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NISABA

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ISLAMIC LEGENDS

*Histories of the Heroes,
Saints and Prophets of Islam*

I

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BY

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The Legend of Yūsuf, or Joseph

The tradition of the Prophet Yūsuf is one of the most popular in all the countries of Islam. The story is told by the Berbers in Morocco and the Hausas in Nigeria. In Indonesia it is probably the most popular of all the Islamic legends, many texts of it have come to light in Javanese, in prose and in verse. In Malay too, more than one version has been composed. The following is the author's translation of the Swahili Epic of Yūsuf, slightly abridged. This is one of the most extensive versions that are known to date. Its author may have been the well known poet and scribe Muhammad b. Abu Bakari Kijuma, of Lamu, who died probably in 1945. One MS is in the possession of Professor Dammann in Pinneberg,

Holstein, who kindly lent it to me for publication. The other MS is in the possession of Miss M.A. Byran. See my own edition in *Four Swahili Epics*, 1964, p. 9-57.

STANZA

1-4 Invocation of Allah's name.

5-6 Jacob, the grandson of Abraham (Burahimu), the great prophet, had in his garden a miraculous tree which had the property that each time a son was born to the Patriarch, a new branch sprouted from the tree.

Eleven sons were born, eleven branches had grown on the tree, but when Yusufu was born, no fresh branch appeared, it only showed as a little stump.

8-13 When Yusuf grew up he saw the flowering branches of his brothers and "jealousy entered his heart". He called his father and said: "Sir, I have no branch, does this mean I am not your son?" It annoyed him every day and he demanded an explanation. Jacob promised to pray to the Owner of the Heavens Who had called him to the prophethood.

He prayed: "Lord, Owner of all things, Thy servant Yusuf has no branch". When the prayer was completed the archangel Gabriel (Jiburili) arrived and brought him a beautiful branch which he had cut for him in Paradise.

Gabriel brought salaams from the Majesty saying: "My Lord ordered me to deliver this blossoming branch". Jacob thanked him with great courtesy and Gabriel returned to his Lord whose presence extends over the firmament.

19 Jacob loved Yusuf ever more since his mother died, sleeping in one bed with him, praying on one prayer rug with him—of course they are orthodox Muslims for

Islam is the true religion of Abraham. (Jacob's love is described at some length).

Of course this vexed the brothers, except Buniyamini (Benjamin) Yusuf's 'brother of one mother', who was "equally good and equally pure".

27 Yusuf dreamed that the sun and the moon and eleven stars prostrated themselves for him. He woke up with a start "and the dream flew away". He told his father who urged him never to disclose to his brothers what he dreamt.

37 He dreams again and sees the twelve branches planted like trees and how his own tree grows bigger and stronger than all the others, and itself develops branches that spread out over the whole world. There comes a fierce tempest but Yusuf's tree stops its impact, while the others are uprooted.

42 Father Jacob who was himself a prophet, interpreted the dream like the previous one, but we do not learn its exegesis. Yusufu's stepmother who was present, overheard this conversation but Jacob forbade her to talk about it, which she promised. However, she cannot contain herself and told the other boys, her sons, who had to herd the cattle. The brothers were embittered and angered by Yusufu's dreams, saying: "One day he will enslave us".

51 They decided to kill Yusuf but this could only be done out in the pastures, not near the homestead; they had to entice Yusuf and make him wish to come out to the pastures. So they staged some games near the homestead to show Yusuf what a gay life they had out in the bush. It worked. Yusuf was convinced that cowboys had a wonderful life and wanted to join them. [Herdboys' fun and games in the wilds is an African idyll].

61 The brothers went and asked their father if Yusuf might come out and play with them in the fields. They promised to look after him with great care.

But the prophet Jacob had had a prophetic dream in which he saw his favourite son Yusuf being dragged away by eleven jackals, how he was then mauled by a lion and ended up in a pit (Sw. *shimo* = "pit, well or grave"). He refused to let Yusuf go.

73 At that moment Yusuf appeared himself and begged his father to let him go to the pastures with his brothers for fun and games. Jacob consented reluctantly.

The next day, Jacob again urged the brothers to care for Yusuf, "for he is a piece of my heart". With sombre forbodings the prophet Jacob kissed his son goodbye, very tenderly, on the eyes, "May the Lord lead you in health".

94 No sooner were they out of sight of the homestead, when they began bullying Yusuf who was a weak boy. They beat him and he saw no one who pitied him. They knocked him on the head till he saw stars; he begged them to give him some water but they answered mockingly that he could tell the sun and the moon to send him water. At that, the angels in heaven burst into tears.

102 The brothers wanted to kill him, but Yahuda prevented them. He said: let us put him in a well. There was a masoned well on the crossroads, but it contained only salt water; it had been dug by Shem, son of Noah.

111 The brothers wanted to strip Yusuf of his *kanzu* (long cotton garment) which they needed for their wicked intentions, but Yusuf, knowing they wanted to abandon him at the bottom of the well, begged them to allow him to keep his *kanzu* because it is improper for a man to lie dead anywhere without a shroud.

119 Yusuf was told not to lament any more. He was then tied with a rope and lowered in the well. The intention was to cut the rope when he was dangling in the middle, so that he would fall down.

123 When he was half-way down, however, there appeared a good spirit, a female Muslim jinn, who caught him in mid-air and put him gently down on the bottom. God sent a lightning which turned the well water "sweet" (fresh). Gabriel was sent from heaven with a new *kanzu*, the same that was worn by Abraham when he was put in the oven.

131 Gabriel did not stay to talk to Yusuf, but when the sun set he brought him a quince fruit. When he was about to leave, Yusuf said: "In the middle of my misfortune you leave me alone". Gabriel then taught him a prayer to recite in hours of loneliness. When Yusuf had recited it, there appeared seventy angels to entertain the prophet Yusuf. Three days he spent in the well.

136 On the fourth day, Gabriel returned and asked him who put him in there, and Yusuf replied that his own brothers had done that to him. Gabriel then asked if he wanted to get out of that place, and Yusuf said yes. Gabriel then taught him another prayer which was intended for all imprisoned persons.

142 The brothers slaughtered a goat, ate it and put some of the blood on Yusuf's *kanzu*. Then they went to Jacob lamenting loudly, and told him that a jackal had eaten Yusuf.

150 Jacob refused to believe them, but when they assured him that it was true, he fainted. When he came to, he rubbed the *kanzu* with its stains across his heart. The next morning the brothers went back to the pastures and considered killing and cooking Yusuf; if they showed his

head to Jacob, he would have to believe them. But Yahuda reminded them of their promise to keep Yusuf alive.

162 When they returned home they began lamenting again as soon as they were within earshot of the homestead: "O, poor Yusuf!" But their father told them not to make such noise. "Bring me rather the jackal which killed him". They went and caught a jackal and brought it before Jacob.

166 Jacob addressed the jackal saying: "You jackal, come near, is it true what I am told? Why did you eat my darling son Yusuf? You caused me great sorrow!" The Almighty then gave the jackal speech and the animal spoke: "O Prophet of God, far be it from me to eat the child of an apostle of the Lord! Moreover, I am a stranger here, I am an Egyptian jackal, I arrived here only today". Jacob severely rebuked his sons: "You see, what you told me was wind! You gave me lies!" Jacob had slaughtered a goat, to break the fast, but now he refrained from eating it and gave it to the neighbours.

176 In the meantime, Yusuf spent another three days in the well until finally a caravan arrived, and stopped for a rest and a drink. As soon as they began lowering a bucket into the well, they heard a voice from inside it. They hoisted Yusuf out and he still looked very handsome at 16. He laughed and praised the Lord. The owner of the caravan was called Maliku bin Dhahari. As soon as the brothers, who arrived just at that moment, saw what had happened, they went to Maliku and told him that "This boy is our slave, we were just looking for him". Maliku asked Yusuf: "Is this true?" But Yusuf kept quiet for fear of being killed.

190 Maliku decided to buy Yusuf and the brothers agreed to sell him for 40 dinars (ten dinars are one real, i.e. 4 sh.). He had Yusuf mount a camel, fearing that he might escape, for the brothers told him that this slender boy was a great liar. Yusuf begged his master that he be permitted to say goodbye to his brothers. The request was granted and Yusuf used this last opportunity to implore his brothers to get him out of his misery, promising that he will pray God to forgive them. He embraced them one after the other, but they were not prepared to do anything at all for him.

197 Yusuf follows the caravan to Egypt. On the way he sees the grave of his mother. Here he kneels down and weeps, praying to the soul of his mother: "My mother, look what my brothers have done to me, look at my condition! Can you see me, mother? Since you left me, misfortune pursues me, I am starved and humiliated. I underwent painful punishment, I was tied with ropes, left to die in a well and now they sold me into slavery, mother raise your head, come out of your grave!" Yusuf never tired of crying, tears streaming down his face.

207 Yusuf heard a voice calling him: "O prophet of God!" When the angels heard him crying, they wept in heaven. The slave-owner sent his men out to see if Yusuf was trying to escape. But Yusuf said: "That was never my intention, I am only praying on the tomb of my mother, for my heart compelled me". Nevertheless he was tied and loaded on a camel, for such a handsome slave would certainly fetch a high price. One of his master's servants slapped him in the face for staying behind. Yusuf prayed: "Lord, put an end to this suffering, lift up my face, forgive me my sins". At that moment God sent lightning and thunder. The slave was

terrified and screamed in complete confusion. Maliku, the owner of the caravan, asked what happened and the slave confessed that he had hit Yusuf. The merchant then told Yusuf: "Pray to God that He remove the evil from us, that we may set forth on our journey". Yusuf did so and at once the darkness 'became untangled' and they could see the road. Yusuf remained a tied prisoner.

213 At the Egyptian frontier, he was dressed in lovely white clothes and was again a good looking youth. He was put on the market for sale, and sold for his weight in musk and a roll of silk. The buyer, the wealthy Katufiri, gave him to his daughter.

227 When Azizi, the king of Egypt, saw Yusuf he wanted him and Yusuf was transferred. Yusuf was then given to Zuleikha, the Queen of Egypt. The moment she saw Yusuf she fell in love with him: 'she became confused and entangled, love seized her, she wanted him, she could not help it'. But Yusuf said: "I fear only God; your husband has sent me to you to serve you, so order and I will serve you but I cannot consent to this wish of yours. I am a Muslim; a criminal has no reward. Your husband has given me favours and entrusted me with the keys of the house, I cannot soil his confidence.

237 I am a servant, I will serve, order me to sweep or to fetch water, I am ready when you want". Zuleikha said: "You are handsome indeed, who could stop looking at you?"

239 Yusuf said: "What is the use of beauty? In your grave you will rot, after my end I shall be sand. God gives beauty, then takes it away". Zuleikha repeated her advances every day until Yusuf agreed to comply, out of annoyance. Zuleikha made the bed ready with silken sheets and said: "Now please satisfy my need".

243 But Yusuf said: "I will not go on the bed and forfeit my chance of Paradise". Zuleikha said: "I have closed the curtains, no one will see us here. Don't make it hard for me, cure me, I suffer".

247 Yusuf said: "Your husband, Madame, is better; tell him what you want, and he will do it for you". Zuleikha said: "You are cutting my inside, do let us go into the alcove, no one can see us there. I will give you money without comparison, you will have plenty of food and servants, rubies, emeralds, silver and gold to give alms and please God. Is that not what you want?"

251 Yusuf said: "God would never accept it nor be satisfied". Then Satan tempted Yusuf and pushed him inside the harem; he came very close to her, love entered his heart, he forgot everything else and sat down with her.

255 Suddenly he saw his old father before him who said: "Yusuf, you are on the verge of perdition, you are almost lost; you are risking the Lord's wrath. You are my son, you possess the light of prophethood, do you not fear damnation? You are straying off the straight path, your name will be deleted from the book of Prophets".

261 When Yusuf heard this he jumped up and started running, but Zuleikha said: "Perhaps you are still young and shy?" Yusuf said: "I fear no mortal, only God". He rose up with force, and opened the door. Zuleikha followed him, seized his *kanzu* from behind and tore it open. At that moment her husband appeared.

267 The King said: "Yusuf, what have you done? Do you have no honour? Are you trying to rob me? You deserve to be locked up. You have sinned".

- 269 Yusuf replied hurriedly: "It was she who wanted me,
I did not start this. Ask these two babies in the room".
- 272 The King questioned the babies and God made them
answer with eloquence; they both testified that Yusuf
was right. Then the King saw that Yusuf's *kanzu* was
torn on the back and not on the front. This, he realized
was a sign of Zuleikha's passion (*'ishiki*). He said angrily:
"You women have so many wiles that some of them
will be too much for your own brains".
- 281 He warned his wife that she must ask for God's par-
don because she had caused her husband a great deal of
sorrow. Zuleikha was confused for she did love the
youth. The news spread in the town.
- 284 When she heard of all the gossip going on about her,
Zuleikha invented another ruse. She invited all the
ladies of the élite to a party. She seated them along the
walls on comfortable cushions; when after the meal the
oranges which she had purposely planned for desert
were passed round, she gave Yusuf, who was standing
behind a curtain, an agreed signal, so he passed through
the hall, from one end to the other. And all the ladies
who were peeling their oranges, cut themselves with the
fruit knives which Zuleikha had whetted for the pur-
pose. Much blood flowed; some of the ladies cut their
thumbs off and died. The reason for this upheaval was
that they were so completely dazzled by Yusuf's beauty
that as soon as he appeared, they could not keep their
eyes off him and so forgot what they were doing.
Zuleikha had foreseen this, and so her plan worked both
ways: She took revenge for the gossiping and at the
same time silenced it. She said: "The man whom you
suspected I had an affair with, is the one you have just
cut yourselves for". They all asked her to forgive them.

- 296 After this Zuleikha could not stop herself from trying
again. When Yusuf refused again, she threatened that
she would have him thrown in jail if he did not comply.
To which he retorted that he preferred going to prison
rather than disobey the Lord's commandments.
- 299 Zuleikha then invented her third ruse. She told the
King, her husband, that she was afraid of walking freely
in the streets because of the people's tongues: "I am
shamed because of that young man!"
- King Azizi called out: "Soldiers, seize him, take him
away, throw him in the dungeon!"
- 304 Yusuf landed in the cell with two men, the King's
cup-bearer and the King's bread-keeper. They had at-
tempted to poison the King who was saved by a little
boy. The King had a sheep brought into the hall and fed
it the bread. The sheep died instantly; the poison was so
potent that the skin came flaking off.
- 325 The prison mates began to like each other and swap-
ped stories. The cup-bearer one night dreamt that he
was cutting grapes from a vine. He seized the king's cup
and squeezed the grapes out into it. When he repeated
what he had seen to Yusuf, Yusuf told him: "Cup-
bearer, the explanation of your dream is, that eventually
you will return home". And indeed, three days later, it
pleased God to have him released. When he left, Yusuf
urged him to try and sway the King's mind in his
favour. The cup-bearer swore that he would remember
him to the King. Then he left prison and resumed his of-
fice in the King's service.
- 338 The bread-keeper, when waking up one morning,
told Yusuf that he had dreamt a dream: "I saw myself
with a piece of bread on my head, which the birds were
eating". Yusuf answered: "The bread on your head

signifies your brain that will be eaten by the birds". The bread-keeper called Yusuf a liar: "I did not dream that at all, of course I shall be saved and escape from this place". But no one tells a dream except to a trusted friend, and when you have uttered your anxiety, what he thinks will be fulfilled. In particular, prophets are loved by the Majesty because they are trustworthy.

345 Yusuf was still speaking when a guard appeared and told the bread-keeper: "Get up, let me cut off your head". The head was cut off and left lying in the fields. The birds came and ate the brain, rejoicing up there in the sky, cawing loudly.

347 The cup-bearer re-entered the service of the King and quite forgot what Yusuf had asked him, or did not think it necessary to speak about it, because he did not want to remember it. He spent many years there before he repented.

351 The other people in that prison grew very fond of Yusuf, because he was always cheerful and kind, and ready for others. They wondered if he was a priest until he told them that he was a prophet of God. He converted many to Islam, so that they were saved.

367 One night when Yusuf felt despondent, Gabriel descended and asked him: "Who saved you from your brothers, who saved you in the well and gave you food? Who gave you clothes and cover?" He said: "My God". "Then do you think that He will not be able to deliver you from prison when his time comes?" Yusuf spent 12 years in the dungeon.

375 One night the Sultan dreamt he saw seven fat cows coming out of a dry river bed. After that he saw seven lean cows come out, looking weak and unhealthy. They seized the fat cows and swallowed them, not even a tail

was left. Then he dreamt again and saw seven full ears of corn, a moment later he saw seven withered ears with nothing in them.

383 The King assembled his priests and told them his dream; his scribes and magicians were also summoned, but the problem was too hard for them.

387 Then his cup-bearer (the one who makes juice) suddenly said: "The one who was locked up with the others, Yusuf will disclose it for you".

391 The cup-bearer was sent to Yusuf to have the dream explained. He came back with the interpretation which Yusuf was able to give straight away. The King then ordered him to bring Yusuf before him.

395 Yusuf was released, cleaned and given new clothes. He looked resplendent. The king told him his dreams with worries in his heart wondering what he should do.

398 Yusuf said: "Of course you will fill your grain stores, but the next period of seven years you will pay double for the grain. There will be famine, seven years as I see it, people will eat even leather. If you order all the Egyptians to pay their *zakati* (taxes) God will reward you. Your Majesty will have unequalled wealth, this is the significance of your dream".

403 The Sultan then asked Yusuf: "Whom shall I appoint to guard all that wealth in my grainstore?" To which Yusuf replied astutely: "Appoint me, O Sultan, as secretary, I can do arithmetic ("I know numbers") and I will look after it with great care". The king agreed and entrusted him with all his money, saying:

407 "Whatever you wish I will agree to, except eating together. You are different from me, you are a servant in charge of agriculture". Then Joseph tells the King that he is the prophet of God, not just 'a man of words'.

The King believed him and agreed to eat with him from one plate.

412 After some years Yusuf asked his King to be appointed vizier. The request was granted and Yusuf was provided with a golden divan to sit on when holding court. The King let Yusuf rule in his name. There follows an elaborate description of the divan, its gold, rubies and cushions. He was crowned vizier so that his face radiated like the moon, an imposing sight. He appointed chiefs and governors. The King withdrew from the capital.

423 Azizi had a lovely daughter called Beryl, who was married to Katufiri, the wealthy merchant. After his death, as Zuleikha had gone, Yusuf married Beryl, who writes verse. Praising herself in a poem, she explains that her poor husband died before the marriage was consummated and so she is still a virgin. The moral of this story is that even a wealthy man may die between the conclusion of a marriage contract and the consummation. Yusuf too was still a bachelor at that time. The two lived happily together in ever increasing love. Yusuf settled down in his kingdom and the people were very fond of him.

436 Then the period of famine set in and the people had soon eaten up all their provisions. They came to Yusuf, confident that he would have food and so he had. People sold all their possessions for food, then their sons and daughters, even their parents. As the famine increased, Yusuf had full stores and doled out the grain for his people, bushel after bushel.

441 So great was Yusuf's compassion with the people of Egypt, that he went hungry himself so that he might give them all he had. The people realized that it was

God who gave him strength all the time. Yusuf replied that he was happy to share with the people. The King realized that his dreams had come true and thanked God for sending him Yusuf.

449 The famine spread in other countries as well. Syria and Kanaan and indeed the whole world. Old Jacob saw the hunger entering his town and decided to send ten of his sons in search of food, keeping only Benjamin with him.

453 The brothers arrived in the capital of Egypt and were told there that: "We all go to the vizier for food". They begged permission to enter the hall where Yusuf was sitting in state, measuring out grain and being useful to the whole world. The gatekeeper told Yusuf that some strangers were waiting outside, "Canaanites to judge by their speech".

460 Yusuf, on hearing the name of his country, expected to hear news from home. He did not expect to see his halfbrothers. He realized they were driven by hunger to leave their land and he pitied them. He recognized them only because he was a prophet. They did not recognize him after 40 years. Moreover, he was seated on a golden throne, dressed in shining silken garments. The ten country boys were confused on seeing the colourful carpets on the walls, and in the adjoining store rooms they saw loads of wheat and millet.

471 Yusuf said to these 'little people': "sit down, make yourselves at ease, let me ask you, what language do you understand?" They replied: "Our language is Arabic, we come from Canaan".

473 Yusuf questioned them further: "Who are you? What have you come for? What can I do for you?" They answered: "We are Arabs, we come from far in search

of food". Yusuf replied (not without venom) "I cannot help thinking that you have evil intentions, I have my reasons for these suspicions". The brothers found this a hard question.

478 They swore they only wanted food, but Yusuf went on questioning them who their father was, how many brothers there were, and when the answer to the last question was 'twelve', he wished to know where the other two were. He learned that one, Benjamin, was at home with his father, while the other one had disappeared—this was only disclosed after insistent interrogations by Yusuf. When the latter also wished to know the name of the one who had 'vanished in the wilderness', the eldest reluctantly told him it was Yusuf. Yusuf's condescending courtesy is painted with psychological finesse. He apparently relished the brothers having no choice but to reply politely and humbly to his queries. When the spokesman of the brothers told his lie about Yusuf vanishing in the bush, Yusuf was so disgusted that he cut short the interrogation, feigning that he was no longer interested.

497 The brothers begged him to accept their merchandize in exchange for food. Yusuf replied coldly that they must bring their brother first, and to make sure they would come back they must leave one of them behind as a hostage; Yusuf picked Simeon (Shamuun) telling them that if they do not do as they are told they will not again be admitted.

509 Yusuf then told his servants to fill the bags of the brothers with millet but to put silver coins and their own presents at the bottom. The orders were promptly executed.

517 The brothers went out on their return journey, unconscious of the contents of their luggage. When they came home they sang the praise of that powerful and generous Egyptian vizier. Soon their father Jacob noticed the absence of Simeon. They had to confess that they pledged him, assuring they would return.

526 When they opened their bags they found the grain as well as their own presents. Of course the inevitable happened: their father refused to believe that they 'left behind' Simeon because: "I never stopped mourning your brother, whom you lost". So Jacob refused also to give up the last surviving son of Rachel (Rahili), Benjamin, unless they swear solemnly that they will protect him. Jacob then let them go, warning them that they must not knock on any door, for in Egypt the girls are shapely beauties.

537 Yusuf ordered a meal to be prepared for his brothers as soon as they had returned and he seated them in twos in such a manner that he himself could take the meal together with Benjamin from one dish, [The host must eat together with his guests] and at night he went to sleep with Benjamin in one bed. When they were alone Yusuf asked his brother: "Who are you?" "Benjamin". What is your mother's name?" "Rahili (Rachel)". "Did you have no full-brothers, are you her only son?" "My brother was lost". "When he was lost were you sad?" "Yes, very sad indeed". "I am your lost brother Yusuf". "I have no brother like you, a prince!" "I swear to you that I am Yusuf, but never tell your brothers".

558 The brothers decided to return to their father and asked Yusuf's permission to go. Yusuf gave them money and they offered him presents. He ordered his slaves to

load Benjamin's camel with extra presents. This made the brothers jealous. Yusuf wanted to keep Benjamin with him and to this end ordered his servants to put his golden beaker in Benjamin's luggage. An hour after the brothers left the soldiers overtook them, accused them of stealing the drinking cup of the grand vizier. The caravan of the brothers was forced to return, their luggage was searched and the cup was found.

584 Yusuf, of course, insisted on keeping Benjamin with him, as he was the supposed thief. The implorations of the brothers to take any of the others had no effect, and they had to return to Jacob and explain to him why there is again one missing. Jacob in despair, wrote a letter pleading that his son was not a thief. The ten sons were sent back to Egypt to deliver it. Yusuf was overjoyed when he recognized his father's handwriting.

617 Having read the letter he wept and made himself known to them: "I am the one who was lost, and I have forgiven you. Now tell me, what did my father do when you returned from the pastures without me?" They answered: "He slaughtered a goat but did not eat it at all; he gave it away to the poor but he himself only sighed and wept".

627 Yusuf prepared the journey for the brothers giving them many camel loads of precious stones. "Take my *kanzu* and show it to my father when you arrive there. Then bring him and all the people of the household with you to Egypt.

630 When Jacob smelled the *kanzu* he knew that it was Yusuf's, he could tell it by the smell. He thanked God and to make sure, he asked the Death Angel if he had ever taken the life of Yusuf, but the angel said that Yusuf was still on earth. The brothers asked forgiveness and Jacob said that the Lord would forgive them.

641 Then Jacob left his home in Kanaan with all the people of his household, slaves and maidens. Yusuf rode out with a thousand horsemen from the Egyptian capital to meet his father, with spears and banners. Old Jacob was frightened when he heard the noise, he trembled and asked Yehuda what it was. His eldest answered that it was Yusuf who now owned the nation. They embraced each other and Yusuf took them to his palace. When they saw him taking his seat on the golden throne, surrounded by hundreds of servants and guards with hundreds of lamps shining, and Yusuf wearing a crown, they were so overwhelmed that they fell on their knees and prostrated themselves before him to honour him; his father, his brothers and all the people bowed down.

659 When Yusuf saw this he smiled and knew that his dream had come true; this was his finest hour. And he took his family for a ride through the city that was entirely illuminated. The old father was then taken to a bedroom with embroidered silken sheets on the bed, after a copious dinner.

678 King Azizi died and Yusuf succeeded him. Old Jacob died at 174 after having charged his sons always to follow the religion of Abraham, Islam.

690 Yusuf went round the country to visit all the famine-stricken areas and bring relief.

692 On his journey he met two very old people living together. One of them was Zuleikha, old, withered and emaciated. She went to the King, kneeled before him and begged for food, wailing that hunger gnawed her inwards. Yusuf ordered his servants to give her food. Then the clerk who had to register the dole found out her name and told his master. Yusuf was shocked to see his one-time mistress in such a miserable condition and

asked her if she knew who he was. She said: "Surely, you are the king of us all, your subjects".

704 As soon as Zuleikha heard his name, her love came back to her, she still loved him as passionately as before. But although Yusuf had not changed, she had now become an old woman. Then Gabriel descended from heaven with the message: "Whoever endures patiently and perseveres, good will come to him in the end. The Lord sent me to tell you that He has given you this woman for a wife". Yusuf replied that she was now very old. Zuleikha begged him to pray to God for her that He might restore her youth. And at once Zuleikha looked again like a twelve year old girl, lovelier than before. Yusuf married her as ordered.

716 They had three children, Furathima and Misha, both sons, and a daughter called Rehema 'Mercy'.

720 Finally, Yusuf dreamed that Death was approaching. He longed for it in his heart. He called all the Children of Israel, 80 people, and told them that he was dying. They cried and said: "After you—what?" Yusuf assigned to Yahuda the task of burying him and of becoming his caliph (successor). When Yusuf died all Agyptians mourned him for he was courteous, free of sins, he defeated Satan and made himself loved by all.