

MODULE 2

Class Title: Story of Yusuf (as) part 1
(1st part of a 3 lesson series).

Aim of Lesson: To read the “most beautiful story” – story of Yusuf (as)

Category: Scripture Stories

Class format: Power point presentation & discussion

(Greeting to students) *Assalamalaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*
(*Ta'awwudh*) *Aoodhubillahi min AsShaytanir Rajeem*
(*Tasmiyah*) *Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem*
(*Du'a*) *Rabbishrahli sadri wa yassirli amri wahlul uqdatum millisani yafqahu qawli* (Surah At Ta-Ha 20: Verse 25-28)

Slides 1-2:

Today, *InshaAllah*, we are doing the story of Yusuf (as). How many of you know about his life?

The Story of Yusuf (as) is the most beautiful, as is mentioned in the 12th *surah* of the *Qur-an*. The entire *surah* is named after this prophet, *Surah Yusuf*. Most stories in the *Qur-an* are mentioned in bits and pieces. In contrast, the story of Yusuf (as) is mentioned in one stretch. Other *Qur-anic* stories are abrupt but this one is narrated in lengthy detail.

Slide 3:

In a *hadith* narrated by Abu Hurayrah (ra), he mentions; “Some people asked the Prophet (pbuh), ‘Who is the most honourable amongst the people?’ He replied, ‘The most honourable among them is the one who is the most God-fearing.’ They said, ‘O Allah’s Prophet we do not ask about this.’ He said, ‘Then the most honourable person is Joseph (Yusuf) (as), Allah’s prophet, who was the son of Allah’s prophet who was the son of Allah’s prophet, who was the son of Allah’s *Khalil* (friend).’ They then said, ‘We do not ask about this.’ He said, ‘Then you want to ask me about the Arab descent?’ They said ‘Yes.’ He said, ‘Those who were the best in the pre-Islamic period are the best in Islam if they comprehend.’” [Bukhari].

Slides 4-6:

As you can see in the *hadith* that I read, Yusuf (as) was the son of Ya’qub (as), who was the son of Is-haaq (as), who was the son of “the friend of Allah i.e. *Khalilullah*”. *Khalilullah* is Ibraheem (as)’s title. This is the family tree of Ibraheem (as); his three wives and their descendents. Ya’qub (as) had 12 sons from four wives. Yusuf (as) and Bin Yamin were sons by the same wife. Some of this information is verifiable. For example our *Qur-an* and *hadith* mention Is-haaq (as) and Isma’il (as). Other information in this family tree is from the Bible and other sources so there may be errors.

Slides 7-8:

As a child Yusuf (as) had a dream in which eleven stars, the sun and the moon were prostrating; doing *sajdah* (prostrating) before him. His father Ya'qub (as) was able to interpret dreams; he understood what dreams really meant. Ya'qub realized that this dream was a good sign; something good was going to happen and he asked his son to keep this dream to himself and not mention it to his brothers. There was a reason for this. Bin Yamin was Yusuf (as)'s only full brother from the same mother. All the other brothers were half-brothers from other mothers. They were not only older and stronger but were extremely jealous of Yusuf (as) whose goodness showed in his every action and who was very obedient to Allah (swt) and his parents. You might have noticed that even where parents treat all children equally, their affections are stronger for the child who is very caring towards them. It's not that they don't love the other children; they just feel more for the child who tries to please them. These brothers always felt that their father, Ya'qub (as), had a soft corner for Yusuf (as) and they wanted to get rid of him. The brothers reasoned that if they killed Yusuf (as), or drove him away, their father Ya'qub (as)'s love and attention would focus on them.

Slides 9-10:

The brothers formed a treacherous plan. They used to take their herds of cattle: cows, goats and sheep to graze in the meadows. While their cattle grazed, they would while away their time by playing. Perhaps one of them kept an eye on the animals and they took turns because they were so many. One day, they went to their father and asked him to let Yusuf (as) go with them. Ya'qub (as) always had this feeling that his other sons did not like this brother of theirs and somewhere deep inside he always felt that they would harm him if they got the chance. Thus, initially he said no, but the brothers were very persistent. Very diplomatically, trying not to hurt their feelings, Ya'qub (as) told his older sons that they might get engrossed in their games and a wolf might come and eat young Yusuf (as) up and they wouldn't even know. They assured their father that they would not let such an event happen and would look after Yusuf (as) very well.

What was actually their plan? Did they want Yusuf (as) to have a good time? They had taken Yusuf (as) with the intention of killing him, but it's not easy killing someone. After all, Yusuf (as) was their brother and they weren't evil. Thus, when they reached the planned place, one of them (the oldest brother according to some) said that instead of killing him, let's push him in the well and then we'll just leave him there to be discovered by somebody. They did exactly that; they threw him in the well.

Before doing that, they took off his shirt so that they could show it to their father as proof that they hadn't hurt Yusuf (as). Liars always have to make up stories to support their lies. Anyway, they soaked Yusuf (as)'s shirt in blood and took it to their father. They told their father that a wolf ate Yusuf (as). They claimed that what Ya'qub (as) had feared had indeed happened; they could not find any better excuse. They asserted that they were all playing and it was Yusuf (as)'s turn to look after the cattle. While they were engrossed, a wolf came and

ate Yusuf (as). The brothers declared that they knew that he would not believe them, so they brought Yusuf (as)'s shirt as evidence.

Slide 11:

Ya'qub (as) wept so much that he lost his eyesight. He was not only grieving for the loss of Yusuf (as) but also for the lying, betrayal and evil behavior of his other sons which hurt him deeply. Yet he said, "I'll complain about my grief and sorrow to Allah alone because I know things from Allah that you do not know." Ya'qub (as) was a very pious man and a prophet; he knew that his sons were lying but he said that he would display beautiful patience or "*Sabrun Jameel*" and rest his case with Allah (swt).

Slide 12:

Meanwhile, unknown to the brothers, the well was actually dry; it had little or no water in it. The brothers had planned something else, but Allah (swt) had planned something totally different. Some travelers happened to be passing by the well and one of them went to get water from it. When the man let his bucket down, he saw a boy and he said, "Good news, I found a boy!" The travelers quickly hid Yusuf (as) because they were heading for one of the slave markets in Egypt or *Misr* as it was called in those times.

Slides 13-15:

They decided to sell him for a few pennies in Egypt. This map shows Yusuf (as)'s journey from his home to where he was sold. This is the present day location, and Pakistan is somewhere here, this is India. Starting from Qanan, Yusuf (as) ended up in Memphis, Egypt.

Slides 16-17:

These are the ruins of a slave market in Egypt, similar to the one in which Yusuf (as) was sold. Slavery was very common at that time, so there were special markets where slaves were bought and sold. This is some writing of the Egyptians, which confirmed for us the existence and prevalence of slavery.

Slides 18-20

In the slave auction, Yusuf (as) was bought by the King's minister. The minister was known as Aziz but from the Bible you get the name Potiphar. It is said that Yusuf (as) was very handsome and well mannered, even though he was from a Bedouin tribe and not used to city life. The Aziz became so fond of Yusuf (as) that he told his wife to treat him well. Even though they had bought Yusuf (as) as a slave, he felt that they might adopt him or he might be useful to them.

Slides 21-22:

As Yusuf (as) grew older and ever more beautiful, the Aziz's wife started getting attracted to him. She was also very beautiful and one day, unable to control her passions, she locked herself in a room with Yusuf (as) and tried to seduce him. She tried to tempt and attract him towards her. Yusuf (as) was shocked and tried to run away. She chased him and caught his shirt. By the time he reached the door, a piece of his shirt ripped and was in her hand. When Yusuf (as) opened the door, the Aziz was standing there. The wife immediately tried to cover up her guilt by telling her husband how wicked Yusuf (as)'s intentions were regarding his family. She asked her husband how such a man should be punished? Yusuf (as) insisted that she had tried to seduce him.

Slide 23:

Another man, who was standing with the Aziz, said that if the shirt was torn from the front then the lady was speaking the truth and the man had told a shameless lie. However if the shirt was torn from the back then the lady had lied and the man had undoubtedly told the plain truth. This is from the *Qur-an*. The logic is obvious, because if he was running after her and if she didn't want him and was struggling, then he should have been facing her. Everyone saw, however, that the shirt was torn from the back and the Aziz understood what had really happened.

Slide 24:

Yusuf (as) had come to the Aziz's house as a child and over the years had come to know his master's nature. The Aziz knew that his wife had lied, but he was at a very high position and felt the need to cover up the incident and prevent scandal. Had the Aziz punished his wife, everything would be out in the open and he would be defamed. He thus had Yusuf (as) imprisoned. However, do you think these things remain a secret? No, the wife of Egypt's Aziz had tried to seduce her slave; that was hot gossip! Do you understand how serious that was? She was the top minister's wife, she was young and beautiful and she had chosen to seduce a slave! "Couldn't she get anybody better?!"

Slide 25:

The Aziz's wife knew what her friends and peers were saying about her; these were the people she socialized with; parties, lunches, dinners. She decided to justify her actions to them and make them realize that they would have done the same in her shoes. She had a banquet for them and after the food and the cutlery were placed in front of them; once the knives were in their hands and they had begun their meals, she got Yusuf (as) to walk in front of them. Yusuf (as) was extremely good looking and when he walked out all these women were shocked and astonished. They were so distracted that instead of cutting the meat in front of them, they all unintentionally cut their hands. Each one understood why their hostess had done what she did.

Slide 26:

When Yusuf (as) realised the intentions of all these women, he became worried; first it was the Aziz's wife and now so many more women were after him. The Aziz's wife threatened that if he did not comply with what she asked, she would have him thrown into prison. *MashaAllah*, he was such a pure Muslim, the *Qur-an* calls him *Muhsin*, that he instantly declared his preference for imprisonment. The Aziz also wanted to cover up this entire episode, so although he knew that Yusuf (as) was innocent, he put him in prison. Maybe the Aziz thought that once this entire episode is forgotten, he could get Yusuf (as) out of prison.

Slides 27-28:

As was his nature, Yusuf (as) started doing *da'wah* (calling people to Allah (swt)) work even in prison. He was so beautiful, kind and diplomatic that lots of people would come and listen to him. People also discovered that he had the gift of interpreting dreams (like his father) and would bring their dreams to him. There were two employees of the palace who were in prison with him. One of them said, "I had a dream that I was pressing grapes." The other one said, "I dreamt that I was carrying bread upon my head and birds were eating it. Tell us the true meaning of these dreams; we see that you are the righteous one."

Yusuf (as) interpreted their dreams and said that the one who had dreamt about squeezing the grapes would go back to the palace and serve wine to the king, while the other one would be crucified and birds would peck at his head. Yusuf (as) then asked the one who was going to be set free, to remind the king about him. As foretold, the predictions of Yusuf (as) came true but the one who was freed, despite a reminder, forgot. *Shaytaan* (satan) made him forget. He went back to the palace and failed to recall Yusuf (as)'s request. Thus Yusuf (as) remained in prison for many years. Some scholars think it was 9 years.

Slides 29-30:

After several years the king had a dream; he dreamt that there were seven fat cows then seven lean cows who ate seven fat cows. There were also seven ears of green corn and seven ears that were drooping down. This dream bothered the king, so he asked his courtiers if they could tell him what it meant. None of the courtiers had any idea. Remember the prisoner who was in prison with Yusuf (as)? He suddenly remembered Yusuf (as)'s talent for understanding dreams and told the king about it. The king asked him to go and speak to Yusuf (as) in prison.

Slide 31:

Yusuf (as) then explained the whole dream, clarifying that there would be seven years of abundant harvest followed by seven years of famine. He advised that during the years of plenty, some food should be consumed and the rest stored in granaries for feeding people during the famine.

Slide 32:

This man went back and conveyed to the King, Yusuf (as)'s interpretation. When the King heard the dream's interpretation, he told the courtier to bring Yusuf (as) immediately. However, when the envoy went to him, Yusuf (as) sent the king a message requesting an investigation into the episode where the women had cut their hands. Why do you think Yusuf (as) said this? It had been nine years and was old news; people would have forgotten by now. However, he was innocent, and now that he had the king's attention, he wanted it proven that he hadn't done anything wrong.

Slide 33:

The king's interest and curiosity was aroused; he wanted to meet Yusuf (as) and felt that such a person would be useful at court. The king called for the ladies involved and asked, "What was the past affair of yours when you solicited Yusuf? This is from the *Qur-an* (Surah Yusuf 12: Verse 51) "And they agreed to it; we know no bad of him." They all said that. The governor's wife then said that the truth had now emerged; indeed she had tried to seduce Yusuf (as) then and he had simply said the honest truth. How many years did Yusuf (as) spend in prison? Many, some say about nine! How many years of Yusuf (as)'s life were wasted because of one woman's lying and mischief? Zero! Prophets don't waste time no matter what trials and tests Allah (swt) puts them in. As soon as Yusuf (as) entered prison, he started doing *da'wah*, teaching the other prisoners about Allah (swt).

Slides 34-39:

After the king heard about all this, his respect for Yusuf (as) increased and he gave him power and to keep him very close. Yusuf (as) chose the position he wanted; he asked for the keys to the granary, because he was honest and could guide them out of the famine knowing better than anybody else what was going to happen (because he knew the interpretation of the dream). Yusuf (as) knew that he was the right person for this responsibility.

The king gave him something like an official emblem or a stamp. Then for seven years they had plenty of rainfall, plenty of grains; they ate some, they stored a lot and everything happened according to Yusuf's (as) orders and plan. You can see the granaries in this slide. Then came the seven years of famine; the people of Egypt were starving; we are talking about the whole of Egypt.

Slide 40:

However, Yusuf's (as) area was self sufficient. When people from around his area found out that these people had lots of food, what did they do? They started coming to ask for food. Not only were Yusuf's (as) people self-sufficient, but with Yusuf's (as) guidance they were also able to help other famine hit areas of Egypt. Just imagine; seven years of famine, no rain, no

rain means no crop, no food. But they had enough to eat for themselves, give it to others and in return get something. See what a sharp mind Allah (swt) had bestowed him!

Slide 41:

Now it so happened that those ten brothers of Yusuf (as) also came in search of food. They came into his presence and he recognised them, but they did not recognise him. How could they as Yusuf (as) had grown so much from the child they had last seen! Besides, they would never have imagined that he would end up in such a prominent position. He gave them their allotted share but they claimed to have a younger brother and a father at home and requested food for them as well. Yusuf (as) refused and asked them to bring their younger brother and father in order to get their share of grain.

Yusuf (as) asked his minister to give them their grains and to secretly place their money back in their belongings as well. Why do you think he did that? Did he do it because they were his brothers? He gave them their share of food and the payment for it back so that they would come again the next time. He knew his brothers' natures; he knew that they were greedy and when they saw that they got their goods and their money back, they would definitely come back for more. The returned payment was bait.

Slide 42:

The brothers returned home and told their father that they were not able to bring anything for him or their brother, as the minister wouldn't give it without their presence; hence they needed to take Bin Yamin with them. Ya'qub (as) was apprehensive and reminded them that they had already lost one son of his; he couldn't risk sending another with them. Again, they pleaded with and reassured their father. Finally they persuaded and pushed Ya'qub (as) into letting Bin Yamin go with them. Bin Yamin was Yusuf's (as) full brother.

Slides 43-46:

When Yusuf (as) saw his brother, he immediately whispered to Bin Yamin that he was his brother Yusuf and that Bin Yamin shouldn't be distressed about the past.

When it was time for the brothers to leave, Yusuf (as) did not want his younger brother to go away from him. Yusuf (as) also wanted to see his father. Out of love, Yusuf (as) quietly hid his personal and valuable goblet in Bin Yamin's bag as a gift for him to find later on his journey. Allah (swt) had a plan and caused the servants who didn't know about the gift to raise a hue and cry that the King's goblet has been stolen! The servants ordered a search. The brothers pleaded that they were not robbers.

The brothers were asked what their own laws were regarding theft. The brothers declared that if the goblet was found in one of their bags, the thief would be handed over. This is exactly what happened; the goblet came out from Bin Yamin's bag. Bin Yamin thus had to stay back

by Allah (swt)'s plan. His brothers accepted that and went back to Ya'qub (as) and told him that Bin Yamin stole and was caught. Poor Ya'qub (as) cried his heart out.

Slide 47:

Sometime later when their food had run out again, they returned to Yusuf (as) and begged him to give them some food. Yusuf (as) told them that do you know what you did with your brother Yusuf and they realized that he must be Yusuf (as)! They praised him for his kindness, mercy and generosity.

Slides 48-49:

Yusuf (as) gave them his shirt and asked them to take it and cast it on their father's eyes and he would be able to see again. When the caravan was on its way home with Yusuf's (as) shirt, Ya'qub (as) said that he could smell Yusuf's scent. He knew that they probably thought him senile, but he really could smell Yusuf (as). When they put the shirt on his eyes, he regained his eyesight.

All these brothers had their own families by now; ten of them moved with their families and their father and mother to Yusuf (as) and they were reunited there. Yusuf (as) said, "Enter Egypt safe and sound, if Allah wills."

Slide 50:

This is how Allah (swt) reunited Yusuf (as) with his parents and this is when they all bent down to him; his father, his mother and his brothers. This was the realisation of Yusuf (as)'s dream; Yusuf (as) realized that his Lord had made it come true and He had been merciful by letting him out of prison and bringing him across the desert when *shaytaan* (satan) had caused dissent between him and his brothers.

Slide 51-52:

Yusuf (as) did not become bitter or haughty because he was in such a powerful position. He prayed, "My Lord You have granted to me power on this earth and taught me the true meaning of events." He then helped his entire family settle in the Nile delta where they prospered.

There are many lessons to be learned in this story, so I want you to go home and ponder over it. *InshaAllah* when we meet next week, we'll pick out the lessons that we can learn from this story.

One of the students asked if our dreams came true, to which the teacher replied that dreams don't generally come true, but prophets do get true dreams as part of their prophethood. Thus with Yusuf (as) having a dream and Ya'qub (as) interpreting it, the dream did come to fruition.

(Du'a for end of a gathering) *SubhanaRabbikaRabbulIzzati 'ammayasifunwasalamun 'alalmursaleen, walhamdulillahiRabbil 'alameen*

(Parting salutation to students) *Assalam alaikum warahmatullahi waBarakatuh*