

Prophet Adam (as)

The following was taken from Stories of Prophets by Allama Ibn Katheer

Before the creation of Mankind Allah created angels and jinns. However, jinn were and are always opposing the law of Allah. They had shed blood on earth and created chaos. When Allah decided to create Mankind and to send him on earth, the angels set the question of 'Will You place therein those who will make mischief therein and shed blood'. But Allah knows what they don't know.

As such, Allah the Almighty created Prophet Adam (as). After his creation Allah explained this in the Qur'an as 'Allah taught Adam all the names of everything, then He showed them to the angels and said: "Tell Me the names of these if you are truthful." They (angels) said: "Glory be to You, we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Verily, it is You, the All-Knower, the All-Wise." He said: "O Adam! Inform them of their names," and when he had informed them of their names, He said: "Did I not tell you that I know the unseen in the heavens and the earth, and I know what you reveal and what you have been hiding?" Allah created Prophet Adam (as) with earth, water, air and fire. Allah gave him knowledge which angels were unaware of. This is to show the superiority of knowledge of Prophet Adam (as) over angels and at the same time the superiority of Man over other creatures. Allah asked Adam to teach the angels the names of things that is to show to them his knowledge on Allah and Everything.

Hence Allah ordered the angels to prostrate. All of them did so except Iblis (a jinn) who refused and was proud and was one of the disbelievers (disobedient to Allah)." The order of prostration was meant to show his (Adam) superiority again over the angels in creation and knowledge. It was not like prostration of ibaadah for Allah. It is a sign of respect. Iblis disobeyed due to his pride, knowledge and his creation out of fire which is above earth, but earth is submissive. Therefore, Allah ordered Prophet Adam (as) to dwell with his wife in the Paradise and both of them freely with pleasure and delight of things therein as wherever they will but come not near this tree or they both will be of the Zalimeen (wrongdoers)." Then the Satan made them slip there from (the Paradise), and got them out from that in which they were. Then Allah ordered them to get down all with enmity between themselves. On earth will be a dwelling place for them and an enjoyment for a Time."

Allah created Eve / Hawa (ra) out of the crooked ribs of Prophet Adam as a companion in Jannah. They were allowed to stay in Jannah, to eat whatever they desired but not to approach the forbidden fruit. Shaitaan influenced and their curiosity deceived them. They were sent to earth. For 300 years they kept on asking forgiveness till Prophet Adam (as) received from his Lord Words that His Lord pardoned him (accepted his repentance). Allah forgave Adam and Eve but as a symbolic punishment he sent them on earth. However, the decision was already taken when Allah announced that He will create a viceroy on earth. Prophet Adam had to face many problems inexistent in Jannah like weathering, cyclones, old age, wife, children and the Everyday chores. Above all, he had to struggle with the spirit of evil. Satan, the cause of his expulsion from Paradise, continued to beguile him and his children in an effort to have them thrown into the eternal hellfire. The battle between good and evil is continuous.

The pinnacle of earthly bliss was reached when Adam and Eve witnessed the birth of their first children, a set of twins. Adam was a devoted father and Eve a contented mother. The twins were Qabil and his sister. Later Eve gave birth to a second set of twins, Habil and his sister. The family enjoyed the bounties and fruits of the earth provided by their Lord. The children grew up to be strong and healthy young adults. Qabil tilled the land while Haabil raised cattle. The time arrived when the two young men desired life partners. This was part of Allah's plan for mankind, to multiply and form

nations with different cultures and colours. Allah revealed to Adam that he should marry each son to the twin sister of the other. Adam instructed his children according to Allah's command, but Qabil was displeased with the partner chosen for him, for Haabil's twin sister was not as beautiful as his own. Adam was in a dilemma. He wanted peace and harmony in his family, so he invoked Allah for help. Allah commanded that each son offer a sacrifice, and he whose offering was accepted would have right on his side. Abel offered his best camel while Cain offered his worst grain. His sacrifice was not accepted by Allah because of his disobedience to his father and the insincerity in his offering. This enraged Qabil further. Realizing that his hopes marrying his own beautiful sister were fading, he threatened his brother. "I will kill you! I refuse to see you happy while I remain unhappy!" Haabil feeling sorry for his brother, replied, "It would be more proper for you, my brother to search for the cause of your unhappiness and then walk in the way of peace. Allah accepts the deeds only from those who serve and fear Him, not from those who reject His Commands."

Haabil was intelligent, obedient, and always ready to obey the will of Allah. This contrasted sharply with his brother who was arrogant, selfish and disobedient to his Lord. Habil did not fear his brother's threats, but neither did he want his brother to be hurt, Allah had blessed Abel with purity and compassion. Hoping to allay the hatred seething in his brother Abel said, "My brother, you are deviating from the right path and are sinful in your decisions. It is better that you repent to Allah and forget about your foolish threat. But if you do not then I will leave the matter in the hands of Allah. You alone will bear the consequence of your sin, for the Fire is the reward of the wrong-doers." This brotherly plea did nothing to lessen the hatred in Qabil's heart, nor did he show fear of Allah's punishment. Even familial considerations were cast aside. Qabil struck his brother with a stone killing him instantly. This was the first death and the first criminal act committed by man on earth. When Haabil had not appeared for some time, Adam began to search for him but found no trace of his beloved son. He asked Qabil about Haabil's whereabouts. Qabil insolently replied that he was neither his brother's keeper nor his protector. From these words his father understood that Abel was dead and Adam was filled with grief.

Meanwhile Qabil did not know what to do with his brother's corpse. He carried it on his back wandering from place to place trying to hide it. His anger had now subsided and his conscience was saddled with guilt. He was tiring under the burden of the corpse which had started to have a stench. As a mercy, and to show that dignity could be retained Even in death, Allah sent two ravens that began fighting, causing the death of one. The victorious bird used its beak and claws to dig a hole in the ground, rolled its victim into it and covered it with sand. Witnessing this, Cain was overcome with shame and remorse. "Woe unto me!" he exclaimed. "I was unable to do what this raven has done, that is to hide my brother's corpse." Cain then buried his brother. This was also the first burial of man.

Prophet Musah (as)

The following was taken from Stories of Prophets by Allama Ibn Katheer

During the time of Pharaoh in Egypt through a year in which boys were to be slain, the mother of Musah gave birth to Musah (as). It was a time where the soothsayers of Pharaoh have predicted that a boy from Israelites would dethrone him. So he decided to kill all new born from the Israelites. Allah says in surah al Qasas that Pharaoh has made himself great on land and has caused mischief. Allah inspired the mother of Musah saying: "*Suckle him (Musah), but when you fear for him, then cast him into the river and fear not, nor grieve. Verily! We shall bring him back to you, and shall make him one of (Our) Messengers.*" (Ch 28: 2-7 Quran).

Then she was commanded to make a basket for Musah and threw it into the water. She instructed her daughter to follow the course of the basket and to report back to her. The basket came to rest at the riverbank, which skirted the king's palace. The palace servants found the basket with the baby and took it to the Pharaoh and his queen. When the queen beheld the lovely infant, Allah instilled in her a strong love for this baby. Pharaoh's wife Aasiyah was very different from Pharaoh. He was a disbeliever; she was a believer. He was cruel; she was merciful.

She was sad because she was infertile and had hoped to have a son. She requested her husband: 'Let me keep the baby and let him be a son to us'. The queen called for some wet nurse but the baby was not ready to accept anyone. Musah's sister was anxious and she told the queen that she knew someone who could feed him. She reunited the mother and the child. (Ch. 28:10-13). Allah had granted Musah (as) good health, strength, knowledge, and wisdom. The weak and oppressed turned to him for protection and justice.

One day in the main city, he saw two men fighting. One was an Israelite, who was being beaten by the other, an Egyptian. On seeing Musah, the Israelite begged him for help. Musah became involved in the dispute and, in a state of anger, struck a heavy blow on the Egyptian, who died on the spot. Upon realizing that he had killed a human being, Musah's heart was filled with deep sorrow, and immediately he begged Allah for forgiveness. The next day he saw the same Israelite involved in another fight. Musah went to him and said: "You seem to be a quarrelsome fellow. You have a new quarrel with one person or another each day." Fearing that Musah might strike him, the Israelite warned Musah: "Would you kill me as you killed the wretch yesterday?"

Soon thereafter, a man approached and alerted him: "O Musah, the chiefs have taken counsel against you. You are to be tried and killed. I would advise you to escape." (Ch 28:15-21 Quran). Musah left Egypt in a hurry without going to Pharaoh's palace or changing his clothes. Nor was he prepared for travelling. He travelled in the direction of the country of Midian. His only companion in this hot desert was Allah, and his only provision was piety. He travelled for eight nights, hiding during the day. After crossing the main desert, he reached a watering hole outside Midian where shepherds were watering their flocks. He went to the spring, where he saw two young women preventing their sheep from mixing with the others.

Musah sensed that the women were in need of help. Forgetting his thirst, he drew nearer to them and asked if he could help them in any way. (Ch 28:22-24 Quran). The young ladies returned home earlier

than usual, which surprised their father. Musah's gentle behaviour was noticed by the father and his daughters. The kind man invited him to stay with them. The old man proposed him to stay and work for 8 years or more and in return he could marry one of his daughters. He stayed and became a shepherd and served the old man for more than 8 years. (*Ch 28:25-28 Quran*)

One day after the end of this period, a vague homesickness arose in Musah's heart. He wanted to return to Egypt. He was fast and firm in making his decision, telling his wife: "Tomorrow we shall leave for Egypt." Musah left Midian with his family and travelled through the desert until he reached Mount Sinai. There Musah discovered that he had lost his way. He sought Allah's direction and was shown the right course. At nightfall they reached Mount Tur. Musah noticed a fire in the distance and said to his family: "I shall fetch a firebrand to warm us."

As he neared the fire, he heard a sonorous voice calling him: "O Musah, I am Allah, the Lord of the Universe." Musah was bewildered and looked around. He again heard the strange voice. "And what is in your right hand, O Musah?" Shivering, Musah answered: "This is my staff on which I lean, and with which I beat down branches for my sheep, and for which I find other uses." The same voice commanded him: "Throw down your staff!" He did so, and at once the staff became a wriggling snake. Musah turned to run, but the voice again addressed him: "Fear not and grasp it; We shall return it to its former state." The snake changed back into his staff. Next, Allah commanded him to thrust his hand into his robe at the armpit. When he pulled it out, the hand had a brilliant shine. These were the two signs given to Musah.

He wanted his brother Haroon to accompany him and Allah made both prophets. Musah (as) and Haroun (as) went together to Pharaoh and delivered their message. Musah spoke to him about Allah, His mercy and His Paradise and about the obligations of monotheism and His worship. Pharaoh recognized him as the same kid he sheltered. (*Ch 26:16-31 Quran*). Musah (as) wanted to show him his miracle. Musah threw his stick which turned into a serpent. He drew out his hands and they were white. Then there was the contest between Musah and Pharaoh's magicians. Musah's big serpent ate all the snakes of the magicians. (*Ch 20:58-76 Quran*).

Pharaoh was angry, called his men and ordered them to build a tower for him to see whether there was another god in heaven. He started persecuting the believers. As a portent of the punishment which Allah would meet out, the Nile did not flood its banks to soak the dry land as it normally did. As a result, crops failed, leading to famine. Then another sign came, the sign of lice, which spread amongst the Egyptians, carrying diseases. A sign of frogs was revealed. The land suddenly filled with frogs. Then the last sign was revealed, the sign of blood. The Nile water was changed into blood. When Musah and his people drank the water, it was, for them, ordinary water. However, if any Egyptian filled his cup with the water, he discovered his cup full of blood. They hurried to Musah as usual, but as soon as everything returned to normal, they turned their backs on Allah.

It appeared that Pharaoh would never believe in Musah' message, nor would he stop the torture of the children of Israel. Allah inspired Musah to conduct his people of Egypt, but only a few of his people believed in his message. Allah commanded Musah to depart and they prepared themselves to leave Egypt. In the darkness of night, Musah led his people towards the Red Sea, and in the morning they reached the beach. By then Pharaoh was aware of their departure, so he mobilized a huge army to pursue them. The impatient children of Israel soon became agitated and Joshua (Yusha), Ibn Nun, exclaimed: "In front of us is this impassable barrier, the sea, and behind us the enemy; surely death

cannot be avoided!". Musah replied that he would wait for further guidance from Allah. These words filled them with some hope, but man is always impatient for results: they were willing to surrender themselves back into slavery.

At that moment Allah revealed to Musah: "Smite the sea with your staff!" Musah did as he was commanded. A fierce wind blew, the sun shone brightly, and in a flash the sea parted, the crests of the waves standing like mountains on each side. Musah led his people across. As they looked back, they saw Pharaoh and his army approaching, about to take the very path which had been opened for them. Pharaoh and his army had seen the miracle, how the sea had parted, but being the pretender that he was, Pharaoh turned to his men and proclaimed: "Look! The sea has opened at my command so that I may follow those rebels and arrest them!" They rushed across the parted waters, and when they were midway, Allah commanded the sea to return to its former state. Terror-stricken Pharaoh, realizing his end had come, declared out of fear: "I believe that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah in Whom the children of Israel believe, and I am of those who surrender to Him." But Allah did not accept this declaration from the tyrant, and the waters closed over him, drowning him and his entire army. (*Ch 26:52-68 Quran*) (*Ch 10:90-92 Quran*).

Through the story of Hazrat Musah (as) we can see similarities with the life of the prophet (s.a.w). Topics like their childhood, their call to Prophethood, their experience of persecution, their fleeing their homes, their eventual triumph, their experience of being misunderstood, their resolve and commitment to their call will be discussed as such.

At the outset, it can be well said that both Hazrat Musah (as) and Hazrat Muhammad (s.a.w) were brought up in an environment that they had to leave at a certain period of their lives. During the time of Musah there was the need for him to be separated from his mother for survival as Pharaoh had decided to kill all new born. However, for the last prophet (s.a.w) he had to leave his mother for 6 years as it was a custom of the pre Islamic Arabs to have their babies suckled by a wet-nurse in the desert. Nevertheless, mothers and children were reunited later on.

Secondly, both the environment in which Musah and the last prophet were born was polytheistic. Their people were polytheists and idol worshippers. They were brought up among the idol worshippers but both never worshipped anything or anyone apart from Allah. Both were monotheist in search of the one God that is Allah. Moreover, they were both against the idea of polytheism.

Moreover, there came a time where due to the level of degradation and injustice found in their respective societies, they decided to help those in need. Hazrat Musah was alongside with the poor and the destitute and would always help the oppressed. That was the same situation for the prophet (s.a.w) who created an organisation with the help of youngsters and elders through Half ul Fuzul. Their aims were to help those in need and to bring some kinds of justice to those who are oppressed both physically and mentally.

Fourthly, due to the above situation which developed the situation and environment of persecutions, both prophets were disgusted with their respective societies. On one side we have Pharaoh who used to oppress the people of Israelite and on the other side the rich Jewish and Arabs oppressed the poor. The societies were deeply rooted then in injustice. Leaving the city was the final option.

Furthermore, attached with the above idea, the society of Musah and that of the last prophet (s.a.w) were deeply rooted in crimes, adultery, fornication, prostitution, bribes, interest, levies, taxes, sins among others. In fact, both societies were immoral ones without leaders. Both prophets were thus fed up with these societies and a need to change environment was important.

Sixthly, as both were in these kinds of societies they were in search of Allah or rather we can say that Allah came to them as a rescue. In the case of Hazrat Musah he found Allah on the mount of Tur with the voice coming from the blessed tree with 2 miracles as gifts. On the other side, the prophet was approached by Hazrat Jibril in the cave of Hira with the first five verses of Surah Al 'Alaq as gift from Allah. Both thus were given the Torah and the Qur'an.

Added to the above ideas, after having the blessing of Allah, both prophets decided to gather their respective people to call them to the religion of Allah. Their messages were the same that is Tawheed was the main theme. They spread the same message with the same good news of Jannah if they were accepted and followed and with the same warnings as Jahannam if they were to be rejected. As history witnessed they were both rejected but accepted only by a few poor destitute people.

Besides, due to persecutions and uncertainties, both prophets had to leave their cities and countries for the Hijrah. As it was impossible to be accepted or the other way being rejected, both prophets left their homeland to Midian and Yathrib (Madina). And what was more surprising was that both were accepted and protected by their new friends and environment. It marked the start of both real spreading of Islam in a much better way with a more peaceful life.

More to the point, both prophets were persecuted by their people and by the chiefs of their societies. In the case of Musah it was Pharaoh who was the persecutor with his hosts. On the other side the prophet and the Muslims were persecuted, beaten and ill-treated by the chiefs of Macca like Abu Lahab and his friends. Hazrat Musah and his people at one time was chased by the hosts of Pharaoh and it also occurred that the prophet (s.a.w) was chased by the unbelievers at Ta'if, for the Hijrah and in the different battles fought.

Last but not least, it is good to mention that both prophets at a certain moment had a homesick. As such Hazrat Musah (as) returned to Egypt and Hazrat Muhammad (s.a.w) returned to Macca. These were their homelands and they were attached to them. Returning there was a great risk taken by both prophets. They could have been murdered. In fact, when Musah returned to Egypt he was later on chased by the Egyptians and when the prophet entered Macca in the 8th year of Hijrah, the division led by Khalid bin Walid (ra) was attacked.

Prophet Yusuf (as)

The following was taken from Stories of Prophets by Allama Ibn Katheer

The story begins with a dream and ends with its interpretation. Prophet Yusuf (as) said: *"O my father! Verily, I saw eleven stars and the sun and the moon, I saw them prostrating themselves to me."* (12:4). His father's face lit up and foresaw that Prophet Yusuf (as) would be among the prophets and warned him about the jealousy his brothers *'Relate not your vision to your brothers, lest they arrange a plot against you.'* (12:5)

Prophet Yusuf (as) was eighteen years old, very handsome and robust, with a gentle temperament. He was respectful, kind and considerate. His brother Benjamin was equally pleasant. Their father loved them more than his other children, and would not let them out of his sight keeping them busy with work in the house garden. Due to jealousy it is said: *"One from among them (his brothers) said: 'Kill not Yusuf (as), throw him down to the bottom of a well ...'"* (12:8-10)

The brothers wanted Yusuf to come with them on business but the father was afraid and said *"Truly, it saddens me that you should take him away. I fear lest a wolf should devour him, while you are careless of him."* (12:11-14). When it was accepted, they went directly to the well, one of them put his arms around Prophet Yusuf (as), held him tightly and cast him into the deep well. The brothers returned to their father and said that *'a wolf devoured him'* (12:17). *bringing his shirt stained with false blood.* (Ch 12:18). Deep down Prophet Yaqoub (as) knew that his beloved son was still alive and that his other sons were lying.

Then it follows that a caravan passing by rescued Prophet Yusuf but *'they hid him as merchandise ... and sold him for a low price,'* to the chief, the Aziz from Egypt who bought him said to his wife: *"Make his stay comfortable, maybe he will profit us or we shall adopt him as a son."* (Ch 12:19-21) Prophet Yusuf (as) smiled at his benefactor (the chief), thanked him, and promised to be loyal. He was made the personal attendant of the chief minister's wife. He was obedient and ever-obliging. Allah blessed him with *'wisdom and knowledge'* (12:22).

The chief minister's wife, Zulaikha could not resist the handsome Prophet Yusuf (as), and her obsession with him caused her sleepless nights. She fell in love with him. Allah said that *'she sought to seduce him, she closed the doors and said: "come on, O you." He said: "I seek refuge in Allah (or Allah forbid)! Truly he (your husband) is my master! He made my stay agreeable!'. (12:23)* Prophet Yusuf (as)'s refusal only heightened her passion. As he moved to the door to escape, she ran after him and caught hold of his shirt *'and she tore his shirt from the back. They both found her lord (her husband) at the door. (12:25).* She immediately changed her tone to anger, and, showing the torn piece of the shirt in her hand, asked her husband: *"What is the recompense (punishment) for him who intended an evil design against your wife ... ?"* (12:25). Prophet Yusuf said: *"It was she that sought to seduce me," and a witness of her household bore witness saying: "If it be that his shirt is torn from the front, then her tale is true, and he is a liar! but if it be that his shirt is torn from the back, then she has told a lie and he is speaking the truth!"* So, it was clear that she lied. (12:26-29).

For her defence, Zulaikha prepared a banquet to show that other women could be under the beauty of Prophet Yusuf (as) and *'she gave each one of them a knife (to cut the foodstuff with), and she said (to Yusuf (as)): "Come out before them." Then, when they saw him, they exalted him (at his beauty) and (in their astonishment) cut their hands. ... She said: "This is he (the young man) about whom you did blame me (for his love) and I did seek to seduce him, but he refused.* Prophet Yusuf said that *'Prison*

is more to my liking than that to which they invite me.'... That evening, Zulaikha convinced her husband that the only way to save her honor was to put Prophet Yusuf (as) in prison.

In prison, Prophet Yusuf explained the king's dream (*He sees himself on the banks of the Nile river. The water is receding before him, becoming mere mud. The fish begin to skip and jump in the mud. Seven fat cows come out of the river followed by seven lean cows. The seven lean ones devour the seven fat ones*) as: "*There will be seven years of abundance. If the land is properly cultivated, there will be an excess of good harvest, more than the people will need. This should be stored. Thereafter, seven years of famine will follow, during which time the excess grain could be used. After seven years of drought, there will be a year during which water will be plentiful. If the water is properly used, grapevines and olive trees will grow in abundance, providing plenty of grapes and olive oil.*" The cupbearer gave the news to the king which was fascinated by Prophet Yusuf (as)'s interpretation and commanded that Prophet Yusuf (as) be set free from prison. However, Prophet Yusuf (as) refused to leave the prison unless his innocence was proven. Under request of the king, the wife of the chief minister came and boldly confessed that she had lied and he had told the truth.

The king informed Prophet Yusuf (as) that his innocence was established offered him a high position as controller of the granaries a request from Yusuf. Drought followed and famine spread throughout the region, including Canaan, the homeland of Prophet Yusuf (as). Prophet Yusuf (as) advised the king to sell his grain to the needy nations at a fair price. Prophet Yaqoub (as) sent ten of his sons, all except Benjamin, to Egypt to purchase provisions. Prophet Yusuf (as) immediately recognized them and received them warmly and asked them to narrate him their life. When they said that they had another brother, prophet Yusuf asked them to bring him and he would double their rations. As an inducement to return with their brother, Prophet Yusuf (as) ordered his servant to secretly place the purse, with the money they had paid, into one of their grain sacks.

The brothers returned to their father to ask his permission for Benjamin. At first Prophet Yaqoub (as) was reluctant but accepted. When they came again to prophet Yusuf (as), Benjamin was kept 'captive' due to the purse. In brief, the 2 brothers finally met. The brothers returned and said that the youngest son has stolen. The father was deeply hurt. Weeping all those years Prophet Yaqoub (as) almost lost his sight. The other sons returned and pleaded Prophet Yusuf (as). At the end, they begged Prophet Yusuf (as) who said: "*I am Yusuf (as), and his is my brother*" (Ch 12:90). They were forgiven and Prophet Yusuf (as) embraced them, and together they wept with joy. Later on he advised his brothers: "*Go with this shirt of mine, and cast it over the face of my father, he will become clear-sighted, and bring to me all your family.*" (12:93) They headed back for Palestine and reaching there, the father said: "*I do indeed feel the smell of Yusuf (as) ... Then, when the bearer of the glad tidings arrived, he cast the shirt over his face, and he became clear sighted. ...*" (12:94-97). Prophet Yusuf (as) '*betook his parents to himself and said: "Enter Egypt, if Allah will, in security."* And he raised his parents to the throne and they fell down before him prostrate. And he said: "*O my father! This is the interpretation of my dream of old! My Lord has made it come true! He was indeed good to me, when He took me out of prison, and brought you all here out of the Bedouin life, after Satan had sown enmity between me and my brothers ...*" (Ch 12:98-100). Before he died, Prophet Yaqoub (as) (pbuh) advised his children to adhere to the teachings of Islam, the religion of all of Allah's prophets.

Prophet 'Isa (as)

The following was taken from Stories of Prophets by Allama Ibn Katheer

The Birth of Mariam (ra)

Allah the Almighty said: *The wife of Imran said: "O my Lord! I have vowed to You what (the child that) is in my womb to be dedicated for Your services (free from all worldly work; to serve Your Place of worship), so accept this, from me. Verily, You are the All-Hearer, the All Knowing."*¹ Then when she delivered her (child Mariam (ra)), she said: *"O my Lord! I have delivered a female child," and Allah knew better what she delivered, - "and the male is not like the female, and I have named her Mariam (ra), and I seek refuge with You (Allah) for her and for her offspring from Satan, the outcast."*²

Mariam's (ra) Sustenance - Quranic

So her Lord (Allah) accepted her with goodly acceptance. He made her grow in a good manner and put her under the care of Prophet Zakariyyah (Prophet Zakariyah's (as) wife's (Elizabeth) sister had a daughter named Hannah who had a daughter called Mariam (ra)). Every time he entered Al-Mihrab (a praying place or a private room), he found her supplied with sustenance. As Allah recounted in the Glorious Quran: *She said: "From Allah. Verily, Allah provides sustenance to whom He wills, without limit." (Ch 3:37 Quran)*

Prophet Zakariyyah (as) Becomes Mariam (ra)'s Guardian

As the baby was a girl, the question of her guardianship posed a problem for the elders. This was a child of their late and beloved leader, and everyone was eager to take care of her. Prophet Zakariyah (as) said to the elders: *"I am the husband of her maternal aunt and her nearest relation in the temple; therefore, I will be more mindful of her than all of you."* As it was their custom to draw lots to solve disagreements, they followed this course. Each one was given a reed to throw into the river. They had agreed that whoever's reed remained afloat would be granted guardianship of the girl. All the reeds sank to the bottom except Zakariyah's. With this sign, they all surrendered to the will of Allah and made him the guardian.

Mariam (ra)'s High Status

To ensure that no one had access to Mariam (ra), Zakariyah (as) built a separate room for her in the temple. As she grew up, she spent her time in devotion to Allah. Zakariyah (as) visited her daily to see to her needs, and so it continued for many years. One day, he was surprised to find fresh fruit, which was out of season in her room. As he was the only person who could enter her room, he asked her how the fruit got there. She replied that these provisions were from Allah, as He gives to whom He wills. Zakariyah understood by this that Allah had raised Mariam (ra)'s status above that of other women. Thereafter, Zakariyah spent more time with her, teaching and guiding her. Mariam (ra) grew to be a devotee of Allah, glorifying Him day and night.

Mariam (ra) Receives News of Prophet Isa (as)

While Mariam (ra) was praying in her temple, an angel in the form of a man appeared before her. Filled with terror, she tried to flee, praying: *"Verily! I seek refuge with the Most Beneficent (Allah) from you, if you do fear Allah."* The angel said: *"I am only a Messenger from your Lord, (to announce)*

¹ Qur'an 3: 35

² Qur'an 3: 36

*to you the gift of a righteous son." She said: "How can I have a son, when no man has touched me, nor am I unchaste?" He said: "So (it will be), your Lord said: "That is easy for me (Allah): And (We wish) to appoint him as a sign to mankind and a mercy from Us (Allah), and it is a matter (already) decreed, (by Allah)."*³

The Birth of Prophet Isa (as)

With a heavy heart, she left the temple and went to Nazareth, the city in which she had been born where she settled in a simple farm house to avoid the public. But fear and anxiety did not leave her. She was from a noble and pious family. Her father had not been an evil man nor was her mother an impure woman. How could she prevent tongues from wagging about her honour? After some months, she could not bear the mental strain any longer. Burdened with a heavy womb, she left Nazareth, not knowing where to go to be away from this depressing atmosphere. She had not gone far, when she was overtaken by the pains of childbirth. She reached Bethlehem valley, about four to six miles from Jerusalem. She saw down against a dry palm tree, and here she gave birth to a son. Looking at her beautiful baby, she was hurt that she had brought him into the world without a father. She exclaimed: "I wish I had died before this happened and had vanished into nothingness!" Suddenly, she heard a voice nearby: "Grieve not, your Lord has placed a rivulet – small stream of water - below, and shake the trunk of this tree, from which ripe dates will fall. So eat and drink and regain the strength you have lost; and be of good cheer, for what you see is the power of Allah, who made the dry palm tree regain life, in order to provide food for you." For a while she was comforted by Allah's miracle, for it was a sure sign of her innocence and purity.

Mariam (ra) Returns to the City with Prophet Isa (as)

Mariam (ra) decided to return to the city. However, her fears also returned. What was she going to tell the people? As if sharing his mother's worry, the baby began to speak: "If you meet any person say: 'I have vowed to fast for The Beneficent and may not speak to any human today.'" With this miracle, Mariam (ra) felt at ease. As she had expected, her arrival in the city with a new born baby in her arms aroused the curiosity of the people. They scolded her: "This is a terrible sin that you have committed." She put her finger to her lips and pointed to the child. They asked: "How can we speak to a new born baby?" To their total amazement, the child began to speak clearly: "*Verily! I am a slave of Allah. He has given me the Scripture and made me a Prophet; and He has made me blessed wherever I be, and has enjoined me prayer, and Zakat, as long as I live, and dutiful to my mother, and made me not arrogant, unblest. And Salam (peace) be upon me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I shall be raised alive!*"⁴ Most of the people realized that the baby was unique, for it Allah wills something, He merely says "Be" and it happens. Of course, there were some who regarded the baby's speech as a strange trick, but at least Mariam (ra) could now stay in Nazareth without being harassed.

Prophet Isa (as) Upsets the Jews

The Jewish priests felt this child Prophet Isa (as) was dangerous, for they felt that the people would turn their worship to Allah the Almighty Alone, displacing the existing Jewish tenets. Consequently, they would lose their authority over the people. Therefore, they kept the miracle of Prophet Isa (as)'s speech in infancy as a secret and accused Mariam (ra) of a great misdeed.

³ Qur'an 19: 18 - 21

⁴ Qur'an 19: 27 - 33

Prophet Isa (as)'s Ability to Debate

As Prophet Isa (as) grew, the signs of Prophethood began to increase. He could tell his friends what kind of supper waited for them at home and what they had hidden and where. When he was twelve years old, he accompanied his mother to Jerusalem. There he wandered into the temple and joined a crowd listening to the lecture of the Rabbis (Jewish priests). The audience were all adults, but he was not afraid to sit with them. After listening intently, he asked questions and expressed his opinion. The learned rabbis were disturbed by the boy's boldness and puzzled by the questions he asked, for they were unable to answer him. They tried to silence him, but he ignored their attempts and continued to express his views.

Prophet Isa (as) Does Not Observe the Sabbath

Prophet Isa (as) grew up to manhood. It was Sabbath, a day of complete rest: no fire could be lit or extinguished nor could females plait their hair. Musah (as) had commanded that Saturday be dedicated to the worship of Allah. However, the Pharisees (one of a group of Jews who thought that they kept all God's rules) who were the guardians of the law, were ready to sell it when their interests were involved so as to obtain personal gains. Prophet Isa (as) was on his way to the temple. Although it was the Sabbath, he reached out his hand to pick two pieces of fruit to feed a hungry child. This was considered to be a violation of the Sabbath law. He made a fire for the old women to keep themselves warm from the freezing air. Another violation. He went to the temple and looked around. There were twenty thousand Jewish priests registered there who earned their living from the temple. The rooms of the temple were full of them.

Prophet Isa (as) Receives His Prophethood

Prophet Isa (as) observed that the visitors were much fewer than the priests. They worshipped nothing but money. The poor people who could not afford the price of the sheep or dove were swept away like flies by the Pharisees and Saducees. Prophet Isa (as) was astonished. On this blessed night, the two noble prophets Yahya (as) and Zakariyah (as) died, killed by the ruling authority. On the same night, the revelation descended upon Prophet Isa (as). Allah the Exalted commanded him to begin his call to the children of Israel. To Prophet Isa (as), the life of ease was closed, and the page of worship and struggled was opened.

Prophet Isa (as)'s Message

Like an opposing force, the message of Prophet Isa (as) came to denounce the practices of the Pharisees and to reinforce the Law of Moses. In the face of a materialistic age of luxury and worship of gold, Prophet Isa (as) called his people to a nobler life by word and deed. Prophet Isa (as) continued inviting the people to Almighty Allah. His call was based on the principle that there is no mediation between the Creator and His creatures. However, Prophet Isa (as) was in conflict with the Jews' superficial interpretation of the Torah. He said that he did not come to abrogate the Torah, but to complete it by going to the spirit of its substance to arrive at its essence. He made the Jews understand that the Ten Commandments have more value than they imagined.

Prophet Isa (as) Denounces Materialism

Prophet Isa (as) was therefore in confrontation with the materialistic people. He told them to desist from hypocrisy, show and false praise. There was no need to hoard wealth in this life. They should not preoccupy themselves with the goods of this passing world; rather they must preoccupy themselves with the affairs of the coming world because it would be everlasting. Prophet Isa (as) told them that caring for this world is a sin, not fit for pious worshippers. The disbelievers care for it because they do not know a better way. As for the believers, they know that their sustenance is with

Allah, so they trust in Him and scorn this world. Prophet Isa (as) continued to invite people to worship the Only Lord, who is without partner, just as he invited them to purify the heart and soul.

Jewish Priests Try to Embarrass Prophet Isa (as)

His teaching annoyed the priests, for every word of Prophet Isa (as) was a threat to them and their position, exposing their misdeeds. The Roman occupiers had, at first, no intention of being involved in this religious discord of the Jews because it was an internal affair, and they saw that this dispute would distract the Jews from the question of the occupation. However, the priests started to plot against Prophet Isa (as). They wanted to embarrass him and to prove that he had come to destroy the Mosaic Law. The Mosaic Law provides that an adulteress be stoned to death. They brought him a Jewish adulteress and asked Prophet Isa (as): "Does not the law stipulate the stoning of the adulteress?" Prophet Isa (as) answered: "Yes." They said: "This woman is an adulteress." Prophet Isa (as) looked at the woman and then at the priests. He knew that they were more sinful than she. They agreed that she should be killed according to Mosaic Law, and they understood that if he was going to apply Mosaic Law, he would be destroying his own rules of forgiveness and mercy. Prophet Isa (as) understood their plan. He smiled and assented: "Whoever among you is sinless can stone her." His voice rose in the middle of the Temple, making a new law on adultery, for the sinless to judge sin. There was none eligible; no mortal can judge sin, only Allah the Most Merciful. As Prophet Isa (as) left the temple, the woman followed him. She took out a bottle of perfume from her garments, knelt before his feet and washed them with perfume and tears, and then dried his feet with her hair. Prophet Isa (as) turned to the woman and told her to stand up, adding: "O Lord, forgive her sins." He let the priests understand that those who call people to Almighty Allah are not executioners. His call was based on mercy for the people, the aim of all divine calls.

Prophet Isa (as)' Brings the Dead to Life

Some Qur'anic commentators said that Prophet Isa (as) brought four people back from the dead: a friend of his named Al-Azam, an old woman's son, and a woman's only daughter. These three had died during his lifetime. When the Jews saw this they said: "You only resurrect those who have died recently; perhaps they only fainted." They asked him to bring back to life Sam the son of Prophet Noah (as). When he asked them to show him his grave, the people accompanied him there. Prophet Isa (as) invoked Allah the Exalted to bring him back to life and behold, Sam ibn Noah came out from the grave gray-haired. Prophet Isa (as) asked: "how did you get gray hair, when there was no aging in your time?" He answered: "O Spirit of Allah, I thought that the Day of Resurrection had come; from the fear of that day my hair turned gray."

The Miracles of Prophet Isa (as) - Quranic

Allah the Almighty said: *"Remember when Allah will say (on the Day of Resurrection): "O Isa, son of Mariam! Remember My Favour to you and to your mother when I supported you with Ruh-ul-Qudus (Gabriel) so that you spoke to the people in the cradle and in maturity; and when I taught you writing, Al Hikmah (the power of understanding), the Torah and the Gospel; and when you made out of the clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, by My Permission, and you breathed into it, and it became a bird by My Permission, and you healed those born blind, and the lepers by My Permission, and when you brought forth the dead by My Permission; and when I restrained the Children of Israel from you (when they resolved to kill you) since you came unto them with clear proofs, and the disbelievers among them said: 'This is nothing but evident magic.'"*⁵ And when I (Allah) put in their

⁵ Qur'an 5: 110

hearts of the disciples (of Isa (as)) to believe in Me and My Messenger, they said: "We believe. And bear witness that we are Muslims."⁶

Prophet Isa (as)' Disciples - Quranic

Almighty Allah also revealed: *Then when Isa (as) came to know of their disbelief, he said: "Who will be my helpers in Allah's Cause?" The disciples said: "We are the helpers of Allah; we believe in Allah, and bear witness that we are Muslims (we submit to Allah)."*⁷ *Our Lord! We believe in what You have sent down, and we follow the Messenger; so write us down among those who bear witness.*⁸ *And they (disbelievers) plotted (to kill Prophet Isa (as)), and Allah planned too. And Allah is the Best of the planners.*⁹

Allah Sends the Disciples a Feast

Prophet Isa (as) continued calling people to Almighty Allah and laying down for them what might be called "the law of the Spirit." Once when standing on a mountain surrounded by his disciples, Prophet Isa (as) saw that those who believed in him were from among the poor, the wretched, and the downtrodden (oppressed), and their number was small. Some of the miracles which Prophet Isa (as) performed had been requested by his disciples, such as their wish for a "holy table" to be sent down from heaven. Allah the Exalted said: *"Remember when the disciples said: "O Prophet Isa (as), son of Mariam (ra)! Can your Lord send down to us a table spread (with food) from heaven?" Prophet Isa (as) said: "Fear Allah, if you are indeed believers." They said: "We wish to eat thereof and to be stronger in Faith and to know that you have indeed told us the truth and that we ourselves be its witnesses." Prophet Isa (as), son of Mariam (ra), said: "O Allah, our Lord! Send us from heaven a table spread (with food) that there may be for us - for the first and the last of us - a festival and a sign from You; and provide us sustenance, for You are the best of sustainers." Allah said: "I am going to send it down unto you, but if any of you after that disbelieves, then I will punish him with a torment such as I have not inflicted on anyone among all the Alamin (mankind and jinn).*

Those Worshipping Prophet Isa (as) and Allah's Questions to Prophet Isa (as)

The Day of the Table became one of the holy days for the disciples and followers of Prophet Isa (as). Later on, the disciples and followers forgot the real essence of the miracles, and so they worshipped Prophet Isa (as) as a god. Almighty Allah asserted: *"And remember when Allah will say (on the Day of Resurrection): "O Prophet Isa (as), son of Mariam (ra)! Did you say unto men: 'Worship me and my mother as two gods besides Allah?'" He will say: "Glory be to You! It was not for me to say what I had no right to say. Had I said such a thing, You would surely have known it. You know what is in my inner self though I do not know what is in Yours, truly, You, only You, are the All Knower of all that is hidden and unseen. Never did I say to them aught except what You (Allah) did command me to say: 'Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord', And I was a witness over them while I dwelt amongst them, but when You took me up, You were the Watcher over them, and You are a Witness to all things. (This is a great admonition and warning to the Christians of the whole world). If you punish them, they are Your slaves, and if You forgive them, Verily You, only You are the All Mighty, the All Wise." Allah will say: "This is a Day on which the truthful will profit from their truth: theirs are Gardens under which rivers flow (in Paradise) - they shall abide therein forever. Allah is pleased with them and they with Him. That is the great success (Paradise). To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and all that is therein, and He is Able to do all things." (Ch 5:116-120 Quran)*

⁶ Qur'an 5: 111

⁷ Qur'an 3: 52

⁸ Qur'an 3: 53

⁹ Qur'an 3: 54

The Jews Plot to Kill Prophet Isa (as)

So the forces of evil accused him of magic, infringement of the Mosaic Law, allegiance with the devil; and when they saw that the poor people followed him, they began to scheme against him. The Sanhedrin (assembly of twenty-three to seventy-one men), the highest judicial and ecclesiastical council of the Jews, began to meet to plot against Prophet Isa (as). The plan took a new turn. When the Jews failed to stop Prophet Isa (as)'s call, they decided to kill him. The chief priests held secret meetings to agree on the best way of getting rid of Prophet Isa (as). While they were in such a meeting, one of the twelve apostles of Prophet Isa (as), Judas Iscariot, went to them and asked: "What will you give me if I deliver him to you?" Judas bargained with them until they agreed to give him thirty pieces of silver known as shekels. The plot was laid for the capture and murder of Prophet Isa (as). The priests had no authority to pass the death sentence at that time, so they convinced the Roman governor that Prophet Isa (as) was plotting against the security of the Roman Empire and urged him to take immediate action against him. The governor ordered that Prophet Isa (as) be arrested. The Glorious Qur'an affirms that Allah the Exalted did not permit the people of Israel to kill Prophet Isa (as) or crucify him. What happened was that Allah saved him from his enemies and raised him to heaven. They never killed Prophet Isa (as), they killed someone else. Allah the Almighty declared: *" And because of their saying (in boast), "We killed Messiah Prophet Isa (as), son of Mariam (ra), the Messenger of Allah," but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but the resemblance of Prophet Isa (as) was put over another man (and they killed that man) and those who differ therein are full of doubts. They have no certain knowledge, they follow nothing but conjecture. For surely; they killed him not (Prophet Isa (as), son of Mariam (ra)): But Allah raised him (Prophet Isa (as)) up (with his body and soul) unto Himself (and he is in the heavens). And Allah is Ever All Powerful, All Wise. And there is none of the people of the Scripture (Jews & Christians), but must believe in him (Prophet Isa (as), son of Mariam (ra), as only a Messenger of Allah, and a human being, before his (Prophet Isa (as) or a Jew's or a Christian's) death (at the time of the appearance of the angel of death). And on the Day of Resurrection, he (Prophet Isa (as)) will be a witness against them. (Ch 4:157-159 Quran)*