

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah,
most Kind, most Merciful

Surah Yusuf, 12:56

وَكَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
يَتَّبِعُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ يَشَاءُ نُصِيبُ بِرَحْمَتِنَا
مَنْ نَشَاءُ وَلَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

That is how We established Yusuf in the land that he may settle
in it wherever he wished. We confer Our mercy on whomever
We wish, and We do not waste the reward of the virtuous.

Learning Objectives

- To examine the events in the life of Nabi Yusuf when he became a minister
- To demonstrate Nabi Yusuf's excellent character, especially when dealing with his family
- To demonstrate the power of *tawakkul* on Allah

Key Words

إِحْسَانٌ	Ihsan virtue
مُحْسِنِينَ	Muhsinin the virtuous ones
مُتَّقِينَ	Muttaqin the God-conscious

In the previous three lessons, we studied the early life of Nabi Yusuf in great detail. We looked at how he was separated from his father at a very young age and taken from his home in Palestine to Egypt where he was sold as a slave. We examined his behaviour and morality, and observed how he was willing to undergo hardship and suffering rather than disobey Allah. As a result, Allah blessed him and gave a great status to him.

In this lesson, we will study the later years of Nabi Yusuf's life, from the time he became a minister in Egypt.

As a minister in charge of agriculture, Nabi Yusuf instructed the farmers to save as much grain as they could during the first seven years when they enjoyed bumper harvests, so that the people would not go hungry during the next seven years when they would be faced with famine. He used the knowledge and the talent that Allah had given him to build huge granaries to store the wheat that should have been preserved for years without going corrupt.

After seven years, when the lands became dry and there were no crops, everyone started coming to Egypt to buy wheat from Nabi Yusuf. His brothers were also experiencing a famine, and had heard that the minister of Egypt had a lot of grain in his stores. They therefore decided to travel to Egypt to buy some grain for their families. They didn't know that their youngest brother Yusuf, who they had thrown into a well many years ago, was now the minister in charge of the granaries in Egypt.

When they came to him, he recognised them, but they did not recognise him. He noticed that only the ten older brothers had travelled. Binyamin was not with them. Nabi Yusuf and Binyamin were Nabi Ya'qub's youngest sons from the same mother. He asked them about the number of heads in their family and that if they were taking the right ration. They said they had a half-brother whom they had left him back home with their father, who was an old man. Nabi Yusuf told them that if they wanted any more grain, they should bring their brother Binyamin next time for him to see, otherwise he would not sell them any more grain.

The brothers were worried that their father would not allow Binyamin to travel with them to Egypt, for he had already lost his youngest son and was very protective of the second youngest. So they returned home with their ration not knowing if they were able to go back at all to receive their next year's grain. However, as they were leaving Egypt, Nabi Yusuf had ordered his men to return the money they had paid for the purchase by hiding it in their saddlebags. In this way they would have had more incentive to come back soon.

When they returned back home, they said to their father, 'Father, the grain has been withheld from us, so let our brother come with us so that we may obtain it, and we will indeed take good care of him.'



Nabi Ya'qub replied, 'Should I trust you with him just as I trusted you with his brother Yusuf before? Yet Allah is the best of protectors, and He is the most merciful of merciful ones.'

And when they opened their baggage, they found their money had been returned to them. They said, 'Father, what more do we want?! This is our money, returned to us! Let us go back with Binyamin. We will get provisions for our family and take care of our brother, and come back with another camel-load of rations. The grain we have at the moment is not enough.'

Nabi Ya'qub said that he would only allow them to take Binyamin if they made a solemn pledge by Allah to protect him. When they had given their pledge, he said to them, 'Allah is witness over what we say.'



Faith in Action

Even though Nabi Ya'qub had lost his beloved son Yusuf, he still had complete trust in Allah. He said to his sons, 'Sovereignty belongs only to Allah. In Him I have put my trust; and in Him let all the trusting ones put their trust.' (*Surah Yusuf*, 12:67).

In this verse, he is teaching us to put all our trust in Allah. Next time you are faced with a difficult situation, take the necessary steps to overcome the difficulty, but at the same time turn to Allah for help, and have complete trust in Him. He will certainly help you when the time is right, for He has a plan for all of us.

Nabi Yusuf and his brother Binyamin *are reunited*

The brothers now headed back to Egypt to get more grain. When they arrived, Nabi Yusuf was overjoyed to see his brother Binyamin. He invited him to sit close to him, and whispered to him that he was Yusuf. He told Binyamin not to say anything to the other brothers.

The brothers got the grain they wanted, and started preparing for their journey back home. Nabi Yusuf asked his staff to hide his expensive drinking cup in Binyamin's luggage. As they were departing, the guard shouted, 'Thieves! You are indeed thieves!'

The brothers were astonished to hear this. They asked the guard what had been stolen. He said to them that the minister's goblet was missing, and whoever brought it would be rewarded with a camel-load of grain.

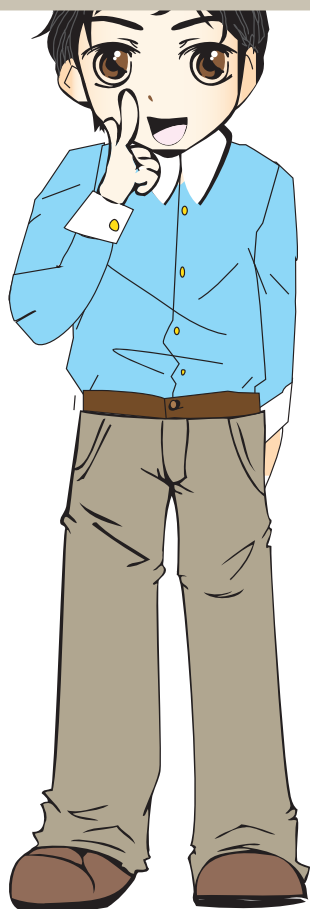
They said, 'By Allah! You certainly know that we did not come to make trouble in this country, and we are not thieves.'

The guard then asked them what he should do if he found the missing goblet in their luggage. They replied that if one of them had stolen it, he should remain behind as a slave of the owner; this is how we punish the thieves. The guard searched their luggage, and at the end found the goblet on Binyamin's camel.



REMEMBER...

“ Losing hope in Allah’s mercy is one of the greatest sins. We must never lose hope in Allah’s mercy, for He is the most Merciful. ”



The brothers were now really worried. They could not leave Binyamin behind because they had made a solemn pledge to protect him and bring him back to their father. They pleaded with Nabi Yusuf, ‘O emir! Indeed he has a father, a very old man; so take one of us in his place. Indeed we see that you are a virtuous man.’

Nabi Yusuf replied, ‘God forbid that we should take anyone except him with whom we found our wares, for then we would indeed be wrongdoers.’

They had no choice but to go back without Binyamin. The eldest brother said to the rest, ‘I will remain here with Binyamin. You guys go back and tell father what has happened’.

Nabi Ya’qub was very sad when he heard what had happened. He grieved quietly, and told his sons that he would remain patient, and maybe Allah would return both his lost sons back to him. He said to them, ‘Go, my sons, and look for Yusuf and his brother, and do not despair of Allah’s mercy. Indeed no one despairs of Allah’s mercy except the faithless lot.’

DID YOU KNOW?

Nabi Ya’qub grieved so much when he lost his youngest son Yusuf that his eyes had turned white from weeping, and he had gone blind. Many years later, when the brothers were reunited with Nabi Yusuf, he gave them his shirt and asked them to place it over their father’s eyes, and his blindness would be cured.



The brothers now returned to Nabi Yusuf in Egypt.



Surah Yusuf, 12:88

فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ قَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا الْعَزِيزُ
مَسَّنَا وَأَهْلَنَا الضُّرُّ وَجِئْنَا بِبِضَاعَةٍ
مُزْجَاةٍ فَأَوْفِ لَنَا الْكَيْلَ وَتَصَدَّقْ
عَلَيْنَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَجْزِي الْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ

Then, when they entered into his presence, they said, 'O emir! Distress has befallen our family, and us, and we have brought just a small sum of money. Yet grant us the full measure (of grain), and be charitable to us! Indeed Allah rewards the charitable.'

Nabi Yusuf told them who he was, and asked them if they had realised their mistake in what they had done to him. He said, 'I am Yusuf, and this is my brother. Certainly Allah has shown us favour. Indeed if one is God-conscious and patient, Allah does not waste the reward of the virtuous.'

The brothers now realised the grave errors they had made, and how Allah had favoured their brother Yusuf over them. Nabi Yusuf told them that he had forgiven them and would not take revenge against them. He told them to go back home and bring their father and their families with them to Egypt.



Faith in Action

Nabi Yusuf decided to forgive his brothers because Allah likes people who forgive others instead of taking revenge. If you have fallen out with a friend or family member, or are angry with someone, forgive them instead of planning to take revenge. Remember, if you forgive others for the wrongs they have committed against you, Allah will forgive you for your errors.

Seeking Allah's forgiveness through a *wasila*

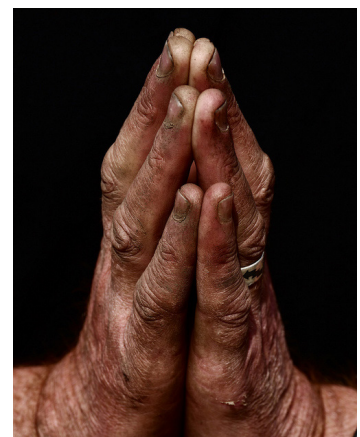
Nabi Yusuf's brothers returned home to give their father the good news that Yusuf was alive and well. Nabi Ya'qub was overjoyed to hear this news. The brothers then said, 'Father! Plead [with Allah] for forgiveness of our sins! We have indeed been erring.'

Nabi Ya'qub replied, 'I shall plead with my Lord to forgive you; indeed He is the All-Forgiving, the All-Merciful.'

REFLECTION



Nabi Ya'qub's sons asked him to plead with Allah on their behalf for forgiveness of their sins. They could have pleaded with Allah directly, but instead asked their father to intercede on their behalf, and he agreed. This was because they knew that their father was much closer to Allah, and his pleading was more likely to be accepted. This demonstrates the validity of seeking a *wasila* through someone who is much closer to Allah, such as a *ma'sum*.



Nabi Yusuf is reunited with his father

Nabi Ya'qub, his sons and their families now set out on their journey to Egypt to meet Nabi Yusuf. When they arrived, Nabi Yusuf was overjoyed being reunited with his parents.

Nabi Yusuf then prayed to Allah,

Surah Yusuf, 12:101



Surah Yusuf, 12:100

وَرَفَعَ أَبَوَيْهِ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ وَخَرُّوا لَهُ
سُجَّدًا وَقَالَ يَا أَبَتِ هَذَا تَأْوِيلُ رُؤْيَايَ
مِن قَبْلُ قَدْ جَعَلَهَا رَبِّي حَقًّا وَقَدْ أَحْسَنَ
بِي إِذْ أَخْرَجَنِي مِنَ السِّجْنِ وَجَاءَ بِكُم
مِّنَ الْبَدْوِ مِن بَعْدِ أَنْ نَزَغَ الشَّيْطَانُ
بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ إِخْوَتِي إِنَّ رَبِّي لَطِيفٌ لِّمَا
يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ

And he seated his parents high upon the throne, and they fell down prostrate before him. He said, 'Father! This is the fulfilment of my dream of long ago, which my Lord has made come true. He was certainly gracious to me when He brought me out of the prison and brought you over from the desert after that Satan had incited ill feeling between me and my brothers. Indeed my Lord is all-attentive in bringing about what He wishes. Indeed He is the All-knowing, the All-wise.'

رَبِّ قَدْ آتَيْتَنِي مِنَ الْمُلْكِ
وَعَلَّمْتَنِي مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ
الْأَحَادِيثِ فَاطِرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَنْتَ وَلِيِّي فِي الدُّنْيَا
وَالْآخِرَةِ تَوَفَّنِي مُسْلِمًا
وَأَلْحِقْنِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ

My Lord! You have granted me a share in the kingdom, and taught me the interpretation of dreams. Originator of the heavens and earth! You are my guardian in this world and the Hereafter! Let my death be in submission [to You], and unite me with the Righteous.

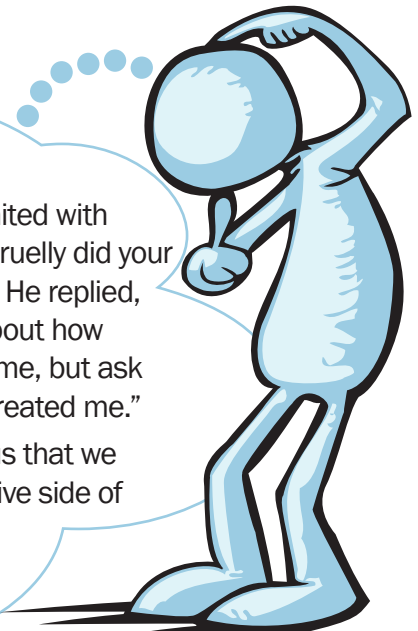
DID YOU KNOW?

Many years after the death of Nabi Yusuf, Egypt was ruled by the Pharaohs, and Allah sent Nabi Musa and his brother Nabi Harun to guide Fir'aun and his people.

REFLECTION...

When Nabi Ya'qub was reunited with Yusuf he asked him, "How cruelly did your brothers treat you my son?" He replied, "My father! Don't ask me about how cruelly my brothers treated me, but ask me about how kindly Allah treated me."

This conversation teaches us that we should always see the positive side of events rather than their negative side. We live the way we see.





ACTIVITY...

Having studied the life of Nabi Yusuf, it is quite apparent that he had the best *akhlaq*.

Write down any five things that he did which demonstrate his excellent moral character:

1

2

3

4

5



HIGHER LEVEL

Why did Allah appoint *anbiya* (Prophets)? Read the last three verses of *Surah Yusuf* with their translation, and write down five lessons you have learnt from these verses regarding the *anbiya*.

1

2

3

4

5





TEST YOURSELF



KEY POINTS

1 Nabi Yusuf used his knowledge and skills to help the Egyptians plan for the seven years of famine so that they would not go hungry. They managed to save enough grain not only for themselves, but were also able to sell it to people from neighbouring lands.

2 Nabi Yusuf's brothers came to Egypt to buy grain. They met their brother Yusuf and bought wheat from him but did not recognise him.

3 Nabi Yusuf devised a plan which would allow him to be reunited with his family. Once they were reunited, he forgave his brothers and treated his family with the utmost respect, even though he was a high ranking minister.

4 We should try to forgive others instead of taking revenge against them.

5 We must never lose hope in Allah's mercy. We should plead to Him for forgiveness when we've done something wrong. He is the Most Forgiving, Most Merciful.

1 Explain why Nabi Ya'qub made his sons swear a solemn pledge before they could take Binyamin with them to Egypt.

2 Why did Nabi Yusuf ask his staff to hide his goblet in Binyamin's luggage?

3 What did Nabi Yusuf do to his brothers when they found out who he was?

4 What dream did Nabi Yusuf see when he was a small child? (Hint: See verse 12:4)

5 How did this dream come true when Nabi Yusuf was reunited with his family? (Hint: See verse 12:100)
