

Prophet Shu'ayb (a) An Introduction

Prophet Shu'ayb (a) is a Prophet from the progeny of Prophet Ibrahim (a). He was sent to the people of Madyan, a town in northwest region of the Arabian peninsula. It was a fertile, wooded land and the people of Madyan came to be known as Ashabul Aykah, people of the woods. They controlled the great trade routes between Yemen and Syria, and between Iraq and Egypt on the shores of the Red Sea. Prophet Shu'ayb is known in the Bible as Jethro.

Historical sources say Prophet Shu'ayb was blind. His blindness is said to have been because of his crying out of love for Allah. The people thought he was weak because of his blindness and looked down upon him. Prophet Shu'ayb was a very eloquent speaker and the Prophet (s) called him 'Khtaib al-Anbiya' – The Orator of the Prophets.

Just like all the other Prophets, Prophet Shu'ayb (a) called his people to the worship of one God and asked them to follow His commands. He reminded them of the blessings of Allah on them. The people of Madyan were traders and were not fair in their transactions with people. Prophet Shu'ayb tried to bring about economic reform in the society. He talked about the rights of others and the harms of fraud in transactions. He provided them with equipment to measure goods when they sold it to others. He is said to be the first person to introduce the use of measures and scales in transactions.

The people of Madyan did not like what Prophet Shu'ayb was telling them and they rose against him. Many of his supporters and representatives were killed by the people of Madyan. He continued to try and change them.

In the story of Prophet Musa, it is narrated that he reached Madyan and helped the daughters of Prophet Shu'ayb get water from the well. They invited him home, where he met Prophet Shu'ayb. One of the daughters suggested they should employ Prophet Musa. Prophet Shu'ayb accepted that suggestion and he offered Prophet Musa to work for him. He also married one of his daughters to him. Hadith says it was because of Prophet Shu'ayb's politeness and love for Allah that Allah made Prophet Musa serve him for a while.