

Fast 28

“When his Lord said to him (Abraham), Submit, he said: I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds. And the same did Abraham command his sons, and (so did) **Jacob**: My sons, surely Allah has chosen for you (this) religion, so do not die except as submitting ones. Or were you witnesses when death visited **Jacob**, when he said to his sons: What will you serve after me? They said: We shall serve your God (O Jacob) and the God of your fathers, Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac, one God only, and to Him do we submit.” — Ch. 2, v. 131–133.

“And We gave him (i.e., Abraham) Isaac and **Jacob**. Each did We guide.” — Ch. 6, v. 84.

“And We gave him (i.e., Abraham) Isaac; and **Jacob**, a son’s son. And We made them all good.” — Ch. 21, v. 72.

“And remember Our servants Abraham and Isaac and **Jacob**, possessors of power and insight. We indeed purified them by a pure quality, the keeping in mind of the (final) abode. And surely they were with Us, among the elect, the best.” — Ch. 38, v. 45–47.

Notes: The prophet Jacob, son of Isaac and grandson of Abraham, was given the title **Israel**, and is the one after whom the Jews are called Israelites or the Children of Israel in both the Bible and the Quran. The twelve tribes of Israel were descended from his twelve sons. According to the Quran, Jacob was a prophet and the above verses tell us that he submitted to God, taught submission to God to others as well, was a guided person, was good, pure, and an elect of God.

As opposed to this, the story of Jacob in the Bible contains incidents which present him as always trying to rob his older twin brother Esau of his rights by means of **blackmail, deceit and falsehood**. On one occasion when Esau returned from hard labour in the fields, and was exhausted and famished, Jacob refused to give him food unless Esau gave him his birth-right which he possessed because of being the elder brother. Jacob thus obtained this birth-right by blackmail (Genesis 25:29–34).

Their father Isaac was also a prophet according to the Quran. According to the Bible, when Isaac was on his deathbed, and was blind, he told Esau that he wanted to pass on Divine blessings to him and that he should bring him some meat to eat, and he would pass on these blessings to him. The mother, overhearing this, told Jacob to bring the meat to the father before Esau could do it, and to pretend before his blind

father that he was Esau, and thereby obtain the blessings intended for Esau. Jacob said to his mother: “Look, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth-skinned man. Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be a deceiver to him; and I shall bring a curse on myself and not a blessing” (Genesis 27:11–12). So the mother got Jacob to put on Esau’s clothes and she put goat skin on his neck to make it rough to the feel. Jacob then went in to Isaac and said: “I am Esau your firstborn; I have done just as you told me; please arise, sit and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me” (Genesis 27:19).

Contrast this use of falsehood, pretence and deceit with the diametrically opposite, good qualities of Jacob mentioned in the Quran as above.

By pretending to be Esau, Jacob obtained the blessings and prayers from his father intended for Esau, which included these prayers: “...may God give you of the dew of heaven, of the fatness of the earth, ... Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. ... Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be those who bless you.” (Genesis 27:28–29). When Esau returned, and it was realised what had happened, Isaac said to him: “Your brother came with deceit and has taken away your blessing” (Genesis 27:35). This alleged behaviour by Jacob is rejected by the Quran in the qualities that it mentions that Jacob possessed.

In chapter 12 of the Quran, which is named Joseph as it relates the story of Joseph, Jacob appears as the father of Joseph and his eleven brothers. We quote below some verses from this chapter where **it is Jacob who is speaking**:

“So patience is best. And Allah is He Whose help is sought against what you describe.” — Ch. 12, v. 18.

“Allah is Guardian over what we say.... Judgment is only Allah’s. On Him I rely, and on Him let the reliant rely.... And surely he (Jacob) was possessed of knowledge, because We had given him knowledge, but most people do not know.” v. 66–68.

“I complain of my grief and sorrow only to Allah, and I know from Allah what you do not know. My sons, ... do not despair of Allah’s mercy. Surely none despairs of Allah’s mercy except the disbelieving people.” v. 86–87.

“They (the ten guilty sons) said: Our father, ask forgiveness of our sins for us, surely we are sinners. He (Jacob) said: I shall ask forgiveness for you of my Lord. Surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.” v. 97–98.

Notes: It is impossible that Jacob who speaks in this way about God could ever commit the despicable acts of deception attributed to him in the Bible.

The conclusion of all this is that the Quran has corrected the errors of the former scriptures. In this example, it has exonerated Jacob (also known as Israel) of the charges against him in the Bible. The Holy Prophet Muhammad had **nothing whatsoever to gain** by presenting the religious founders of other faiths as holy, pure and true prophets, especially when the followers of those faiths were opposed to him. This shows that the Quran and the Holy Prophet were established on the highest standards of justice and truth that it is ever possible to achieve.

It is perhaps the supreme irony in the religious history of the world that the man, Jacob, *after whom the people and state of Israel are named*, is presented in their own scripture as a deceiver, liar and usurper, but that same man is declared as pure, innocent and an elect of God in the scripture of the Muslims! The world will find this fact to be astonishing. Jews, Christians and Muslims should all learn from this that the Quran is far above the pettiness of all national and religious prejudices.
