

MODULE 2

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

Aim of Lesson : To look at how Yusuf(as) dealt with temptation & see what we can learn from it

Category : Scripture Stories

Class format : Power point presentation & discussion

Greeting to students) *Assalam alaikum waRahmatullahi waBarakatuh*

(*Ta'awwudh*) *Aoodhubillahi min AsShaytanir Rajeem*

(*Tasmiyah*) *Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem*

(*Du'a*) *Rabbish rahli sadri wayassir li amri wahlul uqdatum millisani yafqahu qawli*

(Surah At Ta-Ha 20: Verse 25-28)

In the previous classes, we did the story of Yusuf (as) from his childhood to adolescence, we went through the experiences and adventures that he had and derived lessons from his character and life.

Teacher: What was the first lesson that we derived from it?

Student: faith in Allah (swt).

Teacher: Yes Yusuf (as) had profound faith in Allah (swt) and in the light of this knowledge we analysed our faith. We all say '*Laillaha illallah*'. Do we all say '*Laillaha illallah*' or don't we?

Student: we do.

Teacher: But to what extent do we actually believe in it? We also discussed what happens in life when we just trust Allah (swt). It makes our troubles easier to bear and it helps us to keep away from sins despite the temptation. Is life free of temptations? In fact what is this worldly life? It's a test. In the Qur'an, several times Allah (swt) asks us Have you been sent to this earth without purpose? Is there a reason that Allah (swt) has created us? There is a reason in everything that Allah (swt) does.

We also learnt that when times are very tough, we all trust in God. Our prayers and our dua's become more detailed and intense but when the trouble goes away, what happens? We forget! But did that happen in Yusuf (as)'s life? He was very persistent in his trust of God. Despite all odds he put his trust in Allah (swt).

We also noticed one very important thing in Yusuf (as)'s life. What was it? The ups and downs.. There were good times and there were bad times. We saw his conviction that no matter what Allah (swt) will take care of me.

We also learnt that Yusuf (as) was a very patient man. He did not start complaining during hardships that 'oh God why me! Why did you put me through the trails and not my brothers?'

Slides 15 - 20:

In today's lesson we are going to discuss what to do when faced with temptation. Do you all agree that there are temptations in life? Can you name some in your life?

Student: cake

Teacher: Cake is a temptation. You feel that you cannot resist that?

A moment on the lips, forever on the hips. Is that what you mean? There are people who see a dessert like cake or any other and they just can't resist it knowing that they will gain those extra pounds that they have painstakingly shed. What else?

Student: music

Teacher: You are fond of music? Why is it a temptation?

Student: I want to listen to it but I know am not supposed to.

Teacher: It is such a distraction and kind of contagious too. I go the gym and there are songs playing there and even though I am not a music lover, by the time I am done with my workout I realise that unconsciously I am humming that tune. It makes me feel so bad. It's distracting sometimes during prayers also. This is how infectious it can be.

It is often said that audio visual material is effective for learning. Why do they say that? It creates an impact. What you are seeing it is making a picture on your mind and it goes much much further than just words.

What are the other temptations apart from cake and music?

Student: internet.

Teacher: Is internet good or bad?

Student: It can be good or bad depending upon its usage.

Teacher: Let's analyse that. What happens?

Student: We get addicted to it like one gets hooked onto games and facebook.

Teacher: What's the harm there?

Student: You get so engrossed in playing and chatting that you miss your *salah*.

Teacher: What other temptations do you face?

Student: You make friends with random people on internet and then it gets out of hand.

Teacher: Yes, it happens. I have read so many articles about young children getting to know a person on internet and giving their home address or telephone number.

What else can happen when you get into all these things? Friendships?? Often one makes friend with a person thinking it's a girl but turns out later that its boy. Then one is tempted to extend that bond of "friendship" just a little by going out and meeting them. This is how things move so quickly to the next level, one doesn't even realize.

Even if it hasn't happened to you but it would be inappropriate to say that one isn't tempted to do just that. This is what's happening all around us so there is really no use denying it. The more we use various chat mediums, the more we are tempting ourselves unnecessarily.

What will happen if you go climbing on a high mountain and stand right at the tip of it, what are the chances of you falling?

Student: chances are high that we may fall.

Teacher: You may fall. Internet is one of those temptations we are creating for ourselves but there are two choices in whatever we do. Even with mobile phones, sometimes you get random messages?

See I am not saying that mobile phone is bad as long as you are using it for the right purpose. I think it is a very good invention, God forbid there is an emergency or an accident, mobile phone is very handy under such circumstances and also to keep track of you when you are out having a blast at your friend's at the pretext of doing some project!!

Tell me, is eating a cake wrong?

Student: no

Teacher: No, what is the temptation in it? Eating too much...That is the temptation. So there are always two choices. Everything has two choices in whatever we do. Now, is resisting temptation easy work or hard work?

Student: hard

Teacher: You eat one piece of chocolate, you say hmm another one will not matter and then you can't stop.

Yusuf (as) lived with his 'owners' or foster parents until he reached his adulthood, whence Allah blessed him with wisdom and knowledge. His physical beauty, too, reached its peak.

And then when he became a full-grown man, We gave him knowledge and right judgment too. That is how We reward all doers of good. (Surah Yusuf 12: verse 22)

It is difficult to ascertain the cause behind what happened next. But it so happened that the woman in whose house he spent his adolescent years, growing up and

maturing, who undoubtedly held a more dominant, authoritative and stronger position than him in the household, tried to get him to commit adultery with her.

Was it only lust that drove her to aggressively desire him? Was it her power and authority over him that made her so zealous in his pursuit that she tore his shirt even after he turned her down and tried to escape? Or was she just aggressive by nature, not accustomed to having her orders defied? Was it her being much older in age than him, and holding an influential status in Egyptian society? Perhaps a little of all.

Yusuf (as) lived in the house with her and the other domestic staff whilst her husband was away at work, and it is probable that his youth and handsomeness being at a pinnacle caught her gaze.

We know that the gaze is the starting point of *zina* or adultery, if left unchecked. In addition, “*khulwah*” or being alone with a person of the opposite gender who is not a *mehram*, also becomes an invitation for Satan to call the shots towards adultery.

Regardless of the motive behind her aggression, we should note the reason Yusuf (as) gave for his refusal – he mentioned Allah and how well He had kept him in that house – and that committing this act would thus be a great wrong; a severe ingratitude of Allah’s blessings on Yusuf(as).

Another interpretation of this statement made by Yusuf (as) is that by saying, “He is my Lord”, he meant Aziz (his “master”, who bought him as a slave), viz. that Aziz had given him shelter in his house and kept him there very well, and sleeping with his wife behind his back would thus be the greatest wrong Yusuf could do to him in return. Either way, Yusuf’s lofty morals, alert conscience towards sin, and inner strength in face of temptation is apparent here.

The lesson for us in this event is that we cannot place the blame for being weak in the face of temptation on anyone except ourselves. We cannot say, “Allah knows how difficult it is for me not to give in, with such temptation around me. He will not call me to account for such a trial.”

Yusuf (as) was young and unmarried; trapped inside a locked room with a woman calling him to herself – a woman dominant to him in social standing. Yet, not only did he openly refuse her, but ran when she persisted. It was when *he refused* outright that Allah’s help came to him, and he saw a clear proof that prevented him from wanting her too. Allah’s help comes when *we take the first step* to remove the temptation and avert it from ourselves.

This is Yusuf (as)’s du’a, Yusuf (as) said; “Unless you turn away their plot from me, I will feel inclined towards them and be one (of those who commit sin and deserve blame) of the ignorant.” (Surah Yusuf 12: verse 33)

He is saying this to Allah (swt) that Allah (swt) you turn them away from me otherwise I am very weak, I will fall prey to them, I am human only human .

Slides 21-22:

What about parties? Everybody goes to parties?

Student: yes.

Teacher: All girls or mix?

Student: All girls

Teacher: Never been to a mix party?

Student: School one are mixed.

Teacher : Tell me without raising your hands that how many people would be tempted to bunk their tuitions and go to a coffee joint with other friends which include boys?

Student: you said that we don't have to raise our hands.

Teacher: I meant what are the chances of you getting involved in something like that. Are there any chances that things can go out of hand and beyond that other things can develop? You know why there are chances of things like this happening? Can anybody tell me why?

Student: There is natural attraction between a boy and a girl.

Teacher: Yes, there is a natural attraction but there are times and limits to those things. By just mingling with the opposite sex and saying he is just my friend, what are we doing? We are tempting ourselves. Things can go beyond friendship also right? Have things like these happened?

You think these things didn't happen in my generation? Why not? Men were not there? Or girls didn't lie and go out? Or didn't get into situations sinfully tempting? Everything was there but the question is why get into a situation that can get out of hand?

(slide shown)

Can anybody identify what's written?

Student: cheating.

The temptation to cheat is there and you may even get good marks but something always tells you that you have done something wrong. In fact the first time, you are like "oh God what if I get caught" and the second time it becomes easy and then "back of my hand"!! Same is true for robbery and stealing and then murders. *Alhamdulillah* we are not in that category but today in our country, these things are unfortunately rather common.

Teacher: what else is there?

Students: drugs.

Teacher: A lot of times I have seen on television when these journalists are covering a park and you are shocked at how easy it is to get drugs. We are oblivious to how common it is so what should we do? Let's say you are at an all girls party and a friend of yours is doing drugs and she tells you, *try karo yaar bara maza ata hai.han* (just try it, it is a lot of fun).

Do you think you are strong enough to say that I am just going to do it once? It all starts like that believe me. The peer pressure is there I know but nobody actually pushes you to it, it's us tempting ourselves with an unnecessary test.

And then this is music.

(slide shown)

Did we speak about that? What's the harm? He is just my cousin. Does this happen? Can I hear a louder yes? What about cell phones? I think our life would not function without cell phones and how do we use this cell phones? All purposeful activities, no misuse?? We are putting our self through unnecessary temptation, it's the same with cheating, lying then partying and even with music.

It's very tough giving up these things you know, giving up music etc. Are you harming yourself with music? Drugs - you are physically harming yourself? With music are you harming yourself? If you are tempted the best thing to do is to seek refuge with Allah (swt) because temptation is everywhere.

In a 45 minute class, I guess we have just barely gone through half the things, not even half maybe less than that. Had Yusuf (as) not asked Allah (swt)'s for his refuge, he would have been tempted.

Do you know what Aziz's wife did right after it was proved that she had tempted Yusuf (as)? She threw a party. Now why did she do that?

When the local grapevine caught wind of this incident, the gossiping women mocked her pursuit of her slave-boy (since her guilt had been publicly proven by the shirt torn from the back). Incensed, she devised a plot to prove to them why she pursued Yusuf, and convened a "dinner party" for them, where she ordered Yusuf to enter upon them. (So much for letting the whole thing go as her husband had said!) Notice how Yusuf complied – obviously he was still upholding the high virtuous conduct that was in his nature.

Not only did he forgive Aziz's wife and overlook what she did to him (seduction plus slandering his chastity), but also continued *to obey her* as mistress of the house thereafter. This is what *really* "being a man" is! Forgiving women who are outright liars and slanderers, upholding virtuous behavior no matter what, and going on as if nothing ever happened.

When Yusuf entered upon the party of gathered city women, being the benign server that he was, not suspecting the true intention behind his being sent in their midst, they were flabbergasted at his beauty.

When they saw him, they were amazed by him and cut their hands. They said, “Allah preserve us! This is no man. What can this be but a noble angel here!” (Surah Yusuf 12: Verse 31)

Aziz’s wife then made her grand entrance with a gloating, “I-told-you-so” declaration:

She said, “You see! It’s him you blamed me for. I tried seducing him but he refused. If he does not do what I order him, he will be put in prison and brought low.” (Surah Yusuf 12: Verse 32)

Yusuf (as) suddenly realized that she was still in his pursuit, now armed with a vengeance to get back at him for having rejected her advances, and through the dinner party, she was taking the women in her social circle into her confidence as accomplices in her scheme for his entrapment. He realized their power over him (his status in society still being that of a slave) and that Aziz might be unable to save him from them this time.

He hence did what only a morally strong person and a sincere slave of Allah can do – he opted for the prison cell:

He said, “My Lord, the prison is preferable to me than what they call on me to do. Unless You turn their guile away from me, it may well be that I will fall for them and so become a man of ignorance.” His Lord replied to him and turned away from him their guile and deviousness. He is the One Who Hears, the One Who Knows. (Surah Yusuf 12: Verses 33-34)

Allah (swt) again responds to Yusuf (as)’s sincere plea, and notice how He calls Yusuf’s going to prison as “turning (the women’s) guile and deviousness away from him”.

In this, there is a great lesson for us: that sometimes, adverse events are a blessing in disguise – Allah (swt) saves us from major trials and sins by making us endure unfavorable circumstances, such as living in a threadbare condition.

We should try to be happy with Allah’s decree, with the faith that what He decrees is better for us, even if we are not sure how it is better.

Older people usually reflect on their past lives and acknowledge how certain bad events were better for them in the long term, although when they were living through them, they were mostly complaining because their wisdom and insight was not enough to make them see the big picture.

The second is that, in order to save our faith from corruption and our selves from falling into sin, we should be willing to relinquish comfortable environments to go to places that might be adverse for living, but better for safeguarding our *Deen* and chastity.

I thought about the Companions of the Cave – *Ashaab Al Kahf* – as I reflected upon Yusuf (as)’s plea to Allah (swt).

They too, were young men who withdrew willingly into a cave to save themselves from the vices rampant in their society.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) too, withdrew into the cave of Hira to ponder on the purpose of life, when the ignorance and polytheism in Arabian society turned him off. It seems then, that withdrawing into a cave, prison, or secluded spot to save themselves from the evil of people, has been the way of many of our pious predecessors, as a means to protect themselves from corruption.

Another thing that is important and which helps you in maintaining your grounds when tempted is the company of good friends. If you start doing hijab or any good deed for that matter positive peer pressure is also a great tool in keeping you steadfast. On the day of Judgement, you will be brought up with the people you love, the people that you cared for. At this point in your life friends are everything.

You wouldn’t go out, start doing drugs alone or cheat on your mother, bunk your tuition. It’s always some peer pressure that’s making you do it, right. “come on, your mum won’t find out” and then friends are covering up for each other. Brothers and sisters mostly go and tell on you, but friends you can swear by. We think it is being faithful helping your friend, cheat, date and God knows what more and what not.

Slide 23:

This is not just what happened with Yusuf (as), lust and temptation is all around us. I think it’s more difficult for boys as Islam does not permit them to glance twice at a *non mahram* while women are hanging on the billboards everywhere.

What is a man supposed to do, close his eyes and drive?? For e.g it is a men’s deodorant ad but a woman is on the billboard. Have you seen Magnum ice-cream ad?? I mean what is she trying to do? Look at that woman decked up. The look in her eyes, unnecessary temptation.

As girls/women we must make sure that we are not a cause of temptation for some one else. Are we going about all decked out and perfumed to the hilt? For everyone to see. Come on, we are pretty! *Alhamdulillah*. Allah (swt) has made us beautiful and attractive – so are we causing trouble for the opposite sex? Tempting them?

You know it is not necessary that you do something deliberately – I mean be provocative or flirt – just “looking” the way you all look *mashaallah* is cause enough for temptation. Think about it seriously, am I a cause for *fitnah*?

Slide 24:

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said:

"There are seven whom Allah will shade in His Shade on the Day when there is no shade except His Shade: a just ruler; a youth who grew up in the worship of Allah, the

Mighty and Majestic; a man whose heart is attached to the mosques; two men who love each other for Allah's sake, meeting for that and parting upon that; **a man who is called by a woman of beauty and position (for illegal intercourse), but he says: 'I fear Allah'**, a man who gives in charity and hides it, such that his left hand does not know what his right hand gives in charity; and a man who remembered Allah in private and so his eyes shed tears.'" [Bukhari & Muslim]

A person who resists temptations will be in the shade of Allah (swt) on the Day of Judgment.

Slide 25:

You can only ask for Allah's help in such circumstances because only the person who has pure faith will know that he has to stand in front of Allah (swt) one day and answer for his own deeds. No friend is going to come and help him there.

Surely there will be difficult times and times when we get tempted to sin real badly - but we have to make sure that our step doesn't falter. And we can do that if we constantly keep asking Allah (swt) for His help and His guidance.

There may be a time when all your friends are moving in one direction and where you have to take a stand and say no and you might feel alone.

Remember Yusuf (as), the whole of Egypt was not with Yusuf (as) when he was put in jail but his faith gave him the strength. Thus when you feel the tide is against you, pray to Allah (swt) and then strive for the best.

Slide 26:

And then in the end what did Allah (swt) say to Yusuf (as); **"Thus We did, to turn evil and lewdness away from him. Surely, he was one of Our sincere slaves."**
(Surah Yusuf 12: verse 24)

Slide 27:

See how all this is interconnected. Seeking Allah (swt)'s protection, resisting temptation, faith in Allah (swt), trusting Allah (swt), back again seeking Allah (swt)'s protection.

Strong faith gets us started on the track to resist temptations with the help of Allah (swt) and having the trust in Allah (swt) that ok, so this is tough, but eventually *inshaallah* I will see a much better time than this.

The lessons in this amazing amazing story – that Allah (swt) Himself calls the best of stories – are so many that we must really keep revisiting this surah over and over again and contemplate on few lessons at a time, internalize them properly and take heed from them.

May Allah (swt) help and guide us in following the example of Yusuf (as). Ameen

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

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