

THE STORY OF JOSEPH (PART 2 OF 7): TREACHERY AND DECEPTION

Rating: 4.6

Description: Joseph's brothers betray him, and Jacob turns to God with patience and humility.

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***“And Allah has full power and control over His Affairs, but most of men know not.”
(Quran 12:21)***

The story of Joseph confirms unconditionally that God has total control over all affairs. The treachery and deception of Joseph's brothers succeeded only in preparing Joseph for the great position he would eventually attain. Joseph's story describes God's omnipotence and gives an accurate account of His power and supremacy. The story begins with deception but ends with comfort and joy. A fitting reward for the patience and total submission to God's will, Joseph exhibits throughout his long journey confronting the schemes and treachery of those around him.

The patience Joseph learned from his ordeal made him amongst the most righteous of men. His lineage was impeccable, his great grandfather, grandfather and father were also Prophets. In Christian and Jewish tradition, these men are known as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Deception and Treachery

When Jacob's older sons sought permission to take Joseph with them deep into the desert to play, fear leapt into Jacob's heart. From their first words, he suspected treachery and expressed his fear that a wolf would take Joseph. Jacob said,

“Truly, it saddens me that you should take him away. I fear lest a wolf should devour him, whilst you are careless of him.” (Quran 12:13)

Satan works in subtle and deceitful ways, and with his words, Jacob unwittingly supplied his sons with the perfect reason for Joseph's disappearance. The brothers immediately knew they would blame Joseph's disappearance on a wolf, and this became part of their dastardly plan. Eventually Jacob agreed and Joseph left with his brothers on their journey into the desert.

They went directly to the well and without remorse, picked up Joseph and threw him down into the well. Joseph cried out in fear but their cruel hearts felt no pity for their young brother. The brothers felt secure in their plan that a traveller would find Joseph and sell him into slavery. While Joseph called out in terror, the brothers took a small goat or sheep from their flock, slaughtered it and wiped the blood over one of Joseph's garments. Completely consumed by their jealousy, the brothers took an oath to keep their foul deed secret and walked away pleased with themselves. Terrified Joseph clung to a ledge in the well, and God made known to him that one day he would confront his brothers. He told Joseph the day would come when he would speak to his brothers about this dastardly event, but the brothers would not know they were talking to Joseph.

“Indeed, you shall (one day) inform them of this their affair, when they know (you) not.” (Quran 12:15)

Crying is not Evidence of Truth.

The brothers returned to their father weeping. By this time it was dark, and Jacob was sitting in his house anxiously awaiting the return of Joseph. The sound of ten men crying confirmed his deepest fear. The darkness of the night was matched only by the darkness in their hearts. The lies rolled easily from their tongues and Jacob's heart constricted in fear.

“They said, ‘O our father! We went racing with one another, and left Joseph by our belongings and a wolf devoured him; but you will never believe us, even when we speak the truth.’ And they brought his shirt stained with false blood.” (Quran 12:17-18)

In a story from the righteous men that came after Prophet Muhammad comes a tale of a Muslim judge who was deciding the case of an old woman. The details of the case are not important; however, the old woman was crying and crying. Based on the evidence the judge ruled against her. A friend of the judge said, “She was crying and crying, she is old, why didn't you believe her?” The judge said “Don't you know from Quran that crying is not evidence of the truth, the brothers of Joseph went to their father crying.” They were crying but they committed the crime.

Both Jacob and Joseph were among the most noble of men. Prophet Muhammad described Joseph as the most dignified and generous of men. When asked who was the most God fearing man he replied, “The most honourable person is Joseph, God's prophet, the son of God's prophet, the son of the beloved servant of God (Abraham).”^[1] While Joseph sat in the well, terrified, yet secure in his submission to God, Jacob, many miles away, felt his heart constricted by fear and pain yet knew his sons were lying. As befitting a Prophet of God, with tears streaming down his face, Jacob said,

“Nay, but your own selves have made up a tale. So (for me) patience is most fitting. And it is God (Alone) Whose help can be sought against that which you assert.”

(Quran 12:18)

This was a dilemma for Jacob, what was he to do? He knew his sons were lying, but what were his options? To kill his sons? Due to his complete submission to God, Jacob knew that this affair was out of his hands. He had no option but to trust God and turn to Him with hope and patience.

Deep in the well, Joseph prayed. Father and son turned to God in the deep darkness of the night. A mixture of fear and hope filled their hearts, and the night gave way to the new day. For Jacob, the day dawned on the beginning of many years to be filled with trust in God and patience. For Joseph, the sunrays of dawn shone down on the edges of the well. If he could have scanned the horizon, he would have seen a caravan approaching. Minutes later a man lowered his bucket into its depths of the well expecting to find cool clear water.

Footnotes:

[1]

Saheeh Al-Bukhari.

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