

# **TAFSEER OF SURAH YUSUF**

## **LECTURE 6: USING A VALID EXCUSE FOR AN EVIL PURPOSE**

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### **REQUEST OF THE BROTHERS' OF YUSUF (a.s) TO THEIR FATHER**

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After the brothers of Prophet Yusuf (a.s) agreed to get "rid" of him, they had to find an excuse to get their father to allow Prophet Yusuf (a.s) to be alone with them so that they could do their evil act. To achieve this, they had to present their father with a convincing argument that he could not easily reject. Their request is thus mentioned in Verses 11 and 12 as follows:

They said, "Oh our father, why do you not entrust us with Yusuf while indeed, we are to him sincere well-wishers? Send him with us tomorrow that he may eat well and play. And indeed we will be his guardians."

Their reference to not being trusted indicates that they previously also requested for their father to send Prophet Yusuf (a.s) with them, but Prophet Ya'koob (a.s) refused. So this time round they had to change their strategy and they thus added an emotional flavour to their request.

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They thus started by saying "Oh our father." This creates emotional feelings by implying that they are also his children and Yusuf (a.s) is not his only child. This fact being stated thus also meant that there should be no reason to not trust them with Yusuf (a.s) as they were also his brothers and thus blood relation and they thus claim that they are his "well-wishers" and do not intend any bad towards him.

After starting with emotional appeal, they then focused on realities of life that Prophet Yusuf (a.s) seems to have been deprived of as he was not exposed to it. They thus asked for Yusuf (a.s) to be sent with them so that he could "eat" and "play" and have some entertainment.

They were thus alluding to the fact that Yusuf (a.s), while being a child, could not be kept "home bound" all the time and had to experience life and needed entertainment.

### **PROPHET YA'KOUB (a.s)'s REPLY TO THEIR REQUEST**

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It is interesting to note that in reply to their request, Prophet Ya'koob (a.s) did not reject the argument that a young child like Yusuf (a.s) needed entertainment. But since he did not trust the brothers, he presented an alternative argument which also included an element of emotion to try to avoid their request. His reply thus consists of two points which are captured in Verse 13 wherein it says:

He (Ya'koob) said: "Indeed it saddens me that you should take him, and I fear that a wolf would eat him while you are oblivious of him."

Ya'koob (a.s) thus said that he cannot stand being separated from Yusuf (a.s) and that he feared for his physical safety at the same time.

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The brothers of Yusuf (a.s) do not respond to the issue of Ya'koob (a.s)'s sadness of being separated from Yusuf (a.s) as there is nothing they could do about that. All they possibly could say was that it is a reality of life that one day when a child is an adult, then he naturally separates from his parents to live his own life.

However, they do confidently respond to the issue of his safety by once again referring to the fact that they are a strong group (usba) and that it would result in their humiliation as a group if they could not protect Yusuf (a.s) as their dignity and prestige would be destroyed.

Verse 14 thus says:

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They said, "If a wolf should eat him while we are a (strong) clan, indeed we would then be losers."

In this way they managed to convince their father to let Yusuf (a.s) go with them.

### **DECEPTION ALWAYS APPEARS IN A BEAUTIFUL FORM**

We learn from the above that satan always "beautifies" our sins and make them seem attractive to us. That is how we are allured to commit sin. Thus the brothers of Yusuf (a.s) think of themselves as being "well-wishers" of Yusuf (a.s) while they were going to actually get "rid" of him!

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Often in life when slogans are presented of goodness and something being in your benefit, it is often covered in evil.

In deception, very valid arguments may be presented to you to convince you. Thus, the brothers of Yusuf (a.s) referred to his need for entertainment. This human need is recognized by Islam in that we all need some time allocated for lawful, healthy fun.

In a well-known hadith of Imam Ali (a.s) he says:

"Divide your time into three parts, a portion of your time for earning lawful income, a portion of your time for worship and a portion of your time for relaxation and this last portion assists to energize you for the first two parts".

Thus Islam is not a religion that wants you to be a dry zombie. Narrations indicate that Imam Ali (a.s) and similarly Prophet Muhammad (sawa) were jovial in nature.

Even though the brothers of Yusuf (a.s) presented a good argument emphasizing the need for entertainment, the other important lesson that we learn at this point is that satan's plan always flourishes in the environment of entertainment. The biggest corruption that impacts our lives manifests in the arena of entertainment like movies and media which pollutes our thinking.

## **BEING OVER PROTECTIVE OF CHILDREN**



By Prophet Ya'koob (a.s) allowing Yusuf (a.s) to go with his brothers, he shows us that one's love for your child should not cause you to be over protective over them and not allow them freedom to move. This in fact would be harmful to a child's development even though one should at the same time balance this need with the necessity of protecting one's children against harm.

### **DON'T ACCUSE SOMEONE WHEN AN ACT IS NOT YET PERFORMED**

Prophet Ya'koob (a.s) knew that the brothers of Yusuf (a.s) were jealous and might do something to harm him and we thus see that he does not accuse them of anything before the time. This is also important to note in our daily life that one cannot falsely accuse someone of something they have not done and claim that they intend to do it. He thus says "I fear that a wolf would eat him" and does not accuse them of feeding Yusuf (a.s) to a wolf.

## **DON'T TEACH A LIAR TO LIE**

Though the brothers of Yusuf (a.s) planned to get rid of him, they did not think about what excuse they were going to present regarding how Yusuf (a.s) went missing. When Ya'koob (a.s) mentioned the idea of a wolf eating him, it occurred to them for the first time that a wolf could eat a human being, else they were unaware of this fact.

Since they were going to lie, the mentioning of the idea of the wolf actually planted a seed in their minds for the first time that they could use that same story as their own story, which they did later on.

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Prophet Muhammad (sawa) says in relation to this story "Do not teach a liar to lie like the children of Ya'koob did not know that a wolf can eat their brother but their father taught them that the wolf can eat a human being so they took this excuse and lied about it."

One should thus never provide excuses for a liar to lie but rather close the doors for him to lie by ensuring he does not have any justification to do so.