

Sura Yusuf, Verse 43-44

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ إِنِّي أَرَى سَبْعَ بَقَرَاتٍ سِمَانٍ يَأْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَسَبْعَ سُنبُلَاتٍ
خُضْرٍ وَأُخَرَ يَابِسَاتٍ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ أَفْتُونِي فِي رُؤْيَايَ إِن كُنْتُمْ لِلرُّؤْيَا تَعْبُرُونَ

The King said, I saw in a dream seven fat cows being eaten by seven thin ones and seven green ears of corn and seven others that were dry. O chiefs, explain to me my dream if you can interpret dreams

قَالُوا أَضْغَاثُ أَحْلَامٍ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِتَأْوِيلِ الْأَحْلَامِ بِعَالَمِينَ

They said, these are confused dreams and we do not know the interpretation of dreams.

Reflections

- why would the King be concerned about his dream?
- the chiefs don't seem afraid of giving their opinion to the King. What type of relationship do they have with the King?
- what is the plan of God in this turn of events? Who is going to need whom?

Tafsir

Sura Yusuf has talked about four dreams so far;

- the dream of Nabi Yusuf
- the two dreams of the prisoners
- the dream of the King

Each dream played a role in the life of Nabi Yusuf.

Nabi Yusuf spent many years in prison, waiting for his name to be cleared. He used his time to talk the prisoners. He comforted them, looked after those who were sick, and told them about belief in the Merciful God. He made the most of his time although he was eager to be freed.

Until one day something happened that changed things completely. It changed things not just for him, but for the future of the people of Egypt. The King of Egypt whose name is recorded as Walid bin Rayan (and whose vizier was the Aziz of Egypt who had taken in Nabi Yusuf) saw a dream. He saw seven thin cows eating up seven fat cows, and he saw seven ears of corn which

were fresh and green and another seven that were dry and withered. He was worried about what he saw and he called the people in his court in the morning to ask them what they thought about his dream. Some people say it is possible he saw the dream more than once and so he was worried. The people of his court said it was a strange dream and they could not interpret it. They describe it as ‘azghasu ahlam’ meaning dreams that are mixed up, confused, scary . . .

Their message to the King was that some dreams make sense and are good dreams, while others are like nightmares. They worry the dreamer but are a mix of things from his imagination which come together in a scary way. Perhaps this was just an overactive imagination.

It is also possible that they understood that the dream was predicting something that would not be very good. But they were afraid to tell the King. They only told him things that would please him and make him happy. They were afraid to displease him by telling him of an interpretation that he would not like.

Although most chiefs are very respectful to the King, these people seemed to dismiss the dream he saw as a confused nightmare. Perhaps it was because they saw the King was concerned and they wanted to calm him. They tried to laugh it off so he would not think more of it. But the matter worried the King. The dream did not sound good for his kingdom. Would it be attacked and ‘eaten up’ by another King? Would he lose his Kingdom? These thoughts bothered the King.

The dream of the King was the plan of God to remove Nabi Yusuf from the prison. It would clear his name and free him from prison. It would give him a respectable position in Egypt and eventually unite him with his family. It was also to save the people of Egypt from a drought that could have destroyed them. Such is the plan of God. It has far reaching effects and what He wills always happens. But it takes time and many people lose hope instead of trusting the plan of God for themselves.

Note for teachers – some scholars do believe that the Aziz of Egypt and the King of Egypt are the same person. However according to Tafsir Namune, the source for these notes, they were two different people. It may not be necessary to tell this to the students. Differences in history do occur between scholars and do not really affect the moral of the story. Children however may not understand that and get confused.

Important Lessons

1) Kings and leaders are always worried about losing their power.

- 2) Seeking advice from others, especially experts those with more knowledge is a wise action. The King seeks advice of his chiefs and asks their opinion. Consulting others is recommended in Islam.
- 3) If you do not know something, do not be afraid to say it. The chiefs could not interpret the dreams. Only the expert in dream interpretation– Nabi Yusuf – could.
- 4) Trust in the plan of God for yourself.

Ideas

- act out the scene in the court when the King narrates his dream.
- draw/sketch the dream of the King
- have a discussion about the plan of God for everyone. What are some signs, in their own lives, in history, in the world around them . . . ?

Related story

Queen of Sheba seeks advice

When Prophet Sulayman was told by Hudhud about Bilqis, the Queen of Sheba whose people worshipped the sun, he decided to communicate with her. He gave Hudhud a letter to deliver to her. Hudhud flew to the land of Saba where the queen was and dropped the letter in the lap of the queen.

When Bilqis read the letter she was worried. She called her advisors to seek their advice. ‘I have received an honorable letter from Sulayman’ she told them. ‘It begins in the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful and it says; Accept Allah and worship Him alone. I am his Prophet.’

Bilqis then asked her advisors what they thought she should do. They were very respectful towards her and said they were strong and could fight if necessary but they said she was the one who would decide.

This story shows an example of a leader who was wise and consulted with people around her who had knowledge, even though she was the one in charge.

The Holy Prophet (s) consults others

During the battle of Khandaq, the Muslims were worried about the enemies who had gathered forces to come and attack them. The army was marching towards Madina and the Muslims in Madina knew they would soon reach Madina. The Prophet consulted his companions and asked them what they thought would be a good plan. Although he was a Prophet of God, God wanted

him to consult others. That showed respect for others and strengthened their work together as a team.

Salman al Farsi suggested they build a moat around Madina which would be filled with water. The enemies would not be able to jump over it with their horses. The Prophet accepted his suggestion and asked the Muslims to begin digging the moat. It was completed in a few days and completely surprised the enemies when they reached Madina.