Jealousy PerspectiveReferring to the Stories of Prophet Adam's Sons&Prophet Yusuf & his Brothers among Siblings from a Different

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Abstract – The vice of jealousy is one of the lethal ailments of ethics that can be destructive to its beholder in both his life and the after-life. In the Ever-Glorious Quran, feelings of jealousy and its consequences are addressed numerous times. However, the most serious and despised example of jealousy which the Quran alludes is that of which occurred between Prophet Adam's sons Qabil and Habil and that between Prophet Yusuf and his brothers. The first one resulted to committing the first and most brutal murder of humankind on the earth, and the second resulted in throwing Prophet Yusuf into the well by his elder brothers. These two stories that were mentioned in the Ever-Glorious Qur'an were narrated by the Egyptian writer and journalist Ahmad Bahgat in his short stories book entitled Animals in the Glorious Qur'an. However, it was narrated from a different perspective; that of an animalrelated to the prophet; the crow and the wolf respectively. Ahmad Bahgat narrates the two stories of Prophet Adam and Prophet Yusuf in the first person omniscient narrator of an animal. Animals who were involved and interacted in the prophets' lives, and who witnessed their dreadful acts and both stories tackle the theme of jealousy. However, the first story tackles the themes of jealousy and crime. In addition, it deals with an important task that man cannot ignore; it teaches him how to bury a corpse; whereas, the second story tackles only the theme of jealousy and discrimination. The two famous stories here show us that jealousy is one of the most malicious and cruel characteristics in a human being that could cause disasters, not only to the victim but also to the vicious jealous person himself. It has a lot of malevolent consequences as it distorts relationships among siblings, friends, and relatives.

Keywords: Discrimination, Habil, Jealousy, Qabil

1. Introduction

In the Ever-Glorious Quran, feelings of jealousy and its consequences are addressed numerous times. However, the most serious and despised example of jealousy which the Quran alludes are that of which occurred between Prophet Adam's sons Qabil and Habil and that between Prophet Yusuf and his brothers. The first one resulted to committing the first and most atrocious murder of humankind on earth when Qabil received knowledge that Allah (SWT) has accepted the sacrifice of his brother Habil over his and has chosen Qabil for the successorship. The seeds of jealousy were planted in his heart as he was greedy for the guardianship to be transferred to him and his progeny. The second one was the brutal jealousy of the story of Prophet Yusuf. Prophet Yusuf was thrown into the well by his elder brothers after their feeling of jealousy which has increased in their hearts when they observed that Yusuf was specially loved by their father. These two stories which were mentioned in the Ever-Glorious Qur'an were narrated by the Egyptian writer and journalist Ahmad Bahgat in his short stories book entitled Animals in the Glorious Qur'an. However, it was narrated from a different perspective; the perspective of an animal related to the prophet. Ahmad Bahgat narrates the two stories of Prophet Adam and Prophet Yusuf in the first person omniscient narrator of an animal. Animals who were involved and interacted in the prophets' lives, and who witnessed their heinous acts. Both stories tackle the theme of jealousy; however, the story of "The Sons of Adam and the Crow" tackles the themes of jealousy and crime. In addition, it deals with an important task that man cannot ignore; it teaches him how to bury a corpse. It is a story of good versus bad, kindness versus evil and faith versus infidelity. Both stories tackle the theme of jealousy; however, the story of "The Sons of Adam and the Crow" tackles the themes of jealousy and crime. In addition, it deals with an important task that man cannot ignore; it teaches him how to bury a corpse. It is a story of

good versus bad, kindness versus evil and faith versus infidelity. The story, as mentioned in the Ever-Glorious Qur'an, draws the character of two opposite brothers, Habil and Qabil: the first is kind hearted, good and faithful; whereas, the other is wicked, evil and an unbeliever. The two brothers are stereotypes of men with opposite characters; they are symbols of good and evil on earth. Qabil has a tendency to vice and aggression, while Habil has a tendency to virtue and mercy. As Hara Person and Diane Goetz Person in their book Stories of Heaven and Earth comment: "These sons are not simply cheerful, adorable children who will brighten their parents' lives, but two opposing forces, one of whom will slay the other. They are thus a living manifestation of Adam and Eve's acquisition of the knowledge of good and evil, in which evil triumphs through the killing of Abel (Habil) by Cain (Qabil)" (52).

2.1 'The Sons of Adam and the Crow"

The story, Prophet Adam wonders how two brothers could be completely different,

"لست أعرف لماذا يبدو أحد الأخوين رقيقا كزنابق الحقل...ويبدو الثاني قاسيا كشوك الجبال." (بهجت 21)

"I do not know why one brother was as gentle as a field lily and the other as harsh as a mountain thorn" (the translated version:21).

The story starts with the crow narrating his own life, as well as his relation to Prophet Adam's sons. Not only is he narrating his own story, but he is also defending himself and attacking the behavior of humans who are always attacking him. He believes in Allah, Who is always watching, listening and perceiving.

"The Sons of Adam and the Crow" is told in the first person's narrator 'the crow' from his own perspective. He narrates his autobiography in relation to Adam's sons' Qabil and Habil. The plot and the sub-plot move along in parallel lines: the story of Adam's sons and the story of the crow, where the crow is the link between both. Both stories have a murderer and a victim; however, in the first story the murderer is a major character; whereas, in the second the murderer is a minor character. Although the crow is the narrator of the story, yet the plot is the story of Adam's sons and the sub-plot is the story of the crow. The crow keeps shifting from the lives of humans to the lives of crows, in an attempt to prove that crows are not as jealous, cruel and barbaric as humans. On the contrary, they are well organized and just. They have courts that rule justly, and when a crow is aggressive against his group, a trial is assembled. If the accused crow is proved to be guilty, he/she must be punished; accordingly, justice among crows is their strongest instinct.

The sub-plot, as Ahmad Bahgat imagined, is a foreshadowing of the plot which is the world of crows. As a judge, the crow is busy solving their problems for there was a fugitive crow loose that they were searching for to put to trial. When he is found, the trial takes hours and at the end, the crow is sentenced to death. At this same time, Qabil was walking carrying his brother, Habil, not knowing what to do with him, for wild animals would devour his brother if he left him. He is so confused about his brother's body since burying the dead was not yetknown at that time. Here comes the climax of the story, the religious element, when Allah sent him a crow to show him how to bury a dead body.

Then Allah sent forth a raven searching into the earth to show him how he should overlay the shameful parts of his brother. He said, 'Oh woe to me! Am I unable to be like this raven, (and) so overlay the shameful parts of my brother?' So he became among the remorseful (5-31).

The miracle here is lucid: a crow scratching the ground and burying a dead crow. Crows only scratch searching for food and as said, in the story of 'The Ant of Suleiman,' ants are the only animals that bury their dead, yet the crow of Adam performed a miracle by being the only crow that buried a dead bird. He also plays a crucial role as a

preacher saving Habil's corpse from being demolished by the wild animals and teaching Qabil how to bury a corpse, the first dead body on earth. He scratched the ground to show him how to hide the dead body of his brother. The miracle lays in the fact that a crow teaches a human being to bury a corpse.

After committing the murder and facing the problem of the dead body, Qabil repented for being unable to do as the crow did and to hide the dead body of his brother. The theme here is of murder and repentance; the murder committed by the first man on earth due to jealousy, then repentance for not even being able to bury that man.

"جاهل يجهل انه جاهل.. جاهل لا يعرف كيف يوارى سوأنه أخيه."(بهجت 18)

"An ignorant person, who is oblivious of being ignorant, an ignorant person, who does not know how to bury his brother's body," (the translated version:17)

The crow, above, is commenting on Qabil and his brutal murder, he accuses him of being ignorant to the extent that he does not even know how to bury his brother's corpse. Here, Ahmad Bahgat repeats the word 'ignorant' four times to emphasize that what Qabil has done shows complete ignorance. As a result of his perfidious jealousy, his mind stops and his cruel instinct acts. That treacherous crime astonishes the crow at the behavior of human beings' and their contradictory deeds. Although they love Allah and hate Satan, yet they obey Satan and disobey Allah. Although they hate the black feather of the crow, yet they have blacker hearts than the crows.' Although they know that Allah is watching, yet they commit crimes. Here, Bahgat is attacking man for man criticizes other people although he himself is full of flaws.

Ahmad Bahgat criticizes human beings' behavior and manners through the animals'point of view, and that is clear when the crow makes a comparison before and after the descent of man on earth to show how man destroys nature. He praises their lives before the descent of man and his life on earth in specific. He describes nature with all its beauty before man's arrival, as creatures used to live in peace, and everything was clean, pure and honest. Nature was not yet destroyed, the blue seas had no pollution, winds were fresh, fields were green, mountains were covered with white snow and air was intoxicated with the perfume of green fields. Even manners were ideal; there was honesty and no lies; mercy and no severity, love and no jealousy. Life was refined and uncontaminated by a single lie. Everything was pulsating with sincerity; nevertheless, there was still something missing – the existence of man.

However, when man descended to earth, he corrupted and destroyed it, although he was sent to build and inhabit it. He destroyed the beauty of nature in the name of progress and civilization; he destroyed manners in the name of ambition. Although Allah has created animals to serve man, yet man has abused animals cruelly without even realizing this. People hate the crow simply due to superstitions, feelings of pessimism because of its croak, its black color, etc. If only they looked past this, they could see the beauty of the crow and feel grateful to the fact that the crow is the creature that taught Qabil how to bury his brother's dead body.

Ahmad Bahgat describes nature in a very fascinating way, with all its beautiful colors, views, scents, tastes and sounds; on the other hand, he describes how man has destroyed all this in the name of technology. He separates the plot and the sub-plot by this enchanting description of nature, then he switches to the lives of human beings, the life of Adam and Hawa (Eve) and show how they were dispelled from heaven and sent to earth for disobeying Allah. Nevertheless, that discordance has a certain eternal wisdom, which is to inhabit and populate the earth; however, human conflict and jealousy will never end, as both brothers are rivals as they wanted to marry one girl.

The crow in Bahgat's story wants to prove to humans that crows are better than man. Although they justifiably killed the crow after a long trial, yet they still owe his body the right to a proper burial. On the other hand, although Qabil murdered his kind innocent brother unjustifiably out of jealousy, yet he fails to be like that crow and bury his brother's body. As Qabil realizes this, the crow hears the following words of repentance.

"سمعت وأنا أطير مبتعدا صرخة قابيل..."يا ويلتا أعجزت أن أكون مثل هذا الغراب فأوارى سوأه أخي". خيل ألي أن الصرخة تحترق بالندم.." (بهجت 25)

"As I was flying away, I heard Qabil's scream, 'O woe to me. I have failed to be like this crow and bury my brother's body.' I thought that his scream was burnt with remorse" (the translated version:28).

Qabil here felt guilty, and he repented for his hideous crime, but the crow did not understand whether this remorse is because of his ignorance of how to bury his brother's body or because of the murder itself that he had committed. The crow's role here is not only to teach Qabil how to bury the corpse, but also to teach him a lesson in mercy. From that point, we should not judge anyone from his outer appearance, but should perceive his inner self.

2.2 "Prophet Yusuf and the Wolf"

The second story of Prophet Yusuf, which tackles the theme of jealousy, is of no difference. It teaches us few beneficial lessons. In brief, Yusuf's father, Yaqub, showed a great deal of favoritism towards Yusuf as his mother was Yaqub'sfavorite wife. This discrimination caused jealousy among siblings to the extent that they decided to get rid of him; to murder him. They then changed their minds and threw him in the well. However, there was an eye-witness, the wolf. "Prophet Yusuf and the Wolf" was the second short story of jealousy by Ahmad Bahgat in his book Animals in the Glorious Qur'an. The writer has tackled this story from the perspective of a wolf. It is an autobiography of the wolf in relation to Prophet Yusuf. The story opens with a dramatic tone of how miserable the life of a wolf is, as the writer explains scientifically, and how life in a desert is. He explains that wolves usually eat once a week and live on that for the rest of the week. They fast for six days without feeling hungry, and then they begin searching for food again. Wolves can distinguish among more than forty scents at the same time: the ground, grass, trees, mountain goats, flowers, sand, etc.

The wolf then narrates his own story with Prophet Yusuf's brothers, as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, as nobody has given a thought to this wolf, which was accused of devouring Prophet Yusuf. The wolf of Prophet Yusuf is considered a very famous story in history and Holy Books. Although everyone knows that the wolf is a victim, they do not try to imagine how this poor creature might feel, but Ahmad Bahgat thought of Prophet Yusuf's story from the wolf's point of view. He wrote the story from the animal's perspective: how he feels at being accused without any sin or fault of his own except of his being a wolf, as his only sin is that the connotation of the word 'wolf' to man is 'fear and hatred.' Ahmad Bahgat criticizes man when he describes a person as a wolf if he is crafty or ill-mannered or has no morals; he adds that wolves are targets for humans who often persecute them for being cunning. Wolves have long sharp fangs and deadly claws, and humans have the same, but the latter hide them behind sweet smiles. In fact, wolves are so stable and such family oriented creatures that other species of animals envy their cozy family life and emotional stability.

The wolf of Prophet Yusuf (PBUH) here suffers from the injustice of the world. To prosecute someone who is not guilty and who has no idea of what is going on is injustice. The wolf swears that he never saw Prophet Yusuf, nor devoured him, nor tore his clothes, nor even approached him. He is the oppressed wolf; the famous wolf in history that has done nothing in life to deserve so much torture and be killed at the end in such a cruel way.

Injustice and jealousy are the main themes of the story, as seen with Prophet Yusuf's brothers who were so jealous of him to the extent that they decided to kill him, but then, they retreated and suggested to throw him in a well. They accused the poor wolf of killing their younger brother; that wolf who has just come with his family from Canaan to search for his brother. They tied him and took him to Prophet Ya'qub, their father, who knew quite well that they were liars; nevertheless, when he released the unjustly accused wolf at the end, the brothers were so wicked that they killed him with their arrows, as described in the following scene:

وأقبل الرجال العشرة نحوي بالعصي والحبال. وانهالت على جسدي العصي وألقيت على الحبال وراحت تلتفت حولي حتى سكتت حركتي تماماً. رفعت رأسي وتأملت من أسرني. هم أخوة يوسف بغير جدال. اطمأنوا لاستسلامي وربطوا أقدامي في فرع قوى من فروع الأشجار وحملوني مدلى منكس الرأس نحو قريتهم. قال قريتهم. قال أحدهم بفرح: سنقول ليعقوب هذا هو الذئب الذي أكل يوسف." (بهجت 60)

The ten men approached me with sticks and ropes. They hit my body with sticks, and ropes were thrown upon me and I was bound till I was completely still...I raised my head to contemplate those who had captured me. They were without doubt Yusuf's brothers. They made sure that I had given up and tied my feet to a strong tree – branch. Then they carried me to their village with my head bowed.

One of them said joyously, "We are going to tell Ya'qub that this is the wolf that ate Yusuf." (the translated version:79)

This scene shows how cruel human beings can be, with no feelings and no hearts even to sympathize with a poor, weak animal who is unable to defend himself/herself. The story starts with a conspiracy of the brothers of Prophet Yusuf to get rid of the latter, and ends with accusing, abusing and killing an innocent wolf.

The story contains a rich dramatic element and has many striking scenes, and suspense is heightened. At the same time, the reader is indirectly introduced to Yusuf's brothers through a wolf, who went by accident towards a smell of a sheep where he found a white tent set up and in front of it ten men of different ages sat. They seemed to be either brothers or friends at first glance, but the wolf eventually found out that they were the elder brothers of a little boy named Yusuf. They were shady characters in comparison to Yusuf who was a very virtuous child. It was obvious that there was a conflict since they were conspiring to do something evil as he heard one of them saying:

"نبغي أن نتخلص من يوسف." (بهجت 54)

"We have to get rid of Yusuf." (the translated version: 53)

This is the first sentence the wolf heard; the first piece of evidence to prove that Prophet Yusuf's brothers were planning to get rid of him, but he was the only witness of the planned crime. For a wolf, it was firstly weird to see people of different ages sitting together in that forlorn desert, but then he heard their hideous, horrible conspiracy – to get rid of Yusuf, their brother; they planned to throw him in the well and then lie to their father that a wolf devoured him.

As Hara Person and Diane Person in their book Stories of Heaven and Earth discusses jealousy among siblings in general and among Yusuf's brothers in particular in Holy Books as:

Siblings rivalry is a struggle for equal parental affection, a struggle to be loved as much as other siblings, is a story as old as humankind. Siblings jealousy is a universal element of fairy tales as well as prophet's stories in Holy Books. As in the story of Cinderella and her evil stepsisters, this rivalry is often depicted through the relationship of step-or half-siblings. Yusuf and his older brothers are half siblings vying for the affection and respect of their father. However, Ya'qubcannot love and care for them as deeply as he does with Yusuf. (92)

As all short stories in Ahmad Bahgat's book Animals in the Glorious Qur'an, there is a plot and a sub-plot that run parallel. The protagonist, who is the narrator, is the link between the two plots. The wolf here is comparing their lives as wolves with Prophet Yusuf and his family's life as humans, the question is, "Who are the real wolves?" People believe wolves are sly, cunning and immoral. They describe philanders men as wolves, perfidious people as wolves, yet at the end of the story, the wolf wonders, 'Who is the wolf? Is it he or Prophet Ya'qub's sons?' The answer to the question is quite clear in the story as narrated by the writer.

The author is comparing and contrasting between the brothers' acts with Prophet Yusuf and the wolf's act towards his own brother. The conspiracy plotted by Prophet Yusuf's brothers shocked the wolf completely, especially when he discovered that Yusuf was only an eight years old boy. In contrast to that, it is ironic that in spite of being a 'wolf,' he had just left his country Egypt searching for his brother in Canaan and still lamenting his loss.

What Prophet Yusuf's brothers have done is a horrendous and hideous act which is killing their younger brother for no reason but jealousy; a horrible behavior on their behalf. Prophet Ya'qub (PBUH) was well aware of the jealousy of Yusuf's brothers. When they asked him to trust them and send Yusuf with them on a picnic for fun, he refused at first in fear that a wolf might devour him. Finally, he agreed under their pressure and after they convinced him that if something bad were to happen to him, they were the ones who would be at loss.

Prophet Yusuf's story involves both human weaknesses symbolized in Yusuf's brothers such as jealousy, hatred, pride, passion, deception, intrigue, cruelty and terror as well as noble qualities symbolized in Prophet Yusuf, such as patience, loyalty, compassion and love.

The conversation caught his attention and he was surprised by the magnitude that their discussion carried. Furthermore, their conversation concerning their brother opened up his own wound, reminding him of his wolf brother. He compares his sacrifice to search the desert for his brother with their conspiracy to get rid of their younger eight years old brother in the desert; how he loves his brother and is heart broken when he disappeared and how they hate their brother and are jealous ofhim and planned to get rid of him; how he feels restless about losing his brother and how they look forward to get rid of their brother.

قالي تعالى: " قَالَ إِنِّي لَيَحْزُنُنِي أَن تَذْهَبُوا بِهِ وَأَخَافُ أَن يَأْكُلَهُ الذِّنْبُ وَأَنتُمْ عَنْهُ غَافِلُون. قَالُوا لَئِنْ أَكَلَهُ الذَّنْبُ وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّا إذا لخاسرون. " 14&13: ((سورةيوسف:13

He said, "Surely it grieves me indeed that you should go with him, and I fear that the wolf may eat him (while) you are heedless of him."

They said, "Indeed, in case the wolf eats him, and we are a band, (then) surely we are indeed losers!" (12:13-14)

There is a foreshadowing here, for Ya'qub suggested something that had never occurred to them up till this point in their discussion; he feared that desert wolves would eat him. Did he mean the wolves within them or the wild wolves? No one but Allah knows. They coaxed their father to send Yusuf with them, and he agreed against his will (IbnKathir). However, he warned them lest the wolf devour him, he put forth his fear of the wolf over the care of Allah.

Nevertheless, when the catastrophe happened, Ya'qub blamed himself for being afraid of the wolf, forgetting Allah's care and protection. His feeling of guilt shows complete piety to Allah as he refers that to his lack of faith. Although it is considered a small mistake to common people, yet to prophets it is a fatal mistake. Besides that, his discrimination among his sons was another serious mistake, as Yusuf's brothers were not able to get over their jealousy and resentment of this favored brother. They had such negative feelings towards him that their goal was not only to get rid of their frustration, but also to make their father suffer.

In many retellings of stories for children, as Hara Person and Diane Person in their book Stories of Heaven and Earth explain that the parental favoritism is not prettied up or ignored, but it is simply presented as a fact. Prophet Ya'qub is guilty because he favors one child over the others, and because he is a Prophet, who should not make such a mistake, he should be punished (94). In my point of view, the problem of favoritism is a fatal problem that most parent practice without heeding its consequences, and that is why Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) orders us to treat our children equally.

However, when the brothers lied to Prophet Ya'qub about the disaster that happened to their brother, it was apparently noticed by Prophet Ya'qub that his sons were not telling the truth, for how could a wolf devour anyonewithout even tearing his shirt? Deep down in his heart, Prophet Ya'qub (PBUH) knew that his beloved son Yusuf was still alive. He held the blood stained shirt in his hands, spread it out; he sarcastically wonders how merciful is the wolf and remarked,

" كيف يفترس الذئب يوسف ويظل قميصه سليماً" (بهجت 61)

"For how can a wolf eat my son and his shirt remains unharmed" (the translated version: 81).

Prophet Ya'qub could understand from the wolf's eyes that the latter was innocent and a victim, and the wolf knew that Ya'qub was a prophet. The father acted wisely by praying for mighty patience and by trusting in Allah for helping him to face the conspiracy committed against him and his son. Prophet Ya'qub and the wolf wept together. They wondered where Yusuf was and at how smart they were to bring that wolf.

"رحت أدنو منه حتى ألصقت خدي بخده بكيت مثلما بكى.. مد يعقوب يده وربت بها على رأسي فبرئت جراحي جميعاً." (بهجت 61)

"I came closer and closer to him till I put my cheek to his and cried as he cried. Ya'qub extended his hand and patted my head and so all my wounds felt relieved" (the translated version: 82).

The meeting between Prophet Ya'qub and the wolf is a very emotional and impressive scene, as both of them felt injustice, and both were crying; one because of his lost son and the other because he was a victim. Prophet Yaq'ub sympathized with the wolf for he was sure that he was innocent and the wolf felt relief as soon as he put his cheeks close to the prophet and the latter patted his head. They both knew that they were the victims and the brothers were the sinners.

Here comes the tragic ending: as Prophet Ya'qub opened the door to free the wolf, his sons attacked the wolf with their arrows and he fell dead. That scene is very striking, the savage way they tortured the innocent animal then killed him at the end was very inhumane sight.

The first part of Prophet Yusuf's story is the only part written in the Qur'an which is the episode of the conspiracy and the accusation of the wolf for committing the crime. However, Bahgat narrates this first scene of his story from the perspective of a wolf, the innocent, and victim who was accused of killing and devouring Prophet Yusuf, who was actually not killed. Hard-hearted, unemotional people who did not even care for their father's feelingsdeprived the poor kid in a cruel way from his family.

The role of the wolf here is that he saw and heard Yusuf's brothers sitting and planning for a cruel act. He was the only eyewitness for that vicious act, and at the same time, the only one accused of a murder, which was not committed by him. He is the very famous wolf in history, a poor, innocent wolf that was exposed to wicked, hard-hearted and merciless men and was the one that paid for their wicked scheme. The lesson learned from this story is very important. Parents must avoid discrimination among their children. They should be aware that this discrimination does not only affect one generation, but it might pass to younger generations, and that is why Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did order parents to treat their children equally, even in kisses. Thus this story tackles various themes such as love versus hatred, justice versus injustice, cruelty versus kindness as well as animals versus humans.

3 Conclusions

Beware of jealousy as it is one of the most malicious, mean, cruel, wicked characteristic in a human being that could cause a disaster, not only to the victim, but also to the vicious jealous person himself. Jealousy has a lot of malicious consequences; it distorts relationship among siblings, friends and relatives. One should have satisfaction of the blessings that Allah bestows him/her. One should not look at other people's blessings, but should stop and contemplate what Allah has bestowed him/her and thank Him.

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