

## **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's 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 8<sup>th</sup> year of Hijrah, the division led by Khalid bin Walid (ra) was attacked.