

Surah Yusuf – Verses 69 - 79

Learning Objectives:

- Studying verses 69-79
- Examining the events of the brothers' second trip to Egypt

PROPHET YUSUF (AS)'S BROTHERS RETURN BACK TO EGYPT

VERSES 69 - 79

وَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَىٰ يُوسُفَ آوَىٰ إِلَيْهِ أَخَاهُ ۖ قَالَ إِنِّي أَنَا أَخُوكَ فَلَا تَبْتَئِسْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

69. And when they went in to Yusuf he lodged his brother with himself, saying: I am your brother, therefore grieve not at what they do.

فَلَمَّا جَهَّزَهُمْ بِجَهَّازِهِمْ جَعَلَ السِّقَايَةَ فِي رَحْلِ أَخِيهِ ثُمَّ أَذَّنَ مُؤَذِّنٌ أَيَّتُهَا الْعِيرُ إِنَّكُمْ لَسَارِقُونَ

70. So when he furnished them with their provisions, (someone) placed the drinking cup in his brother's bag. Then a crier cried out: O caravan! you are most surely thieves.

قَالُوا وَأَقْبَلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ مَاذَا تَفْقَدُونَ

71. They said while they were facing them: What is it that you miss?

قَالُوا نَفَقْدُ صُوعَ الْمَلِكِ وَلِمَنْ جَاءَ بِهِ حِمْلُ بَعِيرٍ وَأَنَا بِهِ زَعِيمٌ

72. They said: We miss the king's drinking cup, and he who shall bring it shall have a camel-load and I am responsible for it.

قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَا جِئْنَا لِنُفْسِدَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا كُنَّا سَارِقِينَ

73. They said: By Allah! you know for certain that we have not come to make mischief in the land, and we are not thieves.

قَالُوا فَمَا جَزَاؤُهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ كَاذِبِينَ

74. They said: But what shall be the requital of this, if you are liars?

قَالُوا جَزَاؤُهُ مَنْ وُجِدَ فِي رَحْلِهِ فَهُوَ جَزَاؤُهُ ۚ كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ

75. They said: The requital of this is that the person in whose bag it is found shall himself be (held for) the satisfaction thereof; thus do we punish the wrongdoers.

فَبَدَأَ بِأَوْعِيَّتِهِمْ قَبْلَ وِعَاءِ أَخِيهِ ثُمَّ اسْتَخْرَجَهَا مِنْ وِعَاءِ أَخِيهِ ۚ كَذَلِكَ كِدْنَا لِيُوسُفَ ۚ مَا كَانَ لِيَأْخُذَ أَخَاهُ فِي دِينِ الْمَلِكِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ ۚ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مَن نَّشَاءُ ۚ وَفَوْقَ كُلِّ ذِي عِلْمٍ عَلِيمٌ

76. So he began with their sacks before the sack of his brother, then he brought it out from his brother's sack. Thus did We plan for the sake of Yusuf; it was not (lawful) that he should take his brother under the king's law unless Allah pleased; We raise the degrees of whomsoever We please, and above every one possessed of knowledge is the All-knowing one.

قَالُوا إِنْ يَسْرِقْ فَقَدْ سَرَقَ أَخٌ لَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ فَأَسْرَهَا يُوسُفُ فِي نَفْسِهِ وَلَمْ يُبْدِهَا لَهُمْ ۚ قَالَ أَنْتُمْ شَرٌّ مَكَانًا ۚ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَصِفُونَ

77. They said: If he steal, a brother of his did indeed steal before; but Yusuf kept it secret in his heart and did not disclose it to them. He said: You are in an evil condition and Allah knows best what you state.

قَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا الْعَزِيزُ إِنَّ لَهُ أَبًا شَيْخًا كَبِيرًا فَخُذْ أَحَدَنَا مَكَانَهُ ۚ إِنَّا نَرَاكَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

78. They said: O chief! he has a father, a very old man, therefore retain one of us in his stead; surely we see you to be of the doers of good.

قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ أَنْ نَأْخُذَ إِلَّا مَنْ وَجَدْنَا مَتَاعَنَا عِنْدَهُ ۚ إِنَّا إِذَا لَظَالِمُونَ

79. He said: Allah protect us that we should seize other than him with whom we found our property, for then most surely we would be unjust.

Once Prophet Yusuf (as)'s brothers returned back to Egypt, they were met, as they expected with great hospitality.

There are varying traditions of how exactly Prophet Yusuf (as) as the Aziz received them, however, most agree that he invited them to a lavish banquet where they were served in pairs. All of Prophet Yusuf (as)'s brothers sat in pairs and the only one left was Benyameen, whom he had seated next to himself or at his table.

We are also told that they were given accommodation in pairs and again as Benyameen was left on his own, Prophet Yusuf (as) accommodated him in his own quarters. It is their conversation here that the Holy Qur'an refers to when Allah (swt) states that Prophet Yusuf (as) revealed his true identity to his brother, telling him not to grieve about the past or the future.

Prophet Yusuf (as) then asked Benyameen if he would like to remain in Egypt and upon his confirmation devised a plan by which he would be able to hold him back as Benyameen had informed Prophet Yusuf (as) of the covenant that Prophet Ya'qub (as) had made his brothers take. He informed Benyameen that he would have his golden cup (used both to drink with and to measure out grain) placed in Benyameen's saddlebag. He would then be accused of thievery and be held back by Prophet Yusuf (as), Benyameen agreed to this plan in order to stay with his beloved brother.

When the brothers were ready to depart with their loads of grain one of Prophet Yusuf (as)'s servants called out for the brothers to stop stating that one amongst them was a thief. This accusation perturbed the brothers who asked what was missing. The servant replied that they had lost the Drinking Cup of the Aziz and the one to find it would receive an extra camel load of grain. The brothers declared that the Aziz of Egypt and his servants were well aware of their good intentions and conduct (Some tafaseer mention that they had brought back the goods that Prophet Yusuf (as) had returned to them thinking they were returned to them by mistake), and that they had not come to create mischief in the land.

They were then asked what the punishment is of a thief as they understand. It is important to note here that the laws of Palestine and Egypt were different concerning the punishments of thieves. In Egypt the thief would be flogged and fined, however, in Palestine the thief would become enslaved to the one from whom he stole. Knowing this difference in the rules Prophet Yusuf (as) made his brothers assert the punishment for a thief (enslavement) so that they could not deny the "punishment" Prophet Yusuf (as) would put forward in keeping Benyameen with himself. Thus they would not be breaking their covenant to Prophet Ya'qub (as). Allah (swt) emphasises His immaculate plans and Will in making it so that Prophet Yusuf (as) could retain Benyameen under the law of land of Egypt.

Prophet Yusuf (as) had all the brothers' saddle bags checked and then Benyameen's, where his cup was, of course, found. His brothers then make an unexpected comment, in which they accuse Prophet Yusuf (as) (without knowing he is the Aziz) of theft before Benyameen. Perhaps trying to distance themselves from the two brothers and making out to the Aziz that they are of noble character and blood unlike their two half brothers. There are differing reports about the "theft" by Prophet Yusuf (as) that the brothers are referring to.

Prophet Yusuf (as) managed to swallow his anger, and not reveal his true identity. However he said to his brothers: *"You are in an evil condition..."* they were in serious peril due to the theft committed by one of their company. Commentators differ with regard to which theft Prophet Yusuf (as) was alluding to: his own theft from his father or the theft of the cup. It's plausible that that he intended to mean his own theft from his father while citing the obvious theft as the cause of their perilous situation.

Also, Prophet Yusuf (as) warns them about their attribution of the thievery by Prophet Yusuf (as): *"And*

Allah knows best what you state." Meaning that God Almighty knows best whether what you attribute to others is true or not.

After seeing that their brother is being taken into custody as a thief, the brothers attempted to appeal to Prophet Yusuf's (as) sense of mercy and compassion. They offered that another brother should stand in Benyameen's place out of sympathy for their elderly father: *"O chief! He has a father, a very old man, therefore retain one of us in his stead."*

The motivation of this exchange was not love of Benyameen, rather, they were mindful of the covenant that they made with their father to return Benyameen to him. No doubt, they were also conscious of their previous disappointment of their father with regards to Prophet Yusuf (as).

The brothers acknowledged Prophet Yusuf's (as) virtues in their saying: *"Surely we see you to be of the doers of good."* After all, as common subjects of Egypt, they had been honoured by the Aziz, Egypt's second most powerful authority. They had been well-received, fed and hosted with great generosity and graciousness. Those honours were in addition to the generous measure of food that they had received during both visits.

However, Prophet Yusuf (as) rejected their exchange with firmness saying: *"Allah protect us that we should seize other than him with whom we found our property, for then most certainly we would be unjust."*

In the next part of the hadith mentioned in the previous two sections - Abu Baseer Narrates from Imam Baqir (as):

Then, he (Yusuf) said to them: Is Benyameen with you? They said: Yes, he is at the camp. He said: Bring him to me, they brought (Benyameen) to him while he was in the house of the king.

He said: Let him enter alone and they sent him (into the room). Yusuf took him to himself and cried. He said to him: I am your brother Yusuf. Do not be dismayed at what you will see me do and conceal whatever I am informing you. Do not grieve and do not be afraid. Then, he went out to them (his brothers). Then, he ordered his servant to take their goods and prepare their allotment (of food). (He said:) When they have finished, place a (measuring) cup in the baggage of Benyameen. They did that as such. People set out with the group and they left.

Yusuf caught up with them and his servants called out to them: O caravan! You are most surely thieves. They said while they were facing them: What is it that you miss? They said: We miss the king's drinking cup, and he who shall bring it shall have a camel-load and I am responsible. They said: By Allah! You know for certain that we have not come to make mischief in the land, and we are not thieves. They said: But what shall be the requital of this, if you are liars? They said: The requital of this is that the person in whose bag it is found shall himself be (held for) the satisfaction thereof...So he began with their sacks before the sack of his brother, then he brought it out from his brother's sack. Thus did We plan for the sake of Yusuf; it was not (lawful) that he should take his brother under the king's law unless Allah pleased; We raise the degrees of whomsoever We please, and above every one possessed of knowledge is the All-knowing One.

Yusuf said: Depart from our land! "They said: O chief! He has a father, a very old man..." and he has taken a covenant from Allah that we must return (his son) to him. The oldest of them said: I would not like to remain in this land until my father gives me permission (to leave) or until Allah decides (my fate) for me.

The brothers of Yusuf continued until they reached Ya'qub. (Ya'qub) said to them: Where is Benyameen? They said: Benyameen stole the cup of the king and the king seized him for his thievery and confined him with him. Ask the people of the town and the caravan until they inform you. (Ya'qub) withdrew and cried. His sorrow became so intense that it bent his back."

IMPORTANT LESSONS

- 1) Only that which Allah (swt) Plans will come to pass
- 2) We may not always understand the reason why something happens, especially if, superficially, it seems unjust. However we should always have faith that Allah (swt) has a bigger plan.

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