
PROPHET SHU'AYB

Lesson and Story

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Story Text From Translated "The Stories of the Prophets" by Ibn Kathir

Getting Started

In this unit, we are going to take a glimpse at the prophethood of Prophet Shu'ayb (alayhi salam).

When we read about the Prophets, it is important to keep a few things in mind:

The Main Message the Prophets Brought

All prophets taught the basic message of Tawheed, that is, worshipping only Allah.

The Prophets' Treatment by Their Own People

The prophets were persecuted (verbally and physically) by the disbelievers of their own people (nations, tribes).

The Prophets' Warnings of Destruction

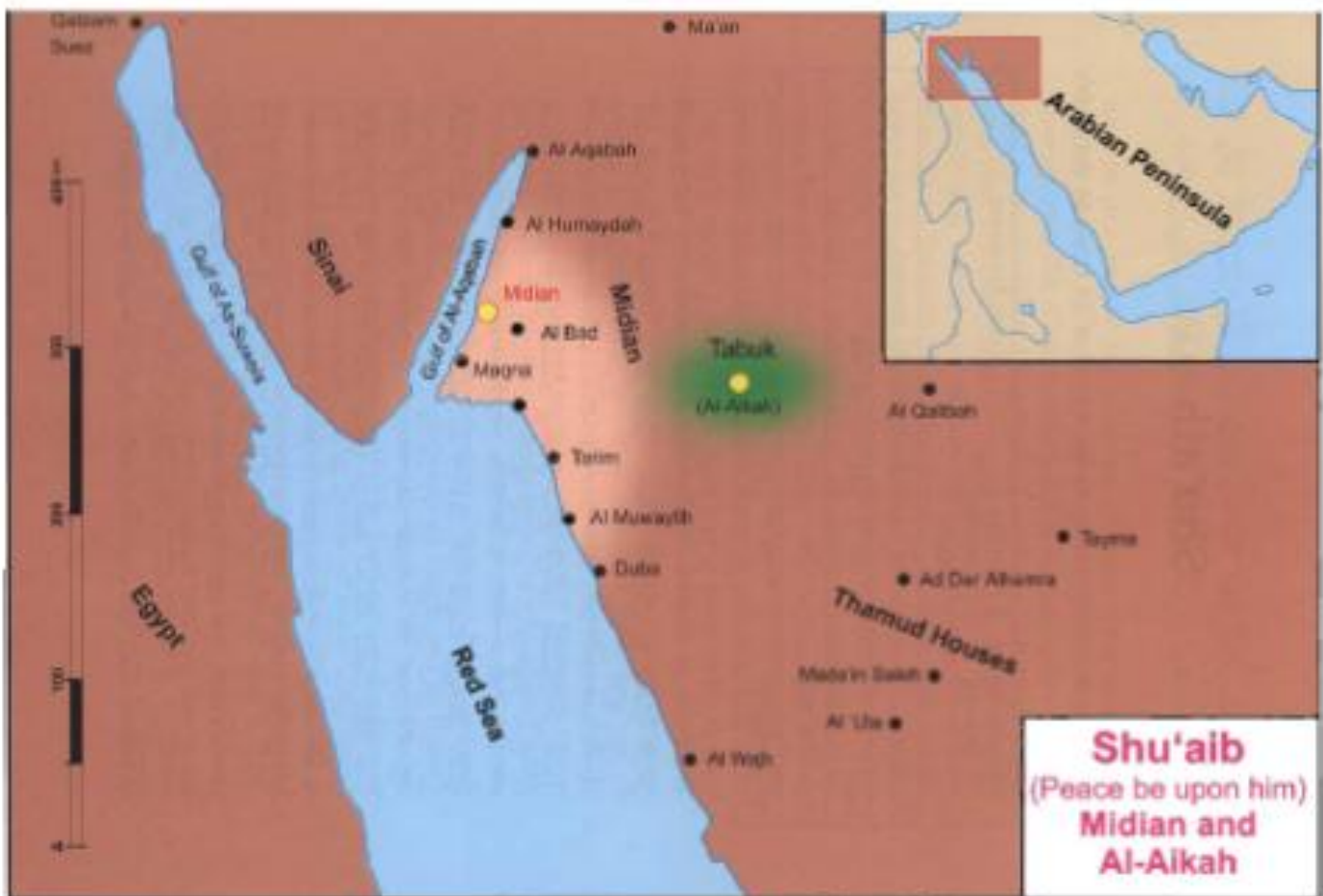
Allah allowed the Prophets to warn the people **BEFOREHAND** of destruction and punishment as a result of the nations' evil deeds.

How can reading about the Prophets help us?

Learning about the struggles of the prophets and how they dealt with them (patience, perseverance, faith, hope) can help us in our struggles, in sha Allah, if we follow their examples.

Location of the People of Prophet Shu'ayb

Allāh ﷻ sent Shu'aib to the people of Madyan ibn Ibrāhīm ﷺ; they lived in the lands of Al-Hijaz, adjacent to Ash-Sham (Syria and surrounding regions), and east of the Gulf of Al-'Aqabah. Near to Madyan is a land full of softwood trees, and at least according to one opinion in the matter, that land is actually the site of the city of Tabûk.



Source: "Atlas of the Quran"

A Glimpse at the Prophethood of Prophet Shu'ayb

(pronounced shoo-aye-b)

The people of Madyan were Arabs who lived in the country of Ma'an, part of which today is greater Syria. They were a greedy people who did not believe that Allah existed and who led wicked lives. They gave short measure, praised their goods beyond their worth, and hid their defects. They lied to their customers, thereby cheating them.

Allah sent His Prophet Shu'ayb (alayhi salaam) armed with many miracles. Shu'ayb (alayhi salaam) preached to them, begging them to be mindful of Allah's favors and warning them of the consequences of their evil ways, but they only mocked him. Shu'ayb (alayhi salaam) remained calm as he reminded them of his kinship to them and that what he was doing was not for his personal gain.

They seized the belongings of Shu'ayb (alayhi salaam) and his followers, and then drove them out of the city. The Messenger turned to his Lord for help, and his plea was answered. Allah sent down on them scorching heat and they suffered terribly. On seeing a cloud gathering in the sky, they thought it would bring cool, refreshing rain, and rushed outside in the hope of enjoying the rainfall. Instead the cloud burst, hurling thunderbolts and fire. They heard a thunderous sound from above which caused the earth under their feet to tremble. The evil doers perished in this state of horror.

Muhammad bin Ishaq said, "They (the people of Madyan) are the descendants of Madyan, son of Midyan, son of Ibrahim. Shu'ayb was the son of Mikil bin Yashjur.

And in the Syrian language, his name was Yathrun (Jethro)". I (Ibn Kathir) say, Madyan was the name of the tribe and also a city that is close to Ma'an on route to the Hijaz (from Ash-Sham).
(Tafsir Ibn Kathir)



Shuayb's Message

Allah the Almighty revealed the story of Shu'ayb (alayhi salaam):

"To the people of Madyan (Madian) (We sent) their brother Shu'ayb (alayhi salaam).

'He said: "O my people! Worship Allah, you have no other Ilah (God) but Him. Verily! a clear proof (sign) from your Lord has come unto you; so give full measure and full weight and wrong not men in their things, and do not make mischief on the earth after it has been set in order that will be better for you, if you are believers.'" (7:85)

'And sit not on every road, threatening, and hindering from the Path of Allah those who believe in Him, and seeking to make it crooked. Remember when you were but few, and He multiplied you. See what was the end of the Mufsideen (mischief makers, corrupters and liars).' (7:86)

Shu`ayb was called `Speaker of the Prophets', because of his eloquent words and eloquent advice
(Tafsir Ibn Kathir)

'And if there is a party of you who believes in that which I have been sent and a party who do not believe, so be patient until Allah judges between us, and He is the Best of judges.'" (7:87)

The chiefs of those who were arrogant among his people said: 'We shall certainly drive you out, O Shu'ayb (alayhi salaam) and those who have believed with you from our town, or else you all shall return to our religion.'

He (Shu'ayb) said: 'Even though we hate it!' (7:88)

‘We should have invented a lie against Allah if we returned to your religion, after Allah has rescued us from it. It is not for us to return to it unless Allah, our Lord, should will. Our Lord comprehends all things in His Knowledge. In Allah (Alone) we put our trust. Our Lord! Judge between us and our people in truth, for You are the Best of those Who gives judgment.’ (7:89)

The chiefs of those who disbelieved among his people said to their people: ‘If you follow Shu’ayb (alayhi salaam) be sure then you will be the losers!’ (7:90)

So the earthquake seized them and they lay (dead), prostrate in their homes. (7:91)

Those who denied Shu’ayb (alayhi salaam), became as if they had never dwelt there (in their homes). Those who denied Shu’ayb (alayhi salaam), they were the losers. (7:92)

Then he (Shu’ayb (alayhi salaam)) turned from them and said: ‘O my people! I have indeed conveyed my Lord’s Messages unto you and I have given you good advice. Then how can I sorrow for the disbelieving people’s destruction).’” (7:93)

The Disbeliever's Ignorance

Allah the Exalted stated:

"The dwellers of Al Aiyka (near Midian, or Madyan) belied the Messengers.

When Shu'ayb (alayhi salaam) said to them: "Will you not fear Allah and obey Him? I am a trustworthy Messenger to you. SO fear Allah, keep your duty to Him, and obey me. No reward do I ask of you for it (my message of Islamic Monotheism), my reward is only from the Lord of the 'Alamin (mankind, jinn and all that exists). Give full measure, and cause no loss to others. And weigh with the true and straight balance. Defraud not people by reducing their things nor do evil making corruption and mischief in the land. Fear Him Who created you and the generations of the men of old."

They said: "You are only one of those bewitched! You are but a human being like us and verily, we think that you are one of the liars! So cause a piece of heaven to fall on us, if you are of the truthful!"

He said: "My Lord is the Best Knower of what you do."

But, they **belied** him, so the torment of the day of shadow (a gloomy cloud) seized them, indeed that was the torment of a Great Day. Verily, in this is a sign yet most of them are not believers.

And verily! Your Lord, He is indeed the All Mighty, the Most Merciful." (Ch 26:176-191 Quran).

Knowledge Check

1. As with all prophets, what was the main message of Prophet Shu'ayb to his people?
2. List 3 of the wicked deeds of the Madyan people.
3. Why did Allah send the torment of the earthquake upon the Midyans?
4. Why did Prophet Shu'ayb not feel sorrow for the disbelievers after the earthquake?
5. How did Prophet Shu'ayb react to the disbelievers' mocking?
6. Besides the message of Tawheed, what advice, concerning trade or dealing with others, did Prophet Shu'ayb give his people?

True or False

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Prophet Shu'ayb was from present day Saudi Arabia | T | F |
| 2. The people of Prophet Shu'ayb believed in Allah, but just did wicked deeds. | T | F |
| 3. The chiefs of the nation accepted Prophet Shu'ayb's message. | T | F |
| 4. The punishment of the Madyan's for their disbelief and wicked deeds was an earthquake. | T | F |
| 5. The nation of the Madyans survived the earthquake even though it was powerful. After that, they became believers. | T | F |
| 6. The Madyans were descendants of Prophet Ibrahim (alayhi salaam) | T | F |
| 7. The Madyans were known for their fair and just trading practices. | T | F |

Activities

Choose from one or more of the following activities as assigned:

1. Prophet Journal. Add an entry for Prophet Shu'ayb in your Prophet Journal (you can use the sheet at the end of the unit).

Add him to your table of Prophets as well as on a page dedicated just for him (include his location, special specific advice for his people (other than Tawheed) and any other important facts to remember. Alternatively, you might make a lapbook.

2. Creative Writing: Pretend that you work for a fictional commerce department back in the time of Prophet Shu'ayb. Make a public service announcement brochure exhorting merchants to use fair trade practices. Use the examples of bad trade practices from the story to create your brochure.
3. Creative Writing: Pretend that you are a follower of Prophet Shu'ayb back in his time. Write a letter to the editor to a fictitious ancient newspaper persuading the public to use fair trade practices.

Appendix

Tips for Letters to the Editor

A letter to the editor can be an effective way for individuals and/or organizations to deliver important information to the public. The "letters" section in newspapers, and radio and television stations that have a listener/viewer feed-back system, exist to provide a forum for public comment or debate. The "letters" section is widely read. Whether you are writing a letter to respond to "bad press" or to reinforce "good press", there are a number of important points to keep in mind.

The Purpose of a Letter to the Editor:

- to correct or clarify information or perceptions;
- to provide additional information;
- to express an opinion or point of view;
- to introduce or reinforce a message.

Begin by collecting your thoughts on paper. What are the main points you want to make? Keep them to three or less. List them by priority and use this as an "outline".

Decide on the "approach" of your letter. What is the best way to make your point? Should it be forceful or gentle? Can criticisms be delivered in a helpful way? Can you raise questions or options for the reader to consider? Should it be serious or could you use a catchy phrase or thoughtful wit? Would relaying personal experience or expertise strengthen your message?

Always approach your subject with an intelligent argument. Do not just voice your sentiments. Avoid whining or complaining.

Address the message or perception not the details. Avoid setting yourself up for rebuttal letters by making absolute statement, or by using facts and figures that can be disputed.

Keep it short (less than 150 words) if possible. Shorter letters have a better chance of being published. If a letter is too long, it may be edited down by someone who probably doesn't understand the issue.

Keep the tone objective and professional. Don't be offensive or make personal attacks. Focus on the information not the person.

When providing factual information/corrections, include the reference or source (for example, "According to the last census, the number of family owned farms in Canada...").

Sample Letters:

Dear Editor:

John Doe of the Metropolis Vegetarian Society claims that food animals are inefficient converters of plants to food (letter, Feb. 31). That's not true. Cattle and poultry are extremely efficient at converting stuff we cannot eat, or would not want to eat, into our most highly nutritious foods.

Cattle eat grass and grains grown on lands which are not suitable for the cultivation of food crops. They concentrate the energy from these lands and, as the buffalo did before them, "recycle" all of the energy not destined to become meat or milk.

If only we humans were as efficient and easy on the planet.

Dear Editor:

Thank you for your insightful piece "Down on the Farm", June 31. Reporter Jane Doe is to be commended for her willingness to trade her "city shoes" for "barn boots" in order to look at farming from the farmer's point of view. Her article included many important points that are often overlooked by city people. Most important of all it showed how farmers are just like anybody else, we all care about the same things.

Prophet Shu'ayb

His "nickname:"

Punishment of the Disbelievers of Prophet Shuayb's nation:

Types of Evil Deeds of His People

Special Advice Prophet Shu'ayb gave specifically to his people:

Ways the People of His Nation Persecuted Him:

Prophet Shu'ayb in the Quraan

Chapter Name (Sûrah)	Number of Chapter (Sûrah)	Verse Numbers
Al-A'râf	7	85, 88, 90, 92 (twice)
Hûd	11	84, 87, 91, 94
Ash-Shu'arâ	26	177
Al-'Ankabût	29	36

Map of Nation of Prophet Shu'ayb