

# Prophet Joseph (pbuh), Part 4

A new chapter in the life of Joseph (Yusuf in Arabic, peace be upon him) began in the house of al-Aziz. Al-Aziz was not a personal name, but rather a distinguished title of office or honor in ancient Egypt; its precise meaning is less pertinent to the moral lessons derived from the narrative. Al-Aziz himself was a high-ranking official in Egypt and a man of significant wealth.

What might appear to be initial adversities and false accusations were the first rungs on the ladder towards Joseph's (pbuh) destined greatness. Allah (God in Arabic) is decisive in His actions. His divine plan unfolds, even as others plot, thwarting their schemes, and ultimately, His promise is fulfilled. Allah had, indeed, promised Joseph (pbuh) prophethood.

Affection for Joseph (pbuh) was divinely instilled in the heart of the man who purchased him – a figure of considerable standing and an important member of Egypt's ruling elite.

Consequently, Joseph (pbuh) was pleasantly surprised when the chief minister of Egypt ordered his men to remove the heavy shackles from his feet. He was further astonished when the minister instructed him not to betray his trust, assuring him he would not be ill-treated if he behaved appropriately. Joseph (pbuh) smiled at his benefactor, thanked him sincerely, and pledged his loyalty.

Joseph (pbuh) finally felt at ease, grateful to

be sheltered and assured of good care. He thanked Allah (God) repeatedly, marveling at the profound mysteries of life. Not long before, he had been cast into a deep, dark well, seemingly with no hope of survival. Rescued from the well, then enslaved, he now found himself moving freely within a luxurious mansion, with abundant food to enjoy. Yet, his heart ached with longing for his parents and his brother Benjamin, and he likely shed tears daily. Despite his past as a slave, Joseph was now treated as a respected member of the household, not merely a servant.

The Qur'an vividly describes al-Aziz's instructions to his wife regarding Joseph's care. In Chapter 12, we read: **"The man from Egypt who bought him said to his wife, 'Take good care of him; he may be useful to us, or we may adopt him as a son.' We thus established Joseph in the land to teach him the interpretation of dreams (and events), Allah prevails over His affairs, but most people do not know."** [Qur'an 12:21]. This verse exemplifies one of the Qur'an's miracles: its profound conciseness, where every word is rich with multiple meanings and lessons. Upon rereading, a vivid cinematic scene unfolds before us. It depicts a young boy obediently following his master. Joseph (pbuh), in his newfound circumstances, neither attempted to escape nor caused his master any difficulty.



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Joseph (pbuh) remained ever-obedient and obliging. Through his pleasant manners and charming demeanor, he swiftly won the hearts of all who encountered him. Joseph's remarkable handsomeness soon became the talk of the town; people referred to him as the most attractive man they had ever seen, even composing poetry in his honor.

His face exuded an immaculate beauty, a reflection of the purity of his inner soul and heart, which only enhanced his outward appearance. So renowned was his beauty that people traveled from afar simply to catch a glimpse of him. The prettiest maidens and the wealthiest ladies yearned to possess him. Yet, despite such widespread admiration, not once did he display haughtiness or conceit; he remained consistently humble and polite. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: "Joseph was given half of all beauty (created by God)". Yes, Joseph was given (by God the Almighty) half of all the beauty God has created. When you see a beautiful rose, always remember that half of its beauty was given to Joseph.

The days passed, and Joseph grew. Almighty

Allah said: "And when he (Joseph) reached his maturity (manhood), We gave him wisdom and knowledge (Prophethood). Thus, We reward the doers of good." [Qur'an 12:22]. He was given wisdom in affairs and knowledge of life and its conditions. He was given the art of conversation, captivating those who heard him. He was given nobility and self-restraint, which made him an irresistible personality. His master soon knew that Allah had graced him with Joseph. He understood that Joseph was the most honest, straightforward, and noble person he had met in his life. Therefore, he put Joseph in charge of his household, honored him, and treated him as a son.

The narrative now shifts to a new cinematic scene, focusing on the wife of al-Aziz, traditionally known as Zulaikha. Day after day, she observed Joseph. As she ate with him, conversed with him, and listened to him, her fascination deepened over time.

Al-Aziz's wife, Zulaikha, found herself increasingly unable to resist the handsome Joseph (pbuh), and her profound obsession with him caused her sleepless nights. She had fallen deeply in love, and it was agonizing for her to be so physically close to a man she desired, yet unable to embrace him. It is worth noting that she was not a woman of frivolous character; given her high position, she could have easily obtained any man she wished. By all

accounts, she must have been a lady of exceptional beauty and intelligence. Her youth is also implied, as the chief minister, a man of his standing, would undoubtedly have chosen a wife of the highest qualities from the kingdom's most beautiful women. Despite her inability to bear him children, he never took another wife, as his love for her was passionate. This could also subtly hint at her husband's advanced age or a personal condition that prevented him from having a full marital relationship.

As noted previously, the Qur'an summarizes this narrative in an exceptionally elegant manner, carefully avoiding any words that might be deemed improper. The Qur'an is indeed for all to read – men, women, and people of all ages – and its remarkably clear and dignified language ensures its universal accessibility and reverence.

The Quran raises the curtain on the scene of this fierce and devouring love on the part of the lady. Allah the Almighty told us: **"She in whose house he was living tried to seduce him. She shut the doors and said, 'Come to me!' He (Joseph) said, 'Allah is my refuge! He is my master (al-Aziz). He has given me a good home. Sinners never succeed.' She desired him, and he desired her, had he not seen the evidence of his Lord. It was thus that We diverted evil and indecency from him. He is one of Our chosen servants."** [Qur'an 12:23-24].

Commentators are unanimous about Zulaikha's intent to commit disobedience, yet there is scholarly disagreement regarding Joseph's (pbuh) reciprocal intention. Some argue that despite her powerful temptation, Joseph was close to yielding to her sinful advances, though he ultimately resisted. The Qur'an, however, affirms Joseph's (pbuh) full humanity and natural male inclinations by stating that he, too, would have desired her, had it not been for a clear and decisive sign from his Lord. This divine proof intervened to preserve his purity and dignity.

One of the scholars said that this temptation and resistance meant that she had tried to seduce him; had he not seen the proof of Allah, he would have been seduced. This is in keeping with the infallibility of prophets, as it suits the words, which immediately follow: **"Thus it was that We might turn away from him evil and illegal sexual intercourse. Surely, he was one of Our chosen, guided slaves."** [Ch 12:24]. This verse proves that Joseph (pbuh) was an upright worshipper of Allah; it also testifies to his rescue from the authority of Satan. The Almighty said to the devil (Iblis) on the Day of Creation: **"Certainly, you shall have no authority over My slaves, except those who follow you of the misguided (who go astray)"** [Ch 15:42]

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