

The story of Yusuf (*alayhi salaam*)

Yusuf, his brothers and the well

Prophet Yusuf (as) descended from a long line of Prophets, beginning with the Prophet Ibrahim (as), who was his great grandfather. Prophet Yusuf (as)'s grandfather was Prophet Ishaq (as) and his father was Prophet Yakub (as).

Prophet Yusuf (as) had eleven brothers. They all lived near Jerusalem in Palestine, which at that time was called Canaan. His youngest brother was called Binyamin (Benjamin).



When Prophet Yusuf (as) was a young boy, he had a dream in which he saw the sun, the moon and eleven stars bow down to him. Prophet Yusuf (as) told his father, Yakub (as), about his strange dream. Yakub (as) told him to be careful and not to tell anyone else about the dream.

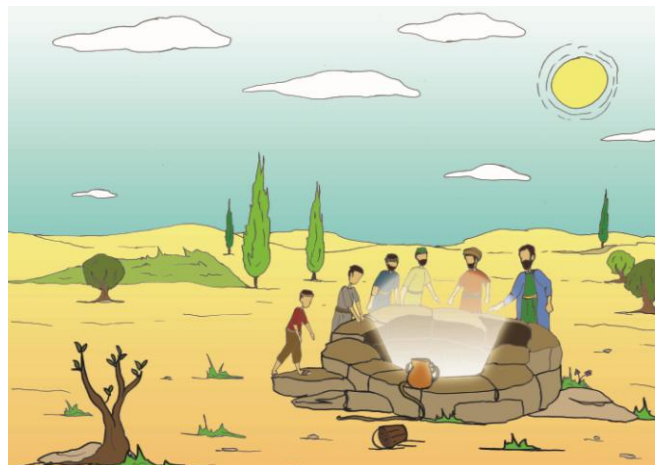
Prophet Yakub (as) loved all of his sons. But they all, except Binyamin, felt jealous of Yusuf (as) because they thought their father loved Yusuf more than he loved them.

The brothers were so jealous of Yusuf (as) that they came up with a plan to get rid of him forever. One brother suggested that they should kill him. Others did not have the heart to kill him and thought it would be better to send him to a faraway place. Finally, they decided to throw him into a well. Travellers would find him when they stopped for water, and Yusuf (as) would disappear from the brothers' lives forever.

One day, the brothers asked their father if they could take Yusuf (as) with them to play. Yakub (as) was afraid for Yusuf (as), but agreed to let him go. The brothers set off together with Yusuf (as). When they were a long way from home, the brothers acted on their plan. They threw Yusuf (as) into a well and left him there.

The brothers then returned home without Yusuf (as). They went to their father weeping, saying that Yusuf (as) had been eaten by a wolf whilst they were playing. The brothers showed Yakub (as) their younger brother's shirt covered with the blood of a sheep, to convince him of their story.

But Yusuf (as) was still alive deep inside the well.



Yusuf (as) as a slave

A group of travellers stopped by the well on their way to Egypt. When the travellers lifted the bucket from the well, Yusuf (as) came up too. The travellers took Yusuf (as) from Palestine to Egypt,

where they sold him as a slave. Yusuf (as) was bought by the Chief Minister, the Aziz, of Egypt. The Aziz treated Yusuf (as) well, and Yusuf (as) was thankful to Allah and remained a loyal slave.

Over the years, Yusuf (as) grew into a man, and Allah gifted him with immense beauty and wisdom. Yusuf (as) was a modest man, but he received a lot of attention because of his good looks. Eventually, even though he did nothing wrong, Yusuf (as) was sent to prison as a way of avoiding unwanted attention and sin.

The King's dream



Sometimes dreams have special meanings, which we do not understand. Allah blessed Yusuf (as) with the ability to interpret dreams; he knew what dreams meant and could explain them to people.

The King of Egypt had a troubling dream that nobody could explain. The king dreamt that seven fat cows were eaten by seven thin cows. He then saw seven healthy ears of corn and seven dry and shrivelled ears of corn. The King

was troubled because he could not understand the dream, and no one could explain it to him. The King's servant knew of Yusuf (as) and his gift, and asked Yusuf (as) to interpret the King's dream.

With the gift Allah had given him, Yusuf (as) interpreted the King's dream. The dream meant that for the next seven years there would be plenty of crops and food throughout the land. But, for seven years after that, there would be famine throughout the land. There would be no crops and not enough food for the people to live on.

When the King heard Yusuf (as)'s interpretation of the dream, he freed Yusuf (as) from prison. The King was so impressed with Yusuf (as)'s character and wisdom that he asked Yusuf (as) to work for him. Yusuf (as) agreed and asked to be put in charge of the food storehouses in Egypt so that he could prepare the land for the seven years of famine, which would follow the seven years of plenty.

The famine and Yusuf (as)'s brothers

During the first seven years of plenty, Yusuf (as) harvested and carefully stored crops and food. When the seven years of famine followed, through Allah's mercy Yusuf (as) had stored enough food to make sure that the people did not starve.

The famine spread throughout the land, including to Palestine where the family of Yusuf (as) also suffered. Yusuf (as)'s brothers knew that in Egypt, there were stores of food that were being given to the



people. Eventually, Yusuf (as)'s brothers decided to travel from Palestine to Egypt to ask for food.

When the group of men arrived in Egypt, Yusuf (as) immediately recognised his brothers. But many years had passed and the brothers did not recognise the powerful man before them as their youngest brother, Yusuf (as). Yusuf (as) noticed that his youngest brother, Binyamin was not with the others. He gave each of the brothers food and told them to come back again, this time with Binyamin so that he may give them more food.

Back in Palestine, the brothers convinced their father to let Binyamin travel with them to Egypt. Yakub (as) was hesitant at first, remembering what had happened to Yusuf (as) so many years before; but after some time he agreed. The brothers returned to Egypt with Binyamin.

Yusuf (as) was happy to see Binyamin. He spoke to Binyamin alone and told him who he really was. Yusuf (as) then acted out a plan to ensure that his brother Binyamin would stay with him and not return to Palestine with the other brothers.

Yusuf (as) placed one of the King's drinking cups in Binyamin's food bag. When Binyamin's bag was searched, and the drinking cup was found, it seemed as if Binyamin had tried to steal it. As part of his plan, Yusuf (as) commanded Binyamin to remain in Egypt as punishment. Remembering their promise to Yakub (as) that Binyamin would return to Palestine safely, the brothers pleaded with Yusuf (as) to let Binyamin leave with them, but Yusuf (as) refused.

The brothers returned home to Palestine and told their father what had happened. The Prophet of Allah, Yakub (as) remained patient, even though he had become blind from the sorrow of losing Yusuf (as) many years before and had now lost a second son.

Finally, the brothers had to make a third trip to Egypt for more food. They were now very poor and had only a few things to trade. The brothers begged Yusuf (as) to have mercy on them. When Yusuf (as) saw the desperate state his brothers were in, he asked them one simple question.

“Do you now realise what you did to Yusuf?”

Stunned by the question, the brothers realised that the powerful man before them had to be their brother Yusuf; because, besides the brothers, Yusuf (as) was the only one who knew about that day so many years ago when they had left their brother in a well.

Even though Yusuf (as) had been through so much hardship because of what his brothers had done to him, he did not get upset. Instead, Yusuf (as) prayed for his brothers and asked them to do two things:

First, to take his shirt and lay it over their father's face. Second Yusuf (as) asked his brothers to bring their entire family back to Egypt.

When the brothers returned home they placed Yusuf (as)'s shirt over their father's face. Through Allah's mercy Yakub (as)'s sight returned and he was able to see again.

Yakub (as), his sons and their families travelled from Palestine to Egypt. Yakub (as) was overjoyed to meet his beloved son again. In respect, Yusuf (as)'s father, mother and eleven brothers bowed before Yusuf (as). Seeing this, Yusuf (as) realised that the dream he saw as a child had become a reality: the sun, the moon and eleven stars bowing to him.

Through constant patience and remembrance of Allah, Yusuf (as) was successful in all of life's tests and was richly rewarded for his patience. May Allah's peace be upon him.