

Woman 1: When Prophet Yunus¹ (PBUH) went to his favorite spot, fishes were brought on Saturday. Every Saturday, all the fishes from the river were collected. The fishermen would catch and distribute the fishes, and it was Allah's orders that the fishes are caught only on Saturdays and eaten. It would not be permissible to catch fish on other days of the week. No one would be allowed to catch fish except on that day. But people started to think, "why should we eat fish only one day of the week?" It does not make sense not to eat on other days of the week if it is possible to catch fish from the river. So you know what they did. They caught the fish on Saturday, but on the other days they cut out small streams so that the fish would pass through them and end up on their property. So at night the fishes would pass through these streams and in the mornings, they would go and shut the openings of these ponds. Then Allah put a curse on them since they decided to disobey his orders, which were to catch fish only on Saturday and not on any other day: "Since you disobeyed me, you have to prepare and face the punishment." Then Allah punished them and they all died.

Woman 2: All of them were humans?

Woman 1: Yes, the entire clan died.

Woman 1: This was according to tales about Prophet Yunus's (PBUH) life. As the story goes, when these selfish and greedy men began to disobey Allah's orders, other noble and honest people of the village started to warn them against disobeying Allah's orders. But instead, these greedy individuals tried to be too smart, and replied that since they were not catching the fish directly from the pond they were not disobeying Allah's orders. As a result of this, the two groups of people, the noble and the greedy, parted ways and their relationship became distant. Allah then decided to protect the noble group and keep them away from danger or punishment, but to punish the greedy group for their wrongdoing. Then Prophet Yunus (PBUH) went up to Allah, pleading for mercy on their behalf. He gave several arguments: first he mentioned that if this group were no more, there would not be enough people to serve Allah; secondly, he raised the point that now that the greedy group had been punished by death, all the villagers would point fingers at him and he would not be able to show his face due to shame. Allah carefully listened to his arguments, and decided to bring the punished individuals back to life. After these men came back to life, they went up to Allah and pleaded for forgiveness. Then they began to lead their daily lives, but this time they made sure that they were honest and selfless in their actions.

Woman 2: So who were these people?

¹ The *Prophet Yunus* (peace be upon him) is also addressed by two other surnames: "Dhun-Nun" (Lord of the Fish) and "Sahibil-Hot" (Companion of the Fish).

Woman 1: They were a group of people at a village in which Prophet Yunus lived. At that time, the population was not as it is now. People lived in small groups, around 1000 people living in one area. This is a true story.

About CultureTalk: CultureTalk is produced by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and housed on the LangMedia Website. The project provides students of language and culture with samples of people talking about their lives in the languages they use everyday. The participants in CultureTalk interviews and discussions are of many different ages and walks of life. They are free to express themselves as they wish. The ideas and opinions presented here are those of the participants. Inclusion in CultureTalk does not represent endorsement of these ideas or opinions by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, Five Colleges, Incorporated, or any of its member institutions: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

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