

Sura Yusuf Verses 7-10

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي يُوسُفَ وَإِخْوَتِهِ آيَاتٍ لِّلسَّائِلِينَ

Certainly in Yusuf and his brothers there are signs for the inquirers.

إِذْ قَالُوا لِيُوسُفُ وَأَخُوهُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْنَا مِنَّا وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّ أَبَانَا لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

When they said: Surely Yusuf and his brother are dearer to our father than we, though we are a (stronger) group; most surely our father is in clear error

اقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ أَوْ اطْرَحُوهُ أَرْضًا يَخْلُ لَكُمْ وَجْهَ أَبِيكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا مِن بَعْدِهِ قَوْمًا صَالِحِينَ

Slay Yusuf or cast him out to some land, so that your father's regard may be just for you, and after that you can be a righteous people.

قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِّنْهُمْ لَا تَقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ وَأَلْقُوهُ فِي غِيَابَتِ الْجُبِّ يَلْتَقِطْهُ بَعْضُ السَّيَّارَةِ إِن كُنْتُمْ فَاعِلِينَ

A speaker from among them said: Do not slay Yusuf, and cast him down into the bottom of the well if you must, some caravan of travellers will pick him up.

Reflections

- the brothers think love should be based on strength and that the father is mistaken to love Yusuf more than them. Do we make mistaken assumptions about people loving or not loving us? What do we base it on?
- jealousy can lead to taking life, even that of a brother. Why did the brothers feel no love or compassion for Yusuf?
- one brother dared to speak out with an alternative suggestion. What does it take to speak up when those around us intend to do wrong?

Tafsir

The brothers discussed how they thought their father loved Yusuf more than them. They did not take into consideration the fact that he was younger and that his mother was not alive, thus making him needy of a display of affection by the father. They felt their father should love them

more as they were stronger and more able to run affairs for their father. They assumed that was the criteria for love. They judged their father and declared that he was wrong in what he was doing.

The veils of jealousy and hatred covered their minds and did not allow them to see things clearly. They could not see another perspective on the matter. That is what happens to the human being when they only think of their own gains and are concerned only about themselves. They need to step out of self-love and the ego to actually see things the way they are.

These verses show the serious effects of jealousy. It can lead to the killing or harming of a brother. It is like a fire that burns within the heart, burning up the person as well as others around him. When we see that someone has a blessing, we can wish that we have it too without wanting to take it away from the other person. This is envy. This can be positive for it can lead to efforts to achieve a similar blessing. It creates progress in the individual and in society. However when we wish to take it away from the other person this is known as *hasad* or jealousy and is a major sin. Imam Sadiq (a) says; *A believer can envy but will not be jealous and a hypocrite will be jealous and will not envy.* Imam Ali (a) has said: *Jealousy does not bring with it except harm and anger that weakens the heart and makes the body sick.*

The brothers did not think the father was wrong in his belief and faith. They knew he was a Prophet. But they blamed him for being unfair in his love for his sons.

The brothers came up with a plot to either kill Yusuf or leave him in a faraway land. They knew that it was an evil action. But they justified it wrongly by saying they would be righteous after that. It was as if they would be able to erase the huge wrongdoing by becoming better afterwards. They had some fear of God and wanted to repent after the sin. But thinking of *Tawbah* and repentance even before committing the sin is just a deception of the soul and is not true regret at the sin. True *Tawbah* is an intense regret that comes after committing a sin, not knowingly doing it and saying I will repent later.

They hoped to get their father's attention if Yusuf was not there. They say they would get his 'regard'. They do not mention that they would get his love, knowing that it would be difficult for the father to forget Yusuf and love them more.

One of the brothers was not happy with the two proposals and had another suggestion. He said they should throw him in the well so that there were chances he would be rescued by a passing

group of people. This brother was reluctant with the whole plan and poses his alternative as a suggestion only if they do have to do this (if you must do this). Sometimes a person knows something is wrong and does not really want to do it but goes ahead because he cannot stand up for what is right (peer pressure).

Important Lessons

1) Stay away from jealousy. At the first jealous thought seek refuge in God from Shaytan and ask Him for help to overcome such negative thoughts. Counter it by understanding that the blessing the other person has, is from God. If you pray and work for it, God can give it to you too. It is all in His hands.

2) Do not be intimidated by others when you know they are doing wrong. A strong speaks out and refuses to follow the crowd when his/her conscience says clearly that what they are doing is wrong.

Ideas

- create a word web on Jealousy. Ask children to come up with words that can be linked to jealousy.

- discuss scenarios (or perform skits, write on posters . . .) where children should speak out. What would they say, and how? Possible examples include classmates bullying a student, friends wanting to lie, siblings shirking duties . . .

- the following site may have some useful info (please use discretion as not all content is appropriate);

<http://www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetailsKids.aspx?p=335&np=287&id=2599>