

Surah Yusuf – Verses 80 - 86

Learning Objectives:

- Studying verses 80 -86
- Examining the events upon the brothers' return to kan'an

PROPHET YUSUF (AS)'S BROTHERS RETURN BACK TO KAN'AN WITHOUT BENYAMEEN

VERSES 80 - 86

فَلَمَّا اسْتَيْأَسُوا مِنْهُ خَلَصُوا نَجِيًّا ۖ قَالَ كَبِيرُهُمْ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ أَبَاكُمْ قَدْ أَخَذَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَوْثِقًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَمِنْ قَبْلُ مَا فَرَّطْتُمْ فِي يُوسُفَ ۖ فَلَنْ أَبْرِحَ الْأَرْضَ حَتَّىٰ يَأْذَنَ لِي أَبِي أَوْ يَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ لِي ۖ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحَاكِمِينَ

80. Then when they despaired of him, they retired, conferring privately together. The eldest of them said: Do you not know that your father took from you a covenant in Allah's name, and how you fell short of your duty with respect to Yusuf before? Therefore I will by no means depart from this land until my father permits me or Allah decides for me, and He is the best of the judges:

ارْجِعُوا إِلَىٰ آبَائِكُمْ فَقُولُوا يَا أَبَانَا إِنَّ ابْنَكَ سَرَقَ وَمَا شَهِدْنَا إِلَّا بِمَا عَلَّمْنَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِلْغَيْبِ حَافِظِينَ

81. Go back to your father and say: O our father! surely your son committed theft, and we do not bear witness except to what we have known, and we could not keep watch over the unseen:

وَاسْأَلِ الْقَرْيَةَ الَّتِي كُنَّا فِيهَا وَالْعَيْرَ الَّتِي أَقْبَلْنَا فِيهَا ۖ وَإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ

82. And inquire in the town in which we were and the caravan with which we proceeded, and most surely we are truthful.

قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَمْرًا ۖ فَصَبِرْ ۖ جَمِيلٌ ۖ عَسَىٰ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَنِي بِهِمْ جَمِيعًا ۚ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ

83. He (Yaqoub) said: Nay, your souls have made a matter light for you, so patience is good; maybe Allah will bring them all together to me; surely He is the Knowing, the Wise.

وَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا أَسْفَىٰ عَلَىٰ يُوسُفَ وَأَبْيَضَّتْ عَيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْحُزْنِ فَهُوَ
كَظِيمٌ

84. *And he turned away from them, and said: O my sorrow for Yusuf! and his eyes became white on account of the grief, and he was a repressor (of grief).*

قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ تَفْتَأُ تَذْكُرُ يُوسُفَ حَتَّىٰ تَكُونَ حَرَضًا أَوْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْهَالِكِينَ

85. *They said: By Allah! you will not cease to remember Yusuf until you are a prey to constant disease or (until) you are of those who perish.*

قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَشْكُو بَثِّي وَحُزْنِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

86. *He said: I only complain of my grief and sorrow to Allah, and I know from Allah what you do not know.*

The brothers were faced with the prospect of returning to their father in shame. They did their utmost to save Benyameen, however they found all roads leading to a solution blocked.

Therefore, they despaired from the 'Aziz, or from deliverance of the brother, and decided to return to Kan'an and tell their father about the matter when they went off by themselves into a corner and conferred as to what next to do.

In that private conference the eldest of the brothers expressed his remorse for the agony that this situation would visit upon his father. He vowed to remain in Egypt until Prophet Ya'qub (as) released him from this vow or until Allah (swt) would give him another way out.

There are differing reports on whom this brother was – whether he was the eldest in age or the most mature in reasoning and knowledge. Some tafaseer also mention that it was the same brother who at the very first instance spoke up and did not want to kill Prophet Yusuf (as) and had suggested putting him in the well instead.

He implored them to tell their father the truth, as they were aware of it: apparently Benyameen had stolen a cup belonging to the king of Egypt, it was found in his luggage, as they all had witnessed. Whether it was placed there by Benyameen or someone else, they could not bear witness to what was unseen. Nevertheless they started to become aware that the hidden truth of the matter rested with Allah (swt).

Knowing that Prophet Ya'qub (as) would be unwilling to believe that Benyameen had committed a theft, he further advised them: "And inquire in the town in which we were and the caravan with which we proceeded, and most surely we are truthful." His expression gives us the impression that perhaps the matter of the stolen cup had become widely known in the town in Egypt and among the travellers in the caravan.

The brothers departed from Egypt, leaving the youngest and the oldest behind, they returned to Kan'an in frustration and shame. In order to remove their father's suspicions and increase his confidence in

them, this time they told the truth of the matter as it had appeared to them, calling him to inquire from the people of Egypt and the caravan to verify their story.

Ya'qub was not impressed, he became angry, and staring at them, he told them that it was their souls that had made something appealing to them that had led to this disaster.

When the brothers, feigning sadness, brought Prophet Yusuf (as)'s bloody shirt to their father, they said that Prophet Yusuf (as) had been eaten by a wolf. Prophet Ya'qub (as) said that their souls had made up something which they had found attractive. Now, with his next two sons taken away from him, he repeats the same sentence. Perhaps, this question may be raised that: in Prophet Yusuf (as)'s affair the brothers committed treason and planned conspiracies, while in the Benyameen's affair, such was not the case. Then, why does Prophet Ya'qub (as) say the same thing in both cases? Tafaseer state that Prophet Ya'qub (as) meant that the facts surrounding these two other brothers remaining in Egypt is an extension (though not directly) of their previous conduct with regards to Prophet Yusuf (as).

It may be said that the purpose of Prophet Ya'qub (as) with this statement was that even then they thought themselves as innocent and that they had acted well, they had still behaved unethically in the crisis, because of the following reasons:

1. Why were they quick to assume that their brother was guilty once they saw the cup among his load? Couldn't it be possible that someone else had hidden it there?
2. Why did they return so quickly without any research? They could (perhaps should) have done as their elder brother, and remained behind
3. Why did they choose servitude as a penalty of the thief? They could have asked Prophet Yusuf (as) to deal with the thief as *he* saw fit

On his part Ya'qub had no other choice than to take recourse in sweet patience and trust in Allah to return all his sons to him, if He willed, because He is aware of them inside of all as well as whatever happened and will happen. Moreover, He is Wise and never does anything undue.

Imam al-Baqir (as) says: *"That (Sabrun Jameel صبر جميل) is patience in which there is no complaining to people"* - meaning that one should only complain to Allah (swt) and have hope in Him for relief from their situation. Thus, Prophet Ya'qub (as) expresses his hope that perhaps Allah (swt) will reunite him with all of his sons, Prophet Yusuf (as), Benyameen and his eldest son (Levi or Rueben) who remained in Egypt.

Prophet Ya'qub (as), despite his hope, could not contain his sorrow for the one whom he loved most dearly: *"O my sorrow for Yusuf! He cried to such an extent that his eyes became white"*.

His expression of love and sorrow toward Prophet Yusuf (as) drew a sharp response from his sons, they asserted that the remembrance of Yusuf (as) would make him ill and of diminished reasoning (i.e. senile), or cause him to come close to death. Prophet Ya'qub (as) responds in the same way as before; stating that he complains only to Allah (swt) and thus displays *"Sabrun Jameel"*.

He then states that he knows something from Allah (swt) that they do not, tafaseer mention that Prophet Ya'qub (as) had been informed by God Almighty that Prophet Yusuf (as) was alive and his other son, Benyameen, was well too.

IMPORTANT LESSONS

- 1) The importance of having true/good/sweet patience – when we are in a situation that we find difficult, it is very hard but very important to have true patience, where our complaint is only to Allah (swt) and not to His creation
- 2) Having faith in Allah (swt)'s Plan, knowing and trusting that He is The Wise and never does

anything undue

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