STORIES FROM THE QUR'AN

SERIES 10

BEAUTIFUL PATIENCE

The Story of Prophet Yusuf (Part 1) According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith



HJ CHE ALIM HJ CHE HARON

AK (KELANTAN)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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وَجَآءُو عَلَىٰ قَمِيصِهِۦ بِدَمٍ كَذِبٍ ۚ قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنفُسُكُمْ أَمْرًا ۖ فَصَبْرٌ
جَمِيلٌ ۖ وَٱللَّهُ ٱلْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَىٰ مَا تَصِفُونَ

"And they brought upon his shirt false blood. [Jacob] said, "Rather, your souls have enticed you to something, so patience is most fitting. And Allah is the one sought for help against that which you describe."."

SURAH YUSUF 12:18

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, who relates to us the best of stories, who raised a boy from the bottom of a well to the storehouses of the land, and who does not allow the reward of the doers of good to be lost. Blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who said that the most honourable of people is Yusuf, the prophet of Allah, son of the prophet of Allah, and upon his family and his Companions.

This eBook is specially dedicated to my beloved wife,

ZAHARAH MOHD LATIF;

my dear children,

MUHAMMAD HAFIZ, NOOR HAZWANI, ABDUL HAKIM, NOOR HIDAYAH, NOR AQILA and **NOR ATIQAH**;

and my sons- and daughters-in-law,

FAZILAH, MALEK, HANIN, FAIRIZAL and **FIRWAN**.

May Allah grant us beautiful patience when we are tested, chastity when we are tempted, and trustworthiness when we are given authority, and unite the hearts of our families upon faith. May this knowledge be ‘ilmun yuntafa‘u bih, knowledge that brings benefit.

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ABOUT THE COVER OF THIS EBOOK

The cover of this eBook does not depict any human being. It shows **scenery**: **an old stone well** in a silent desert as the night draws to a close. **A rope and a wooden bucket** hang down into the well. In the brightening sky shine **stars**, together with **a crescent moon**, and on the horizon **the light of the sun** begins to rise. Far off on the skyline lies **a green plain beside a river**.

The well and the bucket recall the moment Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was put ***"into the bottom of the well"*** (12:15), and the water drawer of the caravan who ***"let down his bucket"*** (12:19). **The stars, the moon and the sun** recall the dream of Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: ***"indeed I have seen [in a dream] eleven stars and the sun and the moon"*** (12:4).

The light of dawn symbolises hope after darkness — the central theme of ***"patience is most fitting"*** (12:18). **The green plain beside a river** recalls the land of Egypt, where Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ finally said: ***"Appoint me over the storehouses of the land"*** (12:55). **The dark blue band** at the bottom, framed by **fine gold lines**, is where the author's name appears.

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Colour guide: green box = verses of the Qur'an; gold box = Hadith; brown box = archaeological note; blue table = comparison. Underlined blue narrator names can be clicked to open the narrator's page on sunnah.com.

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THE BEST OF STORIES

The previous series told the stories of prophets that are spread across many surahs. The story of Prophet Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ is different: it is told in **a single surah**, from beginning to end, in a very orderly sequence. The Qur'an itself calls it ***aḥsan al-qaṣaṣ*** — the best of stories.

SURAH YUSUF 12:1–3

الٓرٓ تِلْكَ ءَايَٰتُ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ ٱلْمُبِينِ ﴿١﴾

Alif, Lam, Ra. These are the verses of the clear Book.

إِنَّآ أَنزَلْنَٰهُ قُرْءَٰنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢﴾

Indeed, We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an that you might understand.

نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ ٱلْقَصَصِ بِمَآ أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَيْكَ هَٰذَا ٱلْقُرْءَانَ وَإِن كُنتَ مِن قَبْلِهِۦ لَمِنَ ٱلْغَٰفِلِينَ ﴿٣﴾

We relate to you, [O Muhammad], the best of stories in what We have revealed to you of this Qur'an although you were, before it, among the unaware.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/12:1-3

This story is too rich to fit into one eBook. So, like the story of Prophet Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ (Series 6 and 7), it is divided into two parts. **This Part 1** covers verses 1 to 57: from a boy's dream until he became guardian of the storehouses of Egypt. **Part 2** will, in sha Allah, cover verses 58 to 111: the arrival of his brothers, the grief of Ya'qub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ and the reunion of the family.

Note: The translation of the Qur'anic verses in this eBook is Sahih International, which renders the names Yusuf and Ya'qub as Joseph and Jacob. The grade of every Hadith is stated in the Hadith box, with a link to sunnah.com.

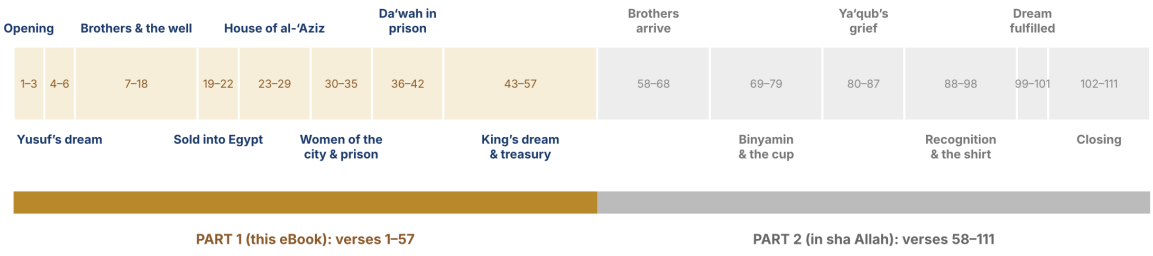


Figure 1: The sequence of the story in Surah Yusuf by verse. The gold sections are told in this eBook.

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HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3383

حَدَّثَنِي عُبَيْدُ بْنُ إِسْمَاعِيلَ، عَنْ أَبِي أُسَامَةَ، عَنْ عُبَيْدِ اللَّهِ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي سَعِيدُ بْنُ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ سُئِلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم مَنْ أَكْرَمُ النَّاسِ قَالَ « أَتْقَاهُمْ لِلَّهِ ». قَالُوا لَيْسَ عَنْ هَذَا نَسْأَلُكَ. قَالَ « فَأَكْرَمُ النَّاسِ يُوسُفُ نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ ابْنُ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ ابْنِ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ ابْنِ خَلِيلِ اللَّهِ ». قَالُوا لَيْسَ عَنْ هَذَا نَسْأَلُكَ. قَالَ « فَعَنْ مَعَادِنِ الْعَرَبِ تَسْأَلُونِي، النَّاسُ مَعَادِنُ خِيَارُهُمْ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ خِيَارُهُمْ فِي الإِسْلاَمِ إِذَا فَقِهُوا ». حَدَّثَنِي مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ سَلاَمٍ أَخْبَرَنَا عَبْدَةُ عَنْ عُبَيْدِ اللَّهِ عَنْ سَعِيدٍ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِهَذَا

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was asked: "Who is the most honourable of people?" He said: **"The one who most fears Allah."** They said: "That is not what we are asking you about." He said: **"Then the most honourable of people is Yusuf, the prophet of Allah, son of the prophet of Allah, son of the prophet of Allah, son of the intimate friend of Allah (Ibrahim)."** They said: "That is not what we are asking you about." He said: **"Are you asking me about the lineages of the Arabs? People are like mines; the best of them in the time of ignorance are the best of them in Islam, when they gain understanding (of the religion)."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Ubaid ibn Isma'il, from Abu Usamah, from 'Ubaidullah ibn 'Umar, from Sa'id ibn Abi Sa'id al-Maqburi, from Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه. A second chain: Muhammad ibn Salam, from 'Abdah ibn Sulaiman, from 'Ubaidullah, with the same chain.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Prophets, chapter on the saying of Allah {Laqad kana fi Yusufa wa ikhwatihi ayatun lis-sa'ilin}, Hadith No. 3383. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 2378).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3383

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ described Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ as the most honourable of people in lineage: four generations of prophets — Yusuf, Ya'qub, Ishaq and Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. Yet his first answer was: ***"The one who most fears Allah."*** The noble lineage of Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ did not save him from the well, from slavery or from prison. What raised him was his taqwa and his patience, as we shall see.

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THE DREAM OF ELEVEN STARS

SURAH YUSUF 12:4–6

إِذْ قَالَ يُوسُفُ لِأَبِيهِ يَٰٓأَبَتِ إِنِّى رَأَيْتُ أَحَدَ عَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا وَٱلشَّمْسَ وَٱلْقَمَرَ رَأَيْتُهُمْ لِى سَٰجِدِينَ ﴿٤﴾

[Of these stories mention] when Joseph said to his father, "O my father, indeed I have seen [in a dream] eleven stars and the sun and the moon; I saw them prostrating to me."

قَالَ يَٰبُنَىَّ لَا تَقْصُصْ رُءْيَاكَ عَلَىٰٓ إِخْوَتِكَ فَيَكِيدُوا۟ لَكَ كَيْدًا ۖ إِنَّ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنَ لِلْإِنسَٰنِ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٥﴾

He said, "O my son, do not relate your vision to your brothers or they will contrive against you a plan. Indeed Satan, to man, is a manifest enemy."

وَكَذَٰلِكَ يَجْتَبِيكَ رَبُّكَ وَيُعَلِّمُكَ مِن تَأْوِيلِ ٱلْأَحَادِيثِ وَيُتِمُّ نِعْمَتَهُۥ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰٓ ءَالِ يَعْقُوبَ كَمَآ أَتَمَّهَا عَلَىٰٓ أَبَوَيْكَ مِن قَبْلُ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ وَإِسْحَٰقَ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٦﴾

And thus will your Lord choose you and teach you the interpretation of narratives and complete His favor upon you and upon the family of Jacob, as He completed it upon your fathers before, Abraham and Isaac. Indeed, your Lord is Knowing and Wise.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/12:4-6

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 12:4–6

First: A son confiding in his father. ***"O my father, indeed I have seen [in a dream] eleven stars and the sun and the moon; I saw them prostrating to me"***. Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ brought his dream to the person he trusted most — his father. The warm bond between father and son is the foundation of this story.

Second: The advice of a wise father. ***"O my son, do not relate your vision to your brothers or they will contrive against you a plan"***. Ya'qub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ understood the meaning of the dream — that his son would be honoured — and he also understood the hearts of his other sons. He did not accuse them, but attributed the danger to the real enemy: ***"Indeed Satan, to man, is a manifest enemy"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 12:5

Third: A dream as glad tidings. ***"And thus will your Lord choose you and teach you the interpretation of narratives and complete His favor upon you"***. The meaning of this dream was fulfilled only decades later, in verse 12:100 (Part 2). Between the dream and its fulfilment lay a well, slavery and prison.

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 7044

حَدَّثَنَا سَعِيدُ بْنُ الرَّبِيعِ، حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، عَنْ عَبْدِ رَبِّهِ بْنِ سَعِيدٍ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَبَا سَلَمَةَ، يَقُولُ لَقَدْ كُنْتُ أَرَى الرُّؤْيَا فَتُمْرِضُنِي حَتَّى سَمِعْتُ أَبَا قَتَادَةَ يَقُولُ وَأَنَا كُنْتُ لأَرَى الرُّؤْيَا تُمْرِضُنِي، حَتَّى سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ « الرُّؤْيَا الْحَسَنَةُ مِنَ اللَّهِ، فَإِذَا رَأَى أَحَدُكُمْ مَا يُحِبُّ فَلاَ يُحَدِّثْ بِهِ إِلاَّ مَنْ يُحِبُّ، وَإِذَا رَأَى مَا يَكْرَهُ فَلْيَتَعَوَّذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شَرِّهَا، وَمِنْ شَرِّ الشَّيْطَانِ وَلْيَتْفِلْ ثَلاَثًا وَلاَ يُحَدِّثْ بِهَا أَحَدًا فَإِنَّهَا لَنْ تَضُرَّهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Salamah said: I used to see dreams that made me ill (with worry), until I heard Abu Qatadah رضى الله عنه say: I too used to see dreams that made me ill, until I heard the Prophet ﷺ say: **"A good dream is from Allah. So when one of you sees (in a dream) something he likes, let him not relate it except to someone he loves. And when he sees something he dislikes, let him seek refuge with Allah from its evil and from the evil of Satan, spit (dryly) three times, and not relate it to anyone, for then it will not harm him."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Sa'id ibn ar-Rabi', from Shu'bah ibn al-Hajjaj, from 'Abd Rabbih ibn Sa'id, from Abu Salamah ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman, from Abu Qatadah al-Ansari رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Interpretation of Dreams, chapter on seeing a disliked dream, Hadith No. 7044. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 2261).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:7044

This Hadith agrees with the advice of Ya'qub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. A good dream is a blessing from Allah, but it is related only to those who love us — because not everyone is happy with the blessings that others receive.

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ENVY AMONG BROTHERS

SURAH YUSUF 12:7–10

۞لَّقَدۡ كَانَ فِي يُوسُفَ وَإِخۡوَتِهِۦٓ ءَايَٰتٞ لِّلسَّآئِلِينَ ٧

Certainly were there in Joseph and his brothers signs for those who ask.

إِذۡ قَالُواْ لَيُوسُفُ وَأَخُوهُ أَحَبُّ إِلَىٰٓ أَبِينَا مِنَّا وَنَحۡنُ عُصۡبَةٌ إِنَّ أَبَانَا لَفِي ضَلَٰلٖ مُّبِينٍ ٨

When they said, "Joseph and his brother are more beloved to our father than we, while we are a clan. Indeed, our father is in clear error."

ٱقۡتُلُواْ يُوسُفَ أَوِ ٱطۡرَحُوهُ أَرۡضٗا يَخۡلُ لَكُمۡ وَجۡهُ أَبِيكُمۡ وَتَكُونُواْ مِنۢ بَعۡدِهِۦ قَوۡمٗا صَٰلِحِينَ ٩

Kill Joseph or cast him out to [another] land; the countenance of your father will [then] be only for you, and you will be after that a righteous people.

قَالَ قَآئِلٞ مِّنۡهُمۡ لَا تَقۡتُلُواْ يُوسُفَ وَأَلۡقُوهُ فِي غَيَٰبَتِ ٱلۡجُبِّ يَلۡتَقِطۡهُ بَعۡضُ ٱلسَّيَّارَةِ إِن كُنتُمۡ فَٰعِلِينَ ١٠

Said a speaker among them, "Do not kill Joseph but throw him into the bottom of the well; some travelers will pick him up - if you would do [something]."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/12:7-10

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 12:7–10 — HOW ENVY GROWS

First: A story for those who ask. ***"signs for those who ask"***.

Second: The comparison that gives birth to envy. ***"Joseph and his brother are more beloved to our father than we, while we are a clan"***. Envy begins with comparing oneself to others, and then feeling treated unfairly: ***"Indeed, our father is in clear error"***.

Third: A sin planned together with a delayed repentance. ***"Kill Joseph or cast him out to [another] land"***, and then ***"you will be after that a righteous people"***. They planned a grave sin while intending to become good afterwards. This is the deception of Satan: justifying today's sin with the promise of tomorrow's repentance. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 12:9

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Fourth: A milder voice. ***"Do not kill Joseph but throw him into the bottom of the well"***. Although this suggestion was still unjust, Allah made it the means by which Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was saved.

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THE WELL AND THE FALSE BLOOD

SURAH YUSUF 12:11–15

قَالُوا۟ يَٰٓأَبَانَا مَا لَكَ لَا تَأْمَنَّا عَلَىٰ يُوسُفَ وَإِنَّا لَهُۥ لَنَٰصِحُونَ ﴿١١﴾

They said, "O our father, why do you not entrust us with Joseph while indeed, we are to him sincere counselors."

أَرْسِلْهُ مَعَنَا غَدًا يَرْتَعْ وَيَلْعَبْ وَإِنَّا لَهُۥ لَحَٰفِظُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

Send him with us tomorrow that he may eat well and play. And indeed, we will be his guardians.

قَالَ إِنِّى لَيَحْزُنُنِىٓ أَن تَذْهَبُوا۟ بِهِۦ وَأَخَافُ أَن يَأْكُلَهُ ٱلذِّئْبُ وَأَنتُمْ عَنْهُ غَٰفِلُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

[Jacob] said, "Indeed, it saddens me that you should take him, and I fear that a wolf would eat him while you are of him unaware."

قَالُوا۟ لَئِنْ أَكَلَهُ ٱلذِّئْبُ وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّآ إِذًا لَّخَٰسِرُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

They said, "If a wolf should eat him while we are a [strong] clan, indeed, we would then be losers."

فَلَمَّا ذَهَبُوا۟ بِهِۦ وَأَجْمَعُوٓا۟ أَن يَجْعَلُوهُ فِى غَيَٰبَتِ ٱلْجُبِّ ۚ وَأَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَيْهِ لَتُنَبِّئَنَّهُم بِأَمْرِهِمْ هَٰذَا وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

So when they took him [out] and agreed to put him into the bottom of the well... But We inspired to him, "You will surely inform them [someday] about this affair of theirs while they do not perceive [your identity]."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/12:11-15

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 12:11–15

First: A father who understood. Ya'qub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ said: ***"I fear that a wolf would eat him while you are of him unaware"***. Ibn Kathir mentions that these words were later used by them as their own excuse. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 12:13

Second: Inspiration at the bottom of the well. At the darkest moment for Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, Allah inspired him: ***"You will surely inform them [someday] about this affair of theirs while they do not perceive [your identity]"***. The help of Allah came **inside** the well, not after leaving it.

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SURAH YUSUF 12:16–18

وَجَآءُوٓ أَبَاهُمۡ عِشَآءٗ يَبۡكُونَ ١٦

And they came to their father at night, weeping.

قَالُواْ يَٰٓأَبَانَآ إِنَّا ذَهَبۡنَا نَسۡتَبِقُ وَتَرَكۡنَا يُوسُفَ عِندَ مَتَٰعِنَا فَأَكَلَهُ ٱلذِّئۡبُۖ وَمَآ أَنتَ بِمُؤۡمِنٖ لَّنَا وَلَوۡ كُنَّا صَٰدِقِينَ ١٧

They said, "O our father, indeed we went racing each other and left Joseph with our possessions, and a wolf ate him. But you would not believe us, even if we were truthful."

وَجَآءُو عَلَىٰ قَمِيصِهِۦ بِدَمٖ كَذِبٖۚ قَالَ بَلۡ سَوَّلَتۡ لَكُمۡ أَنفُسُكُمۡ أَمۡرًاۖ فَصَبۡرٞ جَمِيلٞۖ وَٱللَّهُ ٱلۡمُسۡتَعَانُ عَلَىٰ مَا تَصِفُونَ ١٨

And they brought upon his shirt false blood. [Jacob] said, "Rather, your souls have enticed you to something, so patience is most fitting. And Allah is the one sought for help against that which you describe."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/12:16-18

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 12:16–18 — BEAUTIFUL PATIENCE

First: Tears and false evidence. They came ***"to their father at night, weeping"***, with his shirt stained with ***"false blood"***. Ibn Kathir reports that they forgot to tear the shirt — a shirt "eaten by a wolf" yet still intact. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 12:18

Second: A father who saw the truth. ***"Rather, your souls have enticed you to something"***. Ya'qub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was not deceived, so he chose: ***"patience is most fitting"*** — ***faṣabrun jamīl***, beautiful patience.

Third: What is "beautiful patience"? Scholars explain that it is **patience without complaining to creation**. Ya'qub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ grieved — the Qur'an mentions his grief in Part 2 — but he complained only to Allah: ***"Allah is the one sought for help"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 12:18

The Mother of the Believers 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها, when she was slandered in the incident of *al-ifk*, said that she found no example for herself except the words of the father of Yusuf: ***"Fasabrun jamīl, wallāhul-musta'ān 'alā mā taṣifūn."*** This report is in Sahih al-Bukhari (No. 4141).

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SOLD FOR A REDUCED PRICE

SURAH YUSUF 12:19–22

وَجَآءَتْ سَيَّارَةٌ فَأَرْسَلُوا۟ وَارِدَهُمْ فَأَدْلَىٰ دَلْوَهُۥ ۖ قَالَ يَٰبُشْرَىٰ هَٰذَا غُلَٰمٌ ۚ وَأَسَرُّوهُ
بِضَٰعَةً ۚ وَٱللَّهُ عَلِيمٌۢ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

And there came a company of travelers; then they sent their water drawer, and he let down his bucket. He said, "Good news! Here is a boy." And they concealed him, [taking him] as merchandise; and Allah was knowing of what they did.

وَشَرَوْهُ بِثَمَنٍۭ بَخْسٍ دَرَٰهِمَ مَعْدُودَةٍ وَكَانُوا۟ فِيهِ مِنَ ٱلزَّٰهِدِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾

And they sold him for a reduced price - a few dirhams - and they were, concerning him, of those content with little.

وَقَالَ ٱلَّذِى ٱشْتَرَىٰهُ مِن مِّصْرَ لِٱمْرَأَتِهِۦٓ أَكْرِمِى مَثْوَىٰهُ عَسَىٰٓ أَن يَنفَعَنَآ أَوْ
نَتَّخِذَهُۥ وَلَدًا ۚ وَكَذَٰلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ وَلِنُعَلِّمَهُۥ مِن تَأْوِيلِ
ٱلْأَحَادِيثِ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ غَالِبٌ عَلَىٰٓ أَمْرِهِۦ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ ٱلنَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

And the one from Egypt who bought him said to his wife, "Make his residence comfortable. Perhaps he will benefit us, or we will adopt him as a son." And thus, We established Joseph in the land that We might teach him the interpretation of events. And Allah is predominant over His affair, but most of the people do not know.

وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُۥٓ ءَاتَيْنَٰهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا ۚ وَكَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِى ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾

And when Joseph reached maturity, We gave him judgment and knowledge. And thus We reward the doers of good.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/12:19-22

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 12:19–22

First: The bucket that carried destiny. A water drawer of the caravan ***"let down his bucket"***, and cried out: ***"Good news! Here is a boy"***. He came looking for water, but found a prophet.

Second: A cheap price for a noble soul. ***"they sold him for a reduced price - a few dirhams"***. The man most noble in lineage (Sahih al-Bukhari 3383) was sold for a few dirhams. A person's value in the eyes of people is not the same as his value with Allah.

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Third: A new home in Egypt. The man who bought him said to his wife: ***"Make his residence comfortable. Perhaps he will benefit us, or we will adopt him as a son"***. Allah says: ***"thus, We established Joseph in the land"***, and closes the verse with the principle at the heart of the whole surah: ***"And Allah is predominant over His affair, but most of the people do not know"***.

Fourth: Knowledge as the reward of ihsan. ***"We gave him judgment and knowledge. And thus We reward the doers of good"***. The word ***al-muḥsinīn*** (the doers of good) recurs several times in this surah — it is the quality everyone recognised in Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.

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I SEEK THE REFUGE OF ALLAH

The next trial was heavier than the well. The Qur'an tells it in very modest, veiled language, and this eBook follows the same manners.

SURAH YUSUF 12:23–24

وَرَٰوَدَتْهُ ٱلَّتِي هُوَ فِي بَيْتِهَا عَن نَّفْسِهِۦ وَغَلَّقَتِ ٱلْأَبْوَٰبَ وَقَالَتْ هَيْتَ لَكَ ۚ
قَالَ مَعَاذَ ٱللَّهِ ۖ إِنَّهُۥ رَبِّيٓ أَحْسَنَ مَثْوَايَ ۖ إِنَّهُۥ لَا يُفْلِحُ ٱلظَّٰلِمُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

And she, in whose house he was, sought to seduce him. She closed the doors and said, "Come, you." He said, "[I seek] the refuge of Allah. Indeed, he is my master, who has made good my residence. Indeed, wrongdoers will not succeed."

وَلَقَدْ هَمَّتْ بِهِۦ ۖ وَهَمَّ بِهَا لَوْلَآ أَن رَّءَا بُرْهَٰنَ رَبِّهِۦ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ لِنَصْرِفَ عَنْهُ
ٱلسُّوٓءَ وَٱلْفَحْشَآءَ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا ٱلْمُخْلَصِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾

And she certainly determined [to seduce] him, and he would have inclined to her had he not seen the proof of his Lord. And thus [it was] that We should avert from him evil and immorality. Indeed, he was of Our chosen servants.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/12:23-24

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 12:23–24

First: A complete trial. The temptation came from a woman who had authority over him, in the house where he lived, with the doors closed, and without witnesses. Every path to sin was open. The answer of Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was brief: ***"[I seek] the refuge of Allah" — ma'ādhallāh***.

Second: Three reasons for refusal. Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ sought refuge in Allah; he remembered the kindness of his master: ***"he is my master, who has made good my residence"***; and he remembered the consequence: ***"wrongdoers will not succeed"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 12:23

Third: The meaning of verse 12:24. This verse mentions ***"had he not seen the proof of his Lord"*** (***burhān rabbih***). The scholars of Ahl as-Sunnah agree that Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ **committed no immoral act at all**. Some explain that the "inclination" mentioned is a natural passing thought that was not acted upon; others explain that the inclination did not occur at all because Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ had seen the proof of his Lord. Both views agree on the purity of Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, as the end of the verse says: ***"Indeed, he was***

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of Our chosen servants". Ibn Kathir rejects the Israiliyyat stories that describe that "proof" with images unworthy of a prophet. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 12:24

SURAH YUSUF 12:25–29

وَٱسْتَبَقَا ٱلْبَابَ وَقَدَّتْ قَمِيصَهُۥ مِن دُبُرٍ وَأَلْفَيَا سَيِّدَهَا لَدَا ٱلْبَابِ ۚ قَالَتْ مَا جَزَآءُ مَنْ أَرَادَ بِأَهْلِكَ سُوٓءًا إِلَّآ أَن يُسْجَنَ أَوْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٥﴾

And they both raced to the door, and she tore his shirt from the back, and they found her husband at the door. She said, "What is the recompense of one who intended evil for your wife but that he be imprisoned or a painful punishment?"

قَالَ هِىَ رَٰوَدَتْنِى عَن نَّفْسِى ۚ وَشَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِهَآ إِن كَانَ قَمِيصُهُۥ قُدَّ مِن قُبُلٍ فَصَدَقَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ ٱلْكَٰذِبِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾

[Joseph] said, "It was she who sought to seduce me." And a witness from her family testified. "If his shirt is torn from the front, then she has told the truth, and he is of the liars."

وَإِن كَانَ قَمِيصُهُۥ قُدَّ مِن دُبُرٍ فَكَذَبَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ ٱلصَّٰدِقِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾

But if his shirt is torn from the back, then she has lied, and he is of the truthful.

فَلَمَّا رَءَا قَمِيصَهُۥ قُدَّ مِن دُبُرٍ قَالَ إِنَّهُۥ مِن كَيْدِكُنَّ ۖ إِنَّ كَيْدَكُنَّ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

So when her husband saw his shirt torn from the back, he said, "Indeed, it is of the women's plan. Indeed, your plan is great."

يُوسُفُ أَعْرِضْ عَنْ هَٰذَا ۚ وَٱسْتَغْفِرِى لِذَنۢبِكِ ۖ إِنَّكِ كُنتِ مِنَ ٱلْخَاطِـِٔينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

Joseph, ignore this. And, [my wife], ask forgiveness for your sin. Indeed, you were of the sinful.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/12:25-29

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 12:25–29 — THE SHIRT THAT BORE WITNESS

Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ ran to the door, and his shirt was torn from the back. The woman at once accused him before her husband. A witness from her own family gave a fair rule: ***"if his shirt is torn from the back, then she has lied, and he is of the truthful"***. The shirt once made into false evidence by his brothers (12:18) now became the proof of his innocence.

A note on names: The Qur'an calls this woman ***"The wife of al-'Azeez"*** (12:30). The name "Zulaikha" is well known from the books of stories and appears in brackets in some translations, but it is not mentioned in the Qur'an or in authentic Hadith.

THE MAN WHO SAYS: "I FEAR ALLAH"

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 660

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ بَشَّارٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى، عَنْ عُبَيْدِ اللَّهِ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي خُبَيْبُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ، عَنْ حَفْصِ بْنِ عَاصِمٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « سَبْعَةٌ يُظِلُّهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي ظِلِّهِ يَوْمَ لاَ ظِلَّ إِلاَّ ظِلُّهُ الإِمَامُ الْعَادِلُ، وَشَابٌّ نَشَأَ فِي عِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ، وَرَجُلٌ قَلْبُهُ مُعَلَّقٌ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ، وَرَجُلاَنِ تَحَابَّا فِي اللَّهِ اجْتَمَعَا عَلَيْهِ وَتَفَرَّقَا عَلَيْهِ، وَرَجُلٌ طَلَبَتْهُ امْرَأَةٌ ذَاتُ مَنْصِبٍ وَجَمَالٍ فَقَالَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ. وَرَجُلٌ تَصَدَّقَ أَخْفَى حَتَّى لاَ تَعْلَمَ شِمَالُهُ مَا تُنْفِقُ يَمِينُهُ، وَرَجُلٌ ذَكَرَ اللَّهَ خَالِيًا فَفَاضَتْ عَيْنَاهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"Seven whom Allah will shade in His shade on the Day when there is no shade but His: a just ruler; a youth who grew up in the worship of his Lord; a man whose heart is attached to the mosques; two men who love each other for the sake of Allah, meeting and parting for His sake; a man invited by a woman of rank and beauty, who says: Indeed, I fear Allah; a man who gives charity so secretly that his left hand does not know what his right hand spends; and a man who remembers Allah in solitude and his eyes overflow with tears."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Muhammad ibn Bashshar, from Yahya ibn Sa'id al-Qattan, from 'Ubaidullah ibn 'Umar, from Khubaib ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman, from Hafs ibn 'Asim, from Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Call to Prayer, chapter on one who sits in the mosque waiting for the prayer, Hadith No. 660. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 1031).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:660

One of these seven is ***"a man invited by a woman of rank and beauty, who says: Indeed, I fear Allah."*** Many scholars mention Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ as the greatest example of this group. This Hadith promises that every young man who refuses temptation for the sake of Allah will receive the same shade on the Day of Resurrection.

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PRISON IS MORE TO MY LIKING

SURAH YUSUF 12:30–32

۞ وَقَالَ نِسْوَةٌ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ امْرَأَتُ الْعَزِيزِ تُرَاوِدُ فَتَاهَا عَن نَّفْسِهِ ۖ قَدْ شَغَفَهَا
حُبًّا ۖ إِنَّا لَنَرَاهَا فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

And women in the city said, "The wife of al-'Azeez is seeking to seduce her slave boy; he has impassioned her with love. Indeed, we see her [to be] in clear error."

فَلَمَّا سَمِعَتْ بِمَكْرِهِنَّ أَرْسَلَتْ إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَعْتَدَتْ لَهُنَّ مُتَّكَأً وَآتَتْ كُلَّ
وَاحِدَةٍ مِّنْهُنَّ سِكِّينًا وَقَالَتِ اخْرُجْ عَلَيْهِنَّ ۖ فَلَمَّا رَأَيْنَهُ أَكْبَرْنَهُ وَقَطَّعْنَ
أَيْدِيَهُنَّ وَقُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلَّهِ مَا هَٰذَا بَشَرًا إِنْ هَٰذَا إِلَّا مَلَكٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٣١﴾

So when she heard of their scheming, she sent for them and prepared for them a banquet and gave each one of them a knife and said [to Joseph], "Come out before them." And when they saw him, they greatly admired him and cut their hands and said, "Perfect is Allah! This is not a man; this is none but a noble angel."

قَالَتْ فَذَٰلِكُنَّ الَّذِي لُمْتُنَّنِي فِيهِ ۖ وَلَقَدْ رَاوَدتُّهُ عَن نَّفْسِهِ فَاسْتَعْصَمَ ۖ
وَلَئِن لَّمْ يَفْعَلْ مَا آمُرُهُ لَيُسْجَنَنَّ وَلَيَكُونًا مِّنَ الصَّاغِرِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾

She said, "That is the one about whom you blamed me. And I certainly sought to seduce him, but he firmly refused; and if he will not do what I order him, he will surely be imprisoned and will be of those debased."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/12:30-32

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 12:30–32

The news spread, and the ***"women in the city"*** blamed the wife of al-'Aziz. She invited them to a banquet and gave each of them a knife. When Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ came out, ***"they greatly admired him and cut their hands"***, and said: ***"This is not a man; this is none but a noble angel"***.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ, in the long Hadith of the Isra', related that he met Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ in the third heaven, and that ***"he had been given half of beauty"*** (Sahih Muslim, No. 162). Yet the Qur'an highlights that the beauty of his character was greater: the wife of al-'Aziz herself admitted before them: ***"I certainly sought to seduce him, but he firmly refused"***.

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SURAH YUSUF 12:33–35

قَالَ رَبِّ ٱلسِّجۡنُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا يَدۡعُونَنِيٓ إِلَيۡهِۖ وَإِلَّا تَصۡرِفۡ عَنِّي كَيۡدَهُنَّ أَصۡبُ إِلَيۡهِنَّ وَأَكُن مِّنَ ٱلۡجَٰهِلِينَ ٣٣

He said, "My Lord, prison is more to my liking than that to which they invite me. And if You do not avert from me their plan, I might incline toward them and [thus] be of the ignorant."

فَٱسۡتَجَابَ لَهُۥ رَبُّهُۥ فَصَرَفَ عَنۡهُ كَيۡدَهُنَّۚ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلۡعَلِيمُ ٣٤

So his Lord responded to him and averted from him their plan. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Knowing.

ثُمَّ بَدَا لَهُم مِّنۢ بَعۡدِ مَا رَأَوُاْ ٱلۡأٓيَٰتِ لَيَسۡجُنُنَّهُۥ حَتَّىٰ حِينٖ ٣٥

Then it appeared to them after they had seen the signs that al-'Azeez should surely imprison him for a time.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/12:33-35

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 12:33–35 — THE PRAYER OF A YOUNG MAN

First: Choosing prison. ***"My Lord, prison is more to my liking than that to which they invite me"***. Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ chose to lose his freedom rather than lose his chastity.

Second: Not relying on his own strength. ***"if You do not avert from me their plan, I might incline toward them"***. A prophet who had already proven his purity still asked for Allah's protection. He did not say "I am strong", but "if You do not avert…". This is the secret of his steadfastness.

Third: A prayer answered. ***"So his Lord responded to him and averted from him their plan"***. Yet the answer to that prayer came through prison: ***"after they had seen the signs that al-'Azeez should surely imprison him for a time"***. Sometimes the answer to a prayer comes in a form we do not expect.

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DA'WAH IN PRISON

SURAH YUSUF 12:36–38

وَدَخَلَ مَعَهُ ٱلسِّجۡنَ فَتَيَانِۖ قَالَ أَحَدُهُمَآ إِنِّيٓ أَرَىٰنِيٓ أَعۡصِرُ خَمۡرٗاۖ وَقَالَ ٱلۡأٓخَرُ إِنِّيٓ أَرَىٰنِيٓ أَحۡمِلُ فَوۡقَ رَأۡسِي خُبۡزٗا تَأۡكُلُ ٱلطَّيۡرُ مِنۡهُۖ نَبِّئۡنَا بِتَأۡوِيلِهِۦٓۖ إِنَّا نَرَىٰكَ مِنَ ٱلۡمُحۡسِنِينَ ٣٦

And there entered the prison with him two young men. One of them said, "Indeed, I have seen myself [in a dream] pressing wine." The other said, "Indeed, I have seen myself carrying upon my head [some] bread, from which the birds were eating. Inform us of its interpretation; indeed, we see you to be of those who do good."

قَالَ لَا يَأۡتِيكُمَا طَعَامٞ تُرۡزَقَانِهِۦٓ إِلَّا نَبَّأۡتُكُمَا بِتَأۡوِيلِهِۦ قَبۡلَ أَن يَأۡتِيَكُمَاۚ ذَٰلِكُمَا مِمَّا عَلَّمَنِي رَبِّيٓۚ إِنِّي تَرَكۡتُ مِلَّةَ قَوۡمٖ لَّا يُؤۡمِنُونَ بِٱللَّهِ وَهُم بِٱلۡأٓخِرَةِ هُمۡ كَٰفِرُونَ ٣٧

He said, "You will not receive food that is provided to you except that I will inform you of its interpretation before it comes to you. That is from what my Lord has taught me. Indeed, I have left the religion of a people who do not believe in Allah, and they, in the Hereafter, are disbelievers."

وَٱتَّبَعۡتُ مِلَّةَ ءَابَآءِيٓ إِبۡرَٰهِيمَ وَإِسۡحَٰقَ وَيَعۡقُوبَۚ مَا كَانَ لَنَآ أَن نُّشۡرِكَ بِٱللَّهِ مِن شَيۡءٖۚ ذَٰلِكَ مِن فَضۡلِ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيۡنَا وَعَلَى ٱلنَّاسِ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكۡثَرَ ٱلنَّاسِ لَا يَشۡكُرُونَ ٣٨

And I have followed the religion of my fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And it was not for us to associate anything with Allah. That is from the favor of Allah upon us and upon the people, but most of the people are not grateful.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/12:36-38

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 12:36–38 — PUTTING TAWHID FIRST

Two of the king's servants entered the prison with him, and each had a dream. They came to Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ because ***"we see you to be of those who do good"*** — once again, the quality of ***muḥsin*** was recognised, even in prison.

Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ did not interpret their dreams at once. First he introduced the source of his knowledge: ***"That is from what my Lord has taught me"***, and then he introduced his religion: ***"I have followed the religion of my fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob"***. He used the moment they needed him to convey what they needed most. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 12:37

SURAH YUSUF 12:39–42

يَٰصَٰحِبَيِ ٱلسِّجۡنِ ءَأَرۡبَابٞ مُّتَفَرِّقُونَ خَيۡرٌ أَمِ ٱللَّهُ ٱلۡوَٰحِدُ ٱلۡقَهَّارُ ٣٩

O [my] two companions of prison, are separate lords better or Allah, the One, the Prevailing.

مَا تَعۡبُدُونَ مِن دُونِهِۦٓ إِلَّآ أَسۡمَآءٗ سَمَّيۡتُمُوهَآ أَنتُمۡ وَءَابَآؤُكُم مَّآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ بِهَا مِن سُلۡطَٰنٍۚ إِنِ ٱلۡحُكۡمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِۚ أَمَرَ أَلَّا تَعۡبُدُوٓاْ إِلَّآ إِيَّاهُۚ ذَٰلِكَ ٱلدِّينُ ٱلۡقَيِّمُ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكۡثَرَ ٱلنَّاسِ لَا يَعۡلَمُونَ ٤٠

You worship not besides Him except [mere] names you have named them, you and your fathers, for which Allah has sent down no authority. Legislation is not but for Allah. He has commanded that you worship not except Him. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know.

يَٰصَٰحِبَيِ ٱلسِّجۡنِ أَمَّآ أَحَدُكُمَا فَيَسۡقِي رَبَّهُۥ خَمۡرٗاۖ وَأَمَّا ٱلۡأٓخَرُ فَيُصۡلَبُ فَتَأۡكُلُ ٱلطَّيۡرُ مِن رَّأۡسِهِۦۚ قُضِيَ ٱلۡأَمۡرُ ٱلَّذِي فِيهِ تَسۡتَفۡتِيَانِ ٤١

O two companions of prison, as for one of you, he will give drink to his master of wine; but as for the other, he will be crucified, and the birds will eat from his head. The matter has been decreed about which you both inquire.

وَقَالَ لِلَّذِي ظَنَّ أَنَّهُۥ نَاجٖ مِّنۡهُمَا ٱذۡكُرۡنِي عِندَ رَبِّكَ فَأَنسَىٰهُ ٱلشَّيۡطَٰنُ ذِكۡرَ رَبِّهِۦ فَلَبِثَ فِي ٱلسِّجۡنِ بِضۡعَ سِنِينَ ٤٢

And he said to the one whom he knew would go free, "Mention me before your master." But Satan made him forget the mention [to] his master, and Joseph remained in prison several years.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/12:39-42

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 12:39–42

First: A question that awakens the mind. ***"are separate lords better or Allah, the One, the Prevailing"***? Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ addressed them as ***"O [my] two companions of prison"*** — da'wah with warmth, not with harshness.

Second: An honest interpretation. He interpreted both dreams honestly, including bad news for one of them (12:41). Figure 2 summarises all the dreams in Part 1 and their interpretations.

Dreamer	Dream	Verse	Interpretation & Fulfilment	Verse
Yusuf (as a boy)	Eleven stars, the sun and the moon prostrating to him	12:4	*His family bowing in honour of him in Egypt (Part 2)*	12:100
First prisoner	Pressing wine	12:36	*Gives drink to his master*	12:41
Second prisoner	Carrying bread eaten by birds	12:36	*Crucified, birds eat from his head*	12:41
King of Egypt	Seven fat cows eaten by seven lean; seven green spikes and others dry	12:43	*Seven fertile years, seven years of drought, then a year of rain*	12:47–49

Figure 2: The dreams in Surah Yusuf and their interpretations as mentioned in the Qur'an.

Third: Several forgotten years. Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ asked the prisoner who would be freed: ***"Mention me before your master"***, but ***"Satan made him forget the mention [to] his master"***, and ***"Joseph remained in prison several years"***. Ibn Kathir supports the view that it was the prisoner who forgot. Reasonable effort is not wrong, but Allah decides its timing. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 12:42

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THE KING'S DREAM AND A NAME CLEARED

SURAH YUSUF 12:43–46

وَقَالَ ٱلۡمَلِكُ إِنِّيٓ أَرَىٰ سَبۡعَ بَقَرَٰتٖ سِمَانٖ يَأۡكُلُهُنَّ سَبۡعٌ عِجَافٞ وَسَبۡعَ سُنۢبُلَٰتٍ خُضۡرٖ وَأُخَرَ يَابِسَٰتٖۖ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلۡمَلَأُ أَفۡتُونِي فِي رُءۡيَٰيَ إِن كُنتُمۡ لِلرُّءۡيَا تَعۡبُرُونَ ٤٣

And [subsequently] the king said, "Indeed, I have seen [in a dream] seven fat cows being eaten by seven [that were] lean, and seven green spikes [of grain] and others [that were] dry. O eminent ones, explain to me my vision, if you should interpret visions."

قَالُوٓاْ أَضۡغَٰثُ أَحۡلَٰمٖۖ وَمَا نَحۡنُ بِتَأۡوِيلِ ٱلۡأَحۡلَٰمِ بِعَٰلِمِينَ ٤٤

They said, "[It is but] a mixture of false dreams, and we are not learned in the interpretation of dreams."

وَقَالَ ٱلَّذِي نَجَا مِنۡهُمَا وَٱدَّكَرَ بَعۡدَ أُمَّةٍ أَنَا۠ أُنَبِّئُكُم بِتَأۡوِيلِهِۦ فَأَرۡسِلُونِ ٤٥

But the one who was freed and remembered after a time said, "I will inform you of its interpretation, so send me forth."

يُوسُفُ أَيُّهَا ٱلصِّدِّيقُ أَفۡتِنَا فِي سَبۡعِ بَقَرَٰتٖ سِمَانٖ يَأۡكُلُهُنَّ سَبۡعٌ عِجَافٞ وَسَبۡعِ سُنۢبُلَٰتٍ خُضۡرٖ وَأُخَرَ يَابِسَٰتٖ لَّعَلِّيٓ أَرۡجِعُ إِلَى ٱلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمۡ يَعۡلَمُونَ ٤٦

[He said], "Joseph, O man of truth, explain to us about seven fat cows eaten by seven [that were] lean, and seven green spikes [of grain] and others [that were] dry - that I may return to the people; perhaps they will know [about you]."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/12:43-46

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 12:43–49 — AN INTERPRETATION THAT BECAME AN ECONOMIC PLAN

The king of Egypt dreamt of seven fat cows being eaten by seven lean ones. His nobles could not interpret it: ***"a mixture of false dreams"***. Only then did the forgetful prisoner remember Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.

SURAH YUSUF 12:47–49

قَالَ تَزْرَعُونَ سَبْعَ سِنِينَ دَأَبًا فَمَا حَصَدتُّمْ فَذَرُوهُ فِي سُنۢبُلِهِۦٓ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

[Joseph] said, "You will plant for seven years consecutively; and what you harvest leave in its spikes, except a little from which you will eat."

ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِنۢ بَعْدِ ذَٰلِكَ سَبْعٌ شِدَادٌ يَأْكُلْنَ مَا قَدَّمْتُمْ لَهُنَّ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّمَّا تُحْصِنُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

Then will come after that seven difficult [years] which will consume what you saved for them, except a little from which you will store?

ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِنۢ بَعْدِ ذَٰلِكَ عَامٌ فِيهِ يُغَاثُ ٱلنَّاسُ وَفِيهِ يَعْصِرُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

Then will come after that a year in which the people will be given rain and in which they will press [olives and grapes]?

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/12:47-49

The interpretation of Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was not merely an explanation of the dream; it was **an economic plan** to save a nation: ***"You will plant for seven years consecutively; and what you harvest leave in its spikes, except a little from which you will eat"***. Plant diligently, store in a way that preserves, and be frugal in eating. He also mentioned ***"a year in which the people will be given rain"*** — something not found in the king's dream, a sign of knowledge taught by Allah. Notice too that Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ set no condition for his release before giving the interpretation. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 12:47

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SURAH YUSUF 12:50–53

وَقَالَ ٱلۡمَلِكُ ٱئۡتُونِي بِهِۦۖ فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُ ٱلرَّسُولُ قَالَ ٱرۡجِعۡ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَسۡـَٔلۡهُ مَا بَالُ ٱلنِّسۡوَةِ ٱلَّٰتِي قَطَّعۡنَ أَيۡدِيَهُنَّۚ إِنَّ رَبِّي بِكَيۡدِهِنَّ عَلِيمٞ ٥٠

And the king said, "Bring him to me." But when the messenger came to him, [Joseph] said, "Return to your master and ask him what is the case of the women who cut their hands. Indeed, my Lord is Knowing of their plan."

قَالَ مَا خَطۡبُكُنَّ إِذۡ رَٰوَدتُّنَّ يُوسُفَ عَن نَّفۡسِهِۦۚ قُلۡنَ حَٰشَ لِلَّهِ مَا عَلِمۡنَا عَلَيۡهِ مِن سُوٓءٖۚ قَالَتِ ٱمۡرَأَتُ ٱلۡعَزِيزِ ٱلۡـَٰٔنَ حَصۡحَصَ ٱلۡحَقُّ أَنَا۠ رَٰوَدتُّهُۥ عَن نَّفۡسِهِۦ وَإِنَّهُۥ لَمِنَ ٱلصَّٰدِقِينَ ٥١

Said [the king to the women], "What was your condition when you sought to seduce Joseph?" They said, "Perfect is Allah! We know about him no evil." The wife of al-'Azeez said, "Now the truth has become evident. It was I who sought to seduce him, and indeed, he is of the truthful."

ذَٰلِكَ لِيَعۡلَمَ أَنِّي لَمۡ أَخُنۡهُ بِٱلۡغَيۡبِ وَأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَهۡدِي كَيۡدَ ٱلۡخَآئِنِينَ ٥٢

That is so al-'Azeez will know that I did not betray him in [his] absence and that Allah does not guide the plan of betrayers.

۞وَمَآ أُبَرِّئُ نَفۡسِيٓۚ إِنَّ ٱلنَّفۡسَ لَأَمَّارَةُۢ بِٱلسُّوٓءِ إِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّيٓۚ إِنَّ رَبِّي غَفُورٞ رَّحِيمٞ ٥٣

And I do not acquit myself. Indeed, the soul is a persistent enjoiner of evil, except those upon which my Lord has mercy. Indeed, my Lord is Forgiving and Merciful.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/12:50-53

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 12:50–53 — LEAVING WITH A CLEAN NAME

When the king summoned him, Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ did not rush out. He said to the king's messenger: ***"Return to your master and ask him what is the case of the women who cut their hands"***. He wanted his name cleared before he came out, so that no one could say he was released while the accusation still hung over him.

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 4694

حَدَّثَنَا سَعِيدُ بْنُ تَلِيدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ الْقَاسِمِ، عَنْ بَكْرِ بْنِ مُضَرَ، عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ الْحَارِثِ، عَنْ يُونُسَ بْنِ يَزِيدَ، عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ، عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ الْمُسَيَّبِ، وَأَبِي سَلَمَةَ بْنِ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم « يَرْحَمُ اللَّهُ لُوطًا، لَقَدْ كَانَ يَأْوِي إِلَى رُكْنٍ شَدِيدٍ، وَلَوْ لَبِثْتُ فِي السِّجْنِ مَا لَبِثَ يُوسُفُ لأَجَبْتُ الدَّاعِيَ، وَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ مِنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ {أَوَلَمْ تُؤْمِنْ قَالَ بَلَى وَلَكِنْ لِيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِي}»

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"May Allah have mercy on Lut; he was indeed taking refuge in a very strong support. And if I had stayed in prison as long as Yusuf stayed, I would have answered the one who called (to release me). And we are more entitled (to doubt) than Ibrahim when Allah said to him: {Have you not believed? He said: Yes, but [I ask] only that my heart may be satisfied} (2:260)."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Sa'id ibn Talid, from 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn al-Qasim, from Bakr ibn Mudar, from 'Amr ibn al-Harith, from Yunus ibn Yazid, from Ibn Shihab az-Zuhri, from Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib and Abu Salamah ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman, from Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Tafsir, Surah Yusuf, chapter {Falamma ja'ahur-rasulu qalarji' ila rabbik…} (12:50), Hadith No. 4694. See also No. 3372 and Sahih Muslim No. 151.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:4694

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ praised the patience of Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ with great humility: had he been imprisoned that long, he would have answered the call to come out at once — praise of the self-respect of Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.

As a result of the king's inquiry, the truth came out: ***"We know about him no evil"***, and the wife of al-'Aziz confessed: ***"Now the truth has become evident. It was I who sought to seduce him"***. Then it is said: ***"And I do not acquit myself. Indeed, the soul is a persistent enjoiner of evil"***. Ibn Kathir supports the view that this continues the words of the wife of al-'Aziz, admitting her fault and the weakness of her soul; some other commentators attribute it to Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 12:53

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GUARDIAN OF THE STOREHOUSES OF THE LAND

SURAH YUSUF 12:54–57

وَقَالَ ٱلۡمَلِكُ ٱئۡتُونِي بِهِۦٓ أَسۡتَخۡلِصۡهُ لِنَفۡسِيۖ فَلَمَّا كَلَّمَهُۥ قَالَ إِنَّكَ ٱلۡيَوۡمَ لَدَيۡنَا مَكِينٌ أَمِينٞ ٥٤

And the king said, "Bring him to me; I will appoint him exclusively for myself." And when he spoke to him, he said, "Indeed, you are today established [in position] and trusted."

قَالَ ٱجۡعَلۡنِي عَلَىٰ خَزَآئِنِ ٱلۡأَرۡضِۖ إِنِّي حَفِيظٌ عَلِيمٞ ٥٥

[Joseph] said, "Appoint me over the storehouses of the land. Indeed, I will be a knowing guardian."

وَكَذَٰلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ يَتَبَوَّأُ مِنۡهَا حَيۡثُ يَشَآءُۚ نُصِيبُ بِرَحۡمَتِنَا مَن نَّشَآءُۖ وَلَا نُضِيعُ أَجۡرَ ٱلۡمُحۡسِنِينَ ٥٦

And thus We established Joseph in the land to settle therein wherever he willed. We touch with Our mercy whom We will, and We do not allow to be lost the reward of those who do good.

وَلَأَجۡرُ ٱلۡأٓخِرَةِ خَيۡرٞ لِّلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَكَانُواْ يَتَّقُونَ ٥٧

And the reward of the Hereafter is better for those who believed and were fearing Allah.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/12:54-57

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 12:54–57

First: Judged after speaking. The king wanted to make Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ his confidant, but only ***"when he spoke to him"*** did he say: ***"Indeed, you are today established [in position] and trusted"***. True honour shows itself through words and character.

Second: Asking for office on the basis of competence and trust. ***"Appoint me over the storehouses of the land. Indeed, I will be a knowing guardian"***. Two conditions of leadership are mentioned in one verse: ***ḥafīẓ*** (trustworthy, a guardian) and ***'alīm*** (knowledgeable, competent). Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ asked for that office because he knew the country would face drought, and he was the most qualified to save the people. Scholars explain that asking for an office is permitted when one is sure of being qualified and the aim is the public good. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 12:55

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Third: From the well to the storehouses. ***"thus We established Joseph in the land"***. The same words — ***makkannā li-Yūsuf*** — are used in verse 12:21 when he had just been sold as a slave. Allah had established his position from the very first day, even though people saw only a well and a prison.

Fourth: What is better than power. ***"We do not allow to be lost the reward of those who do good"***, and ***"the reward of the Hereafter is better for those who believed and were fearing Allah"***. Part 1 ends with Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ at the height of power, but the Qur'an immediately reminds us that the reward of the Hereafter is better than all of it.

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WHAT THE QUR'AN DOES NOT TELL

The story of Prophet Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ is among the stories most embellished in the books of stories, poetry and tales — including in old Malay literature. Guided by the Hadith of Sahih al-Bukhari 4485 (Series 1), we do not make these additions part of the story we believe in.

POPULAR STORIES AND WHAT REVELATION SAYS

POPULAR STORY	WHAT THE QUR'AN AND AUTHENTIC HADITH SAY
The wife of al-'Aziz was named Zulaikha, and al-'Aziz was named Qitfir (Potiphar).	The Qur'an only says "the wife of al-'Aziz" (12:30, 51). These names come from reports of the People of the Book.
When tempted, Yusuf saw the image of his father biting his finger, or a hand appeared on the wall with a written warning.	The Qur'an only mentions "the proof of his Lord" (12:24). Ibn Kathir rejects these details as unauthentic and unworthy of a prophet.
Yusuf finally married Zulaikha after she was made young again.	Not mentioned in the Qur'an or authentic Hadith.
The witness in verse 12:26 was a baby in the cradle who spoke.	The Qur'an only says "a witness from her family" (12:26). The report of the baby has a disputed chain.
Yusuf was imprisoned for exactly seven or twelve years.	The Qur'an only says "several years" (biḍ'a sinīn, 12:42).
The pyramids of Egypt were grain stores built by Yusuf.	Not mentioned in the Qur'an or Hadith. The great pyramids were royal tombs built centuries earlier.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTE: WEST ASIANS IN THE NILE DELTA — TELL EL-DAB'A

Excavations at **Tell el-Dab'a**, in the north-eastern Nile Delta, have revealed a city that became the seat of the **Hyksos** kings — rulers of West Asian origin (from the lands of Sham and Canaan) who ruled part of Egypt around 1638–1530 BCE.

A strontium isotope study of the teeth of 75 individuals buried there (Stantis et al., *PLOS ONE*, 2020) found that **many of the city's inhabitants were not local**, and that this was already the case before the Hyksos period. The researchers concluded that people from outside Egypt lived in the Nile Delta for several generations before some of them rose to power.

This finding shows that **the presence and rise of people from the lands of Sham in Egypt** is something that happened in history. However, **no inscription mentions Yusuf** عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, and the date of his time cannot be determined. It is therefore noted as historical background only, **not as evidence** for the story of Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTE: "KING" AND "PHARAOH" — AN OBSERVATION THAT NEEDS CARE

In the story of Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, the ruler of Egypt is called ***"the king"*** (***al-malik***, 12:43, 50, 54), while in the story of Prophet Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, the ruler of Egypt is called ***Fir'awn*** (Pharaoh). According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, the word "pharaoh" originally referred to the palace, and came to be used for the king of Egypt himself in the **New Kingdom** (beginning with the 18th Dynasty, around 1539 BCE).

Many writers see this difference in titles as a sign of the precision of the Qur'an's language. However, linking it to a specific period (such as the Hyksos period) is **an assumption** that requires the date of the time of Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ — which is not known with certainty. So it is noted as a linguistic observation, **not as archaeological evidence**.

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FROM THE WELL TO THE STOREHOUSES

A boy dreamt of stars prostrating to him. Then he was thrown into a well by his brothers, sold for a few dirhams, tempted and slandered, and imprisoned for years. Every step looked like a fall; yet every step was in fact raising him. Allah said when he had just been sold: ***"And thus, We established Joseph in the land"*** (12:21) — and repeated it when he took charge of the storehouses (12:56).

A BRIEF COMPARISON

THE TRIAL	THE RESPONSE OF YUSUF AND YA'QUB
A dream that could provoke envy	Ya'qub: "Do not relate your vision to your brothers" (12:5)
Losing a son, with false blood	Ya'qub: "Patience is most fitting" (12:18)
Temptation behind closed doors	Yusuf: "[I seek] the refuge of Allah" (12:23; Sahih al-Bukhari 660)
The threat of prison	Yusuf: "My Lord, prison is more to my liking" (12:33)
Prisoners asking for an interpretation	Yusuf puts the call to tawhid first (12:37–40)
The call to be released	Yusuf asks first for his name to be cleared (12:50; Sahih al-Bukhari 4694)
Power and the storehouses	Yusuf: "Indeed, I will be a knowing guardian" (12:55)

LESSONS FROM THIS STORY

First: True honour is taqwa. "The one who most fears Allah" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3383).

Second: Guard blessings from envious eyes. Relate a good dream only to those who love you (12:5; Sahih al-Bukhari 7044).

Third: Envy begins with comparison. "Joseph and his brother are more beloved to our father than we" (12:8).

Fourth: Beautiful patience is patience without complaining to creation. ***Faṣabrun jamīl*** (12:18).

Fifth: Chastity is guarded by relying on Allah, not on one's own strength. "If You do not avert from me their plan…" (12:33).

Sixth: Da'wah does not stop, even in prison. (12:37–40).

Seventh: Honour and a good name deserve to be cleared. (12:50–51).

Eighth: Leadership requires trustworthiness and knowledge. ***Ḥafīẓun 'alīm*** (12:55).

Ninth: Allah is predominant over His affair. "But most of the people do not know" (12:21).

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CONCLUSION

Part 1 of the story of Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ teaches that a well, slavery and prison are not the end of the story. For the patient and God-fearing, every fall is a step upward. But the story is not yet over: in Canaan, an old father is still waiting with beautiful patience, and the brothers who threw Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ into the well will come to Egypt to ask him for food — without recognising him.

May Allah grant us the patience of Ya'qub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, the chastity and trustworthiness of Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, and make us among ***al-muḥsinīn*** whose reward is never lost. ***Faṣabrun jamīl, wallāhul-musta'ān.*** Amin.

In sha Allah, the series **Stories from the Qur'an** continues with **the story of Prophet Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ (Part 2)**, with the same method: the Qur'an, authentic Hadith, and solid archaeological findings only.

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SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:261

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتۡ سَبۡعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٖ مِّاْئَةُ حَبَّةٖۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٦١

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:261

SURAH SABA' 34:39

قُلۡ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبۡسُطُ ٱلرِّزۡقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦ وَيَقۡدِرُ لَهُۥۚ وَمَآ أَنفَقۡتُم مِّن شَيۡءٖ فَهُوَ يُخۡلِفُهُۥۖ وَهُوَ خَيۡرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ ٣٩

Say, "Indeed, my Lord extends provision for whom He wills of His servants and restricts [it] for him. But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:39

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2588

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، وَابْنُ، حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - وَهُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ وَمَا زَادَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا بِعَفْوٍ إِلاَّ عِزًّا وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلاَّ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Charity does not decrease wealth.

Allah does not increase a servant who forgives except in honour. And no one humbles himself for the sake of Allah except that Allah raises him in rank."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtue, Good Manners and Joining the Ties of Kinship (Kitab al-Birr wa al-Silah wa al-Adab), chapter on the encouragement of forgiveness and humility, Hadith No. 2588.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2588

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1631

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ - يَعْنِي ابْنَ سَعِيدٍ - وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - هُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « إِذَا مَاتَ الإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلاَّ مِنْ ثَلاَثَةٍ إِلاَّ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, knowledge that is benefited from, or a righteous child who prays for him."

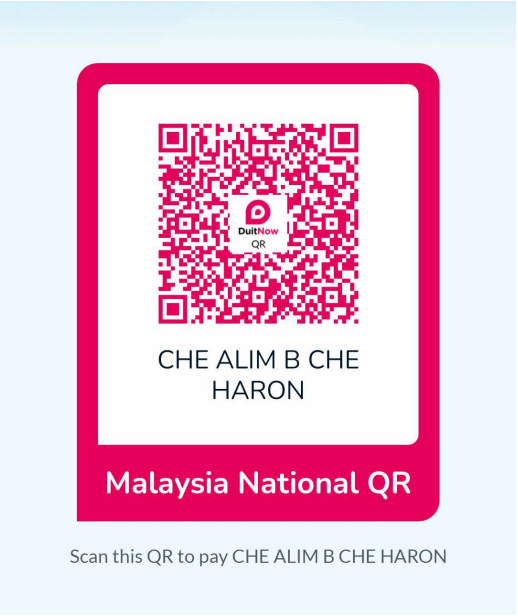
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GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:1631

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