

Prophet Moses (pbuh), Part 3

The life of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) stands as a remarkable source of inspiration and guidance. Like all prophets and messengers sent by God, his story is filled with hope and wisdom that subtly encourage reflection. Although Moses (pbuh) was gifted with great physical strength, he remained unaware of its extent until a moment of anger led him to misuse it, tragically resulting in the death of another man.

The repentance of Moses (pbuh) also sheds light on the spiritual resilience of the Israelites during their time in Egypt. They maintained the faith they inherited from their forefather Jacob (pbuh), who was deeply concerned about what his descendants would worship after him. The Qur'an recounts that, as Jacob (pbuh) approached death, his main worry was his children's faith, lest they be swept away by the idolatrous practices of Egypt. The Qur'an tells us that Jacob asked, **"What will you worship after me?"** and they replied, **"We will worship your God and the God of your fathers Abraham, Ishmael, and Isaac, One God. And to Him, we submit."** [Qur'an 2:133-134]. This episode highlights how the question of true worship and steadfast belief has always been central for people of faith.

The Qur'an further emphasizes this enduring concern, stating: **"And they say, 'Be Jews or Christians and you will be guided.' Say, 'Rather, [we follow] the religion of Abraham, the**

upright, and he was not of those who associate others with God.' Say, 'We believe in Allah, and what was revealed to us, and what was revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and what was given to Moses and Jesus, and what was given to the prophets from their Lord. We do not differentiate between any of them. And to Him we submit." [Qur'an 2:135-136]. The Qur'an also reminds us that Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and their descendants were all monotheists, devoted to the One true God.

Significantly, the Qur'an points out that to claim these patriarchs were Jews or Christians is anachronistic, as Judaism as a religion and the Gospel, as a sacred book delivered to Isa (Jesus), appeared many centuries after their time. Instead, their legacy is one of sincere faith and submission to God, a legacy that Prophet Moses (pbuh) and his people strove to uphold even in foreign and challenging lands.

The Qur'an states: **"Or do you say that Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes were Jews or Christians? Say, 'Are you more knowledgeable, or is Allah?' And who is more unjust than one who conceals a testimony he has from Allah? Allah is not unaware of what you do."** [Qur'an 2:140]. The name "Allah" (Exalted and Praised is He) is the designation for God in Arabic and Aramaic. It is pronounced with an emphatic L, characteristic of Semitic languages, and reflects the unique reverence and emphasis



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found in these traditions.

At this point, Moses (pbuh) understood that his secret was no longer safe. It did not take long before a man from the ruling circles – described in the Qur'an as hurrying from the outskirts of the city – came to warn him. He told Moses that Pharaoh and his advisors were plotting against his life, and urged him to leave Egypt at once. The man assured Moses of his sincerity, advising escape for safety. The Qur'an recounts this pivotal moment: **"And there came a man running from the farthest end of the city. He said, 'O Moses, the authorities are conspiring against you to kill you, so leave; I am sincerely advising you.'" [Qur'an 28:20].** This marked a turning point in Moses' life, as he was compelled to leave behind everything familiar, embarking on a journey that would shape his destiny and mission.

Moses (pbuh) departed from the city hastily, filled with fear and caution. In truth, he had not only left the city but all of Egypt behind, as later verses reveal. The Qur'an describes his flight in these words: **"So he left, fearful and vigilant. He said, 'My Lord, save me from the wrongdoing people.'" [Qur'an 28:21].** This moment captures a profound transition in his

life—Moses fled without wealth, provisions, or companions, relying solely on the providence of his Lord. He who once entered the city "fearful and vigilant" when confronting injustice, now departed it in the same state, yet with a heart turning entirely to divine protection.

Moses (pbuh) fled Egypt in haste, heading toward Midian (Madyan), uncertain of his path and destination. He left behind the only land he had known, carrying no possessions, seeking only safety and divine guidance. The Qur'an says, **"And as he made his way toward Midian, he said, 'Perhaps my Lord will guide me to the right way.'" [Qur'an 28:22].** That journey across barren desert terrain marked the beginning of a new phase in his life, one of solitude, reflection, and renewal. Alone and destitute, Moses placed his trust in God, who would soon lead him to the well of Midian and the household destined to shelter him.

Yet Moses (pbuh), as a man of insight, noticed something unusual. He saw two women standing near shepherds who were drawing water for their herds from a well. It was uncommon for women to perform this task. Moses approached the women and asked, **"What is the matter with you?"** They replied, **"We cannot draw water until the shepherds leave, and our father is a very old man."** The Qur'an beautifully and succinctly recounts this encounter: **"And when he reached Midian's water, he found**

there a crowd of people drawing water, and he noticed two women standing apart. He said, 'What is the matter with you?' They said, 'We cannot draw water until the shepherds depart, and our father is an old man.' So he drew water for them. Then he withdrew to the shade and said, 'My Lord, I am in dire need of whatever good You might send down to me.'" [Qur'an 28:23-24].

Though burdened by his own troubles, Moses (pbuh) did not remain idle when he saw others in difficulty, especially two lone women. He immediately approached them and asked if he could assist. The women responded fully yet concisely, offering only the necessary explanation. They explained that their father was elderly and unable to tend the flock himself, so they had to perform the labor. Being women, and out of self-respect, they did not want to join the crowd of men who watered the flock. Without further conversation, Moses (pbuh) understood what was needed. Seeing their plight, he simply acted and watered their flock for them.

The narratives describe the well as being covered with a heavy lid that few men could lift or replace. In a desert city, such a cover is essential to prevent people or animals from falling into the well. According to these accounts, Moses (peace be upon him) was able to remove the cover by himself to water the two women's flock, and then carefully replaced it. This feat did not go

unnoticed by one of the women. When they returned home earlier than usual, their father, undoubtedly, inquired about the reason. One of the daughters enthusiastically recounted how a stranger had watered their flock without asking for payment. Moved by her words – or perhaps by the two daughters' words, their father sent her to invite the stranger to meet him (their father), so he could pay him for his help. The Qur'an describes these events clearly and, as we are used to now, concisely and elegantly, we read: **"Then, one of the two women approached him, walking bashfully. She said, 'My father is inviting you to compensate you for having drawn water for us.' And when he (Moses) came and told him the story, he (the father) said, 'Do not fear, you have escaped from the wrongdoing people.'" [Qur'an 28:25].**

We could see many lessons in this single verse: How did the father know that Moses was now safe? Why did the father call for Moses? He claimed he wanted to pay him for watering the sheep, but Moses (pbuh) did not ask for any money! How did the woman come and approach Moses (pbuh)? (shy). And what happened after Moses finished his talk with the father? We shall answer these questions next week (God willing).

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