

From a God's Journal, by Japinder Kaur
23 GRE words

I reached the pool within minutes of Sabah's prayer. Yasmeeen was gone. Some of her guards were on their knees desperately praying to me for help, a few were searching for her in the pool, and the rest were foolishly looking behind bushes and trees. Sabah was crying by the pool.

I **manifested** myself and they were all at my feet in an instant, **groveling** that I bring Yasmeeen back.

"Demons have taken her," I told them.

They all gasped in horror.

manifest

(v) to make visible

Done on [Day 20](#) of the Vocab Program.

1. grovel

(v) to lie face downwards

- *The Creator has bidden every man to look up, not down. He made him to climb, not to grovel.*

The chief of Yasmeeen's security troupe swore upon my name that there had been no **dereliction** of duty by him and his men. He had advised the princess against stopping there, but she had insisted on bathing alone in the pool, refusing to take even Sabah along. When Yasmeeen did not return after half an hour, Sabah had gone to the pool and found no one there. She alerted the men and had been praying for Yasmeeen since then.

I assured them that it was not their fault. Demons can be invisible to humans and can strike anywhere. But being near to the demons even for a moment contaminates a human. The chief, the guards and Sabah would all need to cleanse themselves by singing five hymns in my praise and then drinking two handfuls each of the pool water. I emphasized that perfect unity of voices and movements among all of them throughout this exercise was critical. A single **discordant** note or action would make the cleansing ineffective and then, after about an hour, the **manifestations** of the contamination would begin - their skin would start to rot and their bodies would start to shrink and they would all die a painful death.

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2. dereliction

(n) negligence; the act of abandoning something.

- *After a child was kidnapped right outside the school gate, the school watchman, who had left his place to buy a packet of cigarettes from a nearby shop, was suspended for dereliction of duty.*

Adjective: **derelict**

abandoned, neglected

- *The derelict old car kept rusting in the driveway of the derelict farmhouse.*

3. discordant

(adj) lacking harmony

Noun: **discord**

Lack of agreement or harmony

- *Nothing is uglier than marital discord.*

From there, I went to Qaazeb's suite. When I **apprised** him of the development, he became hysterical: what would happen when people came to know? They would not only lose confidence in him but also question my **omniscience** and **omnipotence**, because if I was **omniscient**, how could I not know that the demons were coming for the princess? And if I was **omnipotent**, why could I not stop them from taking her away? "If people become **skeptical** Naad," he dropped into a chair, his fear **patent** on his face, "if they become one bit **skeptical**, we are done for."

4. apprise

(v) to inform

- *The blackmailer threatened to apprise the police of the businessman's many crimes.*

5. omniscience

(n) the ability to know everything

Adjective: **omniscient**

one who knows everything

6. omnipotence

(n) the state of having unlimited power

Adjective: **omnipotent**

skeptical

Done on [Day 5](#) of the Vocab Program.

patent

Done in [Sunday Read 2](#) of the Vocab Program.

His initial shock over, I said that he could help by making a big noise after I left about his daughter having been abducted by the demons. The goal was to get this news into the ears of the palace staff; they were good at gossip.

He could not have shown more disbelief if I had said his head had grown horns. “Haven’t I just finished listing the dangers of people coming to know?”

I looked at him in the eye, said maybe I wanted to test his faith in me, and disappeared.

Both the king and the palace staff lived up to my expectation; the news spread fast, and everybody who heard it left whatever they were doing and started walking towards the palace, as I knew they would. Who can refuse the opportunity to escape their **prosaic** lives for a few hours to participate in a spicy event like a princess’ abduction? Days like these go down in folklore.

7. prosaic

(adj) boring and dull

- *Unable to feed their families through their creations, many talented artists are forced to give up their art and take on prosaic jobs.*

By the evening, the palace grounds were packed with people. Many among them were describing in rich detail the corpses of dwarfish demons that they had seen by a pool on their way to the palace. The general atmosphere was of fear and uncertainty. Their kingdom, which had been as **placid** as a still lake till yesterday, today seemed stormed by demons!

Qaazeb came to the terrace of the palace and waved to the crowd. Immediately they started asking if the rumors were true. Then, I **manifested** myself and they bent on their knees and started chanting my name.

I held up Yasmeen's body for all to see. This relaxed the people somewhat, and I began my speech:

“The repulsive bodies that some of you have seen by a pool belonged to the security troupe of the princess. They look like that because they were contaminated by the demons. The demons have also contaminated the princess. She has already fallen unconscious, and her skin will start to rot, and her body will start to shrink any minute now. Do you want her to live?”

8. placid

(adj) calm and peaceful

Everyone present responded with an **unequivocal** “Yes.”

“Then, a hundred **pious** people among you should step forward. Bathing the princess with their blood will cure her of the **deleterious** effects of the demons’ touch.”

The crowd gasped in horror. Qaazeb turned to me with folded hands and **implored** that his subjects too were like his children, and he could not bear to sacrifice a hundred children to save one. Was there no other way to purify Yasmeen?

No, I said, the only other option was to sacrifice *her*.

He instantly seized the sword of a guard, walked to where Yasmeen lay and killed her. The sky broke out with impassioned cries of ‘Long Live King Qaazeb!’

9. pious

(adj) sincerely believing in one’s religion and living as per its principles and teachings

Noun: **piety/piousness**

sincere devotion to one’s religion, as clear from the way one lives

Opposites:

Adjective: **impious** = lacking respect for god/religion

Noun: **impiety** = disrespect to god/religion

10. deleterious

(adj) harmful

implore

Done in [Sunday Read 1](#) of the Vocab Program.

When the noise died down, a man stood up and asked the question Qaazeb had feared, “How could the demons wreak such havoc when the **omnipotent** Naad guards our kingdom?” Those around him started beating him for his **effrontery**.

I ordered them to stop. The man had asked something I myself wanted to address, I said: the **culpability** for today’s attack lay not with me, not with the king, but with them, the people. The princess and her troupe had paid for the mistake of most people gathered there. But they were only the first victims; the demons would strike again and again now that the people had emboldened the Devil.

The crowd pleaded with me to save them.

They had to save themselves, I said. I was **omnipotent** only so long as no evil thought lurked in any heart in the kingdom. As the evil thoughts **proliferated**, the Devil gained, and I lost, strength. Their confession of evil thoughts was important not to inform me – I was **omniscient**, they told me nothing I did not already know – but to cleanse their hearts. Saying an evil

effrontery

Done on [Day 15](#) of the Vocab Program.

culpability

Done on [Day 2](#) of the Vocab Program.

11. proliferate

(v) to grow in size or number

- *The goats proliferated, and by 1980 the population within the park numbered more than 1,000.*

thought aloud to me **negated** its wickedness and kept the Devil **impotent**. They were asked to confess *all* their thoughts because they, being mere humans, were **fallible** – they could misjudge an evil thought to be a good one and not confess it, and that buried thought would then become one arrow more in the Devil’s armor and one arrow less in mine. I had

12. negate

(v) to make ineffective; to invalidate

- *Many people believe that if they keep their fingers crossed while saying something, this gesture negates their words.*

Synonym: **nullify**, done on [Day 18](#) of the Vocab Program.

13. impotent

(adj) powerless

Origin: Latin *potis*, powerful

Omnipotent (*Word #6 in this story*) also comes from the same root (Latin *omni* means ‘all’)

fallible

Done on [Day 6](#) of the Vocab Program.

struggled to defeat the demons today. Pointing an accusatory finger at the crowd, I declared,

“I will not be able to **prevail** over the demons when they come in greater numbers, or when the Devil attacks you himself. Your **impiety** has made the Devil stronger than me, and I take great **umbrage** at this and have decided to step down from the godship of a kingdom that does not in truth respect me.”

14. prevail

(v) to dominate over

- *‘The Trial’ discusses how Michael Jackson prevailed against child molestation charges.*

Adjective: prevalent

impiety

Done earlier in this story (Word #9)

15. umbrage

(n) offence

Origin: Latin *umbra*, shade

‘Umbrella’ is also from this root.

When you ‘give umbrage’ to someone, it’s as if you’ve darkened their previously sunny face; they are no more smiling; you have upset and angered them. Of course, this happened only because the other person did ‘take umbrage’ at your remarks.

The frightened people begged me to keep guarding them and promised full **compliance** with the daily confession ritual from now on. I granted their request only after much **imploration** and **groveling**.

After the crowd had dispersed and Qaazeb and I were back in his suite, I complimented him on the fine show he had put out there. He said he managed only because I had prepared him before going there, otherwise he would not have had the stomach to kill his child, even if she had **affronted** him by running off with the worst possible choice of a sweetheart she could have made – the son of a prostitute. He had allowed her to go out today after one whole year and only because she had been **docile** for many months and had led him to believe that she had gotten over the man, and what a fine gift he had got for trusting her!

He was still in the dark about many things; I satisfied his curiosity now.

I started with the prayer Sabah had made when she found the pool empty; she had confessed to me then her fears of the princess having eloped with her lover. Yasmeeen must have kept Sabah in the dark about her plans, I said; she may have guessed that we had discovered her affair through

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compliance

Done on [Day 19](#) of the Vocab Program.

implore

Done in [Sunday Read 1](#) of the Vocab Program.

grovel

Done earlier in this story (Word #1)

affront

Done on [Day 15](#) of the Vocab Program.

16. docile

(adj) easy to manage, obedient

Noun: **docility**

- *In patriarchal societies such as India, docility is considered to be a must-have virtue. A 'good' woman is said to be one who is submissive and always bows down to the will of the males in her family.*

Sabah's confessions. After meeting the king at the palace, I had returned to the pool and flown invisibly over the route towards the man's village. I found him and Yasmeen resting under a roadside tree. I killed him, made Yasmeen unconscious and took her with me. And to make sure that a single narrative about the event reached the public, it was necessary to eliminate all witnesses. I talked the security troupe and Sabah into drinking water from the pool. After becoming invisible and before coming to Qaazeb's suite, I had mixed a poison in the pool that not only kills in minutes but also deforms the body.

The king laughed, "Had a human done half the **machinations** you have done today, I could have sworn that he was going to hell."

I walked over to the window. "I meant it, what I said about leaving the place where my advice is not respected. I am done with cleaning your shit."

He understood that I was referring to him not having heeded my repeated advice of making his family confess to me; had he done that, Yasmeen's attraction towards the man would have been discovered the day she met him, and the matter would have been handled there itself. He came up to

17. **machination**

(n) a cunning scheme carried out in secret to achieve an evil goal

- *In the novel 'Aurora Leigh', Romney Leigh was set to marry Marian Erle, but through the machinations of the aristocratic Lady Waldemar, who wanted Romney for herself, Marian was taken to France on the eve of her marriage to Romney, drugged and then raped, leading to the birth of an illegitimate child.*

me and looked outside. His dog was playing in the lawn. “He is a silly animal,” he said after a while. “Some time back, he got it into his head that because I loved him, he was at liberty to do or demand anything. He started to growl at anyone who came near me – the queen, the ministers, everyone – and bit a servant who had brought me tea. I got up and petted him and led him into a dark cell and locked him there. For two days he lay there, without food, water and light. Brought the bugger back to his senses. He must have realized that he needed me more than I needed him and so must behave.”

“I am not a dog locked in a cell and I do not need you,” I said calmly.

He reminded me that I had seventy-five years of service left in his kingdom yet.

I smiled. “You assume that I aspire to higher godship.”

“I know of no god who does not.”

As the king sensed the **resolution** in my voice, his face lost its color.

He may have remembered the god allotted to this kingdom before me. That century had been plagued by corruption, loot, murder and war. Qaazeb's great-grandfather, a mere minister at the royal court, had brutally killed all living members of the dynasty that had ruled the kingdom for a thousand years and had seized the throne for himself.

The god had watched all this **apathetically** and had helped neither the earlier king to save himself nor the new king to improve the law and order situation. I know and Qaazeb knows that I am better than most gods at my level.

resolution

Done in [Sunday Read 2](#) of the Vocab Program.

18. apathetic

(adj) without feeling or showing any interest, concern or emotion

- *He was apathetic to the suffering of others.*

Noun: **apathy**

lack of interest, concern or emotion.

Synonym: **indifference**

Done on [Day 15](#) of the Vocab Program

I was his teacher and his hero, he said in a **conciliatory** tone. He had got a fine lesson today in how an **adversity** could be turned into an opportunity. We not only got out of a mess but also tightened our grip over the people. How could I walk away from the exciting **prospect** of total mind-control over the population? Only the religious people had taken their confessions seriously so far, but today I had scared the others so much that there would

19. conciliatory

(adj) seeking to win over or regain friendship or goodwill

- *Sensing that the story he had told Naad about his pet dog had offended the god, Qaazeb tried to conciliate the god by saying that He was the king's teacher and hero.*

20. adversity

(n) hardship, misfortune; the opposite of well-being and prosperity

Adjective: **adverse**

21. prospect

(n) the expectation (mental view) of a future event; the thing which is expected to happen in the future; a possibility

be no **dereliction** in confessions for a long time now. What could he and I not do with the superpower of knowing the most intimate thoughts of every person in the kingdom? Such hold of a king over his people was **unprecedented**, and it had come into fruition because of my brilliance. I could not waste all my good work and just walk away, he said.

“Well, I *am* walking away. Goodbye and good luck!” I made to go but he rushed to me, crying, “Stop! Stop!” and agreed to make his family confess to me daily from tomorrow.

“No lies or omissions or any sort of **equivocation** in their confessions,” I warned. “One instance of this, and I won’t even say goodbye.”

He assured me that I will have nothing but the naked truth in those confessions.

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dereliction

Done earlier in this story (Word #2)

unprecedented

Done on [Day 19](#) of the Vocab Program.

22. equivocation

(n) the clever use of words, phrases and gestures to avoid stating the exact truth without telling any lie. This is usually done to mislead the listener(s).

Politicians are usually excellent equivocators. Instead of giving a clear and **unequivocal** yes/no answer to whether they support a policy, they give a long, vague answer in which the policy supporters can find a ‘yes’ and the policy opposers can find a ‘no.’

unequivocal

Done on [Day 1](#) of the Vocab Program.

And so, the **ignominy** that my son and his mother have had to live in because of the stupid rule that forbids gods from marrying humans will finally come to an end. He is called a bastard, and she, a prostitute and other soul-stabbing names, and still they have kept their promise to me and not uttered a word to anyone about being *my* family. He is such an excellent son; does everything I ask him to. Well, I will soon reward him with kingship, and then. . . then, I will show the world how a kingdom ought to be run.

23. ignominy

(n) public dishonor or shame.

An action or a thing which is likely to bring **ignominy** is called **ignominious**.

Origin: Latin

ig- (a variant of *in-*), not

+ *nomen*, name

=> 'name is lost'

- *When the manager discovered that the office clerk—whose name **ironically** was Satya Prasad Sharma—had been stealing the office funds for a long time, he called him to his office and asked him to resign by the evening or get ready for the **ignominy** of being publicly thrown out.*

ironic

Done on Day 3 of the Vocab Program.

And so, the first step of the plan is over.

I will finally discover the secrets of the royal family, none of whom have a religious-minded confidante like Yasmeen's Sabah was. I wish though that the **pious** little fool did not have to die; after all, the credit for this idea properly belongs to her. Had she not made that confession, over a year ago, of the discomfort she felt whenever Yasmeen talked about craving for a man's love and about her lonely and boring life as a princess, where would we be today? But then, what choice did I have? She could identify Yasmeen's lover.

It will not take me more than a year now, I estimate, to get rid of the remaining royal family, each killed by making use of his or her specific weaknesses and in a manner as unsuspecting as Yasmeen's death today. When after this, Qaazeb dies one day with no visible **manifestations** of poison or disease, everyone will naturally assume that he had died of heartbreak. With the royal lineage ended, the crown will go to the man I choose.

pious

Done earlier in this story (Word #9)

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23 GRE words

1. Grovel
2. Dereliction, derelict
3. Discordant, discord
4. apprise
5. Omniscience
6. Omnipotence
7. Prosaic
8. Placid
9. Pious, piety/piousness, impious, impiety
10. Deleterious
11. Proliferate
12. Negate
13. Impotent
14. Prevail
15. Umbrage
16. Docile
17. Machination
18. Apathetic, apathy
19. Conciliatory, conciliate
20. Adversity, adverse
21. Prospect
22. Equivocation
23. Ignominy

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