Professional Notes

SHAYKH MOHAMMED MANA
ONCE UPON THE NILE
THE EPIC OF MOSES

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In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

All praise is due to Allah the Lord of the universe. And peace and blessings be upon His beloved Messenger Muhammad, his family, and his pious followers who follow his guidance.

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INTRODUCTION

STORIES OF THE PROPHETS
In Sahih Muslim, Abu Dhar asked the Prophet how many Messengers there are in total. In this narration, the Prophet answered with the number 120,000 (other numbers are mentioned in other narrations). That’s a big number!

How many of those do we know about? 25 of them – some scholars say 26 because of a difference of opinions on names in the Qur’an. 25 out of 120,000 is a very small number; these are the ones mentioned in the Qur’an. Even out of these 25, their stories are told in the Qur’an in different ways.

There are certain prophets (e.g. Hud and Dhul Kifl) whose life stories we cannot fully tell because we have not been given details. This is part of the wisdom of Allah! We come to some other prophets, however, where we have been given a lot of detail, like Nuh and Isa.

Musa is discussed at great length in the Qur’an with a great amount of detail. He is mentioned far more than 100 times by name, and his story is told more than two dozen times, sometimes with almost an entire surah! The story of Musa is told in Surah A’raaf, Surah Shura, Surah Taha, Surah Qasas, Surah Dukhaan, Surah Naziat, and more – at different lengths in each surah.

In Surah An’aam, 18 Messengers are mentioned by name.

أَوَلَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَيْنَا إِلَى اللَّهِ فِيهِدَى نُورًا

“They are the ones whom Allah has guided, so from their guidance take an example.”
Surah An’aam, 6:90

We often feel that the previous Prophets belong to a different religious group, and that they are from a long time ago. We do not feel that closeness to them. Allah says that they are your messengers too! Follow them!

LEARNING FROM MUSA
The Prophet gave us a tremendous amount of detail about Musa in his Sunnah. He described him and praised him on so many occasions. We find that the Prophet seized educational opportunities with the Sahaba – he used the life of Musa to give profound lessons to his Companions.
On one occasion, the Prophet ﷺ was traveling, and shortly before entering back into Madinah, he stopped at the camp of a Bedouin man living outside of the city. He camped there, and asked the man if he had provisions to share. The man invited the Prophet ﷺ into his camp and gave him provisions. The Prophet ﷺ later got back up to continue his journey. Before he left, he said to the man, “Come and visit us in Madinah, we would love to honor you the way you honored us.” The Prophet ﷺ went back to Madinah, and the Bedouin man came and visited soon after. When he came, he asked where the Prophet ﷺ was. The Prophet ﷺ welcomed him like the man had done for him, and he hosted him.

From this example, we learn to do this with travelers and visitors. After the Prophet ﷺ hosted this Bedouin man, he wanted to give him something extra, so he told him to ask for anything he would like. Imagine the Prophet ﷺ saying this! What would we say? Would we ask for Jannah, for du’ā’? The Prophet ﷺ had done this with others, like Rabee’ah, who asked for his companionship in Jannah.

The man thought for a while, and then he responded saying, “An animal that I can ride on.” The Prophet ﷺ said okay, and told the Sahaba to get him an animal. The Prophet ﷺ then told the man to ask again! The man thought again, and said, “A servant that will help us in the house,” so the Prophet ﷺ said okay, and told the Sahaba to meet the man’s request. He then asked the Bedouin man to ask again! The man thought for some time, and said, “A dog to guard my animals, my flock.” The Prophet ﷺ told the Sahaba to get the man a dog, and they got him a dog.

The Prophet ﷺ then asked the man: “Are you not capable of being like that old woman from Bani Isra’il?” This begs a question: what old woman? The Sahaba asked who the Prophet ﷺ was talking about.

THE PROPHET ﷺ TOLD THEM A STORY FROM THE TIME OF MUSA ﷺ

When Allah ﷻ instructed Musa ﷺ to prepare his people for the Hijra, he gathered Bani Isra’il and told them to prepare – they had to do everything in secrecy. Bani Isra’il said, “We have a covenant from the time of Yusuf that if we leave this land, we have to take the body of Yusuf with us.” Musa said okay, and he asked where the body of Yusuf ﷺ was. Bani Isra’il said that they did not know! They asked, “So how will we find him? There is only one old woman from Bani Isra’il who knows the answer, and she will not tell anyone where he is buried!”

Musa ﷺ spoke to this woman and asked her to tell them, so they could fulfill the covenant. She said that she would tell them in exchange for one thing: “Your (Musa’s) companionship in Jannah” – Musa ﷺ was very taken aback by this! As we will come to see, Bani Isra’il went through difficult challenges. The people sacrificed their wealth, their lives, and this woman wanted Jannah for one piece of information! Allah ﷻ revealed to Musa ﷺ, “Give this woman what she is asking for,” so Musa said, “Your request will be granted.” She told
them where the body of Yusuf ﷺ was: “By a small pond, remove water, dig, and you will find him.” Bani Isra’il did exactly that and took the body with them on Hijra.

The Prophet ﷺ told this story to the companions in response to the action of one man – this was an opportunity to educate people with Musa ﷺ’s story. This tells us that he must have been someone special.

We should be spending time learning about Musa ﷺ’s life, and we should reach a point where we can say that we love him – it is hard to love someone if we do not know anything about them!

Allah ﷺ and His Messenger ﷺ did not say anything in vain. Whatever they have told us is for our own good – the story of Musa ﷺ is repeated for a reason! We need to spend time with this story so that we can reflect upon it for our own benefit.

**HOW DID PEOPLE TREAT MUSA ﷺ? HOW DID HE RESPOND?**

Musa ﷺ had a wide array of experiences with his people, and they dealt with him in different ways. Some supported him and struggled with him, and many others gave him a hard time.

While Musa ﷺ was leading Bani Isra’il on Hijra, and they reached the other side of the water, they came across people that were worshipping hand-made idols. The people of Bani Isra’il told Musa ﷺ to make them idols like this, and this angered him because they were just saved from Fir’aun!

After the Prophet ﷺ passed away, a man from the descendants of Bani Isra’il came to ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab ﷺ to provoke him, and said: “Your Messenger has just died and now you are squabbling about who will have leadership!”

The Prophet ﷺ had just passed away, who should be responsible? They decided to make Abu Bakr ﷺ the next leader. ‘Umar ﷺ responded to the man, “It was your forefathers that before their feet even dried from crossing the water, they wanted idols, just after they had been saved from Fir’aun!”

> “And (remember) when Musa said to his people: ‘Verily, Allah commands you that you slaughter a cow.’ They said, ‘Are you making fun of us?’”
> **Surah Baqarah, 2:67**
Is this how people should be addressing their Messenger? Allah ﷺ commanded them to slaughter a cow, how could they respond like that? This gives a snapshot of how they treated their Messenger, how they talked to him, and their manners – or lack thereof.

Musa ﷺ was patient and never gave up. He did not give up on his people – that was not his attitude. He struggled and pushed and tried to show them what was right.

**OVERVIEW**

1.) Tadabbur of Qur’an

What is *tadabbur*? It is reflection, pondering, and deep thinking with the goal of internalization.

When we read Qur’an, it is supposed to be personal – how often do we actually have a personal experience? If the answer is sometimes, that is better than most people! We read it, and it feels far away, foreign, and distant – and it should not be like that. We can boldly say that the Qur’an was revealed for the purpose of doing *tadabbur*. Where do we get this fact from? From the Qur’an itself.

In *Surah Saad*, Allah ﷺ describes the Qur’an as “A Book that We revealed to you, a Blessed Book.” There are so many blessings from it, and from its meaning, recitation, listening, and memorization. Allah then says, “So that they would do *tadabbur* of its verses.”

If we are not doing this, we are not doing what Allah ﷺ expects us to do with the Qur’an – we are not fulfilling the expectation, and that’s a problem! Many people may say that they do not understand Arabic. Many of us may be thinking that we do not even know how to read or understand the Qur’an, so how are we supposed to deeply reflect on it? These may be barriers – it is true that learning the Arabic language will enhance our ability to understand, but that does not mean that if we do not have knowledge of the language, we have to be cut off completely. Some people may say they have not studied *tafsir* – what is *tafsir*? It is a science by which we study the apparent meanings in the Qur’an, the vocabulary words, the reasons for revelation, etc. Tafseer answers the question, “What?” but *tadabbur* answers “Why?” and “How?”

Why is Allah ﷺ telling me this? How should I put this into practice? That’s *tadabbur* – it can be done without mastery of the Arabic language or *tafsir*! A good translation is a basic *tafsir*, it is enough for us to answer questions. We should be doing active reading as opposed to passive reading. Passive reading is simply reading the words and being done. Active reading is when we stop to ask questions, and if we do not know the answers, we do research in order increase our knowledge and connection. *Tadabbur* requires a muscle, which means that it needs exercise to strengthen it.
We are using the story of Musa ﷺ as a case study. We are trying to get personal with it, as much as possible. This will be *tadabbur* of the Qur’an. Stories in the Qur’an are the best place to begin – there is no theology, no prerequisites needed, and we all love stories. Allah ﷻ uses them as a means of delivering powerful messages.

2.) Spending Time with Musa ﷺ

If Allah ﷻ and the Prophet ﷺ are speaking so much about Musa ﷺ, we should be spending time learning about him so that we can discover why his life is relevant to our experiences.

THE STORY OF QARUN

The story of Qarun is deeply related to the story of Musa ﷺ. He is mentioned three times in the Qur’an – two times previously, alongside Fir’aun and Haman.

In this passage of *Surah Al-Qasas*, he is mentioned as a part of the community of Bani Isra’il:

> إنَّ قَرْوَنَ كَاتِبَ مِنْ قُوْمِ مُوسَى فَبَغِيَ عَلَيْهِمْ

“Indeed, Qarun was from the people of Musa, but he tyrannized them…”

*Surah Al-Qasas*, 28:76

Right off the bat, we have this understanding: it is the time of Musa ﷺ, and there are different groups of people. There are the people of Bani Isra’il, and there are the native Egyptians. The people of Bani Isra’il were not native – they came from outside.

“HE TYRANNIZED THEM”

It is amazing that Allah ﷻ says this right away. Qarun was a sort of governor. At the very beginning of *Surah Al-Qasas*, Allah ﷻ says that Fir’aun divided the people of the land into groups. Some historians say that he divided them into 38 provinces. The people of Bani Isra’il were oppressed – they were enslaved and used as cheap labor. Calling them second class would be a compliment. They were very low on the ladder, and that was by design.

There was one province where most of Bani Isra’il was gathered, and Qarun was placed as a leader over them – is there something interesting about this? Fir’aun used one of the people of Bani Isra’il to be the tyrannical leader of their own group! Does this sound familiar to anyone who has studied history? Many oppressors controlled masses by appointing their own and making them leaders. This still exists today, and it is important for us to recognize it. This was known as *jaashaan* or *jaasaan* – there is a difference of pronunciations.

Qarun was from Bani Isra’il, and he was an oppressive ruler over this province. Some say that he was closely related to Musa ﷺ – some say that he was his first cousin, others say
that he was distantly related. Bani Isra’il was one ethnic tribe that went back to the same forefather. When we say Bani Isra’il, we are referring to the descendants of Ya’qub ﷺ.

Allah ﷺ tells us that Qarun was a tyrant. The word baghi refers to oppression. It is a higher level of oppression, and it is tangible, which includes feeling pain physically and financially.

**THE SERIOUSNESS OF OPPRESSION**
The Prophet ﷺ said, “There are two doorways of punishment in this dunya: oppression, and being unruly towards family, especially towards parents.” [Tirmidhi]

The Prophet ﷺ has told us to clear up disagreements now, before the currency is no longer monetary – it will be good deeds and bad deeds!

The Prophet ﷺ has taught us that there is no barrier between the du’a of a person who is oppressed and Allah ﷺ.

During the Abbasid time period, there was a faction that emerged, and eventually, after it had been squashed, the leader of that faction and his son found themselves in jail. They felt remorse for what they had done. The son asked, “What has lead us to this? Yesterday we were honorable! Today we are in this situation.” The father said, “My son, perhaps it was the du’a of someone oppressed – it traveled by night up to Allah while we were asleep, but Allah was not asleep, and it reached Allah.”

When we think of oppression, we often think of governments and politics, but we do not have to go that far! There is oppression under our own roofs, and in our social circles. Our eyes are asleep, but the oppressed are awake at night, shedding tears, and Allah ﷺ hears them.

We assume that we are all good, and that we do not oppress anyone. However, even the Prophet ﷺ was concerned and cautious about this! In his last days before he passed away, he was suffering from a very difficult illness. He could not walk without support. His companions helped him walk up to the pulpit, and he could not stand, so he sat down. He said, “Oh people, I am going to leave soon. If there is anyone whose back I have struck, here is my back. If there is anyone I have offended, here is my honor. If there is anyone whose wealth I have taken, here is my wealth. This is your right, come and take it.”

Then he said, “Or if you are not going to take it, forgive me, set me free with Allah ﷺ so that I can meet my Lord and my heart will be content.” The Prophet ﷺ said this! He never oppressed anyone, but he was genuinely concerned that he did. This teaches us not to take the matter lightly. The matter of harming others on any level is serious.
ALLAH FORBIDS OPPRESSION
Qarun had wealth and power, but until the Day of Judgement, his name will be read as a tyrant in the Qur’an. That was the legacy he left behind. Allah ﷻ and the Prophet ﷺ want us to be free from oppression. In a Hadith Qudsi, Allah says:

"Oh my servants, I have made oppression haram upon Myself! And I have made it haram between you as well, so do not wrong one another."

It becomes easy when we hear the names of oppressors to point the finger, and to only look at the evil that they did. One of Sheikh Mohammed’s friends reminded him that when you point the finger at someone, you point three fingers back at yourself! When we hear about these oppressors, we should be thinking about ourselves, and asking ourselves if we have these qualities. If so, we need to go in with a thin needle and get them out, because we do not want to meet Allah ﷻ with the tiniest amount of oppression.

"...And We gave him of treasures whose keys would burden a band of strong men; thereupon his people said to him, ‘Do not exult. Indeed, Allah does not like the exultant.’"

Surah Al-Qasas, 28:76
QARUN’S WEALTH

After Allah ﷻ mentions that Qarun tyrannized his people, the next thing He mentions is his wealth. Allah does not describe his wealth exactly, but He mentions how much wealth he had. He had so much wealth that a group of strong men would have trouble carrying the keys of the treasure boxes alone.

Wasn’t Qarun from Bani Isra’il? No one from Bani Isra’il had this much wealth – how did he? His wealth came from the agenda he was perpetuating, the oppression he was helping to exist. Scholars say that oppression needs pillars to stand upon, and one of those pillars is the abuse of wealth. Qarun represented this.

The word farah means happiness. Are the people of Bani Isra’il telling Qarun that Allah ﷻ does not love those who are happy? No! Allah ﷻ has told us to be happy, there is nothing wrong with that. What is wrong is the expression of happiness in the wrong way. Society teaches us, “If you got it, flaunt it.” That is not what Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ taught us.

Is it praiseworthy to amass large amounts of wealth? What does Islam teach us about this? Is it problematic for a believer who wants to be close to Allah ﷻ to have a lot of wealth?

The Prophet ﷺ was not a very wealthy person. In fact, didn’t he make du’a to be with masakeen? There are many places in the Muslim world where there is a belief that it is more virtuous to be poor, and that having wealth is blameworthy. This is actually an incorrect understanding of certain texts that are taken out of context. Yes, the Prophet ﷺ did shun wealth at times of his life. However, we have examples of Companions who lived in poverty, and others who were wealthy.

‘Abd-ur-Rahman ibn ‘Auf ﷺ was very wealthy. When he passed away, he left behind four spouses. We know how to divide inheritance from Surah Al-Nisaa’ in the Qur’an. Allah ﷻ tells us that when children are present, the spouse gets 1/8th of the inheritance. Each of his wives inherited four million dirham, and there were four of them! 16 million dirham is only 1/8th of his wealth.
The Prophet visited Sa’ad on his death bed. He only had one daughter, and he wanted to give everything away in *sadaqah*. The Prophet told him not to do that. He then said he would give away half, and the Prophet said not to do that either. Then, he said he would give away a third, and the Prophet said that was fine, but that it was a lot. The Prophet said, “For you to leave your children and your family as self-sufficient is better than you leaving them in need of other people.”

The Prophet taught us that wealth is neither praiseworthy nor blameworthy – as a matter of fact, it can be either one, depending on how it is utilized and gathered.

The Prophet said, “Allah will give wealth to those whom He loves and those whom He does not love, but He does not give *iman* except to those whom He loves.”

‘Abd-ur-Rahman ibn ‘Auf was not considered better than the other Companions because of his wealth. There were other companions who were considered more virtuous, but they had nothing! The test of how good we are has nothing to do with how much wealth we have. Allah and the Prophet have told us to seek *ihsaan*, or excellence, in everything we do, and part of that is in our career and financial situation.

\[But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and yet, do not forget your share of the world. And do good as Allah has done good to you. And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters.\]

*Surah Al-Qasas, 28:77*

**GOLDEN ADVICE**
People who are smart with managing finances say to invest wealth, and that is what his people said to do as well - invest in the *akhirah*. Wealth is not innately positive or negative. It is a means of achieving a much higher goal.

“Do not forget your share of the world” – this shows us that it is also important to save some wealth for our own needs.

Allah has dealt with us with *ihsaan*, so we should deal with *ihsaan* as well. Allah has drawn a metaphor in many places in Qur’an with *tijaarah*, or business transactions, which reminds us of our transaction with Allah – and that we should respond to it with *ihsaan*. 
The problematic trend with individuals that amass wealth is that they end up using it for something that will cause destruction. This is the work of Shaytan, one hundred percent. Shaytan knows where he will end up, so he tries to bring people with him. People are not satisfied doing haram things themselves, so they behave like Shaytan by trying to get more people involved. We should deal with these things in privacy, and we should not get others involved in our disobedience.

There are two categories of people whom Allah does not love in these verses: the ones who express their happiness in a sinful way, and the ones who cause corruption.

Whenever we come across the phrase, “Allah loves/Allah does not love...” we should pause, and ask ourselves if we are a part of this category, and what we can do to be a part of it or not be a part of it. This is tadabbur, and reading actively.

“He said, 'I was only given it because of knowledge I have.' Did he not know that Allah had destroyed before him of generations those who were greater than him in power and greater in accumulation [of wealth]? But the criminals, about their sins, will not be asked.”

Surah Qasas, 28:78

“I WAS ONLY GIVEN IT BECAUSE OF KNOWLEDGE I HAVE”
We have two problems here with Qarun’s statement:

1.) The Attitude of Response to Naseeha (Sincere Advice)
Responding to sincere advice in this way is very problematic. The people of Nuh would cover their eyes and block their ears when they would hear advice. In this case, Qarun responded with similar arrogance.

What is our response when we are advised? Do we automatically get defensive? Do we turn it around and try to find problems with the person giving us advice? We should accept naseeha. It might even be biased, but we should ask ourselves if there is some aspect of truth in it. It is important to think about what we can improve, and not get defensive.

We suffer from the “Don’t judge me, bro” culture – when someone is given advice, they respond with this phrase. However, it has nothing to do with judging! Do we not have the ability to recognize a mistake and help each other? We should be motivating one another to improve and grow. Today, there is the concept of, “I'm just being me!” This is a problem – it is very poisonous because it makes us develop a mindset that we are above being advised or corrected. Sometimes it is uncomfortable, but that is okay, it will not harm us. We should ask ourselves, “What can we can take from this and improve upon?” Even if it’s just five percent, it can go a long way.
2.) Arrogance

Qarun refused to give credit to Allah . He only wanted to give credit to himself because of his knowledge - what knowledge? Some historians say that he had knowledge called alchemy, which refers to changing certain rocks into precious minerals. Some say that this is a form of magic, and some say it is an optical illusion. Others say that his knowledge was bad knowledge because it meant being abusive and taking advantage of Bani Isra’il. Qarun was making money off of their labor.

ORIGINS OF QARUN

The word quroon in Arabic is the plural of qarn, which is a generation. Not only does this share a resemblance with his own name, Qarun, but it also shares similarity with his name as mentioned in the Ancient Hebrew language found in the Tawrah.

Allah says, “Does he not know that Allah has destroyed entire nations before?” Their stories were told and people knew about the people of ‘Aad and Thamud. They left huge landmarks behind, but they vanished. Their stories spread throughout the lands. People are fully aware that these nations existed before and were eventually wiped out. So, let Qarun not think that he is invincible.

“So he came out before his people in his adornment. Those who desired the worldly life said, ‘Oh, would that we had like what was given to Qarun. Indeed, he is one of great fortune.’”

Surah Al-Qasas, 28:79

SHOWCASE OF QARUN’S WEALTH

What was his response? He came out in front of his people with all of his adornments. People warned him not to express his happiness in ways that were inappropriate. He would parade in front of the people with all of his wealth. Some books of tafsir mention that his cavalry of horses had straps of gold! It’s not like he even had anywhere to go. This was just a display for him to flaunt about his wealth. It may sound silly, but people nowadays behave in similar ways. Fitnah can come in all shapes and sizes. The fitnah in the story of Qarun is a test of wealth. Shaykh Mohammed explained that when he was in Madinah, there was one street where a bunch of homeboys would just drive up and down. They would take U-turns, repeating this back and forth. They weren’t even enjoying themselves; they just wanted people to see them. What’s the point? This incident reminded him of the ayah: “So he came out in full display of adornment.”
HOW DID PEOPLE REACT TO HIS WEALTH?

We know what he did, but how did the people around him react? One group of people desired the worldly life and said, “Oh we wish we had similar to what was given to Qarun, he is sooo lucky!”

Does this sound familiar? Sometimes when people see celebrities or athletes, they respond in a similar way. “Man he’s so lucky.” “I wish I had what she had.” This is a very common response.

Another group of people responded differently:

> وَكَانَ الْأَلْبَاطُ أُوْلَىَ الْأَمْلِمِ وَيَلْهَضُمُّ نَوْبَتَ الَّذِيْنِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرًا مَّثَلًا وَعَمَّلَ صَلِيحًا وَلَا يَلْفَقُهَا إِلَّا الصَّرِّحُوتُ

“But those who had been given knowledge said, ‘Woe to you! The reward of Allah is better for he who believes and does righteous. And none are granted it except the patient.’”

Surah Al-Qasas, 28:80

But those who had been given knowledge said “وَلَّكُمْ” which means something like “Hey stop,” “How could you?” or “Whooa this is bad, woe to you.” They understood that the reward of Allah is better for those who believe and do righteous good deeds, and they understood the importance of patience. The people of ‘ilm held the correct opinion. When they heard people drooling over what Qarun possessed, they reacted with strength. They informed those people to seek what is better as they understood that Qarun’s possessions were temporary.

These are very interesting reactions we see between the two groups of people. The Prophet told us in a saheeh hadith: “This dunya is for four categories of people.” People will react in this dunya in four different ways.
1.) A person whom Allah has given wealth and knowledge
Knowledge refers to knowledge of Allah (i.e. piety) in this category as well as the other categories. So, this person spends his or her wealth in different avenues of goodness. It is refreshing and beautiful to see a person spending in order to bring good to others.

2.) A person whom Allah has given knowledge but not much wealth
When this kind of person sees people from category #1 spending in the Path of Allah, he or she says, “I wish I had the wealth they had so that I could do that same khayr.” Overall, jealousy is a negative trait, but in this case, it is a positive kind of jealousy.

3.) A person whom Allah has given wealth but no knowledge
The wealth is a test from Allah ﷺ. These people spend their wealth in ways that are haram. We ask Allah to protect us from spending our wealth in ways that are displeasing to Him.

4.) A person whom Allah has given neither wealth nor knowledge
These people look towards those in category #3, and they view them as lucky individuals. So, they wish they had similar wealth in order to lead the same lifestyle that is displeasing to Allah ﷺ.

When the Prophet ﷺ mentioned category #2, they were described as looking towards category #1 who were spending in goodness. He said that category #1 and #2 will be equal in reward even though category #2 didn’t have anything to spend. But Allah ﷺ rewarded them for that sincere and good intention, so they are equal in reward.

As for category #3 and #4, the Prophet ﷺ said they will share in sin. What about the hadith that explains that if you intend to do something sinful, but you don’t commit that sin, then you get a good deed? Is there any contradiction here? No! The hadith refers to someone who takes the appropriate measures to intentionally and purposefully stop him or herself from doing something wrong. For example, it doesn’t apply to people who were driving in order to do some evil and their car stopped working in the middle of road. The reward is for someone who actually stops him or herself.

Scholars say that people in category #4 have the desire and intention to do something wrong. If they had the wealth of people in category #3, they would be engaging in similar haram activities. So, they too will have a share of those bad deeds. We can be held accountable for seeking and chasing after something sinful, even if we don’t have the means to do so. So be careful what you wish for.
**TWIN PILLARS OF SUCCESS**

From *ayah* 80 in *Surah Al-Qasas*, we learn of two pillars that we need to stand upon in the face of trials: patience and knowledge. Wealth itself can be a test from *Allah* ﷺ. At times, hardships can come like a tsunami. In fact, as we come closer to the end of this world, there will be more trials and tests.

![PATIENCE KNOWLEDGE](image)

‘*Ilm* alone can be a *fitnah* at times, and many people slip into this trial. On the flip side, if one possesses *sabr* but is devoid of ‘*ilm*, then this person’s foundation is not strong enough; he or she will eventually exhaust the limited reserve of patience. *Iman* includes both ‘*ilm* and *sabr*.

**DIFFERENT TYPES OF SABR**

We often link *sabr* to calamities, however, that is only one form of patience. Ibn Al-Qayyim described the different types of *sabr*:

**1.) Patience in the face of ma’siyya**

We must practice *sabr* in abstaining from acts of disobedience to *Allah* ﷺ. Nowadays, many *haram* activities are facilitated for us, and it can become very easy to slip into these traps. It requires a great amount of resolve and patience to say “NO!” to such opportunities.

**2.) Patience in acts of obedience**

We must practice *sabr* in carrying out acts of obedience to *Allah* ﷺ. Fulfilling the commands of *Allah* on a consistent basis requires much patience, especially if you are preoccupied or distracted by other things. It is possible to worship *Allah* ﷺ in an excellent manner for some days and then stray from His obedience on other days. So, consistency requires patience even with no calamity.

**QARUN’S MISCHIEF POST EXODUS**

When *Musa* ﷺ and *Bani Isra’il* left Egypt, Qarun went along with them. He did not stay in Egypt. One opinion states that since *Bani Isra’il* is the labor force and he’s making money off them, he needs to migrate with his source of income. Another opinion states that Qarun harbored tremendous jealousy towards *Musa* ﷺ and *Harun* ﷺ because he saw them claiming Prophethood. Qarun was not a Prophet even though he came from the same tribe. Qarun sensed his power and authority diminish, so he followed them in order to carry out malicious actions. This is supported and confirmed by the following historical narration: after *Bani Isra’il* left Egypt and settled down as a community, Qarun either gathered the
people or came to a place where they were already gathered and asked Musa a question. Before he asked this question, he hired a prostitute and gave her a large sum of money and bribed her to say that she fornicated with Musa! Qarun flat out asked Musa: if someone were to commit the act of zina, what would the punishment be?

In the *Shari’ah* of Bani Isra’il, this person would be stoned to death, which is also confirmed by other narrations of the Prophet ﷺ. When a group of Jews outside of Madinah came to the Prophet ﷺ, a person who had committed zina asked for the Prophet’s ruling. The Prophet ruled based on their own legislation, which states that the punishment is stoning as stated in their own Tawrah.

Qarun asked Musa, “What if it is you, O Musa, who commits zina? What would your punishment be?” Musa ﷺ explained that the same rule applies, as the law is universally applicable to everyone. No one is above the law. So, Qarun states that he has a witness who will testify that she had zina with him! Imagine Musa ﷺ standing there while everyone is watching this scene. Imagine the rumors that started to spread and the social discord that started to creep in as people lost trust in Musa.

Musa became very angry and he made *du’ā* to Allah ﷻ. He then approached the “witness” and made it clear that he expects her to tell everyone the truth. She admitted to bearing false witness to the claim of zina. So, the truth came to light, but the rumors still spread and it was already in people’s heads. Musa then made *du’a* in front of the people saying, “If what Qarun is saying is a lie, then have the earth swallow him.”

**PUNISHMENT OF QARUN**

“And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home. And there was for him no company to aid him other than Allah, nor was he of those who [could] defend themselves.”

*Surah Al-Qasas, 28:81*

Allah ﷻ answered the *du’ā* of Musa ﷺ as He made a sinkhole appear which swallowed both Qarun and his estate. We will see that Musa makes an incredible about of *du’a* throughout his life. When Qarun was destroyed, Musa’s record became clear. However, he still had to endure the difficulty of slander; people questioned his character, but he persevered with patience. This is just one of the many instances in which Musa emerges triumphant in the face of obstacles.
Not only was Qarun swallowed, but also his property and estate. Two main reasons:

1.) **He refused to give credit to Allah ☪ for the blessings in his life**

2.) **Allah ☪ showed the people that He can take away blessings and wealth just as easily as He can give it**

Some scholars even commented that in addition to his home, some people were also swallowed. These people were his “yes men.” There is a profound lesson to be learned: not only should you not be an oppressor, but you should never let yourself be aligned with an oppressor. Don’t justify it with the “I’m just doing my job” mentality. Oppression is an institution. Fir’aun is not a one-man-show, but rather a system.

**LOOKING AHEAD AT THE LIFE OF MUSA ☪**

As you can see, the beginning of this epic is not with the birth of Musa ☪, but much earlier than that. It beings with the origins of Bani Isra’il, their migration to Egypt, and the changes that would ensue in the coming generations and centuries. For example, Bani Isra’il was honored and respected during the time of Yusuf ☪; but then we fast-forward to the time of Musa ☪, and we see that they are at the bottom of the social ladder. What happened?

We will then analyze the birth of Musa ☪ and the different characters in his life as he grew up in the castle of Fir’aun. Did you ever wonder why he fled Egypt and then decided to return? By the permission of Allah ☪, we will discuss all of these points in addition to the final phases of his life.

We will accomplish this by traversing through many verses of the Qur’an in hopes of developing a more personal relationship with the Book of Allah. In the process, we hope to learn from the profound lessons found in Musa’s biography, which will not only benefit us at an individual level, but also a communal level.
CHAPTER 1
Introductions and Understanding
Historical Context

WHAT DO WE SEEK FROM STORIES OF THE PROPHETS?
When we read the stories of the Prophets in the Qur’an, we need to have the correct mindset. What are the goals and objectives of studying these stories?

1.) Composure
The Prophet achieved composure through the stories of other Prophets.

“...And each [story] We relate to you from the news of the Messengers is that by which We make firm your heart.” Surah Hud, 11:120

The Prophet experienced much difficulty in Makkah, and contemplating about the stories of previous Prophets brought him composure. The above ayah comes almost at the very end of Surah Hud, which is followed by Surah Yusuf, the latter being revealed in the Year of Sadness. This was a very difficult year for the Prophet, and the story of Yusuf was a means to console him. Allah is reminding the Prophet that other Messengers have also gone through great hardship.

Scholars of tafsir explain the concept of tanazul: the relationship between the ending of one surah and the beginning of the next surah. Allah ends Surah Hud by telling the Prophet that He will relate to him the news of the Messengers in order to make firm his heart and give him inner strength. The very next surah is Surah Yusuf, which possess a beautiful story that comforts the Prophet during difficult times. Towards the beginning of this surah, Allah says:

“We relate to you, [O Muhammad], the best of stories...” Surah Yusuf, 12:3

The concept of tanazul also encompasses the relationship between the opening of the surah and the closing of that same surah. In every surah of the Qur’an, you will see that certain themes are reiterated and related to one another. At the end of this surah, Allah says:
There was certainly in their stories a lesson for those of understanding. Never was the Qur’an a narration invented, but a confirmation of what was before it and a detailed explanation of all things and guidance and mercy for a people who believe.” Surah Yusuf, 12:111

2.) Renewal of our confidence in Allah

In these stories, we see that Allah makes promises to His Prophets, and He fulfills those promises. Allah has also made us promises. We may not see them materialize in the way we envision, but the promises of Allah are true. We can easily lose confidence in the promise of Allah, but when we study the stories of the Prophets, we see time and time again that Allah fulfills the promises He makes.

3.) Strong role models

Allah says that He guided the Messengers and that we should follow their guidance. Even though we are from the ummah of the Prophet, we still take other Prophets and Messengers as role models.

4.) Hope

With several calamities befalling the Muslim community in our day and age, it can be easy to lose hope in the mercy of Allah, and this is actually one of the objectives of Shaytan. In the stories of the Prophets, we notice the constant struggle between truth and falsehood. The Prophets and those who believed in them represent truth, justice, and Tawheed. They were always met with resistance from falsehood and baseless claims. When we realize that the Prophets emerged victorious, we feel a renewed sense of hope in the Mercy of Allah. Furthermore, we see the terrible demise of those who disbelieved and opposed the Prophets such as the people of Nuh.
HOW CAN THE PROPHETS BE MY ROLE MODEL?
I am just a regular human being, and I do not receive revelation. I am not infallible, so isn’t there an imbalance? We remind ourselves that the Prophets also made mistakes, and Allah 

_corrected those mistakes. They were human beings just like us. The Prophets serve as the best example, and we strive to come as close to that as possible.

Allah 

_chose certain individuals to be Prophets and Messengers, and this is known as _istifaa’. Before _istifaa’, the Prophets and Messengers went through a process called _ibtilaa’ which encompasses intense trials and tests. In the case of Messengers, _istifaa’ comes in the form of receiving _wahi. However, we all have the chance to have _istifaa’ from Allah if we are sincere believers.

“Unquestionably, [for] the allies of Allah there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.” _Surah Yunus 10:62

The allies of Allah 

_establish _salah and give _zakah. Even though we cannot receive revelation, we still have opportunities to be selected by Allah for a great reward. The _ibtilaa’ of the Prophets was more intense than that of any other average person. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The most severely tested people are the Prophets, then the next best and the next best.”

People who are most similar to the Prophets will be tested. If we stay close to Allah during our trials and difficulties, we will be similar to the Prophets and close to them in rank. They were the greatest human beings who walked this earth. Allah tells us about their _ibtilaa’ so that we feel close to them while appreciating the struggles and difficulties they endured.

THE ISRA’ILIYAT NARRATIONS
_Isra’iliyat_ refer to narrations that have come into our Islamic books from Judeo-Christian sources. They do not come from Islamic sources. Many of these narrations come from individuals at the time of the _Sahaba_ who were scholars in the Judeo-Christian tradition and then accepted Islam, such as Ka’ab al-Ahbar. In the previous religious groups, only certain people would actually study the scripture. This is not what Allah 

_intended when He revealed His Books.

When these learned individuals accepted Islam, they brought some narrations from their Judeo-Christian teachings. We may even find some of these narrations in books of _tafsir_ and history. When dealing with these narrations, we need to keep in mind the following:
1.) **It must be in agreement with the Qur'an and Sunnah**
The *Isra'iliyat* narrations must not be contradictory to something established in the Book of Allah or the *Sunnah* of His Messenger . It may offer additional information or give extra details that we don’t have in the Qur’an or Sunnah, but it cannot be contradictory.

2.) **It cannot replace something established in our deen**
In our *deen*, we believe that once the Prophets and Messengers receive revelation, they do not engage in the *kaba’ir* (i.e. major sins such as *shirk* and disbelief). They have a level of *‘isma* (infallibility). So, if we receive a narration from outside Islamic sources stating that one of the Prophets engaged in a major sin, we do not accept that narration.

3.) **Must be validated by one of the Companions of the Prophet**
Very often, some of the *Sahaba* such as ibn ‘Abbas would mention some of the *Isra'iliyat* narrations. This offers us an extra confirmation. In regards to the science of *hadith*, the narrator must be a trustworthy source. The *Sahaba* are a trustworthy source because they are receiving their information directly from the Prophet . The Prophet labeled them as a credible source; so, when we have *Isra'iliyat* narrations transmitted to us through one of the *Sahaba*, we are confident in the validity of that narration.

4.) **Cannot be completely outlandish**
The *Isra'iliyat* narrations cannot be completely out of this universe. We believe that miracles indeed took place in the lives of the Prophets, but if certain events make no sense whatsoever, we put that narration on the side, especially if it’s a detail we don’t need.

5.) **The tafsir must be in accordance with the Arabic language**
*Isra'iliyat* narrations may give us an extra detail or offer a different perspective on an issue. When we analyze the specific wording of the narration, we must ensure that it is harmonious with the word choice that Allah uses in the Qur’an. Certain verses in the Qur’an are general and can encompass different perspectives. Other verses are very specific, such as those explaining the murder that took place amongst Bani Isra’il.

**MUSA IN THE QUR’AN**
Musa is mentioned by name 138 times in the Qur’an according to one scholar. Prophet Muhammad is mentioned by name 4 times in the Qur’an, but this doesn’t mean that he is less important. Allah devotes a great portion of the Qur’an to Musa. In fact, Imam al-Suyuti, author of *Al-Itqan fi ‘ulum al-Qur’an*, said, “It’s almost as if the whole Qur’an was dedicated to Musa.”

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There exists a very strong relationship between the Shari’ah of Musa and the Shari’ah of the Prophet. Linguistically, Shari’ah refers to a path which you follow. Technically, Shari’ah refer to laws.

When analyzing the *deen* as a whole, we realize that it consists of two components: ‘aqeedah (theology) and Shari’ah (laws). Theology explains who Allah is while the laws explain how to worship Allah and our duties to Him. All of the Prophets and Messengers came with the same ‘aqeedah. Allah commands the Prophet:

قُلْ مَا كُنْتُ بِدَايَةٍ مِّنَ الرَّسُلِ

“Say (O Muhammad), ‘I am not a new thing among the Messengers (of Allah) (i.e. I am not the first Messenger).’” *Surah Al-Ahqaf, 46:9*

The Prophet brought the same ‘aqeedah that previous Prophets and Messengers had brought. This was a common denominator amongst all of them, from the time of Adam to the Prophet.

**WE HAVE MORE RIGHT TO MUSA**

The Prophet once found the Jews in Madinah fasting. When he asked them why they were fasting, they explained that it was the day that Allah saved Musa and his people from Fir’aun and his army. The Prophet said:

نحنُ أحقُّ بِمَوسَى مَنْ كُنْتمُ

“We have more right to Musa than you.”
How can the Prophet make such a claim? Because we maintained the common denominator of theology. The belief that Musa had about Allah is the same belief that we have about Allah. Throughout the years, some of the followers of the Prophets corrupted theological principles and developed incorrect beliefs about Allah that the Prophets never taught. These people strayed from their own Prophets, so how can they claim them?

In regards to Shari’ah, this changed from Prophet to Prophet. For example, the previous Prophets had prescribed fasting as Allah says:

\[\text{بِيَادِبَةَ أَلَّذِينَ ابْتُنَّا كَبِيرَ عَلَىْ بَيْنَكُمْ أَلْصَيْبَمُ كَمَا كَبَّرَ عَلَىْ الْذِّيْنَ مِنْ}
\\[\text{قَبْلَهُمْ لَمْ يَكْتُمُّنَّ}
\]

“O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous.” Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:183

The rules of fasting for the previous nations may have differed from our rules. For example, as followers of the Prophet, we have specific things we abstain from for a specific time period. Other Prophets may have followed different rulings on fasting found in their own Shari’ah. Similarly, previous Prophets had salah, but they may have prayed at different times or a different unit of prayer. So, the act of ibadah may exist amongst several different Prophets and Messengers, but the specifics rulings of that ibadah may differ.

**RASUL VS. NABI**

There are some individuals who are called Rasul/Rusl, which refers to Messenger(s). Others are called Nabi/Anbiya, which refers to Prophet(s). Scholars have had long debates about the difference, and there are a plethora of opinions. Many have adopted the following opinion: a Rasul is given a new Shari’ah while a Nabi follows the Shar’iah of the previous/most recent Rasul.

So, Musa is considered a Rasul because he was given a Shari’ah. Harun, on the other hand, is considered a Nabi because he does not have his own Shari’ah; rather, he is following the Shari’ah of Musa. Yusha’ bin Nun is also considered a Nabi because he didn’t have his own Shari’ah, and he instead followed the Shari’ah of Musa.

**COMPREHENSIVE NATURE AND VARIETY OF TESTS MUSA FACED**

Musa endured several different struggles: mental, physical, economical, and institutional/governmental. The variety of hardships he faced makes his story relevant to many different people. The contemporary Mauritanian scholar Sh. Muhammad al-Hasan al-Dedew was asked in an interview, “What are you reading these days?” He replied, “I am rereading the Qur’an.” Sh. Al-Dedew said that he was trying to do special tadabbur about
the stories of the Qur’an, explaining that every single story of the Qur’an is relevant to the life of every single believer at one point in time or another until the Day of Judgment. Allah created us and He knows what experiences we will have; it is only befitting that the user manual that Allah gives us is absolutely relevant to those experiences. The story of Musa is special because we have an incredible amount of detail; therefore, it is easier for us to find parallels between his life and our own.

We also find a variety of individuals and personalities in the story of Musa, both good and bad. We will come across these same personalities in our own lives. Musa teaches us how to face such personalities while overcoming challenges and oppressive systems, which may seem insurmountable. Ibn Qayyim says in his book Jalaal al-Afham, “And therefore, Allah mentions the story of Musa, repeats it and makes it clear. He comforts the Messenger.” When the Prophet would find himself in a difficult situation, he would say:

रङ्गः लोकः उपानु के मुसी; लौँ और जो कः बः कः हः चसर.

“May Allah bestow His Mercy on Musa for he was hurt with more than this, yet he remained patient.”

LINEAGE OF MUSA
He is Musa b. ‘Umran b. Qaahth b. ‘Aazir b. Laawy b. Ya’qub b. Ishaq b. Ibrahim. His father’s name was ‘Imran, and his grandfather’s name was Qaahth. His great grandfather’s name was ‘Aazir, and his great great grandfather’s name was Laawy. Laawy was a son of Ya’qub; Bani Israel is referring to the progeny of Ya’qub. So, Laawy is the brother of Yusuf. We see that Musa has a direct lineage to Ya’qub who is from the progeny of Ibrahim.

VIRTUES OF MUSA
One of the Ulu’l-’azm min al-Rusul
This refers to the Messengers of strength and determination. We mentioned earlier that in one narration, the Prophet explained that Allah sent 120,000 Prophets and Messengers. Of those, Allah selected just over two dozen to mention by name in the Qur’an. And of those two dozen or so, He gave special preference to five. In chronological order, they are: Nuh, Ibrahim Musa, ‘Isa, and Muhammad. Some scholars say that extra preference is given to Ibrahim and Muhammad. And of those two, Muhammad is given even extra special preference. Allah could have decreed we be from the ummah of any other Prophet or Messenger, but He chose for us to be from the ummah of Muhammad. Such a decree is a blessing that we should be thankful for; it is also a big responsibility that we must live up to.

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He is referred to as Kaleem’ul Allah

Musa is the one whom Allah spoke to. But if Allah spoke to other Messengers as well, then why is Musa given this title and not others? For example, the Prophet spoke directly to Allah in al-Isra’ wal-Mi’raj, but he is not given the title kaleem’ul Allah. Some scholars have explained that Allah spoke much more frequently with Musa than other Messengers; they also highlight how Musa’s very first wahi was through a direct conversation with Allah. These factors make Musa special and unique in comparison to other Messengers.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF MUSA

Strength

Musa was strong. One narration (which may not be authentic) describes Musa as being very thin. Strength doesn’t necessarily have to equate with large size. For example, there are some workers in Sudan who are very skinny, but they perform very difficult labor and lift heavy loads.

Dark complexion

The Prophet said that Musa was like adm. This is not referring to the Prophet Adam, but rather, it literally means having a dark complexion. Musa’s ethnic people naturally had a darker skin complexion. Throughout the last few centuries, people have incorrectly propagated the view that people with darker skin are of lesser value. This belief was not only prevalent in Anglo-Saxon and European societies, but also some countries where people are naturally dark-skinned. For example, in Sudan, there are some individuals who have a very dark skin complexion compared to most people; these individuals sometimes have to hear racist comments and endure racist behaviors from others. Such a concept existed in the time of Musa and Fir’aun; Bani Isra’il were considered of “lesser value” by Fir’aun and his people. Individuals like Musa and Luqman had darker complexion, but they had great value to Allah. Race and complexion does not determine a person’s value.

Subconscious racism exists in many of our communities today. Sh. Mohammed once spoke to his friend’s father who was Syrian. The father explained that when he was a young boy in Syria, the country was under rule of the French colony. The French also colonized certain regions in West Africa; they would bribe the natives of those lands to enlist in their army and fight wars in other countries. The father said that he was walking in the street one day, and a French soldier from Senegal started to beat him and smack him. Even though the father was only 5 years old at the time, he explained that he has never been able to look at black people the same way. Whenever he sees people who look like that French soldier from Senegal, he is reminded of that traumatic experience. Some shayatin among humans pit people against each other by placing racist ideologies in their minds. Such an ideology can become engrained in that society for generations, and it takes generations to undo that damage. We should stop this kind of mindset and not allow it to perpetuate further.
WHO IS BANI ISRA’IL?

Bani Isra’il are the descendants of Isra’il (i.e. Ya’qub عليه السلام). He is mentioned by both names in the Qur’an. For example, Allah ﷻ says:


gُفِّيْهِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ نُنزِّلَ الْتَوْرَةُ

“All food was lawful to the Children of Israel except what Israel had made unlawful to himself before the Torah was revealed.” Surah Ali-‘Imran, 3:93

The ending ‘il refers to “of Allah” or “belonging to Allah.” In fact, there are several names that end in ‘il such as Jibra’il and Mika’il. The name Isra’il translates as “servant of Allah.” It is similar to the Arabic name ‘Abdullah which means “servant of Allah.”

STORY OF YUSUF ﷺ

Ya’qub عليه السلام was in the land presently known as Palestine in the region of Can’aan. Yusuf ﷺ was a young boy who was greatly loved by his father Ya’qub. The brothers became jealous, so they devised a plot to get rid of Yusuf. They convinced their father to send Yusuf out with them, and they eventually threw him down a well. They lied to their father, saying that an animal ate him as they brought forth a shirt covered with blood.

While Yusuf ﷺ was in the well, a caravan passed by; they let down the bucket, and when they pulled it up, a boy emerged. The people of the caravan took him, and they sold him in the marketplace. Yusuf was eventually bought by a political figure in the Egyptian society, and the majority of Yusuf’s story took place in the land of Egypt (he is in Egypt from the time he is bought until the end of the story). The name Fir’aun does not appear once in Surah Yusuf. Rather, we have mention of al-‘Aziz and al-Malik. So, the political establishment during the time of Yusuf differed from that during the time of Musa because the titles are not the same. Fir’aun was not the name of the individual, but rather a title similar to President, Prime Minister, or Tsar.

Yusuf ﷺ experienced many tests, and he was imprisoned for a false crime. When freed from prison, he requested to be placed in a position of authority in order to ration and distribute resources. He explained that he was qualified and trustworthy, and he gets the job. Interesting enough, the political establishment at that time welcomed Yusuf into a high-ranking position even though he was from Bani Isra’il. During the time of Musa ﷺ, the only person from Bani Isra’il in a high-ranking position was Qarun. Other than him, there would be no chance for someone from Bani Isra’il to have power in the political establishment at the time of Fir’aun. That’s like trying to have a black African slave become a Congressman during the 1800s in the U.S. It’s unfathomable.
Yusuf was able to reach a high-ranking position partly because he interpreted a dream for the king. Yusuf explained that there would be a great reduction in the crops, which would lead to scarce resources and famine; people would come to the king from different lands seeking help.

Amongst those people were the very brothers of Yusuf. After conducting a plot of his own, Yusuf revealed his identity to his brothers, explaining that they should bring their entire family. At that time, Ya’qub was still in the land of Canaan. Yusuf was in a position of authority, and he was able to secure a good life for his family in the Egyptian civilization.

The trend of human behavior has not changed much. Many of us are immigrants or children of immigrants who moved to a different land searching for a better future, and this ties in with the concept of Hijra. The notion of migrating to a different land breaks down many of the false notions of nationalism and patriotism. Attachment should not be based on the land itself, but rather the ability to secure a good future for one’s family and progeny.

Ya’qub moves the whole family to Egypt; some historians say that he came with a caravan of 70 people.

When they came, Yusuf was a respected and honored individual not only because of his upright character, but also because of his purity and piety. He was a person of honor, dignity, and respect. Yusuf saved his society from the brink of destruction as he advised them to ration the food due to upcoming years of deficit. When people realized that his interpretation of the dream came true, they thought highly of him. Naturally, the king at that time welcomed and honored his family. He gave Ya’qub the freedom to choose any place to settle in the land. Some history books state that he settled his family outside the main city, keeping all of them together. They were a relatively small group.
ON HIS DEATHBED
Towards the end of Ya'qub's life, on his deathbed, he had a conversation with his sons:

“Or were you witnesses when death approached Ya'qub, when he said to his sons, 'What will you worship after me?' They said, 'We will worship your God and the God of your fathers, Ibrahim and Isma'il and Ishaq - one God. And we are Muslims [in submission] to Him.'”

Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:133

Ya’qub settled his family in a foreign land, and he knew the religion of that area was not Islam. The rest of Egyptian civilization was not upon the teachings of Tawheed. Yusuf was a Messenger, and he called people to Tawheed; in fact, one person during the time of Musa even reflected upon the da’wah of Yusuf. The dominant religion in that society was not Islam, and Ya’qub knew it’s only a matter of time before his progeny would grow and disperse in the land. He asks his sons what they will worship after him, and they confirm that they will stay upon the religion of Tawheed. They did for a certain period of time, but Bani Isra’il grew in number and spread until they became a part of Egyptian society. During the time of Yusuf, Bani Isra’il lived in comfort, honor, and dignity; they even exercised power through the government. We fast-forward to the time of Musa, and we see that Bani Isra’il are completely kicked to the side. What happened?

TWO FACTORS THAT LEAD TO A DRASTIC TURN OF EVENTS
1.) Regime change (government change from the top)
In ancient history, we see that the Pharaonic line of leaders had some interruptions. Remember, there is no mention of Fir’aun in the story of Yusuf; Bani Isra’il is respected during that time. Some say that external forces from the Middle East or Central Asia invaded Egypt and thus interrupted the Pharaonic rule. It makes sense that if these people were not native to the land to begin with, they would welcome Yusuf and allow him to be a part of their government. They didn’t have the racist agenda that the Fir’auns had.

Nations rise and fall. Eventually, that political power weakened, allowing the Pharaohs to reclaim control of the land. The Pharaonic Empire came back into existence with a vengeance with the following ideology: this is our land and these people are foreigners. They wanted to sideline anyone who was not considered native. One number estimated Bani Isra’il to be 600,000 at the time of Musa. Because of their large numbers, the Pharaohs could not simply evict them. So, they devised an agenda to make them lesser citizens as they exploited them for labor.
2.) Religious change (from within Bani Isra’il)
How much time passed between Yusuf and Musa? History books say 4 qurun. The Arabic word \( qarn \) can refer to a generation or a century. So, does four \( qurun \) refer to 4 generations or 400 years? It really depends on the average lifespan of that generation. Previous ummahs lived longer lifespans. The Prophet ﷺ said:

\[
\text{"The average lifespan of my ummah is between sixty and seventy years."}
\]

Sh. Mohammed was praying Taraweeh in Madinah back in 2015, and he prayed behind a man from Afghanistan who was 136 years old! He even fought with the Ottoman army in WWI. There was another man from Uzbekistan who was 126 years old. So, generations measure in different numbers: 100 years, 50 years, 35 years, etc. Sh. Mohammed consulted with one of his mentors who is a child psychologist, and they discussed the rapid changes occurring in society. The child psychologist said that a new generation is now identified based on a new pattern of behavior, which is currently 5 years. So, every 5 years, it’s almost as if we have a new generation due to the rapid changes in things like vocabulary, technology, and clothing.

As we come closer to the end of time, changes will occur more rapidly. For example, what would happen in 50 years would happen in 5 years. What would happen in 5 years would happen in 1 year. Technology makes the rate of change more rapid.

Many historians say that the 4 \( qurun \) between Yusuf and Musa refers to 400 years. Overall, we give or take in regards to this number, understanding that it refers to a long time. Bani Isra’il started off as a small group; Yaq’ub had 12 sons that we know about, and they eventually had their own progeny and formed their own tribe. These 12 different tribes are referred to as \( al-Asbat \).

As Bani Isra’il started to grow and disperse, they began to mix with other religious groups. Thus, there was a loss of religion. ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab ﷺ said, “We are a people whom Allah has honored with Islam and if we seek honor in other than it, Allah will humiliate us (again).” Is this not what happened to the global Muslim community throughout the years? Seeking honor through other than Islam will lead to our demise.

So, we have a political shift from the top, which eliminated the establishment that honored Bani Isra’il. The Pharaonic regime emerged which used Bani Isra’il as slaves. Simultaneously, we have an internal change from within Bani Isra’il as they lose their religiosity and connection with Allah ﷻ. Putting all that together, you end up with a disaster.
ALLAH BLESSES BANI ISRA’IL

Bani Isra’il were not a bad people. Allah ᴡُسلِّم blessed them as He says:

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ، يَقُولُوا أَذَّكِرُوا نُعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَّ جَعَلَ فيكُمْ أَنيِّيَاءَ وَجَعَلَكُمْ مُلُوكًا وَأَوَّلَانَكُمْ مَا لَمْ يَوْتَ آخَرًا مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ

“And [mention, O Muhammad], when Musa said to his people, ‘O my people, remember the favor of Allah upon you when He appointed among you prophets and made you kings and gave you that which He had not given anyone among the worlds.’” Surah Al-Ma’idah, 5:20

Bani Isra’il received more Anbiya than any other nation. This was both a virtue and a red flag. When you see many doctors in a society, that means there are many sick people. Anbiya are like doctors: they heal people from the spiritual and social illnesses that afflict communities. The Sahaba would worship idols, eat dead meat, engage in fornication, and abuse orphans. Their behavior manifested both spiritual and social illnesses, and the Prophet ﷺ came to rectify this. Allah sends Messengers to the people to guide them back to the Straight Path.

هوُ الَّذِي بَعْثَ فِي الْأُمِّيَاتِ رِسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَسُلُّؤُوْلَهُمْ أَبْيَاهُمْ وَيُرِيكُمْ

“It is He who has sent among the unlettered a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His verses and purifying them...” Surah Al-Jumu’ah, 62:2

ALLAH ADDRESSES BANI ISRA’IL

Allah ᴡُسلِّم addresses Bani Isra’il in several ayat in the Qur’an, especially Surah Al-Baqarah. For example, Allah says:

١٧٠

"O Children of Israel, remember My favor that I have bestowed upon you and that I preferred you over the worlds.” Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:47
Allah speaks to Bani Isra’il during the time of the Prophet about things that happened in the past during the time of Musa. Scholars of tafsir say that it is like Allah addresses them in one breath (i.e. as if they are one group throughout the different ages).

Allah speaks to them as if they were part of the previous crimes and mistakes. As a community, Bani Isra’il refused to recognize the mistakes of their forefathers. They did something even worse as they would brag about their forefathers giving the Prophets a hard time. When there is no change and a refusal to recognize mistakes of the past, we share in the blame even if we were not there. If the same attitude exists and mistakes are perpetuated, that is problematic. Herein lies an important lesson for us as a community. We come from different backgrounds, which contributes a lot of beauty, but also a lot of baggage. Instead of recognizing that certain baggage is problematic, we may perpetuate it and seek cultural pride. Islam is perfect. Muslims are not. Not everything that Muslims do is in accordance with the teachings of Islam. We must find the courage to recognize our mistakes and take action to fix them; if we don’t, we will share in the blame and be like Bani Isra’il.

Allah also criticizes Bani Isra’il in the following ayah:


“Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth? And let them not be like those who were given the Scripture before, and a long period passed over them, so their hearts hardened; and many of them are defiantly disobedient.”

Surah Al-Hadid, 57:16

Scholars of tafsir say that Bani Isra’il did not have khushoo’; their hearts were not humbled and affected by the remembrance of Allah. They had revelation, scripture, and wahi. They also had acts of worship like salah, but they did not have khushoo’. When there is a lack of khushoo’ and revelation does not penetrate one’s heart, the heart becomes hard.
“Then your hearts became hardened after that, being like stones or even harder.”

*Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:74*

Revelation is not meant to be just a checklist. Rather, it needs to be something that actually affects us and has an impact on our heart. If we lose *khushoo‘* as a community, we will fall into the same mistakes that Bani Isra’il made. Whenever we recognize a mistake from Bani Isra’il, let us ask ourselves: is this behavior present in my community? If yes, then let us try to be part of the solution.

**WHO WAS FIR’AUN?**

There were many different Fir’auns as this was a title, not a specific name of an individual. The Fir‘aun during the time of Musa  was part of the 19th dynasty of Pharaohs. Is the Fir‘aun in the story of Musa the same Fir‘aun from beginning to end? There are several different opinions. One opinion says that it was the same Fir‘aun who lived a long life. Others like Ibn Kathir say there were 2 brothers; the first Fir‘aun died, and then his brother assumed leadership after him. And a third opinion, which is closer to the Judeo-Christian narrative, states that there were 2 Fir‘auns who were father and son.

Many people believe that Ramses II was the Fir‘aun of Musa. There are some ideas to back this up and other ideas that would actually debunk this theory. If we were to combine different historical resources, we could possibly say that Ramses II was the father, and his son who took over was the one who was ultimately drowned. Ramses II had a very long reign of power, the longest in the 19th dynasty and possibly one of longest amongst all the Pharaohs. Historians say he was in power for 60+ years. They say that Ramses II did not die by way of drowning.

His son Merneptah, on the other hand, died by drowning. Merneptah assumed power for a short period of time after the death of his father. His reign was one of turmoil, societal unrest, and threats to his power and authority. When Musa  returned to Egypt with revelation, it caused unrest for the Egyptians and Fir‘aun.
Also, there are some hieroglyphic inscriptions during the time of Merneptah that mention another ethnic group. The hieroglyphics describe how the Pharaoh wanted to prepare an army and attack them due to fear of revolt. Scholars of history say this cannot refer to any group other than Bani Isra’il. After this Pharaoh drowned, political turmoil erupted in the land of Egypt; since there was no longer one sovereign power, the people split up into different political factions. With the political void came a struggle for power.

The theory of father and son Pharaohs with Ramses II as the father seems to a logical and sound opinion. At face value, it is not contradictory to the Qur‘anic narrative. Some scholars explain that we don’t have a name for Fir‘aun in the Qur‘an because there is more than one individual. Scholars also explain how Allah wants to direct our attention to the pattern of behavior and system of leadership that the Pharaohs all perpetuated and lived by. The behavior was not unique to one single Pharaoh.

**PHARAONIC STYLE OF LEADERSHIP AND AUTHORITY**

Allah mentions the killing that Fir‘aun committed in the Qur‘an. This was a common act amongst the oppressors at that time. Scholars say that when a predatory animal kills, it kills for one of three reasons: food, territory, or protection of family. However, it is not part of the fitrah of human beings to engage in such killing. When humans kill others without due right, they lose their humanity and become worse than predatory animals.

> ولا تقتلو النفس التي حرمت الله إلا بحقٍ.

“And do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden, except by right.” Surah Al-Isra, 17:33

The sanctity of life is greatly emphasized in the Islamic tradition. Allah forbade the killing of a nafs except with truth and justice. Unfortunately, we are exposed to a lot of senseless killings these days. We live in a time in which people commit unexplained murder on Facebook live and broadcast it to the world. We need to be very careful not to become desensitized to such killings since we believe the nafs is valuable, whether Muslim or non-Muslim. It is protected by Allah, and it cannot be taken except with justice and fairness.

With oppression comes a wide array of collateral damage to many groups of people. When oppressors and tyrants have a particular agenda, the byproduct of destruction and loss of life becomes insignificant to them.
Allah mentions Fir’aun towards the beginning of Surah Al-Qasas:

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إن فرعون علّ في الأرض وجّه أهلها شيعًا يستضعف طائفة منهم
يذبح أبناءهم وينسخن، يسّاء هم إني كاتب من المقصّدين
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“Indeed, Pharaoh exalted himself in the land and made its people into factions, oppressing a sector among them, slaughtering their [newborn] sons and keeping their females alive. Indeed, he was of the corrupters.” Surah Al-Qasas, 28:4

Fir’aun wanted to put himself on a pedestal; he wanted an elevated status, and he did this by stepping on the backs of others. There exists a connection between the opening and the ending of Surah Al-Qasas. Allah سُمِّيَ أَتْمَامًا starts this surah by discussing the arrogance and oppression of Fir’aun, and He ends the surah by saying:

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تلك الدّار الآخرة لِمَنْ لا يُريدون عُلُوًا في الأرض ولا فسادًا
والعَبَسَة لِلَّمَنَّقِينَ
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“That home of the Hereafter We assign to those who do not desire exaltedness upon the earth or corruption. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous.” Surah Al-Qasas, 28:83

The home of the Hereafter in Jannah is not for the likes of Fir’aun and others like him.

**SOCIAL LADDER OF FIR’AUN**

Fir’aun also divided the people into different groups. Some historical records mention 38 different provinces. These groups were not equal; they were similar to the caste system, which separated people within a nation based on socioeconomic status and birth. Once an individual is placed in a caste, he or she will stay in that caste until death. In some systems, people of darker complexion are placed in a lower caste. The higher the caste, the better the living situation, and vice versa. People will be prevented from pursuing a particular profession, such as medicine, because of their caste. Fir’aun ruled by this style as he put the people of Bani Isra’il at the bottom of the ladder and the native Egyptians at the top. Even within this system, there existed a spectrum; people who blindly followed the oppressive leader were better citizens while those who questioned or disagreed with authority were bad citizens.
**STYLES OF TORTURE**

Fir’aun used different forms of torture, so much so, he would get creative with physical, emotional, and mental torture. In many places in the Qur’an, Allah ﷺ tells us that Fir’aun would kill the children of Bani Isra’il while allowing their women to live. So, he would spare the lives of the mothers and women, not out of mercy, but to inflict psychological pain and trauma on them. Almost all parents would sacrifice their own lives in order to preserve the life of their child. When you slaughter the child and allow the woman to live, she would wish her life would just end. Such a style of torture existed through the Pharaonic regime.

**MILITARY STATE**

"Indeed, Pharaoh and Haman and their soldiers were deliberate sinners.”

Surah Al-Qasas, 28:8

Haman was another figure in the political establishment. In the above ayah, Allah ﷺ says that Fir’aun and his minister, Haman, had armies; *junudahuma* refers to the plural of army. So, not only was it an oppressive state, but also a military sate as armies policed the land.

**SPREADING PROPAGANDA**

Fir’aun used a kind of ideological warfare against Musa ﷺ in an attempt to thwart his *da’wah*. He uses different forms of propaganda such as instructing Haman to build a tower so that he may search for the *ilah* of Musa.

"And Pharaoh said, ‘O Haman, construct for me a tower that I might reach the ways - The ways into the heavens - so that I may look at the deity of Musa; but indeed, I think he is a liar.’"

Surah Ghafir, 40:36-37

Building a tower would take a long time, and it would serve as a major distraction in society. Everyone will talk about the campaign. They would say things like, “What will he find?” and “What will he do when he comes back?”
CHARACTER ASSASSINATION

Fir’aun tries to publicly character assassinate Musa ﷺ. Fir’aun could not respond to the powerful unwavering message of Tawheed, so he instead attacks the Messenger. He reminds the people of Musa’s pervious errors of killing someone, causing the people to become skeptical of Musa. Fir’aun tries to brainwash people to prevent them from accepting the message of Musa ﷺ.

PLANTING SEEDS OF DOUBT

Fir’aun also plants seeds of doubt in the minds of people, claiming that Musa ﷺ and his brother are planning a revolt. They are plotting a coup to take over your land. So, Fir’aun appeals to nationalism and the shallow attachment that people have to the land. Such political propaganda builds up emotions in the masses of people.

قالو إني هذين لسحران يريدان أن يخجاكما من أرضكم بسحرهما

“They said, 'Indeed, these are two magicians who want to drive you out of your land with their magic and do away with your most exemplary way.'” Surah Taha, 20:63

Fir’aun tells the people that Musa ﷺ and his brother have corrupt intentions. When Musa brings forth miracles from Allah that debunked all the sorcery of that time, Fir’aun accuses him of sorcery. He also claims to be better than Musa, saying:

أر أ أنا خير من هذَا اللَّذي هُو مهين ولا يكاد يسيئ
فَلو لآله عليه أسورة من ذهَب أو جاء معاه الملائكة

“Or am I [not] better than this one who is insignificant and hardly makes himself clear? Then why have there not been placed upon him bracelets of gold or come with him the angels in conjunction?” Surah Al-Zukhruf, 43:52-53
THREATENING MUSA AND THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN HIM

Fir’aun threatens to imprison and kill Musa ﷺ. He even kills the sorcerers who eventually believed in him. When Fir’aun acts in such a way, it creates fear in the society; when that fear becomes too overwhelming, it can become debilitating, even paralyzing. People will not do anything because they are afraid, and you can't blame them because fear is a natural human emotion. When Sh. Mohammed was talking to the Syrian uncle mentioned before, the uncle explained that in his older years, he would no longer whisper when discussing the oppressive regime in Syria. He and his people would always lower their voices when talking about the ruler or regime; such a habit became subconscious and can even pass on to future generations.

FIR’AUN EXALTS HIMSELF

While Fir’aun is trying to stop the daw’ah of Musa ﷺ, he also pumps himself up. He holds campaigns in which he displays his wealth to the people. He talks about his palaces, rivers, and gold (the Pharaohs had a very strange obsession with gold). Fir’aun also reminds people of the favors he does for them. He makes them think they do not deserve anything if he does not do some kind of good for them.

“So he bluff his people, and they obeyed him. Indeed, they were [themselves] a people defiantly disobedient of [Allah].” Surah Al-Zukhruf, 43:54

Fir’aun belittled and despised his own people while insulting their intelligence. People became accustomed to being treated in such a manner, so much so, they became stuck in that kind of trap. The people obeyed and followed him because they internalized and believed the propaganda that Fir’aun spread.

PILLARS OF SUPPORT

Fir’aun and other oppressive rulers would not be able to commit atrocities if it were not for their pillars of support. Individuals like Qarun and Haman, in addition to the armies, all played an important role in fueling propaganda. They were the pawns on the chessboard that Fir’aun used to sustain his oppressive state.
No oppressive leader can single-handedly commit mass atrocities. Some people who had committed major war crimes were interviewed, and they justified their actions by saying, “I’m just doing my job.” From Sergeants and Generals, all the way down to foot soldiers. People in the time of Fir‘aun shared this same mentality, whether they were judges who would imprison individuals from Bani Isra’il to those who would monitor women to detect whether she was pregnant or not. Every piece of the puzzle contributed to the oppressive regime of the Pharaonic Empire. When people feel like they are part of the system at large, they can forget they are part of the crime.

In Jahannam, the weak followers will blame the arrogant oppressors for their fate. Allah mentions their conversation in the Qur’an:

قَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَروا لِلَّذِينَ أَسْتَضْعَفُوا أَنْ أَحْنَ صَدْنَاكُمُ عَنِ اهْدَيْنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ جَآَءَكُمُ الْكَرَحُومُ

“Those who were arrogant will say to those who were oppressed, ‘Did we avert you from guidance after it had come to you? Rather, you were criminals.’” Surah Saba, 34:32

So, the arrogant oppressors will shift the blame away from themselves, saying that they did not prevent others from guidance. And at the end of the day, they are both in Jahannam because they were both part of the system of thulm. Shaytan will also deny the blame as Allah states his exact words:

فَلا تُتْعَمِّدُوا وَلْوُمُوْا أَنفَسْكُمْ مَا أَنَا بِمُصَرِّخٍ وَمَا أَنَا بِمُضَرِّعٍ

“So do not blame me; but blame yourselves. I cannot be called to your aid, nor can you be called to my aid.” Surah Ibrahim, 14:22

You can try to blame it on the devil all you want, but on the Day of Judgment, Shaytan will tell you to blame yourself. We must ensure we do not share in the agenda of thulm. During times of oppression, if you cannot stand up for the truth, then at least stay quiet. It is the Sunnah of Allah to protect those individuals from the fitnah. We must study the different tactics of thulm in order to recognize them and avoid them.
"When We inspired to your mother what We inspired."  

Surah Taha, 20:38

Some narrations say that the mother of Musa was named Yukhaabd. Allah says that the mother of Musa received *wahi*. The technical definition of *wahi* refers to a message that is delivered in a direct fashion (not public fashion). It does not specifically refer to revelation or scripture – that is just one form of *wahi*. Any type of message that comes from Allah directly to a person is classified as *wahi*. So, this does not necessitate that the mother of Musa was a Prophet.

“Allah says that He gave *wahi* to the bee, but the bee is not a Prophet:"

Surah Al-Nahl, 16:68
Allah  also gave wahi to the mother of ‘Isa:

"She said, ‘Indeed, I seek refuge in the Most Merciful from you, [so leave me], if you should be fearing of Allah.’ He said, ‘I am only the messenger of your Lord to give you [news of] a pure boy.’”  

Surah Maryam, 19:18-19

Did the mother of Musa receive wahi in the form of a dream or inspiration? Was it perhaps a kind of light placed in her heart? Or were there actual angels? Scholars have debated this issue. Some say she could have had actual angels delivering the message like with Maryam.

"[Saying], ‘Cast him into the chest and cast it into the river, and the river will throw it onto the bank; there will take him an enemy to Me and an enemy to him.’”  

Surah Taha, 20:39

FIR’AUN’S DREAM AND HIS PLAN

Before Musa  was born, Fir’aun had a series of dreams, which he saw over and over again. These dreams were very intense and troubling. He saw a man coming out from the area of Jerusalem (in some narrations), and this man comes and kills Fir’aun. So, Fir’aun gathered his advisors and soothsayers to interpret the dream for him; they explained that someone from Bani Isra’il would emerge and cause his demise.

So, Fir’aun decides to kill all the boys so that none of them would overthrow him. However, Bani Isra’il served as the labor force of society. If Fir’aun kills all the boys, who will do the work? So he decided to kill all the boys one year and then let them live the other year. How could he even guarantee he killed the boys in the correct year? When oppressors become so distracted by power, they act in silly and illogical ways. Haurn  was the older brother of Musa , and he was born in the year in which the boys of Bani Isra’il were spared. So, there was no threat to Harun’s life. Musa, on the other hand, was born in the year in which the boys were killed. Ironically, he would land at the footsteps of Fir’aun’s castle and be raised by him. And he would be the same person who would ultimately overthrow him! The plan of Allah  is perfect. There is no stone left unturned.
DO NOT FEAR, DO NOT GRIEVE

“And We inspired to the mother of Moses, ‘Suckle him; but when you fear for him, cast him into the river and do not fear and do not grieve. Indeed, We will return him to you and will make him [one] of the messengers.’” Surah Al-Qasas, 28:7

The people of Bani Isra’il were being monitored by the police state, similar to a kind of surveillance program. They would spy on them in order to detect pregnancies and keep tabs on the people. Imagine how the mother of Musa felt during those nine months of pregnancy. She didn’t even know if her baby would live or not. She must have experienced a lot of stress and fear, yet she is being told to nurse her baby! Would you nurse a baby that is going to be killed shortly? This was a form of bishara (glad tiding) that this baby is not going to be killed; this wahi served as a means of giving the mother of Musa hope.

She was told to cast him into the river when she fears for him. Furthermore, she was told to not have khawf or huzn. Khawf refers to fear of the future (i.e. the unknown), while huzn refers to grief over what has passed. Allah always mentions these two together.

The two most common mental health issues that people suffer from are anxiety and depression. These feelings are affirmed in the Qur’an: there can be fear of the unknown and grief/depression over things that have passed. Allah addresses these emotions quite explicitly, and He gives the mother of Musa both hope and a plan of action in order to overcome her fear and anxiety. Furthermore, when Allah talks about the people of Jannah, he states that they will have neither khawf nor huzn.

“Enter Paradise. No fear will there be concerning you, nor will you grieve.” Surah Al-A’raf, 7:49

In many of our Muslim communities, we don’t like to talk about mental or behavioral health issues. Refusing to recognize the problem can serve as one of the biggest barriers in overcoming that problem. We sometimes misunderstand certain textual evidence as we say that a believer should not be depressed. Some will say, “That’s just weak Iman. Have more tawakkul.” When someone breaks his or her arm, we don’t say, “Go read Qur’an and have more tawakkul.” You would say, “You should go to a doctor.” So, some hypocrisy presents itself in our communities. Just as we would see a doctor for a physical ailment, we should
be willing to see a professional therapist for issues like depression, marital problems, etc. Islam teaches us to seek the cure, and Allah ﷺ says to ask those who know:

> فَسْتَعِلُوهُ أَهْلَ الْذِّكْرِ إِن كَسَّرْتُ لَتَعاَمُونَ

“So ask the people of the message if you do not know.” Surah Al-Nahl, 16:43

None of us would say that the mother of Musa did not have high Iman. Nor would we say that she was not a good believer. She was afraid and anxious, and she probably felt regret after throwing her baby into the river. She was a human being after all! Allah ﷺ did not make us robots. The height of intelligence is to recognize feelings of fear and anxiety while addressing those feelings in a mature and educated manner. People may resort to shame and guilt instead, which fuels unhealthy behavior patterns. There is nothing to be ashamed of in seeking help.

Allah ﷺ says that He will surely and definitely return Musa to his mother and make him of the Messengers. He uses the word رَدَّاً to describe the return of Musa. Towards the end of this surah, Allah says:

> إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَرَضَ عَلَيْكُمْ الْكِتَابَ لِرَدُّهُ إِلَى مَعَادِ

“Indeed, [O Muhammad], He who imposed upon you the Qur'an will take you back to a place of return.” Surah Al-Qasas, 28:85

Surah Al-Qasas was revealed at the time of Hijra, and it is considered a Makki surah. As the Prophet ﷺ left Makkah, he turns back and says, “Allah knows you are the most beloved lands of Allah to me. If it weren’t for your people kicking me out, I would never leave you.” In the above ayah, Allah ﷺ promises to return him back to Makkah. That was his home. He didn’t want to leave. He left because he had to, and he left on bad terms. Allah reminds the Prophet ﷺ how He returned Musa to his mother. The promise of Allah is always true even if you don’t understand the how and when. A few years after the Prophet left Makkah, he returns home in Fath Makkah with almost the entire peninsula having accepted Islam.

> إِنَّا لَنَنْصُرِ رُسُلَنَا وَلَدَيْنَا أَمَنْوَانَ فِي الْحِيَوَةِ الْالْدِنْيَا وَوِيْوَمَ يَقُومُ الْأَحْسَنُ

“Indeed, We will support Our messengers and those who believe during the life of this world and on the Day when the witnesses will stand.” Surah Ghafir, 40:51
**ASIYA – THE WIFE OF FIR’AUN**

After the mother of Musa cast her baby into the river, the water carried baby Musa to the foot of Fir’aun’s castle. Asiya bint Muzahim b. Abid b. al-Rayyan b. al-Walid was there at the time. Asiya had a circle of influence; other women in society looked up to her, and she was almost like a celebrity. She wanted to have children, but she could not bear children of her own. Some books attributed this to a strange illness she suffered from. While she is standing outside the castle, a baby washes up towards her. She suddenly feels comforted.

> And I bestowed upon you love from Me that you would be brought up under My Eye.
> **Surah Taha, 20:39**

Allah gave a special love to Musa, and He allowed him to be brought up under His Eye (i.e. care, protection, supervision). It is not surprising that Asiya would have this immediate attraction to this baby; when Allah gives a special love to a person, other people will naturally find an attraction to that individual. Even Fir’aun felt some kind of attraction to baby Musa, but he refused to acknowledge that.

> And the wife of Pharaoh said, ‘[He will be] a comfort of the eye for me and for you. Do not kill him; perhaps he may benefit us, or we may adopt him as a son.’ And they perceived not.
> **Surah Al-Qasas, 28:9**

The Prophet said, “If Fir’aun had agreed for Musa to be a comfort for his eye as [his wife] did, Allah would have guided him as He guided her.” Rather, Fir’aun said, “A comfort for your eye.”

**“AND THEY PERCEIVED NOT”**

Asiya then pleads with Fir’aun to not kill him. We can infer that they knew this baby was from Bani Isra’il; they were a different ethnic group with their own unique physical features and complexion. We can also infer that they knew Fir’aun wanted to kill the baby. Asiya explains that perhaps the baby may benefit them, or maybe they can adopt him as a son. The ayah above ends with the phrase, “And they perceived not.” Allah repeats this phrase many times in the story of Musa, and there is a profound lesson in this. We see that Musa goes through many stages and events in his life; many of them seemingly trivial. Fir’aun is almost oblivious. However, these small events add up and lead to great events in the future. Nothing in the plan of Allah is trivial.
We all go through different phases in life, and we sometimes want big and important events to happen sooner rather than later, especially when younger. Allah ﷻ teaches us a profound lesson: all the small steps can add up to something big. Therefore, we should focus on the experiences that Allah is giving us at the current moment while trying to make the best of them. Musa ﷺ was one of Ulu'l-‘azm min al-Rusul and he was kaleem’ul Allah. Nevertheless, he ends up herding sheep and goats for a living! He didn’t stop and say, “I have to save Bani Isra’il. I don’t have time for this!” Allah put him through that learning phase in order to prepare him from something bigger and better, and Musa took full advantage of that experience.

THE MOTHER’S HEART BECAME EMPTY

وَأَصْبَحَ فُوَادُ أُمَّ مُوسَىٰ فَنَرَاَعُ إِن سَكَادَتْ لِنُبِيٍّ إِنَّ أَوْلَىٰ أَن تُرْتِضَنَا

“And the heart of Moses’ mother became empty [of all else]. She was about to disclose [the matter concerning] him had We not bound fast her heart that she would be of the believers.”

Surah Al-Qasas, 28:10

The emptiness of the mother’s heart may be referring to grief and depression. Therapists explain that people who suffer from clinical depression may experience physical feelings in the body even though the underlying ailment is mental or emotional. For example, someone going through extreme anxiety may have troubles breathing.

QALB VS. SADR VS. FU’AAD

Qalb refers to the actual heart
It could be the physical heart that is beating or the spiritual heart that contains the ruh.

Sadr refers to the area of the chest
The area above the waistline encompasses the sadr. There exists much debate about the position of hands in salah partly because the narrations mention sadr, which is a large area in the upper body.

Fu’aad refers to the internal cavity
It can refer to the intangible part of the sadr, the space that is occupied, and the feelings that come from that space.

One can practice tadabbur of the Qur’an by surveying all the places where Allah ﷻ uses the words qalb, sadr, and fu’aad and understanding the proper context of each.
Some scholars say that the above *ayah* means the mother of Musa could not think or focus on anything except the wellbeing of her child. Thus, Allah states that her *fu'aad* became empty. It was as if baby Musa was the only thing that existed in her life and universe at that time. Mothers naturally worry about their children because they are programmed like that. The mother of Musa was about to disclose the matter. Remember, she lived in a society in which pregnant women were monitored. The surveillance people could have stormed inside her house and asked her where the baby was. If they were to see her screaming and crying, or even watching the river, they would become suspicious. She was about to give it away, but Allah bound fast her heart so that she was of the believers.

**THE SISTER FOLLOWS BABY MUSA**

"And she said to his sister, ‘Follow him’; so she watched him from a distance while they perceived not." *Surah Al-Qasas, 28:11*

Musa had an older sister named Maryam. So, she is Maryam bint ‘Imran (daughter of Imran) and ukht Harun (sister of Harun). Allah addresses the mother of ‘Isa as Maryam bint Imran in the Qur’an. She is also addressed as the sister of Harun:

"O sister of Harun, your father was not a man of evil, nor was your mother unchaste."  
*Surah Maryam, 19:28*

Is the sister of Musa the mother of ‘Isa? No!! Just because people addressed Maryam as the sister of Harun, it doesn’t necessarily mean she had a blood brother named Harun. It was a phrase that emphasized the importance of living up to high standards as Harun was a respected and pious individual in the family. The name ‘Imran was quite common. Some *Isra’iliyat* narrations say that before Musa was born, there was a prophecy: a young man will rise amongst them and give victory to the people, and his name was ibn ‘Imran. So, the people of Bani Isra’il would name their sons ‘Imran out of hope, seeking to witness that prophecy. Overall, names like ‘Imran, Maryam, and Harun were common names amongst their people.

So, Maryam follows baby Musa and watches him from a distance while the people perceived not. Some historians say she was around 9 years old. No one would question a young girl running around, but they would question a grown woman like the mother of Musa running around watching the river. Maryam was an intelligent and trained little girl. She grew up in an oppressive military state, so she probably matured quickly and became accustomed to being elusive and careful.
BABY MUSA REFUSES THE WET NURSES

“And We had prevented from him [all] wet nurses before, so she said, ‘Shall I direct you to a household that will be responsible for him for you while they are to him [for his upbringing] sincere?’” Surah Al-Qasas, 28:12

Asiya received the baby, but she cannot nurse him because she doesn't have children of her own. So, she more or less creates a job opening for a wet nurse to feed him; however, baby Musa would not take from any of them, creating turmoil and unrest in the palace of Fir’auun. Hungry babies cry and scream! The sister goes to them and offers them a household that can feed him, take care of the baby, and raise him with sincerity. They accepted her offer.

“So We restored him to his mother that she might be content and not grieve and that she would know that the promise of Allah is true. But most of the people do not know.” Surah Al-Qasas, 28:13

If you had told the mother of Musa that she will be reunited with her baby in safety, in the most luxurious housing in the land while being paid, she would have thought you are mocking her! But the promise of Allah came true.

“...and who is more truthful than Allah in statement.” Surah Al-Nisa, 4:122

Most people forget that the promise of Allah is true. When we have sabr, we refrain ourselves from certain desires because we believe in the promise of Allah. When belief in that promise is weakened, then obedience to Allah is weakened. When belief in that promise is strengthened, then we are motivated to keep struggling for the sake of Allah.
GROWING UP IN THE CASTLE OF FIR’AUN

Musa ﷺ grows up in the castle of Fir’aun, and his mother is present as well. She takes care of him and raises him while maintaining her secrecy. In one narration, people ask her why baby Musa would only take milk from her. She responded, “I come from a household where the children don’t say no to us.” She was more or less saying she has a kind of special charm.

Fir’aun himself affirms that Musa grew up in his castle:

“[Pharaoh] said, ‘Did we not raise you among us as a child, and you remained among us for years of your life?’” Surah Al-Shu’ara

This dialogue happens later on in the story. Musa ﷺ received high-quality education in the castle of Fir’aun because he was close to leadership. Oppressors try to give their children the best education while ignoring the education needs of other children.

MUSA ﷺ FINDS TWO MEN FIGHTING

“And when he attained his full strength and was [mentally] mature, We bestowed upon him judgement and knowledge. And thus do We reward the doers of good. And he entered the city at a time of inattention by its people and found therein two men fighting: one from his faction and one from among his enemy. And the one from his faction called for help to him against the one from his enemy, so Musa struck him and [unintentionally] killed him. [Musa] said, ‘This is from the work of Satan. Indeed, he is a manifest, misleading enemy.’” Surah Al-Qasas, 28:14-15
Musa is not yet a Messenger. He went out in a time of day in which people were not really out and about. It was similar to a kind of siesta time in which people nap midday. During this time, Musa finds two men yaqtatilaan; when you see the word qatl in the context of fighting, it indicates fierce fighting.

One of the two men is from his faction (i.e. Bani Isra’il) while the other is from his enemy (i.e. Native Egyptian). Musa recognizes whom he belongs to in terms of ethnic group even though he grew up in the castle of Fir’aun. The people knew that Musa was the young boy from Bani Isra’il who grew up in the castle; Musa was special to them.

The man from Bani Isra’il called Musa to help him against his enemy. Allah uses the word to describe the request. In Arabic, when there is an alif seen ta before a verb, it usually indicates asking for something. For example, if there is a drought and we need rain, we make salat’ul istisqaa. When we make a mistake and want to repent to Allah, we make istighfaar as we ask Allah for forgiveness. Ghayth means a heavy downpour of rain; it is used as a general term in Arabic to refer to help in a time of desperation.

Musa responds to the man’s plea for help. Allah uses the word (so Musa struck him). The fa is a transitional letter in Arabic that refers to a short amount of time passing. After Musa struck the man, he died. The word wakaz means the hand is closed, and it involves a daf’ (push) as opposed to a tharb in which there is a small time of contact. Musa did not intend to kill the man; it was more or less a kind of freak accident as the death was unexpected. Murder is not an accurate word to describe the event because murder implies malicious intent.

In Shari’ah, there are classifications in the books of fiqh that help a qadhi finalize a verdict. For example, if the person accused of murder did not have a sharp object, that could possibly hold back capital punishment. If the person had a weapon like an axe, that would be different because it can imply malicious intent.
MUSA  ASKS FOR FORGIVENESS

Musa  never had the intention to kill. In fact, he himself is shocked by the outcome as he says, “This is from the work of Satan. Indeed, he is a manifest misleading enemy.” He then asks for forgiveness:

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي طَلَّمْتُ نَفْسِي فَأُعْفِرْ لِي فَغَفَّرَ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَفُوِّ الرَّحِيمُ

“He said, ‘My Lord, indeed I have wronged myself, so forgive me,’ and He forgave him. Indeed, He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.” Surah Al-Qasas, 28:16

Musa  was hasty, and he acted before properly understanding the situation. It was an incorrect decision, but he recognized his mistake and made tawbah. Musa teaches us the importance of acknowledging our faults and rushing to Allah  for forgiveness. Musa also acknowledged the presence of his enemy, as he understood that Shaytan was involved. Nevertheless, he still takes responsibility. It takes a lot of courage to admit a poor choice, especially if one has high status in society. For some people, it may take a lifetime. It’s a tough pill to swallow, but it is a pill that must be swallowed.

We find this du’a in the Sunnah of the Prophet  :

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي طَلَّمْتُ نَفْسِي ظَلَّلَتُ طَرِيقًا كَثِيرًا وَلَا يَعْفِرُ الدُّنْوَى إِلَّا أَنتَ فَأُعْفِرْ لِي مَعْفَرَةً مِنْ عَنْدِكَ وَارْحَمِي إِنَّكَ أَنتَ الْعَفُوِّ الرَّحِيمُ

“O Allah! I have indeed oppressed my soul excessively and none can forgive sin except You, so forgive me a forgiveness from Yourself and have mercy upon me. Surely, You are The Most-Forgiving, The Most-Merciful.” [Sahih Muslim]

The Prophet  taught us to say the above du’a in the final tashahhud before the salam.
DU’A IS A CONVERSATION WITH ALLAH

“He said, 'My Lord, for the favor You bestowed upon me, I will never be an assistant to the criminals.'” Surah Al-Qasas, 28:17

The above statement from Musa to Allah does not contain a request. It is in fact a declaration, showing us that du’a is an intimate and deep conversation with Allah, not simply a wish list or shopping cart. For many of us, du’a is like an Amazon shopping list. That is not a healthy relationship to have with Allah; we need to have an actual conversation with Him. Even though we cannot receive revelation, we can still converse with Allah!

We see Musa and all the Prophets conversing with Allah even if they are not explicitly asking for something. In this du’a, he is making Allah his witness about his declaration and commitment to not assist the criminals.

The Qur’an is the speech of Allah. So often, we think that Allah is talking about others and it is all about those people. In reality, the words of Allah apply to me as well! We need to use du’a to converse with Allah. Look at this beautiful example from Zechariah:
"Kaf, Ha, Ya, ‘Ayn, Sad. [This is] a mention of the mercy of your Lord to His servant Zechariah.
When he called to his Lord a private supplication. He said, "My Lord, indeed my bones have weakened, and my head has filled with white, and never have I been in my supplication to You, my Lord, unhappy. And indeed, I fear the successors after me, and my wife has been barren, so give me from Yourself an heir." Surah Maryam, 19:1-5

FORMULA FOR MAKING DU’A
Zechariah says five sentences in the beginning before he even asks for offspring. Don’t make du’a a robotic formula, but rather a dynamic conversation with your best friend! Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah gave us the following blueprint for making du’a:

1. **Begin by thanking and praising Allah**
2. **Humble yourself in front of Allah**
   As humans, we do not like to be humiliated. But when we humble ourselves in front of Allah, it actually elevates us. There is no room for embarrassment because the One whom you are speaking to already knows what you will say and what is in your heart. We should rest assured that we are safe to disclose all our weaknesses and secrets to Allah. If we disclose our darkest secrets to our most loyal friends, they may say kind words to us while thinking thoughts like, “Wow, you’re so messed up.”
3. **Make your request**
   Ask away for your personal, professional, and spiritual desires and goals.
4. **Send peace and blessings upon the Messenger of Allah**

LIVING WITH TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES
Now that he has experienced loss of life first hand, Musa feels bad. He experiences regret and remorse over the death of this man. Can you imagine how he feels? This is a wound that Musa will carry with him for the rest of his life and on the day of Judgement as well. Musa is very sensitive about the sanctity of life. On the Day of Judgement, humanity will turn to various Prophets to ask Allah to start the Day of Accountability. Each Prophet will turn down the request and state what they are ashamed of. When they come to Musa, he says he cannot make the request because he is too shy over the part he played in the man’s death. In the end, humanity will turn to the final Messenger of Allah who will take on this task and prostrate before Allah.

Although this experience stuck with him his whole life, he did not let it paralyze him or hold him back from having a fulfilling life. It is important that we draw the line for guilt. We all make poor choices and mistakes, but guilt needs to have a certain limit so that we can propel ourselves forward. It’s like salt. Too much of it will prevent us from finishing the
meal. Too much guilt will have adverse effects as it can lead to a spiral of bad behavior. There is proverb in Arabic that explains how going overboard will have an adverse effect.

Ibn Taymiyyah said that sometimes a sin or an act of disobedience to Allah ﷻ can be the turning point in one’s life as he or she become a better servant of Allah. Tawbah and positivity can propel a person into greatness.

MUSA’S SECRET IS EXPOSED

“And he became inside the city fearful and anticipating [exposure], when suddenly the one who sought his help the previous day cried out to him [once again]. Musa said to him, ‘Indeed, you are an evident, [persistent] deviator.’” Surah Al-Qasas, 28:18

Musa ﷺ does not return to the castle after this. The days of growing up in the compound of Fir’aun are over. He becomes fearful as he travels through the city. Allah says yataraqqb which means “always watching your back.” The next day, the man whom Musa previously helped from Bani Isra’il screams for help again. Musa remarks to him, “Indeed you are an evident persistent deviator.”

There is automatically a shift in how Musa handles the situation. The day before, Musa ﷺ immediately helped the person from Bani Isra’il. But now, he learned his lesson, and he didn’t make the same mistake again. He recognizes that the man from Bani Isra’il who is getting beaten may also be contributing to the problem. So, Musa ﷺ informs the man that he is the problem.

“And when he wanted to strike the one who was an enemy to both of them, he said, ‘O Moses, do you intend to kill me as you killed someone yesterday? You only want to be a tyrant in the land and do not want to be of the amenders.’” Surah Al-Qasas, 28:19
There is a difference in the wording this time. The word *bathsh* refers to a strike with the hand but with an open hand. The same word is also used in the follow *hadith*:

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Allah the Exalted has said: 'I will declare war against him who shows hostility to a pious worshipper of Mine. And the most beloved thing with which My slave comes nearer to Me is what I have enjoined upon him; and My slave keeps on coming closer to Me through performing Nawafil (prayer or doing extra deeds besides what is obligatory) till I love him. When I love him I become his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes, and his leg with which he walks; and if he asks (something) from Me, I give him, and if he asks My Protection (refuge), I protect him." [Sahih Al-Bukhari]

In contrast, *wakaz* is using a closed hand. Now Musa’s approach is more balanced and he is aware that every story has two sides. But before he can even lay his hand on anyone, the man from Bani Isra’il said, "Oh Musa do you intend to kill me as you killed someone yesterday?" He is incriminating Musa ﷺ.

Yesterday, no one knew who killed that man. It occurred at a time when there is relatively no activity in the city. But this man has now exposed Musa at a time of day where everyone is out and about. It is now the talk of the city and rumor starts to spread that Musa from Bani Isra’il has killed an Egyptian man. The lack of injustice becomes even more clear now as two people from different social and ethnic backgrounds can commit the same crime yet receive different punishments. They have been wanting to get Musa since he was a baby. He was essentially born with a target on his back. Even from Fir‘aun’s first glance, Asiya urged him not to kill him. The people disliked that a boy from Bani Isra’il grew up in the luxury of Fir‘aun’s castle.

**MUSA MUST FLEE EGYPT**

"And a man came from the farthest end of the city, running. He said, 'O Moses, indeed the eminent ones are conferring over you [intending] to kill you, so leave [the city]; indeed, I am to you of the sincere advisors.’” Surah Al-Qasas, 28:20
Then a man comes to Musa ﷺ from the opposite side of town. This is referring to the political establishment since Musa is currently in the other end of town mixing with society. This man comes and gets to the point very quickly since it is time-sensitive information. He tells Musa that the generals are gathering and planning to kill him. The man explains that Musa needs to leave town and that he will not be given a fair trial. Some scholars say this man is the secret believer in the court of Fir’aun because he has inside information about the generals’ plans. It is possible that it could be a different person altogether.

“So he left it, fearful and anticipating [apprehension]. He said, ‘My Lord, save me from the wrongdoing people.’” Surah Al-Qasas, 28:21

Musa ﷺ leaves, and Allah ﷻ says that he is afraid and that he keeps watching his back. Musa is once again experiencing fear. He says, “My Lord, save me from the wrongdoing people.” Look at how he makes du’a again! Musa ﷺ is not even a Prophet yet. He has not received revelation yet. So where did he learn about du’a and his Rabb and Allah ﷻ and Shaytan? He learned it from his biological mother. While he was mingling with the family of Fir’aun, his mother was the secret source of great education for him. While he lived in the best of luxuries in the palace of Fir’aun, his mother taught him with secrecy and intelligence. He was able to recognize that there is an imbalance in the world, and he knew the struggles that Bani Isra’il faced from the oppressors. This shows you the impact that a mother can have on the child. His mother played a huge role in his life; if you look throughout history, you will find that many luminaries from various civilizations had mothers who connected them with Allah. That level of education is the most important role any parent can play in the life of his or her children. So they know their identity, their Creator, and their enemy (i.e. Shaytan).

Musa ﷺ has to flee, but notice how he did not have adequate time to prepare for his journey.

“And when he directed himself toward Madyan, he said, ‘Perhaps my Lord will guide me to the sound way.’” Surah Al-Qasas, 28:22

Some people draw a map near the Jordan border for where Madyan used to once exist, and Allah ﷻ knows best. He goes in that direction. The people of Madyan are ethnically Arab and there would have been some similarities between them and the people of Bani Isra’il at that time due to their proximity. They both trace their lineage back to Prophet Ibrahim ﷺ.
Shu’ayb was the Prophet sent to Madyan. He is one of the only four Arab Prophets including Hud, Saleh, and Muhammad.

What’s important to note is that “the direction of Madyan” indicated that he did not have a specific destination in mind. And due to his circumstances, there was relatively no time to prepare for the journey that will unfold shortly. Geographically speaking, he had to cross the Sinai Peninsula. When he finds himself in yet another difficult situation, he makes du’a:

> ولماً نوحاً تلقى مديت قال عسى ربي أن يهديني سواء السبيل

“And when he directed himself toward Madyan, he said, ‘Perhaps my Lord will guide me to the sound way.’” Surah Al-Qasas, 28:22

**Life in Madyan**

**HELPING THE TWO LADIES**

> ولماً ورد ماء مديت وجد عليه أمه ميتي الكأس يسفوت ووجد من دونهم أمرتي نذوران قال ما خطبكما قالن كنا لا نسقي حتي يصبر الرعاة وأيوناشبح

“And when he came to the well of Madyan, he found there a crowd of people watering [their flocks], and he found aside from them two women driving back [their flocks]. He said, "What is your circumstance?" They said, "We do not water until the shepherds dispatch [their flocks]; and our father is an old man." Surah Al-Qasas, 28:23

He arrives at a place where there is water. People are watering their animals, and he sees two women along the side who are not watering their flock. He goes up to them and asks them for their story. They respond that they don’t take their animals to get any water until all of those shepherds finish and, by the way, our father is an old man.

> فسقه لهما ثم تولته إلى النظلي فقال رب إني لما أنزلت إلى من خير فقذير

“So he watered [their flocks] for them; then he went back to the shade and said, ’My Lord, indeed I am, for whatever good You would send down to me, in need.’” Surah Al-Qasas, 28:24
So he takes their animals, and he gets water for them. Then he retreated back to the shade and he said “My Lord, I am in desperate need of any good you can send me.” Think about what he just went through; feel those emotions in his du’a. It’s such an intense emotional du’a. I’m so rock bottom, anything that comes, I am in need of it.

**INVITATION FROM THE FATHER**

"Then one of the two women came to him walking with shyness. She said, "Indeed, my father invites you that he may reward you for having watered for us." So when he came to him and related to him the story, he said, "Fear not. You have escaped from the wrongdoing people."

*Surah Al-Qasas, 28:25*

So, one of those two girls comes back. Allah describes her as having so much *hayaa*. This word is encompasses modesty, shyness, bashfulness, and more. It is one of the branches of *Iman* and a manifestation of believing in Allah. It is a way of carrying and respecting yourself. It is a way of dealing with other people. It commands a certain level of respect and dignity, and it is not exclusively for women.

The Prophet said, "Iman has over seventy branches - or over sixty branches - the uppermost of which is the declaration: 'None has the right to be worshipped but Allah'; and the least of which is the removal of harmful object from the road, and modesty is a branch of *Iman."  [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

It is a trait of the believers as well as the angels. Uthman had so much *hayaa* that the Prophet used to carry himself so delicately in front of him. And when he was asked about it, he said, "How can I have not have *hayaa* in front of someone whom the angels have *hayaa* from him?"

Allah describes her as walking in this manner so we have an idea of her demeanor and the honor and dignity she carried herself with. She told Musa that her father is summoning him, saying, “He wants to reward you and compensate you for getting us the water.”
So Musa came to the father and met him, and told him all the stories. The man told him “No need to be afraid anymore, you have been saved from the wrong doing people.” He is now in Madyan, safe and sound.

**A MARRIAGE PROPOSAL**

"One of the women said, ‘O my father, hire him. Indeed, the best one you can hire is the strong and the trustworthy.’” *Surah Al-Qasas, 28:26*

One of the two daughters comes to the dad and says “My father, I think you should hire this man.” The man then turns around and tells Musa to marry his daughter although there was no mention of marriage. She says, “The best person you can hire is someone who is strong and trustworthy.”

"He said, ‘Indeed, I wish to wed you one of these, my two daughters, on [the condition] that you serve me for eight years; but if you complete ten, it will be [as a favor] from you. And I do not wish to put you in difficulty. You will find me, if Allah wills, from among the righteous.’” *Surah Al-Qasas, 28:27*

The father says to Musa that he wants to marry him off to one of his daughters in exchange for 8 years with an additional 2 year option. The word used in this ayah for years is hijaj.

**MARRIAGE**

*Turning a New Chapter in Life*

"And when he directed himself toward Madyan, he said, ‘Perhaps my Lord will guide me to the sound way.’” *Surah Al-Qasas, 28:22*
When Musa went to Madyan, he turned a new page in his. He began that phase with the service of people. We all make mistakes, but it isn't appropriate for our shortcomings to hold us back.

Sulayman made a less than perfect decision. In fact, when he realized the mistake he made, he made istighfaar to Allah and he made a very famous du'a.

قَالَ رَبِّ أَغْفِرْ لِي وَهَبِي مُلْكًا لَا يَنْتَخِبُ لِأَحَدٍ مِّنْ بَعْضِيِّ إِلَّاٰ إِلَّاَكَ أَنتَ أَلْوَهَاءُ

“He said, 'My Lord, forgive me and grant me a kingdom such as will not belong to anyone after me. Indeed, You are the Bestower.'” Surah Saad, 38:35

At a time that Sulayman made a mistake, he asked Allah for a dominion that no one after him will have the likes of. Allah answered that du’a for him. We see that the Prophets are not held back by their less than perfect choices.

**Taking the Initiative to Help**

We see Prophet Musa taking the initiative and assisting the two women by the well. Look at the turn of events: he came to the service of people and Allah rewarded him handsomely.

Prophet Muhammad taught us:

وَللهُ فِي عَوْنِ الْعَبْدِ مَا كَانَ الْعَبْدُ فِي عَوْنِ أَخِيهِ

“Allah will come to the assistance of His servant so long as the servant is in the assistance of his brother.” [Sunan Abi Dawud]

**Filling a Void in Society**

You can judge the health of a society by seeing how the weakest there are treated. There is an Arabic proverb, “The weakest one is the Ameer of the caravan.” Meaning, we move at the pace of our slowest. That is what a community ought to be, a group of people moving as a single unit. Musa came to Madyan and recognized that the women were not getting the same opportunity to water their animals like everyone else. Not only did he go and help the women, but he filled a void in that society.
The Women were Working

“And when he came to the well of Madyan, he found there a crowd of people watering [their flocks], and he found aside from them two women driving back [their flocks]. He said, ‘What is your circumstance?’ They said, ‘We do not water until the shepherds dispatch [their flocks]; and our father is an old man.’” Surah Al-Qasas, 28:23

Musa ᴡ صلى الله عليه وسلم asked the women what they were doing by the well. They said they don’t get to water their flock until the men finish and that their father is an old man. They went out of their way to mention their father. If your father is old in age, you should take the initiative whether you are male or female and take some load off of his shoulders.

It’s permissible for women to work, as long as there are certain conditions of being able to maintain haya (modesty). They weren’t there in the first place to water their animals because they didn’t want to compromise their haya by rubbing elbows with other shepherds.

Importance of Marriage

“So he watered [their flocks] for them; then he went back to the shade and said, ‘My Lord, indeed I am, for whatever good You would send down to me, in need.’” Surah Al-Qasas, 28:24

Musa ᴡ صلى الله عليه وسلم made du’a after watering the flock and one of the responses to that du’a was he got married. We live in an age now where people are sometimes running away from marriage or they’re trying to get married and they can’t.
Marriage is important, and this process was so simple for Musa. When we take something that our *deen* made simple and we complicate it, we’re the ones who’ll suffer; not only as individuals, but there will be societal harm. The Prophet ﷺ said:

> إذا أتاكْم من ترضون حُلقة
> وَدَينه فِرْجَوجْوهُ إِلاَّ نَفْعَلْوَن نَكْنَ فِي الأَرْضِ وَفَسَادُ عَريضٍ

“When someone whose religion and character you are pleased with comes to you then marry (her to) him. If you do not do so, then there will be turmoil (Fitnah) in the land and discord (Fasad)” [Jami’ at-Tirmidhi]

That is how the human being is wired. If we get in the way of *fitrah* and start blocking the things that Allah ﷻ, His *deen* and His Messenger ﷺ facilitated for us, we’re going to suffer. And we are suffering. The most common problem today is marriage crisis; either people not being able to get married or people not being able to stay married. Musa’s marriage was straightforward and simple and a lot of *khayr* and *barakah* came from that.

*Dealing with Differences in Culture*

Musa ﷺ was from Bani Isra’il and his wife was from the people of Madyan. Musa was from one cultural group and his wife from another, but that didn’t hinder the process of marriage.

*Past Mistakes*

> قَالَ ﻟَهُ إِذْ هُمَا
> فَمَثَّلَ عِلَىٰ أَسْيَرْتِهِمَا قَالَ إِنَّكَ أَلْهُوَ لِيَجْزِيهِنَّ
> أَجْرٌ مَا سَقَيْتَ لَنَا فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُ وَقَصَّ عَلَيْهِ الْفَصْصَ قَالَ
> لَا تَخْفَفْ لِنَحْوَتُ مِنْ أَلْقَوْمِ الْطَّلِيمِينَ

> "Then one of the two women came to him walking with shyness. She said, 'Indeed, my father invites you that he may reward you for having watered for us.' So when he came to him and related to him the story, he said, 'Fear not. You have escaped from the wrongdoing people.'”

*Surah Al-Qasas, 28:25*
We should not write people off due to their past mistakes. Musa  ﷺ told the father everything, but the father didn’t point out mistakes from Musa’s past. Rather, he judged him based how he was at the time they were speaking.

**Honesty**
If anyone could’ve had the perfect opportunity to lie and cover something up, it would’ve been Musa  ﷺ. The people he was speaking with had no real way to verify his past, but he still laid everything out in front of them. The reason we know that Musa told them everything is the response of the father, “Fear not. You have escaped from the wrongdoing people.” Honesty is the best policy.

**Validating Concerns**
When someone comes to you expressing their feelings, emotions and situation, the first thing you need to do is validate their concerns. It isn’t about accepting what’s being said as good or true. It’s about how the person feels about their own situation. When you validate someone’s concerns, you automatically make them feel safe and comfortable. It’s only after this point that you can begin to work on helping them, offer them solutions, turn the page and begin anew.

**Having Tawakkul in Allah**
We see again and again in Musa’s life that he would exhaust his resources, but he would always make  ﷺ and rely on Allah  ﷺ, and that always worked out best for him.

**Close Relationship of Father and Daughter**
The daughter did not indicate anywhere that she wanted to get married to Musa  ﷺ, but perhaps the father was aware. Unfortunately, a lot of parents and elders now-a-days are oblivious to what the young ones under their authority are interested in. But this father and daughter had a close relationship; not only in terms of him being aware of the subtleties, but also in the way he took her advice.

On the one hand, she knew that she offer him advice regarding whom to hire. On the other hand, he was welcoming and accepting of her  shura. This father and daughter had a good relationship and that is something which isn’t as common as it should be now-a-days.

**Musa’s Interaction with the Women**
Musa  ﷺ was a non-mahram to these two women, but that didn’t prevent them from having an interaction. Rather, it controlled that interaction. It was neither flirtatious, nor frivolous. It was respectful and to the point.
Strength and Trustworthiness

"One of the women said, 'O my father, hire him. Indeed, the best one you can hire is the strong and the trustworthy.'" Surah Al-Qasas, 28:26

Musa had nothing when he reached Madyan, but the two qualities that his future wife noticed in him were strength and trustworthiness. And strength doesn’t only refer to physical strength, it also refers to qualifications. How did she discern Musa had strength? ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab says in a narration, when Musa came to the place of water in Madyan, he moved a huge rock that would ordinarily take 10 men to move. The people of Madyan would cover the well with a heavy bolder so that nothing falls in the water. It is said it was this bolder that Musa moved. Musa was also able to direct the flock without losing any animals. This shows that he was strong, qualified and able to do the job.

How did she discern Musa was trustworthy? One, he took the flock and he brought it back. Two, he didn’t seek compensation. If anybody was in a position to ask for compensation, it would’ve been Musa in his condition at the time, but he didn’t. Three, when the woman’s father called Musa, Musa asked the woman to walk behind him and instruct him from behind so that she would feel comfortable and safe.

When looking for a spouse, employment or help, we should look for these qualities. Look for someone who is qualified (that has strength in a comprehensive way) and look for someone whom you can trust. A person can have all the strength in the world, but if they aren’t trustworthy, it could come back and bite you. A person can be very trustworthy, but can’t get the job done. You need a person who is qualified and is trustworthy.

Musa’s Employment

قال إلى أريد أن أنكُتكِيك إحدى بنيت هندَّين على أن تأجرني ثمني جمجج فإن أتممت عشرة فقمن عندكームما أريد أن أشِّق علىك ستجردَت إن شاء الله من الصبليين قال ذلك بني ويلك أيما الأجنَّين قضيت فلا عدوى على وَلَّدُه على ما نقول وَكيلّ
“He said, ‘Indeed, I wish to wed you one of these, my two daughters, on [the condition] that you serve me for eight years; but if you complete ten, it will be [as a favor] from you. And I do not wish to put you in difficulty. You will find me, if Allah wills, from among the righteous.’ [Moses] said, ‘That is [established] between me and you. Whichever of the two terms I complete - there is no injustice to me, and Allah, over what we say, is Witness.’”

Surah Al-Qasas, 28:27-28

For 8 or 10 years, Musa ﷺ worked as a shepherd. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said that the Messengers were shepherds and the Prophet himself worked as a shepherd. Why is it important for a Messenger to have experience as a shepherd? Sheep are very naïve; all they look for is green grass and water. They don't know what is best for them, and so they'll go wherever they see grass. A shepherd must be present to direct them to what is best for them. That is what a parent, teacher, mentor and a Messenger does. A Messenger takes a group of followers to the safest and best place for them to be.

It isn't easy to be a shepherd, but it's training to be a good leader. You can never be an effective leader if you were never a good follower. Allah did not rush to give prophethood to Prophets before giving them this training.

Musa ﷺ is an employee of someone and has a contract with his employer. He has tasks and responsibilities and if he loses even one sheep, then he must answer to his boss. And if you never go through this training in accountability, then how can you be a good leader? Everybody wants to be a captain, but nobody is willing to be a team player. Musa is teaching us that we must put in the time. He was trained for 8 to ten years. Let yourself develop naturally, and don't rush. There is an Arabic proverb, “The person who hastens a matter before it's ready, his punishment will be that he'll lose that which he is seeking.”

Allah ﷺ used the word hijjaj in this ayah. The man told Musa ﷺ, “You work for me for eight hijjaj.” Hajj happens once a year, so hijjaj is a way of saying the passage of a year. But why use the word hijjaj? Hajj has been going on since the time of Ibrahim ﷺ. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ referred to a well in a hadith, bir al-rawhaa, located about 70-80 kilometers outside of Madinah towards the place of Badr. It’s one of the few blessed prophetic wells still in existence that you can go and drink from. The Prophet ﷺ and the Sahaba drank from it on a trip from the battle of Badr. In addition to that, the Prophet said 70 of the Anbiya stopped and drank from this well on their way to Hajj. Some scholars have said there is some weakness in the chain of this narration, but it offers interesting academic value. So, some scholars said the word hijjaj could be referring to the fact that the people of Madyan made Hajj.
Proposal Coming from the Woman's Side

Contrary to what’s considered acceptable or unacceptable these days, we find that the proposal for Musa 🌻 came from the woman’s side. The Prophet 🌻, the best of creation, also was proposed to from the woman’s side. Whereas now-a-days in many cultures, this is something that is considered inappropriate, but we find there was nothing shameful in this for the Anbiya. We’ve put certain cultural limitations in place that make things difficult. And when we make things difficult, we end up causing problems in society.

Accept Good Presented to You

Musa 🌻 made du'a and when someone presented him with something good, he accepted it. Many of us are taught to not accept it when someone gives us something. That is not very appropriate. The Prophet 🌻 said when you’re gifted something, accept it. And the Prophet never rejected a gift. When someone gives you something, they feel a sense of honor in the fact that they can offer you something, so don’t break people’s heart by not accepting gifts. However, especially for those of us who have children, what’s best in terms of tarbiyyah is to accept a gift and be grateful for it, but still take it to the authority for approval.

Who was the Wife of Musa?

Her name was Asfoora, and some have said it was Safoora. Farasah is a type of intuition, intelligence, and a level of observation to come up with certain conclusions that aren’t apparent. Ibn Abbas 🌻 said of the three people who had the greatest farasah, was this daughter. She recognized the qualities that Musa 🌻 had and recognized that he was a good person.

REVELATION

فعلما فضى موسى الأجل وسار بأهله فإنلك من جانب
الثور نار قال لأهله امكتروا إني عانست نارا تعلمي ماتيك
منتهى احترم أو جذدى من النار لعلكم تصلتو

“And when Moses had completed the term and was traveling with his family, he perceived from the direction of the mount a fire. He said to his family, 'Stay here; indeed, I have perceived a fire. Perhaps I will bring you from there [some] information or burning wood from the fire that you may warm yourselves.” Surah Al-Qasas, 28:29
How Long did Musa Work?
Ibn Abbas asked the Prophet which of the two terms (8 or 10 years) did Musa complete, and the Prophet said the longer of the two. Some of the ‘ulema even say that he stayed in addition to that from his own ihsaan, that he wanted to go above and beyond the contract from his own excellence and goodness.

Who was Musa Traveling With?
Once he completed that term and was traveling with his family, he perceived from the direction of the mount a fire. So how many people were travelling? Although ahli in Arabic generally refers to the whole “family” unit, ahl in Arabic sometimes also refers to just the “spouse.” It’s a manner of speaking about the spouse with respect and honor.

Where was Musa Going and Why?
Musa was traveling back to Egypt. He has been gone for at least a decade, and it’s very realistic to think that a person would miss his family over such a long period. We know for sure that he was going to Egypt because the place where he sees the fire is a mountain in the Sinai, which is already East of Madyan, and you don’t go into Sinai unless you intend to cross over to the other side.

Investigating the Fire
Musa said to his family, “Stay here, I’m going to investigate this fire and maybe I can bring back some information.” They’re traveling, maybe he wanted to get directions or see where the next watering station is, and Allah knows best. He said, “Maybe I could bring back some of that fire so that we can seek warmth.”

What’s amazing here is that he used the verb aanastu, and the translation of the verse reads “perceived.” But the connotation of aanaasa is that even though he didn’t have all the details, he felt a sense of comfort from what he perceived from a distance. He felt something good would come from this light.

But when he came to it, he was called from the right side of the valley in a blessed spot - from the tree, ‘O Moses, indeed I am Allah, Lord of the worlds.’” Surah Al-Qasas, 28:30

When he reached there, he was called from the right side of the valley in a blessed spot. It is a blessed mountain and it is a blessed place.
What Kind of Tree was it?
Some say it was an olive tree, because we know that it is a blessed tree and Allah told us that it grows there.

"And [We brought forth] a tree issuing from Mount Sinai which produces oil and food for those who eat." Surah Al-Mu’mun, 23:20

Musa is Called by his Name
The first thing Musa hears when he arrives at Mount Tur is his name, and he is called by his name five times in this exchange. The Prophet said to call people by the most beloved of names to them. There is something special when someone takes the time to learn your name and call you by it. And people like to be called by their names.

Allah calls Musa by his name and tells him who He is, “Ya Musa, I am Allah, Lord of the worlds.” Musa already believes in Allah, he was taught that he has a creator, and now he is receiving revelation.

Indeed, I am your Lord, so remove your sandals. Indeed, you are in the sacred valley of Tuwa.” Surah Taha, 20:12

Musa Removing his Sandals
Musa was asked to remove his sandals. Some have said because there was impurity on his sandals; others have said it has nothing to do with impurity, but it was adab. Across cultures, removing your shoes is a sign of respect. Allah teaches the anbiya.

Adab is a Prerequisite to Seeking Knowledge
Before you receive knowledge, wisdom, experience, leadership and status, you need to have purity and adab. There are many quotations of our pious predecessors who said, “We spent two-thirds of our time learning adab and one-third learning hadith.” They also said we are in more need of adab than in more need of knowledge. Adab beautifies a person. A person who amasses knowledge and information without adab, that will be disastrous.
**Allah Chose Musa**

“And I have chosen you, so listen to what is revealed [to you].” *Surah Taha, 20:13*

Allah ﷻ told Musa ﷺ ana ikhtartuka, “I have chosen you” and one of the names of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is al-Mukhtar. In *Surah Al-A’raf*, Allah tells Musa innee istafaytuka ala annas, “I have preferred you over people,” and among Prophet Muhammad’s names was al-Mustafa, “The preferred one.” And it is said that Musa went to the place of revelation, whereas revelation came to Prophet Muhammad.

**Salah**

“Indeed, I am Allah. There is no deity except Me, so worship Me and establish prayer for My remembrance.” *Surah Taha, 20:14*

The first encounter that Musa ﷺ had with Allah ﷻ, he was commanded to establish salah. Without salah, there cannot be a healthy relationship with Allah. That is why a poet in Arabic said, “Salah is a link and fulfillment of a covenant.” We all have a promise to Allah and salah is fulfilling that promise. It’s an act of worship and loyalty to Allah. It’s between the servant on the earth and Allah above the heavens.

**Remembering the Hour**

“Indeed, the Hour is coming - I almost conceal it - so that every soul may be recompensed according to that for which it strives.” *Surah Taha, 20:15*

Allah ﷻ says about the Hereafter that it has been concealed exactly when it will be, but it is important to reflect upon the akhira. Desires are the cause of most people to slip and disobey Allah. The best way for a person to fortify himself is to reflect upon the Day of Judgement and accountability.

There is no other concept in Islam that is more logical than the Day of Judgement. People rejecting Allah doesn’t make sense. There’s an imbalance, and human beings are a trial for one another in this dunya, so there must be an akhira to settle that imbalance.
“So do not let one avert you from it who does not believe in it and follows his desire, for you [then] would perish.” Surah Taha, 20:16

If there was no concept of accountability, then what would stop people from doing whatever they wanted to do?

“And what is that in your right hand, O Moses?’ He said, ‘It is my staff; I lean upon it, and I bring down leaves for my sheep and I have therein other uses.’” Surah Taha, 20:17

Allah asked Musa what was in his right hand, and Musa responded in detail, “It is my staff.” From the way Musa spoke about it, we can see he had an attachment to it. And he goes on to mention how he brings down leaves for his sheep with it and has other uses for it. Contemporary historians speak about this and say if you look into ancient Egyptian civilization, you’ll see that having a staff was a status symbol. It was an accessory you would carry with you even if you don’t need it.

People were in different castes, and you would have a particular design on your staff based on your level in society. Designs or inscriptions that you would have only if you belonged to that segment of the society. The most special staffs would be the ones that the Pharaoh and his family would carry. And the staff at the bottom, the one that was looked down upon the most was the shepherd’s staff. Musa’s staff was the one that society would consider to be of no value, but it was this staff which Allah brought so many miracles through.

“[Allah] said, ‘Throw it down, O Moses.’ So he threw it down, and thereupon it was a snake, moving swiftly. [Allah] said, ‘Seize it and fear not; We will return it to its former condition.’” Surah Taha 19:21
Allah told Musa to throw his staff down, and it became a live serpent. This serpent was moving fast and it was scary, but Allah said, “Seize it and don’t be scared. We will return it to its former condition.” Meaning, Musa felt scared - and who wouldn’t?

وَأَضْمُمْ يَدْكَ
إِلَّا جِنَاحُكَ تَخْرُجُ بِبَصَاءٍ مِّن غِيرِ سَوَءٍ ءَايَةٌ أُخْرَى ۚ لَيْبِكَ

“And draw in your hand to your side; it will come out white without disease - another sign, That We may show you [some] of Our greater signs.” Surah Taha, 20:22-23

Musa was asked to place his hand inside his pocket. Janah in Arabic means “wing.” In those days, their pockets would often be on the inside, and this part of the body is often referred to as janah because if you had wings, that’s where they would be, under the arm.

Musa was then asked to place his hand inside his pocket and was told that it would come out shining white. This ayah means so much more when we know that Musa had a dark complexion, and that his hand would come out shining bright is amazing. However, Allah adds a clause, saying that it is not from any defect or disease (like vitiligo) where there is a change of color in the skin. Allah then says He will give him some big signs.

What will Musa do with the Signs?

أَذْهَبْ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغِينٌ

“Go to Pharaoh. Indeed, he has transgressed.” Surah Taha 20:24

Musa is commanded to go to the Pharaoh, a tyrant and oppressor. Musa is given a heavy load on his chest. It’s one thing to go back to Egypt, lay low and reconnect with family. It’s a whole other story to go to Egypt and go to Fir’aun himself and tell him that he has transgressed. Nobody had the audacity or the willingness to do that to the Pharaoh.
Musa’s Dua

قَالَ
رَبِّ اشْتَغِي لِي صَدْرِي ۚ وَبَيِّنْ لِي أَمْرِي ۚ وَأَحْلِلْ عُقْدَةَٰنِن
لَسَانِيُّ ۖ يَفْهَمُوا قُوْلِي

“[Moses] said, ‘My Lord, expand for me my breast [with assurance] And ease for me my task And untie the knot from my tongue That they may understand my speech.’” Surah 20:25-28

Musa is given a heavy task, and so what does he do? He makes du’a! He says, “Expand for me my chest.” Sharh means to open something up to lay it out. This is another example of how Prophet Muhammad was blessed and preferred. Musa asked for his chest to have sharh, whereas Allah told the Prophet alam nashrah laka sadrak.

“Untie for me the knot in my tongue” refers to the changes in the Egyptian language that may have taken place while he was away. On top of that, Musa hadn’t been practicing the language. He was learning two languages as he was growing up; the language of Bani Isra’il from his mother and the language of the Egyptians in the palace of Fir’aun, so perhaps he didn’t have mastery of either language.

When he returns to Egypt, he asks for the assistance of his brother Harun, and one of the things he says about his brother is, “Harun is more eloquent than me in speech” because he never left Egypt and is aware of the changes. So, some contemporary scholars have said untying the knot in his tongue refers more to eloquence in speech rather than a physical disability.

Struggle with Fear

Musa struggled with fear. So many times in the Qur’an, Allah says, “Fear not.” Musa himself said that he was afraid they would disbelieve in him and that they will kill him.
What did Musa Ask for? What did he Receive?

“And appoint for me a minister from my family - Harun, my brother.” Surah Taha, 20:29-30

Of the things Musa asked for is the support of his brother Harun. We learn from this that there is no concept of being a “one man show” or a “complete champion.” Musa had Harun, the Prophet had the Sahaba, and Isa had the Hawariyyun (disciples). Behind every leader is a team, so be a team-player.

Musa didn’t ask for Harun to be a prophet, he only asked for his help, but Allah still made him a prophet. Allah responded to Musa with far more than what he had asked for; this is Allah’s generosity and mercy. Ask from Allah’s bounties and what He can give you is limitless. Ask Allah and He will grant you.

DELIVERING THE MESSAGE

“Said Pharaoh, ‘And what is the Lord of the worlds?’ [Moses] said, ‘The Lord of the heavens and earth and that between them, if you should be convinced.’ [Pharaoh] said to those around him, ‘Do you not hear?’” Surah ash-Shu’ara 26:23-25

Musa went to Fir’aun and Fir’aun questioned him, “Who is this Lord that you’re talking about?” and Musa responded, “He is the Lord of the heavens and the earth and everything in between, if you should be convinced.”

Fir’aun then looks to the people around him in his court and he said, “Do you not hear?” One does that when they want to make a mockery of what someone else is saying. “Are you guys hearing what I’m hearing?” Fir’aun tried to shake Musa with that, but Musa didn’t stop.

“[Moses] said, ‘Your Lord and the Lord of your first forefathers.’” Surah Ash-Shu’ara, 26:26
The Pharaohs used to claim that they are descendants of gods. And so Musa combatted that claim and said to Fir‘aun, “Not only is He your Lord, He is the Lord of all your forefathers from the very beginning.”

*[Pharaoh] said, “Indeed, your ‘messenger’ who has been sent to you is mad.”

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara, 26:27

Fir‘aun spoke to those around Musa and sarcastically said, “This ‘messenger’ that has been sent to you is insane.” He couldn’t respond to the claims that Musa made, so he resorted to abusing and attacking the person making the claim.

*[Moses] said, ‘Lord of the east and the west and that between them, if you were to reason.’”

Surah ash-Shu‘ara, 26:28

Musa said, “Lord of the east and the west, and everything in between.” Fir‘aun accused him of being crazy, so we see in this verse that Musa responded, “If you had any intellect.” If Fir‘aun had intellect, he would’ve recognized this as the truth.

Amazingly, Musa didn’t respond to any of the claims that Fir‘aun made. He didn’t get defensive or get sidetracked. In this is an important lesson for us when giving da’wah and engaging with people. When you talk with someone about Islam, it’s very possible that that might result in personal attacks. So do we get sidetracked and deal with those personal attacks or will we stay focused with the message that we have? Musa stayed focused on his message.
Fir’aun then turned to Musa and resorted to his language of threats. He threatened to imprison Musa. Fir’aun said min almasjuneen, “among those imprisoned.” Meaning, he has already locked away a lot of people; that is part of his oppression and subjugation.

Now that Fir’aun is making threats, Musa can bring forth his proofs.

Musa threw his staff and it turned into a live serpent for everyone to see clearly.

Then he drew out his hand, shining white for everyone to see.
Fir’aun said, “This is a learned magician.” Again, he couldn’t respond to the proofs that Musa ﷺ brought forth, so he resorted to personal attacks. Fir’aun kept changing the story. At first he said Musa was crazy, then he said he was a magician.

“He wants to drive you out of your land by his magic, so what do you advise?”

_Surah ash-Shu’ara, 26:35_

Then Fir’aun spoke to those around him, “This man has a plot to kick you out of your land, so what do you all think we should do?” Fir’aun wanted to hear it from them, so that he didn’t seem like the source of the claim.

“They said, ‘Postpone [the matter of] him and his brother and send among the cities gatherers who will bring you every learned, skilled magician.’” _Surah ash-Shu’ara, 26:36-37_

They said, “Put off the matter for now, search throughout the land and find magicians that will beat him at his magic trick.” And so Fir’aun does that.

“So the magicians were assembled for the appointment of a well-known day.”

_Surah ash-Shu’ara, 26:38_

So the sorcerers were gathered on an appointed, well-known day. What day was that?

“[Moses] said, ‘Your appointment is on the day of the festival when the people assemble at mid-morning.’” _Surah Taha, 20:59_
In *Surah Taha*, Musa ﷺ chooses that day. He says, “The appointment will be on this day called *Yawm az-Zeena.*” *Yawm az-Zeena* was a day of celebration, a holiday in the Egyptian civilization. Their economy rested upon the Nile river, and some say that it was the day that the Nile river would be full; even the offshoots of the river would be full of water.

Musa ﷺ was being strategic. He chose this day because everyone was going to be there and he wanted to expose as many people as possible to the message that he has from Allah ﷻ. This shows us that strategy isn’t just for business or medicine, it is also for *da’wah*.

> “And it was said to the people, ‘Will you congregate that we might follow the magicians if they are the predominant?’” *Surah ash-Shu’ara*, 26:39-40

Word spread among the land and between people. It was a big event and everyone wanted to be there to see what would happen. People started thinking that they’ll follow the magicians because it seemed like they had the upper hand. Some scholars mentioned there were up to 70,000 sorcerers. Others said there were 70. There was an army of magicians and Musa ﷺ didn’t even have 70 people with him; it was him and Harun ﷺ.

> “And when the magicians arrived, they said to Pharaoh, ‘Is there indeed for us a reward if we are the predominant?’ He said, ‘Yes, and indeed, you will then be of those near [to me].’” *Surah ash-Shu’ara*, 26:41-42

The magicians asked Fir‘aun whether they’ll get any compensation if they win. He said yes, not only would they get paid well, they would also be close to him with positions in government and status. Wealth is not the only fitnah. That’s why when the scholars talk about the purification of the heart, they not only talk about wealth, but also position, status, authority, leadership and power. Being put on a pedestal in front of people is something that the human being seeks, and that is what Fir‘aun used to lure the magicians in.
"Moses said to them, 'Throw whatever you will throw.' So they threw their ropes and their staffs and said, 'By the might of Pharaoh, indeed it is we who are predominant.'"

Surah ash-Shu’ara, 26:43-44

The magicians threw their sticks, ropes and staffs, and they invoked the name of Fir’ain. They committed shirk. When we do something as believers, we say bismillah, they invoked his name not only because of their disbelief, but also to butter up Fir’ain and get as much credit as they can.

"Then Moses threw his staff, and at once it devoured what they falsified."

Surah ash-Shu’ara, 26:45

Musa ﷺ threw down the staff that he had, and not only did it defeat what the magicians threw, but it devoured it all.

"So the magicians fell down in prostration [to Allah]. They said, 'We have believed in the Lord of the worlds, The Lord of Moses and Aaron.'" Surah ash-Shu’ara, 26:46-48

The magicians were the very people that did those magic tricks. Nobody knows magic better than a magician himself. So when they saw what Musa ﷺ brought forward, they automatically knew it wasn’t magic. They fell in prostration.

Their behavior is a big lesson for us. When truth is presented to you, accept it and don’t resist. The magicians didn’t respond with arrogance, rather they submitted when they saw the truth clearly. And that is what Islam means; to submit to Allah ﷻ. Naturally, Fir’ain wasn’t happy about that.
"[Pharaoh] said, ‘You believed Moses before I gave you permission. Indeed, he is your leader who has taught you magic, but you are going to know. I will surely cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides, and I will surely crucify you all.’” Surah ash-Shu’ara, 26:49

Look at the arrogance of Fir’aun. He said, “You believed in him before I gave you permission.” As if he would’ve given permission even if they asked him. Then he threatened them, saying he’d cut off their hands and feet and crucify them into the trees, it was their cruel form of punishment.

“They said, ‘No harm. Indeed, to our Lord we will return. Indeed, we aspire that our Lord will forgive us our sins because we were the first of the believers.’” Surah ash-Shu’ara, 50-51

They maintained their tawakkul even after being threatened by Fir’aun. They said, “We will return to Allah قٰٓ. And we’re seeking forgiveness from Allah because we hastened and took the initiative to be believers.”

Fir’aun chased them, captured whomever he could from amongst them, tortured and killed them. Ibn Qayyim said these were sorcerers and sinners in the morning and they were shuhada and pious by that evening.
THE SENSELESSNESS OF PHARAOH

"And the eminent among the people of Pharaoh said, ‘Will you leave Moses and his people to cause corruption in the land and abandon you and your gods?’ [Pharaoh] said, ‘We will kill their sons and keep their women alive; and indeed, we are subjugators over them.’"

Surah Al-A‘raf, 7:127

"And Pharaoh called out among his people; he said, ‘O my people, does not the kingdom of Egypt belong to me, and these rivers flowing beneath me; then do you not see? Or am I [not] better than this one who is insignificant and hardly makes himself clear? Then why have there not been placed upon him bracelets of gold or come with him the angels in conjunction?’ So he bluff his people, and they obeyed him. Indeed, they were [themselves] a people defiantly disobedient [of Allah].” Surah az-Zukhruf, 43:51-54

This is language that Fir‘aun knows all too well. He calls out to his people in his campaign to inflate his own ego and maintain his status. He bluff his people, so they followed him. He fooled them all with images and propaganda.
**Distracted Masses**

How was Fir’aun able to gather so many sorcerers throughout the land? Because this was rampant in that society. This was also something that Fir’aun supported. Every oppressor needs to make sure that the masses are distracted. If the people have distractions, they won’t have the intelligence, time or the effort to recognize the oppression and the truth. Is this something that we have in our day and age today? How many screens do we have in our lives? How many images does an average person see in a day? This can subconsciously affect you.

Our eyes and ears are so distracted, and the eyes and ears are the vessels by which information comes to our heart. If our eyes and ears aren’t protected and everything is just going in, the heart will just soak it up like a sponge. This is how our heart can become polluted, clouded and hardened. Be careful of what we expose our eyes and ears to, because all of that goes straight to your heart and to your mind, especially at a young age.

Fir’aun could easily bluff his people because they were caught up in distractions. Likewise, the music and film industries of today are just getting dumber and dumber every year. The kinds of things put on there are an insult to human intelligence, but that’s exactly the point. The industries are there to make you dumb and keep you dumb. If you stay dumb, you’ll stay quiet and passive. That is what those in power want, so they can make more money off of us. That’s a common denominator in oppressive personalities and oppressive agendas in systems.

وَقَالَ فِرَعُونُ

يَتَأْيِهَا أَلْمَا مَا عَلِمْتُ لَحُكْمٍ مِّنْ إِلَهِي غَيْرِي فَأَوْقِدْ

لِي بَنِهِمْ عَلَى الْقَلْبِينَ فَأَجَعلِي صُرْحًا لَعْصِيَّأَ لَعَلَّهُ أَطْلَعَ إِلَى

إِلَهِ مُوسَى وَإِلَى لَآَوْنَهُ أَلْكَنْدِينَ ۚ

“And Pharaoh said, ‘O eminent ones, I have not known you to have a god other than me. Then ignite for me, O Haman, [a fire] upon the clay and make for me a tower that I may look at the God of Moses. And indeed, I do think he is among the liars.’” **Surah Al-Qasas, 28:38**
Fir’aun acted as if he was concerned for his people and said, “I don’t know of any god for you other than me.” He then comes up with a plot to have Haman build a tower. There’s an exhibit on the ancient Egyptian civilization somewhere. They have a statue of an individual and the inscription says, “Haman. The minister in charge of construction and the stone quarries.” This is interesting because Fir’aun calls him “Haman,” and Allah knows best.

"And Pharaoh said, ‘Let me kill Moses and let him call upon his Lord. Indeed, I fear that he will change your religion or that he will cause corruption in the land.’” Surah Ghafir, 40:26

Fir’aun got to the point where he wanted to find and kill Musa. This was a big civilization on a big land, and Musa was in the phase where he was trying to be elusive and he had to do his da’wah in secret and try to protect himself as much as possible. Fir’aun feigned concern again and told his people, “I’m worried he’s going to corrupt your religion for you and cause disruption in your land.”

It is at this time that a hidden believer emerged. Some of the scholars have said this hidden believer was the same person who alerted Musa the first time to leave Egypt. Allah knows best, He did not tell us exactly who he was.

**THE HIDDEN BELIEVERS**

"And a believing man from the family of Pharaoh who concealed his faith said, "Do you kill a man [merely] because he says, ‘My Lord is Allah ’ while he has brought you clear proofs from your Lord? And if he should be lying, then upon him is [the consequence of] his lie; but if he should be truthful, there will strike you some of what he promises you. Indeed, Allah does not guide one who is a transgressor and a liar.” Surah Ghafir, 40:28
We know this believing man was from the ancient Egyptians and that he was from the family of Fir'aun because Allah \( \text{ﷻ} \) explicitly tells us. He was hiding his \textit{Iman}, and the scholars have said that if a person is in a position where their life is in danger, then they can conceal their \textit{Iman}. The hidden believer told Fir'aun, “You want to kill this man just because he says Allah is his Lord? But he has come forward with proofs.” Musa \( \text{ﷺ} \) made a claim and backed it up with proofs.

The hidden believer began by appealing to their logic and said, “Let's assume he's a liar. If he is lying, he's going to be hurt by his own lies. But if he's telling the truth (and he's talking about the Day of Judgement and accountability) and we don't follow him, then there is a lot at stake here.”

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لَكُمْ الْمَلَكُ الْيَومَ الْيَوْمَ الْيَوْمِ الْيَوْمِ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ فَمِنْ يُصُرْنَا مِنْ بَاسِرِ الْمَلَكَةِ إِنْ جَاءَناَ قَدْ فَرَعْنَ مَا أُرِيَكُمُ إِلَّاَ مَا أَرَى وَمَاَ أَهْدِيكُمُ إِلَّاَ سَبِيلَ الرَّشَاَدِ 29
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“'O my people, sovereignty is yours today, [your being] dominant in the land. But who would protect us from the punishment of Allah if it came to us?’ Pharaoh said, ‘I do not show you except what I see, and I do not guide you except to the way of right conduct.’”

\textit{Surah Ghafir, 40:29}

Look at how the hidden believer addressed his people, “O my people.” He appealed to them, he came from a place of love, concern and genuine emotion. One of Sh. Mohammed’s teachers said, “If you truly want to be effective in \textit{da'wah}, you have to care for your audience.” \textit{Da'wah} is not about debating and beating them. Each of these exchanges have a time, place and people that are qualified for it. But what is \textit{da'wah}? It is to have genuine concern, and that is what this man had. If a person is only concerned with your \textit{dunya}, then that is not a person who truly cares for you. But if they have concern about your \textit{akhira}, then that is what matters.

This man tried to make his people think critically and use the intelligence Allah \( \text{ﷻ} \) gave them. He said, “O my people, today you have power, you have control and wealth. But what about when the punishment from Allah comes? Who will defend you from that?” Whereas Fir’aun wanted to be the one who thinks for them. Oppressors don't want you to think. Because if you think, then you will come to the right conclusion. Fir’aun said, “I do not show you except for what I see is best for you, and I am guiding you to what is right.”
And he who believed said, 'O my people, indeed I fear for you [a fate] like the day of the companies - Like the custom of the people of Noah and of ‘Aad and Thamud and those after them. And Allah wants no injustice for [His] servants.' **Surah Ghafir, 40:30-31**

What does the hidden believer mean by “the day of the companies?” He reminds them of the stories of the people of ‘Aad and Thamud. These were stories that were spoken about and passed throughout the land. He reminded them of people that came before them who were powerful and yet got wiped out.

And O my people, indeed I fear for you the Day of Calling - The Day you will turn your backs fleeing; there is not for you from Allah any protector. And whoever Allah leaves astray - there is not for him any guide.” **Surah Ghafir, 40:32-33**

The believing man said, “O my people, I’m concerned about you on the Day of Calling. On that day, no one will protect you except Allah.” He then came out to them in the open and declared himself as a believer.

**Learn from Previous Errors**

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَ ۘ حَكْمُ يُوسُفُ مِنْ قَبْلِ بَالِبَيْنِ ۛ فَأَزَلَّنَّهُ فِي ە شَكَّ يَمِّنًا جَآءَ حَكْمُ يُوسُفُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ ۛ ۚ حَقَّ ۚ إِذَا هَذَى ۝ قَلَمْنَ لَنْ يُبَصِّرَ اللَّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ ۛ رَسُوْلًا ۚ ۚ ۙ حَكْمُ يُوسُفُ لِيُصِلِّ اللَّهُ مِنْ هَٰذُ ۝ مُسْرِفُ مُرَكَّبٌ ۚ ۚ ۙ
“And Joseph had already come to you before with clear proofs, but you remained in doubt of that which he brought to you, until when he died, you said, 'Never will Allah send a messenger after him.' Thus does Allah leave astray he who is a transgressor and skeptic.”

Surah Ghafir, 40:34

He then reminded them of Yusuf ( عليه السلام) and what he used to call to (Tawheed). He tried to wake his people up to the fact that Musa ( عليه السلام) came with the same message as Yusuf.

**Sincere Advice**

وَقَالَ اِلَّهُ لَكُمُ الْأَذىٰ

أَمَّنْ يَقْوُمُ أَنْتُمْ عَلَى مَسَاهِمٍ لِلرَّسَالَاتِ

يَقْوُمَ إِنَّمَا هذَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا مَتَاعٌ وَلَنَّ الْآخِرَةَ هُنَّ

دَارُ ٱلْفَكْرِ

“And he who believed said, 'O my people, follow me, I will guide you to the way of right conduct. O my people, this worldly life is only [temporary] enjoyment, and indeed, the Hereafter - that is the home of [permanent] settlement.”” Surah Ghafir, 40:38:39

He then told them about *dunya* versus *akhira*, weighing things out.

مَنْ عَمِلَ سَيِّئَةً فَلَا يَجْرِي إِلَّا وَمَثَلاً

وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مَنْ دَخَلْنَاهُ ذَٰلِكَ أَوْ آتَنَّاهُ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ

فَأُولَئِكَ يَدْخِلُونَ ٱلنَّجَاتُ يُرَفَّعُونَ فِيهَا ثَلَاثُ حُسَابٍ

“Whoever does an evil deed will not be recompensed except by the like thereof; but whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - those will enter Paradise, being given provision therein without account.” Surah Ghafir, 40:40

He appealed to their logic, he reminded them to learn from the errors of those who came before them, he told them not to be distracted by the temporary enjoyment of this *dunya*, and then he tells them of the mercy of Allah (عَزَّزَ). All of these are profound lessons on how to give *da’wah* and what our message should be when inviting people to Tawheed.
Allah is so merciful. You do something wrong, you get one bad deed. You do something good with sincerity whether you’re a man or a woman and you have belief, you’ll get Jannah. The reward is multiplied, blessing without reckoning.

“And O my people, how is it that I invite you to salvation while you invite me to the Fire? You invite me to disbelieve in Allah and associate with Him that of which I have no knowledge, and I invite you to the Exalted in Might, the Perpetual Forgiver.” Surah Ghafir, 40:41-42

Finally, he appealed to them from the deepest part of his heart. And he said there’s no proof for their way of life, for the shirk they were committing. Whereas what he brought to them has proof, and Musa came to them with proof.

“Assuredly, that to which you invite me has no [response to a] supplication in this world or in the Hereafter; and indeed, our return is to Allah, and indeed, the transgressors will be companions of the Fire. And you will remember what I [now] say to you, and I entrust my affair to Allah. Indeed, Allah is Seeing of [His] servants. ‘So Allah protected him from the evils they plotted, and the people of Pharaoh were enveloped by the worst of punishment’” Surah Ghafir, 40:43-45
"The Fire, they are exposed to it morning and evening. And the Day the Hour appears [it will be said], 'Make the people of Pharaoh enter the severest punishment.'” Surah Ghafir, 40:46

Allah ﷻ says they are exposed to the Hellfire by morning and by night. Some of the ‘ulema understood this verse and said this is proof for the punishment in the grave. Even before the Day of Judgment, they’re being exposed to punishment and then Allah says, “enter ala Fir’aun,” the people of Fir’aun. There wasn’t just one Fir’aun, we’re not talking about just an individual here. We’re talking about that individual who was a part of that system, that oppression and that shirk. They will share in the punishment.

This was a hidden believer, but he came forth with the da’wah even though he was not from Bani Isra’il. The scholars have said just like not all of Bani Isra’il believed in Musa ﷺ, some of the Egyptians did believe in Musa and followed him.

The Wife of Pharaoh

“We present an example of those who believed: the wife of Pharaoh, when she said, ‘My Lord, build for me near You a house in Paradise and save me from Pharaoh and his deeds and save me from the wrongdoing people.’” Surah at-Tahrîm, 66:11

Another beautiful believer is Asiya, the wife of Fir’aun. There are some theories that she was the descendent of the kings in Egypt before the Pharaohs re-emerged, and they came from the East of Egypt (from the Asian continent). Allah knows best.

In the concluding part of Surah Tahrim, Allah ﷻ gives two opposite examples. He gives examples of people who believed and of people who disbelieved. The people who disbelieved were the wife of Nuh ﷺ and the wife of Lut ﷺ. Even though their husbands were Anbiya, they rejected their da’wah and disbelieved. On the flip side, Fir’aun was one of
the worst people to ever live, but his wife was a believer. *Hidayah* is in the hands of Allah. Human beings have the ability to make choices, but the hearts are in the hands of Allah.

Asiya was a believer. Her *du'a* in the above verse gives us a good idea of her personality, her gentleness, her loving and caring nature. She said, “Build for me next to You a house in *Jannah.*” There is something so beautiful and subtle about her *du'a:* she preferred the neighbor before the house.

The Prophet encouraged us so much to be good to our neighbors because it has a big impact on the quality of life. So take that initiative, be the best neighbor to those living around you. Asiya recognized that and she loved Allah .

You can see from this *du'a* the emotions that she had, the longing for love, but also the recognition of wrongdoing and Fir‘aun.

The Prophet said Asiya was one of four women who achieved perfection and completion in their *Iman,* manners and *akhlaq.* She should be our role-model, and a lesson for those of us who are parents, and for men and women who don’t have children of their own. They can still play a big role in society and in someone’s life by being a caretaker for another child. Asiya didn’t have children of her own, but she protected Musa . She was a woman of beauty, wealth, authority, and she put all of that on the line to protect this baby. And Allah rewarded her generously.

**THE GREAT TRIAL**

*On the Verge of Losing Hope*

"Said Moses to his people, ‘Seek help through Allah and be patient. Indeed, the earth belongs to Allah. He causes to inherit it whom He wills of His servants. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous.’” *Surah al-A’raf, 7:128*

In this time when Bani Isra’il are in Egypt pre-Exodus, Musa is giving *da'wah* and the situation is becoming very difficult. Musa calls to his people and advises them to rely on Allah and to be patient. The sorcerers were killed and tortured. It was already bad for the people of Bani Isra’il and now it got worse. Fir‘aun was hunting the believers down and there’s a lot of harm coming their way.
Bani Isra’il were being attacked, subjugated, oppressed and killed. There was no sign of hope anywhere on the horizon for them. It’s in the midst of all this that Musa ﷺ gave them profound advice and reminded them that this land belongs to Allah ﷻ and He will inherit it to whom He wills. Musa is already talking about big ideas; he was preparing them for something that they couldn’t even visualize yet. When the going gets rough and there doesn’t seem to be any opening in sight, have foresight and think ahead. It may not happen in our lifetime, but plant the seeds and prepare for the lifetime of your children and grandchildren.

“They said, ‘We have been harmed before you came to us and after you have come to us.’ He said, ‘Perhaps your Lord will destroy your enemy and grant you succession in the land and see how you will do.’” Surah al-A’raf, 7:129

Musa ﷺ made them reflect on what they would do if their enemy was destroyed and they were given succession. In their condition, with the oppression of Fir’aun and their debilitating state, would they have been able to imagine being in control of their own land? Musa has foresight, and that is a quality of a leader.

“But no one believed Moses, except [some] youths among his people, for fear of Pharaoh and his establishment that they would persecute them. And indeed, Pharaoh was haughty within the land, and indeed, he was of the transgressors” Surah Yunus, 10:83

Very few people believed in the beginning. The population of Bani Isra’il was big, but not all of them believed right away out of fear of Fir’aun.
“And Moses said, ‘O my people, if you have believed in Allah, then rely upon Him, if you should be Muslims.’” Surah Yunus, 10:84

Musa was struggling, he went from household to household in secrecy trying his best, calling them to *tawakkul*. He’s asked them to have *tawakkul* and patience. But how could they have patience? What could be the source of their *tawakkul* and patience?

**Pray in your Homes**

“And We inspired to Moses and his brother, ‘Settle your people in Egypt in houses and make your houses [facing the] qiblah and establish prayer and give good tidings to the believers.’” Surah Yunus, 10:87

Allah inspired Musa and Harun to settle their people in their homes and they were asked to take their homes as a place to establish *salah* and face the *qiblah*. Today, we’re able to go out of our homes and make *salah* in congregation, but Bani Isra’il weren’t able to do so. However, that didn’t mean they could abandon this connection they had with Allah. Even with all the torture, suffering and punishment, they were reminded to establish *salah* in the confines of their homes. This is where they could get *tawakkul* and *sabr* from. Allah drew a parallel between *salah* and *sabr*, because *salah* is the source of *sabr*.

**Famine**

“And We certainly seized the people of Pharaoh with years of famine and a deficiency in fruits that perhaps they would be reminded.” Surah al-A’raf, 7:130
Fir’aun and the oppressors were also going through a tumultuous time. Allah ﷻ sent a lot of signs. In another place in the Qur’an, Allah said there would be nine signs.

The first sign was as-sineen, years of famine and drought. And they weren’t able to get what they used to grow and harvest, so there was a great deficiency in resources. This was shaking their economy and society at that time.

“And when good came to them, they said, ‘This is ours [by right].’ And if a bad [condition] struck them, they saw an evil omen in Moses and those with him. Unquestionably, their fortune is with Allah, but most of them do not know.” Surah al-A’raf, 7:131

They persisted in their evil and arrogance. Whenever any good would come, they would say, “We deserve this” with a sense of entitlement. And whenever any difficulty would come, they would blame Musa ﷺ and the believers, saying that they’re a bad omen.

“And they said, ‘No matter what sign you bring us with which to bewitch us, we will not be believers in you.’” Surah al-A’raf, 7:132

They persisted in their arrogance and disbelief, so Allah ﷻ sent more signs.

“So We sent upon them the flood and locusts and lice and frogs and blood as distinct signs, but they were arrogant and were a criminal people.” Surah al-A’raf, 7:133
All of these are signs from Allah. And tests that would hit them at the root of their economy and society. Just as Bani Isra’il is going through difficulty, Fir’aun himself is struggling to keep control of his nation.

And the signs didn’t come all at once. There would come a sign and then there would be a period of chance to make tawbah.

**What were the nine signs?**
- Years of famine
- Great deficiency in crops
- The flood
- The locusts
- The lice
- The frogs
- The blood
- Musa’s staff
- Musa’s hand coming out shining bright

“And when the punishment descended upon them, they said, ‘O Moses, invoke for us your Lord by what He has promised you. If you [can] remove the punishment from us, we will surely believe you, and we will send with you the Children of Israel.’” *Surah al-A’raf, 7:134*

Then they got the punishment, *ar-rijz*. The scholars differed on what *ar-rijz* is. Some said all the above listed signs are *ar-rijz*. Others have said it is another sign in and of itself and it was a plague/illness and it only affected Fir’aun and his people. Fir’aun said, “O Musa, call upon your Lord.” He said they would believe Musa if he got rid of the punishment and that they would let Bani Isra’il go.
“But when We removed the punishment from them until a term which they were to reach, then at once they broke their word. So We took retribution from them, and We drowned them in the sea because they denied Our signs and were heedless of them.”

Surah al-A’raf, 7:135-136

Musa  made du’a and Allah  lifted the punishment from Fir’aun and the Egyptians, but they broke their word and neither did they believe, nor let Bani Isra’il go. Allah says, “So We took retribution because they denied Our signs and they were heedless.”

They had arrogance, a sense of entitlement, heedlessness, major distractions, and all these are still present today. These are the things we need to work on. May Allah protect us.

The anbiya, their people would always make bold claims such as, “Give us so and so and we will believe in you.” Like the people of Saleh, Thamud, ‘Aad, all these nations always challenged the anbiya.

Even the Prophet  was challenged, and he also came with miracles (like the splitting of the moon) that people could see. The Prophet made du’a and Allah  told him that if Allah were to grant this request, then that is the final straw. If they believe in it, good. If they do not, then they would be destroyed. That is the Sunnah of Allah.

These nations would make bold requests of their Prophets and that would be the defining line for them. For example, ‘Isa  and al-Ma‘idah; his people wanted a full table spread from the sky to come down. Likewise, this was a defining line for the people of Fir’aun. They didn’t keep their side of the bargain, so after that comes destruction.

It was at this point that Allah  revealed to Musa to prepare Bani Isra’il for their journey.

EXODUS

“And We inspired to Moses, ‘Travel by night with My servants; indeed, you will be pursued.’ Then Pharaoh sent among the cities gatherers” Surah ash-Shu’ara, 26:52-53

Bani Isra’il was imprisoned and they were the labor force of Fir’aun’s nation; it would be a major loss for Fir’aun to let go of this huge population. Musa  was told to take them by night and go out and that they would be followed.
Fir‘aun did send messengers, spies and armies of soldiers throughout the land to gather Bani Isra’il again.

“[And said], "Indeed, those are but a small band,“” Surah ash-Shu’ara, 26:54

Part of Fir‘aun’s propaganda to rile up the army was to say Bani Isra’il were just a small group. However, they weren’t a small group as they grew in number over time. The period when Musa was giving da’wah and gathering Bani Isra’il and the tests coming on Fir‘aun and his people is a long time. It was a period of a few years. Therefore, the group around Musa grew. Musa was sent for Bani Isra’il, so even if some of them didn’t believe in him, they still had that ethnic connection with him.

Even post-Exodus, we see Musa struggling with a lot of the people in the community because not all of them had Iman and conviction.

“So indeed, they are enraging us, And indeed, we are a cautious society...’ So We removed them from gardens and springs And treasures and honorable station - Thus. And We caused to inherit it the Children of Israel.” Surah ash-Shu’ara, 26:55-59

When Bani Isra’il left Egypt, they took much of the gold and wealth with them. And when Fir‘aun and his army were destroyed, the people of Bani Isra’il who stayed behind assumed control over some parts of the land in that civilization.

“So they pursued them at sunrise.” Surah ash-Shu’ara, 26:60

Remember, Bani Isra’il left by night, so Fir‘aun and his army followed them at sunrise the next day. Allah said mushriqeen in this verse, referring to the direction East. Meaning, we know from this that they headed East.
“And when the two companies saw one another, the companions of Moses said, ‘Indeed, we are to be overtaken!’ [Moses] said, ‘No! Indeed, with me is my Lord; He will guide me.‘”

*Surah ash-Shu’ara, 26:61-62*

Musa وَبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ and Bani Isra’il were making *hijrah* and when they reached a large body of water, Bani Isra’il said that they’d be caught. Musa responded, “No! For sure with me is my Lord and He will guide me.” Musa spoke in singular form.

“He said to his companion, ‘Do not grieve; Allah is with us.’” *Surah at-Tawbah, 9:40*

When the Prophet ﷺ and Abu Bakr ﷺ were making *hijrah* and hiding in the cave, the Prophet told Abu Bakr, “Allah is with us.” The Prophet ﷺ spoke in plural form.

Both Musa وَبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ and the Prophet ﷺ were making *hijrah*, they both were with their companions, and their companions felt anxiety that they’d be caught. However, one said, “My Lord is with me” and the other said, “Allah is with us.” Why? This refers to the condition of the followers. The Prophet ﷺ was talking with Abu Bakr, and he had full *Iman* and trust in Allah and the Prophet. Whereas Musa وَبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ was talking with Bani Isra’il, and they didn’t have full *Iman* and trust in Allah and Musa.

“Then We inspired to Moses, “Strike with your staff the sea,” and it parted, and each portion was like a great towering mountain.” *Surah ash-Shu’ara, 26:63*

Allah told Musa to take his staff and strike the sea with it. The sea parted and each side became stiff and like a towering mountain. Another narration mentions there were 12 avenues for each of the tribes of Bani Isra’il. Each one knew their path to follow to get across.
Fir'aun was arrogant and he was blinded by the pursuit of Musa and Bani Isra'il. An oppressor will become so consumed by their oppression that eventually their own stupidity is what will destroy them. They get blind in the pursuit of power. That is ultimately what happened to Fir’aun.

**ON THE OTHER SIDE**

**Panic Strikes Again**

As soon as Bani Isra’il got across to the other side, Musa out of instinct wanted to strike the sea with his staff again and close it up. However, Allah told Musa to leave it alone. Allah wanted Musa to wait until the entire army came inside between those towering walls of water. Allah decreed the water to come crashing down on the army, destroying them. Fir’aun and his army came so close to the other side, but they were unable to cross because that was their ending.

**The Last Breath**
“And We took the Children of Israel across the sea, and Pharaoh and his soldiers pursued them in tyranny and enmity until, when drowning overtook him, he said, ‘I believe that there is no deity except that in whom the Children of Israel believe, and I am of the Muslims.’”

Surah Yunus, 10:90

As Fir’aun was drowning, he recognized that his expiration date had come upon him and he attempted to make tawbah and believe. These were his dying moments. Is tawbah accepted in those moments? The Prophet ﷺ said as long as a person is alive and the sun has not risen from the West, the doors of tawbah are open. No matter what the action is, so long as you’re breathing and you haven’t seen the sun rise from the West, the doors of tawbah are still open. Do not let anyone tell you otherwise. Fir’aun was in the throes of death, this is not the time of tawbah.

“Allah said, “Now?” after all those years of being disobedient and corrupt he wanted to believe. It comes in some narrations that the body of Fir’aun is the only one to be washed to shore.

Out of all the major civilizations, there isn’t another civilization that has so much historical research, artifacts and exhibits today. Egyptologists even uncovered an entire language! Hieroglyphics died, but it was revived and studied. The Egyptians were no small civilization. Where are they now? That is the result. So, if we want to go see the pyramids, it should be an intense lesson for us.

The Prophet ﷺ was with the companions and they passed through the ruins of the people of Thamud. The Prophet said, “Pass through it quickly and cry. If you’re not crying, make yourself cry. This is a place where a nation was destroyed.”

The Nile river itself is thin, but the area around it is all farmland. In fact, the area around the Nile is the most fertile land on Earth; sugarcane, cotton, mangoes etc. grow there. The gardens and the wealth the Egyptians had could not avail them from the water that came crashing down.
"Thus. And We caused to inherit it another people. And the heaven and earth wept not for them, nor were they reprieved. And We certainly saved the Children of Israel from the humiliating torment - From Pharaoh. Indeed, he was a haughty one among the transgressors." Surah ad-Dukhan, 44:28-31

The Egyptians came and went and someone else took over their land and wealth. Bani Isra'il were saved from Fir'aun and the Exodus was now complete.

CHAPTER 3
Post Exodus

OUT IN THE WILDERNESS
After the Exodus, Bani Isra'il was out in the wild and free. They had escaped from Fir'aun and his army, and there was no more oppression. However, there was also no civilization and they were out in the middle of nowhere. The people needed water so they approached Musa and asked him for help.

Allah  told Musa  to strike a boulder, and out of the rock, twelve flowing streams would come forth, one for each of the twelve tribes so they would not quarrel amongst themselves.
“And We divided them into twelve descendant tribes [as distinct] nations. And We inspired to Moses when his people implored him for water, ‘Strike with your staff the stone,’ and there gushed forth from it twelve springs. Every people knew its watering place.”

Surah al-Araf, 7:160

This was another miracle given to Musa ﷺ and Bani Isra’il. Imagine being with Musa at that time, seeing all of these different miracles with your own eyes: the staff becoming a snake, a body of water opening up to make a path through it, water gushing out of a rock. Every prophet and messenger of Allah ﷺ was given miracles, and the greatest miracle of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was the Qur’an.

MIRACLES OF THE QUR’AN

Yet, there is a very distinct and important difference between all of the other miracles given to any of the prophets, and the miracle of the Qur’an. All miracles, except for the Qur’an, were given to the people for a specific time and place, and were all visual miracles. A visual miracle is powerful to anyone who has the opportunity to experience firsthand, but hearing about it secondhand is less impactful.

The Qur’an is an auditory miracle and was sent to all of humanity until the end of time. This gives everyone who hears the Qur’an a chance to be affected and moved by this miracle. The Qur’an is not a miracle to be seen; even its main source of preservation and transmission is done orally. The Qur’an was heard and memorized. If someone wanted to remove all of the physical copies of the Qur’an in the world, within less than 24 hours, it can easily be rewritten. The main preservation of the Qur’an is in the heart of believers and multitudes of people across the world have memorized the Qur’an. Although it is written down, the writing is secondary. The beauty of the Qur’an is most potent when heard. To this day, when you want to learn the Qur’an, you sit with a teacher and listen to how it is recited.

Memorizing the Qur’an is very valuable. One of the biggest benefits is to walk and sleep with the Qur’an in your heart and mind, but the Qur’an also becomes your closes and most valuable companion. It will protect you in the grave and as you are crossing the sirat; the Qur’an will always be with you as your guiding light. In addition, when you memorize the Qur’an, you become a part of the process of the preservation of the words of Allah ﷺ. You should feel honored that Allah ﷺ has chosen you and you are being used by Allah to preserve the Qur’an. It is never too late to start memorizing the Qur’an and if you put in the effort, Allah will help you. When Allah ﷺ asks you what you did with your life, you can tell Him that you tried to memorize the Qur’an.
And We shaded them with clouds and sent down upon them manna and quails, [saying], ‘Eat from the good things with which We have provided you.’ And they wronged Us not, but they were [only] wrongdoing themselves. Surah Al-Araf, 7:160

After the water gushed out of the rock, Allah sent clouds to shade them, and manna, and salwa, food that was specifically given to Bani Isra’il from the sky. The scholars have differed on what exactly manna is: some say it is a time of bread, and some say it was something sweet, similar to honey that they found like dew on the leaves. Either way, it provided energy, such as carbohydrates, to Bani Isra’il. Salwa was a bird, which provided them meat and protein. So between these two foods, the people of Bani Isra’il had a full complete meal. It was something unique and special sent down just for them from the sky.

UNGRATEFULNESS OF BANI ISRA’IL

When Allah has blessed with you such amazing blessings, you must respond with humbleness and gratitude. Yet, despite the provisions that Allah had sent down for them, Bani Isra’il were still ungrateful. They did not want to eat the same thing every day. So Bani Isra’il went to Musa and told him, “You call upon YOUR Lord.” Here, their tone of voice is problematic. Was Allah also not their Lord? Were they not believers as well?
And when you said, “O Moses, we can never endure one kind of food. So call upon your Lord to bring forth for us from the earth its green herbs and its cucumbers and its garlic and its lentils and its onions.” [Moses] said, “Would you exchange what is better for what is less? Go into [any] settlement and indeed, you will have what you have asked.” And they were covered with humiliation and poverty and returned with anger from Allah [upon them]. That was because they repeatedly disbelieved in the signs of Allah and killed the prophets without right. That was because they disobeyed and were habitually transgressing.”

Surah al-Baqarah, 2:61

Allah had given them food from the sky, which no other nation was privy to, yet they still missed all the foods that they were accustomed to back in Egypt. They were ready to trade things sent down to them from Jannah for the things of this world; something of extreme value for something of lesser value. Does that make any sense? Would you ever trade your $20 bill for a $10 bill? We should be grateful for the blessings of Allah.

One of the shuyukh in Madinah had a beautiful daughter who drowned when she was 9 years old. One day, her father saw her in a dream happily wearing a necklace of shiny jewels and pearls. He didn’t understand what the dream was referring to, so he went to go ask a scholar who was gifted with the knowledge of dreams. The scholar told him to investigate with his family if his daughter had any problems with food. The Shaykh went back home to his wife and explained the situation. His wife told him that not too long before their daughter drowned, they were at a walima. The food was being served and everyone was sitting on the carpet, eating. This little girl was only eating the grains of rice that fell onto the carpet and some others were making fun of her for it. The Shaykh went
back to the scholar and he told him that Allah ﷻ replaced the grains of rice that his
daughter was eating with jewels on her necklace, since even as a young age, she realized
the blessings of Allah ﷻ and didn’t want to be wasteful.

Another example is the story of a man from Yemen who migrated to Makkah as a teenager
in the 1990s. They would fight to lift up the wealthiest hujjaj on their shoulders, who at the
time were from India. The Saudis were poor and these hujjaj would pay these young boys
with gold. Yet, whenever they had food, they would throw it away. In this man’s lifetime, he
has seen the wealthiest of the hujjaj become some of the poorest because of their
ungratefulness. Now in Saudi, unfortunately, the same thing is being done. Trucks of food
are being thrown away, when only a few miles away, people are dying from hunger.

Allah ﷻ has promised us that if we are grateful, He will increase us. But if we are not
grateful, it will only be a matter of time before we lose it.

"And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, ‘If you are grateful, I will surely increase you
[in favor]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe.’” Surah al-Ibrahim, 14:7

STUBBORNNESS OF BANI ISRA’IL

"And [recall] when We said, ‘Enter this city and eat from it wherever you will in [ease and]
abundance, and enter the gate bowing humbly and say, ‘Relieve us of our burdens.’ We will
[then] forgive your sins for you, and We will increase the doers of good [in goodness and
reward].’” Surah al-Baqarah, 2:58

After the Exodus, Bani Isra’il were told to enter a city where all of their provisions would be
taken care of and a place that would become their new home. Allah ﷻ only had one
condition, which was to make dhikr of hitta, or seek constant forgiveness as they entered.
But, they were spiteful and stubborn, so they refused. They would change the words and
tried to be smart with Allah; these transgressors wronged themselves. Bani Isra’il blatant
ly disobeyed with Allah ﷻ yet again, when He kept giving them multiple opportunities and
saved them from oppression.
But those who wronged changed [those words] to a statement other than that which had been said to them, so We sent down upon those who wronged a punishment from the sky because they were defiantly disobeying. 

Surah al-Baqarah, 2:59

Allah punished Bani Isra’il for their ungratefulness and stubbornness, and the countless they tried to take advantage of Him.

THE COMMAND TO SLAUGHTER A COW

Surah Al-Baqarah gets its name from this incident. Bani Isra’il is now living together as a community and Musa is their leader. As with any community, things happen and quarrels, disagreements, and fights take place as part of the human experience. A murder had taken place within Bani Isra’il and nobody knew who committed the crime. A family member of the deceased man was going around the community, distraught that no one could figure out whom the perpetrator was.

So Allah revealed to Musa a multi-step process to figure out who committed the murder. The first step was to slaughter a cow.

And [recall] when Moses said to his people, ‘Indeed, Allah commands you to slaughter a cow.’ They said, ‘Do you take us in ridicule?’ He said, ‘I seek refuge in Allah from being among the ignorant.’” 

Surah al-Baqarah, 2:67

When talking about Allah’s commandments, we cannot joke around. It is a very serious offense to joke about Allah and His messengers. Musa recognized this was serious as evident by his response: “I seek refuge in Allah from being among the ignorant.” This shows us that only ignorant fools are ones that make jokes about Allah.

This is something we have to be careful about in our lives, since making jokes about God and His messengers is very common in our society. The lines of what is and is not acceptable in comedy have been blurred and everything is now fair game. We should not accept the mockery of Allah or any of His messengers. Although we might not be
making such statements, we are consumers of this kind of entertainment, and often expose ourselves and our children to it. This leads us to becoming desensitized to these kinds of inappropriate jokes and that is dangerous for our heart. It can lead us to questioning our faith and not taking Allah seriously anymore, so we need to be extremely careful. We should not let our ears to be exposed to that kind of speech or humor.

"They said, ‘Call upon your Lord to make clear to us what it is.’ [Moses] said, ‘[Allah] says, ‘It is a cow which is neither old nor virgin, but median between that,’ so do what you are commanded.’” Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:68

The only command that Allah gave Bani Isra'il was to slaughter a cow. It is very straightforward and there were no restrictions. Hence, they had a lot of options of cows and it was meant to be easy for them. However, when there is arrogance, spite, and a refusal to do something in the first place, one will try to delay it and make excuses. Hence, Bani Isra'il kept asking Musa to ask Allah to specify the type of cow. The more questions they asked, the options of cows become narrower, and it becomes more difficult.

"They said, ‘Call upon your Lord to show us what is her color.’ He said, ‘He says, ‘It is a yellow cow, bright in color-pleasing to the observers.’’” Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:69

It is important to understand that cows do not come in unlimited colors. But since Bani Isra’il purposely wanted to make things more complicated for themselves, Allah told them that it was a yellow cow, which was bright in color, and pleasing to the eye. These kinds of cows do exist, but they are very rare. The options have become even slimmer.

"They said, ‘Call upon your Lord to make clear to us what it is. Indeed, [all] cows look alike to us. And indeed we, if Allah wills, will be guided.’” Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:70
Even with the questions they have already asked, and the answers they have already received, they are somehow still confused and ask again for more clarification. It is very clear that they are simply trying to outsmart Allah ﷺ and prolong the process.

“He said, ‘He says, ‘It is a cow neither trained to plow the earth nor to irrigate the field, one free from fault with no spot upon her.’” They said, ‘Now you have come with the truth.’ So they slaughtered her, but they could hardly do it.” Surah al-Baqarah, 2:71

After Allah ﷺ gives them a complete description of a very specific type of cow, they proclaim that Musa ﷺ has finally told them the truth. Did they think that Musa was lying to them or hiding things from them up until now? This fact demonstrates their level or stubbornness and spite.

In the end, they ended up finding the cow, but they could barely do it because it became so difficult for them. We should learn that there is a difference between asking questions out of a genuine desire to learn or for clarification, and asking out of stubbornness to make things more complicated. Do not make things more difficult by asking unnecessary questions.

“And [recall] when you slew a man and disputed over it, but Allah was to bring out that which you were concealing. So We said, ‘Strike the slain man with part of it.’ Thus does Allah bring the dead to life, and He shows you His signs that you might reason.” Surah al-Baqarah, 2:72-73

The second step of the process was to strike the dead man with a piece of the meat from the cow, which they did. By the will of Allah ﷺ, the dead man came back to life and told everyone who had killed him. It just so happened that the family member who was going around in strife was the one who had murdered him. He had killed the person so he could inherit his money.
Allah does not tell us this story just to reveal who had committed the murder. He tells us about this even so we could see the type of behavior that Bani Isra’il had towards the commandments of Allah and how we should not act when dealing with Allah and His Messenger. Islam means complete submission to Allah and we should follow that principle wholeheartedly.

**SHARI’AH AND THE TAWRAH**

When it came time for Musa to receive his wahi, he was given an appointment from Allah for forty nights. He was going to be given the Tawrah in the form of tablets.

> And We made an appointment with Moses for thirty nights and perfected them by [the addition of] ten; so then term of his Lord was completed as forty nights. And Moses said to his brother Aaron, “Take my place among my people, do right [by them], and do not follow the way of the corrupters.” 

*Surah al-Araf, 7:142*

When a leader leaves to go attend to business, he needs to leave his people with a responsible person to look over them. Hence, Musa appoints Harun to be in charge while he is gone. Harun is his brother and a Prophet; he is someone that Musa trusts. Before he leaves, Musa reminds Harun to do the right thing and not to get involved with the disbelievers.

When Musa leaves for his meeting, he rushes to go this appointment with Allah.

> And what made you hasten from your people, O Moses? He said, “They are close upon my tracks, and I hastened to You, my Lord, that You be pleased.”

*Surah al-Taha, 20:83-84*
From these ayat, we learn that for acts of worship, where is a command of Allah ﷺ, we should try to do it right away and need to get them done as soon as possible, unless we have a legitimate excuse. Acts of worship are based on the premise of being hastened, while our own interpersonal dealings are based on the premise of taking our time.

For example, we should try to pray salah as early as we can and not delay it unnecessarily or without reason.

“So woe to those who pray, but are heedless of their prayer.” Surah al-Ma’un, 107:4-5

Sometimes, the Prophet ﷺ would delay prayers, but for valid reasons. During that time, it used to be very hot at the time of Dhuhr, so the Prophet ﷺ would delay Dhuhr salah closer to the time of ‘Asr when the weather was more bearable.

Another example is Hajj. For some reason, there is a common notion in the Muslim world that Hajj is for older people. Most people, even though they have the money and energy, think that they will live a nice long life of enjoyment, do all the things they want to do, pile up the sins, and then go for Hajj when they retire so all of their sins will be forgiven. There are a few problems with this philosophy. You cannot guarantee that you will be alive when you plan to go for Hajj later on in your life. Even if you could guarantee that, what kind of attitude is that for a relationship with Allah ﷺ? We should not play games with Allah like that.

When Allah ﷺ tells us to do something, we should do it as quickly as possible. When dealing with mu’amalaat such as marriage, divorce, or business transactions, we should take our time, study the matter, consult with others, and pray istikhara to make wise decisions.
"And when Moses arrived at Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said, 'My Lord, show me [Yourself] that I may look at You.' [Allah] said, 'You will not see Me, but look at the mountain; if it should remain in place, then you will see Me.' But when his Lord appeared to the mountain, He rendered it level, and Moses fell unconscious. And when he awoke, he said, “Exalted are You! I have repented to You and I am the first of the believers.’”

Surah al-Araf, 7:143

**MUSA REQUESTS TO SEE ALLAH**

When Musa came to his appointment with Allah, he made a strange request. This was another time when Allah would speak directly with Musa, with no medium in between, and Musa asked Allah if he could see Him. Instead, Allah told Musa that He would show Himself to a mountain, and if the mountain could withstand seeing Allah, then Musa would be able to as well. But, when Allah shows a part of Himself to the mountain, the mountain crumbles in front of Musa’s eyes. Imagine being in Musa’s position and seeing this in front of you; a huge mountain with a strong base, towering above you, then flattening and crumbling into smoke. The impact and force of the mountain falling caused Musa to fall unconscious. It is too heavy for a human being to handle something like that.

When he woke up, Musa’s first thought was *SubhanAllah*, Allah is free from any defect, fault, or blemish. How can our eyes perceive Allah, someone so perfect, flawless, and unlimited, when we are so imperfect, deficient, and limited in our abilities? It doesn’t fit. This is why one of the greatest blessings of the believers in *Jannah* will be being able to see Allah, because in this *dunya*, we are incapable of doing so. If we were able to see Allah in this world, He would cease to be worthy or worship since anything our limited eyes can see should be equal to our eyes, and by extension, us. The fact that we cannot see Allah makes *Tawheed* even more amazing and powerful.

Musa also repents to Allah after this shaking experience. He makes *dhikr* and asks for forgiveness. Whenever we get back on our feet from a sin or precarious experience, we should make *dhikr* and *tawbah*. *Tawbah* literally means going back and returning to Allah and His obedience.
“[Allah] said, ‘O Moses, I have chosen you over the people with My messages and My words [to you]. So take what I have given you and be among the grateful.’ And We wrote for him on tablets [something] of all things- instruction and explanation for all things, [saying], “Take them with determination and order your people to take the best of it. I will show you the home of the defiantly disobedient.”” Surah Al-Araf, 7:144-145

Allah chose Musa to deliver His message through the Tawrah on tablets, which contained instructions. They were comprehensive in nature and contained instructions and explanations, so that nothing was left ambiguous. Those who refused to take and act upon the revelation would be given another home as punishment from Allah.

It is interesting to note that Musa made a request to see Allah, but Bani Isra’il made the same request as well. However, there is a big difference between the two.

“And [recall] when you said, ‘O Moses, we will never believe you until we see Allah outright’; so the thunderbolt took you while you were looking on.” Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:55

REQUEST OF MUSA VS. REQUEST OF BANI ISRA’IL

Why were the two requests met with two different answers? Bani Isra’il made a conditional demand, stating that they would not believe until they saw Allah. They acted like their belief would be doing Allah and was dependent on certain things, which is a dangerous attitude. Musa made a humbly asked to see Allah out of love and respect. Our obedience does not do Allah any favors or increase His light in any way, shape, or form, just as our disobedience does not take away from His might and authority. Allah is Ghaniy, free from need of all others. We are in need of Allah accepting our ibadah, not the other way around.

This brings up a very important and relevant lesson. At the end of the day, both Musa and Bani Isra’il asked for the same thing. However, the two requests are dealt with differently because of the way they are presented. Many people have questions about Allah through different ideologies and understandings. There are a lot of theories and religions out there, and naturally, people have questions and, sometimes, doubts about Allah, religion, and Shari’ah. It is okay to ask questions with love and sincerity to reaffirm your faith in different areas; those questions need to be met with answers and explanations to increase your confidence in Islam and Allah. The difference is when those questions come in the form of arrogance, defiance, or as a way to challenge Allah in a rude or inappropriate manner. Then it becomes unacceptable.
Sometimes, people use their uncertainty in one aspect of Islam to leave Islam all together. At the end of the day, we have to ask ourselves in we believe in the core teachings of Islam, and if we do, then we can take our time to comb through the issues we have trouble understanding. Just because we have an issue does not mean that we should be willing to forget about Islam all together. As humans, we will not be able to understand everything; that is the way Allah  has created us. But, if something does not make sense to you, ask Allah  to help you get through it. It is okay if it takes time. Maybe Allah  is using that one issue to help you get closer to Him through knowledge. Look at the different perspectives and opinion and do more research. It is going to be a process. But, it will help you appreciate Islam even further and see the beauty of our religion.

WORSHIPPING THE CALF

When Musa  left for his appointment with Allah , he left Harun responsible to look after Bani Isra’il. Allah informed Musa that there was a fitnah taking place, which was the fitnah of Bani Isra’il worshipping a golden calf. This was not something new for Bani Isra’il. They were still shaky in their religiosity and their Iman was still developing. Many of them did not fully trust Musa yet and their negative habits were still present.

“...and We took the Children of Israel across the sea; then they came upon a people intent in devotion to [some] idols of theirs. They said, ‘O Moses, make for us a god just as they have gods.’ He said, ‘Indeed, you are a people behaving ignorantly. Indeed, those [worshippers] – destroyed is that in which they are [engaged], and worthless is whatever they were doing.’ He
said, ‘Is it other than Allah I should desire for you as a god while He has preferred you over the worlds?’ And [recall, O Children of Israel], when We saved you from the people of Pharaoh, [who were] afflicting you with the worst torment – killing your sons and keeping your women alive. And in that was a great trial from your Lord.” **Surah al-Araf, 7:138-141**

Bani Isra’il had no foundation for worshipping these false idols, but they still wanted to. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ had a similar experience with the Sahaba when they were returning from an expedition and they passed a tree where people were hanging their swords and armor on it. It was thought that the holy tree would bless the swords and shields and the Sahaba asked the Prophet ﷺ to appoint a holy tree so that they could do the same. The Prophet ﷺ was in shock and asked the Sahaba if they were going to treat him like Bani Isra’il treated Musa ﷺ. He warned us to be careful from blindly following the previous nations until we are ready to climb into the hole of a lizard just to follow them.
فأخذوا لهم عجلًا جسدهم لله خورًا فقُلوا هذا إلهكم و إله موسى فنسنئ ٨٨ أفلا برون ألا يرجع إليهم قولاً ولا يملأكم لهم ضرًا ولا نفعًا ٨٨ وقال قل لهم هذون من قبل يعصم إنما فتستهم به وإن ركب الرحمن فانبعوني وأطيعوا أمري ٩٠ قالوا لن ننحرف عليه عرمكيفين حتى يرجع إليتنا موسى ٩١ قال يهدرُون ما منعك إذ رأينهم صلوا ٩٢ ألا تسمعون أفصصيت أمري ٩٣ قال يبنؤم لا تأخذ بلحنتي ولا يرأسن إلى خشييت أن تقول فرقت بين بني إسرائيل ولن تقرب قولني ٩٤ قال فما خطبت ينسرئيل ٩٥ قال بصرت يما لم يصروا به فقضت قبضكة من أثر الرسول فنبذتها وحكم ذلك سوالت لي نفسى ٩٦ كال فاذب فاتك اللد في الحياة أن تقول لا مساس وإن لك
“[Allah] said, ‘But indeed, We have tried your people after you [departed], and the Samiri has led them astray.’ So Moses returned to his people, angry and grieved. He said, ‘O my people, did your Lord not make you a good promise? Then, was the time [of its fulfillment] too long for you, or did you wish that wrath from your Lord descend upon you, so you broke your promise [of obedience] to me?’ They said, ‘We did not break our promise to you by our will, but we were made to carry burdens from the ornaments of the people [of Pharaoh], so we threw them [into the fire], and thus did the Samiri throw.’ And he extracted for them [the statue of] a calf which had a lowing sound, and they said, ‘This is your god and the god of Moses, but he forgot.’ Did they not see that it could not return to them any speech and that it did not possess for them any harm or benefit? And Aaron had already told them before [the return of Moses], ‘O my people, you are only being tested by it, and indeed, your Lord is the Most Merciful, so follow me and obey my order.’ They said, ‘We will never cease being devoted to the calf until Moses returns to us.’ [Moses] said, ‘O Aaron, what prevented you, when you saw them going astray from following me? Then have you disobeyed my order?’ [Aaron] said, ‘O son of my mother, do not seize [me] by my beard or by my head. Indeed, I feared that you would say, ‘You caused division among the Children of Israel, and you did not observe [or await] my word.’’ [Moses] said, ‘And what is your case, O Samiri?’ He said, ‘I saw what they did not see, so I took a handful [of dust] from the track of the messenger and threw it, and thus did my soul entice me.’ [Moses] said, ‘Then go. And indeed, it is [decreed] for you in [this] life to say, ‘No contact.’ And indeed, you have an appointment [in the Hereafter] you will not fail to keep. And look at your ‘god’ to which you remained devoted. We will surely burn it and blow it into the sea with a blast. Your god is only Allah, except for whom there is no deity. He has encompassed all things in knowledge.’” *Surah Taha, 20:85-98*
SAMIRI FASHIONS A GOLDEN CALF
Samiri and Bani Isra’il had taken some wealth from Egypt with them, which included lots of heavy gold and jewelry. When Musa  ﷺ asked for an explanation for what had happened, they said that they had to carry all of these heavy ornaments with them and it wasn’t doing them any good, so they threw it into a fire. From this fire, Samiri fashioned and extracted a golden calf, and told them it was making a sound; hence it was their lord and the lord of Musa  ﷺ.

Musa  ﷺ then asks Samiri what his reasoning behind this was. Samiri tells him that he saw a special horse that no one else saw, so he took a handful of dust from the footprints of that horse and threw it into the fire. When he did so, he heard a sound coming from the calf. Some scholars say the sound was coming because the idol was hollow; others say that it was Shaytan who was making the sound. There are multiple theories about why the sound occurred. Samiri then became a fitnah for the people; as he became enamored by the calf, he was able to influence people to do the same.

In particular, gold and cows were two things that the pharaohs and the people of Egypt were obsessed with, and things that were holy to them. Even though Bani Isra’il was no longer in Egypt, and they were never part of the religion of the pharaohs, generations of being surrounded by that culture affected them, and they, too, developed an attachment for these two things. Even prior to this, Allah  ﷺ had told them to slaughter a cow. He could have told them to sacrifice a goat or a sheep, but He wanted to sever ties from their unhealthy attachment to cows. If there is an attachment greater than Allah  ﷺ that is getting the way of your relationship with Him and your spiritual health, you must find a way to remove it from your life. Otherwise, you won’t be able to progress in your Iman, and your community.

Musa  ﷺ came back and was extremely angry. He had the tablets that Allah  ﷺ had given him and he cast them down so hard that they broke. That’s how angry he was. It was nothing personal; he was just so upset about the lack of obedience, Tawheed, and worship of Allah  ﷺ. Anger is not always a bad trait is dealt with correctly and for the right reasons. Prophet Muhammad  ﷺ almost never got angry, and if he did, it was never for himself; he always became angry because the rules and laws of Allah were being violated. The best type of person is one who is very slow to get angry and quickly recovers. Otherwise, anger can be problematic, and many times, people make careless decisions in the heat of the moment when they are angry.

Over his time with Bani Isra’il, Musa  ﷺ had so many opportunities to get riled up and show anger, but he advised them and stayed patient with them. This time, however, they crossed the line. Musa turns to Harun  ﷺ, since he had left Harun in charge, and as the leader, Harun needs to be responsible. But Harun pleads with Musa and tells Musa that he was afraid he would cause a division within Bani Isra’il if he was too harsh with them. Harun did not have many leadership interactions with Bani Isra’il, but Musa did.
Furthermore, Musa had a tough life. He had nowhere to go, had a target on his back for accidentally killing someone, had to move to a foreign land, and needed to work hard all his life. One of the most profound lessons we can learn from Musa is to adapt. We have to learn to adapt to various circumstances. We are not in control of certain things, and life is always changing, but we need to learn how to deal with the situation and keep going. All throughout his life, and especially with Bani Isra’il, Musa was constantly adapting from one scenario to another. He had a very passionate personality, and was not going to stand by and let the golden calf be worshipped.

**SAMIRI IS PUNISHED**

Samiri was exiled and had a very interesting punishment from Allah . He had a strange illness, in which touching anything caused him pain. He did not want anyone to touch him, nor did anyone want to interact with him after he became afflicted. But there was another punishment for Bani Isra’il for falling into a trap in the absence of Musa.

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\text{وَإِذَا قَالَ مُوسَى لِقُومِهِ يَقُومُ إِنْ يَقُومُ ظَلَمُهُمْ أَنْفَسَّكُمْ بِإِخْتِزَالِكُم}
\]

\text{العِجْلَ فَتَوَّرُوا إِلَى بَارِيْكَمْ فَأَفْنَأْلُ أَنْفَسَكُمُ ذَلِكَ عِدَّةً حِيْرَةً لَّكُمُ عندَ بَارِيْكَ}

\[
\text{فَنَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنَّهُ هُوَ أَنتَوَابُ الْرَّحِيمُ}
\]

“And [recall] when Moses said to his people, ‘O my people, indeed you have wronged yourselves by your taking of the calf [for worship]. So repent to your Creator and kill yourselves. That is best for [all of you in the sight of your Creator.’ Then He accepted your repentance; indeed, He is the Accepting of repentance, the Merciful.’” Surah al-Baqarah, 2:54

All sins necessitate tawbah, but some sins also require expiation as part of taubah. For Bani Isra’il, a part of their tawbah, was to kill themselves. Those who had followed Samiri and went astray were required to do this, so a large group from Bani Isra’il was killed. The people who had worshipped the calf earned Allah’s anger, but the expiation they had to do was humiliating. Then, Allah forgave them and accepted their repentance. It is important to note that they had their own sharia that is different from ours. We would not tell someone to kill themselves if they had worshipped a cow or committed Shirk.

**THE COWARDICE OF BANI ISRA’IL**

Part of the reason why Bani Isra’il fell into the trap of worshipping the calf was because they were still new to the religion. Yes, arrogance was also a part of it, but they had been oppressed for so long that everything was very new to them. When dealing with people new to Islam, we should realize that Allah gives them multiple opportunities. Even the Prophet encountered with Bedouins who lived out of civilization and did not have good manners. But the Prophet was patient with them. People who are new to Islam will make mistakes and that is okay. These people had to adjust from the lives they were
living before, and no one is perfect the second they take the shahada. It takes time for things to change; things don’t happen overnight. People need time to adapt and learn.
And [mention, O Muhammad], when Moses said to his people, ‘O my people, remember the favor of Allah upon you when He appointed among you prophets and made you possessors and gave you that which He had not given anyone among the worlds. O my people, enter the Hold Land which Allah has assigned to you and do not turn back [from fighting in Allah’s cause] and [thus] become losers.’ They said, ‘O Moses, indeed within it is a people of tyrannical strength, and indeed, we will never enter it until they leave it; but if they leave it, then we will enter.’ Said two men from those who feared [to disobey] upon whom Allah had bestowed favor, ‘Enter upon them through the gate, for when you have entered it, you will be predominant. And upon Allah rely, if you should be believers.’ They said, ‘O Moses, indeed we will not enter it, ever, as long as they are within it; so go, you and your Lord, and fight. Indeed, we are remaining right here.’ [Moses] said, ‘My Lord, indeed I do not possess except myself and my brother, so part us from the defiantly disobedient people.’ [Allah] said, ‘Then indeed, it is forbidden to them for forty years [in which] they will wander throughout the land. So do not grieve over the defiantly disobedient people.’”  

**Surah al-Maidah, 5:20-26**

Musa اسallah reminds his people to reflect over all the blessings that Allah ﷺ has bestowed on them. He saved them from Fir’aun, made prophets and kings amongst them, and is now giving them the opportunity to enter the holy land, the land of Can’aan, which is now Quds in Palestine. **Al-amaliqa**, who were oppressive and disbelieving giants occupied the land, and Bani Isra’il was given the responsibility to rid the land of those oppressive people. Just as Allah ﷺ saved them from oppressors, now they had to save the land from oppressors as well.
THE COMMAND TO FIGHT JIHAD

Bani Isra’il was given commandments of jihad, just like Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and the Muslims. They set out to fight, but once they saw how big their enemy was, they became cowards and did not want to fight them. Bani Isra’il declared that they would never enter the holy land until the ‘amaliqa left, not realizing that it was their entire job to fight them and claim ownership of the holy land. Instead, they passively waited until the giants decided to leave. In life, you will need to fight and struggle to get what you want.

Two men, one of them being Yusha’ bin Noon, a prophet, called to their people and encouraged them to fight. The initial struggle would only be getting through the gates, and after that, Allah ﷺ would help them win and He promises a clear victory. But they were stubborn and refused. They told Musa ﷺ that he could go fight with his Lord, while they sat and waited. How disrespectful can people be to their Prophet?! So Allah ﷺ gave them a long punishment, al-teheel, which means to be lost. Since they did not want to fight, that land was forbidden to them for 40 years. In that time, they just wandered around, and this marked a new chapter in Bani Isra’il’s history, as they were lost in the Sinai.

BANI ISRA’IL BECOMES LOST

There are several opinions on how Bani Isra’il was lost in the Sinai. Some say they were physically lost and went around in circles. They would travel, but would end up in the same place and could not figure out where to go. Others say that they were locked down by the angels, like a prison, so they could not leave that spot, even if they wanted to. Since they wanted to stay there until the giants left, that is what they would do for 40 years.

Another opinion states that they themselves did not want to go anywhere. Their punishment was self-imposed because they had no desire to leave anyway. One scholar points out, that regardless of their situation, for 40 years, they were not moving towards any goals or objectives. As a community, there was no growth, and they were stagnant. We have to reflect on our ummah today. Are we stuck in a state of stagnation, seemingly? Sure, we might know where we are on a map, but what is the status of our community? What are our goals and objectives that we are working towards? Many people do not know, or worse, do not have any goals. We must always have a clear vision of where we are going and what we are aiming for.

This was an amazing study of sociology. In 40 years, people’s behaviors and mindset changes. There is a development of a new generation, people who were not born into oppression, servitude, or a culture of second class. They are born into freedom and are their own community. As the new generation gets older, they start thinking for themselves and further growth and development. One example of this is Yusha’ bin Noon. Musa took him as a young child on his journey to find Khadhr, and Yusha’ learned that he would be
able to lead Bani Isra’il into the holy land. It takes new leadership, a new generation, physical freedom, and emotional freedom to depart from old ways.

What is really scary is that we can see how Bani Isra’il starts to speak and behave in the same ways as their oppressors in Egypt. Fir’āun would say ‘call upon your Lord,’ and Bani Isra’il has started to do the same with Musa ﷺ. The Egyptians loved gold and cows, and Bani Isra’il copied them. They became arrogant and started repeating the same mistakes as their oppressors. They were brainwashed by them and it was the only life they knew. They had to stop thinking how they always have and need to force and train themselves to think differently. Once they remove their mental and spiritual shackles, only then will a new generation rise in the proper direction.

We also see this today. So many of us are children of immigrants and have come from lands and countries that were colonized. The colonial powers wanted to change the way we think and our languages. Algeria, for example, under the French authority, banned the citizens from learning or teaching Arabic. Every subject in every grade was now taught in French. Arabic was only for the household. Revolutionary leaders would advise people to keep in touch with Arabic. If they lost their language, they would lose their culture and lose their connection with the Qur’an. Even though many of us have emigrated, we still act and think like we are under the rule of someone else. We have to be careful not to inherit the same kind of behavior as Bani Isra’il. We have to develop as a community.

**THE JOURNEY FOR KNOWLEDGE**

Musa ﷺ had the opportunity to get a beautiful experience of knowledge. Musa was asked by his people who the most knowledgeable person in the land was, and he responded that it was himself. He did not say this out of arrogance.

He knew that he was a Messenger of Allah ﷺ, that he receives revelations, and was given position and status amongst the people. That is what he knew so Musa was unaware of anyone who was more knowledgeable than himself. Yet, Allah still wanted to teach Musa that his response was not correct. We should keep turning back to Allah ﷺ and acknowledge that He is the One who is most knowledgeable about everything.

So Allah told Musa ﷺ to go find Khadhr, who was a servant of Allah and given a specific mercy and knowledge, so that Musa may learn from him. Scholars differ on whether Khadhr was a Prophet, but there is a consensus that Musa held a higher status than him. If Musa were arrogant, he would have not gone or told Allah that Khadhr should come to him. But Musa accepted and set off to go find and learn from Khadhr.
"And [mention] when Moses said to his servant, "I will not cease [traveling] until I reach the junction of the two seas or continue for a long period." Surah Al-Kahf, 18:60

There are a few lessons we can take from the story of Musa ﷺ and Khadhr. Firstly, seeking knowledge requires determination and effort. Nowadays, most of our knowledge comes to our screens from the comfort of our home. If we really want to learn, we need to get uncomfortable at times. It will resonate with us much more if we are uncomfortable. We see Musa going to the teacher to find him. We love to have people come to us, but we need to be willing to go in search of knowledge.

In addition, Allah ﷻ mentions the detail of how Musa ﷺ and Yusha’, his servant boy, stopped at a place to rest. At this resting place, the fish they had brought came back to life and slipped away.

“But when they reached the junction between them, they forgot their fish, and it took its course into the sea, slipping away.” Surah Al-Kahf, 18:61

They continued traveling, but forgot about the incident until it came time for them to eat. That was their sign! This is such an amazing detail in the story and it shows us that there will be hiccups in the road.

“So when they had passed beyond it, [Moses] said to his boy, "Bring us our morning meal. We have certainly suffered in this, our journey, [much] fatigue.” Surah Al-Kahf, 18:62
“He said, 'Did you see when we retired to the rock? Indeed, I forgot [there] the fish. And none made me forget it except Satan - that I should mention it. And it took its course into the sea amazingly.'” Surah Al-Kahf, 18:63

“[Moses] said, "That is what we were seeking." So they returned, following their footprints.” Surah Al-Kahf, 18:64

**MUSA JOURNEYS WITH KHADR**

Musa seeks to learn from Khadr

Khadr was given ‘ilm that no one else was given. When Musa encounters Khadr, Musa seeks permission to follow him with great adab so that he may teach Musa some of that knowledge which Allah had imparted to Khadr.

“Moses said to him, 'May I follow you on [the condition] that you teach me from what you have been taught of sound judgment’” Surah Al Kahf, 18:66

Khadr replies that Musa will never be able to have patience with Khadr since how can one be patient about something he does now know. Musa vows to try his best and to not disobey Khadr in any order. Khadr allows Musa to follow him under the condition that Musa not question Khadr under any circumstance until Khadr himself chose to explain it.

**The first journey together**

Khadr and Musa then set out together. They board a boat. While they were in it, Khadr makes a hole in it, thus destroying it. Concerned about the wellbeing and livelihood of those in the ship, Musa questions Khadr’s actions.
Khadr then reminds Musa of his promise to remain patient. Musa apologizes, asking Khadr not to blame him for which he had forgotten and to not punish him.

**A boy killed**

Khadr and Musa continue their journey together until they encounter a boy, whom Khadr then kills. This opens an old wound for Musa; the sanctity of life means too much for Musa. Musa cannot hold back his disapproval.

Khadr responds, “Didn’t I tell you [Musa] that you would not be patient with me.” Hurt by the boy’s murder, Musa does not apologize this time. Musa requests that if he asks Khadr about anything after this, then Khadr could dismiss him as a companion. They then set out again together.

**Khadr repairs a town’s wall**

Their travels continue until they come upon a town. Probably being fatigued and out of food, they ask the townsmen to offer them hospitality. The people of the town were not nice, however, and refused to host the travelers or give them any food.
Walking through the town, they come upon an old decaying wall. Despite the poor treatment they received in the town, Khadr repairs the wall. Musa remarks Khadr could have been compensated for his labor. It is at this point that Khadr says it is time for him and Musa to part, but first he would explain his actions to Musa.

[Khadr] said, “This is parting between me and you. I will inform you of the interpretation of that about which you could not have patience.” Surah Al-Kahf 18:78

Wisdom behind Khadr’s actions revealed
The boat belonged to a bunch of poor masakeen, who relied on the boat for their livelihood. Above them was an oppressive tyrannical king who would have seized their boat from them, but only if the boat was in perfect condition. Unlike Musa ﷺ, Khadr understood that the king would not take a faulty boat. By causing a defect in it, he was able to spare it for the poor people.

As for the boy, his parents were righteous believers and he feared the boy would overburden his parents with transgression and disbelief. Thus, killing the boy was meant as a mercy, not a punishment. Allah would bless them with a better child in his place.
Lastly, the wall belonged to two orphan boys of the town. Beneath the crumbling wall, lie a treasure left for them by their righteous father. We may have life insurance in America, but next time fill out ayah 9 in Surah al-Nisaa.
"And let those [executors and guardians] fear [injustice] as if they [themselves] had left weak offspring behind and feared for them. So let them fear Allah and speak words of appropriate justice." *Surah Al-Nisaa, 4:9*

If anyone leaves offspring behind and is worried about what will come of them, it is better for them to have *taqwa* of Allah and say what is good and pure. Not only will the offspring benefit from the piety of a righteous parent, but even the people in their household.

Because the father of the orphan boys was *saleh* (pious), his offspring deserve righteousness and kindness. As a mercy from Allah, these boys would be able to benefit from the treasure when they reached maturity. Therefore, Khadr acted not of his own accord.

**Linguistic Nuances**

There have been many linguistic nuances from the very beginning. For example, when Yusha’ forgot the fish, Allah uses the word *saraba* to describe the fish slipping away. In a later *ayah* in which Allah is quoting what Yusha’ said, He uses the word *ajaba* (surprisingly/amazingly). Nothing is *ajeeb* for Allah, but it can be *ajeeb* for the creation.

When Khadr is about to tell Musa these interpretations for that which Musa could not have patience, he uses the term *istita’a*. This comes from the word *istita’a*, meaning ‘ability.’ Khadr tells Musa he will inform him of the ability which he didn’t have patience and self-control.

After he is finished explaining, Musa understands the *ta’weel* of that which he did not (thus, deleting one letter). It is important to recognize that in Arabic, if you add more letters to a root word, you add more meaning and weight to the word. Even if you do not directly change the meaning, you give it more heaviness. Therefore, before Musa had any explanation, Khadr used the word because it is harder for Musa to have the ability to understand. Now that everything was explained, the ability will come easier to Musa, and thus Khadr deleted one letter.
Chapter 4
Musa’s Last Days and Bani Isra’il after His Death

Musa’s story is full of *adab*. After these experiences Musa has had with Bani Isra’il, he still had good conduct and good manners. To learn from Khadr was a rejuvenating experience; every leader needs professional development.

**MUSA’S FINAL REQUEST BEFORE DEATH**
*Wanting to be divided from Bani Isra’il*

Musa ﷺ had an amazing life with so many experiences, but it was really tragic too. He wanted so badly to fulfill the mission he was given, to enter the holy land, but his people just abandoned him. He makes *du’a* in Ar’af. He says:

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قال ربّي إنّي لَآ أملك إلاّ نفسِي وأخِي فأفرق بينّنا وبيّن علمظلّومَ القَوْمِ الْفَسَقِينَ
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[Moses] said, “My Lord, indeed I do not possess except myself and my brother, so part us from the defiantly disobedient people.” *Surah Al-Ma’idah 5:25*

At this point, Musa feels he cannot do anything with these persistent sinners anymore. In his last days, he complains to Allah that he cannot go into Arth Al-Muqadas.

**Fighting with the Angel of Death**

Even in his last moments, Musa was still the tough person that his life trained him to be, that his mother taught him, that all his experiences shaped him into becoming.

The angel of death comes to Musa ﷺ in the form of a man, informing him that he was there to take Musa’s soul. So Musa pokes his eye out, causing the Angel of Death to return to Allah and complain that he was sent to a slave that does not want to die. Allah ﷺ tells the Angel of Death to return to Musa and give Musa the option to extend his life by placing his hand over the back of an ox, for which he will be allowed to live an extra year for every hair that comes under his hand. Musa then asks, then what? Then, death. Musa said, then now. No need to extend his life further.

Before the Angel of Death takes his soul, however, Musa requests that he be taken as close to *Al Bayt Al Maqdis* so at the very least he could see it. Imagine the desperation Musa had to fulfill the mission that Allah gave Bani Isra’il. The Angel of Death takes him to the hills outside of Aqsa. Musa is able to lay eyes on the holy lands and then the Angel of Death takes his soul and returns it to Allah. Even in his final days, he longed to be in proximity to a virtuous and a holy place affirmed in our religion.
The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said that whosoever is able to die in Madinah, then let him die there, because those people will have a special intercession. Those that are buried in Madinah have the best of neighbors. Imagine being neighbors with the Sahaba, Imam Malik, and great scholars. In life and even after death, we see Musa seeking to be close to good places and good people.

**BANI ISRA’IL AFTER MUSA**

Bani Isra’il made many of the same mistakes; they still killed some of their Anbiya. Allah admonishes them.

“وَضُرِّبَ عَلَيْهِمْ الْحُمْلَةُ وَالْمَسْيَرَةُ وَيُغْضَبُ مِنَ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ بَيْنَهُمَا يَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ الْأُنْبِيَاءَ أَلْحَقَ الْحَقَّ ذَلِكَ يَعَظُّهُمَا وَيَعَذَّبُهُمَا

’And they were covered with humiliation and poverty and returned with anger from Allah [upon them]. That was because they [repeatedly] disbelieved in the signs of Allah and killed the prophets without right. That was because they disobeyed and were [habitually] transgressing.” *Al-Baqarah 2:61.*

The true followers of Musa, however, were told another Messenger would come.
CHAPTER 5
Conclusion

OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH MUSA
*Musa is special to the ummah of the Prophet Muhammad* ﷺ

Musa ﷺ met the Prophet ﷺ during al-Isra’ wal-Mi’raj. After the Prophet continued on his journey, Musa cried. When the angels asked him why, he responded, “He [The Prophet] came after me and his ummah is bigger than mine.” Look at how he weeps, wishing his ummah would be like that of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

During this famous journey, the Prophet ﷺ encounters Musa again. Musa encouraged the Prophet to ask Allah to ease the obligation of fifty prayers as this would have been a difficult matter on his ummah. Imagine having 50 prayers a day; every 23-28 minutes we would have had to break for salah. Musa suggests that the Prophet return to Allah, as he dealt with the people before him. Allah reduced it by 10, so they became 40. He continued to return, until they became 5. After being commanded 5 daily prayers, Musa again says go back as they do not have the ability to perform even this much. The Prophet ﷺ, however, said he could not go back, saying he was shy in front of His Lord. This story shows how much Musa cared about us and our ability to connect with Allah through salah.

**VIRTUES OF MUSA** ﷺ

There were several virtues mentioned previously, but the following are some major points:

- Loves knowledge and wants to increase in it
- Humble
- Patient in the face of harm
- *Haya’*
- He will be among the first at the throne of Allah on the Day of Judgment
- Seeking to be buried close to a blessed place

**WHAT WE CAN TAKE FROM THIS CLASS**

Now, we know more about his character and his passion. We understand a bit more about his commitment to truth, justice, da’wah, patience, and the struggles he faced. We hope we can love him more now with a better understanding of who he was. How amazing if we beg Allah to allow us to be with Musa ﷺ, as we have spent this weekend learning about him.

May Allah ﷺ allow us to benefit from this class. We have been motivated to relook at the stories of the Prophets from a more personal perspective and hopefully we can use this as a push to look deeper into the hidden meanings; we should strive to further read, reflect, and extract lessons when we explore the stories of the Qur’an. There is so much meaning in the stories and hopefully this experience will allow us to feel a closeness to the book of Allah and a willingness to reflect on it on a more intimate level.