

DAY 22

ANSWER: Valley of Ṭuwā

SŪRAH ṬĀ-ḤĀ: VERSES 9-16

And has there come to you the story of Mūsā? [9]

When he saw a fire and said to his family, “Wait. I have noticed a fire. Perhaps I bring you an ember from it, or find some guidance by the fire.” [10]

So when he came to it, he was called, “O Mūsā, [11]

It is Me, your Lord, so remove your shoes; you are in the sacred valley of Ṭuwā. [12]

And I have chosen you, so listen to what is revealed: [13]

Surely, I AM ALLAH. There is no god but I, so worship Me and establish Ṣalāh for My remembrance. [14]

Surely, the Hour has to come. I would keep it secret so that everyone is given a return for the effort one makes. [15]

So the one who does not believe in it and follows his desires must not make you neglectful of it, otherwise you will perish. [16]

COMMENTARY

(And has there come to you the story of Mūsā?-20:9) In the earlier verses, reference was made to the greatness of the Qur'ān and also to the reverence due to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Thereafter, the story of Sayyidnā Mūsā 'alayhis salām has been related so that the Holy Prophet ﷺ should become fully aware of the trials and tribulations which afflict the prophets in the discharge of their missions, and which were rendered with courage and fortitude by the earlier prophets. This was to prepare the Holy Prophet ﷺ for the great mission which was entrusted to him. There is another verse which conveys the same sense: **“And We narrate to you everything from the events of the messengers with which We strengthen your heart.” (11:120)** It means that these stories are narrated to prepare you (the Holy Prophet ﷺ) and make you strong to undertake the responsibilities of the mission.

The story of Sayyidnā Mūsā 'alayhis salām which is related here begins like this. At Madyan he stayed with Sayyidnā Shu'aib 'alayhis salām with the understanding that he would serve the latter for a period of eight or ten years. According to Tafsīr Al-Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ, after the expiry of this period he sought the permission of Sayyidnā Shu'aib 'alayhis salām to proceed to Egypt to see his mother and sister. He had fled earlier from Egypt fearing capture or death by the soldiers of the Pharaoh but this danger had now passed through the lapse of so many years. Sayyidnā Shu'aib 'alayhis salām willingly gave the permission and sent him away, with his wife (who was the latter's daughter). He also gave him some money and a few articles which they might use during their journey. Since he was apprehensive of the hostility of some of the rulers in Syria, he adopted a less frequented route. It was winter season and his pregnant wife was very close to confinement. The route which he had taken was unfamiliar to him and he lost his bearings. He

came out to the west, i.e. the right side of the mount of Ṭūr. It was a dark and cold night and to add to the misery, his wife began to experience birth pangs. He tried to strike fire with flint but did not succeed. In this state of utter confusion he saw light on the Ṭūr mountain which, in fact, was the Nūr (the light symbolizing the truth). So he said to his family, *"I have noticed fire. I am going there to bring for you a live coal and I may also find someone who could tell me the way to Egypt."* The presence of his wife on the journey is well established. According to some traditions there was a servant with him who is also addressed. Others say that there were some other companions also who were separated when they lost their way. (Al-Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ)

(So when he came to it -20:11): means that he approached the fire which he had seen from a distance. Musnad by Aḥmad, on the authority of Wahb Ibn Munabbih raḥimahullāh reports that when Sayyidnā Mūsā ‘alayhis salām drew near the fire he saw a very strange scene. A fire was blazing on a green tree without scorching even a leaf or a branch. On the other hand the flame added manifold to the beauty and the freshness of the tree. He stood there quite a while watching this strange sight waiting for a chance to pick up a piece of burning wood. At last he collected some dry grass and tried to light it but as soon as he pushed the grass towards the fire, it retracted. It is also related that the fire advanced towards him and he drew back in consternation. Consequently he was unable to collect any fire. And as he stood, not knowing what to do, a mysterious voice called him. This happened in a plain called Ṭuwā which was to his right side and at the foot of this mountain.

(He was called, "O Mūsā, it is Me, your Lord, remove your shoes - 20:11,12). It is related in Al-Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ, Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī and other books that the voice which Sayyidnā Mūsā ‘alayhis salām heard appeared to come from all directions and not from any particular direction. At the same time the manner in which the voice reached his perception was most extraordinary, because it was heard not only through his ears but by the entire body. This, indeed, was a miracle! What the voice said was that the light that he saw was not fire but a particular kind of divine manifestation. And the voice said, "Surely I am your Lord." The question arises: how did Sayyidnā Mūsā ‘alayhis salām know that it was the voice of Allah Ta'ālā? The answer is that Allah Ta'ālā had created in his heart the conviction that the voice which he heard was really the voice of Allah Ta'ālā. Then there was the circumstance that the fire, instead of burning the tree added to its beauty and luster. Also the manner in which the voice was perceived by all the parts of his body and not only by his ears, were all factors which left no doubt in his mind that the voice he heard was really the voice of Allah Ta'ālā.

Sayyidnā Mūsā ‘alayhis salām learned the words of Allah directly

It is mentioned in a report of Wahb mentioned in Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī on the authority of Musnad by Aḥmad that when the mysterious voice called him *"O Mūsā!"*, he replied, *"I hear the voice O Allah! But I do not know from where it comes. Where are you, O Allah?"* And Allah Ta'ālā said, *"I am above you in front of*

you, to your right and your left. Indeed I am all around you.” Then Sayyidnā Mūsā ‘alayhis salām said, “O Allah, do I hear these words from you directly or through an angel sent by You?” And Allah Ta’ālā said, “I myself am speaking to you.” According to Rūḥ ul-Ma’ānī this proves that Sayyidnā Mūsā ‘alayhis salām heard this *kalam lafẓī* (spoken words) directly from Allah Ta’ālā. There is a sect among the Sunnis who believe that *kalam lafẓī* (spoken words) can also be heard.

To take off shoes at a sacred place is an act of respect

(Remove your shoes - 20:12). The command to take off shoes was given because it was a sacred place and it was necessary to take off shoes to show it proper respect. Another reason for this command may be that since shoes are made from the hides of dead animals, they should be removed when entering upon sacred places. Sayyidnā ‘Alī raḍī‘allāhu ‘anhu, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī raḥimahullāh and Ibn Juraij raḥimahullāh have supported the first explanation and reasoned that the real purpose in commanding Sayyidnā Mūsā ‘alayhis salām to remove his shoes was that the soles of his feet should come into contact with the soil of this hallowed place and be blessed thereby. Others have said that by this command Sayyidnā Mūsā ‘alayhis salām was required to show humility and in earlier times devout and pious believers used to take off their shoes when circumambulating around the Holy Ka’bah.

There is a Ḥadīth that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ once saw Bashīr Ibn Khaṣaṣia walking through the graves with his shoes on, said: “When you pass by a place which needs to be respected, take off your shoes.”

All the jurists are unanimous that if the shoes are clean they may be worn when offering prayers and it is established by authentic reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his companions often wore clean shoes when saying prayers. But their common practice appears to be of removing the shoes when saying prayers, because it is closer to humility.

(You are in the sacred valley of Ṭuwā - 20:12): Allah, in his Divine Wisdom, has granted special status to some selected places such as Baitullāh (the Holy Ka’bah), the Aqṣā Mosque, Masjid Nabawī etc. Wādī Ṭuwā (the valley of Ṭuwā) is also one such sacred place and is situated at the foot of the mount of Ṭūr.

How to conduct oneself when the Qur’ān is being recited

(So listen to what is revealed - 20:13). Sayyidnā Wahb Ibn Munabbih has said that the correct behavior while listening to the recitation of the Qur’ān is, that one sits still, refrains from any unnecessary movement in a way that no organ of his body is involved in any other work, keeps eyes down - concentrates the mind towards understanding its meaning. The person who listens to the Holy Qur’ān in this respectful manner is rewarded by Allah Ta’ālā with a better understanding of His word.

DAY 22

(Surely I AM ALLAH. There is no god but I, so worship Me and establish Ṣalāh for My remembrance - 20:14): with these words Allah Ta'ālā bestowed upon Sayyidnā Mūsā 'alayhis salām a knowledge of all the basic principles of the true Faith, namely the Oneness of Allah Ta'ālā, the prophethood and the Hereafter. **(So listen to what is revealed)** refers to prophethood. **"worship Me alone and no one else"**. This points to the Oneness of Allah Ta'ālā. **(Surely, the Hour has to come)** points to the inevitability of the Hereafter. Although the word **(worship Me)** encompasses the injunction for prayers also yet it has been mentioned separately to stress its special merit relative to the other forms of worship. It is the pillar of the Faith and its neglect is the mark of the infidels.

(Establish Ṣalāh for My remembrance - 20:14): means that the essence of prayer is the remembrance of Allah Ta'ālā and that the Ṣalāh, from beginning to end is nothing but remembering Allah - with the tongue, the heart and the other organs of the body. Therefore, one should not neglect to remember Allah Ta'ālā while praying. This sentence also means that if a person omits to say his prayers at the appointed time due to over-sleeping or forgetfulness while engrossed in some other task, he should say his prayers as soon as he wakes up from sleep or becomes aware of his lapse. This is according to Ḥadīth.

(I would keep it secret - 20:15): Allah Ta'ālā says that He wishes to keep the circumstances relating to the Day of Judgement hidden from all created things including prophets and angels. The word **(I would)** gives a subtle hint that it is only to induce people to good deeds that the coming of the Day of Judgment has been disclosed, otherwise even this fact would have been concealed. **(So that everyone is given a return for the effort one makes - 20:15).** If this phrase is taken to be linked with the word **(has to come)** then it would mean that this world is not a place of requital. Here a person does not receive recompense according to his merits and even if he receives some reward in this world it is just a token which does not constitute the full recompense of his deeds. It is, therefore, essential that there should be a time when everybody would receive his due reward.

Another possibility about the construction of this phrase is that it is taken to be linked with the words **(I would keep it secret - 20:15)**. In this case, it would mean that the philosophy in not revealing the time of death and the Day of Judgment is that people should continue in their endeavours and should not cease to strive in the belief that their own death or the Day of Judgment are still far away in the future. (Rūḥ)

(must not make you neglectful of it -20:16) Here Sayyidnā Mūsā 'alayhis salām is cautioned by Allah Ta'ālā lest he should allow himself to be led away by the infidels and become negligent about the Day of Judgment because that would be the cause of his ruination. It is clear that a Prophet and a Messenger who is impeccable cannot commit such a lapse but the fact that such a warning has been addressed to him is meant to warn his followers as well as mankind at large to be cautious in the matter.

This concludes the commentary for Day 22.