

Section 2: Yusuf Suffers the Treatment of His Brothers

Surah Yusuf – Verse 7

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي يُوسُفَ وَإِخْوَتِهِ آيَاتٌ لِّلسَّائِلِينَ

7. “Certainly there are signs (of Allah’s sovereignty) in (the story of) Yusuf and his brothers for the inquirers.”

There are numerous signs of Allah’s omnipotence at work in the life history of Hadrat Yusuf, each of which is an advice and a didactic lesson for the seeker of Truth. Among these Signs we can cite:

1. Hadrat Yusuf’s very sophisticated dream.
2. The science of the interpretation of dreams.
3. Ya’qub’s awareness of the future of his son.
4. Yusuf’s remaining safe at the bottom of the well.
5. Becoming blind and then regaining sight.
6. From being abandoned at the bottom of a well and becoming high, exalted.
7. Being put in prison and finally to acceding power and government.
8. Being cleared off all accusations and hearing accusations of corruption.
9. Parting and reunion.

10. Servitude and accession to power.

11. Choosing prison over being polluted with sin.

12. Having the upper hand yet impelled to forgive wrong done to oneself.

Along with the above signs, there are certain questions which can be raised, the answers to which illustrate the way to a decent life:

How does man's envy lead him to fratricide?

How can ten individuals engage in a conspiracy for treason?

How does Yusuf spare punishing his criminal brothers while having the upper hand?

How can man prefer prison to pollution by sin and the pleasures of committing sin, when thinking of Allah?

This Surah was revealed when the sublime Prophet (S) was economically and socially besieged and this story provided great comfort for him.

It meant that if some of his relatives did not believe and support him, he should not have worried for the brothers of Yusuf had thrown him down a well. The most important verses of this Surah are those which deal with the domination of the Divine power over man-made conspiracies.

They threw Yusuf into the well in order to become dearer to their father but they became hated. Doors were closed in order to pollute him with sin, but his chastity and innocence were well demonstrated in this trying circumstance.

Neither did the well, servitude, prison, palace life, or any of these conspiracies exert the slightest influence on Allah's Will.

At any rate, it is from here that the entanglement of the brothers with Yusuf first starts, and didactic lessons can be gleaned from the story.

It says:

“Certainly there are signs (of Allah's sovereignty) in (the story of) Yusuf and his brothers for the inquirers.”

What lesson might be more instructive than this? One finds a group of powerful individuals with well calculated strategies, through envy trying their utmost to kill a seemingly weak person.

In the end all their plans turn against them making it possible for him to be elevated to a position of influence, governing a vast territory with everyone bowing before him instead! This shows that when

Allah's will is at work, His plans may be implemented by even the opponents of those plans.

This denotes that a truly faithful believer is never left alone and even if the whole world were to unite for his extermination, he would not even suffer the slightest injury if the will of Allah does not desire such.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 8

إِذْ قَالُوا لِيُوسُفُ وَأَخُوهُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْنَا مِمَّا وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّ أَبَانَا لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ

8. “When they said: ‘Verily, Yusuf and his brother (Benjamin) are dearer to our father than we, while we are a (strong) group. Verily, our father is in manifest error’.”

Hadrat Ya‘qub had 12 sons, two of whom (Yusuf and Benjamin) were of the same mother and the rest from another mother. Ya‘qub’s interest in Yusuf (because of his young age or because of his virtues) made his brothers envy him.

They not only envied him but also by saying: /wa nahnu ‘usbatun/ **“while we are a (strong) group”** made it clear that they were arrogant in spirit and, because of this, they accused their father of being mistaken and deviated in his focus of affection.

The verse says:

“When they said: ‘Verily, Yusuf and his brother (Benjamin) are dearer to our father than we, while we are a (strong) group. ...”

Many of those who are at comparatively lower rungs of position and rank in society try to degrade those who rank higher in society in order to compensate for their own shortcomings.

There are differences between the words, discrimination and differentiation, the former implies attaching importance to someone over others for no justified reason and the latter refers to distinguishing on the basis of one's abilities and conditions.

For example, a physician's prescriptions or a teacher's marks differ since they must vary in accordance with the rules which are not of an oppressive nature. However, Yusuf's brothers considered Ya‘qub's love as one that had no good reason.

Explanations

1. If the children feel that they are discriminated against, their envy will be aroused.

2. Discrimination among one's children will decrease their love towards their parents
3. The exercise of power does not engender love.
4. Envy crossed the frontiers of fatherhood and prophecy hence the brothers attributed deviation and injustice to their father who was, at the same time, their prophet.

The above verse says:

"... Verily, our father is in manifest error'."

5. To be loved is an inherent need of man. Lack of love and affection of others is one of the greatest sufferings of man.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 9

اَقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ أَوْ اطْرَحُوهُ أَرْضًا يَخْلُ لَكُمْ وَجْهُ أَبِيكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ قَوْمًا صَالِحِينَ

9. "Slay you Yusuf, or cast him out to some (far) land, (so that) your father's attention may be given on you (exclusively), and you may be after that (by repentance) a righteous people."

With respect to Divine favors, man has four options: to be jealous, to be stingy, to be self – sacrificing, and to be envious of others.

If he enjoys a blessing and is happy that others do not enjoy it as well, this is a case of stingy, this is also the case if he does not enjoy a blessing and is glad that others do not enjoy it as well which is jealousy.

If he lets others benefit from a blessing he enjoys and is not concerned whether he would be deprived of it in the process, this is a case of self-sacrifice. If he thinks that others enjoy a blessing and he doesn't and he wishes that he enjoys that blessing too, this is envy.

Imam Baqir (as) said:

*"I sometimes express my affection towards some of my children, seating them on my lap even though they do not merit all that love, so that they do not become envious of my other children, and the adventures of Yusuf be repeated once more."*¹

The feeling of envy, however, eventually led the brothers to conspire with each other. They proposed two schemes, either to kill Yusuf or to send him off to a far distant land so that the love and attention of

their father would be evenly distributed among them.

The verse says:

“Slay you Yusuf, or cast him out to some (far) land, (so that) your father’s attention may be given on you (exclusively)...”

It is true that they might have trouble with their consciences having condescended to committing such a crime against their brother. However, they thought that it might be possible to compensate for this sin and repent afterwards.

The holy verse continues saying:

“...and you may be after that (by repentance) a righteous people.”

This sentence reveals the fact that they had feelings of guilt for having committed such a barbarous act and were afraid of Allah at the bottom of their hearts.

However, the important problem in question lies in the fact that discussing repentance before the commission of a sin is in actual fact a satanic strategy to cheat one’s own conscience and keep a channel open with Allah, hence, the person in question is not really repenting and by no means it is a reason for his regret.

Explanations

1. Dangerous thoughts lead man to perform dangerous acts and jealousy leads man to such great sin that he will even be prepared to commit fratricide.
2. Man seeks popularity and affection, the lack of which leads to the most dangerous kinds of behaviors and deviations.
3. Although the holy Qur’an makes the acquisition of popularity and affection upon having faith and righteous conduct, Satan makes it the reward for killing one’s brothers.
4. The jealous person thinks that if others are killed or removed, all the blessings will be given to him.
5. Satan, by holding out the probable possibility of future repentance, opens up the gate for man to commit sin in the present.
6. Being knowledgeable and being aware does not always imply that one has distanced him from deviation.

Despite the fact that Yusuf’s brothers knew and believed that killing their brother was an evil act it did not stop them from committing it.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 10

قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِنْهُمْ لَا تَقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ وَأَلْقُوهُ فِي غَيَابَتِ الْجُبِّ يَلْتَقِطُهَا بَعْضُ السَّيَّارَةِ إِن كُنْتُمْ فَاعِلِينَ

10. “Said a speaker among them: ‘Do not slay Yusuf, and if you must do it, throw him into the bottom of the well (so that) some caravan (of travelers) may pick him up’.”

The Arabic term /jubb/ means a kind of well in which stones have not been used in its construction. The word /qayabat/ also refers to a platform on the wall of a well near the water which cannot be seen from above the wall.

Among his brothers, there was one who was more intelligent and had a conscience that was superior to that of the others. He opposed the conspiracy to murder Yusuf and the plan to send him into exile to a far distant land, as there was the fear that he might die in the process.

He offered another contingency plan suggesting that they should not kill Yusuf, but put him down a well in such a way as to leave him in safety, which would enable travelers, passing by in their caravans to pick him up and take him with them, thus putting a distance between him and themselves and from the eyes of their father.

The verse says:

“Said a speaker among them: ‘Do not slay Yusuf, and if you must do it, throw him into the bottom of the well (so that) some caravan (of travelers) may pick him up’.”

Another important lesson drawn from this story is how a man’s jealousy can provide him with ways of entangling himself in very serious problems, and how, if this outrageous feeling is not controlled, it would involve not only oneself but others as well.

It is for this very reason that in Islamic traditions various ways and techniques have been suggested to fight this abhorrent evil. Here are some examples:

The Prophet (S) has been quoted who said:

“Allah dissuaded Musa Ibn Imran from being jealous, saying to him: ‘The jealous person is furious about the blessings I have bestowed upon My servants and hinders the distribution of those shares which I have allocated for My servants. He who does so does not belong to Me nor do I belong to him’.”

And a tradition quoted from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

“The faithful may be envious but are never jealous. However, a hypocrite exhibits his jealousy but does not envy.”

This part of the story teaches us that parents should be extraordinarily vigilant as to how they express affection towards their children, for it sometimes happens that a simple expression of love towards one child can create such an inferiority complex in another that it would incite him to engage in all kinds of ill conduct.

The other child could feel so intensively rejected that he would be ready to assassinate his brother's character, not recognizing any kind of boundary.

Even if he is not in a position to show the appropriate reaction, he would keep all his troubles to himself, blaming himself inwardly, which can contribute to the occurrence of mental problems.

Some Traditions Concerning Jealousy

1) The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“Do not be jealous, do not perform acts of hostility, do not back-bite or gossip, stay as Allah's sheep, and act in a brotherly manner towards each other.” 2

2) Also, he (S) said:

“The only thing which I am most afraid of about my Ummah is the multiplication of wealth, for people will become jealous and consequently kill each other.” 3

3) The holy Prophet (S) told his companions one day:

“Beware that the disease of the former nations has afflicted you. That disease is jealousy which does not wipe out the hair, but it can make one lose his religion.” 4

4) Ali (as) said:

“A jealous person is always in discomfort and pain, even though his body may be healthy.” 5

5) Ali (as) also said:

“Remove jealousy from your heart for jealousy is an exhausting and exasperating disease.” 6

6) Amir ul Mu'minin Ali (as) said:

“Jealousy is the worst of diseases.” 7

7) Ali (as) said:

“Stop being jealous and stop bearing grudges for they disrupt one’s religion and bring man to destruction”.

8) Imam Sadiq (as) said:

*“Be in awe of Allah and do not feel jealous of one another.”*⁸

9) Ali (as) said:

*“Jealousy makes one’s life bitter and dark.”*⁹

10) Amir ul Mu’minin Ali (as) in a Tradition said:

*“Jealousy is a cureless disease which will not disappear except with the annihilation of the jealous person or when the one of whom others are jealous has passed away.”*¹⁰

11) Ali (as) said:

*“The misfortunes of this world and the next is a consequence of one’s jealousy.”*¹¹

12) Amir ul M’uminin Ali (as) said:

*“The faithful will neither do flatter nor is jealous, save when they are seeking knowledge.”*¹²

13) Imam Sadiq (as) quoting his father, said:

*“A man who has stinginess, jealousy and fear within him is not a faithful believer.”*¹³

14) Imam Sadiq (as) has been quoted as saying:

*“Jealousy wears away one’s faith the same way as fire consumes wood.”*¹⁴

Surah Yusuf – Verses 11 – 12

قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا مَا لَكَ لَا تَأْمَنَّا عَلَى يُوسُفَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَنَاصِحُونَ

أَرْسَلَهُ مَعَنَا غَدًا يَرْتَع وَيَلْعَبُ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

11. “They said: ‘O our father! What cause is with you that you do not trust us with Yusuf, and verily we are his sincere well-wishers?’”

12. “Send him with us tomorrow to enjoy himself and play, and verily we shall take every care of him.”

Jealousy makes one commit such sins as lying and playing dirty tricks even upon the most favorite of one’s kin. After they had agreed on the final plot to throw him into the well, the brothers fell to thinking about how to separate Yusuf from his father.

They came up with another idea. They came to their father, disguising their true intentions on their faces, and with an innocent tone of voice, they told him why he did not temporarily separate himself from Yusuf, and let him be with them instead. They inquired why Jacob did not trust them with Yusuf to look after their little brother.

The verse says:

“They said: ‘O our father! What cause is with you that you do not trust us with Yusuf, and verily we are his sincere well-wishers?’”

Yusuf’s brothers urged the father to send the young boy with them to take him outside the town to play and to take benefit of the fresh air and fruits there. They also mentioned that they would take care of him.

The verse says:

“Send him with us tomorrow to enjoy himself and play, and verily we shall take every care of him.”

The father was put in an awkward position; if he refused their suggestion, it would make his secret distrust of the brothers public. On the other hand, Yusuf was attracted by the idea of going out for the recreation and excitement outside the town.

Points to Note

Man needs recreation and exercise, and, as one notices in this verse, the strongest argument which persuaded Ya‘qub to submit to the wishes of his children, was that Yusuf needed recreation.

It is mentioned in the Islamic narrations that the believer must allocate a certain period for recreation so that he would be able to succeed in his other affairs.¹⁵ Therefore, recreation and healthy sports are not only allowable in Islam, but they are also highly recommended.

However, the enemies of Allah in the past, present and in the future, seek to deviate recreation and sports from their healthy role and separate the youth from their true objectives. Thus, the youth take sports too seriously regarding something recreational as a serious competitive matter, consuming energies that could be put to better and more creative use.

Worldly oppressors and plot makers not only misuse sports, but also under any other agreeable and acceptable subject, they always pursue their evil aims. With the name of diplomat, they send the most dangerous spies to different countries.

Under the title of military consolers, they plot and obtain the military secrets. By the name of human's rights, they support their hired patrons. With the excuse of medicine, they send arms for their supporters, and so on.

Surah Yusuf – Verses 13 – 14

قَالَ إِنِّي لَيَحْزُنُنِي أَنْ تَذْهَبُوا بِهِ وَأَخَافُ أَنْ يَأْكُلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَأَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ غَافِلُونَ

قَالُوا لَئِنْ أَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّا إِذًا لَخَاسِرُونَ

13. “He said: ‘Verily it saddens me that you should take him away, and I fear lest the wolf devour him while you are heedless of him’.”

14. “They said: ‘If the wolf were to devour him while we are a (strong) group, then we should be losers’.”

The father was aware of his children's jealousy and this was why he told Yusuf that he should not recount his dream to his brothers. However Jacob (as) did not make any mention of their jealousy, on the contrary, he raised the issue of the wolf and their probable neglect of Yusuf as a pretext.

Therefore, in response to their suggestions and without accusing them of any possible wrong doing, he said that he would be saddened if they took him with them, because in the surrounding area there might be fierce wolves, which might probably attack and eat his son while they might be busy having fun, and neglect him.

The verse says:

“He said: ‘Verily it saddens me that you should take him away, and I fear lest the wolf devour him while you are heedless of him’.”

Certainly, the brothers had no clear answer for the first reason which their father had given, for Yusuf's departure was such a sorrowful event to the father that they could not compensate by any means.

It is quite possible that this statement might have enflamed their jealousy even more.

On the other hand, the father's answer, from a different perspective, indicated that eventually a child had to be separated from his father for the sake of his own development.

They could not and did not give an answer to the first reason, instead. They focused their attention on the second reason which was more important to their plans.

They said that they were a powerful group, and it would be they who would be at a disadvantage if a wolf had attacked him, because the wolf would have to eat them first, therefore, this could never happen.

In other words, they were never going to allow wolves to eat any of their brothers and sit by and watch such a thing happen. At any rate, they made their father submit to their demand through playing all kinds of tricks and getting Yusuf excited about going by emphasizing the fun he would have.

The verse says:

“They said: ‘If the wolf were to devour him while we are a (strong) group, then we should be losers’.”

It is interesting to note that just as Yusuf's brothers utilized his inherent interest in recreation in order to achieve their objectives, the enemies of truth and justice also try to employ sports and recreation to poison the thinking of the new generation.

We must guard ourselves against those evil plots which the wolf-like superpowers employ under the guise of recreational activities for the youth.

Outstanding Points

Give your children independence.

1- The paternal affection unto the child and defending him against probable dangers are two principles, but the child's independence is also another principle.

2- A lie must be avoided to be suggested because people may misuse it.

The Prophet (S) said:

“Do not suggest a lie and do not open the way of pretext for lying.”

In Majma'ul-Bayan, it says that Ya'qub feared that the brothers might kill him though he did not say this directly. He referred to them metaphorically as wolves, for he had dreamed that wolves had attacked Yusuf.

When Ya'qub had mentioned the word “wolves” it occurred to them to use this as an excuse for their crime. The lesson here is that one should be careful not to make it easy for others to misuse our words

and actions.

The Arabic word /'usbah/ refers to a strong united group, and they protect each other on this basis.

Sometimes grown people become disconcerted in the face of danger, but the youth are proud of their strength and do not take danger seriously: /wa nahnu 'usbatun/. While the father was anxious, the children were proud of their strength.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 15

فَلَمَّا زَهَبُوا بِهِ وَأَجْمَعُوا أَنْ يَجْعَلُوهُ فِي غِيَابَتِ الْجُبِّ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ لَتُنَبِّئَنَّهُمْ بِأَمْرِهِمْ
هَذَا وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ

15. “So when they did take him with them, and they agreed to put him in the bottom of the well, and We revealed unto him: ‘You will certainly inform them of this deed of theirs while they know (you) not’.”

At the sensitive times, Allah’s help comes unto the saints of Allah. The best means of calmness for Yusuf, when he was at the bottom of well, was Allah’s inspiration due to his bright future and his deliverance.

The brothers had gone to sleep that night, confident that their plot would go according to their plan the following day. Their only anxiety was that their father might rue, and reverse his saying.

The next morning they went to their father and he entrusted Yusuf to their care giving them advice on how they should take care of their little brother. They expressed their appreciation for the advice and, taking him up gently and respectfully in front of their father, set off with Yusuf.

It is said that the father escorted them to the gates of the town and held Yusuf for the last time, embracing him while drops of tears rolled down his cheeks. Then he deposited him in their care and departed with a sorrowful heart.

As long as they were in sight of Jacob, they would fondle and caress Yusuf, pretending that they really cared for him. But when they were out of sight of their father, they began beating and kicking him, showing their true colors and jealousy of the little innocent boy. He implored the protection of one brother from the other, but all were of one cruel mind.¹⁶

In one narration it is said that when Yusuf was crying during their mistreatment of him or when they were about to throw him into the well, he suddenly started laughing to his brothers’ astonishment.

Then he manifested the secret of this laughter and taught then a great lesson when he said:

“I shall never forget that once I used to be happy to look at you, my powerful brothers with strong arms and extraordinary bodily strength. I used to say to myself that I had no reason to worry about anything when I had so many powerful companions to rely on.

I was then sure of your protection and confident in your support. Now, I am at your mercy, while I am being maltreated by you I am seeking the protection of each you from the other and none of you may give me any support.

Allah has taught me the lesson that I must not rely upon anyone except Him alone.”

At any rate, the Qur'an says that they unanimously agreed to throw him into the well and before this they inflicted as much tyranny and cruelty on him as was possible. It says:

“So when they did take him with them, and they agreed to put him in the bottom of the well...”

To console him, it was revealed to Yusuf that he should not grieve for a day would come when he would make them all aware of their evil designs while they did not recognize him.

That was not a Divine revelation revealed as a prophet's revelation, but it was an aspiration to the heart of Yusuf. It was for Yusuf to know that he was not alone and that he had guardians who took care of him. This revelation shone the light of peace and hope on his heart, expelling the darkness of frustration and despair from his soul.

The verse says:

“...and We revealed unto him: ‘You will certainly inform them of this deed of theirs while they know (you) not’.”

Surah Yusuf – Verse 16

وَجَاءُوا أَبَاهُمْ عِشَاءً يَبْكُونَ

16. “And they came to their father at nightfall, weeping.”

Crying is not always sincere nor a sign of honesty. Do not trust every type of crying and weeping.

Conspirators do not neglect to take into consideration the role of feelings and timing.

Yusuf's brothers had executed their plot flawlessly as they had planned and desired against him. Now,

they had to think about their return, their father's questions and how to make him believe their lies.

The lie they cooked up, which we will see later on in the commentary on the next verse, was the very same fear which their father had expressed and predicted, proclaiming that Yusuf was eaten by wolves.

The Qur'an says that the brothers went to their father at night, crying. This kind of crying is deceiving and pretentious which shows us that someone might cry without a valid and honest reason and therefore we cannot conclude that someone is in trouble simply by looking at the tears in his eyes.

The verse says:

"And they came to their father at nightfall, weeping."

There are four types of weeping in the Qur'an:

1- The tears shed out of joy: Some Christians, when listening to the chanting of the Qur'an used to shed tears.

The Qur'an says:

"And when they hear what has been sent down to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears because of what they recognize of the Truth..."¹⁷

2- The tears shed out of sorrow: For example, when some Muslims heard that it was not possible for them to join the advance forces of the army of the Sublime Prophet (S), they shed tears.

The Qur'an says:

"...and their eyes overflowed with tears of sorrow, for they did not find that which they should spend."¹⁸

3- The tears shed out of fear: For example, whenever certain verses of the Qur'an were read to the men of Allah, they would fall in prostration and cry.

"...When the revelations of the Beneficent (Allah) were recited unto them, they fell down prostrating and weeping."¹⁹

In another occurrence the Qur'an says:

"And they fall down on their faces weeping, and it adds to their humility."²⁰

4- Tears shed to deceive and mislead: An example of this is reflected in Yusuf's brothers coming to Ya'qub, in tears, to try to falsely prove and convince him that a wolf had torn apart the body of their brother.

“...Weeping.”

Surah Yusuf – Verse 17

قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا إِنَّا ذَهَبْنَا نَسْتَبِقُ وَتَرَكْنَا يُوسُفَ عِنْدَ مَتَاعِنَا فَأَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَمَا أَنْتَ
بِمُؤْمِنٍ لَنَا وَلَوْ كُنَّا صَادِقِينَ

17. “They said: ‘O’ our father! Verily we went off racing and left Yusuf with our things; then the wolf devoured him. But thou will never believe us even though we be truthful’.”

The brothers told three consecutive lies to justify their fault. They said they had gone tracing; they left Yusuf with their things and a wolf devoured him.

Waiting impatiently to receive his beloved son, the father was struck with fear and concern on seeing them return without Yusuf, he was afraid that his worst fears had been realized. Naturally, Ya‘qub asked them why Yusuf had not returned with them.

They said that they had gone racing (horse–riding and the like) and since Yusuf was too young and could not participate, they left him with their belongings. They were so occupied with racing that they forgot about everything else, even their younger brother whom they had left looking after their things. It was at that time that the vicious wolf came and tore him apart.

The verse says:

“They said: ‘O’ our father! Verily we went off racing and left Yusuf with our things; then the wolf devoured him...”

This was the truth of the matter they said, but, they told their father that he would never believe them, because Jacob had already predicted such a thing would happen, and thus he might regard their claims as a pretext.

The verse says:

“...But thou will never believe us even though we be truthful’.”

To explain Yusuf’s absence, as it was referred at the beginning, the brothers told three consecutive lies: They left Yusuf with their belongings, they went off to race with each other, and the wolf came and ate him.

Traditions upon Lie

There are numerous Islamic traditions about lying, a few of which are listed below:

1) Imam Rida (as) said:

*“Keep away from major sins, which consist of: Killing someone the shedding of whose blood is forbidden, fornication, theft, lying, arrogance and extravagance.”*²¹

2) It is narrated from Allah’s Prophet (S) who said:

*“Abstain from lying for it seduces (man) to commit sins which in turn lead him to Hellfire.”*²²

3) Imam Hasan ‘Askari (as) has been quoted to have said:

*“All corruptions are assembled in one house, the key of which is lying”*²³.

That is, man’s lying leads him to commit other sins.

4) The sublime Prophet told Abuthar Ghaffari:

*“O’ Abuthar! Woe be unto him who tells lies in order to make others laugh! Woe be unto him! Woe be unto him! Woe be unto him! Woe be unto him!”*²⁴

5) Imam Sadiq (as) has been narrated who said:

*“Allah’s Prophet (S) said: ‘The worst type of quotation is quoting a lie’.”*²⁵

6) Ali (as) has said:

*“The end of telling a lie is self-blame and feeling sorry for oneself.”*²⁶

7) The sublime Prophet (S) said to Ali (as):

*“O Ali! Abstain from lying, for it brings shame. Then one would be reported as a liar to Allah.”*²⁷

8) The holy Prophet (S) remarked:

*“He who bears false witness against a Muslim or the person sheltered by Islam, or an individual in the society, would be hanged by his tongue on the Day of Resurrection, and would be cast along with the hypocrites into the lowest level of Hell.”*²⁸

9) Ali (as) said:

*“The consequence of lying is meanness in this world and torment in the Hereafter.”*²⁹

10) The sublime Prophet (S) said:

*“Lying is one of the gateways to hypocrisy.”*³⁰

Surah Yusuf – Verse 18

وَجَاءُوا عَلَيَّ قَمِيصِهِ بِدَمٍ كَذِبٍ قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَمْرًا فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ
وَاللَّهُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَيَّ مَا تَصِفُونَ

18. “And they brought his shirt with false blood on it. He said: ‘No, your (guilty) selves have made a matter light for you. (For me) patience is good; and Allah is He Whose help is to be sought against what you describe.’”

Patience for Allah’s determinations is good. But how is it good that one has to keep his patience in a situation where cruelty has been inflicted upon an innocent child, when Jacob says:

“for me patience is good”?

An Answer to the Question

First, Ya‘qub knew that Yusuf was still alive, because he knew this fact through revelation.

Secondly, if he behaved differently, he might have made them more suspicious and they might then rush back to the hiding place, the well, and kill the little boy.

The third point is that one should not act in such a way as to obstruct another’s way to repentance, even if that person is as cruel as those brothers were.

They brought Yusuf’s shirt to him, stained with false blood to prove that he was killed.

However, as liars have poor memories, they had been neglectful to tear the shirt apart in several places at least as would have been the case if he had been really attacked by a wolf. They had simply taken it off and brought it to him.

Ya‘qub was quite a perceptive and experienced man; he took one look at the shirt and understood that the whole story had been made up. He bluntly told them that they were lying, that their selfish and egoistic passions had put them up to doing such a satanic and dreadful deed.

The verse says:

“And they brought his shirt with false blood on it. He said: ‘No, your (guilty) selves have made a

matter light for you...”

In some narrations we read that he took the shirt and turned it inside out and asked:

“Why is it that I do not see any traces of the wolf’s teeth and claws on it?”

According to another narration, he took the shirt and covered his face with it and while he was weeping, he said:

“What kind of wolf was it that had eaten up my son but did not do any damage to his shirt?”

Then he lost consciousness and fell to the ground like a dry piece of wood. Until late at night when the cold breeze of midnight caused him to recover his senses.

Although he felt the burning anguish of the loss of his son at the bottom of his heart, he never uttered a single word of ingratitude towards Allah. Instead he said he would wait patiently, with the kind of patience that was beautiful and rely upon Allah.

The verse continues saying:

“...(For me) patience is good;...”

The hearts of the men of Allah are centers of compassion and it is not surprising that when he separated from his son Ya‘qub shed abundant tears for him which is natural. Nevertheless, despite his emotional distress, he did not lose his self control, and did not say anything against the consent of Allah.

Then Jacob remarked that he would ask Allah to help him for what they said and he would seek Him to give him more ability so that he could stand firm in front of that terrible storm and not to lose his self-control and not to pollute his tongue with any improper word. The verse in this regard says:

“...and Allah is He Whose help is to be sought against what you describe’.”

Explanations

1– The best type of patience is that in which, despite one’s profound sorrow and ardent yearning, one does not forget Allah and relies upon Divine assistance.

2– Satan, as well as the despotic soul, may present sin as something attractive to man and provide a justification for him to commit that sin.

3– Do not be duped by the deceptive pretensions of people. Ya‘qub did not let himself be fooled by Yusuf’s blood-stained shirt and his brothers’ tears, rather he said:

“No, your (guilty) selves have made a matter light for you.”

4– Imam Sadiq (as) has been quoted as saying that when Yusuf was thrown down the well, Gabriel came to him and said:

“What are you doing here?”

He answered:

“My brothers have thrown me down this well.”

Gabriel asked:

“Do you want to be saved from the well?”

He answered:

“It is Allah Who will take me out if He wishes.”

He said:

“Your Lord has commanded that you recite this prayer, and you get out.”

He asked:

“What prayer?”

He answered:

“Say: O’ Allah: I ask You Whose is all praise, and there is no god but You; You are the bestower of blessings (upon Your servants), the Creator of the heavens and the earth and the Owner of Glory and Benevolence. I ask You to send Your blessings upon Muhammad and his descendents and appoint the wherewithal for me to be saved from the plight I am in.”

However, as soon as a caravan of camels arrived, Yusuf was rescued from the well.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 19

وَجَاءَتْ سَيَّارَةٌ فَأَرْسَلُوا وَارِدَهُمْ فَأَدْلَى دَلْوَهُ قَالَ يَا بُشْرَى هَذَا غُلَامٌ وَأَسَرُّوهُ
بِضَاعَةٍ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ

19. “Then there came a caravan (of travelers). They sent their water-drawer (for water) and he let down his bucket. He said: ‘O’ good news! This is a youth.’ So they hid him as a merchandise; while Allah is aware of what they do.”

Allah never leaves his sincere servants alone and saves them whenever they are entangled in hardships. He guided Noah to safety on the surface of water, he rescued Yunus from underneath the water, and He rescued Yusuf from the bottom of the well, the same way He saved 'Ibrahim from within the fire.

He guided Moses to safety through the middle of the sea, He protected Muhammad (S) in the cave, and Ali (as) during the night fixed for the execution of the conspiracy (Laylat-ul-Mabit), when he slept in place of the Prophet (S).

Whenever Allah wills, He acts and it is without the consent of man.

For instance, Hadrat Musa (as) went to fetch a fire, and returned with prophetic revelations. The caravan also went to draw water to replenish their supply, in the process they saved Yusuf and returned with him.

Due to Allah's will, the ropes became a means for Yusuf to climb up from the bottom of the well and ascend the throne. From this one should heed the things that can happen through the rope of Allah.

When those near to one do not provide the support needed, Allah provides that support using others. His brothers abandoned him, but a caravan of strangers arrived and gave him help.

Yusuf had a hard time down there at the bottom of the well in that terrible darkness, but his faith in Allah and the peace and comfort, which that faith provided, gave him a ray of hope that made him tolerate that awful loneliness and thus remain unshaken throughout the ordeal.

Allah knows how many days passed after this event, however, a caravan arrived and stopped there to draw water, a primary need for the caravan in that arid climate.

They sent the man responsible for maintaining their water supplies to get the water and he let his bucket down the well with a rope. From the bottom of the well Yusuf saw the bucket with the rope coming down rapidly towards him, he seized this Divine opportunity and clung to the rope.

The verse says:

“Then there came a caravan (of travelers). They sent their water-drawer (for water) and he let down his bucket...”

The water-carrier felt his bucket over weighted and quickly hauled it up. As soon as he brought it up, his eyes fell upon a handsome little boy. He exclaimed: ***“Good tidings,”*** instead of water, it was a beautiful boy.

Some members of the caravan also took note but hid the news from the others in order to sell the boy as a slave in Egypt. They said that that beautiful boy was given by the owner of the well in order that they could sell him as a merchandise in Egypt. But Allah was well aware of what they were doing.

The verse continues saying:

“...He said: ‘O’ good news! This is a youth.’ So they hid him as a merchandise; while Allah is aware of what they do.”

Surah Yusuf – Verse 20

وَشَرَوْهُ بِثَمَنٍ بَخْسٍ دَرَاهِمَ مَعْدُودَةٍ وَكَانُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الزَّاهِدِينَ

20. “And they sold him for a small price, of a few dirhams counted out, and in him they had no interest.”

They sold Yusuf cheap, for a few dirhams. This is not so surprising, for a common rule among thieves, or those who underhandedly acquire a valuable property, is to promptly sell their easily gotten merchandise usually quickly, for the fear that others may become aware and apprehend them.

The verse says:

“And they sold him for a small price, of a few dirhams counted out...”

Naturally, when someone intends to sell something in a hurry, he cannot obtain a fair price for his goods.

At the end of the verse Allah says:

“...and in him they had no interest.”

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1. Bihar ul 'Anwar, vol. 14, p. 78.
 2. Majmu'ah Warram, p. 81.
 3. Mahjhat ul Bayda', vol. 5, p. 326.
 4. Bihar ul-'Anwar, vol. 70, p. 253.
 5. Mustadrak ul Wasa'il vol. 2 p. 328.
 6. Ibid
 7. Ghurar ul Hikam, vol. 1, P. 15
 8. Safinat ul Bihar, vol. 1, p. 251.
 9. Mastadrak-ul-Wasa'il, vol.2, p.328
 10. Ghurar ul Hikam, vol. 1, p. 79.
 11. Mastadrak-ul-Wasa'il, vol.2, p.328
 12. Tuhaf ul 'Uqul, p. 928.
 13. Safinat-ul-Bihar, vol. 1, p. 251
 14. Ibid
 15. Hikmat 390, Nahjul Balaqah.
 16. Majma'-ul-Bayan

17. Surah Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 83.
18. Surah Al-Taubah, No. 9, verse 92.
19. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 58.
20. Surah Al-Isra', No. 17, verse 109
21. Uyun 'Akhbar ul-Riza, vol. 2, p. 137.
22. Mustadrak-ul-wasael , vol.2 , p. 100.
23. Bihar ul 'Anwar , vol. 72 , p.263.
24. Makarim al Akhlaq, p.47.
25. Bihar ul Anwar, vol.72 , p.259.
26. Qurar-ul-Hikam, vol.4 , p.363.
27. Bihar al Anwar , vol.77, p.67.
28. Wasa'il al Shia , vol. 18, p.237, hadith 6.
29. Qurar-ul-Hikam, vol. 3, p. 332
30. Majmu'at ul-Warram , vol. 1 , p. 113.

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