

**Yasir Qadhi. (2020). Lessons from Surah Yusuf. Leicester: Kube Publishing Ltd. 256 pp.
ISBN: 978-1-84774-137-0^(*)**

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There are many parables in the Al-Quran and each of them is unique in their own ways. However, not only is Surah Yusuf captivating in its details, but it is also presented in an easy-going and smooth manner, concentrating on the morals of the story with elegant Arabic eloquence. Such was how the author introduced this book.

Yasir Qadhi divided his book into 13 parts, in which the first 12 are specific parts discussing the stories in this surah as well as its meanings and important lessons.

Part One has two subparts, covering the story of Prophet Yaqub's family, and this part involves verses 1-14. The first three verses provide the basic introduction of this surah.

The story of Prophet Yaqub's family begins in verse 4 onwards. In them, it is told that Prophet Yusuf informed his father (Prophet Yaqub) about his dream of seeing 11 stars together with the moon and the sun prostrating to him. This part ends with the story where a sibling of Yusuf presented a shirt with bloodstains on it to Prophet Yaqub, supposedly claiming that Yusuf was killed by wolves.

Part Two is about the story of Yusuf, in which he was sold as a slave. It spans verses 15-22, telling us of the story regarding Allah's revelation to Yusuf while he was in the well, being sold into slavery, and ends with the narration of Yusuf living in a minister's house until his adulthood.

Part Three is related to verses 23-35. It concerns the test of seduction towards Yusuf, beginning with the story of the minister's wife seducing Yusuf. It is in this part where the story of women in Egypt accidentally cut their fingers as they see the beauty of him were discussed. When Yusuf was looking for a comfortable

^(*) This book review was submitted on: 01/12/2021 and accepted for publication on: 17/12/2021.

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place, he made du'a to Allah, ending this part with Yusuf's du'a to be departed from his family being answered by the Almighty God with him being sent to prison.

Subsequently, in Part Four the author narrates a long story in prison, where Yusuf's two new cellmates were introduced. The story continues with us being told of what happened to them in the future whilst being kept in jail. This story covers the length of verses 36-42.

The author continues Part Five discussing the king and his dream. It covers verses 43-49. In this part, we were told about a dream that the king had concerning seven female cows being devoured by seven other much thinner female cows. Yusuf had explained the meaning of the dream through his former cellmate whom at that point was free.

Part Six specifically focuses on Yusuf, telling us of his journey from being a prisoner to a minister. It covers verses 50-57. The story begins with Yusuf being summoned by the king to negotiate about his conditions of being offered to become the minister. The part ends with Yusuf willing to take charge as the minister, following the order of the King himself.

The next part is Part Seven and it is a story as told in verses 58-68. It tells us about Yusuf's brothers who came to Egypt looking for help. Knowing that without the present of his youngest brother, Bunyamin, the story ends with Yusuf ordering them to bring his youngest brother together with them if they wanted to be treated well again the next time.

Following this story, Part Eight covers verses 69-79 and begins with the discussion of how Yusuf confided his beloved brother, Bunyamin with regards to their familial relationship when his brothers came for the second time to Egypt. The story in this part ends with a narration about Yusuf's humble and strategic response to the appeal of one of his other siblings in replacing Bunyamin on the issue of the stolen cup as well as the need for them to keep their promise made to their father Prophet Yaqub not to betray their father for the second time after supposedly losing Yusuf the first time.

Part Nine covers verses 80-87. In this part, the author shares us the story of how Yusuf's siblings discussed among themselves as to what should be done next when Bunyamin had to be kept in Egypt due to the issue of a stolen cup. In their discussion, one of them refuses to go back to see their father for their repeated mistakes. This part continues with Yaqub displaying his endless patience and only

sadly asks his children to look for ways of finding Bunyamin and Yusuf, together with the other son who refused to go back to see their father.

It is in Part Ten that Yusuf's act of revealing his identity was discussed, and it involves verses 88-93. The narration begins with the story of Yusuf's siblings who came for the third time asking for help during the continuous drought. It is also in this part that Yusuf asks his siblings to bring back home his shirt to be given to his father, knowing that it can be used as a confirmation that he is still alive. Note that there were three shirts belonging to Yusuf in this story, the first shirt was riddled with bloodstains, the second was torn when Yusuf ran from the seduction of the minister's wife, and the last is when Yusuf was in the pinnacle of power.

Surah Yusuf also narrates about three different dreams. His own dream, his cellmate's, and the king's dream. It is in Part Eleven—named "*The Dream Fulfilled*"—that verses 94-101 were covered, telling us of how Yusuf's major family migrated to Egypt and ends with Yusuf's thankful prayers towards Allah.

The last part of the surah is in Part Twelve, and it is about the reminders to Prophet Muhammad SAW and of course ourselves, covering verses 102-111. In this part, Allah tells Prophet Muhammad SAW regarding the stories of Prophet Yusuf. It is in the last verse of Surah Yusuf, verse 111 that the author iterates over the ideas and important lessons of Surah Yusuf, where those with the right reason can obtain benefits from the stories far better than the stories of the previous prophets.

It is then exclusively in a separate segment, Part Thirteen that the author invites the readers to embark on another journey of extracting the surah's lessons, retaking the time to reflect on what this surah offers, its *'ibrah*, the hidden wisdom, as well as other benefits. Yasir Qadhi offers 50 lessons that we can derive from the surah, and they include requiring the right setting as well as a willing audience, and always turning to Allah so that He may help us overcome our desires, among other things.

The following are some of my two cents. The stories of the high achievements or the pinnacle stage of the prophets are mentioned. In the case of Prophet Yusuf, it was during the time where all of his family members gathered in the palace, where their parents were placed at the throne. As for Prophet Muhammad, it was the moment when Mecca was in the hand of the Muslims in 8 Hijrah. In these two moments of Islam's pinnacle, the two prophets exercised forgiveness and mercy instead of revenge. I think that this event should be highlighted more succinctly, explaining that Islam is not a religion of revenge nor conquest.

Another thing to note is that the author invariably had a good reason to separate the discussion concerning the surah's lessons, possibly motivated by the fact that surah Yusuf is a surah that clearly mentions the idea of a having lessons for the people of reason as in verse 111. While it makes sense if the author did not put the specific lessons at the end of each part in order to receive the benefits and blessings of the surah as the readers embark on a new journey of understanding the surah, it would be much easier for novice readers to follow the story of Surah Yusuf if the 50 lessons discussed under part 13 are inserted following the plots in the surah itself.

The author explains that the end of Yusuf's story is not actually about glory, but instead to be together with God. This is shown in his du'a, in which he wants to be together with a righteous person. We hope that as we review this book, we also make du'a to be with a righteous person as well, Aamin.