

Tawriya

Question 11

What is the meaning of the last paragraph of as-Sayid ar-Radi quoted before?

He has eluded here to the best way of *taqiyyah*, which is called *tawriyah*.

Sometimes a sentence or phrase may be used in such a way that the hearer takes it to conform with his own ideas, while the speaker takes it to mean a quite different thing. A good example of *tawriyah* is found in a talk of the "believer from the family of Pharaoh".

Islamic traditions say that he was a cousin of Pharaoh. When his partiality towards Prophet Musa (as) became known, some courtiers of Pharaoh told him that his cousin was a secret follower of Musa and did not believe in divinity of Pharaoh.

Pharaoh was naturally furious, and asked his cousin to explain it. The court was full.

"The believer from the family of Pharaoh" asked them:

The Believer: Tell me who is your Lord?

Courtiers: Pharaoh.

The Believer: Who is your Creator?

Courtiers: Pharaoh.

The Believer: Who is your sustainer, who guarantees your livelihood and removes your troubles?

Courtiers: Pharaoh.

Then the Believer declared: "O King! I keep you and all these present as my witness that their Lord is my Lord, and their Sustainer is my Sustainer; and the One , who looks after their lives and livelihood is the One who looks after my life and livelihood. I have no Lord or Creator except their Lord, Creator and Sustainer..."

Pharaoh's anxiety vanished and the backbiters were severely tortured and put to death. [1](#)

But, in spite of the joy of Pharaoh on this declaration, the real intention of "The Believer" is quite clear.

Also two examples from New Testament come here to mind.

Tawriyah of Jesus Christ

St. Matthews reports,

Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him (Jesus) in his talk.

And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying: Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men.

Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny.

And he saith unto them, whose is this image and superscription?

They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left him, and went their way.[2](#)

Taqiyyah of St. Paul

St. Paul was brought before a gathering of the Jews who wanted to punish him for his faith in Christianity. Now read the accounts from the `Acts`:

But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; to the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between . the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided.

For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisee, confess both.

And there arose a great cry: and the Scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove,,saying, We find no evil in this man.[3](#)

Many examples of this kind of *taqiyyah* could be quoted from Shi'a sources. But, as many of them entail explanations of Arabic grammar, I prefer not to write them here. However, one is given here to complete this topic.

A preacher was asked during his sermon: "Who was the supreme most after the Holy Prophet? Abu

Bakr or 'Ali?" He replied:

It may be interpreted as "He whose daughter was in his (i.e., Prophet's) house." i.e.; Abu Bakr.

And may as easily mean "He that his (Prophet's) daughter was in his house". i.e. 'Ali.

1. at-Tabrasi, al-Ihtijaj, Beirut, 1403/1983, vol. 2, pp. 3711-371.

2. Matthew, 22:15-22

3. Acts, 23:6-9

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