

Chapter 12: Yusuf- Joseph

By Muhammad Taqi Uthmani

With the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful.

[12:1]

Alif Lām Rā. These are verses of the enlightening Book.

[12:2]

We have sent it down, as an Arabic Qur'an, so that you may understand.

[12:3]

By revealing this Qur'an to you, we hereby narrate to you the best narrative, while before this you were among those unaware (of it).

[12:4]

(It happened) when Yūsuf (Joseph) said to his father, "My father, I saw (in dream) eleven stars and the Sun and the Moon; I saw them all fallen prostrate before me."

[12:5]

He said, "My son, do not relate your dream to your brothers, lest they should devise a plan against you. Surely, Satan is an open enemy for mankind.

[12:6]

And it will be in this way that your Lord will choose you and teach you the correct interpretation of events, and will perfect His bounty upon you and upon the House of Ya'qūb (Jacob), as He has perfected it earlier upon your fore-fathers, Ibrāhīm (Abraham) and IsHāq (Isaac). Surely, your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing."

[12:7]

Surely, in (the story of) Yūsuf (Joseph) and his brothers, there are signs for those who ask.

[12:8]

(It happened) when they said, "Yūsuf (Joseph) and his brother are dearer to our father than we are, while we are a whole group. Surely, our father is in clear error.

[12:9]

Let us kill Yūsuf (Joseph), or throw him at some place on earth, and thus your father's full attention will be devoted for you alone, and after doing that, you may become a righteous people."

[12:10]

One of them said, "Do not kill Yūsuf; rather, cast him into the bottom of a pit, so that some wayfarers may pick him up, if you are going to do something anyway."

[12:11]

They said (to Ya'qūb [Jacob]), "Our father, why is it that you do not trust us about Yūsuf (Joseph), while we are his well-wishers indeed.

[12:12]

Send him with us tomorrow, that he may eat and play, and of course, we will remain as guards for him."

[12:13]

He said, "It makes me sad that you should take him with you, and I fear that some wolf may eat him up when you are heedless of him."

[12:14]

They said, "If a wolf eats him up, while we are a whole group, we are then losers indeed."

[12:15]

So, when they went away with him and were determined to put him in the bottom of a pit, (they did accordingly). And We revealed to him (Yūsuf [Joseph]), "You will (one day) remind them of this deed of theirs, and they will not recognize (you)."

[12:16]

And at nightfall, they came to their father weeping.

[12:17]

They said, "Father, we went racing with one another, and left Yūsuf [Joseph] with our belongings, and the wolf ate him up. You will never believe us, howsoever truthful we may be."

[12:18]

And they came with fake blood on his shirt. He said, "Rather, your inner desires have tempted you to do something. So, patience is best. It is Allah whose help is sought against what you describe."

[12:19]

And some wayfarers came (near the pit in which Yūsuf [Joseph] was thrown), and sent their water-drawer (to bring water for them). So, he let down his bucket. He said, "What a good news! Here is a boy." And they kept him hidden as merchandise, while Allah was aware of what they were doing.

[12:20]

And they sold him for a paltry price, for a few silver-coins, and they had not much interest in him.

[12:21]

And the one who bought him from Egypt said to his wife, "Make his stay graceful. He may be useful for us. Or, we may adopt him as a son." And thus We established Yūsuf (Joseph) in the land, so that We should teach him the interpretation of events. Allah is powerful in (enforcing) His command, but most of the people do not know.

[12:22]

And when he reached the prime of his age, We gave him wisdom and knowledge, and this is how We reward those who are good in their deeds.

[12:23]

And she, in whose house he was, seduced him towards herself, and bolted the doors, and said, "come on!" He said, "I seek refuge with Allah. Surely, he (your husband) is my master. He has given me a good lodging. Indeed, the wrongdoers do not prosper."

[12:24]

She certainly desired him, and he might have desired her, had he not seen the proof from his Lord. Thus We did, to turn evil and lewdness away from him. Surely, he was one of Our chosen servants.

[12:25]

They raced towards the door, and she ripped his shirt from behind, and they found her master by the door. She said, “What could be the punishment of him who intended evil with your wife, except that he be imprisoned or (given) a painful chastisement?”

[12:26]

He (Yūsuf [Joseph]) said, “It was she who tried to seduce me.” And a witness from her family observed that if his shirt was ripped from the front side, then she is true and he is a liar;

[12:27]

and if his shirt was ripped from behind, then she is telling a lie and he is truthful.

[12:28]

So, when he (her husband) saw his shirt ripped from behind, he said, “This is certainly your trickery, O women. Great is the trickery of you women indeed.

[12:29]

O Yūsuf [Joseph], ignore this matter, and you (O woman,) seek forgiveness for your sin, for you were guilty in fact.”

[12:30]

And women in the city said, “The wife of the minister is seducing her youthful slave. His love has entered the depth of her heart. Surely, we see her in open error.”

[12:31]

So, when she heard of their taunting comments, she extended an invitation to them and arranged for them a comfortable place (to sit and dine) and gave everyone a knife, and said (to Yūsuf [Joseph]): “come out to them.” So when they saw him, they found him great, and (were so stunned that they) cut their hands and said, “Oh God! He is no human being. He is but a noble angel.”

[12:32]

She said, “This is the one about whom you reproached me. Yes, I seduced him, but he abstained. And should he not follow my command, he shall be imprisoned and will be disgraced.”

[12:33]

He (Yūsuf [Joseph]) said, “My Lord, the prison is dearer to me than what these women invite me to do. If You do not turn their guile away from me, I shall get inclined towards them and shall be among the ignorant.”

[12:34]

So, his Lord accepted his prayer and turned their guile away from him. Surely, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.

[12:35]

Later on, even after having seen the clear signs (of his innocence), they deemed it proper to imprison him for some time.

[12:36]

And two men entered the prison with him. One of them said, “I have seen myself (in dream) pressing wine.” And the other said, “I saw myself carrying bread on my head of which the birds were eating. Let us know its interpretation. We see you are a man of good deeds.”

[12:37]

He said, “No food provided for you shall come to you, but I can give you its description before it comes to you. This is the knowledge my Lord has given to me. I have abandoned the way of those who do not believe in Allah, and who are deniers of the Hereafter,

[12:38]

and I have followed the way of my fathers, Ibrāhīm (Abraham), IsHāq (Isaac) and Ya‘qūb (Jacob). It is not for us that we associate any partners with Allah. All this is a part of the favor Allah has bestowed upon us and upon the people, but most of the people are not grateful.

[12:39]

O my fellow prisoners, are different gods better or Allah, the One, the All-Dominant?

[12:40]

Whatever you worship, other than Him, are nothing but names you have coined, you and your fathers. Allah has sent down no authority for them. Sovereignty belongs to none but Allah. He has ordained that you shall not worship anyone but Him. This is the only right path. But most of the people do not know.”

[12:41]

“O my fellow prisoners, one of you will serve wine to his master, while the other will be crucified and birds will eat from his head. Destined is the matter you are asking about.”

[12:42]

And he (Yūsuf [Joseph]) said to the one whom he believed likely to be released out of the two, “Tell your master about me.” Then, the Satan made him forget to tell his master. So, he (Yūsuf [Joseph]) remained in prison for a few years.

[12:43]

And (one day) the king said (to his courtiers), “I have seen (in a dream) seven fat cows being eaten by seven lean ones, and seven ears of grain which are green and (seven) others which are dry. O people, tell me about my dream, if you can interpret dreams.”

[12:44]

They said, “(It seems to be) a mishmash of dreams, and we do not know the interpretation of dreams.”

[12:45]

And said the one who was released (from the prison) out of the two, and recalled (Yūsuf [Joseph]) after a long time, “I shall tell you its interpretation. Just send me (to Yūsuf [Joseph]).”

[12:46]

(Thus he came to the prison and said to Yūsuf [Joseph] “Yūsuf, O the truthful one, tell us about seven fat cows eaten by seven lean ones, and seven ears of grain which are green and (seven)

others which are dry, so that I may go back to the people and they may know (the interpretation of the dream.)”

[12:47]

He said, “You will grow crops for seven years consecutively. So, what you have harvested, leave it in its ear, except a little which you eat.

[12:48]

Then seven hard years shall come after that, which shall eat up what you have stored for them, except a little which you preserve (to sow).

[12:49]

Then there shall come after that a year in which people will have rains and in which they will extract juices.”

[12:50]

And (when this person went back and told the king about the interpretation of the dream), the king said, “Bring him to me.” So, when the messenger came to Yūsuf [Joseph], he said, “Go back to your lord and ask him, ‘What is the case of the women who cut their hands?’ Surely, my Lord knows well their guile.”

[12:51]

He (the king) said, “What was your case, O women, when you seduced Yūsuf [Joseph]?” They said, “God forbid, we know of no evil in him.” The governor’s wife said, “Now the truth has come to light. I did seduce him, and he is surely truthful.”

[12:52]

(Then Yūsuf [Joseph] said), “That was because he (the governor) may know that I did not betray him in his absence, and that Allah does not lead the guile of betrayers to success.

[12:53]

And I do not absolve my inner self of blame. Surely, man’s inner self often incites to evil, unless my Lord shows mercy. Certainly, my Lord is the Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful.”

[12:54]

The king said, “Bring him to me, and I shall employ him purely for myself.” So, when he (the king) talked to him, he said (to Yūsuf [Joseph]), “Today you are with us well-placed, fully trusted.”

[12:55]

He said, “Appoint me to (supervise) the treasures of the land. I am indeed a knowledgeable keeper.”

[12:56]

And thus We gave Yūsuf [Joseph] power in the land. He could settle in it wherever he wished. We extend Our mercy to whomsoever We will, and We do not let the reward of the righteous people to go to waste.

[12:57]

And the reward of the Hereafter is surely better for those who believe and constantly observe taqwā [piety].

[12:58]

And came the brothers of Yūsuf [Joseph] and appeared before him. He recognized them, while they did not recognize him.

[12:59]

When he equipped them with their provisions, he said, “Bring to me your other brother from your father’s side. Do you not see that I give full measure, and I extend the best hospitality?”

[12:60]

Still, if you do not bring him to me, then you deserve no (further) measure from me, nor shall you approach me any more.”

[12:61]

They said, “We shall persuade his father about him and we will certainly do it.”

[12:62]

And he (Yūsuf [Joseph]) said to his boys, “Put their goods in their camel-packs. Perhaps they will recognize it when they go back to their family; perhaps they will come again.”

[12:63]

So, when they returned to their father, they said, “Father, the (required) measure (of grain) has been withheld from us, therefore, send our brother with us, so that we may receive our full measure. And, of course, we are his guards.”

[12:64]

He said, “Shall I trust you about him as I trusted you earlier about his brother? Well, Allah is the best guardian, and He is the Most-Merciful of all the merciful.”

[12:65]

When they opened their baggage, they found their goods given back to them. They said, “Our father, what else should we want? Here is our goods given back to us, and we shall bring food to our family, protect our brother and add the measure of one camel more. That is an easy measure.”

[12:66]

He said, “I shall never send him with you until you give me a pledge in the name of Allah that you will definitely bring him back to me, unless you are overpowered (by circumstances).” So, when they gave him their pledge, he said, “Allah is watchful over what we say.”

[12:67]

And he said, “O my sons, do not enter (the city) all of you from the same gate, rather, enter from different gates. And I cannot help you in any way against (the will of) Allah. Sovereignty belongs to none but Allah. In Him I place my trust, and all those who trust should trust in Him alone.”

[12:68]

And (recall) when they entered (the city) in the manner their father had advised them. He could not help them in any way against (the will of) Allah, but it was just an urge in the heart of Ya‘qūb [Jacob] which he satisfied; he was a man of knowledge, because We had taught him, but most of the people do not know.

[12:69]

And when they came to Yūsuf [Joseph], he lodged his brother (Binyamin) with himself. He said, “Look, I am your brother! So do not grieve for what they have been doing.”

[12:70]

Later, when he equipped them with their provisions, he placed the bowl in the camel-pack of his brother. Then, an announcer shouted out, “O people of the caravan, you are thieves.”

[12:71]

Turning towards them, they said, “What are you missing?”

[12:72]

They said, “We are missing the measuring-bowl of the king, and whoever brings it back shall deserve a camel-load, and I stand surety for it.”

[12:73]

They said, “We swear by Allah, you know, we did not come to make mischief in the land, nor have we ever been thieves.”

[12:74]

They said, “What is the punishment, if you are liars?”

[12:75]

They said, “Its punishment? The one in whose saddlebag it is found shall himself be the punishment. This is how we punish the wrongdoers.”

[12:76]

So, he started with their bags before (searching) the bag of his brother, then, recovered it from the bag of his brother.

This is how We planned for Yūsuf [Joseph]. He had no right to take his brother according to the law of the king, unless Allah so willed. We elevate in ranks whomsoever We will. Above every man of knowledge, there is someone more knowledgeable.

[12:77]

They said, “If he commits theft, (there is nothing surprising, because) his other brother had committed theft earlier.” Yūsuf [Joseph] kept it (his reaction) to himself and did not reveal it to them. He said (in his heart), “You are even worse in position. Allah knows best of what you allege.”

[12:78]

They said, “O ‘Azīz, he has a father, a very old man. So, take one of us in his place. We see you are a generous man.”

[12:79]

He said, “We seek Allah’s refuge from keeping anyone other than him with whom we have found our thing, otherwise we shall be unjust.”

[12:80]

So when they lost hope in him, they went aside for consultation. The oldest of them said, “Do you not know that your father has taken pledge from you in the name of Allah, while you had defaulted earlier in the case of Yūsuf [Joseph]. So, I shall never leave this land unless my father

permits me or Allah decides about me. He is the best of all judges.

[12:81]

Go back to your father and say, ‘Our father, your son has committed theft, and we do not testify except what we know, and we could not guard against the unseen.

[12:82]

Ask (the people of) the town in which we have been, and the caravan with which we have come, and undoubtedly we are truthful.”

[12:83]

He (Ya‘qūb [Jacob]) said, “Rather, your inner desires have seduced you to something. So, patience is best. Hopefully, Allah may bring them all together. Surely, He is the All-Knowing, All-Wise.”

[12:84]

He turned away from them and said, “How sad I am about Yūsuf [Joseph]!” and his eyes turned white with sorrow and he was suppressing (his anger and grief).

[12:85]

They said, “By God, you will not stop remembering Yūsuf [Joseph] until you collapse or perish.”

[12:86]

He said, “I do not complain of my anguish and sorrow to anyone but Allah, and I know from Allah what you do not know.

[12:87]

O my sons, go and search for Yūsuf [Joseph] and his brother, and do not lose hope in the mercy of Allah. In fact, only the infidels lose hope in Allah’s mercy.”

[12:88]

So, when they came to him (Yūsuf [Joseph]), they said, “‘Azīz, we and our family are struck by distress, and we have brought some goods of very little worth. So, give us the full measure (of grain) and be charitable to us. Surely, Allah rewards the charitable.”

[12:89]

He said, “Do you know what you did to Yūsuf [Joseph] and his brother when you were ignorant?”

[12:90]

They said, “Is it that you are, in fact, Yūsuf [Joseph]?” He said, “I am Yūsuf [Joseph], and this is my brother. Allah has been very kind to us. Surely, whoever fears Allah and observes patience, Allah does not let the reward of such good people to go to waste.”

[12:91]

They said, “We swear by Allah, indeed Allah has given to you preference over us, and we were guilty in fact.”

[12:92]

He said, “No reproach upon you today! May Allah forgive you, and He is the Most-Merciful of all the merciful.

[12:93]

Go with this shirt of mine, and put it over the face of my father, and he will turn into a sighted man. And bring to me all your family.”

[12:94]

And when the caravan set out (from Egypt), their father (Ya‘qūb [Jacob]) said (in Canaan), “I sense the fragrance of Yūsuf [Joseph], if you do not take me to be senile.”

[12:95]

They said, “By God, you are still in your old fallacy!”

[12:96]

So, when came the man with good news, he put it (the shirt) on his face, and he turned into a sighted man. He (Ya‘qūb [Jacob]) said, “Did I not tell you that I know from Allah what you do not know?”

[12:97]

They said, “Our father, pray to Allah to forgive us our sins. Surely, we have been guilty.”

[12:98]

He said, “I shall pray to my Lord to forgive you. Surely, He is the Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful.”

[12:99]

Later, when they came to Yūsuf [Joseph], he placed his parents near himself and said, “Enter Egypt, God willing, in peace.”

[12:100]

And he raised his parents up on the throne, and they all fell before him in prostration. He said, “My father, here is the fulfillment of my early dream. My Lord has made it come true. He favored me when he released me from the prison, and brought you from the countryside after Satan had caused a rift between me and my brothers. Surely, my Lord does what He wills in a subtle way. Surely, He is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.”

[12:101]

“My Lord, You have given me power to rule and the knowledge of interpreting events. O Creator of the heavens and the Earth, You are my guardian in this world and the Hereafter. Make me die a Muslim and make me join the righteous.”

[12:102]

That is a part of the reports of the unseen We reveal to you (O Prophet). You were not with them when they determined their object, and when they were planning devices.

[12:103]

Most of the people are not going to believe despite your strong desire for it.

[12:104]

And you do not demand from them any reward against it. It is nothing but a reminder for all the (people of the) worlds.

[12:105]

How many a sign there are in the heavens and the Earth, which they pass by and they are heedless to them;

[12:106]

and most of them do not believe in Allah without associating partners with Him in His divinity.

[12:107]

Do they feel themselves secure from the visit of Allah's encircling punishment or from the sudden arrival of the Hour, while they are not conscious of it?

[12:108]

Say, "This is my way. I call (people) to Allah with full perception, both I and my followers. Pure is Allah; and I am not among those who associate partners with Allah."

[12:109]

We did not send before you (messengers) other than men from the people of the towns whom We inspired with revelation. Have they not traveled in the land where they could have seen how was the fate of those before them? And surely the abode of the Hereafter is much better for those who fear Allah. Would you, then, still not understand?

[12:110]

(Punishment was often delayed) until when the messengers were in despair and thought that they were wrong in their estimation, Our help came to them, then saved were those whom We willed. And Our punishment is not averted from the guilty.

[12:111]

Surely, in the narratives of these, there is a lesson for the people of understanding. It is not an invented story, rather, a confirmation of what has been before it, and an elaboration of everything, and guidance and mercy for a people who believe.