

CHAPTER 12, YUSUF (JOSEPH) (PART 2 OF 2)

Rating: 5.0

Description: A brief commentary of Chapter 12 (verses 67-111) of the Holy Quran. Joseph has become an important man in the Egyptian government and his brothers have approached him for grain. The story concludes with Joseph revealing his identity and reuniting with his family.

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Verses 67-76 The brothers return

Jacob advises his sons to not all enter the city by the same gate as a precaution but at the same time tells them that this will not help them against the will of God. All power is in God's hands, says Jacob.

The sons of Jacob present themselves to Joseph and he draws his youngest brother (Benjamin) aside and reveals his identity to him. Joseph gives his brothers their portion of grain but places his drinking cup in his youngest brother's pack. Someone calls out and accuses the caravan of thievery. 'What is lost?' the brothers ask. 'The King's drinking cup', is the reply, and 'whoever returns it will be given a camel's load of grain'.

The brothers respond that they did not come to make mischief. Joseph's men ask the brothers what penalty should apply if they are found to be lying. They answered, 'the penalty will be the enslavement of the person in whose bag the cup is found: this is how we punish wrongdoers.' Joseph did not want his brother punished under the laws of Egypt but wanted the opportunity to keep his brother with him while the others returned to their father Jacob. The bags are searched and the cup is found in the youngest brother's belongings. God explains that He devised a plan for Joseph and that He will raise the status of whomsoever He wills.

Verses 77-82

The brothers allude to Benjamin's brother (Joseph) being a thief, but Joseph controls himself and does not disclose his identity. The brothers beg that one of them be allowed to stay in his brother's stead; this is refused. Finally the eldest brother, remembering the pledge he gave to his father, vows to stay in Egypt until Jacob gives him permission to leave or God decides on another course of action. The remaining brothers return to their father Jacob saying, we tried to keep our pledge but we could not have foreseen that your son would steal. Ask the people we travelled with if you

need proof.

Verses 83-86

Their father said, 'No! Your souls have prompted you to do wrong!' He turned away from them saying 'Alas, my grief for Joseph!'. Jacob's eyes went white with grief (he was blind) and the brothers said, 'If you don't stop thinking about Joseph you will ruin your health or even die.' He said, "I only complain of my suffering and my grief to God, and I know from God that which you do not know'. When this new sorrow overwhelmed Jacob, his first reaction was to be patient. He knew, without a shred of doubt, that the affairs of his beloved youngest sons were controlled by God.

Verses 87-98

Jacob said, 'My sons, go and seek news of Joseph and his brother and do not despair of God's mercy— only disbelievers despair of God's mercy.' So they presented themselves before Joseph without knowing his real identity. They explained that misfortune had afflicted their family and asked Joseph to be charitable towards God, they said, rewards the charitable. Joseph replied by 'Do you now realize what you did to Joseph and his brother when you were ignorant?' The brothers were astounded and asked if he was Joseph and he said, 'I am Joseph'. They said God really did favour you over all of us; we were in the wrong. Joseph replied that no reproach would be on them and may God forgive them.

Joseph then handed them his own shirt telling them to lay it over their father's face and all would be well, then he asked them to come back altogether. Back at home Jacob was saying that he could smell Joseph, and those around him looked upon him with derision thinking him lost in an old illusion. When the shirt was placed on Jacob's face his eyesight returned and he said, 'Did I not tell you that I have knowledge from God that you do not have?' The brothers asked their father to ask God to forgive them and he replied that his Lord is the Most Forgiving and the Most Merciful.

Verses 99-101

Later when the whole family was presented before Joseph he drew his parents close to him and welcomed them telling them that, God willing they will be safe. They all bowed down to Joseph and he commented to his father that this was the fulfilment of the dream he had so long ago. Joseph said that God had been gracious towards him after Satan had sowed discord between he and his brothers. Joseph prays to God acknowledging his blessings and asking to live and die as a Muslim and be joined with the righteous.

The story of Joseph is a lesson for all of humankind. True patience and the ability to forgive are lofty characteristics worthy of inculcating.

Verses 102-111

That concludes the story of Joseph and in this final 10-verse epilogue God tells Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, that this was the story of which he had no previous knowledge and that he was not present when the brothers made their evil plans. God then tells him that he cannot make the people believe no matter how much he desires to do so. God also mentions that Muhammad asks for no reward yet people ignore the signs in the heavens and the earth and only believe in God while joining partners with Him. How can they be so sure that an overwhelming punishment or the Last Hour will not come upon them when they least expect it? Can the people not see the lessons all around them; how can they travel and see the signs of what happens to the disbelievers and still not understand, do they not have a mind? Here is a lesson for those who understand, this is no fabrication; it a confirmation of the truth and an explanation for everything ('everything' refers to either the story of Joseph or the religion as a whole, or perhaps both).

In this chapter God was advising Prophet Muhammad that the road may be long and difficult but the ultimate victory belongs to those with God-consciousness and patience.

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