

## سُورَةُ يُوسُفَ

### Surāh Yūsuf

Surāh Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> is a Makkan Sūrah. It is one of those historical facts, which the Qurān has revealed for the guidance of mankind. The incident this Sūrah describes is the only one revealed in a single go. Selected segments of other historical events have been quoted where needed in order to illustrate the character of various people and the consequences drawn thereupon.

Since the main aim of the Qurān is character-building and not merely recounting history, the historical events have also been referred to in the same context. It has also been clarified that knowledge of these events is not required merely for its own sake. Rather, they should be remembered as well as conveyed to others so as to warn people for their reformation. With this aim, recording of history becomes a preferred art. The style should be the same as that of Sūrah Yūsuf. It should neither be so lengthy as to exhaust the reader, nor so short as to mar comprehension.

This Sūrah was revealed when the Jews demanded of the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> to answer them as to why the Banī Isrāīl had shifted from Syria to Egypt, and what the story of Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> was. These answers were given in the Torah also, but the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> had never attended any school nor had listened to any rabbi. It was intended to be a test for him. But **Allah**, the Most Gracious, revealed the entire event to **His Beloved Prophet<sup>SAW</sup>**, unveiling even those facts that were not mentioned in the Torah. It contains history, admonition, counselling, and describes the results borne on actions. Above all, it endorsed the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> in a miraculous manner.

### Section 1

In the Name of **Allah**

The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful.

1. Alif. Lam. Ra. These are the verses of a Book luminous.
2. Verily **We!** **We** have sent it down, an Arabic Recitation, that perchance you may reflect.
3. **We!** **We** recount to you the best of stories, by Revealing to you

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الرِّقْلِكَ ءَايَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ ﴿١﴾

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْءَانًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢﴾

نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَا أَوْحَيْنَا

this Qurān, though you have been hitherto among the unaware ones.

إِلَيْكَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ وَإِنْ كُنْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ  
لَمِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ ﴿٢﴾

4. Recall when Yūsuf said to his father: O my father! I have seen eleven stars and the sun and the moon; I have seen them prostrating themselves before me.

إِذْ قَالَ يُوسُفُ لِأَبِيهِ يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ أَحَدَ عَشَرَ  
كَوْكَبًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ رَأَيْتُهُمْ لِي سَاجِدِينَ ﴿١١﴾

5. He said: O my son! Do not recount your vision to your brothers, lest they may scheme a plot against you; verily Satan is to men a manifest enemy.

قَالَ بَنِيَّ لَا تَقْصُصْ رُءْيَاكَ عَلَى إِخْوَتِكَ فَيَكِيدُوا  
لَكَ كَيْدًا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴿٥﴾

6. And thus will your **Rabb** choose you and teach you of the interpretation of events, and will fulfil **His** Favour upon you and upon the house of Y'aqūb, as **He** has fulfilled it upon your fathers, Ibrahīm and Ishāq formerly, verily your **Rabb** is Knowing, Wise.

وَكَذَلِكَ يَجْتَبِيكَ رَبُّكَ وَيُعَلِّمُكَ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ  
الْأَحَادِيثِ وَيُرِيكَ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰ آلِ  
يَعْقُوبَ كَمَا أَتَمَّهَا عَلَىٰ أَبَوَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ

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## Secrets of Revelation

Alif Lām Rā, are the Isolated Letters, as explained earlier, the knowledge whereof is confined to **Allah** or **His** Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> or the erudites whom **Allah** may choose to enlighten. However, the recitation of these Letters is enjoined upon all Muslims, yielding their benefits to the reader.

These are the **Āyāt** of a Book which explains everything clearly without leaving any ambiguity. Since the very first people addressed by the Qurān were Arabs, it was revealed in their mother tongue, though, **Allah** is beyond the limitations of languages.

## The Sanctity of Languages

Although **Allah** is above the linguistic limitations, yet **He** chose Arabic as the medium of **His** Revelations, so as to invite the intellectuals of Arabia, proud of their eloquence, to ponder over the truth. This was also the language of the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup>. According to the scholars of Qurān and Ḥadīth, **Allah** has chosen this language for conveying **His** Message, for conducting the proceedings on the Day of Judgment and for the dwellers of Jannah. Apart from this, there is no other discrimination among other languages, for they are only means of expression. To acquire the knowledge of as many languages as possible is desirable because a multi lingual person can propagate Dīn at a larger scale. Although Ṣalāt, Azān, and the specified sermons are mandatory in Arabic yet it is very important to teach Qurān, Ḥadīth and Fiqh to masses in as many languages as possible. It is also highlighted here that the Qurān comprises only the Arabic text as revealed by **Allah**. Even if it is explained in Arabic using different words, such explanation will be called a Commentary of the Qurān. Its translation into any language will merely be a translation for easy understanding of the Qurān but reading it shall not win the merits peculiar to the recitation of the Qurān. It is not correct to go through English or Urdu translations and assume that one is reciting the Qurān.

## Beauty of the Temporal Events

**Allah** Almighty chose to tell a beautiful story to **His** Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> through **His** Personal Word, the Qurān, thus ensuring its repeated recitation in Ṣalāt and worship, in lectures and sermons, and in commentary forever. It is indeed astonishing how two dear Prophets of **Allah**, namely Y'aqūb<sup>AS</sup> and Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> had to endure hardships for a long period. The former lost his eyesight while the latter was dumped into a well, sold as a slave and imprisoned after being wrongly indicted. He suffered the pangs of solitude away from his dear ones and his home. Moreover, his brothers, who should have been a source of strength and pride for him proved to be the cause of affliction. In spite of all this **Allah** refers to this account as a beautiful story and reveals it as a part of the Qurān, whereby it is constantly repeated in Ṣalāt both individual and collective. Let us see what is so beautiful about it? The story illustrates the nature and levels of the relationship **Allah**'s servants have with **Him**. It demonstrates the validity of **Allah**'s Words, when he said to the angels that only **He** Knew how passionately man would seek **Him**. They are welcome to witness how distressed **His** beloved people are, yet the one who is suffering inside his home or the one confined to the well, both remember and cry only to **Him**.

Not only happiness but also each forthcoming moment of distress boosts their adoration for **Allah**. It has been mentioned earlier how **Allah** appreciated Ḥadhrat Hājirah<sup>RAU</sup>, and made the seven trips between Ṣafā and Marwā mandatory for every pilgrim. Hence the beauty of every event lies in its outcome. If it yields **Allah**'s Nearness, it is indeed marvellous.

The Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> was unaware of all these events. He had never read any book nor availed the company of a storyteller nor attended any academic gatherings. His recounting of these events with such details itself endorsed the fact that he was blessed with Divine Revelation. The story begins when Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> had reported his dream to his father that he had seen eleven stars, the sun and the moon, prostrating before him. What are dreams and what is their reality? It is indeed a vast field of knowledge. The knowledge of their interpretation is revealed by **Allah** to the Prophets<sup>AS</sup> and it has a number of facets.

### **Reality of Dreams and their Classification**

According to the scholars, dreams are experienced when human Rūḥ detaches itself from physical body during sleep and its imaginative powers turn to its origin in the Realm of Command. As a result it may observe certain scenes, for all that is manifested on earth identically exists in the World of Realities. Such observation again has three aspects. Firstly, a person's imaginative power may remain confined to what he had experienced or thought in the day, that is, his soul puts up a show. Secondly, the Satanic forces may cause a person to hallucinate. Both these situations are ungodly. However, the third aspect is when the imaginative power of the Rūḥ actually captures some realities. This observation is based on truth provided it is not tainted by the effects of the previous two states; otherwise it is likely to jumble up everything.

Even if the dream belongs to the last category, sometimes its visions call for an interpretation. For this purpose a specialized, 'Knowledge for Interpreting Dreams' was revealed to the Prophets<sup>AS</sup>. However, these dreams also vary with individual temperament. Whatever is shown in a dream from **Allah** is often polluted with evil thoughts due to a weak character, rendering the interpretation difficult. The Prophets<sup>AS</sup> are inherently innocent. They have incorruptible character and firm resolution. Therefore, their dreams have the status of Revelation and are always true. Yet they need to be interpreted. For instance, the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> had dreamt that he was performing 'Umrah with his Companions<sup>RAU</sup>, but when they actually undertook the journey they had to return from Ḥudaibiya. **Allah** had endorsed his dream as true, yet the

time for its realisation had not come. Hence he performed 'Umrah the next year, followed closely by the Conquest of Makkah.

Sometimes **Allah** shows true dreams even to the non believers or the wrongdoing believers. However, except a Prophet<sup>AS</sup>, no one's dream can be taken as an authority. And if a nightmare is seen one must seek **Allah**'s refuge and forget about it. If it is a good dream, **Allah** must be thanked. However, one must act according to the prevailing circumstances.

When Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> discussed his dream with Prophet Y'aqūb<sup>AS</sup>, he interpreted it as a glad tiding. He told his son that **Allah** would shower **His** Favours unto him and would bless him immensely. In terms of Dīn, Prophethood is the highest status, while in the worldly sense rule over a kingdom is the greatest position. He said that **Allah** would bless him with Prophethood just as **He** had blessed his forefathers Prophets Ibrāhīm<sup>AS</sup> and Ishāq<sup>AS</sup>. And the prostration of the sun, the moon and the stars before him denoted power and sovereignty, which he would also be blessed with, adding to the glory of Banī Isrāīl. Moreover, he would also be granted the knowledge of interpretations of dreams, a presumption supported by the fact that Prophets Ibrāhīm<sup>AS</sup>, Ishāq<sup>AS</sup> and he himself had been given this knowledge together with the honour of Prophethood. In other words, he thought that this knowledge would also be transferred to his lineage, for **Allah** is All Knowing and the Wisest.

### **A Blessing must not be Disclosed to Everyone**

Prophet Y'aqūb<sup>AS</sup> forbade his son from disclosing his dream to his brothers, lest Iblīs should mislead them to jealousy and they cause him harm. Two aspects stand out here. Firstly, the brothers of Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> were not Prophets as believed by many, because Prophets<sup>AS</sup> are innocent of such misdeeds. Secondly, a blessing must not be disclosed before hand. This is a lesson for the students of Taṣawwuf that they must not tell everyone about the spiritual stations they are blessed with.

Amongst the eleven brothers of Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> only one was real. The others were stepbrothers from another wife. Such relations often turn hostile Hence Prophet Y'aqūb<sup>AS</sup> forbade the disclosure. The dream had highlighted the exalted status of Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup>. His father feared that Satan, the enemy of mankind, may make some mischief as he does not hesitate even to conspire against the Prophets<sup>AS</sup>.

It also becomes clear that to forewarn someone of another person's evil nature in order to save him does not tantamount backbiting but is permissible.

## Section 2

7. Assuredly in Yūsuf and his brothers there have been Signs for the inquirers.
8. Recall when they said: Surely Yūsuf and his brother are dearer to our father than we, whereas we are a band; our father is in a manifest error indeed.
9. Slay Yūsuf or cast him away to some land; your father's solicitude will be free for you and you will be thereafter a people favoured.
10. Said a speaker from among them: do not slay Yūsuf, but cast him into the bottom of a well, some of the caravan will take him up – if you must be doing.
11. They said: O our father! Why is it that you do not trust us with Yūsuf, whereas we are his well-wishers.
12. Send him with us tomorrow, that he may refresh himself and play, and we are to be his guards.
13. He said; verily it grieves me that you should take him away, and I fear lest a wolf may devour him, while you are negligent of him.
14. They said: if the wolf devoured him despite of our numbers, we shall surely be lost.
15. So when they took him away and resolved to place him in the bottom of the well, We revealed

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي يُوسُفَ وَإِخْوَتِهِ  
آيَاتٍ لِّلسَّالِئِلِينَ ﴿٧﴾

إِذْ قَالُوا لِيُوسُفُ وَأَخُوهُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْنَا مِنَّا  
وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّ آبَانَا لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٨﴾

أَقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ أَوْ اطْرَحُوهُ أَرْضًا يَخْلُ لَكُمْ وَجْهُ  
أَيْكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ قَوْمًا صَالِحِينَ ﴿٩﴾

قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِنْهُمْ لَا تَقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ وَالْقَوَّةُ فِي غَيْبَتِ  
الْجَبِّ بَلَنَقِطُهُ بَعْضُ السَّيَّارَةِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ  
فَاعِلِينَ ﴿١٠﴾

قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا مَا لَكَ لَا تَأْتِنَا عَلَى يُوسُفَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ  
لَنَصِِحُونَ ﴿١١﴾

أَرْسِلْهُ مَعَنَا غَدًا يَرْتَعْ وَيَلْعَبْ وَإِنَّا لَهُ  
لَحَافِظُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

قَالَ إِنِّي لَيَحْزُنُنِي أَنْ تَذْهَبُوا بِهِ وَأَخَافُ  
أَنْ يَأْكُلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَأَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ غَافِلُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

قَالُوا لَئِنْ أَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ  
إِنَّا إِذَا لَخَسِرُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

فَلَمَّا ذَهَبُوا بِهِ وَاجْتَمَعُوا أَنْ يُجْعَلُوهُ فِي غَيْبَتِ

system. The recounting of this story with such explicit details is also a miracle, which endorses the truth of Prophethood and Revelation. The Jews of Madinah were sending questions asking the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> about the story of Prophet Yūsuf, because there was not a single Jewish Scholar in Makkah of such calibre as to have knowledge of this event. The Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> himself was obviously unaware of it.

The story unfolds as the brothers of Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> got a wind of his dream and were exasperated. The Commentators have recorded the name of Prophet Ya'qūb's<sup>AS</sup> wife as Liyya bint Layyān, mother of his ten sons, on whose death he had married her sister Raheel bint Layyān. She gave birth to two sons Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> and Binyāmīn, and died after the birth of the latter. This explains why Prophet Ya'qūb<sup>AS</sup> was more affectionate towards them. Moreover Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> was extremely handsome as reported in Aḥādīth. The Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> discloses that he saw Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> on the Night of Ascension; who alone was blessed with half of the beauty in the whole world while the remaining half was distributed among all other things. Besides, the light of Prophethood shone on his forehead, which was another reason why his father loved him so much. The Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> is reported to have said: 'Gracious, son of the gracious, son of the gracious, son of the gracious' i.e., Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup>, son of Ya'qūb<sup>AS</sup>, son of Ishaq<sup>AS</sup>, son of Ibrahīm<sup>AS</sup>. And amongst his Companions<sup>RAU</sup>, Ḥadhrat Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq<sup>RAU</sup> was similarly honoured. His father, children and grand children were all Companions<sup>RAU</sup>.

So the brothers of Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> collaborated. They said that Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> and his brother Binyāmīn were very dear to their father. Or they might have thought that the glad tidings given to Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> in his dream was also due to the attention he received from their father. It was amazing, they thought, how the two youngsters got so much affection and attention from their father, while they were ten grown up youth and used to take care of the entire household. According to the Commentators, Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> was seven years old at that time, while Binyāmīn was younger to him. The ten brothers discussed the inequity of their father's love and concluded that they should have been paid more attention because of their strength and the hard work they were doing. In their opinion their father was blatantly discriminating in his attitude towards them. Therefore, they began to conspire against Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> in order to remove him from the scene and win the whole attention of their father. They weighed various options of eliminating him. They could either assassinate him or pack him off to a far off land wherefrom nothing could ever be heard of him. Then, they said, they could pacify their father with an apology and remorse, and at the same time beg forgiveness of **Allah** by repenting. All of

them agreed that murder was the only mootable course of action, except for one, who stood up against the murder of a younger brother and a child. He said it was a grave crime and they should not even consider it. He suggested dumping him into a deep well in a desolate place where he may perish either by starvation or by sting of some poisonous insect; or some caravan passing by could retrieve and take him along to a far off land. Thus their objective would be achieved without having to resort to cold-blooded murder.

### **Barakah of Loving the Pious**

Amazingly, the Commentators assert here that they were motivated to the crime out of love of their father. That is why **Allah** granted them the capacity to abstain from murder and eventually to seek forgiveness. They were ultimately pardoned by their father as well as the aggrieved brother.

The eldest brother Yahuda was the one who had persuaded them against the killing. To execute their plan, all of them went to their father and sought his permission for going on a recreation trip. They asked him if he could trust them and send Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> along so that he could also have fun and eat with them. They pledged to ensure his safety. They said that he was after all their little brother, and his welfare and happiness was their concern too. They insisted on taking him along.

### **Recreation and Travel without Violating Shari'ah is Permissible**

A healthy recreation or sport is permissible provided it does not violate any aspect of Shari'ah. Competitions in running or shooting or horse riding or in other sports are permissible provided no stakes or gambling is involved. Holding such competitions and giving away prizes to the winners is also permissible. In fact, clean and healthy sports are not only lawful but also meritorious according to the sayings of the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup>.

So upon their insistence, Prophet Ya'qūb<sup>AS</sup> replied that he did not feel like separating from his beloved son. Besides, he feared that they might become neglectful of him while playing, and he might fall prey to the wolves. They asserted that such a mishap was impossible when ten robust men were escorting him. They emphatically rejected his fears and succeeded in persuading him to let Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> accompany them. They arranged some eatables and carrying Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> lovingly on their shoulders, left for the excursion. Prophet Ya'qūb<sup>AS</sup> also came along for some distance to see them off, but as soon as they were out of his sight, they hurled Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> to the ground, asking him sarcastically to call for help the sun, the moon and the eleven stars who had made obeisance to him. Any of the brothers he turned to

either frowned at him or slapped him. A little boy, he dragged himself along, receiving beatings enroute, until they arrived at a deserted well. The brothers unanimously decided to cast him down. They tied him with a rope and lowered him into the well. As he was suspended halfway through, they cut off the rope. Instantly came the Divine Inspiration: O Yūsuf! Remain calm. One day these brothers would not be able to look up to your grandeur. They will fail to even recognize you and it is you who would remind them of this incident.

According to the Commentators Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> was held by Ḥadhrat Jibril<sup>AS</sup> before the fall, who gently seated him on a rock in the bottom of the well. It was then that **Allah** manifested to him the events of the future. Indeed his journey to the throne of Egypt commenced from this well. A day would come when his brothers would stand before him as beggars. He would then disclose his identity to them; the he was the same brother whom they had once dumped in the well.

### **Ilhām to Prophets<sup>AS</sup> before Raising and to non-Prophets Proved**

The author of Tafsīr-e-Mazharī writes that the Ilhām received by Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> in the well was not a Revelation peculiar to Prophethood but was similar to the one Prophet Mūsa's<sup>AS</sup> mother was blessed with. Prophethood was formally conferred upon him at the age of forty. The Prophets<sup>AS</sup> are granted a befitting level of Wilayah before they are raised as Prophets<sup>AS</sup> and do receive Ilhām before it. Likewise the Aulia' are also blessed with Ilhām, for instance, the mother of Prophet Mūsa<sup>AS</sup> and Ḥadhrat Maryam<sup>AS</sup>. The only difference is that a Wali's Ilhām is a pretext only for the recipient, and he or she is obliged to follow it. Whereas a Prophet's<sup>AS</sup> Revelation is a pretext for his entire Ummah and must be followed as an obligation. Secondly, a Wali may err in the interpretation of Ilhām while a Prophet<sup>AS</sup> does not and the former depends on the latter for its authentication. It is acceptable only if it is in consonance with the Prophet's Revelation otherwise it would be assumed that the Wali has erred. It was solely Divine Wisdom that the reality was revealed to Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> and concealed from Prophet Ya'qūb<sup>AS</sup> who wept for years. It is also recorded that forty years passed between Prophet Yūsuf's<sup>AS</sup> departure for the jungle and his reunion with his father. The knowledge of the Prophets<sup>AS</sup> also depend upon **His Blessings**. **He** may reveal the entire universe if it Pleases **Him**, or veil even the obvious facts.

This has been beautifully expressed by Maulāna Roomi<sup>RUA</sup> in a couplet. Here is the summary: "Someone asked Prophet Ya'qūb<sup>AS</sup> how could he feel the fragrance of Prophet Yūsuf's<sup>AS</sup> shirt as soon as the courier had left from

Egypt, while he remained unaware of his presence in the well of Can'ān? He replied that it was like the flash of lightening which reveals every single particle upto the heavens and the very next moment one cannot even see the heels of his feet." In other words, whatever **Allah** allows us to see, we can see and what **He** does not is not visible to us. Even when Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> was given power and authority in Egypt, he was not allowed to inform his father. And when he sent his shirt from Egypt, the fragrance was instantly carried by the wind to Can'ān. These are all wonders of **His** Omnipotence, for **He** Alone possesses the Knowledge of the Unseen and the Seen. All the rest depend upon **His** Favours, not withstanding that the Prophets<sup>AS</sup>, with all the exultation of Prophethood, obey **Him** far more ardently than others.

Going back to the story, Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> remained in the well for three days. His brothers stained his shirt with goat's blood and took it back to their father. They arrived home weeping and wailing late in the evening where their father waited anxiously for his beloved son. Upon hearing the noise, he came out. They told him that they had gone deeper into the woods racing with one another, and had left Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> behind with their luggage. Before they returned, they said, he had fallen prey to the wolves. They said that they did not expect their father to believe in what they said, but it was the truth nonetheless. They presented his blood stained shirt as an evidence.

### **Barakah of Relics of the Virtuous**

When Prophet Ya'qūb<sup>AS</sup> examined the shirt, he couldn't help remark that the wolf was certainly a very crafty one, for it had managed to devour its prey completely yet leave the dress intact. It was incredible how it had managed to pull Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> out of the shirt without tearing it. The shirt was drenched in blood, yet it had remained one piece. He told his sons that their story was a fabrication of their souls, and the evidence they had presented was false.

The author of Mu'ārif al Qurān comments here that a Qadhi (judge) must evaluate the case in terms of the exhibits and the circumstantial evidence presented before him to arrive at the truth. The following incidents would show how the relics of the pious people carry Barakah. The shirt of Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> worked wonders on three different occasions. Firstly, it refuted the story of his brothers when they tried to deceive their father. Secondly, it proved the mendacity of the wife of a Minister of Egypt when she blamed Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> of misconduct. And thirdly when it was sent to Prophet Ya'qūb<sup>AS</sup>, his eyesight was restored. Similarly the scarf of the beloved wife of **Allah's** Beloved Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> is associated with three great ventures. Firstly, it was hoisted as the flag of the Islamic Army in the very first encounter of Islam

with infidelity at Badr, which was the foundation of Islamic revolution. Secondly, on the Day of Khyber, the flag awarded to Ḥadhrat ‘Ali<sup>RAU</sup> was again her scarf. And thirdly, on the Day Makkah was taken, it became the flag accompanying the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup>. In case of Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> the shirt benefited a few individuals, but here it was the scarf, which revolutionized the fate of mankind. Praise be to **Allah!** The scarf was in fact a symbol of the Holy Prophet’s<sup>SAW</sup> Barakah.

Prophet Ya‘qūb’s<sup>AS</sup> words are the essence of this story. He said that their lie was evident, and the dream of Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> also indicated he could not be killed by them or devoured by any wolf. And the very thought of the ordeal his beloved son must be going through was cutting deep into his heart. Yet he would neither express his sorrow nor utter a word of complaint. Rather they would see in him an example of perseverance and composure. He would seek only **Allah’s** Help **Who** was Aware of his feelings and the Sustainer of Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup>, and a witness to what they had deposed.

### **Presumptions and Opinions can be Wrong**

Prophet Ya‘qūb<sup>AS</sup> had made a correct assessment after evaluating the circumstantial evidence. But later when his sons returned from Egypt without Binyāmīn, who was detained in Egypt, he again presumed a similar situation, which turned out to be wrong. This proves that anyone can err in his personal opinion including Prophets<sup>AS</sup>, while in matters of Dīn a Prophet<sup>AS</sup> does not speak on his own. So in worldly affairs there is a chance of miscalculation, but a Prophet<sup>AS</sup> does not dwell on error and is informed by **Allah**. Therefore, people must not insist on their personal opinions and should also listen to what the others have to say.

It so happened that a caravan heading for Egypt lost its way and came up on the deserted well located on the long forsaken route. This coincidence was in fact a link in the eternal scheme of destiny. They had been sent for Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup>. His own brothers were happy to have driven him off and thought that he had been condemned to the life of slavery. However, **Allah** had better plans, and he was to rise to the Throne of Egypt. Such indeed are the miracles of **His** Omnipotence. Nothing takes place as a coincidence in this world; it is our lack of insight that we fail to see the reality.

Thus the caravan camped near the well and a man was sent to look for water. He came upon the well and lowered his bucket. Commentators identify this man as Mālīk bin Dabir. On the other end, Yahūda the elder brother of Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> had also been visiting the well for the last three days bringing some food



23. And she in whose house he was, solicited him and she closed the doors and said: come on, O you! He said: **Allah** be my refuge: verily he is my master, he has made me a good dwelling, verily the wrong-doers do not prosper.

وَرَوَدَتْهُ الَّتِي هُوَ فِي بَيْتِهَا عَنْ نَفْسِهِ، وَعَلَقَتِ  
الْأَبْوَابَ وَقَالَتْ هَيْتَ لَكَ قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ  
إِنَّهُ رَبِّي أَحْسَنَ مَثْوَايَ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ  
الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

24. And assuredly she besought him, and he would have besought her were it not that he had seen the evidence of his **Rabb**. Thus **We** did, in order that **We** might avert from him all evil and indecency; verily he was a single-hearted bondman of Ours.

وَلَقَدْ هَمَّتْ بِهِ، وَهَمَّ بِهَا لَوْلَا أَنْ رَأَى بُرْهَانَ  
رَبِّهِ، كَذَلِكَ لِنَصْرِفَ عَنْهُ السُّوءَ  
وَالْفَحْشَاءَ إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُخْلِصِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾

25. And the two raced to the door, and she rent his shirt from behind. And the two met her master at the door. She said: what is the requital for him who intended evil towards your household except that he be imprisoned, or an afflictive chastisement?

وَأَسْتَبَقَا الْبَابَ وَقَدَّتْ قَمِيصَهُ، مِنْ دُبُرٍ وَالْفِيَا  
سَيْدَهَا لَدَا الْبَابِ قَالَتْ مَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ أَرَادَ  
بِأَهْلِكَ سُوءًا إِلَّا أَنْ يُسْجَنَ أَوْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٥﴾

26. He said: it is she who solicited me. And a witness from her own household bore witness: if his shirt is rent in front, she speaks truth and he is a liar.

قَالَ هِيَ رَوَدَّتْنِي عَنْ نَفْسِي وَشَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ  
مِنْ أَهْلِهَا إِنْ كَانَتْ قَمِيصُهُ، قُدَّ مِنْ قُبُلٍ  
فَصَدَقَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾

27. But if his shirt is rent from behind, she lies and he is a true-teller.

وَإِنْ كَانَتْ قَمِيصُهُ، قُدَّ مِنْ دُبُرٍ فَكَذَبَتْ  
وَهُوَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾

28. So when he saw his shirt rent from behind, he said: verily it is the guile of you women; the guile of you women is mighty.

فَلَمَّارَةٌ أَقَمِيصُهُ، قُدَّ مِنْ دُبُرٍ قَالَ إِنَّهُ  
مِنْ كَبِدِكُنَّ إِنَّ كَيْدَكُنَّ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

29. Yūsuf! Turn away therefrom; and you woman! Ask forgiveness for your sin; verily you have been guilty.

يُوسُفُ أَعْرِضْ عَنْ هَذَا وَاسْتَغْفِرِي لِذَنبِكِ  
إِنَّكَ كُنتِ مِنَ الْخَاطِئِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

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## Secrets of Revelation

The caravan arrived in Egypt and made special preparations for selling their valuable merchandise. The news also reached the Royal Palace that a slave was available for sale, whose beauty outshined the sun. It was customary for the caravans to advertise their merchandise soon after arriving and stationing in a city to attract maximum customers. In the auction eventually a Government Minister named Qatfir won the deal and purchased the boy for an equal weight of gold, musk and silk. Commentators assert that he was a Minister in the King's Cabinet, and the king was Ariyān bin Usaid, of the 'Amalqah race. However, it was the former who ran the affairs of the State. The King finally pledged allegiance to Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup>, embraced Islam and died during his lifetime.

Qatfir was very happy with his deal and took the boy home. He told his wife not to treat him as an ordinary slave but to bring him up in such a manner that he could fulfil their future plans. He said that the radiant face of the boy had brought them good luck, so they could adopt him as their son who would be their heir. This couple was issueless. Qatfir's wife was Zulaikhah, the most beautiful lady in Egypt. She brought him up with extreme care and love.

According to Ḥadhrat Ibne Mas'ud<sup>RAU</sup>, three persons excelled in speculating. Firstly, the Minister who correctly recognized the merit of Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup>. Secondly, the daughter of Prophet Sho'aib<sup>AS</sup> who formed the right opinion about Prophet Mūsa<sup>AS</sup> and lastly Ḥadhrat Abū Bakr Ṣiddiq<sup>RAU</sup> who selected Ḥadhrat 'Umar<sup>RAU</sup> as his successor.

## The Pious, Particularly Ṣūfis, can Manage State Affairs far Better

Allah blessed Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> with power and authority. He bestowed upon him Prophethood and the knowledge of interpreting events and running the affairs of the State, so that he may ensure justice in the land and enforce Allah's Law upon His creation. The interpretation of events includes Revelation and the knowledge of interpreting dream as well as the skills of managing the affairs of the State with wisdom and justice. The common

notion that the pious and saintly cannot run the affairs of a State is negated here. Rather they can manage them in a better way. The reason is that they are not blinded by power but take their decisions holding **Allah** in awe.

A helpless boy sold as a slave entered the Royal Palace to become the future ruler by **Allah**'s Power, as foretold by **Him**. **He** is Dominant in **His** Purpose, and can do anything, whenever and wherever **He** Pleases. Unfortunately, people are blinded by and get entangled in the cobwebs of visible causes and disregard the Omnipotence of their Creator. However, it is very strange that despite the prophesy Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> had to remain imprisoned for many years before he was exonerated by an enquiry in the Royal Court. The king later entrusted him with the State responsibilities, eventually pledged allegiance to him and embraced Islam. Thus he gained access to the rule of Egypt. The point to note here is that even if the final outcome of an event is known through Kashf it is not necessary that it will take place right away without any hindrance. Rather every event takes place at a time predestined by **Allah**.

### **Knowledge from His Presence**

Now the doors of blessings were flung wide open. When Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> grew up among comforts, he was blessed with Prophethood and the knowledge of this world and Dīn. This is called Knowledge from **His** Presence ('Ilm Luduni) imparted purely by **Allah**'s Blessing without any formal instructor. Whereas the conventional source of gaining knowledge is through education and learning. The Prophets<sup>AS</sup> do not receive knowledge from any human being but directly from **Allah**. Some accomplished souls are also blessed with such knowledge because of their adherence to the Prophets<sup>AS</sup>. The hallmark of their excellence is that in comparison to conventional scholars they are far better in analysis and insight. Moreover, along with knowledge of Dīn they are also well versed in worldly matters and the ways of running a State.

When was he blessed with Prophethood? There are varying accounts. Some scholars assert that it took place at the age of thirty while others assume it was at thirty-three or forty years. However, the Qurān only mentions that he was blessed at the prime of his age. And those who seek **Allah** with sincerity and obey **Him** with good intentions are blessed with the knowledge of the outward and the inward as well as with honour, affluence and power.

### **Ihsān leads to Spiritual Knowledge as well as Worldly Power**

Prophethood is something that is conferred. **Allah** has chosen **His** Messenger's<sup>AS</sup> from eternity. Also alongwith Wilayah and spiritual

knowledge, power and rule can be bestowed as a Divine Reward. However, the powers given to the wrongdoers are an affliction both for the ruler as well as the ruled, because **Allah** imposes evil rulers upon wicked people as a punishment.

### **Zulaikhah Strayed**

Prophet Yūsuf's<sup>AS</sup> splendid youth complemented with the dazzling light of Prophethood made Zulaikhah restless. Unmindful of her age and status, she was blinded by her fancies. Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> was not only her slave but also young enough to be her son. Yet she forgot everything, and overpowered by her lust to have him, she tried her level best to seduce him to sin.

The Commentators state that she would speak lovingly to him praising his beauty and expressing her love. One day she fully decorated her bedroom and told him to embrace her, for it was for him that she had adorned herself. She had already locked the doors, which are said to have been seven in number. Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> said: "I seek refuge in **Allah**. How can this be possible? Your husband has been so generous to me and has brought me up as a child with such care and respect. Should I return his favours by dishonouring him? Moreover **Allah** has blessed me with Prophethood and knowledge of the limits imposed by **Him**. According to them, adultery is a grave transgression and indeed there is no salvation for the indulgent."

### **Zulaikhah's Intentions and Yūsuf's<sup>AS</sup> Prophetic Character**

**Allah** confirms that Zulaikhah had firmly resolved to have him and he too would have inclined had he not been observing the 'Evidence of **Allah**'. According to Ḥadhrat ibn 'Abbas<sup>RAU</sup> this evidence refers to the Prophethood, which is the protective shield of a Prophet<sup>AS</sup> against error, and is a Divine Reward. *Humma Biha* (he could have desired her) means that he could have become naturally tempted as he was also human. This involuntary inclination is a part of human nature. The mere inclination, however, would not have been a sin, as it is the difference between a human being and an angel. An angel does not get inclined to sin but a human being does. However, the latter perseveres and abstains from it in obedience to **Allah**. But in case of Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup>, he did not even show any interest in her, for he was **Allah**'s Prophet<sup>AS</sup> and the preceding **Āyāt** have revealed his raising as a Prophet<sup>AS</sup>.

Secondly, **Allah** declares that **He** protected him against sin and lewdness, which includes all possibilities of sin, even the very intention to indulge in it. Hence **Allah** saved him from any indulgence into sin or any such immoral act whereby he could have even spoken to her amorously or touched her. Rather,

**Allah** says that **He** removed sin and lewdness far away from him. In other words, he was placed at a high level of chastity far beyond the access of evil thoughts. Thirdly, **Allah** says that he was amongst **His** sincere and devoted servants, and the Satan has confessed his inability to allure such devotees. The fourth evidence to his innocence is that when Prophet **Ādam's**<sup>AS</sup> slip has been mentioned in the Qurān, his repentance is also described. And when Prophet **Yūnus's**<sup>AS</sup> error of judgement is mentioned it is also followed by his repentance and **Allah's** Forgiveness. So had there been even the slightest of mistake committed here, it would have certainly been followed by Prophet **Yūsuf's**<sup>AS</sup> repentance and his turning to **Him**. Instead, he is being declared as a chosen and true servant who was protected from all shades of sin.

It is inconceivable why the scholars have even discussed this possibility and have been classifying varying degrees of *Hamm*. I feel that such discussion is totally uncalled for. Error in a personal opinion or judgement is a separate issue but it is impossible to ascribe the mere thought of an abominable act like adultery to a Prophet<sup>AS</sup>. And then the very first sentence he uttered was: "I seek refuge in **Allah**", which shows that he could not bear to even hear her words. When he realised that Zulaikhah blinded by her passion was heedless of his advice and counselling and insisted on sin, he ran to the doors which were seven in number and had been locked. But each one of them flung open by **Allah's** Will as he approached them.

### **Tawakkul**

Commentators have discussed *Burhān-e-Rabb* (Evidence of **Rabb**) differently. Some assert that Prophet **Yūsuf**<sup>AS</sup> had seen his father, while others say that he had seen some inscriptions etc. All this is possible, but the real cause behind his supreme self-control was Prophetic chastity. And it was his unwavering trust in **Allah** that he fled from the scene without paying any heed to the fact that the doors were locked. This indeed is Tawakkul whereby a person, regardless of the outcome and heedless of means, undertakes a task with whatever is within his power. Having done it he leaves the results to **Allah**. He was closely chased by Zulaikhah and she did get hold of his shirt from behind, yet he did not stop. As a result the shirt was torn. As the both of them crossed the exit door they found themselves standing in front of Zulaikhah's husband.

### **Zulaikhah's Disposition**

She at once changed her stance and said that a person like him should be condemned to the gaols, for he had attempted to molest her, the wife of his

benefactor, under his own roof. It proves that she never actually loved Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> but was only driven by her lust. The brothers of Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> had once planned to kill him, then dumped him into the well and finally sold him off, but one of the main reasons for their malice was the love for their father. Although the means they had employed to secure his affection were sinful, yet their love for a Prophet<sup>AS</sup> finally led to their salvation. They were not only granted the capacity to repent but were also saved from committing murder, and were eventually forgiven and pardoned. Had Zulaikhah loved Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> she would never have been deprived, but all she wanted was the satisfaction of her desires. As soon as she was caught red handed, she placed the entire blame on him. This is certainly not the way beloveds are treated. That is why, the scholars assert, Zulaikhah could neither have him nor become his wife. The lady who married Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> was Asnath. A Prophet's wife can be a non believer but can never indulge in an immoral act.

### **To Prove own Integrity is the Sunnah of Prophets<sup>AS</sup>**

Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> pleaded his innocence and strongly refuted her charge by giving true account of the incident. He said that it was she who had tried to entice him while he was running away from her. Miraculously, an infant lying in a cradle, probably of some maid or a family member, was granted the capacity to speak by **Allah**. Had the baby only pronounced her guilty, it would have sufficed, but he spoke rather wisely: "O Minister! Examine the shirt. If it is torn from the front he is guilty; otherwise she is to be blamed, for she tried to get hold of him as he ran away."

Certainly **Allah** never lets down those who fear **Him**, and upholds their honour. **He** made Prophet 'Isā<sup>AS</sup> speak in his cradle for the exoneration of his mother Ḥadhrat Maryam<sup>AS</sup>. Or when a Walī, Ḥadhrat Jareeh of Banī Isrāīl was accused, a newborn vindicated him. At yet another occasion, a baby girl named Mashṭah stopped the Pharaoh from killing Prophet Mūsa<sup>AS</sup>. And here an infant miraculously proclaimed the innocence of Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup>. According to Tafsīr-e-Mazharī, the infants spoke miraculously on four different occasions, but when the Holy Prophet's<sup>-SAW</sup> beloved wife Ḥadhrat 'Āyeshah Ṣiddiqah<sup>-RAU</sup> was falsely indicted, **Allah** did not assign the task to any infant but **Himself** pronounced her exoneration. A series of Āyāt were revealed in Surāh al Noor for this purpose.

So the honourable Minister examined the shirt and found it rent apart from behind. Although the miraculous speech of the infant could have sufficed, yet in a testimony, circumstantial evidence has a special importance and a unique influence. He impeached Zulaikhah saying that her artifice and craftiness had

been proved. Verily when a woman resorts to cunningness, she can go to great limits. **Allah** has classified the guile of Satan to be weaker, whereas here the guile of a woman has been pronounced as mighty indeed. However, not every woman, but only the crafty one can work such wonders. The Minister requested Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> to forgive his wife for he feared the disgrace that could stain his family once the news became public. He also felt very sorry for the grief caused to Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup>. He addressed his wife and said: "O' Zulaikhah! You have indeed committed a blatant error for which you must apologise unconditionally. It is your moral obligation to ask forgiveness from me as well as from Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> whom you have caused much grief."

#### Section 4

30. And women in the town said: the wife of the 'Azīz has solicited her page, he has inflamed her with love, verily we see her in error manifest.

وَقَالَ نِسْوَةٌ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ امْرَأَتُ الْعَزِيزِ تُرَاوِدُ فَتَاهَا عَن نَّفْسِهِ ۗ قَدْ شَغَفَهَا حُبًّا إِنَّا لَنَرَاهَا فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٢٠﴾

31. Then when she heard of their cunning talk, she sent to them a messenger and prepared for them a repose, and provided each with a knife. And she said: come forth to them. Then when they saw him, they were astonished at him, and they cut their hands, and said: how perfect is **Allah**! No man is he; he is nothing but a noble angel.

فَلَمَّا سَمِعَتْ بِمَكْرِهِنَّ أَرْسَلَتْ إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَعْتَدَتْ لَهُنَّ مُتَكَاوِءًا أَتَتْ كُلَّ وَجْدَةٍ مِّنْهُنَّ سَبَّحُوا بِحَمْدِ اللَّهِ تَالِيَةً أُمَّرَأَةً ۗ فَلَمَّا تَرَايَتْهُ أَكْبَرَتْهُ ۚ وَقَطَعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ وَقُلْنَ حَسْبُ لِلَّهِ مَا هَذَا بَشَرًا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا مَلَكٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٢١﴾

32. She said: this is he whom you reproached me for. Assuredly I solicited him, but he abstained. Yet if he does not what I wish him to do, he is sure to be imprisoned and sure to be humbled.

قَالَتْ فَذَلِكُنَّ الَّذِي لُمْتُنَّنِي فِيهِ ۖ وَلَقَدْ رَاوَدتُّهُ عَنِ نَفْسِهِ ۗ فَاسْتَعْصَمَ ۚ وَلَئِن لَّمْ يَفْعَلْ مَا آَمُرُهُ لَيُسْجَنَنَّ وَلَيَكُونًا مِّنَ الصَّغِيرِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾

33. He said: my **Rabb**! Prison is dearer to me than that these women call me to; and if **You** do

قَالَ رَبِّ السِّجْنُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا يَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ ۗ

not avert their guile from me I should incline to them and become of the ignorant.

34. Then his **Rabb** answered him and averted their guile from him. Verily **He! He** is the Hearer, the Knower!

35. Thereafter it occurred to them, even after they had seen the Signs, to imprison him for a season.

وَالْأَنْصَرِفَ عَنِّي كَيْدَهُنَّ أَصْبُ إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَكُنْ  
مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾

فَأَسْتَجَابَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ فَصَرَفَ عَنْهُ كَيْدَهُنَّ  
إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٢٣﴾

ثُمَّ بَدَأْهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا رَأَوْا الْآيَاتِ لَيْسَ جُنُنَهُ  
حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٢٤﴾

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### Secrets of Revelation

A secret cannot remain a secret for long, as people do get a wind in due course of time. The wives of the high ranking officials of the Royal Court eventually came to know of the whole episode. They were astonished at how the wife of a Government Minister could have fallen so low as to be infatuated by her own slave. It was in their opinion a despicable act for the wife of such a highly placed official. But their slanderous gossip connoted an element of curiosity. They wanted to see the handsome youth who had driven the wife of the most influential person in Egypt passionately restless. Hence they began to gibe at Zulaikhah's conduct so that the word could spread to her, and she herself allowed them to see Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> to vindicate herself. That is why their gossip has been termed as guile. It was in fact a secret plan to behold the splendour of the youth, and it worked. When the word reached Zulaikhah, she arranged for a banquet for the ladies. The table was laden with all sorts of savoury foods and the traditional cutlery was neatly laid out. As the ladies were having meat with knives in their hands Zulaikhah summoned Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> into the banquet hall. She had never hitherto let any lady ever lay eyes on him.

According to Tafsīr-e-Māzhārī, just as the sunshines on the walls, the splendour of Prophet Yūsuf's<sup>AS</sup> countenance lit the interiors of the hall. The ladies were astounded and dazzled, and in their bewilderment cut their fingers instead of the meat. They exclaimed, "By **Allah!** He cannot be a human being nor can any human have such an illuminated face. Certainly he is an angel."

The Egyptians believed in the existence of **Allah** and the angels in their own way.

### **Chastity of Prophethood**

Zulaikhah reproached the ladies for scandalizing her for being infatuated by this man, whose single glimpse they had not been able to withstand. She confessed that she had tried her level best in making advances at him, but to no avail. The Qurānic text reads: "*Fast 'aṣam.*" The expression emphasises the chastity of Prophethood, and asserts that he remained pure. Zulaikhah herself did not claim that the thought of sin had crossed his mind but his courage had failed him. Rather, the accuser herself confessed her guilt and pronounced his innocence.

### **Zulaikhah's Condition**

It is strange how some people assume that Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> also felt inclined towards her. Zulaikhah still insisted on her evil designs. She reiterated her desire before all the ladies at the banquet. She also vowed to have her desire satisfied or else he would have to live the rest of his life in jail, disgraced and humiliated. The scholars have objected upon Zulaikhah's character, suggesting that she never loved **Allah's** Prophet<sup>AS</sup> but was only ensnared by the vain desires of her soul. Failing to fulfil her desires, she was ready to harm him and that ultimately she did. A woman of such vicious character can never be a Prophet's<sup>AS</sup> wife. The Qurān recounts the disbelief of the wives of Prophets Nūḥ<sup>AS</sup> and Lūṭ<sup>AS</sup>, which is a dissension. It is a malignance of beliefs of a person and is an extrinsic sin, but a person with degenerated morals and character cannot remain annexed with a Prophet<sup>AS</sup>. Hence Zulaikhah could never get married to Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> and by the time he was released from the prison she was an old lady.

Zulaikhah no longer was the only woman coveting him. They all began to seduce him under the cover of Zulaikhah. They stressed upon him to fulfil her desire, reminding him of her favours. They portrayed how gently she had brought him up, and how much she was in love with him. They even cautioned him against the hardships of the formidable prison of Egypt wherefrom very few people emerged alive. In their opinion, he at least for his own sake should submit to her desire. They knew that once he indulged in sin, he might plunge deeper into it and they too might have a chance. But they were completely oblivious of the strength of Prophethood.

## Ignorance

Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> begged **Allah**, the Provider and the Protector, to take care of him. He said that he considered disobedience far worse than life in prison. He implored that if **Allah** did not protect him, he was only a human surrounded by the beautiful women of Egypt alluring him to sin. His only refuge was Divine Protection guaranteed by his Prophetic innocence. He knew that the very inclination towards these women would be sheer ignorance. The scholars interpret that a believer's sin is pure ignorance. Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> was not fond of going to the prison. But he considered the greatest of worldly hardships little in comparison to **Allah**'s disobedience. According to the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup>: "May **Allah** have Mercy on my brother Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup>! He should have asked for safety and peace from **Allah** rather than imprisonment." It is, therefore, advisable that one should not pray for a smaller trouble to avert a bigger one but should seek peace from **Allah**. Ḥadhrat 'Abbas<sup>RAU</sup> once asked the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> what should he ask of **Allah**? He replied, "peace". After a few days he repeated his question and received the same answer. The Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> once heard a person praying for perseverance. The Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> enquired of him if he was asking for trouble, whereby he would be patient. He advised him to seek peace from **Allah** instead.

So **Allah** protected Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> against the evil designs of the women. The Minister despite being convinced of his innocence and chastity thought that if he was not formally convicted it would cause great embarrassment for his wife. Everyone would indulge in humiliating gossip. So he decided in his best interest and for face saving to imprison him. The Minister thought that once he was in prison people would forget about him. Even if someone did discuss the issue, he would do so with the impression that the guilty had been punished.

## Section 5

36. And there entered with him two pages in the prison. One of them said: verily I saw myself pressing wine; and the other said: verily I saw myself carrying upon my head bread whereof the birds were eating; declare to us the interpretation

وَدَخَلَ مَعَهُ السِّجْنَ فَتَيَانٍ قَالَ أَحَدُهُمَا  
إِنِّي أَرِنِي أَغْصِرُ خَمْرًا وَقَالَ الْآخَرُ إِنِّي أَرِنِي  
أَحْمِلُ فَوْقَ رَأْسِي خُبْزًا تَأْكُلُ الطَّيْرُ مِنْهُ نَبِّئْنَا  
بِتَأْوِيلِهِ إِنَّا نَرَاكَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾

thereof, verily we see you of the well-doers.

37. He said: no food will come to you for your sustenance but before it comes to you I shall have declared to you the interpretation thereof. That is of what my **Rabb** has taught me. Verily I have abandoned the creed of a people who do not believe in **Allah** and who are disbelievers in the Hereafter.

38. And I have followed the creed of my fathers, Ibrahīm and Ishaq and Ya'qūb: it is not for us to associate anything with **Allah**. That is of **Allah**'s Grace upon us and mankind, but most of mankind thank not.

39. O my two fellow-prisoners! Are sundry lords better or **Allah** the One, the Subduer?

40. You do not worship besides Him, but only names you have forged, you and your fathers. **Allah** has not sent down for them any authority. Judgement is but **Allah**'s; **He** has Commanded that you should worship none except **Him**. That is the right religion, but most of the mankind know not.

41. O my two fellow-prisoners! As for one of you he will pour out wine for his master, and as for the other, he will be crucified, and the birds will eat off his

قَالَ لَا يَأْتِيَكُمَا طَعَامٌ تُرْزَقَانِيهِ إِلَّا نَبَأُكُمَا  
يَتَأْوِيلُهُ. قَبْلَ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمَا ذَلِكَ مَاعَلَّمَنِي رَبِّي  
إِنِّي تَرَكْتُ مِلَّةَ قَوْمٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ  
وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

وَاتَّبَعْتُ مِلَّةَ آبَائِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ  
مَا كَانُوا لَنَا أَنْ نُشْرِكَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَذَلِكَ  
مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ  
النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

يَصْنَعِي السِّجْنِ ءَأَزْيَابٌ مُتَفَرِّقُونَ خَيْرٌ  
أَمْ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ ﴿٢٩﴾

مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءُ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا  
أَنْتُمْ وَءَابَاؤُكُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ  
إِنِ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ أَمَرَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ  
ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ  
لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

يَصْنَعِي السِّجْنِ أَمَّا أَحَدُكُمَا فَيَسْقِي رَبَّهُ  
خَمْرًا وَأَمَّا الْآخَرُ فَيُصَلَّبُ فَتَأْكُلُ الطَّيْرُ  
مِنْ رَأْسِهِ. قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ الَّذِي فِيهِ تَسْتَفْتِيَانِ ﴿٣١﴾

head; this is decreed the affair of which you two enquired.

42. And he said to one of them, who he imagined would be saved: mention me before your master. But Satan caused him to forget to mention him to his master. So that he stayed in the prison for several years.

وَقَالَ لِلَّذِي ظَنَّ أَنَّهُ نَاجٍ مِّنْهُمَا اذْكُرْنِي  
عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ فَأَنَسَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ ذِكْرَ  
رَبِّهِ فَفَلَيْتَ فِي السِّجْنِ بِضَعِّ سِنَّينَ ﴿١٢﴾

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## Secrets of Revelation

When Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> arrived in the prison, his fame made the prisoners living in misery anxious to see him. He captured their attention by declaring the excellence Allah had given him as it is obligatory for Prophets<sup>AS</sup> to invite people towards the straight path by announcing their Prophetic excellences to them.

### Proclamation of Excellence by the Aulia'

The Aulia' announce their extraordinary qualities with the same objective. It is not proper to think that a Wali desires to gain fame by declaring his merits. The author of Tā'fīr-e-Mazharī quotes the example of Ḥadhrat Mujaddid Alif Thani<sup>RUA</sup> that it was the announcement of his excellence which attracted a very large number of people to benefit from him. And those who spoke against him remained ignorant. Today the open invitation extended by Shaikh Allah Yār Khan's<sup>RUA</sup> Naqshbandiah Owaisiah Order is globally attracting people out of bars, clubs and casinos, to the peace of the mosques. The common mistaken belief that Taṣawwuf is not to be disclosed pertains only to those matters which are beyond the understanding of common people and cannot benefit them in any way. The declaration of Barakah is not forbidden at all, for if Taṣawwuf is a part of Dīn, it has to be announced and spread. And, Allah forbid, if it is not, then what is the need to pursue it?

### Ridiculing Aulia' is Devastating both for Dīn and Worldly Life

Shortly after Prophet Yūsuf's<sup>AS</sup> confinement, two young men were admitted in the prison. According to the Commentators one was the royal chef and the other a royal steward. The King suspected them of an attempt to poison his food, and they were to be interrogated. When they heard of Prophet Yūsuf's<sup>AS</sup>

reputation, they decided to have some fun. They concocted fake dreams and went to Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> seeking an interpretation. The steward said that he had dreamt of holding a bunch of grapes and the royal cup. He had squeezed the grapes into the royal cup and offered the juice to the King. The chef said that he had dreamt that he was carrying a basket full of eatables on his head and the birds and the crows were eating therefrom. They requested Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> to interpret their dreams, for they had heard much about his piety, and his extraordinary qualities as well as his kind treatment of the down trodden.

Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> said that **Allah** had blessed him with a very broad vision and a priceless treasure of knowledge. If they wanted to try, he could even inform them before hand with the details of their daily meals. He could tell them when they would be served with meals and even the after effects thereof. He claimed this just like Prophet 'Isā<sup>AS</sup> had announced his capability of knowing what the people had eaten and what they had left over in their homes, as reported in the Qurān. Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> said that his knowledge was **Allah's** Award because of his belief in **Him**, and because of his complete abstinence from the path of the disbelievers.

### **Irk of Disbelief is a Prerequisite of Faith**

In other words, faith requires a feeling of disgust towards disbelief. To believe in **Allah** while also thinking that there is nothing wrong with disbelief is not acceptable. Today, those who say that all kinds of ideologies held by various people are correct, are considered enlightened or broad minded. This attitude is incorrect. Rather, it is the darkness of thought to take falsehood as truth. To declare truth as truth and falsehood as falsehood is indeed the real enlightenment. Besides, Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> also spoke of his personal honour. He was a member of the Prophets' family in terms of lineage, as well as in beliefs. He added that he followed his ancestors Prophets Ya'qūb<sup>AS</sup>, Ishāq<sup>AS</sup> and Ibrāhīm<sup>AS</sup> in practice.

### **Lineage is an Honour only when Beliefs are Pure, not Otherwise**

To be of an honourable lineage is indeed a great blessing of **Allah** for which one should be grateful to **Him**. But family honour would only be valid when the beliefs are sound, otherwise it would be of no consequence. It has also been established that the Prophets<sup>AS</sup> always come of noble lineage and notable families so that people do not feel embarrassed following them. Similarly the Spiritual Offices are also given to persons belonging to noble families. Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> said that it did not befit those from noble families, with enlightened bosoms beaming with the light of Prophethood, to even think of ascribing

partners to **Allah**. This pure belief is a great blessing of **Allah** especially showered upon **His** Prophets<sup>AS</sup>, though its doors are open for the entire mankind.

### **Invitation to Allah**

It is to **Him** that the Prophets<sup>AS</sup> invite the mankind. **His** Favours are unlimited upon **His** creation but the majority is ungrateful. They enjoy **His** Blessings without showing gratitude. In short, the essence of every engagement and activity is that people be invited to Dīn. This endeavour should be done using all possible methods. Compared to large public gatherings, private and selective get-togethers with people from various walks of life prove the most effective for such invitation.

Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> enquired of his visitors as to what seemed more logical: To beg from sundry gods or to submit and pray to the One and the Only **Allah**? **He** has no equal. **He** enjoys supreme control over **His** creation whereupon he exercises **His** Sovereign Authority at **His** free Will. He added that their sundry gods had in fact no existence and even if they physically existed they were only a paltry creation totally unworthy of being worshipped. Yet the people crossed all limits and worshipped imagined names, concocted by their ancestors of which **Allah** had never revealed anything. If the forefathers were obedient to **Allah**, following in their footsteps is a commendable act, for it indirectly amounts to **Allah**'s obedience. However, if the ancestors were ignorant, their doctrines carry no value.

It is only **Allah**'s Doctrines which are to be implemented and obeyed, and it is this adherence to **His** Commands that make a deed meritorious. **He** has conveyed **His** decision through every Messenger<sup>AS</sup> that only **He** must be worshipped, and none besides **Him**. This indeed is the true Dīn and the straight path. Unfortunately, majority of the people are ignorant of it. Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> then interpreted their dreams and said that in the light of knowledge inspired into his heart by **Allah**, one of them would be reinstated on his duty while the other would be crucified until his brain would be gnawed by birds of prey.

### **The Manner of Preaching must be Beautiful**

Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> did not wish to cause unease to anyone so he did not nominate them directly while giving interpretation. He said that one of them was to be reinstated while the other would be punished. It shows that one must always be discreet in the use of words in his speech. Anyway, when the two heard of the interpretation they wailed that they had fabricated the dreams

only to test him. The Prophet<sup>AS</sup> explained that had they actually dreamt, it would still have been only a dream. And if it was a fabrication, still the words were theirs but what he had told them was out of the knowledge blessed by **Allah** and information over their destiny. This was to happen whether they liked it or not.

### Employment of Means is Permissible

Besides, Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> said to the one likely to survive that when taken to the Royal Court he should speak to the King that an innocent person, a servant of **Allah** lies in the gaols. He hoped that this might lead him to freedom. It proves that one must employ all permissible and available re-sources.

### Iblīs Conspires to Vex the Aulia'

When the steward was summoned by the King, the Satan made him forget what Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> had told him to convey. He made no mention of him to the King. This shows that Iblīs not only beguiles people but also tries to tease those who work for **Allah**. He in fact operates through those to whose subtle hearts he has an access. So inspite of his attempt, Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> had to spend several more years in jail, for his freedom had been predestined. And only **Allah** Knows when events are to take place. Besides, **Allah** had not only planned his liberation but also his exoneration and ultimate access to the Throne of Egypt.

## Section 6

43. And the king said: I saw seven fat cows which seven lean ones are devouring and seven green corn-ears and seven others dry. O chiefs! Give me an answer in regard to my vision, if a vision you are at all able to interpret.

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ إِنِّي أَرَى سَبْعَ بَقَرَاتٍ سِمَانٍ  
يَأْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَسَبْعَ سُنبُلَاتٍ  
خُضْرٍ وَأُخَرَ يَابِسَاتٍ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ أَفْتُونِي  
فِي رُؤْيَايَ إِن كُنْتُمْ لِلرُّؤْيَا تَعْبُرُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

44. They said: medleys of nightmare! And in the interpretation of nightmare we are not skilled.

قَالُوا أَضْغَثٌ أَحْلَمٌ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِتَأْوِيلِ  
الْأَحْلَمِ بِعَالِمِينَ ﴿١٤﴾

45. Then the one of the two, who was saved, now at length remembered and said: I shall

وَقَالَ الَّذِي نَجَا مِنْهُمَا وَادَّكَرَ بَعْدَ أُمَّةٍ

declare to you interpretation thereof; so send me forth.

أَنَا أَنْتُمْ بِتَأْوِيلِهِ، فَأَرْسِلُونِ ﴿١٥﴾

46. Yūsuf, O saint! Give an answer to us in regard to seven fat cows which seven lean ones are devouring and seven green corn-ears and seven others dry. Perchance I may return to the people; perchance they may learn.

يُوسُفُ أَيُّهَا الصِّدِّيقُ أَفْتِنَا فِي سَبْعِ بَقَرَاتٍ  
يِمْعَانُ يَأْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَسَبْعِ  
سُنْبُلَاتٍ خُضْرٍ وَأُخَرَ يَابِسَاتٍ لَعَلِّي أَرْجِعُ  
إِلَى النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

47. He said: you shall sow seven years as usual and what you reap leave in its ears, except a little of it which you may eat.

قَالَ تَزْرَعُونَ سَبْعَ سِنِينَ دَأَبًا فَمَا حَصَدْتُمْ فَذَرُوهُ  
فِي سُنْبُلِهِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِمَّا نَأْكُلُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

48. Thereafter will come seven hard years which will devour what you have laid up beforehand for them, except a little which you shall preserve.

ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ سَبْعٌ شِدَادٌ يَأْكُلْنَ  
مَا قَدَّمْتُمْ لَهُنَّ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِمَّا تَحْصِنُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

49. Thereafter will come another year when people will have rain and when they will press grapes.

ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ عَامٌ فِيهِ يُغَاثُ النَّاسُ وَفِيهِ  
يَعْصِرُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

### Secrets of Revelation

**Allah** has his own system. When Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> tried to approach the king for his freedom, Satan made the steward forgetful. But when the time for his release came **Allah** made arrangements out of thin air. The King had a strange dream. He woke up in anxiety and summoned all the astronomers and soothsayers of his Court and recounted it. He said he had seen seven healthy oxen being eaten up by seven lean ones and seven green corn-ears with seven dry ones. He demanded an interpretation from them but they were perplexed and could not comprehend it. They declared his dream as stray thoughts which should simply be ignored. But the King was not satisfied. Also present in this gathering was the steward who had once met Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> in the prison. Suddenly he remembered how true his interpretations had proven, and how wise and sagacious he was. He sought the King's permission to visit a noble and righteous person, who was in prison inspite of being innocent; who was an

institution of knowledge and could properly interpret the King's dream. The King made arrangements for the steward and after so many years he stood before the Prophet<sup>AS</sup> again and said: "O' truthful! I have erred for I had forgotten what you had asked of me; but whatever you had said in the interpretation of our dreams proved to be true. Once again your guidance is needed for the King had a strange dream which no one can interpret." According to the Commentators dreams sometimes depict corresponding events just as the deeds and characters of people shall assume corresponding shapes on the Day of Judgment.

### **Interpretation of Dreams Vary with People**

The interpretations of dreams also vary with the characters of people. 'Allamah ibn-e-Sirin<sup>RUJA</sup>, a well known master in this field, once gave two opposite interpretations to a similar dream seen by two different persons. They had dreamt that they were calling out Azān. One was told that he would gain great fame and a Government job and the other would be defamed and prosecuted. A listener later questioned the 'Allamah in privacy about the disparity in the two interpretations. He clarified that it was because of the contrast in their characters. Azān, in a dream, is merely interpreted as an exposure of ones inner self and qualities. Since the former was a man of wisdom and character, when his qualities would become known he would certainly find fame and a rank in the society. While the latter was a dacoit, and when exposed, he would certainly be prosecuted. Hence the dream of a king or a common man may be similar but their interpretations will vary.

### **The Accomplished must give Advice to People for their Betterment**

Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> not only interpreted the King's dream but also gave an excellent plan. He said that the seven healthy oxen represented seven years bringing in grain and harvest in abundance. The same was denoted by the seven green corn. The lean oxen, on the other hand, meant seven years of famine and the same was indicated by the dry corn-ears. The eating up of the fat oxen by the lean ones meant that the grain produced in the first seven years would be consumed in the following seven famine stricken years.

He also gave a unique advice to be conveyed to the King. He said that the King must make people work extremely hard in the first seven years. In order to avoid deterioration of grain due to long storage, it must be stored in its stalks and cleaned only on as required basis. The famine would be so severe that everything would be threatened with extinction. However, they must save sufficient seeds, for after the famine there will be a lot of rainfall making

tillage possible once again. Fruits would be produced in such abundance that people would extract and drink their juices instead of eating them. These suggestions emanated from the Knowledge of Prophethood. He gave a wonderful administrative advice and suggested the way of conserving resources. Moreover, he also gave the glad tiding of a productive year ahead. When the king heard this interpretation, he could not help admiring the sagacity of the interpreter because all his wizards had failed to comprehend the matter.

## Section 7

50. And the King said: bring him to me. Then when the messenger came to him, he said: return to your Rabb, and ask him, what about the women who cut their hands? Verily my Rabb is the Knower of their guile.

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ أَتُؤْمِنُ بِهِ فَمَا جَاءَهُ الرَّسُولُ قَالَ أَرْجِعْ  
إِلَى رَبِّكَ فَسَأَلَهُ مَا بَالَ النِّسْوَةِ الَّتِي قَطَّعْنَ  
أَيْدِيَهُنَّ إِنَّ رَبِّي بِكَيْدِهِنَّ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٠﴾

51. He said: what was the matter with you when you solicited Yūsuf? They said: how perfect is God! We know not of any evil against him. The wife of 'Azīz said: now has the truth come to light. It was I who sought to seduce him, and he is of the truth-tellers.

قَالَ مَا خَطْبُكُمْ إِذْ رَاوَدْتُنَّ يُوسُفَ عَنِ نَفْسِهِ  
قُلْنَ خَشِيَ لِلَّهِ مَا عَلِمْنَا عَلَيْهِ مِنْ سُوءٍ قَالَتِ  
أَمْرَأَتُ الْعَزِيزِ الْفَن حَصْحَصَ الْحَقُّ أَنَا رَاوَدْتُهُ  
عَنِ نَفْسِهِ وَإِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٥١﴾

52. He said: that I did in order that he may know that I did not betray him in secret, and that Allah guides not the guile of betrayers.

ذَلِكَ لِيَعْلَمَ أَنِّي لَمْ أَخْتِئُهُ بِالْغَيْبِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي كَيْدَ  
الْخَائِبِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾

53. Nor do I acquit myself. Verily soul ever urges to evil save that soul on whom my Rabb has Mercy; verily my Rabb is Forgiving, Merciful.

﴿٥٣﴾ وَمَا أُنْفِئُ نَفْسِي إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ  
إِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّي إِنَّ رَبِّي غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٥٣﴾

54. And the King said: bring him to me. I shall single him out for myself. Then when he spoke to him, he said: you are to-day with us high-placed, trusted.

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ أَتُونِي بِهِ، أَسْتَخْلِصُهُ لِنَفْسِي فَلَمَّا  
كَلَّمَهُ قَالَ إِنَّكَ الْيَوْمَ لَدَيْنَا مَكِينٌ أَمِينٌ ﴿٥٤﴾

55. He said: set me over the storehouses of the land; I shall be a keeper knowing.

قَالَ اجْعَلْنِي عَلَى خَزَائِنِ الْأَرْضِ إِنِّي حَفِيظٌ  
عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٥﴾

56. In this way We established Yūsuf in the land so that he might settle therein wherever he wished. We bestow of Our Mercy on whom We will, and We are not to waste the wage of the well doers.

وَكَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَتَّبِعُوا مِنْهَا  
حَيْثُ يَشَاءُ نُصِيبُ بِرَحْمَتِنَا مَنْ نَشَاءُ  
وَلَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾

57. And surely the wage of the Hereafter is better for those who believe and ever fear.

وَلَأَجْرُ الْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا  
وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

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## Secrets of Revelation

### One must Try to Avoid being Accused

The King summoned Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup>, for he wanted to hear the interpretation directly from him. When the royal courier informed Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> that the King had set him free and sent for him he told him to request the King to first investigate his case. He added that the ladies of high-ranking officials who were present at the banquet must be summoned for evidence, as they knew the truth. Zulaikhah had confessed before them, and had also given out the truth about the whole incident. And whatever those ladies had entreated to convince him for giving in to Zulaikhah's demand, was well known to Allah. The scholars assert that wise men must avoid such occasions where there is a chance of being accused, but if it does happen, they must try hard for their absolution. Hence the Royal Court summoned Zulaikhah and all other ladies and the King himself undertook the investigation, as he had by now developed great respect for Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup>. When all concerned were asked to come out with the facts, they together proclaimed '*Hashalillah*', (Allah Blameless).

It implies that those people did believe in **Allah** but because they believed as they chose to believe, they were distant from Islam and faith. The ladies said that as far as they knew, Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> was an angel, completely free from any blame. Zulaikhah readily corroborated, for times had totally changed her situation. She was now an aging widow. According to some reports Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> lived in prison for twenty-three years. A period of forty years had lapsed between his leaving home and reunion with his family. When he was sold in the markets of Egypt he was a lad of seven years while Zulaikhah was a married woman. So these forty years had ushered her into old age. She had become a widow and no longer enjoyed the official honour.

### **Zulaikhah's Second Testimony**

So she testified frankly and confessed that it was she who had tried to allure him. He had stood firm on a pure and flawless character. This was the second testimony of Zulaikhah in his favour. Previously she had exonerated him before the ladies at the banquet and now she was pronouncing him virtuous and truthful before the entire Royal Court. Moreover, she said that she wanted Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> to know that inspite of her many mistakes she had not been dishonest to him behind his back, and that her mistake of accusing him before her husband had taught her an important lesson in life. She had learnt that **Allah** sooner or later exposes the guile of the betrayers.

### **Are these the Words of Zulaikhah or Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup>?**

“Nor do I acquit myself. Verily soul ever urges to evil save that soul on whom my **Rabb** has Mercy; verily my **Rabb** is Forgiving, Merciful!” The wording of this **Āyah** has been attributed to Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> by many a Commentators. But my understanding, by **Allah**'s Grace, is that these are the words of Zulaikhah. A number of scholars have also listed it as a probability. However, in his Commentary of **Sūrah Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup>** Qadhi Muḥammad Sulaiman Salman Manṣūr<sup>RUA</sup> has strongly asserted that these were Zulaikhah's words. It may be that an odd scholar had attributed these to Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup>, while the rest simply went on reproducing it. The **Āyah** does not provide any pretext for the latter case. Additionally, when the King had summoned Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> from the prison, he had not come, and had sought investigation of his case first. Hence the King called all the ladies including Zulaikhah to his Court while he was still in prison. When the investigation was over, the King ordered: “Bring him to me”. So how can these words be of Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup>?

## A Mention of Laṭāif

A third argument in his favour has been presented by the author of Tafsīr-e-Mazharī in his explanation of *Nafs* (soul). He writes that the human soul is the byproduct of four elements (air, clay, fire, water) but the Qalb and Rūḥ etc are the Laṭāif of 'Alam-e-Amr and their origin is beyond 'Arsh. Human soul has three states, described in the Qurān namely Nafs-e-Ammārah, (Soul at Evil) Nafs-e-Lawwāmah (the Accusing Soul) and Nafs-e-Muṭma'inah (Soul at Peace). Elaborating further on Nafs-e-Ammārah, he asserts that if dominated by the animal soul, it acquires arrogance and fury from the fire, abjection and meanness from the clay, variety and impatience from the water, lust and cupidity from the air. Whereas if one embraces faith, its light enlivens the Qalb and Rūḥ and his Nafs turns into Nafs-e-Lawwāmah. It begins to recognize and reprimand upon sin, because not believing sin to be sin is disbelief. However, there are varying levels of Nafs-e-Lawwāmah held by different individuals and it ultimately transforms into Nafs-e-Muṭma'inah through worship, perseverance and devotion to **Allah**. Again each individual has his own level of Nafs-e-Muṭma'inah, the highest being that of the Prophets<sup>AS</sup>. Hence the Āyah under comment cannot be associated with a Prophet<sup>AS</sup>, as it would indicate that he had Nafs Ammārah (**Allah** forbid), whereas even every believer possesses Nafs-e-Lawwāmah to some degree. For the purification of Nafs it is imperative to acquire the Barakah of the Prophethood, attainable only in the company of an accomplished Shaikh.

After the outcome of the investigations, the King pronounced his desire to have Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> as his personal advisor. He couldn't help admiring a person so upright that even the women were endorsing his chastity, so handsome that they had cut their hands at a single glance. And above all, he was so learned and wise as to have interpreted his dream while all the astronomers and other savants of the kingdom had failed. He had also suggested a perfect solution to the problem. He was brought to the Royal Court and the King simply fell for his charm. He honoured him immensely and deposed total confidence in him.

According to the Commentators Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> gave out further details of the King's dream, which he did not remember or had not been conveyed to him. This was all due to Divine Revelation. Some Commentators have added a tale that the King married him to Zulaikhah, and he became very fond of her. So much so that he even complained that she did not display the same fondness anymore for him, as she had done before. She said that through him she had been blessed with the love of **Allah**, which had made her unmindful of

everything else. But this is nothing but a myth. To begin with, he was seven years old when sold as slave, while Zulaikhah was a married woman. He spent twenty-three years in prison and by now she must have been between seventy and eighty years of age and obviously was no longer fit for marriage. Also for the myth that she regained her youth because of Prophet Yūsuf's<sup>AS</sup> invocation, no authentic account can be found. The Aḥādīth discussing the charm, piety, sagacity and the admirable character of Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> would certainly have mentioned the miraculous return of Zulaikhah to youth had there been any truth to this tale. Besides, Zulaikhah had never loved Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup>, but was a captive of her vain desires. She resorted to harm him when she saw her designs failing. In fact, **Allah** made her confess in the Court in order to establish the dignity of **His** Prophet<sup>AS</sup>. A woman of such character cannot become a Prophet's<sup>AS</sup> wife, as discussed before.

### **To Declare one's Excellence and seek Office in Public Interest is Permitted**

Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> asked for the portfolio of the Treasury from the King on the basis of his honesty, trustworthiness and sound knowledge of management. He said that he knew where from to generate and raise funds and where to spend them. In fact, he explained the duties of a Finance Minister and the prerequisite of this Office in two phrases: he should be honest and fully conversant with the management of expenditure, and fully conscious of the lawful and the illegitimate. The King hosted Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> as his royal guest for one year. Meanwhile, because of the Barakah of the Prophet's company and for the reverence and love he had developed for **Allah's** Apostle, the King was blessed with faith. The King pledged his allegiance to him and amidst a royal ceremony handed over the crown to him. **Allah** declares that it was like this that **He** placed the grandeur of a vast empire at his feet while he had only sought the rank of a Minister. This was because of the fact that he was not pursuing power, but sought the office only for the welfare of people in the impending terrible famine. According to a saying of the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup>, the one who seeks an office must not be entertained if it is to establish his own authority. However, under certain circumstances, desiring an office is permissible. For example, if a person sincerely believes that by being in a certain position he can protect the rights of the public which will otherwise be usurped and they will be wronged, he can ask for that position.

Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> became the king and soon justice prevailed all over Egypt. **Allah** showers **His** Mercy upon whoever **He** Pleases. **He** may take **His** chosen one from the warmth of a father's lap to the depths of a well in the wilderness,

or from the house of a Government Minister to a prison. Of course, such a treatment to **His** servants is also extended out of Mercy, being in their best interest. And when **He** so desires **He** can simply remove **His** servant from the gaol and instate him on the throne, as **He** does not let the efforts of sincere devotees go in vain. Piety is destined to prevail while evil must vanquish. However, the rewards that await the righteous in the *Ākhirah* are far more superior than the worldly blessings. The prerequisites are faith, Taqwa and piety. May **Allah** bless us with clean beliefs and the capacity to do good!

### Section 8

58. And the brothers of Yūsuf came and entered unto him, and he recognised them, while they did not recognise him.

وَجَاءَ إِخْوَةُ يُوسُفَ فَدَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ فَعَرَفَهُمْ  
وَهُمْ لَهُ مُنْكَرُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

59. And when he had furnished them with their furnishing, he said: bring to me a brother of yours from your father; do you not see that I give full measure and that I am the best of hosts?

وَلَمَّا جَهَّزَهُمْ بِجَهَّازِهِمْ قَالَ أَتُنُونِي بِأَخٍ لَكُمْ  
مِنْ أَبِيكُمْ أَلا تَرَوْنَ أَنِّي أُوْفِي الْكَيْلَ  
وَأَنَا خَيْرُ الْمُنْزِلِينَ ﴿٥٩﴾

60. But if you do not bring him to me there shall be no measuring for you from me and you shall not approach me.

فَإِنْ لَمْ تَأْتُونِي بِهِ، فَلَا كَيْلَ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي  
وَلَا تَقْرَبُونِ ﴿٦٠﴾

61. They said: we will certainly solicit him of his father and certainly we will do it.

قَالُوا سُرُودٌ عَنْهُ أَبَاهُ وَإِنَّا لَفَاعِلُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

62. And he said to his pages: put their merchandise into their packs; they will find it when they reach back to their household; perchance they may return.

وَقَالَ لِفِتْيَانِهِ اجْعَلُوا بِضَعْتَهُمْ فِي رِحَالِهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ  
يَعْرِفُونَهَا إِذَا انْقَلَبُوا إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِمْ  
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

63. Then when they returned to their father, they said: father, the measuring has been denied us, so send you with us our brother,

فَلَمَّا رَجَعُوا إِلَىٰ أَبِيهِمْ قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا مُنِعَ مِنَّا  
الْكَيْلُ فَأَرْسِلْ مَعَنَا أَخَانَا نَكْتَلْ

and we shall get our measure; and certainly we shall be his guards.

قَالَ هَلْ ءَامَنُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا كَمَا ءَامَنُكُمْ عَلَىٰ أَخِيهِ مِن قَبْلُ فَاللَّهُ خَيْرٌ حَفِظًا وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّحِيمِينَ ﴿١١﴾

64. He said: I can trust you with him only as I trusted you with his brother before; **Allah** is the best Guard. **He** is the Most Merciful of the merciful.

وَلَمَّا فَتَحُوا مَتْعَهُمْ وَجَدُوا بِمِصْنَعَتِهِمْ رُدَّتْ إِلَيْهِمْ قَالُوا يَا بَنِي آدَمَ مَا نَبِغِي هَذِهِ بِمِصْنَعِنَا رُدَّتْ إِلَيْنَا وَنَعِيرُ أَهْلَنَا وَنَحْفُطُ أَخَانَا وَنَزِدَادُ كَيْلَ بَعِيرٍ ذَلِكَ كَيْلٌ يَسِيرٌ ﴿١٥﴾

65. And when they opened their pack they found their merchandise returned to them; they said: father! What more can we desire? Here is our merchandise returned to us, we shall have portions for our family and shall guard our brother and shall add another measure of a camel-load; this is only an easy measure.

قَالَ لَنْ أُرْسِلَهُ مَعَكُمْ حَتَّىٰ تُؤْتُونِ مَوْثِقًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ لَتَأْتُنِي بِهِ إِلَّا أَن يُحَاطَ بِكُمْ فَلَمَّآ ءَاتَوْهُ مَوْثِقَهُمْ قَالَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ مَا نَقُولُ وَكِيلٌ ﴿١٦﴾

66. He said: I will by no means send him with you until you give us an assurance by **Allah** that you will bring him back to me, unless it be that you are prevented. Then when they gave him their assurance, he said: **Allah** is Witness over what we had said.

وَقَالَ يَبْنَئِي لَا تَدْخُلُوا مِن بَابٍ وَاحِدٍ وَادْخُلُوا مِن أَبْوَابٍ مُّتَفَرِّقَةٍ وَمَا أُغْنِي عَنْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِن شَيْءٍ ؕ إِنِ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَعَلَيْهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

67. And he said: my sons! Do not enter by one gate, but enter by different gates, and I cannot avail you against **Allah** at all; judgement is but **Allah**'s. On **Him** I rely, and on **Him** let the relying rely.

وَلَمَّآ دَخَلُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَهُمْ أَبُوهُم مَّا كَانَ يُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِن شَيْءٍ ؕ إِلَّا حَاجَةٌ فِي نَفْسٍ

68. And when they entered as their father had enjoined them to enter, it did not avail them

against Allah at all. It was only a craving in the heart of Ya'qūb that he satisfied, verily he was endued with knowledge, for We had taught him; but most people know not.

يَعْقُوبَ قَضَىٰ بِهَا وَإِنَّهُ لَذُو عِلْمٍ لِّمَا عَلَّمْنَاهُ  
وَلٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾

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## Secrets of Revelation

In the following seven years the harvest was abundant not only in Egypt but everywhere. A rich yield both in grain as well as fruits made people wealthy. Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> made special arrangements to purchase surplus grain from the farmers and within the first seven years the Government granaries swelled. Then the famine years set in and not a grain could be found. At this time the Government released the stocks to the market.

### Control on Basic Commodities Permissible and is a Government Function

Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> maintained a regulatory control over the quantity to be sold. For example, each household was allowed to receive a camel load of grain only. This rationing was done to guard against trading on exorbitant rates by unscrupulous businessman, that is black marketing in modern terminology. It proves that items of basic necessity must be controlled and their supply regulated to ensure availability to every citizen at an affordable price. And that the protection of people from the greedy and dishonest merchants is the responsibility of the State, which reserves the right to impose appropriate control on supplies when necessary. This prudent administration carried Egypt's fame to far off lands. The city of Can'an today exists as Khalīl in Isrāīl, where four Prophets Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup>, Ya'qūb<sup>AS</sup>, Ishāq<sup>AS</sup> and Ibrahīm<sup>AS</sup> are resting in eternal peace. The city of Can'an was also hit by famine, and the brothers of Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> decided to travel to Egypt to buy grain. Prophet Ya'qūb<sup>AS</sup> had made Binyāmin the centre of his attention after losing Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup>. Therefore, he stopped Binyāmin and allowed the rest to travel to Egypt. He also gave them money and valuables for trading against grain. They had heard that the King of Egypt was a benign ruler who had made excellent arrangements for supplying food to the people.

## **Kashf is Valid, but Timings of its Manifestation cannot be Determined**

After so many years, finally the time had come for the materialization of what had been inspired unto Prophet Yūsuf's<sup>AS</sup> heart in the well. Similarly, the Aulia' also have visions of some forthcoming events but the determination of the exact time of occurrence is very difficult. When Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> saw his brothers he instantly recognised them, though they could not identify him at all. He was sold as a little boy, and now he was nearly fifty years old. Moreover, he was sold off as a slave while they now stood in the court of a mighty ruler where no one could even dare to look up. They stood in awe and respect in the Royal Court. Because of the fact that Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> had recognised his brothers, he made them stay as his guests. He asked their whereabouts adding that they did not look like the Egyptians. They told him that his fame had motivated them to undertake this journey from Palestine. Their father was **Allah's** Prophet<sup>AS</sup> and a very noble man, who had sent them after having heard much about the king's piety. Thus he came to know about his father and treated them with great respect. When their share of grain was given to them, they disclosed that they also had a younger brother who had stayed back with their father to take care of him. They also told him that previously one of their brothers had been lost in the wilderness and their father in his grief had wept away his eyesight. They requested that the share of their youngest brother may also be given but the request was turned down being against the regulations.

## **Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> Planned Secretly by Allah's Command to Meet His Brother**

Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> told his brothers that if they were to revisit Egypt they should bring their younger brother along. They had seen his hospitality and he would also be given his share. However, if they failed to bring him along, they needed not come for the grain, as they would not be entertained. This was probably because he thought that they were tale-tellers and may sell the grain in the market. They promised to try their best to bring him along so that the doubts could be cleared and they may be given the grain again.

This plan was made and the warning given to them by **Allah's** Permission. Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> quietly ordered his servants to place the payment made by them in the grain to further ensure their return to Egypt. This was done for two reasons; firstly to be generous and honour the Prophets'<sup>AS</sup> household, for which they would certainly return to express their gratitude. Secondly, they had traded ornaments and jewellery for food, which indicated that the family was short of money and had stretched its resources. Therefore, they might not

be able to afford a second trip. However, in spite of all the anxiety, he did not send any news about himself to his father, as it was not **Allah's** Will. His father could also not know anything through Kashf, although a Prophet's<sup>AS</sup> Kashf is commensurate with his status. Of course, **Allah** is all-Powerful. When **He** plans to disclose **He** can unveil the reality even through Kashf, and on the contrary, **He** may seal the obvious means of information. When his brothers returned to Palestine, they spoke very highly of the justice and generosity of the King of Egypt. They admired his management skills as well as his pleasing demeanour before their father and mentioned that in spite of all the hospitality they had faced a problem; when they had asked for the share of Binyāmin, their request had not only been turned down, but they had been directed to bring him along in order to prove their credibility and receive bonus of an extra camel load of grain. However, the worst part was that if they failed to comply they would be considered liars and shall not be entertained again. In that case they needed not go back for more grain. Therefore, they requested their father to send Binyāmin along and also pledged to protect him.

Prophet Ya'qūb<sup>AS</sup> could not help reminding them of the fallibility of their safety measures, like they had demonstrated in the case of Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup>. He added that he did not trust them, yet he did have faith in **Allah**, **Who** was the Most Gracious and the best Protector. **He** relied on **His** Mercy and Grace that **He** would save him from another tragedy at this old age.

As they talked, they were unloading and unpacking their luggage. They suddenly discovered the payment they had made from one of the sacks. They were delighted and spoke highly of the graciousness of the King of Egypt, who had returned their wealth without even making them feel indebted. They said to their father that it would be highly unbecoming of them if they failed to return and show gratitude for his extreme generosity. Moreover they needed more grain for the family and it would only be possible if Binyāmin went along. They would certainly protect him and because of him will be able to augment their supply.

**Parents / Shaikhs must Upbring their Children / Seekers, and not Drive them Away**

Prophet Ya'qūb<sup>AS</sup> permitted his sons to take Binyāmin along but only under the condition that they would bring him safely back, unless some unavoidable situation developed beyond their control. But they must promise him to do their best to protect him. They pledged in the name of **Allah** to protect their brother to the best of their ability and acknowledge that **Allah** is the all Knowing and the Powerful. Here it is proven that parents must not disown

their children if they err or sin. Similarly a Shaikh must not shun away his disciples but patiently and persistently bring them up. Breaking up does not help anyone; it rather deteriorates their condition further and makes them vulnerable to deeper indulgence in sin. It is, however, imperative for parents and the Shaikhs to make their children and students realise their mistakes and to guide them appropriately to make amends. After taking all these measures, they must rely upon **Allah** for best results.

### **Planning is Essential but Hopes for Desired Outcome must be Focused on Allah**

When Prophet Ya'qūb<sup>AS</sup> was bidding farewell to his sons including Binyāmin he advised them not to enter the city through one door. This was because they were eleven handsome, robust men who had been honoured by the King. It was possible that someone might cast an evil eye upon them.

### **The Effects of an Evil Eye**

The Ahl-e-Sunnah scholars agree on the effects of an evil eye. It is a fact proved by Ḥadīth, and a later chapter of the Qurān. It suffices here to say that it is the effect of a person's thinking. Just as the climate or diet can harm people making them sick, so can human thought. The Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> said that an evil eye can put a man in his grave and a camel in a casserole. Prophet Ya'qūb<sup>AS</sup> said that the honour conferred upon them in the King's Court could arouse jealousy among people. And their entry together would be eye catching. Hence they must enter the city from different gates. It was, however, certain that only destiny would prevail, as it is **Allah** Alone **Who** Controls everything and makes all means effective. It is upon **Him** that he relied just like all his servants do. It is imperative to adopt some means only because **He** has enjoined so. Hence his advice was based on **Allah's** obedience.

So when they arrived in Egypt they stepped into the city from different gates. Though this measure did not help them against the impending distress, yet Prophet Ya'qūb<sup>AS</sup> had no regrets later that he had not employed any means. It is mandatory to do whatever is permissible and within one's power for one's protection.

### **Knowledge from His Presence (Ilm-e-Luduni)**

Ya'qūb<sup>AS</sup> was **Allah's** Prophet and the Prophets<sup>AS</sup> are blessed with inherent wisdom as well as knowledge directly from **Him**. Their knowledge is not attained through any effort or means. There always remains a chance of error in the knowledge so acquired, whereas there is no possibility of error in the

inherent and directly inspired knowledge (Ilm Luduni). The only difference between the knowledge so granted to a Prophet<sup>AS</sup> and a Wali is that a Prophet<sup>AS</sup> never errs in discerning what is inspired while a Wali can. Besides, a Prophet<sup>AS</sup> receives it directly from **Allah** while Wali acquires it by virtue of his adherence to the Prophet<sup>AS</sup>. Also, he is dependant on the Prophet<sup>AS</sup> for its' interpretation. If it conforms the teachings of the Prophet<sup>AS</sup> it is correct otherwise he has certainly misunderstood it. Prophet Ya'qūb<sup>AS</sup> had envisioned through his Prophetic foresight his plummeting troubles and the separation of Binyāmin. Still he did employ a preventive strategy and at the same time declared that the efficacy of his plan was entirely dependant on **Allah** and destiny would prevail, notwithstanding the means.

Unfortunately people are unaware of the excellence of the knowledge granted directly from **His** Presence. If only they knew they would dedicate their entire lives in its pursuit.

### Section 9

69. And when they entered unto Yūsuf, he betook his full brother to himself and said: I am your own brother Yūsuf, so do not grieve over what they have been doing.
70. And when he had furnished them with their furnishing, he placed the drinking-cup in his brother's pack. Thereafter a crier cried: caravan men! You are thieves.
71. They said, as they turned to them: what is it that you are missing?
72. They said: we miss the royal cup and for him who brings it shall be a camel-load, and of him I am a guarantor.
73. They said by **Allah**! Assuredly you know that we have not

وَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَىٰ يُوسُفَ ۗ أَوَىٰ إِلَيْهِ أَخَاهُ  
قَالَ إِنِّي أَنَا أَخُوكَ فَلَا تَبْتَئِسْ بِمَا كَانُوا  
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

فَلَمَّا جَهَّزَهُمْ بِجَهَّازِهِمْ جَعَلَ السِّقَايَةَ فِي رَحْلِ  
أَخِيهِ ثُمَّ أَذَّنَ مُؤَذِّنٌ أَيُّهَا الْعَيْرِ إِنَّكُمْ  
لَسَارِقُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

قَالُوا وَأَقْبَلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ مَاذَا تَفْقَدُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

قَالُوا نَفَقْدُ صُوعَ الْمَلِكِ وَلِمَن جَاءَ بِهِ حِمْلُ  
بَعِيرٍ وَأَنَا بِهِ زَعِيمٌ ﴿٧٢﴾

قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَا جِئْتَنَا بِنَفْسٍ

come to work corruption in the land, nor we have been thieves.

74. They said: what shall be the penalty of him, if you are found liars?

75. They said: his penalty is that he in whose pack it is found shall himself be the recompense thereof; thus we recompense the wrongdoers.

76. Then he began with their sacks before the bag of his brother; then he brought it forth from the bag of his brother. Thus We contrived for Yūsuf. He was not to get his brother by the law of the King, except that Allah willed. We exalt in degrees whom We will, and above every knowing one is a Knower.

77. They said: if he steals, then a brother of his has stolen afore. But Yūsuf concealed it in himself, and disclose it not to them. He said; you are in evil plight, and Allah is the Best Knower of what you ascribe.

78. They said: O 'Azīz verily he has a father, an old man very aged; so take one of us in his stead; verily we perceive you to be of well-doers.

79. He said: Allah forbid that we should take anyone but him with whom we found our stuff; verily we then should be the wrongdoers.

فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا كُنَّا سَرِقِينَ ﴿٧٢﴾

قَالُوا فَمَا جَزَاؤُهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ كَاذِبِينَ ﴿٧٤﴾

قَالُوا جَزَاؤُهُ مَنْ وَجَدَ فِي رَحْلِهِ، فَهُوَ جَزَاؤُهُ، كَذَلِكَ  
يَجْزَى الْفٰلِئِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾

فَبَدَأَ بِأَوْعِيَّتِهِمْ قَبْلَ وِعَايَةِ أَخِيهِ ثُمَّ اسْتَخْرَجَهَا  
مِنْ وِعَايَةِ أَخِيهِ كَذَلِكَ كَذَبْنَا لِيُوسُفَ مَا كَانَ  
لِيَأْخُذَ أَخَاهُ فِي دِينِ الْمَلِكِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ  
نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مَن نَّشَاءُ وَفَوْقَ كُلِّ  
ذِي عِلْمٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٦﴾

﴿٧٦﴾ قَالُوا إِنْ يَسْرِقْ فَقَدْ سَرَقَ أَخٌ لَّهُ  
مِنْ قَبْلٍ فَأَسْرَهَا يُوْسُفُ فِي نَفْسِهِ،  
وَلَمْ يَبْدِهَا لَهُمْ قَالَ أَنْتُمْ شَرٌّ مَّكَانًا  
وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَصِفُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾

قَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا الْعَزِيزُ إِنَّ لَهُ أَبًا شَيْخًا كَبِيرًا فَخُذْ  
أَحَدَنَا مَكَانَهُ، إِنْ أَنْزَلْنَاكَ  
مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٧٨﴾

قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ أَنْ نَأْخُذَ إِلَّا مَن وَجَدْنَا مَتَّعَنَا  
عِنْدَهُ، إِنْ آتَا إِذَا الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾

## Secrets of Revelation

On their arrival, Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> arranged an honourable lodging for them. He quietly confided to Binyāmin that he need not worry any more because he was his brother Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup>. He told him that although his separation from the family had been extremely painful yet the forthcoming time of reunion would make up for all troubles. Soon, the good news would be conveyed to their noble father. "For the time being", he said, "**Allah** plans to detain you in Egypt for yet another trial of our father".

### The Grooming of Qulūb

This proves that whatever Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> did was by **Allah**'s Will. Indeed **Allah**, the Merciful, purifies the hearts of **His** servants through trials to make them absolutely marvellous. Every Messenger<sup>AS</sup> goes through such ordeals in a befitting manner. Also, the hardships Aulia' face are for their spiritual progress. Upheavals push a seeker of the mundane further into ingratitude and disobedience, while the same hardships take the devoted closer to **Allah**. The real greatness develops in a person only after the heart is burnished through trials.

In order to detain Binyāmin in Egypt Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> directed his attendants to hide a precious drinking cup inside Binyāmin's bag of grain. Everyone was allocated a camel-load and had to get his share personally loaded, hence each one had his own camel.

When the caravan left, royal courier was sent, who soon caught up with it. The travellers were told that they were suspected of theft. They were astonished and very annoyed, for they were the Prophets'<sup>AS</sup> progeny and had the honour of being royal guests. Such an accusation seemed preposterous because an act of ingratitude could, by no stretch of imagination, be expected of them. They said that they were not there to create any mischief, nor were they thieves. Praise be to **Allah**! How vehemently they claimed to be innocent, whereas they were the same people who had wronged their brother, and had aggrieved their father, both **Allah**'s Prophets<sup>AS</sup>! This is human temperament and people often forget their past offences. If only **Allah** blessed us with a realisation the real goal of life would be achieved. They enquired from the courier what was missing, and were told that it was a very precious royal cup which had been stolen. It was imperative to search them, they were told, for it was possible that the cup had been packed in their stuff due to an oversight.

## To Fix Reward for a Task and Offer a Guarantee is Permissible

The courier told the travellers that the King had announced the reward of a camel-load of grain on recovery of the cup. He also undertook to ensure that the reward would go to the one who returns the cup. Thus fixing a reward for something and offering guarantee is permissible. The claimant has the right to demand the guaranteed goods from the guarantor. The caravan members displayed their annoyance over the accusation. In order to appease them they were given the choice to settle the matter in accordance with the rules of their land. A search was, however, inevitable. If at all the cup was not recovered from their baggage, the inconvenience would be duly apologized. They answered that according to the laws of their land a thief was to be handed over to the owner of the stolen goods as a slave, to be treated as the owner desired. This was the punishment for theft, a grave crime according to the Shari'ah of Prophet Ya'qūb<sup>AS</sup>, while in Egyptian law a thief was reprimanded and beaten.

**Allah** had planned to make Binyāmin stay back and his brothers themselves paved the way for it. When the search was conducted the cup was recovered from Binyāmin's sack, searched at the end. The brothers were deeply perturbed and scolded Binyāmin for putting them to shame. However, it was not Binyāmin's or Prophet Yūsuf's<sup>AS</sup> fault, for all was done in accordance with Divine Revelations: "Thus **We** contrived for Yūsuf. He was not to get his brother by the law of the King except that **Allah** willed. We exalt in degrees whom **We** will," Prophet Ya'qūb<sup>AS</sup> was progressing in exultation by bearing the pangs of separation, and Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> by obeying **Allah**'s Command. In spite of being aware of his old father's condition he did not send him the news of his own well being. Now he was deprived of even Binyāmin, his sole support after the separation of Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup>. It is indeed the passion for **Allah** which severs all other ties except with **Him** and is the base of spiritual elevation. Besides, the ultimate source of knowledge is **Allah** while the creation varies in the level and kind of the knowledge it possesses.

The brothers of Binyāmin were infuriated by what he had done and said: "If Binyāmin has stolen the cup it is not surprising, for long ago his brother Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> had done the same." The story goes that after Prophet Yūsuf's<sup>AS</sup> mother died he was sent to live with his paternal aunt, who was extremely fond of him. When he was a little older, his father wanted him back, but his aunt could not bear his separation. So she contrived a plan by wrapping Prophet Ishāq's<sup>AS</sup> turban, kept as a relic, around his waist under his attire. After he had gone, she announced its theft and later recovered it from him. Prophet Ya'qūb<sup>AS</sup> was so moved by the intensity of her love that he allowed

Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> to stay with her for as long as she lived. This incident was known to the brothers who were annoyed at Binyāmin, and not knowing how to react, resorted to sarcasm. Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> was hurt but did not express his feeling. He only wished that man could analyze his own conduct! His brothers were accusing him of theft while being the worst criminals themselves. Whether man remembers or forgets, it is **Allah Who** surely Knows all.

Now the brothers began to plead their case. They said that their father was not in good health back home and they had promised him the safe return of Binyāmin. After mutual consultations, they said: ‘O King of Egypt! Our father is an old man who had barely gotten over the loss of a son earlier. He may not be able to survive this blow. Have Mercy on that noble soul. You may detain anyone of us in lieu of Binyāmin, but do let him go.’ Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> answered: “**Allah** forbid! We are not transgressors to punish an innocent instead of the one from whom the stolen goods are recovered. This is impossible”. In short, they tried their best but to no avail. The King did not yield to their request nor did he want to. This moment was far more tormenting for Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> himself than his brothers, he had been separated for years from his beloved father and was now fully aware of his sorry state, yet he had to follow and obey **Allah’s** Command having no other choice.

## Section 10

80. Then when they despaired of him they counselled together privately. The eldest of them said: do you not remember that your father has taken an assurance from you before **Allah**? And earlier you have been remiss in your duty in respect of Yūsuf; so I will by no means go forth from the land until my father gives me leave or **Allah** judges for me, and **He** is the Best of judges.

فَلَمَّا اسْتَيْسَرُوا مِنْهُ خَلَصُوا مُخْتَبِئًا قَالٍ  
كَبِيرُهُمْ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ أَبَاكُمْ قَدْ أَخَذَ  
عَلَيْكُمْ مَوَاقِفًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَمِنْ قَبْلُ مَا فَرَّطْتُمْ  
فِي يُوسُفَ فَلَنْ أَبْرَحَ الْأَرْضَ حَتَّى يَأْذَنَ لِي أَبِي  
أَوْ يَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ لِي وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحَاكِمِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾

81. Return to your father and say: Father! Verily your son has stolen, and we testify not save

أَرْجِعُوا إِلَىٰ آبَائِكُمْ فَقُولُوا إِنَّا بَنَانَا بِكَ ابْنِكَ

according to what we know, and of the unseen we could not be watchers.

82. And inquire of the people of the city where we have been and of the caravan with whom we have travelled hither; and verily we speak truth.

83. He said: Nay! Your minds have embellished for you an affair. So patience is agreeable. Perchance **Allah** may bring them all to me; verily **He!** Only **He** is the Knowing, the Wise.

84. And he turned away from them, and said: O my grief for Yūsuf! And his eyes were whitened with grief, and he was choked with sorrow.

85. They said: by **Allah**, you will not cease remembering Yūsuf until you are wizened or you be of the dead.

86. He said: I only bewail my anguish and sorrow unto **Allah**, and I know from **Allah** what you know not.

87. My sons! Go and ascertain about Yūsuf and his brother, and despair not of the Mercy of **Allah**; none despair of the Mercy of **Allah** except a people disbelieving.

88. And when they entered unto him, they said: O 'Azīz distress has seized us and our family and we have brought scant goods, so

سَرَقَ وَمَا شَهِدْنَا إِلَّا بِمَا عَلَّمْنَا وَمَا كُنَّا  
لِلْغَيْبِ حَافِظِينَ ﴿٨١﴾

وَمَثَلِ الْفَرِيِّةِ الَّتِي كُنَّا فِيهَا وَالْعَيْرِ الَّتِي أَقْبَلْنَا  
فِيهَا وَإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

قَالَ بَل سَأَلْتُ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ أَنرَأَيْتُمْ جَمِيلٌ  
عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَنِي بِهِمْ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ  
الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٨٣﴾

وَنَوَىٰ عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَإَسْفَىٰ عَلَىٰ يَوسُفَ وَأَبِصْرَتِ  
عَيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْحَزَنِ فَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ﴿٨٤﴾

قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ تَفْتُوا تَذَكُرُ يَوسُفَ  
حَتَّىٰ تَكُونَ حَرَضًا أَوْ تَكُونَ  
مِنَ الْهَالِكِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾

قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَشْكُوا بَنِيَّ وَحُزْنِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاعْلَمُ  
مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾

بَنِيَّ أَذْهَبُوا فَتَحَسَّوْا مِن يَوسُفَ وَأَخِيهِ  
وَلَا تَأْسُوا مِن رَّوْحِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يَأْتِئُشُ مِن رَّوْحِ  
اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾

فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ قَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا الْعَزِيزُ مَسْنَا وَأَهْلَنَا  
الْأُزْرُ وَجِئْنَا بِبِضْعَةٍ مُّزَجَّجَةٍ فَاؤْفِ لَنَا الْكَيْلَ

give us full measure and be charitable to us; verily Allah rewards the charitable.

89. He said: remember what you did to Yūsuf and his brother while you were ignorant.

90. They said: are you Yūsuf? He said: I am Yūsuf and this is my brother; Allah has surely been gracious to us; verily he who fears Allah and endures affliction, then Allah leaves not the wage of well doers to waste.

91. They said: verily Allah has chosen you above us, and we have been sinners indeed.

92. He said; no reproach on you today; may Allah forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of the merciful.

93. Go with this shirt of mine and cast it upon my father's face; he shall become clear-sighted; and bring to me all your family.

وَتَصَدَّقْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَجْزِي  
الْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ ﴿٨٨﴾

قَالَ هَلْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ بِيُوسُفَ وَأَخِيهِ  
إِذْ أَنْتُمْ جَاهِلُونَ ﴿٨٩﴾

قَالُوا أَأَتَاكَ لَأَنْتَ يُوسُفُ قَالَ أَنَا يُوسُفُ  
وَهَذَا أَخِي قَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّهُ مَنْ يَتَّقِ  
وَيَصْرِفْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَضِيْعُ أَجْرَ  
الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٩٠﴾

قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ عَآثَرَكُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا  
وَإِنْ كُنَّا لَخَطِيئِينَ ﴿٩١﴾

قَالَ لَا تَثْرِيْبَ عَلَيْكُمْ الْيَوْمَ يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ  
وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ ﴿٩٢﴾

أَذْهَبُوا بِقَمِيصِي هَذَا فَالْقُوْهُ عَلَى وَجْهِ أَبِي  
يَأْتِ بِصِيْرًا وَأَتُونِي بِأَهْلِكُمْ  
أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٩٣﴾

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### Secrets of Revelation

After all efforts to get Binyāmin released failed, they decided to return to their homeland. The grain had run out back home and prolonging their stay in Egypt was no longer possible. The eldest brother reminded them of the word they had given to their father and of the transgression they had previously committed in Yūsuf's<sup>AS</sup> case. He said that their father was already frail and grief stricken in Yūsuf's<sup>AS</sup> separation. Therefore, he wished to stay back, or else at least one of them should stay back in Egypt, until permitted by their father to return back; or else Allah may pave the way for Binyāmin's acquittal because all the matters rest with Him and it is He Who takes all decisions.

The decision people take are mere façades, while these are **His** decisions that are actually enforced. According to the majority of Commentators, the eldest brother was Yahūda who had earlier opposed the killing of Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> and was the most sound in judgement amongst all of them. He advised his brothers to go back and reassure their father that they had not neglected their responsibility but had to face exceptional circumstances. It was his son who had committed the theft without their knowledge. His action had indeed caused them a great deal of embarrassment before the King who had honoured them so much. Moreover, the hope of getting grain in the future also seemed bleak because of loss of trust after that incident. They said that they were bound by their pledge to protect only under normal circumstances. The sudden trouble from the unseen had taken them totally by surprise.

### **Status of an Agreement and Testimony**

The jurists assert that an agreement is binding only under the normal circumstances. If an abnormal situation develops, which could not possibly have been foreseen, the terms of agreement are suspended. The second point that comes to light here is about testimony. To testify, one must have knowledge of the event and has to disclose his source, that is, if he is not an eye witness he must tell who gave him the information. Such a testimony is considered valid. The eldest brother advised others to tell their father to personally probe into the whole matter if he desired. He could enquire from other fellow-travellers, or could go to Egypt and see things for himself. What they were reporting to him was nothing but the truth, they asserted.

When Prophet Ya'qūb<sup>AS</sup> heard the story, he repeated the same words: it was a fabrication of their soul. Could it be expected of Binyāmin to steal and did they expect him to buy their story? However, he said that patience was the best option which he had already been practising. He cautioned them that since there is a limit to everything, and now that his turmoils were crossing the limit, he expected a relief from **Allah** very soon. Not only Binyāmin but all his children would return to him, as Yūsuf's<sup>AS</sup> dream had predicated the reunion of the entire family. This was in his knowledge, but despite knowing he said that the real knowledge is with **Allah, Who** is the Wisest. All that was happening was the execution of **His** prudent plan.

### **Further Gratitude on His Blessings**

It is evident here that a person must attribute all his outstanding qualities to Divine Blessing and thank **Him** more. The best way is to consider oneself as a humble servant of **Allah** and ascribe all his distinctions to **His** Favour.

Therefore, Prophet Ya'qūb<sup>AS</sup> turned his face away from his sons and sighed in pain: "O' Yūsuf! Where could I find you?" With the passage of time, he had lost his eyesight crying for Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup>. Now that Binyāmin was detained in Egypt he resorted to silence. Grief and sorrow nearly choked him from inside.

### Love and Allah's Prophets<sup>AS</sup>

Some critics ask why a Prophet<sup>AS</sup> loved someone other than **Allah** so intensely that he lost his eyesight crying, whereas for a fact the Prophets<sup>AS</sup> love only **Allah**. The Commentators have given various answers but the simplest explanation is that Prophets<sup>AS</sup> are also human, rather the finest of human beings. They are adorned with human traits par excellence, and their love indeed is far superior. Love influences every living being, and it is perfected inside the human heart. Love for the world is different from the love one has for the fellow beings. The question is whether one forsakes his human relationships for the love of material world, or sacrifices the worldly desires despite being dear to him, and honours and nurtures the love for fellow beings. In the absence of any natural or instinctive love for the world, sacrificing it would not denote any excellence. Similarly the love for **Allah** is totally different from the love for human beings, who belong to the same species sharing the bonds of blood, family and friendship. But a human being has nothing in common with the Almighty, **Who** is Unique in **His** Powers. **His** creation simply has no comparison with **Him**. But **He** blessed man with such consciousness that he can become crazy after **His** Splendour. The strength of one's love for **Allah** can be validated by seeing how much he loves his fellow beings, and how far he can sacrifice this love. In this context, we see the intensity of Prophet Ya'qūb's<sup>AS</sup> love for Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> touching the heights of helplessness and the way he is sacrificing it over the Will of **Allah**. He confessed that Yūsuf's<sup>AS</sup> memories had tormented him unceasingly, but he was too shy to complain to **Allah**. Moreover, he had no one save **Allah**, **Who** is capable of doing everything. **He** was well Aware of his condition and the separation spreading over half a century. Everything was a part of **His** Wise Plan and whatever may happen he could not ever think of annoying **Him**. Here indeed lies the beauty of the entire story, and this indeed is the excellence of one's faith, as expressed by the Qurān: "Believers love **Allah** the most." They may love other too, but that love always stays subservient to the love of **Allah**.

Seeing his state, his sons said that although time was the greatest healer of wounds yet the case of their father was different. He had not forgotten Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> and if his sorrow persisted, it could cost him his life. He told them that they

knew nothing about his grief, as he expressed it only before **Allah**, Whose Prophet<sup>AS</sup> he was and **Who** had blessed him with immense knowledge. He knew that someday Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> would come back to him. He also knew that **Allah** would bless Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> with glory, power and Prophethood. In spite of all this, if he was still out of his sight it was only by **Allah's** Will. But unfortunately, his sons would not understand this. He bade them to go forth and search for Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> and Binyāmin and not to despair of **Allah's** Mercy. It was possible that the King of Egypt of whom they spoke so highly, might be the lost Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup>. Anything is possible with **Allah** and to despair is the lot of the infidels. He told them to leave him alone and set off for Egypt immediately.

But now they had no valuables left to trade in for grain and the family needed the provisions. Hence they loaded the utensils and other household items on the camels to barter for the grain, and left.

They arrived in Egypt and presented themselves in the Royal Court where Binyāmin was already present. They implored the King that their family was in distress, and having nothing to offer in return for the grain, they had brought with them some used household items of very little value. They requested him to accept whatever they had in barter against grain as a special gesture of benevolence and also to release their brother for whom their old father was grief stricken. He had already lost his eyesight and this son was his only consolation, whose detention had made him awfully miserable. They said that words failed them to express his anguish and it would sadden the King to hear about the extreme grief of a Prophet<sup>AS</sup> whose father and grand father were also **Allah's** Prophets<sup>AS</sup>. They begged him to show clemency for which **Allah** shall reward him.

Now the time had come to unveil the truth. The long separation was about to be transformed into a joyous reunion. After listening to them Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> said that they seemed very concerned about their father's grief, but did they not remember who had given this pain to him in the first place? Had they forgotten the treatment they had given to his beloved son Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> by selling him off for a few Dirhams? He added that it was beyond measure how much their ignorance and foolishness had wronged their noble father, and their brothers Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> and Binyāmin. They were flabbergasted. How could the King of Egypt know all this? They looked up and inquired if he was Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup>, probably recalling the dream and seeing familiarity in his face. Besides, this secret was only known to them or Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> and, of course, to **Allah**. Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> replied that he was Yūsuf indeed and Binyāmin was his real brother.

He asked them to realize how much **Allah** had favoured them; for their distress was a prelude of a superior plan. He said that whatever hardships they had faced were indeed blessings, because the final outcome was so favourable. He advised them to remember that **Allah** rewards **His** servants generously, those who acquire Taqwa and remain patient. There was no option for them but to confess their sin. So they said that **Allah** had indeed been very generous to Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> and had granted him a status exalted. He had power over them while they stood guilty before him for having wronged him immensely. However, all they could offer was tears of repentance and remorse. That was when Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> forgave them and said that on that day they would not be reproached nor questioned, and that he would also pray **Allah** to forgive them, **Who** indeed is the Most Merciful.

### The Blessings of Relics

He gave his shirt to them to take it to their father, for a touch would restore his vision and convey the glad tidings to him of their reunion. As the garment touched his eyes, his eyesight was restored. This was the blessing of a relic and also a miracle of Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup>. The analysis of the effects is not possible through science as the blessings associated with these are far above human understanding.

He also invited his brothers to bring all their relations to Egypt where **Allah** had blessed him with power. There they could live in tranquillity, and they no longer needed to live in the wilderness. That, he said, was the time to rejoice and cherish their reunion as the dismal years of separation were over.

## Section 11

94. And when the caravan had departed their father said: surely I feel the breath of Yūsuf, if you do not think I am doting.

وَلَمَّا فَصَلَتِ الْعِيرُ قَالَ أَبُوهُمْ إِنِّي لَأَجِدُ  
رِيحَ يُونُسَ لَوْلَا أَنْ تُفِيدُونِ ﴿١٥﴾

95. They said: by **Allah**! You are in your old-time illusion.

قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ إِنَّكَ لَفِي ضَلَالِكَ الْقَدِيمِ ﴿١٥﴾

96. Then when the bringer of the glad tidings arrived, he cast it upon his face and he became clear-sighted. He said: did not I

فَلَمَّا أَنْ جَاءَ الْبَشِيرُ أَلْقَاهُ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ فَارْتَدَّ  
بَصِيرًا قَالِ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ

tell you, that I knew from **Allah** what you knew not.

97. They said: father! Pray for us forgiveness of our sins, verily we have been sinners.

قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا اسْتَغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا

خَاطِبِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

98. He said: presently I shall pray of my **Rabb** for forgiveness for you, verily **He!** Only **He** is the Forgiving, the Merciful.

قَالَ سَوْفَ اسْتَغْفِرُ لَكُمْ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ

الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٨﴾

99. Then when they entered unto Yūsuf, he betook his parents to himself and said: enter Egypt, **Allah** willing, in security;

فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَى يُوسُفَ ءَاوَىٰ إِلَيْهِ أَبَوَيْهِ

وَقَالَ أَذْخُلُوا مِصْرَ إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ ءَامِنِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

100. And he raised his parents to the throne, and they fell down before him prostrate. And he said: Father! This is the interpretation of my dream aforesaid; my **Rabb** has now made it come true; and surely **He** did well by me when he took me forth from the prison, and has brought you from the desert after Satan had stirred strife between me and my brothers; verily my **Rabb** is Subtle to whom **He** will. Verily **He**, only **He**, is the Knowing, the Wise.

وَرَفَعَ أَبَوَيْهِ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ وَخَرُّوا لَهُ سُجَّدًا وَقَالَ

يَتَأْتِبْ هَذَا تَأْوِيلُ رُؤْيَا بَنِيَّ مِنْ قَبْلُ قَدْ جَعَلَهَا

رَبِّي حَقًّا وَقَدْ أَحْسَنَ بِي إِذْ أَخْرَجَنِي مِنَ السِّجْنِ

وَجَاءَ بِكُمْ مِنَ الْبَدْوِ مِنْ بَعْدِ أَنْ نَزَغَ الشَّيْطَانُ

بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ إِخْوَتِي إِنَّ رَبِّي لَطِيفٌ لِمَا يَشَاءُ

إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٢٠﴾

101. My **Rabb!** You have given me of the dominion, and have taught me of the interpretation of events, Creator of the heavens and the earth! You are my Patron in the world and the **Ākhirah**. Make me die a Muslim and join me with the righteous.

﴿٢١﴾ رَبِّ قَدْ آتَيْتَنِي مِنَ الْمُلْكِ وَعَلَّمْتَنِي

مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ فَاطِرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

أَنْتَ وَلِيِّ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ تَتَوَفَّنِي

مُسْلِمًا وَالْحَقِيقِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٢١﴾

102. This is of the tidings of the unseen, which We Reveal to you. Nor were you with them when they resolved on their affair while they were plotting.

ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهِ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ أَجْمَعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَمْكُرُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾

103. And most of the people, though you desire ardently, are not going to be believers.

وَمَا أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٠٣﴾

104. And you do not ask of them any wage for it, it is but an admonition to the worlds.

وَمَا تَسْأَلُهُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠٤﴾

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### Secrets of Revelation

Back home Prophet Ya'qūb<sup>AS</sup> anxiously awaited the return of his sons from Egypt. But Allah manifested His Grace in a unique way.

#### Kashf or Intrinsic Observation

When the caravan with the person carrying Prophet Yūsuf's<sup>AS</sup> shirt arrived in Can'ān, Prophet Ya'qūb<sup>AS</sup> said that though it sounded crazy, he could for sure smell Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup>. The listeners conveniently dismissed it as an illusion that had haunted him for long. They said that he would probably remain hopeful forever of Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> being alive and returning someday. The strange thing as mentioned earlier, was that Egypt was at a journey of eight days from Can'ān, yet Prophet Ya'qūb<sup>AS</sup> could smell Yūsuf's<sup>AS</sup> scent. But he could not smell him when he was inside a well in Can'ān, or was being taken to Egypt along with the caravan. Moreover, Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> lived for years in Egypt, and his father could not come to know of it. The simplest explanation is that Kashf or spiritual observation are rewards from Allah, gifted at His free Will. He may disclose whatever He wants and conceal whatever He wills. Without His Approval, neither did Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> send a word to his father nor did the breeze carry the fragrance. But when He allowed, Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> sent a messenger and the breeze carried the scent. At long last, the bearer of glad tidings arrived in Can'ān. He put the shirt, as advised, on Prophet Ya'qūb's<sup>AS</sup> eyes and his eyesight was restored. He exclaimed that he had always been saying that Allah had informed him over what they didn't know. That is why he had never believed Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> to be dead. He knew for sure that one day

Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> would be the ruler and Allah's Prophet<sup>AS</sup>. Although he had been unaware of his whereabouts, yet he had been sure to meet him one day.

### **Request to the Pious to Pray is Permissible**

The secret was no longer a secret as all the brothers had already met Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> and had sought his forgiveness. They confessed their crime to their father also and begged him to forgive them, and also to pray for their forgiveness from Allah. It shows that asking the noble and the pious souls to pray for someone is not only allowed but also desired. Prophet Ya'qūb<sup>AS</sup> promised that he would soon pray for them. Probably he wanted to first speak to Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> and hear him as he wanted him to forgive them before he raised his hands in prayer. The law is that first the oppressor must suitably compensate the aggrieved, and then forgiveness should be sought from Allah. A mere prayer cannot replace the lost rights of the aggrieved. If the matter involves money or property, and the aggrieved cannot be found, the offender must give away alms and dedicate the reward to him. If, however, he can be approached, his belongings must obviously be returned to him. And if it is not possible to even give away alms, there is no way out except praying for the wronged.

Prophet Ya'qūb<sup>AS</sup> said that Allah is the Most Clement and Merciful and it is only appropriate to seek forgiveness from Him. Hence a wrongdoer must never lose hope in Allah. Also, he must never be abandoned by the righteous, for this would reduce the possibility of reformation.

So the entire family prepared to leave for Egypt. Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> had already sent food supplies and transport alongwith his brothers. The caravan comprising ninety to a hundred people of Prophet Ya'qūb's<sup>AS</sup> family arrived in Egypt. The Banī Isrāīl who later left Egypt led by Prophet Mūsa<sup>AS</sup> were the descendants of this caravan and were a little short of seven hundred thousand in number.

On their arrival, Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> went out to receive his parents with great dignity and honour. He addressed his family members and said that Egypt would serve them to her best, for they shall find peace, tranquillity and security here. He escorted them all to the Royal Court and made his parents sit on his throne, but all of them knelt and prostrated before him in adoration and respect. Probably prostration-in-respect is different from the Sajdah in worship. A mere bowing of the head in respect is also sometimes termed as prostrating-in-respect, which was not forbidden in the preceding nations. It is the Sajdah of worship which must only be done before Allah. However, in the

Shari'ah of the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup>, the prostration of respect has also been banned.

### **The Realization of a Dream may take Many Years**

Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> told his father that this was the interpretation of the dream he had seen as a child, that the sun, the moon and eleven stars were prostrating before him. Indeed **Allah** had made it come true.

### **The Style of Allah's People and their Opinion about Events**

He recounted an abridged account of his ordeal to his family in a manner that every word he spoke displayed gratitude to **Allah**. He briefly spoke of Zulaikhah's trap due to which he had to spend many precious years of his life in prison. He was released from the jail and placed on the royal throne by the Most Munificent, **Allah**. Instead of complaining over the prolonged separation, he spoke of **Allah's** Mercy and Grace **Who** had reunited them and had also brought them to the comforts of a city life from the hardships of rural living. Speaking of the unpleasant incident of his childhood, he agreed with his father that Satan had caused a strife between him and his brothers. It was indeed gracious of him that he confessed to be a party to the scuffle, despite the fact that he was a child of only seven years at that time. Yet he showed his involvement so that his brothers may not feel embarrassed. The trait standing out in **Allah's** people is that they consider the brighter side of everything, and since they succeed eventually, they always speak of the outcome and the results. Glorified be **Allah**, when **He** plans to do something, **He** creates causes out of the blue, beyond anyone's imagination. Could his brothers ever imagine that the youngster they were selling off as a slave was in fact heading towards the throne of Egypt? Yet **Allah**, the all Knowing, keeps on creating means for the execution of **His** Prudent Plans.

### **Etiquettes of Supplication**

Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> then raised his hands in prayer and spoke with great elegance. He first mentioned all the blessings he had been favoured with and then put forth his request: "O **Rabb!** **You** have blessed me with power and kingdom, and have endowed me with immense knowledge. **Your** endowments are as vast as **Your** creativity, and **You** Alone are the Creator of the heavens and the earth. **You** Alone are my Patron in this world and in the **Ākhirah**, and when **You** have blessed me so much, please bless me further and let me die as a Muslim. O' **Allah**, let me be raised amongst **Your** righteous and beloved people in the **Ākhirah**." Although all Prophets<sup>AS</sup> are innocent and their exalted rank cannot possibly be revoked, yet they show their gratitude by

acknowledging their humility and begging for **His** Mercy. This is a lesson for the entire Ummah, for no one is aware of the state of his faith at death. Eternal outcome of a Wali's piety or a noble man's virtues depends entirely on the state of his faith when he dies. Therefore, it is imperative to beg **Allah** for a happy ending.

Prophet Ya'qūb<sup>AS</sup> died in Egypt, but was taken back to his native land for burial. Prophet Yūsuf<sup>AS</sup> died and was buried in Egypt. At the exodus of Banī Isrāīl from Egypt, they carried along his coffin with them.

### **Knowledge of the Unseen and Information over the Unseen**

**Allah** tells **His** Beloved Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> that this story is also an Information from the Unseen, given to him through Revelation. These incidents had taken place thousands of years before him. Moreover, the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> was unlettered and had never attended any school or sermon. It, therefore, proved to be a great evidence supporting his Prophethood and the reality of Divine Revelation. It is obvious that **Allah** conveys Information on the Unseen to **His** chosen people, especially **His** Messengers<sup>AS</sup>. The Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> was by far the most informed, commensurate with his high status. However, this knowledge is conveyed through some subtle medium, for example Kashf, Ilhām, Ilqā', or the most superior and the strongest source, the Revelation, which is reserved for the Prophets<sup>AS</sup>. Moreover, the Kashf, Ilhām and even the dream of a Prophet<sup>AS</sup> is classified as Revelation. All this cannot be deemed as Knowledge of the Unseen which is only **Allah's** Domain and no one else shares it with **Him**. **His** Knowledge is not acquired through any source. When a source or medium is there, the knowledge gained through it will be Information on the Unseen. It is only **Allah's** Attribute to know without any source or medium.

As for mankind at large, their becoming believers would depend upon their relationship with **Allah**, and not upon the Holy Prophet's<sup>SAW</sup> longings. No matter how hard he wishes, they will not embrace faith, except a few blessed ones whose hearts have not yet turned gloomy to the point of no return. The Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> must not grieve over the behaviour of infidels, for he expects nothing from them in return for his efforts. He is only working hard in the execution of Divine Commands for which his reward lies with **Allah**. He is only a well-wisher of mankind striving round the clock in pursuit of **Allah's** Pleasure. Now it is upto them to benefit from his gracious, generous and universal guidance or not. And if they fail to appreciate it, indeed they are unfortunate. As asserted by the Commentators, those who had inquired about

Prophet Yūṣuf<sup>AS</sup> from him also failed to embrace Islam, although the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> had narrated the whole story with absolute clarity.

## Section 12

105. And how many a Sign in the heavens and the earth they pass by, while they are averse therefrom.
106. And most of them do not believe in **Allah** except as associators.
107. Are they then secure against this, that there may come upon them an overwhelming of **Allah**'s torment, or that there may come upon them the Hour all of a sudden while they perceive not?
108. Say you: this is my way; I call to **Allah** resting upon an insight – I, and whoever follows me. Hallowed be **Allah**! And I am not of the associators.
109. And **We** sent not before you any save men unto whom **We** revealed from among the people of the towns. Have then they not travelled about in the land? Have they observed how has been the end of those before them? And surely the abode of the **Ākhirah** is best for the God-fearing. Do you not then reflect?
110. Respited were they until when the Messengers had despaired and imagined that they were deluded, there came unto them **Our** succour; and whosoever
- وَكَأَيِّن مِّنْ آيَةٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَمُرُّونَ عَلَيْهَا وَهُمْ عَنْهَا مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿١٠٥﴾
- وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ بِإِلَهِ إِلَّا وَهُمْ مُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٠٦﴾
- أَفَأَمِنُوا أَن تَأْتِيَهُمْ غَشِيَةٌ مِّنْ عَذَابِ اللَّهِ أَتَوْتَانِيهِمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٠٧﴾
- قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٠٨﴾
- وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ إِلَّا رِجَالًا نُّوحِي إِلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَىٰ أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَدَارُ الْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٠٩﴾
- حَتَّىٰ إِذَا اسْتَيْشَسَ الرَّسُولُ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ قَدْ كُذِّبُوا جَاءَهُمْ نَصْرُنَا فَنُجِيَ مَن نَّشَاءُ وَلَا يَرْدُ بَأْسُنَا عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١١٠﴾

We willed was delivered. And Our Wrath is not warded off from a sinning people.

111. Assuredly in their stories is a lesson for men of understanding. It is not a discourse concocted but a confirmation of what went before it, and a detailing of everything, and a guidance and a Mercy to a people who believe.

لَقَدْ كَانَتْ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةً لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ  
مَا كَانَ حَدِيثًا يُفْتَرَىٰ وَلَٰكِن تَصَدِّقَ  
الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيلَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ  
وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١١١﴾

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### Secrets of Revelation

If these people are not accepting the truth, it is nothing unusual. Allah's Greatness is reflected by the heavens, and across the earth in each and every particle. The ruins of the settlements of the defiant folk also demonstrate the grave outcome of disbelief. These people frequently pass by these ruins and are also aware of the Signs of Allah's Greatness present in nature all around them. Yet they do not wish to pay heed. Even if they are logically humbled into accepting the existence of Allah, they ascribe partners to Him in many of His Attributes and thus invite doom. These ignorant and heedless people might consider accepting the faith only when their death starts looming over their heads or they see Allah's doom. Embracing Islam then would be of no avail to them.

### Islam, a Religion of Sound Mind

The Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> must tell them that his way is to invite people to the One and the Only Allah, Whose Unity and Greatness is supported by logical and recorded evidence. His Message is also in harmony with sound reasoning and sane mind. In other words, Islam is not a religion based on mere rituals and their hypothetical results. Rather, it is a religion comprising articles of faith and worships founded on logic and spiritual insight: "And this indeed is the practice of my followers, (the Companions<sup>RAU</sup>) whose bosoms are cumulations of Prophetic treasures and who are the soldiers of Allah". These words of the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> have been reported by Hadhrat ibn-e-Mas'ud<sup>RAU</sup>. This Hadith includes all Muslims who invite to the true faith with prudence and insight, without any additions or subtractions. They do not

promote any specific cult to satisfy their vested interests or personal fancies. This Ḥadīth refers especially to those knowledgeable ones whose hearts are enlightened with the Barakah of the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> and who enjoy spiritual insight. **Allah** is above any partnership and the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> announces his exoneration from any form of polytheism, no matter how insignificant or trivial it might be.

### **Prophethood for Men only**

**Allah** informs the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> that even before him, **He** had deputed many men as Prophets<sup>AS</sup> to various settlements, who were blessed with Revelation. And there is nothing unusual in his raising that the infidels may feel amazed. It also becomes clear in this Āyah that Prophethood had only been conferred upon the male. The term Waḥī (revelation) with reference to Ḥadhrat Maryam<sup>AS</sup>, Prophet Mūsa's<sup>AS</sup> mother or Prophet Ibrahīm's<sup>AS</sup> wife Sarah does not mean the Waḥī of Prophethood, but the revelation of knowledge from **Allah** upon **His** devoted servants and the Aulia'. Prophethood involves fieldwork and was not to be assigned to a gender enjoined to remain veiled.

People must learn a lesson from the ruins of those settlements, where Prophets<sup>AS</sup> were raised. They conveyed to their dwellers **Allah**'s Message, which they rejected and were ultimately destroyed. And it is an established fact that even if the pious have to suffer in this world, they will surely be rewarded amply in the Ākhirah, and will enjoy the best and eternal abode. All this can be easily perceived if one has a sane mind.

And if the infidels are wondering why their denial has not yet invoked the promised doom, they must know the eternal rule that **Allah**, the Most Merciful, allows maximum respite to humans. The preceding nations were also given enough respite, so much so that their Prophets<sup>AS</sup> began to wonder whether they would be punished at all! In that case, they thought, the deniers would find a rationale to reject their Prophethood. It was then that **Allah** sent **His** Succour unto **His** Prophets<sup>AS</sup> and the respite came to an end. Whereas **Allah** rescued **His** Prophets<sup>AS</sup> and their followers, none could save the non believers from the catastrophe ordained for them.

This Book is not a book of fabricated stories, but is verified by the preceding Divine Books and explains the same beliefs and Message. It dwells at length on all spheres of human activity, be it faith, worships, morality, mutual dealings or politics. It goes beyond discussion and provides excellent guidance over each and every aspect of human life. This Book is an embodiment of

Mercy, for it shows the path of deliverance from the turmoils of this life and of the **Ākhirah**. It also teaches the manners of seeking **Allah's** Nearness. Naturally all these blessings are for those fortunate souls who believe in this Book.

22 Ramadhan 1410 AH.

18 April 1990 CE