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Qualities of a Good Teacher

The teachers of a society can play a pivotal role in the development of a nation. On them, therefore, rests its future. If they deliver, this future is surely going to be bright. However, ever since commercialism has stepped into this profession, a lot is left to be desired. Here are some suggestions to this fraternity and to all those who in future aspire to join it.....p.5

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Qualities of a Good Teacher

Dr Shehzad Saleem

The teachers of a society can play a pivotal role in the development of a nation. On them, therefore, rests its future. If they deliver, this future is surely going to be bright. However, ever since commercialism has stepped into this profession, a lot is left to be desired.

Here are some suggestions to this fraternity and to all those who in future aspire to join it.

1. A teacher must master the subject he or she is entrusted to teach. If a teacher is to inspire students and make them conceptually aware of the subject taught, this is an obvious given. Any slackness in this will not only damage the reputation of the teacher, it will also make students lose interest in the subject.

2. Not only should a teacher be very adept in the subject taught, he or she should also try to make teaching techniques very attractive. The pedagogy adopted should capture the interest and attention of the students. In this regard, experiential and activity-based teaching can work wonders since they are very interactive and also make students retain most of the content taught since it becomes an experience they live through.

3. Teachers must have a high moral character and ethical conduct. They must try to become an embodiment of noble traits and high ideals. They must remember that it is their unwritten commitment to their students to make them better human beings besides being proficient in the subject. They should try to be truthful, honest, humble grateful, sympathetic, charitable, generous, selfless, devoted and morally courageous. If they show these traits, they will have laid the foundations of a very upright and morally strong new generation.

4. Teachers must be well equipped in the art of emotional

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intelligence and empathy. They should try to use this skill in guiding their students and take a personal interest in solving their personal problems.

5. Teachers should pay special attention to weak students of the class and give them extra time and coaching to overcome their shortcomings. Every class has below par students. However, the way to bring them at par with their class mates is not through scolding and rebuke. It should be through compassion, taking pains and giving more time to them.

6. Teachers must try and help their students in discovering their inner potential and aptitude. More often than not, students are unaware of their inner talent and need guidance and aptitude testing techniques. If teachers are able to do this, they will do a great service to their student fraternity because in this way they will be able to make their students potential high achievers in life.

7. In each class there are students who are very intelligent and much ahead of their class mates. At times they pose questions to their teachers to which they may not have an immediate answer. The quality of a great teacher is that he or she is always ready to learn from brilliant students by re-evaluating and rethinking the data they have.

8. Teachers must keep themselves abreast with new developments and researches in the subjects they teach. Knowledge has ever-increasing frontiers and it is the right of students that they be taught the latest update in a subject.

9. One of the biggest contributions teachers can make is to inculcate critical thinking in their students. Critical thinking starts with a yearning for the truth and may lead to new discoveries and phenomena.

10. Teachers must never snub their students if they ask questions. On the contrary, they must always encourage questions from their students. This sharpens the curiosity and inquisitiveness in them and makes them vibrant thinkers.

Sūrah Yūsuf

Javed Aḥmad Ghāmidī

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الرَّ تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ ﴿١﴾ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢﴾
نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ ﴿٣﴾ وَإِنْ كُنْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Ever Merciful.

This is Sūrah Alif Lām Rā.¹ These are the verses of the Book which states its intent with full clarity. We have revealed it as an Arabic Qur'ān [O Quraysh of Makkah] so that you can fully understand it.² (1-2)

[O Prophet!] Through this Qur'ān which We have revealed to you, We narrate to you an excellent account.³ In reality, before

1. Like Sūrah Yūnus and Sūrah Hūd, this *sūrah's* name is also Alif Lām Rā. The purpose of this is to point to the fact that the subject-matter of this *sūrah* is similar to those of the previous ones. What is the meaning of this name? I have explained in detail my view about it while discussing verse 2 of Sūrah al-Baqarah.

2. The *sūrah* is addressed to the Quraysh. The opening words express God's favour on them. Concealed in them is also a warning that if they do not listen to this Qur'ān, they should bear in mind that they will have no excuse left to present before God.

3. From what aspects is it an excellent account? The aspects of this account to which Imām Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī has directed our attention are summarized below:

i. It is a tale that has the flavour of love in it. Yet Joseph (sws) who is the central character of this story comes out as a person in whom purity of character and conduct is personified. Such is the profound nature of this portrayal that the reader finds in it spiritual nourishment for his faith and joy and ecstasy for his soul.

ii. The attributes and features of Joseph's nature that become evident in this tale are so majestic that every reader is induced to follow him

this you were totally unaware of [such things].⁴

and a point to note is that this following is not beyond his reach; on the contrary, it seems achievable.

iii. This tale tells us that that the outward beauty of a person can be seen by upper class ladies of Egypt but his inner beauty becomes evident when he passes through various trials in life. In a similar way, the inner beauty of Joseph (sws) becomes prominent in this story and he comes out as an abiding example of intelligence, truthfulness, purity, chastity and a person who is an embodiment of forgiveness even though he has the power to take revenge.

iv. The events and incidents that took place in the account are quite amazing but at no place does it seem that anything in them is out of order and sequence or is not in harmony with the natural pace of events.

v. Its foremost addressees are the Quraysh. It is like a mirror for them in the reflection of which they can see their own fate and also that of Islam and the Muslims. Viewed thus, it was a clear prophecy which was proven word by word by the events of the next ten years. Thus only a year and a half had passed after its revelation when the Quraysh, like the brothers of Joseph (sws), conspired to kill the Prophet (sws) but the Almighty protected him from their evil scheme. He came out of Makkah and hid in the Thawr Cave. From there he reached Madīnah. There, totally contrary to the expectations of the Quraysh, he was blessed with a majesty and political authority that cannot be rivalled in history. The people of Makkah were driven to show obedience to him whether they wanted it or not until at the time of the conquest of Makkah precisely the same situation arose as had arisen in the times of Joseph's (sws) political ascendancy in Egypt when his brothers came to him in the end. The Prophet (sws) asked his nation: "Tell me! How will I be dealing with you?" They replied: "أخ كريم و ابن أخ كريم (You are a benevolent brother and the son of a benevolent brother)." At this, he said: "I will say the same thing to you what Joseph (sws) said to his brothers: "لا تثريب عليكم اليوم إذ هموا فأنتم الطلقاء (Go you are free. Today you shall not be seized.)"

4. This is stated so that the addressees of the Qur'ān reflect on this account viz a viz the angle that if the Prophet (sws) was not a recipient of divine revelations, how was it possible for him to narrate the story in such a comprehensive way and with such precision? After all he had spent forty years among his people before the revelation of the Qur'ān. Had he even known a little of the tale, it would have come up in discussion in some form during that time. His addressees knew that no

إِذْ قَالَ يُوسُفُ لِأَبِيهِ يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ أَحَدَ عَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ رَأَيْتُهُمْ لِي سَاجِدِينَ ﴿٥﴾
قَالَ يَبْنَىٰ لَا تَقْصُصْ رُءْيَاكَ عَلَىٰ إِخْوَتِكَ فَيَكِيدُوا لَكَ كَيْدًا ۖ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ عَدُوٌّ
مُبِينٌ ﴿٦﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ يَجْتَبِيكَ رَبُّكَ وَيُعَلِّمُكَ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ وَيُتِمُّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰ

This happened when Joseph said to his father:⁵ “Father! I have dreamt that there are eleven stars and the sun and the moon. I see them prostrating before me.”⁶ His father replied: “Son! Do not narrate this dream to your brothers lest they engage in a conspiracy against you.”⁷ Undoubtedly, Satan is an open enemy of man. [It is evident from your dream that] your Lord will bless you in this way⁸ and will teach you how to reach the crux of words⁹

traces of this tale ever came up in his conversation prior to this. It was only now that he narrated it with certainty and clarity.

5. I.e., to Jacob (sws). Joseph (sws) was his son. He was the grandson of Isaac (sws) and the great grandson of Abraham (sws). It is evident from the Bible that Jacob's (sws) twelve sons were born from his four wives. Among them, Joseph (sws) and his brother Benjamin were from one wife and the rest of the ten were from the other three wives. They lived in Hebron which is in Palestine. It is now called al-Khayl. According to Biblical scholars, the incident which is mentioned here took place some time around 1890 BC. At that time, Joseph (sws) was seventeen.

6. The humility found in Joseph (sws) becomes fully evident the way he has narrated his dream. Initially, he just said that he saw eleven stars, the sun and the moon. Then since in the subsequent statement his eminence would be reflected he hesitantly said that he has seen those heavenly bodies prostrating before him. The repetition of the word رَأَيْتُ in the verse has made this hesitancy very evident.

7. It is evident from this that the jealousy his brothers had for Joseph (sws) was not hidden at all. Because of his noble traits, Jacob (sws) started to love him a lot and this made the brothers jealous of him.

8. I.e., will grant him prophethood. This means that as soon as Jacob (sws) heard the dream, he understood that this was an indication of Joseph (sws) becoming a prophet.

9. I.e., not only the real meaning of this dream will become evident to him but also he will be given the knowledge of understanding other similar things. Imām Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī writes:

... Since dreams and visions are one of the sources of prophetic knowledge and since in dreams what is to be conveyed appears in symbolic form which only certain adept minds can decipher, the Almighty grants His prophets the special aptitude and special

إِلَّا يَغْفُوبُ كَمَا آتَتْهَا عَلَى أَبِيكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١٠﴾
لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي يُوسُفَ وَإِخْوَتِهِ آيَاتٍ لِّلْسَائِلِينَ ﴿١١﴾ إِذْ قَالُوا لِيُوسُفَ وَأَخُوهُ أَحَبُّ إِلَىٰ آبَائِنَا
مِنَّا وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّ آبَاءَنَا لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿١٢﴾ اقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ وَأَوْصَايُوهُ أَرْضًا بَيْخُلَ لَكُمْ
وَجْهَ أَبِيكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ قَوْمًا صَالِحِينَ ﴿١٣﴾ قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِنْهُمْ لَا تَقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ وَالْقَوْهُ

and complete His favour on you and on the clan of Jacob,¹⁰ the way He completed it on your fathers Abraham and Isaac before this. Surely, your Lord is all knowing, all-wise.” (3-6)

In reality, there are many signs [in this account] of Joseph and his brothers for those who ask.¹¹ When his brothers said to one another: “Joseph and his brother¹² are dearer to our father than us even though we are a group.¹³ Surely, our father is afflicted with a blatant error. [The only remedy to this is to] kill Joseph or to throw him at some place; because of this your father’s attention will be totally focused towards you and after this you will become

knowledge to interpret them. (Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī, *Tadabbur-i Qur’ān*, vol. 4, 192)

10. This is a special expression that has also been adopted at other instances in the Qur’ān to refer to the favour of religion and *sharī’ah*. This religion is innately found in its concise form in every human being. Since prophets of God completely specify and elaborate it by providing all its details and corollaries, the Qur’ān calls it a completion of favour.

11. Ie., there are signs for those in whose minds such questions are arising regarding the Prophet (sws) and his preaching endeavour, what will happen in future and how things will materialize; how will such profound results of this preaching which are now being indicated appear when today its advocates are being inflicted with great calamities and problems by the tyrants of the land; in spite of their criticism, it is the beliefs and views of these tyrants that are dominant all around.

12. This refers to Joseph (sws) and his real brother Benjamin. He was many years younger than him.

13. In rural life, a person had to rely a lot on his young sons for strength. It was they who helped him against enemies. It was because of this that the sons of Jacob (sws) said that their father, God forbid, had become so short-sighted that he was ignoring the sons who as a group would be of benefit to him in difficult times and was showering all his love on the younger sons who could be of no help to him and in fact themselves needed protection.

فِي غَيْبَتِ الْجُبِّ يَلْتَقِطُهُ بَعْضُ السَّيَّارَةِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فَاعِلِينَ ﴿١٠﴾

قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا مَا لَكَ لَا تَأْمَنَّا عَلَى يُوسُفَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَنَصِحُونَ ﴿١١﴾ أَرْسَلَهُ مَعَنَا غَدًا يَرْتِمُ وَيَلْعَبُ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَنَحْفُظُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ قَالَ إِنِّي لَيَحْزُنُنِي أَنْ تَذْهَبُوا بِهِ وَأَخَافُ أَنْ يَأْكُلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَأَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ غَافِلُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ قَالُوا لَيْنَ أَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّا إِذًا لَخَسِرُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

فَلَمَّا ذَهَبُوا بِهِ وَاجْمَعُوا أَنْ يَجْعَلُوهُ فِي غَيْبَتِ الْجُبِّ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ لَتُنَبِّئَنَّهُمْ بِأَمْرِهِمْ

full well.”¹⁴ At this, one of the speakers said: “Do not kill Joseph. If you must, throw him in the darkness of a desolate well; some passing by caravan will pull him out and take him away.”¹⁵ (7-10)

[After this, they went and] told their father: “Why is it father that you do not trust us in the matter of Joseph, even though we are his sincere well-wishers. Let him go along with us tomorrow that he may enjoy and play a little;¹⁶ we will be responsible for his safety.” The father said: “It grieves me that you take him away and I fear that a wolf may eat him while you are unaware.”¹⁷ They replied: “If a wolf eats him when we are a group, then we surely will be in great loss.” (11-14)

When they took away Joseph [by insisting] in this manner and ultimately decided to throw him in the bottom¹⁸ of a well and on

14. The actual words are: وَتَكُونُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ قَوْمًا صَالِحِينَ. This sentence is coordinated to the previous one which in fact is the answer to the prior imperative statement; hence its directive cannot be different. Therefore the word here does not mean “pious”; it actually occurs in its literal meaning. What is implied is: “After this, we will be people whose state of affairs is okay; all our difficulties will go away and this thorn that it is pinching us will be removed.” The translation has tried to do justice to this meaning.

15. This sentence shows that one of Joseph’s brothers had a soft corner for him. He definitely wanted this thorn to be removed but for this was not willing to go as far as to kill him.

16. In ancient rural societies, a very popular means of entertainment was to go to a jungle or a desert or an oasis, spend time there eating and playing. It was like our picnic of today.

17. It is evident from this that a lot of wolves were found in the adjoining areas and they used to attack visitors at various occasions.

18. Ie., after taking him away there still arose a difference of opinion but it was finally decided that it was better to cast him in the well. According to the narratives found in the Torah and the Talmud this

هَذَا وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَجَاءَ وَآبَاهُمْ عِشَاءً يَبْكُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا إِنَّا ذَهَبْنَا نَسْتَبِقُ وَتَرَكْنَا يُوسُفَ عِنْدَ مَتَاعِنَا فَالَكُمُ الدِّبُّ وَمَا أَنْتَ بِمُؤْمِنٍ لَّنَا وَلَوْ كُنَّا صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَجَاءُوا عَلَى قَمِيصِهِ بِدَمٍ كَذِبٍ ﴿١٨﴾ قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّكْتُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ أَمْراً قَصِيراً جَمِيراً وَاللَّهُ ائْتَسَعَانِ عَلَى مَا تَصِفُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

وَجَاءَتْ سَيَّارَةٌ فَأَرْسَلُوا وَارِدَهُمْ فَأَدْلَى دَلْوَهُ قَالَ يَبُشَىٰ هَذَا غُلْمٌ وَأَسْرُوهُ بَضَاعَةً وَاللَّهُ the other hand We sent a revelation to him: “[One day,] you will inform them of this misdeed when they will not even know,”¹⁹ and [after throwing him in the well] they came weeping to their father at nightfall.²⁰ They [came over and] said: “Father! We became busy in a racing competition against one another and had left Joseph with our belongings when a wolf [came and] devoured him.²¹ But you will not believe us even though we may be truthful.”²² [In order to prove their claim,] they brought Joseph’s shirt stained with fake blood. The father said: “[No,] in fact, it is your heart that has forged a lie for you. So, a graceful patience be my way²³ and on whatever you are saying, God alone is the support.”²⁴ (15-18)

On the other hand, a caravan arrived and sent its water-bearer.²⁵

well was situated south of Shechem near the existing territory of Dothan.

19. Ie., inform them when they will not even be able to imagine that the brother they had thrown in the well will come to occupy such a high rank and is talking to them.

20. The reason that they came back late in the night must have been to rule out any chance of going in search of him if the father wanted.

21. It is evident from this that they fashioned an excuse from what Jacob (sws) had earlier said: they thought that since the fear of a wolf was already in his mind, he would readily believe their excuse.

22. This was the lie found in their hearts that came to their mouths.

23. This refers to a patience that does not have any element of complaint, grumbling and wailing in it. The expression صَبْرٌ جَمِيراً is actually a *mubtadā'* (inchoative) whose *khavar* (enunciative) has been suppressed. It has been revealed in the translation.

24. The implication is that it is only through God’s help that this enigma can be solved as to what they actually did and the excuse they fashioned.

25. The actual word is: وَارِدٌ. Its actual meaning is someone who steps into a fountain or a spring. However, here it is used for the person who

عَلَيْهِمْ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَسَمَوْهُ بِشَيْنٍ بَخْسٍ دَرَاهِمَ مَعْدُودَةٍ وَكَانُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الزَّاهِدِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾
وَقَالَ الَّذِي اشْتَرَاهُ مِنْ مِصْرَ لِمَرْأَتِهِ أَكْرِمِي مَثْوَاهُ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَنْفَعَنَا أَوْ نَتَّخِذَهُ وَلَدًا وَ
كَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلِنُعَلِّمَهُ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ وَاللَّهُ غَالِبٌ عَلَىٰ أَمْرِهِ

And, he slid his bucket [in the well; then seeing Joseph cried:] “Glad tidings be delivered; this is a boy.” Thus, they [took him out and] hid him thinking him to be a prized possession.²⁶ And God was fully aware of whatever they were doing. [Then they came with him to Egypt] and sold him for a paltry price of a few *dirhams* and they had no interest in his matter.²⁷ (19-20)

From among the people of Egypt the one²⁸ who bought him said to this wife:²⁹ “Treat him well; hopefully he will give benefit to us or we can even make him our son.”³⁰ In this way, We gave Joseph a place in that country in order to choose him³¹ and in order to teach him to reach the crux of words.³² In reality,

was deputed by the people of the caravan to arrange for water. Both the Bible and the Talmud record that this caravan was going from Gilead (Transjordan) to Egypt of which the capital at that time was Memphis. Its ruins are found 21 kilometers to the south of Cairo.

26. He was hid so that no one from around could lay claim on him.

27. This disinterest was because whatever they had obtained was obtained without any cost. Hence, they sold him to the first buyer that came to them at whatever price he named.

28. In the Bible, he is mentioned by the name Potiphar. He was a high ranking officer among the royal retinue. Further ahead, the Qur’ān has mentioned him by the title ‘Azīz. It is evident from this that in the Egypt of those times it referred to a rank given to the nobles of the empire.

29. In the Talmud, she is named as Zelicha.

30. It is evident from this that as soon as he saw Joseph (sws), he understood that he was not a slave but the offspring of a noble family who for some reason had fallen into the hands of the sellers. It further seems that till that time he was issueless and thus thought that if the boy fulfilled his expectations he would adopt him as a son.

31. This is a coordinated clause of the causative sentence. It is suppressed because of being extremely obvious.

32. Ie., took him away from a rural society and placed him in the developed and civilized culture of Egypt so that the extraordinary ability he has to reach the crux of matters is polished further and is instrumental in making him the king of Egypt and also prepares him to

وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَكَلَّمَا بَدَلَهُ أُشْدَدَّ أَتَيْنَهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾

وَرَأَوْنَاهُ الَّذِي هُوَ نَرَىٰ بَيْنَهُمَا عَن نَّفْسِهِ وَغَلَّقَتِ الْأَبْوَابَ وَقَالَتْ هَيْت لَكَ ۖ قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ رَبِّي أَحْسَنَ مَثْوَايَ ۖ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَلَقَدْ هَمَّتْ بِهِ ۖ وَهَمَّ بِهَا لَوْلَا أَنَّ رَأَى

God is One who implements His will but most people know not. [Thus this is what happened] and when he reached mature age, We gave Him authority and knowledge.³³ In this way do We reward those who are thorough in deeds. (21-22)

And the woman in whose house Joseph resided began tempting him. [One day,] she bolted the doors and said: “Come.” Joseph said: “God forbid! He is my master.”³⁴ He has treated me well. I

become a prophet in a civilized land.

33. I.e., the knowledge that is divinely revealed for the guidance of mankind.

34. Joseph (sws) meant that her husband is his master. The actual word used for master is: رَبِّي. Just, as it is used for God, it is also used for master and owner. In the Arabic language, expressions such as رب المال, رب البيت and رب الدار are very common. There are many examples of words in this language that are used both for God and for human beings. However, in both cases, they have different meanings. The question nevertheless can still arise as to why at this instance Joseph (sws) instead of referring to God mentioned Zelicha’s husband to her. Imām Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī while explaining this writes:

... A deliberation on this sentence of Joseph (sws) shows that there is great psychological eloquence in it. Reminding a woman of God and the Hereafter when she had no conception of them and that too at a time at which she had become blinded by emotions was like casting pearls before swine. If anything could have allayed her frenzy it could only have been this sentence uttered by Joseph (sws). Had she the slightest semblance of decency in her, she would definitely have thought that there was a young man who had been deeply moved by a small act of kindness of his master; he had so much regard for him that inspite of her immense luring he was not willing to be unfaithful to him and regarded it to be devastating for the Herein as well as the Hereafter. On the other hand, there was she who was his wife and had consigned herself to him in marriage and made her the master of her chastity; she was the queen of her house and used his means and resources; yet such was the extent of her unfaithfulness that in a rage of lust she was inviting his slave to marital dishonesty. (Amīn Aḥsan

بُرْهَانَ رَبِّهِ كَذَلِكَ لِنَصْرِفَ عَنْهُ السُّوءَ وَالْفَحْشَاءَ إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْبُحْصَيْنِ ﴿٢٣﴾
وَاسْتَبَقَا الْبَابَ وَقَدَّتْ قَیْصُهُ مِنْ دُبُرٍ وَأَلْفَيَا سَيِّدَهَا لَدَا الْبَابِ قَالَتْ مَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ
أَرَادَ بِأَهْلِكَ سُوءًا إِلَّا أَنْ يُسْجَنَ أَوْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ قَالَ هِيَ رَاوَدْتَنِي عَنْ نَفْسِي وَشَهِدَ
شَاهِدٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا إِنْ كَانَ قَیْصُهُ قُدَّ مِنْ قُبُلٍ فَصَدَقَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَإِنْ كَانَ

cannot do this treachery because such unjust people never prosper.” Indeed, that woman had decided for Joseph and had he too not seen the sign of His Lord,³⁵ he would have succumbed to her.³⁶ It happened thus so that We keep away vice and wantonness from him. Surely, he was from among our chosen people. (23-24)

Both of them rushed to the door one behind the other³⁷ and [in an effort to stop Joseph] that woman [pulled out and] tore his shirt from the back.³⁸ At the door, both of them found her husband. [As soon as she saw him,] the woman said: “What else can be the punishment of that person who intends evil with your wife than to imprison him or he be given some other painful punishment?” Joseph said: “It is she who had tried to entice me.” [When the matter proceeded further,] a person from the family of the woman presented [circumstantial] evidence that if Joseph’s shirt is torn from the front, then the woman is telling the truth and he is lying and if his shirt is torn from the back, then that woman lying and he is telling the truth. Then when the husband

Islāhī, Tadabbur-i Qur’ān, vol. 4, 205)

35. This refers to the divine spark which is innately found in every human being. However, it appears on such occasions only for those who duly value it and accept its guidance at every step of their life. For them, it becomes so strong that in such situations it protects them from the onslaughts of their evil desires and the temptations of Satan. In this case, it was this very divine spark that saved a young lad from the enticement of Zelicha.

36. Because Joseph (sws) too was a human being and though had been chosen by God to be His messenger, had not been divested from human desires and sentiments.

37. Ie., when Joseph (sws) ran away from that woman’s luring, she also ran after him to stop him.

38. Trying to stop a person by taking hold of his shirt can in all probability result in this very situation to arise.

قَبِيضُهُ قَدْ مِنْ دُبُرٍ فَكَذَبَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾ فَلَمَّا رَأَى قَبِيضَهُ قَدْ مِنْ دُبُرٍ قَالَ إِنَّهُ
مِنْ كَيْدِكُنَّ إِنَّ كَيْدَكُنَّ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٥﴾ يُوسُفُ أَعْرِضْ عَنْ هَذَا ۖ وَاسْتَغْفِرِي لِذَنْبِكِ ۖ إِنَّكَ
كُنْتِ مِنَ الْخَاطِئِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾

وَقَالَ نِسْوَةٌ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ امْرَأَتُ الْعَزِيزِ تُرَاوِدُ فَتْسَهَا عَنْ نَفْسِهِ ۖ قَدْ شَغَفَهَا حُبًّا ۚ إِنَّا
لَنَنْزِلُهَا فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٢٧﴾ فَلَمَّا سَمِعَتْ بِمَكْرِهِنَّ أَرْسَلَتْ إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَعْتَدَتْ لَهُنَّ مُتَمَكًّا وَآتَتْ

saw that Joseph's shirt was torn from the back, he [angrily] cried out: "These are deceptions of you women; no doubt, your deceptions are great.³⁹ Joseph, leave aside this matter and O you woman! Seek repentance for your sin because you are the actual wrongdoer." (25-29)

The women of the city began gossiping [with one another]: "The wife of 'Azīz is trying to tempt her servant. She is infatuated by his love. In our opinion, she is very foolish."⁴⁰ [Perhaps she does not know that such people are enticed through deception."] So, when that woman heard of their deception, she sent for them [that they too may test their skills⁴¹] and arranged a

39. This was a clear indication that Joseph (sws) had not taken the initiative; it was Zelicha who had. The anger which the husband must have felt has been expressed in the last sentence. In the words of Imām Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāhī this act of hers not only made her but the whole female species deceivers and loathsome in the eyes of her husband.

40. I have tried to explain the elements of rebuke, callousness and challenge found in this sentence within parenthesis that follow. Imām Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāhī has explained them. He writes:

... They meant that in the first place it is strange that the wife of a high-ranking official should stoop so low as to go after the slave of her husband. An even stranger thing is that she is not even successful in luring him to herself. It is from here that within this rebuke another element is added: how foolish is this woman because this matter not only brought her into disrepute but also showed that she was a loser. The implication being that had they been in her place, they would enticed Joseph (sws) in one blow and all his purity would have been dashed to the ground. (Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāhī, *Tadabbur-i Qur'ān*, vol. 4, 208)

41. And they get to know the status of their temptation, deception and excitement for the person against whom she had failed.

كُلَّ وَاحِدَةٍ مِّنْهُنَّ سَكِينًا وَقَالَتِ اخْرُجْ عَلَيْهِنَّ فَلَمَّا رَأَيْنَهُ أَكْبَرْنَهُ وَقَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ وَقُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلَّهِ مَا هَذَا بَشَرًا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا مَلَكٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٦٦﴾ قَالَتْ فَذَلِكُنَّ الَّذِي لُمْتُنَّنِي فِيهِ وَ

gathering for them⁴² and gave a knife to each of them⁴³ and asked Joseph: “Come before them.” So, when the women saw him, they were wonderstruck by his majesty⁴⁴ and [to force him to accept their demand] they inflicted a cut on their hands at various places⁴⁵ [but did not succeed and ultimately] cried out: “Hāshalillāh,”⁴⁶ this is not a human being; this is a noble angel.”⁴⁷ She said: “Now you know; it is he about whom you were

42. The actual word is: مُتَّكَا. It is used for a gathering in which big pillows would be provided. In the Egypt of those times, this was how the gatherings of the affluent were set up.

43. It is evident from the succeeding part that the knives were given at the request of the women for the scheme they had contrived to lure Joseph (sws).

44. It is evident from this sentence how young and handsome Joseph (sws) was and the purity of his character and conduct had made him even more attractive.

45. The actual word is: قَطَّعْنَ. It is of the order of تَفْعِيل from قَطَعَ and connotes multiplicity. The translation gives due regard to this aspect.

46. This expression implies “to divest and to strip off” and is used on occasions when an acquittal is declared from a blame.

47. Here, in a few sentences, the Qur’ān in its own style has encompassed a whole story. The implication is that when Joseph (sws) came before them, at first they were wonder-struck at seeing an embodiment of beauty and purity. Then they got hold of themselves a little and since they had come with a great challenge and claim they began testing Joseph (sws) with their machinations. When they realized that all their luring and enticement were failing they threatened him that they would take their lives if he did not accept their invitation. Thus, in order to validate their threat some of them inflicted cuts on their hands at various places. But when this measure also did not prove successful, they cried out that this person was not a human being; he was some divine angel. Imām Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāhī writes:

... This confession of the ladies is actually high praise for Joseph (sws) and also an excuse for their failure. Concealed in it is also the sentiment that if they were not able to win the heart of Joseph (sws), it was not because of any shortcoming in their scheme or their own beauty but because they were facing a noble angel; all their weapons of enticement were only effective against human

لَقَدْ رَاوَدَتْهُ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ فَاسْتَعْصَمَ ۖ وَلَئِنْ لَّمْ يَفْعَلْ مَا امْرَأَتُهُ يُسْجِنُ وَيَكُونَا مِنَ الصَّغِيرِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ السِّجْنُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا يَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ ۖ وَإِلَّا تَصْرِفْ عَنِّي كَيْدَهُنَّ أَصْبُ إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَكُن مِّنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾ فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ فَصَرَفَ عَنْهُ كَيْدَهُنَّ ۚ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٣٦﴾

ثُمَّ بَدَأَ لَهُمْ مِّن بَعْدِ مَا رَأَوُا الْآيَاتِ لَيْسْجُنُّهُ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَدَخَلَ مَعَهُ السِّجْنَ فَتَتَيْنِ

censuring me? Indeed, I tried to tempt him but he could not be lured. Yet if he does not comply with what I am asking him to do, he will surely be imprisoned and humiliated.”⁴⁸ At this, Joseph prayed: “The prison is dearer to me than what they are inviting me to. If you now do not drive away their intrigue from me, I will be inclined towards them and will become among those who are overwhelmed with emotions.”⁴⁹ So, his Lord accepted this prayer of his and warded off their intrigue from him. Indeed, He hears and knows all. (30-34)

Then even after observing these signs [which showed that he was innocent,] those people regarded it appropriate to necessarily

beings. (Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī, *Tadabbur-i Qur'ān*, vol. 4, 210)

Why is this account narrated here with such brevity and conciseness? The reason most probably is that this Qur'ān did not deem it apt for a majestic discourse like itself to mention the details of the ignoble way that must have been adopted to win the heart of Joseph (sws).

48. This is a further threat. Initially, Zelicha had very sharply reacted to the claim of those women and then clearly said that she was not going to leave him alone. Hence if he continued with his ways, he would ultimately end up in jail. This meant that the lustful love was on the one hand threatening him and on the other hand seeking to avenge the failure. This was a new trial for Joseph (sws) which he was about to encounter. Also evident from this gathering of the ladies of Egypt is the moral situation of the Egypt of those times: they were no less developed than the “developed” culture of present times.

49. This is a very humble prayer by Joseph (sws) to beseech the Almighty. It has come to his tongue after he had expended every bit of his energy to save his faith and conduct. It is later stated that his prayer was immediately accepted. The reason for this is that when a person shows such perseverance against Satan and then consigns himself to his Lord, His prayer is necessarily accepted and that too forthwith.

قَالَ أَحَدُهُمَا إِنِّي أَرِنِي أَغَصِمُ خَمْرًا ۖ وَقَالَ الْآخَرُ إِنِّي أَرِنِي أَحْمِلُ فَوْقَ رَأْسِي خُبْرًا تَأْكُلُ الطَّيْرُ مِنْهُ نَبِّئْنَا بِتَأْوِيلِهِ ۖ إِنَّا نَرَاكَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥٠﴾ قَالَ لَا يَأْتِيكُمَا طَعَامٌ تُرْزَقَانِهِ

imprison Joseph for a while.⁵⁰ With him, two other young men also entered the prison.⁵¹ One of them [one day] said to him: “I dream of squeezing wine.”⁵² The other said: “I see that I am carrying a loaf on my head from which birds are eating. Interpret this dream for us. We see that you are among those who are thorough.”⁵³ Joseph replied: “Before the food you are served

50. Since Joseph (sws) was a slave, in accordance with ancient tradition, no legal procedure was needed to send him to jail. The masters of those times had unlimited authority over their slaves. Thus Joseph’s (sws) master too sent him to jail thinking that it would get rid of Zelicha’s infatuation for him and people would also think that if he had been punished then he must have been at fault. It is evident from the words of the Qur’ān that other relatives were also involved in this decision because they too thought this to be the right measure to save their honour.

51. According to the Bible, one of them was the person assigned the duty of providing the king with wine and the other one was his baker. It is further clarified in the Talmud that the king of Egypt had sent these young men to jail because the loaves of bread that they served at a banquet were insipid and a fly was found in the cup of wine. Narratives found in the books of Muslims, on the other hand, say that both had allegedly tried to mix poison in the food of the king.

52. The actual words are: *إِنِّي أَرَانِي أَغَصِمُ خَمْرًا*. Grapes are squeezed to make wine yet here the Qur’ān has used a word that expresses the product of a thing.

53. It is evident from these words how Joseph (sws) was regarded by his prison mates. The way those young boys addressed him shows that the prisoners did not regard him to be a criminal; they in fact regarded him to be a very pious person and they knew how he had proven his moral conduct through very severe trials. Thus, according to the Bible, not only the prisoners but also the jail officials had become his admirers. It is recorded in Genesis:

So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph’s care, because the LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did. (39:22-23)

إِلَّا نَبَأْتُكُمَا بِتَأْوِيلِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمَا ذَلِكُمَا مِمَّا عَلَّمَنِي رَبِّي إِنِّي تَرَكْتُ مِلَّةَ قَوْمٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَاتَّبَعْتُ مِلَّةَ آبَائِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ

here comes, I will interpret it to you.⁵⁴ This is from the knowledge which my Lord has taught me.⁵⁵ Indeed, I have left the religion of those who do not believe in God and it is they who reject the Hereafter,⁵⁶ and I have adopted the religion of my elders: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.⁵⁷ We do not have the right to

54 It was the distribution of food in the life of the prison which broke the monotony of the daily routine. It is probably because of this that Joseph (sws) has alluded to it. It is evident from succeeding verses that he had gained this time from them to present his message. Imām Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī writes:

... The effect of this on the two young individuals who had requested Joseph (sws) to interpret their dream was that they thought that their dream had been given importance by him and that he did not want to dismiss it by giving a casual explanation; they must have thought that he wanted to deliberate and then tell them its interpretation once he had turned to God as well for this purpose. On the other hand, Joseph (sws) created for himself a window of opportunity from this delay to preach the truth to them – something which had become the most cherished purpose of his life. When he saw two hearts inclined towards himself, he did not confine himself to their blind veneration. He wanted to call them towards worshipping God which if they accepted would grant them success in this world and the next. (Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī, *Tadabbur-i Qur'ān*, vol. 4, 218)

55. This is a brilliant prelude by Joseph (sws) that has lifted the need of the youngsters from himself and connected it to the Lord of the worlds. The implication is that the skill for which they have come to him does not originate from him. It is God-given. Thus if they want to know their dream's interpretation they should first have a comprehension of the being who has given this skill to him.

56. This is an expression of the truth: whatever Joseph (sws) has accepted by leaving out some views has been fully weighed by him in the scale of intellect. Deliberation shows that through these words he has also indicated that there is no possibility of polytheistic beliefs to co-exist with belief in God. If this is adhered to then this would mean they would have to necessarily forsake the ways of those who associate partners with God and do not have true belief in the Hereafter.

57. The way the names have been referred shows that the names of
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مَا كَانَ لَنَا أَنْ نُشْرِكَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۚ ذَلِكَ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ
النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾ يُصَاحِبِي السِّجْنِ عَارِبَابٌ مُتَتَفِرِّقُونَ خَيْرٌ أَمِ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ ﴿٣٩﴾
مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءُ سَيَّسْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ ۚ إِنْ
الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ ۚ أَمَرَ الْأَلْطَفُ إِلَّا يَأْهُذَ ۚ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾

associate anyone with God. It is a blessing on us and on all mankind [that He has made this fact evident through his messengers] yet most people are not grateful. Fellow Prisoners! Are many different gods separately better or that one God Who is dominant on all. You are only worshipping some names besides Him which you and your forefathers have kept. God has not revealed any sanction in their favour. Sovereignty belongs to God alone. He has directed not to worship anyone except Him. This is the true religion but many people are not aware [of this fact.]⁵⁸ (35-40)

those elders were not unknown to these young individuals. Thus by naming them, Joseph (sws) introduced his message to them in just one sentence and also explained to them he was not giving them a new message; he was delivering to them the same message which those illustrious elders had brought earlier. Their addressees did not express wonder at this. It is further evident from this that by that time the inmates of the jail were aware of his noble lineage.

58. This speech of Joseph is one of the best speeches found in the Qur'an regarding monotheism, and was delivered precisely at the moment its addressees had become fully ready to listen to it. First he has directed their attention to the real fountainhead of knowledge and wisdom. Then he has referred to his own intellectual journey that he underwent to forsake evil and reach the truth. After this, he has explained the historical splendour and significance of the religion of monotheism. He has then highlighted the requisite of worship that no human being has the right to associate partners with God. Then he has directed their attention to God's favour which He did on mankind by sending His messengers. Next he has addressed the two young men and one can see how aptly he has addressed them. This address very eloquently stirs the sentiments of love and sympathy that arise for each other in the wake of facing a common calamity. The purpose is that the addressees should hear these words with full attention and regard each word to originate from sentiments of mutual well-being and sincerity. After this, he has presented his real message. It can be summarized thus: As far as God is concerned, He is a self-evident reality – in fact, the most self-evident of

يُصَاحِبِي السِّجْنِ أَمَّا أَحَدُكُمَا فَيَسْقِي رَبَّهُ خَمْرًا ۖ وَأَمَّا الْآخَرُ فَيُصْلَبُ فَتَأْكُلُ الطَّيْرُ مِنْ رَأْسِهِ ۚ قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ الَّذِي فِيهِ تَسْتَفْتِلِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾
وَقَالَ لِلَّذِي ظَنَّ أَنَّهُ نَاجٍ مِّنْهُمَا اذْكُرْنِي عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ۚ فَأَنسَاهُ الشَّيْطَانُ ذِكْرَ رَبِّهِ فَلَبِثَ فِي السِّجْنِ بِضْعَ سِنِينَ ﴿٦١﴾

Fellow Prisoners! [The interpretation of your dream is that] one of you [will be reinstated to his position and] will serve wine to his master. As for the other, he will be hanged to death; then birds will tear away his head and eat it. The matter you had asked of has thus been decided. (41)

Joseph asked the person he thought would be freed from among them: “Mention me before your master.”⁵⁹ But Satan made him forget mentioning this to his master⁶⁰ and Joseph remained in

realities and His servants are compelled to accept Him as their Master. However, what kind of wisdom is it to accept that some others also have a share in His sovereignty? Who will like to put the yoke of slavery of some being in his neck without any need? Moreover, why should something be believed the slightest evidence of which is neither found in the world within man nor the one around him? At best, it can be said that God has informed people about His associates; but it is known that even this cannot be substantiated. What is being believed are mere names which people have invented without any evidence. All sovereignty belongs to God and the religion which He has revealed to mankind through His messengers has always contained the directive that there is no deity except God and hence people should worship Him alone; this is the upright religion but alas the majority is unaware of it.

59. It has been mentioned earlier that this person was the wine server of the king and hence the word “master” here refers to the king. The reason that Joseph (sws) expressed his desire to him was that the person would present his observations especially the incident of dream interpretation before the king. He thought that if such a need arose there he could get the chance of being freed from the prison where he had been incarcerated without any crime.

60. The actual words are: فَأَنسَاهُ الشَّيْطَانُ ذِكْرَ رَبِّهِ. The nature of annexure (*idāfat*) in ذِكْرَ رَبِّهِ is of the same nature as in مَكْرُ النَّيْلِ وَالتَّهَارِ etc. It is Satan who makes human beings forget acts of kindness; however, he gets this opportunity at God’s behest. Here it is evident that it was a requisite of God’s wisdom too that Joseph (sws) remain in prison for some more years. Thus when that person got released from jail, he totally forgot what his fellow prisoner had requested him.

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ إِنِّي أَرَى سَبْعَ بَقَرَاتٍ سِمَانٍ يَأْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَسَبْعٌ سُتُوبَاتٍ خُضَرٍ وَ
 أَخْمَرٍ يَسْتَأْكِلُنَّ الْبَلَاءَ أَفْتُونِي فِي رُءْيَايَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لِلرُّءْيَا تَعْبُرُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ قَالُوا أَضْغَاثُ
 أَحْلَامٍ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِتَأْوِيلِ الْأَحْلَامِ بِعَالِمِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِي نَجَا مِنْهُمَا وَادَّكَرَ بَعْدَ أُمَّةٍ
 أَنَا أَنْتَبِئُكُمْ بِتَأْوِيلِهِ فَأَرْسِلُونِ ﴿٤٤﴾

يُؤْسِفُ أَيُّهَا الصِّدِّيقُ أَفْتِنَا فِي سَبْعِ بَقَرَاتٍ سِمَانٍ يَأْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَسَبْعِ سُتُوبَاتٍ

the prison [in this way] for many years. (42)

[Then one day,] the king said [to his courtiers]: “I dream of seven fat cows being devoured by seven lean ones and seven green ears of corn and seven other dry ones [and they too are eating the green ones].⁶¹ Courtiers! Interpret this dream for me if you have this skill of interpretation.”⁶² People said: “These are wavered dreams and we are not aware of the interpretation of such dreams.”⁶³ Of the two prisoners who had been freed and he remembered after a long time,⁶⁴ said: “I will interpret this dream for you. [If you want to know it] just send me [to meet Joseph in the prison].”⁶⁵ (43-45)

[He went and said:] “Joseph! O man of your words,⁶⁶ tell us

61. This part is suppressed. Verse 48 ahead has explained it.

62. It is evident from the last sentence that though the king was deeply affected by his dream, he knew that deciphering it was not easy.

63. This sentence was uttered by them to maintain their pride. The implication was that had his dream been meaningful they would definitely have interpreted it; but this was a totally wavered dream and hence he should rest assured that such dreams do not have any interpretation.

64. This too happened because of God’s permission as the time was then ripe for Joseph (sws) to come out from prison and become the absolute ruler of Egypt.

65. In accordance with its style, the Qur’ān has suppressed some details here. It is evident from the Bible and the Talmud that that person first narrated to the king and his courtiers the detailed account of his meeting with Joseph (sws) in jail and his skill of interpreting dreams. After that, he asked them to let him go so that he could ask him the interpretation of these dreams too.

66. It is evident from this style of address that he did not merely regard Joseph (sws) to be a person who interpreted dreams. On the contrary, because of his experiences in jail, he knew that Joseph (sws) was an embodiment of truthfulness and veracity who had this skill too.

خُمْرًا وَآخَرًا يَبِيسَتٌ لَّعَلِّي أَرْجِعُ إِلَى النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾ قَالَ تَزْرَعُونَ سَبْعَ سِنِينَ دَأَبًا فَمَا حَصَدْتُمْ فَذَرَوْهُ فِي سُنْبُلَةٍ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾ ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ سَبْعٌ شِدَادٌ يَأْكُلْنَ مَا قَدَّمْتُمْ لَهُنَّ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّمَّا تُحْصِنُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾ ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ عَامٌ فِيهِ يُغَاثُ النَّاسُ وَفِيهِ يَعَصُرُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ ائْتُونِي بِهِ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُ الرَّسُولُ قَالَ ارْجِعْ إِلَى رَبِّكَ فَسْأَلْهُ مَا بَالُ النِّسْوَةِ الَّتِي قُطِعَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ إِنَّ رَبِّي بِكَيْدِهِنَّ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٠﴾ قَالَ مَا خَطْبُكُمْ إِذْ رَاوَدْتُنَّ يُوسُفَ عَنْ

about the seven fat cows that are being devoured by seven lean ones and about the green ears of corn and the other seven which are dry that I may go back to those people so that [instead of wildly conjecturing] they also come to know [the interpretation of this dream].” Joseph said: “For seven years continuously you will sow. So, from the crop you harvest except for a little that you may take and eat leave the rest in its ears [so that it does not become stale]. After this, seven very harsh years will follow which will consume the corn you had stored for those years except for a small quantity from what you were able to preserve.⁶⁷ After this, a year will come in which the pleading of people will be answered [in the form of abundant rain]⁶⁸ and they will squeeze grapes in it.⁶⁹ (46-49)

[When this interpretation was related in the royal court,] the king said: “Bring him to me.” But when the messenger came to Joseph [to bring him to the king], he said: “Go back to your master and ask him: ‘What was the matter of the women who had cut their hands?’⁷⁰ My Lord is fully aware of their deception.” The

67. Joseph (sws) not only told them the interpretation of the dream but also guided them to a practical suggestion to combat the seven years of drought. It is evident from this how different the view of the Qur’ān is from mystic religions regarding future planning.

68. The actual word is: يُغَاثُ. It is from غَوَّثَ. However, as its consequence, it can be translated as rain. But it has been translated literally so that a comprehensive picture of the all-embracing affects of drought on people is portrayed. The implication is that it will be such an extra-ordinary year that people will cry out and be forced to plead and beg the Almighty until finally their pleadings will be answered.

69. The actual word is: يَعْصُرُونَ. Some other expression could have been used in its place but since the questioner was the king’s wine server this word was chosen as it creates special eloquence in the discourse.

70. If someone else was in place of Joseph (sws), he would have

نَفْسِهِ ط قُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلَّهِ مَا عَلِمْنَا عَلَيْهِ مِنْ سُوءٍ ط قَالَتِ امْرَأَتُ الْعَزِيزِ اِنَّكَ حَصْحَصُ الْحَقِّ اَنْتَا اَوَدُّتَهُ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ وَاِنَّهٗ لَبَيْنَ الصَّدِيقَيْنِ ﴿٥١﴾
 ذٰلِكَ لِيَعْلَمَ اَنِّي لَمْ اَخْنِهٖ بِالْغَيْبِ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِي كَيْدَ الْخٰٓئِنِيْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَمَا اُبْرِيْ
 نَفْسِيْ اِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَا مَارَاةَ بِالسُّوْءِ اِلَّا مَارَحِمَ رَبِّيْ ط اِنَّ رَبِّيْ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٥٣﴾

king [called them and] asked: “What overtook you when you had tried to tempt Joseph?”⁷¹ Each of them bore witness: “Hāshalillāh, we did find even a semblance of vice in him.” The wife of ‘Azīz also spoke up: “Now the truth has become evident. It is I who had tried to tempt him. No doubt, he is absolutely truthful.” (50-51)

[Joseph said:] “My intent in this was that ‘Azīz comes to know that I did not secretly betray him and God does not let the intrigue of those succeed who betray.”⁷² I am not absolving my soul because the soul is prone to evil except when my Lord shows

immediately gone along as soon as he knew that he was being freed. However, he insisted that first that matter must be investigated into on the basis of which he was wrongly jailed. Imām Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī writes:

... If one deeply analyzes this statement of Joseph (sws) it becomes evident that he did not like to be freed and become closer to the king merely on the basis of a temporary benefit of the doubt expressed by the king about him. He gave absolving himself from the blame cast on him the most importance and such was his trust on his own truthfulness and on his Lord that he did not the slightest care how many lies his adversaries could fabricate to prove him to be a criminal. (Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī, *Tadabbur-i Qur’ān*, vol. 4, 224)

71. It is evident from this sentence that by that time the truth had become evident to the king to a great extent. He knew that the women were the real culprits. Imām Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī writes:

... In reality, truth requires patience for its manifestation. If a person adheres to truthfulness and shows the befitting patience that is needed for it, the time definitely comes when everything around him bears witness to his veracity. So much so, even his enemies ... vouch for him. (Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī, *Tadabbur-i Qur’ān*, vol. 4, 224)

72. Joseph (sws) here has stated the reason for insisting on investigating the matter. The opportunity for this must probably have arisen when he was told the results of the investigation in jail.

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ ائْتُونِي بِهِ اَسْتَخْلِصْهُ لِنَفْسِي فَلَمَّا كَلَّمَهُ قَالَ إِنَّكَ الْيَوْمَ لَدَيْنَا مَكِينٌ
أَمِينٌ ﴿٥٥﴾ قَالَ اجْعَلْنِي عَلَى خَزَائِنِ الْأَرْضِ إِنِّي حَفِيظٌ عَلَيْمُ ﴿٥٦﴾

mercy.⁷³ Indeed, my Lord is very Forgiving and Ever Merciful.” (52-53)

The king said: “Bring him to me; I will make him exclusive to myself.”⁷⁴ Then when he talked to him [he was so impressed that] he said to him: “Now you will be a man of authority among us and you shall be trusted.”⁷⁵ Joseph said: “Consign the treasures of this land to me because I am one who protects and also has knowledge.”⁷⁶ (54-55)

73. The actual words are: إِلَّا مَارَجِمَ رَبِّي. The letter مَا here connotes time. The translation takes this aspect into account.

74. This should not be any cause for wonder. The way Joseph (sws) superbly deciphered the dream, the effective measure he suggested to combat the drought portrayed in the dream, his refusal to be freed unless the allegations against him were cleared and as a result the confession of ‘Azīz’s wife and other women – any one of these issues, in the words of Imām Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāhī was sufficient to make the king a great admirer of Joseph (sws); yet if all these three points came to his knowledge at the same time it was but natural for him to become, in absentia, a fan of Joseph (sws). He thus declared that he was making Joseph (sws) his trusted assistant.

75. This is an offer by the king to Joseph (sws) for the highest post in his government. He made it to him after he had conversed with him and seen his knowledge, intelligence and competence. Yet the form in which Joseph (sws) was to accept this offer was left to his discretion by the king.

76. The greatest challenge at hand was to manage the country during the drought predicted by Joseph (sws). The greatest desire of the king too must have been efficient management of it. Thus Joseph (sws) presented his opinion before the king keeping this in consideration. This is almost the same demand of authority which in a parliamentary form of government is held by the prime minister. The Bible records:

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you.” So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt.” Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on Joseph’s finger. He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. He had him ride in a chariot

وَكَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَتَّبِعُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ يَشَاءُ ۖ نُصِيبُ بِرَحْمَتِنَا مَنْ نَشَاءُ وَلَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَلَا جُرْأُولَ الْأُخْرَىٰ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾
وَجَاءَ إِخْوَةُ يُوسُفَ فَدَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ فَعَرَفَهُمْ وَهُمْ لَهُ مُنْكَرُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَلَمَّا جَهَّزَهُمْ بِجَهَازِهِمْ

In this way, We gave Joseph authority in that country; he can pick a position for himself anywhere there.⁷⁷ We bless whomsoever We want with Our mercy and We do not waste the reward of those who are thorough.⁷⁸ The reward of the Hereafter however is much more than this for those who accept faith and keep fearing [God]. (56-57)

[Many years after this] the brothers of Joseph came to Egypt⁷⁹

as his second-in-command, and people shouted before him, “Make way!” Thus he put him in charge of the whole land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh, but without your word no one will lift hand or foot in all Egypt.” (Genesis: 41, 39-44)

Here it should be kept in mind that the use of the word Pharaoh for this king is an error made by the compilers of the Bible. This king was from the fifteenth family of kings who in history are known as the shepherd kings (Hyskos Kings). They were Arabs by lineage and in about 2000 BC had gone to Egypt from Palestine and Syria and had taken hold of its reins of government. Arab historians call them ‘Amālīq. The researchers of current times say that king Apophis from among the shepherd kings is the one being referred to. The word Pharaoh was a religious term in Egypt and these people did not believe in the Egyptian religion. Thus this name is used for Coptic kings who ended the rule of the Shepherd kings sometime in 1500 BC and replaced them.

77. Ie., wherever he can, he can stay and whichever part of the kingdom he wants to visit, it is his kingdom; he can run the empire any way he wants and pass orders for whomsoever he wants at whichever place he deems fit. In short, this is an expression of the comprehensive authority invested in Joseph (sws) by the decree of the king.

78. The implication is that in this world also the Almighty necessarily rewards them in some form or the other for their thoroughness.

79. It is evident from the succeeding verses that his brothers had also come to Egypt to buy grain. The prophecy of the drought made by Joseph (sws) had begun and was rampant not only in Egypt but also its neighbouring countries like Syria and Palestine. However, because of the effective measure taken by Joseph (sws) in advance, Egypt was not only self-sufficient in its food needs, it was also providing for the needs of the neighbouring countries. It had allowed them to come and purchase grain.

قَالَ اسْتُونِي بِأَخِي لَكُمْ مِّنْ أَبِيكُمْ ؕ أَلَا تَرَوْنَ أَنِّي أُوفِي الْكَيْلَ وَأَنَا خَيْرُ الْمُنْزِلِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾ فَإِن لَّمْ تَأْتُونِي بِهِ فَلَا كَيْلَ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي وَلَا تَقْرَبُونِ ﴿٨١﴾ قَالُوا سُرَّادُ عَنْهُ أَبَاهُ وَإِنَّا لَفَاعِلُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾
وَقَالَ لِفَتَاهِهِ اجْعَلُوا بَضَاعَتَهُمْ فِي رِحَالِهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْرِفُونَهَا إِذَا انْقَلَبُوا إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾ فَلَمَّا رَجَعُوا إِلَىٰ أَبِيهِمْ قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا مُنِعَ مِنَّا الْكَيْلُ فَأَرْسِلْ مَعَنَا آخَانَ نَكْتَلْ

and also came to his presence;⁸⁰ so, he recognized them but they did not recognize him.⁸¹ [Then at the time of their departure] when he had their provisions prepared, he said to them: “[When you come again,] bring to me your step brother as well. Do you not see that I give grain in full measure and am also a very good host? But if you do not bring him to me, then neither will I have grain for you nor should you come near me.”⁸² They said: “We will try to convince his father about him and we shall definitely do this.”⁸³ (58-61)

Joseph asked his servants: “[Secretly] place back in their saddle packs the goods they have given in lieu of the grain. The purpose of this is that when they reach their families they recognize [that their own goods have been returned to them] so

80. Since the brothers of Joseph (sws) belonged to a different country, they must have needed to seek permission. It was probably for this reason that they came to him.

81. It is not unlikely that the brothers were unable to recognize Joseph (sws). When they had thrown him in the well, he was just seventeen years old and by then he was thirty eight. In twenty years, people change a lot. In verse 90 ahead, there is an indication that they did see the reflection of their brother in him but they soon dismissed this notion because they could not even imagine someone who had been thrown in the well was now in charge of the kingdom of Egypt.

82. If food is rationed, the general way adopted is that every needy person is given food on the basis of the number of his family members. They must have obtained grain for their brother Benjamin also. This gave Joseph (sws) the opportunity to insist on bringing him over the next time to prove his identity though on that visit he allowed them to take grain for him as well. He told them that if they did not bring him, they would be regarded as liars and hence were not even to try to come back to him.

83. Ie., they will try their best. It is evident from this sentence the excuse they had in mind: if they were not able to bring him, it would only be because their father did not give them permission: this was fully possible because of what they had done to Joseph (sws).

وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَفُظُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ قَالَ هَلْ أَمِنُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا كَمَا أَمِنْتُكُمْ عَلَى أَخِيهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۖ قَالَ لَهُ خَيْرٌ حَفِظًا ۖ وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّحِيمِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾
وَلَمَّا فَتَحُوا مَتَاعَهُمْ وَجَدُوا بِضَاعَتَهُمْ رُدَّتْ إِلَيْهِمْ ۖ قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا مَا نَبْغِي ۖ هَذِهِ بِضَاعُنَا رُدَّتْ إِلَيْنَا ۖ وَنَبِيرُ أَهْلِنَا وَنَحْفَظُ أَخَانًا وَنَزِدُ ذِكْرًا ذِكْرًا ۖ ذِكْرُ كَيْلٍ بَعِيرٍ ۖ ذَٰلِكَ كَيْلٌ يَسِيرٌ ﴿٦٥﴾
قَالَ لَنْ أَرْسِلَهُ مَعَكُمْ حَتَّى تُؤْتُوا مَوْثِقًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ لَتَأْتُنِنِي بِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ يُحَاطَ بِكُمْ ۚ فَلَمَّا اتَّوَهُ مَوْثِقَهُمْ قَالَ اللَّهُ عَلَى مَا نَقُولُ وَكِيلٌ ﴿٦٦﴾

that they may come again.”⁸⁴ Then when they returned to their father, they said: “Father! We have been denied grain [in future]. So, let our brother [Benjamin] also go along with us that we [are able to prove our truthfulness and] bring grain; we promise to protect him.” The father replied: “Should I trust you in his matter the way I trusted you earlier in the matter of his brother? So, God is the best of guardians and of all those who show mercy, He is the most merciful.”⁸⁵ (62-64)

[After that,] when they opened their luggage, they say that their goods had been returned to them. [Seeing this,] they cried out: “Father! What more do we need. [Look!] Our goods have been returned to us. Now we will go, bring supplies for our family,⁸⁶ protect our bother and procure more than a camel-load of grain.⁸⁷ The grain [that we have brought this time] is not enough.”⁸⁸ The father replied: “I shall never send him with you until you promise me in God’s name that you shall definitely bring him back to me, except if you are stranded somewhere.” So, when they give him their word [on his insistence], he said: “This pact that we are

84. He said this so that any shortage of goods did not cause a hindrance in their return.

85. The implication is that he has experienced trusting them earlier; hence if he sent Benjamin, it would only be by trusting God and not them.

86. The actual words are: *نَبِيرُ أَهْلِنَا*. The clause to which they are coordinated is suppressed because of contextual indication. It has been revealed in the translation.

87. It is evident from this that the way the grain was rationed: the needy from abroad could obtain one camel-load each of grain.

88. Readers may consider the eloquence of these sentences: the Qur’ān has cited what they said in the words of Imām Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī, their joy is readily evident from every sentence they uttered.

وَقَالَ يَبْنِي لَا تَدْخُلُوا مِنْ بَابٍ وَاحِدٍ وَادْخُلُوا مِنْ أَبْوَابٍ مُتَفَرِّقَةٍ وَمَا أُغْنِي عَنْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِنْ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَعَلَيْهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾ وَكَلَّمَا دَخَلُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَهُمْ آبَاؤُهُمْ مَا كَانَ يُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا حَاجَةً فِي نَفْسٍ يَعْقُوبَ قَضَاهَا وَإِنَّهُ لَكُدُوْعٌ لِمَا عَلَّمْنَاهُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَكَلَّمَا دَخَلُوا عَلَى يُوسُفَ أَوَى إِلَيْهِ أَخَاهُ قَالَ إِنِّي أَنَا أَخُوكَ فَلَا تَبْتَئِسْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾ فَلَمَّا جَهَّزَهُمْ بِجَهَّازِهِمْ جَعَلَ السَّقَايَةَ فِي دُحْلِ أَخِيهِ ثُمَّ أَذَّنَ مُؤَذِّنٌ أَيَّتُهَا

making, God is its protector.” (65-66)

[Then when they were about to depart,] he directed them: “My sons! Do not enter together [the capital of Egypt] through the same gate; but go through separate gates.⁸⁹ [I know this is only a scheme] and I can be of no benefit to you against God. All authority belongs to God. I have trusted Him and all those who want to trust should trust Him.” Thus when they entered the city from where their father had directed them, then surely [had something been ordained for them from God] this could not have been of avail to them against God; except that it was only a desire in the heart of Jacob which he fulfilled.⁹⁰ Indeed, he had the knowledge We had taught him, but most people do not know.⁹¹ (67-68)

And when these people reached Joseph’s presence, he gave his brother a special place near himself. [Then sometime in seclusion] he told him: “I am your brother [Joseph]. So, do not grieve on what they have been doing.”⁹² Then [at the time of

89. He said this because if all the eleven tribal strongmen enter the city together in the form of a group, they may regarded as suspicious and the people of the city may be led to think that in this period of drought they have come to loot them.

90. This is an explanation of the relationship between a human scheme and a divine plan: the latter is nevertheless inevitable. No human scheme can change it. A person can only go about practically implementing the idea that comes to his mind. Nothing beyond this is in his control. A true believer must always keep this in mind.

91. Ie., he had the knowledge which tells a person that God’s will prevails over everything. However, in spite of this, it is the duty of a person to undertake essential measures because at times God’s will is dependent on a person’s planning, yet many people do not know this.

92. The implication is that the days of his sorrow have ended. By the

اٰلَيْكُمْ لَسِرْفُوْنَ ۝۴۰ قَالُوْا وَاَقْبِلُوْا عَلَيْنٰمْ مَا دَا تَفْقِدُوْنَ ۝۴۱ قَالُوْا نَفْقِدُ صُوَاعَ الْمَلِكِ وَلَيْنَ جَاءَ بِهٖ حَبْلٌ بَّعِيْرٍ وَّاَنَا بِهٖ رَعِيْمٌ ۝۴۲ قَالُوْا تَاللّٰهِ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَا جِئْنَا لِنُفْسِدَ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَمَا كُنَّا سِرّٰتِيْنَ ۝۴۳ قَالُوْا فَمَا جَزَاؤُهٗۤ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ كٰذِبِيْنَ ۝۴۴ قَالُوْا جَزَاؤُهٗۤ مَنْ وُجِدَ فِي رَحْلِهٖ فَهُوَ جَزَاؤُهٗۤ كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ۝۴۵ فَبَدَاۤ اِبْرٰهِيْمُ يَتَخَفَتُهُمْ قَبْلَ وِعَآءِ اَخِيْهِ ثُمَّ اسْتَخْرَجَهُمَا مِنْ وِعَآءِ اَخِيْهِ كَذٰلِكَ كِدْنَا لِيُوسُفَۙ مَا كَانَ لِيَآخُذَ اَخَاهُ فِي

their departure] when he had their provisions prepared, he placed his cup [as a token of love] in the belongings of his brother.⁹³ After this, [it happened from God that exactly at that time] a caller called: “O People of the Caravan! You are thieves indeed.” They turned back and asked him: “What have you lost?” They replied: “We are not able to find the king’s goblet.” [Their officer said:] “And he who brings it will get a camel-load of grain; I take responsibility of this.” Joseph’s brothers said: “By God! You know that we have not come here to create disorder in the land and we are not those who steal.” They said: “If you are proven wrong, then what is the punishment of the thief?” They replied: “The punishment from whose belongings the stolen thing is located is that he himself shall be kept back as his punishment.”⁹⁴ Thus do We punish such unjust people.⁹⁵ At this, that person began searching their bags before the bag of Joseph’s brother. Then [the goblet of the king was not found,⁹⁶ but]

grace of God, he will now see comfort and relief. So, he should not worry. These people will not be able to harm him now.

93. Just as in his first meeting Joseph (sws) had placed the goods given by his brothers in their camel packs, in a similar way he placed the cup in the belongings of Benjamin without informing him. The purpose was that when he opened them after he returned to his home he would feel overjoyed and at the same time show it as a sign of his brother’s authority to his father.

94. Ie., he will be detained as a slave.

95. This could also be a custom of their land. It is not necessary to regard it as a directive of the Abrahamic religion. Abraham (sws) never attained political authority in this land, hence it is not plausible that the *sharī‘ah* given to him had directives related to crime and punishment.

96. The reason for this is that a cup (السِّقَايَةُ) was placed in the belongings of Benjamin for which a feminine pronoun is used. On the contrary, the royal guards were trying to locate the king’s goblet (صُوَاعٌ)

وَيُنِ الْهَلِكِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مَن نَّشَاءُ وَفَوْقَ كُلِّ ذِي عِلْمٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٤٦﴾

he extracted [the cup] from the bag of his brother [that Joseph had placed in it]. In this way, We schemed for Joseph [to hold back his brother because] he was not authorized to hold back his brother according to law of the king⁹⁷ except if God willed.⁹⁸ We raise the status of whomsoever We want⁹⁹ and in reality there is a knowledgeable being above every other knowledgeable person.¹⁰⁰ (67-76)

الهِلِكِ). Thus one can see in the verse a masculine pronoun is used for it and for what was found in the belongings a feminine pronoun is used.

97. After regaining his brother, Joseph (sws) was not prepared to undertake the danger of consigning him back to his unjust brothers on their return trip. After all, they could have done anything to him. For this, it was essential to stop him from going with them. At that stage, he did not want to reveal himself and it was also not possible to stop him without any reason as per the law of the land. In spite of having all powers, it was only befitting for him to act according to the law in whatever measure he undertook. The Qur'ān says that at that instance the Almighty helped him and precisely at the time when he had placed his cup in Benjamin's belongings and the brothers were about to depart, the king's goblet got misplaced somewhere and could not be found in spite of a search to locate it. The guards suspected the brothers who were about to leave to have stolen it. As a result, a situation arose in which they were forced to leave their brother Benjamin behind. This was a divine scheme which manifested itself in the same way as at times such extra-ordinary accidental happenings come to our notice and we are not able to know how they materialized. Joseph (sws) and his brothers were only silent observers of this event. No doubt, as a result, Benjamin had to face a temporary blame, yet he knew that very soon this stain would be washed. Thus he too remained reassured and did not express any anxiety.

98. And from His power create a situation in which without violating the law Benjamin is detained.

99. This is a reference to Joseph (sws). The implication is that he is made to reach such a high rank that the Lord of the universe schemes for this.

100. I.e., the eternal God Whose knowledge is true knowledge. Thus only He knows whichever thing can appear at whatever time in whichever shape and what is seemingly impossible for human beings is very much a possibility for Him.

قَالُوا إِنْ يَسْرِقْ فَقَدْ سَرَقَ أَخٌ لَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَأَسْرَاهُ يُوسُفُ فِي نَفْسِهِ وَلَمْ يُبْدِهَا لَهُمْ قَالَ أَنْتُمْ شَرٌّ مَكَانًا وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَصِفُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾ قَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا الْعَزِيزُ إِنَّ لَهُ أَبًا شَيْخًا كَبِيرًا فَخُذْ أَحَدًا مَكَانَهُ إِنَّا نَرَاكَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾ قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ أَنْ نَأْخُذَ إِلَّا مَنْ وَجَدْنَا مَتَاعَنَا عِنْدَهُ إِنَّا إِذًا لَظَالِمُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾ فَلَمَّا اسْتَيْسَسُوا مِنْهُ خَلَصُوا نَجِيًّا قَالَ كَبِيرُهُمْ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ أَبَاكُمْ قَدْ أَخَذَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَوْثِقًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَمِنْ قَبْلُ مَا فَرَّطْتُمْ فِي يُوسُفَ فَلَنْ أَبْرَرَنَّ

When the brothers [saw this,] they said: “If he has stolen, [then this is no matter of amazement,] before this, one of his brothers has also been guilty of stealing.¹⁰¹ [This was totally a false accusation,] but Joseph kept it in his heart and did not express it to them. The only thing he said in his heart was: “Very wicked are you people and God well knows whatever you are saying.” They said: “ ‘Azīz! He has a very old father; so, in his place keep one of us; we see that you are a very virtuous person.” Joseph said: “God forbid that we should seize someone else than the person with whom we have found our thing.¹⁰² In such a case, we will be regarded as very unjust.” When after hearing this answer of his they lost hope, they went in seclusion in order to consult one another. An elder¹⁰³ among them said: “Do you not know that your father has taken a strong promise from you in the name

101. This they said to hide their embarrassment. They had already stated earlier that they were not thieves. Now when they saw that the cup had been recovered from their brother’s bag, they immediately fabricated a tale and dissociated themselves from him and dragged their other brother too in this blame. Obviously, the impression they wanted to give by this was that he was not their real brother and that he was their step brother and that he had inherited this evil trait from his parents. It is evident from this how much malice and meanness was hidden in their hearts for Joseph (sws).

102. The precaution exercised by Joseph (sws) must be kept in mind: when he was forced to speak, he did not say: “He who has stolen our thing.” On the contrary, he just said: “He with whom we have found our thing.” This is an excellent example of a veiled lie which cannot be ethically objected to.

103. The word used for him is كَبِيرُهُمْ and not أَكْبَرُهُمْ. According to linguistic aspects, this word is also used for those who are big in knowledge and wisdom. Thus if Judas is implied by it, then it is quite likely. It is specified in the Bible that it was he who had given this suggestion.

الْأَرْضَ حَتَّى يَأْذَنَ لِيَ أَبِي أَوْ يَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ لِي ۖ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحَاكِمِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾ اِرْجِعُوا إِلَى آبَائِكُمْ فَقُولُوا يَا أَبَائِنَا إِنَّ ابْنَكَ سَرَقَ وَمَا شَهِدْنَا إِلَّا بِمَا عَلَّمْنَا وَمَا كُنَّا بِالْغَيْبِ حَافِظِينَ ﴿٨١﴾ وَسَلِّ الْقَرْيَةَ الَّتِي كُنَّا فِيهَا وَالْعِيرَ الَّتِي أَقْبَلْنَا فِيهَا ۖ وَإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾ قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَمْرًا ۖ فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ ۖ عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَنِي بِهِمْ جَمِيعًا ۖ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا أَسْفَى عَلَى يُوسُفَ وَابَيْضَتْ عَيْنُهُ مِنَ الْحُزْنِ فَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ﴿٨٤﴾ قَالُوا

of God and before this, the mistake you have committed regarding Joseph is also known to you? Hence I am not going to leave this land until my father permits me or God passes a judgement for me and He is the best of judges.¹⁰⁴ Go back to your father and tell him: ‘Father! Your son has committed a theft and We have only said what has come to our knowledge. We are not guardians of the unseen. Ask the people of that settlement where we have stayed and the caravan with which we came. We are absolutely truthful.’” Their father [heard this story; then] said: “No! In fact, your heart has made up an excuse.¹⁰⁵ So, graceful patience is better. Hopefully God will bring all of them to me.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, He is all knowing and wise.” (77-83)

[After saying this,] he turned away his face from them and said: “Alas O Joseph!”¹⁰⁷ and his eyes turned white due to grief¹⁰⁸

104. It is evident that this brother was better than the others. He probably was the one who had suggested not to kill Joseph (sws). Thus, his honour did not permit him to come to the father as the culprit guilty of losing his second brother.

105. Ie., the fact that Benjamin was in fact guilty of stealing even though they could have said there that they knew their brother; he never stole; they could have said maybe the cup had been placed by someone else or that it was mistakenly packed in his belongings. Furthermore, even after reaching their father, they did not say that Benjamin had been accused of stealing. On the contrary, they vehemently said that his son was guilty of stealing.

106. Jacob (sws) regarded the dream seen by Joseph (sws) very early on as divine glad tidings. Hence he was convinced that Joseph (sws) was alive and would meet him and his dream would be fulfilled. This is an expression of his conviction.

107. Though it was the matter of Benjamin that was at hand at that time, but Jacob (sws) was reminded of Joseph (sws). Imām Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī writes:

تَاللّٰهِ تَفْتُوْا تَذْكُرُ يُّوسُفَ حَتّٰى تَكُوْنَ حَرَمًا اَوْ تَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْهٰلِكِيْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾ قَالَ اِنَّمَا اَسْكُوْا بَئِىْ وَ حُرْنِىْ اِلَى اللّٰهِ وَاَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٨٦﴾ يٰبَنِيَّ اذْهَبُوْا فَتَحَسَّسُوْا مِنْ يُّوسُفَ وَ اَخِيْهِ وَلَا تَاِيَسُّوْا مِنْ رُّوْحِ اللّٰهِ اِنَّهٗ لَا يَاِيَسُّ مِنْ رُّوْحِ اللّٰهِ اِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾

and he was in a lot of anguish – The sons said: “By God! You will only keep remembering Joseph until you become miserable with woe or pass away.”¹⁰⁹ He said: “I complain of my worry and sorrow to God alone¹¹⁰ and know from God what you do not. My Sons! Go and search for Joseph and his brother and do not lose hope in God’s mercy.”¹¹¹ Only the disbelievers lose hope in God’s mercy.” (84-87)

It is not strange that the current incident revived the sorrow of losing Joseph (sws) in Jacob’s heart. In the first place, the nature of what befell Benjamin was very different from what happened to Joseph (sws). Secondly, the deep affection Jacob (sws) had for Joseph (sws) was not merely because he was his son; the real reason for this were his outstanding abilities. So profound were they that Jacob (sws) was attached to him to such an extent that the rest of the brothers became jealous of him. Ultimately, it was because of this jealousy that Joseph (sws) had to pass through very severe trials at their hands. (Amīn Aḥsan Işlāhī, *Tadabbur-i Qur’ān*, vol. 4, 224)

108. It is a common observation that the intense sorrow and profuse crying cause the pupil and eye lashes to lose their blackness and the redness of the eyes also slowly starts to vanish. This is a portrayal of this situation.

109. This apparently seems to be a sentence that expresses sympathy. However, deliberation shows that this too has an underpinning of jealousy in it – the very jealousy which was the basis of all their measures. They thought that after killing Joseph (sws) they would have the exclusive attention of their father. However, they observed that whatever they had obtained as a result had also been snatched away from them and the father had nothing to do when he was alone but to wail and cry for Joseph (sws).

110. This only is befitting for a true believer. He expresses his sorrow and grief before God alone because all his hopes are pinned on Him and he knows that these pleadings will finally stir the mercy of God.

111. It is evident from this sentence that just as Jacob (sws) had not believed their statement in the matter of Joseph (sws), he also did not believe them in what they said about Benjamin.

فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ قَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا الْعَزِيزُ مَسَّنَا وَأَهْلَنَا الضُّرُّ وَجِئْنَا بِبِضَاعَةٍ مُّزْجَاةٍ فَأَوْفِ لَنَا الْكَيْلَ وَتَصَدَّقْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَجْزِي الْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ ﴿٨٨﴾ قَالَ هَلْ عَلَيْكُمْ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ بِيُوسُفَ وَأَخِيهِ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ جَاهِلُونَ ﴿٨٩﴾ قَالُوا إِنَّكَ لَأَنْتَ يُوسُفُ قَالَ أَنَا يُوسُفُ وَهَذَا أَخِي قَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّهُ مَنْ يَتَّقِ وَيَصْبِرْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٩٠﴾ قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ أَتَرَكْنَا اللَّهَ عَلَيْنَا وَإِنْ كُنَّا لَخُطِئِينَ ﴿٩١﴾ قَالَ لَا تَثْرِيْبُ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ ﴿٩٢﴾ اذْهَبُوا بِقَمِيصِي هَذَا فَالْقَوَّةُ عَلَى وَجْهِ أَبِي يَأْتِ بِصِيرًا وَ أَتُونِي بِأَهْلِكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٩٣﴾

Then when [the next time] they came to Joseph, they [imploringly] said: “O ‘Azīz! We and our family are in great affliction and we have come with a small amount.”¹¹² So, [be gracious to us and] give us the grain in full and give us in charity; indeed, God nicely rewards those who give in charity.”¹¹³ [Hearing their pleading, Joseph could not restrain himself;] he said: “Do you know that when you were overwhelmed with frenzy what did with Joseph and his brother?” [In amazement,] they cried out: “Are you really Joseph?” He replied: “Yes, I am Joseph, and this is my brother. God has been gracious to us. In reality, those who fear God and remain steadfast, certainly get their reward because God does not waste the reward of those who are thorough in their deeds.”¹¹⁴ They said: “By God! God has given you superiority over us and there is no doubt that it was we who were wrongdoers.” Joseph said: “Now there is no blame on you. May God forgive you. Of all those who show mercy, He is the most merciful. [Go and] take this shirt of mine and put it on the face of my father; his eyesight will be restored¹¹⁵ and bring all your family to me. (88-93)

112. The actual words are: *بِضَاعَةٍ مُّزْجَاةٍ*. Ie., such a trivial amount that no will accept it. It seems from this that instead of cash they had taken something in kind which was not in demand there.

113. It is evident from this where need and necessity can take people with such pride and arrogance.

114. It is this reality for the explanation of which the whole account has been related to the Quraysh of Makkah.

115. This is a matter of great amazement and not easy to comprehend. Imām Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī writes:

وَلَبَّا فَصَلَتِ الْعِيرُ قَالَ أَبُوهُمْ إِنِّي لَأَجِدُ رِيحَ يُوسُفَ لَوْلَا أَنْ تُقَدِّدُونِ ﴿٩٣﴾ قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ إِنَّكَ لَفِي ضَلَالِكَ الْقَدِيمِ ﴿٩٤﴾ فَلَمَّا أَنْ جَاءَ الْبَشِيرُ أَلْقَاهُ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ فَارْتَدَّ بَصِيرًا قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾ قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا اسْتَغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا خُطِيئِينَ ﴿٩٦﴾ قَالَ سَوْفَ أَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكُمْ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٩٧﴾

When this caravan departed [from Egypt,] their father [in Canaan] said [to his family]: “If you do not say that I have become senile, I can feel the fragrance of Joseph.”¹¹⁶ People said: “By God! You are still with your old insanity.” Then when it happened that the giver of glad tidings arrived,¹¹⁷ he placed the shirt on Jacob’s face; then suddenly his eyesight returned. At this, he said: “Did I not tell you that I know from God what you do not know.” The brothers of Joseph cried out: “Father! Pray for the forgiveness of our sins; we were indeed wrongdoers.” He said: “I will soon¹¹⁸ pray to my Lord for your forgiveness. Indeed, He alone forgives and is ever-merciful.” (94-98)

Why did Joseph (sws) send his shirt that had touched his body as a sign? And how did this give rise to the effect in the shirt that Jacob’s eyesight was restored? Neither can everyone solve this question nor can everyone understand its answer. They relate to emotions and the emotions too of such noble souls: on the one hand is Jacob (sws) and on the other is Joseph (sws). We masses can say nothing in such matters except that the marvels of the effects of such pure emotions manifest themselves in such amazing forms that intellect is unable to decipher them. (Amīn Aḥsan Islāhī, *Tadabbur-i Qur’ān*, vol. 4, 224)

116. Jacob (sws) was a prophet of God. The senses and faculties of the individuals God chooses as His prophets and messengers should not be considered analogous to our senses and faculties. God makes them aware of a matter whenever He intends and in whichever way He desires. Thus there too Joseph (sws) remained in Egypt for more than 20 years and Jacob (sws) never felt his fragrance. However, at that time his faculty of smell became so enhanced that that when Joseph’s shirt began its journey from Egypt, Jacob (sws) could feel its fragrance.

117. The actual words are: فَلَمَّا أَنْ جَاءَ الْبَشِيرُ. Before the word أَنْ a verb is suppressed. It has been expressed in the translation.

118. The actual word is: سَوْفَ. This indicates that Jacob (sws) had promised to pray for them in a thorough way and at a specific time. He did not put them off by saying: “Go, may God forgive you.”

فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَى يُوسُفَ أَوَىٰ إِلَيْهِ أَبَوِيهِ وَقَالَ ادْخُلُوا مَعِيَ إِنِّ شَاءَ اللَّهُ أَمِينٌ ﴿١١٩﴾ وَ
رَفَعَ أَبَوَيْهِ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ وَخَرُّوا لَهُ سُجَّدًا وَقَالَ يَأْبَتِ هَذَا تَابِئِلَ رُءُيَايَ مِنْ قَبْلُ قَدْ
جَعَلَهَا رَبِّي حَقًّا وَقَدْ أَحْسَنَ بِي إِذْ أَخْرَجَنِي مِنَ السِّجْنِ وَجَاءَ بِكُمْ مِنَ الْبَدْوِ مِنْ بَعْدِ أَنْ
نَزَغَ الشَّيْطَانُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ إِخْوَتِي إِنَّ رَبِّي لَطِيفٌ لِّمَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١٢٠﴾ رَبِّ

Then when these people came over to Joseph, he gave his parents¹¹⁹ a special place near him and said: “Stay in Egypt, if God wills, with peace.”¹²⁰ [After reaching his house,] he made his parents sit on the throne¹²¹ and everyone bowed before him in prostration.¹²² Joseph said: “Father! This is the interpretation of my dream that I saw earlier. My Lord made it a reality. He has been very gracious to me when He took me out of the prison and brought all of you here from the village even though Satan had spread mischief between me and my brothers. In reality, whatever my Lord desires, He creates very subtle means for it. Indeed, He alone is knowledgeable and wise. Lord! You granted me a share

119. Ie., his father and step mother who was also her paternal aunt. It is specified by the Bible that his real mother had passed away.

120. This is a sentence of greeting. When they arrived, Joseph (sws) welcomed them by coming out of the city and escorted them with such splendour into the city that it became a festive occasion.

121. This does not refer to the royal throne but to the throne on which Joseph (sws) would sit to fulfil his state responsibilities.

122. Prostration here does not refer to the one which is done before God; it refers to bending down in the form of kneeling. Showing respect for elders in this manner is a very ancient tradition. In Arabic, the word *سَجَدَ* is commonly used in this meaning. It is specified by the Bible and the Talmud that the ceremonial prostration was also prohibited in the *shar'ah* of the Israelites the way it is in ours. How did the incident mentioned here take place? Imām Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāhī writes:

Joseph (sws) shared his throne with his parents as a mark of respect. The rest of the people must have sat where common people generally sit. It seems that after this Joseph (sws) appeared and as was the custom his courtiers and attendees bowed before him in respect. Such was the aura created that these people too spontaneously bowed in respect. (Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāhī, *Tadabbur-i Qur'ān*, vol. 4, 254)

قَدْ أَتَيْتَنِي مِنَ الْمَلِكِ وَعَلَّمْتَنِي مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ ۚ فَاطِرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَنْتَ
وَلِيٌّ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ ۚ تُوفِّئِي مُسْلِمًا وَآلِحَقِّئِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٠١﴾
ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهِ إِلَيْكَ ۚ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ أَجْمَعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَمْكُرُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾
وَمَا أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَمَا تَسْأَلُهُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ ۗ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْاَدِّمُ

in political authority and taught me from the knowledge of interpreting words. O Creator of the Heavens and the Earth! You are my guardian in this world and the next. Make me die on Islam and include me among your righteous people.”¹²³ (99-101)

This tale is from among the news of the unknown. We are revealing it to you [O Prophet!] You were not present at that time when the brothers of Joseph had firmly decided and they were conspiring [against him]. (102)

In spite of this, a vast majority of these people will not accept faith however much you may desire.¹²⁴ You are not asking for

123. Exalted be God! What superb conduct and character. He has neither expressed any complaint or rebuke nor his superiority or pre-eminence. On the contrary, he has expressed his gratitude to His Lord and an acknowledgement of His favours; in fact, in order to assure his brothers he stated that in fact it was Satan who had distanced both. He finally ended his speech by praying to God to grant him perseverance on His worship and to include him among the righteous. This conversation of Joseph (sws) is the best example of the character and conduct the Qur'an wants to instill in its followers.

¹²⁴. Ie., they will not accept faith in spite of the fact that the Prophet (sws) is narrating to him a tale which in itself is a proof that he is a prophet of God because he could never have known it. He was not present when this incident took place but he has narrated it in such an accurate manner that if people are fair, they can correct the version of the Bible which not only has historical mistakes but has also suppressed important parts of the account which can rightly be termed as its real essence. The verse says that whatever the Prophet (sws) has reported about this account is correct word by word and befits the splendour and majesty of the characters of such celebrated prophets of God as Jacob (sws) and Joseph (sws) and is also in accordance with sense and nature. If his opponents compare the Prophet's account with that of the Bible and the Talmud, they will cry out themselves that it has been originally revealed to him by God and is not an extract of the Bible or the Talmud.

لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَكَأَيِّن مِّن آيَةٍ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ يَمرُؤْنَ عَلَيْهَا وَهُمْ عَنْهَا مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُم بِٱللَّهِ إِلَّا وَهُمْ مُّشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ أَفَأَمِنُوا أَن تَأْتِيَهُمْ غَاشِيَةٌ مِّنْ عَذَابِ ٱللَّهِ أَوْ تَأْتِيَهُمُ ٱلسَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٠٦﴾

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِى أَدْعُو إِلَى ٱللَّهِ عَلَىٰ بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِ ۖ وَسُبْحٰنَ ٱللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ ٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٠٧﴾

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِلَّا رِجَالًا نُّوحِىَ إِلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ أَهْلِ ٱلْقُرْأٰى ۖ أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ فَيَنظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ ٱلَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۖ وَكَدَارُ ٱلْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِينَ ٱتَّقَوْا ۖ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٠٨﴾ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا اسْتَيْسَسَ ٱلرُّسُلُ وَظَنُّوٓا أَنَّهُمْ قَدْ كُذِّبُوا جَاءَهُمْ نَصْرُنَا فَنُجِّى مَن

any reward for this service [so that they are trying to evade you]. This is only a reminder for the people of the world. [They demand a sign from you. In reality] there are so many signs in the earth and the heavens on which they pass by and pay no heed. Most of them believe in God by associating partners with Him. Then [by trusting the partners they associate with God] have they become content that a torment visit them from God or the Day of Judgement suddenly descend on them and they are absolutely unaware of it? (103-107)

Tell them clearly: “This is my way; I call towards God with full understanding – me also and those who follow me. And [listen] God is exalted [from the filth of polytheism]¹²⁵ and I am not from among the polytheists.” (108)

[They are amazed that a human being has been sent to them as God’s messenger.] Before you also [O Prophet!] whoever We sent as messengers were human beings who lived in these settlements; We would send Our revelations to them. Then have these people not walked about in the land so that they could have seen [with their eyes] the fate of those who were before them. In reality, the abode of the Hereafter is far better for those who are God-conscious. Then do you not understand? [The way they are asking to hasten the torment, those before them also did the same thing.] Until when their messengers lost hope in them and they too thought that they were lied to [about the torment], Our help

125. This refers to the filth which is a necessary consequence of every polytheistic belief and a logical outcome of polytheism.

نَشَاءُ^ط وَلَا يُرَدُّ بَأْسُنَا عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١١١﴾ لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي قَصصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ^ط
مَا كَانَ حَدِيثًا يُفْتَرَى وَلَكِنْ تَصْدِيقَ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيلَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً
لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١١١﴾

came to the messengers. Then they were saved whom We wanted [to be saved] and Our torment cannot be warded off from the wrongdoers. There is a great lesson to be learnt by people of intellect in their accounts. This Qur'ān is not something concocted; in fact, it substantiates what is before it and is a detail of everything [essential for guidance] and is a guidance and mercy for those who believe.¹²⁶ (109-111)

(Translated from Al-Bayān by Dr Shehzad Saleem)

126. Ie., guidance with regards to the beginning and mercy with regards to the end.