

## Exploring the Possibility that Prophet Musa may have Lead the Bani Israel from Indus Valley to Israel

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### Abstract

*It is believed that Prophet Musa led the Bani Israel from Egypt to Israel at c. 1500 BCE. However, evidence from archaeology and Egyptian literature in support of such movement is not forthcoming. This study aims to examine whether the Quranic narrative of Prophet Musa's journey matches with the Indus Valley. Ten descriptions are identified related to Prophet Musa's stay in Misr (the name for Egypt in the Quran). We call these "parameters." We find favorable evidence from the Indus Valley on all ten parameters. In contrast the evidence from Egypt is favorable in four parameters, silent in three parameters and against in three parameters. Overall, the Indus Valley matches the Quranic descriptions much better. This suggests that Prophet Musa may have lived in the Indus Valley and led the Bani Israel from there to Israel. An implication of this study is that the prophets before Prophet Musa, specifically, Adam, Nuh and Ibrahim may also have lived in the Indus Valley. This study opens up the possibility that the origins of the Abrahamic religions may lie in the Indus Valley and lays the foundation of an inter-religious dialogue between Muslims and Hindus at a scriptural level.*

**Keywords:** Prophet Musa, Pharaoh, Egypt, Misr, Indus Valley, Hinduism, Israel, Bani Israel.

## Introduction

The narrative of Prophet Musa occupies an important place in the Quranic narrative. The Quran says that Prophet Musa undertook those momentous events in “Misr.” Conventionally, Misr is identified with Egypt and it is thought that Prophet Musa led the Bani Israel from here to Israel.

We find four major problems with the identification of Misr with Egypt. One, the Quran tells of the Pharaoh asking Haman to bake bricks but mostly mud bricks were used in Egypt and baked bricks were used sparingly in furnaces etc. Two, the Quran tells of Prophet Musa striking his staff in the water and the waters parting to make way for Bani Israel. No such phenomenon is known from Egypt. Three, the Quran says that the command was given to Prophet Musa when he was not in the west which means not in Egypt. Four, the Quran tells of Prophet Musa walking to a junction of rivers. Such is not known from Egypt.

The Quran is Word of God. It cannot be wrong. Thus, there arises a contradiction between the Quranic descriptions and the evidences obtaining on the ground. We examine the possibility that Prophet Musa led the Bani Israel from Indus Valley to Israel in order to resolve these contradictions.

## Methodology

We make a comparative study as to whether the Quranic narrative of Prophet Musa at the place named Misr matches more with Egypt or the Indus Valley? We have used translation of Sahih International in this paper unless mentioned otherwise. We consider the evidence from the fields of archaeology, geography, genealogy, etymology of person names, culture and textual narratives. We call these the six fields of study. The field of archaeology has four parameters of study namely, evidence of habitation, the name “misr” and baked bricks; and availability of a natural

phenomenon corresponding to the parting of the waters. The field of geography has two parameters of study, namely, the Quran saying that Prophet Musa was “not in the west” when the command was given to him, and the Quran telling of Prophet Musa’s travel to the junction of rivers. The abovementioned six parameters and the four fields doubling up as one parameter each namely, genealogy, etymology of person names, culture and textual narratives-these together make ten parameters on which we compare the evidence from Egypt and the Indus Valley. We find that the narrative of Prophet Musa from the Quran runs parallel with the narrative of the Hindu Avatar Krishna hence we consider the parallels between these two figures in the fields of genealogy, etymology of person names, and textual narratives.

### **Archaeology**

*Time of Prophet Moses.* It is necessary to work out the time at which Prophet Musa lived in order to examine the evidence from the field of archaeology. We do this before considering the four parameters in this field. Islamic sources do not give an academically considered date of Prophet Musa and oftentimes refer to the Biblical scholarship on this point. Two representative examples are F91) Either in 1446/7 B.C. or between 1270-1260 B.C. (Alatiqi 2024:56); and (2) Prophet Moses lived around 13th century BC (Fadli 2024). A benchmark date is assessed at 14<sup>th</sup> century BCE on the basis of above two dates. The date for the Mahabharata War in which Krishna had participated is estimated at 1793 BCE on astronomical calculations (Bhatnagar 2017:369). It has been estimated between 1445 to 1124 BCE or an average of 1284 BCE on genealogical considerations (Roy 1991:702). The benchmark date is assessed at 16<sup>th</sup> century BCE. The benchmark date considering both Islamic and Hindu sources is assessed at c. 1500 BCE.

### *Habitation*

The ancient Egyptian civilization collapsed between 1200 and 1050 BCE (Burke 2018). Thus, habitation at 1500 BCE is established. The decline of the Indus Valley Civilization has been placed between 1900 and 1300 BCE (Kenoyer 2005). Thus, habitation at c. 1500 BCE is established here as well. This parameter provides favorable evidence from both the locations.

### *“Misr”*

The Quran refers to the place of Pharaoh and Prophet Musa as “Misr”, for example, in Q 43:51. We have examined the use of this name in various languages.

*Akkadian:* The Amarna Letters sent during the reign of Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten (c. 1353–1336 BCE) use the word “misr” for Egypt. This is the earliest use of this name to our knowledge. It is not clear, however, whether “misr” was used here as a pronoun for Egypt or a common noun because the word “misru” is used for “border” or “territory” in Akkadian (Black et. al, 2000:e-212). The name “Misr” is used in the Quran in the narrative of Prophet Yusuf in Q 12:21, a few hundred years before it was used in the Amarna Letters in the 14<sup>th</sup> century BCE. The use of the name “misru” as a pronoun for Egypt is brought into question by the fact that this is mentioned in the Quran about five centuries before the Amarna Letters.

*Arabic:* Quran is the first source which mentions the word “misr” in Arabic literature. It is used as a common noun for “city, barrier between two lands and for the large area in which houses, markets, schools, and other public facilities are built” (Lane 1874c:2721).

*Coptic:* There is no mention of the word “Misr” in Coptic language (Black et. al, 2000). The land of Egypt is called “Rem-en-Kimi” in Coptic (Wassef, 2023).

*Egyptian:* Egypt referred to itself as “Kemet” or “Kmt”. This name was used beginning with the Old Kingdom (2613-2181 BCE) (Zulu, 2012; Thomas, 2022).

*Greek :*In Greek, Egypt was called “Aígyptos”, a name derived from the Egyptian phrase “ḥwt-ka-ptḥ” (Wassef, 2023).

*Hebrew:* The name “Mitsrayim” used in the Hebrew Bible for Egypt is derived from the word “matsowr” meaning “besieged places, defense, fortress, fortified” (NetBible, 2025).

*Sanskrit:* The name “Mathura,” where Krishna lived, is derived from the root “math” which means “to stir or whirl around” (Monier-Williams 1899:777).

Three methods for identifying parallels in names are (1) “Common Key Method,” which compares the sounds in the names; (2) “Word Embedding Method,” which assesses whether the word meanings are similar even though the words are phonetically dissimilar (Kim 2024); and (3) “Semantic Method” holding that names may be defined through their thematic considerations or “Toponymic Generics” which discovers how physical features acquire geographical names (Butler 2012; Burrill 1956).

This overview indicates that the name “misr” is not used in Coptic, Egyptian and Greek. It is used for border, territory, city, fortress, etc. in Akkadian, Arabic and Hebrew. It could have been used for Egypt on the basis of “Toponymic Generics.” The names “Mathura” and “Misr” both have common sounds M-R. The two names are similar on the basis of “Common Key” method. Thus, the name “Misr” matches with both Egypt and the Indus Valley.

### ***Baked Bricks***

The Pharaoh ordered Haman: “Then ignite for me, O Haman, [a fire] upon the clay and make for me a tower that I may look at the God of Prophet Moses” (Q 28:38).

The main materials of construction in ancient Egypt were stone and mud bricks. Baked bricks were used sparingly in special circumstances such as kilns in the pre-dynastic period before 3100 BCE, for decoration in the 11<sup>th</sup> dynasty 2134-1991 BCE, drains in the center of the streets in the middle kingdom, 2040-1782 BCE, and tombs in the Ramesside period 1550 to 1070 BCE (Spencer, 1979:7, 8, 39). Some dykes of canals were also built with baked bricks but the writer does not give the period for the same (Maspero, 1914: 45). Therefore, Egyptian architecture was mainly of mud bricks with burnt bricks used in special circumstances.

In contrast, we get plentiful evidence of baked bricks in the Indus Valley: “The baked brick work is the signature mark of Harappan Bronze Age technologies. Most of the large cities of the IVC [Indus Valley Civilization]... were built from both mud and baked bricks” from 2500 BCE onwards (Khan & Lemmen, 2013). Thus, the parameter of baked bricks provides favorable evidence from the Indus Valley and stands against Egypt.

### ***Parting of the Sea***

The Quran says that Allah inspired Prophet Moses to strike with his staff the sea. Then the sea parted, and each side was like a towering mountain (Q 26:63). There is no natural event that parallels such parting of the sea in Egypt.

We suggest that the Bani Israel crossed the Indus River in their westward journey from the Indus Valley to Israel. There is evidence of repeated flooding and rebuilding of the city of Mohenjo Daro. People finally abandoned it around 1500 BCE. One theory is that mud volcanoes obstructed the path of the Indus River downstream of Mohenjo Daro, leading to the creation of a large pond that submerged the city (Raikes, 1965). Mud volcanoes spew out mud in the form of lava. We give a photo of the Hingol Mud Volcano at Figure 1.



**Figure 1:Hingol Mud Volcano, Pakistan. Photo: Mabdullah 2007.**

Earthquakes, the gravitational pull of the sun or the moon, or Divine Intervention, can lead to the eruption of these volcanoes (Dimitrov, 2002, 61). Whatever be the cause, the eruption of a mud volcano along the Indus River would have deprived the river of the flow of water downstream for a period of time and exposed the riverbed. The Bani Israel could have crossed the exposed riverbed on land. Then the volcanic mud could have eroded and the flow of water may have resumed drowning the Pharaoh and his men.

Regarding this event, the Quran says that each side was “like a great towering mountain.” The letter ك (kaf) in كالطود (kal-ṭawdi) is a prefixed preposition which means “like”-mountain. It is possible that the mud from the volcano may have formed a mountain-like deposit upstream the point of crossing of the Indus River as shown in Figure 1. Therefore, the verse could use the word “mountain” metaphorically for a temporary mountain of mud or a high riverbank. On this point Egypt provides negative evidence while the Indus Valley provides favorable evidence.

## Geography

### *“Not in the west”*

The Quran says: “And you [kunta], were not on the western side when We revealed to Prophet Moses the command, and you [kunta] were not among the witnesses” (Q 28:44). The conventional understanding is that “kunta” refers to the Prophet Muhammad in both instances (Al-Tabari, 2025a, Ibn Kathir, 2025a). There is no dispute that the second use of “kunta” is for Prophet Muhammad. The first use of “kunta” needs consideration. Prophet Mohammad was not even born at that time of Prophet Moses. It is meaningless to say that Prophet Mohammad was not on the western side when he was not born at all. The Quran is a perfect text hence such a meaningless statement is not expected. The fact that this contradiction has not been noted by scholars does not obviate the contradiction.

One way of solving this contradiction is to consider the first instance of “kunta” as third person for Prophet Moses. However, this rendering is against grammar that says that “kunta” refers to second person. On the other hand, the verse before—Q 28:43—is being addressed to Prophet Moses: “Indeed, we gave Prophet Musa the scripture...” Thus, in continuity, the first use of “kunta” in Q 28:44 may also be addressed to him. Further, “kunta” (كُنْتَ) is derived from “kana” (كَانَ) which refers to third person (Elder, 1950:43). Thus, third person “kana” is embedded in the second person “kunta.”

We are faced with a difficult problem. We attribute a meaningless averment to the Quran if we say that the first “kunta” was used for second person for Prophet Mohammad. We violate the rules of grammar if we say that the first “kunta” was used for third person for Prophet Musa. Among these two, we give more weight to the Quran being a perfect document hence consider that “kunta” was used for third person in the first instance and render the verse as: “And you [Prophet Musa], were



not on the western side when we revealed to Prophet Musa the command, and you [Prophet Mohammad] were not among the witnesses.”

Next question is western side from where? Al-Tabari (2025a), Ibn Kathir (2025a), Al-Baghawi (2025a) and Al-Qurtubi (2025b), all say the western side is to be reckoned from Mount Tur. Ibn Kathir (2010), Al-Qurtubi (2025b) Al-Baydawi (2025) and Al-Jalalayn (2025a). say that Mount Tur was located in the Sinai. Thus, Q 28:44 may be understood as “you [Prophet Musa], were not on the western side of Sinai when we revealed to Prophet Musa the command.” It follows that Prophet Musa was not in Egypt when Allah revealed to him the command. The only ancient civilization east of Sinai was the Indus Valley. Hence, we propose that the command was given to Prophet Musa in the Indus Valley. We make no averment regarding the location of other events in his life such as going to Madyan. Our focus is on locating Misr-the place from where he led the Bani Israel. The evidence on this parameter is against Egypt and favorable for Indus Valley.

### ***Junction of Rivers***

The Quran says regarding the travels of Prophet Musa with Khizr: “And [mention] when Prophet Musa said to his servant, ‘I will not cease [traveling] until I reach the junction of the two seas or continue for a long period’” (Q 18:60). Number of classical scholars have interpreted this verse allegorically. al-Qushayri views the encounter as a model for the master-disciple relationship (al-Qushayri 2007). Al-Baqli presents the story as an allegory of the soul’s journey towards divine knowledge (Halman, 2013). al-Kashani views Prophet Musa as representing the rational soul and Khizr as embodying the intuitive soul, guiding Prophet Musa through stages of spiritual realization (Bakhtiar, 2019). Ibn Arabi views this as the encounter of Universe of Unseen (rooh) to the Universe of Seen (Jism) (Ibn Arabi, 2025: 404). These allegorical interpretations, however, do not cancel a possible geographical location for this encounter.

These seas have been identified as the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea, for example, Al-Tabari (2025b) and Al-Baghawi (2025b). However, there is no “junction” of these two seas here. At best, they can be said to face each other.

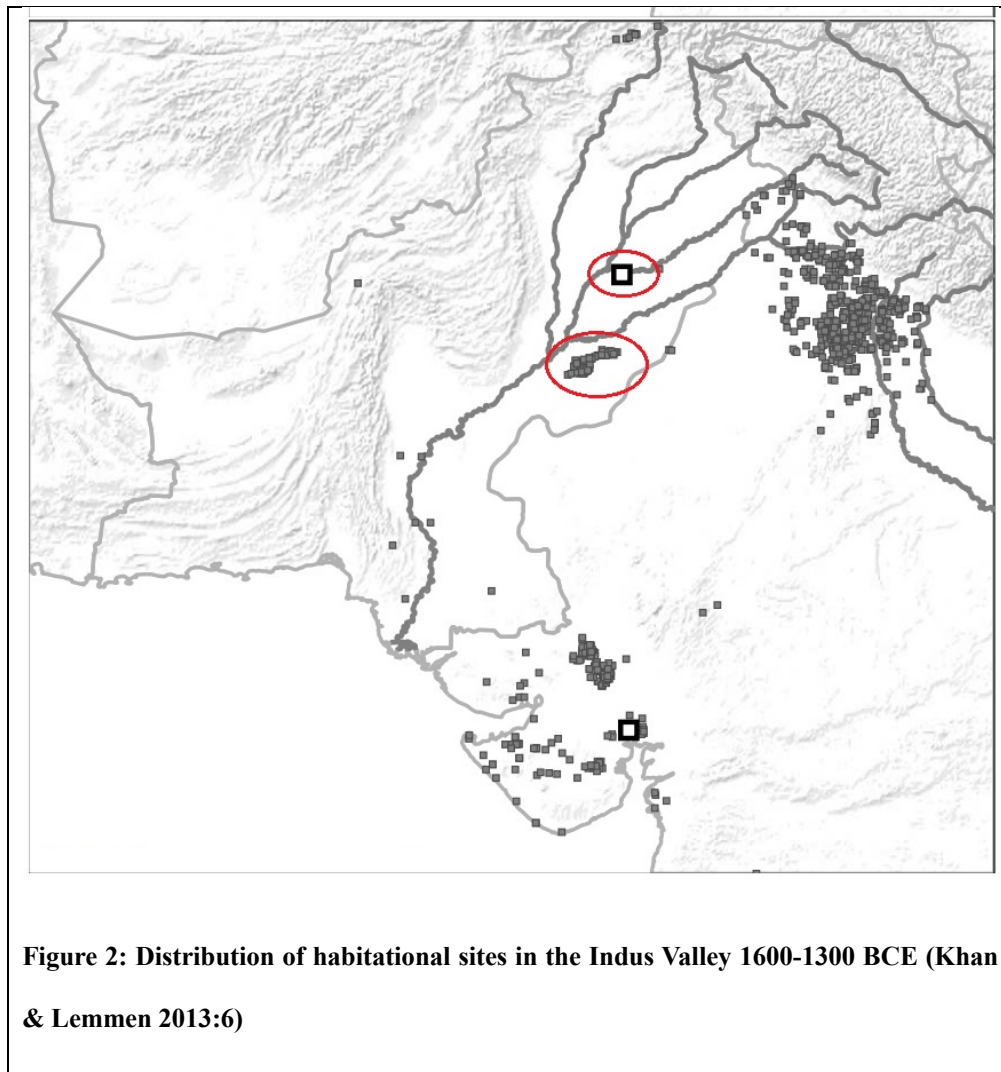
A possible alternative is that the two “seas” refer to two rivers. Lane’s Arabic-English Lexicon describes the root word “bahr” as “He slit; cut, or divided, lengthwise; split; or clave; and enlarged, or made wide. Hence the term بَحْرٌ [as meaning “ a sea “ or “ great river “] is said to be derived, because... the trench is made the bed of its water” (Lane, 1874a). Ibn Abbas says on this verse, (I will not give up until I reach the point where the two rivers meet) “where sea water meets with river water, i.e. where the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea meet, I will continue going on for years (Ibn Abbas, 2025a). Laleh Bakhtiar identifies the two seas as the “Freshwater rivers with their linear and directional nature” symbolizing rational thought while the saltwater sea with its vastness symbolizes deep inner knowledge (Bakhtiar, 2019:3). Muqatil identifies these rivers as Al-Rash and Al-Kur that meet and fall into the sea in Azerbaijan (Muqatil, 2002:592-593). These averments suggest that *l-bahrayni* in Q 18:60 may refer to two large rivers matching with meaning “vastness.”

The only notable junction of two rivers in the Egyptian context is of the White Nile and Blue Nile in Sudan. However, this is far to the south of Egypt. Indeed, north of Cairo, the Nile splits into two primary distributaries-the Rosetta Branch and the Damietta Branch-both emptying into the Mediterranean Sea (Hurst, et.al, 2025). However, here the Nile splits into two distributaries rather than two rivers joining. Hence, we do not find a credible junction of rivers in Egypt.

Among the commentaries mentioned above, Muqatil identifies these rivers as Al-Rash and Al-Kur in Azerbaijan. Qurtubi, without mentioning the name of river, only mentions Azerbaijan (Al-Qurtubi 2025a). The rivers Al-Ras and Al-Kur meet at Sabirabad in Azerbaijan. However, the

distance between Egypt and Azerbaijan is about 2700 kilometers. Prophet Musa was travelling on foot as indicated in him returning, “following his footprints” (Q 18:64). Further, the previous verse Q 18:59 tells of Allah destroying some cities. Therefore, we may expect to find evidence of habitation near the junction of the rivers. Archeological studies confirm that several agricultural and stockbreeding settlements have existed in Azerbaijan since the 7th-6th millennium BCE. However, the first “state” a concomitant requirement for the emergence of a city emerged only in the 10th Century BCE (Khalifa-Zadeh, 2025: 2). Therefore, evidence of the cities that may have been destroyed at the time of Prophet Musa at c. 1500 BCE is not available from Azerbaijan. Thus, the distance from Egypt and absence of archaeological evidence does not inspire confidence in Azerbaijan being indicated in this verse.

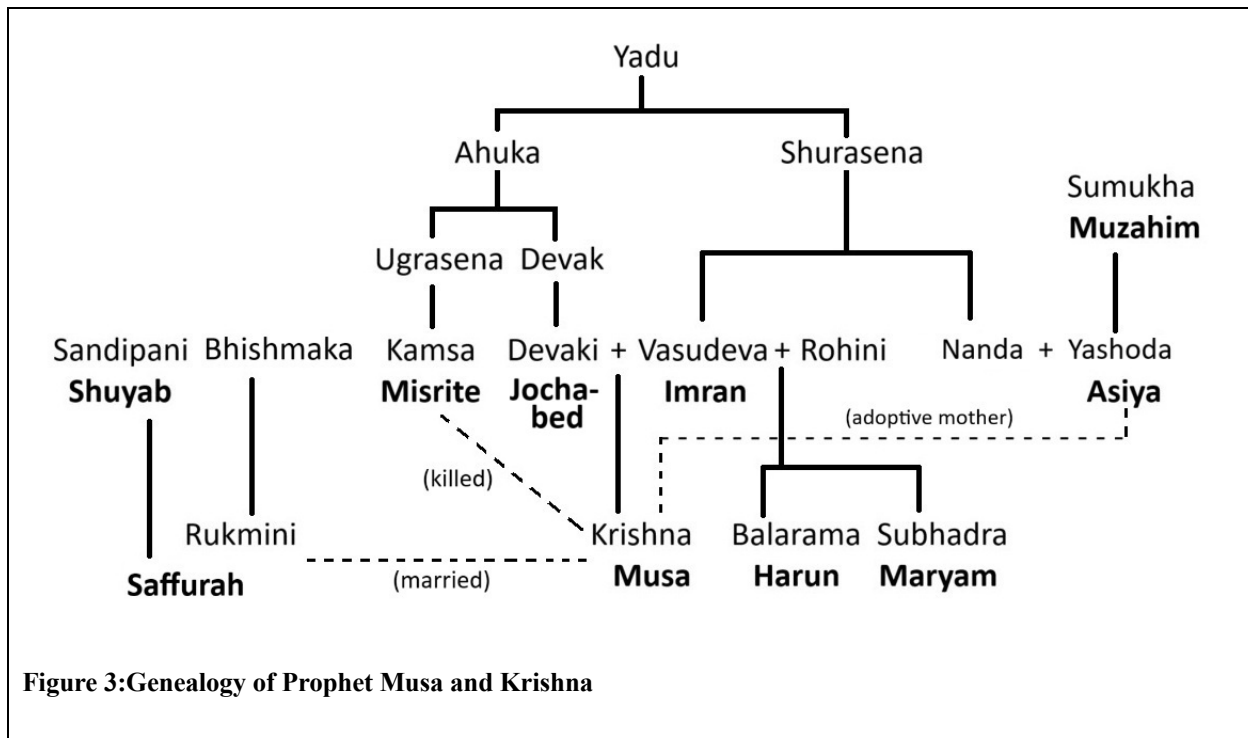
In contrast, the Indus River has at least two junctions with ancient sites nearby at 1600-1300 BCE that we have circled in red color as shown in Figure 4.



Prophet Musa could have travelled to one of these junctions of the rivers. The distance between the cluster of habitational sites in the northeastern part of the map in Figure 2 and the two junctions is only about 500 miles. This less distance and the availability of habitational sites near the rivers sets apart Indus from Azerbaijan. Thus, we find that the evidence from Egypt is unfavorable while that from the Indus Valley is favorable.

## Genealogy

Ten names relating to the genealogy of Prophet Musa are mentioned in the Islamic sources as given in bold in Figure 1.



The Egyptian texts do not mention the name of the Misrite killed by Prophet Musa while the Hindu texts say his name was Kamsa. Hence, a comparative assessment of these two names is not possible. We, therefore, examine the parallels between the remaining nine names.

*Musa, Imran and Jochabed.* Name of the father of Prophet Musa was Imran (Ibn Kathir, 2010:5). Ibn Abbas gives the name of his mother as Jochabed (Ibn Abbas, 2025b). The Hindu genealogy tells that two branches of Ahuka and Shurasena descended from Yadu. Devaki, the granddaughter of Ahuka, became the wife of Vasudeva, the son of Shurasena. Devaki and Vasudeva begot

Krishna (Bhagwata Purana 10:3:47-51). Thus, Musa~Krishna, Imran~Vasudeva and Jochabed~Devaki.

*Harun and Maryam.* Harun was the brother of Prophet Musa (Q 19:43, 21:48). Balarama was brother of Krishna (Bhagwata Purana 10:8:12). A point of difference is that Krishna was son of Vasudeva from wife Devaki while Balarama was his sone from wife Rohini.

Q 19:28 tells of sister of Prophet Musa but does not give her name. Ibn Kathir gives her name as “Maryam” (2025b). Maududi gives her name as “Mary” (2025). Once again, a point of difference is that Subdhra was daughter of Vasudeva from wife Rohini; not from Jochebed as implied in the Islamic tradition. Thus, Harun~Balarama, Maryam~Subhadra.

*Asiya and Muzahim.* Name of the Pharaoh whose wife picked up infant Musa from the river is not given in the Quran (Q 28:7). However, Ibn Kathir gives her name as Asiya bin Muzahim (2025b). On the Hindu side, name of foster mother who brought up Musa is given as Yashoda and her husband’s name is given as Nanda. The classical Hindu texts do not give the name of Yashoda’s father but living traditions give the name as Sumukha (Gaudiya History, 2025). Thus, Asiya~Yashoda, Muzahim~Sumukha.

*Shuaib.* Name of the person who gave shelter to Prophet Musa in Madyan is not given in the Quran although Prophet Shuaib is mentioned in many verses (Q 7:85, 11:84). Tradition as given by Mohammad Shafi (2025) and Al-Jalalayn (2025b) identifies Shuaib as father-in-law of Prophet Musa. On the Hindu side, Krishna is said to have left for studies under Sage Sandipani after killing Kamsa (Bhagwata Purana 10:44:38, 10:45:31-32). Thus, Shuaib~Sandipani.

*Saffurah.* The name of daughter of Shuaib who married Prophet Musa is given as Saffurah by Ibn Abbas (2025c). The name of Krishna’s first wife is given as Rukmani. She was daughter of King

Bhishmaka (Bhagwata Purana 10:54). A point of distinction is that Saffurah was daughter of Shuaib who had given shelter to Prophet Musa. Bhishmaka, on the other hand, was a king who had an adversarial relation with Krishna. Despite this distinction, Saffurah~Rukmini.

### Etymology of Person Names

We have identified the parallels in names in the genealogies of Prophet Musa and Krishna. Now we examine whether the parallel names are also etymologically similar.

*Musa~Krishna.* Musa is described in a Hadith by Bukhari as being “brown skinned” (Bukhari 2025). The name “Krishna” means “dark” (Monier-Williams 1899:306). The term “brown skinned” is close to being “dark” hence we consider the names to be parallel (Semantic Method).

*Imran~Vasudeva.* The name Imran means “prosperity,” “long-lived,” or “exalted” (Wisdom Library 2025a). The name Vasudeva means “excellent gods” (Monier-Williams 1899:930). The two names (Word Embedding Method).

*Jochabed~Devaki.* The Hebrew name “Jochebed” means “YHWH is glory” (Meyers 2000). The parallel name Devaki means “celestial, divine, god or deity” (Monier-Williams 1899:495). Both names carry a sense of God’s glory hence we consider them to be parallel (Word Embedding Method).

*Harun~Balarama.* The name Harun has the sounds “a,” “r” and “n.” The name Balarama has the sounds “a,” “r” and “m.” The difference is between “n” and “m.” These are both nasal consonants hence we consider the names to be parallel (Common Key Method).

*Maryam~Subhadra.* The Hebrew name Mariam means ‘exalted’ or ‘pious worshipper’ (Khan 2023). The Hindu name Subhadra means “very glorious,” “splendid,” “auspicious” or “fortunate”

(Monier Williams 1899:1229). Both names carry a sense of exaltation or glory hence we consider them to be parallel (Word Embedding Method).

*Asiya~Yashoda*. The name Asiya means “medicine” or “remedy” (Lane 1874b:157). The name Yashoda means “conferring fame or renown” (Monier Williams 1899:848). The names are not parallel.

*Muzahim~Sumukha*. The name Muzahim means “one who straitens, pushes, presses, crowds, or throngs or victorious warrior” (Lane 1874d). The name Sumukha is derived from the prefix “Su” meaning “good” and “mukha” meaning mouth or face (Monier Williams 1899:819). It may be understood as a beautiful face. The names are not parallel.

*Saffurah~Rukmini*. The name Saffurah could be derived from two possible roots: (1) “safu” meaning “clearness” (Lane 1874a:61); and (2) “sfr” meaning “yellow” (Hawramani 2025:Book 3). The root of the name Rukmini is “ruk” which means “desiring splendour, eager of lusture.” A variant “Rukmin” means “wearing golden ornaments, adorned with gold” (Monier Williams 1899:882). Both names carry the meanings clearness or lusture; and yellow or gold hence we consider them to be parallel (Word Embedding Method).

*Shuaib~Sandipani*. The name Shuaib means “who shows the right path” and embodies wisdom and guidance (Wisdom Library 2025b). The word “sandipana” from which the name Sandipani is derived means “kindling, inflaming, exciting, arousing” (Monier Williams 1899:1143). In the context of the teacher Sandipani, it means one who kindles knowledge. The names are parallel (Word Embedding and Semantic Methods).

We find that seven out of the nine names have parallel meanings. The evidence is in favor of the Indus Valley while Egypt is silent on this parameter.



## Culture

We examine whether the cultural traits described in the Quran match with Egypt or the Indus Valley.

*Quail.* Q 2:57 tells of quails. The quail bird was known in Egypt (Halim 2022). Quail is found in the western parts of the Indo-Chinese peninsula including the Indus valley (Arya et. al, 2018: 2).

*Cucumbers, garlic, lentils and onions.* Q 2:61 tells of cucumbers, garlic, lentils and onions. Evidence of cucumber and lentils is not available from Egypt (Paris et. al, 2011; Swamy, 2023) while onions and garlic were known (Mehta, 2017; Petrovska & Cekovska, 2010). All the four items are found in India. Cucumber is considered to be native to India (Chandra & Koppar, 1992: 4). Lentils and garlic are attested archaeologically (Pokharia & Srivastava, 2013). Onions are mentioned in the Vedic writings (Mehta, 2017).

*Staff.* In Q 20:18 Prophet Moses says to God: “It is my staff; I lean upon it, and I bring down leaves for my sheep and I have therein other uses.” Staffs are depicted as walking aids in the tomb paintings from Egypt (Loebl & Nunn, 1997: 2). Staff (*danda*) is described as a major weapon in several ancient Hindu texts (Singh et. al, 2017:61).

*Calf.* Q 7:148 tells of the Bani Israel making a calf with their ornaments. The Egyptian goddess Hathor was depicted as having a female face with cow ears, a cow, or as a woman with a cow head (Jennings, 2020). Around 1500 BCE, a ritualistic and sacrificial role for cattle is known in the Vedic literature (Kennedy et. al, 2018).

*Polytheism.* Q 6:137 condemns the polytheists. In ancient Egypt, each dynasty had a god as their patron and protector (Bamunusinghe, 2019:48). Deities of Mother Goddess and Nature are found in the Indus Valley (Singhal, 2024).

*Slavery.* Q 26:22 tells of the Bani Israel being enslaved. Different forms of slavery existed in Egypt during the Old-, Middle- and New Kingdoms (Karev, 2023: 59). Evidence of slavery is available from the Indus Valley (Chanana, 1960:17).

Thus, we find that the cultural descriptions in the Quran match both with Egypt and the Indus Valley. The only minor exception is that evidence for cucumbers and lentils is not forthcoming from ancient Egypt but available in the Indus Valley. We consider evidence on this parameter to be equal from both the locations.

### **Textual Narratives**

In this section we make a study of the comparative mythology relating to Prophet Musa in the Quran and the Hindus. Egypt is silent on this matter hence we provide comparisons only with the Hindus.

*Killing male Children.* The Pharaoh ordered that the sons of the Hebrews be killed: “We will kill their sons and keep their women alive; and indeed, we are subjugators over them” (Q 7:127). We are not aware of a similar story in the Egyptian literature. The Hindu texts say that King Kamsa ordered demoness Putna to kill the male children of the people of Krishna. The demoness “used to roam in the villages and settlements of the cowherds to kill the male children” (Bhagwata Purana 10:41).

*Infant Musa on Water.* Allah says to Prophet Musa’s mother: “Suckle him; but when you fear for him, cast him into the river and do not fear and do not grieve” (Q 28:7). Accordingly, Musa’s natural mother cast Musa into the river.

Krishna was born in a prison. His father Vasudeva gave a slip to the guards and came out of the prison. He carried newborn Krishna in a basket across the waters of River Yamuna. We give a

popular imagery of this event at Figure 4. Vasudeva then placed the Krishna on the bed of Yashoda, the queen of Gokul. He returned with her newborn daughter to Mathura. He reentered the prison and feigned that his wife Devaki had given birth to a girl child (Bhagwata Purana 10:3:51-52). Nanda and Yashoda brought up Krishna as his foster parents (Bhagwata Purana 10:3:48-51). The Prophet was taken in a basket to a river in both the narratives; and that he was brought up by his foster parents.



**Figure 4: Infant Krishna being carried across the Yamuna, Reengus Temple. Photo: Shyam (2008).**

*Killed and fled.* The Quran says, “And he [Musa] entered the city at a time of inattention by its people and found therein two men fighting: one from his faction and one from among his enemy. And the one from his faction called for help to him against the one from his enemy, so Moses struck him and killed him” (Q 28:15). Then Prophet Musa left the place fearful and anticipating apprehension (Q 28:21).

The Hindu story says that Krishna was summoned to Mathura by King Kamsa after the former became an adult. Kamsa wanted to kill Krishna. However, Krishna instead killed Kamsa who was tyrannizing the Yadavas-the clan in which Krishna was born. Then Krishna left to study under Sage Sandipani (Bhagwata Purana 10:41, 10:44:38, 10:45:12). The killing of an enemy is common to the Quran and Hindu texts. A distinction is that Quran says that Prophet Musa left the place in a state of fear while the Hindu text says that Krishna left in victory.

*Musa and Haroon.* The Quran tells of Prophet Musa being repeatedly assisted by his elder brother Haroon for example in Q 10:75. Krishna was similarly assisted by his elder brother Balarama. For example, the two travelled to Mathura together where they killed Kamsa (Bhagwata Purana 10:39:39-40). In conclusion, multiple parallels between the Quranic and Hindu textual narratives are available while Egypt is silent on these.

## Conclusion

We find that the Quranic narrative aligns with both Egypt and the Indus Valley in three parameters, namely: habitation, the name “Misr” and culture. Egypt is silent on three parameters although evidence from the Indus Valley is favorable, namely: genealogy, etymology of person names, and textual narratives. The evidence is against Egypt and in favor of the Indus Valley in four parameters, namely: baked bricks, parting of the sea, “not in the west” and junction of rivers. The overall picture is that we find favorable evidence from the Indus Valley on all ten parameters against only three parameters from Egypt. Therefore, there exists a possibility that Prophet Musa may have led the Bani Israel from the Indus Valley to Israel.

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