

Prophet Musa (A)

Learning objectives:

- To know that Prophet Musa (A) had Shi'ahs before he became Prophet.
- To learn about the incident that changed Prophet Musa (A)'s life.

Surat al-Qasas: Verse 15

وَدَخَلَ الْمَدِينَةَ عَلَىٰ حِينٍ غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا فَوَجَدَ فِيهَا رَجُلَيْنِ يَقْتَتِلَانِ هَٰذَا
 مِّنْ شِيعَتِهِ وَهَٰذَا مِّنْ عَدُوِّهِ ۖ فَاسْتَعَاثَ الَّذِي مِّنْ شِيعَتِهِ عَلَىٰ الَّذِي مِّنْ
 عَدُوِّهِ فَوَكَزَهُ مُوسَىٰ فَقَضَىٰ عَلَيْهِ ۖ قَالَ هَٰذَا مِنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ ۖ إِنَّهُ عَدُوٌّ
 مُّضِلٌّ مُّبِينٌ

[One day] he entered the city at a time when its people were not likely to take notice. He found there two men fighting, this one from among his followers, and that one from his enemies. The one who was from his followers sought his help against him who was from his enemies. So Moses hit him with his fist, whereupon he expired. He said, 'This is of Satan's doing. Indeed he is clearly a misleading enemy.'

Reflection:

Ponder over the verse mentioned above. Why is the term Shi'ah used in the verse? Even though Prophet Musa (A) had not reached the stage of prophethood, he was still considered a leader amongst the Banu Isra'il due to his position within the palace. How do you think Prophet Musa (A)'s life changed after this incident?

As the verse states, Prophet Musa (A) entered the city when the people were not expecting him and hence he witnessed how the Banu Isra'il were really treated. This was an eye opening experience for Prophet Musa (A). He now saw the reality of how his people were actually being treated. He then noticed that there were two men fighting each other. They were actually trying to kill each other. One of the men was from Banu Isra'il. The Qur'an refers to this man as a "Shi'ah" of Prophet Musa (A). "Shi'ah" in this verse does not signify cultural or racial ties, it is used to express one's following of a person. This man calls out to Prophet Musa (A) for help.

The other man was a Coptic guard, the Qur'an refers to this man as the enemy of Prophet Musa (A). Prophet Musa (A) intervened trying to stop the two men from fighting and punched the Coptic guard which caused the guard to die on impact.

The verse continues and describes the reaction of Prophet Musa (A) after the death of the Coptic guard. He states: *'This is of Satan's doing. Indeed he is clearly a misleading enemy.'* From many interpretations of this line, what is understood is that his act of punching the guard ruined all his plans of bringing a change and freeing the Banu Isra'il from captivity. It can also mean that the Shi'ah of Prophet Musa (A) was wrong to have started a fight and he did not help the plans of Prophet Musa (A) by being radical and outspoken.

In the next verses, it becomes clear that this Shi'ah would continuously pick fights and then call Prophet Musa (A) for help.

Reflection:

This "Shi'ah" of Prophet Musa (A) caused him more harm than good by picking fights with the Coptic guards. Are we like such Shi'ahs? Are we going to help the Imam (A) of our time or are we going to be foolish like this follower of Prophet Musa (A) and unknowingly cause the Imam more difficulty in his mission? What are we doing to help the cause and plans of our Imam (A).

Surat al-Qasas: Verse 16

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي فَاغْفِرْ لِي فَغَفَرَ لَهُ ۗ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

He said, 'My Lord! I have wronged myself. Forgive me!' So He forgave him. Indeed, He is the All-forgiving, the All-merciful.

One could claim that killing a guard was a sin and that is why Prophet Musa (A) is asking for forgiveness. First of all, Prophet Musa (A) did not intend to kill the Coptic guard. His intention was to protect his Shi'ah. Secondly, he did not think that by punching the guard, the guard would die on impact. When this happened he immediately felt that he had ruined all his plans of saving his people and he immediately asked Allah (SWT) for forgiveness.

Prophet Musa (A) was now in trouble because people from the Palace would take action against him for killing the guard.

Reflection:

This verse is a beautiful *munajaat* – whispered prayer between Prophet Musa (A) and Allah (SWT). This is also a verse we should memorise and recite immediately after we have committed a sin as Allah (SWT) loves the ones who repent immediately after making a mistake. This verse also gives hope to the one who has made a mistake as the end of the verse states that Allah (SWT) forgave Prophet Musa (A) and that He is the All-Forgiving, All-Merciful.

After reciting this *munajaat*, Prophet Musa (A) felt inspired that he had been forgiven by Allah (SWT) and he then responded with the following verse:

Surat al-Qasas: Verse 17

قَالَ رَبِّ بِمَا أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ فَلَنْ أَكُونَ ظَهيرًا لِلْمُجْرِمِينَ

He said, 'My Lord! As You have blessed me, I will never be a supporter of the guilty.'

Reflection:

Is this our attitude when we make a mistake? Do we continue to support the unjust and oppressors even though we know it is the wrong thing to do? Prophet Musa (A) is showing us that his apology was sincere and that being forgiven is a great blessing from Allah (SWT) and hence he makes a promise to himself never to support the guilty people.

Surat al-Qasas: verse 18-19

فَأَصْبَحَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ خَائِفًا يَتَرَقَّبُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي اسْتَنْصَرَهُ بِالْأَمْسِ يَسْتَصْرِحُهُ ۚ
 قَالَ لَهُ مُوسَى إِنَّكَ لَغَوِيٌّ مُبِينٌ

The next morning he proceeded to the city in fear and looking around as one apprehensive of danger when all of a sudden, the man who had sought his help the day before again called out to him for his help. Moses said to him: "Clearly, you are a very misguided fellow."

فَلَمَّا أَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَبْطِشَ بِالَّذِي هُوَ عَدُوٌّ لَهُمَا قَالَ يَا مُوسَى أَتُرِيدُ أَنْ تَقْتُلَنِي
 كَمَا قَتَلْتَ نَفْسًا بِالْأَمْسِ ۗ إِنَّ تُرِيدُ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ جَبَّارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا
 تُرِيدُ أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُصْلِحِينَ

But when he wanted to strike him who was an enemy of both of them, he said, 'Moses, do you want to kill me, just like the one you killed yesterday? You only want to be a tyrant in the land, and you do not desire to be one who brings about reform.'

Prophet Musa (A) is now a fugitive, he is in hiding because he knows that Pharaoh's guards are looking to arrest him. The next day, the same Shi'ah gets into another fight and calls Prophet Musa (A) for help. This time Prophet Musa (A) replies to this Shi'ah and tells him that he is clearly misguided and that he is causing disruption with no benefit to anyone.

Earlier it was mentioned that Pharaoh treated Prophet Musa (A) like his own son and that killing a guard was not a big deal because Prophet Musa (A) was one of the princes. However, Prophet Musa (A) is now around the age of 20 and Pharaoh over the years began to realise that he had made a mistake by keeping Prophet Musa (A) in his palace. Pharaoh was now looking for excuses to get rid of Prophet Musa (A) so he started to send him into the front lines of many battles. This incident with the Coptic guard was now the perfect excuse for Pharaoh to get Prophet Musa (A) killed.

The news of the death of the guard reached the palace of Pharaoh and Pharaoh held a meeting with his council to decide the fate of Prophet Musa (A).

Reflection:

This incident with the Coptic guard changed the ideas and plans of Prophet Musa (A). However, this incident again shows us that we plan and Allah (SWT) plans. This incident was the plan of Allah (SWT). Even though Prophet Musa (A) thought that he made a mistake, through hindsight, one knows that this was all part of Allah (SWT)'s greater plan.