

The Characterization of Joseph (a) in the Quran and the Torah: A Comparative Study Based on Contemporary Exegeses and the Quranic Thought of Martyr Imam Khamenei

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze and comparatively examine the characterization of Joseph (a) in the Holy Quran and the Torah. It asks how the two scriptures construct Joseph's identity, explain the epistemological foundations of his actions, and assign meaning to major stages of his life, including the dream, the well, temptation, imprisonment, dream interpretation, and political authority. The study employs a descriptive-analytical and comparative methodology informed by narratological analysis, focusing conceptually on narrative structure, characterization, actions, dialogue, dreams, and the theological and social contexts of the narratives. The analysis demonstrates that, although the two narratives share major plot elements, they construct fundamentally different models of character. The Quran presents Joseph as a divinely chosen, monotheistic, sincere, and infallible prophet whose experiences unfold within a teleological framework of divine providence, spiritual formation, and individual and social reform. The Torah, by contrast, emphasizes Joseph's moral integrity, resilience, practical wisdom, competence, and gradual advancement within familial, social, and political relations. These findings highlight the importance of integrating narratological and theological perspectives in comparative scriptural studies and provide a conceptual basis for further research on characterization, theological meaning, and the pedagogical functions of sacred narratives across religious traditions.

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Introduction

The *Sūra* of *Yūsuf* (Joseph) in the Holy Quran begins with the disjointed letters¹ (*hurūf muqattaʿa*), a structure regarded in exegetical literature as an indication of the Quran's rhetorical inimitability and of the formation of elevated revelatory concepts from the simplest linguistic elements. The description of these verses as "*the signs of the Manifest Book*" (*āyāt al-kitāb al-mubīn*) (*Quran* 12:1) and the use of the remote demonstrative pronoun "*tilka*" signify the exalted status and elucidatory guidance of the Quran. Furthermore, the emphasis on the Quran's revelation in Arabic in the verse, "*Indeed We have sent it down as an Arabic Quran so that you may apply reason*"² (*Quran* 12:2), elevates the fundamental purpose of the sacred text beyond mere recitation and grounds it in reflection, profound understanding, and conscious conduct (Makārim Shīrāzī 1995, 9:298-299). The account of Joseph in the Book of Genesis (the Old Testament) likewise occupies a distinctive position among the narratives of the ancestors of the Israelites in terms of structural coherence, plot development, and narrative subtleties. By focusing on character psychology, employing literary suspense, and omitting manifestations of the miraculous and direct revelation, this narrative develops a structure grounded in social and historical experience (Sarna 1989, 254).

Martyr Imam Khamenei states regarding the story of Joseph (a):

"The story of Joseph occupies almost an entire *sūra* in the Quran and is described as 'the best of narratives' (*aḥsanu al-qāṣaṣ*) (*Quran* 12:3), that is, the best story—not to be confused with *qīṣaṣ*. *Qīṣaṣ* is the plural of *qīṣṣah*, meaning 'stories,' and thus 'the best of stories.' *Qāṣaṣ*, however, is a verbal noun, meaning 'story' or 'storytelling'; hence, it denotes the best storytelling or the finest narrative and has consequently been interpreted as the best story. The reason is that, in the story of Prophet Joseph (a), one observes the complete embodiment of piety. The piety of a

¹. ﴿الر تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ﴾ (يوسف/١)

"Aif, Lam, Ra. These are the signs of the Manifest Book" (*Quran* 12:1)

². ﴿إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ﴾ (يوسف/٢)

person who has lived through many years and acquired experience in life appears more natural than that of a young person who is intoxicated with youth. Youth itself carries a kind of ‘intoxication,’ and all young people experience a certain sense of youthful exuberance. Of course, this exuberance is itself a blessing, and it can be used well. In such a state of youthful exuberance, exercising vigilance and self-awareness—which is what *taqwā* means—is of particular importance. Therefore, the story of Joseph is more distinguished than all the other stories of the Quran and is *aḥsanu al-qāṣaṣ*, the best story” (Khamenei, Remarks at the Meeting with Various Student Associations of the Universities of Tehran, 24/10/1377 Sh [January 14, 1999], <https://khl.ink/f/24657>).

This study offers a comparative and well-documented analysis of the characterization of the Prophet Joseph (a) in the Quran and the Bible. Drawing on contemporary Quranic and biblical exegetical works, and placing particular emphasis on the Quranic thought of Martyr Imam Khamenei, it examines the points of convergence and divergence between the two scriptures across various dimensions. In doing so, the study seeks to provide a relatively comprehensive account of this influential and significant narrative and its role in deepening religious beliefs, reforming individuals and society, and guiding humanity toward perfection and felicity. Such an account may contribute to a fuller understanding of the guidance-oriented capacities of the Holy Quran, as well as to a more precise appreciation of the narrative structure of the Torah.

Literature Review

The story of Prophet Joseph (a) has attracted extensive scholarly attention because of its narrative, theological, and educational dimensions. However, the existing literature reveals a significant gap in the comparative study of contemporary exegeses, particularly regarding the complex construction of characterization and its theological implications.

Previous research may be grouped into three major approaches. First, exegetical and content-oriented studies have primarily focused on extracting moral lessons and comparing selected events. Al-Dajani, for example, examines Quranic and Torah narratives comparatively, while Salāmī-Rāvandī (2009) compares Shi'i and Sunni exegetical accounts with the Old Testament, particularly addressing *Isrā'iliyyāt* and Joseph's infallibility.

Second, structuralist and narrative studies have examined narrative organization, semantic structures, characters, and linguistic devices. Karīmī-Mihr (2010), for instance, analyzes the story through narrative semantics and discourse, whereas Mir Mustanir (1986) investigates its themes, characters, and plot. Nevertheless, these studies largely emphasize formal structures rather than theological and exegetical implications.

Third, functional and historiographical studies have explored differences in the purposes served by the two narratives. Ashrafī and Dehqānī (2017) argue that Quranic history serves religious and divine purposes, whereas biblical historiography contributes to Jewish national identity; similarly, Rahmawati Baharuddin (2009) highlights the Torah's nation-building function versus the Quran's emphasis on faith and education.

The present study addresses this gap by examining contemporary exegeses through a systematic analysis of characterization, informed by the intellectual framework of Martyr Imam Khamenei, thereby offering a deeper account of the theological and substantive differences between the Quranic and biblical narratives.

Research Methodology

This study employs a descriptive–analytical method with a comparative approach. The research data were collected through library-based and documentary methods from the Holy Quran (*Sūra* of *Yūsuf*), the text of the Book of Genesis in the Old Testament (the Torah), as well as contemporary exegetical sources and the Quranic statements of Martyr Imam Khamenei. Through content and narratological analysis, the components of the characterization of

Prophet Joseph (a) are examined and compared across the foundational scenes of the narrative—including the dream, the well, temptation, imprisonment, dream interpretation, and attainment of political authority—at different stages of the story. In this process, particular attention is paid to narrative structure, actions, dialogues, the role of dreams, and the theological and social contexts, through which the similarities and differences between the two texts in their portrayal of Joseph (a) are analyzed.

Concepts

1. Characterization

Lexically, “Characterization” denotes the act or result of describing, delineating, or representing the distinctive traits and essential qualities of a person, entity, or thing. It encompasses both the portrayal of inherent attributes and the systematic distinction of a subject by means of its peculiar, identifying characteristics (OED 1989, 3:33). “Characterization” refers to the process, methods, and techniques through which an author or narrator creates, establishes, and introduces to the audience the physical, moral, psychological, and internal motivational characteristics of narrative agents (see Mīr-Şadiqī 2015, 122). Characterization is a means through which the narrator can reveal the hidden layers, inner emotions, and causes of human actions, thereby enabling the audience to gain access to the characters’ private and inner worlds (see Forster 1927, 72). In this study, characterization is understood not merely as static description, but as an active narrative and rhetorical mechanism whereby real characters are delineated, differentiated, and endowed with distinct moral, spiritual, or functional personalities.

2. Contemporary Exegeses

The term “contemporary exegeses” refers, in this study, to the body of exegetical approaches developed by modern and contemporary scholars who engage the Quranic and biblical texts through literary, historical, social, theological, philosophical, and contextual

perspectives. In Quranic studies, contemporary interpretation has expanded beyond the conventional boundaries of pre-modern *tafsīr* by addressing new intellectual, social, and cultural contexts and by employing diverse exegetical frameworks (see Pink 2017, pp. 479-491). Similarly, contemporary interpretation of the Torah and the Hebrew Bible draws upon critical scholarship while remaining in dialogue with classical Jewish and Christian exegetical traditions. Such approaches examine literary patterns, historical contexts, theological perspectives, and the continuing significance of biblical narratives for contemporary readers (Davis 2019, pp. 1-7). Accordingly, in the present study, “contemporary exegeses” denotes interpretations that combine engagement with established exegetical traditions with modern analytical perspectives in order to elucidate the meanings, narrative structures, theological implications, and enduring educational significance of the Quranic and Torah texts.

A Comparison of the Characterization of Joseph (a) in the Quran and the Torah

While the Quran and the Old Testament share major plot points, they construct fundamentally different portraits of Joseph: The Quran presents an infallible, divinely guided prophet realizing divine providence, whereas the Torah depicts a resilient, practically wise, and capable person navigating familial and political challenges. To elucidate these distinct theological horizons, this section comparatively examines the key stages of Joseph’s life—including the well, temptation, imprisonment, and rise to authority.

1. Joseph’s Dream in the Quran

The story of Joseph in the Quran begins with a true dream that appears to delineate the overarching “schema” of his life. This revelatory prefiguration transcends the level of a simple event and possesses a semantic function; that is, the hardships and trials awaiting Joseph are not random occurrences, but rather links in a formative process leading toward the heights of perfection and the attainment of an exemplary model. From a narratological perspective, this initial dream

places the audience in a state of “informed suspense,” prompting the reader, through following the narrative actions, not only to discover the ultimate outcome of the events but also to extract a treasury of knowledge and moral teachings for personal and human development.

From the very beginning of the narrative of Joseph (a), the Holy Quran attributes to him the status of prophethood and the divine gift of dream interpretation. Thus, the expression, “*That is how your Lord will choose you*” (Quran 12:6), refers to God’s choosing Joseph for prophethood (Ibn ‘Āshūr 1984, 12:215). Likewise, God teaches him, through His bestowed, divinely granted knowledge, the knowledge of interpreting and explaining dreams; that is, He teaches him how to interpret a dream through articulating and elucidating its meaning, as well as how to discern the outcome and reality toward which the dream will ultimately lead in the realm of existence. As Almighty God recounts Joseph’s words to his father: “*Father! This is the fulfillment of my dream of long ago, which my Lord has made come true*” (Quran 12:100) (Marāghī, n.d., 12:115).

In examining the opening verses, particularly Verse 4, which depicts the conversation between Joseph and his father, a subtle point can be discerned in the Qur’an’s choice of vocabulary. In this context, the Qur’an refrains from explicitly mentioning the name “Jacob” and instead uses the term “*ab*” (father). Relying on this lexical choice, ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī argues that the use of the word “father” is not merely a simple substitute, but rather a linguistic device intended to foreground the qualities of paternal “mercy, affection, and compassion” toward the child. In his view, this lexical choice prepares the ground for understanding the emotional atmosphere governing the subsequent dialogue, in which Jacob, with utmost affection, says: “*He said, My son, do not recount [your dream]*” (*Qāla yā bunayya lā taqṣuṣ*) (Quran 12:5) (Ṭabāṭabā’ī 1995, 11:77). Thus, the choice of this term not only evokes the emotional bond between father and son but also emphasizes the element of mercy in prophetic education.

Similar to the story of Abel and Cain, in which Satan exploited Cain’s jealousy toward his brother from the outset and incited him to kill him, Prophet Jacob asks Joseph not to relate his dream to his brothers lest their

jealousy be aroused and they harm him. Verses 8 and 9 immediately reveal the existence of this jealousy. Jacob's particular attention to Joseph and his brother was influenced by several factors: first, their young age, which necessitated additional protection; second, the emotional void resulting from the loss of their mother, Rachel, according to some narrations, which made paternal attention all the more necessary; and third, the emergence of signs of intellectual aptitude and personal excellence in Joseph that distinguished him from his other brothers (Makārim Shīrāzī 1995, 9:321). Accordingly, Joseph is portrayed as a distinguished and gifted figure who receives special paternal attention and who, from the very beginning, becomes the object of his brothers' jealousy and is exposed to a conspiracy to kill him.

2. Joseph's Dream in the Torah

The first portrayal of Joseph in the Torah presents him as a seventeen-year-old young man who tended the flock with his brothers in the land of Canaan (Genesis 37:1-2). The reason for Joseph's favored status in the Torah is presented as follows: "Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours" (Genesis 37:3). This passage renders the stated basis for Jacob's preference for Joseph ambiguous, since, on the one hand, Joseph's relationship to Rachel, Jacob's beloved wife, is disregarded, while, on the other hand, Benjamin—not Joseph—was the child born during Jacob's old age (Alter 1996, 209).

After Joseph (a) shared his two dreams concerning the bowing of his brothers' sheaves and of the sun, moon, and eleven stars before him, their jealousy and hostility intensified (Genesis 37:7, 9). Within the cultural context of the ancient Near East, dreams were regarded both as possessing divine and prophetic significance and as reflecting the personal desires and ambitions of the dreamer. Accordingly, Joseph's brothers interpreted his dreams not only as signs of divine destiny but also as expressions of his claim to superiority and self-centeredness, causing their hostility to escalate into a plot to kill him (Sarna 1989, 256). Even Jacob, after hearing the second dream, rebuked him, questioning whether he and the other members of the family would indeed bow down before Joseph (Genesis 37:10).

3. Comparative Analysis of the Characterization and Narrative Function of the Dream in the Quran and the Torah

A comparative examination of the opening of the Joseph narrative in the Quran and the Torah reveals several shared narrative elements, including Jacob's special affection for Joseph, the occurrence of a significant dream, and the subsequent emergence of fraternal jealousy. Nevertheless, the two texts differ substantially in their characterization of Joseph and in the narrative function assigned to his dream. In the Quran, Joseph's dream constitutes a prophetic and formative sign that establishes his divinely chosen status from the outset. This characterization is reinforced by the declaration, "*That is how your Lord will choose you*" (Quran 12:6), together with the divine bestowal of knowledge and the ability to interpret dreams. Jacob's instruction to conceal the dream further reflects a protective measure intended to prevent the brothers' jealousy and satanic interference. By contrast, the Torah initially introduces Joseph as a seventeen-year-old shepherd and Jacob's favored son. His repeated disclosure of his dreams (Genesis 37:7–9) is presented in a manner that may suggest ambition or an awareness of superiority, thereby eliciting his father's rebuke and exacerbating his brothers' hostility. Accordingly, whereas the Quran employs Joseph's dream primarily to establish his prophetic identity, divine election, and spiritual formation, the Torah utilizes the dream chiefly as a narrative device that anticipates and intensifies the ensuing familial conflict.

4. Joseph's Being Cast into the Well in the Quran

When Joseph's brothers, driven by resentment and jealousy, intended to cast him into the well, Joseph (a) was divinely inspired that he would inform them of their deed (Quran 12:15). The revelation (*wahy*) in this verse apparently refers to prophetic revelation (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1996, 11:100). It may also refer to an inspiration from God into Joseph's heart, intended to kindle the light of hope within him (Riḍā'ī Iṣfahānī 2008, 10:52). Thus, from childhood, in addition to experiencing the auspicious dream, Prophet Joseph (a) was under divine care and received either prophetic revelation or divine inspiration, indicating his special status.

5. Joseph's Being Cast into the Well in the Torah

In the Torah, Joseph is sent by his father to Shechem to inquire about the welfare of his brothers and their flocks and to report back to him (Genesis 37:12). When his brothers see him approaching from a distance, they conspire to kill him (Genesis 37:18), referring to him derisively as “this dreamer” and proposing to cast him into a pit and claim that a wild animal had devoured him (Genesis 37:19-20). Reuben intervenes and prevents the immediate killing, suggesting instead that Joseph be cast into a pit, apparently intending to rescue him later (Genesis 37:21-22). The brothers subsequently strip Joseph of his distinctive long robe and cast him into the pit (Genesis 37:23-24). Judah then proposes selling Joseph to a caravan of Ishmaelites traveling from Gilead toward Egypt, and the brothers accept the proposal, selling him for twenty pieces of silver (Genesis 37:26-27). Thus, the Torah presents Joseph's descent into the pit and subsequent sale as the direct outcome of his brothers' jealousy and hostility, with the episode marking a decisive transition from familial conflict to Joseph's displacement and subsequent development within the Egyptian social and political context.

6. Comparative Analysis of Joseph's Characterization in the Scene of His Being Cast into the Well

The narrative of Joseph's being cast into the well in the Quran and the Torah shares several elements, including the brothers' jealousy, their conspiracy, the substitution of being cast into the well for murder, and Joseph's separation from his family. Nevertheless, the narrative differences give rise to two distinct patterns of characterization. In the Quran, divine revelation or inspiration at the moment of danger places Joseph under God's protection and guidance, portraying him as a hopeful and resilient figure progressing along the path of divine formation and destiny. In the Torah, Joseph is portrayed primarily as an obedient son who, at his father's request, goes in search of his brothers and, as a consequence of their jealousy, is cast into a well and subsequently subjected to slavery in Egypt. Thus, in the Quranic narrative, the well constitutes a stage in the process of salvation and the fulfillment of the divine promise, whereas in the Torah it symbolizes the beginning of Joseph's social downfall and the collapse of familial security.

7. Joseph's Attainment of a Position of Power in the Quran

Following Joseph's purchase by the 'Azīz of Egypt, the Quran presents an image of Joseph's honor and elevated status: "...Thus We established Joseph in the land and that We might teach him the interpretation of dreams. Allah has [full] command of His affairs, but most people do not know"³ (Quran 12:21). Joseph's establishment in the land of Egypt may be understood as referring to the gradual creation of the conditions for his future authority and distinguished position, since his entry into the household of the 'Azīz, compared with his previous condition in the depths of the well, brought about a fundamental transformation in his living circumstances, security, and well-being. The verse then connects this divine providence with the teaching of the "interpretation of dreams" (ta'wīl al-aḥādīth), which, according to the prevailing interpretation, primarily refers to the knowledge of dream interpretation and awareness of certain future events. Although the possibility that the expression refers to the reception of divine revelation has also been proposed, the context of the verses and the prominent role of dreams in the story of Joseph reinforce the former interpretation (Makārim Shīrāzī 1995, 9:358-359).

The following verse refers to Joseph's attainment of maturity and development, as well as to the divine favor bestowed upon him: "*When he came of age, We gave him judgement and [sacred] knowledge, and thus do We reward the virtuous*"⁴ (Quran 12:22). The intended meaning of *ḥukm* in the expression "*ātaynāhu ḥukman*" is a form of sound judgment, correct discernment, and the ability to distinguish truth from falsehood in matters of dispute—a capacity encompassing religious, ethical, and social domains. Quranic indications, particularly Joseph's emphasis on the exclusive sovereignty of God in judgment, demonstrate that this gift belongs to the category of divine judgment and is free from doubt, error, and the

³. ﴿... وَكَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلِنُعَلِّمَهُ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ وَاللَّهُ غَالِبٌ عَلَى أَمْرِهِ وَلَكِنْ أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾ (يوسف/ ٢١)

⁴. ﴿وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ آتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ﴾ (يوسف/ ٢٢)

influence of carnal desires. Likewise, the “knowledge” bestowed upon Joseph is understood as pure and divinely granted knowledge, untainted by ignorance or temptation. Within this framework, the granting of judgment and knowledge to Joseph is neither an accidental nor an initial gift; rather, it constitutes a divine reward for his virtuous conduct and moral merit, as the expression “*and thus do We reward the virtuous*” indicates a connection between righteous conduct and attainment of these levels of knowledge and discernment (Ṭabāṭabā’ī 1996, 11:118-119).

8. Joseph’s Attainment of a Position of Power in the Torah

In the Torah, Joseph is sold to Potiphar, an officer and captain of Pharaoh’s special forces (Genesis 39:1), and “the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian” (Genesis 39:2). In the Joseph narrative, the expression “the LORD was with Joseph” indicates the continuation of the divine promise of God’s presence, previously given within the Jacob cycle to Isaac and Jacob (Genesis 26:3, 24, 28; 28:15, 20; 31:3). This continuity signifies the persistence of divine support throughout the lineage of Jacob. Joseph’s remarkable success became so evident that his master recognized that the LORD was with him and promoted him to his personal assistant (Wenham 1994, 374). The repetition of the expression “the LORD was with Joseph” throughout the chapter plays a fundamental role in establishing narrative and semantic coherence, placing seemingly disparate events within an integrated framework. This recurring pattern also highlights the process of transformation undergone by the protagonist: from a vulnerable and isolated adolescent in a foreign land into a mature and resilient individual possessing strength of character. Thus, in addition to creating structural continuity, the repetition of this expression functions as a narrative device for representing character development and Joseph’s ability to overcome increasingly difficult circumstances (Sarna 1989, 271).

Potiphar entrusted all that he possessed to Joseph, and the LORD blessed his household because of Joseph (Genesis 39:5). This passage

clearly anticipates the blessing that Joseph, in his position as ruler of Egypt, would bring to that land and the neighboring nations (Wenham 1994, 374). The statement, “And he left all that he had in Joseph’s hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured” (Genesis 39:6), indicates that Joseph reaches the height of his position as a servant in a wealthy household and, by demonstrating his competence and integrity, gains the complete and unconditional trust of his Egyptian master (Sarna 1989, 272).

9. Comparative Analysis of Joseph’s Attainment of a Position of Power in the Quran and the Torah

The Quranic and Torah narratives concerning Joseph’s attainment of a position of power in Egypt share a recognition of divine presence and providence, as well as the transformation of his status from subordination to authority. Nevertheless, the origins and approaches through which the two texts explain this position differ. In the Holy Quran, Joseph’s establishment in a position of authority has a cognitive, sacred, and divinely guided nature, linked to the bestowal of “*ḥukm*” (sovereignty), “*ilm*” (knowledge), and the teaching of the “interpretation of dreams,” and constitutes a manifestation of the realization of his divinely ordained destiny and spiritual perfection. By contrast, the Torah emphasizes the gradual process of socialization, individual competence, integrity, and the cultivation of trust within Potiphar’s household, which, in addition to facilitating the development of Joseph’s human capacities and resilience, becomes a source of material blessing for those around him. Thus, from the Quranic perspective, Joseph’s attainment of power has a cognitive–theological teleology, whereas in the Torah narrative it is associated with practical competence, social advancement, and tangible blessing.

Comparative Dimension	Quranic Narrative	Old Testament (Torah) Narrative
Basis of Authority and Empowerment	Direct divine providence, spiritual	Individual competence, integrity,

Comparative Dimension	Quranic Narrative	Old Testament (Torah) Narrative
	perfection, and the bestowal of <i>ḥukm</i> (judgment), knowledge, and the interpretation of dreams.	trustworthiness, and the gradual cultivation of Potiphar's trust.
Focus of Characterization	A chosen figure connected to the revelatory source and endowed with moral and intellectual distinction.	A resilient, capable, and prudent individual who progresses from vulnerability to maturity and social stability.
Function and Consequences of Empowerment	The realization of the divine promise and wisdom within the order of existence.	The creation of tangible blessing and prosperity for the master's household, Egypt, and the neighboring peoples.

10. Joseph's Severe Trial of Temptation by Zulaykha in the Quran

Joseph's chastity and infallibility become manifest in an exceptionally difficult trial, in which all the circumstances conducive to sin are present. Nevertheless, relying upon God and remaining faithful to his servitude, Joseph resists the advances of the wife of 'Azīz: *"The woman in whose house he was solicited him. She closed the doors and said, 'Come!!' He said, 'God forbid! Indeed He is my Lord; He has given me a good abode. Indeed the wrongdoers are not felicitous'"*⁵ (Quran 12:23). This response reflects the depth of his monotheistic

⁵. ﴿وَرَأَوْنَاهُ الَّتِي هُوَ فِي بَيْتِهَا عَنْ نَفْسِهِ وَغَلَّقَتِ الْأَبْوَابَ وَقَالَتْ هَيْت لَكَ قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ رَبِّي أَحْسَنَ مَثْوَايَ إِنَّهُ لَا يُغْلِبُ الظَّالِمُونَ﴾ (يوسف/ ٢٣)

faith, sincerity, and trust in divine providence, qualities that gradually developed throughout his life—from his initial dream and God’s promise to his endurance of suffering and adversity. Accordingly, Joseph confronts hardship with patience and piety and his character was gradually shaped by divine love and sincere devotion to God, a monotheistic orientation reflected in his statements, such as “*I seek refuge in God*” (*ma ‘ādha Allāh*) (*Quran 12:23*), “*Sovereignty belongs only to Allah*” (*in al-ḥukmu illā li-llāh*) (*Quran 12:40*), and “*You are my guardian in this world and the Hereafter*” (*anta waliyyī fī al-dunyā wa-al-ākhirah*) (*Quran 12:101*). Moreover, ‘Azīz’s recognition of Joseph’s distinguished character and potential from the beginning of his presence in his household indicates his perception of Joseph’s exceptional qualities and future capabilities (Ṭabāṭabā’ī 1996, 11:120-121). Thus, Joseph’s chastity and moral impeccability may be understood as manifestations of his monotheistic faith, sincerity, and complete devotion to God, whereby love and trust in God constitute the fundamental basis of his conduct and moral decisions.

The following verse refers to the status of sincerity (*ikhhlāṣ*) of this divine prophet: “She certainly made for him; and he would have made for her [too] had he not beheld the proof of his Lord. So it was, that We might turn away from him all evil and indecency. He was indeed one of Our dedicated servants”⁶ (*Quran 12:24*). In Quranic usage, *burhān* refers to a conclusive proof or compelling sign that, by illuminating the truth, prevails over the human mind and heart and leaves no room for doubt; accordingly, both miracles and rational proofs may be designated as *burhān*. Although the Quran does not specify the precise nature of the proof that Joseph (a) witnessed from his Lord, it cannot be understood merely as ordinary knowledge of the moral qualities or consequences of actions, since such knowledge may coexist with error and the commission of sin. On the basis of this interpretation, Joseph’s divine “*burhān*” (proof) was a form of intuitive and unveiled certainty granted to God’s sincere servants, rendering a person so obedient to the truth that the inclination toward sin finds no opportunity to manifest itself (Ṭabāṭabā’ī 1996, 11:129-130).

⁶ ﴿وَلَقَدْ هَمَّتْ بِهٖ وَهَمَّ بِهَا لَوْلَا اَنْ رَّاٰ رُبُّهَا نَ رَبِّهٖ كَذٰلِكَ لِتَصْرِفَ عَنْهُ السُّوْءَ وَالفَحْشَاءَ اِنَّهٗ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُخْلَصِيْنَ﴾ (يوسف/ ٢٤).

In the Quranic expression, “...So it was, that *We* might turn away from him all evil and indecency...” (Quran 12:24), the emphasis is on turning evil and indecency away from Joseph, rather than restraining him from an intention to commit sin. This formulation therefore indicates the absence of an inherent inclination toward sin in his character. This interpretation accords with the description “...He was indeed one of Our dedicated servants” (*innahū min ‘ibādīnā al-mukhlaṣīn*) (Quran 12:24), referring to a servant whom God has purified exclusively for Himself and protected from the domination of satanic temptations and non-divine motives. Accordingly, divine protection in Joseph’s case reaches a degree of “*iṣmah*” (infallibility) whereby not only the commission of sin but even the intention or inclination toward it does not arise within him. In this context, the Quranic distinction between *mukhliṣ* and *mukhlaṣ* is also significant: the former denotes one who actively strives toward sincerity and spiritual purification, whereas the latter refers to one who has attained complete purity through spiritual struggle and self-discipline, to the extent that Satan is rendered incapable of exerting influence over him (Riḍā’ī Iṣfahānī 2008, 10:67). The Quran thus portrays Joseph as a monotheistic, *mukhlaṣ*, and divinely protected figure who, when confronted with one of the most difficult trials of his life, not only refrains from committing sin but is also free from any inclination or intention toward it.

This characterization is further reinforced in the subsequent scene of Joseph’s flight from the seduction of the wife of ‘Azīz. Although she attempted to shift the blame onto Joseph, he initially refrained from exposing her conduct when confronted by ‘Azīz and disclosed the truth only after being accused himself, in order to clear his name and defend his honor. This response may be understood not as an act of retaliation, but as a legitimate and morally justified defense against a false accusation (Riḍā’ī Iṣfahānī 2008, 10:71). Joseph’s resistance to sexual temptation and his refusal to submit to carnal desire thus constitute a significant dimension of his moral and spiritual development. In this regard, Martyr Imam Khamenei states: “Imagine a young man named Joseph, eighteen or nineteen years of age, in the

full vigor of youth and at the height of physical beauty, who becomes the object of desire of a woman possessing these same qualities. At this point, there are two possible courses of action: one is to surrender and become a sinful person; the other is to resist, and suddenly grow, rise, and attain spiritual elevation” (Khamenei, Remarks at the Eleventh Session of the Interpretation of *Sūrat al-Baqarah*, 15/8/1370 Sh [November 6, 1991], <https://khl.ink/f/17174>).

The scene of Prophet Joseph’s escape from Zulaykha constitutes one of the dramatic high points and a prominent example of scene construction in the Quranic narrative, portraying the dignified triumph of a divine and infallible human being in confronting a profound trial. This event presents Prophet Joseph (a) as an exalted model of infallibility, chastity, and fidelity for all generations. Martyr Imam Khamenei, explaining the magnitude of this trial, states: “This is a great test; it is a test from which, among thousands of people, perhaps one person emerges victorious—even at its lesser stages. Here, Joseph became the embodiment of purity, freedom from impurity, and piety; but there is an even higher level beyond this” (Khamenei, Remarks at the Meeting with Various Student Associations of the Universities of Tehran, 24/10/1377 Sh [January 14, 1999], <https://khl.ink/f/24657>).

At the next stage, the pinnacle of Joseph’s God-wariness is depicted when Zulaykha threatens to have him imprisoned if he refuses her lustful advances (Quran 12:32), and Joseph chooses imprisonment instead (Quran 12:33). Martyr Imam Khamenei states in this regard: “Here, the issue is no longer merely giving up a sexual desire; it means giving up everything: status, comfort, and life within a family that was fond of and enamored with a young man, a life in which he would enjoy so much! Everything was there for him: respect, honor, admiration, a brilliant future, abundant wealth, abundant opportunities—whatever he wanted was available to him. He turned away from all of it. This is piety. He was imprisoned. And this was not imprisonment for one month, six months, or one year; it had no definite duration. Prisons in those days were like this: once someone entered prison, he simply remained there. Some narrations state that he remained in prison for seven years, while others give

fourteen years” (Khamenei, Remarks at the Meeting with Various Student Associations of the Universities of Tehran, 24/10/1377 Sh [January 14, 1999], <https://khl.ink/f/24657>).

11. Joseph’s Severe Trial of Temptation by Zulaykha in the Torah

The Torah reveals Zulaykha’s temptation in the following words:

“And it came to pass after these things, that his master’s wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. But he refused, and said unto his master’s wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her.” (Genesis 39:7-10)

Joseph’s response to Zulaykha’s explicit and commanding proposition is a categorical “no,” demonstrating his moral steadfastness and commitment to religious principles. The significance of this response becomes even more pronounced given Joseph’s status as a slave and the prevalence of unregulated sexual relations in slaveholding societies, particularly since accepting the proposition could have been regarded, from the perspective of an ambitious individual, as an opportunity to advance his personal interests. Without expressing anger or delivering a moralizing lecture, Joseph articulates his reasons for refusal according to a hierarchy of values: first, betrayal of trust; second, violation of the husband’s rights; and third, the sinful act’s anti-religious and immoral nature (Sarna 1989, 273).

One day, Joseph came into the house when no one else was present. Zulaykha seized his garment and attempted to sleep with him, but Joseph left his garment behind and fled. Upon witnessing this, Zulaykha called the men of the household and claimed that the Hebrew slave had come to mock her and sleep with her, and that when she cried out, he had left his garment and fled. She then kept the garment until Potiphar arrived and recounted the same story to him.

Upon hearing Zulaykha's account, Potiphar became angry, seized Joseph, and placed him in the prison where the king's prisoners were confined, and Joseph remained there (Genesis 39:11-20). Following her failure to achieve her desire, Zulaykha, fearing the exposure of the truth and its consequences, was driven by anger and humiliation toward revenge. By using the garment left behind as apparently credible evidence against Joseph, she reversed the narrative of the incident and accused him of committing the very act she herself had previously sought. Thus, the garment was transformed from potential evidence of Joseph's innocence into an instrument for bringing an accusation against him (Sarna 1989, 274).

12. Comparative Analysis of Joseph's Trial of Temptation in the Quran and the Torah

Although the accounts of Joseph's trial of temptation in the Quran and the Torah share a fundamental emphasis on his resistance and chastity, they reveal fundamental differences in their epistemological foundations and levels of characterization. In the Quran, Joseph's refusal is explained through his seeking refuge in monotheism ("*ma'ādih Allāh*"), his witnessing of the "*proof of his Lord*" (*burhān rabb*), and his status among the *mukhlashīn* (Quran 12:23-24). This elevates his action beyond a merely ethical decision and connects it to divine protection, infallibility, and the manifestation of divine will, culminating in his conscious preference for imprisonment over sin, which confirms the perfection of this practical monotheism. By contrast, the Torah frames Joseph's steadfastness within a threefold rational-juridical argument: fidelity to his master's trust, respect for the sanctity of marriage, and avoidance of sin before God (Genesis 39:7-10). Joseph is thereby portrayed as a trustworthy person, guided by conscience and committed to righteousness within the context of social life and human relationships. Accordingly, in the Quranic perspective, Joseph's chastity derives from his status of infallibility and existential sincerity, whereas in the Torah, it is represented as an individual, ethics-oriented virtue grounded in human agency within the legal and social order of society.

Comparative Dimension	Quranic Narrative	Torah (Old Testament) Narrative
Epistemological Basis of Resistance	Monotheistic orientation, divine assistance (“ <i>the proof of his Lord</i> ”), and the status of infallibility and sincerity (“ <i>Our dedicated servants</i> ”).	Moral conscience, rational reasoning, and fear of God within the framework of covenantal obligations.
Mode of Reasoning and Refusal	Seeking refuge in God (“ <i>Ma ‘ādh Allāh</i> ”) and a fundamental rejection of any inclination toward wrongdoing and moral deviation.	A socio-legal argument: preserving the master’s trust, respecting the sanctity of marriage, and avoiding sin before God.
Characterization Horizon	A universal model of infallibility, sacred servitude, and the triumph of monotheistic will over desire and power.	A righteous, trustworthy, and God-fearing servant situated within the context of social relations and slavery.

13. Joseph’s Trial of Imprisonment in the Quran

Prophet Joseph (a) emerges in prison as an exemplary figure whom his fellow prisoners recognize as a virtuous person. The expression, “*indeed we see you to be a virtuous man*” (*innā narāka min al-muḥsinīn*) (*Quran* 12:36), indicates that Joseph’s two fellow prisoners regarded him as belonging to the ranks of the righteous, basing their judgment on the manifest signs of moral integrity and purity in his character. Their request that he interpret their dreams was likewise connected to this perception, since, according to the prevailing

understanding, righteous individuals, by virtue of their purity of heart, self-purification, and greater spiritual insight, possess a greater capacity to discern the hidden relationships underlying events and to perceive their deeper meanings. As a result, they regarded Joseph as qualified to interpret their dreams and hoped that he could discern a meaning that remained inaccessible to others (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1996, 11:171).

In prison, Prophet Joseph (a) not only exemplifies divinely oriented conduct and morality, which place him among the “*muḥsinīn*” (the virtuous), but also assumes the role of a teacher and spiritual guide. Before interpreting his fellow prisoners’ dreams, he calls them to monotheism and the worship of the One God (Quran 12:37-40). He attributes his ability to interpret dreams to divine instruction, stating, “*That is among things my Lord has taught me*” (*dhālika mim mā ‘allamanī rabbī*) (Quran 12:37). He then invokes the monotheistic tradition of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, emphasizing that associating partners with God is fundamentally incompatible with the religious identity of the prophetic household: “*It is not for us to ascribe any partner to Allah*” (*mā kāna lanā an nushrika bi-Allāhi min shay*) (Quran 12:38). Nevertheless, Joseph does not present monotheism as an exclusively familial or ethnic privilege; rather, he portrays it as a divine grace granted to humanity and brought to fruition through prophetic guidance (Makārim Shīrāzī 1995, 9: 408-409).

After preparing his fellow prisoners intellectually for the message of monotheism, Joseph introduces his theological argument by contrasting “different masters” with “Allah, the One, the All-paramount”: “*Are different masters better, or Allah, the One, the All-paramount?*” (Quran 12:39). Within his argument, “*Sovereignty belongs only to Allah*” (*in al-ḥukmu illā li-llāh*) signifies God’s absolute sovereignty and rejects the independent authority of any non-divine power or object of worship. Accordingly, “*al-dīn al-qayyim*” (the upright religion) is not confined to individual worship but encompasses the system of values and the organization of social life and power as well (Makārim Shīrāzī 1995, 9:411-412). Martyr Imam Khamenei states in this regard: “In an ignorant society, the “*different*

masters” (*arbāb mutafarriqūn*) (*Quran 12:39*) rule over people; that is, the human mind, the human body, human thought and intellectual capacity, human wealth, human labor power, and, in short, all the resources that exist within human beings are under the control of diverse gods and diverse rulers in an ignorant society; they are not under the control of the One God” (Khamenei, Remarks on the Day of Tāsū‘ā in 1355 Sh: Address at the Three-Way Meeting with Martyr Muṭahharī and Dr. Sharī‘afī, 10/10/1355 Sh [December 31, 1976], <https://khl.ink/f/50996>). Thus, Joseph’s prison discourse portrays him not merely as an interpreter of dreams but as a prophetic educator whose primary concern is to liberate human beings from servitude to multiple false authorities and direct them toward the worship and sovereignty of the One God.

14. Joseph’s Trial of Imprisonment in the Torah

In the Torah, God’s favor toward Joseph is likewise depicted:

“But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the LORD was with him, and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper.” (Genesis 39:21-23)

In this passage, the theme of “the LORD being with Joseph” is emphasized as the principal factor underlying his success. This divine presence is manifested in Joseph’s gaining the trust and favor of the prison keeper and, consequently, being entrusted with responsibility for overseeing the entire range of his duties. Thus, Joseph’s success is presented within the narrative not merely as the result of his personal abilities, but as a direct consequence of divine assistance and presence (Westermann 1986, 68).

In Genesis 40:1-8, Pharaoh imprisons his chief cupbearer and chief baker, placing them under Joseph’s supervision. Both prisoners subsequently experience troubling dreams and become distressed because no one is available to interpret them. Joseph says to them,

“Do not interpretations belong to God? tell me them” (Genesis 40:8). In the ancient Egyptian context, dream interpretation was regarded as a specialized form of knowledge practiced by professional experts. Joseph’s statement challenges this understanding by identifying God as the ultimate source of interpretive knowledge. Thus, dream interpretation is presented not merely as an acquired skill but as a divine gift through which the true meaning of dreams may be disclosed (Westermann 1986, 75).

15. Comparative Analysis of Joseph’s Trial of Imprisonment in the Quran and the Torah

The Quran and the Torah both portray Joseph’s imprisonment as a stage in which divine providence remains operative and his exceptional abilities become evident, yet they differ in their characterization of this period. In the Quran, Joseph emerges as a prophetic teacher and reformer who attributes his knowledge of dream interpretation to divine instruction and calls his fellow prisoners to monotheism and recognition of God’s absolute sovereignty before interpreting their dreams (Quran 12:36-40). In the Torah, divine presence establishes Joseph’s trustworthiness and administrative authority, while his interpretation of the prisoners’ dreams is presented as a divinely granted ability (Genesis 39:21-23; 40:1-8). Thus, while both narratives emphasize divine providence, the Quran foregrounds Joseph’s prophetic and missionary role, whereas the Torah emphasizes his trustworthiness, leadership, and interpretive ability.

16. Joseph’s High Office in the Quran

Following Joseph’s interpretation of the Egyptian king’s dream and the disclosure of his innocence (Quran 12:47-52), his position at the royal court was significantly elevated. The king declared:

﴿... ائتوني به أَشْتَرِيصُهُ لِنَفْسِي فَلَمَّا كَلَّمَهُ قَالَ إِنَّكَ الْيَوْمَ لَدَيْنَا مَكِينٌ أَمِينٌ﴾ (يوسف/ ٥٤)

“... ‘Bring him to me, I will make him my favourite.’ Then, when he had spoken with him, he said, ‘Indeed today [onwards] you will be honoured and trustworthy with us’” (Quran 12:54)

The expression (*astakhliṣhu li-nafsī*) “I will make him my favourite” indicates the king’s decision to select Joseph as one of his close associates and trusted confidants, suggesting that his conversation with Joseph confirmed his intellectual and moral qualifications. The designation (*makīnun amīn*) “honoured and trustworthy” further signifies Joseph’s secure status, authority, and reliability, grounded in his moral integrity, patience, knowledge, and administrative wisdom. Subsequently, by requesting responsibility for the treasuries of Egypt and describing himself as (*ḥafīzun ‘alīm*) “fastidious and well-informed” (*Quran* 12:55), Joseph demonstrates that the assumption of public responsibility requires not only moral integrity and trustworthiness but also knowledge, expertise, and administrative competence as essential qualifications for responsible governance (Ṭabāṭabā’ī 1996, 11:200–201; Makārim Shīrāzī 1995, 10:10).

Verse 56 of *Sūra Yūsuf* depicts Joseph’s attainment of the pinnacle of power, authority, and honor, presented as a reward for his righteousness:

﴿وَكَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَتَّبِعُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ يَشَاءُ نُصِيبُ بِرَحْمَتِنَا مَنْ نَشَاءُ
وَلَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ﴾ (يوسف/٥٦)

“That is how We established Joseph in the land that he may settle in it wherever he wished. We confer Our mercy on whomever We wish, and We do not waste the reward of the virtuous” (*Quran* 12:56)

This verse recounts Joseph’s establishment and authority in Egypt through divine providence and mercy—an authority that enabled him to administer affairs and exercise jurisdiction over various aspects of the land. This empowerment does not merely signify the attainment of political power; rather, it constitutes a reward for sincere servitude, steadfastness in obedience, and resistance to forces of misguidance, threats, and environmental pressures. The expression “We confer Our mercy on whomever We wish” indicates the absolute sovereignty of divine will and the comprehensiveness of God’s mercy toward His worthy servants, while the statement “and We do not waste the reward

of the virtuous” emphasizes that righteousness in word and deed never remains unrewarded. Accordingly, Joseph’s empowerment constitutes an example of God’s worldly reward for those who remain steadfast in the path of faith and sincerity (Faḍlullāh 1998, 12:231).

Martyr Imam Khamenei, discussing Prophet Joseph’s spiritual status and worldly honor, states: “...Prophet Joseph, despite his beauty and youth and his enjoying material status and honor in the house of the ‘Azīz of Egypt, overcame his own desire; therefore, he became worthy of the exalted position that God bestowed upon him, namely, prophethood. God knows that this servant possesses such an inner essence and will devote his will in this manner to His path; therefore, He assigns him other great and weighty responsibilities as well—each of which, in turn, carries great rewards” (Khamenei, Remarks at the Meeting with a Group of *Maddāḥīn*, 5/5/1384 [July 27, 2005], <https://khl.ink/f/3298>).

17. Joseph’s High Office in the Torah

When Pharaoh summoned Joseph to interpret his dream, Joseph responded, “It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace” (Genesis 41:16). By attributing the interpretation to God rather than to his own ability, Joseph emphasizes the divine origin of both the dream and its interpretation. His response also frames the forthcoming interpretation as a divine message ultimately intended for Pharaoh’s welfare, despite its warning of impending hardship (Westermann 1986, 89).

Following Joseph’s interpretation of Pharaoh’s dream concerning seven years of abundance and seven years of famine, Joseph said to him: “Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt” (Genesis 41:33). Pharaoh said: “Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?” (Genesis 41:38). In the biblical narrative, possessing the “spirit of God” is associated with knowledge, wisdom, skill, and exceptional abilities. Bezalel, by virtue of possessing the spirit of God, is endowed with “skill, ability, and knowledge” (Exodus 31:3; 35:31), and this gift likewise empowers Joshua for a particular mission (Numbers 27:18).

Similarly, the spirit of God in Judges (3:10; 11:29) is associated with extraordinary power and the ability to act, while in the case of Daniel it is associated with “insight, knowledge, and wisdom” (Daniel 5:14). Therefore, in the narrative of Joseph as well, this concept indicates the divine origin of his wisdom, abilities, and extraordinary capacities (Sarna 1989, pp. 285-286).

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph: “Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou” (Genesis 41:39-40). Pharaoh further declared: “See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt” (Genesis 41:41). He then removed his ring and placed it on Joseph’s hand, clothed him in fine linen, and put a gold chain around his neck (Genesis 41:42). The transfer of Pharaoh’s ring bearing the royal seal to Joseph symbolized the formal delegation of governmental authority and power, enabling Joseph to authenticate official documents in the king’s name and marking his elevation from an executive official to a figure possessing formal authority within the royal structure. Likewise, the presentation of the gold chain represented, within royal tradition, the highest degree of honor, status, and the king’s trust in its recipient (Sarna 1989, 286).

18. Comparative Analysis of Joseph’s High Office in the Quran and the Torah

The accounts of Joseph’s attainment of political authority in the Holy Quran and the Torah share an attribution of the source of his wisdom to God and his effectiveness in managing the crisis of famine; nevertheless, they differ significantly in their foundations of legitimacy and their respective horizons of characterization. In the Quranic perspective, Joseph’s authority derives from “divine empowerment” and constitutes a reward for perseverance in the path of servitude, sincerity, and benevolence. This is articulated through Joseph’s own identification of the two attributes of “*ḥafīẓ*” (fastidious) and “*‘alīm*” (well-informed) (Quran 12:54-56), thereby presenting a model of governance grounded in meritocracy, the administration of justice, and the realization of the monotheistic divine will. By

contrast, the Torah portrays Joseph's elevation as resulting from the indwelling and manifestation of the "Spirit of God" (*Ruach Elohim*) within him, which is consolidated through wisdom, crisis management, and the symbolic and legal transfer of royal power by Pharaoh (the granting of the signet ring and the golden chain; Genesis 41:38-44). Thus, the Quran represents Joseph's office as a sacred instrument for social reform and as a reward for spiritual perfection, whereas the Torah places greater emphasis on practical wisdom, crisis management, and the transfer of legitimacy and structural authority within the Egyptian political system.

Comparative Component	The Quranic Narrative	The Torah (Old Testament) Narrative
Origin and Philosophy of Legitimacy	Divine empowerment, reward for the attainment of virtue, and the manifestation of the monotheistic divine will in society.	The manifestation and indwelling of the "Spirit of God" (<i>Ruach Elohim</i>) in individual wisdom and prudence.
Components of Governance / Administration	The integration of ethical commitment with scholarly expertise (<i>"ḥafīẓun 'alīm"</i>).	Intelligence, effectiveness in crisis management, and practical wisdom.
Mode of Delegation and Consolidation of Authority	Rational dialogue, recognition of trustworthiness and competence (<i>"makīnun amīn"</i>), and the request to assume responsibility for the treasuries.	The conferral of legal and royal symbols (the signet ring, the golden chain, and the royal robe) by Pharaoh.
Purpose of Holding Office	Reform, the administration of justice,	The preservation of Egypt's political-

Comparative Component	The Quranic Narrative	The Torah (Old Testament) Narrative
	the dissemination of divine mercy, and the governance of society according to sacred values.	economic structure from famine and the consolidation of social order.

Conclusion

A comparative examination of the characterization of Joseph (a) in the Holy Quran and the Torah demonstrates that both narratives share the overall structure of the story and several fundamental elements, including Joseph's dream, the jealousy of his brothers, his being cast into the well, his sale, temptation, imprisonment, dream interpretation, and attainment of power. Nevertheless, the narrative treatment and theological foundations of each text give rise to two distinct models of Joseph's characterization. In the Holy Quran, Joseph (a) is portrayed as a prophetic figure, a monotheist, and one who benefits from continuous divine guidance and providential care, as well as an exemplar of patience, chastity, sincerity, and moral steadfastness. The events of his life, from the well to his attainment of political office, acquire their meaning within the framework of divine providence and governance. In this context, both his knowledge of dream interpretation and his political authority serve the fulfillment of his monotheistic mission and the advancement of individual and social reform.

By contrast, the Torah places greater emphasis on the gradual development of Joseph's character within familial, social, and political relations. The Joseph of the Torah is portrayed as a trustworthy, righteous, resilient, and capable administrator endowed with divine wisdom, who rises from a subordinate position to a position of power through competence, the establishment of trust, and the ability to manage crises. Therefore, the most significant difference between the two narratives lies in the fact that the Quran constructs Joseph's

character around divine guidance, infallibility, monotheism, and spiritual perfection, whereas the Torah focuses on his moral virtues, individual capabilities, administrative competence, and social advancement. Accordingly, the Quranic narrative may be characterized as teleological and pedagogical, viewing the events of Joseph's life as signs of the fulfillment of divine promise and wisdom; the Torah narrative, by contrast, presents a more historical-social account of his suffering, development, and individual success. This distinction ultimately reveals the fundamental divergence between the two texts in their representation of Joseph's character and in the educational function of the narrative.

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