

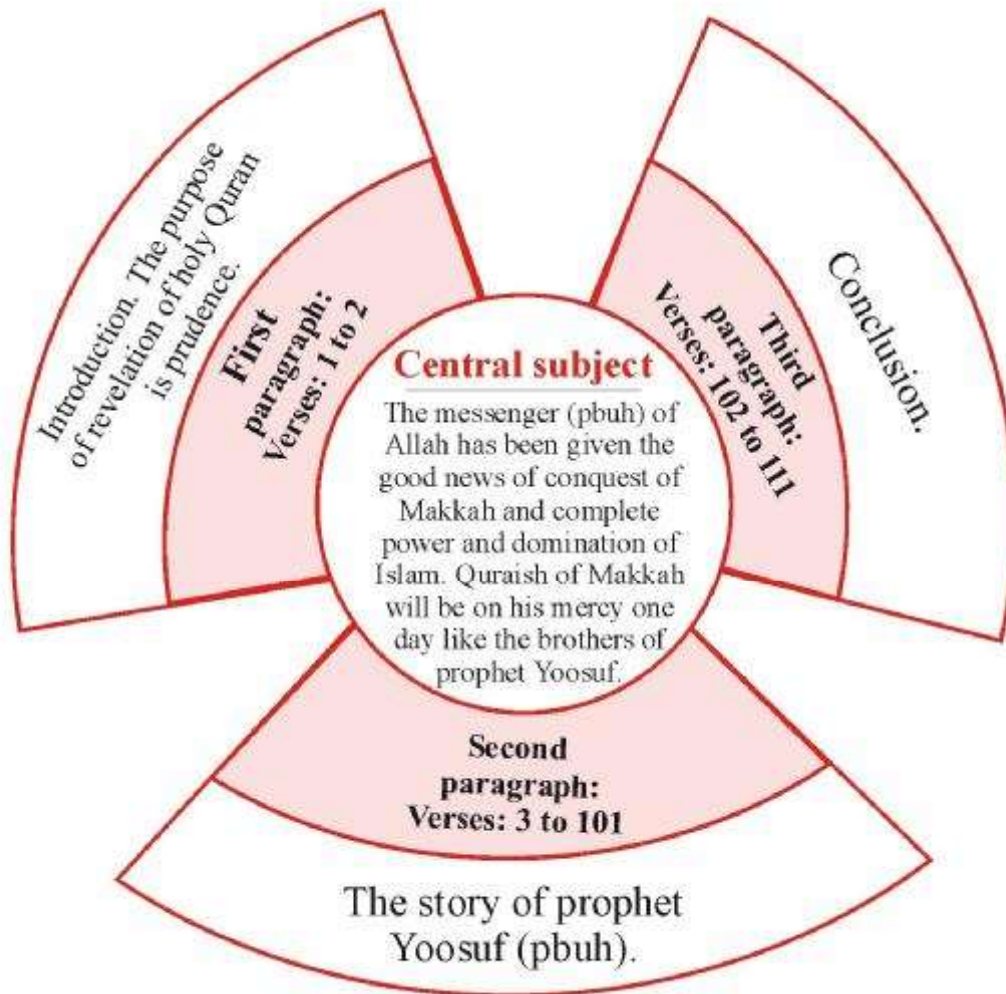
Flow Chart of Macro-Structure of Soorah Yoosuf

12- Soorah Yoosuf

Makkan

Verses: 111

Paragraphs: 3



• **Period of revelation and the background:**

Probably, soorah Yoosuf was revealed in 12 prophet-hood, before migration to Madinah and after soorah Hood; when the plans for the prophet's expulsion from Makkah or his murder were being made. The Quraishi leadership were tyrannising their own brothers like the brothers of prophet Yoosuf, while their only crime was that they denied paganism and declared their belief in Tawheed.

The relationship of soorah Yoosuf with the Book

- 1- In the previous soorah (Hood), the predominant aspect was the warning with the history of annihilation of nations. Here, in soorah Yoosuf, the predominant aspect is the good news of ease after the difficulties. Tawheed is the truth and Shirk is the falsehood. Prophet Yoosuf spread the invitation of Tawheed even in prison.
- 2- In the next soorah (Ar-Ra'd), the difference between the truth and the falsehood (Tawheed and Shirk) has been made clear through intellectual and universal arguments.

Important key words and subjects

- 1- **Prophet Ya'qoob asked for the forgiveness of his sons after they had admitted their sin and felt regret.**

In spite of the jealousy and tyranny of his brothers with prophet Yoosuf, Allah gave him the power in Egypt after making him go through various tests and tribulations. All the brothers migrated from Palestine and moved to Egypt along with their families and parents. The brothers of prophet Yoosuf regretted and felt sorry for their faults at that occasion and prophet Ya'qoob prayed for their forgiveness.

He said: ﴿قَالَ سَوْفَ أَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكُمْ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ﴾ “Soon I will ask forgiveness for you from my Lord; surely, He is the One Who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.”
(Verse: 98)

In short, it seems that if a person realises his sin and feels sorry for it, Allah blesses him with His Mercy and Forgiveness.

- 2- **The introduction of holy Quran in soorah Yoosuf:**

- (a) The holy Quran has been revealed in Arabic language for the people to ponder over it, so that the Arabs should become Muslims first and then the rest of the world should be invited to Islam through them.
﴿إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ﴾ “We have revealed this Quran in the Arabic language so that you (Arabs) may understand.” (Verse: 2)
- (b) The messenger (pbuh) of Allah was told the details about prophet Yoosuf through revelation. The Arabs were unaware of this story of the descendants of Isaa'eel. ﴿نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ وَإِنْ كُنْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ﴾ “We relate to you the best of stories through this Quran by Our revelation to you, though before this you were of those who did not know.” (Verse: 3)

- (c) The Makkan pagans have been provided with a source to learn a lesson from the story of prophet Yoosuf so that the wise and thinking people among them may accept the Quran which is revealed to Muhammad (pbuh) as the Guidance and Mercy, and embrace Islam. The holy Quran is not a fabrication.

﴿لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي قَصصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ. مَا كَانَ حَدِيثًا يُفْتَرَى، وَلَكِنْ تَصْدِيقَ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ، وَتَفْصِيلَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ﴾

“There is a lesson in these stories (of former people) for the men of common sense. This (story of Yoosuf revealed in the Quran) is not an invented tale, but a confirmation of previous scriptures - a detailed exposition of all things, and is a guidance and blessing for the people who believe”. (Verse: 111)

3- Soorah Yoosuf has got the invitation of Tawheed and the invitation to believe in the life hereafter as well.

- (a) Prophet Yoosuf told his companions of the prison that he had left a nation who denied both the Tawheed and the life hereafter.

Yoosuf replied: ﴿قَالَ لَا يَأْتِيكُمَا طَعَامٌ تُرْزَقِينَ إِلَّا نَسَاؤُكُمَا بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ. ذَلِكُمْ مِمَّا عَلَّمَنِي رَبِّي. إِنِّي تَرَكْتُ مِلَّةَ قَوْمٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ كُفْرُونَ﴾

“I will (with Allah's permission) tell you the interpretation of these dreams before you are served with the food you eat, this is part of the knowledge which my Lord has taught me. In fact, I have forsaken the faith of those people who do not believe in Allah and even deny the hereafter.” (Verse: 37)

- (b) Prophet Yoosuf gave the intellectual reasons and suggested to both of his companions of the prison to think over it and accept the invitation of Tawheed. He asked them if many gods were better or One Allah, the Dominant, the Irresistible? ﴿يُضَاحِكِي السَّجْنِ أَرْبَابٌ مُّتَفَرِّقُونَ خَيْرٌ أَمْ لِلَّهِ الْوَالِدُ الْقَهَّارُ؟﴾ “O my fellow inmates! Tell me what is better; many different lords or one Allah, the Irresistible?”

(Verse: 39)

- (c) Prophet Yoosuf refuted the Shirk, forbade them from the blind following of their forefathers and conveyed them the command of Allah that only Allah deserves worship.

﴿مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِهِ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءُ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ. مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِن سُلْطَانٍ. إِنِ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ أَمَرَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ. ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

“Those you serve besides Him are nothing but mere names which you and your forefathers have invented, for which Allah has revealed no sanction. The Command belongs to none but Allah, Who has ordained that you worship none but Him. That is the True faith, yet, most of the people do not know.”

(Verse: 40)

4- The wise people know that the truth becomes victorious in the end:

It has been made clear to the wise people that there is a lesson in the true story of prophet Yoosuf (pbuh). The truth becomes victorious in the end.

﴿لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ﴾ “There is a lesson in these stories (of former people) for the men of understanding.” (Verse: 111)

5- The words “Sabrun Jameelun” (good patience) have been used twice by Ya'qoob (pbuh) in soorah Yoosuf.

- (a) When he heard the incorrect news of his first son Yoosuf's death he said that it was the fabrication of their souls and good patience was the most appropriate thing. He made Allah his helper and made his petition to Him.

﴿وَجَاءَهُ عَلَى قَمِيصِهِ بِدَمٍ كَذِبٍ. قَالَ: بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَمْرًا. فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ وَاللَّهُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَى مَا تَصِفُونَ﴾

“They brought his shirt stained with false blood. 'No!' He cried, 'Your souls have tempted you to evil. (I need) good patience! Allah Alone can help me against that which you assert'.” (Verse: 18)

- (b) When he heard the news of his second son Bin Yaameen being held in Egypt, he said the same thing that good patience is the most appropriate attitude. He had the perfect belief that Allah will unite him with all his sons one day.

﴿قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَمْرًا. فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ. عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَنِي بِهِمْ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ﴾

“No!” He cried: “Your souls have contrived a story for you. Well, I will bear this too with good patience. May be Allah will bring them all back to me; indeed He is the Knowledgeable, the Wise.” (Verse: 83)

6- Allah Almighty had given prophet Yoosuf the knowledge of interpretation of dreams.

- (a) Allah Almighty taught prophet Yoosuf the knowledge of interpretation of dreams. This was a plan to give him power in Egypt.

﴿وَوَكَّلْنَاكَ يَا يُوسُفُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلِنُعَلِّمَهُ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ﴾ “Thus We established Yoosuf in the land and arranged to teach him the understanding of affairs.” (Verse: 21)

- (b) In prison, prophet Yoosuf interpreted the dreams of his two companions before they were served with their food. He said:

﴿قَالَ لَا يَأْتِيَنَا طَعَامٌ تُرْزَقُنَا إِلَّا نَبَأُكُمَا بِتَأْوِيلِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمَا﴾ “I will tell you the interpretation of these dreams before you are served the food you eat.” (Verse: 37)

- (c) When the parents and brothers of prophet Yoosuf became together in Egypt he reminded his father: ﴿وَقَالَ يَا أَبَتِ هَذَا تَأْوِيلُ رُؤْيَايَ مِنْ قَبْلُ. قَدْ جَعَلَهَا رَبِّي حَقًّا﴾ “This is the interpretation of my dream that I had years before. Allah has made it come true.”

Yoosuf said, "O my father! This is the interpretation of my dream which I dreamt long before. My Lord has really made it come true." (Verse: 100)

- (d) Prophet Yoosuf was thankful to Allah that He had granted him power and gave him the knowledge of interpretation of dreams. He always regarded Allah as His guardian in this world and the hereafter and prayed that he should die as a Muslim and be included among the righteous people.

﴿رَبِّ قَدْ أَتَيْتَنِي مِنَ الْمُلْكِ وَعَلَّمْتَنِي مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ. فَاطْرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَنْتَ وَرَبِّي فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ. تَوَفَّنِي مُسْلِمًا وَأَكْفِنِي بِالطَّالِحِينَ﴾

"O my Lord! You have indeed given me sovereignty and taught me the interpretation of dreams. O, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, You are my Protector in this world and in the hereafter, make me die as a Muslim and admit me among the righteous." (Verse: 101)

7- The invitation of Islam to the Quraish with full insight:

Allah Almighty ordered His messenger (pbuh) to tell the Quraish clearly that Allah has no partners and that their behaviour with the prophet (pbuh) is like that of the brothers of Yoosuf with him. Like Yoosuf (pbuh), the messenger (pbuh) of Allah and his companions are inviting towards Allah with full insight.

﴿قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي. أَدْعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ. أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ﴾

Tell them (plainly): "This is my way. I invite you to Allah with sure knowledge which I and my followers possess. Glory be to Allah, and I am not one of the pagans." (Verse: 108)

Macro-structure of soorah Yoosuf

Soorah Yoosuf consists of three paragraphs.

- 1- Verses: 1 to 2: In the first paragraph, there is the introduction. The purpose of revelation of Quran is prudence.

The first two verses are introductory in which there is the demand that the holy Quran should be pondered over and a lesson should be learnt from the true story of prophet Yoosuf (pbuh) which has been called the best of stories.

- 2- Verses: 3 to 101: In the second paragraph, the story of prophet of Yoosuf has been stated.

This paragraph has ten subsidiary paragraphs.

- (1) In the first sub paragraph (verses 3 to 20), the dream of prophet Yoosuf and the conspiracy of his brothers have been mentioned.

Prophet Yoosuf dreamt that the sun, the moon and eleven stars are bowing down to him. He stated his dream to his father who advised him not to disclose

it to his brothers. His brothers were jealous of him. They took him to the forest on a pretext, threw him into a dark well, came back to their father with a blood-stained shirt and told him that Yoosuf was eaten by a wolf. Prophet Ya'qoob showed good patience. A trading caravan took Yoosuf from Palestine to Egypt and sold him there.

(2) In the second sub paragraph (verses 21 to 35), the tests and tribulations of prophet Yoosuf in Egypt are mentioned.

In Egypt, a rich man bought prophet Yoosuf and took him home. He advised his wife to treat him nicely. Prophet Yoosuf was very handsome. The wife of rich man fell in love with prophet Yoosuf. One day, she closed the door and tried to persuade him for sin. When she was caught, she blamed prophet Yoosuf, but a man from her own family scolded her for her lie. The woman invited her female friends and asked Yoosuf to appear before them. When they saw him, they were stunned and cut their hands.

The influential lady who owned Yoosuf threatened him, that if he did not accept her offer of love she would send him to prison; but he remained steadfast.

He said that he would prefer to go to jail, rather than accept what she wanted. Consequently, he had to go to jail in spite of his innocence.

(3) In the third sub-paragraph (verses 36 to 42), the invitation and propagation of Tawheed by prophet Yoosuf (pbuh) in the jail is mentioned.

Two other prisoners were kept with him in prison. They had a dream and asked its interpretation from prophet Yoosuf. He told them the interpretation of their dreams and invited them to the belief in Tawheed. One of them was set free. Prophet Yoosuf asked him to mention him to the king whom he was going to serve.

(4) In the fourth sub-paragraph (verses 43 to 57), the dream of the king of Egypt and the appointment of righteous leader like Yoosuf over the treasures of Egypt are mentioned.

The king had a dream and asked its interpretation from his courtiers. At that time, his servant remembered that prophet Yoosuf who was in the prison, was the best person in giving the interpretation of dreams. Prophet Yoosuf gave the interpretation and the king was very pleased with him. He decided to make him his assistant. Prophet Yoosuf denied to come out of the prison until he was acquitted of the false allegations laid against him. The woman accepted her fault and declared that Yoosuf was innocent. Thus, prophet Yoosuf was released from the prison and became the ruler of Egypt.

- (5) **In the fifth sub-paragraph (verses 58 to 68), the first arrival of Yoosuf's brothers in Egypt and his demand to bring Bin Yaameen to Egypt from Palestine are mentioned.**

Palestine was struck by a famine. Yoosuf's brothers came to Egypt for the first time to get grain from the king. Prophet Yoosuf recognised them but they did not recognise him. Prophet Yoosuf favoured them and told them to bring their brother Bin Yaameen with them when they would come next time. They came back to Palestine and asked their father to send Bin Yaameen with them. The father hesitated to send him but when they gave a solemn oath, he agreed to send him to Egypt with them.

- (6) **In the sixth sub-paragraph (verses 69 to 79), the second coming of Yoosuf's brothers to Egypt and the Divine plan of detaining Bin Yaameen in Egypt are mentioned.**

Yoosuf's brothers arrived in Egypt for the second time along with Bin Yaameen. Yoosuf detained his real brother Bin Yaameen by his planning.

- (7) **In the seventh sub-paragraph (verses 80 to 87), the shame of the eldest brother and the good patience of Ya'qoob (pbuh) on detention of Bin Yaameen in Egypt are mentioned.**

The brothers had a mutual consultation among them after the detention of Bin Yaameen. Then they went back to Palestine and mentioned it to prophet Ya'qoob. He showed good patience at his deprivation from the second son. He loved Yoosuf dearly; but had complete trust in Allah Almighty. He told his sons to go back to Egypt and try to find them.

- (8) **In the eighth sub-paragraph (verses 88 to 92), the third arrival of Yoosuf's brothers in Egypt and the confession of their sin are mentioned.**

Yoosuf's brothers arrived in Egypt for the third time and asked him to favour them. He disclosed his reality and revealed himself to them. The brothers apologised.

- (9) **In the ninth sub-paragraph (verses 93 to 98), the miracle of Yoosuf's shirt and Ya'qoob's seeking forgiveness are mentioned.**

Prophet Yoosuf (pbuh) gave his shirt to his brothers and told them to put that on their father's face. His eyesight will be restored miraculously. When this caravan left Egypt for Palestine, prophet Ya'qoob said that he had got the fragrance of Yoosuf. When the shirt was put on his face he got his eyesight back.

- (10) **In the tenth sub-paragraph (verses 99 to 101), the fourth arrival of Yoosuf's brothers in Egypt as immigrants, along with their parents, and the gratitude of prophet Yoosuf are mentioned.**

Yoosuf's brothers apologised their father for throwing Yoosuf in a dark well. The father prayed to Allah to forgive all of them. Then all the brothers along

with their families and parents settled permanently in Egypt. Prophet Yoosuf seated his parents with him on the throne. The brothers accepted his authority. At that occasion, prophet Yoosuf said: "This is the interpretation of my dream which I had years before, that the sun, the moon and the eleven stars are bowing down to me."

Prophet Yoosuf thanked Allah Almighty and confessed that He is the One Who granted him the power, gave him the knowledge of interpretation of dreams and He is his protector and guardian in this world and in the hereafter. He prayed to Allah to let him die as His slave and include him among the righteous people.

3- Verses: 102 to 111: The third and last paragraph is the conclusion.

The Makkan pagans and the other nations of the world have been asked to learn a lesson from the story of prophet Yoosuf. The Quraish have been threatened with a sudden punishment.

The behaviour of the Makkan pagans with the messenger (pbuh) of Allah and his companions was exactly like that of Yoosuf's brothers with him.

The prophet (pbuh) was also confined in the mountain trail of Abu Taalib. The messenger (pbuh) of Allah was advised to continue the invitation of Tawheed with prudence like prophet Yoosuf (pbuh).

It was made clear to the pagans that all the previous prophets were human beings; therefore, they would have to accept Muhammad (pbuh) as the messenger of Allah in spite of being a man. They should use their wisdom, ponder over the holy Quran, which is the Guidance and Mercy for the believers and believe in it.

Central subject

The messenger (pbuh) of Allah has been given the good news of conquest of Makkah and complete power and domination of Islam. Quraish of Makkah will be on his mercy one day, like the brothers of prophet Yoosuf. The wise people should learn a lesson from the history and should accept the invitation towards Allah given by His messenger with understanding and insight.

