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Print ISSN: [3006-2497](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21237704) Online ISSN: [3006-2500](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21237704)Platform & Workflow by: [Open Journal Systems](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21237704)<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21237704>**Spiritual Guidance for Women Given in Surah Al-Qasas: An Analytical Study****Nabeela Rauf**

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[rahim.buic@bahria.edu.pk](mailto:rahim.buic@bahria.edu.pk)**Abstract**

*Surah al-Qasas presents a Qur'anic narrative in which women are not marginal or passive figures but spiritually alert, morally responsible, and active agents within the unfolding of divine wisdom. This article analyzes the female role models associated with the story of Prophet Musa (AS): the mother of Musa (AS), the sister of Musa (AS), the women of Madyan, especially the daughter of Shu'ayb (AS), and Asiyah, the wife of Pharaoh. Through a qualitative, thematic, and analytical reading of Qur'an 28:7–13, 28:23–26, 28:9, and the related verse 66:11, the article argues that Surah al-Qasas constructs a comprehensive model of female spiritual formation. The mother of Musa (AS) embodies tawakkul (reliance upon Allah), divine inspiration, obedience, and courage amid fear. His sister represents vigilance, patience, responsibility, and wise communication. The women of Madyan display haya (modesty rooted in faith), dignity, purposeful speech, and ethical public conduct. Asiyah embodies compassion, spiritual independence, and moral resistance within an oppressive household. Read together, these figures demonstrate that Qur'anic spirituality is inseparable from ethical action. It appears through emotional resilience, moral clarity, disciplined speech, compassionate intervention, and commitment to truth. The study concludes that Surah al-Qasas offers contemporary Muslim women a balanced framework for God-conscious identity, moral refinement, and spiritual strength in family, public, and institutional life.*

**Keywords:** *Surah al-Qasas; Women in the Qur'an; Spiritual Guidance; Female Role Models; Mother of Musa (AS); Sister of Musa (AS); Faith and Trust in Allah; Patience and Perseverance; Qur'anic Women's Studies; Islamic Spirituality.*

**Introduction**

The Qur'an is the central source of guidance in Islam, addressing not only outward conduct but also the inward life of the human being. It shapes belief, intention, emotion, judgment, and ethical responsibility. In Qur'anic discourse, guidance is not merely information about lawful and unlawful acts; it is a process of moral and spiritual formation through which the believer learns to live before Allah with sincerity, patience, trust, modesty, compassion, and courage. Surah al-Qasas is especially significant for such a study because it presents these qualities through narrative rather than abstract instruction alone. In the story of Prophet Musa (AS), the Surah places women at decisive moments in the divine plan and

shows that their choices become instruments of protection, moral resistance, and spiritual transformation (Abdel Haleem, 2004, Q. 28:7–13, 28:23–26).

The female figures examined in this article are the mother of Musa (AS), his sister, the women of Madyan, especially the daughter of Shu'ayb (AS), and Asiyah, the wife of Pharaoh. Each appears in a different social and moral setting. The mother of Musa (AS) acts under the pressure of Pharaoh's violent policy against the children of Israel. His sister moves within the same hostile environment, watching over the infant with caution and intelligence. The women of Madyan appear in a public setting where practical need requires them to water their flock while preserving dignity and restraint. Asiyah lives inside Pharaoh's palace, yet her compassion toward the infant Musa (AS) and her prayer in Surah al-Tahrim reveal a heart independent of tyranny (Qur'an 28:7–13; 28:23–26; 28:9; 66:11).

Although these women are not named in Surah al-Qasas, Islamic tradition identifies Pharaoh's wife as Asiyah. The Qur'an's restraint in naming them is itself meaningful. Their importance does not depend on public status, lineage, or political authority, but on spiritual quality and moral action. They appear in moments of crisis, yet their conduct reveals enduring principles: reliance upon Allah, patience under pressure, modesty in public interaction, wise speech, compassion for vulnerable life, responsibility toward family, and willingness to stand against injustice. Their spiritual excellence is therefore embodied rather than theoretical (Ibn Kathir, 1999; al-Tabari, 1955–1969).

The study's central thesis is that Surah al-Qasas portrays its female figures as spiritually and morally active agents within divine wisdom. They are neither passive symbols nor secondary characters whose significance is merely relational. Rather, the narrative presents them as women whose inner states shape visible conduct and whose visible conduct participates in Allah's plan. This argument is developed through a thematic analysis of selected verses in Surah al-Qasas and the related verse in Surah al-Tahrim. The study remains focused on spiritual and moral qualities rather than attempting a comprehensive legal or social theory of women in Islam.

The scope of the article is therefore deliberately defined. It does not examine all Qur'anic women, nor does it compare every verse relating to women across the Qur'an. It focuses on the female figures associated with Musa (AS) in Surah al-Qasas, with the discussion of Asiyah completed through Qur'an 66:11. The aim is to show how the Surah forms a coherent model of God-conscious, emotionally balanced, ethically responsible womanhood. Such a model is relevant not only to classical tafsir but also to contemporary Muslim women's identity formation, especially amid anxiety, moral confusion, social pressure, and weakening religious confidence (Qutb, 2003; Shafi, 2004).

### **Significance, Research Gap, and Objectives of the Study**

This study is significant because it focuses on the spiritual dimension of Qur'anic guidance for women rather than treating women only through legal, social, or historical categories. Surah al-Qasas presents women as spiritually aware and morally responsible figures whose conduct reflects faith, wisdom, courage, modesty, sincerity, and trust in Allah. The study therefore contributes to Qur'anic studies by showing how narrative can form character and guide ethical personality.

The research gap addressed here is the limited focused treatment of Surah al-Qasas as a structured source of spiritual guidance for women. Existing studies often discuss women's rights, empowerment, education, work, or public participation in broad terms, while the inward formation of faith, emotional resilience, haya, sabr, tawakkul, compassion, and moral courage receives comparatively less attention.

This study therefore reads the female figures connected with Musa (AS) together as a coherent model of Qur'anic female role formation.

The objectives of the study are threefold: first, to examine the spiritual guidance presented for women in Surah al-Qasas through the mother of Musa (AS), his sister, Pharaoh's wife, and the women of Madyan; second, to analyze the moral and spiritual qualities reflected in these figures; and third, to explain the relevance of these Qur'anic lessons for contemporary women's spiritual growth, moral refinement, inner peace, and faith-based empowerment.

### **Literature Review and Scholarly Context**

Modern scholarship on women in Islam provides the wider academic setting for this article. The relevant literature approaches women through Qur'anic interpretation, tradition, rights, empowerment, social participation, peacebuilding, work, and moral values. Barlas and Stowasser represent major modern studies concerned with women in relation to the Qur'an, tradition, and interpretation. Their inclusion in the field shows that discussion of women in Islamic sources has long been connected with questions of reading, authority, and the moral meaning of Qur'anic discourse (Barlas, 2002; Stowasser, 1994). Within contemporary journal literature, Elatrash, Rahmawati, and Alhaq examine women's empowerment from a Qur'anic perspective, while Abdul Razak connects faith, or iman, with women's empowerment and inner confidence (Abdul Razak, 2023; Elatrash et al., 2023).

Other studies extend the discussion into scholarship, public life, and social participation. Khair and Razali examine women's role as mufassir and their contribution to Qur'anic exegesis, thereby shifting attention from women only as subjects of interpretation to women as participants in interpretive work (Khair & Razali, 2021). Umam and Waskito analyze women's empowerment from an Islamic perspective, and Haris and Nabi discuss women's empowerment in the light of Islamic values. Such works are important because they frame women's dignity and participation through religious principles rather than through purely secular categories (Haris & Nabi, 2024; Umam & Waskito, 2022). Khair, Tawil, and Ibrahim address women's role and the contextualization of peace from a Hadith perspective, while Munawar and Akhtar survey women's rights and roles in Qur'anic teachings (Hamisan@Khair et al., 2023; Munawar & Akhtar, 2024).

Two studies are especially close to the present article's focus on Surah al-Qasas. Ghodrati discusses women's right to work in Islam and includes the Madyan episode, which is relevant for analyzing modesty and responsibility in public conduct (Ghodrati, 2020). Haris, Mahfud, and Al-Bahiy examine moral criteria in the story of Prophet Moses and the Madyan woman in Surah al-Qasas 22–28, identifying values such as trustworthiness, modesty, intelligence, and patience (Haris et al., 2023). These studies provide useful background, yet their scope is either broader than Surah al-Qasas as a whole or narrower than the combined treatment of all major female figures connected with Musa (AS).

The research gap addressed here lies in the focused study of spiritual and moral formation through the female figures of Surah al-Qasas. Much existing work approaches women in Islam through legal, social, public, educational, or empowerment lenses. These are valuable areas of inquiry, but they do not fully address the inward qualities by which the Qur'an forms personality: tawakkul, sabr, haya, sincerity, courage, compassion, and wisdom. The contribution of this article is to read Surah al-Qasas as a structured source of spiritual guidance for women, while still recognizing the ethical and social dimensions of that spirituality. Its concern is not empowerment detached from revelation, nor

spirituality detached from action, but a Qur'anic model in which the heart's relation to Allah becomes visible in morally responsible conduct (Abdul Razak, 2023; Elatrash et al., 2023; Haris et al., 2023).

### **Methodology and Scope of the Study**

This study adopts a qualitative, thematic, and analytical methodology. Its primary textual focus is Qur'an 28:7–13, which concerns the mother and sister of Musa (AS); Qur'an 28:23–26, which concerns the women of Madyan and the daughter of Shu'ayb (AS); Qur'an 28:9, which presents the compassionate intervention of Pharaoh's wife; and Qur'an 66:11, which completes the discussion of Asiyah's spiritual independence and supplication (Qur'an 28:7–13; 28:23–26; 28:9; 66:11). The translation used is M. A. S. Abdel Haleem's *The Qur'an: A New Translation*, used here for clarity, fluency, and contextual balance (Abdel Haleem, 2004, Q. 28:7–13, 28:23–26).

The interpretive analysis is supported by classical and contemporary tafsir sources selected for this study: Ibn Kathir's *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, al-Tabari's *Jami' al-Bayan*, al-Qurtubi's *Al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an*, al-Maraghi's *Tafsir al-Maraghi*, Sayyid Qutb's *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*, Muhammad Shafi's *Ma'arif al-Qur'an*, and Amin Ahsan Islahi's *Tadabbur-e-Qur'an* (Ibn Kathir, 1999; al-Maraghi, 1946; al-Qurtubi, 1964; al-Tabari, 1955–1969; Islahi, n.d.; Qutb, 2003; Shafi, 2004). The analysis proceeds by identifying the spiritual and ethical qualities displayed in each narrative scene and then synthesizing them into a unified model of Qur'anic female role formation.

The analysis is organized around three connected areas: the spiritual qualities of women in Surah al-Qasas, the moral and ethical dimensions of women's personality, and the contemporary relevance of Qur'anic guidance. The study does not employ surveys, interviews, or statistical measurement; its conclusions are based on textual analysis of the Qur'an, recognized tafsir literature, Hadith literature, and relevant modern academic studies. The scope is limited to the female figures connected with the narrative of Musa (AS), with Surah al-Tahrim 66:11 included where it completes the discussion of Asiyah.

### **Main Discussion**

#### **Spiritual and Ethical Female Role Models in Surah al-Qasas**

The Mother of Musa (AS): Tawakkul, Divine Inspiration, and Courage Amid Fear

The mother of Musa (AS) appears at one of the most emotionally intense moments in Surah al-Qasas. Pharaoh's policy of killing the sons of the children of Israel had made ordinary motherhood a site of danger. Within this atmosphere of violence, Allah inspired her to suckle the child and, when fear for him arose, to cast him into the river, promising that He would return him to her and make him one of the messengers (Qur'an 28:7). The narrative therefore begins not with visible security but with divine instruction in the midst of fear. The mother of Musa (AS) is spiritually significant because she receives guidance, obeys it, and acts against the immediate expectations of maternal instinct while remaining fully human in her fear and grief.

*The central Qur'anic evidence for this reading is the divine instruction and promise given to the mother of Musa (AS):*

” وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمِّ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَرْضِعِيهِ ۖ فَإِذَا خِفْتِ عَلَيْهِ فَأَلْقِيهِ فِي الْيَمِّ وَلَا تَخَافِي وَلَا تَحْزَنِي ۗ إِنَّا رَادُّوهُ إِلَيْكِ وَجَاعِلُوهُ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ”

The first quality reflected in her story is *ilham*, inner guidance from Allah. The Qur'an does not present her as a prophet, and this analysis treats the inspiration given to her as a special form of divine prompting rather than legislative revelation. In tafsir, this distinction preserves the uniqueness of prophethood while recognizing that Allah may guide sincere believers at moments of extreme need (Ibn Kathir, 1999;

al-Qurtubi, 1964; al-Tabari, 1955–1969). The command given to her was extraordinary. From a visible perspective, placing an infant into the river appeared to expose him to danger. From the perspective of divine wisdom, however, the river became the path through which he would be protected, brought into Pharaoh's household, and eventually returned to his mother. Her receptivity to divine inspiration thus reveals spiritual sensitivity: she recognizes a command whose wisdom is not yet visible.

This scene also provides one of the clearest Qur'anic models of *tawakkul*—reliance upon Allah. *Tawakkul* is often misunderstood as passivity, but the mother of Musa (AS) shows that true reliance is active obedience. She suckles the child, follows divine instruction, places him into the river, and trusts Allah for the outcome. Her heart is attached not to the means themselves but to the promise of Allah. The external means are fragile: a basket, a river, and an infant under a tyrant's decree. Yet Allah's promise transforms these fragile means into a vehicle of protection (Abdel Haleem, 2004, Q. 28:7; Shafi, 2004).

Her *tawakkul* is also spiritually deep because fear remains present. The Qur'an's portrayal does not erase her emotional condition. After the child leaves her hands, her heart becomes empty, and she nearly discloses him had Allah not strengthened her heart so that she might remain among the believers (Qur'an 28:10). The verse presents a profound psychology of faith. A believing heart may tremble, grieve, and approach the edge of disclosure, yet Allah may grant firmness at the decisive moment. The mother of Musa (AS) is not honored because she lacks emotion; she is honored because emotion does not overthrow obedience. The coexistence of fear and faith is therefore essential to the narrative.

This has important implications for the concept of spiritual strength. The Qur'an does not require the believer to become emotionally numb. It teaches that the heart may suffer while still being strengthened by Allah. The mother of Musa (AS) experiences the full force of maternal anxiety, yet her grief becomes a setting for divine support. Her example corrects simplistic notions that faith eliminates pain. Instead, faith gives pain direction and prevents it from becoming rebellion, despair, or moral collapse. In her case, spiritual resilience is not self-generated toughness but firmness granted by Allah to a heart that obeys.

The mother's obedience also possesses an ethical and political dimension. Pharaoh's decree sought to destroy innocent life, yet her act became a hidden form of resistance. She did not confront Pharaoh openly, because the circumstances did not allow such action; rather, she obeyed Allah in a private act that quietly defeated the tyrant's policy. The river, which seemed to take the child away, became the means by which Allah placed Musa (AS) beyond immediate danger and eventually returned him to the very mother who had surrendered him to Allah. This demonstrates that moral courage is not always public or dramatic. Sometimes it consists in obeying Allah when fear, social pressure, and visible danger urge a different response (Qur'an 28:4, 28:7; Ibn Kathir, 1999).

The promise of return is central to her spiritual formation. Allah returned Musa (AS) to his mother so that her eyes might be comforted, that she might not grieve, and that she might know the promise of Allah is true (Qur'an 28:13; al-Tabari, 1955–1969). The event therefore educates the heart. She first trusts a promise without seeing its fulfillment, and then she witnesses its realization. In this movement from command to separation, from fear to return, and from promise to certainty, the mother of Musa (AS) becomes a model for believers who must act before outcomes are visible. Her spirituality is not merely private piety; it is trust enacted through obedience under emotional hardship.

Her example also integrates motherhood with spiritual responsibility. This analysis emphasizes that motherhood in this narrative is not reduced to biological attachment. It becomes a field of obedience,

sacrifice, moral courage, and trust in Allah. The mother of Musa (AS) loves her child intensely, but her love is purified by submission to Allah. She does not choose between motherhood and faith; rather, her motherhood becomes spiritually elevated because it is governed by faith. This makes her a role model for women whose responsibilities require difficult decisions, patience, and reliance upon Allah in situations where the visible path seems uncertain.

The Sister of Musa (AS): Vigilance, Patience, and Wise Communication

The sister of Musa (AS) continues the spiritual movement begun by her mother. After Musa (AS) is placed into the river, his mother instructs his sister to follow him, and the Qur'an states that she watched him from a distance while the people did not perceive her (Qur'an 28:11). This brief Qur'anic description contains a rich account of responsibility, vigilance, patience, emotional control, and wise communication. She is not a passive child standing at the edge of events; she becomes an active participant in the divine plan that returns Musa (AS) to his mother.

*Her first quality is vigilance. She follows the basket in an environment shaped by Pharaoh's violence and suspicion. The task required more than curiosity. It required the ability to observe without being noticed, to remain emotionally controlled while watching her infant brother move beyond family protection, and to wait until a suitable opening appeared. The Qur'anic phrase indicating that the people did not perceive her suggests successful discretion. She is near enough to know what is happening, yet distant enough to avoid exposure. Her vigilance is therefore practical, intelligent, and morally purposeful (Abdel Haleem, 2004, Q. 28:11–12; Ibn Kathir, 1999).*

“ قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: كُنُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُنُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ ”

This discussion of responsibility may be read alongside the Prophetic principle:

Patience is equally central to her role. The sister of Musa (AS) must wait under pressure. A careless cry or impulsive movement could expose the family. Her patience is therefore active, not passive. It is not the stillness of indifference, but the disciplined restraint of someone who understands that timing matters. The analysis repeatedly emphasizes that Qur'anic patience is not emotional emptiness; it is controlled faithfulness in hardship. In the sister's case, patience protects the child because it allows her to remain observant and ready.

Her patience is inseparable from emotional control. She sees her brother taken into a setting associated with Pharaoh's household, yet she does not reveal panic. This composure does not mean that she is without feeling. Rather, it shows that feeling is governed by responsibility. In Qur'anic spirituality, the believer's emotional life is not denied but trained. The sister of Musa (AS) teaches that crises often require a disciplined silence before they require speech. Such silence can itself be an ethical act when it prevents harm and preserves a trust (Muslim, 2007, no. 223).

The most striking feature of her role appears when she speaks. After Allah prevents Musa (AS) from accepting the nursing women, she offers a solution to Pharaoh's household: she can direct them to a family who will care for him sincerely (Qur'an 28:12). Her speech is brief, wise, and carefully framed. She does not disclose the child's identity, does not reveal her mother, and does not speak with visible anxiety. Instead, she presents the proposal in terms of benefit: care, sincerity, and practical resolution. This is strategic communication shaped by moral purpose.

Her speech demonstrates that wisdom is a spiritual quality. Words can expose or protect, inflame or heal, mislead or guide. In this scene, the sister's words protect life and become the means by which the divine promise is fulfilled. Her courage is not loud or confrontational; it is the courage to speak at the

correct moment with the correct wording. A coherent treatment of her character therefore joins patience with communication. Patience without wise speech might have left the opportunity unused, while speech without patience might have exposed the hidden plan. Her excellence lies in the integration of both.

The sister of Musa (AS) also complicates any narrow view of female agency. She acts publicly and decisively, yet her action is marked by modesty, intelligence, and loyalty. Her agency is not framed as rebellion against family responsibility, nor as self-display, but as faithful service to a divine purpose. This is important for a Qur'anic understanding of women's moral action. The sister operates within constraints, yet she is not erased by them. Her young age, social vulnerability, and dangerous surroundings do not prevent her from becoming an instrument of protection.

Her example has enduring significance because many moral situations require precisely the qualities she displays: alertness, restraint, courage, and careful speech. In families, communities, and institutions, protection of trust often depends on those who observe responsibly and speak wisely. The sister of Musa (AS) shows that spiritual awareness is not limited to devotional acts. It can appear in watching, waiting, withholding, and speaking with precision. She embodies a disciplined form of moral intelligence grounded in faith.

The Women of Madyan / Daughter of Shu'ayb (AS): Haya, Dignity, and Ethical Public Conduct

The women of Madyan introduce a different setting in Surah al-Qasas. Musa (AS), having left Egypt, arrives at the water of Madyan and finds people watering their animals. Apart from them, he finds two women holding back their flock. When he asks about their condition, they explain that they cannot water until the shepherds depart and that their father is an elderly man (Qur'an 28:23–24). This scene is central to this article's discussion of haya (modesty rooted in faith) because the women are present in a public place due to practical necessity, yet their conduct is marked by restraint, dignity, and moral boundaries.

The narrative does not present modesty as withdrawal from responsibility. The women are outside the home because family circumstances require them to work. Their elderly father cannot perform the task, so they undertake it. Yet they do not push into the crowd or abandon propriety. They hold back until the space becomes appropriate. Their modesty therefore has both inward and outward dimensions: inward consciousness of Allah and outward discipline in public interaction. Such conduct challenges two opposite errors: the idea that modesty means total social absence and the idea that public participation requires the abandonment of moral restraint (Ibn Kathir, 1999; al-Qurtubi, 1964).

The daughter of Shu'ayb (AS), who later comes to Musa (AS), is described as walking with modesty (Qur'an 28:25). The Qur'an's attention to her manner of approach is significant. It does not reduce her to appearance, nor does it give unnecessary biographical detail. Instead, it selects a moral quality visible in movement and communication. Her modesty is not embarrassment without purpose; it is dignified self-command. She comes because her father has sent her to invite Musa (AS) and reward him for assisting them. Her speech is direct, limited, and purposeful. The scene therefore presents modesty as a form of spiritual refinement that shapes both presence and language (Abdel Haleem, 2004, Q. 28:25–26; Qutb, 2003).

*The verse's Arabic wording is especially relevant because it links modest presence with purposeful communication:*

”فَبَجَاءَتْهُ إِحْدَاهُمَا تَمْشِي عَلَى اسْتِحْيَاءٍ قَالَتْ إِنَّ أَبِي يَدْعُوكَ لِيَجْزِيَكَ أَجْرَ مَا سَقَيْتَ لَنَا فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُ وَقَصَّ عَلَيْهِ الْقِصَصَ  
قَالَ لَا تَخَفْ نَجَوْتَ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ“

This analysis emphasizes that haya is an expression of faith rather than social weakness. It is not fear of people but consciousness before Allah. The Hadith cited in Islamic sources describes modesty as a branch of faith, and this meaning illuminates the Madyan episode (al-Bukhari, 1997, no. 9; Muslim, 2007, no. 35). The women are neither helpless nor careless. They know their need, communicate it when asked, accept assistance, and then one of them conveys her father's invitation with dignity. Their conduct shows that faith does not prevent necessary interaction; it disciplines interaction so that it remains ethical.

*The same meaning is supported by the concise Prophetic statement:*

“ قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: الْحَيَاءُ شُعْبَةٌ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ ”

The balance between modesty and practical necessity is one of the most important ethical lessons of this narrative. The women of Madyan are responsible members of their household. Their work is neither condemned nor treated as improper in itself. What receives Qur'anic emphasis is the moral form of their public conduct. They wait rather than compete aggressively, speak only as needed, and preserve dignified boundaries. Their example therefore provides a Qur'anic model for public life in which women may fulfill necessary responsibilities without surrendering spiritual identity (al-Qurtubi, 1964; Shafi, 2004).

This point is especially relevant to discussions of education, employment, and social participation. This article does not present the Madyan episode as a general legal ruling that answers every modern circumstance in detail. Rather, it reads the scene thematically as a source of ethical principles: necessity should be met with dignity, public interaction should be purposeful, speech should be clear and restrained, and moral boundaries should accompany responsibility. These principles can guide Muslim women in academic, professional, and community settings where interaction is unavoidable but must remain ethically disciplined (Ghodrati, 2020).

The daughter of Shu'ayb (AS) also shows ethical discernment when she advises her father to hire Musa (AS), describing him as strong and trustworthy (Qur'an 28:26). This brief statement contains an enduring principle of responsibility. Positions of service and employment should be given to those who possess both competence and integrity. Strength without trustworthiness may become abuse, while trustworthiness without ability may fail to fulfill responsibility. Her judgment reveals intelligence and moral clarity. She recognizes the practical capability and ethical reliability of Musa (AS), and she communicates this assessment respectfully to her father.

Her example also corrects a shallow understanding of modesty as silence in all matters. The daughter of Shu'ayb (AS) speaks when speech is appropriate. She reports, invites, advises, and evaluates. Her modesty does not erase her judgment; rather, it refines the manner in which judgment is expressed. This is an important Qur'anic lesson because ethical speech is not merely a matter of avoiding obscenity or falsehood. It includes purpose, restraint, truthfulness, and benefit. The Madyan woman speaks neither excessively nor vaguely. Her words serve a clear moral and practical purpose (Haris et al., 2023).

The women of Madyan therefore represent a comprehensive model of ethical public conduct. Their haya is not passivity; their dignity is not isolation; their responsibility is not moral laxity. They embody a balanced Qur'anic pattern in which inward faith governs outward presence. This pattern is essential for contemporary Muslim women who must navigate public responsibilities while preserving spiritual consciousness. The narrative teaches that modesty and participation are not enemies when both are governed by obedience to Allah.

### Asiyah, Wife of Pharaoh: Compassion, Spiritual Independence, and Moral Resistance

Asiyah, the wife of Pharaoh, appears in Surah al-Qasas at the moment when the infant Musa (AS) is found by Pharaoh's household. She says that he may be a comfort to the eye for her and Pharaoh, and she asks that he not be killed (Qur'an 28:9). Her words interrupt the logic of Pharaoh's violence. In a palace shaped by tyranny and the killing of innocent male children, she responds to the infant not as a political threat but as a vulnerable life to be protected. This analysis treats this compassion as a form of moral resistance.

Compassion in this scene is not sentimental weakness. It is a moral judgment that refuses to accept Pharaoh's devaluation of life. Tyranny often begins by redefining the innocent as expendable. Asiyah's response restores the child's value and creates space for his protection. Her plea, "do not kill him," is simple yet profound because it resists a policy of death from within the household of the tyrant himself. She does not possess Pharaoh's public power, but her compassion becomes an instrument in Allah's plan to preserve Musa (AS) (Ibn Kathir, 1999; al-Tabari, 1955–1969).

The spiritual depth of Asiyah's character becomes clearer when Surah al-Tahrim presents her as an example for the believers. Her prayer asks Allah to build for her a house near Him in Paradise and to save her from Pharaoh and his deeds (Qur'an 66:11). This prayer discloses the inner orientation of her heart. She lives in the palace but desires nearness to Allah. She is associated outwardly with Pharaoh's household but inwardly rejects Pharaoh's deeds. Her spiritual identity is therefore not determined by her environment, status, or marriage. It is determined by faith.

*The Qur'anic prayer attributed to Pharaoh's wife expresses this spiritual independence directly:*

” وَصَرَّبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا امْرَأَتٌ فِرْعَوْنُ إِذْ قَالَتْ رَبِّ ابْنِ لِي عِنْدَكَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَنَجِّنِي مِنْ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ”

Asiyah's example is especially powerful because it shows spiritual independence within oppressive proximity. She does not merely oppose evil from a distance; she lives in its center. The Qur'an makes her a model not only for women but for the believers generally. This universal presentation emphasizes that spiritual excellence is possible even under extreme external pressure. A believer may be surrounded by corruption, yet the heart may remain directed toward Allah. This article interprets this as moral courage and spiritual independence, and the connection between Qur'an 28:9 and 66:11 supports that reading (al-Qurtubi, 1964; Qutb, 2003).

Her compassion toward Musa (AS) also reveals the ethical relationship between mercy and justice. Mercy is not simply kindness in comfortable circumstances. In the palace of Pharaoh, mercy becomes a challenge to injustice. By seeking the child's life, Asiyah stands against the destructive pattern of the regime. Her resistance is not portrayed as reckless; it is expressed through wise intervention in the situation available to her. This teaches that moral resistance may take many forms. Sometimes it is a public declaration; sometimes it is the protection of a vulnerable person; sometimes it is refusal to participate in wrongdoing.

The prayer of Asiyah in Surah al-Tahrim adds a further dimension: inner transformation. She asks not only to be saved from Pharaoh, but also from his deeds. This wording shows that oppression is not only external danger but also a moral environment from which the believer seeks purification. She desires freedom from the actions, values, and consequences associated with Pharaoh. Her aspiration is not merely escape from suffering; it is nearness to Allah and separation from falsehood. Such a prayer reveals sincerity, clarity, and a reordering of desire (Ibn Kathir, 1999; Shafi, 2004).

The article also connects Asiyah with Hadith literature that honors her among women of spiritual perfection (al-Bukhari, 1997, no. 3433; Muslim, 2007, no. 2431). Within the article's scope, this point reinforces the Qur'anic portrayal of her as a woman whose faith overcame surroundings of arrogance and disbelief. Her status does not arise from palace life, wealth, or political proximity. It arises from faith, moral courage, and reliance upon Allah. She becomes a role model because she refuses to allow worldly power to define ultimate value.

*A related Hadith identifies Asiyah among the women of exceptional spiritual completion:*

“ قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: كَمَلَّ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ كَثِيرٌ، وَلَمْ يَكْمُلْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِلَّا مَرْيَمُ بِنْتُ عِمْرَانَ وَآسِيَةُ امْرَأَةَ فِرْعَوْنَ ”

Asiyah's example has major ethical implications. She teaches that spiritual independence is not arrogance, isolation, or social hostility. It is the condition in which the heart's loyalty belongs to Allah even when outward life is entangled with oppressive structures. A woman may face pressure within family, institution, workplace, or society; Asiyah's story shows that moral clarity can survive such pressure. Her conduct and prayer make clear that faith must not be surrendered to power, status, fear, or comfort. She stands as a model of compassion in action, conscience under pressure, and truthfulness before Allah.

### **Comparative Analysis**

Read together, the female figures of Surah al-Qasas present a unified Qur'anic model of spirituality in action. They differ in social location, age, and circumstance, yet their qualities converge. The mother of Musa (AS) is a believing mother facing the terror of Pharaoh's decree. The sister of Musa (AS) is a young woman entrusted with surveillance, patience, and wise speech. The women of Madyan are responsible daughters fulfilling public necessity with dignity and restraint. Asiyah is a woman in the palace of tyranny whose compassion and prayer reveal spiritual independence. Their diversity shows that spiritual excellence is not confined to one social role (Qur'an 28:7–13; 28:23–26; 28:9; 66:11).

The first shared quality is trust in Allah. In the mother of Musa (AS), trust appears as tawakkul in the face of danger. In the sister, it appears as calm participation in the unfolding of Allah's promise. In the women of Madyan, it appears as dignified responsibility without complaint or moral compromise. In Asiyah, it appears as the refusal to allow Pharaoh's palace to define reality. Trust is therefore not a single emotion. It becomes obedience, patience, restraint, and moral courage according to circumstance (Abdel Haleem, 2004, Q. 28:7–13, 28:23–26, 66:11; Qutb, 2003).

The second shared quality is sabr (patience and steadfastness). The mother waits for the promise of return; the sister waits for the right moment to speak; the women of Madyan wait until the shepherds depart; Asiyah endures proximity to oppression while seeking salvation from Allah. This patience is not passivity. It is disciplined endurance directed toward ethical action. It allows each woman to avoid panic, impulsiveness, and despair. Patience in these narratives preserves life, protects dignity, and sustains faith.

The third shared quality is wisdom. Each woman acts with moral intelligence. The mother obeys divine inspiration despite the apparent danger of the river. The sister frames her proposal so that Pharaoh's household accepts the child's return to his mother. The daughter of Shu'ayb (AS) recognizes strength and trustworthiness in Musa (AS). Asiyah intervenes compassionately at a decisive moment. Wisdom here is not abstract knowledge alone; it is the ability to judge circumstances in light of faith and to act in ways that protect truth and life (Ibn Kathir, 1999; al-Tabari, 1955–1969).

The fourth shared quality is courage. The mother has the courage to obey under emotional hardship. The sister has the courage to approach a dangerous household with controlled speech. The women of Madyan have the courage to fulfill public responsibility while preserving modesty. Asiyah has the courage to resist tyranny from within its own house. Qur'anic courage is therefore not uniform. It may be maternal, youthful, social, or political. In every case, it is rooted in accountability before Allah.

Compassion and responsibility also unite these figures. The mother acts for her child's protection; the sister fulfills a family trust; the women of Madyan care for their household; Asiyah protects an innocent infant. None of these women is spiritually isolated from human need. Their relationship with Allah makes them more responsible, not less. This is a crucial conclusion: in Surah al-Qasas, spirituality does not withdraw from ethical life. It produces ethical life. The closer the heart is to Allah, the more carefully it guards life, speech, modesty, and justice (Qutb, 2003; Shafi, 2004).

This synthesis supports the article's main argument. Surah al-Qasas does not present women as passive figures within a male prophetic story. It presents them as active moral agents whose spiritual qualities participate in the protection and upbringing of Musa (AS) and in the exposure of Pharaoh's false power. Their examples together form a Qur'anic pattern of God-conscious personality: emotionally aware but not ruled by emotion, modest but not inactive, compassionate but not weak, courageous but not reckless, and responsible without losing reliance upon Allah.

### **Contemporary Relevance of the Qur'anic Female Role Models**

The contemporary relevance of Surah al-Qasas lies in its ability to address modern spiritual and moral challenges without reducing Qur'anic guidance to slogans. Many Muslim women today confront anxiety, social pressure, moral confusion, weakening religious identity, and competing models of success. Some models define worth through public visibility, material achievement, or individual autonomy detached from divine accountability. Other models may restrict women in ways that overlook their moral agency and capacity for service. The female figures of Surah al-Qasas offer a balanced alternative: faith-rooted, emotionally resilient, ethically disciplined, and socially responsible womanhood (Abdul Razak, 2023; Elatrash et al., 2023).

The mother of Musa (AS) speaks powerfully to modern experiences of motherhood, anxiety, and uncertainty. Contemporary mothers often face fears about children's safety, education, faith, identity, and future. The story does not tell mothers that fear is sinful in itself. Rather, it teaches that fear must be governed by trust in Allah. The mother of Musa (AS) feels fear and grief, yet she obeys and waits for Allah's promise. Her example encourages mothers to combine effort with prayer, care with surrender, and emotional love with spiritual trust. Motherhood becomes not merely a social role but a form of worship when it is guided by obedience and reliance upon Allah (Qur'an 28:7–13; al-Qurtubi, 1964).

The sister of Musa (AS) offers a model for young women. Her role shows that youth can carry responsibility, intelligence, and moral courage. In contemporary settings, young Muslim women may face pressure to conform to peer expectations, media norms, careless speech, or environments that weaken religious identity. The sister's example teaches vigilance without suspicion, courage without recklessness, and communication without exposure of trust. She shows that young women can protect family, uphold values, and participate constructively in society when their judgment is trained by faith (Qur'an 28:11–12; Ibn Kathir, 1999).

The women of Madyan provide a deeply relevant framework for education, work, and public conduct. Modern women often engage in universities, offices, hospitals, schools, research, business, and

community service. The Madyan narrative does not portray necessary public responsibility as inherently blameworthy. Instead, it asks how such responsibility is carried. The answer is haya, dignity, purposeful speech, competence, and ethical boundaries. This is especially relevant for professional ethics. Punctuality, honesty, reliability, respectful communication, avoidance of inappropriate familiarity, and recognition of merit are all compatible with the Qur'anic values reflected in the daughter of Shu'ayb (AS) (Qur'an 28:23–26; Ghodrati, 2020).

This understanding of haya is particularly important. In some contexts, modesty is misunderstood as social invisibility, while in others it is dismissed as weakness. The Madyan episode corrects both errors. The women are present in public because duty requires it, but their presence is not careless. Their speech is necessary, not excessive. Their conduct is dignified, not self-displaying. For contemporary Muslim women, this provides an ethical vocabulary for navigating mixed environments. Modesty is not the rejection of education, work, or service; it is the spiritual discipline that prevents public participation from becoming detached from accountability before Allah (al-Bukhari, 1997, no. 9; Haris et al., 2023; Muslim, 2007, no. 35).

Asiyah's example addresses another contemporary challenge: standing for truth within oppressive or morally compromised systems. Women may encounter pressure in families, institutions, workplaces, or social settings where faith and ethical commitment are discouraged. Asiyah shows that the believer's inner allegiance must remain with Allah. She lived in Pharaoh's palace yet sought a house near Allah in Paradise. Her example teaches that spiritual independence is possible even in constraining environments. It also teaches that resistance may begin with compassion: protecting the vulnerable, refusing injustice, and not allowing power to silence conscience (Qur'an 28:9; 66:11; Ibn Kathir, 1999).

These figures also contribute to Muslim women's identity formation. Identity is often shaped by the models people admire. Surah al-Qasas offers models who are neither defined by worldly celebrity nor erased by domestic or social roles. The mother of Musa (AS), his sister, the women of Madyan, and Asiyah show that a woman can be spiritually significant as a mother, daughter, sister, worker, adviser, protector, and moral witness. Their roles differ, but each is meaningful because it is oriented toward Allah. This helps Muslim women form an identity that is neither reactive nor imitative, but Qur'anically grounded (Barlas, 2002; Stowasser, 1994).

The contemporary application of these narratives must avoid two extremes. It should not flatten the women into abstract symbols detached from their Qur'anic context, nor should it confine their lessons to the past. The proper method is to identify stable spiritual qualities and apply them wisely in changing circumstances. Trust in Allah remains necessary in anxiety; patience remains necessary in crisis; modesty remains necessary in public interaction; compassion remains necessary in injustice; courage remains necessary under pressure; and responsibility remains necessary in every role. These qualities form a living framework for contemporary Muslim women's moral and spiritual development.

Finally, Surah al-Qasas reminds contemporary readers that divine wisdom often works through hidden, ordinary, or socially underestimated persons. A mother, a sister, a modest daughter, and a believing wife in an oppressive palace all become means in a wider divine plan. This is a powerful corrective to material measures of influence. The Qur'an teaches that spiritual value is not measured by public recognition, institutional power, or social visibility. It is measured by faith, sincerity, and righteous action. For Muslim women today, this message provides dignity, direction, and hope.

## Research Findings

The study finds that Surah al-Qasas presents women as spiritually active figures whose decisions contribute meaningfully to the unfolding of divine wisdom. The mother of Musa (AS) represents tawakkul as disciplined obedience in a moment of fear; the sister of Musa (AS) demonstrates vigilance, patience, and wise communication; the women of Madyan show that modesty and public responsibility can operate together within ethical boundaries; and Asiyah represents spiritual independence and moral resistance within an oppressive environment.

A second finding is that Qur'anic spirituality is inseparable from ethical action. In these narratives, spirituality appears in protecting innocent life, preserving trust, speaking carefully, fulfilling family responsibility, maintaining dignity in public interaction, and resisting injustice. The article therefore understands Qur'anic empowerment as agency grounded in faith, moral discipline, and divine consciousness rather than as self-assertion detached from revelation.

The study further finds that these narratives remain relevant to contemporary challenges such as anxiety, moral confusion, social pressure, weakening religious identity, and loss of inner peace. Surah al-Qasas provides a practical framework for forming God-conscious, emotionally balanced, and ethically responsible Muslim women in family, educational, professional, and institutional settings.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations may guide future academic work on this theme:

1. A deeper study of the mother of Musa (AS) as a model of tawakkul, emotional resilience, maternal responsibility, and submission to Allah during uncertainty.
2. A focused analysis of the sister of Musa (AS) in relation to young Muslim women's responsibility, vigilance, courage, and constructive social participation.
3. A detailed study of the daughter of Shu'ayb (AS) and the women of Madyan in relation to haya, ethical communication, gender interaction, and workplace or professional conduct.
4. A separate study of Asiyah as a model of faith, moral resistance, spiritual independence, and steadfastness within oppressive environments.
5. Comparative research on women in Surah al-Qasas and other Qur'anic female figures, including Maryam (AS), the wife of Ibrahim (AS), and the Queen of Sheba.
6. Further work on the contribution of Qur'anic female role models to Islamic counselling, family guidance, spiritual education, and Muslim women's identity formation (Abdel Haleem, 2004, Q. 28:7–13, 28:23–26, 28:9, 66:11; Shafi, 2004).

## Conclusion

Surah al-Qasas presents a profound framework for understanding the spiritual qualities of women through the narrative of Musa (AS). The female figures examined in this article are not passive accessories to a prophetic story. They are spiritually conscious and morally active agents whose conduct reveals reliance upon Allah, patience, modesty, wisdom, courage, compassion, responsibility, and sincerity. Their actions occur in different settings, yet each setting becomes a field of divine guidance and ethical formation.

The mother of Musa (AS) embodies tawakkul, divine inspiration, obedience, and courage amid fear. Her story shows that faith does not eliminate emotion but governs it through trust in Allah's promise. The sister of Musa (AS) represents vigilance, patience, and wise communication, demonstrating that responsibility and moral intelligence are not restricted by age. The women of Madyan, especially the

daughter of Shu'ayb (AS), present haya as dignified and purposeful ethical conduct in public life. Asiyah, the wife of Pharaoh, reveals compassion as moral resistance and spiritual independence within oppression (Qur'an 28:7–13; 28:23–26; 28:9; 66:11).

Together, these figures show that Qur'anic spirituality is inseparable from ethical action. It is not confined to private worship or inward feeling. It appears in protecting life, preserving trust, speaking wisely, fulfilling responsibility, resisting injustice, and maintaining modesty before Allah. The article has therefore argued that Surah al-Qasas offers a Qur'anic model of female spiritual formation that is God-conscious, emotionally balanced, morally refined, and socially responsible (Ibn Kathir, 1999; Qutb, 2003).

For contemporary Muslim women, these narratives remain deeply relevant. They provide guidance for motherhood, youth, public responsibility, professional ethics, moral courage, and identity formation. Their lessons are neither restricted to ancient circumstances nor reducible to modern slogans. They form an enduring Qur'anic framework for developing a personality that trusts Allah, acts ethically, preserves dignity, and stands for truth.

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