Islamic Academy of Coventry

Stories from the Qur’ān

Yūsuf

Maulānā Ebrahim Noor
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Introduction

I begin in the name of Allāh, Lord of the Worlds, and sending Salutations on our beloved Rasūlullāh.

Allāh sent down many Prophets to this world in order to guide mankind. He chose to mention some of them in the Holy Qur’ān so we can read, learn and take advice from their examples.

Alḥamdulillāh there have been many books written about the Prophets including ‘Stories of the Prophets’ by Hazrat Sayyed Abul Ḥasan ‘Alī Nadwi which is an invaluable resource for all Students of the Qur’ān.

This Ramadān, due to the attendance of many younger children in our daily programmes after ‘Aṣr Ṣalāh at Masjid Zakariya, I decided to narrate the story of Yūsuf. The verses from the Qur’ān would be read first and then the translation and an explanation of the verses.

As resources I used ‘Stories of the Prophets’ and the English Translation of the Qur’ān done by Mufti Taqī Usmani DB.

During the compilation, I thought it would be a good idea to serialize this story into various chapters, so it can be used by various people, like students who want to learn the meaning of...
the verses. It can be used by teachers in Madāris who want to tell the story over the course of a few days. It can even be used by parents wanting to tell their children the story of Yūsuf عليه السلام during bedtime.

Inshā’Allāh, I pray that Allāh سبحانه وتعالى increases our love and connection with the Holy Qur’ān and gives me the ability to produce more booklets in the same format for the other Prophets as well.

Ebrahim Noor

26th Ramaḍān 1439 (11th June 2018)
Chapter 1 – The Dream

Allāh has revealed many Sūrah’s about many Prophets in the Holy Qur’ān. One such Prophet was Yūsuf. And this is his story.

Allāh says:

بِسۡمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحۡمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحۡيۡمِ

الَّذِيْنَ أَنزَلۡنَّا قُرۡءَٰنًا عَرَبِيًا تَعۡقِلُونَ مَنِ ۡمُنَّۡنُ ۡنِلۡكَ ۡعَرَبۡيَةً لَّوۡلَأَكُم تَعۡقِلُونَ بِمَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيۡكَ هَٰذَا ۡقُرۡءَٰنٖ وَإِنۡكَ ۡمِنَ ۡعَلَّمۡنِۡنُ إِلَیۡكَ ۡفَ ۡلَمَّا أَوَّحۡنَّنَا إِلَیۡكَ هَٰذَا ۡقُرۡءَٰنٗ إِنَّكَ مِنَ ۡعَلَّمۡنِۡنُ

Alif Lām Rā. These are verses of the enlightening book. We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur’ān, so that you may understand. By revealing this Qur’ān to you, we hereby narrate to you (Muḥammad) the best narrative, while before this you were among those unaware (of it).

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1 Holy Qur’ān (12:1-3)
This is an amazing and fascinating story. It is the only story in the Qur’ān of a Prophet which is mentioned in a single Sūrah. The Stories of the other Prophets are mentioned in lots of different Sūrahs, like ‘Ādam, Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, and ‘Īsā, but the actual story of Yūsuf is only mentioned in this one Sūrah.

This Sūrah will tell us about lots of different things. It will tell us about the love of a son for his father, and the fathers love for his child. It will tell us about jealousy between brothers. It will tell us about the journey of one boy who was abandoned and then travelled to another country where he became the leader of the people. It will tell us how Allāh gave him patience, bravery, intellect and the quality to forgive.

So let’s start our story. Yūsuf was the son of Ya‘qūb who was the son of Isḥāq who was the son of Ibrāhīm. Ya‘qūb had 12 sons in total and the youngest 2 were Yūsuf and Binyāmīn.

Allāh used to sometimes send true dreams to the Prophets. This Sūrah starts with a dream and ends with the interpretation of the dream. Yūsuf was still a boy when one night he had a dream.
In the Qur’an Allāh ﷺ says.

إِذۡ قَاۡلَ يُوسُفُ لِيۡتُ يَاۡبِيِّ رَأۡيَتَ إِنّ بِيْهِ يََٰٓأۡيَتُ أَحَدٌ عَشَرُ كُوۡكَبٍ وَٱلشَّمۡسَ وَٱلقَّمَرَ رَأۡيَتُهُمْ لِي سَجِدِينَ²

And when Yūsuf ﷺ said to his father, “Oh my father, indeed I have seen (in my dream) 11 stars and the sun and the moon, I saw them prostrating, doing Sajdah to me!”

When Yūsuf ﷺ told his father Ya‘qūb ﷺ what he had seen in his dream, Ya‘qūb ﷺ realised, that his son was destined for great things, but he gave him a warning because he knew his brothers were jealous of him.

² Holy Qur’ān (12:4)
He (Yaʿqūb عليه السلام) said “Oh my son, do not tell your brothers about your dream, for they might plot against you, indeed Shayṭān to man is an open enemy.”

Yūsuf عليه السلام listened to his father’s advice and didn’t tell his brothers about the dream.

Now Yūsuf عليه السلام and his brother Binyāmīn both had the same mother, Rachel. And their father Yaʿqūb عليه السلام loved them very much. He would not let them out of his sight and would not send them with their brothers in case something happened to them.

The brothers were jealous because their father loved those two more than them, so what did they do? They decided to plot against Yusuf عليه السلام.

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3 Holy Qur’an (12:5)
The Qur'an tells us:

إذ قالوا ليوسف وأخوه أحب
إلى أبيتنا مينا ونحن عضبة إنا أبانا لفي ضلالٍ مبين

When they said “truly Yūsuf and his brother (Binyāmīn) are more beloved to our father than us, and we are a strong group. Indeed our father is in plain error.”

اقتُلُوا يوسيف أو أطِرَحُوه أرضًا يُحل لحكم وجه أبيكم
وتصونوا من بعدِهِ قومًا صليحين

“Kill Yūsuf or cast him out to another land, so the favour of your father will be given to you and after that you will become righteous people.”

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4 Holy Qur’an (12:8)
5 Holy Qur’an (12:9)
One from among them said, “Don’t kill Yūsuf, throw him down to the bottom of a well, he will be picked up by some caravan, if you are to do something.”

So the brothers made a plan, we won’t kill Yūsuf, we will take him and throw him into the bottom of a well. Some caravan will then pass by and pick him up. They will take him away with them to some far away land so he will be away from our father. Once he has gone, our father will only love us and we won’t have to worry about him. After that we will become good again.

Now the plan was made, they needed to find a way to take Yūsuf away from their father. In order to do this, they needed to come up with a good excuse and convince him to let him go.

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6 Holy Qur’ān (12:10)
Chapter 2 – The Brothers Plot

The brothers had plotted and decided to throw Yūsuf ʿalayhi ṣalam inside a well so that their father Yaʿqūb ʿalayhi ṣalam would love them more instead of him.

So they now went to their father:

قَالُواْ يَا بَانَاتِنَا مَالَكَ لَّا تَأْمَنَّنَا عَلَى
يُوسُفَ وَإِنها لَلنَّصِحُونَ أَرْسِلۡهُ مَعَنَا غَدًا يَرۡتَعِ وَيَلۡعَبِ
وَإِنها لَنَحْفِظُونَ

They said “Oh our father, why do you not trust us with Yūsuf ʿalayhi ṣalam and indeed we are his well-wishers. Send him with us tomorrow to enjoy himself and play and we will take care of him.”

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7 Holy Qurʾān (12:11-12)
Their father replied:

قال إني ليحزنني أن تذهبوا به، وأخف أن يأكلله الدبُّ وأنتم عنة غافلون

He said, “Indeed it saddens me that you take him away and I fear that a wolf may eat him while you are unaware (careless).”

The brothers replied:

قالو لين أكلله الدبُّ ونحن عصبة إذا أذا خسرُون

They said, “If a wolf eats him, while we are a strong group then surely we are the losers.”

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8 Holy Qur’an (12:13)  
9 Holy Qur’an (12:14)
So the brothers asked their father Ya‘qūb عليه السلام if they could take Yūsuf عليه السلام with them and he expressed reservation. He was worried something might happen to Yūsuf عليه السلام, maybe the desert wolves might eat him. His other sons convinced him that how can a wolf eat him when there are so many of us, we are a strong group. We will look after him and make sure nothing happens to him. In this way the brothers convinced their father and the next day they would take Yūsuf عليه السلام with them and carry out their plan.

The following day, the brothers took Yūsuf عليه السلام into the Wilderness.

So when they went away with him and were determined to put him in the bottom of the pit.

They took him to a well and threw him inside. They showed no mercy to their younger brother and left him there. Imagine how sad and lonely Yūsuf عليه السلام must have felt all alone in that deep, dark well and the fact that it was none other than his own brothers who had done this horrible deed.

10 Holy Qur’an (12:15)
Allāh then told Yūsuf:

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ لَتَنْتَبِئُنَّهُمْ بِأَمْرِهِمْ هَذَا وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ

And we revealed to him (Yūsuf), you will one day remind them of this deed of theirs and they will not recognize you.

So Allāh told him not to worry, he will be safe and one day he will see them all again and remind them of what they did.

So now Yūsuf is in the well, the brothers need to come up with an excuse to explain Yūsuf’s absence, what will they tell their father?

They decided that they will tell their father that a wolf had eaten him. Their father had already expressed fear that this might happen to him. So how could they prove that Yūsuf had been eaten by a wolf?

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11 Holy Qur’ān (12:15)
The brothers had to prove Yūsuf had been attacked, so they took his shirt and decided they needed to cover it in blood. The brothers went a caught a ram and killed it. Yūsuf shirt was then dipped in the ram’s blood. Their father will recognize his shirt and see it covered in blood and believe in their story.

وَجَآءُوا أَبا هُمْ عِشَآء يَبْكُونَ

And they came to their father at night time weeping.

The brothers then returned home pretending to be upset because they had to show that their younger brother had just been killed.

قالُواْ يَأَبَانَا إِنَّا ذَهَبۡنَا نَسۡتَبِيْقَ
وَتَرَكۡنَا يُوسُفَ عِندَ مَتَبَعِنَا فَأَصَلُّهُ الۡدَُّبَّ وَمَا أَنتَ بِمُؤۡنِنِنْ

They said, “Oh our Father, we went racing with one another and we left Yūsuf with our belongings and the wolf ate him. You will never believe us, howsoever truthful we may be.”

12 Holy Qur’ān (12:16)
13 Holy Qur’ān (12:17)
And they came with fake blood on his shirt.

Now when Ya‘qūb saw the shirt, he knew something wasn’t right. Ya‘qūb was a Prophet, he was a wise man. If a wolf had eaten up Yūsuf then his shirt would be all torn up, but this shirt wasn’t ripped, it had only been dipped in blood.

He (Ya‘qūb) said, “Rather your inner desires have tempted you to do something. So patience is best. It is Allāh whose help is sought against what you describe.”

So the brothers’ left Yūsuf in a well, they came to their father with his shirt dipped in false blood and their father knew something was not right, but he remained patient.

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14 Holy Qur‘ān (12:18)
15 Holy Qur‘ān (12:18)
Chapter 3 – From the Well to the Palace

The brothers had returned home in the evening crying and lied to their father. They said we were racing and left Yusuf with our belongings when a wolf came and ate him. They showed him Yusuf shirt covered in blood but their father knew something was not quite right.

Yusuf was now in the well all alone, it was deep, dark, and lonely. His father Yaqub must have also been wondering what has happened to his son that he loved so much. Imagine how we feel when someone we love gets lost even for a little while. Let’s see what happened next.
A group of people were travelling through the desert and were thirsty. They saw the well and sent a person to go and get some water.

And some wayfarers came (meaning some travelers) and they sent their water-drawer (the person who gets water for them), so he let down his bucket.

He puts his bucket in the well and what does he find?

He said “What a good news, here is a boy”, and they kept him hidden in their merchandise while Allāh was aware of what they were doing.

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16 Holy Qur’ān (12:19)
17 Holy Qur’ān (12:19)
So this group found this boy and hid him so they could sell him later on. They travelled all the way from the land of Can‘ān where Yūsuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَّمَ used to live, to the land of Egypt.

They took Yūsuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَّمَ to the market and put him up for sale!

وَشَرَّوْهُ يِثَّمَنَ بِجَوْهَرٍ دَرَّاهِمٍ مَّعْدُودةٍ وَكَانُوا فِيهِ مِنْ الْرُّهْدِينِ

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

So Yūsuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَّمَ was sold and his master was a leader, he was an ‘Azīz which is a title given to mighty person like a king.
The ‘Azīz took Yūsuf home to his palace and said

وَقَالَ

الذِّي أَشْتَرَنَّهُ مِن مَّصْرٍ لِأَمْرِ أَمْرَائِهِ

أَسْتَرَمَى مَتَوَلِّهَ عَسِيَّ أَن يَنفَعَنَا أَوْ يَنْتَخِدَهُ،َ وَلَدًا. ١٩

And the one who brought him from Egypt said to his wife, “Make his stay graceful, he may be useful for us, or we may adopt him as a son.”

So Yūsuf went to live in the palace with the person who purchased him. He had gone from being inside a well in one country all the way to a palace in a faraway land. But the problems of Yūsuf did not end there.

Yūsuf was a very handsome young man. The wife of the ‘Azīz was attracted to him. But Yūsuf would not go near her.

١٩ Holy Qur’ān (12:21)
One day she made a plan. She was in the house with Yūsuf when she locked the doors and told him to come to her.

He said, “I seek refuge with Allāh, Indeed he is my master (meaning her husband) He has given me a good place to stay, indeed the wrong doers do not prosper.”

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

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20 Holy Qur’ān (12:23)
21 Holy Qur’ān (12:25)
So the Master’s wife lied to her husband and said that Yūsuf had bad intentions with her when in actual fact it was the other way around. Yūsuf now tried to prove his innocence.

قَالَ هِيْ رَؤُودَتِي عَن نَّفْسِي

He said, she had tried to attract me

Now how are they going to prove who is telling the truth? Was Yūsuf saying the truth or was it his Master’s wife?

وَشَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ مِنْ أُهْلِهَا إِنْ كَانَ قَمِيصُهُ قُدَّمَ مِنْ فَبِلٍ فَصَدَقَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ

A Witness from her family said that if his shirt has been ripped from the front side, then she is saying the truth and he is a liar.

وَإِن كَانَ قَمِيصُهُ قُدَّمَ مِنْ دُبُرٍ فَكَذَبَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ الْصَّدِيقِينَ

And if his shirt is ripped form the back then she is lying and he is from among the truthful.

22 Holy Qur’ān (12:26)
23 Holy Qur’ān (12:26)
24 Holy Qur’ān (12:27)
So this was the test, if he had tried to do something to her then she would have ripped his shirt from the front as he would be facing her. But if he was running away and she was trying to do something to him, then his shirt would be ripped from behind.

قَلْلَمَا رَاءَ قَميصَهُ وَقَدْ مِن دُبْرٍ قَالَ إِنَّهُ وَمِن كَيْدَكُنَّ إِنَّ كَيْدَكُنَّ عَظِيمٌ

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

25 Holy Qur’an (12:28)
So the Master knew Yūsuf was innocent. However Yūsuf kept on getting tested and his Master’s wife said.

وَلَيْنَ لَمْ يَفْعَلْ مَا أَمَرْهُ ۛ لَيْسَ سِجِّنَٰنَ وَلَيْكُونَا مِنَ الْصَّغِيرِينَ

And should he not follow my command, he shall be imprisoned and will be from the disgraced.

قَالَ رَبِّنَا أَحْبَبْ إِلَيْهِ مَا يُدْعُونَنِيّ

Yūsuf said, “My Lord, the prison is dearer to me than what these women invite me to do.”

ثُمَّ بَدَا لَهُم مِّنْ بَعْضِ مَا رَأَوْا أَلَا يَسْجُنُّهُ ۗ حَتَّى حَيْثُ

Later on, even after having seen the clear signs (that Yūsuf was innocent) they deemed it proper to imprison him for some time.

So now Yūsuf is being tested again by Allāh. He was left in a well, then brought all the way to Egypt. He was then sold for a few silver coins. His Master was good to him but his Master’s wife fell in love with him and tried to call him towards

26 Holy Qur’ān (12:32)
27 Holy Qur’ān (12:33)
28 Holy Qur’ān (12:35)
her. When her husband came, she lied and said that it was Yūsuf عليه السلام who had tried to come towards her.

Her husband saw his shirt and because it was ripped from behind, he knew it was his wife who was not telling the truth. After a while Yūsuf عليه السلام was put into prison. So what happened next?
Chapter 4 – The Prisoners Dreams

So Yūsuf was now put into a prison. Even though he was innocent, he was imprisoned. The people in the prison knew that Yūsuf was a noble man with great knowledge. So one day two men came to him. Both of them had a dream and wanted to know what their dreams meant.

And two men entered the prison with him, one of them said, “I have seen myself pressing wine”. And the other said “I saw myself carrying bread on my head and the birds were eating from it”. Let us know its interpretation, we see you are a man of good deeds.

Holy Qur’ān (12:36)
Now Yūsuf was a great Messenger of Allāh and Allāh had given him to ability to interpret dreams.

Now after a while Yūsuf told them what they wanted to hear, he interpreted both dreams.

30 Holy Qur’ān (12:37)
31 Holy Qur’ān (12:37)
“Oh my fellow prisoners, one of you will serve wine to his Master, while the other will be crucified and birds will eat from his head. Destined is the matter you are asking about.”

So now Yūsuf عليه السلام had told both of them the meaning of their dreams. He added one more thing.

And Yūsuf عليه السلام said to the one whom he believed likely to be released out of the two, “Tell you’re Master about me”. Then Satan made him forget to tell his Master, so he (Yūsuf عليه السلام) remained in prison for a few years.

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32 Holy Qur’ān (12:41)
33 Holy Qur’ān (12:42)
So Yūsuf spoke to one of the prisoners. He knew one will become a wine-bearing and the other will be crucified. He told the wine-bearer that when you are released, mention me in front of your Lord. When his Lord hears about Yūsuf and finds out about how he had been falsely accused and imprisoned, maybe he will be freed.

The two men now left the prison. As Yūsuf had foretold, one of them became a wine-bearer for the King. The other man was crucified.

The wine-bearer forgot to tell the king about Yūsuf so now he had to stay in prison for a few more years. Did Yūsuf manage to prove his innocence and get released from prison?
Chapter 5 – The Kings Dream

Two prisoners had come to Yūsuf so he could give them the interpretation of their dreams. One of them had a dream that he was pressing wine and the other said he was carrying bread on his head and the birds were eating from it.

Yūsuf told them that one would become a wine-bearer and the other would become crucified and the birds would eat from his head. He had told the wine-bearer that make sure you tell your Master about me. The wine-bearer had forgotten to tell the king because Shayṭān had made him forget. And this resulted in Yūsuf spending some more years in Jail.

It just so happened that the King of Egypt started to see strange dreams. What did he see?

And the King said (to the people in his court) “I saw (in my dream) seven fat cows being eaten by seven lean (skinny) cows. And seven ears of grain

34 Holy Qur’an (12:43)
which are green and (seven) others which are dry. Oh people, tell me about my dream, if you can interpret dreams.”

So now all the people heard about the dream. They told the king don’t worry about it. When a person sleeps they see lots of things in their dreams so don’t concern yourself.

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

There was one person however present in the court who would be able to find out what the Kings dream really meant. And this was the wine-bearer.

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35 Holy Qur’ān (12:44)
And said the one who was released (from the prison, meaning the wine-bearer) out of the two, and recalled (meaning remembered Yūsuf) after a long time. “I shall tell you it’s interpretation, just send me (to Yūsuf).”

So now the wine-bearer goes back to the prison to look for Yūsuf so he can ask him the interpretation of the dream. He sees Yūsuf and says:

“Yūsuf, Oh the truthful one, tell us about seven fat cows eaten by seven lean ones (skinny ones) and seven ears of grain which are green and others (seven) which are dry, so that I may go back to the people and they may know (the meaning of the dream).”

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36 Holy Qur’ān (12:45)
37 Holy Qur’ān (12:46)
Now Yūsuf  not only told him the meaning of the dream but also explained what they needed to do. The meaning of the dream was that for 7 years, they will have a good harvest, lots of food and crops. But then after this, there will follow 7 years of drought where there will be no food and crops. So what advice did he give?

٤٨  قَالَ تَزَرَّعُونَ سَبۡعَ سِنِينَ دَأَبا فَمَا حُصِدَتْمُ فَذَرُوهُ فِی سُنۢبُلِهِ إِلَّا قَلِیلًا مِّمَّا تَأْصِفُونَ

He (Yūsuf  عليه السلام) said, “You will grow crops for seven years continuously, so what you have harvested, leave it in its ear, except a little which you eat.”

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38 Holy Qur’an (12:47)
Then seven hard years shall come after that, which shall eat up what you have stored for them, except a little which you preserve (to sow).

So for seven years they will save lots of food, and when the seven hard years come they will eat what they had saved over those years, except the seeds which they need to plant again so more crops can grow.

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39 Holy Qur’ān (12:48)
Then there shall come after that a year in which people will have rains and in which they will extract juices.

So in this year, the crops will grow again people have lots of food again.

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40 Holy Qur’an (12:49)
The wine-bearer now went back to the king to tell him the meaning of his dream. When the king heard, he became very happy and relieved. He asked the wine-bearer who told you about this, he said it as Yūsuf عليه السلام. So the king told the wine-bearer to go and bring Yūsuf عليه السلام to him.

وَقَالَ ٱلۡمَلِكُ ٱئۡتُونِ بِهِ ۖ فَلَمها جَآءَهُ ٱلرهسُولُ قَالَ أَرۡجِعِ إِلَّا رَبِّكَ فَسۡ 41 عَلِيۡم

So the king told the wine bearer to go and bring Yūsuf عليه السلام to him. So when the Messenger came to Yūsuf عليه السلام, he said go back to your Lord and ask him, what is the case of the women who cut their hands? Surely my Lord knows well their guile.

So Yūsuf عليه السلام wanted the king to investigate his case. If he came out just like that then people would say that this is the same person who was unfaithful to his master. So before he came out he wanted his innocence to be known.

The king then asked the women and his masters wife admitted that she was the one who had tried to do bad things with him

41 Holy Qur’an (12:50)
rather than Yūsuf. Once she had admitted that she was in the wrong.

Yūsuf then said “That was because he (his master) may know that I did not betray him in his absence, and that Allāh does not lead the guile of the betrayers to success.”

So Yūsuf was finally free after years of false imprisonment. His innocence had been proven and now he had to help the king and the country to make sure they survive the seven years of drought which are about to come.

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42 Holy Qur’ān (12:52)
Chapter 6 – The Storehouses

Now Yūsuf عليه السلام had been declared free from prison as his innocence had been proven. He was also able to interpret dreams and interpreted the Kings dream which was worrying him greatly. There would be 7 years of good harvest followed by 7 years of famine.

Egypt was a very fertile land and there were many storehouses for grain, yet they were empty. The reason was that the people who ran them were not trustworthy, they would not fear Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. Now it was very important that these storehouses were looked after properly so the grain could be kept safe in them until the time would come when they needed it. If they didn’t look after the grain properly then after 7 years when the famine would come, they would have no food.

Yūsuf عليه السلام knew about these problems, what did he do?

قَالَ أَجْعَلْنِي عَلَىْ خَزَآئِنِ ٱلَّذِيْنِ ٱلَّذِيْنِ ٱلْأَرْضِ إِنِّيْ حَفِيظٌ عَلَيْهِم

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

43 Holy Qur’ān (12:55)
The King accepted Yūsuf عليه السلام request and now he became in charge of all of the storehouses in the whole of Egypt!

Allāh ﻫُوَيْنِي ﻧَرَضَيْنِي ﺑِنَآَايْنِهِ ﻛَذَٰلِكَ ﻣَكَّنَّا لَيِوُسُفَ فِي ٱلَّٰٓضَرِّ يَتَبَوهَأَ مَنْهَا ﻫَٰٓيَّثُ ِيَّشَاءُ 44

And thus we gave Yūsuf عليه السلام power in the land. He could settle in it wherever he wished.

44 Holy Qur’ān (12:56)
Now just as Yūsuf had foretold from interpreting the Kings dream, they had 7 good years of plenty and now the famine started. Yūsuf had managed to store enough grain so everyone would be able eat and not stay hungry in this testing time.

This famine just didn’t affect Egypt but also Canān where his family used to live. They were also struggling. They had heard that there was a merciful man in Egypt who looked after the Storehouses. People could go to him and he would give them some food. Ya‘qūb sent his ten sons with some money to go and buy some food.
Yūsuf’s other brother, Binyāmīn, was not sent with them as his father wanted to keep him close. He had already lost Yūsuf and did not want to lose another son as well. So the brothers left Canān and made their way to Egypt.

Little did they know that the man they wanted to go and meet was none other than their own flesh and blood, their own brother, Yūsuf. It had been years since they had left him inside the well that day so they thought he had passed away long ago.

So what happened next?

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

Now at that moment in time Yūsuf could have exposed them, he could have turned them away, he could have had them imprisoned for trying to kill him. But such was the mercy of Yūsuf that he did not disgrace them.

Yūsuf talked to them for a while and asked them where they were from. He knew too well where they were from but he still asked.

45 Holy Qur’ān (12:58)
They replied we are from Can‘ān. He then asked them who their father was. They replied that their father was Ya‘qūb عليه السلام the son of Ishāq عليه السلام, the son of Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. What an amazing lineage.

He then asked them, do you have another brother. They replied that they have another brother whose name is Bīnyāmīn.

Yūsuf عليه السلام then asked them, why didn’t he come with you? They replied that their father would not let him go because he didn’t like to be far away from him.

Yūsuf عليه السلام then asked, why does he not let him go, is he a very young child? They replied, no, we once had a brother called Yūsuf. He once went with us and we went to run races and left him with our belongings. A wolf then came and ate him.
When he heard this, Yūsuf laughed to himself but he didn’t say anything. He longed to see his brother Bīnāmīn and wanted to find a way to try and get him to Egypt.

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

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

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46 Holy Qur’ān (12:59)
47 Holy Qur’ān (12:60)
So Yūsuf ʿalla al-salām told his brothers, if they don’t bring Binyāmīn, then you will get no more food from me and don’t bother coming here again. If they can’t get more food from here then where else could they go because there was a famine?

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

Yūsuf ʿalla al-salām also had another plan.

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

48 Holy Qur’ān (12:61)
49 Holy Qur’ān (12:62)
Yūsuf ʿalā-ʾl-salām told his people to put the brothers’ money (which they had used to pay for the food) back into their camel-packs. When they get home and realize they still have the money, this should further persuade them to come back to Egypt.
Chapter 7 – The Brothers Return Home

The brothers went back to their father Ya‘qūb عليه السلام. They had not recognized Yūsuf عليه السلام when they went to Egypt. They thought he had passed away long ago in the well. They now had to find a way to convince their father to send their other younger brother Binyāmīn with them to Egypt. Long ago, they had convinced him to send Yūsuf عليه السلام with them and their father hadn’t seen him since, will he send Binyāmīn?

فَلَمَا رَجَعُوٓاْ إِلََِٰٓ أِبَنَا نُنِعَ نِنها ٱلۡكَيۡلُ
فَاَرُسِلُ مَعَنَا أُخَانَا نَسْتَنۡتَلُ وَإِنها لَُْۥ لَحََٰفِظُونَ

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

50 Holy Qurʾān (12:63)
He (Ya‘qūb عليه السلام) said, “Shall I trust you about him as I trusted you earlier about his brother? Well Allāh is the best guardian and he is the Most-Merciful of all the Merciful.

Now Yūsuf عليه السلام had put the brothers’ money back into their camel packs unbeknown to them and they found their money. They told Ya‘qūb عليه السلام what else should we want. He has given our money back to us. We can go back again, protect our brother Binyāmīn and add the measure of another camel as well.

This time Ya‘qūb عليه السلام wanted them to make a firm pledge that they will not let anything happen to their brother.

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51 Holy Qur‘ān (12:64)
قَالَ رُسِلَهُۥ نَعَكُمۡ حَتَّى تُؤۡتُونِ مَوۡثِيقٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لَتَأۡذَنۡنِي بِهِۦ إِلَّا أن يُحاَظِ يِحْكُمُ فَلَمَّا وَقِيتُوهُمۡ قَالَ اللَّهُ عَلَى مَا نَقُولُ وُكَيْلٌ

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

He then gave them some advice.

وَقَالَ يََٰبَنَِه لََ تَدۡخُلُواْ نِنۢ بَاب وََٰحِد بۡوََٰ وَٱدۡخُلُواْ نِنۡ أ بۡنُۡ نَۡقَة

And he (Ya’qūb عليه السلام) said “Oh my sons, do not enter (the city) all of you from the same gate, rather enter from different gates.”

52 Holy Qur’ān (12:66)
53 Holy Qur’ān (12:67)
So the brothers did what their father had told them to do and entered from different gates. Yūsuf  finally saw his brother Binyāmīn after many years, imagine his happiness.

وَلَمَّا دَخَلُواْ عَلَّيْ يُوسُفَ ءَاوَىَٰٓ إِلََۡهِ أَخَاهُ قَالَ إِنّ ۖ أَنَا أُحْوَىْ فَلاَ تَبۡنَّسۡ بِمَا كََنُواْ يَعۡمَلُونَ

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

Binyāmīn was very happy to see his brother who he thought had passed away long ago. Now Yūsuf  wanted his brother to stay with him, he didn’t want to send him back so he could talk to him every day. He needed to come up with a plan as he just couldn’t say that he is not allowed to go back. He also can’t tell them he is their brother. So what did he do?

54 Holy Qur’ān (12:69)
Later, when he equipped them with their provision, he placed the bowl in the camel-pack of his brother. Then an announcer shouted out “Oh people of the caravan, you are thieves.”

Yūsuf got a precious drinking cup and placed it in Binyāmīn’s camel-pack. He then sent his people after his brothers and accused them of being thieves.

Turning towards them, they (the brothers) said (to Yūsuf) “What are you missing?”

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55 Holy Qur‘ān (12:70)
56 Holy Qur‘ān (12:71)
They said “We are missing the measuring bowl of the king, and whoever brings it back shall deserve a camel-load, and I stand a surety for it.”

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

They said “What is the punishment if you are liars?”
They said “Its punishment? The one in whose saddlebag it is found shall himself be the punishment. This is how we punish the wrong doers.”

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

So the cup was found in Binyāmīn’s camel-pack. What happened next?

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60 Holy Qur’ān (12:75)
61 Holy Qur’ān (12:76)
Yūsuf had been visited by his brothers and he had finally been reunited with Binyāmīn after many years. Yūsuf did not want to send him back with them and wanted him to stay with him so he thought of a plan. A precious drinking cup was put in Binyāmīn’s camel pack and Yūsuf sent his men after them to see where it was.

The cup had been found in Binyāmīn’s camel-pack just as Yūsuf had planned. So what did the brothers say when this happened?

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

Imagine that, his brothers were not even ashamed in lying, but Yūsuf stayed patient and didn’t say anything. Now the brothers were worried, how would they go home without

62 Holy Qur’ān (12:77)
Binyāmīn? How would they face their father? They had to think of something to convince Yūsuf عليه السلام to send him back.

قالوا يَا أَبَا الْعَزِيزِ إِنَّ لَهُ أَبَا شَيْخًا كَبِيرًا فَخُذْ أَحَدَكُمَا مَكَانَهُ وَإِنَّا نَرَكُ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

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

قالَ مَعَادُ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَأْخُذَ إِلَّا مَنْ وَجِدَنَا مَتَعَنَا عِندَهُ إِنَّا إِذَا لَظَلِيمُونَ

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

63 Holy Qur’ān (12:78)
64 Holy Qur’ān (12:79)
So now the brothers had to leave Binyāmīn behind, what are they going to do? They had to think of an excuse before they go back to their father Yaʿqūb ﷺ. They had already lost one brother and now the other one as well!

So when they lost hope in him, they went aside for consultation. The oldest of them said “Do you not know that your father has taken a pledge from you in the name of Allāh, while you had defaulted earlier in the case of Yūsuf ﷺ. I shall never leave this land until my father permits me or Allāh decides about me. He is the best of all Judges.”

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65 Holy Qur’ān (12:80)
“Go back to your father and say, our father, your son has committed theft, and we do not testify except what we know and we could not guard against the unseen.”

So the brothers went back to Can‘ān to their father Ya‘qūb ʿa.s. and told him what had happened. When Ya‘qūb ʿa.s. heard what had happened he knew that Allāh ʿazza wajjal was testing him.

He (Ya‘qūb ʿa.s.) said “Rather, your inner desires have seduced you to something. So patience is best. Hopefully Allāh ʿazza wajjal may bring them all together. Surely, He is the All-knowing, All-Wise.”

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66 Holy Qur‘ān (12:81)
67 Holy Qur‘ān (12:83)
He (Ya‘qūb عليه السلام) turned away from them and said, “How sad I am about Yūsuf عليه السلام” and his eyes turned white with sorrow and he was suppressing (his anger and grief).

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

He (Ya‘qūb عليه السلام) said “I do not complain of my anguish and sorrow to anyone but Allāh, and I know from Allāh what you do not know.”

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68 Holy Qur’ān (12:84)
69 Holy Qur’ān (12:85)
70 Holy Qur’ān (12:86)
Yaʿqūb ʿAlayhissalām now addressed his sons and said:

يَبَنِيَ أَذْهَبْوُا فَتَحَسَّسُوا مِن يُوسُفَ وَأَخِيَّهُ وَلَا تَأْيِسُوا
مِن رُوحِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَيَا يَأْيُسُّ مِن رُوحِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا أَلْقَوْمٌ أَكْفَرُونَ

“Oh my sons, go and search for Yūsuf and his brother, and do not lose hope in the mercy of Allāh. In fact, only the infidels (disbelievers) lose hope in Allāh’s mercy.”

So Yaʿqūb ʿAlayhissalām now sent his sons a third time to Egypt. The first time they had gone to get food, the second time they had returned with their brother Binyāmīn and now they were going a third time to try and find their brothers. Yaʿqūb ʿAlayhissalām told them not to lose hope in Allāh’s mercy and this is a lesson for us as well.

71 Holy Qur’ān (12:87)
Chapter 9 – The Secret is Uncovered

Ya‘qūb عليه السلام had told his sons to go to Egypt to look for their brothers and not to lose hope in Allāh سُبُحَانَهُ وَتَّعَالَā mercy. They now entered Egypt for a third time.

فَلَمَّا دَاхَلُوا عَلَيْهِ قَالُوا يََٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلْعَزِيزُ مَسِئَنا وَأُهِلُّنا ٱلضُّّرُ وَجَعَلَنا بِبَضَعَةٍ مَسِئَةٌ فَأَوَّفَ لَنَا ُٰٰٰتَٰٰلَكِئُلَ وَتَصَدَّقَ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَزِيِّنَ ٱلۡمُتَصَدِّقِينَ

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

Now Yūsuf was listening to his brother complaining, these were the sons of a Prophets, Subḥānallāh. He thought to himself how long can I keep hiding the truth from them that I am their brother. He longed to see his father as well, who he hadn’t seen for many years.

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72 Holy Qur’ān (12:88)
Yūsuf addressed his brothers:

 قالُ هَلَ عَلِمْتُمْ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ بِيُوسُفَ وَأَخِيٍّ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ جَهَلُونَ

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

Now only the brothers knew what they had done to Yūsuf, no one else knew. Who could this person be who is asking them about their little brother, it can only mean one thing. Who is this person, the one who is the ‘Azīz of Egypt, the one who is in control of all of the storehouses, the one who has given us food? They knew then who this was.

73 Holy Qurʾān (12:89)
They said, “Is it that you are in fact, Yūsuf?”

قَالَ أَنَا يُوسُفُ

وَهَنَّدَّا أَخَيَّ قَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّهُ مَنْ يَتَقَيْ وَيَصْبِرْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

He (Yūsuf) said “I am Yūsuf, and this is my brother. Allāh has been very kind to us. Surely, whoever fears Allāh and observes patience, Allāh does not let the reward of such good people to go to waste.”

قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ عَاثَرَكَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا وَإِن كُنتَ لَخَاطِئٌ

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

Even after all they had done to Yūsuf, he did not blame them or seek revenge.

74 Holy Qur’ān (12:90)
75 Holy Qur’ān (12:90)
76 Holy Qur’ān (12:91)
He (Yūsuf ) said, "No reproach upon you today! May Allāh forgive you, and He is the Most-Merciful of all the Merciful.”

Now Yūsuf  had been reunited with his brothers, the only thing left was his parents. He had wanted to see his father for a very long time. His father Ya‘qūb  loved him dearly and he also longed to see his son. He never lost faith in Allāh  and he never lost hope.

Yūsuf  had found out that his father had lost his sight, he had gone blind because he had been crying greatly and had been very upset due to losing his son.

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77 Holy Qur’ān (12:92)
Yūsuf said:

آذْهَبُوا بَقِمِيصِي هَنَّدَا فَأَلْقُوهُ عَلَّ وَجْهِ أَبِي يَأْتَ بِصَيْرًا وَأَثْوَى بِآَهْلِكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ٧٨

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

So now a Messenger sets out from Egypt with the shirt of Yūsuf to put over the blessed face of his father Ya‘qūb. The brothers also now set off to bring their father back to Egypt to be reunited with his sons.

78 Holy Qur’ān (12:93)
Chapter 10 – A Beautiful Ending

Yusūf had sent a Messenger with his shirt to put over the face of his father Ya‘qūb. The Messenger was ahead of the brothers and as he approached Canān, Ya‘qūb could sense something.

وَلَمَّا فَصَلَّتِ الْعِيرُ قَالَ أَبُوهُمُ إِلَيْهِ لَأَفْجَادُ رِيحَ يُوسُفَ تَفْقَهُونَ

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

79 Holy Qur‘ān (12:94)
When he said this, the people replied:

قَالُواْ تَٱللَّهِ إِنَّكَ لَفِِ ضَلََٰلِكَ ٱلۡقَدِيمِ

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

Little did they know, Ya‘qūb عليه السلام was saying the truth!

فَلَمَّا أَن جَآءَ ٱلۡبَشِيُۡ أَفَلَمۡ أَقُل لَّهُمۡ إِنّ لَمۡ أَأۡلَمۡ أَعۡلَمُ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعۡلَمُونَ

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

Now Ya‘qūb عليه السلام could see once again and his sons also returned to Can‘ān. They saw their father while they were full of remorse and regret for the actions which they had committed.

80 Holy Qur‘ān (12:95)
81 Holy Qur‘ān (12:96)
They said “Our father, pray to Allāh to forgive us our sins. Surely, we have been guilty.”

He (Ya‘qūb عليه السلام) said “I shall pray to my Lord to forgive you. Surely, he is the Most Forgiving, Very-Merciful.”

Ya‘qūb عليه السلام then travelled to Egypt with his sons and was reunited with his son Yūsuf عليه السلام who he had not seen for many years. Imagine the immense joy and happiness when they saw each other. Imagine how Ya‘qūb عليه السلام felt when he saw his beloved son was now the ‘Azīz of Egypt!

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

82 Holy Qur’ān (12:97)
83 Holy Qur’ān (12:98)
84 Holy Qur’ān (12:99)
This was a very memorable and happy day in Egypt when the family of Yūsuf ʿalā al-salām came. So what did Yūsuf ʿalā al-salām do?

And he (Yūsuf ʿalā al-salām) raised his parents up on the throne and they all fell before him in Prostration.

And he (Yūsuf ʿalā al-salām) said “My Father, here is the fulfilment of my early dream. My Lord has made it come true. He favoured me when he released me from prison, and brought you from the countryside after Satan had caused a rift between me and my brothers. Surely, my Lord does what He will in a subtle way. Surely, He is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.”

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85 Holy Qur’ān (12:100)
86 Holy Qur’ān (12:100)
So the dream where Yūsuf ʿālīs had seen 11 stars and the sun and the moon bowing down to him in actual fact represented, his father, his mother and brothers all bowing down to him. And so the dream was fulfilled after many many years.

Yūsuf ʿālīs stayed in Egypt and with his brother and parents. The Banī Isrāʿīl flourished in the land until much later on when the Egyptians started to view them as outsiders and the Banī Isrāʿīl had lost their way. This was when Allāh ʿālīs decided to send another Messenger Mūsā ʿālīs to liberate them.

Allāh ʿālīs says:

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

87 Holy Qurʾān (12:111)
There were lots of lessons in this story for us, never to lose hope, and to always have faith in Allāh ﷻ. How jealousy can cause people to do horrible things and how forgiveness can heal all the wounds. May Allāh ﷻ give us all the ability to forgive, live happily with our families, and give us the same type of love for our parents as Yūsuf ﷺ had for his parents and the same type of love for our children as Ya‘qūb ﷺ had for Yūsuf ﷺ.

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