

Sura Sad, Verses 24-25

وَظَنَّ دَاؤُودُ أَنَّمَا فَتَنَاهُ فَاسْتَغْفَرَ رَبَّهُ وَخَرَّ رَاكِعًا وَأَنَابَ

Then Dawood knew that We had tested him so he sought forgiveness and fell down, bowing, and turned [to Allah]

فَغَفَرْنَا لَهُ ذَلِكَ صَلَوةٌ وَإِنَّ لَهُ عِنْدَنَا لَزُلْفَىٰ وَحُسْنَ مَآبٍ

So We forgave him and indeed he has a station of nearness to Us and an excellent place of return.

Reflections

- What was Nabi Dawood's test in this event?
- How did he realize he had been tested?
- What did Nabi Dawood do after his realization?
- How do these verses show Nabi Dawood's closeness to God?

Tafsir

After giving his judgement Nabi Dawood immediately realized that he had not given the other brother a chance to speak before passing judgement. A case that is conducted fairly must listen to both sides and allow each to present their points. The rights of people, even those who have done wrong, should not be overlooked. Nabi Dawood realized that God had tested him to see how he reacted when he was asked to judge after being startled and afraid. Perhaps he had rushed into judging without thinking properly about it. It was a lesson that despite being a great judge he could sometimes make a mistake. All human beings react differently to stress or negative emotions and no-one can be sure of themselves at all times.

Some commentators also say that he could have sought forgiveness for thinking the two brothers had a wrong intention of harming him while all they wanted was a fair judgement.

Nabi Dawood immediately seeks forgiveness and falls down. The word 'kharra' means to fall from above with a sound or noise. It is possible that it refers to falling into sajdah with the sound of dhikr of Allah, or even crying due to regret and repentance. The bowing could be an actual ruku before the sajdah, or it could just mean he bent and then went into sajdah. These actions

show that turning to Allah should be done with the heart and with the body. The limbs of the body must reflect the humility that is felt in the heart.

Allah forgives Nabi Dawood his mistake and accepts his turning back to Him. He also declares that the Prophet has a station of nearness and respect with Him, and that his eventual end and destination will be excellent. This shows that both the world and the Hereafter will be blessed for Nabi Dawood. It is an important success. It is not enough for the world to be blessed, both the world and the hereafter are necessary for true happiness.

This event shows that closeness to Allah means a person is very watchful over himself. He is alert and cautious with his actions, and quick to repent at even the slightest slip.

Relevant Verses

Seeking forgiveness - 11:3, 66:8

Hadith

The sin that makes you sad and repentant is more liked by Allah than the good deed which turns you arrogant.

Imam Ali (a)

My God! You are He who has opened a door to your pardon and named it 'repentance' for you said, 'Repent to God with complete repentance' (66:8). What is the excuse for him who remains heedless of entering the door after its opening?

Imam Zaynul Abidin (a)

Important Lessons

- 1) Those who are close to God are alert and realize their mistakes immediately.
- 2) When you realize your mistake seek forgiveness and show humility.
- 3) Humility to God must be manifested verbally and physically.

Story

Nabi Dawood's conversation with God

Allah asked Nabi Dawood, O Dawood! Why have you gone in seclusion and are alone?" He replied, "I remain aloof from others to gain Your pleasure and people also remain away from me."

Allah asked, "Why do you remain silent?" He replied, "My Lord! My being afraid of you has made me silent."

The Lord asked, "Why do you toil so much in worship?" His submission was, "Your love has made me toil endlessly in your worship."

Allah asked, "Why are you so humble?" Dawud replied, "Your limitless Grandeur and Might has made me extremely low before You. Moreover, O My God! Only humility is appropriate when I am facing You." . . .

Allah said, "Greetings to you and good news of increases in My Grace and Bounty. When you will come to Me, everything desired by you will be ready for you. So live among the population and be social to them but keep away from bad deeds so that you may be able to gain whatever you wish from me on the Day of Judgment.

Possible Ideas for activities

- 1) Discuss seeking forgiveness - different ways of doing it. Heartfelt regret, sadness, tears, an intention not to repeat, humble physical signs, different dhikr of repentance. Brainstorm ways of seeking forgiveness with the students - on a the board or on papers around the room. Role play scenarios or play a game on situations requiring forgiveness.
- 2) Nearness to God - who are other people the students know (from Islamic history or present day) who are near to God. What are their qualities. Students can draw a figure and label it with qualities that reflect nearness to God. This concept could be explored in different ways.
- 3) Act out this story. It could be done as narrated or could be adapted into a court case. The class could be divided into groups and each group can perform the story with a judge, plaintiff and defendant.

Sources:

Āytaullāh Nāsir Makārim Shirāzī (ed), *Tafsīr-e Namūneh*;

Aghae Muhsin Qaraati, *Tafsire Nur*

<https://www.al-islam.org/hayat-al-qulub-vol-1-allamah-muhammad-baqir-al-majlisi/account-dawud>