

Say, 'People of the Book, let us come to a statement that is common to us all: we worship God alone, we ascribe no partner to Him, and none of us takes others beside God as lords.' If they turn away, say, 'Bear witness that we are Muslims.'

{ Quran 2:136 }



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AN ICNA PROJECT

In the Name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

Belief in all Prophets and Messengers is an essential part of Islamic creed. On their own, human beings cannot be fully guided, understand God, the hereafter, or the purpose of life. Accordingly, God communicated to mankind by selecting Prophets who would deliver his message to the rest of humanity. To convey the purpose of existence to humans, God sent clear and practical instructions through Prophets. Moses, known as Mūsā in Arabic, is one of the greatest Prophets and Messengers along with Noah, Abraham, Jesus, and Muhammad peace be upon all of them. He plays an important role in Islamic teachings and is the Prophet that is most mentioned by name in the Qur'ān and his story ranges over several chapters.

Moses is one of the most revered Prophets in Islam and has the designated title of *Kalim Allah*, meaning the one who directly spoke to God. The Torah, which was revealed to Moses, is considered to be one of the true revelations of God and its teachings are confirmed in the Qur'ān.

EARLY LIFE

Moses was born into a family of Israelites in Egypt. Islamic tradition refers to the father of Moses as Imrān, which corresponds to Amran in the Hebrew Bible. Moses was born during a time when Pharaoh enslaved the Children of Israel. Pharaoh had a dream in which one of the males from the Israelites will destroy his kingdom. Therefore, he took it upon himself to murder all the male newborns among the Israelites for one year and spare them for another because they were needed for economic reasons. Moses was born during the year in which the male children were to be murdered.

Moses's mother was worried about her son's fate. God inspired her to place him in a basket and cast it in the Nile. Moses ended up near the palace of Pharaoh where he was taken by the guards. Asiya, the wife of Pharaoh, was childless and was delighted by Moses. She convinced her husband to allow her to adopt him.

After reaching adulthood, Moses walked through the city and encountered an Israelite fighting with an Egyptian. The Israelite summoned Moses to help him. Moses struck the Egyptian and accidentally killed him. Moses was consumed by guilt and asked God to forgive him. Fearing for his life, he fled to Madyan, where he found refuge in a household and got married. Moses was then given instruction by God to return to Egypt and call the people to worship God.

Every event in Moses's life was predetermined to prepare him to deliver God's message. Belief in God's decree is an

essential pillar of Islamic creed. Although bad things happen, Muslims do not believe that anything is completely evil. There is a purpose and a greater good for everything. The story of Moses emphasizes the notion of placing one's faith in God. God taught Moses about the need to put his trust in Him, despite the fact that he felt fear on many occasions.

PROPHETHOOD

Moses left Madyan with his family, as they passed the mount of Tur he saw a fire and told his family to wait for him to get a torch or find guidance. Upon arriving, God spoke to Moses, told him to remove his shoes, and informed him that he was chosen to be a Prophet. God commanded Moses to return to Egypt to call Pharaoh to worship God and free the Israelites. Moses mentioned his fear of being killed by Pharaoh and asked God to make his brother Aaron a Prophet so that he may assist him. God granted Moses' request and gave him two miracles. His stick could transform into a snake and his right hand shined with light after he placed it in his pocket. Moses and Aaron arrived in Egypt and were commanded to call Pharaoh to stop his oppression. The Qur'ān describes Pharaoh as a tyrant, oppressor, and one who spread corruption of such severe magnitude and transgressed all boundaries (Qur'ān 2:49; 89:11-12). Despite Pharaoh's transgression, God commanded Moses and Aaron to "*Speak to him with gentle speech perhaps he may take heed and remember and fear God*" (Qur'ān 20:44).



In Islam, all Prophets are supported by miracles to prove that they are not impostors. Those miracles are granted by the power and permission of God and are usually in the realm in which their people excel and are recognized as superiors. Moses' contemporaries were excellent in magic. So, his major miracle was to defeat the best magicians of Egypt of his days. The Arabs, the contemporaries of the Prophet Mohammed, were known for their eloquence and beautiful poetry and Arabic language. Therefore, the Prophet Muhammad's major miracle was the Qur'an. Although they were masters of Arabic, none of the Arab poets or orators could produce anything like the Qur'an, despite the repeated challenge from the Qur'an itself. Previous miracles were limited by time and place, but the Qur'an is a universal and everlasting miracle. Previous generations witnessed it and future generations will witness its miraculous nature in terms of its style, content and being spiritually uplifting. These still can be tested and will thereby prove the divine origin of the Qur'an.

Moses, like other Prophets, clearly stated that these miracles are not of his own but from God. He had no personal benefit for the delivery of the message, it was sincerely for the well-being of mankind. Moses also confirms what was revealed before him and what may be revealed after him. The message given to Moses was one in the same essence and for the same purpose as that of previous Prophets. Therefore, his teachings did not deviate from what was revealed to other Prophets.

Islam, Judaism, and Christianity share the core concept that God sent prophets to guide their people. However, Islam also differs from these two faiths on important aspects related to Prophethood. Islam teaches that all Prophets of God were of high moral character and did not succumb to the sins their people committed. For example, the Qur'an exonerates Aaron even though the Old Testament depicts him as one who worshipped the golden calf.

WHAT DID MOSES PREACH?

Islam is not limited to the revelation that was sent to the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him, but was also the message of previous Prophets. The Qur'an teaches that previous religions, such as Christianity and Judaism, in their original forms were based on the oneness of God. Each Prophet conveyed the consistent divine message of worshiping one God and living a morally upright life. Moses, like other Prophets, called his people to worship only one God and foretold of a final Messenger. However, the original message of Moses was lost, abandoned, or changed over time and only parts of the original message remained intact. Along with these beliefs, Moses also instructed his people to follow the laws of God. These laws, similar to sharia, encompassed many parts of daily life, such as diet, dress, marriage, conflicts, and finances.

THE TORAH IN ISLAM

The Quran confirms the original revelation that was given to Prophet Moses called the Torah and the Injil (the Gospel) that was revealed to Prophet Jesus.

Known as the sacred scriptures of the three Abrahamic Faiths, the Torah, the Bible, and the Quran are all universally linked. They are all revealed from the one God of Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad. The Quran is the culmination of revelation as prophesied in the preceding two books. Nevertheless, Muslims have a different understanding of the Torah. For Jews and Christians, the Torah is believed to be the first five books of the Bible beginning with Genesis. However, when examined carefully, these books do not represent revelation given to Moses but are instead biographies of Moses. For instance, towards the end of chapter 34 in the book of Deuteronomy, which is part of the Torah, it talks of Moses' death and being buried, which obviously is not of the work of Moses nor is it the revelation given to him on Mount Sinai as Muslims believe.

Therefore, even the definition of Torah in the Judea-Christian literature is not like the Qur'anic reference to the Torah which specifically refers to the revelation given to Prophet Moses not biographies about him. The Qur'an speaks of confirming previous scriptures, but it is conditional and indicates in no uncertain terms that only the Qur'an is the final judge and criterion used to discern what parts of previous scripture is the word of God and what is the word of humans.

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN MOSES AND MUHAMMAD

As previously noted, Prophet Moses is the most mentioned Prophet in the Qur'an. This is due to the similarities between him and the Prophet Muhammad.

	MOSES	MUHAMMAD
Orphaned	✓	✓
Exiled from home	✓	✓
Returned to place of birth to deliver God's message	✓	✓
Spoke to God directly	✓	✓
Worked as a Shepherd	✓	✓
Lawgiver	✓	✓
Led people secretly in a mass exodus	✓	✓
Given scripture	✓	✓
Fought oppression	✓	✓
Sent to all mankind	✗	✓

THE STATUS OF MOSES IN ISLAM

Moses is honored and revered in the Qur'an. While the story of Moses in the Qur'an has similarities with the Bible, the Qur'an exonerates him from any blame of his people's actions. He is not only a Prophet among others in the chain of Prophets, but he is one of the five greatest Prophets, the others being Noah, Abraham, Jesus, and Muhammad peace be upon them. Each of these Prophets delivered the same message, to worship God alone and follow His teachings. Islam is considered one religion from Adam to Jacob to Moses, to Muhammad. Therefore, Muslims believe that Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him did not start Islam, but completed it.