Stories from the Qur'an
Series 9

Measure and Weight

The Story of Prophet Shu'aib and the People of Madyan According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

STORIES FROM THE QUR'AN

SERIES 9

MEASURE AND WEIGHT

The Story of Prophet Shu'aib and the People of Madyan According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith

وَيَٰقَوْمِ أَوْفُواْ ٱلْمِكْيَالَ وَٱلْمِيزَانَ بِٱلْقِسْطِ ۖ وَلَا تَبْخَسُواْ ٱلنَّاسَ أَشْيَآءَهُمْ وَلَا تَعْثَوْاْ فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ

"And O my people, give full measure and weight in justice and do not deprive the people of their due and do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption."

SURAH HUD 11:85

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, who raised the heaven and imposed the balance, so that mankind would not transgress within the balance. Blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who put his hand into a heap of food in the market and said "Whoever cheats is not of me", and upon his family and his Companions.

This eBook is specially dedicated to my beloved wife,

ZAHARAH MOHD LATIF;

my dear children,

MUHAMMAD HAFIZ, NOOR HAZWANI, ABDUL HAKIM, NOOR HIDAYAH, NOR AQILA and **NOR ATIQAH**;

and my sons- and daughters-in-law,

FAZILAH, MALEK, HANIN, FAIRIZAL and **FIRWAN**.

May Allah make our provision lawful and blessed, keep us from depriving anyone of their due, and make us traders, workers and leaders who are honest in every measure and weight. May this knowledge be 'ilmun yuntafa'u bih, knowledge that brings benefit.

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ABOUT THE COVER OF THIS EBOOK

The cover of this eBook does not depict any human being. It shows **scenery**: **an oasis in a rocky valley** in the late afternoon, with shady trees and sandstone hills. In the foreground, on a stone bench, stands **a brass balance scale** that is **tilting to one side**, together with **a measuring vessel** and a heap of grain. **Thick, dark clouds** are gathering in the sky.

The tilting scale represents the chief sin of the people of Madyan: ***"do not decrease from the measure and the scale"*** (11:84). **The measuring vessel and the grain** recall the Hadith of the heap of food in the market (Sahih Muslim 102). **The shady trees** recall the name ***"The companions of the thicket"*** (26:176) — ***al-aikah*** means an area of dense trees.

The thick, dark clouds recall ***"the punishment of the day of the black cloud"*** (26:189). **The dark blue band** at the bottom, framed by **fine gold lines**, is where the author's name appears.

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Colour guide: green box = verses of the Qur'an; gold box = Hadith; brown box = archaeological note; blue table = comparison. Underlined blue narrator names can be clicked to open the narrator's page on sunnah.com.

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MEASURE AND WEIGHT

The previous series told of peoples destroyed for their arrogance, idol worship and immorality. Series 9 takes us to a people whose sin is very close to our daily lives: **cheating in measure and weight**. The people of Madyan did not only worship others besides Allah; they also cheated in the market, deprived people of their due, and considered matters of wealth to have nothing to do with religion.

SURAH AL-A'RAF 7:85

وَإِلَىٰ مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا ۚ قَالَ يَٰقَوْمِ ٱعْبُدُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَٰهٍ غَيْرُهُۥ ۖ قَدْ
جَآءَتْكُم بَيِّنَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ ۖ فَأَوْفُوا۟ ٱلْكَيْلَ وَٱلْمِيزَانَ وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا۟ ٱلنَّاسَ
أَشْيَآءَهُمْ وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا۟ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَٰحِهَا ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن
كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾

And to [the people of] Madyan [We sent] their brother Shu'ayb. He said, "O my people, worship Allah; you have no deity other than Him. There has come to you clear evidence from your Lord. So fulfill the measure and weight and do not deprive people of their due and cause not corruption upon the earth after its reformation. That is better for you, if you should be believers."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/7:85

The call of Prophet Shu'aib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ in this verse covers the whole of life: ***"worship Allah"*** (tawhid), ***"fulfill the measure and weight"*** (economic trust), ***"do not deprive people of their due"*** (social justice), and ***"cause not corruption upon the earth"*** (caring for the earth). The religion brought by the prophets is not separate from the market.

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	Al-A'raf 7:85–93	Hud 11:84–95	Al-Hijr 15:78–79	Ash-Shu'ara' 26:176–191	Al-'Ankabut 29:36–37
Call to tawhid: worship Allah	●	●		●	●
Give full measure and weight	●	●		●	
Do not deprive people of their due	●	●		●	
Do not cause corruption on earth	●	●		●	●
Averting people from Allah's way	●				
"Does your prayer command you...?"		●			
Threatened with eviction or stoning	●	●			
Called bewitched, punishment challenged				●	
Destroyed by the punishment	●	●	●	●	●
Shu'aib and the believers saved		●			
Total episodes	7	8	1	6	3

Figure 1: The episodes of the story of Prophet Shu'aib in five surahs. Surah Hud gives the fullest detail.

Figure 1 shows that the story of Prophet Shu'aib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ is told in five surahs, besides brief mentions of the companions of the thicket (38:13; 50:14). Surah Hud holds the longest dialogue, including the mocking question ***"Does your prayer command you…?"***, while Surah Al-A'raf adds detail about what they did on the paths, and Surah Ash-Shu'ara' mentions the punishment of the day of the black cloud.

Note: The translation of the Qur'anic verses in this eBook is Sahih International. The grade of every Hadith is stated in the Hadith box, with a link to sunnah.com.

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A BROTHER TO THE PEOPLE OF MADYAN

SURAH AL-'ANKABUT 29:36–37

وَإِلَىٰ مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا فَقَالَ يَٰقَوْمِ ٱعْبُدُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَٱرْجُوا۟ ٱلْيَوْمَ ٱلْءَاخِرَ وَلَا تَعْثَوْا۟ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾

And to Madyan [We sent] their brother Shu'ayb, and he said, "O my people, worship Allah and expect the Last Day and do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption."

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ ٱلرَّجْفَةُ فَأَصْبَحُوا۟ فِى دَارِهِمْ جَٰثِمِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

But they denied him, so the earthquake seized them, and they became within their home [corpses] fallen prone.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/29:36-37

COMMENTARY — A BROTHER, NOT A STRANGER

First: "Their brother". The Qur'an introduces Shu'aib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ as ***"their brother Shu'ayb"*** — just as Hud عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was to the people of 'Ad and Salih عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ to the people of Thamud. He came from among them and knew their language, customs and markets. His advice was the advice of a brother who wanted them to be saved.

Second: Expecting the Last Day. Surah Al-'Ankabut adds an important call: ***"worship Allah and expect the Last Day"***. Whoever cheats in weighing sees only today's profit. Whoever expects the Last Day will not trade his Hereafter for a few handfuls of grain.

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SURAH ASH-SHU‘ARA’ 26:176–180

كَذَّبَ أَصۡحَٰبُ لۡـَٔيۡكَةِ ٱلۡمُرۡسَلِينَ ١٧٦

The companions of the thicket denied the messengers.

إِذۡ قَالَ لَهُمۡ شُعَيۡبٌ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ١٧٧

When Shu'ayb said to them, "Will you not fear Allah?"

إِنِّي لَكُمۡ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٞ ١٧٨

Indeed, I am to you a trustworthy messenger.

فَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُونِ ١٧٩

So fear Allah and obey me.

وَمَآ أَسۡـَٔلُكُمۡ عَلَيۡهِ مِنۡ أَجۡرٍۖ إِنۡ أَجۡرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ رَبِّ ٱلۡعَٰلَمِينَ ١٨٠

And I do not ask you for it any payment. My payment is only from the Lord of the worlds.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/26:176-180

MADYAN AND THE COMPANIONS OF THE THICKET — ONE PEOPLE OR TWO?

In Surah Ash-Shu‘ara’, the people of Shu‘aib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ are called ***“The companions of the thicket”*** — ***aṣḥāb al-aikah***, the people of an area of dense trees. Scholars differ on whether they were the people of Madyan themselves or another people to whom Shu‘aib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was also sent.

Ibn Kathir supports the view that **they were the same people**, because their call and their sin were the same, concerning measure and weight (26:181–183). He explains that in this passage the Qur’an does not say ***“their brother”*** (compare 26:177 with 7:85), because they are named after ***al-aikah*** — the tree they worshipped — and Shu‘aib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ is not associated with that object of worship. When they are named by their tribe (Madyan), he is called their brother. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 26:176

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SURAH AL-HIJR 15:78–79

وَإِن كَانَ أَصْحَٰبُ ٱلْأَيْكَةِ لَظَٰلِمِينَ ﴿٧٨﴾

And the companions of the thicket were [also] wrongdoers.

فَٱنتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ وَإِنَّهُمَا لَبِإِمَامٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٧٩﴾

So We took retribution from them, and indeed, both [cities] are on a clear highway.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/15:78-79

Surah Al-Hijr mentions the companions of the thicket after the people of Lut, and then says: ***"indeed, both [cities] are on a clear highway"***. Both lands — the land of the people of Lut and the land of the companions of the thicket — lay on a trade route known to the Arabs. Shu'aib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ himself reminded his people: ***"And the people of Lot are not from you far away"*** (11:89) — not far in place or in time. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 11:89

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CHEATING IN THE MARKET

SURAH HUD 11:84–86

۞ وَإِلَىٰ مَدۡيَنَ أَخَاهُمۡ شُعَيۡبٗاۚ قَالَ يَٰقَوۡمِ ٱعۡبُدُواْ ٱللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنۡ إِلَٰهٍ غَيۡرُهُۥۖ وَلَا تَنقُصُواْ ٱلۡمِكۡيَالَ وَٱلۡمِيزَانَۖ إِنِّيٓ أَرَىٰكُم بِخَيۡرٖ وَإِنِّيٓ أَخَافُ عَلَيۡكُمۡ عَذَابَ يَوۡمٖ مُّحِيطٖ ٨٤

And to Madyan [We sent] their brother Shu'ayb. He said, "O my people, worship Allah; you have no deity other than Him. And do not decrease from the measure and the scale. Indeed, I see you in prosperity, but indeed, I fear for you the punishment of an all-encompassing Day."

وَيَٰقَوۡمِ أَوۡفُواْ ٱلۡمِكۡيَالَ وَٱلۡمِيزَانَ بِٱلۡقِسۡطِۖ وَلَا تَبۡخَسُواْ ٱلنَّاسَ أَشۡيَآءَهُمۡ وَلَا تَعۡثَوۡاْ فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ مُفۡسِدِينَ ٨٥

And O my people, give full measure and weight in justice and do not deprive the people of their due and do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption.

بَقِيَّتُ ٱللَّهِ خَيۡرٞ لَّكُمۡ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤۡمِنِينَۚ وَمَآ أَنَا۠ عَلَيۡكُم بِحَفِيظٖ ٨٦

What remains [lawful] from Allah is best for you, if you would be believers. But I am not a guardian over you.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/11:84-86

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 11:84–86

First: The sin of the comfortable. ***"Indeed, I see you in prosperity"***. The people of Madyan did not cheat because they were poor or desperate. They lived in prosperity, yet still wanted more. This is the nature of greed: it does not stop even when needs have been met.

Second: Two forms of dishonesty. Shu'aib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ forbade two different things: ***"do not decrease from the measure and the scale"*** — cheating directly with the measuring tools; and ***"do not deprive the people of their due"*** — in Arabic ***lā tabkhasū***, that is, lowering the value of other people's goods or rights by any means. Ibn Kathir explains that ***bakhs*** covers every form of depriving people of their due. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 11:85

Third: Little but lawful. ***"What remains [lawful] from Allah is best for you"*** — in Arabic ***baqiyyatullāh***, "what remains from Allah". The lawful profit that is left after giving people their due in full, even if it looks small, is better and more blessed than the extra taken dishonestly.

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SURAH ASH-SHU'ARA' 26:181–184

۞أَوۡفُواْ ٱلۡكَيۡلَ وَلَا تَكُونُواْ مِنَ ٱلۡمُخۡسِرِينَ ١٨١

Give full measure and do not be of those who cause loss.

وَزِنُواْ بِٱلۡقِسۡطَاسِ ٱلۡمُسۡتَقِيمِ ١٨٢

And weigh with an even balance.

وَلَا تَبۡخَسُواْ ٱلنَّاسَ أَشۡيَآءَهُمۡ وَلَا تَعۡثَوۡاْ فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ مُفۡسِدِينَ ١٨٣

And do not deprive people of their due and do not commit abuse on earth, spreading corruption?

وَٱتَّقُواْ ٱلَّذِي خَلَقَكُمۡ وَٱلۡجِبِلَّةَ ٱلۡأَوَّلِينَ ١٨٤

And fear He who created you and the former creation.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/26:181-184

Surah Ash-Shu'ara' adds: ***"weigh with an even balance"*** — ***bil-qisṭās al-mustaqīm***, the straight balance. This command is not only about good intentions; it is also about **accurate tools**. A faulty scale, a shortened measuring tape or a tampered meter is the same dishonesty, even if the owner never touches the goods.

CHEATING IN THE WORDS OF THE MESSENGER ﷺ

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 102

وَحَدَّثَنِي يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ جَمِيعًا عَنْ إِسْمَاعِيلَ بْنِ جَعْفَرٍ، - قَالَ ابْنُ أَيُّوبَ حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي الْعَلاَءُ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم مَرَّ عَلَى صُبْرَةِ طَعَامٍ فَأَدْخَلَ يَدَهُ فِيهَا فَنَالَتْ أَصَابِعُهُ بَلَلاً فَقَالَ « مَا هَذَا يَا صَاحِبَ الطَّعَامِ ». قَالَ أَصَابَتْهُ السَّمَاءُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ. قَالَ « أَفَلاَ جَعَلْتَهُ فَوْقَ الطَّعَامِ كَىْ يَرَاهُ النَّاسُ مَنْ غَشَّ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed by a heap of food (grain) and put his hand into it, and his fingers felt something wet. He asked: **"What is this, O owner of the food?"** He

replied: "It was struck by rain, O Messenger of Allah." He said: **"Why did you not put it on top of the food so that people could see it? Whoever cheats is not of me."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya ibn Ayyub, Qutaibah ibn Sa'id and 'Ali ibn Hujr, all from Isma'il ibn Ja'far, from al-'Ala' ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman, from his father, 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Ya'qub, from Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Faith, chapter on the saying of the Prophet ﷺ "Whoever cheats us is not of us", Hadith No. 102.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:102

This Hadith shows that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself went down to the market and inspected the goods. The trader had not wet his food on purpose — it had been struck by rain. His fault was **hiding the defect** underneath. The Messenger ﷺ did not tell him to throw the food away, but to put it on top so that buyers could see and choose. Honesty does not mean the goods must be perfect; honesty means **making the true condition clear**.

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 2079

حَدَّثَنَا سُلَيْمَانُ بْنُ حَرْبٍ، حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، عَنْ قَتَادَةَ، عَنْ صَالِحٍ أَبِي الْخَلِيلِ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ الْحَارِثِ، رَفَعَهُ إِلَى حَكِيمِ بْنِ حِزَامٍ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم « الْبَيِّعَانِ بِالْخِيَارِ مَا لَمْ يَتَفَرَّقَا ـ أَوْ قَالَ حَتَّى يَتَفَرَّقَا ـ فَإِنْ صَدَقَا وَبَيَّنَا بُورِكَ لَهُمَا فِي بَيْعِهِمَا، وَإِنْ كَتَمَا وَكَذَبَا مُحِقَتْ بَرَكَةُ بَيْعِهِمَا ».

TRANSLATION:

Hakim ibn Hizam رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"The seller and the buyer have the option (to continue or cancel the sale) as long as they have not parted. If both of them speak the truth and make things clear (about the goods), their sale is blessed; and if they conceal and lie, the blessing of their sale is wiped out."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Sulaiman ibn Harb, from Shu'bah ibn al-Hajjaj, from Qatadah ibn Di'amah, from Salih Abu al-Khalil, from 'Abdullah ibn al-Harith, from Hakim ibn Hizam رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Sales, chapter on when the seller and buyer make things clear and do not conceal, Hadith No. 2079. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 1532).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:2079

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This Hadith is the Messenger's ﷺ answer to the logic of the people of Madyan. They thought cheating would increase their profit. The Messenger ﷺ affirmed the opposite: honesty brings ***barakah***, while concealment and lying **wipe out the blessing**. This is the meaning of ***baqiyyatullāhi khairun lakum*** in the language of the market.

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SITTING ON EVERY PATH

SURAH AL-A'RAF 7:86–87

وَلَا تَقۡعُدُواْ بِكُلِّ صِرَٰطٖ تُوعِدُونَ وَتَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ مَنۡ ءَامَنَ بِهِۦ وَتَبۡغُونَهَا عِوَجٗاۚ وَٱذۡكُرُوٓاْ إِذۡ كُنتُمۡ قَلِيلٗا فَكَثَّرَكُمۡۖ وَٱنظُرُواْ كَيۡفَ كَانَ عَٰقِبَةُ ٱلۡمُفۡسِدِينَ ٨٦

And do not sit on every path, threatening and averting from the way of Allah those who believe in Him, seeking to make it [seem] deviant. And remember when you were few and He increased you. And see how was the end of the corrupters.

وَإِن كَانَ طَآئِفَةٞ مِّنكُمۡ ءَامَنُواْ بِٱلَّذِيٓ أُرۡسِلۡتُ بِهِۦ وَطَآئِفَةٞ لَّمۡ يُؤۡمِنُواْ فَٱصۡبِرُواْ حَتَّىٰ يَحۡكُمَ ٱللَّهُ بَيۡنَنَاۚ وَهُوَ خَيۡرُ ٱلۡحَٰكِمِينَ ٨٧

And if there should be a group among you who has believed in that with which I have been sent and a group that has not believed, then be patient until Allah judges between us. And He is the best of judges.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/7:86-87

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 7:86–87

First: Crime on the roads. ***"do not sit on every path, threatening"***. Ibn Kathir reports that they sat on the roads to threaten passers-by and take their wealth, and to frighten anyone coming to Shu'aib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. Dishonesty in the market was followed by oppression on the road. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 7:86

Second: Blocking the way of Allah. ***"averting from the way of Allah those who believe in Him, seeking to make it [seem] deviant"***. They not only refused to believe, but also blocked others and slandered the religion so that it would seem crooked.

Third: Remember the favour and the outcome. ***"remember when you were few and He increased you"***, ***"see how was the end of the corrupters"***.

Fourth: Patience until Allah judges. When society was split in two, Shu'aib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ did not call for violence: ***"be patient until Allah judges between us. And He is the best of judges"***.

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DOES YOUR PRAYER COMMAND YOU?

SURAH HUD 11:87–90

قَالُوا۟ يَٰشُعَيْبُ أَصَلَوٰتُكَ تَأْمُرُكَ أَن نَّتْرُكَ مَا يَعْبُدُ ءَابَآؤُنَآ أَوْ أَن نَّفْعَلَ فِىٓ
أَمْوَٰلِنَا مَا نَشَٰٓؤُا۟ ۖ إِنَّكَ لَأَنتَ ٱلْحَلِيمُ ٱلرَّشِيدُ ﴿٨٧﴾

They said, "O Shu'ayb, does your prayer command you that we should leave what our fathers worship or not do with our wealth what we please? Indeed, you are the forbearing, the discerning."

قَالَ يَٰقَوْمِ أَرَءَيْتُمْ إِن كُنتُ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّى وَرَزَقَنِى مِنْهُ رِزْقًا حَسَنًا ۚ وَمَآ
أُرِيدُ أَنْ أُخَالِفَكُمْ إِلَىٰ مَآ أَنْهَىٰكُمْ عَنْهُ ۚ إِنْ أُرِيدُ إِلَّا ٱلْإِصْلَٰحَ مَا ٱسْتَطَعْتُ ۚ
وَمَا تَوْفِيقِىٓ إِلَّا بِٱللَّهِ ۚ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ ﴿٨٨﴾

He said, "O my people, have you considered: if I am upon clear evidence from my Lord and He has provided me with a good provision from Him...? And I do not intend to differ from you in that which I have forbidden you; I only intend reform as much as I am able. And my success is not but through Allah. Upon him I have relied, and to Him I return."

وَيَٰقَوْمِ لَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شِقَاقِىٓ أَن يُصِيبَكُم مِّثْلُ مَآ أَصَابَ قَوْمَ نُوحٍ أَوْ قَوْمَ
هُودٍ أَوْ قَوْمَ صَٰلِحٍ ۚ وَمَا قَوْمُ لُوطٍ مِّنكُم بِبَعِيدٍ ﴿٨٩﴾

And O my people, let not [your] dissension from me cause you to be struck by that similar to what struck the people of Noah or the people of Hud or the people of Salih. And the people of Lot are not from you far away.

وَٱسْتَغْفِرُوا۟ رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوٓا۟ إِلَيْهِ ۚ إِنَّ رَبِّى رَحِيمٌ وَدُودٌ ﴿٩٠﴾

And ask forgiveness of your Lord and then repent to Him. Indeed, my Lord is Merciful and Affectionate.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/11:87-90

COMMENTARY ON VERSE 11:87 — SEPARATING RELIGION FROM WEALTH

The reply of the people of Madyan is among the verses most relevant to the modern age: ***"does your prayer command you that we should leave what our fathers worship or not do with our wealth what we please"***?

This question contains two positions. **First**, religion is regarded as a private matter — "your prayer" — that has no right to interfere in other people's affairs. **Second**, wealth is regarded as the absolute property

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of man — "our wealth" — to be handled as one pleases, without the limits set by Allah. This position exists in every age: religion is allowed in places of worship, but not allowed into the market or into matters of money.

They closed their words with ***"Indeed, you are the forbearing, the discerning"***. Ibn Kathir reports that many of the salaf understood these words as **mockery**. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 11:87

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 11:88–90 — THE ANSWER OF A CALLER TO ALLAH

First: Deeds before words. ***"I do not intend to differ from you in that which I have forbidden you"***. Shu'aib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ did not forbid them to cheat while cheating himself. The most effective caller is the one who practises what he calls to.

Second: The aim is only reform. ***"I only intend reform as much as I am able"***, and ***"my success is not but through Allah"***. This verse became the motto of callers and writers: ***in urīdu illal-iṣlāḥa mastaṭa'tu, wa mā taufīqī illā billāh***.

Third: The door of repentance stays open. After reminding them of the fate of the peoples of Nuh, Hud, Salih and Lut (11:89), Shu'aib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ closed with hope: ***"ask forgiveness of your Lord and then repent to Him. Indeed, my Lord is Merciful and Affectionate"***.

FALSE OATHS TO SELL GOODS

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 106

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، وَمُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْمُثَنَّى، وَابْنُ بَشَّارٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ جَعْفَرٍ، عَنْ شُعْبَةَ، عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ مُدْرِكٍ، عَنْ أَبِي زُرْعَةَ، عَنْ خَرَشَةَ بْنِ الْحُرِّ، عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « ثَلاَثَةٌ لاَ يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلاَ يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلاَ يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ » قَالَ فَقَرَأَهَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم ثَلاَثَ مِرَارٍ. قَالَ أَبُو ذَرٍّ خَابُوا وَخَسِرُوا مَنْ هُمْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ « الْمُسْبِلُ وَالْمَنَّانُ وَالْمُنْفِقُ سِلْعَتَهُ بِالْحَلِفِ الْكَاذِبِ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Dharr رضى الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"There are three to whom Allah will not speak on the Day of Resurrection, at whom He will not look, whom He will not purify, and for them is a painful punishment."** The Messenger of Allah ﷺ repeated it three times. Abu Dharr said: "They are lost and ruined! Who are they, O Messenger of Allah?" He said: **"The one who lets his garment trail (out of pride), the one who reminds others of what he has given, and the one who sells his goods by means of a false oath."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaibah, Muhammad ibn al-Muthanna and Muhammad ibn Bashshar, from Muhammad ibn Ja'far (Ghundar), from Shu'bah, from 'Ali ibn Mudrik, from Abu Zur'ah, from Kharashah ibn al-Hurr, from Abu Dharr al-Ghifari رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Faith, chapter on the severe prohibition of trailing the garment, reminding others of one's gifts and selling goods by oath, Hadith No. 106.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:106a

The people of Madyan separated religion from trade. This Hadith shows how Islam joins the two. A trader who swears falsely by the name of Allah to sell his goods is listed among those to whom Allah will not speak, at whom He will not look and whom He will not purify on the Day of Resurrection. The affairs of the market are affairs of religion.

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THREATS AGAINST THE WEAK

SURAH AL-A'RAF 7:88–89

۞ قَالَ ٱلۡمَلَأُ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱسۡتَكۡبَرُواْ مِن قَوۡمِهِۦ لَنُخۡرِجَنَّكَ يَٰشُعَيۡبُ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ مَعَكَ مِن قَرۡيَتِنَآ أَوۡ لَتَعُودُنَّ فِي مِلَّتِنَاۚ قَالَ أَوَلَوۡ كُنَّا كَٰرِهِينَ ٨٨

Said the eminent ones who were arrogant among his people, "We will surely evict you, O Shu'ayb, and those who have believed with you from our city, or you must return to our religion." He said, "Even if we were unwilling."

قَدِ ٱفۡتَرَيۡنَا عَلَى ٱللَّهِ كَذِبًا إِنۡ عُدۡنَا فِي مِلَّتِكُم بَعۡدَ إِذۡ نَجَّىٰنَا ٱللَّهُ مِنۡهَاۚ وَمَا يَكُونُ لَنَآ أَن نَّعُودَ فِيهَآ إِلَّآ أَن يَشَآءَ ٱللَّهُ رَبُّنَاۚ وَسِعَ رَبُّنَا كُلَّ شَيۡءٍ عِلۡمًاۚ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ تَوَكَّلۡنَاۚ رَبَّنَا ٱفۡتَحۡ بَيۡنَنَا وَبَيۡنَ قَوۡمِنَا بِٱلۡحَقِّ وَأَنتَ خَيۡرُ ٱلۡفَٰتِحِينَ ٨٩

We would have invented against Allah a lie if we returned to your religion after Allah had saved us from it. And it is not for us to return to it except that Allah, our Lord, should will. Our Lord has encompassed all things in knowledge. Upon Allah we have relied. Our Lord, decide between us and our people in truth, and You are the best of those who give decision.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/7:88-89

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 7:88–89 — EVICTION OR APOSTASY

The arrogant chiefs gave two choices: ***"We will surely evict you, O Shu'ayb, and those who have believed with you from our city, or you must return to our religion"***. The answer of Shu'aib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was full of wisdom: ***"Even if we were unwilling"***? Faith cannot be forced, and neither can disbelief be imposed.

Then he held fast to Allah: ***"Upon Allah we have relied"***, and prayed: ***"Our Lord, decide between us and our people in truth, and You are the best of those who give decision"***. This prayer was answered not long after.

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SURAH HUD 11:91–93

قَالُوا۟ يَٰشُعَيْبُ مَا نَفْقَهُ كَثِيرًا مِّمَّا تَقُولُ وَإِنَّا لَنَرَىٰكَ فِينَا ضَعِيفًا ۖ وَلَوْلَا رَهْطُكَ لَرَجَمْنَٰكَ ۖ وَمَآ أَنتَ عَلَيْنَا بِعَزِيزٍ ﴿٩١﴾

They said, "O Shu'ayb, we do not understand much of what you say, and indeed, we consider you among us as weak. And if not for your family, we would have stoned you [to death]; and you are not to us one respected."

قَالَ يَٰقَوْمِ أَرَهْطِىٓ أَعَزُّ عَلَيْكُم مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ وَٱتَّخَذْتُمُوهُ وَرَآءَكُمْ ظِهْرِيًّا ۖ إِنَّ رَبِّى بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ ﴿٩٢﴾

He said, "O my people, is my family more respected for power by you than Allah? But you put Him behind your backs [in neglect]. Indeed, my Lord is encompassing of what you do."

وَيَٰقَوْمِ ٱعْمَلُوا۟ عَلَىٰ مَكَانَتِكُمْ إِنِّى عَٰمِلٌ ۖ سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ مَن يَأْتِيهِ عَذَابٌ يُخْزِيهِ وَمَنْ هُوَ كَٰذِبٌ ۖ وَٱرْتَقِبُوٓا۟ إِنِّى مَعَكُمْ رَقِيبٌ ﴿٩٣﴾

And O my people, work according to your position; indeed, I am working. You are going to know to whom will come a punishment that will disgrace him and who is a liar. So watch; indeed, I am with you a watcher, [awaiting the outcome].

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/11:91-93

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 11:91–92 — FEARING THE CLAN, NOT FEARING ALLAH

The people of Madyan said: ***"we consider you among us as weak. And if not for your family, we would have stoned you"***. What stopped them from killing Shu'aib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was not fear of Allah, but respect for his ***raht*** — his small family clan.

The answer of Shu'aib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was very sharp: ***"is my family more respected for power by you than Allah? But you put Him behind your backs"***. They respected a small clan, yet put the command of Allah behind their backs. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 11:92

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SURAH ASH-SHU'ARA' 26:185–188

قَالُوٓاْ إِنَّمَآ أَنتَ مِنَ ٱلۡمُسَحَّرِينَ ١٨٥

They said, "You are only of those affected by magic."

وَمَآ أَنتَ إِلَّا بَشَرٞ مِّثۡلُنَا وَإِن نَّظُنُّكَ لَمِنَ ٱلۡكَٰذِبِينَ ١٨٦

You are but a man like ourselves, and indeed, we think you are among the liars.

فَأَسۡقِطۡ عَلَيۡنَا كِسَفٗا مِّنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ إِن كُنتَ مِنَ ٱلصَّٰدِقِينَ ١٨٧

So cause to fall upon us fragments of the sky, if you should be of the truthful.

قَالَ رَبِّيٓ أَعۡلَمُ بِمَا تَعۡمَلُونَ ١٨٨

He said, "My Lord is most knowing of what you do."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/26:185-188

In Surah Ash-Shu'ara', the companions of the thicket accused him of being ***"of those affected by magic"***, and then challenged him: ***"cause to fall upon us fragments of the sky, if you should be of the truthful"***. Shu'aib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ did not reply in anger. He only said: ***"My Lord is most knowing of what you do"***.

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THE DAY OF THE BLACK CLOUD

SURAH HUD 11:94–95

وَلَمَّا جَآءَ أَمۡرُنَا نَجَّيۡنَا شُعَيۡبٗا وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ مَعَهُۥ بِرَحۡمَةٖ مِّنَّا وَأَخَذَتِ ٱلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُواْ ٱلصَّيۡحَةُ فَأَصۡبَحُواْ فِي دِيَٰرِهِمۡ جَٰثِمِينَ ٩٤

And when Our command came, We saved Shu'ayb and those who believed with him, by mercy from Us. And the shriek seized those who had wronged, and they became within their homes [corpses] fallen prone.

كَأَن لَّمۡ يَغۡنَوۡاْ فِيهَآۗ أَلَا بُعۡدٗا لِّمَدۡيَنَ كَمَا بَعِدَتۡ ثَمُودُ ٩٥

As if they had never prospered therein. Then, away with Madyan as Thamud was taken away.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/11:94-95

SURAH ASH-SHU'ARA' 26:189–191

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَخَذَهُمۡ عَذَابُ يَوۡمِ ٱلظُّلَّةِۚ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ عَذَابَ يَوۡمٍ عَظِيمٍ ١٨٩

And they denied him, so the punishment of the day of the black cloud seized them. Indeed, it was the punishment of a terrible day.

إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَأٓيَةٗۖ وَمَا كَانَ أَكۡثَرُهُم مُّؤۡمِنِينَ ١٩٠

Indeed in that is a sign, but most of them were not to be believers.

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ ٱلۡعَزِيزُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ ١٩١

And indeed, your Lord - He is the Exalted in Might, the Merciful.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/26:189-191

COMMENTARY — THREE DESCRIPTIONS OF ONE PUNISHMENT

The Qur'an describes the punishment of the people of Madyan with three different words: ***al-rajfah*** (the earthquake) in ***"So the earthquake seized them"*** (7:91; 29:37); ***al-ṣaiḥah*** (the shriek) in ***"the shriek seized those who had wronged"*** (11:94); and ***'adhāb yaum al-ẓullah*** in ***"the punishment of the day of the black cloud seized them"*** (26:189).

Ibn Kathir explains that all three **struck them together**: a cloud they took for shade, a shriek from the sky, and an earthquake from below. Each surah mentions the angle suited to its context. In Surah Al-

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A'raf, they threatened to "shake" the position of the believers by evicting them, so they were struck by an earthquake. In Surah Hud, they mocked Shu'aib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ with words, so they were struck by a shriek that silenced them. In Surah Ash-Shu'ara', they asked for fragments from the sky, so they were struck by a punishment from a cloud. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 11:94

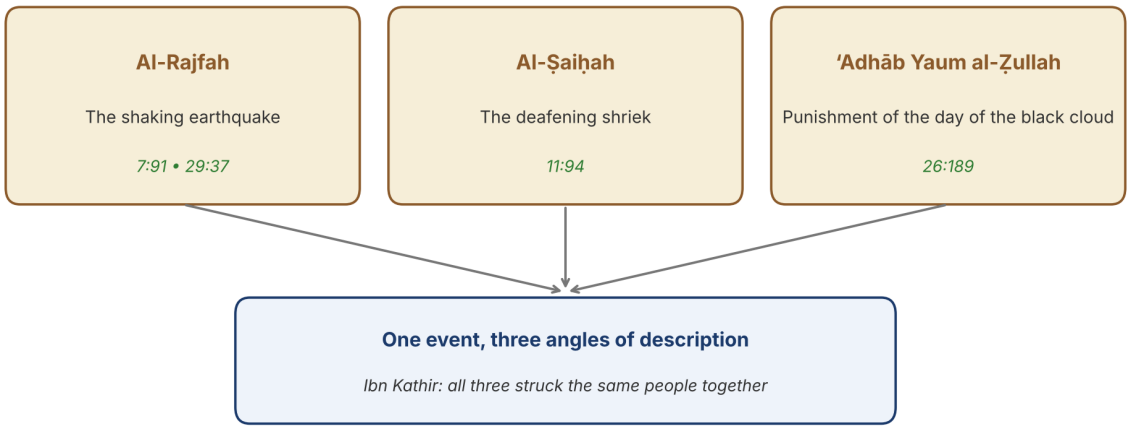


Figure 2: Three descriptions of the punishment of the people of Madyan in the Qur'an, and Ibn Kathir's explanation that all three happened together.

Regarding "the day of the black cloud", some of the salaf in tafsir reports relate that they were struck by intense heat for several days, and then a cloud came that gave shade; they gathered beneath it for shelter, and the punishment came down from it. These details come from tafsir reports, not from a marfu' Hadith. What is certain from the Qur'an is this: the punishment came from the direction they thought was shelter. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 26:189

SURAH AL-A'RAF 7:92–93

ٱلَّذِينَ كَذَّبُواْ شُعَيۡبٗا كَأَن لَّمۡ يَغۡنَوۡاْ فِيهَاۚ ٱلَّذِينَ كَذَّبُواْ شُعَيۡبٗا كَانُواْ هُمُ ٱلۡخَٰسِرِينَ ٩٢

Those who denied Shu'ayb - it was as though they had never resided there. Those who denied Shu'ayb - it was they who were the losers.

فَتَوَلَّىٰ عَنۡهُمۡ وَقَالَ يَٰقَوۡمِ لَقَدۡ أَبۡلَغۡتُكُمۡ رِسَٰلَٰتِ رَبِّي وَنَصَحۡتُ لَكُمۡۖ فَكَيۡفَ ءَاسَىٰ عَلَىٰ قَوۡمٖ كَٰفِرِينَ ٩٣

And he turned away from them and said, "O my people, I had certainly conveyed to you the messages of my Lord and advised you, so how could I grieve for a disbelieving people."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/7:92-93

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 7:92–93 — WHO WERE THE LOSERS?

The chiefs of Madyan had once said to their people: ***"If you should follow Shu'ayb, indeed, you would then be losers"*** (7:90). The Qur'an answered them with the same word: ***"Those who denied Shu'ayb - it was they who were the losers"***. They thought honesty would harm their trade, but the true losers were those who denied.

Then Shu'aib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ left the land, saying: ***"O my people, I had certainly conveyed to you the messages of my Lord and advised you"***. Verse 11:94 affirms that Allah saved ***"Shu'ayb and those who believed with him, by mercy from Us"***. And the end of that land: ***"As if they had never prospered therein"***.

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THE BALANCE ESTABLISHED BY ALLAH

The story of Madyan is not mere history. The Qur'an revealed a surah named after their sin — ***Al-Muṭaffifīn***, "those who give less than due" — and made justice in weighing part of the order of creation.

SURAH AL-MUTAFFIFIN 83:1–6

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ ﴿١﴾

Woe to those who give less [than due].

ٱلَّذِينَ إِذَا ٱكْتَالُوا۟ عَلَى ٱلنَّاسِ يَسْتَوْفُونَ ﴿٢﴾

Who, when they take a measure from people, take in full?

وَإِذَا كَالُوهُمْ أَو وَّزَنُوهُمْ يُخْسِرُونَ ﴿٣﴾

But if they give by measure or by weight to them, they cause loss.

أَلَا يَظُنُّ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ أَنَّهُم مَّبْعُوثُونَ ﴿٤﴾

Do they not think that they will be resurrected?

لِيَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٥﴾

For a tremendous Day.

يَوْمَ يَقُومُ ٱلنَّاسُ لِرَبِّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٦﴾

The Day when mankind will stand before the Lord of the worlds.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/83:1-6

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 83:1–6

First: Two scales in one soul. ***"when they take a measure from people, take in full"***, ***"if they give by measure or by weight to them, they cause loss"***. The dishonest person knows the value of justice — he demands it for himself — but denies it to others.

Second: The root of dishonesty is forgetting the Last Day. ***"Do they not think that they will be resurrected"***? ***"The Day when mankind will stand before the Lord of the worlds"***. This verse echoes the call of Shu'aib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: "worship Allah and expect the Last Day" (29:36). Tafsir Ibn Kathir 83:1

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SURAH AR-RAHMAN 55:7–9

وَٱلسَّمَآءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ ٱلۡمِيزَانَ ۝٧

And the heaven He raised and imposed the balance.

أَلَّا تَطۡغَوۡاْ فِي ٱلۡمِيزَانِ ۝٨

That you not transgress within the balance.

وَأَقِيمُواْ ٱلۡوَزۡنَ بِٱلۡقِسۡطِ وَلَا تُخۡسِرُواْ ٱلۡمِيزَانَ ۝٩

And establish weight in justice and do not make deficient the balance.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/55:7-9

In Surah Ar-Rahman, Allah mentions the balance together with the heaven: ***"the heaven He raised and imposed the balance"***, ***"That you not transgress within the balance"***. Justice in weighing is not merely a rule of the market; it is part of the balance that Allah has established throughout all of creation.

SURAH AL-ISRA' 17:35

وَأَوۡفُواْ ٱلۡكَيۡلَ إِذَا كِلۡتُمۡ وَزِنُواْ بِٱلۡقِسۡطَاسِ ٱلۡمُسۡتَقِيمِۚ ذَٰلِكَ خَيۡرٞ وَأَحۡسَنُ تَأۡوِيلٗا ۝٣٥

And give full measure when you measure, and weigh with an even balance. That is the best [way] and best in result.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/17:35

This command is repeated in the list of commandments in Surah Al-Isra', together with the prohibition of shirk, adultery and killing: ***"That is the best [way] and best in result"***. Honesty brings good in this world and a good end in the Hereafter.

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THE TRADER WHO RECEIVES MERCY

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 2076

حَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ عَيَّاشٍ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو غَسَّانَ، مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ مُطَرِّفٍ قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْمُنْكَدِرِ، عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « رَحِمَ اللَّهُ رَجُلاً سَمْحًا إِذَا بَاعَ، وَإِذَا اشْتَرَى، وَإِذَا اقْتَضَى ».

TRANSLATION:

Jabir ibn ‘Abdullah رضى الله عنهما narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **“May Allah have mercy on a man who is lenient when he sells, when he buys, and when he demands his due.”**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from ‘Ali ibn ‘Ayyash, from Abu Ghassan Muhammad ibn Mutarrif, from Muhammad ibn al-Munkadir, from Jabir ibn ‘Abdullah رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Sales, chapter on leniency in buying and selling, Hadith No. 2076.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:2076

If the people of Madyan are an example of traders who earned Allah’s anger, this Hadith describes the trader for whom the Messenger ﷺ prayed for mercy: easy and lenient when selling, when buying, and when demanding his debt. Islam does not forbid seeking profit; Islam forbids profit taken from the rights of others.

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WHAT THE QUR'AN DOES NOT TELL

As with the previous stories, the story of Prophet Shu'aib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ has been embellished with many tales in the books of stories. Guided by the Hadith of Sahih al-Bukhari 4485 (Series 1), we do not make them part of the story we believe in.

THE OLD MAN OF MADYAN — WAS HE SHU'AIB?

SURAH AL-QASAS 28:23

وَلَمَّا وَرَدَ مَآءَ مَدۡيَنَ وَجَدَ عَلَيۡهِ أُمَّةٗ مِّنَ ٱلنَّاسِ يَسۡقُونَ وَوَجَدَ مِن دُونِهِمُ ٱمۡرَأَتَيۡنِ تَذُودَانِۖ قَالَ مَا خَطۡبُكُمَاۖ قَالَتَا لَا نَسۡقِي حَتَّىٰ يُصۡدِرَ ٱلرِّعَآءُۖ وَأَبُونَا شَيۡخٞ كَبِيرٞ ٢٣

And when he came to the well of Madyan, he found there a crowd of people watering [their flocks], and he found aside from them two women driving back [their flocks]. He said, "What is your circumstance?" They said, "We do not water until the shepherds dispatch [their flocks]; and our father is an old man."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/28:23

SURAH AL-QASAS 28:27

قَالَ إِنِّيٓ أُرِيدُ أَنۡ أُنكِحَكَ إِحۡدَى ٱبۡنَتَيَّ هَٰتَيۡنِ عَلَىٰٓ أَن تَأۡجُرَنِي ثَمَٰنِيَ حِجَجٖۖ فَإِنۡ أَتۡمَمۡتَ عَشۡرٗا فَمِنۡ عِندِكَۖ وَمَآ أُرِيدُ أَنۡ أَشُقَّ عَلَيۡكَۚ سَتَجِدُنِيٓ إِن شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ مِنَ ٱلصَّٰلِحِينَ ٢٧

He said, "Indeed, I wish to wed you one of these, my two daughters, on [the condition] that you serve me for eight years; but if you complete ten, it will be [as a favor] from you. And I do not wish to put you in difficulty. You will find me, if Allah wills, from among the righteous."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/28:27

Surah Al-Qasas tells of Prophet Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ fleeing from Egypt to Madyan, helping two women water their flocks, and then being invited by their father — ***"our father is an old man"*** — who later married Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ to one of his daughters (28:27).

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The Qur'an does not name that old man. Many commentators hold that he was Prophet Shu'aib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. However, other scholars hold that he was someone else — among them a nephew of Shu'aib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, or a believing man from his people. Ibn Kathir reports this difference of opinion in his tafsir. Since the Qur'an and authentic Hadith do not name him, this eBook does not affirm his identity. The story of Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ in Madyan will, in sha Allah, be told in the series on Prophet Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 28:23

POPULAR STORIES AND WHAT REVELATION SAYS

POPULAR STORY	WHAT THE QUR'AN AND AUTHENTIC HADITH SAY
Prophet Shu'aib was called "Khatib al-Anbiya'" (the orator of the prophets) by the Messenger ﷺ.	This title is well known, but the report attributing it to the Messenger ﷺ is not established in authentic Hadith. The eloquence of his call is clear from the verses of the Qur'an themselves (11:84–93).
Prophet Shu'aib is Jethro, the father-in-law of Musa in the Book of Exodus.	The Qur'an does not name the father-in-law of Musa (28:23–28). This identification comes from the People of the Book.
Prophet Shu'aib was blind.	Some of the salaf interpreted the word "weak" in 11:91 as blind. It is an opinion of tafsir, not stated in authentic Hadith.
The companions of the thicket worshipped a particular named and described tree.	The Qur'an only calls them "the companions of the thicket" (26:176; 15:78). The details about that tree are not authentic as a marfu' report.
The tomb of Prophet Shu'aib is at Hittin (Palestine) or in Wadi Shu'aib (Jordan).	Not mentioned in the Qur'an or authentic Hadith. It is a local tradition that cannot be verified.
The full lineage of Prophet Shu'aib back to Prophet Ibrahim.	The Qur'an only calls him the "brother" of the people of Madyan (7:85; 11:84; 29:36).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTE: AL-BAD' — THE SITE OF MADYAN IN NORTH-WESTERN SAUDI ARABIA

The oasis of **al-Bad'** in the Tabuk region, east of the Gulf of 'Aqabah, is identified as the site of ancient **Madyan**. According to the joint Saudi–French archaeological project, which began its survey in 2017 and excavation in 2018, this identification comes from Arab-Islamic textual sources and is regarded as certain. Occupation there in the first millennium BCE is estimated to have begun at the end of the second millennium BCE, when the oasis may have been part of the region known as Madyan (Midian).

In the area are rock-cut tombs in the sandstone hills, popularly known as **"Maghayir Shu'aib"** (the caves of Shu'aib). However, these tombs were built by **the Nabataeans** in the Nabataean–Roman period (around the

first century BCE to the second century CE) — long after the time of Prophet Shu'aib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. Just like Hegra (Series 5), they are **not** the homes or graves of the people of Shu'aib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.

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French Ministry of Culture — Archéologie: Al-Bad', Saudi Arabia: https://archeologie.culture.gouv.fr/en/al-bad

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTE: QURAYYAH AND "MIDIANITE POTTERY" — A LABEL THAT HAS BEEN CORRECTED

The oasis of **Qurayyah** in north-western Saudi Arabia is among the largest fortified oases in the Arabian Peninsula, with a surface-runoff irrigation system and permanent settlement since the early third millennium BCE. An excavation project led by Marta Luciani (University of Vienna, with the support of the Saudi Heritage Commission) studies the painted pottery once called **"Midianite Pottery"**.

Recent research (*PLOS One*, 2026) shows that this pottery was produced at Qurayyah from about 3,600 years ago and exported as far as the southern Levant. The researchers now call it **"Qurayyah Painted Ware"**, because the "Midian" label rested on an inaccurate assumption. Therefore this pottery **cannot be used as evidence** about the people of Prophet Shu'aib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. It is noted here only as a picture of trading life in that region.

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Austrian Academy of Sciences (2026). Oases in the Arabian desert already had "brands" in the Bronze Age:
https://www.oeaw.ac.at/en/news/in-oasen-in-der-arabischen-wueste-gab-es-bereits-in-der-bronzezeit-marken

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THE LASTING BALANCE

The people of Madyan lived in prosperity on a trade route, but greed overcame them. They gave short measure, undervalued people's rights, blocked the roads, and when they were corrected, they said: "Does your prayer command us to give up what we please to do with our wealth?" They thought honesty would make them losers. In the end, the earthquake, the shriek and the punishment of the day of the black cloud proved who the true losers were.

A BRIEF COMPARISON

THE LOGIC OF THE PEOPLE OF MADYAN	THE ANSWER OF REVELATION
Decrease the measure to profit more (11:84)	"What remains [lawful] from Allah is best for you" (11:86); honesty brings blessing (Sahih al-Bukhari 2079)
Hide the defects of the goods	"Whoever cheats is not of me" (Sahih Muslim 102)
Religion is for worship; wealth is our business (11:87)	A false oath in buying and selling earns Allah's anger (Sahih Muslim 106)
Respect the clan, ignore Allah's command (11:91)	"Is my family more respected for power by you than Allah?" (11:92)
Following Shu'aib will make you losers (7:90)	"Those who denied Shu'ayb — it was they who were the losers" (7:92)
Take in full for oneself, give less to others (83:2–3)	Be lenient when selling, buying and demanding one's due (Sahih al-Bukhari 2076)

LESSONS FROM THIS STORY

First: Tawhid includes the market. The call "worship Allah" and "fulfill the measure" come in the same verse (7:85).

Second: Dishonesty is born of greed, not of poverty. "I see you in prosperity" (11:84).

Third: Little but lawful is better. ***Baqiyyatullāhi khairun lakum*** (11:86).

Fourth: Honesty means making the true condition clear. Put the wet part on top so that people can see it (Sahih Muslim 102).

Fifth: A caller must practise what he calls to. "I do not intend to differ from you in that which I have forbidden you" (11:88).

Sixth: The aim of da'wah is reform, and success is only from Allah. (11:88).

Seventh: Do not fear people more than Allah. (11:91–92).

Eighth: Remember the Day of standing before Allah every time you weigh. (83:4–6).

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CONCLUSION

Today, a balance is no longer only a brass scale. It is a meter, a digital scale, working hours, a contract, a report, a mark and a promise. Every time we take more than our right or give less than others' due, we repeat the sin of the people of Madyan in a new form. And every time we give full measure even when no one is watching, we answer the call of Prophet Shu'aib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.

May Allah make us among those who give full measure and weight, bless our lawful provision however little, and make us among those who receive mercy when selling, buying and demanding their due. ***In urīdu illal-iṣlāḥa mastaṭa'tu, wa mā taufīqī illā billāh, 'alaihi tawakkaltu wa ilaihi unīb*** (11:88). Amin.

In sha Allah, the series **Stories from the Qur'an** continues with the story of Prophet Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, with the same method: the Qur'an, authentic Hadith, and solid archaeological findings only.

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SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:261

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتۡ سَبۡعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٖ مِّاْئَةُ حَبَّةٖۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٦١

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:261

SURAH SABA' 34:39

قُلۡ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبۡسُطُ ٱلرِّزۡقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦ وَيَقۡدِرُ لَهُۥۚ وَمَآ أَنفَقۡتُم مِّن شَيۡءٖ فَهُوَ يُخۡلِفُهُۥۖ وَهُوَ خَيۡرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ ٣٩

Say, "Indeed, my Lord extends provision for whom He wills of His servants and restricts [it] for him. But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:39

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2588

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، وَابْنُ، حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - وَهُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ وَمَا زَادَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا بِعَفْوٍ إِلاَّ عِزًّا وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلاَّ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Charity does not decrease wealth.

Allah does not increase a servant who forgives except in honour. And no one humbles himself for the sake of Allah except that Allah raises him in rank."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtue, Good Manners and Joining the Ties of Kinship (Kitab al-Birr wa al-Silah wa al-Adab), chapter on the encouragement of forgiveness and humility, Hadith No. 2588.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2588

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1631

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، - يَعْنِي ابْنَ سَعِيدٍ - وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - هُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « إِذَا مَاتَ الإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلاَّ مِنْ ثَلاَثَةٍ إِلاَّ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, knowledge that is benefited from, or a righteous child who prays for him."

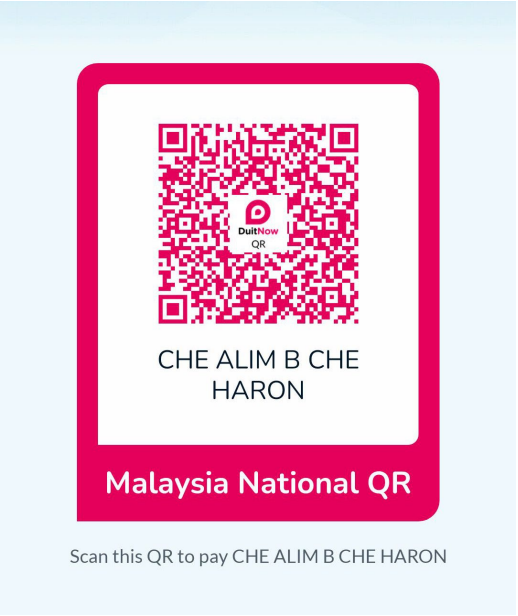
CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Wills (Kitab al-Wasiyyah), chapter on the reward that reaches a person after his death, Hadith No. 1631.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:1631

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