10242 - A brief look at Moosa (peace be upon him)

the question

We would like a brief description of Moosa (peace be upon him) and his people.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

·Allah sent revelation to Moosa ibn ‘Imraan (peace be upon him) and sent him to the Children of Israel to call them to worship Allah alone, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And indeed We sent Moosa (Moses) with Our Ayaat (signs, proofs, and evidences) (saying): “Bring out your people from darkness into light, and remind them of the annals of Allah”

[Ibraaheem 14:5]

·And Allah sent Haaroon the brother of Moosa as a support to Moosa when He wanted to send him to Pharaoh, to call him to worship Allah. This was in response to the request of Moosa:

“And We granted him his brother Haaroon (Aaron), (also) a Prophet, out of Our Mercy”[Maryam 19:53]

·At that time, the Children of Israel were in Egypt, under the rule of Pharaoh, who had enslaved and humiliated them. He used to let their women live but he killed their sons:

“…weakening (oppressing) a group (i.e. Children of Israel) among them: killing their sons, and letting their females live. Verily, he was of the Mufsidoon (i.e. those who commit great sins and crimes, oppressors, tyrants”[al-Qasas 28:4]

·Moosa was born in Egypt, and Allah willed that he should be brought up in the house of Pharaoh… So his mother put him in a box which she threw into the river, and it was picked up by the family

of Pharaoh. His wife Aasiyah rejoiced over him and forbade them to kill him… When he grew up and attained his full strength, Allah gave him wisdom (Prophethood, right judgement of affairs) and knowledge (of the religion of his forefathers, i.e., Islamic monotheism). (cf. al-Qasas 28:14)

·One day a man from among the Children of Israel sought Moosa's help against his enemy. Moosa struck him with his fist and killed him (cf. al-Qasas 28:15). Then Moosa regretted it, and sought the forgiveness of his Lord, and He forgave him. Then he became afraid, looking about in the city (waiting to see the result of his crime of killing) (cf. al-Qasas 28:18). The next day, Moosa found that man fighting another enemy. He asked Moosa to help him again, and Moosa became angry with him. The man thought that he was going to kill him, so he said to him:

" 'Is it your intention to kill me as you killed a man yesterday?'"

[al-Qasas 28:19]

·That enemy told the people of Pharaoh about that, and they started to look for him in order to kill him. A righteous man came and told Moosa what the people were plotting against him. He advised him to leave Egypt:

"So he escaped from there, looking about in a state of fear. He said: 'My Lord! Save me from the people who are Zaalimoon (polytheists and wrongdoers)!'"[al-Qasas 28:21]

·Moosa headed for the land of Madyan (Midian), where he married the daughter of a noble shaykh in return for working for him for eight years. When that time was over, Moosa travelled with his family towards Egypt. When he came to al-Toor (Mount Sinai), Allah wanted to single him out, to honour him with Prophethood and to speak with him. Moosa lost his way, then he saw a fire…

"… he said to his family: 'Wait! Verily, I have seen a fire; perhaps I can bring you some burning brand therefrom, or find some guidance at the fire.'

And when he came to it (the fire), he was called by name: 'O Moosa (Moses)!

Verily, I am your Lord! So take off your shoes; you are in the sacred valley, Tuwa.

And I have chosen you. So listen to that which will be revealed (to you).

Verily, I am Allah! Laa ilaaha illa Ana (none has the right to be worshipped but I), so worship Me, and perform As-Salaah (Iqaamat-as-Salaah) for My remembrance.

Verily, the Hour is coming and I am almost hiding it that every person may be rewarded for that which he strives"[Ta-Ha 20:10-15]

·Then Allah showed him some of the miracles. He commanded him to throw his stick on the ground, and it turned into a snake; then to put his hand into his garment, and it came out white. Then He told him to go with these two miracles to Pharaoh, so that he might accept admonition or fear Allah, for he had transgressed all bounds in oppression and corruption. And He sent with Moosa his brother Haaroon. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

" 'Go, both of you, to Fir'awn (Pharaoh), verily, he has transgressed (all bounds in disbelief and disobedience and behaved as an arrogant and as a tyrant).

And speak to him mildly, perhaps he may accept admonition or fear (Allah).'

They said: 'Our Lord! Verily, we fear lest he should hasten to punish us or lest he should transgress (all bounds against us).'

He (Allah) said: 'Fear not, verily, I am with you both, hearing and seeing.

So go you both to him, and say: "Verily, we are Messengers of your Lord, so let the Children of Israel go with us, and torment them not; indeed, we have come with a sign from your Lord! And peace will be upon him who follows the guidance!"'"[Ta-Ha 20:43-47]

·Moosa and Haaroon (peace be upon them) went to Pharaoh and conveyed the message to him. Pharaoh asked Moosa:

"Fir'awn (Pharaoh) said: 'And what is the Lord of the 'Aalameen (mankind, jinn and all that exists)?'

Moosa (Moses) said: ‘The Lord of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, if you seek to be convinced with certainty’”[al-Shu’araa’ 26:23-24]

·Then Pharaoh asked Moosa for a sign to prove that he was speaking the truth:

“[Fir‘awn (Pharaoh)] said: ‘If you have come with a sign, show it forth, if you are one of those who tell the truth.’

Then [Moosa (Moses)] threw his stick and behold! it was a serpent, manifest!

And he drew out his hand, and behold! it was white (with radiance) for the beholders”[al-A’raaf 7:106-108]

·When Pharaoh and his people saw that, they accused Moosa of sorcery. They brought the sorcerers together and offered them a great reward. Then they gathered the people together on a feast day. The sorcerers threw down their sticks and ropes,

“…So when they threw, they bewitched the eyes of the people, and struck terror into them, and they displayed a great magic”[al-A’raaf 7:116]

·Then Allah supported Moosa against the sorcerers and exposed the falsehood of their plots. Then the sorcerers believed in the Lord of the Worlds:

“And We revealed to Moosa (Moses) (saying): ‘Throw your stick,’ and behold! It swallowed up straight away all the falsehood which they showed.

Thus truth was confirmed, and all that they did was made of no effect.

So they were defeated there and returned disgraced.

And the sorcerers fell down prostrate.

They said: ‘We believe in the Lord of the ‘Aalameen (mankind, jinn and all that exists).

The Lord of Moosa (Moses) and Haaroon (Aaron)’”[al-A’raaf 7:117-122]

·When the sorcerers believed in Allah, Pharaoh cut off their hands and feet on opposite sides and crucified them. But they bore that with patience and paid no heed to his threats, until they met Allah as Muslims. Then the chiefs indicated that Moosa and his people should be killed, lest they spread corruption in the land. So they killed their sons, and let their women live. Moosa urged the Children of Israel to have patience. Then Pharaoh could no longer bear to see Moosa , so he decided to kill him:

“Fir’awn (Pharaoh) said: ‘Leave me to kill Moosa (Moses), and let him call his Lord (to stop me from killing him)! I fear that he may change your religion, or that he may cause mischief to appear in the land!’”[Ghaafir 40:26]

·Whilst they were thinking of killing Moosa, chivalry caused a believing man from among the family of Pharaoh, who was concealing his faith, to defend Moosa. He said, “If he is lying, he cannot harm us, and if he is telling the truth, then some of that of which he is warning you will befall you.” This man continued to advise Pharaoh and his people, but they did not respond to him:

“… Fir‘awn (Pharaoh) said: ‘I show you only that which I see (correct), and I guide you only to the path of right policy!’”[Ghaafir 40:29]

·Moosa continued to call Pharaoh and his people, preaching in a good manner, but it only made them more arrogant in the land and caused them to oppress and persecute the believers even more. So Moosa prayed against them, and Allah punished them with drought, famine, and failure of the harvest, that they might receive admonition. But they did not submit, rather they persisted in their evil deeds and transgression. So Allah punished them with other kinds of afflictions, so that they might return to their senses:

“They said [to Moosa (Moses)]: ‘Whatever Ayaat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) you may bring to us, to work therewith your sorcery on us, we shall never believe in you.’

So We sent on them: the flood, the locusts, the lice, the frogs, and the blood (as a succession of) manifest signs, yet they remained arrogant, and they were of those people who were Mujrimoon

(criminals, polytheists and sinners)’”[al-A’raaf 7:132-133]

·When the transgression of Pharaoh intensified, there came the divine command to seek a way out. Allah commanded Moosa to leave Egypt with the Children of Israel, in secret. When Pharaoh found out, he gathered a great army to catch up with Moosa and his people before they reached Palestine. Pharaoh and his troops set out, leaving behind them gardens and wealth. They caught up with Moosa and his people at sunrise, on the shores of the Red Sea. Allah saved Moosa and his people, and drowned Pharaoh and his troops, as Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And We revealed to Moosa (Moses), saying: ‘Depart by night with My slaves, verily, you will be pursued.’

Then Fir‘awn (Pharaoh) sent callers to (all) the cities.

(Saying): ‘Verily, these indeed are but a small band.

And verily, they have done what has enraged us.

But we are a host all assembled, amply forewarned.’

So, We expelled them from gardens and springs,

Treasures, and every kind of honourable place.

Thus [We turned them (Pharaoh’s people) out] and We caused the Children of Israel to inherit them.

So they pursued them at sunrise.

And when the two hosts saw each other, the companions of Moosa (Moses) said: ‘We are sure to be overtaken.’

[Moosa (Moses)] said: ‘Nay, verily, with me is my Lord. He will guide me.’

Then We revealed to Moosa (Moses) (saying): ‘Strike the sea with your stick.’ And it parted, and

each separate part (of that sea water) became like a huge mountain.

Then We brought near the others [Fir‘awn’s (Pharaoh’s) party] to that place.

And We saved Moosa (Moses) and all those with him.

Then We drowned the others.

Verily, in this is indeed a sign (or a proof), yet most of them are not believers.

And verily, your Lord, He is truly, the All-Mighty, the Most Merciful”[al-Shu’araa’ 26:52-68]

·Thus Pharaoh and his troops were destroyed. When he was drowning, he believed, but that was of no benefit to him. Allah preserved his body to be a lesson to those who came after him. The punishment of Pharaoh’s family in this world was drowning in the sea, and in the Hereafter, theirs is a painful torment:

“…while an evil torment encompassed Fir‘awn’s (Pharaoh) people.

The Fire, they are exposed to it, morning and afternoon. And on the Day when the Hour will be established (it will be said to the angels): ‘Cause Fir‘awn’s (Pharaoh) people to enter the severest torment!’”[Ghaafir 40:45-46]

·The Children of Israel witnessed the miracles of Moosa, the last of which was their being saved and the destruction of their enemy. These miracles were sufficient to eradicate the last traces of idolatry from their hearts, but they still returned to it sometimes, and Moosa was faced with great difficulties in bringing them back to the worship of Allah alone. For example:

When they had crossed the sea, they passed by some people who worshipped idols. They asked Moosa to give them an idol which they could worship like those people did. Moosa said to them:

“ ‘Verily, you are a people who know not (the Majesty and Greatness of Allah and what is obligatory upon you, i.e. to worship none but Allah Alone, the One and the Only God of all that exists).’

[Moosa (Moses) added:] ‘Verily, these people will be destroyed for that which they are engaged in (idols, worship). And all that they are doing is in vain.’

He said: ‘Shall I seek for you an ilaah (a god) other than Allah, while He has given you superiority over the ‘Aalameen (mankind and jinn of your time)?’”[al-A’raaf 7:138-140]

The Children of Israel were headed towards the Holy Land, and on the way they suffered from thirst. They complained to Moosa, who prayed to his Lord and He gave them water:

“We revealed to Moosa (Moses) when his people asked him for water (saying): ‘Strike the stone with your stick’, and there gushed forth out of it twelve springs, each group knew its own place for water”[al-A’raaf 7:160]

On their journey, they complained about the intense heat of the sun, and the lack of food. So Moosa prayed to his Lord and He shaded them with clouds, and provided them with good things (to eat), but they did not appreciate that, and they demanded something else.

“We shaded them with the clouds and sent down upon them Al-Manna and the quail (saying): ‘Eat of the good things with which We have provided you.’ They harmed Us not but they used to harm themselves”[al-A’raaf 7:160]

Then they complained and said:

“ ‘We cannot endure one kind of food. So invoke your Lord for us to bring forth for us of what the earth grows, its herbs, its cucumbers, its Foom (wheat or garlic), its lentils and its onions”"

[al-Baqarah 2:61]

Allah had promised Moosa that He would send down to him a Book containing commands and prohibitions for the Children of Israel. When Pharaoh was destroyed, Moosa asked Allah his Lord for that Book. Allah commanded him to fast for forty days. He appointed his brother Haaroon as his deputy to be in charge of his people, and he fasted for those days. Then Allah revealed the Tawraat (Torah) to him at the mountain of al-Toor (Sinai), in which there were lessons and

explanations of all things. When he came back to his people, he found them worshipping the calf, which al-Saamiri had made for them from their jewellery and had told them, “This is your god and the god of Moosa.”

“Then he took out (of the fire) for them (a statue of) a calf which seemed to low. They said: ‘This is your ilaah (god), and the ilaah (god) of Moosa (Moses), but he [Moosa (Moses)] has forgotten (his god).’

Did they not see that it could not return them a word (for answer), and that it had no power either to harm them or to do them good?

And Haaroon (Aaron) indeed had said to them beforehand: ‘O my people! You are being tried in this, and verily, your Lord is (Allah) the Most Gracious, so follow me and obey my order.’

They said: ‘We will not stop worshipping it (i.e. the calf), until Moosa (Moses) returns to us’”[Ta-Ha 20:88-91]

When Moosa came, he got angry with them and rebuked them, and explained the truth to them. Then he burned the calf, and threw it into the sea. He punished al-Saamiri and he subsequently felt pain from anything he touched.

The Children of Israel regretted having worshipped the calf. Moosa chose from among them seventy men and took them to the Mountain (al-Toor/Sinai) to worship Allah and show their regret for what they had done. There Allah spoke to Moosa, but some of them did not believe that Allah was the One who had spoken to Moosa. So they disobeyed him and said, Show us Allah plainly.

“And (remember) when you said: ‘O Moosa (Moses)! We shall never believe in you until we see Allah plainly.’ But you were seized with a thunderbolt (lightning) while you were looking.

Then We raised you up after your death, so that you might be grateful”[al-Baqarah 2:55-56]

When Moosa came back to the Children of Israel with the Tawraat, they refused to accept it and complained about its rulings. So he threatened them, then they accepted it, as Allah says

(interpretation of the meaning):

“And (O Children of Israel, remember) when We took your covenant and We raised above you the Mount (saying): ‘Hold fast to that which We have given you, and remember that which is therein so that you may become Al-Muttaqoon (the pious).

Then after that you turned away. Had it not been for the Grace and Mercy of Allah upon you, indeed you would have been among the losers”[al-Baqarah 2:63-64]

Then Moosa commanded the Children of Israel to go with him to the Holy Land in Palestine, so they went with him, then they became afraid of its powerful inhabitants, so they disobeyed Moosa and rebelled against him:

“They said: ‘O Moosa (Moses)! We shall never enter it as long as they are there. So go you and your Lord and fight you two, we are sitting right here’”[al-Maa'idah 5:24]

So Moosa prayed against them, and Allah answered his prayer. He told him that the Holy Land was forbidden to them, and they would wander in the land for forty years, so he should not grieve over them:

“He [Moosa (Moses)] said: ‘O my Lord! I have power only over myself and my brother, so separate us from the people who are the Faasiqoon (rebellious and disobedient to Allah)!’

(Allah) said: ‘Therefore it (this holy land) is forbidden to them for forty years; in distraction they will wander through the land. So be not sorrowful over the people who are the Faasiqoon (rebellious and disobedient to Allah)’[al-Maa'idah 5:25-26]

·Moosa bore with patience the many complaints of the Children of Israel. During that period of wandering, Haaroon died, then Moosa died, and most of them also died. When that time came to an end, Yoosha’ ibn Noon (Joshua the son of Nun) led them into the Holy Land and besieged it until he conquered it. He commanded them to enter the land prostrating, but they did not obey him, and entered it on their backsides.

·Allah bestowed great blessings upon the Children of Israel. He saved them from Pharaoh, and provided them with good things to eat. He made Prophets and kings from among them, and favoured them above all other people, but they were ungrateful for those blessings and did not appreciate them:

“And (remember) when Moosa (Moses) said to his people: ‘O my people! Remember the Favour of Allah to you: when He made Prophets among you, made you kings and gave you what He had not given to any other among the ‘Aalameen (mankind and jinn, in the past)’”[al-Maa’idah 5:20]

·The Jews say and do evil things which bring upon them the wrath and anger of Allah.

·They accused Allah of being stingy:

“The Jews say: ‘Allah’s Hand is tied up (i.e. He does not give and spend of His Bounty).’ Be their hands tied up and be they accursed for what they uttered. Nay, both His Hands are widely outstretched. He spends (of His Bounty) as He wills”

[al-Maa'idah 5:64]

·By virtue of this serious lie, they became disbelievers:

“Indeed, Allah has heard the statement of those (Jews) who say: ‘Truly, Allah is poor and we are rich!’”[Aal ‘Imraan 3:181]

·They attributed a son to Allah; Allah’s curse be upon them, how they are deluded away from the truth!

“And the Jews say: ‘Uzayr (Ezra) is the son of Allah…”[al-Tawbah 9:30]

·When the Tawraat reached them, most of them disbelieved in its rulings. They turned away from the path of Allah, and regarded wrongdoing as permissible, so Allah punished them for their sins. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“For the wrongdoing of the Jews, We made unlawful for them certain good foods which had been

lawful for them — and for their hindering many from Allah's Way;

And their taking of Riba (usury) though they were forbidden from taking it and their devouring of men's substance wrongfully (bribery). And We have prepared for the disbelievers among them a painful torment"[al-Nisaa' 4:61]

·Among their lies is their claim that they are the sons and the beloved of Allah:

"And (both) the Jews and the Christians say: 'We are the children of Allah and His loved ones.' Say: 'Why then does He punish you for your sins?' Nay, you are but human beings of those He has created"[al-Maa'idah 5:18]

·And among their lies is the following:

"And they say, 'None shall enter Paradise unless he be a Jew or a Christian.' These are their own desires. Say (O Muhammad), 'Produce your proof if you are truthful'"[al-Baqarah 2:111]

·And among their fabrications is the following:

"And they (Jews) say, 'The Fire (i.e. Hell-fire on the Day of Resurrection) shall not touch us but for a few numbered days.' Say (O Muhammad to them): 'Have you taken a covenant from Allah, so that Allah will not break His Covenant? Or is it that you say of Allah what you know not?'"[al-Baqarah 2:80]

·An example of their plots and betrayal is the way in which they distorted their Book, the Tawraat:

"Among those who are Jews, there are some who displace words from (their) right places…"[al-Nisaa' 4:46]

·Among their crimes are their disbelief in the signs of Allah and their killing the Prophets unlawfully, so Allah will punish them for their sins. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"And they were covered with humiliation and misery, and they drew on themselves the Wrath of Allah. That was because they used to disbelieve the Ayaat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons,

signs, revelations etc.) of Allah and killed the Prophets wrongfully. That was because they disobeyed and used to transgress the bounds (in their disobedience to Allah, i.e. commit crimes and sins)”[al-Baqarah 2:61]

·Because the Jews have committed so many wrongful actions and evil deeds, fabricated so many lies and spread so much corruption on earth, Allah has created hatred and enmity among them, and they will never have lasting power until the Day of Resurrection:

“We have put enmity and hatred amongst them till the Day of Resurrection. Every time they kindled the fire of war, Allah extinguished it; and they (ever) strive to make mischief on the earth. And Allah does not like the Mufsidoon (mischief-makers)”[al-Maa'idah 5:64]

·The Jews are weak and divided, each of them with different desires:

“They fight not against you even together, except in fortified townships, or from behind walls. Their enmity among themselves is very great. You would think they were united, but their hearts are divided. That is because they are a people who understand not”[al-Hashr 59:14]

·The Jews are the most hostile of all people towards those who believe. Because of their transgression and corruption, the Jews hate death because they fear what comes after death. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Say (O Muhammad): ‘O you Jews! If you pretend that you are friends of Allah, to the exclusion of (all) other mankind, then long for death if you are truthful.’

But they will never long for it (death), because of what (deeds) their hands have sent before them! And Allah knows well the Zaalimoon (polytheists, wrongdoers, disbelievers)’”[al-Jumu’ah 62:6-7]

·The Jews persisted in their corruption, transgression and deviation. Allah sent many Prophets and Messengers to the Children of Israel, to bring them back to the Straight Path, and some of them believed in them and some disbelieved… until Allah sent ‘Eesa ibn Maryam (peace be upon him) to them.