



Pearls
FROM THE
Quran

LESSONS FROM

Sūrah Yūsuf

سُورَةُ يُسُوف

❦ DR YASIR QADHI ❦

Pearls
FROM THE
Quran



LESSONS FROM

Sūrah
Yūsuf

سورة يوسف

❦ DR YASIR QADHI ❦

Lessons from Sūrah Yūsuf

First published in England by
Kube Publishing Ltd
Markfield Conference Centre,
Ratby Lane, Markfield,
Leicestershire, LE67 9SY,
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0) 1530 249230
Fax: +44 (0) 1530 249656
Email: info@kubepublishing.com
Website: www.kubepublishing.com

PEARLS FROM THE QUR'AN

Copyright © Dr Yasir Qadhi 2021
All rights reserved.

The right of Dr Yasir Qadhi to be identified as the author
and translator of this work has been asserted by him
in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and
Patents Act, 1988.

CIP data for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: 978-1-84774-138-7 casebound
ISBN: 978-1-84774-137-0 paperback
ISBN: 978-1-84774-139-4 ebook

Editor: Lubaaba al-Azami
Cover Design by: Jannah Haque
Typesetting by: nqaddoura@hotmail.com
Printed by: Elma Basim, Turkey

Contents



Transliteration Table		iv
Foreword		v
Introduction		1
PART ONE:	The Family of Ya‘qūb	5
PART TWO:	Sold Into Slavery	43
PART THREE:	The Seduction	63
PART FOUR:	The Prisoner	93
PART FIVE:	The King and His Dream	107
PART SIX:	From Prisoner to Minister	117
PART SEVEN:	The Brothers Return	131
PART EIGHT:	Binyāmīn and the Ruse	149
PART NINE:	Deprived of Three Sons	165
PART TEN:	Yūsuf Reveals His Identity	179
PART ELEVEN:	The Dream Fulfilled	189
PART TWELVE:	Reminders to the Prophet ﷺ	203
PART THIRTEEN:	50 Lessons from Sūrah Yūsuf	221
Conclusion:	The Ring Composition Theory of the Sūrah	245
Index		248

Transliteration Table



Arabic Consonants

Initial, unexpressed medial and final: ء ’

ا a	د d	ض ḍ	ك k
ب b	ذ dh	ط ṭ	ل l
ت t	ر r	ظ ṣ	م m
ث th	ز z	ع ‘	ن n
ج j	س s	غ gh	ه h
ح ḥ	ش sh	ف f	و w
خ kh	ص ṣ	ق q	ي y

With a *shaddah*, both medial and final consonants are doubled.

Vowels, diphthongs, etc.

Short:	ا َ a	ي ِ i	و ُ u
Long:	آ َ ā	ي ِ ī	و ُ ū
Diphthongs:		اَو َو aw	
		اَي َي ay	

Foreword



*All Praise is due to Allah, Who revealed the Book
to His Servant to be the Only Guidance, And may
prayers and salutations be upon our Prophet (ﷺ)
in great abundance.*

The first time the Qur'ān spoke to me, it was through Sūrah Yūsuf.

I was probably 11 years old, in the mid-1980s. Like most kids my age, I had a Qur'ān teacher who helped me with reading and memorization (at this stage, I had only memorized maybe Juz 'Amma). I didn't understand Arabic then, and while, of course, I loved listening to my father's cassettes of Abdul Basit Abdul Samad, I hadn't read any translation of the Qur'ān. One day, in the summer break, completely bored at night, I curiously pulled out an old and tattered copy of the Qur'ān from my father's library – a translation of Abdullah Yūsuf Ali. I remember flicking through it, here and there, reading passages before losing interest and then turning to another passage (I was just a child after all!).

Then, seemingly at random – but of course, it was Allah's *qadr* – I came across the beginning of Sūrah Yūsuf.

I remember it vividly: the opening line just caught me like a hook, and I spent the next hour or so – way past my bedtime – turning page after page, reading every verse, and following up with every footnote in Abdullah Yusuf Ali’s translation, until finally, I finished the sūrah. I was *riveted* with the story. At night as I lay in bed, my mind became filled with images from the sūrah: Yūsuf alone in the well, the torn shirt, him sitting in the palace on the King’s throne. Thus began my journey into the Qur’ān.

Five years later, I would be memorizing the entire Qur’ān, and finishing Sūrah Yūsuf in a breeze. Around a decade after I first read it, I found myself studying at the University of Madinah. I would pick up little booklets in libraries and bookstores that went into more detail regarding this sūrah: some discussed *balāgha* (Arabic eloquence), others concentrated on the morals and benefits of this story. It was here as well that I began building my personal library: every month, when the students got their modest stipend, the first thing I did was to rush to the bookstores and splurge on a book that I might have had my eyes on for a while. Slowly, my *tafsīr* collection began to grow, and whatever I could find about this sūrah, I would buy.

In the summer of 2001, I was invited for my very first trip to England (since then, to date, I have been fortunate to travel more than a hundred times to the UK), and my hosts asked what intensive class I would be interested in teaching at Masjid al-Tawhid in Leyton. Immediately, and without a moment’s hesitation, I said, “I would like to teach a detailed *tafsīr* of Sūrah Yūsuf!” Perhaps the child in me was still subconsciously imagining that story.

I spent a significant portion of that summer reading the classical *tafsīrs* and sifting through material to prepare for that course. It was the first time I taught the *tafsīr* of Sūrah Yūsuf, but it would not be the last, and I would go on to teach it half a dozen times, sometimes in various masjids of cities where I lived in over the course of the next two decades, and sometimes for some Islamic satellite channels for broadcast. (That class also happened to be the first time I taught an intensive *tafsīr* class; hence it was my first exposure to the art of teaching *tafsīr* in English.) On a personal note, soon after the cassettes of that lecture were released, I was blessed with my second child, and I named him after the prophet of this sūrah. Every time I taught the sūrah, I went back to even more references and contemplated the sūrah afresh, and every time the story continued to resonate with me.

When I was approached last year by Kube Publications to publish a *tafsīr* of this sūrah in English, it was the next logical step, and I eagerly took on this task.

Tafsīr is a multidisciplinary field and one that can be done from many different angles and at numerous levels of detail. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' level, and for every style and level of detail, there is an audience that will appreciate it. To write a *tafsīr* in any language other than Arabic is a compounded dilemma: to what level should each word be dissected, and how should one explain Arabic's eloquence to a non-Arabic speaking audience?

For this work, I decided to choose a style that would be appropriate for the sūrah – easygoing and smooth, concentrating on the morals of the story rather than specific

examples of Arabic eloquence. I want the reader to be immersed in the morals of the sūrah, and not get bogged down with numerous footnotes or incidental benefits that might be beneficial for advanced students but would cause others to lose track of the main point. Hence, in this book (in contrast to some of my other writings), one will not find detailed discussions of differences of opinions or competing views regarding secondary issues or references. I wanted this book to be *read*, cover to cover if possible, with the same enthusiasm as a translation of this sūrah. It is not to say that one won't find academic benefit or *tafsīr*-based points in it. On the contrary, I have consulted many works while writing this *tafsīr*, but rather than separate them into points, I have tried my utmost to incorporate their ideas into the commentary without mentioning controversies or differences.

I hope that this style combines academic benefits, spiritual motivation, and ease of reading.

The primary works that I consulted for this *tafsīr* are (in chronological order):

- *Al-Muḥarrar al-Wajīz* of Ibn 'Aṭīyya (d. 546 AH/1152 CE)
- *Zād al-Masīr* of Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597 AH/1201 CE)
- *Tafsīr* of Ibn Kathīr (d. 774 AH/1373 CE)
- *Al-Taḥrīr wa-l-tanwīr* of Ibn 'Ashūr (d. 1973 CE)

Of course, the encyclopedic work of Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 311 AH/924 CE) was always in the background, and some of the points in this work were culled from his *magnum opus*.

Foreword

No work is the product of only one author. I would like to thank Sr. Shaakirah Edwards for the many hours she spent helping to smooth the rough edges and shaping the narrative-style of the work. Br. Ekram Haque gave valuable advice and feedback on an initial draft of this work. The editors of Kube also deserve special mention for their hard work and improvements. Of course, special mention must be made of my family. My three teenagers and one tween are now accustomed to leaving their father in his study for many, many hours; I hope that when they are adults, they can forgive the long absences their father had during their growing years. My wife of a quarter of a century has been my constant support and pillar, and I thank Allah for such a wonderful ‘Khadījah’ figure in my life. I shall always be grateful to my parents for raising me upon the foundations of this faith and instilling in me the love of the Qur’ān, and for encouraging me to memorize the Book of Allah, and then to study Islam in the city of the Prophet (ﷺ). I am fortunate that they are now living with me, and that our proximity is a source of comfort to them: *“O Allah! Have mercy on them even as they reared me as a child” [Isrā: 24]*.

I pray that the readers of this book experience the same joy and enthusiasm that I felt as a child when I read this sūrah for the first time, for indeed when it comes to stories, all of us are still children!

Dr. Yasir Qadhi

Plano, TX

4th December 2020 CE

(18th Rabi’ al-Thani, 1442 AH)

Introduction



Allāh called Sūrah Yūsuf the ‘Best of All Stories’, which He revealed in the Qur’ān, the best of all Revelations, to the best of all prophets, our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The story was revealed to lift his spirits at a time when his sufferings and worries had mounted. The Prophet Yūsuf lived thousands of years ago, but time has not diminished his story’s relevance. It is a tale of love, passion, betrayal, and forgiveness, and it has something to teach us, at every stage of our lives. It imparts Divine wisdom wrapped in unparalleled eloquence. It is a timeless story that will continue to soothe our souls during times of hardship and reignite our trust in our Lord.

The Revelation of Sūrah Yūsuf

The timing of Sūrah Yūsuf could not be more opportune. Allāh revealed it after the ‘Year of Sorrow,’ in which three traumatic events happened to the Prophet ﷺ one after another.

The first was the most personal and intimate: the death of his wife, Khadijah. She was his ﷺ greatest supporter

and a constant source of comfort and strength. When the revelation began, it was Khadījah that he turned to for emotional support and reassurance. She was the first to believe in his ﷺ mission and firmly remained by his side in the face of tremendous adversity. When a man has comfort and love inside his home, he can face anything in the world outside. Khadījah's death was such a profound loss for the Prophet ﷺ that he, known for his ubiquitous smile, did not smile for a whole year.

A second tragedy soon followed, the death of his uncle Abū Ṭālib. While Khadījah had been the Prophet's ﷺ supporter at home, Abū Ṭālib was his supporter in public. When the Quraysh began to threaten the Prophet ﷺ because of his public preaching, Abū Ṭālib initially tried to convince his nephew to stop. But the Prophet's response would change Abū Ṭālib's life forever. The Prophet ﷺ said, 'By Allāh! If they placed the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left on the condition that I abandon this course, I would not abandon it until Allāh has made me victorious, or I perish trying.' Abū Ṭālib then said, 'Go and preach what you please, for, by Allāh, I will never forsake you.'¹ He was a man of his word. For the next ten years, Abū Ṭālib did everything he could to protect the Prophet ﷺ. He sacrificed his reputation and prestige to protect his nephew, so much so, that when the Quraysh boycotted the Muslims, Abū Ṭālib voluntarily gave up his privileges to join them in the valley outside of Makkah. As long as Abū Ṭālib lived, the Quraysh could not harm the Prophet ﷺ. With his death,

¹ *Sīrah* of Ibn Hisham (1/265).

the persecution only increased, to such an extent that the Prophet ﷺ would eventually have to leave Makkah.

The third incident was the Prophet's fateful trip to Ṭā'if to invite its people to the worship of Allāh alone. These were the most difficult days of his life. His wife 'Ā'ishah once asked him, 'Have you encountered a day harder than the Battle of Uḥud?' The Prophet ﷺ said, 'Yes. Your tribes have troubled me very much, and the worst was the day of Aqaba when I presented myself to Ibn Abd Yalīl ibn 'Amr [the chieftain of Ṭā'if], and he did not respond to what I intended. I departed, overwhelmed with excessive sorrow.'² The Prophet ﷺ was publicly rejected and humiliated in Ṭā'if and had stones pelted at him until his sandals filled up with blood.

These incidents occurred within six weeks of each other, and the Prophet ﷺ felt as if things couldn't get any worse. It was at this time that Allāh chose to reveal Sūrah Yūsuf. We do not know the exact date, except that it was around the tenth or eleventh year of the *da'wah* in Makkah and a few years before the *hijrah*. When we understand the time frame of revelation, the significance of Sūrah Yūsuf becomes clear. Through the revelation of Sūrah Yūsuf Allāh lifted the Prophet's spirits, and consoled and strengthened him, at a time when he was politically vulnerable. Sūrah Yūsuf was the light that brought the Prophet ﷺ out of the darkness of his pain and anguish. For centuries, before the Prophet ﷺ and since, this sūrah has uplifted the believers and illuminated their spiritual paths.

² *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī (3059).

The scholars have mentioned several other incidents behind the revelation of this sūrah. As the persecution of the Muslims increased, the *Ṣaḥābah* felt overwhelmed. They went to the Prophet ﷺ and said, ‘O Allāh’s Messenger! Why not narrate to us stories?’³ They wanted to hear the examples of how the previous nations coped with suffering. At the same time, the Quraysh were trying to discredit the Prophet ﷺ as a messenger of God, calling him a poet, a soothsayer, and a madman. They sent a delegation to the Jews of Madīnah to ask for a question that only a prophet could answer. The Jews told them to ask about the story of Yūsuf and his brothers because they presumed that no Arab would know it. Allāh responded to their question by revealing Sūrah Yūsuf in captivating detail.



³ *Tafsīr* of al-Ṭabarī (15/552).



PART TWO

Sold into Slavery



فَلَمَّا ذَهَبُوا بِهِ وَأَجْمَعُوا أَنْ يَجْعَلُوهُ فِي غَيَابَتِ الْجُبِّ وَأَوْحَيْنَا
إِلَيْهِ لَتُنَبِّئَنَّهُمْ بِأَمْرِهِمْ هَذَا وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

And so, when they took him away and decided to throw him into the bottom of the well, We inspired him: “‘One day’ you will remind them of this deed of theirs while they are unaware ‘of who you are’.”

With their ploy successful, the brothers spirited away Yūsuf from their father, heading straight into the wilderness. Allāh says, ‘...*when they took him away...*’ without completing the statement. The Qur’ān often skips words, phrases, or details, and the scholars ascribe this to the *balāghah* or eloquence of the Arabic language. The Qur’ān uses the most comprehensive and concise speech that reflects Allāh’s wisdom and knowledge. Details are glossed over, as shall be explained below.

He then says, ‘...*and decided to throw him into the bottom of the well...*’ The brothers were unanimous about throwing Yūsuf into the well. There was not one merciful brother amongst them. We cannot even imagine what shock, fear, and horror Yūsuf must have felt. He had happily gone with the brothers to play and have fun, and here he was, looking in disbelief at them as they scurried to carry out their macabre plan.

Notice that Allāh did not explicitly criticize the brothers, despite their cruel act. Centuries later, when we

think about it, our hearts still shudder, thinking, 'How could they have done that to a little brother?' Yet, Allāh does not use a single negative adjective in the sūrah to describe the brothers of Yūsuf, even though they were every bit worthy of criticism. Why? One of the main reasons is that it is not befitting for the Qur'ān's nobility to mention gore and evil, except in briefest terms. For example, to describe the factors that break one's ablution Allāh says in the Qur'ān, '*...or have relieved yourselves...*','⁴¹ rather than '*if one of you urinates or defecates.*' In yet another place, He says, '*...if you have touched your wives...*'⁴² to describe marital relations. The words the Qur'ān uses are most dignified and cultured.

The Qur'ān, therefore, teaches us a vital etiquette: be brief and dignified when mentioning evil. Although there are exceptions, it is discouraged for a Muslim to go into detail about someone's lewd or evil act, or sin. Allāh warns us in Sūrah Nūr, '*Indeed, those who love to see indecency spread among the believers will suffer a painful punishment in this life and the Hereafter.*'⁴³ We can see that Allāh's standards about morality and decency far surpass those set by humans. In modern societies, news outlets describe crime, vulgarity, murder, and rape in the most vivid detail using the most offensive language. Hollywood glorifies such subjects in blockbuster movies, and authors turn them into best-selling books. The tabloids have a field day with scandalous gossip. The preponderance of promiscuity desensitizes people, and, for some of them, the stories of

⁴¹ *an-Nisā'* (4: 43).

⁴² *an-Nisā'* (4: 43).

⁴³ *an-Nūr* (24: 19).

murder, illicit relationships, and the adoration of hedonistic lifestyles become a stepping-stone to committing those acts themselves.

Another reason for avoiding a detailed description of the crime and denunciation of the brothers is their repentance of the sin later. Allāh, the ever-forgiving, accepted their repentance. Amazingly, the only time the Qur'ān mentioned the brothers' transgression was through their own admission. In a remorseful tone, they said to Yūsuf, *'By Allāh! Allāh has truly preferred you over us, and we have surely been sinful.'*⁴⁴ And they said to their father, *'O our father! Pray for the forgiveness of our sins. We have certainly been guilty.'*⁴⁵ It is a compelling message. When Allāh has forgiven them, why mention their faults? Such graciousness only reflects Allāh's unparalleled forgiveness. True forgiveness means that we don't remind people about their mistakes or tell others about them.

Yūsuf was now at the bottom of a dark, secluded well. He's a young child, bewildered, frightened, and alone. It was part of Allāh's plan to put him in this situation, so He instilled *sakīnah*, or tranquillity, in his heart, and inspired to him, saying that, *"'One day' you will remind them of this deed of theirs while they are unaware 'of who you are'."* By using *tawkīd*, or emphasis, in this statement, Allāh informed Yūsuf that this was undoubtedly going to happen. There were other implications in this prediction that Yūsuf was given. One was that he would not die in the well; two, that he will eventually reunite with his family, and three, at the time of reunion, he will have the upper hand.

⁴⁴ Yūsuf (12: 91).

⁴⁵ Yūsuf (12: 97).

This verse also has an optimistic message for the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ during a period of intense difficulty. Through the story of Yūsuf, Allāh reminded him that even though his people had abandoned him, he would eventually become victorious over them. In another sūrah Allāh hinted to the Prophet ﷺ about his migration and triumphant return to Makkah: *'Most certainly, the One Who has ordained the Qur'ān for you will 'ultimately' bring you back home 'to Makkah'.*⁴⁶ Through Sūrah Yūsuf, Allāh reminded the Prophet ﷺ and us that *'surely, with every difficulty comes relief.'*⁴⁷

Knowing how matters will turn out brings us great comfort. Allāh foretold Yūsuf about the end of his life in this world, and He only gives this knowledge to a prophet. As Muslims, we believe in Allāh's cardinal rule that the righteous will inherit Paradise. No matter what is happening in the world, how tough life is, or what difficulties or problems we face, we should always remind ourselves of the ultimate reward: *Jannah*, and that should help us get through.

We notice that in the above verse, Allāh sent Yūsuf a revelation (*wahy*) even though he was still a child. Some scholars believe that this happened when Yūsuf had become a prophet. However, the majority opinion holds that indeed Yūsuf received this *wahy* when he was a child, but it was different from the *wahy* Allāh sends to prophets. Because he was a child, Yūsuf could not be appointed a prophet. There are three different types of *wahy* mentioned in the Qur'ān. First, the *wahy* that Allāh sent to non-humans, for example, *'And your Lord inspired the bees: "Make 'your' homes*

⁴⁶ *al-Qaṣaṣ* (28: 85).

⁴⁷ *al-Sharḥ* (94:5).



PART ELEVEN

The Dream Fulfilled



وَلَمَّا فَصَلَتِ الْعِيرُ قَالَ أَبُوهُمْ إِنِّي لَأَجِدُ رِيحَ يُوسُفَ
لَوْلَا أَن تُفَنِّدُونِ ﴿٩٤﴾

*When the caravan departed ‘from Egypt’,
their father said ‘to those around him’, “You
may think I am senile, but I certainly sense
the smell of Yūsuf.”*

The caravan set out on its last journey back to Palestine, bringing with it the promise of a new future. Nestled amongst the grain sacks and merchandise was the shirt of Yūsuf. Although he was hundreds of miles away, Ya‘qūb could sense that his beloved son was close. He said, *‘You may think I am senile, but I certainly sense the smell of Yūsuf.’* We saw earlier in the story that Ya‘qūb had *firāsah*, a spiritual intuition that helped him understand things instinctively. Allāh had given him a sign that something was about to happen.

قَالُوا تَأَلَّهْ إِنَّكَ لَفِي ضَلَالِكَ الْقَدِيمِ ﴿٩٥﴾

*They replied, “By Allāh! You are definitely
still in your old delusion.”*

Ya‘qūb anticipated that his family would think of him as insane for saying such a thing, but in his heart, he knew it was true. Some scholars say that it was his grandchildren

who uttered the harsh words in reply, *‘By Allāh! You are definitely still in your old delusion.’* But they were mistaken.

فَلَمَّا أَن جَاءَ الْبَشِيرُ أَلْقَاهُ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ فَارْتَدَّ بَصِيرًا قَالَ أَلَمْ
أَقُلْ لَّكُمْ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾

*But when the bearer of the good news arrived,
he cast the shirt over Ya‘qūb’s face, so he
regained his sight. Ya‘qūb then said ‘to his
children’, “Did I not tell you that I truly
know from Allāh what you do not know?”*

Many scholars say that the *‘...bearer of the good news...’*, the *bashīr* who carried Yūsuf’s shirt, was the same son who had brought the bloody shirt to Ya‘qūb at the beginning of the story. Notice that Allāh chose to mention the good news and ignore the bad. It is a repeated theme throughout this sūrah and the Qur’ān. When praise is due, Allāh specifically mentions it, but when criticism is warranted, He tries to conceal. Imagine how this son must have felt bringing the shirt that announced Yūsuf was alive, knowing it is he who had carried the bloodied shirt to his father many years ago that caused him lasting grief.

‘...he cast the shirt over Ya‘qūb’s face, so he regained his sight...’ With the touch of the shirt, Ya‘qūb’s vision came back. Joyous at the news that Yūsuf, his most beloved son, was alive, he said, *‘Did I not tell you that I truly*

know from Allāh what you do not know?’ Through all these years of separation, Ya‘qūb had not lost hope about Yūsuf’s eventual return. Today, Allāh had vindicated him.

قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا اسْتَغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا خَاطِئِينَ ﴿٩٧﴾

They begged, “O our father! Pray for the forgiveness of our sins. We have certainly been sinful.”

Finally, the brothers asked their father for forgiveness, saying, ‘*We have certainly been sinful.*’ Before this, they had implored Yūsuf to forgive them; they were sincerely repentant. The first step for repentance is always the admission of guilt. One cannot repent without acknowledging they have done wrong. That’s why the Prophet ﷺ said, ‘Regret is part of repentance.’⁹⁴

قَالَ سَوْفَ أَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكُمْ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٩٨﴾

He said, “I will pray to my Lord for your forgiveness. He ‘alone’ is indeed the All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”

Ya‘qūb agreed that he would ask Allāh to forgive his sons, but his use of the term, ‘*I will...*’, clearly indicated but

⁹⁴ *Sunan* of Ibn Mājah (4252).



PART THIRTEEN

50 Lessons from Sūrah Yūsuf



50 Lessons from Sūrah Yūsuf



Indeed, in their stories there was truly a lesson for people of reason.

Our reading of the story of Yūsuf is complete. Allāh concludes by reminding us once again that there are many lessons in it. It is as if He is telling us: One reading isn't enough! Read this Sūrah, and then read it again and again, and every time you read, you shall find beneficial lessons and morals. So let us embark on another journey of extracting its lessons. Allāh tells us that in their stories, was '*...a lesson for the people of reason...*' Therefore, let's take the time to reflect on the *'ibrah*, the hidden wisdom, and other benefits, this sūrah offers. Below are fifty such lessons.

1. The miracle of the language and eloquence of the Qur'ān

This sūrah shows us the **miracle of the Qur'ān**: its style, recitation, and the intricately interwoven meanings. Everything about the language of the Qur'ān is miraculous,

and Sūrah Yūsuf highlights this most profoundly. We are told the story in riveting detail, but without the superfluous events. Contrast this story with its counterparts in other Scriptures and astound yourself at the eloquence of the Qur'ānic version.

2. The stories of the Qur'ān are the best

Allāh said, “We relate to you ‘O Prophet’ the best of stories...”¹⁰⁹ The Qur'ānic stories are the best, and they deserve a close study. We should read them and narrate them to our children, and contemplate deeply on their lessons. Although this *tafsīr* is about Sūrah Yūsuf, let this be a gateway to exploring other stories of the Qur'ān as they all offer amazing insight.

3. When Allāh wants to bless someone, He blesses him with knowledge

Allāh tells us in this sūrah that He had blessed the family of Ishāq with knowledge, wisdom, and prophethood. The ultimate blessings from Allāh are faith and knowledge. The Prophet ﷺ said, ‘If Allāh intends good for someone, He gives to him the understanding of the religion.’¹¹⁰

4. The intuition of the believer is true

Of the wisdom of this sūrah is that it shows us that the believer's *firāsah* or intuition is real. *Firāsah* comes from being close to Allāh, and it keeps the believer rightly guided. Ya'qūb's *firāsah* warned him that something was

¹⁰⁹ *Yūsuf* (12: 3).

¹¹⁰ *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhārī (71).

wrong concerning Yūsuf. The closer one draws to Allāh, the more accurate their intuition will be. Although it carries no legal weight, the intuition can be used in business or social dealings and making decisions in one's life. *Firāsah* is one of the fruits of piety that Allāh bestows upon the righteous.

5. True dreams and their interpretation are a gift from Allāh

Dreams are a constant motif of Sūrah Yūsuf, beginning with Yūsuf's dream as a child, then the dreams of the prisoners, and finally, that of the King. True dreams and their interpretation are blessings from Allāh, which He bestows upon some of His most righteous servants.

6. The inner beauty of decency and morality is more attractive than outer beauty

The events of the story of Yūsuf show us that inner beauty is the result of one's character. It comes from good manners, chastity, and living a good and wholesome life. No matter how people live their lives, from their *fitrah* or innate nature, they can tell right from wrong. A chaste and virtuous life is a reflection of inner beauty. After Yūsuf refused the sexual advances of the wife of Al-'Azīz, she invited her friends to see him. They attested to his outer beauty, but it was his inner beauty, exemplified by his refusal, which made him even more attractive; they thought he was a noble angel. It is human nature to admire an honourable character. Inner beauty increases over time, while outer beauty fades away.

Allāh called Sūrah Yūsuf the ‘Best of All Stories,’ which He revealed in the Qur’ān, the best of all Revelations, to the best of all prophets, our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The story was revealed to lift his spirits at a time when his sufferings and worries had mounted. This was a time when he had gone through at least a decade of ridicule and rejection in Makkah, a time when he lost his beloved wife and partner, Khadījah رضي الله عنها, a time when he had lost his dear uncle, Abū Ṭālib.

The Prophet Yūsuf lived thousands of years ago, but time has not diminished his story’s relevance. It is a tale of love, passion, betrayal, and forgiveness, and it has something to teach us, at every stage of our lives. It imparts Divine wisdom wrapped in unparalleled eloquence. It is a timeless story that will continue to soothe our souls during times of hardship and reignite our trust in our Lord.



Dr. Yasir Qadhi was born in Houston, Texas, where he completed a B.Sc. in Chemical Engineering, and then went to pursue Islamic Studies at the University of Madinah. There, he did a BA in Hadith Sciences, and an MA in Islamic Theology. He then completed a PhD in Islamic Studies from Yale University. He is currently the Dean of

Academic Affairs of The Islamic Seminary of America, and resides with his wife and four children in Dallas, Texas.



ISBN 978-1-84774-137-0 US\$16.95

