

ALI 347: Sura Shu'ara, verses 10-33

Session Three

Please have a copy of the Quran with
English translation

Read and reflect on verses 18-22

Ponder over the conversation of Firaun and Nabi Musa (a). What do they say to each other?

Agenda

- Conversation of Nabi Musa (a) and Firaun
- Words to ponder over
- Some Points

The court of Firaun

When Musa son of `Imran went to Pharaoh along with his brother Harun wearing coarse shirts of wool and holding sticks in their hands, they guaranteed him retention of his country and continuity of his honour if he submitted; but he said: "Do you not wonder at these two men guaranteeing me the continuity of my honour and the retention of my country although you see their poverty and lowliness. Otherwise, why do they not have gold bangles on their wrists?" He said so feeling proud of his gold and collected possessions, and considering wool and its cloth as nothing.

Khutba no. 192, *Nahjul Balagha*

The Conversation

Firaun: How can you be a Prophet when;

- 1) We know you so well since we brought you up
- 2) You killed a person
- 3) You were ungrateful for our favors

Nabi Musa (a)'s reply:

- 1) I was unaware of the consequences
- 2) Prophethood was given to me by God
- 3) How can the enslavement of the Banu Israel be a favor?

Answer to the accusation

Accusation - I favored you

Answer – was the enslavement of Banu Israel a favor?

Meanings:

- a) why was I taken in by you? Because of the oppression of the Banu Israel. Because you killed all the baby boys my mother had to abandon me. Had it not been for your injustice there would have been no need to take me in.
- b) What was the favor on me compared to all the oppression on the Banu Israel?
- c) All that you gave me as favors was the hard work done by the slaves from the Banu Israel.

Fleeing from Fir'awn

According to Tafsir *Nur al-Thaqalayn* Imam Ali (a) was asked why he did not fight the first three khalifas and remained silent.

He said; sometimes silence and withdrawal is the best option.

- Did not Nabi Ibrahim say: *And I will withdraw from you and what you call on besides Allah, and I will call upon my Lord (19:48)*
- Did not Harun say: *Son of my mother! surely the people thought me weak and nearly slayed me (7:150)*
- Did not Yusuf say: *O my Lord! the prison is more to my liking than that to which they invite me (12:33)*
- Did not the Holy Prophet (s) flee Makkah while I lay in his bed?
- Did not Musa say: *So I fled from you when I feared you, then my Lord granted me wisdom and made me of the messengers (26:21)*
- Did not Lut say: *If only I had the power to deter you or could take refuge in a mighty support. (11:80)*

According to *Nur al-Thaqalayn*, Imam al-Mahdi (a) when he reappears he will recite this verse:

فَفَرَرْتُ مِنْكُمْ لَمَّا خِفْتُكُمْ فَوَهَبَ لِي رَبِّي حُكْمًا وَجَعَلَنِي مِنَ
الْمُرْسَلِينَ

So I fled from you when I feared you, then my Lord granted me wisdom and made me of the Messengers

Sura Shu'ara, 26:21

Words to ponder over

الْكَافِرِينَ - Ungrateful. The word means to deny the favors of someone.

حُكْمًا - Hukman

- authority over the Banu Israel
- knowledge and wisdom

الضَّالِّينَ - Astray. Possible meanings:

- a) as in غَافِلٌ . He means to say that I intended to help the one who was oppressed. I did not realize the other person would die.
- b) *Tawriyeh* – when a person says something that gives one meaning to the listener but he has another meaning inside. He does not want to tell a lie so he says the truth in a way which is interpreted differently by the listener.
- c) He was physically lost – he lost his way while traveling.
- d) He was unaware of the consequences of helping the person from the Banu Israel.

Tafsir Nur al Thaqaalayn quotes a hadith from Imam Ridha (a) in a discourse with Mamun al Rashid on the infallibility of the Prophets.

Mamun asked why Nabi Musa referred to himself as الضَّالِّينَ. That proved he was fallible. Imam replied that Firaun said he committed the deed while being ungrateful. Nabi Musa told him he did it while he was lost in the city.

Imam then quoted verses from Sura Dhuhā and explained them.

وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَىٰ
your people and guided them to you. (93:7)

Some points

- True believers are not affected by the environment in which they grow up. Nabi Musa was raised in the house of a man who claimed himself to be god. But it did not affect his spiritual purity.
- To make people feel obliged and remind them of your favors is act of arrogance and rebellion. Allah says: *O you who believe! cancel not your charity by reminders of your generosity or by reproaches (2:264)*
- To receive a favor from one who rejects God should not be a cause of refraining from preaching the word of God to him.
- Do not fulfill the expectations of those who reject God.

- Acknowledge when you have made a mistake. Nabi Musa (a) does not deny that a man was killed because of his mistake.
- You have to distance yourself from the *Taghut* – physically and/or spiritually to gain the grace of God.
- Pride adorns evil in the eyes of the evil doer. Firaun thought he had favored Nabi Musa by taking him in. He is reminded that it was actually a result of his evil actions.



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