

Section 2: Moses Saved By Allah From Being Murdered

Surah Al-Qasas – Verse 14

وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَاسْتَوَىٰ ءَاتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا وَكَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ

14. “And when he reached his full strength and was ripe, We granted him wisdom and knowledge; and thus do We reward the good-doers.”

The first condition of accepting responsibility is bodily puberty; but real puberty is not obtained by only the bodily growth and sexual power, it depends on the completion of thought and intellect, too.

Here we are faced with the third part of the adventurous life story of Moses (as), in which the events of before his puberty period, and before he goes from Egypt to Madyan, and the motive of his migration are pointed out.

It says:

“And when he reached his full strength and was ripe, We granted him wisdom and knowledge; and thus do We reward the good-doers.”

The Arabic term /'ašudda/ is derived from /šiddat/ in the sense of ‘to become strong’; and the word /'istawa/ is derived from /'istiwa’/ which means ‘the perfection of creation and equilibrium’.

Some commentators have said that /balaqa 'ašudd/ is the state in which man reaches the limit of perfection from the point of bodily strength and it is often in the age of eighteen; and /'istiwa’/ is the state of equilibrium and establishment in the affair of life and living which usually comes forth after the

perfection of bodily power.

The difference between these two Arabic words /hukm/ (judgment) and /'ilm/ (knowledge) may be in the fact that /hukm/ refers to intellect, understanding, and ability for correct judgment, while /'ilm/ is an awareness and knowledge which is not accompanied with ignorance.

The Qur'an sentence /ka'alaika najzil mu'minin/ clearly shows that, because of his godly piety and for his good and pure deeds, Moses had got this eligibility that Allah gave him the reward of wisdom and knowledge, and it is clear that the purpose of this wisdom and knowledge is not revelation and prophethood, because on that day Moses had a long distance with the time of revelation and prophethood.

Then, the purpose is that awareness, clear sightedness, the ability of correct judgment and the like of them that Allah gave to Moses for his chastity, veracity, and righteousness.

Shortly speaking, this sentence indicates that Moses did not change to the habit of the castle, the environment where he lived, and, as far as he could, he tried to help the right and justice, though today the details of it are not clear to us.

Surah Al-Qasas – Verse 15

وَدَخَلَ الْمَدِينَةَ عَلَىٰ حِينٍ غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا فَوَجَدَ فِيهَا رَجُلَيْنِ يَقْتَتِلَانِ هَذَا مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ وَهَذَا مِنْ عَدُوِّهِ فَاسْتَغَاثَهُ الَّذِي مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ عَلَى الَّذِي مِنْ عَدُوِّهِ فَوَكَزَهُ مُوسَىٰ فَقَضَىٰ عَلَيْهِ قَالَ هَذَا مِنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ عَدُوٌّ مُّضِلٌّ مُّبِينٌ

15. “And he entered the city at a time when its people were unheeding, and found there two men fighting, one being of his own party, and the other of his enemies. Then the one that was of his own party sought his help against the one who was of his enemies, so Moses struck him with his fist and killed him. He said: ‘This is of the Satan’s doing; verily, he is an enemy that manifestly misleads’.”

The reformers of the society should sometimes informally, unknowingly and without any title come among people.

Before his prophethood, Moses (as) had some companions and followers, too. Though he was grown up in the castle of Pharaoh, the oppressed people had mostly accepted him as their supporter and leader because of his thought and manner.

However, the verse says:

“And he entered the city at a time when its people were unheeding...”

It is not clear that which city it was that Moses entered, but most probably it was the capital of Egypt. As some Islamic commentators have said, Moses had been condemned to be banished from the capital of Egypt as the result of the daily increasing discords he had against Pharaoh and his governmental system. But, in a special time when people were unaware, Moses entered the capital.

This is also probable that the purpose of entering the city was his coming out from the castle of Pharaoh, because the castle of the kings were usually built by the city so that they could control the ways of coming and going.

The objective of the sentence 'at a time when its people were unheeding' is the time when the people of the city stopped their business and no one was exactly taking care of the circumstances of the city. But at what hour it happened?

In a tradition the holy Prophet (S) said:

*“The hour of negligence is between sunset and the evening supper.”*¹

And, verily, this hour is the hour of negligence and many of the crimes, vices, and ethical deviations are performed in these very hours of the beginning of night.

At this time, people are mostly neither busy working nor are they in the state of sleeping and resting. There is usually a general negligence in the city at this time, and the circulation of the mischief centers are also during these hours.

Anyhow, Moses entered the city where he was confronted a scene.

The verse continues saying:

“...and found there two men fighting, one being of his own party, and the other of his enemies...”

The application of the Arabic term /šī'atihi/ in the verse shows that from that time Moses had some communications with the children of Israel and he had some followers there, and probably he had chosen them as a central source for struggling against the tyrannical system of Pharaoh.

When the Israelite man saw Moses who was a strong man, asked him, to help him against his enemy.

The verse says:

“...Then the one that was of his own party sought his help against the one who was of his enemies...”

Moses hastened to help him in order to deliver him from the grips of that unjust cruel man. Some

commentators have said that this enemy was one of the cooks of Pharaoh and he wanted to force the Israelite man to carry the woods without pay.

The verse says:

“...so Moses struck him with his fist and killed him...”

No doubt Moses did not want to kill the Coptic man, and this meaning is also understood from the later verses, not for the sake that they were not deserving to be killed, but for the sequels that this action might have for Moses and the Children of Israel.

So immediately Moses spoke:

“...He said: ‘This is of the Satan’s doing; verily, he is an enemy that manifestly misleads!’

In other words, he wanted to separate the hand of the Coptic man from the collar of the man who was from the Children of Israel. Though the people of Pharaoh deserved more than this, in those circumstances that action was not expedient and, as we will see later, this event caused him not to remain in Egypt any longer and he went toward Madyan.

Surah Al-Qasas – Verse 16

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي فَاغْفِرْ لِي فَغَفَرَ لَهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

16. “(Moses) said: ‘My Lord! Verily I have done harm to myself! Do You then forgive me!’ So (Allah) forgave him. Verily He is the forgiving, the Merciful.”

The righteous people immediately ask forgiveness even for the unintentional wrong actions, too, and avoid from their sequels. (By his seeking forgiveness, Moses asked several things from Allah: both wiping the social effects of his action, and removing the anxiety from the future, and repelling of the revengeful plots of the people of Pharaoh.)

In this verse, the Holy Qur’an from the tongue of Moses (as) says:

“(Moses) said: ‘My Lord! Verily I have done harm to myself! Do You then forgive me!’ So (Allah) forgave him. Verily He is the forgiving, the Merciful.”

Certainly Moses did not commit any sin here, but there happened a ‘leaving the better (nodbi)’ from him that there should not happen such a thing so that he would not inflict some annoyance, trouble, and pain.

For this very action he asked Allah to forgive him and Allah included him in His grace, too.

Commentators have delivered a great deal of discussions about the affray of the Coptic man and the Israelite one, and the Coptic being killed by Moses (as).

Of course this action was not itself an important problem, because the criminal men of Pharaoh were some cruel mischief mongers who cut the head of thousands of newborn sons from the Children of Israel and refused to commit no crime against the Children of Israel. Thus they were not some ones whose blood could be honourable specially for the Children of Israel.

The things that have created difficulty for the commentators are the expressions that Moses (as) himself has stated in this event:

Once he says:

"... This is of the Satan's doing..."²

In another occurrence he says:

"My Lord! Verily I have done harm to myself! Do you then forgive me!..."³

How do these expressions agree with the infallibility of the prophets who must have the rank of immunity even before their prophethood and Messengership?

But the above explanations upon the commentary of the above verses make clear that what Moses did was not more than leaving the better (nodbi).

By this act he troubled him because a Coptic being killed by Moses was not an ordinary thing that the people of Pharaoh could easily renounce, and we know that abandoning this action is in the sense of an action which is not essentially unlawful (haram), but it causes that a better deed may be left without that a wrong action would have been done.

Something similar to this meaning has also been cited in the life story of some other prophets, including Hadrat Adam, the explanation of which was given when commenting on Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 19.

A tradition upon the commentary of this verse has been recorded in 'Uyun-ul-'Akhbar from Imam Ali-ibn-Musar-Rida (as) who said:

"The purpose of the Qur'anic sentence:

"... this is of the Satan's doing..."

is the conflict of those two with each other which was considered as a Satanic act, not the act of Moses (as); and the purpose of the sentence:

“My Lord! Verily I have done harm to myself!...”

is that I put myself in a place where I should not put. I should not come into this city; and the purpose of the phrase:

“...Do You then forgive me!...”

is that You do cover me from Your enemies so that they do not find me.

(One of the meanings of /qufran/ is ‘to cover’.)

Sayyid Murtada ‘Alam–al–Huda, in Tanzih–ul–’Anbiya, commenting on the verse, has chosen the same meaning, too.⁴

Surah Al–Qasas – Verse 17

قَالَ رَبِّ بِمَا أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ فَلَنْ أَكُونَ ظَهِيرًا لِلْمُجْرِمِينَ

17. “He said: “My Lord! For the bounty You have bestowed on me, never shall I be a supporter of the guilty’.”

It is better that we call Allah in our supplications by the holy word ‘Rabb’ (Lord).

The bodily power is one of the bounties of Allah (s.w.t.) given to human beings. (Moses (as) had ability that he could kill a pagan by his fist.)

Moses implicitly said to Allah:

“For the gratitude of this bounty that You included me in Your forgiveness and caused me not to be seized by the enemies, and for the gratitude of all bounties that You have bestowed on me since the beginning, I will never support the guilty and will not be the helper of the unjust. On the contrary, I will hasten to help the oppressed and the deprived.”

The verse says:

“He said: “My Lord! For the bounty You have bestowed on me, never shall I be a supporter of the guilty’.”

The purpose of Moses (as) from this noble sentence was that he would never cooperate with the criminal sinful people of Pharaoh and he (as) would be the supporter of the oppressed Children of Israel.

In Islamic jurisprudence there is a large chapter about ‘helping the sin’ and ‘assisting the oppressors’; or

there are many traditions which show that one of the most clear sins is helping the unjust, tyrants, and criminals. It causes man to share the evil fate of theirs.

In principle, the unjust, tyrants, and persons like Pharaoh are some particular members who always exist in every society, and if the crowds of people do not cooperate with them the tyrannical kings will not become so tyrant.

When a group of vile and weak fellows, or the seekers of an occasion and mammonists gather around them and become as their aids or, at least, as their multitude of soldiers, they usually provide a satanic power for them.

This Islamic and humane principle has repeatedly been emphasized on in the Holy Qur'an.

For example, Allah in Surah Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 2 says:

"...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and transgression..."

There are some other evidences in it, too.

The Qur'an explicitly says:

"And do not incline to those who are unjust, lest the Fire will touch you..."⁵

The Qur'anic word ***rुकun***, whether it may be meant in the sense of heartily inclination, outward cooperation, or expressing content, or friendship and benevolence, or obedience on which each of commentators have delivered a commentary, or a concept that envelops all of them and it is reliance, confidence and dependence, is a lively evidence and attestation to our purpose.

Muhammad-ibn-Muslim Zuhari was a learned man who had cooperation not only with the system of Umayyads but also with Husham-ibn-'Abdul-Malik in particular.

Imam Zayn-ul-'Abidin Ali-ibn-il-Husayn (as), after avoiding him of helping the unjust, in his shaking words told him:

"Did they not invite you to their own group and did they not form a center by you that the mill of their oppression turns around its axis? Did they not set you as a bridge for their passing unto their afflictions, as a ladder for their aberrations, an emissary for their misguidance, and a follower for their shameful path?"

*They create doubt the scholars by you, and through you they entrap the hearts of ignorant simple-minded ones. What a little price they gave you for that which they took from you, and instead of what they ruined from you, how little they built! Ponder upon yourself, because there is no one to be sympathetic for you save yourself; and as a responsible man reckon your account."*⁶

Truly this clear expressive logic of the Imam (as) can attract the attention of any courtier and dependent scholar to his evil end.

Concerning the verse under discussion, Ibn 'Abbas says:

"This verse is among the verses which attest that supporting the guilty is a crime and a sin, while helping the believers is obeying the commandment of Allah."

Once one of the scholars was told:

"So and so is the writer of an unjust person, and what he writes is only his accounts. If he takes a salary for this work, his living will be safeguarded, otherwise he and his family will seriously be involved in poverty."

In answer to this question, the scholar only said:

"Have you not heard the word of that righteous man (Moses) who said:

'...My Lord! For the bounty You have bestowed on me, never shall I be a supporter of the guilty.'

Ali (as) in a tradition said:

*"Avoid tyranny because verily a tyrant will never smell the smell of Paradise."*⁷

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Allah, Almighty and Glorious, says:

*'By My Honour (and Glory) I will certainly take vengeance from the unjust in this world and the next; and take vengeance from the one who sees an oppressed and he can help him but he does not help him.'*⁸

The Messenger of Allah (S) says:

*"The Wrath of Allah is violent on the one who is unjust upon whom that finds no helper save Allah."*⁹

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

*"The oppressor, the one who helps him, and he who is content of it all three are the associates of the oppression."*¹⁰

Imam Ali (as) advised both Hassan and Husayn (as), saying:

*"...Be enemy of the oppressor and the helper of the oppressed..."*¹¹

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

*“No oppression is more serious than oppressing the one who finds no helper for it except Allah.”*¹²

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

*“Whoever breaks the oath of allegiance, or establishes an aberration, or hides a knowledge, or occupies one’s property unjustly, or helps an oppressor in his oppression while he knows that he is surely an oppressor, he has certainly refused Islam.”*¹³

The holy Prophet (S) once said:

*“When people see an oppressor (who is committing cruelty) and do not take his hands (do not hinder him of it) it will be nigh that Allah inflicts a punishment upon them.”*¹⁴

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

*“There have been written three words on the fourth door of the doors of Hell: Allah abases the one who disgraces Islam; Allah abases the one who disgraces Ahl-ul-Bayt; Allah abases the one who helps the oppressors in their injustice upon people.”*¹⁵

Imam Amir-ul-Mu’minin Ali (as) said:

*“The most vicious of people is the one who helps (the oppressor) against the oppressed.”*¹⁶

Surah Al-Qasas – Verse 18

فَأَصْبَحَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ خَائِفًا يَتَرَقَّبُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي اسْتَنْصَرَهُ بِالْأَمْسِ يَسْتَصْرِخُهُ قَالَ لَهُ
مُوسَى إِنَّكَ لَغَوِيٌّ مُّبِينٌ

18. “And he was in the city, fearing, awaiting, when behold, the man who had, the day before, sought his help called aloud for his help (again). Moses said to him: ‘Verily you are one erring manifestly’.”

Not any fear is blameworthy. The fear of failing in reaching some good aims and wishes is a praiseworthy fear.

In this verse, and the next verses, we are faced with the fourth scene of this adventurous story.

The news of slaughter of a man from Pharaoh’s people quickly spread in Egypt, and perhaps it was known by the frame of references that the slaughterer was a man from the Children of Israel, and perhaps the name of Moses was also mentioned in it.

This slaughter, of course, was not a simple one. It was counted a spark for a revolution, or a prerequisite for it, and the system of the government of Pharaoh could not simply ignore the event that the slaves from among the Children of Israel might intend to kill their lords.

So, as a fact next to this event, the verse says:

“And he was in the city, fearing, awaiting...”

The Arabic word /taraqqub/ means ‘wait for’; and the term /surax/ means ‘seeking help’.

Suddenly Moses was faced with a scene, as the verse says:

“...when behold, the man who had, the day before, sought his help called aloud for his help (again). Moses said to him: ‘Verily you are one erring manifestly’.”

Moses told the man that he was clearly an ignorant person, because every day he fought with a man and created trouble and did some deeds which were not suitable at that time. Moses then added that the sequences of his yesterday programs were still continued that he began another one.

Surah Al-Qasas – Verse 19

فَلَمَّا أَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَبْطِشَ بِالَّذِي هُوَ عَدُوٌّ لَهُمَا قَالَ يَا مُوسَى أَتُرِيدُ أَنْ تَقْتُلَنِي كَمَا قَتَلْتَ نَفْسًا بِالْأَمْسِ إِنْ تُرِيدُ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ جَبَّارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا تُرِيدُ أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُصْلِحِينَ

19. “So when he intended to assault him who was the enemy of them both, the man said: ‘O Moses! Do you intend to kill me as you killed a person yesterday? You desire nothing but to be a tyrant in the land; and you do not desire to be of the reformers’.”

The Arabic word /batš/ means: ‘anger accompanied with severity and power’.

Criticism upon the friends’ fault should not cause them to leave the fact and do not support their right.

(Though Moses criticized his friend, saying:

‘... You are one erring manifestly’,

yet he decided to support him again.)

The verse says:

“So when he intended to assault him who was the enemy of them both, the man said: ‘O Moses! Do you intend to kill me as you killed a person yesterday? You desire nothing but to be a tyrant in the land; and you do not desire to be of the reformers’.”

This sentence shows that Moses had already expressed his reforming intention both in the castle of Pharaoh and outside of it, and some narrations indicate that he had some conflicts in this field with Pharaoh, too.

That is why the Coptic man says to Moses that every day he wanted to kill a man; what a reformer he was! While if Moses decided to kill this tyrant, too, it would be a step on the way of reform.

However, Moses understood that the yesterday event had been revealed and, in order that he would not face with some more difficulties, he did not follow the matter.

By the way, Ibn Abbas, as well as the majority of the commentators of both sects, have said that the subject of the Qur’anic verb *iqalal* is the Israelite man for whose support Moses had killed the Coptic man the previous day, and who fearfully said that Moses wanted to kill him as he killed the Coptic man.¹⁷

Surah Al-Qasas – Verses 20-21

وَجَاءَ رَجُلٌ مِنْ أَقْصَا الْمَدِينَةِ يَسْعَى قَالَ يَا مُوسَى إِنَّ الْمَلَأَ يَأْتَمِرُونَ بِكَ لِيَقْتُلُوكَ
فَاخْرُجْ إِنِّي لَكَ مِنَ النَّاصِحِينَ

فَخَرَجَ مِنْهَا خَائِفًا يَتَرَقَّبُ قَالَ رَبِّ نَجِّنِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

20. “And there came a man from the furthest part of the city, running. He said: ‘O Moses! Verily the chiefs are consulting to slay you. So depart (from here at once); Verily I am one of Your sincere advisers’.”

21. “So he departed there from, fearing, awaiting, (and) he said: ‘My Lord! Deliver me from the unjust people’.”

The purpose of the Arabic word /rajul/, in this verse, is ‘the Believer of the people of Pharaoh’ that Surah ‘Mu’min’ (Qafir) in the Qur’an has been entitled by his name. He concealed his faith and in the guise of ‘taqiyyah’ (precautionary concealment) helped Moses.

Moses (as) had a penetrating factor and supporter in the court of Pharaoh. Sometimes, giving

information promptly and on time may change the fate of a nation. (If this man did not give the news to Moses (as) and Moses did not go out from the city, then he might be killed by the men of Pharaoh.) This is why that revealing the treacherous plots is incumbent.

However, this holy verse implies that the event was informed to both Pharaoh and his entourage, and they took its repetition as a threat against their own situation. They held a meeting of consultation, and issued the command of Moses' slaughter.

At this time, an unexpected incident saved Moses from a certain death, as the verse says:

“And there came a man from the furthest part of the city, running. He said: ‘O Moses! Verily the chiefs are consulting to slay you. So depart (from here at once); Verily I am one of Your sincere advisers’.”

This man apparently is the same one who later became known as ‘the Believer of the people of Pharaoh’. It is said that his name was Hezqil and he was one of the close relatives of Pharaoh.

Hezqil had such a communication with them that he could take part in that kind of meetings. He was suffering from the crimes of Pharaoh and he was waiting for a godly raise to happen against him so that he could join to it.

His hope was apparently to Moses in whose feature he had observed to be a godly revolutionary man. For this reason, when he felt that he was in danger, he quickly approached him and saved Moses (as) from the grips of that danger.

We will see later that not only in this event but also in some other circumstances he was a support for Moses (as), and he was counted as a keen-eyed person for the Children of Israel in the castle of Pharaoh.

The next holy verse implies that Moses (as) took this information very earnest, and valued the benevolence of that faithful man. According to his advice, Moses went out from the city while he was terrified and every moment he expected an event to happen.

The verse says:

“So he departed there from, fearing, awaiting...”

He concentrated his whole heart to Allah and for solving this great problem he sought His Grace.

The verse continues saying:

“...(and) he said: ‘My Lord! Deliver me from the unjust people’.”

This means: I know that they are unjust and cruel, and I defended the oppressed while I was not the

supporter of the unjust; then, as I repelled the vice of the oppressors from the oppressed so much that I could, You, too, O' Almighty Lord! repel the vice of the oppressors from me.

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1. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 5, P. 249; and Tafsir-us-Safi, and Tafsir-ul-Burhan, following the verse.
 2. Surah under discussion, verse 15
 3. The verse under discussion
 4. 'Uyun-ul-'Akhbar, Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Tafsir-us-Safi, Tafsir-ul-Burhan, Tafsir-i-Manhaj-us-Sadiqin under the verse.
 5. Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 113
 6. Tuhaf-ul-'Uqul, P. 66
 7. Mizan-ul-Hikmah, Vol. 7, P. 33
 8. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, P. 7641
 9. Sunan Ibn-Dawud, Vol. 2, P. 436
 10. Al-Kafi, Vol. 2, P. 333, No. 16
 11. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, Letter No. 47 and sermon No. 3
 12. Bihar, Vol. 72, P. 329
 13. Mustadrak-ul-Wasa'il, Vol. 2, P. 137
 14. Sunan Ibn-Dawud, Vol. 2, P. 436
 15. Safinat-ul-Bihar, Vol. 2, P. 107
 16. Mustadrak-ul-Wasa'il, Vol. 2, P. 437
 17. The commentaries of Qurtabi, Majma'-ul-Bayan, Atyab-ul-Bayan, Safi, Jawami'-ul-Jami', Manhaj-us-Sadiqin, Burhan, and Makhzan-ul-'Irfan, Vol. 9

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