

## Did Abu Bakr Weep In The Cave?

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إِلَّا تَنْصُرُوهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ اللَّهُ إِذْ أَخْرَجَهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ثَانِيَ اثْنَيْنِ إِذْ هُمَا فِي الْغَارِ إِذْ يَقُولُ  
لِصَاحِبِهِ لَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَيَّدَهُ بِجُنُودٍ لَّمْ تَرَوْهَا وَجَعَلَ كَلِمَةَ الَّذِينَ  
كَفَرُوا السُّفْلَى ۗ وَكَلِمَةَ اللَّهِ هِيَ الْعُلْيَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ (٩:٤٠)

“[It does not matter] if you [believers] do not support him, for Allah did in fact support him when the disbelievers drove him out [of Mecca] and he was only one of two. While they both were in the cave, he reassured his companion, ‘Do not worry; Allah is certainly with us.’ So Allah sent down His serenity upon the Prophet, supported him with forces you [believers] did not see, and made the word of the disbelievers lowest, while the Word of Allah is supreme. And Allah is Almighty, All-Wise.” (9:40)

The verse is telling the companion of the Prophet “لا تحزن” (“do not grieve”). The question naturally arises – what did he do to show his (*huzn*) حزن that the Qur'an had to stop him?

Let us look at some other verses of the Qur'an where the word *huzn* has been used and its context:

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمِّ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَرْضِعِيهِ ۖ فَإِذَا خِفْتِ عَلَيْهِ فَأَلْقِيهِ فِي الْيَمِّ وَلَا تَخَافِي وَلَا تَحْزَنِي ۗ إِنَّا رَادُّوهُ إِلَيْكَ وَجَاعِلُوهُ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ (٢٨:٠٧)

“We inspired the mother of Moses: ‘Nurse him, but when you fear for him, put him then into the river, and do not fear or grieve. We will certainly return him to you, and make him one of the messengers.’” (28:07)

Here the word *khawf* (fear) has been used twice and then *tahzani* (for female) has been used. What is the difference? *khawf* is for something that might happen, an impending danger, while *huzn* is for something that has happened.

Obviously, the mother of Hazrat Musa knew that the Pharaoh was killing all newborn boys among the Bani Israel. She had given birth to the child in secret and she was fearing that she and the baby would be discovered and killed. That was the first *khawf*. Then she was told to let the baby float in the river. She was afraid that the baby may be lost or drowned. That was the second *khawf*. Then she saw that she was parting from her newborn, it was the impending parting and the resulting grief of that parting against which she was being consoled and promised that her son was destined for great things and she would be eventually reunited with him.

The entire episode is a typical example of a new mother having to part from her newborn. Everything in it is a natural human reaction to the circumstances.

Now look at the story of Hazrat Musa when he is proceeding towards the Pharaoh:

وَأَن أَلْقِ عَصَاكَ فَلَمَّا رَآهَا تُهَنِّئُ كَانَتْهَا جَانٌّ وَلَّى مُدْبِرًا وَلَمْ يُعَقِّبْ يَا مُوسَى أَقْبِلْ وَلَا تَخَفْ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الْآمِنِينَ (٢٨:٣١)

And: 'Throw down your staff!' And when he saw it wriggling as if it were a snake, he turned his back [to flee], without looking back. 'Moses! Come forward, and do not be afraid. Indeed you are safe.' (28:31)

Here the word *khawf* is being used for the immediate reaction of Hazrat Musa when his staff turned into a moving snake, Once again, he was startled and it was a natural reaction.

OK, now back to the original discussion. What did happen in the cave and what was the reaction of Abu Bakr to whatever happened in the cave while the Prophet was nearby, which caused Allah to command Abu Bakr to stop from "grieving"?

How did he show his grief? That is the question that one has to answer. My answer is that in a moment of nervousness he began weeping.

Now, was it a good weeping or a bad weeping? The Qur'an again brings a reply to that too. Had it been good weeping the holy Qur'an would have praised him for that. That would be exactly like in the case of Hazrat Yaqoub:

وَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا أَسْفَىٰ عَلَىٰ يُوسُفَ وَأَبْيَضَّتْ عَيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْحُزَنِ فَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ (١٢:٨٤)

“He turned away from them, lamenting, ‘Alas, poor Joseph!’ And his eyes turned white out of the grief he suppressed.” (12:84)

Now, eyes do not become white just by having grief in the heart. They would become white because of excessive weeping. And that is exactly what is meant here by *huzn*. Hazrat Yaqoub had been weeping excessively missing Yusuf. But the holy Qur'an does not stop Hazrat Yaqoub from weeping – instead he is being praised with the epithet of “*kadheem*”.

That says that it was a good weeping otherwise Allah had said “لا تحزن”.

That clearly states that Abu Bakr was weeping in the cave while the Prophet was with him; and Allah commanded Abu Bakr to stop weeping. That proves that it was a bad weeping. Had it been a good weeping, Allah may have praised him for that action.

This verse (9:40) therefore must be read as a reprimand for Abu Bakr rather than as a *fadila* (praise).

It is so sad to see a senior companion weeping in cowardice while the Prophet of Allah is beside him, and the Prophet had to reassure him of Allah's company with them. If Abu Bakr really loved the Prophet he should have welcomed the opportunity to sacrifice his life for the Prophet.

Imam Ali's great *fadila* at the same time is unmatched in that he decided to sleep in the Prophet's bed knowing full well that blood-thirsty enemies were surrounding the house waiting for the right moment to pounce upon him.

Allah revealed the following verse in praise of Imam Ali at that moment:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ (٢:٢٠٧)



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## Citations

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