

Overview**The brothers lying to Nabi Ya‘qūb (a)****Exaggeration****Covering up the lie****Nabi Ya‘qūb’s response****Patience****Seeking God’s help**

Sūrat Yūsuf
Verses 16-18

وَجَاءُوا أَبَاهُمْ عِشَاءً يَبْكُونَ

And they came to their father at night weeping.

قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا إِنَّا ذَهَبْنَا نَسْتَبِقُ وَتَرَكْنَا يُوسُفَ عِنْدَ مَتَاعِنَا فَأَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ ۖ وَمَا أَنْتَ بِمُؤْمِنٍ لَنَا وَلَوْ

كُنَّا صَادِقِينَ

They said: O our father! we went off racing and left Yūsuf by our goods. Then the wolf ate him, and you will not believe us though we are truthful.

وَجَاءُوا عَلَىٰ قَمِيصِهِ بِدَمٍ كَذِبٍ ۚ قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَمْرًا ۖ فَصَبِرْ ۖ جَمِيلٌ ۖ وَاللَّهُ

الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَىٰ مَا تَصِفُونَ

And they brought his shirt with false blood upon it. He said: Nay, your souls have made the matter light for you. But patience is good and Allah is He Whose help is sought for what you describe.

Questions For Reflection:

- 1) What are some ways in which the brothers exaggerated to cover up their lie?
- 2) What matter was more serious for Nabi Ya‘qūb than the separation of Yūsuf?
- 3) What type of patience was Nabi Ya‘qūb required to exercise? (Patience along with trust in Allah. Imam al-Baqir (AS) was once asked about graceful patience [graceful patience (al-Sabr al-jamil) - mentioned in the Quran 12:18, 12:83], to which he replied, *‘That is the patience that is devoid of complaint to other people.’*)

Commentary

The brothers carried out their plan against Yūsuf. Now they needed to plan what they would tell their father to make it look like a natural accident. They also wanted to gain his love and attention now that Yūsuf would not be there. The method they chose was the same one Nabi Ya‘qūb had told them he was afraid of – a wolf had eaten him.

Nabi Ya‘qūb had been waiting for his sons to return. When they came he could not see Yūsuf with them. The sons began to explain. They said they had gone off to race on their horses, playing games etc. Yūsuf who was much younger than them could not compete with them. So they left him behind with their goods. When they came back from their racing they saw that a wolf had attacked him and eaten him. The brothers showed him the shirt of Yūsuf which they had stained with the blood of an animal. The brothers did not understand how wrong it was to lie to their father. Lying is a major sin and is disliked by God. Imam Hasan al-Askari (a) says; *All evil is locked in a room and its key is lying.*

Nabi Ya‘qūb looked at the shirt and knew that the story was a lie. It had blood on it but was not torn in any place. A wolf would have ripped the shirt apart. According to history, Nabi Ya‘qūb took the shirt in his hands and asked why there were no signs of the wolf’s teeth on it. Another tradition says he held the shirt and cried out; what type of a kind wolf is this? It ate my son but did not damage the shirt at all? He tells them their Nafs, the Nafs al-‘Ammāra which invites people to do evil – has made this serious matter very light for them. They are able to get rid of their brother and lie to their father without feeling any guilt. He then fell to the ground and the brothers were afraid that the news had caused his death.

In Usūle Kāfi, the following hadith is quoted from Imām Sādiq (a): *A free human being is free in all circumstances. Should a misfortune befall him he bears it with patience (sabr). If calamities strike him, they don’t shatter him. If taken captive and subdued; he turns hardship into ease, as was the case of Yūsuf, the truthful and trustworthy (a). His freedom saved him from harm, although he was enslaved, subdued, and imprisoned. The darkness of the pit, the dread and whatever befell him did him no harm, until God favored him and made the insolent tyrant, who had been his master, his slave. Then God made him His apostle and through him was merciful to a people. In this way patience is followed by good. So be patient and reconcile yourself to patience in order to be rewarded.*

Lessons

- 1) A lie is usually discovered quickly. It cannot fool others for a long time
- 2) The Nafs al-‘Ammāra and Shaytān are the two biggest enemies of the human being in his progress towards God. It should be controlled and disciplined by understanding its evil nature and not listening to it
- 3) Patience and trust in Allah are two powerful weapons to deal with any difficulty in life. They strengthen the human being and allow him to handle things well. Imam ‘Ali (a) says: *The one who practices patience will never be deprived of success, even though it may take a long time.*

Practical Implementations

1. When you find yourself wanting to tell a lie, identify your reasons/need to lie and think of the consequences.
2. Picture yourself in battle with the Nafs and Shaytān and you emerging as the winner.
3. Remind yourself of personalities in history whose patience and trust in Allah was rewarded.

Cross Reference Verses

Shaytān descends on Liars – 26:221-223

Good news to the patient ones – 2:155

Verses on Patience - <https://themuslimvibe.com/faith-islam/10-verses-from-the-holy-quran-on-patience>

Connecting Topics

Lying

Covering up Lies in News Media

Useful Links

<https://www.al-islam.org/greater-sins-volume-2-sayyid-abdul-husayn-dastghaib-shirazi/seventeenth-greater-sin-lying>

<https://www.healthline.com/health/how-to-stop-lying#find-triggers>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wbftlDzIALA>

<https://hbr.org/1995/05/why-the-news-is-not-the-truth>

