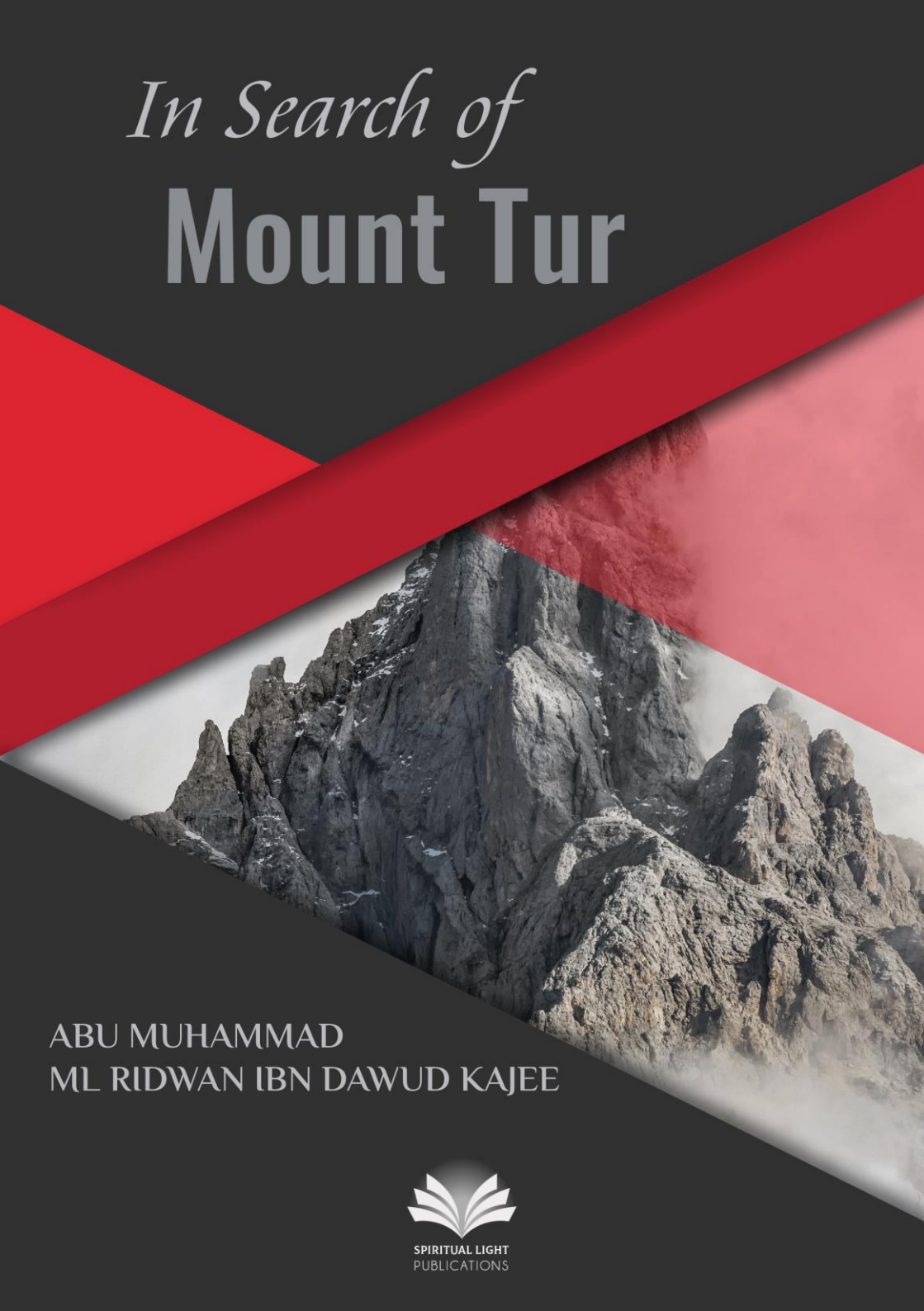
In Search of
Mount Tur



ABU MUHAMMAD
ML RIDWAN IBN DAWUD KAJEE

SPIRITUAL LIGHT
PUBLICATIONS

In Search of

Mount Tur

Abu Muhammad

Ml Ridwan ibn Dawud Kajee



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May Almighty Allāh accept this publication, and in His Infinite Kindness, crown it with His Pleasure, and the pleasure of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

May Almighty Allāh allow it to be a means of perpetual reward «إيصال الثواب وصدقة جارية» for the author and the members of Spiritual Light, their parents «نسبًا وصهرًا», their mentor, and for all those that have offered aid in any form, as well as their parents and children, and for the Ummah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ in general.

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Transliteration Guide

Consonants

ء	ʾ
ب	B
ت	T
ث	TH
ج	J
ح	Ḥ
خ	KH
د	D
ذ	DH
ر	R
ز	Z
س	S
ش	SH
ص	Ṣ

ض	Ḍ
ط	Ṭ
ظ	Ẓ
ع	ʿ
غ	GH
ف	F
ق	Q
ك	K
ل	L
م	M
ن	N
ه	H
و	W
ي	Y

Vowels

ـَ	A
ـِ	I
ـُ	U
ـَا	Ā
ـِي	Ī
ـُو	Ū
ـَيْ	AY
ـَوْ	AW

بِسۡمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحۡمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

﴿وَٱلتِّينِ وَٱلزَّيۡتُونِ ١ وَطُورِ سِينِينَ ٢
وَهَٰذَا ٱلۡبَلَدِ ٱلۡأَمِينِ ٣﴾ [التين: ١-٣]

In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful Most Compassionate.
By the fig, and the olive.
By Mount Sinai.
By this city of security (Makkah).

بِسۡمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحۡمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

نحمَدُه ونصَلِّي ونسَلِّم علَى رسُوله الكرِيم، وعلَى آلِه وأصْحَابه أجمَعِين،

أمّا بعْدُ:

In Search of Mount Ṭūr

Introduction

About 200 years after Nabī ʿĪsā عَلَيۡهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ, an area of Old Egypt, today known as The Sinai Desert was declared by Helena, the mother of Constantine, as the land of Mt Ṭūr. In the map below, the spot demarcated by Helena can be seen, located between Jubayl and Abū Durbah.



After fleeing Egypt for the first time and taking refuge in the land of Madyan for ten years, Nabī Mūsā عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ set out for Egypt, with the intention of visiting his mother. During the journey, he took a wrong path and thus found himself at night far from any resting-area. In search of someone to direct him, or at least some fire for warmth and protection for his family, he proceeded in the direction of what he thought to be a burning fire. It was as this spot, which would come to be known as Mt Ṭūr, that he received his first revelation.

On account of Helena's demarcation of Mt Ṭūr, the route that historians would trace for the journey of Nabī Mūsā عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ from Madyan (which is on the top-right of the Gulf of Aqaba) to Egypt (which is on the left of the Gulf of Suez), would be around the tip of the Gulf of Aqaba (near Elat), all the way down to the area 'aṭ-Ṭūr' then upwards to the tip of the Gulf of Suez, around it and then down to Egypt.

Despite the area demarcated by Helena being close to 500 km off the path from Madyan to Egypt, Christian historians, trusting Helena's demarcation, rarely questioned the need for Nabī Mūsā عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ travelling so far off his path, i.e., instead of traversing a path straight to Egypt, why did he instead travel all the way towards Sharm el-Sheikh, and from there all the way back up towards the tip of the Guld of Suez?

In my book, '*al-Aqṣā, Past, Present and Future*'[1], I have discussed Helena's insincerity to the Christian faith, and how she deviously demarcated a fraudulent area as the blessed spot of al-Aqṣā and its rock. When she could lie regarding the rock of al-Aqṣā and its position, her being truthful in this instance should most definitely be questioned.

If Helena's demarcation of Mt Ṭūr is ignored, the question would then arise as to:

1. Where did Nabī Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ receive his first revelation?
2. Whilst in Egypt, whenever he conversed with Almighty Allah, where would that occur?
3. When he asked Almighty Allāh to allow him a vision of His blessed Being, on which mountain was he?

A short answer to this would be that the first revelation most probably occurred on a mountain range, somewhere above Madyan (on the eastern-side of the Gulf of Aqaba); the conversations he enjoyed with Almighty Allāh, whilst in Egypt, would most probably have occurred on the mountains of that area, known as Muqaṭṭam (on the western-side of the Gulf of the Suez); and the conversation

[1] This book may be downloaded from the site: spirituallight.org.za

in which he asked Almighty Allāh to allow him a vision of His blessed Being, that would have most probably occurred on a mountain range, which appeared on his path towards the lands of Shām and al-Aqṣā (north of the Gulf of Aqaba).

In recent times, many Christian groups have begun admitting that Helena's demarcation had duped them for centuries, and that Mt Ṭūr and the Sinai desert is actually somewhere else. [2]

[2] An example of an article which throws adequate light on this subject is one that has been prepared by the Doubting Thomas Research Foundation, a foundation set up to research Biblical history, reconciling it with modern understandings of history and science.

(https://www.jabalmaqla.com/timeline-tradition-mount-sinai/)

This article was published in no small part with the help of studies from Joel Richardson, author of Mount Sinai in Arabia.

The theory that Mount Sinai is located in modern-day Saudi Arabia is treated as a fairly new idea, but our research shows that there is a long tradition in support of this theory. Evidence for this alternative theory is substantiated by historical references and maps which are older than any other tradition about the location of Mount Sinai.

The traditional location for Mount Sinai is at St. Catherine's Monastery in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. However, many researchers have been disappointed with the lack of evidence at the site, resulting in dismissals =

of the credibility of the Exodus story or proposals for other Mount Sinai candidates.

St. Catherine's/Jebel Musa was established as a possible site by Helena during her journey from the years A.D. 331-334. Traditions from Christian, Jewish, and Islamic sources, as well as cartographers, explorers and historians, state or infer that Mount Sinai is located in north-western Saudi Arabia. These non-Biblical sources describe the mountain as "the highest peak in the region" of Midian, an ancient land located in north-western Saudi Arabia.

A review of these accounts shows that, even after the traditional location was marked by Helena, a competing tradition placing Mount Sinai in Arabia persisted.

The following sources are organized in chronological order and by religion.

The oldest recorded transition pointing to Mount Sinai as being in Saudi Arabia dates back to the 3rd century B.C., about 600 years before the St. Catherine's tradition was established.

300 B.C. - 134 B.C. - The Septuagint

The Septuagint (the first known translation of the Original Hebrew Pentateuch and following books, known as the Old Testament in the Christian Bible) was translated and circulated among the Alexandrian Jewish population.

=

Dr. Allen Kerkeslager concluded in a scholarly study that the Septuagint is among the oldest works to state that Mount Sinai is in north-western Saudi Arabia.

The Septuagint says that Mount Sinai is near an ancient city named Madyan, also spelled as "Madian" and "Madiam."

20 B.C. - 40 A.D. - Philo Judaeus Of Alexandria

Philo was a Jewish philosopher who was alive in the time of Jesus and lived in Alexandria, Egypt. Philo placed Mt. Sinai east of what is now Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, and south of Palestine. He used the Septuagint as his exclusive source.

A.D. 93-94 - Josephus

Titus Flavius Josephus was a Romano-Jewish Scholar born in Jerusalem and a well-respected source of history in the 1st century of the Church. In his work The Antiquities of the Jews, Josephus confirms that Midian was close to the Red Sea from when Moses meets with Jethro:

In his accounts, he mentions multiple times that Mount Sinai was the highest peak in the region:

A.D. 260 - A.D. 339 - Eusebius Of Caesarea

In reference to Mount Horeb, which could arguably be adjacent to Mount Sinai, he stated:

"The Mountain of God in the land of Madian. It lies beside Mount Sinai beyond Arabia in the desert."

Propaganda supported this preposterous notion making it palatable for generations thereafter, despite it being a view in conflict with all the religious scriptures, and with logic itself, since that very area was, during the era of Nabī Mūsā عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ, under the rule of the Pharaoh. It was a land from which Nabī Mūsā عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ was fleeing, not one towards which he was fleeing.

Unfortunately, due to the popularity of Helena's proclamation, and due to this land, i.e., the area between the Gulf of the Suez and Arabia, being labelled on all present-day maps as 'The Sinai Desert', even Muslim scholars of present times are found erring with regards to the true location of Mt Ṭūr and blindly placing it in a land where it is not.

In order to estimate an approximate location of Mt Ṭūr, understanding the route which the Banū Isrā'īl took as they fled from Firʿawn would aid greatly. Unfortunately, in this regard too, there exists great confusion amongst the Christian scholars. Thus, before proceeding with identifying the lands of Mt Ṭūr, a brief discussion regarding the 'Exodus' (the departure of the Banū Isrā'īl from Egypt) is necessary.

The Exodus

For centuries, the journey of Nabī Mūsā عَلَيۡهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ, together with the Banū Isrā'īl, from Egypt towards the blessed lands of Shām, has caught the attention of researchers and scholars of all three monotheist faiths, due to the position Nabī Mūsā عَلَيۡهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ occupies in all.

Much reference has been made towards this most unique historical journey in the Glorious Qur'ān, as well as in the previous scriptures. Despite the vast volume of knowledge that has reached us today regarding this journey, the exact route which the Banū Isrā'īl followed has always been a point of uncertainty.

In recent years however, as archaeology has developed into a recognized science, especially on account of the tools of discovery which modern technology has provided, new research has begun in an effort to locate this route.

The route that Bible commentators have for centuries accepted, despite having no evidence to support it, has in recent times come under great scrutiny, due to the non-existence of even a shred of archaeological evidence along this path, whereas a journey of such a huge number of people would surely have left behind something of note.

Zahi Hawass, an Egyptian archaeologist and formerly Egypt's Minister of State for Antiquities Affairs, said of the Exodus:

> "Really, it's a myth... Sometimes as archaeologists we have to say that never happened because there is no historical evidence." [3]

In order to understand why researchers question this route, a rough sketch of this route shall first be required.

Routes Of The Banū Isrā'īl As Opined By Bible Scholars.

Amongst the Bible commentators there exists great difference as with regards to the exact route that the Banū Isrā'īl took when they left Egypt, especially with regards to the spot at which they crossed the water, and where Firʿawn and his army were drowned. Due to the drowning of Firʿawn being the most significant episode in the history of the Banū Isrā'īl, one would have expected that this spot be earmarked as a historical landmark, whereas that has for some reason not been the case.

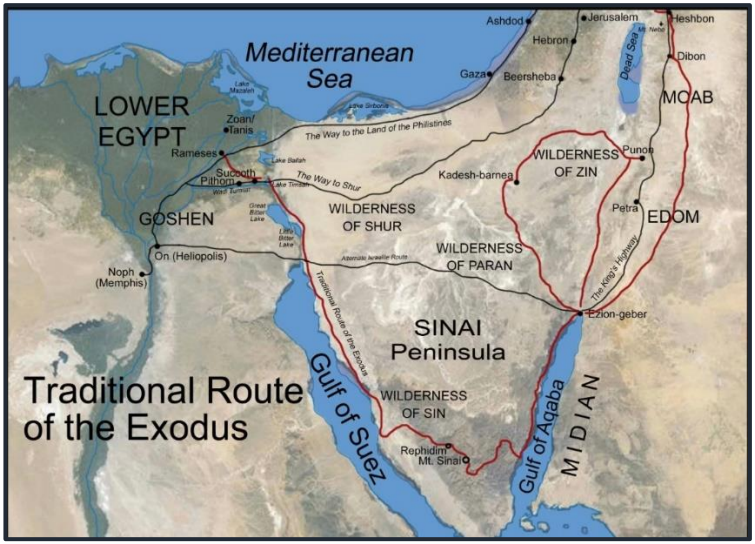
Then with regard to the location of Mt Sinai, towards which the Banū Isrā'īl travelled after the drowning of Firʿawn, which would be

[3] Slackman, Michael (3 April 2007). "Did the Red Sea Part? No Evidence, Archaeologists Say". The New York Times. Retrieved 27 October 2016. [Wikipedia]

the most important mountain for the Jewish people, here too over thirteen possible spots have been discussed, which means that their scholars are clueless as with regards to the exact location of the mountain.

Such confusion generally arises due to alteration of texts, adulterated translations and interpretation, and an exerted attempt to prevent the truth from being disclosed. Below follows a crux of two of the more famous views of present-day Bible commentators and researchers regarding the route of the exodus:

Route 1: Through the Lake of Timseh (Lake of reeds)



The line in red indicates to route 1.

According to the above, the journey began from Rameses (north of Goshen). The city of Goshen[4] has been explicitly mentioned in the Bible as the area wherein the Banū Isrā'īl resided.

Instead of continuing North, on the path marked out in black (the way to the Land of the Philistines), they travelled South pass the city of Succoth.

In the Bible [Exodus 13.18] the path taken has then been described as '*God led them in a roundabout way through the wilderness towards the*

[4] The Land of Goshen (Hebrew Eretz Gošen) is named in the Bible as the place in Egypt given to the Hebrews by the pharaoh of Joseph [Genesis 45:9-10], and the land from which they later left Egypt at the time of the Exodus. It was located in the eastern Delta of the Nile.

In 1885 Édouard Naville identified Goshen as the 20th territorial division of Ancient Egypt, located in the eastern Delta, and known as "Gesem" or "Kesem" during the Twenty-sixth dynasty of Egypt (672–525 BC). It covered the western end of the Wadi Tumilat, the eastern end being the district of Succoth, which had Pithom as its main town, extended north as far as the ruins of Pi Ramesse (the "land of Rameses"), and included both crop land and grazing land. [Wikipedia]

The biblical Book of Exodus mentions "Ramesses" as one of the cities on whose construction the Israelites were forced to labour [Exodus 1:11] and from where they departed on their Exodus journey [Exodus 12:37 and Numbers 33:3]. This Ramesses was identified by biblical archaeologists of the nineteenth century with the Pi-Ramesses of Ramesses II. [Wikipedia]

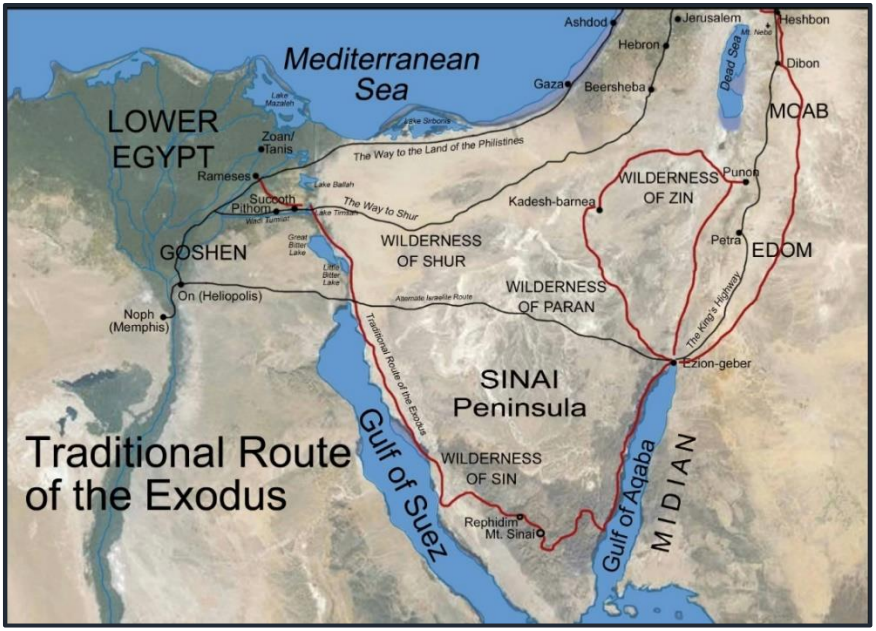
Red Sea'. Due to the Red Sea not being anywhere near to this route, recent commentators of the Bible have explored the possibility of the phrase 'Yam Suph' referring to 'a sea of reeds', instead of 'The Red Sea', which had been the traditionally understood meaning for centuries. The waters that the Banū Isrā'īl crossed, according to this, would then have been one of the reed-framed lakes north of the Red Sea, such as Lake Timseh, The Great Bitter Lake or The Little Bitter Lake.

The map above shows Lake Timseh (just after Succoth) as the point of 'the great crossing'. After crossing at either Lake Timseh, or one of the two lakes South of it, the route shown on the map shows the Banū Isrā'īl travelling all the way South to what is shown as Mt Sinai, and from there all the way North towards Jerusalem.

The objection that would obviously arise here is that if the army of Firʿawn had already been destroyed so close to Egypt, what was the need now to travel all the way South from there and then to journey back to the North. Easier options would have been to either return to Egypt as victors or to travel directly to Jerusalem by moving North. A route shown in black, labelled as 'the way to Shur' would have been the closest route to Jerusalem if their crossing point was Lake Timseh. And if it was one of the two bitter lakes, lower South, then the route labelled as 'alternate Israelite route', i.e., crossing

the so-called ‘wilderness of Paran’, would have been the best option.

Route 2: Through the Red Sea



The journey begins at Memphis, towards Heliopolis. (Marked in black on the map above, labelled as ‘alternate Israelite route’). The crossing occurs south of The Little Bitter Lake, at the tip of the Gulf of Suez, which is part of the Red Sea. The journey continues towards what is marked on the map as ‘the wilderness of Paran’.

According to this theory, the location of Mt Sinai shall be somewhere in the vicinity of ‘the wilderness of Paran’ and not

towards the southern tip of 'The Sinai Peninsula'. This theory shall thus conform with what has been generally understood by the traditional Jewish and Christian scholars that the crossing occurred over the Red Sea, but at the same time it conflicts with what has traditionally been understood by their scholars as Mt Sinai.

As can be clearly seen from the above the conflicting routes that Bible scholars hold differ to great extents, making re-conciliation impossible. Since they have no concrete evidence for any of their views, the right to explore for alternate 'possible' routes should be offered to others as well. As they are allowed to differ with each other, and draw up routes in accordance to what they feel most comfortable with, it is only fair that others too be given this privilege.

Based upon this, I shall now pen down a 'possible' route of the exodus, which I find myself inclined to. If correct, then it is from Almighty Allāh, and if incorrect, then I seek Almighty Allāh's forgiveness for my errors and misjudgement, and ask that it be viewed as an '*Ijtihādī*' error.

In order to properly understand the exodus, it is imperative that one first identifies the land that Nabī Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام reached after crossing the sea. Our discussion shall thus begin from here.

Journeying To ‘Where’? - Madyan

It is common knowledge amongst all, i.e., the Muslims, the Christians and the Jews that when Nabī Mūsā عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ fled Egypt, after mistakenly killing a Coptic, the land to which he fled was Madyan (Midian), north-west of the Arabian Peninsula

Firʿawn held no authority over Madyan due to it being under the ruling authority of the Canaanites.[5]

Present-day research indicates that Madyan was located close to what is today known as al-Bad’, on the eastern shore of the Gulf of Aqaba, approximately 200 km from the tip of the gulf.

The route that Nabī Mūsā عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ took to reach Madyan, when he fled Egypt the first time, was based upon Divine Inspiration, due to which he was able to avoid all Egyptian check-points.

When the time came for him to lead the Banū Isrā’īl out of Egypt, a possible route could have been towards ‘the land of the Philistines’, since it was the shortest path out of Egyptian domain, but as mentioned clearly in the Bible, that path was avoided.

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[5] «طَمْأَنَهُ شُعَيْبٌ بِأَنَّهُ يُزِيلُ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ الْخَوْفَ؛ لِأَنَّهُ أَصْبَحَ فِي مَأْمَنٍ مِنْ أَنْ يَنَالَهُ حُكْمُ فِرْعَوْنَ؛ لِأَنَّ بِلَادَ مَدْيَنَ تَابِعَةٌ لِمُلْكِ الْكَنْعَانِيِّينَ، وَهُمْ أَهْلُ بَأْسٍ وَنَجْدَةٍ. وَمَعْنَى نَهْيِهِ عَنِ الْخَوْفِ: نَهْيُهُ عَنْ ظَنِّ أَنْ تَنَالَهُ يَدُ فِرْعَوْنَ». [التحرير والتنوير]

> [Exodus 13:17-18] - Then it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, 'Lest perhaps the people change their minds when they see war (i.e., the ʿAmāliqah who they would have to fight against to gain entry into the promised lands) and return to Egypt.' So, God led the people around by way of the wilderness of the Red Sea.

The next possible destination would be to travel to Madyan, due to the protection it had once given him. Nabī Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was quite familiar with the route to Madyan, due to traversing this path once when he had fled to Madyan and once upon his return to Egypt.

Proofs Of Madyan Being The Land Towards Which The Banū Isrā'īl Fled:

Proof 1:

The Land Of Balʿam Ibn Bāʿūrah - Madyan

After escaping from Firʿawn, the Banū Isrā'īl passed Madyan. According to a narration of Māik ibn Dīnār, Nabī Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ sent one of the Banū Isrā'īl to invite them to the worship of one Allāh. The name of this man was Balʿam ibn Bāʿūrah.

This man was known to be one whose prayers were readily accepted, on account of the knowledge he possessed regarding the

Ism Aʿẓam (the Great name of Almighty Allāh). Being enticed with the wealth of the leader of the Midianites, he chose to join them and abandon his religion. [Ibn Kathīr][6]

Almighty Allāh discusses this incident in the Glorious Qur'ān:

﴿ وَٱتۡلُ عَلَيۡهِمۡ نَبَأَ ٱلَّذِيٓ ءَاتَيۡنَٰهُ ءَايَٰتِنَا فَٱنسَلَخَ مِنۡهَا فَأَتۡبَعَهُ ٱلشَّيۡطَٰنُ فَكَانَ مِنَ ٱلۡغَاوِينَ ١٧٥ ﴾ [الأعراف: ١٧٥]

> "And recite to them the incident of the one who We had given our signs, but he slipped away from it and instead followed the devil, and thus fell into destruction."

Other versions regarding him have also been quoted in the books of Tafsīr.

The point of note is that the area where this incident occurred has been recorded as Madyan. Texts of the Bible also indicate towards this.

[6] «وقَالَ مَالِكُ بْنُ دِينَارٍ: كَانَ مِنْ عُلَمَاءِ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ، وَكَانَ مُجَابَ الدَّعْوَةِ، يُقَدِّمُونَهُ فِي الشَّدَائِدِ، بَعَثَهُ نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ مُوسَى إِلَى مَلِكِ مَدْين يَدْعُوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ، فَأَقْطَعُهُ وَأَعْطَاهُ، فَتَبِعَ دِينَهُ وَتَرَكَ دِينَ مُوسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. [تفسير ابن كثير]

Proof 2:

The Encounter Of The Banū Isrā'īl With Idol-Worshippers In The Lands Close To Madyan

After crossing the sea, one of the first localities the Banū Isrā'īl came into contact with was an idol-worshipping nation. Seeing their worship, some ignorant Isrā'īlī's asked if they too could have an idol. Nabī Mūsā عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ was astonished at their ignorant request and rebuked them severely.

Almighty Allāh describes this incident in the Qur'ān:

﴿ وَجَٰوَزۡنَا بِبَنِيٓ إِسۡرَٰٓءِيلَ ٱلۡبَحۡرَ فَأَتَوۡاْ عَلَىٰ قَوۡمٖ يَعۡكُفُونَ عَلَىٰٓ أَصۡنَامٖ لَّهُمۡۚ قَالُواْ يَٰمُوسَى ٱجۡعَل لَّنَآ إِلَٰهٗا كَمَا لَهُمۡ ءَالِهَةٞۚ قَالَ إِنَّكُمۡ قَوۡمٞ تَجۡهَلُونَ ١٣٨ ﴾ [الأعراف: ١٣٨]

> "And when We took the Banū Isrā'īl across the ocean they passed by a nation engrossed in the worship of idols. They said, O Mūsā, make for us a god similar to their god." He said, 'You are indeed an ignorant nation!"

In the Tafsīr of this verse, Ibn Abī Ḥātim quotes Qatādah that the nation that they passed was Lakhm.[7]

Abū Qudāmah has narrated that he had heard Abū ʿImrān al-Jawnī saying,

> "Do you know which nation it was which the Banū Isrā'īl passed and found engrossed in idol-worship? It was your nation, Lakhm and Judhām!'[8]

Banū Lakhm and Banū Judhām were two famous Arab tribes. The area inhabited by the Banū Judhām, as shown on the map below, is on the right-hand side of the Gulf of Aqaba, close to Madyan.

As for the Banū Lakhm (the Lakhmids), their ancestor, Qahtan, created an Arab empire for them in Ḥīra (near modern-day Iraq), as shown on the map. Since Banū Lakhm and Banū Judhām were closely related, it is quite possible that certain groups of them lived

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[7] حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي ثنا نَصْرُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ، حدثنا مُبَشِّرُ بْنُ عُمَرَ، حدثنا الْعَبَّاسُ ابْنُ الْفَضْلِ الأَنْصَارِيُّ عَنْ أَبِي الْعَوَّامِ يَعْنِي عِمْرَانَ الْقَطَّانَ، عَنْ قَتَادَةَ فِي هَذِهِ الآيَةِ: ﴿فَأَتَوْاْ عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ يَعْكُفُونَ عَلَىٰٓ أَصْنَامٍ لَّهُمْ﴾ قَالَ: «عَلَى لَخْمٍ». [تفسير ابن أبي حاتم]

[8] حَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ الْحُسَيْنِ، حدثنا الْمُقَدَّمِيُّ، حدثنا أَشْعَثُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ثنا أَبُو قُدَامَةَ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عِمْرَانَ الْجَوْنِيَّ قَالَ: «هَلْ تَدْرِي مَنِ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ مَرَّ بهم بنوا إِسْرَائِيلَ عَلَى قَوْمٍ يَعْكِفُونَ عَلَى أَصْنَامٍ لَهُمْ»؟ قُلْتُ: «لَا أَدْرِي»، قَالَ: «هُمْ قَوْمُكَ لَخْمٌ وَجُذَامٌ». [تفسير ابن أبي حاتم]

close to the Banū Judham, and the Banū Isrā'īl thereby passed by both tribes.

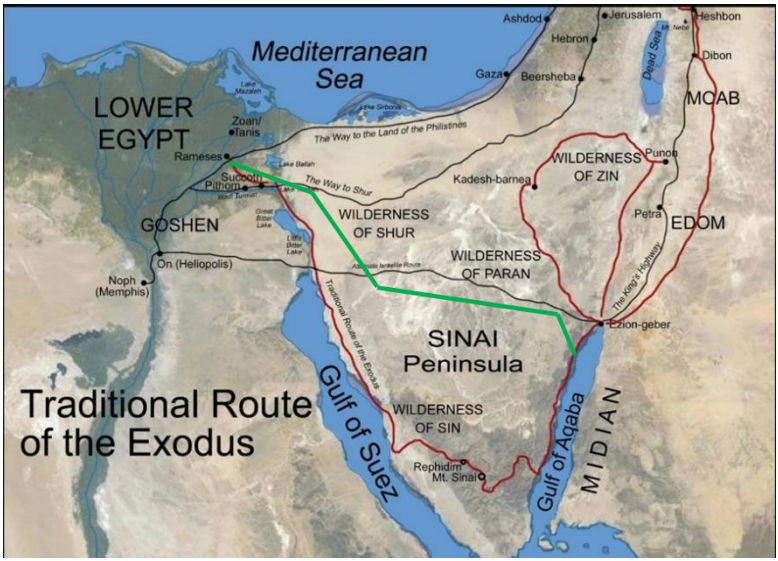


The Great Crossing

After having understood that Madyan and its surrounds were the focal center of all the activities of the Banū Isrā'īl after they crossed the ocean, and it was the direction of Madyan that Nabī Mūsā عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ intended when he took the Banū Isrā'īl out from the land of the pharaoh, it now becomes quite simple to draw a possible route of the Exodus. It may not be the exact route, but it is surely way closer

to the truth than what current Jewish and Christian preachers try to explain.

The best route to Madyan during those days would be to travel towards the tip of the Gulf of Aqaba, using the route that would cross the 'wilderness of Paran'. A turn towards North-East would be made close to the gulf, thereby passing the tip of the Gulf of Aqaba, and shortly thereafter a turn to the South would be made towards Madyan (Midian). An approximate line of this route is shown in blue in the map below. (Just before the Gulf of Aqaba a small green line indicates to a possible turn that Nabī Mūsā عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ could have made, due to which the Banū Isrā'īl found themselves in front of the Gulf of Aqaba (Red Sea), instead of passing around its tip.)

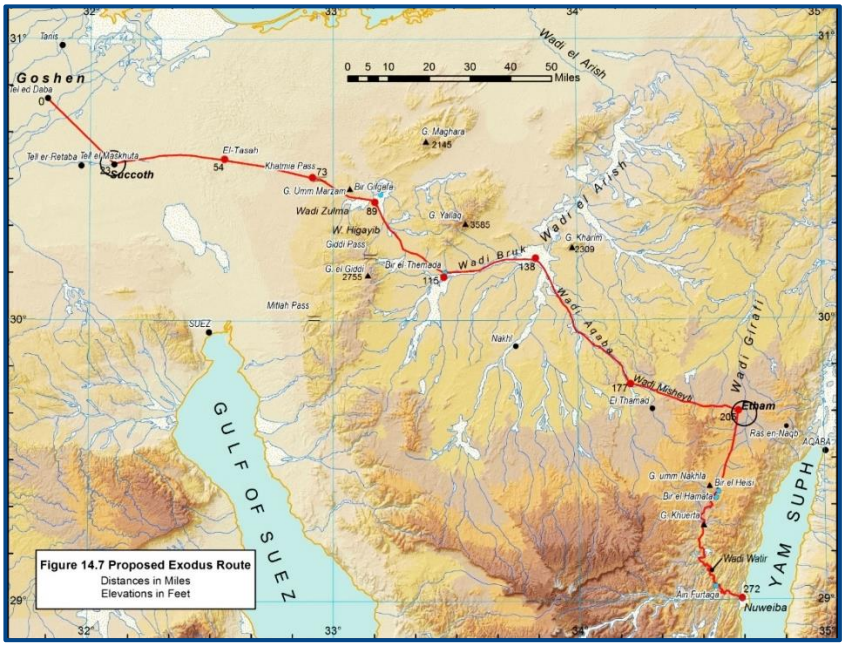


When the Banū Isrā'īl intended leaving the lands of Egypt, their preparations were not secret, since many quotes of the Bible indicate that Firʿawn had, after experiencing numerous calamities and trials, finally relented to allow the Banū Isrā'īl to leave his land. A point of meeting was chosen and the Banū Isrā'īl were given time to gather, with their flocks, at the chosen spot. This area would most likely have been the very area where the pharaohs would gather their armies, as they prepared for battle.

The date of migrating from the land was however not disclosed. Through revelation, Nabī Mūsā عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ was informed that Firʿawn would soon retract on his promise to allow the Banū Isrā'īl a safe exit, and would gather his armies against them, either as a punishment for their decision to leave his land, or in order to capture them and force them back to Egypt. The Banū Isrā'īl were thus ordered to leave suddenly, and to travel throughout the night, thereby gaining an ample lead before Firʿawn's retraction on his promise and gathering of his forces.

'Ancient Exodus', a mission set up to explain Exodus locations and enigmas using sound geographical research, has mapped out a possible route of the Exodus as follows:

Possible Route Of The Exodus From Egypt



According to their findings, the likely starting point of the Exodus was Tel el-Dab'a (ancient Rameses), in Goshen. Enroute to Arabia, Nabī Mūsā عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ receives a divine command in Etham to turn from the path that leads to the head of the gulf and, instead, enter the wilderness to encamp somewhere

The Bible says that they travelled towards "*the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea* (Hebrew: Yam Suph)" [Exod. 13:18]. In the map above, the area marked as Yam Suph is what is today known as 'The Gulf of Aqaba'.

The Hebrews left Egypt on the 15th of *Aviv*, which fell close to the Spring Equinox (March 21) and coincided with the end of the Peninsula rainy season.

Considering this, the best conditions would have been offered by a route utilizing the extensive *wad*i (valley) network in the northern peninsula plateau. Not only do these valleys offer more passable terrain, they have a greater potential for providing water and vegetation. Following this line of thinking, explorer E. H. Palmer noted that:

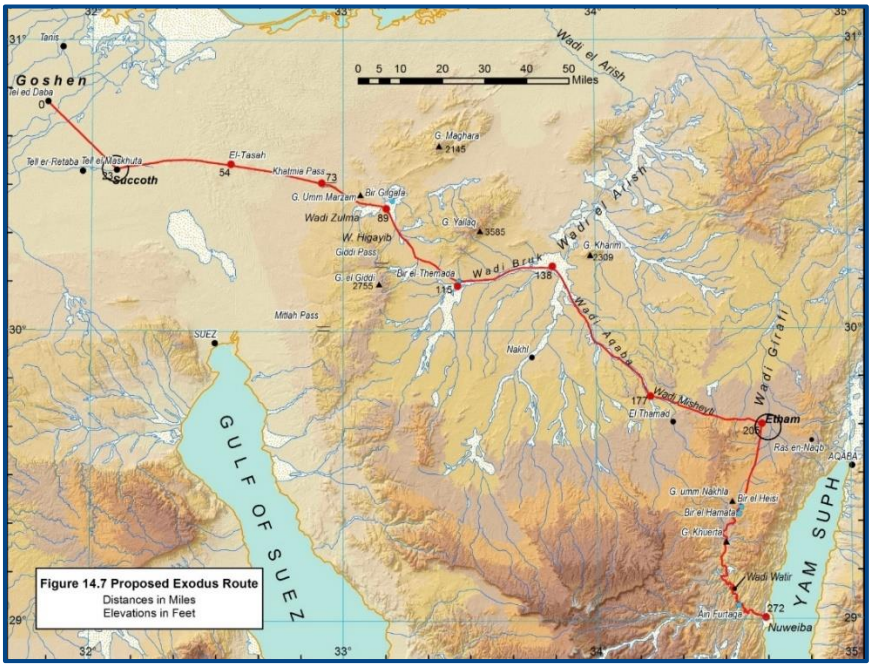
> "In the larger valleys a very considerable amount of moisture infiltrates through the soil, producing much more vegetation than in the plains. Sufficient pasturage for the camels is always to be had in these spots, and here and there a few patches of ground are even available for cultivation." [Palmer 1872]

The Map above lays out a feasible route through the network of low-lying valleys. The travel distance between *Rameses* and The Gulf of Aqaba via this path is about 438 km (272 miles). Given these circumstances, and the travel chronology in the book of Exodus, it is possible that the Hebrews crossed the Sinai Peninsula in as little as 18 days, an average of 15.1 miles per day.

(End of research of Ancient Exodus)

With regard to the route taken for the first and second part of the journey, i.e., the route taken towards Etham, that is irrelevant to this discussion. The main point is that the Banū Isrā'īl's journey brought them to the North of Arabia, close to Madyan.

As for the route followed from Etham to Madyan, and whether the Banū Isrā'īl took the path of *Wadi Watir*, as shall be shown below, or some other part, that is open to research and difference of opinion. Below a possible path, known as *Wadi Watir*, shall be shown.



At 'Etham', if a turn towards the South is made, one shall soon find himself in *Wadi-Watir*, which is a narrow lengthy gorge of about 85

km (52 miles), that opens up on a wide sandy beach on the Gulf of Aqaba, near Nuweiba.

In the sketch below, a white line running towards Nuweiba indicates to the path that runs through the mountains.



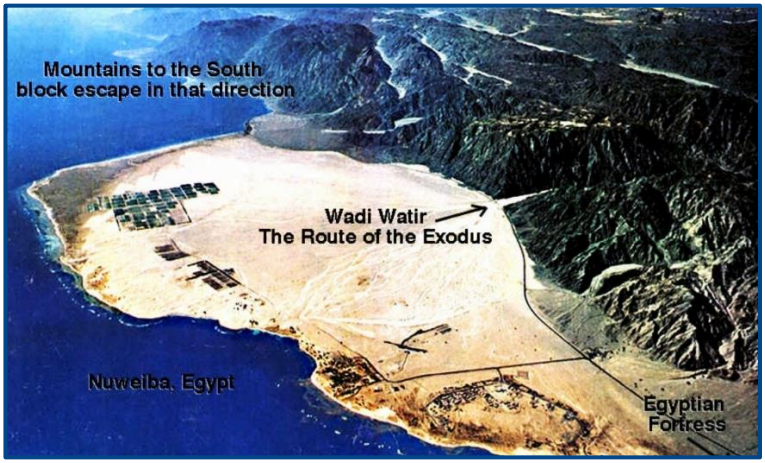
It is possible that this was the path taken by the Banū Isrā'īl, and the Great-Crossing was made at this area. In recent times, much research has been conducted at this area. A crux of what the research revealed, shall now be given.

1. Wadi-Watir

The light-brown sand shows the gorge as it runs through the high mountains surrounding it.



2. Nuweiba



Nuweiba lies on a large flood plain, measuring about 40 sq.km, sandwiched between the Sinai mountains and the Gulf of Aqaba. Mountains to the South block escape from that direction. In the direction of the North was an Egyptian fortress, the ruins of which still stand today. The presence of soldiers in that direction would prevent them travelling further in that direction.

Throughout the journey the Banū Isrā'īl would have passed lookout points, thus for Firʿawn to remain informed of the direction they were taking would not have been too difficult. It was perhaps regarding their being ordered to travel through the valley leading to Nuwaiba that the Bible discusses as:

> "Tell the Israelites to turn back and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea. You are to encamp by the sea, directly opposite Baal-Zephan. ***For Pharaoh will say of the Israelites, 'They are wandering the land in confusion; the wilderness has boxed them in'.*** And I will harden Pharaoh's heart so that he will pursue them. But I will gain honour by means of Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD." So, this is what the Israelites did.... [Exodus 14-3]

The full name of this area is Nuwaybaʿ al-Muzaymah «النويبع المزيمة». Some have suggested that this translates as 'The Springing Waters of Moses'. (And Almighty Allāh knows best)

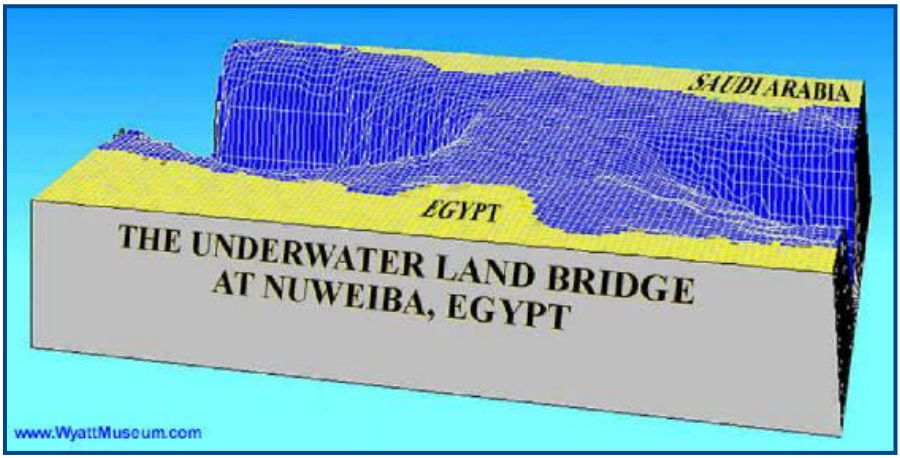
3. The Beach of Nuweiba

Ron Wyatt, after extensive research in the 1970's at this spot made the following claims:

- The surface structure of the beach of Nuweiba has a unique characteristic, which is that the depth of the water at its centre is much less than on its two sides.

(If this is proven true, it would mean that when the waters opened up, creating two mountain-like walls on both sides, the journey of the Banū Isrā'īl downwards towards the ocean-bed would have been much shorter.)

According to Ron Wyatt's research the ocean-bed of Nuweiba would look something like this:



Ron Wyatt's diving expedition in the area revealed the remains of chariot wheels and bodies, and human and horse bones. Three intact four-spoke gilded chariot wheels were discovered. Coral does not grow on gold, so the shapes — of the same sizes — have remained distinct. The wood beneath the gold overlay has disintegrated though, making the artefacts too fragile to move. Photographs have been taken, and new technologies are awaited to salvage the remnants.[9]

There are many Christians today who have inclined towards this view, and there are just as many that have rejected the findings of Ron Wyatt's research.

For us, their difference of opinion does not matter much, since irrespective of whether the crossing was at this point or further below or above, the main point of discussion is that after crossing the waters, the Banū Isrā'īl reached North Arabia (Madyan), and from there began their journey to the promised holy lands of al-Aqṣā.

During this journey towards al-Aqṣā, Nabī Musā عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ was ordered to proceed towards Mt Ṭūr, and engage himself in worship, at the

[9] https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2008/12/26/426658/science-proves-moses-crossed-red-sea#533u7P8LDKAhpVpW.99

completion of which he received the Tawrāh. The location of this Mt Ṭūr would thus be somewhere on the route between Madyan and al-Aqṣā.

Mt Ṭūr – One Or Many?

It is necessary to understand that the word '*Ṭūr*' itself is not the name of a specific mountain, but rather as ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا has mentioned, it refers to any mountain upon which grass grows.[10]

As for the word «سينين» (*Sinai*), it refers to any mountain upon which fruit-bearing trees grow, or an area full of blessings.[11]

The meaning of «طور سينين» and «طور سيناء» is thus 'a blessed, fertile mountain-range'. Nabī Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ conversed with Almighty Allāh on many occasions. Scholars differ as to whether he always

[10] وقال مجاهد وعكرمة وقتادة وغيرهم: «الطُّورَ اسم لكل جبل»، وقال ابن عباس أيضا: «الطُّورَ كل جبل ينبت، وكل جبل لا ينبت فليس بطور»، قال القاضي أبو محمد رحمه الله: «وهذا كله على أن اللفظة عربية»، وقال أبو العالية ومجاهد: «هي سريانية، اسم لكل جبل». [المحرر الوجيز – سورة البقرة]

[11] قال مجاهد: «سينين» المبارك [تفسير الإمام مجاهد]. وقال مقاتل، قال: «كل جبل فيه شجر مثمر فهو سينين». [تفسير الكشف والبيان]

conversed with Almighty Allāh at the same place[12]. On account of many factors, I incline to the view of his conversations having occurred at different spots, along a mountain-range that was blessed and fertile.

In the writings of the scholars, one finds much indication towards the view that Mt Ṭūr is not one specific mountain, but rather a term used for the fertile mountainous regions towards which Nabī Mūsā h would be directed, whenever the opportunity arose for him to be blessed with conversing directly with Almighty Allāh.

At times it, i.e., Mt Ṭūr, is described as being close to Madyan; at times it is described as being withing the valley of Muqattam (Egypt), and at times it is described as being about 180-200 km past Ailah/Eilat, within the lands of Shām. A little of what has been written regarding each of these locations is hereunder provided.

[12] وقالت فرقة: «هذا الطُّورِ هو الذي كلم فيه موسى أولا حيث رأى النار، وكان في طريقه من الشام إلى مصر»، وقالت فرقة: «ليس به». [المحرر الوجيز]

Madyan, Egypt, or Shām

Nabī Mūsā عَلَيۡهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ, after spending a period of 10 years in the service of his father-in-law, set out with his family, with an intention to visit his mother in Egypt.[13]

As he proceeded north from Madyan, he erred in his path, and thus found himself, together with his family, having to spend the night in the cold, without any material with which he could light a fire. It is possible that since there were resting spots at set points on the traveller's route to Egypt, the need to carry such material was not felt. But due to veering of the route and not reaching a resting area before sunset, Nabī Mūsā عَلَيۡهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ now found himself in need of material for making a fire.

While pondering over his dilemma he spotted light coming from Mt Ṭūr. Almighty Allāh states:

﴿فَلَمَّا قَضَىٰ مُوسَى ٱلۡأَجَلَ وَسَارَ بِأَهۡلِهِۦٓ ءَانَسَ مِن جَانِبِ ٱلطُّورِ نَارٗاۖ قَالَ لِأَهۡلِهِ ٱمۡكُثُوٓاْ إِنِّيٓ ءَانَسۡتُ نَارٗا لَّعَلِّيٓ ءَاتِيكُم مِّنۡهَا بِخَبَرٍ أَوۡ جَذۡوَةٖ مِّنَ ٱلنَّارِ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تَصۡطَلُونَ ٢٩﴾ [القصص: ٢٩]

[13] قال مقاتل: «استأذن صهره في العودة إلى مصر لزيارة والدته وأخيه، فأذن له فسار». [الوسيط للواحدي]

> "When Mūsā had completed his allotted time, and he set forth with his family, he spotted from the side of Ṭūr a fire. He said to his family, 'Remain here. I have spotted a fire. Perhaps I shall be able to bring from it some news (regarding the path) or a flame, whereby you may gather warmth'."

During this journey of Nabī Mūsā عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ from Madyan to Egypt, the spot demarcated by Helena as Mt Ṭūr, which is today regarded as 'the accepted spot, that area would in no way have come in the path of Nabī Mūsā عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ.

The map below shall show why:



Madyan (Midian) was situated on the right of The Gulf of Aqaba. After passing Eilat (at the tip of the gulf) if Nabī Mūsā عَلَيۡهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ continued north, he would be journeying towards Kanʿān. If he turned to his left (towards the west) and continued straight, he would come to the lands of ancient Egypt. The area of St Catherine, below which Helena demarcated Mt Ṭūr, would not appear on his path at all. In fact, if he chose to journey towards it, diverting from the road to Egypt, it would mean a journey of about 140 km south (about 4 days of fast travel). To travel so far in order to acquire some material to light a fire hardly seems probable.

What has been learnt thus far is that if one travels from Madyan to Misr, somewhere along his path he shall pass by Mt Ṭūr. From the indication taken from the statements of the scholars, three possible locations of Mt Ṭūr come to the fore. These shall now be discussed in detail.

Location 1. Close to Madyan

Indications Towards This Location In The Books Of The Scholars:

1. Under the verse:

﴿وَٱلطُّورِ ۝١﴾ [الطور: ١]

By the oath of Ṭūr

the following statement of Abdullāh ibn ʿAbbās رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنْهُمَا has been quoted:

«وكلّ جبل طور، ولكن عنى الله بهذا الجبل الذي كلّم الله موسى عَلَيْهِٱلسَّلَامُ عليه، وهو بمدين، واسمه زبير». [دَرْجُ الدُّرر في تَفسِيرِ الآيِ والسُّوَر للجرجاني]

"Every mountain is 'Ṭūr'. However, in this verse Almighty Allāh is referring to that mountain in Madyan, upon which Almighty Allāh conversed with Nabī Mūsā عَلَيْهِٱلسَّلَامُ. Its name is Zabīr."

2. In the book *Marāṣid al-Iṭṭilāʿ*, it is written that close to Madyan is a mountain called 'Ṭūr'. It is this mountain from which Nabī Mūsā عَلَيْهِٱلسَّلَامُ conversed with Almighty Allāh.[14]

3. In *Tafsīr al-Basīṭ*, the following statement of Farrā' has been quoted from Maʿānī al-Qur'ān:

وقال الفراء في قوله تعالى: ﴿وَٱلطُّورِ ۝١﴾ قال: «هو الجبل الذي بمدين، كلم الله عليه موسى».

"Ṭūr is a mountain which is in Madyan. Allāh spoke to (Nabī) Mūsā whilst he was on this mountain."

[14] «وبالقرب من مدين جبل يسمى الطور، وهو الذي كلّم الله عليه موسى». [مراصد الاطلاع على أسماء الأمكنة والبقاع]

According to this, Mt Ṭūr would be somewhere in the region of the area of the red line, marked on the sketch below:



Location 2: About 180-200 Km Past Ailah «أيلة» - Within The Lands Of Shām

Indications Towards This Location In The Books Of The Scholars:

1. In the commentary of the verse:

﴿وَسْـَٔلْهُمْ عَنِ ٱلْقَرْيَةِ ٱلَّتِى كَانَتْ حَاضِرَةَ ٱلْبَحْرِ ﴿١٦٣﴾﴾ [الأعراف: ١٦٣]

> ‘And question them regarding the village that was at the sea-side’

it has been written that the inhabitants of a village at the sea-side had been prohibited from fishing on the day of Saturday. In order to avoid missing the catch of that day, they devised a scheme to place their nets in the water just before Friday night and remove it on Sunday morning. As a punishment for tampering with the laws of the Sharīʿah, their bodily features became that of monkeys and died three days later.

It has been recorded from Sayyidunā ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا that the name of this community was Ailah, a village between Madyan and Ṭūr «أَيْلَةُ بَيْنَ مَدْيَنَ وَالطُّورِ».[15]

ʿAllāmah ibn Kathīr has written that Ailah is situated on the shore of the Red Sea. (Ailah is most probably what is shown on the map above as Eilat).

From the word «بين» (between) in the statement of ibn ʿAbbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا, indication can be taken that Ailah lies at, or close to the centre point between Madyan and Ṭūr. This would mean that the distance between Ṭūr and Ailah should be similar to the distance between Ailah and Madyan.

Present-day research indicates that Madyan was located close to what is today known as «البدع» (al-Badʿ), on the eastern shore of the Gulf of Aqaba, approximately 200 km south of the tip of the gulf. Ailah is situated at the tip, thus the distance between Ailah and Madyan should be in the range of 180-200 km.

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[15] وَهَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةُ هِيَ «أَيْلَةُ» وَهِيَ عَلَى شَاطِئِ بَحْرِ الْقُلْزُمِ. قَالَ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ إِسْحَاقَ: عَنْ دَاوُدَ بْنِ الحُصَين، عَنْ عِكْرِمَةَ عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ فِي قَوْلِهِ: ﴿وَسْـَٔلْهُمْ عَنِ ٱلْقَرْيَةِ ٱلَّتِى كَانَتْ حَاضِرَةَ ٱلْبَحْرِ﴾ [الأعراف: ١٦٣] قَالَ: «هِيَ قَرْيَةٌ يُقَالُ لَهَا «أَيْلَةُ» بَيْنَ مَدْيَنَ وَالطُّورِ». وَكَذَا قَالَ عِكْرِمَةُ، وَمُجَاهِدٌ، وَقَتَادَةُ، والسُّدِّي. [تفسير ابن كثير]

After Ailah a journey of 180-200 km to the north (towards Jerusalem) or slightly north-west towards the old road linking Egypt with Jerusalem would bring one somewhere in the vicinity of the area marked in red below:



If the above calculation proves correct, it would mean that Mt Ṭūr is situated within the lands of Shām.

2. It has been reported from ibn ʿAṭiyyah رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ:

> The scholars do not differ that the Ṭūr mentioned in the Qur'ān, upon which an oath was taken is a mountain in Shām. Whilst upon this mountain, Nabī Mūsā عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ

conversed with Almighty Allāh. It was from this area that he was initially called and bestowed with Nubuwwah. It is in this area that he prostrated.[16]

3. In the commentary of the verse:

﴿وَإِذۡ أَخَذۡنَا مِيثَٰقَكُمۡ وَرَفَعۡنَا فَوۡقَكُمُ ٱلطُّورَ ٦٣﴾ [البقرة: ٦٣]

"When We took a covenant from you and We lifted above your heads Ṭūr."

The following statement of Abdullāh ibn ʿAbbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا has been quoted, regarding the mountain of 'Ṭūr' which Almighty Allāh had lifted above the heads of the Banū Isrā'īl when they showed unwillingness to practice upon the laws of the Tawrāh:

«أمر الله تعالى جبلا من جبال فلسطين، فانقلع من أصله حتّى قام على رؤوسهم مثل الظلّة». [تفسير الثعلبي]

"Almighty Allāh issued an order to a mountain from the mountains of Palestine. It uprooted itself and rose above their heads like a cloud."

[16] قال ابن عطية: «لم يختلف أنه جبل بالشام، كلم الله عليه موسى، ومنه نودي، وفيه مسجد موسى، فهو الطور». [المحرر الوجيز]

According to the above statement of ibn ʿAbbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا, the mountain range of 'Ṭūr' is located in Palestine (Shām).

4. The author of Tafsīr Sirāj al-Munīr has written in the commentary of the verse:

﴿وَشَجَرَةً تَخۡرُجُ مِن طُورِ سَيۡنَآءَ﴾ [المؤمنون: ٢٠]

"The tree which grows upon Mt Ṭūr of the Sinai..."

«وهو الجبل الذي كلم الله تعالى عليه موسى بن عمران عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ بين مصر وإيلة».

"This is the mountain upon which Almighty Allāh conversed with Nabī Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. It is situated between Ailah and Egypt."

Location 3. In The Valley Of Muqattam (Close To Cairo)

Indications Towards This Location In The Books Of The Scholars:

1. The following has been recorded in '*Faḍā'il Miṣr*':[17]

   - Ṭūr is within the Muqaṭṭam region, which is the blessed valley mentioned in the verse:

     ﴿إِنَّكَ بِٱلۡوَادِ ٱلۡمُقَدَّسِ طُوٗى ١٢﴾ [طه: ١٢]

     "Verily you are in the blessed valley of Ṭuwā."

   - Kaʿb al-Aḥbār has mentioned that the area in which Almighty Allāh spoke with Nabī Mūsā عَلَيۡهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ stretches from Ṭūr to the furthest end of the Muqaṭṭam region in the sacred valley.

[17] فذكر أهل العلم أن الطور من المقطم وأنه داخل فيما وقع عليه القدس في قوله تعالى: ﴿وَنَٰدَيۡنَٰهُ مِن جَانِبِ ٱلطُّورِ ٱلۡأَيۡمَنِ وَقَرَّبۡنَٰهُ نَجِيّٗا ٥٢﴾ [مريم: ٥٢]. وقال تعالى: ﴿إِنَّكَ بِٱلۡوَادِ ٱلۡمُقَدَّسِ طُوٗى ١٢﴾ [طه: ١٢]. قال كعب: «كلم الله تعالى موسى من الطور إلى أطراف المقطم من القدس». [فضائل مصر المحروسة]

In *al-Masālik wa al-Mamālik*, it is mentioned that Muqaṭṭam is in the area known as Fusṭāṭ, where Imām Shāfiʿī is buried.[18]

In *Nuzhah al-Mushtāq*, it is mentioned that the Muqaṭṭam Mountains runs all the way to Aswān[19] (approximately 600 km south from Fusṭāṭ)

According to this, the location of Mt Ṭūr would be in the region shown in red in the sketch below.



[18] «وفي شمالي النيل جبل بقرب الفسطاط يسمى المقطّم ... وعند هذا الجبل بحذاء الفسطاط قبر الشافعي في جملة المقابر». [المسالك والممالك]

[19] «إن جبل المقطم الذي أوله من ديار مصر يأخذ من مصر، فيمر في الصحراء إلى أن ينتهي إلى قرب أسوان، وهو جبل مشهور بالطول». [المسالك والممالك]

From what has passed, we find three possible locations of Mt Ṭūr, each at quite a distance from the other. One would now need to either consider the possibility of Nabī Mūsā عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ having conversed with Almighty Allāh at various mountain-tops during his lifetime, all of which would be referred to as 'Mt-Ṭūr' (a lush mountain) or of pinpointing one particular location of Mt Ṭūr and discarding the other conflicting views.

The great Mufassir, ibn ʿAṭiyyah Andalūsī has written in his Tafsīr that a difference of opinion does exist amongst the scholars regarding whether the Mt Ṭūr from which Nabī Mūsā عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ received the Tawrāh was different from the one at which he first conversed with Almighty Allāh.[20]

In the sketch below the three possible locations have been shown in red. The distance between the one east of Eilat and the one close to Gaza is approximately 180 km, and the distance between the one close to Gaza and the one close to Cairo is approximately 260 km.

[20] «أن الله تعالى لما أنجى بني إسرائيل وغرق فرعون؛ وعد بني إسرائيل وموسى أن يصيروا إلى جانب طور سيناء ليكلم فيه موسى ويناجيه بما فيه صلاحهم بأوامرهم ونواهيهم، فلما أخذوا في السير تعجل موسى عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ للقاء ربه حسبما يأتي ذكره، وقالت فرقة: هذا الطُّورِ هو الذي كلم فيه موسى أولا حيث رأى النار وكان في طريقه من الشام إلى مصر، وقالت فرقة: ليس به». [المحرر الوجيز]



I am inclined to the view that there were many mountain tops upon which Nabī Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ conversed with Almighty Allāh, all of which were described as Mt-Ṭūr. His first conversation with Almighty Allāh was perhaps at a mountain close to Madyan; his conversation with Almighty Allāh, whilst he was in Egypt was perhaps in the region of Muqaṭṭam; and his request to see Almighty Allāh perhaps occurred on some mountain close to Gaza.

In the Tafsīr of Imām Qurṭubī, a statement of ibn Zayd is recorded, which strengthens this view. He said:

«هو جبل بيت المقدس، ممدود من مصر إلى أيلة».[21]

"Ṭūr is a mountain of Bayt al-Maqdis, stretching from Egypt all the way to Ailah

According to the above, the mountain range of 'Ṭūr' is as indicated in red, in the sketch below:



[21] «القرطبي تحت الآية: ﴿وَشَجَرَةً تَخۡرُجُ مِن طُورِ سَيۡنَآءَ﴾ [المؤمنون: ٢٠].

Conclusion

The crux of my understanding regarding Mt Ṭūr, is that the conversations that occurred between Almighty Allāh and Nabī Mūsā عَلَيۡهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ did not always occur upon the exact same spot. Rather, as the journeys of Nabī Mūsā عَلَيۡهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ took him from Madyan to Egypt and back, and then from Madyan to Shām, whenever the opportunity would arise for him to converse with Almighty Allāh, he would proceed towards a nearby mountain of the long mountainous range, known as 'Ṭūr' and whilst upon it, he would be honoured with listening directly to the Divine Speech of Almighty Allāh.

The mountain upon which he received his first revelation could have been somewhere above Madyan (around the green patch, on the map, near to point.47)[22].

[22] وقال الفراء في قوله تعالى: ﴿ وَٱلطُّورِ ۝١ ﴾ [الطور: ١] قال: «هو الجبل الذي بمدين، كلم الله عليه موسى». [التفسير البسيط]

The conversations he enjoyed with Almighty Allāh, whilst in Egypt, could probably have occurred on the mountains of the area known as Muqaṭṭam (around point.75).[23]

And when he requested from Almighty Allāh to allow him a vision of His blessed Being, that might have occurred on a mountain range, which appeared on his path towards the lands of Shām and al-Aqṣā (somewhere between Eilat and the Gaza Strip)[24].

Qārī Muḥammad Ṭayyib Ṣāḥib رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ, in his book, *Maqāmāt-e-Muqaddasah*, has written that due to Nabī Mūsā عَلَيۡهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ conversing

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[23] فذكر أهل العلم أن الطور من المقطم وأنه داخل فيما وقع عليه القدس في قوله تعالى: ﴿وَنَٰدَيۡنَٰهُ مِن جَانِبِ ٱلطُّورِ ٱلۡأَيۡمَنِ وَقَرَّبۡنَٰهُ نَجِيّٗا ٥٢﴾ [مريم: ٥٢]. وقال تعالى: ﴿إِنَّكَ بِٱلۡوَادِ ٱلۡمُقَدَّسِ طُوٗى ١٢﴾. قال كعب: «كلم الله تعالى موسى من الطور إلى أطراف المقطم من القدس». [فضائل مصر المحروسة]

«وفى شمالي النيل جبل بقرب الفسطاط يسمى المقطّم ... وعند هذا الجبل بحذاء الفسطاط قبر الشافعي في جملة المقابر». [المسالك والممالك]

«إن جبل المقطم الذي أوله من ديار مصر يأخذ من مصر، فيمر في الصحراء إلى أن ينتهي إلى قرب أسوان، وهو جبل مشهور بالطول». [المسالك والممالك]

[24] ﴿وَإِذۡ أَخَذۡنَا مِيثَٰقَكُمۡ وَرَفَعۡنَا فَوۡقَكُمُ ٱلطُّورَ ٦٣﴾ [البقرة: ٦٣] قال ابن عباس: «أمر الله تعالى جبلا من جبال فلسطين، فانقلع من أصله حتّى قام على رؤوسهم مثل الظلّة». [تفسير الثعلبي]

﴿وَشَجَرَةٗ تَخۡرُجُ مِن طُورِ سَيۡنَآءَ﴾ [المؤمنون: ٢٠] «وهو الجبل الذي كلم الله تعالى عليه موسى بن عمران عَلَيۡهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ بين مصر وإيلة». [تفسير السراج المنير]

with Almighty Allāh, whilst in Egypt, this resulted in the inhabitants of Egypt benefitting from the '*Tajallī*' of Divine Speech and thus being blessed with sweet voices and fluent tongues. This area of 'Ṭūr' would most probably have been in what was known as the valley of Muqaṭṭam (close to the point marked as 75).

As for the 'Ṭūr' (near point. 47), which lies close to Madyan, upon which the first revelation was received, there exists a great possibility of it being very close to, or perhaps the very area upon which the 'satanic' city of the future, 'Neom', is being erected.

And as for the 'Ṭūr' upon which Nabī Mūsā عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ presented his request to see Almighty Allāh, Qārī Ṭayyib Ṣāḥib has indicated in his book that it would have been upon a mountain range not far from Gaza. This request of Nabī Mūsā عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ was however not accepted. Instead, he was ordered to look towards a mountain in the distance, and see whether it could manage to hold the 'divine *Tajallī* (manifestation) of Almighty Allāh. It obviously could not, and crumbled into pieces.

Almighty Allāh alone knows best, but it is highly possible that the area upon which this crumbled mountain once stood could in fact be the Gaza Strip itself.

Why Gaza?

If Nabī Mūsā عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ was facing towards the lands of Shām, at the time when he made his request to see Almighty Allāh, it is quite likely that such a spot would be chosen for this *Tajallī*, beyond which lies a vast ocean. An ocean would allow for the mountain to melt and flow into it and the effects of the blast could concentrate more towards that direction.

In *Tafsīr aṭ-Ṭabarī*, mention is made of this mountain crumbling and its remains flowing into the ocean and being washed away.[25]

Gaza is such a spot which has a sea behind it, i.e., the Mediterranean Sea, and which comes in front of one, when one faces Shām, whilst on the path between Madyan and Jerusalem.

[25] حدثني المثنى قال، حدثنا سويد قال، أخبرنا ابن المبارك قال: سمعت سفيان يقول في قوله: ﴿فَلَمَّا تَجَلَّىٰ رَبُّهُۥ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُۥ دَكًّا﴾ [الأعراف: ١٤٣]، قال: «ساخ الجبل في الأرض، حتى وقع في البحر فهو يذهب معه». [تفسير الطبري]



Qārī Muḥammad Ṭayyib Ṣāḥib inclined towards this view, and thus explained the secrets of the land of Gaza as well in his book, *Muqāmāt-e-Muqaddasah*, the crux of which I have penned down in my book, '*The Secrets of the Holy Lands*.[26]

And Almighty Allāh knows best.

Completed, by the grace of Almighty Allāh, on the 12th of Dhū al-Qaʿdah 1442 (23rd June 2021).

وصلى الله على النبي الأمي وعلى آله وأصحابه أجمعين والحمد لله رب العالمين

[26] This book may be downloaded from the site: spirituallight.org.za

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