

MODULE 4

Class Title: Story of Musa (as) – part 1 (1st part of a 2 lesson series)

Aim of the lesson: To understand & learn lessons from the story

Category: Scripture Stories

Lesson Format: Power point presentation with discussion

Greeting to students) *Assalam alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*

(Ta'awwudh) Aoodhubillahimin AsShaytanir Rajeem

(Tasmiyah) Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

(Du'a) Rabbish rahli sadri wa yassirli amri wahlul uqdatum millisani yafqahu qawli (Surah Ta-Ha 20: Verse 25-28)

Slide 1:

As you can see here, we're going to do the story of Prophet Musa. Everybody knows the story of Prophet Musa? Do you know how many times Allah (swt) has mentioned Musa (as) in the Qur'an? Many times! Why do you think this story has so much relevance that it is frequently repeated?

Student: So we learn a lesson

Teacher: What else?

Student: So that we can know the gifts that he was given.

Teacher: Anyone else?

Student: To witness his struggle for Islam.

Teacher: Everything in the Qur'an is for a purpose. We need to know that why certain things happened in the prophets' life.

Teacher: Why were the Prophets sent to us?

Student: To serve as an example.

Teacher: yes

Slide 2:

Now, I'll just quickly go over the story so that we do a little recap and then we can come to our main discussion. See the family tree? These are prophets. Can you see this? Adam (as), Musa (as) is way here at number 14. And can you see where it's coming from? Ya'qub (as). Who is Ya'qub (as)? Do you all remember the story of Yusuf (as)? Where was he in the end? Egypt right? You remember the story? How he was abandoned by his brothers and then he was picked up as a slave then all the difficulties he went through but at the end he became the right hand

man of the king of Egypt and then what happened? I need to recap this because it is connected to what we are going to be discussing today. Do you remember what happened after he was given the important position at the king's palace?

Students: There was a famine.

Teacher: Absolutely. Then Ya'qub (as) along with his children came to Egypt and even after the famine was over these people did not go back and since he had 11 sons so their families expanded and they became a huge tribe and this tribe was called *Bani* Israel or the children of Israel also known as *Bani* Ya'qub. You know that Israel was also Ya'qub (as)'s other name so this is how these people came to Egypt. Okay? And from there, can you see this? Yaqub (as), then you can see the off-shoots, Musa (as) Harun (as), okay. So this is how Musa (as) is related to other prophets in this family tree.

Slide 4:

Now what happened is that after several years Pharaoh became the ruler of Egypt. He was a corrupt king who made sure that Bani Israel was kept oppressed as slaves. The descendants of Ya'qub (as) used to do all the labor work such as building pyramids and were not given their due rights. In fact, Pharaoh insisted that they bow to his innovations of god such as sun, moon and he himself instead of the God of Ya'qub (as).

Teacher: Who are we talking about? Yaqub (as)?

Student: The descendants of Ya'qub (as)

Teacher: Who did Ya'qub (as) worship? One God, remember? After all the trouble he had gone through, being separated from Yusuf (as), losing his eye sight in grief by crying but in all this his faith in Allah (swt) never wavered. His children were to follow the same religion and show the same conviction. However, many years had passed since the demise of the prophet and their faith had weakened. To make matters worse, they had a ruler who was oppressive and called himself god!! He severely persecuted those who rebelled and rewarded those who did not.

Slide 5:

One day, a fortune teller told Pharaoh that a boy will be born from amongst Bani Israel who will bring about his downfall. Upon hearing this, the merciless king ordered that each and every one of the baby boys born in Bani Israel was to be killed and only girls were allowed to live.

Ibn e Abbas (ra) narrates,

“Pharaoh saw in his vision; a fire, which came from Jerusalem and burnt the houses of the Egyptians and all the crops and did no harm to the Children of Israel. When he woke up, he was horrified. He then gathered the priests and the magicians and asked them about this vision. They said this means a boy will be born of them and the Egyptian people will perish at its hand. That is why Pharaoh commanded that all male children of the Children of Israel be killed.”¹

¹ Stories of the Prophets by Ibn Katheer, pg: 351

Teacher: What do you think would be the result if you continue killing one gender?

Student: Population will decrease. What else?

Student: There will be disbalance.

Teacher: Yes, more women less men right? What else? What was the main purpose of Bani Israel? What were they doing?

Students: They were doing all the hard work

Teacher: Yeah, the men of Bani Israel were doing all the hard work for the Pharaoh, right? Beautifying his country, carrying those big stones for pyramids... I'm not going to go into the history of how the pyramids were made but I'm sure you all have learnt in history that it was no easy job making those monumental structures.

Slide 5:

Pharaoh soon realized that if he continued in his insanity, he would soon have no manpower and there would be economic losses so he called upon his economic advisers and sought a solution. Now isn't it funny that he called himself god and he can't think of a solution by himself??? Any way, it was decided that they will regulate this policy of killing every alternate year meaning the boys will be killed one year and allowed to live the next year. ²

Slides 6-8:

Now what happened? In the year Musa (as)'s mother was pregnant with Harun (as), that was the year when boys were spared but she wasn't so lucky when Musa (as) was born. This terrified Musa (as)'s mother but Allah (swt) inspired and told her to put the baby in a basket and let it flow in the river Nile.

Teacher: Do you think it is an easy decision for a mother to take?

Student: No, it must have been tremendously difficult parting with her baby.

Teacher: Yes but Allah (swt) strengthened her heart so she nursed him and put him in a basket and let it flow with the river but then, she was a mother. She told Musa (as)'s little sister to go along the bank of the river and see where the basket floats.

Slide 9:

You see when Allah (swt) does something, He has a greater plan which due to our limited mental capacity, we are unable to comprehend and thus result in being impatient and ungrateful. It so happened that the waves of Nile were flowing in such a manner that it took the basket all the way

² Pg: 353

up to the Pharaoh's palace where one of the servant one picked the basket up and took it to the Pharaoh.

Teacher: Who was the wife of Pharaoh?

Student: Asiya

Teacher: How would you describe Pharaoh's personality?

Student: Evil

Teacher: What else?

Student: Cruel/ selfish

Teacher: Yes, I don't think he had any morals at all. In fact he is mentioned in Qur'an as *meikhoun wala* Fir'aun. Allah (swt) says in Surah Al Fajr 89: Verse 10

وَفِرْعَوْنَ ذِي الْأَوْتَادِ

“ and Fir'aun who had the stakes”

Do you know what is *meikhain*? Have you seen these tents that are put up? These big *shaamiaanas* (tents)? How do they get them to stand? They have these huge stakes which they peg in the ground so that the tent may stand firm.

The Pharaoh used to do the same to people he wished to torture. He would nail their hands in the ground to keep them immobile until they were tortured to death. Imagine such brutality...But what a wife he had! Asiya. She is the woman who said the following *du'a* when she was dying at the hands of her own husband;

وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا امْرَأَةٌ فِرْعَوْنَ إِذْ قَالَتْ رَبِّ ابْنِ لِي عِنْدَكَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَنَجِّنِي
مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَعَمَلِهِ وَنَجِّنِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

(Surah At-Tahreem, 66: verse 11)

Now as soon as Asiya saw the baby, her maternal instincts provoked her to adopt the baby as she had fallen in love with the beautiful child at first sight. She had no child of her own so she pleaded her husband not to kill him. Pharaoh thought he might benefit from him later so though a little unwilling, he consented without perceiving its result. Thus, Musa (as) was raised as Asiya's son in the palace in royal supervision.

Slides 10-11:

Then the baby came in the palace and they wanted somebody to suckle the baby but he wouldn't

take feed from any nurse. This was part of Allah's (swt) plan. Musa (as)'s original mother was naturally heartbroken at the loss of her baby and was unaware of Allah's (swt) plan for her. Since Musa (as)'s sister had followed him so she observed the wet nurses coming in and baby throwing a tantrum. This was Allah's (swt) plan to get the baby back to his mother. She did not know that she was going to be summoned but Musa (as)'s sister requested permission to suggest an appropriate nurse. Desperate for someone who the baby would accept, it was agreed and as soon as the real mother went to the palace pretending to be a wet nurse, the baby immediately sensed his mother's presence. It is said that little babies have instincts. They hear their mother's voice and they know it's my mother. They can feel their mother by the smell and immediately Musa (as) knew and he started suckling.

Teacher: So what did Allah (swt) do?

Student: Reunited them.

Teacher: At that moment, when Musa (as)'s mom was putting him in the river, do you think that it ever occurred to her that she will be re united? What thoughts must have come to her mind?

Student: She'll never see him again.

Teacher: Yes, it is human nature. She could not comprehend Allah (swt)'s divine plan? Do you think she trusted Allah (swt)?

Students: She did.

Teacher: How do you know that she trusted Allah (swt)? She would not have put her baby in a basket and let it go if she did not trust Allah (swt) to take care of the baby.

Slides 12-14:

Are these the only lessons that we have learnt till now? Or is there anything else that you have derived?

Student: We should have faith in Allah (swt) at all times.

Teacher: What else?

Student: To trust His decision, to go along with whatever He has planned and not let our emotions get in the way.

Teacher: Yeah. Allah (swt) always makes the best decision for us. Sometimes in life, when things don't go according to our way and we feel that life has been unfair, we need to have faith in Allah (swt) that he has a better plan for us that we cannot comprehend at that time. Often we cannot see beyond that situation and we are like, "why me?"

Musa (as)'s mother was also put through a trial but she was eventually reunited with him and at the same time Asiya (as) was blessed with a son.

Teacher: If Allah (swt) wanted, He could have gotten her a son of her own, couldn't He?

Student: He could.

Teacher: He could but again, Allah (swt) had a plan. Maybe if Asiya (as) had a son of her own, she wouldn't be too tempted to adopt Musa (as). Musa (as) grew up in Fir'aun's own house and then through him, Bani Israel got free from Pharaoh's cruel reign. Sometimes Allah (swt) tests us by asking us to give away something very dear and this is something we have seen in another prophet's story as well. Do you recall which one?

Students: Yusuf (as).

Teacher: Yusuf (as) and?

Student: Ibrahim (as).

Teacher: Yes, you remember? He loved his son so much and he was asked to sacrifice. Now he was a prophet so we can perhaps assume that he had extraordinary faith but Musa (as)'s mother was an ordinary woman and Allah (swt) inspired her to put the child in a basket. What is the first thing that could come in your mind? As a human being, maybe she must have said, I am hallucinating or that it could be my doubt and not a revelation. But she did what Allah (swt) told her to and was rewarded for it.

Teacher: Why do you think Allah (swt) planted Musa (as) in Pharaoh's palace?

Student: So that he could grow up and beat Fir'aun.

Teacher: That was the underlying thing that we know now but let's assume that he was born in a year when boys were not slaughtered. In that case, he would have grown up in his own surroundings instead of Pharaoh's palace, right? So he would grow up in his own surroundings, right? Can you think of any benefit that he received by being raised in the palace?

Student: He could gain the trust of Pharaoh by being under his eye.

Teacher: What else?

Student: Being raised in a palace, he had proper education and vital understanding of the Pharaoh.

Teacher: Absolutely. Anybody else?

Student: Pharaoh could never doubt him because he was like his own son.

Teacher: Sometimes, we don't foresee the eventual plan of Allah (swt) and feel utterly devastated. You must have often heard your elders saying that *Iss main koi behtari hogi* and it is there but we just don't realize it. Next time you feel down at failure of your immediate plan, think of Musa (as). He was taken from his mother and into the Pharaoh's palace. He got the riches, best education, learning to speak out which he might not have dared to, had he been raised in an oppressed environment that his mother belonged to so Allah (swt) was thinking of the bigger picture, He had in mind what Musa (as) and his mother could not fathom at that time.

Slides 15-17:

One day, Musa (as) was walking and he saw an Israeli man who was being beaten by another Egyptian man and on seeing Musa (as) the Israeli begged him to come and intervene. Musa (as) was a man of good built so one punch and the Egyptian died. Now Musa (as) was shocked as he did not plan to kill anyone. As soon as Musa (as) realized his mistake, he immediately asked for forgiveness. This was the first incident. The next day Musa (as) was passing by and again this Israeli man was having an argument with another Egyptian and he called out to Musa (as) again. This time Musa (as) did not act on impulse and he told him that you seem like a quarrel some person who picks fights with everyone. Upon hearing this, the Israeli became defensive and asked, "Are you going to punch me too and kill me like you did the other day?"

Then a man who was a well-wisher of Musa(as) and who used to work in the courts of Pharaoh came running and warned Musa(as) that the chiefs have found out about the death of the Egyptian and they are planning to have him killed so he must run away.

Slides 18-19:

Teacher: What do we learn from this particular incident?

Student: That even the best of us make mistakes.

Teacher: Yes, and it is important to realise a mistake as soon as possible like Musa (as) who immediately asked for Allah's (swt) forgiveness and changed his attitude.

Teacher: Absolutely and what was the second thing?

Student: Allah (swt) does things for a reason.

Teacher: Allah (swt) does everything for a reason. He always has a plan.

Slide 20:

So Musa (as) got scared and escaped to Madian. When he reached there, he saw a well where lots of shepherds were getting water for their cattle. He was very tired and hungry so he went towards the well. There were two women who were waiting for these men to go so that they would be able to get water for their cattle. These men kept on getting water for their cattle so

Musa (as) went and offered help to those women. They obliged and were very thankful. They went and told their father about Musa (as).

Teacher: What type of society do you think is this?

Student: Very conservative.

Teacher: Conservative. What else?

Student: nomadic type/ male dominated.

Teacher: Okay, why do you feel it was male dominated?

Student: Because all the men were busy with their own concerns and did not take much heed of the ladies.

Teacher: Yeah and I don't even think they had much respect for women because, even in today's modern world , as we may call it, whenever anybody sees a lady, what is the first thing that they do? Most people?

Move aside, or if a man and woman both are standing, seat will always first be offered to the lady but in this story men did not respect women enough and kept them waiting whereas what do you see in Musa (as)?

Student: He helped them.

Teacher: He helped them. Musa (as) grew up in the Pharaoh's castle, seeing a different society but there was this nobility in him which taught him the respect for women. He observed that these women were standing for so long and the men were just not giving them way.

Slides 21-22:

So the ladies went back and told their father about the stranger who helped them. The father called for Musa (as) welcomed him to his house and he listened to his whole story. He listened how that incident took place when he hit the Egyptian and fled.

Musa (as) could have lied, right? He could have thought that what if this man hands me over to the Pharaoh? Refused to give me shelter or food? He was hungry and exhausted but Musa (as) did not lie.

The father was an old wise man who realized that Musa (as) was no ordinary man. In recognition of his honesty and nobility, he not only welcomed Musa (as) to stay but also offered his daughter's hand in marriage whose name was Safoora. Thus, Musa (as) married his daughter and stayed there for ten years.

Slide 23:

After Musa (as) had completed the term of ten years, he bade farewell to his father in law and departed with his family towards Egypt since it is said that he was keen to see his family. The journey occurred on a dark and cold night, when they lost their way and could not see anything. Musa (as) saw a light in the distance so he told his wife that he would go and fetch some fire to keep them warm or might get some information of their whereabouts..

Then when Musa (as) gets near the fire, he gets called by a voice. Allah (swt) describes this incidence in Surah Al-Qasas 28, verse 30:

فَلَمَّا أَتَاهَا نُودِيَ مِنْ شَاطِئِ الْوَادِي الْأَيْمَنِ فِي الْبُقْعَةِ الْمُبَارَكَةِ مِنَ الشَّجَرَةِ أَنْ يَا مُوسَى إِنِّي أَنَا
اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ

“Then when he came to the fire, he was called from the right side of the valley from the tree in the blessed place, ‘O Moosa, verily I am Allah, Lord of the worlds.’”

Teacher: This incidence was a great miracle. Does anyone who what happened after this?

Student: And then Musa (as) was given some miracles like when he throws his stick to the ground, it turns into a snake..

Teacher: Yes, anything else?

Students: Then he puts a hand in his armpit and ..

Teacher: And?

Student: It comes out glowing.

Teacher: So this is exactly what happened. He goes there and he sees that there is a fire but it's not actually fire. What it is, nobody knows, alright? And then, he hears the sound, and it's Allah (swt) talking directly to Musa (as).

Allah (swt) asked him what he had in his hand. Do you think Allah (swt), The All Knower, could not see what was in his hand?? When you read it in the Qur'an, it's such a beautiful dialogue between Allah (swt) and Musa (as). To Allah (swt)'s query, Musa (as) answers; it's a stick which I use to herd my cattle or for climbing the mountains. Why do you think Musa (as) explaining in such length?

Student: Show of innocence.

Teacher: Show of innocence. What else? What do you think would be a precise answer?

Students: A stick.

Teacher: The stick, right? He's explaining further. Why do you think he's explaining further?

Student: He's talking to Allah and opening up to Him.

Teacher: Maybe when he actually realized that Allah (swt) is talking to him, he didn't want this conversation to end. Often when we are talking to someone we are fond of, we don't want to cut it short. In fact we use phrases like, *Aur batao? Acha phir? Han?* (tell me more, and then ..) Why do we do that?

Student: So we keep on talking.

Teacher: So we keep on talking. This is showing Musa (as)'s love and attachment to Allah (swt). Then he was told to throw the stick on the ground. Musa (as) obliged and it transformed into a writhing snake.

Now Musa (As) did not say that why should I throw it? It is useful for me! He blindly followed. When it turned into a snake, he got scared and took a few steps back. However, Allah (swt) told him to pick up the snake and once again he followed so that the stick transformed to stick again.

Allah (swt) also tells him that you have been chosen as a prophet and gave him a mission? Do you know what was the mission of Prophet Musa (as)?

Students: To preach to Pharaoh and free Bani Israel

Teacher: Absolutely.

Slide 26:

When Musa (as) was given his mission he told Allah (swt) that he was not very eloquent for such a daunting task and thus sought his brother Harun's help. There are some people who talk smooth and have convincing power. At this point, he made this *du'a*. Deep inside, as a human being, he was scared because he had firsthand knowledge about the cruelty of Pharaoh. Knowing this Allah (swt) strengthened his heart and made his brother his helper.

Why, do you think, Allah (swt) was giving these miracles to Musa (as)?

Allah (swt) was showing him His Power so that Musa (as) may not feel alone. In fact he was made to feel that a power greater than Pharaoh was with him. This strengthened Musa (as)'s heart and prepared him for the task ahead.

Now, let's put ourselves in the situation. We also encounter situations where we are required to take the plunge and place our trust solely in Allah (swt). We do not know where the path that we have taken, shall lead to but we must place our trust in Allah (swt) because without Allah (swt)'s help, we can't even blink our eyes.

What was Musa (as)'s response to all this. He made this *du'a* and Allah (swt) made it part of the Qur'an.

"O my Lord! Open for me my chest (grant me self-confidence, contentment, and boldness). And ease my task for me; and make loose the knot from my tongue, that they understand my speech, and appoint for me a helper from my family, Aaron, my brother; increase my strength with him, and let him share my task (of conveying Allah's Message and Prophethood), and we may glorify You much, and remember You much, Verily! You are of us Ever a Well-Seer." (Taha 20:25-35)

Slides 27-28:

Now, Allah (swt) is Appointing Musa (as) as Pharaoh's opponent so do you think He does not know about any weakness that Musa (as) had?? He is the Creator of Musa (as) so how can He not know?? On the other hand, Musa (as) knows about the brutality of Pharaoh and is naturally scared so he placed his trust in Allah (swt) knowing that whoever does so shall never despair.

Teacher: What lesson do we learn from this? What should we do when we are getting a responsibility?

Student: We should learn to handle it.

Student: We should ask Allah (swt)'s help.

Teacher: Yes, make *du'a* and ask Allah (swt) to provide support for you in form of good friends who may become your helpers in the quest for righteousness. With good and righteous friends, it is easier to handle difficult problems.

Our Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) had very good friends who were also his helpers and best supporters without whom it would have been very difficult to achieve what he did. What if you have a bunch of friends who are going one way and you are going the other? Things become really tricky so we must remember Allah (swt) through *tasbeeh* and *salah*. In the Qur'an, surah Al-Baqarah verse 45, it is said,

وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ

And seek help in patience and *As-Salah* (the prayer)

Things will not happen overnight. There may not be miracles so we must exercise patience.

(Du'a for end of a gathering) *SubhanaRabbikaRabbullzzati 'ammayasifunwasalamun 'alalmursaleen, walhamdulillahiRabbil 'alameen*

(Parting salutation to students) *AssalamalaikumwarahmatullahiwaBarakatuh*