

**Overview**

The brothers request Nabī Ya‘qūb *‘alayhis salām* to seek forgiveness for them  
 Nabī Ya‘qūb *‘alayhis salām* agrees to seek his Lord’s forgiveness for his children

The attributes of God – Forgiving, Merciful

Seeking forgiveness from Allāh at special times

The dhālim (oppressor) and the madhlūm (oppressed)

Related Story

Sūrat Yūsuf

Verses 97-98

قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا اسْتَغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا خَاطِئِينَ

They said: O our father! seek forgiveness of our sins for us, surely we were at fault

قَالَ سَوْفَ أَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكُمْ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

He said ‘I will soon seek forgiveness of my Lord for you, Surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.’

**Questions for Reflection**

1. Why do the brothers ask their father to seek forgiveness for them? (the brothers realize their fault. But they are more concerned whether God will forgive them)
2. Why does Nabī Ya‘qūb say ‘I will soon seek forgiveness’? Why didn’t he do it right away?
3. Nabī Ya‘qūb mentions two names of Allāh. What effect do those names have on the brothers? (He doesn’t mention anything about justice or punishment).

**Commentary**

After seeing their father regain his eyesight the brothers are delighted for the father. But they feel very ashamed of what they have done. The realization of all they put their family through hits them hard and they regret their actions deeply. They immediately acknowledge that they are at fault and ask the father to seek forgiveness

for them. When human beings realize the extent of their sin and regret having done it, it is a sign of turning back to God. It shows that the heart is not completely hard. Otherwise, there would be no realization and no repentance.

The brothers are concerned about their disobedience to God. They ask the father to seek God's forgiveness for them, rather than ask for just his forgiveness. The father does not reproach them or ask them anything. He says he will soon seek forgiveness for them and gives them hope that Allāh will forgive them by reminding them that He is the Forgiving and the Merciful. Hadīth tells us that Nabī Ya'qūb wanted to seek forgiveness for them at a special time, when du'ās are most quickly answered. He waited for the early morning time on a Friday which is the best time for seeking forgiveness from Allāh.

Asking someone in a higher position to seek forgiveness for you is allowed in Islām. This verse is proof of that. The brothers ask their father to seek forgiveness for them and the father agrees to. The brothers are aware of the status of their father and know that his prayer for them would be answered. This is known as doing 'tawassul' or using a 'wasīlah'. It means using an intermediary who has a higher status with Allāh.

The days of wrongdoing and tolerating the wrongdoing were now over.

Scholars say that for the oppressor (dhālim) there are three days;

- a) The day of power (when he can do wrong)
- b) The day of opportunity (when he gets the chance to do wrong)
- c) The day of regret.

And for the oppressed (madhlūm) there are also three days:

- a) The day of sadness (when he bears the wrong done to him)
- b) The day of thought (when he plans how to counter what is done to him)
- c) The day of help (when he is helped and rewarded by God, either in this world or in the Hereafter)

Of course, days here refers to periods of time.

The day that the brothers put Nabī Yūsuf in the well they were laughing and Nabī Yūsuf was sad and humiliated. Now it was the opposite.

It is never too late to seek forgiveness of Allāh. However great the sin, if there is true understanding of the seriousness of the sin that was committed and a sincere desire to

repent and turn back to God, Allāh will forgive and accept the person back. In fact, Allāh dislikes a person who loses hope in the mercy of God. That is one of the major sins.

### Related Story

#### **Effect of true repentance**

When the order prohibiting wine-drinking was revealed, a caller was sent by the Messenger of Allāh *‘azza wa jall* who announced that henceforth no one shall consume liquor. By chance, one day the Holy Prophet (s) was passing through a by lane when a Muslim man also entered it carrying a bottle of wine in his hand. He was terrified on seeing the Holy Prophet (s) and he said fervently to the Almighty Allāh, “I repent for this and I shall never drink again. Please save me from disgrace.”

When the Messenger of Allah (s) came near he asked, “What is there in the bottle?” “It contains Vinegar,” replied the man. The Holy Prophet put forward his hand and asked the man to put a little bit on his palm. When the Prophet examined it, it was indeed vinegar. The person was overwhelmed with emotions and he began to weep and say, “By Allāh! It was wine!”

“But before this I had repented and begged Allāh not to disgrace me,” He added. The Messenger of Allah (s) said that it was true, “Allah changes the sins of repenters into good deeds. “They are the ones whose sins are changed into good deeds by Allāh.”

Source: Misbāhul Qulūb

### Lessons

- 1) Acknowledging the sin is the first step towards getting it forgiven.
- 2) Family relationships are too precious to let mistakes of members spoil them for ever.
- 3) A parent will always love and accept the child back, even when they have wronged them.

### Practical Implementation

- When someone acknowledges the wrong they have done to you do not reproach them for it or rub it in.
- When you wrong your parents, try to come up with ways to make it up to them other than just saying sorry.

### Cross reference verses

Seeking intermediary increases chances of forgiveness Q4:64

Not despairing in the Mercy of Allāh Q39:53

### Connecting Topics

Tawassul (seeking intermediary)

Special times for supplication/seeking forgiveness

### Useful Links

<https://www.al-islam.org/message-thaqalayn/vol5-n4-2000/tawassul-seeking-way-into-allah-abd-al-karim-bi-azar-shirazi/tawassul>

<https://www.al-islam.org/divine-link-study-wasilah-and-tawassul-kazim-dhalla/tawassul-person>

<https://www.al-islam.org/supplication-eyes-ahl-al-bayt-muhammad-mahdi-al-asifi/etiquettes-and-requisites-supplication>

### Activity Ideas

- Let the students make a door of repentance. Make a key (Istighfār) and a lock (hard heart). Imām Zayn al ‘Ābidīn *‘alayhis salām* says; “My God! You are He who has opened a door to Your pardon and named it ‘repentance’ for You said, ‘Repent to God with unswerving repentance’ (Q66:8). What is the excuse for him who remains heedless of entering the door after its opening?” Sahīfā al-Kāmilah, the whispered prayers of those who repent.

- Students could make a tree of repentance. What are its fruits (sincerity, love of Allāh, good deeds, feeling sorry, ashamed . . .)?

### Sources

Āyatullāh Nāsir Makārim Shirāzī (ed), Tafsīr-e Namūneh

Āghae Muhsin Qarāati, Tafsīre Nūr