

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

10th Taraweeh Summary, Ramadan 1447 Hijri

Summary of Verses 11:50 – 13:18

Sura Hud (Verses 11:50-123)

Prophets Hud, Salih, and Shuaib (AS) brought the same message of *Tawhid* to their respective people: "*O my people, worship Allah. You have no other god but Him.*" (11:50)

The people rejected the message and faced destruction. Pharaoh refused to accept the message of Oneness of Allah that Prophet Musa (AS) preached, and he and his followers were swallowed by the sea.

When Shuaib (AS) is mocked by his own Madyan people after he exhorts them to "... *worship Allah. You have no other God but Him ...*" (11:84), he tells them, "... *I only desire what is good for you to the best of my power. And my success in my task can only come from Allah. In Him I trust and unto Him I turn.*" (11:88)

Notice how Shuaib (AS) attributes his success or ability (Taufiq) to Allah alone. We must always remember that any gift Allah has blessed us with is exactly that, a gift. We should humbly acknowledge it and never let it fill us with pride or arrogance. Allah could have given it to someone else or taken it away. What is the ultimate purpose of such a gift? To earn the "*pleasure of Allah, the supreme triumph.*" (9:72)

Allah says about those who rejected the messages of His prophets: "*It was not We who wronged them. They wronged their souls. When your Lord's judgment came upon them, the gods they called upon besides Allah availed them nothing. They only added to their ruin.*" (11:101)

Those who disobey Allah "... shall be in the fire, where there will be nothing but the heaving sighs and sobs." (11:106) But "... those blessed will be in the Garden. They will dwell therein so long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord wills, a gift without break." (11:108)

The centrality of prayers in a believer's life is emphasized: "*Establish regular prayers at the two ends of the day and the approaches of the night. Good deeds make up for evil ones. This is an admonition for thoughtful people.*" (11:114)

It was Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) who taught us the specific forms of daily prayers, but this verse suggests that the number of daily prayers is five. (Other Quranic verses that refer to the daily prayers and their timings are (2:238), (17:78), (20:130), (30:17-18), and (50:39-40)).

The Sura ends with a sublime affirmation: "*To Allah belongs the unseen of the heavens and the earth. And to Him go back every affair for decision. So worship Him and put your trust in Him and your Lord is not unmindful of all that you do.*" (11:123)

(In several verses of Sura Hud, Allah addresses the Prophet (s.a.w) directly no less than eighteen times, describing the fate of the 'Ad, the Thamud, the Madyan, Pharaoh, and others. It filled the Prophet (s.a.w) with fear about the fate of his own *Ummah*. As reported by Tarmidhi in his *Sunan*: The Prophet (s.a.w) is reported to have said: "*Hud* and its sister Suras – *al-Waqiah*, *al-Mursalat*, *an-Naba* and *at-Takwir* – are the cause of my gray hair." A close reading of these Suras explains why.)

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(Sura Yusuf is a Makkan Sura)

Sura Yusuf (Verses 12:1-111)

According to scholars, this relatively long Surah with 111 verses was revealed in its entirety in Makkah after what is known as the Prophet's (s.a.w) "Year of Sorrow." The year 619 CE, three years before his migration to Madinah, was a difficult year for Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) as he lost his beloved wife Khadija and his uncle Abu Talib, who protected him from Quraish attacks. It was also the year he was rejected, humiliated, and stoned by the people of Taif, a city in modern-day Saudi Arabia. Scholars agree that Allah revealed Surah Yusuf to lift him out of his sadness, calm him, and fill him with hope. Many of the trials and tribulations that Prophet Yusuf faced were similar to those of Prophet (s.a.w). In the end, Prophet Yusuf was vindicated when his trial and tragedy turned into triumph, serving as a reminder to Prophet (s.a.w) that he too would be vindicated despite his profound losses and setbacks during the "Year of Sorrow."

The Quran is not a linear story. It weaves together first, second, and third-person accounts in nearby verses or even within the same verse, often using specific stories to highlight eternal truths. It is primarily non-chronological. The only exception is Sura 12, which tells a linear, chronological story from start to finish. The Quran describes the story of Prophet Yusuf (AS) as the most beautiful of stories for several reasons: a) It is the most detailed story in the Quran, featuring Yusuf, his father Yaqub (Jacob), his blood brother Binyamin (Benjamin), his ten stepbrothers, and other characters, each revealing human strengths and flaws. b) It is full of examples of the inevitable ups and downs of life faced by men and women. c) It contrasts nobility with pettiness, trust in Allah with lack of it, and the enduring nature of virtues in a world of shifting falsehoods.

"We have sent it down as an Arabic Quran so that you may learn wisdom. In it We relate to you the most beautiful of stories ..." (12:2-3)

"Yusuf" is mentioned 27 times in the Quran. Of these, 25 mentions are in Sura Yusuf. The remaining two are in (6:84) and (40:34).

Prophet Yaqub (AS) inherited his religious mission from his father Ishaq (AS), who had received it from his father Ibrahim (AS). Therefore, it is reasonable to expect Yusuf to have inherited his father's legacy.

The story of Prophet Yusuf (AS) and his family is well known. What interests us are its timeless lessons. Some of these are:

Trust in Allah and contented patience go together: The theme of the Sura is suggested in verse 67 in which Yaqub (AS) says: *"Judgment as to what is to happen rests with Allah alone. On Him do I put my trust: and let all who have trust in His existence put their trust on Him alone."* (12:67) Yaqub's foremost virtue was *"Sabrun Jamilun."* These two words appear together in verses (12:18) and (12:83) that mean "beautiful, contented patience." In (12:18), Yaqub declares his undying faith in Allah by exercising "beautiful patience" when his sons lie to him and tell him that a wolf ate Yusuf: *"For me, beautiful patience is most fitting. Against what you assert, it is Allah alone whose help can be sought."* In (12:83), it is Prophet Yaqub again who responds with "beautiful patience" after being informed by his sons that Yusuf's brother Binyamin has been found guilty of stealing and so has been taken captive by the Aziz: *(Yaqub) said, "... your souls have enticed you to something, so contented patience is most fitting. Perhaps Allah will bring all of them to me. Indeed, it is He who is the Knowing, the Wise."* Notice the qualifier *"Jamilun"* with *"Sabrun."* This "beautiful patience" is active patience, showing complete reliance on Allah. It is not the passive patience we display when there's nothing we can do to change our situation. For example, when

stuck in a traffic jam, we have no choice but to be "patient" even if we're boiling inside. There is no "beauty" or "contentment" in this kind of "patience." Similarly, in a family where one spouse makes an unfair claim or says something false or provocative, the other spouse might outwardly show patience by staying silent while secretly resenting. It is not "*sabrun jamilun*." Forced patience can never reach the exalted height of "beautiful patience." Yet it is "*sabrun jamilun*" that we must strive for if we hope to be rewarded by Allah, because it is through this active patience, demonstrated by forbearance and complete reliance on Allah's judgment, that we fulfill our duties as believers. This is shown in verse (12:90) later in the story when Yusuf finally reveals himself to his brothers and Yaqub. says: "*Those who fear Allah and patiently persevere, Allah will not deny them their reward.*"

Faith will overcome temptation if awareness of Allah resonates constantly in the heart: "*And with passion did she desire him, and he would have desired her, but that he saw the evidence of his Lord: thus did We order that We might turn away from him all evil and shameful deeds: for he was one of Our servants, sincere and purified.*" (12:24) Also, "*O my Lord! Prison is more to my liking than that to which they invite me. Unless You turn away their snares from me, I should in my youthful folly feel inclined towards them and join the ranks of the ignorant. So his Lord listened to him and turned away their snares from him.*" (12:33) The important thing to note is that Yusuf knew, even in his extreme moment of weakness, that only by asking Allah for help could he save himself from temptations.

When life's challenges seem overwhelming, seek only Allah's help: "*He (Yaqub AS) said: 'I only complain of my hurt and anguish to Allah ...'*" (12:86) This is what we also read in (1:5): "*You alone we worship and from You alone we seek help.*"

To despair of Allah's mercy is to disbelieve: Yaqub (AS) tells his sons, "... *and never give up hope of Allah's soothing mercy. Truly no one despairs of Allah's soothing mercy except those who have no faith.*" (12:87) In other words, to despair is to disbelieve.

Forgiveness is nobler than revenge: Yusuf (AS) could have taken revenge on his stepbrothers for the sorrow they caused his father and for his tribulations. Instead, after all the disclosures have been made and secrets revealed, he told his brothers: "*This day you are free of reproach. May Allah forgive you. He is the most merciful of all.*" (12:92)

Develop gifts even under adversity: Yusuf (AS) knew that Allah had blessed him with a unique gift, the ability to interpret dreams. Even while in prison (12:35-37), instead of giving in to despair and bitterness, he used his gift as an act of gratitude to Allah. Developing our gifts and skills amid adversity is a way of showing thanks to Allah. Islam leaves no room for laziness, whining, making excuses, or blaming fate.

Mysteries of premonition and the world of the Unseen are real, even if access is granted only to a few: Throughout the ordeal of Yusuf's (AS) long absence, Yaqub (AS) knew deep in his heart and through his unwavering faith in Allah that his son was still alive. The father continues to hope, and the son continues to act. They are connected across time and space through their faith in the Divine. "*(Yusuf then said to his brothers) Take this shirt of mine and throw it over my father's face. He shall recover his sight. Then come together with all your family.*" (12:93) Hundreds of miles away, Yaqub (AS) exclaimed: "*I do indeed scent the presence of Yusuf!*" (12:94) And when Yusuf's shirt was placed over his face and he regained his sight, he said, "*Did I not tell you that I know from Allah which you do not?*" (12:96)

Show gratitude to the One to Whom gratitude is due: When the family was reunited, Yusuf said, *"O my father! This is the fulfillment of my vision of old! Allah has made it come true! He was indeed good to me when He took me out of prison and brought you all here out of the desert, even after shaitan had sown enmity between me and my brothers. Surely my Lord best understands the mysteries of all He plans to do, for He is full of knowledge and wisdom. O my Lord! You have indeed bestowed on me some power and taught me something about the interpretation of dreams and events. O Creator of the heavens and the earth! You are my Protector in this world and in the Hereafter. Take my soul at death as one submitting to Your will as a Muslim and unite me with the righteous."* (12:100-101) This powerful prayer to Allah encapsulates for the believer a complete blend of Tawhid, humility, grace, and gratitude.

(In the Quran, "*nafs*" (self) is mentioned a total of 295 times. The Quran uses three adjectives or qualifiers to describe three different types of "*nafs*." The first is "*nafs-ul-ammarah*" (dominating *nafs*) identified in verse (12:53): *"And I do not seek to free myself from blame, for indeed the soul is ever inclined to evil, except those shown mercy by my Lord. Surely my Lord is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful."* This "*nafs*," (also stated in 91:7-10), dominates us and pulls us down the slippery slope when we yield to our wayward passions and desires. We can only be redeemed by the mercy of Allah, which we must earnestly seek when under the grip of shaitan's seductive whispering. The second type is "*nafs-ul-lawwamah*" (conscientious soul) identified in verse (75:2): *"And I do swear by the self-reproaching soul!"* This "*nafs*" represents the conscience that makes us feel remorse and regret after sinning and pushes us toward repentance. It is the divine spark that resides within us. The third type is "*nafs-ul-mutmainnah*" (tranquil soul) identified in verses (89:27-28): *"Allah will say to the righteous, 'O tranquil soul! Return to your Lord, well pleased with Him and well-pleasing to Him.'"*

Mutma'in are those who are content with Allah's commands and are happiest when obeying them. They aim to please Allah through their good words and deeds and avoid anything that displeases Him. Their lives are peaceful and content.

Note the divine nature of the Quran when it refers to past events unknown to anyone at the time of the revelation (12:25-42 and 27:17-28). The Prophet (s.a.w) was reminded that he was not an eyewitness to these events and that he learned about them only through divine revelation (12:102). The Quran also predicts events that have proven true (30:1-6 and 48:27). As part of its sublime nature, the Quran uses the past tense to refer to future events, especially when describing the Day of Judgment (39:68-75). These verses remind us that Allah is not bound by time and that these events are so certain to happen, it is as if they have already occurred.

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(Sura Ar-Rad is a Madinan Sura)

Sura Ar-Rad (Thunder) (Verses 13:1-18)

If our external conditions are grim and our situations hopeless, we need to change what is in our hearts so that we can transform ourselves: "*Surely, Allah will never change the condition of a people unless they change their inner selves.*" (13:11) (We find the same truth also stated in verse 8:53)