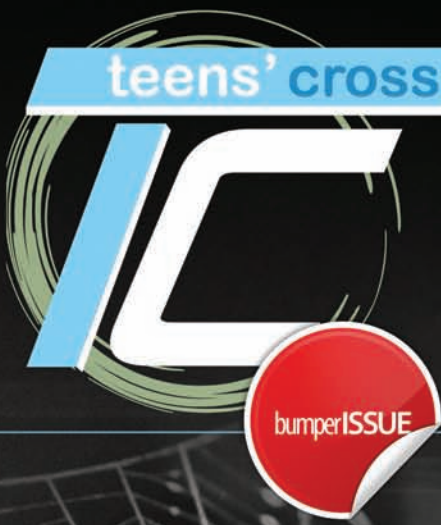


teens' crossroads

Singapore's 1st Muslim Teenage Magazine



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# Patience

...featuring the winning entries for essay  
competition by Al-Mawrid Resource Library

a special on Islamic Arts in Southeast Asia and  
Treasures from Aga Khan Museum collection

**Endurance  
is PATIENCE  
concentrated.**



**THOMAS CARLYLE**

(4 December 1795 – 5 February 1881)

Scottish Writer, Essayist, Historian



"If you have to respond to any wrong,  
respond (only) to the measure of the  
wrong done to you;

but if you endure patiently, it is  
indeed better for the patient."

Translation of the Quran  
An-Nahl, The Bee  
(16:126)



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Teens' Crossroads Vol.21 no. 1 & 2



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# Editor's Note

It makes up half of our faith. And in facing any hardship, one of the most painful struggles is composing oneself while embracing patience.

"Surely, with hardship comes ease" (Al-Inshirah, The Expansion, 94:06).

Through experience, we learn, understand, and feel that patience is the element that calms us and brings us peace towards the relief of the hardship. Within the Quran, there are numerous references to patience. A particular chapter centred on Prophet Joseph/Yusuf (AS) brings to the fore his embrace of patience and how patience embraced him.

Especially for this issue, we feature the winning entries from Al-Mawrid Resource Centre's Essay Competition 2011 based on the theme centred

on the patience of Joseph (AS). Congratulations to the first prize winner: Sakina Roshan, the second prize winner: Sajat Nisha, and the third prize winner: Siti Hazirah. (Note: All featured entries have been edited for this edition. The use of "Joseph" has been standardised to indicate reference to the Prophet, while "Yusuf" to indicate the name of the Surah. This is meant for ease of reading.)

As this edition of TC is produced, the pages keep on extending and more materials relevant to the theme of patience come to light. In a world whereby freedom of expression is a popular human right, unfortunately, there are many notions from irresponsible individuals and not-so-well-thought-through opinions based on limited first-hand experience and

knowledge. Till the last day of Earth, Muslims will continue to face insults and negativity. How should we react? Most likely, telling folks to remember patience is not enough to console the angry Muslims. Featured in this edition is a reminder from CelebrateMercy on how we can imitate Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in dealing with insults directed towards him and how we can offer condolences to innocent victims.

One of the challenges for the youths today is learning to embrace Islam while learning to deal with the complexities of bad publicity about our religion. As we struggle to move forward with optimism, take a leaf out of this special bumper edition on patience. *Insha'Allah*, may Allah (SWT) bless us with more insight and wisdom on the practice of patience.

Terms used in Teens' Crossroads  
(SAW) - Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasalam  
Meaning: Peace be upon him  
Used for: Prophet Muhammad (SAW)

(SWT) - Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala  
Meaning: Glorified and Exalted One  
Used for: Allah (SWT)

(RA) - Radiyallahu 'Anhu/'Anha/'Anhum  
Meaning: May Allah be pleased with him/her/them  
Used for: Companions of the Prophet (SAW)

(AS) - Allayhis Salam  
Meaning: Peace be upon him  
Used for: Prophet who came before Prophet Muhammad (SAW)

*Siti Hazirah*

## Displaying Patience When Learning

Develop patience and awareness towards wisdom while learning.

TEXT BY DR WAFFIE MOHAMMED

It is important for learners to be aware of the etiquette and attitude that should be displayed in the process of learning. A special discipline needs to be developed at the same time during this process. One of the etiquettes is demonstrating patience before speaking, asking questions or responding to others. Tread carefully so as not to just open your mouth and express your mind. Be patient and be mindful.





Asking questions is not wrong when one sincerely wants to learn. Allah (SWT) encourages it and says in Surah Al-Anbiyaa, “ask of those who possess the Message” (21:07). Practise being mindful when asking questions, especially to a learned person, such as one’s teacher. It is possible that at that time of questioning, we lack the capacity to understand fully the spiritual meaning of the answers we seek. Insha’Allah, with time, the wisdom we gained will help us get a better grasp of the answer.

A potent example in the Quran is the encounter between Prophets Moses (AS) and Khidr (AS). Moses (AS) wanted to know more about the truth, more than about creation. Theologically, Moses (AS) was a learned person, but he wanted to acquire that knowledge that is beyond reason and logic. Eventually, he set out on a spiritual journey to acquire this knowledge. Allah (SWT) guided him to Khidr (AS).

### Who was Khidr (AS)?

He is a personality that Allah (SWT) mentioned in the Quran. Some say he was a prophet of Allah, some say he was an angel, some say he was a wise servant of Allah (SWT) who still functions today. We cannot say with full determination because Allah (SWT) did not shed more details about this personality. All that is recorded is, “So they found one of Our servants, on whom We had bestowed Mercy from Ourselves and whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence” (Al-Kahf, 18:65).

Throughout their journey, Moses (AS) demonstrated his limited understanding by questioning Khidr (AS) on three separate occasions. During those points of the occurrences, Moses (AS) could not see the purpose of Khidr’s actions. And Khidr (AS) summed it up beautifully by asking Moses (AS) the same question prior to their journey: “How can you have patience about things which your understanding is not complete?”

From this encounter, we see the wisdom in bearing patience, especially when in the company of the learned. Allah (SWT) reinforces this in Surah Al-Maidah, “O you who believe! Ask not questions about things which, if made plain to you, may cause you trouble” (05:101).

### Our Understanding is Limited

Continuously asking questions may make things a bit harder for you to understand, as was the case with the Jews. When they were commanded to slaughter a cow, they kept asking Moses (AS) question after question. And every time they got an answer, the task became a little more difficult for them until they were made to pay gold that equalled to the weight of a cow. This story is recorded in Surah Al-Baqarah, verses 67-73.

As learners, we must bear in mind and understand that we do not know Allah’s plan. Our knowledge and understanding is limited. Do not question Allah (SWT). Do not say “why me”

when you are faced with trials and tests. Do not question Allah’s work. We do not know what He has planned for us. What we do know is that Allah (SWT) loves us and takes care of us.

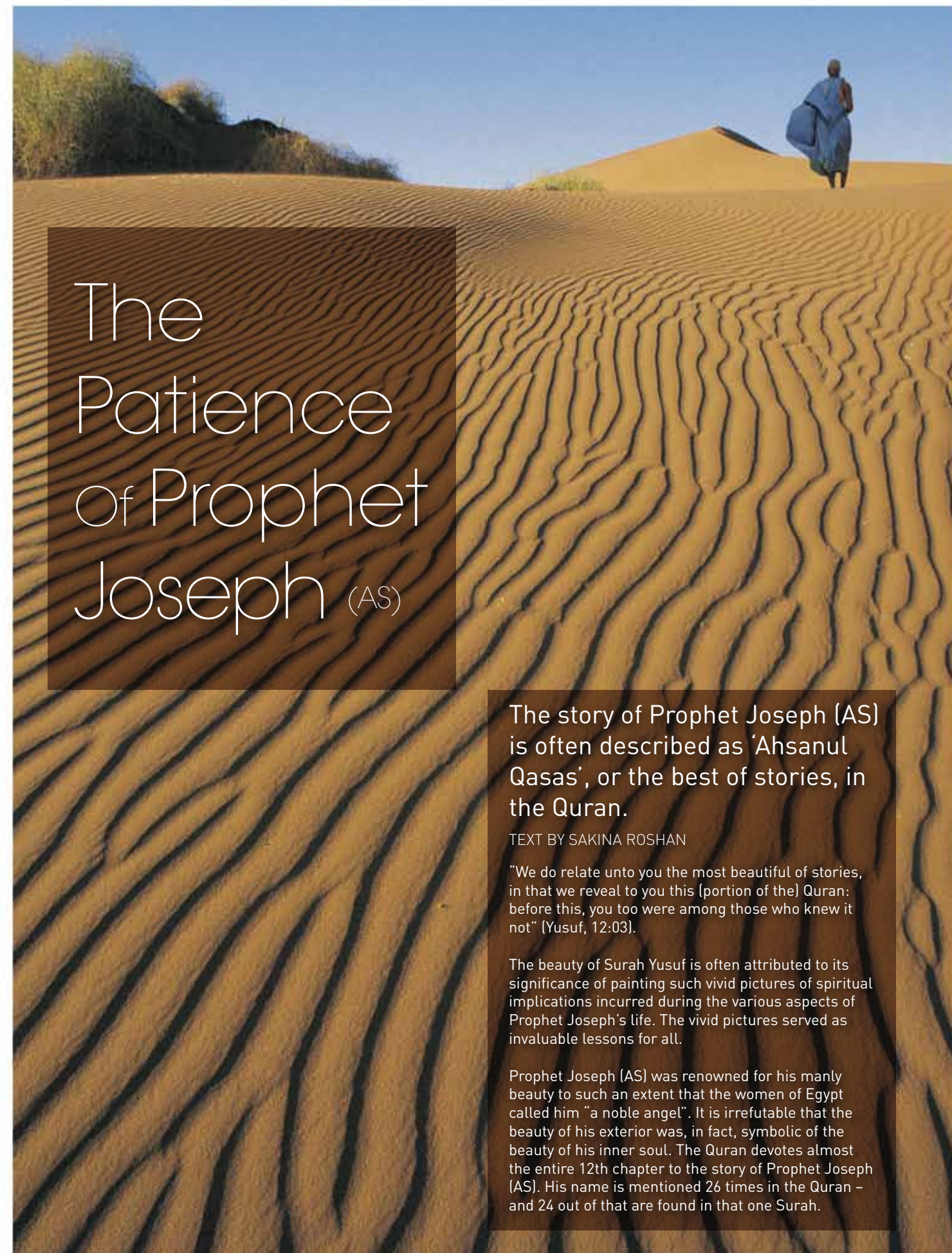
Those who are trying to get closer to Allah (SWT) are careful and cautious when it comes to opening their mouths. They would rather remain silent and look on with the outlook that Allah (SWT) will take care of the affairs of His servants.

### Have Some Reservations

Satan was so blessed that he was favoured with entry into paradise amongst the company of Angels, but he questioned Allah (SWT). Look how far Satan fell. The Angels displayed their reservations when Allah (SWT) announced to them that He was going to create man. Thereafter, when they were questioned, the Angels responded, “Glory to You, of knowledge we have none, save what You have taught us: in truth it is You who are perfect in knowledge and wisdom” (Al-Baqarah, 02:32).

What Allah (SWT) wants to happen, will happen. He knows what is best for us. Our understanding is limited and short-sighted. Being believers, we need to put our faith and trust in Allah (SWT) and believe that He is taking care of our affairs.

How we could proceed with patience is to ask of Allah (SWT) to make us from amongst those who will never question His decisions and accept whatever He sends our way. May Allah (SWT) make the trials and tests easy and bearable for us, and may He inculcate in us the ability to demonstrate patience when seeking knowledge and spiritual advancement. **TE**



# The Patience of Prophet Joseph (AS)

The story of Prophet Joseph (AS) is often described as ‘Ahsanul Qasas’, or the best of stories, in the Quran.

TEXT BY SAKINA ROSHAN

“We do relate unto you the most beautiful of stories, in that we reveal to you this (portion of the) Quran: before this, you too were among those who knew it not” (Yusuf, 12:03).

The beauty of Surah Yusuf is often attributed to its significance of painting such vivid pictures of spiritual implications incurred during the various aspects of Prophet Joseph’s life. The vivid pictures served as invaluable lessons for all.

Prophet Joseph (AS) was renowned for his manly beauty to such an extent that the women of Egypt called him “a noble angel”. It is irrefutable that the beauty of his exterior was, in fact, symbolic of the beauty of his inner soul. The Quran devotes almost the entire 12th chapter to the story of Prophet Joseph (AS). His name is mentioned 26 times in the Quran – and 24 out of that are found in that one Surah.



## Good vs Evil

Full of human vicissitudes, the story has deservedly embalmed its universal appeal to people of all status. In Prophet Joseph's story, good and evil are contrasted in so many different ways that only those in search of true spiritual knowledge can see it embodied in concrete events that unfold in this story. As mentioned in the Quran (12:07), "Verily in Joseph and his brethren are signs (or symbols) for seekers (after truth)".

When analysing the story of Prophet Joseph (AS), many lessons of wisdom dawn upon us. Its benefits may not only be reaped in this world but also during the hereafter, for regarding the virtue of this Surah, Abu Ibn Ka'b reported from the Messenger of Allah (SAW):

"Teach your servants Surah Yusuf. Surely whenever a Muslim recites it and teaches it to his family and that which his right hand possesses, Allah, the Exalted, will ease for him the throes of death and grant him strength that he will not harbour jealousy toward another Muslim" (From Majma' al-Bayan).

Furthermore, Abu Baseer narrates on the authority of Imam as Sadiq (RA): "Whoever recites Surah Yusuf every day or every night, Allah will raise him on the Day of Judgment and grant him beauty like the beauty of Yusuf. He will not be afflicted with terror on the Day of Judgment and he will be among the select of the righteous servants of Allah. In it indeed is that which was written in the Taurah".

It is apparent that such a story worthy of bountiful rewards and admonitions entails lessons like no other. The patience of Prophet Joseph (AS) prevails as the crest of his many benevolent and noble characteristics. Since young, Prophet Joseph's personality was unblemished and admirable. He was kind hearted, generous and exercised exceptional rectitude. Straightforward, yet reverent, he had a gentle temperament. These excellent qualities garnered both the enduring love from his father, Jacob (AS), as well as the *hasad* (envy) of his ten, elder half-brothers. Certainly, the father himself, a figure deemed impartial in all circumstances, being dubious of the characters of his older sons so far in advance in the chapter, foreshadows the danger ahead for Prophet Joseph (AS). Unveiling their vile and abhorrent traits once away from the watchful eyes of Jacob (AS), it is, but hard to resist the sickening feeling of revulsion swelling within our hearts as the older brothers unflinchingly cast Prophet Joseph (AS) into the pit of the dark well, as we learn when the story unfolds further.

Indeed, Imam 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib (RA) (as recorded in Gharar al-Hikam) described *hasad* as the "worst of illnesses" and added, "*hasad* is a debilitating disease which does not cease except with the destruction of the jealous person or the death of the person they were jealous of".

## Guilt and Conscience

The magnitude of their crime is again reflected in the Surah by the ninth verse. In that verse we see that the brothers themselves being knowledgeable of faith, knew of the

gravity of their sin, and had intended repentance even before committing the sin. This undoubtedly reflects the colossal guilt perforating their hardened hearts. Their act was so disgraceful that they were more than aware of its consequences for it had pricked their conscience.

In the narration from Tafsir Ibn Kathir, the heinousness of the crime is magnified as such: "they (the brothers) started to abuse Prophet Joseph (AS) verbally, by cursing and harmed him, by beating", before they threw him down the well. When Prophet Joseph (AS) had tried to beg one of his brothers, he was cursed and smacked. When he tried to hold on to the sides of the well, they (his brothers) struck his hand and then cut the rope when Prophet Joseph (AS) was only halfway down the well. Prophet Joseph (AS) fell into the well and was submerged. However, he ascended onto a stone in the well.

Such injustice inflicted by one's own kin is surely atrocious and sparks off repercussions of antagonism and frustration, to say the least. Nonetheless, Prophet Joseph (AS) let neither of the aforementioned nor related emotions, cross his heart. Instead, he supplicated fervently to Allah (SWT). Indeed Allah (SWT) mentions, "Seek help in patience and *As-Salat* (the prayer). Truly, Allah is with *As-Sabirun* (the patient)" (Al-Baqarah, 02:153).

When we reflect upon the foretold hardship faced by Prophet Joseph (AS), we can easily understand the vulnerability of mankind against the will of Allah (SWT) for the ultimate decision rests only with Him. Hence patience is a prelude for the extent of one's willingness to express contentment and absolute submission to Allah (SWT). So, Prophet Joseph (AS) remained steadfast in his trust in Allah (SWT) and prayed to Him for salvation, preventing fear from taking over neither his mind nor his heart.

## Restrain from Complaining

Besides realising the unshakable faith – the highest degree of piety and righteousness – Prophet Joseph (AS) displayed in the face of adversity, we should also understand that to do so, is not possible without *Sabr* (patience) and the restraint of oneself from the complaints of hidden anguish. We are made aware of his genuine patience, one that was devoid of complaints; neither expressed nor suppressed. He endures the betrayal of his brothers and the hardships of being sold into slavery without any grievances. His heart never falters from the trust he had on Allah (SWT).

Surely those who exert for the sole cause of truth and entrust all their affairs to Allah (SWT) get consolation and comfort from Him, and they do not lose heart. This indeed helps them face their opponents with confidence and courage.

This is apparent in the following verse revealed to Prophet Joseph (AS): "So when they had gone off with him and agreed that they should put him down at the bottom of the pit, and We revealed to him: You will most certainly inform them of this their affair while they do not perceive" (Yusuf, 12:15).

When we reflect upon the foretold hardship faced by Prophet Joseph (AS), we can easily understand the vulnerability of mankind against the will of Allah (SWT) for the ultimate decision rests only with Him. Hence patience is a prelude for the extent of one's willingness to express contentment and absolute submission to Allah (SWT).



## Relief for Believers

From this verse we can comprehend the mercy, compassion, compensation and relief that Allah (SWT) sends in times of distress to those who believe and invoke Him. The narration from Tafsir Ibn Kathir relates that Allah (SWT) revealed to Prophet Joseph (AS), during his distressful situation, to comfort his heart and strengthen his resolve: “do not be saddened by what you have suffered. Surely you will have a way out of this distress and a good end, for Allah will aid you against them, elevate your rank and raise your grade. Later on, you will remind them of what they did to you” and so, Prophet Joseph (AS) surrendered himself to the will of the Almighty God, adopting calmness and displaying his exemplary patience.

The patience of Prophet Joseph (AS) is different from today’s definition which is veiled by axiomatic claims. Patience can be exercised in many forms, as per popular beliefs. Patience in Islam is above the worldly claims of mere toleration and endurance without rancour or retaliation; it is in fact, a course for Muslims to spiritually grow closer to Allah (SWT) and attain true inner peace.

The type of patience described in Surah Yusuf and associated with Prophet Joseph (AS) is that of one who intends the sole pleasure of Allah (SWT) and acts accordingly with that which is obligatory. His endurance and perseverance do not have any motives, and is not for the sake of “goodness” brought about when being patient. Instead it is done for seeking the pleasure of Almighty Allah (SWT). That patience is called “*Sabr Jamil*” (or Sweet Patience). Shown by both Jacob and Joseph (AS), it sets a very fine example of never giving up hope of Allah’s infinite mercy just like it is mentioned in the Quran: “and who despairs of the Mercy of his Lord except those who are astray?” (Al-Hijr, 15:56).

## Charity in Forgiveness

Another aspect of Prophet Joseph’s patience is that it does not stand muted by his internal submission and reverence to his Lord. Instead, it engulfs those who have harmed him or have tried to distract him from the right path. To err is human and to forgive is divine. In Islam, there is charity even in forgiveness. We realise that there are many ways for Prophet Joseph (AS) to deal with the very people who had intended harm, and worse, had it inflicted unjustly upon him.

Given a situation with his authority and power, he could have almost done anything to his brothers who were foreigners in the land and could have gotten away with it too, as he was in a much higher rank than them. But did it happen? No. Instead, Prophet Joseph (AS) welcomed his brothers and treated them with equity and compassion (gave them royal treatment and even returned their money). He pardoned his brothers instantly for their betrayal and the harm they had done to him, and even supplicated for their forgiveness: “He said: May Allah forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of the merciful” (Yusuf, 12:92).

From his actions we understand the degree of his patience, piety and kindness towards his brothers. Abu Hurairah (RA) said that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, “He who forgives the faults of a Muslim, Allah will forgive his faults on the Day of Resurrection” (Ibne-Hibba’n).

## Refuse to Leave Prison

Another significant portion of his patience can be understood from the time Prophet Joseph (AS) spent in prison. Though convicted for a crime that he did not commit, Prophet Joseph (AS) refused to leave the prison without his exoneration. Regarding his excellent patience, Prophet

Muhammad (SAW) said: “If I were to stay in prison for such a long time as Joseph did, I would have accepted the offer (of freedom without insisting on having my guiltlessness declared)” (Sahih Bukhari, Stories of the Prophets).

Prison was another one of Allah’s tests for Prophet Joseph (AS); just like Prophet Job (AS), we can see that he was put through a number of tests in his life. These tests were not punitive in nature; rather they were instructive for later stages in his life. Indeed Allah (SWT) tests those whom He loves most. In prison we do not catch Prophet Joseph (AS) lamenting his ill-fate or complaining to his inmates. Instead, he treats them kindly, attends to the sick and calls them to Islam. Engaged in his prophetic mission, his patience is strengthened and his resolve is intensified. Surely refusing one’s freedom offered by the king himself requires exceptional patience and *tawakkal* (placing confidence in Allah). Allah (SWT) did not waste Prophet Joseph’s patience when he was beset by his brothers and when he was imprisoned due to the actions of the wife of Aziz.

## Half of All Beauty

Speaking of the wife of Aziz, it is vital to note that Prophet Joseph (AS) was immune from error by Allah’s will and He saved him from error. It is said in an authentic Hadith that Prophet Joseph (AS) was bestowed with “half of all beauty”. This constitutes of both his inner and outer qualities that had appealed to the masses. However his innocence towards her abominable thoughts could be best justified using this verse from the Quran when the king questioned the wife and the ladies when she admitted her fault: “He said: How was your affair when you sought Joseph to yield himself (to you)? They said: Remote is Allah (from imperfection), we knew of no evil on his part. The chief’s wife said: Now has the truth become established: I sought him to yield himself (to me), and he is most surely of the truthful ones” (Yusuf, 12:51).

How could Prophet Joseph’s patience come into the picture at the instance of temptation? Indeed his spiritual eyes saw something that her eyes, blinded by earthly passion, failed to see. She thought that no one may see them through closed doors, but Prophet Joseph (AS) knew that Allah (SWT) was everywhere and could see everything.

A man of great patience, he immediately invoked Allah (SWT) and sought refuge in Him: “if you abandon me and I am reliant on myself, then I have no power over myself, nor can I harm or benefit myself, except with your power and will. Verily, You are sought for each and everything. Please, do not abandon me and leave me to rely on myself, for then I will be of the ignorant” (Tafsir Ibn Kathir). Allah (SWT) accepted his prayer and turned away their guile from him, saving him. Hence only those who have exceptional patience could have invoked Allah (SWT) instead of taking matters into their own hands. Allah (SWT) grants the believers with guidance and mercy because they are able understand and be advantageous through its essence. With *Iman* (Belief) they obtain guidance, and Allah (SWT) guides them with His infinite mercy.

## No Revenge in His Pure Heart

Apart from shunning the forbidden acts, Prophet Joseph’s demeanour is, but strangely tranquil. There are no traces of revenge in his pure heart. He does not seek to avenge his imprisonment due to the unjustified claims of the wife of Aziz nor did he let any harm befall his brothers who had betrayed him. Instead he says, “none shall reproach you” to his brothers.

Having been sold as a slave in a foreign land, he was raised to authority by the Grace of Allah (SWT). Here we can see the emphasis on consistency of his character. He never did once lose faith in Allah (SWT), because of his patience, and was sincere in his most trying of times. Surely *Ikhlas* (sincerity to God) is the fundamental aspect expected in a Muslim, for him to obtain goodness and help him shun evil. This is evident in Prophet Joseph’s actions, which were beneficial to everyone because he was capable of being entrusted and not be corrupted.

Ibn Umar narrated that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, “The most honourable is the son of the honourable, the son of the honourable, the son of the honourable, i.e. Joseph, the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham” (Sahih Bukhari). This is not said without validation. Prophet Joseph (AS) definitely did live up to his noble expectations throughout his life. Regarding his truthfulness, Prophet Joseph (AS) was called the “Man of Truth” (Yusuf, 12:46); was admitted amongst those who were truthful (Yusuf, 12:51); and was given high rank and was fully trusted (Yusuf, 12:54). *✍*

**Abu Hurairah (RA) said that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, “He who forgives the faults of a Muslim, Allah will forgive his faults on the Day of Resurrection” (Ibne-Hibba’n).**



# When Insulted, Remember: It Is Indeed Better to Endure Patiently

The latest 11 September 2012 tragedy prompts CelebrateMercy to highlight how Muhammad (SAW) remained calm whenever he was insulted.

For the first 13 years of his mission, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and his followers were exposed to demeaning abuse, mockery and torture on a daily basis in Mecca. Not only did he resist violence, he did not even return an insult with another insult.

At one point in Mecca, his enemies twisted his name to call him 'Mudhammam' (The Loathsome) instead of 'Muhammad' which deeply offended his followers. But the Prophet (SAW) calmly comforted them by stating, "Doesn't it astonish you how God protects me from the Quraish's abusing and cursing? They abuse Mudhammam and curse Mudhammam while I am Muhammad" (Sahih Bukhari).

On Tuesday, 11 September 2012, extremists in Libya and Egypt reacted to an obscure film which attempts to insult Prophet Muhammad (SAW) with profane inaccuracies. But their reaction, which included vandalism and the murder of innocent civilians, completely contradicts the character and message of our beloved Prophet (SAW).

In a famous Islamic tradition, Muhammad (SAW) stated, "It is not allowed to cause harm to others nor to return harm for harm." The Quran teaches us that we cannot blame or punish a person for the crime of another and instructs believers to "disagree with them in the most courteous way".


Ambassador Chris Stevens, as well as other Americans and Libyans, were killed during such protests. By killing an innocent man who had nothing to do with this film, these extremists did more to offend Prophet Muhammad's legacy than this film could have ever done. Their actions go against the mercy, patience, and justice that he embodied on a daily basis.

CelebrateMercy Founder Tarek El-Messidi stated, "When lies are spread about our Prophet, we simply respond with the truth. And the most effective response is to embody his merciful character on a daily basis. Violence and vandalism carried out in his name are more offensive than the content of any film. The Quran tells us that the Prophet is praised by God and His Angels; even a million films cannot threaten his status as the Best of all Creation nor his love in our hearts."

In response to the crimes carried out in the Prophet's name, CelebrateMercy has launched a letter-writing campaign to the families of the innocents killed in Libya. It also launched a 10-day MercyMail campaign that aims for 5,000 people to send online condolences to the family of Ambassador Stevens. In less than 48 hours, they had 3,000 messages sent from 83 countries: one every minute.

## Helpful Tips From CelebrateMercy

CelebrateMercy also provides a helpful guide on how to offer condolences to innocent victims of such incidents. When writing your message, it may be helpful to consider the following talking points:

- Respectfully address the family (e.g. "To the family of Ambassador Stevens")
- Offer condolences by expressing your emotions towards the tragic event
- As a Muslim, explain why this act contradicts the Prophet's true message and character
- Offer a final expression of support (e.g. "Our prayers are with you at this time.")
- Sign off on the message with your names (e.g. The Ahmad Family from the American-Muslim Community in Knoxville, Tennessee, USA) 

## What is CelebrateMercy?

Based in Cincinnati, Ohio (US), CelebrateMercy is a non-profit organisation that aims to instil a greater love for and deeper understanding of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) among Muslims and friends of other faiths. It brings a global conference into your living room by hosting interactive online webcasts, featuring short videos of globally prominent scholars and performers. Previous contributors include Shaykh Hamza Yusuf, Maher Zain, Dr Ingrid Mattson, Dr Tariq Ramadan, and Yusuf Islam (Cat Stevens).

CelebrateMercy now has a global base of over 800 volunteers and over 110,000 Facebook fans. Learn more at [www.celebratemercy.com](http://www.celebratemercy.com)

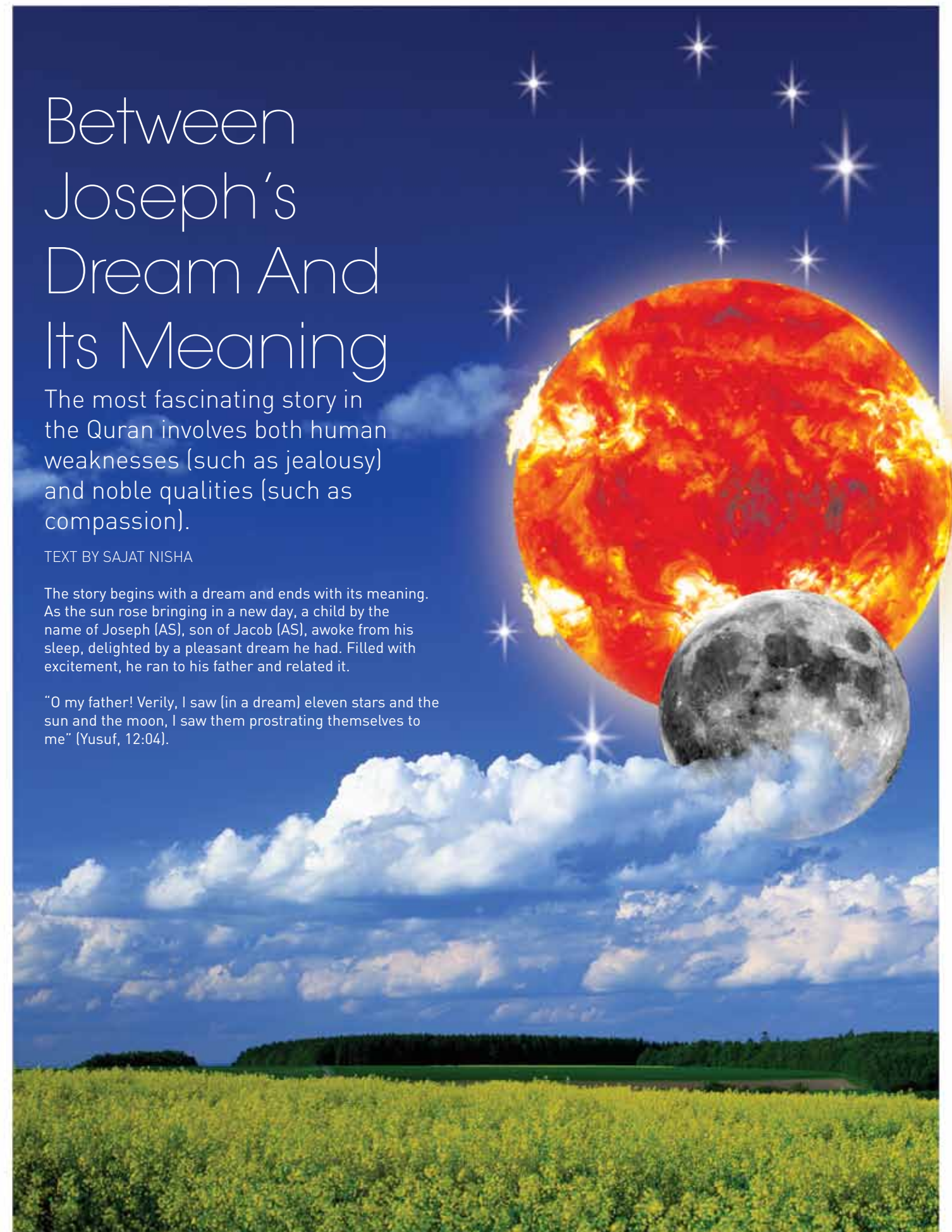
# Between Joseph's Dream And Its Meaning

The most fascinating story in the Quran involves both human weaknesses (such as jealousy) and noble qualities (such as compassion).

TEXT BY SAJAT NISHA

The story begins with a dream and ends with its meaning. As the sun rose bringing in a new day, a child by the name of Joseph (AS), son of Jacob (AS), awoke from his sleep, delighted by a pleasant dream he had. Filled with excitement, he ran to his father and related it.

"O my father! Verily, I saw (in a dream) eleven stars and the sun and the moon, I saw them prostrating themselves to me" (Yusuf, 12:04).





Jacob (AS), being a prophet, understood. He told Joseph (AS) not to tell his brothers of this dream for they might harm him. Joseph (AS) had 11 brothers. Jacob (AS) was their father but they had different mothers. Joseph and his brother Benjamin (AS) were from the same mother. Joseph and Benjamin (AS) were handsome, well behaved and obedient to their father. Their father loved and protected them and this made the other older brothers very jealous.

Jacob (AS) was happy about this dream because Allah (SWT) had blessed Joseph (AS), just as Allah (SWT) had blessed their forefathers Abraham and Isaac (AS). Sadly, the ten older brothers planned to get rid of Joseph (AS) so that their father would give all his attention to them only. They thought of killing him or having him sent to a faraway land. But one of the brothers said, “Kill not Joseph, but if you must do something, throw him down to the bottom of a well, he will be picked up by some caravan of travellers” (Yusuf, 12:09-10).

“They said: “O our father! Why do you not trust us with Joseph, when we are indeed his well-wishers? Send him with us tomorrow to enjoy himself and play, and verily we will take care of him” (Yusuf, 12:11-12).

He (Jacob) said: “Truly, it saddens me that you should take him with you. I fear lest a wolf should devour him, while you are inattentive of him.” They said: “If a wolf should devour him when we are so strong a company, then we should surely be lost!” (Yusuf, 12:13-14).

They took Joseph (AS) with them into the desert, pulled off his shirt and throw him down a well. Allah (SWT) kept Joseph (AS) safe in the well. Joseph (AS) knew that one day he will meet his brothers and tell them of the wrong they had done. The evil brothers killed a sheep and stained Joseph’s shirt with the sheep’s blood. They went to their father crying, showing Joseph’s bloodied shirt and explaining that Joseph (AS) had been attacked by a wolf.

Jacob (AS) trusted in Allah (SWT). He knew that Joseph (AS) was still alive and that his sons were lying. Jacob (AS) was patient and had faith in Allah (SWT). Thus was the beginning of Prophet Joseph’s story.

Towards the conclusion of the story, many years afterwards, we find Prophet Joseph (AS) as the prime minister of Egypt who was enjoying full authority on behalf of the king, and his family, including Jacob (AS) presented themselves before Joseph (AS). The Quran reveals, “He raised his parents on the throne and they all bowed down before Joseph (as a sign of loyalty to him). He said: O my father! This is the meaning of my dream of long ago; my Lord has made it come true.”

## Joseph’s Prayer as His Dream Came True

Consider Joseph’s feelings now that his dream has come true. He prays to Allah (SWT): “My Lord! You have indeed granted me some important part of the rule and imparted to me some knowledge of the inner meaning of all happenings (including dreams). O You, Originator of the heavens and the earth each with particular features!

You are my Owner and Guardian in this world and in the Hereafter. Take my soul to You as a Muslim, and join me with the righteous” (Yusuf, 12:101).

## Patience and Gratitude

We see Joseph (AS) starting to tell his father Jacob (AS) about the things that happened to him. This is a point where it would be useful to stop and think. Had someone in our time been subjected to go through all those hardships which were faced by Joseph (AS) and had he been able to meet his parents after such a long trial of separation and disappointment, just imagine where he would begin his tale of woes. Imagine how he would cry and make others do the same. Imagine how many days and nights he would spend in recounting the hardships faced by him.

But, in Joseph’s tale, the two parties – the teller and the listener – were both no less than two prophets of Allah. Worth observing is their conduct in this matter. Here is the separated son of Jacob (AS). When he met his father, after having gone through tremendous trials and difficulties, Joseph (AS) said: “He (my Lord) has indeed been gracious to me: He freed me from prison, and He brought you all from the desert after Satan had sown discord between me and my brothers. Truly, my Lord is subtly kind in the way He brings about whatever He wills. Surely He it is Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise” (Yusuf, 12:100).

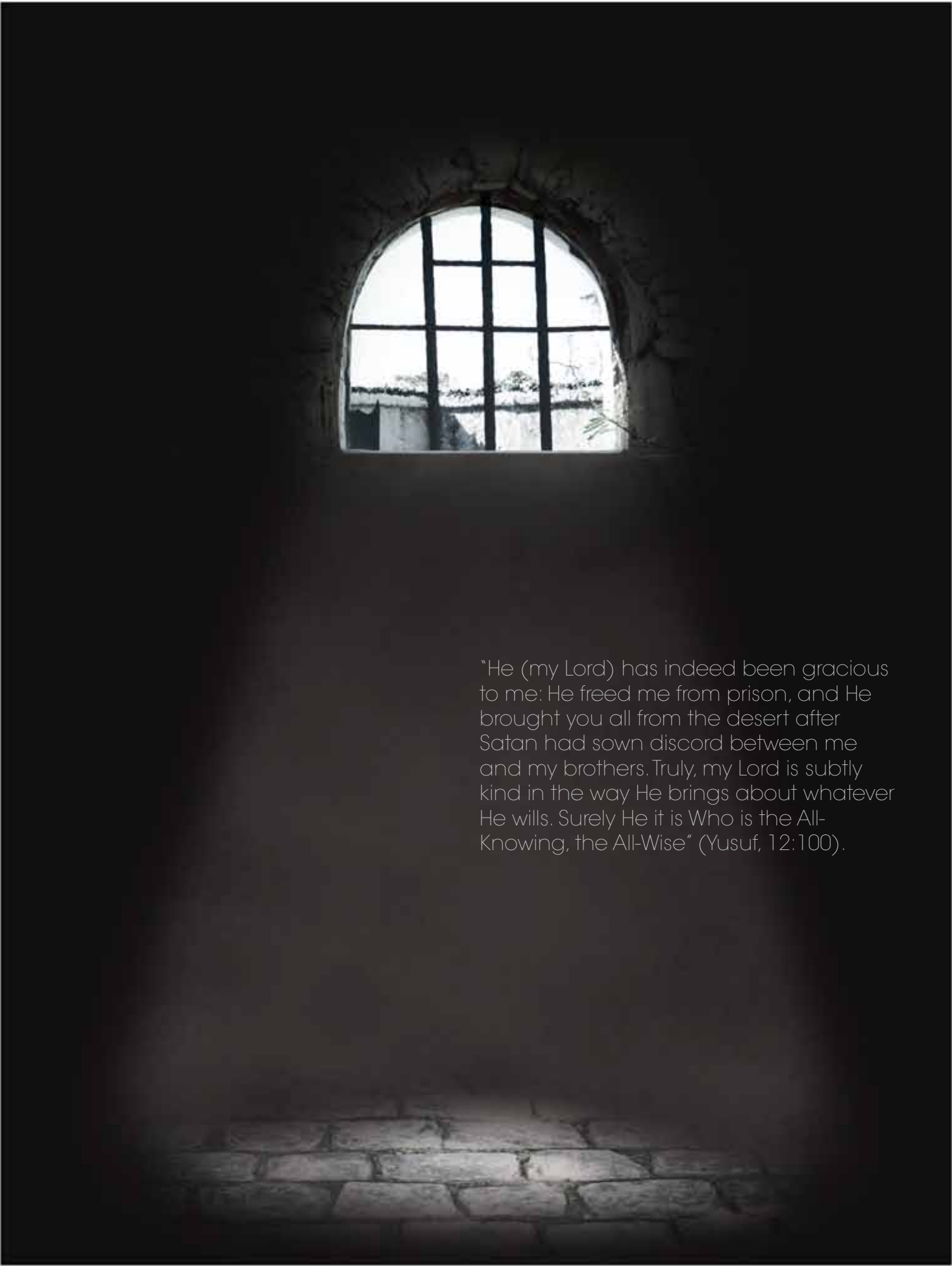
The hardship faced by Joseph (AS) can be divided over three stages: (1) The injustices of his brothers; (2) the separation from his parents; (3) the pain of prison. He said nothing about how he had been accused and sent to the prison. Instead, he spoke about how he was released from prison with specific mentions of gratitude for Allah (SWT). Worth nothing here is that Joseph (AS) mentioned his release from the prison but not the prison of the well in which his brothers had thrown him.

## Forgiveness

The reason probably was that he had already forgiven the mistake made by his brothers. Joseph (AS) said: “No reproach this day shall be on you. May God forgive you; indeed, He is the Most Merciful of the merciful” (Yusuf, 12:92). Neither did Joseph (AS) reproach them nor did he leave them feeling guilty. He did not consider it proper to mention the incident of the well in any form whatsoever, so that his brothers may not be put to shame for their past misdeeds.

After that, he did not dwell on the long separation from his parents and how that had affected him. He set all those things aside. He mentioned his meeting with his parents with sayings of gratitude to Allah. “...and He (Allah) brought you all from the desert...” (Yusuf, 12:100). Here lies a hint to the blessing of Allah (SWT) that brought Prophet Jacob (AS) from his home in the desert, where conveniences of living were scarce, to Egypt, a place with royal honours.

The injustices inflicted by his brothers on him were not mentioned at all. It is interesting that he swept the whole incident as a handiwork of Satan and this suggested that his brothers were not of the kind who would have done something like that on their own accord. It was Satan who deceived them and caused the rift between them.



“He (my Lord) has indeed been gracious to me: He freed me from prison, and He brought you all from the desert after Satan had sown discord between me and my brothers. Truly, my Lord is subtly kind in the way He brings about whatever He wills. Surely He it is Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise” (Yusuf, 12:100).



# Elegance of Prophets (AS)

This is the elegance of the Prophets (AS). Not only were they patient in the face of pain and hardship, but they were invariably finding the occasion to be grateful to Allah (SWT) under all conditions. In their state of being, the Prophets (AS) would have thousands of blessings of Allah (SWT) showered upon them, yet, the Prophets (AS) would not talk about them to anyone.

## Verse 101

“My Lord! You have indeed granted me some important part of the rule and imparted to me some knowledge of the inner meaning of all happenings (including dreams). O You, Originator of the heavens and the earth each with particular features! You are my Owner and Guardian in this world and in the Hereafter. Take my soul to You as a Muslim, and join me with the righteous” (Yusuf, 12:101).

After having achieved an important objective, that was to meet his parents and brothers, Joseph (AS) was at peace to devote himself directly to praising Allah (SWT) and to supplicate before Him. What Joseph (AS) said immediately was the verse 101. The *salihin* (righteous) or morally the most perfect servants of Allah (SWT) can be the Prophets themselves for they are Divinely protected (*ma’sum*) against all sins.

Note in this *dua* (supplication) is the prayer for the good end to life. It presents before us a profile of the typical servants of Allah (SWT) who have the honour of being accepted in the sight of their Creator. Their attitude is such that they may be enjoying the highest possible ranks in this world and in the Hereafter, and they may have all sorts of power and office beneath their feet, yet they would never wax proud over these. In fact, they fear lest such blessings from Allah (SWT) around them be taken away or cut down. So, they keep praying that the physical and spiritual blessings given to them by Allah (SWT) continue to be with them – right through their hour of death.

Prophet Joseph’s patience can also be attributed to his marvellous humility and gratefulness to his Almighty Lord as it is mentioned that “he raised his parents upon the throne...” and Prophet Joseph also said, “He (Allah) was indeed kind to me when He brought me forth from the prison...” (Yusuf, 12:100). Prophet Joseph (AS), then was an authority in the land of Egypt and Jacob (AS) and his family migrated there in order to establish themselves in a new land. Allah’s Wisdom and Understanding of His servant’s affairs is flawless and His Guidance, due to that knowledge and understanding, is also flawless. Surely all this mercy is due to Joseph’s unfaltering belief and patience which served as the fundamental aspect behind the various desirable qualities he had characterised throughout his life. **TC**

“My Lord! You have indeed granted me some important part of the rule and imparted to me some knowledge of the inner meaning of all happenings (including dreams). O You, Originator of the heavens and the earth each with particular features! You are my Owner and Guardian in this world and in the Hereafter. Take my soul to You as a Muslim, and join me with the righteous” (Yusuf, 12:101).



# Guessing The Murder Suspect

TEXT BY LULU W RAHMAN

Murder in Mesopotamia is one of Agatha Christie’s classic crime thrillers featuring Hercule Poirot, the fictional Belgian detective who is one of Christie’s most famous and long-lived characters. Set at an archaeological excavation site in Iraq, the story was narrated by Amy Leatheran, a newly hired young nurse. She was hired by Dr Eric Leidner, an archaeologist, to look after his wife, Louise Leidner, who was suffering from paranoia and nerve attacks. Mrs Leidner had been receiving threatening letters from her ex-husband who had supposedly died years earlier and this terrified her. However, before that mystery was solved, she was murdered brutally.

Along came Hercule Poirot, invited by the local authorities to try to solve this murder mystery that was baffling the local folks. Initially sceptical of his sleuthing abilities, Amy Leatheran was eventually convinced of his abilities despite his eccentric appearance and idiosyncrasies. As a detective, Poirot is intuitive and observant, unprejudiced and intelligent. His way of fishing for information is also quite unique – he encourages people to “gossip” with him. With this information at the tip of his fingers, he is able to whittle down the list of suspects and thus solve the mystery in the most ingenious manner. Poirot uses a combination of logic and interviews to reach his conclusion and waits until the end to reveal his conclusions and gets a confession from the killer.

The backdrop of this novel is extremely detailed, showing how much Christie understands about life at an archaeological dig, thus providing an unusual setting that was expertly and entertainingly presented. The characters in the book are also unique and the plot is simple yet well-thought out. Amy Leatheran can be unreliable, contrived and prejudiced as the main narrator but that compliments and juice up the drama rather than weakens the plot. Though she prides herself as being an excellent judge of character, she tends to be too naïve and readers need to take her conclusions with a pinch of salt.

The other characters were initially portrayed as pretty bland, just a group of quiet yet oddly troubled scientific workers. However as the story goes on, readers begin to realise how each character is distinctive that when crimes are committed among a group of well-bred and cultivated people, every one of them becomes a suspect. Christie is so skilful at making her readers feel that every human character is a little mysterious. She sets the stage where readers can see the characters before the murder actually takes place and from there, they could form opinions about who might have the motive and means.

The pacing is perfectly set, neither too slow nor too fast due to the nature of the narrator who is straightforward and precise so the point of the matter is quickly arrived at. The characters are fully formed and ready to either be adored or hated as the reader feels best. As a mystery writer, Agatha Christie again tells another delightful story; while providing rabbit trails, she is able to keep readers guessing right till the end. **TC**

## About the book

Title: Murder in Mesopotamia  
Author: Agatha Christie  
Price: S\$12.84 (Kinokuniya and other local major bookstores)



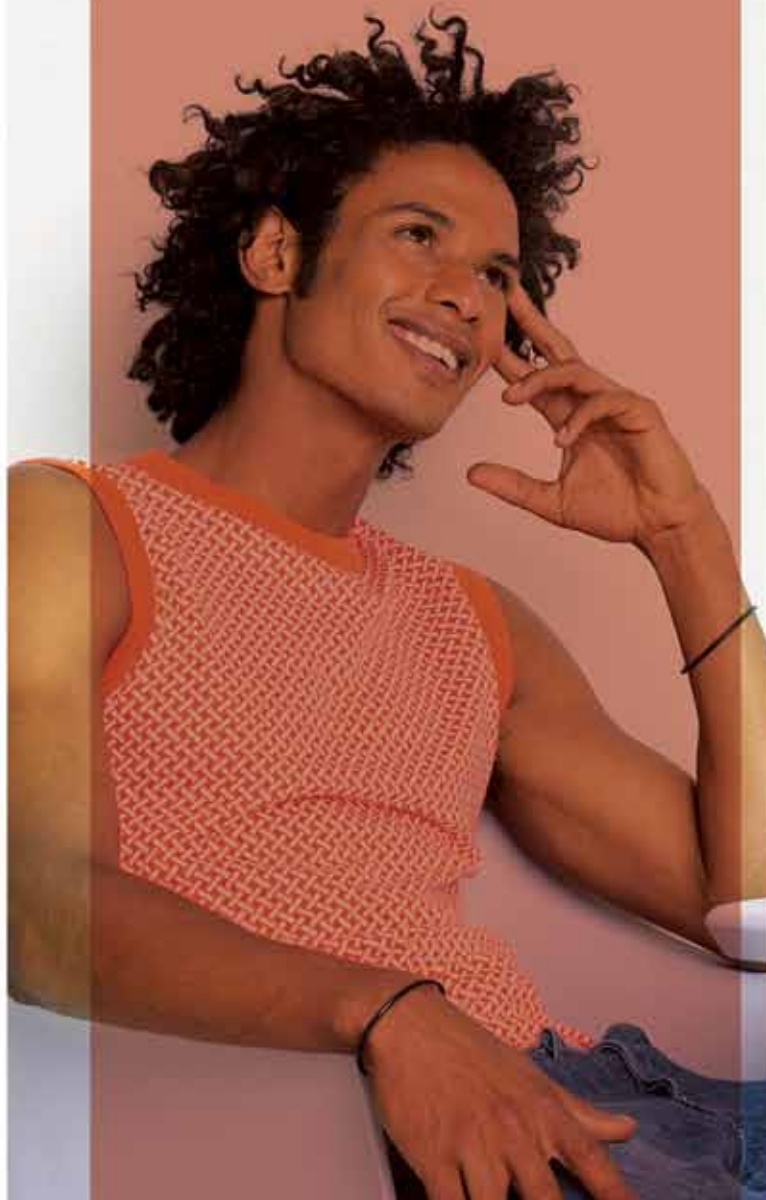




"Oh you who believe! Seek help with patient perseverance  
and prayer, for God is with those who patiently persevere."  
*Quran Al-Baqarah, The Heifer 2:153*



# Viewing Hardship From A Different Perspective



## Patience can teach us sincerity and acceptance.

TEXT BY SITI HAZIRAH HAMID

Muslims in Singapore are easily influenced by the western culture and we question ourselves: can we steadfastly adhere to our Islamic values while embracing the positive influences of culture and modernity? How does a society that is engaged in constant progress and that survives on instant mashed potatoes, packaged cake mixes, frozen dinners, and instant cameras, teach patience to its young? Look at where we stand now.

We frown when we have to work overtime. We grumble while waiting for the bus. We even race ourselves to work on the road and often squabble with other road users. We are so used to fighting our way to get the things or outcome that we want. We demand on having it our way, as if life owes us something.

As Muslims, we rely on the Quran and the Prophet's *sunnah* (practice) as guidance to help us through life. In the Quran is one of Allah's messages to mankind that is portrayed in the form of a great story. This is the story of Prophet Joseph (AS), wherein lies the teaching of one of life's greatest virtues – patience.

## Lived His Life Confronting Schemes

Prophet Joseph (AS) lived all his life confronting schemes made by the people closest to him. His brothers plotted to kill him and instead they decided to find a way to exile him. Imagine if a boy was sent down to a deserted well with nothing to hold on to other than the darkness and deafening sound of a hollow abandoned well. Should he not be angry, depressed and traumatised, all at the same time?

Eventually, Joseph (AS) was sold at the slave market in Egypt, where he was bought for a nominal sum. While oppressed, Prophet Joseph (AS) was patient, had a good opinion of Allah (SWT) and faith in Him, that in the end, Prophet Joseph (AS) understood that His was not the way of the world but rather the way of *Iman* (Belief). He was helpless and was bought by the chief minister called Al-Aziz. But Allah (SWT) kept a way of greatness for Joseph (AS) as he was loved by Al-Aziz although Joseph (AS) was a slave boy with no means.

## Victim of Enviars

When he grew to be a man, Joseph (AS) fell victim to envious who were captivated by the beauty that Joseph (AS) possessed and considered as a trust (*amanah*) that Allah (SWT) gave him. He was tempted through seduction by Al-Aziz's wife, Zulaikha, but Joseph (AS) rejected her. And because of his rejection, she wanted him sent to prison. Joseph (AS) prayed, "My Lord! Prison is dearer to me than what they bid me to. If You do not avert their guile from me, I might incline towards them and become one of the ignorant" (Yusuf, 12:33). Allah (SWT) answered Joseph's prayers. This noble Prophet (AS) protected his *Iman* and his religion more than his freedom for life.

During Joseph's term as a prisoner, Allah (SWT) blessed him with an extraordinary ability to interpret dreams. He interpreted the King's dream about the coming healthy harvest that would be followed by famine. Then, Joseph (AS) was given authority for seven good years, over the cultivation, harvesting, and storage of crops. With Allah's will, the period of the famine brought Joseph's brothers to Egypt in request for provisions. When Prophet Joseph (AS) met his brothers, he received them warmly despite what they did to him years ago. He supplied them with provisions. It was clear that he longed for his beloved

parents and his loving brother Benjamin, because he cried when he heard his brothers mentioned about their father, the noble Prophet Jacob (AS).

## Gratitude

Joseph's dream came true and he was reunited with his family. He was in gratitude and said a beautiful prayer: "My Lord! You have indeed granted me some important part of the rule and imparted to me some knowledge of the inner meaning of all happenings (including dreams). O You, Originator of the heavens and the earth each with particular features! You are my Owner and Guardian in this world and in the Hereafter. Take my soul to You as a Muslim, and join me with the righteous" (Yusuf, 12:101).

We learn from the revelation in Surah Yusuf that Allah's Command takes place in accordance with causes which He also creates, and patience will teach us sincerity and acceptance of what is preordained.

## Do Not Lose Heart when Facing Difficulties

Thus, when you are sad and the future seems dim, look back to this story about Joseph (AS). Remember that the believers – even when left without land, power, wealth, or prestige – hold onto their belief even when tested with death and worldly pleasures.

Joseph (AS) worked for his belief even if it meant suffering for him. Muslims too must learn to face their opponents with confidence and courage without losing heart during their encounters with challenges in life. We should persevere in our task without fear and leave the results to Allah (SWT). It is one of our pillars of belief to believe in predestination. Measures for success and failure are entirely in the hands of Allah (SWT).

Sometimes life is hard, but we could choose to look at it in a different view so that we learn to be sincere in accepting God's Will. Accept criticism and take it as an opportunity for us to be humble. Sometimes Allah's Will does not seem – to us – to be for our best interest but that is the Wisdom behind His Will. Only Allah (SWT) knows what is best for His servants.

So if we are to teach our young about patience, it is best to start by portraying a patient parent first. Remind ourselves and our children about the story of Prophet Joseph (AS) and the other good men mentioned in the Quran. The stories were revealed to remind mankind about goodness. Allah (SWT) mentions in the Quran that we (Muslims) are the best community (*khairul ummah*) and that our purpose is to invite towards good and forbid evil. Hence, let us embrace this story of Joseph (AS) with full conviction and continue to strive in life with patience and endurance just as how our Prophets (AS) had shown us. **TE**



# Lyrical Story to Remind You of Mom

TEXT BY LULU W RAHMAN

This is a story of a mother's love and her selfish family. Park So Nyo is woman from the countryside who has brought up four successful children. One day while travelling with her husband to Seoul to visit their eldest son, she was separated from her husband at a crowded train station. Upon realising her disappearance, the family frantically get together and put their busy schedules on hold to go on a frantic search for her. They distribute flyers around where she was last seen, seek out clues from passersby who might have come across her and even turn to the police but their Mother is nowhere to be found.

Their story is told in three sections, each from the viewpoint of a family member and ends with an epilogue by Mother herself. The way in which the story is conveyed allows the family members – the first daughter, eldest son and their father – to weigh in on the shared crisis, often in an intimate second-person narration. By drawing up their past interactions and feelings, the readers are introduced to their Mother's life and personality. The first part is told by Chi-hon, the first daughter who is a successful novelist; followed by her eldest son Hyong Chol; her husband; and finally by Park

So Nyo herself. As each of them reflects on the times when they took her for granted for the sacrifices she made on their behalf, or how they rarely showed their appreciation, they all reinforce their feelings of self-blame, guilt and melancholic regret.

Through these flashbacks, the reader is also able to discover the true nature and character of Mother. Chi-Hon talks of the guilt she feels over her recurring terse and dismissal of Mother's ignorance and illiteracy. Hyong Chol reveals the feeling that he ultimately let her down by not understanding that her dreams for him were perhaps the dreams for herself. Her resilience and self-sacrificing ways were also highlighted in his segment when he talks about how the mother beat him up for refusing to eat the food cooked by his father's mistress as she wants him to be strong enough to take care of the family during her brief absence. The father also talks about his mistakes – the times when he ignored her and the various ways he took her for granted. His insensitivity and wrongdoing highlights Mother's incredible strength of character and also revealed her emotional isolation for most of her life.

In the epilogue, Mother describes her early years as a young woman who left her family and village to live with her new husband, her pride and joy that were her children, her dreams and hopes for them. She also reminisce fondly a potential romance she almost had, though one-sided, with her long time male friend. But Mother also revealed she did not always suffer in silence – she was capable of whipping the kids, breaking the tables and jars when she was frustrated and even, walking out on her husband when he took on a mistress. However, her sensibility eventually wins out as she rethought her last decision and made things right.

The story's dynamism mostly takes place inside the narrator's mind in the form of regretful memories and guilt-laden thoughts. Despite that, it stops short at being over sentimental, yet brutally well-observed of the understanding of the shortcomings of traditional ways and modern life. At the heart of the matter, the book's charm is how it delivers its message – love and treasure your own Mother – with outmost simplicity. **TC**

## About the book

Title: Please Look After Mother  
Author: Shin Kyong-sook  
Price: S\$ 15.95 (available at Kinokuniya and other major local bookstores)





# Explore the Diversity of Islamic Arts from Southeast Asia

Artistic ideas from central Islamic lands were adapted in Southeast Asia to create a style that is uniquely our own.

The Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM) presents highlights of Islamic arts of Southeast Asia from its own collection, including several recent acquisitions, in the exhibition Islamic Arts from Southeast Asia: Highlights of the Asian Civilisations Museum, on display at the museum from 7 July 2012 through 20 January 2013.

## A distinctive art

"This exhibition focuses on objects made with a specific religious purpose or design," says Dr Pedro Moura Carvalho, Chief Curator of the ACM and Curator of the exhibition. "In many cases, these objects were commissioned by a Muslim patron for use in a mosque, school, or other religious contexts. And many of the objects are inscribed in Arabic – the language of the Quran – or Jawi, the regional script based on Arabic but adapted to reflect the languages of this region."

The objects show a wide variety of materials and forms. It is especially noteworthy that a strong Southeast Asian identity remains in objects that have parallels throughout the Islamic world. Local traditions of batik, drums, and wooden sculpture were adapted to Islamic objects. Porcelain and enamel with Arabic inscriptions were specially commissioned from factories in China for use in Southeast Asia.

"The ACM has one of the most important collections of Islamic Southeast Asian art," says Alan Chong, Director of the ACM. "The Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur also has a significant collection, but this category is underrepresented in Europe and North America. We hope we will make a contribution to understanding this distinctive iteration of Islamic culture. A series of programmes and lectures will explore this field in depth for our audiences."

On page 23 is a multicultural cotton Batik Sarong from Northern Java, Indonesia, from the early 20th century.

The decoration was almost certainly commissioned by someone who had performed the Hajj.

The decoration on the beige main field is almost unusual; the upper and lower registers show wealthy pilgrims being comfortably transported on a camel, while their belongings follow on a second camel. In the central register, a turbaned man carries a flag of the ruler of Mecca.





## Multicultural influences in Singapore

Islam is integral to the culture of Singapore. The surrounding region is home to some of the largest populations of Muslims. Many of the region's architectural and artistic forms have their origin in Iran, Northern India, Turkey, and North Africa.

Mosques are one of the most visible symbols of Islam. In a special section of the exhibition reflecting the diverse cultural roots of Singapore, an array of photographs highlight some of the many architectural styles used to build local mosques. Some follow Malay and Javanese styles, while others show influences from China, the Indian subcontinent, and the Middle East, and occasionally even reflect Western architectural conventions.

The exhibition includes mosque furnishings from the Wak Sumang Mosque in Punggol, now demolished. Displays will enhance visitors' understanding of the Islamic arts in Singapore.

Dr Moura Carvalho, who is also a leading scholar of Islamic arts, explains, "The arts produced by Muslims and for Muslim patrons in Southeast Asia are probably the least studied and understood in the Islamic world. We hope that this exhibition will draw more attention to the richness and variety of Southeast Asian Islamic arts and contribute to a better appreciation of such a unique history."

On page 25, clockwise from top left:  
Double Doors from Eastern Java, Indonesia, from early 20th century. This painted and gilded wood consists of floral motifs and scrolls with inscriptions on each of the lower panels end.

Large Vase from Guangzhou, China, from 1900s. This gilded brass and enamel piece contains an inscription in Sini, a variation of the Arabic script developed in China.

Chest possibly from Northern Java, Indonesia, from 19th century. Made from teak and European woods, this chest contains inscriptions, floral motifs, and interlacing circles.

Kendi, from China, from 17th century. Kendis are among the most distinctive forms of liquid containers in Southeast Asia. This one is made from porcelain and silver and was almost certainly made for a Muslim patron because what seems to be the word "Allah" (for God), is written in poor Arabic in the middle band.





## Historical Background

Islamic art is intrinsically linked to one of the world's major religions. Islam expanded rapidly through conquest, commercial contacts, and mass conversions. The expansion of Islam in Southeast Asia has yet to be fully understood. By tradition, Sufi mystics are thought to have played a major role in its spread, but trading contacts with China and the Near East must have had a more decisive impact.



### About the exhibition Islamic Arts from Southeast Asia:

Highlights of the Asian Civilisations Museum  
**Exhibition Dates :** 7 July 2012 to 20 January 2013  
**Venue :** Gallery 2, Asian Civilisations Museum  
 1 Empress Place, Singapore 179555  
**Website :** [www.acm.org.sg](http://www.acm.org.sg)  
**Enquiries :** 6332 7798 / [nhb\\_acm\\_vs@nhb.gov.sg](mailto:nhb_acm_vs@nhb.gov.sg)

**Admission charges :** \$8 (adult) / \$4 (concession)  
 Family package at \$20 for up to 5 pax  
 Free admission for children aged 6 and below  
 Free admission for students, teachers, full-time National Service men and senior citizens aged 60 and above [Singaporeans and PRs only]  
 50% discount for students and senior citizens aged 60 and above (non-Singaporean / non-PR) 50% discount every Friday, 7-9pm

**Opening hours :** Monday: 1-7pm,  
 Tuesday to Sunday: 9am-7pm,  
 Friday: 9am-9pm  
**How to get there :** By MRT – Raffles Place,  
 By Bus – 75, 100, 107, 130, 131, 167

### About the Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM)

The Asian Civilisations Museum is dedicated to exploring the rich artistic heritage of Asia, especially Singapore's ancestral cultures. Through a collection of works of art and a varied exhibition programme, we hope to deepen understanding of Southeast Asia, China, South Asia, West Asia, and the Peranakan world. Rare among museums in Asia, the ACM connects audiences with many cultures.

Keris, 19th century, made from Iron, Silver & Wood

Quran, probably from Indonesia, 18th or 19th century

Quran box, Myanmar (Burma), 19th or 20th century

Sireh box & cover, Riau Lingga Archipelago, 19th or 20th century

# Over 1000 years of Islamic Art and Architecture at ACM

Singapore is the third and final stop before the objects move to their new home in Toronto.

The Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM) presents an exhibition of works of art from the Aga Khan Museum. Featuring masterpieces of Islamic art and architecture spanning many centuries and from regions around the world, Treasures of the Aga Khan Museum: Architecture in Islamic Arts will be on display at the ACM from 19 July to 28 October 2012. Architecture, with tiled and gilt domes, shaded courtyards, and inscribed gates, became a natural expression of Islam. The exhibition reveals how Muslim artists perceived the Islamic built environment.

Over 100 objects, ranging from manuscript illumination, paintings, and architectural elements to *hajj* certificates and tiles decorated with passages from the Quran, illustrate ideas of space and decoration in both religious and secular environments. The exhibition offers insights into some of the great Islamic dynasties: the Al-Andalus of the Iberian Peninsula; Ilkhanid, Timurid, and Safavid Iran; Ottoman Turkey; and Mughal India.

"Islamic architecture is one of the most visible aspects of Islamic culture," says Dr Alan Chong, Director of the ACM. "This exhibition approaches architecture from several points of view. Intricately painted illuminations capture the world in miniature, and invite the viewer into splendid palaces and intimate gardens. At the same time, visitors can inspect carved wooden beams and brilliantly coloured glazed tiles that once decorated mosques and other buildings. We hope that visitors will gain new insights into the history and creativity of the Islamic world."

Moses Regrets His Generosity Towards the Intemperate Man





Last Stop: Singapore

Singapore is the last stop for the collection, which was displayed earlier at the State Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg, Russia, and at the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur, before they enter the new Aga Khan Museum, opening in Toronto in 2014. The curator and designer at the ACM have reinterpreted and redesigned the exhibition.

Visitors will encounter five sections in the exhibition. The journey begins with The Fortress And The City, a section featuring architectural elements, including corbels, capitals, beams, and arches, as well as painted depictions of fortified cities and towns. Sacred Topographies explores images of Mecca and Medina, the holiest sites of Islam, and pilgrimage mementos. Religious And Funerary Buildings includes mosque furnishings, manuscript illumination showing mosques and shrines, and colourful tiles decorated with calligraphic inscriptions. In The Palace, visitors will get a glimpse of life in the great Muslim courts. Gardens, Pavilions, and Tents extends the life of the palace out into nature, the setting for poetry and love, as well as battles and conquest.



Capital with animals



Hajj Scroll



Plans of Mecca and Medina

Beautiful Intricate Manuscripts

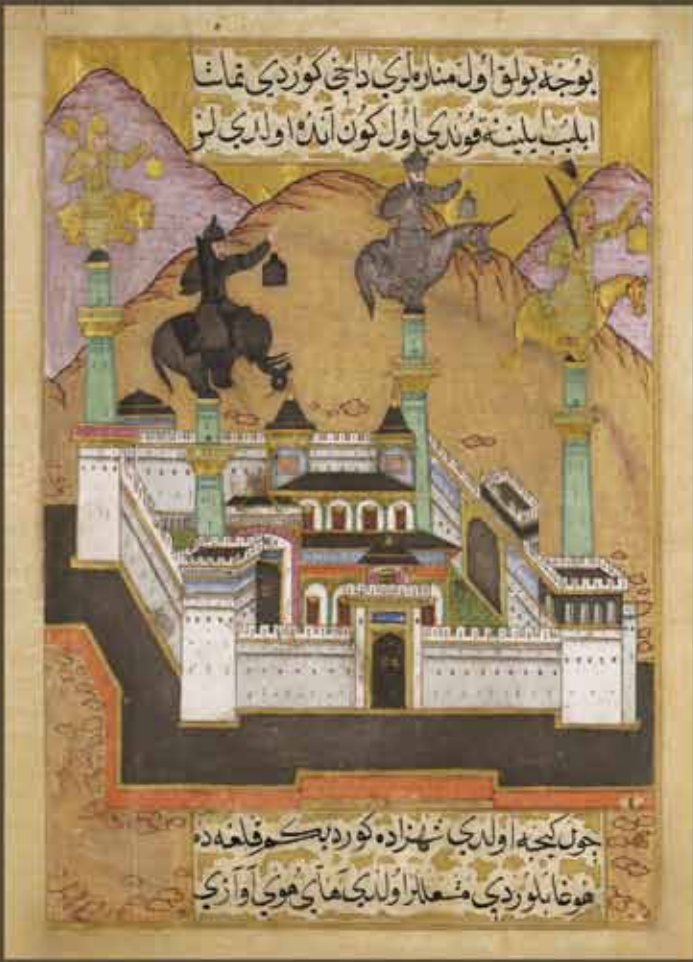
Throughout the exhibition, visitors will see the beauty and intricacy of manuscript illumination, the lustre on colourful ceramic tiles, and the pure invention of delightful design and pleasing colour combinations. Artists painted scenes from favourite stories and legends again and again, passing on to later generations the universal values and beliefs that still resonate in our own lives today.

Folios from illustrated manuscripts of classics of the Islamic world are among the highlights of the exhibition. The Shahnama (Book of Kings), the Khamsa (Quintet) of Nizami, and the Kulliyat (collected works) of Sa'di provided artists with opportunities to create delightfully inventive depictions of the many familiar stories contained within these volumes.

"Architecture can define a state. For millennia, rulers have used vast financial resources to glorify the name of God, to defend their realms, or simply to display their power and vanity. This exhibition pays tribute to Muslim rulers and their creations, as well as to the architects and artists who created the distinctive styles of Islamic art and architecture," says Dr Pedro Moura Carvalho, Chief Curator at the ACM and Curator of the exhibition.

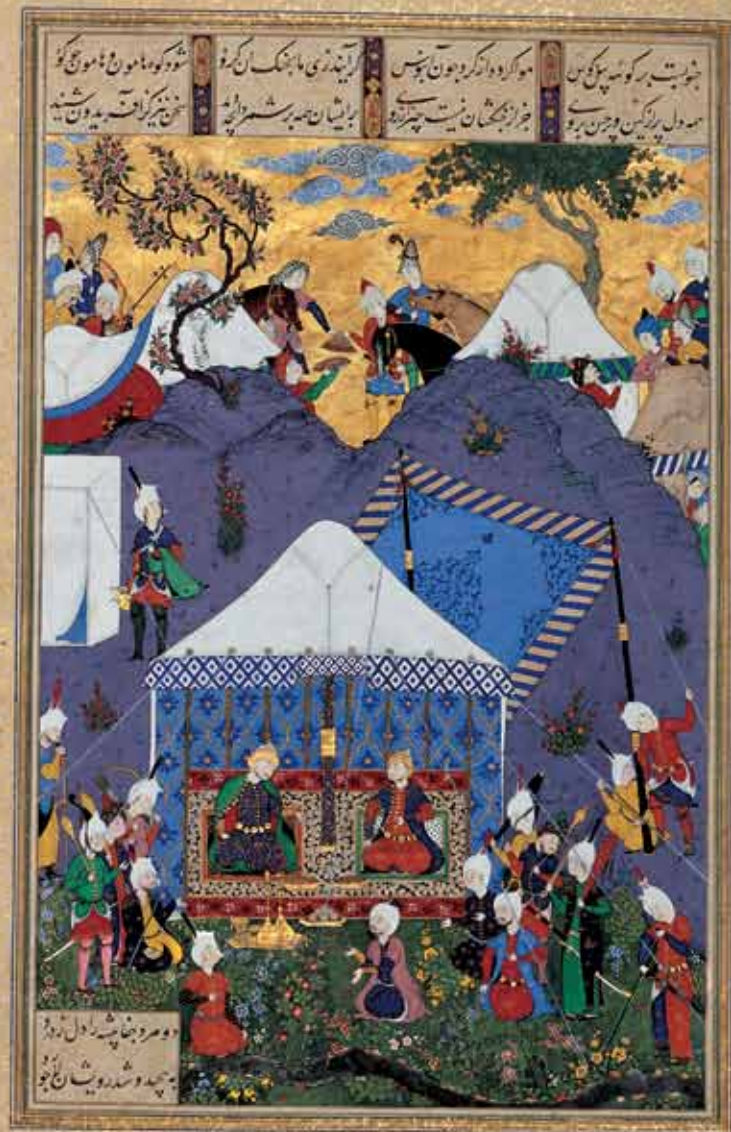


Illustration of the Masjid al-Haram at Mecca



Shāh Rāmīn and His Companions Before the City of Dār ūl-Bekām





Salm and Tür Receive the Reply of Faridün and Manúchih.



Gardens, pavillions and tents on a Palace terrace



Inscribed tile



Monumental still Life in a Palace



# Gallery Activities and Programme Highlights

A range of interactive gallery activities await visitors. They can use iPads provided in a special, high-tech, interactive section of the exhibition to create colourful, animated patterns that will then be immediately projected on the wall. Or they can pick up a booklet that will lead them through a series of clues in the gallery to solve a mystery. And near the end of the exhibition gallery, visitors can step into a life-size scene from one of the paintings and take a photo as a souvenir. **TC**

Create colourful animated patterns



Interactive iPad app

The exhibition is organised by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture and the Asian Civilisations Museum.

**About the exhibition Treasures of the Aga Khan Museum:**

Architecture in Islamic Arts

**Exhibition Dates :** 19 July 2012 to 28 October 2012

**Venue :** Special Exhibition Gallery, Asian Civilisations Museum, 1 Empress Place, Singapore 179555

**Website :** [www.acm.org.sg](http://www.acm.org.sg)

**Enquiries :** 6332 7798 / [nhb\\_acm\\_vs@nhb.gov.sg](mailto:nhb_acm_vs@nhb.gov.sg)

**Admission charges :** \$8 (adult) / \$4 (concession)

Family package at \$20 for up to 5 pax

Free admission for children aged 6 and below; Singaporean and PR students, teachers, and senior citizens (aged 60 and above); and full-time National Service men 50% discount for foreign students and senior citizens (aged 60 and above) 50% discount every Friday, 7 to 9pm

**Opening hours:** Monday: 1 to 7pm;

Tuesday through Sunday: 9am to 7pm;

Friday: 9am to 9pm

**How to get there:** By MRT – Raffles Place,

By Bus – 75, 100, 107, 130, 131, 167

## About the Aga Khan Museum and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture

The Aga Khan Museum collection contains over one thousand artefacts and artworks and spans over one thousand years of history. The objects – in ceramic, metalwork, ivory, stone and wood, textile and carpet, glass and rock crystal objects, parchment and illustrated paintings on paper – present an overview of the artistic accomplishments of Muslim civilisations from the Iberian Peninsula to China.

The Aga Khan Museum is one of the institutions of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, which is itself an agency of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN). Through education and cultural initiatives in music and the arts the Aga Khan Trust for Culture aims to highlight the contributions of the Muslim world to global cultural heritage. It also implements programmes aimed at the physical and social revitalisation of communities with the aim of improving the quality of life and, through its architectural programmes, promotes debate about contemporary design problems. For more information, please see [www.akdn.org/museum](http://www.akdn.org/museum). The Trust works with other AKDN institutions to improve living conditions and opportunities in the developing world. The agencies have mandates that range from the fields of health and education to rural development and the promotion of private-sector enterprise. The three main areas of activity in the Network are social development, economic development and culture. For more information, please see [www.akdn.org/about](http://www.akdn.org/about)



“... and know that victory  
comes with patience,  
relief with affliction,  
and ease with hardship.”

**Muhammad (SAW)**

as related by At-Tirmidhi

Imam Nawawi's Forty Hadith, No 19





**The strongest  
of all WARRIORS  
are these two —  
TIME and  
PATIENCE.**

teens' crossroads



**LEO TOLSTOY**

(9 September 1828 – 20 November 1910)  
Russian Novelist, Playwright



**KINDNESS is  
the LANGUAGE  
which the DEAF can hear  
and the BLIND can see.**

teens' crossroads

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## **VOLUNTEERS needed**

if you enjoy  
research and writing, and  
would like to be actively  
involved in  
producing our publications,  
email to  
[aishah\\_hussein@yahoo.com](mailto:aishah_hussein@yahoo.com)