them by Pharaoh and his agents, was given the mission to transfer the Israelites to the holy lands of Syria and Jerusalem. The first town on their way to Syria was the town of Ariha. When they reached the spot where They could easily see the town, one of the people accompanying Moses said: "Moses! How can we enter that town?"

Moses replied: "We should capture the town first." "You mean we have to fight with them." Another man asked.

Moses said: "Of course, choose one man from each race and tribe and send them to the city to bring some information."

ollowing this, twelve (12) men were selected for this reason. They went to the town and after a
little while came back to Moses. Upon their return Moses asked them: "What did you notice and find out there? How did you find the town?"

One of them replied: "There are many strong and powerful men in that town. It would be quite impossible for our men to fight and overcome them." Another man said: "Yes, they are much more powerful than us." Another man confirmed his words and added: "If we fight with them, they'll enslave our women and plunder our properties." "If we move towards the gates of the town, we can easily enter

the town." Another man by the name of Youshe said: "Yes, we will be victorious."

"You two are going go cause the death of all our people." One of them said. "As long as those strong cruel people are in that town we'll never get in and we shall remain here." Another man said.

At the same time, the first man turned to Moses and said: "You Moses! You go there with your God and fight with them. We shall wait here until your return."

Moses endured all kinds of sufferings. His main problem was that he was sent to a people who were used to disgrace ignominy and submission. His torture was not confined to rebellion and stupidity, but he had also to deal with ignorance, rudeness and idol-worshipping. Things even reached the extent of hurting Moses himself. God said: O you who believe! be not like those who spoke evil things of Moses, but God cleared him of what they said, and he was worthy of regard with God. (33:69)

The most harmful injury they inflicted on Moses must have been when they refused to fight for the cause of the religion of unification. Moses was very disappointed so he rose his head and said: "My God! Thou knowth that I can not make anyone do what I want. And I have control on no one but me and my brother. I'm alone here. So Thou shalt judge between this corrupt malicious tribe and me."



At this time God sent him the revelation saying: "This town is prohibited for

them to enter for forty years. During these forty (40) years, they shall wander about in this land. So do not feel pity for these corrupted and malicious people and leave them alone."

In this way God condemned the Israelites to be wondering about that city for forty years so that those having weak and mean spirit among them would be destroyed and there would remain only those brave men who would have the necessary potentialities to capture the promised land. During those forty years, each morning they woke up and started to walk and do their daily tasks until night, but the next day morning they found themselves in the same place they had started the day before. Many things changed during these years.

Aaron died at the age of one hundred and nineteen (119) years in that desert shortly before Moses, his people were still wandering in the wilderness when he died at the age of one hundred and twenty five (125) years. He was buried near a red sandhill.

All the Israelites also died there and a new generation under the leadership of Youshe the son of Noun who was Moses successor and who took over after his death stepped in Palestine quite strongly and captured that land merely through their bravery.

## The Cow of the Israelites

The Holy Quran says: And when Moses said to his people: Surely God commands you that you should sacrifice a cow; they said: Do you ridicule us? He said: I seek the protection of God from being one of the ignorant.... (2:67-74)

Prophet Moses (pbuh) stayed among his people calling them to Almighty God. It seems their souls were uneasy in a way that the observant eye could not mistake. Their obstinacy and chattering about what has become known as "The Story of the Cow" was unwarranted. This topic did not need so many negotiations between Moses and the people, nor did it need all their bias.

It was said that among the children of Israel there lived a pious man. He was poor but very careful about how he earned his living; it had to be honestly earned. Everything that he did was done for the sake of Almighty God, never for selfish gain. On his deathbed his last words were: "O Almighty God, I place my wife, my little son, and my only possession, a calf, in Your care." Strangely, he asked his wife to lead the calf to the forest and leave it there. He did this because he did not trust the children of Israel, for they were a selfish and greedy folk.

After a few years when the boy had grown up, his mother told him: "Your father has left you a calf in the trust of Almighty God. It must have grown into a cow by now." The son was surprised. He did not know of any calf all these years and asked his mother where it was. She replied: "Be like your father and say: 'I trust in Almighty God,' then go look for it."

With a rope in his hand, he went to the forest and prostrated himself before Almighty God: "O Almighty God, Lord of Abraham and Jacob and Job, return to me my father's trust." As he raised his head, he saw a cow coming towards him. It stopped submissively beside him. He tied the rope around its neck and led it to his house. The cow would not allow anyone else come near it except the young man.

The youth was as pious as his father. He earned his living by cutting wood. Whatever he earned he divided into three (3) equal portions: one he gave to his mother, one he used for his needs, and the last he gave as charity. His nights, too, were divided into three parts: during the early part of the night he helped his mother, the middle part he devoted to the worship of Almighty God, and during the last part he rested.

About this time a wealthy man died, leaving behind an only son, who inherited his father's wealth. His cousins envied his good fortune and secretly killed him and threw the corpse on the way so that they could inherit it. Gradually, a lot of people gathered round the dead body of the murdered boy.

The dead boy's other relatives came to the Prophet Moses and asked his help in tracing the boy's murderer. Moses with the help of God's revelation said: "You should slaughter a cow and touch the body of the murdered boy with a part of the cow's meat so that he could become alive again and say who his murderer was?"

They accused Prophet Moses of joking and said, "Oh! What are you talking about? How is it possible? Are you making fun of us?" Moses replied: "Almighty God forbid that I be foolish!"

One of the men said again: "Ask your God to clarify the kind of cow that shall be slaughtered."

Moses replied: "My God says that this cow should not be so old and disabled and not very young, so you shall find a middle-aged cow. Now move and act just as you have been commanded."

Instead of following his direction, they asked him more questions. "What color must it be?"

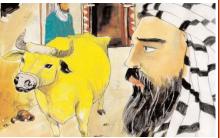
"My God says it should be yellow all over so that its color would make the observer happy."

They still were not satisfied with his answer and asked for more details. "May be, these descriptions wouldn't be enough for us to recognize the cow clear." So, tell us about the characteristics of this cow more exactly. If God wishes we shall be guided.

Moses replied: "My God says this cow shouldn't have been tamed for ploughing or watering the cultivated lands. It should not have any disability and there shouldn't be any other color on its skin." Now you have explained the main points about this cow for us quite comprehensively we understood it.

By asking those silly questions, they put themselves in a great trouble finding the cow, they went out in search of such a cow. The only one in the whole town that matched the description was the one owned by the orphaned youth. They met him on the way and asked the price for which he would sell his cow. He told them he would have to consult his mother first, so they accompanied him to his house and offered her three gold coins. She refused their offer, saying that the cow was worth much more.

They went on increasing their offer and the mother kept on refusing. Finally they urged the son to speak to his mother to be reasonable. He told them: "I will not sell the cow without my mother's approval, even if you offered me its skin filled with gold!" On hearing this, his mother smiled and said: "Let that be the price: its skin filled with gold." They realized that no other cow would do; they had to have it at any



price. They agreed to buy the cow and paid high Price with its skin filled with gold.

They immediately slaughtered the cow and touching the dead man's carcass with its meat to their great surprise, the man was revived and introduced his murderer to the Israelites.

## Prophet Moses and Qaroon (Croesus/Korah)

The Holy Quran says: Surely Qaroon was of the people of Moses, but he rebelled against them, and We had given him of the treasures, so much so that his hoards of wealth would certainly weigh down a company of men possessed of great strength. When his people said to him: Do not exult; surely God does not love the exultant. (28:76)

Qaroon was one of the Israelites and a close relative of Prophet Moses. He used to be a pious and faithful man, but at the time when Israelites were destined to wander about in the land/valley of Tih for forty (40) years, after escaping from the cruelties of the Pharaoh and the forced rule of the Qabtis (Egyptians who worshiped bulls), Qaroon isolated himself from Israelites and chose to be a goldsmith, a job which made him incredibly rich and he could gather great wealth. He gradually owned such a huge treasure that a number of powerful men had to carry the keys to the Qaroon's safes. They grew tired under the weight of the burden. This immeasurable amount of wealth and treasure changed Qaroon into a selfish, proud and rebellious man. He despised the pious, looked down on them and regarded them with great contempt. And become the symbol of capital and capitalism.

Moses would often preach in the streets and at the town squares. He would remind his people to worship the one and only God-Almighty, and to stop caring for worldly goods. Just then, Qaroon would pass by, all dressed up in grand robes, and followed by a trail of servants carrying the keys to his treasures, displaying his wealth and strength. This distracted the attention of young people listening to Moses. Some of them would even turn away from the Word of God to take an envious glimpse at Qaroon's fabulous wealth. They wished for such wealth here rather than the pleasures of the hereafter.

Qaroon's show of strength and wealth made Moses task even more difficult. He told Qaroon, "God has been kind to you and given you so much wealth; you should be kind to the poor and give them charity. You should make the provisions for your Hereafter with this great wealth and endless favors God has granted you and step in God's way. Make the most of the world and these blessings." But, Qaroon would boast even more shamelessly. "It is my wealth which I got through my own skills, wisdom and hard labor and I do not like anyone to interfere in my affairs. Your God didn't bestow (give) it on me. Why should I give it away in charity? I am not mad, Moses."

Moses was very upset but there was nothing more that he could do about it. Qaroon was not willing to share his wealth with the poor and the needy. He was mean and stubborn and believed that his wealth was the fruit of his own efforts, and not a blessing of God.

But soon people found out who controlled the vast treasures of the

heaven and the earth. God gives to whom He pleases and takes away from whom He pleases.

And God took away from Qaroon what He had given him in plenty. The boastful Qaroon sank and perished in the ground together with his treasures and he was condemned to eternal torment. His money was of no use to him or to anyone else.

When people saw his fate they realized that Moses was right and that pride and boastfulness are destructive. At that time one could hear these words from those who had envied his life: "How lucky we were who did not have a life like that of Qaroon and were not condemned to God's torment."

## Prophet Moses and Prophet Khidr (Elijah)

The Holy Quran says: Behold, Moses said to his attendant, "I will not give up until I reach the junction of the two rivers or (until) I spend years and years in travel." But when they reached the Junction, they forgot (about) their Fish, which took its course through the sea (straight) as in a tunnel. When they had passed on (some distance), Moses said to his attendant: "Bring us our early meal; truly we have suffered much fatigue at this (stage of) our journey." He replied: "Sawest thou (what happened) when we took refuge on the rock? I did indeed forget (about) the Fish: none but Satan made me forget to tell (you) about it: it took its course through the sea in a marvelous way!" (18:60-63)

ne day, Prophet Moses (pbuh) delivered such an impressive sermon that all who heard it were deeply moved. Someone in the congregation asked: "O Messenger of Almighty God, is there another man on earth more learned than you?" Moses replied: "No!" believing so, as Almighty God had given him the power of miracles and honored him with the Torah.

However, Almighty God revealed to Moses that no man could know all there is, to know, nor would one messenger alone be the custodian of all knowledge. There would always be another who knew what others did not. Moses asked Almighty God: "O Almighty God, where is this man? I would like to meet him and learn from him." He also asked for a sign to this person's identity.

Almighty God instructed him to take a live fish in a water-filled vessel. Where the fish disappeared, he would find the man he sought. When Moses heard about Khidr's wisdom, he set out on his journey, accompanied by a young man, Joshua (Youshe the son of Noun) who carried the vessel with the fish and decided not to rest until they found him. They reached a place where two rivers met, Moses felt tired and decided to rest there. Instantly, Moses fell asleep on a rock.

While he was asleep, his companion saw the fish wriggle out of the vessel into the river and swim away making a silvery line. However, he forgot to relate this incident to Moses. When he awoke, they con-

tinued their journey until they were exhausted and hungry. Moses asked for his meal. Only then did his companion recall that the fish they had brought with them had got away. Hearing this, Moses exclaimed: "This is exactly what we are seeking!"

They hurriedly retraced their steps to the place where the rivers met and where the fish had jumped out. There they found a man

sitting on the same rock, his face partly covered with a hood. His bearing showed he was a saintly man. He was Al-Khidr, the guide.

Moses greeted him and told him he had come to find out that, which God wanted Moses to know through Khidr. So, "do you allow me to follow you and would you teach me the things God has taught you?" Khidr said, God has given me knowledge of some of His mysteries which you do not know of. You might find them strange, and therefore it might be difficult for you to stop yourself from asking questions when you are with me.

But when Moses promised to be patient, Khidr agreed to let Moses accompany him and learn from him, provided that he would just watch and not ask any questions.

Moses went along with Khidr. Soon they came to a river and Khidr hired a boat to cross it. The people on the boat knew Khidr and did not charge any money to take them across.

Strangely enough, as they were crossing, Khidr made a hole in the boat by breaking a plank. Moses was annoyed at this and said to Khidr, "Is this how you repay their kindness, why did you do that?" Khidr replied: Did I not tell you not to ask any questions?

Just then, a bird came and sat on the prow of the boat and drank a drop of water. Pointing towards it, Khidr said, our knowledge is like that drop in comparison to God's knowledge which is like an ocean.

Moses realized his mistake, remembered his promise, and apologized. "I'll be more careful next time," he said. When they reached the town across the river and were passing through it, they saw a nice child. For no obvious reason, Khidr suddenly rushed to the child caught him and killed him immediately.

It was too much for Moses to bear. He forgot about his promise and asked angrily, "Why did you kill that innocent child who had done no crime? It was really a cruel and evil deed."

Khidr did not reply. He only reminded Moses of his promise, and said, "If you break your promise once again, I'll leave." Moses apologized, and promised not to question him again.

They continued their way and after walking for a long time, they became hungry and tired. They arrived in a town and asked the people for some food to satisfy their hunger, but the people of the town refused to give them food or shelter and did not treat them with hospitality, so they left the town while they were still hungry.

As they were leaving the town, they saw a wall which was about to be collapsed. Khidr repaired it, without taking any money for doing the work.







Moses didn't understand this kindness in return for their unkindness. He couldn't resist asking "Why did you do this when the people were so unkind to us? At least, you could have taken some money for it to buy us some food."

"Alas," said Khidr, you cannot be patient, now; you've broken your vow for the third time. It is time for us to part. But before this I would like to reveal the secrets hidden in what I have done.

That boat in which I made a hole belonged to poor people who earned their living from it. The king who lives across the river is very cruel, and takes away all good boats by force. He would have taken this one, too. That's why I made a hole in it, so that it would look broken and useless and the king wouldn't take it for himself.

But why did you kill the child? Moses asked. I killed him because his parents are very virtuous and pious people, said Khidr. But, he would have grown up to be an atheist and very wicked person and made their life miserable. They will be unhappy at his death, but, the pain and sorrow would be much less than what they would have had to bear if he had grown up to be a sinner. Also, there was the possibility that he would force his parents to accept atheism. God will soon give them another son who will be a joy in their old age.

Instead of that child that was killed by Khidr (and Moses objected to this act). God granted his parents a daughter from whose generation came seventy Prophets. [Kafi, v.6, p.6; Vasa'il, v.21]

What about the last one? Why did you fix the wall even though the people were unkind to us? asked Moses. Well, I did that because a treasure belonging to two orphan children is hidden beneath that wall, said Khidr. Their father was a very virtuous man, and it was God's wish that these boys find the treasure when they grow up.

Revealing all this to Moses, Khidr said, "Remember, I did nothing on my own. It was all God's will."

"And moreover, I did not do it of my accord. This is the significance of that with which you could not have patience." (18: 60-82)

Then Khidr went away leaving Moses surprised, and lost in thought about how little we human beings know of God's mysteries. Indeed, everything has a reason, and God, the Wise, the Omniscient and the Omnipotent alone knows it all.

**Moral:** Prophet Moses in spite of perfection of intellect, superiority and cleverness bestowed on him by Almighty God was not able to perceive through the rational processes of deduction, (Istidlal) the meaning of the actions of Khidr, so much so that the reasons therefore became obscure to him. Now if it were not permissible for the Prophets and Messengers of God to exercise Qiyas (analogy), Istidlal (reasoning) and Istikhraj (deduction), for others who are below them in rank, it would be all the more not permissible.

### THE MEN OF SABBATH

The Holy Quran says: The Sabbath was only enjoined on those who differed about it. Your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Rising regarding the things about which they differed. (16:124)

**P**rophet Moses (pbuh) had taught the Israelites (Jews) to designate one particular day for the worship of Almighty God. On that day they were to abandon all their business and indulging in earthly affairs or leisure activities. Originally, the day of Friday was specified, but at the request of the Israelites, it was changed to Saturday. This day, the Sabbath, became a holiday for the Jews and on Saturdays Prophet Moses used to address a special congregation and preach to the people. For many years after Prophet Moses passes away, the Sabbath was faithfully observed as a religious day. However, in the time of Prophet David (pbuh), one group of the Israelites, who lived at the seaport of Ela, broke the divine rule. The people of Ela were mainly fishermen and fished the seas everyday except Saturday. Almighty God tested their faith by making the fish become very easy to catch on Saturdays. On Saturdays, unlike the other days that the fishes in the sea swam deep down in the water, they came to the surface waters and swam quite confidently knowing that there weren't any fishermen around awaiting them. But on the other days, they did not approach the shore.

The Holy Quran says: And (O Muhammad) ask them about the (people of the) town which was beside the sea; when they exceeded (the limits) in the Sabbath when their fish came to them on the day of

their Sabbath, appearing on the surface of the water; and on the day they did not observe the Sabbath, they (the fish) did not come unto them. Thus did We try them, for they were transgressing. And when a part of them said, "Why do you preach to those whom Almighty God would destroy or punish by a severe torment?" They replied, "To be free from blame before your Lord, so that perhaps they may become pious." (7:163-164)

The fishermen were tempted by the easy catches to be made on Saturday and they thought of a plan to get around the divine restriction. They decided to dig trenches and canals to divert the fish. On Saturdays, the canals were opened and the fish would swim into them in large numbers. At night, before the fish could return back to the sea, the canals were dammed. Then on Sundays the fishermen would easily catch all the trapped fish.

The wise and pious people of the tribe advised these greedy fishermen not to violate the command of Almighty God. They considered it their duty to guide those who were in error, because otherwise they would also be to blame for the consequences. However, the fishermen continued disobeying the divine commandment and even boasted about their cleverness.

Finally, the punishment of Almighty God came down and their faces were transformed into those of animals (they were metamorphosed into monkeys). After three days and nights all the sinners were destroyed.

The Holy Quran says: And indeed you know of those amongst you

who transgressed on the Sabbath, so We said unto them, "Become apes, despised and spurned!" And We made it a lesson for (those of) their own times and those (of their posterity) who came after them and a guidance for those who guard against evil. (2:65-66)

## Satan's strategies to beguile human beings

uring the time of Prophet Moses (pbuh), there was a worshiper, who used to pray day and night on the roof of his house. One day the worshiper was told by the people of his village that some people are worshiping a tree. The worshiper considered it his moral duty to set right the peo-



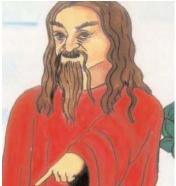


ple, but when his persuasions failed to achieve the desired result, he decided to cut off the tree itself.

Satan approached the worshipper (in the form of an old man) and said: "You are a saint, what need you have to leave your religious pursuits and busy yourself in this work."

The worshiper said: "This too is worship." Satan: "I will not allow you to cut the tree in any case."

A scuffle ensued and the worshiper mounted the chest of Satan and overpowered him. At this moment Satan said: "If you leave me, I have something to say." When the worshiper released his victim. Satan said: "The Almighty God has not made it obligatory on you to cut the tree. You yourself do not worship it, so where is the justification for meddling in this affair which is



not obligatory (Wajib). You are neither a Prophet, nor God has commanded you in this affair. Hence if it is the will of God, He shall cause it to be cut."

The worshiper said: "I must cut it." Again a fight started. Once again the worshiper overpowered Satan. Again the Satan suggested another scheme.

Satan said: "I will tell something which shall decide between me and you. And it will also be advantageous to you." Worshiper released the Satan and asked him the proposal.

Satan: "You are a destitute. You have nothing with you. People manage bread and clothing for you. Don't you wish, that you may have wealth and you too may provide needs of others. Also you will lead a life independent of others."

The worshiper: "Yes, I find your argument apparently appealing. So, what is your proposal?"

Satan said: "I shall daily put two gold coins under your pillow every night. You can then use this during the day and can help the needy folks too. This will be useful for your hereafter when you help others and besides if you cut the tree, people will plant again and start worshiping it."

The worshiper thought: "I am not a Prophet. It is not my divine assignment to cut the tree. God has neither specifically commanded me to cut it. The thing which the good old man (Satan) says is certainly more advantageous." With these thoughts the worshiper accepted the old man's (Satan) counsel. He slept and next morning looked found the two gold coins under his pillow. Next day he again got his two gold coins from under his pillow. On the third day he did not get the two coins. When this happened the worshiper got excited and set off to cut the tree. Enroute Satan appeared (i.e. the old man) and asked: "Where do you intend to go?"

The worshiper said: "To cut the tree." Satan: "I will not let you cut it." In a short while again, a scuffle started and this time the old man overpowered the worshiper. The Satan said: "If you do not desist, I shall kill you." Being in a helpless position the worshiper asked "How is it that every time I used to overpower you and this time you have overpowered me."

Satan said: "First you proceeded to cut the tree purely in the path of God. There was sincerity in your intentions. Today you are enraged for not getting two gold coins. Your initiative is not purely for the sake of God. This is the reason why I gained victory over you."

**Moral:** To keep away from insincere and impure intentions is indeed difficult but not impossible. This can be done by constant thinking and true understanding of the aim of our life. We have to understand what Almighty really wants from us, without getting influenced by Satan.

## Who is my neighbor in Heaven (Janna)?

The young man heard a knock on the door! "Who is it?" he asked. "I am a stranger from a far away place." Came the reply. He had been taught that guests were a mercy (Rahma) from Almighty God, so he invited the stranger in making him feel welcome.

Every now and then, the young man would ask permission to be excused for a while. He would disappear for a moment or two and would return to attend to the guest. It happened many times. The guest asked of his excuse for these frequent disappearances. The young man told him that it was his mum who was old and not very well who he went to attend to.

The guest asked whether he could say salaam to the young man's mum. "Of course, you can," said the young man. "I'm sure she'll be very pleased."

The guest saw an old and weak woman in bed who had no strength in her. The only thing that was moving was her mouth, silently saying something he could not understand. The guest asked the young man whether the young man knew what his mum was saying. The young man nodded and said: "From a young age, she has always prayed for me, whenever I would do something for her," she would say "May God makes your home in the neighborhood of His messengers."



The guest smiled and said: "Tell her that her prayer has been granted. I

am Moses! I asked Almighty who my neighbor would be in Heaven and He gave me your address." "I asked of him how this person becomes a neighbor of the prophets. He told me to come and see for myself."

## The two brothers

During the time of Prophet Moses (pbuh) there were two brothers who lived in flats above each other. One believed in God and His Prophets and the other was an atheist (one who does not believe in God). Both ate their meals together and for years each tried to convince the other that he was right. It is related that the brother who was an atheist was rich whilst the believing brother was not.

ne day the believing brother woke up thinking, "It seems that my brother is right. I struggle so hard and pray but to no avail. He has far more than I have! I must go downstairs and tell him that he is right." That same day the unbelieving brother woke up thinking, "My brother is right. There has to be more to life than this. I must go upstairs and tell my brother that he is right." Both brothers met half way on the staircase but before they could say a word to each other, the angel of death took their souls away.

Prophet Moses (pbuh) was advised of this by Almighty God and he related it to his people. The brother who had been a believer all his life died the death of a unbeliever (Kafir) whilst the brother who was an unbeliever all his life died the death of a believer (Momin).

We must try to recite & understand Dua-e-Adeela every night asking Almighty to keep our faith safe.

# ELIAS (ILYAS) THE PROPHET

The Holy Quran says: And Elias was most surely of the messengers. (37:123)

fter the death of Izqeel, when the mischief of Banu Israel was on the increase, Prophet Elias (pbuh) was sent to guide the people. Ajeena the King of that period was a believer but was led astray by his Queen Izbeel and became an Apostate. The subject also adopted idol worship.

When he said to his people: Do you not guard (against evil)? What! do you call upon Ba'l (an idol) and forsake the best of the creators, Almighty God, your Lord and the Lord of your fathers of yore. (37:124-126)

The people refused to believe the Message of the Divine Messenger. Mean while Izbeel happened to see the garden of a devotee-which was the means of her livelihood. To achieve the coveted garden, she got him (the devotee) murdered and became its Owner.

Prophet Elias tried to admonish the King, but he was after the Messenger's blood and issued instructions for his arrest. The Messenger cursed the Kings and his son got ill and his attention was diverted for the time being. Prophet Elias went to a mountain and was engrossed in worshipping Almighty God.

The King sent some people to the idols of Syria, to pray for the recovery of his son. They happened to meat Prophet Elias who sent a message to the King that his son would become hale and hearty if he believed in the true religion (Islam).

When the King was informed of the whereabouts of Prophet Elias, he sent a number of people for his arrest. They all died when cursed by the Messenger of God. The King then sent Vazier who was a believer, stayed there and never returned.

The King's son also died. There was famine in the country. Prophet Elias returned after a long time and said to the people, "You pray before your goods for rain and you may stick to your religion, if it rains. If it does not rain, I will pray to Almighty God for rain. If it rains then you embrace the True Faith." They agreed to it. First they prayed to their idols and it did not rain. Then Prophet Elias prayed to Almighty God for rains. His prayer was granted; and it rained. But the people did not keep their word and remained apostate.

Then came the time far their chastisement by Almighty God. Another King overpowered 'Ajeena' and murdered him and his queen Izbeel, in the garden which the king's wife had taken possession of after killing its owner-a devotee (Abid), and their flesh was eaten up by the wild animals.

Later on, Prophet Elias appointed Prophet Elisha (Al-Yasa) his deputy as commanded by Almighty God and himself disappeared.

Prophet Elias and Prophet Khidr carry out the commandments of Almighty God but are invisible.

Prophet Khidr is detailed to look after the Sea and Prophet Elias looks after the forest and the Mountains. Both these Messengers meet during the Hajj season.

# EZRA (UZAIR) THE PROPHET

The Holy Quran says: Or the like of him (Ezra) who passed by a town, and it had fallen down upon its roofs; he said: When will Almighty God give it life after its death? So Almighty God caused him to die for a hundred years, then raised him to life. He said: How long have you tarried? He said: I have tarried a day, or a part of a day. Said He: Nay! you have tarried a hundred years; then look at your food and drink - years have not passed over it; and look at your donkey; and that We may make you a sign to men, and look at the bones, how We set them together, then clothed them with flesh; so when it became clear to him, he said: I know that Almighty God has power over all things. (2:259)

Once Ezra the prophet planned to leave his house and travel to a distant city. Thus he took his donkey to ride along with some drink and food with him to quench his thirst and satisfy his hunger. So he stated his Journey.

n his way, he reached a village which had been destroyed. Being attracted by the scene, he stopped and began to ponder about the vil-

lage. Finally, through examining what he had seen carefully, he understood how its inhabitants were killed and the city was destroyed. While he was looking at the village, he happened to see some decoyed bones which were on the ground and as he was thinking, he said to himself, "Strange! How many years have passed since the owners of these bones died? How will God then be able to revive

them after this much time" He said this not out of doubt but out of curiosity.

Ezra said this and went away to find some shade to sleep in. All the while he was sleeping, the Almighty put him to death. After the passage of one hundred (100) years, God resurrected the sleeping Ezra. As his death had occurred in the morning and his awakening in the afternoon, he said: "I think I've been sleeping a whole day a may be a part of the

day." But Ezra got great surprise as Almighty God, informed him that he had slept for a hundred (100) years.

Then Almighty God in order to make him sure and prove the truthfulness of this event asked him to look at the drink and food which he had taken with him were still unchanged and compare them with the decayed bones of his donkey as a good evidence. Suddenly, through God's will, the donkey's bones joined together and were gradually covered with flesh and skin. Finally his donkey was alive again and started to walk.

Having observed the unbelievable resurrection of a donkey happening through God's will Ezra referred to his own heart, kept his faith stronger in the Almighty's knowledge and power and addressed God like this, "My God! You have always been benevolent to me and treated me kindly and never neglected guiding me. Now I'm quite sure that the faith I had in Your knowledge, power and kindness somewhere deep in my heart had not been originated from my ignorance but it was itself the knowledge deserving trust and devotion."

### Ezra Returns Home

He rode on his donkey and entered his native place in Babylon, but the people did not recognize him, nor did his household, except his maid, now an old woman. He asked her: "Is this the house of Ezra?"





She said: "Yes, but the people have long forgotten Ezra." He said: "I am Ezra. Almighty God had taken my life for a hundred years and has now returned it to me." She said: "Ezra used to be answered when he prayed to Almighty God. Pray to cure me of blindness if you are Ezra." He prayed for her and massaged her eyes and took her by the hand. "Get up by the power of Almighty God," he said. The crippled woman stood up and walked; she opened her eyes and saw: her blindness was gone. She said: "I bear witness that you are Ezra."

## Ezra Finds and Copies the Torah

She rushed to the assembly of the Israelites. Ezra's son was one hundred eighteen (118) years old, and his children's children now were lords of the assembly. She called out to them saying: "This is Ezra come to you." They accused her of lying. She said: "I am your old maid. He has just prayed to Almighty God for me, and here I am whole again, walking and seeing." The people stood up and looked at him. His son said: "My father had a mark between his shoulders, a black mole," and they discovered it. They said: "None among us memorized the Torah (Law, or the regulations of the first five books of the Old Testament) since Nebuchadnezzar burnt it, except Ezra; and there was only one copy of the Torah, which was hidden by Sarukha. He buried it in the days of Nebuchadnezzar in a place none but Ezra knows." Ezra led the people to the hidden place and took out that copy of the Torah. Its leaves had rotted, and the book itself crumpled.

Ezra sat under the shade of a tree surrounded by the children of Israel and copied out the Torah for them from that script. Henceforth the Jews said that Ezra is the son Almighty God, for the two pieces of evidence which came down from Heaven: for his copying the Torah and for his fighting the cause of the Israelites. He had been copying the Torah for Ezekiel in the land of darkness in the hermitage of Ezekiel. The village which was in ruins is said to be Sayrabadh.

And the Jews say: Ezra is the son of God; and the Christians say: The Messiah is the son of God; these are the words of their mouths; they imitate the saying of those who disbelieved before; may God destroy them; how they are turned away! (9:30)

# DAVID (DAWOOD) THE KING AND PROPHET

The Israelites who had been brought out of Egypt by Prophet Moses (pbuh), had settled in the land of Palestine. After the death of Prophet Moses (pbuh), Joshua (Youshe the son of Noun) the successor of Prophet Moses took the responsibility of leading Israelites. However, after the death of Joshua, a great difference occurred among the Israelites and they started an endless dispute and quarrel with one another. This was the beginning of their disobedience to Gad and a turning point for them to start committing sins.

Israelites used to have a Sacred coffin (Taboot-e-Sakina/The Ark of the Covenant/Relics left behind by Prophet Moses and Aaron or the original Tablets of the Taurat) which was granted a special quality by God. Whenever they were going to fight their enemy, they used to place it in front of their army to serve as a sort of consolation for their hearts and



make them victorious. Their enemies also believed that it was given special power by Almighty God. Gradually the Israelites started to ignore Almighty God's law; evil habits became part of their lives, they gradually lost their power and glory and thus the enemies could easily defeat them. Almighty God sent upon them an enemy, the Philistines, who defeated the Israelites and killed many of them, captured their land, drove them out of their homes, and took away their children to use or sell as slaves.

Their power was broken. They separated from one another and were very disheartened. And finally they lost that holy coffin at the hands of their enemy the Philistines. This caused them to lose their courage in fighting for victory. The children of Israel remained like sheep without a shepherd until Almighty God sent them a prophet named **Samuel (Shammil)**.

Have you not considered the chiefs of the children of Israel after Moses, when they said to a prophet of theirs: Raise up for us a king, (that) we may fight in the way of God. He said: May it not be that you would not fight if fighting is ordained for you? They said: And what reason have we that we should not fight in the way of God, and we have indeed been compelled to abandon our homes and our children. But when fighting was ordained for them, they turned back, except a few of them, and God knows the unjust. (2:246)

After some time, few of the Israelites went to their prophet Samuel who grew old, to find a way to restore their holy coffin, and asked him to appoint a strong leader, a king over them to lead them in a war in the way of God (Jihad) against their enemies.

Prophet Samuel, knowing their weakness, told them: "I fear that



when the time comes to fight you may refuse." But they assured him that they had suffered enough insults and were now ready to fight in the way of Almighty God, even if they lost their lives.

And their prophet said to them: Surely God has raised Saul (Talut) to be a king over you. They said: How can he hold kingship over us while we have a greater right to kingship than he, and he has not been granted an abundance of wealth? He said: Surely God has chosen him in preference to you, and He has increased him abundantly in knowledge and physique, and God grants His kingdom to whom He pleases, and God is Ample giving, Knowing. (2:247)

Prophet Samuel prayed to Almighty God for guidance. Almighty God revealed to him that He had chosen one, Saul, to be their king. The prophet wanted to know how to recognize the future king. He was told that Saul would come to him by himself and that they should then hand over the control of the kingdom to him, for he would lead them in battle against the Philistines.

## Saul (Talut) is appointed King

S aul was tall and sturdy, pious, and very intelligent. He lived and worked with his father on their farm. One day, several of their donkeys were lost. Accompanied by his servant, Saul went in search of them. They traveled for many days and were very tired. Saul said to his servant: "Let us rather go back, for I am sure that my father will be worried by now, and the other animals must also be cared for." His servant suggested that as they were already in the land of Samuel the prophet, they should go to him to inquire about the lost donkeys.

Saul agreed, and they carried on. On their way, they asked directions from some maidens carrying water. They were told to go in the direction of the mountain. Here, a vast crowd was waiting for the Prophet Samuel. When Saul set eyes on him, he instantly recognized him as a prophet by his holy mien. Samuel also recognized Saul as the king that Almighty God had chosen for them. Saul greeted the prophet respectfully. When he asked about his missing donkeys, Samuel told him not to worry, his donkeys were already on their way to his father's farm.

He then told Saul that Almighty God had chosen him as the king of the children of Israel. His duty

would be to take charge of their affairs, to unite them under one banner, and to protect them from their enemies. If he carried out Almighty God's commands, he would be given victory. Saul was surprised by this sudden honor offered to him. It was also a heavy responsibility. He protested to the prophet that he was of the Children of Benjamin, the least famous of the tribes of Jacob; he did not know anything of leadership or kingship and had no wealth. Samuel told him that it was the will of Almighty God that he should be the king, that he should thank Almighty God for His favor and be strong in faith.

After that, their prophet told them: "God has appointed Saul to be your king." They replied, "Why shall he be our king while there are many better people among us who deserve more to be king? Moreover, he has no great wealth and unknown man." The prophet replied: "Great God has selected him for you and granted him this superiority over the others because of his vast knowledge and physical power. Besides, God bestows the kingdom upon whoever He wishes for He is the Most Wise."

And the prophet said to them: Surely the sign of His kingdom is, that there shall come to you the chest (Taboot) in which there is tranquility from your Lord and residue of the relics of what the children of Moses and the children of Aaron have left, the angels bearing it; most surely there is a sign in this for those who believe. (2:248)

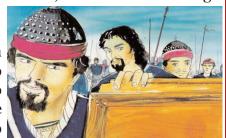
A good sign to prove that he is just qualified for this position is that he will find the coffin and restore the lost consolation for your hearts. He shall regain the coffin which is a remainder of your ancestors, Moses and Aaron and when he found it, the angels shall carry the coffin. Yes, this will be a true sign and an example for you if you are really faithful.

And that is exactly what happened. The Philistines who had taken away the coffin thought that to keep it would bring them ill luck, so they tried to get rid of it. For this they followed the trail (route) of two cows, which brought them to the Israelites, and there they lift it. So the Israelites got back their coffin intact. It took Saul twenty (20) years to relocate the Sacred Casket, after this proof they had to accept Saul as their king.

Thus, Saul soon became the king and the ruler of the tribe. When he decided to move his army ahead to fight the enemies. Saul wanted to know the exact strength of his people before facing the enemy. He wanted to know how many of them would really fight bravely. So when they came to a stream, he said to his people, "God wishes to test you through a spring. Whoever drinks the water of this spring to quench his thirst completely is not my follower and those who refuse to drink its water shall remain among my followers and will be victorious. Of course you may take a little bit of water with your hands to wet your throats (sip), if you're extremely thirsty."

When they reached the spring, except for a few, they all drunk the water of that spring fully. So, on the day of the war, those who had completely quenched themselves with the water said, "Today, we're not powerful and tolerant enough to fight with the Philistines fearsome commander Goliath (Jalut)

and his army because the number of their soldiers are much more than us and they are all well equipped." But the other pious and faithful men (Mujahideen) consoled them by saying, "It has happened many times that small armies with a few men could defeat their enemies' huge armies through God's will for God is the supporter of the patient and the faithful." Then they started praying to God and asked Him to grant them patience and stability to overcome the atheists.





The battle started and the strongest Philistines soldier Goliath came forward. He challenged anyone from Israelite to fight him. But he was so strong that nobody dared to come forward. Saul said to his people: He who will kill Goliath will get half of my Kingdom and will be married to my daughter.

## **Israelites Victory**

There was a lean, young boy named David among Saul Amy. He was not supposed to join Saul's army to fight with the Israelites but he had to be sent there only because his father Jesse (Eeshia) had ten (10) sons, wanted him to go with his other brothers so that at the end of the war he could return and bring the news of the other brothers health for the father. When leaving home for the battlefront, David took with him the sling/Catapult with which he usually fought the disturbing animals and directed the sheep as well as his brothers' food. On the way, he picked up some pieces of stone and took them with him, too.

When he reached the battlefield, he heard the soldiers talking about Goliath's bravery, courage and his challenging victories. They were overestimating him in a way that David couldn't help going to them. There he said, "Why are you so much afraid of Goliath's attack, and talking this high of him? By God, if I see him, I shall kill him immediately." His words were overspread until Saul also heard them and called him to his presence. When he was brought to Saul, he asked David, "How do you know you're powerful enough to fight this bold man? How have you examined yourself and become so certain? What fighting experiences have you got?" David replied, "I think I can beat him for I have recently killed a lion which attacked my father's sheep cattle. There was a bear accompanying it which I also managed to cut its head off."

Saul, hearing this, agreed to let them fight. The next morning the two enemies stood against each other and so David said, "Who is this Goliath. Show him to me."



The moment he saw Goliath, Goliath laughed and made fun of David. But the young David stood firm, put a piece of stone into his

sling, aimed it at Goliath's forehead and threw the stone. It hit Goliath in the forehead and his second and third slingshots following the first killed him at once. David then drew Goliath's heavy sword and cut off his head.

This turned the tables on the enemy. The Philistines lost courage when they saw their strongest man being killed by such a young boy. David then ordered to attack Goliath's army. They soon defeated them and thus David's fame was gradually overspread. So Philistines were defeated by the small group of God fearing people who had asked God for help and courage. Finally Israelites supporting Saul elected David to be their commander of the army. In appreciation of the extraordinary courage of David, Saul married him to his daughter Mikaal and his close friendship to Saul's son Yunathaan, made him very powerful and popular in the land. After Saul's death David became the king. This was something quite unusual because, though the prophets and holy men were usually from the tribe of the Israelite, the kings were from another tribe. But David was from Israelite. Later on, God made him a prophet also. So David was both a prophet and a king.

## **Power of Judgment**

Prophet David (pbuh) after becoming the king, had to decide cases of disputes and administer justice.

Before he was made a Messenger Almighty God tried him. That is He (Almighty God) taught him where and how he missed the correct decision.

Prophet David used to allocate different duties for each day. He set aside one day for the worship of God, one day for hearing people's complaints, one day for giving sermons, one day for rest and so on. On the day set for his rest, Prophet David's guards did not allow anybody to enter his house. On one such day, two angels in human form entered his house from the roof, startling Prophet David.

The Holy Quran says: And has there come to you the story of the litigants, when they made an entry into the private chamber by ascending over the walls? When they entered in upon David and he was frightened at them, they said: Fear not; two litigants, of whom one has acted wrongfully towards the other, therefore decide between us with justice, and do not act unjustly, and guide us to the right way. Surely this is my brother; he has ninety-nine ewes and I have a single ewe; but he said: Make it over to me, and he has prevailed against me in discourse. (38:21-23)

Prophet David heard the complaint and at once he said that the man demanding the only sheep his brother possessed was being unjust.

The disputants disappeared. Prophet David on their disappearance realized that they were angels. This was a mere test of Almighty to teach him that in judging a dispute he should listen to the defendant and the plaintiff before pronouncing any verdict. Then Prophet David regretted his hasty decision without demanding proof from the complainant and hearing both sides of the story. He realized that in his position as judge amongst the people, he could not make rash decisions and he turned to Almighty, begging His forgiveness for this mistake.

(David) said: Surely he has been unjust to you in demanding your ewe (to add) to his own ewes; and most surely most of the partners act wrongfully towards one another, save those who believe and do good, and very few are they; and David was sure that We had tried him, so he sought the protection of his Lord and he fell down bowing and turned time after time (to Him). Therefore We rectified for him this, and most surely he had a nearness to Us and an excellent resort. O David! surely We have made you a vicegerent in the land; so judge between men with justice and do not follow desire, lest it should lead you astray from the path of God; (as for) those who go astray from the path of God, they shall surely have a severe punishment because they forgot the day of reckoning. (38:24-26)

## Almighty God's Caliph

After Prophet David's asking forgiveness and after being forgiven (vide above) Almighty God says: And We strengthened his kingdom and We gave him wisdom and a clear judgment. (38:20)

In the exegesis of the verse following is recorded: Two Israelites came to Prophet David disputing about a cow. Prophet David demanded a witness from the plaintiff who could not produce them. The disputants were therefore asked to see him the next day. At night in a dream Prophet David was commanded to slay the defendant. Prophet David did not execute the decree as the crime was not proved. When Prophet David had the same dream for three consecutive nights, ordered the defendant to be executed. The defendant pleaded asking the grounds on which the sentence was passed. Prophet David replied that he had been commanded by Almighty God through dream for three consecutive nights. When sure of his death, the defendant helplessly confessed that he had slain the plaintiff's father and possessed the cow. The Israelites got very mush frightened at Prophet David getting the true versions and thus remained quiet and peaceful in the land, always fearing Prophet David's getting the knowledge of even the hidden and the concealed secrets. Thus the authority of Prophet David in his kingdom was firmly established by Almighty God, this is what Almighty God Says in the verse quoted above.

### Holy scripture Psalm (Zaboor)

Almighty God gave Prophet David wisdom and the Divine Book, Psalms, after he was made His Vicegerent. Which he used to recite in a melodious voice to attract the people to the words of Almighty. He could recite the whole of psalms while fixing the saddle on his horse. It is not a book of DO'S and DONT'S for that purpose Holy Torah was taken as a guide. There are only psalm in it.

### **Miracles given to Prophet David**

iracles given to Prophet David are summed up in a verse: And certainly We gave to David excellence from Us: O mountains! sing praises of God with him, and the birds (too); and We made the iron soft for him. (34:10)

**1.** Prophet David was gifted with enchanting melodious voice and whenever he sang the glory of Almighty God the mountains around used to echo the praise and the birds sang along with him. Almighty God further says: Surely We made the mountains to sing the glory (of Almighty) in unison with him at the evening and the sunrise, And the birds gathered together; all joined in singing with him. (38:18-19)

**2.** Iron, one of the hard metals, was made soft in the hand of Prophet David like wax without heating it. He could make it pliant enough for making the lightweight battle armor made of iron ringlets joined together. It is said that Prophet David was the first to manufacture coats of mail and armor. This is true. Almighty God Says: And We taught him the making of coats of mail for you, that they might protect you in your wars; will you then be grateful? (21:80)

It is Almighty God Who taught him this art-therefore he was the first person to manufacture it. This is an art of protection in defense and not that of destruction. Prophet David did not take anything from the public treasury for his sustenance. But by selling these armors to the army, he earned his livelihood, even though he was the king of such a vast empire.

**3.** And Solomon was David's heir, and he said: O men! we have been taught the language of birds, and we have been given all things; most surely this is manifest grace. (27:16)

Prophet Solomon by the way of expressing his gratitude to Almighty God addressed the people that he and his father David were inspired by Almighty God with the knowledge of language of birds.

### Inheritance

nd remember David and Solomon when they gave judgment concerning the field when the people's sheep pastured therein by night, and We were bearers of witness to their judgment. So We made Solomon to understand it; and to each one We gave wisdom and knowledge...(21:78-79)

Prophet David (pbuh) had nineteen (19) sons and every one of them wanted to inherit his throne. Prophet David wanted Prophet Solomon to be his heir. Almighty God commanded him not to appoint anyone, but to wait for His revelation. Once a case of a sheep herd having grazed in a vineyard of another person was referred to Prophet David. By the command of Almighty God, Prophet David called all his sons in the presence of the scholars and the chiefs of the tribes of his kingdom and told them that whoever decided the case correctly and answers correctly the following questions would become his heir/successor.

Prophet Solomon decreed the case correctly and also answered the questions correctly. No one else could do. Prophet Solomon ordered that the owner of the vineyard shall be given the sheep herd to use its milk, wool and lambs in the course of restoring his vineyard by the owner of sheep herd and when his vines bear grapes again he shall return the sheep herd back to its original owner.



Prophet David asked why he did not decree the sheep herd to be given to the owner of the vineyard. Prophet Solomon said that the sheep had not eaten away the plants but only the grapes i.e. the produce, hence only the produce from the herd was due to compensate the loss. His judgment was approved by God.

The following are the questions with their replies, answered by Prophet Solomon.

- Q. What is the closest (nearest) thing to man?
- A. The nearest thing to man is Hereafter (Life and Death as one may die any moment).
- Q. What is the farthest thing?
- A. Time which has passed away (which is not to going to come back again).
- Q. What are the two things are attached to each other?
- A. It is man's body with soul.
- Q. Which is the most awe-creating thing?
- A. Man's body (dead) without soul is awe creating.
- Q. What are the things which remain the same or unchanged?
- A. The two which remain the same are the sky and the earth.
- Q. What are the things which are always different?
- A. Day and night are ever different.
- Q. Which are those that are opposed to each other?
- A. Life and death are opposed to each other.
- Q. Which is the work or action that its end is good?
- A. It is patience and forbearance at the time of anger.
- Q. Which is the work or action that its end is bad?
- A. It is haste at the time of anger.

Prophet Solomon after answering correctly was declared the heir of Prophet David. He was the youngest of all his sons. Prophet David departed from this world to his heavenly abode at the age of 140 years, after ruling wisely for many years and was succeeded by Prophet Solomon at the age of thirteen (13) years. This was the plan to prove to the people the wisdom of Prophet Solomon granted to him by Almighty God in his young age. Thus it will be seen that it was the supreme knowledge and understanding that made Prophet Solomon succeed his father and become the Great King Prophet.

## The benefit of prayer of Dead (Namaz-e-Maiyyat)

In the times of Prophet David there was a person who was very pious who used to spend his money lavishly in good causes. Prophet David was very much attached to him. In the mean while Prophet David got a revelation from God through which Prophet David came to know that all the money spent by that person was only for show and there was no real charity for the sake of God. When this man died, people expected Prophet David to attend the funeral but instead of himself attending the funeral Prophet David sent a representative to attend.

There were around fifty (50) witnesses at the time of ablution (Ghusal) and all of them whispered among themselves that they had not seen anything except good from the person. The same fifty declared and made the same statement while offering prayer (Namaz) and also at burial and all of them bore witness saying that they found that man excellent in his ways. After the

burial was over, Prophet David got a revelation from God and was asked why he did not attend. Prophet David pleaded that because he was doing charity only for show and not for Almighty he did not like to attend the funeral of such a person.

Revelation came from Almighty God saying, "Oh David! When I heard the statement of the people that he was good, I accepted their witnesses and gave preference to their statement over my own knowledge and gave the man all the rewards that he deserved because of the public opinion."

**Moral:** Final decision lies at the hands of Almighty God.

## **Excellence of prayer**

Prophet David (pbuh) once decided to perform prayers and read Psalms (Zaboor) with the excellence that nobody would have done. He entered the chamber (Mehrab) and prayed.

After he finished to his satisfaction he found a frog appear before him and told him, "Oh David! Is it true that you feel that you have prayed too well?" Every night I am habituated to pray 1,000 Tasbihs and from every Tasbih three thousand Hamds are expressed.

Sometimes when I am at the bottom of a pond and I hear the voice of any

bird above, thinking that it might be hungry, I come to the surface of the water so that the hungry bird may get its food by eating me. This is the part of the duty that I perform towards Almighty God.

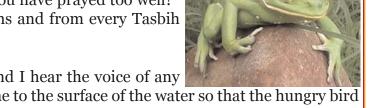
**Moral:** We should not feel proud of the prayers we do to our Lord, and the best of prayer is the one which is performed by giving the life.

# SOLOMON (SULAIMAN) THE PROPHET

nce, the Prophet Solomon (pbuh) said that he would have a son from each of his wives. Since he did not leave the fulfillment of his desire upon the will of Almighty God by saying 'God willing' (Insha Allah), only one of his wives

bore him a child, and even then, it was stillborn. When Solomon realized his mistake, he became very sorry and asked Almighty God to forgive him and to grant him a kingdom which no one else would have after him. Almighty God accepted these prayers and granted him a mighty kingdom.

Prophet Solomon (pbuh) expressed his gratefulness to Almighty God and narrated to the people that Almighty God had granted his prayer and showered His bounties on him. His father Prophet David was also blessed by Almighty God.







And (We made) the wind (subservient) to Solomon, which made a month's journey in the morning and a month's journey m the evening, and We made a fountain of molten copper to flow out for him, and of the Jinn there were those who worked before him by the command of his Lord; and whoever turned aside from Our command from among them, We made him taste of the punishment of burning. (34:12)

Besides the wind, the men, the Jinn's, the birds, the animals, the beasts were also at the disposal of Prophet Solomon. They all had to obey his orders. Almighty God also taught Solomon the languages of every living creature on earth. According to a moderate estimate, his army was spread over two hundred miles. Since Solomon could control the wind, he could make it carry him long distances at his will.

In spite of his wealth, glory, and vast empire, Prophet Solomon remained a humble and devoted servant of Almighty God. He spent his nights in prayers and fasted during the days. He used his power and might only in the way of Almighty God to bring humankind to the right path. For his livelihood, he used to make baskets or bags and sell them in the market; and with the hard earned money he obtained, he bought food (loaves of bread) and shared it with the poor.

### **Prophet Solomon and the Ants**

nce Prophet Solomon and his army of Jinn's and animals happened to pass through the valley of the Ants. This Valley contained deposits of precious metals such as Gold and Silver and other valuable stones. Almighty created special types of huge Ants who inhabited the Valley so that people dare not enter it.

The chief of the Ants was overawed by the hosts of Prophet Solomon in the air and asked the other Ants to get into the holes lest they should be trampled dawn unintentionally. With the help of the wind, Prophet Solomon heard what the chief of the Ants had said.



So he (Solomon) smiled, wondering at her word, and said: My Lord! grant me that I should be grateful for Thy favor which Thou hast bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I should do good such as Thou art pleased with, and make me enter, by Thy mercy, into Thy servants, the good ones. (27:19)

Prophet Solomon commanded his hosts to hold on till the Ants enter their holes and ensure that no Ant is hurt in the valley. Then he smiled and walked up to the Chief of the Ants, gently lifting him on the palm of his hand, said, "How could my hosts hurt you and your kind as they are passing well above you in air and do you not know that I am the Messenger of Almighty God and would never hurt any-one unjustly?" The Chief replied, "O' Messenger of Almighty God! My cautioning my people (Ants) was not for any hurt that they would suffer but to prevent them getting astray after seeing the glory of your hosts by forgetting the Glory of Almighty God."

The Chief of the Ants then asked Prophet Solomon, "May I ask you a question?" "Yes! Of course" said Prophet Solomon. "Who is better at this moment of time?" asked the Chief of the Ants.

"Why don't you answer the question yourself!" Prophet Solomon said. The Chief of the Ants replied: "At this moment in time, I am better than you for I am standing on the palm of a Prophet of God, whilst you O Prophet, are standing on the ground!"

Moral: There is a deep meaning in this event. It shows that even the most humble and smallest of creatures has been endowed with the necessary wisdom to live safely and avoid being hurt as far as possible. It also shows, how even a small Ant does have the natural understanding of the true position of Almighty God. It imparts a lesson that one should not forget the true might and glory of Almighty God when one experiences a great power and dignity of any creature in this world.

hus an Ant is one of the most wonderful small creatures in this world. The Ant (Sura Naml) in the Holy Quran is a chapter 27 named after this creature. Over 1400 years ago, Imam Ali (pbuh) was giving a sermon in Kufa, in which he was describing the beauties of creation in various forms of life. He was referring to small creatures and asking man to study how God made them so small yet so sturdy and strong. He described the Ant in these words:

"Look at an Ant. How tiny is its body and how delicate are its features! It is such a small creature that it often escapes the eve and few people care to attach any importance to it among the living beings found on this earth. Look at it and study its ways of life; how it crawls, how it attacks its food; how it lifts a grain so many times heavier than its body, carries it to its hole; how it

stores grains; and how in summer it gathers and stocks food for winter and rainy days."

#### The Ant prays for rain

nce during the time of the Prophet Solomon(pbuh), there was a big famine in Palestine. He came out with his people and proceeded to an open place in the desert to pray for the rains to come. Suddenly, he saw an Ant standing on its two legs, raising its hands up towards the sky and saying, "Oh Almighty God! We are but very small among all the creatures. We cannot survive

without Your grace. Please bestow upon us Your sustenance and do not punish us because of the sins of human beings. Please send down the rains so that trees can grow, farms become green and grains become available and we have our food to eat."

After hearing this Prophet Solomon told his people, "Let us go home. The prayer of this Ant is enough." It then rained heavily and all the land became green and productive.

The Ant is an intelligent creature. During warm days it collects and stores grain inside the holes. It knows that during wet and cold months, it would not be able to go out to search for food. For fear that grain may start growing because of wetness, it splits it into two or more pieces. At times, during moonlit nights, it brings the split grains out of the stores for drying and preservation against decay. The holes under the ground are made very carefully and covered with shelter to prevent the rain water from getting inside the holes. The Ant, unlike the other animals, can lift a burden twice its own weight. It is not a selfish creature. When an Ant finds some store of food grains, it runs up to its group and takes its fellow Ants to that place. It shows everyone of them its own find of the store. They always behave in this manner. They work and live in co-operation with each other.

Moral: This shows how the Ant works for the group and how each of them fulfils the needs and livelihood of its fellow-beings. How shameful it is for a man, who has no regard for another man; who has no concern for his fellow human beings who could be starving because of want of food.





## Prophet Solomon and the Queen of Sheba

It is reported that whenever Prophet Solomon went on a journey and fell in want of water for ablution for prayers, this bird (Hoopoe) used to show the place of water, for it is an instinct in the bird that it could see water underground as one sees a liquid through a bottle just as we see things in the opaque contained through x-rays.

In one of such journey, Prophet Solomon and his companions were returning from Makkah where they had performed their pilgrimage rituals. On their way home, they were looking for water but could not find any. Solomon tried to call Hoopoe (Hudhud) to ask for help but could not could not find it either. So he swore to reprimand it in return and thought that if it didn't have an acceptable excuse for its absence, he would severely punish.



Shortly after that, Hoopoe arrived and told Prophet Solomon that he had flown over the land of Sheba (Saba) where he had seen a beautiful woman ruling over the people. Her name was Bilqees the daughter of Sharaheel son of Malik son of Royan. She had plenty of wealth, a strong army and a throne made of gold, diamonds and other precious stones. He saw her and the people worshipping the sun, instead of Almighty God. Satan has glorified this path for them and prevented them from stepping in the way of the Almighty. Where as they should worship the God who has domination over all evident and hidden things on the earth and in heavens. The unique God who reveals and fades them, the God of the great celestial throne who is the one and the only.

Surely I found a woman ruling over them, and she has been given abundance and she has a mighty throne: I found her and her people adoring the sun instead of God, and the Satan has made their deeds fair-seeming to them and thus turned them from the way, so they do not go aright. (27:23-24)

### Use your powers to bring Humankind to the right path

Prophet Solomon was very pleased with Hoopoe and to verify the statement of Hoopoe, Prophet Solomon wrote a letter to the Queen of Sheba and sent it through the Hoopoe inviting her and her people to Islam. Hoopoe flew to the land of Sheba and dropped the letter in front of Bilqees while she was in the palace. Then flew away and sat somewhere nearby to hear what she says.

On receipt of the letter the Queen of Sheba called her advisors and said, I have received an honorable letter from Solomon. It begins In the name of Almighty God, the beneficent, the merciful and it reads: "Accept Almighty God and worship only Him. I

am his prophet, believe in what I say and accept my command." (27:30-31)

She said: O chiefs! give me advice respecting my affair: I never decide an affair until you are in my presence. (27:32)

They replied, "We are very strong and

have a powerful army to fight against Solomon, but the decision is yours and we will obey your order after due consideration."



#### Don't offer or receive bribe

The Queen Bilqees was wise, reflected on the results of defeat and victory, and then decided not to fight Prophet Solomon. Instead, she sent him precious and valuable gifts along with female slaves, disguised in men dresses. Thus she wanted to put his wisdom to test. The hoopoe went to Solomon immediately and before Bilqees's agents could get there told him whatever it had heard there. Solomon ordered to decorate his palace quite gloriously and arrange his troops and army in front of his palace so that his wealth and power would surprise her messengers who were on the way.

When the Queen of Sheba's messengers arrived in the land of Prophet Solomon, was astonished beyond measure when they saw the pomp and show of the Court, they were struck with wonder. They thought the gifts they had brought were worthless.

Prophet Solomon became very angry when he was presented with the gifts and said, "What! Do you offer me wealth? What Almighty God has given me is more superior to all the wealth on this earth. Go back to your Queen with her gifts and tell her that I will soon march to conquer her land Sheba with a huge army." And also informed the mes-



sengers about the disguised men and women. When Bilqees heard what had happened, she decided to surrender herself to Prophet Solomon and make preparations to go meet him. Angel Gabriel informed Solomon of their decision.

Meanwhile, on the orders of Prophet Solomon, a palace of glass was built to disillusion Bilqees. Even the floor was made of glass and water was put under it with different kinds of fish. The whole floor looked like a pool of water without the glass showing on top.

### Seek knowledge wherever you are, it can do wonders

**P**rophet Solomon then asked who could bring the throne of Bilqees to him. Jinn stepped forward and said, "I will bring the throne before you rise from your seat." But Asif-e-Barkhiya, who had access to little heavenly knowledge interrupted the Jinn and said, "I will bring it in the twinkling of an eye." No sooner had Solomon closed and opened his eyes than he found Bilqees's throne in front of him. When Prophet Solomon saw the throne before him, he praised Almighty God and thanked Him for His favors.

One who had the knowledge of the Book said: I will bring it to you in the twinkling of an eye. Then when he saw it settled beside him, he said: This is of the grace of my Lord that He may try me whether I am grateful or ungrateful; and whoever is grateful, he is grateful only for his own soul, and whoever is ungrateful, then surely my Lord is Self-sufficient, Honored. (27:40)

#### Admit your mistake whenever you are wrong

When Bilqees arrived, she was amazed to see her throne and realized what power Almighty God had given to Prophet Solomon. She then entered the palace through the courtyard whose floor was made of glass. Thinking that it was a pool of water, she took off her shoes and raised her clothes showing her bare feet and ankles to pass through it. When Prophet Solomon informed her, what it was, she was overwhelmed with wonder and accepted him to be a prophet of Almighty God. She said, "O Lord, I have wronged myself in worshipping the sun instead of you. I therefore give in myself with Solomon to You, the Lord of the Worlds." It was (Solomon) said to her: Enter the palace; but when she saw it she deemed it to be a great expanse of water, and bared her legs. He said: Surely it is a palace made smooth with glass. She said: My Lord!

surely I have been unjust to myself, and I submit with Solomon to Almighty, the Lord of the worlds. (27:44)

Prophet Solomon was successful in guiding the Queen to the Right Path. This device of his made the Queen realize the folly of getting misled by outward appearance and worshipping the objects manifesting the glory of the Lord. She saw the 'True Faith' of Prophet Solomon and accepted believing in the oneness of Almighty God. Prophet Solomon then married Bilqees and thereafter she returned to her land, where he visited her frequently.



## The Flood of Arim which was sent to the State of Saba

The community of Saba was one of the four biggest civilizations which lived in South Arabia. This people is estimated to have been established some time between 1000-750 BC and to have collapsed around 550 AD with the two centuries-long attacks of the Persians and the Arabs.

Archaeological findings and the historical data both verify what is recorded in the Quran. As mentioned in the verse, these people, who did not listen to the exhortations of their prophet and who ungratefully rejected faith, were in the end punished with a dreadful flood. This flood is described in the Quran in the following verses:

Certainly there was a sign for Saba in their abode; two gardens on the right and the left; eat of the sustenance of your Lord and give thanks to Him: a good land and a Forgiving Lord! But they turned away (from God), so We sent upon them a torrent (Flood) of which the rush could not be withstood, and in place of their two gardens We gave to them two gardens yielding bitter fruit and (growing) tamarisk and a few lote-trees. This We requited them with because they disbelieved; and We do not punish any but the ungrateful. (34:15-17)

The height of the dam in Ma'rib was 16 meters, its width was 60 meters and its length was 620 meters. According to the calculations, the total area that could be irrigated by the dam was 9,600 hectares, of which 5,300 hectares belonged to the southern plain, while the remaining part belonged to the northern plain. The expression in the Quran, "two gardens to the right and to the left," points to the imposing gardens and vineyards in these two valleys. Thanks to this dam and its irrigation systems, the region became famous as the best irrigated and most fruitful area of Yemen. As emphasized in the above verses, the Sabaean people were living in a region noted for its outstanding aesthetic, fruitful vineyards and gardens. Situated on the trade routes, the country of Saba had quite a high standard of living and was one of the most favored cities of the time.





### **Building of Mosque (Solomon's Temple)**

f the structures erected by men and Jinn's is the big Mosque or palace at Jerusalem or called as "Solomon's Temple" in Jewish literature. Solomon's Temple had the most advanced technology of the time and a superior understanding of aesthetics. It is said that Almighty God revealed to Prophet David saying: "O' David! tell My servants to offer gratitude and the prayer I heard, let there be a mosque so that your progeny and others of future generation might offer their prayers in it." The construction of the Mosque was started and the righteous ones among the Israelites and Prophet David himself labored for it by carrying heavy stones and mud on their heads. When the walls rose to a man's height, Prophet David was commanded by Almighty God that his share in building the

Mosque was complete, the work left to be completed by his son Solomon. After the death of Prophet David, Prophet Solomon continued the construction of the Mosque.

Once Prophet Solomon said to his courtiers: "Though Almighty God has blessed me with the greatest Kingdom which none ever had and has favored me with unique gifts of control over men, Jinn's, animals and birds, even the knowledge of the birds. I am not even happy for a moment over all these. I want to get on the top of my palace and have a full view of Almighty God's Kingdom around me, let none enter the palace."



minut

#### Prepare for death, it can strike anytime

Prophet Solomon, with his Staff in his hand, was reviewing the Kingdom, while supervising the construction of a magnificent mosque by the Jinn's. All of a sudden he saw a young man approaching him, he was surprised and asked him, "Who are you and who gave you permission to enter the palace?" The visitor replied, "I have come in with the permission of Almighty God, the owner of the universe. I am the angel of death (Ezraeel) and Almighty God has sent me to take your life away." Prophet Solomon said: "So, you get busy in the discharge of your duty, as directed by the Lord." Prophet Solomon was leaning on his staff, when he breathed his last. He remained leaning on his staff for long time even after his death. People and Jinn's who saw him from below the palace, were under the impression that he was alive. So they kept continued the construction

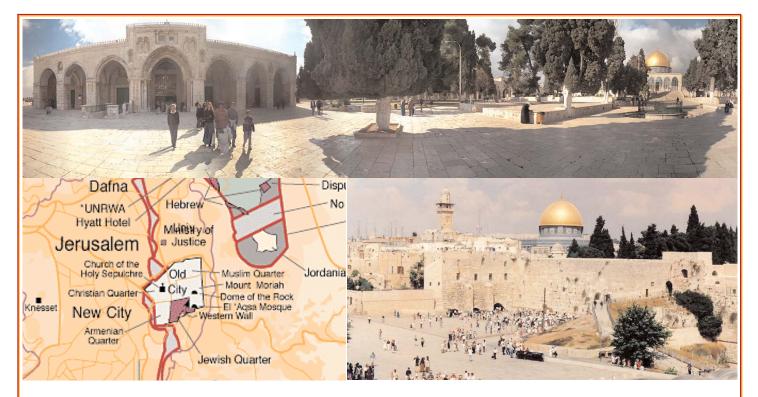
work till the Mosque was completed.

At this juncture, the Lord decreed: But when We decreed death for him, naught showed them his death but a creature of the earth that ate away his staff; and when it fell down, the Jinn came to know plainly that if they had known the unseen, they would not have tarried in abasing torment. (34:14)

They carried on with the work entrusted to them by Prophet Solomon, until

Almighty God caused the Ants to eat away the staff he was leaning on and his body fell to the ground. The Jinn's cursed themselves for not being able to understand God's mysteries. 'Had we known about this we would have escaped from this toil much earlier' they said. Prophet Solomon ruled for forty years and died at the age of fifty-three.

**Note:** After Solomon's Temple was destroyed, the only wall of the temple that remained was turned into the "Wailing Wall" by the Jews. After conquering Jerusalem during the 7th century, the Muslims built the Aqsa Mosque & the Dome of Rock where the temple once stood. Jerusalem still retains this.



Do not transgress

Once Prophet Solomon (pbuh) was sitting on the bank of a lake deeply engrossed in the beauties of nature around and appreciating the various forms of Almighty God's creation on earth.

Suddenly Prophet Solomon's attention was drawn towards an ant creeping forward with a grain of wheat in its mouth. As it reached near the water, a tortoise came out, opened its mouth and the ant crept into it. The tortoise closing its mouth disappeared under the water. After a while, the tortoise again sprung out of the water and standing on the bank opened its mouth

and the ant came out. But this time it had no grain of wheat in its mouth.

Prophet Solomon became anxious to know what had been happening under water. On inquiring, the ant explained that at the bottom of the lake, was a stone and underneath it lived a blind ant. Almighty God had created it there and because of blindness, it could not move about. The



ant further said that I have been appointed by Almighty God to provide its daily sustenance with the assistance of the tortoise and hence, I do perform this duty everyday.

Let us ponder over one thing. If a tiny creature like an ant living under a stone at the bottom of a sea is not denied its sustenance, why should man the noblest of all creatures ever suspect loss of his sustenance from Almighty God? Isn't it foolishness to dirty one's hand in prohibited transactions for earning one's livelihood? Such persons do not get more than what is destined to earn. Plus Almighty God's Wrath and Punishment in the Hereafter world.

## Scholar or hunter?

One day a pair of pigeons were sitting on a branch when they saw a scholar coming with a book under one arm and a stick in the other. One pigeon told the other: "Let's fly away! There is a man coming. He might kill us." Her partner said: "He's not a hunter. He is a scholar. He will not harm us." The scholar saw the pigeons and with his stick he struck the female pigeon. He took out his knife and made the meat Halal.

Her companion came to complain to Prophet Solomon (pbuh). The scholar was summoned to the court. "What crime did I commit?" He asked. "Is not Pigeon meat is Halal?"



The male pigeon replied: "I know that it is Halal for you, but if you came to hunt you should have come dressed as a hunter. You cheated and came as a scholar."

Moral: Our outside must match our inside.

# THE WISDOM OF LUQMAN

The Holy Quran says: And certainly We gave wisdom to Luqman, saying: Be grateful to God. And whoever is grateful, he is only grateful for his own soul; and whoever is ungrateful, then surely God is Self-sufficient, Praised. And when Luqman said to his son while he admonished him: O my son! Do not associate aught with God; most surely polytheism is a grievous iniquity. (31:12-13)

Luqman Hakeem is not generally believed to be a Prophet, but he was a man who had been specially endowed with wisdom by Almighty God. He was an African black who was bought as a slave in his childhood and sold in another country and lived at the time of Prophet David (pbuh). He was an extremely pious man and used to mostly remain silent while he pondered about the nature of life. Sometimes he would come to Prophet David to discuss problems. Luqman was so wise and respected that a Surah in the Quran is called by his name (Chapter 31).

One of Luqman's wives and some of his sons were disbelievers and so he preached to them about faith in Almighty God till they embraced Islam. Luqman lived for one thousand (1,000) years from the time of Prophet David to that of Prophet Jonah. His life and words are a great lesson in morals (Akhlaq) for mankind.

It is narrated from Imam Jafar Sadiq (pbuh) that Luqman was granted wisdom not because of his family or his wealth and nor was he gifted for his physical strength or appearance but for the fact that he was a man of manner who was quite stable and insistent in God's way and rejected everything which was against God's will. He was a silent man who looked poor but who had a deep and sharp insight and a great sense of logic. He was quite careful of his behavior and gestures and never laughed at whatever he saw or heard lest it would be considered as a sin for him.

He never joked or get angry with anyone and never passed two fighting men indifferently. In such cases, he used to stop, talk with them and reconcile them. He used to have close connections with philosophers and jurisprudence experts.

He was always refusing Satan and asked others about the different ways to overcome passion and sensual desires. He never traveled, except when necessary for these reasons God granted him wisdom and infallibility, but he was not a Prophet.

The Almighty commanded a group of angels to visit Luqman in the middle of the day, of course in a way that he would not see them. So they come dawn on him. Angels said: "You Luqman! Do you wish

to be God's Prophet on the earth and rule over all people?"

Luqman replied: "If God commands me to be so, I shall listen and obey Him because if He asks me this, He Himself will be there to guide me, teach me how to step in the way of salvation, and protect me from committing sins. But if he gives me the freedom of choice, I shall choose good health?"

Angels asked: But why should you do so? Luqman answered: "For it's too difficult to judge among people." If your judgments are true and accurate you may keep yourself safe and sound otherwise you have not only taken the wrong path to Paradise but also you will definitely lose your life.

It would be much better to be a weak and humiliated man in this world than being strong and powerful but poor, miserable and humiliated in the Hereafter. Moreover, He who prefers this world to Hereafter will lose in both worlds for this world will soon come to an end and he won't enjoy the Hereafter, either.

The angels were quite surprised of his wisdom and the Almighty, also found his philosophy and logic satisfactory. So when night fell upon and Luqman went to bed, God bestowed him the great wisdom to such an extent that it filled his whole body from head to toe.

The day after when Luqman got up he was the wisest man and the fairest judge of his time. He went among people and talked words of wisdom to share his knowledge with other people.

### An example of the wise words he told his son are:

'O' my dear son! From the day you were born in this world, you have turned your back at it and advanced towards the Hereafter. The house to which you're heading is closer to you than the house from which you have started out. Keep in touch with philosophers, but never dispute with them. Indulge

in the worldly blessings to an extent that they will not be considered a disadvantage for your Hereafter. Thus if you wish to have honor in this world, suppress your greed for what other people possess. Do know that you should have proper answers for four things in God's presence in near future. These four things you will be questioned for are:

Firstly, you are asked about haw you have wasted your youth, secondly on what you have spent or wasted your life for, thirdly how you have acquired your wealth and properties, and finally how you have spent your wealth.

## Whose pleasure shall we seek

Once Luqman said to his son, "Oh son! Do not tie your heart in seeking the pleasure of people. You are not likely to succeed. Do not pay attention to what people say. Instead tell yourself always to seek the pleasure of God."

Luqman wanted this lesson to be always remembered. Never to be forgotten. He thought of a way. He then told his son to ride a donkey. The son obeyed. The father followed behind on foot. They traveled in this way for some distance. After some distance they came across a group of people. Seeing the son on the donkey, one of them said, "What an impolite and bad boy. The old father is walking on foot. The young son is comfortably riding on the donkey. This is no manner to show respect to one's father."





Father and son heard this. The son came down from the donkey. Luqman rode on the animal. After sometime they came across another group of people. On seeing the father riding the donkey, the elder of the group said, "Oh you old man! This is not the way to bring up a son. You make him walk in the hot sun, while you sit comfortably on the donkey."

Luqman paid attention to what the people said. He came down from the donkey. Both father and son walked on foot. The donkey walked in front. They went a little further. People seeing them, said, "How foolish you are? You walk behind a donkey. Why don't you ride it?"

Luqman and his son once again accepted what the people said. They both rode the donkey and went further. They came across a river. There was a bridge to be crossed. Some people were sitting there. They saw Luqman and his son riding the donkey. One of them said, "It is very unkind and cruel of you two to ride on the poor donkey. The little animal can hardly take all your burden."

o taking this advice Luqman and his son dismounted from the donkey. They traveled a little distance further. Looking very lovingly Luqman said to his son, "You have heard and seen what the people said. It must have assured you, by now, that whatever you do or whichever way you move, one is not able to please the people of the world." He pointed at the flowing river and added, "A person can build a wall across the river. It will stop the flow of the water. But it is not possible to shut the mouth of the people from criticism."

Very clearly, similar is the case in our world today. The tongue has no bone. It can speak even without thought. There are as many opinions as there are people in the world. It is very bad to find fault with the other person. Especially when he is doing something good.

A person can feel very hurt when he listens to all the tongues that talk loose. To avoid getting hurt by loose talk, a person can train himself. He can discipline himself to think. By thinking he can know what is wrong and void. When a person is sure that what he is doing will please his Master, the Almighty God, then he must never worry what others speak.

### Admonitions by Luqman the wise

O my son! If you learn discipline in childhood you will benefit from it after you grow up.

O my son! You must set aside some hours in the day and night for achieving knowledge because there is nothing which can destroy man's knowledge.

my son! Do not quarrel with the quarrelsome nor argue with any wise and learned person. Do not make the rich your enemy and do not keep company of the oppressors and do not cultivate brotherhood with a sinner nor sit with a disgraced and notorious person.

My precious son! Fear Almighty God, as He deserves to be feared. Be afraid of Him even if you have at your credit all the virtues and good deeds done by all men and jinn if you have to stand before Him for giving account of your deeds.

O my dear son! Do not have a wish for the world and do not engage yourself in it because no creation





of Almighty God is more worthless than the world in the sight of Almighty God.

O my son! You must keep a weapon ready by which you can fell (defeat) your enemy and that weapon (tactic) is that you should shake hands with him and show pleasure to him without separating from him, without showing enmity to him so that he may reveal to you what is hidden in his heart about harming you.

O my son! Make a thousand friends because even a thousand friends are less but do not make even one enemy because even one enemy is sufficient.

Keep your secrets hidden and your inner self, pure.

Keep your soul clean of Almighty God's disobedience and characterless ness.

My son! Hard work for attaining a useful thing should be considered light and less effort in achieving a harmful thing should be considered heavy.

The one whose faith in Almighty God's attribute of being the Provider is less, must take a lesson of advice and the one who is weak in asking provision from the Almighty must take a lesson of advice because it is only Almighty God who brought him from non-existence into existence and gave him provision in three states and there was no source of getting provision whatsoever in any of the said three states. So he much have rest assured that He will provide him maintenance in the fourth state of his life also.

One of the above mentioned three states is when he was in the womb of his mother. It was only Almighty God who provided him sustenance and sheltered him in a restful place where he suffered neither heat nor cold.

In another state he was brought out of his mother's womb by Almighty God and he provided his provision of milk from his mother's breast. It was a pure and clean and enough for him in that state. Almighty God nourished and raised him in that state wherein there was no other source of nourishment and training, no strength for earning and no power of warding off harms.

The third state was when his milk supply ended. Then he was provided maintenance through his parent's earnings who spent on him with maximum love and pleasure and compassion, so much so that sometimes they gave him preference over themselves.

This continued until he grew up and got enough strength and intelligence to earn his provision himself. Then he himself made things difficult for him by entertaining undesirable thoughts about his Lord and did not spend for fulfilling and observing the rights of Almighty God and began to give less to his family members fearing loss of wealth thereby losing faith in Almighty God.

This was despite the fact that Almighty God always rewards him for spending in His path both in this world and in Hereafter. So bad indeed is such a slave.

My son! Everything has a sign by which it is recognized. That sign gives witness for that thing. So religion too has three signs: Faith (Imaan), Knowledge (Ilm) and Deeds (Amal).

Faith has three signs: Testifying of Almighty God's Books. Knowledge also has three signs: Knowing

his Lord, ascertaining what his Lord likes and what He dislikes. Again there are three signs of the one who acts according to his Knowledge: Daily prayers (Salat), fasts (Soum) and poor tax (Zakat). Also there are three signs of a man who closes the door of knowledge for himself and does not become learned: He quarrels with one who is wiser than him, mentions things which are higher than his level of intelligence though he acts against it, oppresses the weak and assists the oppressors.

And there are three sings of the hypocrites: His tongue does not corroborate his heart, his heart does not corroborate his character and his outward appearance is different from his inner self.

There are three signs of a sinner: He misappropriates people's wealth, tells lies and acts contrary to his words. There are three signs of a Riyaakaar (one who make a show): He is slack in his worship while he is alone but makes a show of full attentiveness in worship while in public and he does it so that people may praise him.

The envious has also three signs: He backbites people and flatters them on the face, feels happy when people are in trouble. There are three sings of extravagant: He eats things which are beyond his capacity and so also he wears likewise, and he feeds others crossing his limits of capacity.

There are three signs of a indolent (lazy): He is slack in doing good deeds and he postpones good deeds until and unless he is threatened and he becomes so lazy that the job is spoiled and thus he becomes a defaulter. There are three signs of a negligent man: He is doubtful in his worship, becomes careless in matter of remembering his Lord and he forgets good deeds.

Reference: Hayaat al Qulub, Vol. 1.

## THE MEN OF RAS

The Holy Quran says: And the (tribes of) Aad and Thamud and the inhabitants of Ras, and generations between them in a great number. And to each of them We gave examples (lessons, warnings) and We destroyed every one (of them) with an utter extermination. (25:38-39)

The people of Ras lived between Azerbaijan and Armenia on the bank of the river Ras during the time just after Prophet Solomon (pbuh). They lived in twelve towns situated along the river. The largest of these towns was Isfandar where the king, Tarqooz, lived. Tarqooz was a descendant of the cruel king Namrud who had ruled at the time of Prophet Abraham (pbuh).

The men of Ras worshipped the "King Tree (Sanobar)." This was a huge pine tree that had been originally planted at Isfandar by Yafes, son of Prophet Noah (pbuh), after the great flood. The men of Ras picked twelve (12) buds off the tree and planted each of these twelve buds in their towns. There was also a spring under the big tree from which they branched off a subdivision to pass the twelve towns and water the buds. Drinking the water of this spring was absolutely forbidden. The punishment of those who had drunk the water of the spring or watered their animals with it was a hard death. People believed, the lives of these twelve Gods are dependent upon the water of this spring. So it's not fair to drink its water and decrease the reviving water which supplies our Gods.

The men of Ras cultivated the lands around the river and Almighty God blessed them with a pleasant climate and a life of comfort. In spite of this, they were unmindful of His favors and thoughtlessly turned to the pine tree for their needs. Twigs from the king tree would be taken to homes and also worshipped.

The other ritualistic custom of these people was that every month on a special day they gathered together in one of the towns, and made festivities. They all gathered under the pine tree of that town and offered a sacrifice, then they burned that sacrifice in fire and when the smoke of the burned sacrifice raised to the sky, they knelt down before the pine tree and started crying. This way, Satan talked to them in the disguise of the tree. This was their habit in these twelve towns until there was the time when the festivity had to be held in the largest town Isfandar. The inhabitants of all the twelve towns had to gather in the largest town and make festivities for twelve days, instead of one. The people of each town tried to bring more sacrifices than the others towns. Praising the Satan had given them a fake hope and they thought they could achieve success doing this. Satanic words in this town was also much more prolonged than the other towns and Satan was trying to have the utmost effect on them.

To educate and guide these ignorant people, Almighty God sent to them His Prophet. Although the name of the Prophet is not mentioned in history, we do know that he was from the descendants of Yahuda, son of Prophet Jacob (pbuh).

The Prophet tried to bring the people to their senses by pointing out the error of their ways. He taught them about the blessings and bounties of Almighty God and warned them not to worship anything



besides Him. However, in spite of his continuous efforts, the people turned a deaf ear to the Prophet's words and carried on worshipping their pine tree.

On the day of their festival the Prophet sadly watched the people prepare for the ceremonies. As he observed the dedication and enthusiasm with which they were preparing to glorify their tree, he invoked Almighty God to dry up the tree so that the people may realize the absurdity of their worship.

The prayer was granted by Almighty God and the shocked people watched their pine tree wither and begin to die before their eyes. However, instead of learning a lesson, they decided that their God was annoyed at the interference of the Prophet and resolved to sacrifice him to appease their God.

Thus the men of Ras seized the Prophet and threw him into a large pit. Thereafter, they covered the pit and thus buried him alive. For some time the cries of the Prophet were heard but then there was quiet as his soul departed this world. The people turned to their tree to see if it had recovered. Instead, they noticed the signs of Divine Punishment.

Suddenly, the Wrath of Almighty God broke over the whole tribe. A red blast of wind swept through them and destroyed the entire population. All that was left at the end was a black cloud which hung over the entire region, plunging it into darkness. Thus, the men of Ras faded into obscurity, providing posterity with a valuable lesson.

# JONAH (YUNUS) THE PROPHET

The Holy Quran says: "And verily Jonah was (one) of the Messengers." (37:139)

Jonah son of Mati was appointed as a Messenger for the inhabitants of Nineveh (near the city of Mosul) at the age of thirty (30) years. Prophet Jonah (pbuh) invited these people, who are idolaters to worship the Unique Gad, but they refused his invitation and said: "What are these words you're telling us? Our ancestors were worshipping these idols and as we are the followers of our

fathers, so we shall do the same." Jonah told them: "Refer to your own wisdom and see if these idols deserve to be worshipped." They replied: "You Jonah! Don't put yourself into this much trouble and don't try in vain to invite us to your God for we are neither afraid of your God's torment nor do we believe in you and your God. Now do whatever you wish to." Prophet Jonah (pbuh) continued preaching for thirty three (33) years to more than hundred thousand idolaters but there were only two believers. Robeel a erudite, a wise man was the first believer. Tanookha a pious man who would bring wood from the forest, sold it and thus earned his livelihood, was the second believer.

Prophet Jonah (pbuh) thought that he had fulfilled his mission and that his invitation did not have any effect. He lost all hopes that his people would embrace the true faith, hence he requested Almighty for chastisement. He was asked to wait and be patient but on his insistence their punishment was decreed and it was announced to the people. Prophet Jonah (pbuh) along with his companions hid himself in some mountain.

Robeel stood on the mountain and reminded the people of the chastisement promised by Almighty God. He asked them to repent and have faith in Him and His Prophet Jonah. After Jonah had left, the signs of God's torment appeared among the people of the tribe. The sky went dark and the terrible storm started which caused the people of the tribe to realize what a great mistake they had mode. Among the people of the tribe them was a very wise and knowledgeable man who was kind and benevolent towards his people. Coming to know of the disaster expecting them, he called people and shouted. "Now these are the signs of God's torment." Hence, announce your faith in God. Almighty is merciful to His servants. Show Him that you have repented. Take suckling babies and make them weep. Take your animals away from the pastures. Make them hungry so that they may cry loudly.

Following this, all men and women, young and old rushed to the desert to pray and moan to God and ask His greatness not to send them dawn such a great torment. They were praying in such a loud voice that their moaning and cries could be heard all over the desert. It depicted the scene as if the trumpet was blown and all had presented themselves humiliating before their Lord.

Almighty God bless them with His kindness and mercy and stopped the sending of His Divine torment to them, because of their sincere repentance and their determination to tread on the right path. So the black clouds scattered gradually, and then the clear blue sky began to appear.

Next day, when Prophet Jonah (pbuh) came down from the mountain he was under the impression that the city along with the disbelievers would have been destroyed. He was surprised to see the people hale and hearty. But Prophet Jonah (pbuh) did not go to the city lest people might take him to a liar; so he went towards the Mediterranean Sea, reached the seashore after walking a long way. Holy Quran relates this story in the follows words:

When he ran away (like a slave from captivity) to the ship (fully) laden, He (agreed to) cast lots, and he was condemned: Then the big Fish did swallow him, and he had done acts worthy of blame. Had it not been that he (repented and) glorified Almighty God, He would certainly have remained inside the Fish till the Day of Resurrection. But We cast him forth on the naked shore in a state of sickness, And We caused to grow, over him, a spreading plant of the gourd



kind. And We sent him (on a mission) to a hundred thousand (men) or more. And they believed; so We permitted them to enjoy (their life) for a while. (37:140-148)

There he saw a group of people who were on board a ship and were about to sail. Jonah asked them to let him in, They accepted his request and let him on board. While they were sailing on the sea a great storm started and dreadful high waves began to strike the ship so hard that all the passengers were about to be thrown in the sea. There was a danger that the ship would sink, as it was overloaded and the people suspected that there was a runaway slave on the ship. In those days it was believed that if such a person was on board a ship, it would sink. So, they decided to throw someone out into the sea by casting lots. The lot fell upon Jonah but because Jonah was their guest and they had to respect him, the passengers cast the lot again. Again it fell upon Jonah, but nobody was ready to believe that

he was a runaway slave because he looked so decent and pious. They did it for the third time but the result was just the same. At this time Jonah understood he was probably put into this trouble for leaving his tribe without God's permission.

Thinking that there had to be a divine wisdom behind that event he jumped into the sea without any hesitation and God commanded a huge fish to swal-

low him down without hurting him. For three (3) days Jonah was in the stomach of the fish and the fish was swimming deep down in the sea through the dark water. There, Jonah was suffering a great grief and sorrow.

So in that state of depression he took refuge in Great God and started praying to Him in the darkness by saying: "There is no God in the whole Universe but You and You are

Glorious and exempted from any fault or oppression."

The Holy Quran says: And remember Zun-nun, when he departed in wrath: He imagined that We had no power over him! But he cried through the depths of darkness, "There is no god but thou: glory to thee: I was indeed wrong!" So We listened to him: and delivered him from distress: and thus do We deliver those who have faith. (21:87-88)

God answered his prayers and commanded the fish to take Jonah to the seashore. As he came out of the belly of the fish with his body badly burnt due to the acids inside the fish, he found that he could not stand the heat of the sun which was somehow burning his skin. He, lay sick, extremely weak, and helpless, like a new born babe. So God commanded a gourd plant to grow there so that he could rest in the shade of its leaves and protected against the Sun and the flies.

A wild goat, would come and feed Jonah as Commanded by Almighty God, to regain his lost strength. After a short time, Jonah recovered and become sound and healthy again. One day as he returned to his place, the gourd plant had dried away. Prophet Jonah felt sorry at this change.

Almighty God addressing Prophet Jonah said, "O Jonah you did not feel for hundred thousand or more of your fellow men having been made to perish for rebellion against you and you feel for merely loving a gourd plant which you need no more."

God sent him this revelation: "Jonah, go back to your own tribe for your people now do believe in God and have stopped worshipping idols and eagerly await to meet you." When Jonah reached the premises of the city he happened to meet a shepherd who did not believe him to be Jonah since it was considered that he had been drowned. Prophet Jonah prayed to Almighty God and a sheep testified him as Jonah and people believed in him. In this way Jonah was sent back to his people and they enjoyed a great life as long as it was destined for them by God.





# **ZECHARIAH (ZAKARIYA) THE PROPHET**

**P**rophet Zechariah (pbuh) was sent to the people of Banu Israel (Israelites). He was well liked and respected by his people because of his cheerful manner. He was in charge of the mosque of Baytul Muqaddas in Jerusalem, and preached the religion of Almighty God from there. He guided the people according to the rules laid down in the Torah (Taurat) of Prophet Moses (pbuh), who had been the last Rasul (a Prophet who has been given a Book) before him. For living Prophet Zechariah worked as a carpenter and made beautiful things out of wood.

Prophet Zechariah had also been entrusted to look after Mary (Bibi Maryam), the mother of Prophet Jesus (Issa), who happened to be his niece (wife sister's daughter). He had provided her with a special chamber in Baytul Muqaddas. Although Mary (pbuh) remained in the chamber, busy worshipping Almighty God, Prophet Zechariah found that she always had fresh fruit in her room. Because he knew

that she had no contact with any person, he wondered where the food came from. Mary informed him that Almighty God sent her the fruits every morning and evening, and it was a sign of His Grace. Prophet Zechariah realized that he was the guardian of a very special lady whom Almighty God had specially chosen for a great honor.



Prophet Zechariah had reached the age of ninety (90) years and his wife

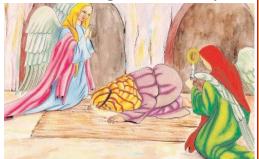
Elizabeth (Umme Kulsoom) daughter of Imran was eighty eight (88) and despite his cheerful and relaxed nature, he was sad that he had no son to succeed him, for he knew he would soon pass away and no one would be able to undertake the responsibility of leading his tribe. After hearing Mary he pondered on the limitless blessings that Almighty God bestows on His servants and wondered if he could be blessed with a son despite his old age. The same night he went to pray under the Arch of Sanctuary in Baytul Muqaddas, which was the special place of prayer to Almighty God. His prayers have been recorded in the Holy Quran as: (This is) a mention of the mercy of your Lord to His servant Zechariah. When he quietly called his Lord and said, "My Lord! My bones have become feeble, and my hair has turned white with age. Yet I have never been deprived in receiving from you the answer to my prayers. I am afraid of what my kinsmen will do after (my death) and my wife is barren. Lord, grant me a son who will be my heir and the heir of the family of Jacob, and make him, O my Lord, one with whom You are well pleased." (19:2-6)

..."Lord grant me by Your Grace, virtuous offspring, You hear all my prayers." When he was standing during prayer in the sanctuary, the angels called him saying, "Almighty God gives you the glad news of the birth of your son John, who will be testimony of the Word of Almighty God. (He will be) honorable and chaste and one of the righteous Prophets." (3:38-39)

The prayers of Prophet Zechariah were answered and he was blessed with a handsome and virtuous son, John (Yahya). Almighty God bestowed this child with wisdom and knowledge in his infancy and

appointed him His Prophet and Messenger. "My God how would I know when?" asked Prophet Zechariah. You would not be able to speak for three days, Almighty answered.

And sure enough one day Prophet Zechariah found that he could not speak at all. He was overjoyed because it was good news for him. Hence get absorbed in Almighty's praise and Glory.



## JOHN (YAHYA) THE PROPHET

Prophet John is a son of Prophet Zechariah (pbuh). Almighty God bestowed this child with wisdom and knowledge in his infancy and appointed him His Prophet and Messenger.

From his childhood, Prophet John (pbuh) worshipped and glorified Almighty God. Among his qualities mentioned in the Holy Quran, is the fact that he was always kind to his parents and never spoke to them harshly. Prophet John is mentioned in the Bible as John the Baptist. His story in the Christian tradition is described in Bible Luke (1:5-22). He would eat dried bread or leaves of the tree and would put on coarse cloth. It is said that Prophet John was yet a young boy when others called him to play, he used to tell them: Men are not born to play away their lives.

#### His miraculous birth

Prophet Jesus was not the only Prophet who was born miraculously. By miraculous, we mean outside of the normal process of human reproduction Almighty God has ordained which requires a man and a woman to conceive a child. In the case of Jesus, this meant being born of a mother but no father. But Prophet Adam (pbuh)'s birth was even more miraculous in this sense since he was created with no mother or father. The birth of Prophet John is miraculous because he is the offspring of a barren mother Elizabeth and an elderly father Prophet Zechariah.

"Zechariah exclaimed: 'My Lord! How shall I have a son when old age has overtaken me and my wife is barren?' He said: 'Thus shall it be; Almighty God does what He wills.'" (3:40) Also see (3:38, 21:89)

Prophet John was well versed in the Divine commandments as laid down in the Torah (Taurat). He used to teach people the religious principles and urged them to stay away from sin. He was particularly serious in discharging his duties as a Prophet and would not hesitate to speak out if he thought that a wrong action was being committed.

#### **Cause of Prophet John's assassination**

One day, Prophet John found out that the Emperor of Palestine, Herod antipas, wanted to marry his niece (brother's daughter), Salome (Herodias). He was extremely annoyed, because this sort of marriage was against the religion and had been forbidden in the Torah. His views that this marriage should not occur began to spread around the country, and people began to gossip about the king's unlawful relationship with his niece.

Heard of Prophet John's objection to the marriage, she became his deadliest enemy.

Once when the king was indulging in wine and music, she appeared in front of him in a shameless manner. The king became more infat-



uated with her than ever and promised to give her anything she desired. She demanded that Prophet John be killed as soon as possible. The king, who had lost all control of his senses in his love for his niece, issued the order for murdering Prophet John.

When the scholars of the faith came to know about it, they went to the king and tried to dissuade him, from this heinous act and gave out that if a drop of John's blood was shed on earth, no vegetation would grow at all. But the king remained firm in his decision. One of the courtiers suggested that Zechariah's prayer was always granted by Almighty God; so he should be killed first lest he curses to king for the assassination of his son. This was agreed and the king's men went to Zechariah's house. Both father and son were offering prayers. They caught hold of John but Zechariah escaped and hid himself in the tree which had split to afford him shelter. A part of Zechariah's clothes was visible; hence the king's men decided to cut the tree, by means of a saw.

When Zechariah felt that he was being cut, along with the trunk of the tree, he heard a voice. Beware Zechariah! If you raised any voice or complained your name will be removed from the list of the patient ones! Prophet Zechariah was cut by the saw without any complaint or shouting.

Soon afterwards, the king's courtiers brought Prophet John before the king and brutally murdered him. However, wherever the sacred blood of this noble Prophet of Almighty God fell, it began to boil. It was suppressed by heaps of sand, but it continued to boil. Finally, a sand hill was erected over it, but the blood still kept on flowing.

This miracle only stopped when Nebuchadnezzar (Bakhtun Nasr) invaded Palestine and avenged the innocent blood of John by putting 17,000 people of Israelite (Banu Israel) to death on that sand hill.

Prophet Zechariah martyr at the age of two hundred and seven (207) years and his son Prophet John was martyred at the age of ninety five (95) years.

# MARY (MARYAM) THE MOTHER OF PROPHET JESUS (ISSA)

In the Holy Quran there is a chapter (19) named Mary which talks about her birth, the birth of her son Prophet Jesus, and other things.

I mran (Joachim) and Hannah (Anne) lived happily but did not have any issue which they desired so much. Hannah a faithful and pious woman wished God would bestow upon her an offspring. One day she rose her head and started praying to God: "You Great God of the whole Universe, I have just made a vow that if You grant me a child, I shall send him to be at Your service in Jerusalem." And the prayer was accepted; but the issue was a female.



The Holy Quran relates the story of Mary's birth thus: (Remember) when the wife (Hannah) of Imran said: My Lord! surely I vow to Thee what is in my womb, to be devoted (to Thy service); accept therefore from me, surely Thou art the Hearing, the Knowing. So when she brought forth, she said: My Lord! Surely I have brought it forth a female and God knew best what she brought forth and the male is not like the female, and I have named it Mary (maidservant of God), and I commend her and her offspring into Thy protection from the accursed Satan the outcast. So her Lord accepted her with a good acceptance and made her grow up a graceful growing. (3:35-37)

It was 618 years before Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) was born that Mary was born to Hannah. Her father having died before her birth there was a dispute as to who should be her guardian. When Mary was first brought to the temple (Baytul Muqaddas), the priests, because she was the daughter of one



of their chiefs, they disputed among themselves who should have the education of her. Prophet Zechariah insisted that he ought to be preferred, because he had married her aunt Elizabeth; but the others not consenting that it should be so, they agreed to decided the matter by casting lots; where-upon twenty-seven (27) of them went to the river Jordan and threw in their rods (or arrows without heads or feathers, such as the Arabs used for the same purpose), on which they had written some passages of the law, but they all sank, except that of Prophet Zechariah's which floated on the water, and he had thereupon the care of the child committed to him.

Thus Mary came under the care of Prophet Zechariah, and since she was reserved for service to Almighty God. Mary was brought up in holy surroundings, among virtuous people, so after she become grown up a girl Prophet Zechariah reserved a special room for her retirement where she used to meditate and pray to Almighty God, the lord of the worlds. Whenever Zachariah went to her sanctuary he found some heavenly sustenance there. He asked her: "You Mary! whom do this heavenly food come from?" Mary always answered: "From God, for He provides sustenance for Whoever He wishes." God had granted Mary a state of infallibility as well as a high rank and superiority over the other women of her time.

Once when Mary went out of her room for a bath to a separate covered area, she saw a young man standing in front of her. Mary was terrified. Who are you? She asked. For God's sake don't come close. I seek God's refuge from you. The man answered do not fear, I am God's angel Gabriel



and sent by Him only as a messenger to tell you that you will have a holy son. But how can I have son when no man has ever touched me (I am not married) and I am not unchaste? She asked.

It is God's will and it is not difficult for Him. When He wishes to create something He just says, "Be" and it is. Your son will be a very holy one. So saying the angel disappeared and left Mary in a daze. Mary submitted to God's will and waited until there came the time she had to give birth to her holy son. An introduction about the virtues and qualities of her son was also made to her in this prophecy. The Holy Quran records the prophecy in these words.

When the angels said: O Mary, surely God gives you good news with a Word from Him (of one) whose name is the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, worthy of regard in this world and the hereafter and of those who are made near (to God). And he shall speak to the people when in the cradle and when of old age, and (he shall be) one of the good ones. (3:45-46)

And further that:

She said: My Lord! when shall there be a son (born) to me, and man has not touched me? He said: Even so, God creates what He pleases; when He has decreed a matter, He only says to it, Be, and it is. And He will teach him the Book and the wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel (Injeel). And (make him) a messenger to the children of Israel. (3:47-49)

## **BIRTH OF PROPHET JESUS (ISSA)**

fter the above account of the tidings of the birth of a son to Mary, the Holy Quran (19:16-32) relates the story of the conception and birth of Prophet Jesus and describes his proclamation to be a Prophet of Almighty God even when he was in the cradle.

Later when the time for her son to be born came close, Mary went to a remote place, away from the people. In that desert she patiently suffered the great pain of delivering her child and finally she gave birth to a beautiful baby all alone & without any assistance. There, afraid & weak with hunger & thirst she lay under a dried palm tree and murmured in pain, "I wish I were dead and forgotten before this."

But a voice spoke soothingly to her, "Grieve not Mary. Your Lord has provided a stream of water beneath you and if you shake the trunk of the dried palm tree under which you are sitting plenty of ripe and fresh dates will fall on you; so eat, drink and enjoy seeing your son, for God is the Most Merciful."

Her son Prophet Jesus was born in this remote place. Even though Mary

loved the cuddly little baby she did not have the courage to take him to her people. How would she answer their questions? What would they say? How could she explain the birth of the child? She was miserable and didn't know what to do. But God comforted her. "Do not say anything to the people. Do not answer any questions, just show them by signs that you are fasting and have vowed not to speak that day," she was ordered.

Strengthened by God's support, innocent young Mary, picked up her baby and walked back to her people in Jerusalem. When they saw her coming with a baby in her arms they gathered round her. "Mary, what a shame! Your parents were pious people, what have you done?" And they wanted to know about the child.

Mary did not answer them. She just pointed towards the child.

"Are you crazy? How can we talk to an infant, Mary?" Just then to everyone's utter amazement the child in Mary's arms began to speak. "I am God's messenger, He has given me the Scripture (Injeel) and made me a Prophet. He has ordered me to say my prayers and be charitable and has blessed me wherever I be: He has made me kind to my mother and bestowed peace upon me on the day I was born, the day that I die and the day I shall be raised up (again)."

With these words Prophet Jesus introduced himself and proved Mary's chastity and virtue, for the birth of such a child was an extraordinary miracle and it wasn't possible except through a virtuous and chaste mother. Also God who made him talk at such stage had surely been able to give birth to him without a father. Everyone listened in wide-eyed wonder and disbelief. This was Prophet Jesus, the Prophet of God. It quietened all those who had come to reproach Mary who was innocent and holy, to hear the infant speak.

Giving this account of the birth of Prophet Jesus as the son of Virgin Mary, the Holy Quran declares: This is Jesus, the son of Mary; (this is) a statement of the truth about which they dispute. (19:34)

The people of those days, as it is clear from the above quotations of the Holy Quran namely the Jews doubted the truthfulness of Mary and continued to hurl all sorts of objections against her till finally the Holy Quran emphatically and unequivocally exonerated her of all their wrongful charges against her and stated the entire event of Prophet Jesus birth so that the matter became quite clear. To the Christians we can say with full confidence that it is the Holy Quran, whether you take it to be a Revealed Book or not, that silenced the Jews forever. As a matter of fact Christianity should feel highly indebted to Holy Quran for having so candidly spoken in support of Virgin Mary. The Holy Quran refutes the false allegation of the Jews that she bore Prophet Jesus of unchaste origin. It openly holds the allegation to be a sin and vouchsafes Mary's chastity.





Final home of Mary (Ephesus/Turkey)

"And for their disbelief and their utterance against Mary a grievous calumny." (4:156)

The Christians, that is those who claimed to be the follower of Prophet Jesus had to be corrected in their notions about his personality. The Christians, on account of birth of Prophet Jesus from virgin mother without a father, took him to be the Son of God. The Holy Quran corrects this notion in the following words:

Verily similitude of Jesus with Almighty God is as the similitude of Adam; He created him out of dust then said to him BE, and he became. (3:59)

And further: And (remember, O' Our Prophet Mohammad) she (Mary) who guarded her chastity, so We breathed into her of Our Spirit and made her and her son a sign for the nations. (21:91)

At another place the Holy Quran further clarifies the position of Prophet Jesus in these words: And Mary, the daughter of Imran, who guarded her chastity, so We breathed into her of Our Spirit and she accepted the truth of the words of her Lord and His Scriptures, and she was of, the obedient ones. (66:12)

In this beautiful and convincing style the Holy Quran made the candid assertion that Mary was chaste and both she and her son that is, Prophet Jesus were Signs of Almighty God.

Almighty can make water spring out from stones and trees come out from the earth. He can make fish swim in the water and birds fly in the air. He has made man superior to all living beings so that he (man) can see these clear signs, think about them and be grateful to his Creator. And He has given man intelligence and wisdom to understand and appreciate His greatness and make his faith in God's words stronger. Because God is all powerful and he is the creator of the whole universe. For Him nothing is impossible.

### **RELATIONS OF GOD, MARY AND JESUS**

Oncerning the Christian ideas about the relations of God, Mary and Prophet Jesus the Holy Quran says: O followers of the Book! do not exceed the limits in your religion, and do not speak (lies) against God, but (speak) the truth; the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary is only a messenger of God and His Word which He communicated to Mary and a spirit from Him; believe therefore in God and His messengers, and say not, Three. Desist, it is better for you; God is only one God; Far is it removed from His Transcendent Majesty that He should have a son, whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His, and God is sufficient for a Protector. (4:171)

As the final statement on the unimpeachable position of Mary and of Prophet Jesus the Holy Quran records as follows: Certainly they disbelieve who say: Surely God, He is the Messiah, son of Mary; and the Messiah said: O Children of Israel! serve God, my Lord and your Lord. Surely whoever associates (others) with God, then God has forbidden to him the garden, and his abode is the fire; and there shall be no helpers for the unjust. Certainly they disbelieve who say: Surely God is the third (person) of the three; and there is no god but the one God, and if they desist not from what they say, a painful chastisement shall befall those among them who disbelieve. (5:72-73)

The Messiah, son of Mary is but a messenger; messengers before him have indeed passed away; and his mother was a truthful woman; they both used to eat food. See how We make the communications clear to them, then behold, how they are turned away. (5:75)

## JESUS (ISSA) THE PROPHET

H aving shown that Mary came out of a very noble family noted for its righteousness, chastity and devotion to Almighty God and that she, gave birth to a son whom Almighty God commissioned as a Prophet after thirteen hundred (1300) years from the time of Prophet Moses (pbuh), for the guidance of the people of his days, calling him His Spirit, Word, Messenger (Nabi) etc.

Christ (Messiah) is another name of Jesus and for this reason his followers are called Christians. The birth of Prophet Jesus marked the beginning of the Christian calendar.

Prophet Jesus, grew up as a very virtuous young man. His cousin Prophet John, the son of Prophet Zechariah, preached the word of God among his people. But the king had him beheaded. After John's martyrdom the heavy responsibility of leading his people to the right path fell on Prophet Jesus. When Prophet Jesus was thirty (30) years old, he received the command of God to begin his mission and the Divine Book (Injeel), was revealed to him. But the Israelite were not an easy people to lead.

They were stubborn and critical of everything and argued just for the sake of argument. The rich among them were cruel to the poor; there were intrigues and quarrels among them. It was not surprising, therefore, that the Romans had taken control of their country while they lived almost like slaves in their own land. Their rulers were mere puppets and the real power was in the hands of the Roman governor. They lived in disgrace and misery, with sickness, fear and poverty all around them. There was no one to guide them and they were like a scattered flock of sheep. At such a time Prophet Jesus came with the word of God and His Book the Gospel (Injeel), to guide them.

Prophet Jesus was a very soft-spoken and humble young man. He saw the condition of his people and knew of their miseries. He spoke to them with love, gave them comfort and guided them, all the time telling them about the one and only God, who had sent him to them as a prophet. He gave them hope for the future and the hereafter. He assured them of God's reward if they were virtuous and patient.

The poor people trusted Prophet Jesus and loved him dearly. They came to him with all their woes. He was their Messiah. God had given him great powers of healing. He cured the sick and the blind just by touching them. In those days the most dreaded of all diseases was leprosy, because there was no cure for it. It was believed to be contagious, and people who had it were taken far away and thrown into a pit or valley of lepers, where they were left to die. Even their family and friends did not visit them for fear of catching the disease. For those desperate people Prophet Jesus was a ray of hope, because God had given him the power of healing them. These remarkable powers attracted the Jews to him and some became believers. The rest of them became his enemies.

Can you imagine the love and devotion Prophet Jesus received. People followed him everywhere. They listened to him and believed in him. He spread the word of God wherever he went. He taught them to love one another, to forgive their enemies and to believe in the one and only God. He told them that Prophet Moses religion was true and he as a prophet had come to verify it.

I have come to confirm the Law brought to you by Moses and to give you the good news of another prophet, Ahmed, after me, he said to his people. (Prophet Mohammad came 500 years after Prophet Jesus). Prophet Jesus traveled far and wide with his message and preached to the people all over the country from Nazareth in Galilee to Jerusalem. The poor people listened to him and found in his teachings hope for a better life. They got strength by being patient and humble. But the rich and pow-

erful people turned against him. They saw in his message the seeds of a revolution.

The Holy Quran says: And most certainly We gave Moses the Scripture and We sent messengers after him one after another; and We gave Jesus, the son of Mary, clear arguments and strengthened him with the holy spirit, What! whenever then a messenger came to you with that which your souls did not desire, you were insolent so you called some liars and some you slew. (2:87)

And He will teach him the Book and the wisdom and the Torah (Taurat) and the Gospel (Injeel). And (make him) a messenger to the children of Israel: That I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that I determine for you out of dust like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird with God's permission and I heal the blind and the leprous, and bring the dead to life with God's permission and I inform you of what you should eat and what you should store in your houses; most surely there is a sign in this for you, if you are believers. And a verifier of that which is before me of the Torah and that I may allow you part of that which has been forbidden to you, and I have come to you with a sign from your Lord therefore be careful of (your duty to) God and obey me. Surely God is my Lord and your Lord, therefore serve Him; this is the right path. (3:48-51)

It is thus clear that Prophet Jesus was not God, nor Son of God, but only a Prophet of God commissioned by Him for the guidance of the people like other Prophets commissioned before him. As a Prophet of Almighty God he had been give certain signs namely that he could formulate a bird and then put life in it with the permission of Almighty God, or heal the blind and the leper or bring the dead back to life, all by invoking Almighty God's help and support so that he himself could not do any of these acts but depended upon Almighty God.

These verses of the Holy Quran make it clear that Prophet Jesus was not himself god or part of the composite Divinity of the Three as represented by the conception of Trinity held by the Christians, assigning to Prophet Jesus the position of Divinity equal to that of God by regarding him as Son of God and therefore sharing the quality of Divinity with him. See (5:114) for his prayer to Lord.

# The disciples (Hawarieen) of Prophet Jesus

These who believed in Jesus, son of Mary, as the Prophet of Almighty God on his appealing to them were much liked by Almighty God and were called Hawarieen, that is, those supporting Prophet Jesus. From amongst the believers, Prophet Jesus chose twelve (12) special men (Disciples). These men learnt directly from him and he told them to travel and to preach to the people according to the laws laid down in the Gospel.

The Holy Quran mentions them as follows: And when I revealed to the disciples, saying, Believe in Me and My messenger (Jesus), they said: We believe and bear witness that we are Muslims (those who submit to Almighty God). (5:111)

But when Jesus perceived disbelief on their part, he said Who will be my helpers in God's way? The disciples said: We are helpers (in the way) of God: We believe in God and bear witness that we are submitting ones (Muslims). Our Lord! we believe in what Thou hast revealed and we follow the messenger (Jesus), so write us down with those who bear witness (to him). (3:52-53)

At another place in the Holy Quran Almighty God asks the people who have accepted Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) as the Prophet of Almighty God to become his helpers as Prophet Jesus had exhorted his Hawarieen to be his helpers. Quran says: O you who believe! be helpers (in the cause) of God, as Jesus son of Mary said to (his) disciples: Who are my helpers in the cause of Almighty God? The disciples said: We are helpers (in the cause) of Almighty God. So a party of the children of Israel believed and another party disbelieved; then We aided those who believed against their enemy, and they became uppermost. (61:14)

Note: Sham'oon son of Hamoun-es Safa was the successor of Prophet Jesus (pbuh).

Once Prophet Jesus told his companions: "I have a request. If you accept I shall tell you."

The companions said: "We shall accept anything that you say."

Prophet Jesus started washing each person's feet. The companions felt very uncomfortable with this gesture, but since they had promised to accept, they submitted to his will. When he had finished the task, his companions told him: "You are our teacher, our guide. It is becoming that we wash your feet, not vice versa."

Prophet Jesus said: "I did this to make you understand of the fact that an scholar (Alim) is much more fit to serve people. I did this due to humility, so that you learn humility and when you become the guide of people after me, your duty would be serving people with humility. Wisdom grows amidst humility, not with arrogance, just as a seed sprouts in the soft land of the desert as opposed to the hardness of the mountains."

# **PROPHET JESUS CRUCIFIED IN SEMBLANCE BUT NOT KILLED**

The general opposition to the principles of truth and righteousness preached by prophet Jesus became so acute in due course. The rich and powerful people of Jerusalem were afraid of the growing popularity of Prophet Jesus, so they insulted him and made life really difficult for him and his followers. But Prophet Jesus never harmed anyone and carried on his mission peacefully with the help of Hawarieen.

The Jews were looking for a chance to harm Prophet Jesus. They planned and plotted against him and finally went to the Roman Governor of Judaea, Pontius Pilate, to complain against the 'young man' who was becoming a danger to the government. They blamed him for poisoning the minds of the people against the government and against their own religion.

The Roman Governor was not ready to believe anything that he heard without proof, but the rich and powerful Jews made it look like a plot. They pleaded that if Prophet Jesus was not stopped in time, his growing popularity among the poor people would become a threat to the government.

At last Pilate gave orders for Prophet Jesus' arrest. It was to be done quietly to avoid public reaction or revolt. They bribed Yahuda (Judas) one of his disciples with thirty pieces of silver. He told them in which house Prophet Jesus was, Prophet Jesus was arrested and brought before the governor. He was charged with treason, that is, blamed for poisoning the minds of the people against their religion and government.

His enemies wanted him to be put to death. The punishment for treason in those days was 'death by crucifixion' or on the scaffold (Saleeb). The scaffold was a wooden cross to which a person was nailed and left until he bled to death.

On the insistence of the rich and powerful Jews of the land this punishment was pronounced for Prophet Jesus. But God in His great mercy saved him from suffering the pain and torture, and raised him to Heaven alive and he is still alive. Meanwhile, Yahuda entered the house but found it empty. Almighty God changed his face so that he looked exactly like Prophet Jesus.

When he came out of the house to report to the Jews, he was shocked when they grabbed him and dragged him away. He swore that he was not Prophet Jesus, but they did not believe him, and he was crucified. Holy Quran clarifies this position in the following words:

And their saying (in boast): Surely we have killed the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, the messenger of Almighty God; and they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so (like Jesus) and most surely those who differ therein are only in a doubt about it; they have no knowledge respecting it, but only follow a conjecture, and they killed him not for sure. Nay! God took him up to Himself; and God is



Mighty, Wise. And there is not one of the followers of the Book but most certainly believes in this before his death, and on the day of resurrection he (Jesus) shall be a witness against them. (4:157-159)

Almost all the commentators of the Holy Quran agree that according to the above verses all Jews and Christians in general shall have right faith in Jesus before his death, that is, when he descends from heaven and returns into the world, where he is to kill anti-Christ and to establish Islam as the true religion and spread a most perfect tranquility and security on earth, in cooperation and support of the Twelfth Imam from the progeny of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (pbuh).



## Holy scripture Gospel (Injeel)

The English word "Bible" means "books" (from the Greek word for books). A book of the Bible is an established collection of writings. For example, the book of Psalms consists of 150 songs (151 in some editions of the Septuagint), while the book of Jude is a half-page letter.

The Hebrew Bible consists of the five books of Moses (The Torah means Law or Pentateuch a Geek term meaning five books), a section called "Prophets" (Neviim), and a third section called "Writings" (also Ketuvim or Hagiographa). The term "Tanakh" is a Hebrew acronym formed from these three names. Though the Hebrew Bible is predominantly in Biblical Hebrew, it has some small portions in Biblical Aramaic.

The Christian Bible is divided into two sections, the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament is in large part identical to the Jewish Tanakh, but with the books differently ordered. In addition, Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox include several other books that have not been preserved in Hebrew, but rather only in the Greek Septuagint, a translation made by Greek-speaking Jews in Alexandria between the third and first centuries BC.

The majority of scholars believe the New Testament was originally composed in Greek. There are a number of different textual traditions of the New Testament. The three main traditions are sometimes called the Western text-type, the Alexandrian text-type, and Byzantine text-type, and together they comprise the majority of New Testament manuscripts. There are also several ancient translations into other languages, most important of which are the Syriac (including the Peshitta and the Diatessaron gospel harmony) and the Latin (both the Vetus Latina and the Vulgate).

For Christians, the New Testament continues-with the birth of Jesus-the story begun in the Hebrew scriptures, and is both a primary source of religious doctrine and a foundation for their spiritual beliefs. The New Testament is divided into the four Gospels, History (Acts of the Apostles), the Letters to Christian churches by Paul and other apostles, and the Book of Revelation. Some religious groups, notably, several of the Protestant Christian groups, believe the Bible to be the ultimate and authoritative guide in all spiritual matters, following a principle called sola scriptura.

However, Muslims believe that Gospel (Injeel) was given to Prophet Jesus by Almighty God. But history was written by his enemies, so there is a big gap between Prophet Jesus and the first record alleged to be of his bible. It was more than sixty years after his departure. The first copies of bible were found in Greek language. They were translated scriptures, the original copies are missing and its original language is unknown. There are many contradictions in those versions as well as they are contradictive to many historical and gospels' scientific facts. Hence, what we have in our hands today the biblical documentation has not entirely accurate with the genuine book revealed to Prophet Jesus (pbuh) Al-Injeel.

For the guidance of mankind, Almighty God honored four famous Prophets by revealing to them four Holy Books as under:

- 1) Torah (Taurat) To Prophet Moses (pbuh)
- 2) Psalms (Zaboor) To Prophet David (pbuh)
- 3) Evangel (Injeel) To Prophet Jesus (pbuh)
- 4) Quran To Prophet Muhammad Mustafa (pbuh)

وَ قَفَيْنَا بِعِيْسَى ابْنِ مَرْبَعَهُ وَاتَيْنَهُ الْإِنْجِيْلَ أُنْ (ustafa (pbuh) 57:27)

The commandments of Almighty are contained in these books. The first three (3) books were for the earlier times. The Holy Quran is the last book of God and is for the guidance of entire mankind till the Day of Judgment, hence it is preserve by Almighty in its original form in Arabic language.

#### To bring a fool to his senses

Prophet Jesus was once seen running away from a man. People were surprised to see him running away. He did not run away from anything or anybody. He was known for his goodness, humbleness and friendliness.

They asked him: "Jesus, why are you running away from that man?"

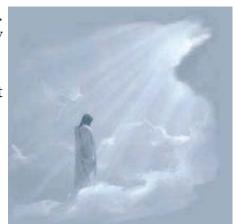
Prophet Jesus replied: "I am running away from a fool."

People were still more surprised they knew that Jesus was a prophet. He had cured the sick. He had even brought the dead to life. So they said: "But Jesus, you have power to bring dead to life."

Prophet Jesus smiled and said: "True, I have brought dead to life. But I find it difficult to bring a fool to his senses."

### Moral:

- (1.) It is necessary to understand who is wise and who is a fool.
- (2.) It is indeed difficult to bring a fool to his senses.



إِنَّا ٱنْزَلْنَا التَّوْرَلِ، فِيْهَا هُرَّى وَ نُوْرً، (5:44) وَ اتَيْنَا دَاؤَدَ زَبُوْرًا (4:163)

#### Al-Hamdolillah, Shukran lillah (Thank you Allah)

Once Prophet Jesus (pbuh) asked Almighty God who was the most nearest to him on the earth? At that moment Almighty God gave him the directions where he could find a woman called her as Mu'mina.

Her mark was that she was a remembering Almighty God. Prophet Jesus finds her. She is a being without legs, arms, and eyes. Homeless and destitute, she is left at the mercy of the passers by to give her something to survive on. Yet with her tongue, she is busy thanking God, and praising Him calling out, "O Lord! Al-Hamdolillah (all praise is to Almighty God). You have granted me so much, how will I ever thank You. You have granted me what You have not granted so many more. Why? I don't know. It is only a display of Your grace. Al-Hamdolillah..."

Prophet Jesus greets her and she responds back with a better greeting, addressing him as Roohallah. He is perplexed. He asks her, O' Mu'mina! What is it that God has granted you that you are so thankful for? Surely God is gracious. But in your case, one might see how much God has not given you.

"O Issa Roohallah" she responds. "He has granted me His remembrance. He has withheld from me feet that would walk on the path of forbidden (Haaram). He has withheld from me hands that would act on forbidden. He has withheld from me eyes that would glance at forbidden. Yet I do recognize you without their aid. And my tongue, He has occupied with His praise. Al-Hamdolillah. Tell me how many has He blessed as such?"

#### THE MEN OF THE CAVE (ASHAB-E-KEHF)

The Quran's 18th Surah named "Al-Kahf", meaning "the cave", tells about a group of young people who took shelter in a cave to hide away from a ruler who denied God and practiced oppression and injustice upon the believers. The verses on the subject are: "Or, do you think that the men of the Cave and the inscription were of Our wonderful signs? When the youths sought refuge in the cave, they said: Our Lord! grant us mercy from Thee, and provide for us a right course in our affair." (18:9-10)

After attacking Rome, Diqyanus (Decius) the Ramon Emperor, sat on the royal throne and took the reins of Government, around 250 AD. Foolish people accepted to place him in a God-like position and submitted as slaves to his power. At that time, six (6) wise and competent young men decided to leave their country and start a simple life in one of the remotest parts of the desert. They wanted to dedicate their lives to Great Unique God and worshipping Him.



One of the six men was called Tamlikha, who was married and had one son. He sold some of his date palms, got money and joined the other five men. After traveling for several miles on their horses they reached a mountainous area, and they got off their horses and continued on foot.

On their way, they saw a shepherd who asked them, "Who are you and where are you going?" They answered, "We are six ministers of the king who have given up chancellorship and are going to pray and praise the Unique God in a far deserted place, for praising Diqyanus have caused us to suffer from a guilty conscience and put us in a spiritual torment."

The shepherd said: If you agree, I would like to accompany you on this trip, for I have the same opinion as yours and want to participate in the ceremony of praising Great God. The young men accepted his request, but against the shepherd's dog also started following them and their efforts for preventing the dog from following them was of no use. Finally they found no other way rather than taking the dog with them.

With the guidance of the shepherd, the young men climbed up a mountain and from the other side reached a green and flourishing foothill. They continued walking until they reached a cave in a mountain. They entered it and were surprise to see a spring of water and some fruit trees there. They ate some fruit, drank water and sat to spend the night after saying their prayers. The shepherd's dog, too, placed its head on its hand and slept by the cave opening.

When the tyrant king found out about their escape, his troops followed them and found them sleeping in that cave. The tyrant said, "They have chosen their own punishment. Block the entrance of the cave and let their God save them." Almighty God kept them safe asleep for three hundred and nine (309) years.

During this long sleep, they did not even wake up for a second. Finally after three hundred and nine years they woke up through God's will and started asking one another how long they had been sleeping. Some of them said they had slept for one whole day and some believed they had slept for half a day, but what astonished them most was the destruction withering of the trees as well as their great hunger. Tamlikha voluntarily wore the shepherd's clothes so that people would not know him and went to the town to buy some food. He could hardly find the way to town.

When he got there, he went to a baker's, picked up some pieces of bread and gave his money to the shop owner. The baker got the money and after taking a look at if carefully said, "You young man! Have you found a treasure somewhere around?" The young man answered, "Why! This is the money I've received in exchange for the dates I sold the day before yesterday."

The baker did not believe his words and took him to the king. In the king's presence, the young man narrated whatever had happened to him and his friends. The king answered, "We shall come with you to see your house. This is the only way we can make sure of the truthfulness of your words." Tamlikha took them to his house and they knocked on the door. An old man opened the door. The ruler said to him, "This

man says this is his house." The old man asked, "What is your name?" Tamlikha answered, "I am Tamlikha, son of Constantiken, the minister of Diqyanus."

The old man bent down and kissed his feet and shouted, "By God, he is my grandfather. He is one of the six who ran away from Diqyanus's tyranny."

Then They all set out for the cave and when they got there, the young man said, " let me go inside the cave alone and tell them about the story so that they won't get frightened. Then you can enter the cave."

The young man went in and told his friends about what had happened in the town, but they did not believe him either and thought they were caught in a trap. So they started praying and asking God to return them to their previous position. God responded to their prayers and made them fall asleep once again. After a while, the king and his agents, having noticed that the absence of young man had taken long, entered the cave. But owing to God's will, the Men of the Cave were hidden from the sight.





Following this, the king ordered to set up a building in that place for worshipping and praising God. This event was a token of God to draw the attention of people to God's power.

**Note:** Almost all the Christian sources show Ephesus (Turkey) as the location of the Cave where these young believers took shelter. Some Muslim researchers and the Quranic commentators agree with the Christians regarding Ephesus. Some others, explained in detail that Ephesus was not the place, and then tried to prove that



the event took place in Tarsus. Some believe another place outside of Amman (Jordan) called as Kahf Al-Raqim or The Cave of The Seven Sleepers.

### THE MAKERS OF THE PIT

The Holy Quran says: Cursed be the makers of the pit, of the fire (kept burning) with fuel, When they sat by it, And they were witnesses of what they did with the believers. (85:4-7)

Zonouas (Zu-Nuwas) was the last king of Homair (Himyrite) tribe in Yemen, well known as the makers of the pit, who came to the throne and took complete control of the affairs in that land. Zonouas accepted the religion of the Jews named himself Yusef. And announced it to be the formal religion of the tribe though Judaism was somehow abandoned after the prophethood of Jesus Christ and was no more a widespread religion. Zonouas started to fight Christianity quite severely and was ready to do anything to abolish it. Therefore, he beheaded any Christians coming to his land and instead honored the Jewish people. He was absolutely determined to spread Judaism all over the world and make it the formal religion of all human beings. Thus the first step for him was to abolish all other religions.

nce, he was informed that the inhabitants of the city of Najran north of Yemen had accepted Christianity and except for some few ones they had all rejected Judaism. This news made Zonouas so furious that he immediately commanded to wage a war with them. The next day, he was on the way to Najran with a great well-equipped army. They stopped on a land close to Najran. Zonouas sent his agents to the city to bring the lords and the nobles of that city to his presence. When they attended to his presence, he addressed them like this:

"I have been informed that trickery of a Christian man have caused you to reject Judaism and accept Christianity as your religion. I have come to invite you to Judaism once again and make you repent for this deviation of yours. Otherwise I shall order a horrible punishment for you and shall not let any of you and your followers stay alive in this land. The nobles of Najran stipulated quite firmly and rigorously, 'We need not consult with anybody about our religion, we have found the true religion of God and shall not fear any punishment of yours."

Zonouas who did not except to hear such a response, ordered to dig large ditches in the ground and put up a huge fire in them. Then he ordered to capture those who have accepted Christianity and put them in fire while still alive. His army slaughtered those faithful believers by putting them in fire,

murdering them with swords or mutilating them. Altogether, the number of deaths was about twenty thousand. Before reaching a stage that there would remain no Christian in that land, one of them could manage to escape on a horseback and ride to Rome. There, he attended to the presence of Caesar, the Roman emperor and informed him of that massacre. Caesar being a Christian himself, wrote a letter to Negus and asked him to fight with Zonouas.



When Negus received this letter, he took his whole army to Yemen, fought and defeated Zonouas. During this war, they killed Zonouas and the number of Jewish people and thus joined Yemen to Abyssinia. After Zonouas's death Judaism was again deserted and Christianity become prevalent and became the formal religion again.

This is the story of a group of people who believed in God and openly proclaimed their belief. They encountered tyrannical and oppressive enemies who were bent upon denying the right of a human being to believe in the Almighty, the All-Praiseworthy God. They intended to deprive man of that dignity which has been bestowed upon him by God and without which he is reduced to a mere plaything in the hands of tyrants, to be tortured, burned alive, and provide entertainment to his tormentors by his cries of agony.

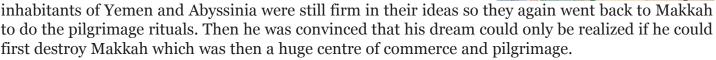
But the faith in the hearts of the Believers raised them above all persecution. Belief triumphed over life. The threat of torture did not shake them, they never recanted, and they burned in the fire until death.

## KAABA AGAINST THE MIGHT OF ELEPHANTS

The Holy Quran says: Have you not considered how your Lord dealt with the possessors of the elephant? Did He not cause their war to end in confusion, And send down (to prey) upon them birds in flocks, Casting against them stones of baked clay, So He rendered them like straw eaten up? (105:1-5)

uring the sixth century around 570 A.D., the part of Arabia knows as Yemen was under the rule of the Abyssinian Christians king Negus, who had driven away the Jewish Himyar rulers. The

Abyssinian viceroy in Yemen was Abraha Ashram. When he found people rushing to Makkah from different parts of the world, he started to think of a way to distract the people's attention from Kaaba and Makkah and attract them to his own country. He was determined to build a magnificent church with the best art decoration and ornaments in San'aa, present capital of Yemen, so as to make it a leading centre of commerce and place of pilgrimage for the Christian world. So a church was built and named Al-Qullais. Despite his prediction, however he found that not only the people of Makkah but also the



Intoxicated with power and fired by religious fanaticism, Abraha finally made his vicious plans. Accompanied by a big herd of elephants and other animals, he led an expedition and marched to destroy the Holy Kaaba in Makkah. The Arabs in those days hardly had any opportunity to see an elephant in their lives. Hence the army of Abraha is described in history as 'ASHABUL FEEL' i.e. the army with elephants.

Abraha camped his army on the outskirts of Makkah preparing to attack and destroy the holy Kaaba. During the course of preparation, his army stole some seven hundred (700) camels belonging to Abdul Mutalib - the grandfather of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). The camels were grazing in the open fields outside the city. Abraha sent a message to Abdul Mutalib who was the supreme chief of Makkah, informing him his intention of destroying the Holy Kaaba. Abdul Mutalib replied that he



would meet Abraha in person and talk to him. When he approached the invading army's camp, he was received respectfully and given an honorable seat near Abraha. As the two men talked, Abdul Mutalib said that he had come to complain about Abraha's army stealing his camels. Abraha answered, "How strange, I have come to conquer Makkah, your place of worship, and you worry about your camels?" Abdul Mutalib replied, "I am the owner and responsible for the camels so I have come for them. The Kaaba also has a owner and it is the concern of the owner whether to save it or not."

Abraha amazed by the reply, returned Abdul Mutalib's camels to him but was determined to attack the city. Abdul Mutalib advised his people to move into the hills for safety. As Abraha trying to enter the city, one of his elephant named Mahmud refused to walk forward and suddenly a huge flock of tiny birds called Ababil, like a patch of cloud appeared in the sky. Each bird had a stones of baked clay in its tiny beak and dropped it on the invading soldiers. The stones fell exactly

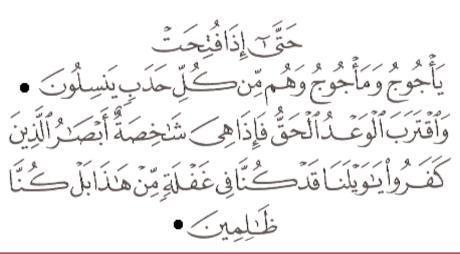
on the men and they were instantly killed and fell prone on the ground. Abraha was spared, but one bird flew above him. The king asked him what kind of birds had acted so miraculously. Abraha raised his eyes to the sky and saw the bird and pointed out it to the king; the bird dropped the stone and Abraha was instantly killed. After the miraculous event, Abraha's army was found lying on the ground as bits of some withered and crunched grass rendered useless for any

as bits of some withered and crunched grass rendered useless for any purpose.

Is this event not a clear miracle proving the sanctity of the Kaaba and the people who were truly attached to it such as Abdul Mutalib and the people of his house? Had he not shown his utmost confidence in Almighty God as the real protector of the Holy Shrine and guided his people to safety, they would have perhaps bowed down to the might

and pomp of Abraha and made a truce with him. Consequently the history of Makkah and the holy shrine as well as the glory of Islam would have been different.

It was in this year that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was born on the 17th of Rabi ul Awwal (570 AD).







Until the Gog and Magog (people) are let through (their barrier), and they swiftly swarm from every hill. Then will the true promise draw nigh (of fulfillment): then behold! The eyes of the Unbelievers will fixedly stare in horror: "Ah! Woe to us! We were indeed heedless of this; nay, we truly did wrong!" (21:96-97)

