



CHAPTER 12

Yūsuf: Joseph

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 12 sections; 111 verses)

This chapter receives its title from the story with which it deals. The entire chapter gives a continuous account of the history of Joseph, the first three verses and the concluding section both pointing to the purpose which underlies the story. It is not, in fact, a mere narrative, but foretells the ultimate triumph of the Holy Prophet, who was to be turned out of his native city, and also the final submission of those who were plotting against his very life.

The chapter deals with three kinds of vision, viz., the vision of a prophet (Joseph), which pointed to his ultimate triumph and the triumph of Truth (vv. 4 and 100); the vision of a king, relating to the material welfare of those under his care (vv. 43–49), and the visions of ordinary men, relating to their own adversity or prosperity (vv. 36–41). The grander the purpose, the longer the vision takes for its due fulfilment; Joseph's vision took a whole lifetime, the king's vision fourteen years, while the visions of ordinary men come to immediate fulfilment. The Holy Prophet doubtless obtained consolation from these facts, as he had before him a very grand object — the reformation, first of the Arabs and then of the whole world.

In the arrangement of the chapters, the connection of this chapter with the one preceding it is clear. That chapter deals with the histories of several well-known prophets and the fate of their opponents. This prophetically states that the mutual dealings of the Holy Prophet and his enemies would be similar to the dealings of Joseph and his brethren, there being persecution on one side and entire forgiveness and merciful dealing on the other.

The chapter belongs to the same period as the other chapters of this group.

SECTION 1: Joseph's Vision

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 I, Allāh, am the Seer. These are the verses of the Book that makes manifest.

2 Surely We have revealed it — an Arabic Qur'ān — that you may understand.

3 We narrate to thee the best of narratives,^a in that We have revealed to thee this Qur'ān, though before this thou wast of those unaware.^b

4 When Joseph said to his father: O my father, I saw eleven stars and the sun and the moon — I saw them making obeisance to me.^a

5 He said: O my son, relate not thy dream to thy brethren, lest they devise a plan against thee. The devil indeed is an open enemy to man.

6 And thus will thy Lord choose thee and teach thee the interpretation of sayings, and make His favour com-

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الرَّاسِدَاتِ لَكَ أَيُّهُنَّ الْمُبِينَاتِ

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ وَإِنْ كُنْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ

إِذْ قَالَ يُوسُفُ لِأَبِيهِ يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ أَحَدَ عَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ سَأَى لَهُمْ لِي سَجْدِينَ

قَالَ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تَقْصُصْ رُءْيَاكَ عَلَى إِخْوَتِكَ فَيَكِيدُوا لَكَ كَيْدًا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ

وَكَذَلِكَ يَجْتَبِيكَ رَّبُّكَ وَيُؤَمِّرُكَ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْآحَادِيثِ وَيُتِمُّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ

3a. It is called the best narrative because it is the best picture of the dealing of the Quraysh with the Prophet, and the Prophet's dealing with them. It was in the very words of Joseph to his brothers — *no reproof be against you this day* (v. 92) — that the Holy Prophet forgave the people of Makkah all the atrocities they had committed against him, atrocities which had but one end in view — the extirpation of Islām and the destruction of the Prophet and his followers.

3b. The Prophet's "unawareness" relates to his own future, of which this chapter gives a clear indication in the incidents of Joseph's life, viz. that he was to be expelled from his home as Joseph was expelled, but that his countrymen would ultimately come to him in submission, asking pardon for their faults, as Joseph's brothers had done. But "unawareness" here may also refer to all those things that are related in the Qur'ān, because the Prophet knew nothing of them before revelation. This is also stated in 42:52: "And thus did We reveal to thee an inspired Book by Our command. Thou knewest not what the Book was, nor what faith was, but We made it a light, guiding thereby whom We please of Our servants".

4a. Compare Gen. 37:9: "And, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me".

plete to thee and to the Children of Jacob, as He made it complete before to thy fathers, Abraham and Isaac. Surely thy Lord is Knowing, Wise.

وَعَلَىٰ آلِ يَعْقُوبَ كَمَا أَتَتْهَا عَلَىٰ أَبِيكَ
مِن قَبْلُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَ إِسْحَاقَ إِنَّ رِزْقَكَ
عَلَيْمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٤﴾

SECTION 2: Plot against Joseph by his Brothers

7 Verily in Joseph and his brethren there are signs for the inquirers.^a

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي يُوسُفَ وَإِخْوَتِهِ آيَاتٍ
لِّلسَّاعِلِينَ ﴿٧﴾

8 When they said: Certainly Joseph and his brother^a are dearer to our father than we, though we are a (strong) company. Surely our father is in manifest error —

إِذْ قَالُوا لَيُوسُفُ وَأَخُوهُ أَحَبُّ إِلَىٰ
أَبِينَا مِنَّا وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّ أَبَانَا
لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٨﴾

9 Slay Joseph or banish him to some (other) land, so that your father's regard may be exclusively for you, and after that you may be a righteous people.^a

أَفْتُلُوهَا يُوسُفَ أَوْ اطْرَحُوهُ أَرْضًا يَخْلُ
لَكُمْ وَجْهَ أَبِيكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ
قَوْمًا صَالِحِينَ ﴿٩﴾

10 A speaker among them said: Slay not Joseph, but, if you are going to do anything, cast him down to the bottom of the well. Some of the travellers may pick him up.^a

قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِنْهُمْ لَا تَقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ
وَ أَلْقُوهُ فِي الْوَيْبِ يَلْتَمِظْهُ بَعْضُ
السَّيَّارِقِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُفْعِلُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

11 They said: O our father, why dost thou not trust us with Joseph, and surely we are his sincere well-wishers?

قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا مَا لَكَ لَا تَأْمَنَّا عَلَىٰ يُوسُفَ
وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَنَصِحُونَ ﴿١١﴾

7a. By inquirers are meant people who inquired about the Holy Prophet, who was at this time being persecuted most severely by the people of Makkah. They are told in plain words that the story of the Prophet and his opponents was the story of Joseph and his brothers.

8a. Benjamin, his brother by the same mother, is meant here.

9a. The conspiracy of the Quraysh against the Holy Prophet is referred to in the Qur'an in the following words: "And when those who disbelieved devised plans against thee that they might confine thee or slay thee or drive thee away" (8:30).

10a. "And Reuben said unto them: Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness and lay no hand upon him" (Gen. 37:22).

12 Send him with us tomorrow that he may enjoy himself and play, and we shall surely guard him well.

13 He said: Indeed it grieves me that you should take him away and I fear lest the wolf devour him, while you are heedless of him.

14 They said: If the wolf should devour him, while we are a (strong) company, we should then certainly be losers.

15 So when they took him away and agreed to put him down at the bottom of the pit, We revealed to him: Thou wilt certainly inform them of this affair of theirs while they perceive not.^a

16 And they came to their father at nightfall, weeping.

17 They said: O our father, we went off racing one with another and left Joseph by our goods, so the wolf devoured him. And thou wilt not believe us, though we are truthful.

18 And they came with false blood on his shirt. He said: Nay, your souls have made a matter light for you. So patience is goodly. And Allāh is He Whose help is sought against what you describe.^a

أَمْرٍ سَلُهُ مَعَنَا عَدَايَ تَرْتَمُ وَيَلْعَبُ وَإِنَّا
لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

قَالَ إِنِّي لَيَحْزُنُنِي أَنَّ تَذْهَبُوا بِهِ وَ
أَخَافُ أَنْ يَأْكُلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَأَنْتُمْ
عَنْهُ غَافِلُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

قَالُوا لَئِنْ أَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَنَحْنُ
عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّا إِذًا لَآخِصْرُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

فَلَمَّا تَذَهَبُوا بِهِ وَاجْتَمَعُوا أَنْ يَجْعَلُوهُ
فِي غِيَابَتِ الْجُبِّ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ لَتُنَبِّئَهُمْ
بِأَمْرِهِمْ هَذَا وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

وَجَاءُوا أَبَاهُمْ عِشَاءً يَبْكُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

قَالُوا يَا أَبَا نَارَ إِنَّا ذَهَبْنَا نَسْتَبِقُ وَتَرَكْنَا
يُوسُفَ عِنْدَ مَتَاعِنَا فَأَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ
وَمَا أَنْتَ بِمُؤْمِنٍ لَنَا وَلَوْ كُنَّا صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

وَجَاءُوا عَلَى قَمِيصِهِ بِدَمٍ كَذِبٍ قَالَ
بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَمْراً فَصَبِرُوا
جَمِيعاً وَاللَّهُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَى مَا تَصِفُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

15a. The essential difference between the two versions of this story, one given in the Bible and the other in the Qur'ān, is this, that while the Bible narrates it as a simple story, the Holy Qur'ān preserves in it the spiritual element, which alone can justify its record in a book meant for the spiritual guidance of man. Here is a boy, whose age does not exceed seventeen years, who, though to all appearance lost forever, receives a Divine revelation and promise that he will one day be the master of his present oppressors. It is this circumstance in the life of a prophet, which really enables him to face all distresses and difficulties, viz., the deep conviction of the ultimate triumph of truth, which is produced by revelation from on high.

18a. The Qur'ān represents Jacob as doubting from the very first the sincerity of Joseph's brothers, but not so the Bible. Again, according to the Holy Qur'ān, Joseph

19 And there came travellers, and they sent their water-drawer and he let down his bucket. He said: O good news! This is a youth. And they concealed him as an article of merchandise, and Allāh was Cognizant of what they did.

وَجَاءَتْ سَيَّارَةٌ فَأَسْرَوْهُ وَابْتِغَاءَ مَبْرُورٍ
فَأَدَّى دُرُوهُ قَالَ يَبْشُرِي هَذَا عِلْمٌ
وَاسْرُوهُ بِضَاعَةً وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ
بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

20 And they sold him for a small price, a few pieces of silver, and they showed no desire for him.^a

وَسَرَّوهُ بِتَمَنٍّ بَعْضٍ دَرَاهِمَ مَعْدُودَةٍ
وَكَانُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الزَّاهِدِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾

SECTION 3: Joseph's Firmness under Temptation

21 And the Egyptian who bought him^a said to his wife: Make his stay honourable. Maybe he will be useful to us, or we may adopt him as a son. And thus We established Joseph in the land, and that We might teach him the interpretation of sayings. And Allāh has full control over His affair, but most people know not.

وَقَالَ الَّذِي اشْتَرَاهُ مِنْ مِصْرَ
لِامْرَأَتِهِ أَكْرِمِي مَثْوَاهُ عَسَى أَنْ
يَنْفَعَنَا أَوْ نَتَّخِذَهُ وَكَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا
لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلِنُعَلِّمَهُ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ
الْأَحَادِيثِ وَاللَّهُ غَالِبٌ عَلَى أَمْرِهِ وَلَكِنَّ
أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

relates his vision to his father, who is at once apprehensive of the envy of his brothers, if they are apprised of it; but according to the Bible, Jacob himself rebuked Joseph for his dream. Besides several discrepancies, the Bible narrative represents Jacob as an ordinary mortal, while the Holy Qur'an represents him as a prophet. The former makes him grieve for the loss of a beloved son as any other mortal would, but the latter shows that he had from the first hope: "And Allāh is He Whose help is sought against what you describe". And throughout the story this hope is the bright ray, without which the story would be a gloomy description, devoid of all value as a spiritual lesson. There are traces left still in the Bible narrative which show that the account as now met with in Genesis does not truly depict the character of Jacob, for in Gen. 37:11 we are told: "And his brethren envied him, but his father observed the saying", i.e. kept the vision in his heart, which shows that he was convinced of its truth. Thus the Qur'an, in fact, removes the inconsistencies of the Bible narrative.

20a. Compare Gen. 37:28: "Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver". Those who sold him were either Joseph's brothers or the merchants who found him in the pit; according to the story as related in Genesis, Joseph's brothers sold him to the Midianites, who again sold him in Egypt.

21a. "And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, and a captain of the guard" (Gen. 37:36).

22 And when he attained his maturity, We gave him wisdom and knowledge. And thus do We reward the doers of good.⁴

23 And she in whose house he was, sought to seduce him,⁴ and made fast the doors and said: Come. He said: Allāh forbid! Surely my Lord made good my abode. The wrongdoers never prosper.

24 And certainly she desired him, and he would have desired her, were it not that he had seen the manifest evidence of his Lord. Thus (it was) that We might turn away from him evil and indecency. Surely he was one of Our chosen servants.⁴

25 And they raced with one another to the door, and she rent his shirt from behind, and they met her husband at the door. She said: What is the punishment for one who intends evil to thy wife, except imprisonment or a painful chastisement?

26 He said: She sought to seduce me. And a witness of her own family bore witness: If his shirt is rent in front, she speaks the truth and he is of the liars.

27 And if his shirt is rent behind, she tells a lie and he is of the truthful.

28 So when he saw his shirt rent behind, he said: Surely it is a device

وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ آتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا
وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾

وَسَأَوَدْتُهُ الَّتِي هُوَ فِي بَيْتِهَا عَنِ نَفْسِهِ
وَعَلَقَتِ الْأَبْوَابَ وَقَالَتْ هَيْت لَكَ قَالَ
مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ رَبِّي أَحْسَنَ مَوْلَىٰ إِنَّهُ
لَا يَفْعِلُ الْظَلْمُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

وَلَقَدْ هَمَّتْ بِهِ وَهَمَّ بِهَا لَوْلَا أَنْ رَأَىٰ
بُرْهَانَ رَبِّهِ كَذَلِكَ لِنَصْرِفَ عَنْهُ الشُّؤْمَ
وَالْفُحْشَاءَ إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُخْلَصِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾

وَاسْتَبَقَا الْبَابَ وَقَدَّتْ قَمِيصَهُ مِنْ
دُبُرٍ وَأَلْفَيَا سَيِّدَهَا لَدَا الْبَابِ ط قَالَتْ
مَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ أَرَادَ بِأَهْلِكَ سُوءًا إِلَّا
أَنْ يُسْجَنَ أَوْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٥﴾

قَالَ هِيَ رَأَوْدَتُنِي عَنِ نَفْسِي وَشَهِدَ
شَاهِدًا مِنْ أَهْلِهَا إِنْ كَانَ قَمِيصُهُ قُدَّ
مِنْ قُدْبِي فصدقَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾

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

فَلَمَّا رَأَىٰ قَمِيصَهُ قُدَّ مِنْ دُبُرٍ قَالَ إِنَّهُ

22a. "And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man" (Gen. 39:2).

23a. *Rāwada-hū* means *he endeavoured to turn him from a thing*.

24a. This does not show that Joseph had any desire for her; but that the temptation was so strong that, if he had not been strengthened by great faith in God, he would have fallen a prey to mortal weakness.

of you women. Your device is indeed great!^a

مَنْ كَيْدِكُنَّ إِنَّ كَيْدَكُنَّ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

29 O Joseph, turn aside from this. And (O my wife), ask forgiveness for thy sin. Surely thou art one of the sinful.

يُوسُفُ أَعْرِضْ عَنْ هَذَا سْتَغْفِرُكَ لِذَنْبِكِ إِنَّكَ كُنتِ مِنَ الْخَاطِئِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

SECTION 4: Joseph is Imprisoned

30 And women in the city said: The chief's^a wife seeks to seduce her slave. He has indeed affected her deeply^b with (his) love. Truly we see her in manifest error.

وَقَالَ نِسْوَةٌ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ امْرَأَتُ الْعَزِيزِ تُرَاوِدُ فَتَاهَا عَنْ نَفْسِهِ قَدْ شَغَفَهَا حُبًّا إِنَّا لَنَرَاهَا فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

31 So when she heard of their device,^a she sent for them and prepared for them a repast,^b and gave each of them a knife, and said (to Joseph): Come out to them. So when they saw him, they deemed him great, and cut their hands (in amazement),

فَلَمَّا سَمِعَتْ بِمَكْرِهِنَّ أَرْسَلَتْ إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَعْتَدَتْ لَهُنَّ مُتَّكَأً وَآتَتْ كُلَّ وَاحِدَةٍ مِّنْهُنَّ سِكِّينًا وَقَالَتِ اخْرُجْ عَلَيْهِنَّ فَلَمَّا رَأَيْنَهُ أَكْبَرْنَهُ وَقَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ وَقُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلَّهِ مَا هَذَا

28a. The vindication of Joseph's character on this occasion, and the production of the evidence of the shirt, are not related in the Bible; but without it the episode of leaving the garment becomes meaningless. It seems to be a clear omission. The next section proves that Joseph was not cast into prison for being guilty of having committed an outrage against his master's wife.

30a. *Al-'Aziz* stands for Potiphar (Kf). *'Aziz* really means *mighty, powerful, strong*, and might as such be applied to such a dignitary as the captain of the guard, which rank was held by Potiphar. The king himself is spoken of as *malik* (king) in v. 43, and Joseph, who was only a dignitary, and not the king, is called *al-'Aziz* (chief) in v. 78.

30b. *Shaghafa-hā* literally means *he has affected her so that the love of him has entered beneath the shighāf*, i.e. *the pericardium of her heart* (LL).

31a. The secret imputation of the women is called here their *makr* or *device*. Some think that she knew that certain women had circulated the news with the object of getting a chance to see Joseph, and hence it is called their *device*.

31b. *Muttaka'a* means originally *a place in which one reclines*, then *that upon which one reclines in eating, drinking, or talking*, and also *food*, or *repast*, which last is considered to be the meaning here (LL). The commentators add that *muttaka'a* is the particular food which requires to be cut with a knife and suggest that to be the reason for handing over knives to them.

and said: Holy Allāh! This is not a mortal!^c This is but a noble angel.

32 She said: This is he about whom you blamed me. And certainly I sought to seduce him, but he was firm in continence. And if he do not what I bid him, he shall certainly be imprisoned, and he shall certainly be of the abject.

33 He said: My Lord, the prison is dearer to me than that to which they invite me. And if Thou turn not away their device from me, I shall yearn towards them and be of the ignorant.

34 So his Lord accepted his prayer and turned away their device from him. Surely He is the Hearer, the Knower.

35 Then it occurred to them after they had seen the signs that they should imprison him till a time.^a

بَشَرًا إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا مَلَكٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٣٢﴾

قَالَتْ فَذَلِكُنَّ الَّذِي لُمْتُنَّنِي فِيهِ ط
وَلَقَدْ رَاوَدْتُهُ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ فَاسْتَعْصَمَ
وَلَئِن لَّمْ يَفْعَلْ مَا أَمَرْتُهُ لَيَسْجَنَنَّ وَ
لَيَكُونًا مِّنَ الضَّعِيفِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

قَالَ رَبِّ السِّجْنُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا يَدْعُونَنِي
إِلَيْهِ وَإِلَّا تَصْرِفْ عَنِّي كَيْدَهُنَّ أَصْبُ
إِلَيْهِنَّ وَ أَكُن مِّنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾

فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ فَصَرَفَ عَنْهُ
كَيْدَهُنَّ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٣٥﴾

ثُمَّ بَدَأَ لَهُمْ مِن بَعْدِ مَا رَأَوُا الْآيَاتِ
لَيَسْجُنَنَّهُ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٣٥﴾

SECTION 5: Joseph's Preaching in the Prison

36 And two youths entered the prison with him.^a One of them said: I saw myself pressing wine. And the other said: I saw myself carrying bread on my head, of which birds were eating. Inform us of its interpre-

وَدَخَلَ مَعَهُ السِّجْنَ فَتَيْنِ ط قَالَ أَحَدُهُمَا
إِنِّي أَرَأَيْتُ أَنَا أُعْصِرُ خَمْرًا وَقَالَ الْآخَرُ
إِنِّي أَرَأَيْتُ أَحْمِلُ فَوْقَ رَأْسِي خُبْزًا
تَأْكُلُ الطَّيْرُ مِنْهُ نَبِّئْنَا بِتَأْوِيلِهِ إِنَّا

31c. The Egyptians were a superstitious and polytheistic people, and anything strange, or any human being about whom they witnessed anything wonderful, was considered by them to be a god. Hence, when they saw Joseph they thought he was not a mortal.

35a. There is nothing to show that Joseph was cast into prison on a charge of having committed an outrage on Potiphar's wife. As he was proved guiltless of that charge, it is very likely that some other accusation was brought against him; and more probably an autocratic ruler needed no excuse for putting an innocent man into prison. By *signs* must be understood the *signs of Joseph's innocence*.

36a. Compare Gen. 40th chapter, which, however, omits Joseph's preaching. The two youths were the butler and the baker.

tation; surely we see thee to be of the doers of good.^b

37 He said: The food with which you are fed shall not come to you, but I shall inform you of its interpretation before it comes to you. This is of what my Lord has taught me. Surely I have forsaken the religion of a people who believe not in Allāh, and are deniers of the Hereafter.

38 And I follow the religion of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. It beseems us not to associate aught with Allāh. This is by Allāh's grace upon us and on mankind, but most people give not thanks.

39 O my two fellow-prisoners, are sundry lords better or Allāh the One, the Supreme?

40 You serve not besides Him but names which you have named, you and your fathers — Allāh has sent down no authority for them. Judgment is only Allāh's. He has commanded that you serve none but Him. This is the right religion, but most people know not.

41 O my two fellow-prisoners, as for one of you, he will serve wine for his lord to drink; and as for the other, he will be crucified, so that the birds will eat from his head. The matter is decreed concerning which you inquired.

تَرَكَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ۝

قَالَ لَا يَأْتِيكُمَا طَعَامٌ تُرْفِقِينَ إِلَّا نَبَأُكُمَا بِتَأْوِيلِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمَا ذَلِكُمَا مِمَّا عَلَّمَنِي رَبِّي إِنِّي تَرَكْتُ مِلَّةَ قَوْمٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ ۝

وَاتَّبَعْتُ مِلَّةَ آبَائِي ابْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ مَا كَانَ لَنَا أَنْ نُشْرِكَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ذَلِكَ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ ۝

يَصَاحِبِي السِّجْنِ أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ مَتَّعْنَاهُ قَوْلَ خَيْرٍ أَمَرَ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدَ الْقَهَّارُ ۝

مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءٌ سَيَّمَيْنَهُمَا أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِنْ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ أَمَرَ آلَا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا آيَاتُهُ ذَلِكَ الَّذِينَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا وَلَكِنْ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۝

يَصَاحِبِي السِّجْنِ أَمَّا أَحَدُكُمَا فَيَسْقِي رَبَّهُ خَمْرًا وَأَمَّا الْآخَرُ فَيُصَلَّبُ فَتَأْكُلُ الطَّيْرُ مِنْ سَرَائِهِ ط قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ الَّذِي فِيهِ تَسْتَفْتِينَ ۝

36b. It should be noted that in the case of the four dreams mentioned in this chapter, viz. the two recorded here and Joseph's dream mentioned in v. 4 and Pharaoh's dream mentioned in v. 43, the word used for seeing a vision is the same word *arā* (from *ru'yat*, meaning *to see*), as is used for the seeing of ordinary things.

42 And he said to him whom he knew would be delivered of the two: Remember me with thy lord. But the devil caused him to forget mentioning (it) to his lord, so he remained in the prison a few years.^a

وَقَالَ لِلَّذِي ظَنَّ أَنَّهُ نَاجٍ مِّنْهُمَا
أذْكُرْنِي عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ نَفْسَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ
ذَكَرَ رَبَّهُ فَلَيْتَ فِي السِّجْنِ بِضْعَ سِنِينَ ۖ

SECTION 6: The King's Vision Interpreted by Joseph

43 And the king said: I have seen seven fat kine which seven lean ones devoured; and seven green ears and (seven) others dry.^a O chiefs, explain to me my dream, if you can interpret the dream.

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ إِنِّي أَرَى سَبْعَ بَقَرَاتٍ
سِمَانٍ يَأْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَسَبْعَ
سُنْبُلَاتٍ خُضْرٍ وَأُخَرَ يَابِسَاتٍ يَا أَيُّهَا
الْمَلَآئِكَةُ افْتَحُونِي فِي رُءْيَايَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
لِلرُّءْيَا تَعْبُرُونَ ۖ

44 They said: Confused dreams, and we know not the interpretation of dreams.

قَالُوا أَضْعَافٌ أُخْلَامٍ وَمَا نَحْنُ
بِتَأْوِيلِ الْأَحْلَامِ بِعِلْمِينَ ۖ

45 And of the two, he who had found deliverance and remembered after a long time said: I will inform you of its interpretation, so send me.

وَقَالَ الَّذِي نَجَا مِنْهُمَا وَادَّكَرَ بَعْدَ
أُمَّةٍ أَنَا أُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِتَأْوِيلِهِ فَأَرْسِلُونِ ۖ

46 Joseph, O truthful one, explain to us seven fat kine which seven lean ones devoured, and seven green ears and (seven) others dry, that I may go back to the people so that they may know.

يُوسُفُ أَيُّهَا الصِّدِّيقُ أَفْتِنَا فِي سَبْعِ
بَقَرَاتٍ سِمَانٍ يَأْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ
وَسَبْعِ سُنْبُلَاتٍ خُضْرٍ وَأُخَرَ يَابِسَاتٍ
لَّعَلِّي أَرْجِعُ إِلَى النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ۖ

47 He said: You shall sow for seven years as usual, then that which you reap, leave it in its ear, except a little which you eat.

قَالَ تَرْبَعُونَ سَبْعَ سِنِينَ ذَابًا فَمَا
حَصَدْتُمْ فَذَرُّوهُ فِي سُنْبُلِيهِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا
مِّمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ ۖ

48 Then after that will come seven years of hardship, which will eat away all you have beforehand stored

ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ سَبْعٌ شِدَادٌ
يَأْكُلْنَ مَا قَدَّمْتُمْ لَهُنَّ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

42a. The word *bid'-un* is applied to indicate a number from three (according to some, one) to ten (LL).

43a. Compare Gen. 41:1–31.

for them, except a little which you have preserved.

مِمَّا تَحْصِنُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

49 Then after that will come a year in which people will have rain and in which they will press (grapes).

ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ عَامٌ فِيهِ يُغَاثُ النَّاسُ وَفِيهِ يَعْصِرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

SECTION 7: Joseph Cleared of the Charges

50 And the king said: Bring him to me. So when the messenger came to him, he said: Go back to thy lord and ask him, what is the case of the women who cut their hands. Surely my Lord knows their device.

وَ قَالَ الْمَلِكُ انْتُونِي بِهِ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُ الرَّسُولُ قَالَ ارْجِعْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَسْأَلْهُ مَا بَالُ الْمُسَوِّفَةِ الَّتِي قَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ إِنَّ رَبِّي بِكَيْدِهِنَّ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥١﴾

51 (The king) said: What was your affair when you sought to seduce Joseph? They said: Holy Allāh! We knew of no evil on his part. The chief's wife said: Now has the truth become manifest. I sought to seduce him and he is surely of the truthful.

قَالَ مَا خَطْبُكُنَّ إِذْ سَأَوْلْتَنِي يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ قُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلَّهِ مَا عَلِمْنَا عَلَيْهِ مِنْ سُوءٍ قَالَتِ امْرَأَتُ الْعَزِيزِ الظَّنُّ حَصْحَصَ الْحَقُّ أَنَا رَاوِدْتُهُ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ وَإِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾ ذَلِكَ لِيَعْلَمَ أَنِّي لَمْ أَخُنْهُ بِالْغَيْبِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي كَيْدَ الْخَائِبِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

52 This is that he might know that I have not been unfaithful to him in secret, and that Allāh guides not the device of the unfaithful.^a

Part 13

53 And I call not myself sinless; surely (man's) self is wont to command evil, except those on whom my Lord has mercy. Surely my Lord is Forgiving, Merciful.^a

وَمَا أَدْرِيٓ أَنِّي نَفْسِيٓ إِنَّا لِلنَّفْسِ لَكَا مَارَةٌ بِالنَّفْسِ إِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّي إِنَّ رَبِّي غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٥٤﴾

52a. These are the words of Joseph, who explains his conduct in preferring to remain in prison until his innocence was established.

53a. These are also the words of Joseph. When a man addressed Jesus as *good master*, he said: "Why callest thou me good?" (Mark 10:18). The righteous never attribute any good to themselves, but attribute all good to the Great Source of goodness — God. Man's self is here called *ammārah*, i.e. *one wont to command evil*. It is, in fact, the lowest

54 And the king said: Bring him to me, I will choose him for myself. So when he talked with him, he said: Surely thou art in our presence today dignified, trusted.

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ ائْتُونِي بِهِ اَسْتَخْلِصُهُ
لِنَفْسِي فَلَمَّا كَلَّمَهُ قَالَ اِنَّكَ الْيَوْمَ
لَدَيْنَا مَكِينٌ اَمِينٌ ﴿٥٤﴾

55 He said: Place me (in authority) over the treasures of the land; surely I am a good keeper, knowing well.

قَالَ اجْعَلْنِي عَلَى خَزَائِنِ الْاَرْضِ
اِنِّي حَفِيظٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٥﴾

56 And thus did We give to Joseph power in the land — he had mastery in it wherever he liked. We bestow Our mercy on whom We please, and We waste not the reward of the doers of good.

وَكَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْاَرْضِ
يَتَبَوَّأُ مِنْهَا حَيْثُ يَشَاءُ نُصِيبُ بِرَحْمَتِنَا
مَنْ نَشَاءُ وَلَا نُضِيعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾

57 And certainly the reward of the Hereafter is better for those who believe and guard against evil.

وَلَا اَجْرُ الْاٰخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِينَ اٰمَنُوْا
وَكَانُوْا يَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾

SECTION 8: Joseph helps his Brothers

58 And Joseph's brethren came and went in to him, and he knew them, while they recognized him not.

وَجَاءَ اِخْوَتُهُ يُوْسُفَ فَدَخَلُوْا عَلَيْهِ
فَعَرَفُوْهُمْ وَهُمْ لَهُ مُنْكَرُوْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾

59 And when he furnished them with their provision, he said: Bring to me a brother of yours from your father. See you not that I give full measure and that I am the best of hosts?

وَلَمَّا جَهَّزَهُمْ بِرِجَالِهِمْ قَالَ ائْتُونِي
بِاَخٍ لَّكُمْ مِنْ اٰبَائِكُمْ اَلَا تَرَوْنَ اَنِّي
اَوْفِي الْكَيْلِ وَاَنَا خَيْرُ الْمُنْزِلِينَ ﴿٥٩﴾

60 But if you bring him not to me, you shall have no measure (of corn) from me, nor shall you come near me.

فَاِنْ لَّمْ تَاْتُوْنِيْ بِهِ فَلَا كَيْلَ لَكُمْ
عِنْدِي وَلَا تَقْرَبُوْنِ ﴿٦٠﴾

stage in the spiritual growth of man. It is what may be called his animal self; low desires and animal passions rule the mind of man and he is capable of doing any evil without feeling any pangs at all. He submits to his carnal desires like the brute. The next stage is called the *lawwāmah*, which is referred to in 75:2 as the *self-accusing spirit*, when the slightest departure from the path of rectitude at once rouses the pangs of conscience. The third stage is the stage of perfection — the *muṭma'innah*, or the *soul at rest*, when it is in perfect peace, having attained the goal of perfection; see 89:30a. Those who have attained the second stage in the spiritual advancement and those who have attained the goal of perfection are spoken of as *those on whom my Lord has mercy*.