

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah,
most Kind, most Merciful



Surah Yusuf, 12:24

وَلَقَدْ هَمَّتْ بِهِ وَهَمَّ بِهَا لَوْلَا أَنْ رَأَى
بُرْهَانَ رَبِّهِ كَذَلِكَ لِنَصْرِفَ عَنْهُ السُّوءَ
وَالْفَحْشَاءَ إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُخْلَصِينَ

She certainly made for him; and he would have made for her [too] had he not beheld the proof of his Lord. So it was, that We might turn away from him all evil and indecency. He was indeed one of Our dedicated servants.

Learning Objectives

- To evaluate the role of God-consciousness when faced with the temptation to sin
- To demonstrate the importance of turning to Allah for help to protect oneself from sin
- To recognise the power of patience and trust in Allah when faced with a difficult choice

Key Words

سُوءَ Su'u
evil

فَحْشَاءَ fahsha'
indecency



REFLECTION

Nabi Yusuf was a servant in the house of a wealthy chief who had bought him as a slave. One day, the chief's wife Zulaykha tried to seduce him. She covered the idol in the room, locked the door, and invited him to her, Nabi Yusuf replied, "You feel ashamed from something that can neither speak nor see (the idol), and you expect me not to feel ashamed from He who has created me, taught me and can see everything?"

What do we learn from this incident?

In the previous lesson we studied the early life of Nabi Yusuf. We looked at how he was abandoned in a well by his brothers, and rescued and sold as a slave in Egypt. He was only a child, and one can only imagine the ordeal he must have gone through. The person who bought him was a high ranking chief in Egypt. He took Nabi Yusuf home and took good care of him, and Nabi Yusuf grew up into a handsome young man.

One day, Zulaykha – the chief's wife and lady of the house - tried to seduce him. She locked the doors and invited Nabi Yusuf into her room. Nabi Yusuf knew that this was wrong, and responded saying, 'God forbid! Indeed He is my Lord; He has given me a good home. Indeed the wrongdoers are not successful'

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From the above verse we can see the positive consequences of Nabi Yusuf's actions. He could have easily given in to Zulaykha's seduction, but instead he remembered Allah and remained God-conscious. Allah therefore turned indecency and evil away from him, and chose him as His dedicated servant. This is indeed a great honour for any person.

Zulaykha persisted tempting Nabi Yusuf into sin, but he started running away from her. She ran after him, and as she tried to grab him, she tore his shirt from behind. Just then, her husband walked into the door. To protect herself, she blamed Nabi Yusuf and said to her husband, 'What is to be the punishment of him who has evil intentions for your wife except imprisonment or a painful punishment?'

Nabi Yusuf insisted he was innocent, and that she was the one who had tried to seduce him. Knowing that Yusuf was an honest and sincere man, Zulaykha's husband wondered what to do.

Faith in Action

There are many temptations all around us, and it is necessary for us to protect ourselves from those actions that are *haram*. We may be tempted to steal something, or watch something on TV or on the internet that is *haram*, or listen to *haram* music, or go to a party where *haram* acts take place. We learn from Nabi Yusuf's story that if we keep ourselves away from *haram* acts, we will be able to get closer to Allah. We can do this by always remembering Allah before carrying out any action, and seeking protection in Him from Shaytan, who tries to tempt us to commit *haram* acts.



Someone from her family suggested that if his shirt was torn from the front, then it was his fault, but if it was torn from the back, then it was her fault. When the master of the house saw the torn shirt, he was convinced of Nabi Yusuf's innocence. He commanded his wife to ask for forgiveness for what she had done and asked Yusuf not to disclose the news.

However, the news spread by other members of the house and the aristocrat women of the city started mocking Zulaykha, saying that the chief's wife had fallen in love with her slave boy! To justify her actions, Zulaykha invited them to her house, and offered them fruits. She also gave them knives to peel and cut the fruit. She then called Nabi Yusuf into the room. When the guests saw him, they were captivated by his beauty so much that they absent-mindedly started cutting their hands with the knives they were holding. They said, 'Good heavens! This is not a human being! This is but a noble angel!'

Zulaykha responded saying, 'This is the young man on whose account you blame and mock me. I will continue to pursue him, and if he does not give in to my demands, I will have him thrown in prison'.

Nabi Yusuf remained strong in faith and did not give in to Zulaykha's demands. He said,

REFLECTION



Nabi Yusuf now had two options in front of him: either give in to the demands of Zulaykha, or go to prison.

What would you do in such a situation?



Surah Yusuf, 12:33-34

قَالَ رَبِّ السِّجْنُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا يَدْعُونَنِي
إِلَيْهِ وَإِلَّا تَصْرِفْ عَنِّي كَيْدَهُنَّ أَصْبُ إِلَيْهِنَّ
وَأَكُن مِّنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ
فَصَرَفَ عَنْهُ كَيْدَهُنَّ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

He said, 'My Lord! The prison is dearer to me than to what they invite me. If You do not turn away their schemes from me, then I will incline towards them and become one of the senseless.' So his Lord answered him and turned away their stratagems from him. Indeed He is the All-hearing, the All-knowing



We can see from these verses that he continued to seek Allah's help so that he would not end up falling into temptation. And Allah answered his prayer.



ACTIVITY...

List any three lessons you have learnt from the narrative of Nabi Yusuf and Zulaykha

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Lessons we learn from Nabi Yusuf

Allah has narrated the story of Nabi Yusuf at great length in the Qur'an so that we may learn lessons from it. There are several dimensions to this story. In this lesson we will look at the role of divine guidance and how it helped Nabi Yusuf keep away from sin.

1 The role of the *fitrah*

We have studied in previous lessons that Allah has given us guidance in many different forms: the *anbiya*, *a'immah*, divine books and also our *fitrah* or innate nature. Some moral and ethical values are hard-wired into us, and we don't need someone to teach these to us. For example, everyone knows that theft and murder are wrong. Nabi Yusuf listened to his inner voice - his natural instinct - when he was confronted by Zulaykha. His master - who bought him as a slave - had been kind to him and given him a good home. How could he betray him by committing an indecent act with his wife? Giving in to Zulaykha's demands would have been a senseless thing to do. This is why he prayed to Allah saying, 'If You do not turn away their schemes from me, then I will incline towards them and become one of the senseless'. Paying attention to his *fitrah* also made him turn to Allah for help whenever he was faced with a difficult situation.

2 The *Ismah* of *anbiya*

We know that the *anbiya* were *ma'sum* (sinless). This does not mean that they were not capable of sinning. They also had free will, just like us. However, due to their knowledge of sin and its consequences, they chose not to sin. We see from the story of Nabi Yusuf that he chose not to give in to temptation. He even confided in Allah his weaknesses and that he would fall into temptation if Allah did not help him keep away from it. We too can choose to turn to Allah when faced with the temptation to do wrong, and Allah has promised that He would listen to those who turn to Him for help.

3 The strength to withstand trials

Nabi Yusuf's story is exemplary in teaching us patience. Whenever he was faced with a choice between hardship and suffering versus giving in to temptation, he chose suffering and hardship rather than sinning against Allah. This is because he had complete trust in Allah. He knew that these difficult situations were a test from Allah, and if he remained patient rather than give in to the whisperings of Shaytan, he would get closer to Allah and his status in front of Allah would be elevated.

4 God-consciousness

Crime is usually prevented by having law enforcement officers, the police, judges and courts. But people will often only obey the law when they know they will be caught. For example, car drivers may jump the traffic light or drive above the speed limit if they think no one is watching them. Someone may even steal something from a shopping mall if he or she thinks no one will find out. *Deen* teaches people that Allah is always watching and every action is being recorded and will be accounted for on the Day of Judgement. So God-conscious people police their own selves. Nabi Yusuf teaches us that a religious person does not need a police officer to be honest. Their faith is their police and watches over them.

Faith in Action

Next time you are faced with peer pressure to do something wrong, remember the story of Nabi Yusuf and turn to Allah for help.



ACTIVITY...

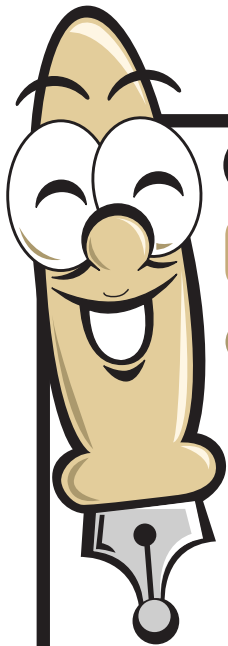
Read verse number 3 of *Surat at-Talaq* (65) and see how you can relate that verse to the decision of Nabi Yusuf (a).



HIGHER LEVEL

Read verses 23 to 29 from *Surah Yusuf* and draw comics illustrating the conversations between Nabi Yusuf, Zulaykha, her husband (the master of the house) and the 'witness in the household' (See verse 12:26)

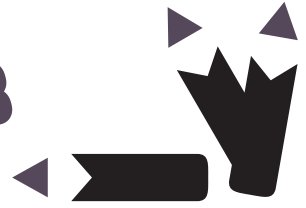




KEYPOINTS

- 1 The man who bought Nabi Yusuf as a slave from the market was a high ranking official in Egypt. He took Nabi Yusuf, who was only a child at the time, to his home and took good care of him.
- 2 Nabi Yusuf grew up in the chief's home, and became a very handsome young man. The chief's wife Zulaykha was infatuated with him, and tried to seduce him.
- 3 Nabi Yusuf did not give in to her temptation, even though she threatened to have him thrown into prison.
- 4 Nabi Yusuf constantly turned to Allah for help against the temptation to sin, and Allah listened to his prayers.
- 5 Nabi Yusuf had the free will and freedom to choose his actions. He chose not to fall into sin, even though that was the more difficult option. As a result, Allah elevated his status.

TEST YOURSELF



- 1 Who bought Nabi Yusuf as a slave from the market?

- 2 What did Nabi Yusuf say to Zulaykha when she tried to commit an indecent act?

- 3 Why did Nabi Yusuf prefer to go to prison rather than commit a sin?

- 4 What strategies did Nabi Yusuf use to help him overcome the temptation to sin?

- 5 State any two lessons you have learnt from the story of Nabi Yusuf and Zulaykha.

