

Sūrat al-Mu'min Verses 28

وَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مُّؤْمِنٌ مِّنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَكْتُمُ إِيمَانَهُ أَتَقْتُلُونَ رَجُلًا أَنْ يَقُولَ رَبِّيَ اللَّهُ وَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ
بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۗ وَإِنْ يَكُ كَاذِبًا فَعَلَيْهِ كَذِبُهُ ۗ وَإِنْ يَكُ صَادِقًا يُصِيبْكُمْ بَعْضُ الَّذِي
يَعِدُّكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ كَذَّابٌ

Q 40:28 Said a man of faith from Fir'awn's clan who concealed his faith, 'Will you kill a man for saying, 'My Lord is Allah,' while he has already brought you clear proofs from your Lord? Should he be lying, his falsehood will be to his own detriment; but if he is truthful, there shall come to you some of what he promises you. Indeed, Allah does not guide someone who is a transgressor and liar.

Questions for Reflection

- 1) Why was this man hiding his faith? What made him speak up?
- 2) What are the two options he gives in thinking about what the person is saying? (if he is lying . . . if he is speaking the truth . . .)
- 3) How do the last two qualities go together? (transgressor/extravagant and liar/rejecter)

Commentary

This verse begins a story from the life of Prophet Mūsā 'alayhi salām which is only mentioned in this sūra. It is the story of Mu'min of Āli Fir'awn, also known as Hizqīl. He was from the relatives of Fir'awn and was close to him. Some commentators say he was the chief of the police force of the time. But when he heard Prophet Mūsā calling people towards the worship of One God he accepted and believed in God. He did not reveal his faith to anyone. This was not just because he was afraid of his life. Rather he wanted to hide his faith so he could be a helper of the Prophet without anyone realizing it. When he saw that the Prophet's life is in danger (see verses 26 & 27) he came forward to speak up. He knew it is now is more helpful for God's mission that he reveals his faith, rather than keep it hidden.

The actions of Mu'min of Āli Fir'awn shows that the motive behind every action should be the pleasure of God and service to His mission. It is not personal gain or safety that was important to him. When the need was there for him to work undercover, he does. And when the need called for speaking up and thereby revealing his faith, he does that. The story of Hizqīl also proves that living in a corrupt environment does not necessarily force you to become corrupt. You can maintain your faith and determination in a society of disbelievers. Note also that when people work to spread God's word, they will always have supporters

amidst all the opposers to their mission. Although most people were against Prophet Mūsā, he did have his supporters who were brave and determined.

The first thing Hizqīl asked is why Fir‘awn would kill a person just because he believes his Lord and Provider is Allah. That too after he has brought miracles to prove his point. How could anyone deny the miracle behind the stick that turned into a serpent and the shining hand – two miracles that Prophet Mūsā showed Fir‘awn and his people. The effect of the miracles was such that the magicians who were skilled and knowledgeable accepted him as a Prophet and prostrated to God. They were not afraid of the result of their actions. Such is the effect of miracles on receptive hearts. Why was it that Fir‘awn not only rejected the miracles but was also ready to kill the Prophet?

Note that Hizqīl refers to Prophet Mūsā as ‘a man’ rather than ‘a Prophet’. He does not want to anger Fir‘awn by giving the Prophet the title he deserves.

Hizqīl asked Fir ‘awn to think deeply about what he was planning to do. Did it make sense? He gave two logical scenarios – if the Prophet was a liar then his lie will eventually come back to haunt him. Fir‘awn did not need to be afraid of him, thus there was no need to kill him. If the Prophet was truthful then by killing him, Fir‘awn would bring upon himself the punishment of the God that the Prophet had warned about. Either way it was better not to kill him.

He ended his statement by saying that God does not guide one who transgresses and lies. If the Prophet was doing that then God would not support him. And if Fir‘awn did that he too would not get guidance.

To summarize the beginning of Hizqīl’s speech, he gave the following points:

- The action of Prophet Musa was not deserving of a death sentence.
- The Prophet has some serious proofs that could not be ignored.
- The Prophet should be left to himself. He himself would see the result of his deeds, whether they were based on truth or on falsehood.

Connecting Verses

- 1) Two miracles – Q 20:17-23, Q 27:9-12
- 2) Hiding faith (Taqiyya) – Q 16:106

Hadith

The *Siddiqūn* (Those who were foremost in accepting the truth brought by the Prophet of their time) in history are three: Habib al-Najjar (also known as Mu’min of Āli Yāsīn), Mu’min of Āli Fir‘awn, and Ali bin Abi Tālib ‘*alayhis salām*.

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Connecting topics

1) Taqiyyah – The word ‘taqiyyah’ comes from ‘waqaya’, meaning to protect. In this context, taqiyyah means “to agree with someone, in words or in action, on something which is not true, because of fear of harm from that person” There are several instances in the Holy Quran where taqiyyah is endorsed. The first is the story of Ammār ibn Yāsir who under severe torture gave in and denounced Islam verbally with words. However, his heart never swayed from the true faith. He went to the Prophet distraught, thinking he had lost his religion. The Prophet (s) asked: *was your heart sure of Islam?* Ammār replied: ‘yes, I only denounced it verbally because of their torture’. The Prophet (s) said: *then it is okay, and if they come and do the same to you again, you say the same thing again.* The following āyat of the Holy Quran is regarding this incident: *Whoever disbelieved in Allah after his belief (except him who is forced thereto and whose heart is at rest with Faith)... theirs will be a great torment.* (Q 16:106). Also the incident of the believer of Āli Fir‘awn can be seen in Quran doing taqiyyah for his protection.

References:

1) Taqiyyah - <https://en.shafaqna.com/43636/shia-islam-the-meaning-of-taqiyya-14/>

2) Habib al-Najjar – http://en.wikishia.net/view/Habib_al-Najjar

3) Supporting the truth while working for an oppressor – Story of Ali bin Yaqtin
http://en.wikishia.net/view/Ali_b._Yaqtin

4) On Hizqil see ‘The Believer from the House of Pharaoh’, *God’s Emissaries*, p.403;
<https://www.shia-maktab.info/index.php/en/library?format=raw&task=download&fid=280>

References

Āyatullāh Nāsir Makārim Shirāzī (ed), *Tafsīr-e Namūneh*

Agha Muhsīn Qarā’ati, *Tafsīr Nur*

Shaykh Rizwan Arastu, *God’s Emissaries – Adam to Jesus*