

Prophet Shu‘ayb

There are different views about the family background of Shu‘ayb. Some are of the opinion that he was the son of Noba who was the son of Prophet Ibrahim. Some believed that his father’s name was ‘Boyab’ while others said that he was the son of ‘Mikeel’ who was the son of Yosaeb bin Ibrahim and his (Mikeel’s) mother was the daughter of Prophet Lut. Some said that Shu‘ayb’s name was ‘Sherun’ and he was the son of ‘Saikun’ or ‘unka’ or ‘Sabit’ who belonged to Prophet Ibrahim’s family. While others believe he does not belong to Prophet Ibrahim’s family but his father had accepted Islam at the time of Prophet Ibrahim.

In Surah Al-A‘raf, Allah says:

And to Madyan (We sent) their brother Shu‘aib. He said: O my people! Serve Allah, you have no god other than Him; clear proof indeed has come to you from your Lord, therefore give full measure and weight and do not diminish to men their things, and do not make mischief in the land after its reform; this is better for you if you are believers:

And do not lie in wait in every path, threatening and turning away from Allah’s way him who believes in Him and seeking to make it crooked; and remember when you were few then He multiplied you, and consider what was the end of the mischief-makers.

And if there is a party of you who believe in that with which am sent, and another party who do not believe, then wait patiently until Allah judges between us; and He is the best of the Judges.

The chiefs, those who were proud from among his people said: We will most certainly turn you out, O Shu‘aib, and (also); those who believe with you, from our town, or you shall come back to our faith. He said: What! though we dislike (it)?

Indeed we shall have forged a lie against Allah, if we go back to your religion after Allah has delivered us from It, and it befits us not that we should go back to it, except if Allah our Lord please: Our Lord comprehends all things in His knowledge; in Allah do we trust: Our Lord! decide between us and our people with truth; and Thou art the best of deciders.

And the chiefs of those who disbelieved from among his people said: If you follow Shu'aib, you shall then most surely be losers.

Then the earthquake overtook them, so they became motionless bodies in their abode.

Those who called Shu'aib a liar were as though they had never dwelt therein; those who called Shu'aib a liar, they were the losers.

So he turned away from them and said: O my people! certainly I delivered to you the messages of my Lord and I gave you good advice; how shall I then be sorry for an unbelieving people?

And We did not send a Prophet in a town but We overtook its people with distress and affliction in order that they might humble themselves. (7:85-94)

In 26:32-41, Prophet Shu'ayb said to the dwellers of the desert,

"You are not afraid of Allah's punishment? Allah has sent me as a messenger and I am your Prophet. Listen to the orders which Allah has given me. I don't require anything from you. Allah will reward me for my deeds. Allah says: Be just and honest in weighing things and also in returning their belongings. Do not create quarrels and troubles among the people and fear Allah as He is the great creator of the world." The dwellers of the forest said that Shu'ayb was influenced by black magic and has become mad. They also said that he was just a human being like them and was a great liar. They said, "If you are really a true Prophet then ask Allah to send us a few pieces of the sky." The Prophet said that Allah knew better what they said. But they did not listen, and insulted him. So Allah sent the great punishment on them. It was a severe punishment. (26:32-41)

When they insulted Shu'ayb, Allah sent punishment of scorching heat which affected them and their families. They went inside their houses to save themselves but the heat also entered along with them. The heat was so intense that they could not bear it. Then Allah sent a piece of dark cloud. They all ran under the shade of the cloud but instead of water (rain), fire started raining on them and an earthquake started and they all were destroyed by fire. These two incidents clearly show that Allah sent punishment on the two groups who disbelieved Him and His Prophet.

According to Imam Ali ibn Al Husayn, Shu'ayb made a scale and standard weights. His people were very honest in weighing things. After that the people became dishonest in their weighing. They started cheating by under weighing. Then Allah sent a curse on them through an earthquake and they were destroyed.

According to another tradition Ibn Babawayh and al-Qutb al-Rawandi have mentioned through Ibn-'Abbas that Shu'ayb and Prophet Ayyub and Balaam Bin Bao'or belonged to the family who had brought faith on Prophet Ibrahim when he was thrown in a fire and was saved from Nimrod's punishment. After

that, Prophet Ibrahim and these people went towards Syria. Then Prophet Ibrahim asked for one of the daughters of Prophet Lut. In this way all the other Prophets came after Prophet Ibrahim. Shu‘ayb was one of them that Allah sent as a Prophet to Madyan, but the people of Madyan were not from the family of Shu‘ayb.

The king of Madyan was very strong, but he and his people were disbelievers and idol worshippers. They were dishonest in their dealing with outsiders and the king also allowed them to do so. Shu‘ayb tried to make them aware of it but in vain. The king drove away the disciples of Shu‘ayb from his city. At last Allah sent a great punishment of fire. The water became very hot, so that they could not drink. The people ran towards Baisha, which was not so far from them. They all gathered together under the shadow of a cloud to save themselves. But fire rained on them from the cloud. They were all burnt and none escaped the punishment.

The Holy Prophet himself has stated that on Doomsday, Shu‘ayb will be the first Prophet along with his people to enter heaven. When his people were destroyed through punishment Shu‘ayb came along with his followers to Makkah and stayed there until his death. Shu‘ayb stayed in Makkah and again went to Madyan. At that time Prophet Musa came to see him. Ibn ‘Abbas has stated that Shu‘ayb was 242 years old when he expired.

There is a tradition from Imam Ja‘far as-Sadiq that Allah has sent five Prophets i.e.. Prophet Hud, Prophet Salih, Prophet Isma‘il, Shu‘ayb and the Holy Prophet who were very much beloved to Allah. Imam ‘Ali said that Shu‘ayb used to call the people to accept Islam until he became old and his bones became weak and brittle. He disappeared from the people for a while and then after some time Allah bestowed him with youth and again he came to the people and started preaching. The people said we didn’t listen to your address when you were old so how can we obey and trust you when you have become young now. Imam Muhammad al-Baqir said that Allah said to Shu‘ayb that He would send a punishment on 40,000 people who had disobeyed his orders and on 60,000 who were obedient. Shu‘ayb, “O Allah! Why will you send a punishment on obedient people?” Allah said, “They did not fight with the disobedient people nor did not utter a word or help you in your work.”

Shu‘ayb became very sad and wept so much that he became blind. Allah gave him back his sight. But he did not give up lamenting and lost his sight again and Allah again restored his sight. This happened three times. The fourth time Allah asked him why he wept so much? Was he afraid of hell? If so, Allah has given him security. If he was crying for heaven, heaven is for him. Shu‘ayb said, “O Allah! I am not weeping for hell or heaven but because I love you very much and I want to come to You.” Then Allah said, “I am sending Musa Ibn ‘Imran to you to take care of you.”

Sahl bin Sa‘id says that Husham bin Abdul Malik sent him to ‘Rasafah’ to dig a well. When he dug for 200 feet, he saw a human head covered with dust and mud. He removed the dust from the head and saw a man in white dress standing on a stone and his left hand was on his head. When he removed his hand from his head blood started flowing from the wound. Again he put his hand on the wound and the

blood stopped flowing. On his clothes it was written: I am the Shu‘ayb. Allah sent me to the people to preach to them but they wounded me and threw me into this well and closed it. Sahl bin Sa‘id wrote about this matter to Husham bin Abdul Malik and he ordered the well to be closed as before and dig at another place.

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