

## XII JOSEPH

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### **In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate**

12:1 *Alif Lam Ra*

Those are the signs of the Manifest Book. We have sent it down as an Arabic Koran; haply you will understand.

We will relate to thee the fairest of stories in that We have revealed to thee this Koran, though before it thou wast one of the heedless.

When Joseph said to his father, 'Father, I saw eleven stars, and the sun and the moon; I saw them bowing down before me.'

12:5 He said, 'O my son, relate not thy vision to thy brothers, lest they devise against thee some guile. Surely Satan is to man a manifest enemy.'

So will thy Lord choose thee, and teach thee the interpretation of tales, and perfect His blessing upon thee and upon the House of Jacob, as He perfected it formerly on thy fathers Abraham and Isaac; surely thy Lord is All-knowing, All-wise.'

(In Joseph and his brethren were signs for those who ask questions.)

When they said, 'Surely Joseph and his brother are dearer to our father than we, though we are a band. Surely our father is in manifest error. Kill you Joseph, or cast him forth into some land, that your father's face may be free for you, and thereafter you may be a righteous people.'

12:10 One of them said, 'No, kill not Joseph, but cast him into the bottom of the pit and some traveller will pick him out, if you do aught.'

They said, 'Father, what ails thee, that thou trustest us not with Joseph? Surely we are his sincere well-wishers. Send him forth with us tomorrow, to frolic and play; surely we shall be watching over him.'

He said, 'It grieves me that you should go with him, and I fear the wolf may eat him, while you are heedless of him.' They said, 'If the wolf eats him, and we a band, then are we losers!'

12:15 So when they went with him, and agreed to put him in the bottom of the well, and We revealed to him, 'Thou shalt tell them of this their doing when they are unaware.'

And they came to their father in the evening, and they were weeping. They said, 'Father, we went running races, and left Joseph behind with our things; so the wolf ate him. But thou wouldst never believe us, though we spoke truly.'

And they brought his shirt with false blood on it. He said, 'No; but your spirits tempted you to do somewhat. But come, sweet patience! And God's succour is ever there to seek against that you describe.'

Then came travellers, and they sent one of them, a water-drawer, who let down his bucket. 'Good news!' he said. 'Here is a young man.' So they hid him as merchandise; but God knew what they were doing.

12:20 Then they sold him for a paltry price, a handful of counted dirhams; for they set small store by him. He that bought him, being of Egypt, said to his wife, 'Give him goodly lodging, and it may be that he will profit us, or we may take him for our own son.' So We established Joseph in the land, and that We might teach him the interpretation of tales. God prevails in His purpose, but most men know not.

And when he was fully grown, We gave him judgment and knowledge. Even so We recompense the good-doers.

Now the woman in whose house he was solicited him, and closed the doors on them. 'Come,' she said, 'take me!' 'God be my refuge,' he said. 'Surely my lord has given me a goodly lodging. Surely the evildoers do not prosper.'

For she desired him; and he would have taken her, but that he saw the proof of his Lord. So was it, that We might turn away from him evil and abomination; he was one of Our devoted servants.

12:25 They raced to the door; and she tore his shirt from behind. They encountered her master by the door. She said, 'What is the recompense of him who purposes evil against thy folk, but that he should be imprisoned, or a painful chastisement?' Said he, 'It was she that solicited me'; and a witness of her folk bore witness, 'If his shirt has been torn from before then she has spoken truly, and he is one of the liars; but if it be that his shirt has been torn from behind, then she has lied, and he is one of the truthful.'

When he saw his shirt was torn from behind he said, 'This is of your women's guile; surely your guile is great.'

Joseph, turn away from this; and thou, woman, ask forgiveness of thy crime; surely thou art one of the sinners.'

12:30 Certain women that were in the city said, 'The Governor's wife has been soliciting her page; he smote her heart with love; we see her in manifest error.'

When she heard their sly whispers, she sent to them, and made ready for them a repast, then she gave to each one of them a knife. 'Come forth, attend to them,' she said. And when they saw him, they so admired him that they cut their hands, saying, 'God save us! This is no mortal; he is no other but a noble angel.'

'So now you see, she said. 'This is he you blamed me for. Yes, I solicited him, but he abstained. Yet if he will not do what I command him, he shall be imprisoned, and be one of the humbled.'

He said, 'My Lord, prison is dearer to me than that they call me to; yet if Thou turnest not from me their guile, then I shall yearn towards them, and so become one of the ignorant.'

So his Lord answered him, and He turned away from him their guile; surely He is the All-hearing, the All-knowing.

12:35 Then it seemed good to them, after they had seen the signs, that they should imprison him for a while. And there entered the prison with him two youths. Said one of them, 'I dreamed that I was pressing grapes. Said the other, 'I dreamed that I was carrying on my head bread, that birds were eating of. Tell us its interpretation; we see that thou art of the good-doers.'

He said, 'No food shall come to you for your sustenance, but ere it comes to you I shall tell you its interpretation. That I shall tell you is of what God has taught me. I have forsaken the creed of a people who believe not in God and who moreover are unbelievers in the world to come.

And I have followed the creed of my fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Not ours is it to associate aught with God. That is of God's bounty to us, and to men; but most men are not thankful. Say, which is better, my fellow-prisoners -- many gods at variance, or God the One, the Omnipotent?

12:40 That which you serve, apart from Him, is nothing but names yourselves have named, you and your fathers; God has sent down no authority touching them. Judgment belongs only to God; He has commanded that you shall not serve any but Him. That is the right religion; but most men know not.

Fellow-prisoners, as for one of you, he shall pour wine for his lord; as for the other, he shall be crucified, and birds will eat of his head. The matter is decided whereon you enquire.' Then he said to the one he deemed should be saved of the two, 'Mention me in thy lord's presence.'

But Satan caused him to forget to mention him to his master, so that he continued in the prison for certain years.

And the king said, 'I saw in a dream seven fat kine, and seven lean ones devouring them; likewise seven green ears of corn, and seven withered. My counsellors, pronounce to me upon my dream, if you are expounders of dreams.'

'A hotchpotch of nightmares!' they said. 'We know nothing of the interpretation of nightmares.'

12:45 Then said the one who had been delivered, remembering after a time, 'I will myself tell you its interpretation; so send me forth.'

'Joseph, thou true man, pronounce to us regarding seven fat kine, that seven lean ones were devouring, seven green ears of corn, and seven withered; haply I shall return to the men, haply they will know.' He said, 'You shall sow seven years after your wont; what you have harvested leave in the ear, excepting a little whereof you eat.'

Then thereafter there shall come upon you seven hard years, that shall devour what you have laid up for them, all but a little you keep in store.

Then thereafter there shall come a year wherein the people will be succoured and press in season.

12:50 The king said, 'Bring him to me!' And when the messenger came to him, he said, 'Return unto thy lord, and ask of him, "What of the women who cut their hands?" Surely my Lord has knowledge of their guile.'

'What was your business, women,' he said, 'when you solicited Joseph?' 'God save us!' they said. 'We know no evil against him.' The Governor's wife said, 'Now the truth is at last discovered; I solicited him; he is a truthful man.'

'That, so that he may know I betrayed him not secretly, and that God guides not the guile of the treacherous. Yet I claim not that my soul was innocent -- surely the soul of man incites to evil -- except inasmuch as my Lord had mercy; truly my Lord is All-forgiving, All-compassionate.'

The king said, 'Bring him to me! I would attach him to my person.' Then, when he had spoken with him, he said, 'Today thou art established firmly in our favour and in our trust.'

12:55 He said, 'Set me over the land's storehouses; I am a knowing guardian.'

So We established Joseph in the land, to make his dwelling there wherever he would. We visit with Our mercy whomsoever We will, and We leave not to waste the wage of the good-doers. Yet is the wage of the world to come better for those who believe, and are godfearing.

And the brethren of Joseph came, and entered unto him, and he knew them, but they knew him not. When he had equipped them with their equipment he said, 'Bring me a certain brother of yours from your father. Do you not see that I fill up the measure, and am the best of hosts?'

12:60 But if you bring him not to me, there shall be no measure for you with me, neither shall you come nigh me.'

They said, 'We will solicit him of our father; that we will do.' He said to his pages, 'Put their merchandise in their saddlebags; haply they will recognize it when they have turned to their people; haply they will return.'

So, when they had returned to their father, they said, 'Father, the measure was denied to us; so send with us our brother, that we may obtain the measure; surely we shall be watching over him.'

He said, 'And shall I entrust him to you otherwise than as I entrusted before his brother to you? Why, God is the best guardian, and He is the most merciful of the merciful.'

12:65 And when they opened their things, they found their merchandise, restored to them. 'Father,' they said, 'what more should we desire? See, our merchandise here is restored to us. We shall get provision for our family, and we shall be watching over our brother; we shall obtain an extra camel's load -- that is an easy measure.'

He said, 'Never will I send him with you until you bring me a solemn pledge by God that you will surely bring him back to me unless it be that you are encompassed.' When they had brought him their solemn pledge he said, 'God shall be Guardian over what we say.'

He also said, 'O my sons, enter not by one door; enter by separate doors. Yet I cannot avail you anything against God; judgment belongs not to any but God. In Him I have put my trust; and in Him let all put their trust who put their trust.'

And when they entered after the manner their father commanded them, it availed them nothing against God; but it was a need in Jacob's soul that he so satisfied. Verily he was possessed of a knowledge for that We had taught him; but most men know not.

And when they entered unto Joseph, he said, taking his brother into his arms, 'I am thy brother; so do not despair of that they have done.'

12:70 Then, when he had equipped them with their equipment, he put his drinking-cup into the saddlebag of his brother. Then a herald proclaimed, 'Ho, cameleers, you are robbers!'

They said, turning to them, 'What is it that you are missing?'

They said, 'We are missing the king's goblet. Whoever brings it shall receive a camel's load; that I guarantee.'

'By God,' they said, 'you know well that we came not to work corruption in the land. We are not robbers.' They said, 'And what shall be its recompense if you are liars?'

12:75 They said, 'This shall be its recompense -- in whoever's saddlebag the goblet is found, he shall be its recompense. So we recompense the evildoers.'

So he made beginning with their sacks, before his brother's sack, then he pulled it out of his brother's sack. So We contrived for Joseph's sake; he could not have taken his brother, according to the king's doom, except that God willed. Whomsoever We will, We raise in rank; over every man of knowledge is One who knows.

They said, 'If he is a thief, a brother of his was a thief before.' But Joseph secreted it in his soul and disclosed it not to them, saying, 'You are in a worse case; God knows very well what you are describing.' They said, 'Mighty prince, he has a father, aged and great with years; so take one of us in his place; we see that thou art one of the good-doers.'

He said, 'God forbid that we should take any other but him in whose possession we found the goods; for if we did so, we would be evildoers.'

12:80 When they despaired of moving him, they conferred privily apart. Said the eldest of them, 'Do you not know how your father has taken a solemn pledge from you by God, and aforetime you failed regarding Joseph? Never will I quit this land, until my father gives me leave, or God judges in my favour; He is the best of judges.

Return you all to your father, and say, "Father, thy son stole; we do not testify except that we know; we were no guardians of the Unseen. Enquire of the city wherein we were, and the caravan in which we approached; surely we are truthful men".'

'No!' he said 'But your spirits tempted you to do somewhat. But come, sweet patience! Haply God will bring them all to me; He is the All-knowing, the All-wise.' And he turned away from them, and said, 'Ah, woe is me for Joseph!' And his eyes turned white because of the sorrow that he choked within him.

12:85 'By God,' they said, 'thou wilt never cease mentioning Joseph till thou art consumed, or among the perishing.' He said, 'I make complaint of my anguish and my sorrow unto God; I know from God that you know not.'

Depart, my sons, and search out tidings of Joseph and his brother. Do not despair of God's comfort; of God's comfort no man despairs, excepting the people of the unbelievers.'

So, when they entered unto him, they said, 'O mighty prince, affliction has visited us and our people. We come with merchandise of scant worth. Fill up to us the measure, and be charitable to us; surely God recompenses the charitable.'

He said, 'Are you aware of what you did with Joseph and his brother, when you were ignorant?'

12:90 They said, 'Why, art thou indeed Joseph?' 'I am Joseph,' he said. 'This is my brother. God has indeed been gracious unto us. Whosoever fears God, and is patient -- surely God leaves not to waste the wage of the good-doers. 'By God,' they said, 'God has indeed preferred thee above us, and certainly we have been sinful.'

He said, 'No reproach this day shall be on you; God will forgive you; He is the most merciful of the merciful.'

Go, take this shirt, and do you cast it on my father's face, and he shall recover his sight; then bring me your family all together.'

So, when the caravan set forth, their father said, 'Surely I perceive Joseph's scent, unless you think me doting.'

12:95 They said, 'By God, thou art certainly in thy ancient error. But when the bearer of good tidings came to him, and laid it on his face, forthwith he saw once again.'

He said, 'Did I not tell you I know from God that you know not?'

They said, 'Our father, ask forgiveness of our crimes for us; for certainly we have been sinful.'

He said, 'Assuredly I will ask my Lord to forgive you; He is the All-forgiving, the All-compassionate.'

12:100 So, when they entered unto Joseph, he took his father and mother into his arms saying, 'Enter you into Egypt, if God will, in security.'

And he lifted his father and mother upon the throne; and the others fell down prostrate before him. 'See, father,' he said, 'this is the interpretation of my vision of long ago; my Lord has made it true. He was good to me when He brought me forth from the prison, and again when He brought you out of the desert, after that Satan set at variance me and my brethren. My Lord is gentle to what He will; He is the All-knowing, the All-wise.

O my Lord, Thou hast given me to rule, and Thou hast taught me the interpretation of tales. O Thou, the Originator of the heavens and earth, Thou art my Protector in this world and the next. O receive me to Thee in true submission, and join me with the righteous.'

That is of the tidings of the Unseen that We reveal to thee; thou wast not with them when they agreed upon their plan, devising. Yet, be thou ever so eager, the most part of men believe not.

Thou askest of them no wage for it; it is nothing but a reminder unto all beings.

12:105 How many a sign there is in the heavens and in the earth that they pass by, turning away from it! And the most part of them believe not in God, but they associate other gods with Him. Do they feel secure that there shall come upon them no enveloping of the chastisement of God, or that the Hour shall not come upon them suddenly when they are unaware?

Say: 'This is my way. I call to God with sure knowledge, I and whoever follows after me. To God be glory! And I am not among the idolaters.'

We sent not forth any before thee, but men We revealed to of the people living in the cities. Have they not journeyed in the land? Have they not beheld how was the end of those before them?. Surely the abode of the world to come is better for those that are godfearing. What, do you not understand?

12:110 Till, when the Messengers despaired, deeming they were counted liars, Our help came to them and whosoever We willed was delivered. Our might will never be turned back from the people of the sinners.

In their stories is surely a lesson to men possessed of minds; it is not a tale forged, but a confirmation of what is before it, and a distinguishing of every thing, and a guidance, and a mercy to a people who believe.