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<u>Home</u> > <u>Kamaaluddin wa Tamaamun Ni'ma Vol. 1</u> > Chapter 5: Regarding the Occultation of Prophet Yusuf

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Chapter 5: Regarding the Occultation (Ghaibat) of Prophet Yusuf (a.s.)

The period of the occultation of Prophet Yusuf (a.s.) was that of twenty years. During this time he never applied oil to his hair, did not use Kohl and perfume and didn't touch a woman till the time the Almighty Allah once more gathered the scattered family of Yaqoob and brought together Yusuf, his brothers, his father and maternal aunt. Of these twenty years he was in the well for three days and in the prison for some years. And for the remaining years he was the ruler. He was in Egypt while Yaqoob (a.s.) was in Palestine and the distance between them was only nine days of travel.

He passed through various circumstances during the period of his occultation. Sometimes his brothers united to eliminate him and later changed the plan and decided to throw him down the well. Then they sold him as a slave for a minor sum of money. After that he was involved in the deceit and plot of the wife of the Egyptian king. Then he was forced to live in imprisonment for some years. After that he became the ruler of Egypt and in this way the Almighty Allah reunited his family and fulfilled the vision he had seen.

1 – Narrated to us Muhammad bin Ali Majilaway (r.a.) that: Narrated to us Muhammad bin Yahya al–Attar Husain bin Hasan bin Aban, from Muhammad bin Uramiya from Ahmad bin Hasan al–Muthanna from Hasan al–Wasiti from Hisham bin Saalim from Abi Abdullah (a.s.) that he said:

"A Bedouin came to Prophet Yusuf (a.s.) to purchase rations from him and the latter sold it. When the transaction was over Prophet Yusuf (a.s.) asked, "Where do you live?" He said, "At such and such place." The narrator says: Yusuf said: So you halt at such and such desert and call out: O Yaqoob! O Yaqoob! And a tall and handsome man will come to you. You tell him that you met a person in Egypt who has conveyed salutations to him. He would say: This trust of yours will not be wasted with Allah, the Mighty and Sublime. The narrator says: Thus that Bedouin reached to the place.

He told his servants to take care of his camel. Then he began to call out: O Yaqoob! O Yaqoob! A tall

and handsome man emerged walking with the support of a wall. The Bedouin asked if he was Yaqoob. When he replied in the positive he conveyed to him all that Prophet Yusuf (a.s.) had said. Yaqoob (a.s.) fell down in a swoon and when he regained consciousness he said, "O Bedouin, do you have wish from Allah?"

The man said, "I am an affluent person and my wife is the daughter of my paternal uncle. But I don't have a son from her. I request you to pray that I may have a son. The narrator says that Yaqoob (a.s.) performed ablution, prayed two units of prayer and then supplicated to Allah, the Mighty and Sublime. This man's wife gave birth to twins, four times.

Thus Yaqoob (a.s.) knew that Yusuf was alive and comfortable and that the Almighty Allah will bring him out after his occultation. He used to say the same thing to his sons:

I know from Allah what you do not know?1

His family members and relatives used to criticize him for remembering Yusuf (a.s.). Till the time he perceived the fragrance of Yusuf (a.s.) he said:

Most surely I perceive the fragrance of Yusuf, unless you pronounce me to be weak in judgment. They said: By Allah, you are most surely in your old error. So when the bearer of good news came he cast it on his face, so forthwith he regained his sight. He said: Did I not say to you that I know from Allah what you do not know?2

2 – Narrated to us Muhammad bin Ali Majilaway (r.a.) that: Narrated to us Muhammad bin Yahya al–Attar who said: Narrated to us Husain bin Hasan bin Aban, from Muhammad bin Uramiya from Muhammad bin Ismail bin Bazee from Ismail Sarraj from Bashir bin Ja'far from Mufaddal – (perhaps) al–Jofi – from Abi Abdullah (a.s.) that he said:

"Do you know what the garment of Yusuf was? 'No,' replied I. He said, "When fire was lit for (burning) Ibrahim (a.s.) Jibraeel brought a garment of Paradise for him and dressed him in it. That garment protected him from heat and cold and when his death approached, he made it into an arm band and tied it to Ishaq; Ishaq in turn tied it to Yaqoob and when Yusuf was born Yaqoob tied it on him.

And it was tied to his arm till those circumstances befell him. Thus when Yusuf removed it from the arm band in Egypt, Yaqoob perceived its fragrance and it is about the same thing that Allah quotes him

saying:

"Most surely I perceive the fragrance of Yusuf, unless you pronounce me to be weak in judgment."3

It is the same garment that had come down from Paradise."

I said: May I be sacrificed on you, whom did this garment reach after him? He replied, "To the one deserving of it. And the garment is with our Qaim, when he would reappear. Then he said: All knowledge or things inherited by every prophet have reached to [the progeny of] Muhammad (S)."

It is narrated that when the Qaim reappears he will reappear wearing the shirt of Yusuf (a.s.) and will also have the staff of Musa (a.s.) and the ring of Prophet Sulaiman (a.s.).

And what proves that Yaqoob (a.s.) was aware that Yusuf was alive and had disappeared as a divine test is that when the other sons returned in the evening weeping and wailing he asked them, "Why are you crying and wailing? And why don't I see my dear Yusuf among you?

They said: O our father! surely we went off racing and left Yusuf by our goods, so the wolf devoured him, and you will not believe us though we are truthful. 4

This is his shirt that we have brought back for you. Yaqoob (a.s.) told them to throw the shirt to him and they handed it over to Yaqoob (a.s.). He rubbed it on his face and immediately became unconscious. After regaining consciousness he told his sons, "O my sons, do you think that the wolf has eaten up my dear Yusuf?" When they replied in the positive he said, "Then tell me why I cannot perceive the smell of Yusuf's flesh? And why do I find his shirt undamaged? Even if you grant that the shirt is open from below, did the wolf not need to tear it in order to reach to the shoulders and neck of Yusuf?

It is only an allegation on the wolf and indeed my son is oppressed. Nay, your souls have made the matter light for you, but patience is good and Allah is He Whose help is sought for against what you describe. That night Yaqoob (a.s.) kept away from them and he did not speak to them. He began to recite an elegy for Yusuf (a.s.) and said again and again: O my dear Yusuf whom I preferred over all my sons; he has been taken away from me! O my dear Yusuf! Of all my children I had hope only in him.

And he is snatched from me. O my dear Yusuf! I used to make him sleep on my right and left arm. He is taken away from me. O my dear Yusuf! By whom I filled the emptiness of my loneliness. He is taken

away from me. O my dear Yusuf! On whom have you left me or where shall I search for you? O my dear Yusuf! If only I had been with you, so that I could have also borne what you had to bear.

O my dear Yusuf! If only I had known on which mountain they have abandoned you or in which river they have thrown you. O my dear Yusuf! If only I had been with you and had suffered the same calamities that you had to suffer."

Among the points proving that Yaqoob (a.s.) was aware that Yusuf (a.s.) was alive and in occultation is that he said:

... maybe Allah will bring them all together to me...5

And he said:

O my sons! Go and inquire respecting Yusuf and his brother, and despair not of Allah's mercy; surely none despairs of Allah's mercy except the unbelieving people.6

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) said: Prophet Yaqoob (a.s.) asked the Angel of death: Tell me whether you capture the souls together or you capture each of them separately? He replied: Separately. Then Yaqoob (a.s.) asked: Is the soul of Yusuf there among the souls that you have captured? "No," said the angel. Thus after this Yaqoob (a.s.) told his sons, "O my sons, go out and search for Yusuf and his brother.'

Thus the condition of the people of our time who know about the Master of the Time living in concealment and those who have his recognition is the same as the condition of Yaqoob (a.s.) regarding Prophet Yusuf and his concealment. And those who are ignorant and foolish, they behave in the same way as did the family members and relatives of Yaqoob (a.s.). They were so ignorant about Yusuf and his occultation that they used to tell their father: "By Allah, you are most surely in your old error."

And the saying of Yaqoob when the bringer of good news rubbed the shirt of Yusuf on his face and he regained his eyesight that: "Did I not say to you that I know from Allah what you do not know?" This proves that he knew that Yusuf was alive and that he had to go into occultation by way of test.

3 - Narrated to us my father; and Muhammad bin Hasan - may Allah be pleased with them - they said: Narrated to us Abdullah bin Ja'far al-Himyari from Ahmad bin Hilal Isa from Abdur Rahman bin Abi Najran from Fadala bin Ayyub from Sadeer who said: I heard Aba Abdullah (a.s.) say: "The Qaim is also having a similarity to Prophet Yusuf (a.s.)." The narrator says: I said: Perhaps you want to tell us about him or his occultation. He told me: "In this Ummah, the opponents who resemble swine, don't oppose that Yusuf's brothers were among the children of prophets but they sold away Yusuf while all of them were his brothers and he was also a brother to them, yet when they met they could not recognize him till Yusuf introduced himself and said: "I am Yusuf and this is my brother."

Thus how can this Ummah deny if the Almighty Allah wants to keep His Proof concealed from them in a period of time? And one day Yusuf became the king of Egypt and the distance between him and his father was only of 18 days' travel. When Allah, the Blessed and the High wanted that his status and value be recognized, by Allah, the people of his house covered this distance in nine days after getting the glad news. Thus how can this Ummah deny that Allah, the Mighty and Sublime can do with His Proof the same as what He had done with Yusuf? His Proof should walk among them, pass by them in the markets and sit among them and they could not recognize him. Until Allah, the Mighty and Sublime permits the Divine Proof to introduce himself as He had permitted Yusuf (a.s.) to do so when he said:

Do you know how you treated Yusuf and his brother when you were ignorant? They said: Are you indeed Yusuf? He said: I am Yusuf and this is my brother.7

- 1. Surah Yusuf 12:96
- 2. Surah Yusuf 12:94-96
- 3. Surah Yusuf 12:94
- 4. Surah Yusuf 12:17
- 5. Surah Yusuf 12:83
- 6. Surah Yusuf 12:87
- 7. Surah Yusuf 12:89-90

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