



## Interpretation of Prophet Joseph's Political Strategy in the Qur'an: Leadership, Conflict Resolution, and Its Relevance to Contemporary Politics in Indonesia

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### Abstract

This article examines the political strategies of Prophet Yusuf as recorded in the Qur'an, focusing on leadership and conflict resolution, as well as their relevance to the phenomenon of dynastic politics in Indonesia. Although Muslims regard the Qur'an as a guide, their understanding of its political aspects remains limited. The story of Prophet Yusuf in Surah Yusuf offers valuable lessons on political strategies based on ethics and wisdom. This study employs a library research approach with a thematic tafsir method, analyzing various exegetical perspectives on the verses describing Yusuf's political strategies. The findings reveal that Yusuf implemented several political strategies relevant to the context of dynastic politics, namely: first, the politics of reciprocal obligation, where he repaid ill treatment with kindness to build long-term influence. Second, the politics of desire, by creating dependency so that others would follow his will. Third, the politics of scenario, which involved strategically setting situations so that opponents would accept the prevailing rules. Fourth, the politics of control, in which Yusuf carefully managed the narrative and actions of his adversaries. Fifth, the politics of identity declaration, where he revealed his true identity at the right moment to maximize acceptance. Sixth, the politics of accommodation, which ultimately led his brothers to submit and join him in Egypt. Yusuf's political strategies reflect a form of leadership that prioritizes wisdom, strategic planning, and conflict management. In the context of dynastic politics in Indonesia, similar strategies can be observed in how political elites build influence, maintain power, and manage both support and opposition.

**Contribution:** This study contributes to understanding how Qur'anic values can serve as a reference for contemporary political analysis.

**Keywords:** *Qur'anic Exegesis, Yusuf's Political Strategy, Conflict Resolution, Dynastic Politics, Thematic Tafsir.*

### Abstrak

Artikel ini mengkaji strategi politik Nabi Yusuf sebagaimana diabadikan dalam Al-Qur'an, dengan fokus pada kepemimpinan dan resolusi konflik, serta relevansinya terhadap fenomena politik dinasti di Indonesia. Meskipun umat Islam menjadikan Al-Qur'an sebagai pedoman, pemahaman mereka terhadap aspek politik dalam teks suci ini sering kali masih terbatas. Kisah Nabi Yusuf dalam Surah Yusuf menawarkan pelajaran berharga tentang strategi politik berbasis etika dan kebijaksanaan. Penelitian ini merupakan studi kepustakaan (library research) dengan metode tafsir tematik, menelaah berbagai pandangan mufasir mengenai ayat-ayat yang menggambarkan strategi politik Yusuf. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Yusuf menerapkan sejumlah strategi politik yang relevan dalam konteks politik dinasti, yaitu: pertama, politik tanam jasa (hutang budi), di mana ia membalas perlakuan buruk dengan kebaikan untuk membangun pengaruh jangka panjang. Kedua, politik keinginan, yakni dengan menciptakan ketergantungan sehingga pihak lain mengikuti





kehendaknya. Ketiga, politik skenario, yang dilakukan melalui pengaturan situasi strategis agar lawan menerima aturan yang berlaku. Keempat, politik pengendalian, di mana Yusuf mengelola narasi dan tindakan lawannya secara cermat. Kelima, politik deklarasi identitas, yaitu menyampaikan jati diri pada momentum yang tepat untuk memaksimalkan penerimaan. Keenam, politik akomodasi, yang akhirnya membuat saudara-saudaranya tunduk dan bergabung dengannya di Mesir. Strategi politik Yusuf ini mencerminkan bentuk kepemimpinan yang mengutamakan kebijaksanaan, perencanaan strategis, dan kemampuan mengelola konflik. Dalam konteks politik dinasti di Indonesia, strategi serupa dapat ditemukan dalam cara elite politik membangun pengaruh, mempertahankan kekuasaan, serta mengelola dukungan dan oposisi.

**Kontribusi:** kajian ini berkontribusi dalam memahami bagaimana nilai-nilai Al-Qur'an dapat menjadi rujukan dalam analisis politik kontemporer.

**Keywords:** *Tafsir Al-Qur'an, Strategi Politik Yusuf, Resolusi Konflik, Politik Dinasti, Tafsir Tematik.*

## Introduction

The study of Qur'anic interpretation in the political context continues to grow, especially in the face of contemporary socio-political dynamics.<sup>1</sup> One approach that has gained widespread attention in Qur'anic studies is thematic interpretation, which seeks to explore the meaning of verses systematically based on certain themes. Thematic interpretation is considered more contextual compared to tahlili interpretation which interprets verses sequentially.<sup>2</sup> Contemporary tafsir scholars, such as Hasan Hanafi,<sup>3</sup> Fazlur Rahman<sup>4</sup> and Muhammad al-Ghazali,<sup>5</sup> argue that the thematic approach allows for an understanding of the Qur'an that is more relevant to modern problems. However, this approach also draws criticism, especially from classical scholars who prioritize the *tafsir bi al-ma'tsur* method. They argue that the thematic approach risks ignoring the historical context of revelation (*asbab al-nuzul*) and interpreting verses subjectively according to certain interests.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Iqbal Jhazbhay, "The Politics of Interpretation: The Call of Islam and Ulama Disciplinary Power in South Africa," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, October 1, 2002, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360200022000027401>; Mansour Mirahmadi, "Foundations of Qur'anic Politics with Emphasis on Tafsir Al-Mizan," *Islamic Political Thought* 1, no. 1 (January 1, 2021): 42-74, <https://doi.org/10.22081/ipt.2021.69671>; Angelika Neuwirth, Nicolai Sinai, and Michael Marx, *The Qur'an in Context: Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qur'anic Milieu* (BRILL, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Lilik Umami Kaltsum and Ahmad Syaifuddin Amin, "The Development of Qur'anic Thematic Exegesis in Indonesia: Historical Landscape and Shifts of Authority," *Journal of Qur'anic and Hadith Studies* 25, no. 2 (September 20, 2024): 296-319, <https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.v25i2.5422>; Tulio Maranhao, *The Interpretation of Dialogue* (University of Chicago Press, 1990).

<sup>3</sup> Hassan Hanafi, "Method of Thematic Interpretation of the Qur'an" (Brill, 1996), [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004452169\\_014](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004452169_014).

<sup>4</sup> Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'an: Second Edition* (University of Chicago Press, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Shaykh Muhammad al-Ghazali, *A Thematic Commentary on the Qur'an* (International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), 2000).

<sup>6</sup> Lukmanul Hakim et al, "Qur'anic Interpretation Method And Its Impact On Contemporary Interpretation," *Journal of Ushuluddin* 26, no. 2 (December 13, 2018): 142-53, <https://doi.org/10.24014/jush.v26i2.4577>; Nur Afifah bint Abas and Mohd Nizam bin Sahad, "A Comparative Study Between Reflexive Thematic Analysis in Social Sciences and Qur'anic Thematic Analysis in Qur'anic Sciences," *Ma'ālim Al-Qur'ān Wa al-Sunnah* 17 (December 20, 2021): 1-25, <https://doi.org/10.33102/jmq.v17i2.326>.





In the context of politics, the thematic interpretation approach provides new insights into Islamic political thought by highlighting how the Qur'an describes the leadership strategies implemented by the prophets. The story of the Prophet Yusuf in Surah Yusuf, for example, has long been an object of study regarding political strategies based on ethics and wisdom. Some classical mufasirs such as al-Razi and al-Qurtubi interpreted this story as evidence of Yusuf's resignation to the divine destiny that led him to power.<sup>7</sup> In contrast, contemporary commentators such as M. Quraish Shihab and Hamid Abu Zaid see this story as a representation of political intelligence involving negotiation strategies, conflict management, and diplomacy.<sup>8</sup> This difference in perspective shows how thematic interpretation provides space for the reinterpretation of Qur'anic values in a broader context, including in understanding the phenomenon of dynastic politics that is rampant in various Muslim countries, including Indonesia.

The phenomenon of dynastic politics is an issue that continues to be debated in the democratic system, including in Indonesia.<sup>9</sup> In the history of Islamic civilization, the descent-based political model was seen in the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphate systems, which featured a family-based pattern of power succession.<sup>10</sup> Ibn Khaldun in *his* Muqaddimah states that dynastic politics is a necessity in the process of transferring power because kinship relations strengthen group solidarity (*asabiyyah*).<sup>11</sup> However, thinkers such as al-Mawardi in *Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyyah*<sup>12</sup> and *Siyasah Syar'iyah*<sup>13</sup> by Ibn Taimiyyah criticized dynastic politics for potentially ignoring the principles of meritocracy and justice in Islam. In Indonesia, dynastic politics is often associated with oligarchic practices and corruption, which contradict democratic values and social justice.

In the context of current Indonesian politics, the phenomenon of dynastic politics is evident in the leadership of President Joko Widodo. Although he does not come from a dynastic political

<sup>7</sup> Abu al-Walid Ibn al-Qurtubi and Muhammad Ibn Rushd, "Fasl al-Maqal Fi Ma Bain Al-Hikmah wa al-Syari'ah min al-Ittisal" (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, t.t.).

<sup>8</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *The Quran and Its Meanings* (Lentera Hati, 2020); Naşr Hāmid Abū-Zaid, "Rethinking the Qur'an: towards a humanistic hermeneutics," 2004, <https://ixtheo.de/Record/1626759383>.

<sup>9</sup> Donald Porter, *Managing Politics and Islam in Indonesia* (London: Routledge, 2002), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203642764>; Kikue Hamayotsu, "Conservative Turn? Religion, State and Conflict in Indonesia," Text (Pacific Affairs, a division of the University of British Columbia, December 2014), <https://doi.org/10.5509/2014874815>; Greg Barton, "Indonesia: Legitimacy, Secular Democracy, and Islam," *Politics & Policy* 38, no. 3 (2010): 471–96, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-1346.2010.00244.x>.

<sup>10</sup> Mulyadi Mulyadi, "Drafted Leadership Theories; Modern And Islamic Perspectives Sources, Stand-Points And Leadership Spatialization On Educational Institution," *Fikroh: Journal of Islamic Thought and Education* 12, no. 1 (November 3, 2019): 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.37812/fikroh.v12i1.37>.

<sup>11</sup> Ibn Khaldūn, "The Muqaddimah," in *The Anthropology of Climate Change* (John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2014), 55–66, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781394260881.ch3>.

<sup>12</sup> Ali bin Muhammad al-Mawardi, "al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyyah," Cairo: *Dar al-Fikr* 1401 (1983): 59.

<sup>13</sup> Ibn Taymiyyah, "al-Siyasah al-Shar'iyah," *Al-Qâhirah: Dâr al-Fiqr al-'Arabi.*, 1952.





background, Jokowi has faced criticism in his two terms of leadership regarding his family's involvement in politics. . His son, Gibran Rakabuming Raka, became Mayor of Solo and is now a vice presidential candidate in the 2024 election, paired with Prabowo Subianto.<sup>14</sup> This move is considered by some as a form of strengthening dynastic politics that is not in line with the spirit of reform. Meanwhile, Prabowo Subianto, who has a strong political and military family background, also shows how political networks can be used to strengthen power domination.<sup>15</sup> Anies Baswedan, on the other hand, although not coming from a political family, utilized his intellectual image and technocratic leadership to build a support base, which in practice also relies on a sustainable network of political elites.<sup>16</sup>

Previous research on the political strategy of the Prophet Yusuf in the Qur'an has been widely studied from various perspectives, especially in the interpretation and implementation of Islamic politics. Nuriz & Amrullah (2024) discussed political thought in the story of Prophet Yusuf through a multidisciplinary approach by referring to Sayyid Qutb's *Fi Zhilalil Qur'an*.<sup>17</sup> Meanwhile, Berkah et al. (2024) highlighted how state financial policies can be linked to the economic strategy of the Prophet Yusuf in Surah Yusuf.<sup>18</sup> The study of disaster management from the Qur'anic perspective was also conducted by Ismail et al. (2022), who examined how the Prophet Yusuf's strategy in dealing with the economic crisis can be applied in modern disaster mitigation.<sup>19</sup> While Azizy et al. (2022) highlighted thematic interpretation methods in the Qur'an, including the story of the Prophet Yusuf in Indonesian interpretive literature.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Novia Fatimatu Zahra and Dian Suluh Kusuma Dewi, "The Pattern of Joko Widodo's Political Dynasty Practices," *Journal of Local Government Issues* 4, no. 1 (September 30, 2021): 1-12, <https://doi.org/10.22219/logos.v4i1.15407>; Danny Permana, "Political Dynasties in the Government System in Indonesia," *Ministrate: Journal of Bureaucracy and Local Government* 5, no. 3 (September 7, 2023): 153-63, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jbpd.v5i3.29460>.

<sup>15</sup> M. Miftahul Hidayat, "The 2024 General Elections in Indonesia: Issues of Political Dynasties, Electoral Fraud, and the Emergence of a National Protest Movements," *IAS Journal of Localities* 2, no. 1 (June 29, 2024): 33-51, <https://doi.org/10.62033/iasjol.v2i1.51>.

<sup>16</sup> Putra Perdana Ahmad Saifulloh et al., "Political Dynasties in General Elections According to Human Rights and A Comparison in Four ASEAN Countries," *Trunojoyo Law Review* 7, no. 1 (January 11, 2025): 123-60, <https://doi.org/10.21107/tlr.v7i1.28492>.

<sup>17</sup> M. Adib Fuadi Nuriz et al., "Political Philosophy of Prophet Yusuf in Qur'an: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach," *AL QUDS : Journal of Quranic and Hadith Studies* 8, no. 1 (January 11, 2024): 21-36, <https://doi.org/10.29240/alquds.v8i1.6437>.

<sup>18</sup> Dian Berkah, Tika Widiastuti, and Nikmatul Atiya, "Shaping Financial Futures: How Does Quran Surah Yusuf Discuss the Instruments of the State Financial Policy?," *Al-Uqud: Journal of Islamic Economics* 8, no. 1 (April 16, 2024): 42-55, <https://doi.org/10.26740/aluqud.v8n1.p42-55>.

<sup>19</sup> Faisal Husen Ismail et al., "Quranic Perspective on Disaster Management: Analysis from Prophet Yusuf A.S History" (International Conference on Islamic and Muhammadiyah Studies (ICIMS 2022), Atlantis Press, 2022), 187-95, <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.220708.024>.

<sup>20</sup> Jauhar Azizy, Mohammad Anwar Syarifuddin, and Hani Hilyati Ubaidah, "Thematic Presentations in Indonesian Qur'anic Commentaries," *Religions* 13, no. 2 (February 2022): 140, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13020140>.





In addition, research on the leadership of the Prophet Joseph in the context of Islamic politics has also been studied in several classic and modern works of tafsir. Arifin et al. (2021) discuss leadership through *Al-Azhar* and *Al-Misbah* commentaries, and its relevance to contemporary politics.<sup>21</sup> Political studies in tafsir are also seen in Bhat's (2020) research which highlights the political aspects in *Tafheem Al-Qur'an*, focusing on the Prophet Yusuf's governance strategy.<sup>22</sup> Overall, these studies show that Prophet Yusuf's political strategy in the Qur'an is not only relevant in the context of Islamic history, but also has broad implications in modern leadership, economic and political studies, including in the dynastic political dynamics in Indonesia.

In this context, the political strategy applied by the Prophet Joseph can provide a new perspective on the study of dynastic politics. Joseph not only managed to gain power through an unconventional process, but was also able to manage support and opposition with a careful strategy. Some of the strategies he applied, such as the politics of planting merit, the politics of desire, and the politics of control, show how leadership can be built with an approach that relies not only on lineage, but also competence and wisdom. This study seeks to compare Yusuf's political principles with the dynamics of dynastic politics in Indonesia, so as to provide a critical reflection on how Islamic values can be used to assess the legitimacy of descent-based power.

Thus, this study aims to explore the interpretation of Prophet Yusuf's political strategy in the Qur'an and its relevance in the context of dynastic politics in Indonesia. This research not only contributes to the enrichment of political interpretation studies in Islam, but also offers a broader analysis of how leadership in the Qur'an can be implemented in the context of modern politics. By using a thematic interpretation approach, this research is expected to provide more contextual insights into how Islam views leadership, power, and political succession in a government system.

This research is included in qualitative<sup>23</sup> *-library research* (library research). Qualitative research is descriptive research in an inductive way. Qualitative research usually focuses on one object and not in the form of numbers. The source of this research is obtained from the text of a book or book so it is called qualitative-library *research*. While the approach in this study uses a thematic interpretation mechanism. Thematic interpretation is more commonly known as *mawdu'i*

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<sup>21</sup> Syamsul Arifin, Muhammad Wahyudi, and Muh Mustakim, "Political Leadership Among Religious Minorities: A Study of the Books Tafsir Al-Azhar and Tafsir Al-Misbah on the Non-Muslim President," *Al-Ulum* 21, no. 1 (June 1, 2021): 1–26, <https://doi.org/10.30603/au.v21i1.1838>.

<sup>22</sup> Ali Muhammad Bhat, "Tafheem Al-Qur'an: Political Interpretation of Holy Qur'an," *QURANICA - International Journal of Quranic Research* 12, no. 2 (December 31, 2020): 74–96.

<sup>23</sup> A. Strauss, J. Corbin, *Basic of Qualitative Research Techniques* (London: Sage Publications, 1998), 19.





*interpretation*. The mechanism of this interpretation is to determine the theme, collect verses, arrange them based on *tartib nuzul* and assemble them with various disciplines related to the understanding of the verse, be it the cause of the revelation of a verse - if any - *munasabah*, and so on.<sup>24</sup>

The theme taken from this article is called *fi kharij al-qur'an* (from outside the Qur'an) because the word 'beautiful politics' is not explicit in the Qur'an. Thus, the pattern that leads a meaning towards that phrase will be studied more deeply. This article does not need to compile surahs or verses outside surah Yusuf, because the story of Yusuf is only in surah Yusuf. There is also no need to arrange them by time of revelation, as the revelation is periodic. If the story was scattered, it could be done. There is also no mention of the reason for the revelation of a verse in this surah, because almost all the stories that happened before Prophet Muhammad, there is no reason for the revelation.

### Joseph's Story of Establishing Leadership Among His Brothers

Joseph was the son of the prophet Ya'qub. He had 12 brothers from 4 mothers: Rachel had sons Joseph and Benjamin. From Leah had sons Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun. Prophet Ya'qub also had a slave and from this slave he also had children. Rachel's slave was named Bilhah, from whom Ya'qub had children named Dan and Naphtali. Then Leah also had a slave named Zilpah, from whom the prophet Ya'qub had children named Gad and Asher.<sup>25</sup> Thus complete 12 sons of the prophet Ya'qub which later became the term twelve tribes of Israel. Rachel, Joseph's mother was more beautiful<sup>26</sup> than Leah or others, therefore it is natural that her descendants are also more beautiful.

At the age of 'junior high' Joseph dreamt of seeing eleven stars, the sun and the moon bowing down to him. He was then forbidden to tell the dream to anyone. It was forbidden by his father so as not to cause jealousy and conflict within the Ya'qub family. It turned out that the dream was leaked and the jealousy of Joseph's brothers was getting stronger so they planned to get rid of Joseph by

<sup>24</sup> Team Sembilan, *Tafsi> r Maudju> 'i al-Muntaha>* (Yogyakarta: Lkis, 2004), 19-20.

<sup>25</sup> The Indonesian Bible Institute, *New Translation of the Bible* (Jakarta: Indonesian Bible Institute, 1994), 5. While al-Nasafi> explains that his names are Jarya> n, al-Dhiya> l, T{a> riq, Qa> bis, 'Amu> dan, Fali> q, Mis}bah}, S{aru> h}, Fargh, Watha> b and Dhu> al-Kitfayn. See, Abu> al-Bara> ka> t 'Abd Alla> h bin Ah}mad bin Mah}mu> d al-Nasafi> , *Tafsi> r al-Nasafi>* (Beirut: Da> r al-Nafa> 'is, 2005), vol. 2, 177.

<sup>26</sup> See also, Albertus Purnomo, *God is with the Family* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2015), 91; Dini Juniarti Mursyid, *Exploring the Moral Message of the Story of the Prophet Joseph in the Qur'an: A Comparative Study of Tafsir al-Azhar and Tafsir al-Misbah* (Thesis-UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanudin Bantern), 95.





throwing him into the well.<sup>27</sup> This was done by them and in the end the prophet Joseph was actually thrown into the well.

Joseph was then rescued by travelers and sold to an Egyptian court official. From here on, the prophet Joseph was cared for by an Egyptian court official's wife (Qitfir).<sup>28</sup> Because of his very handsome appearance, the wife of the Egyptian official wanted to invite him to have an affair. But Joseph refused. This incident was caught by her husband.<sup>29</sup> However, the law stated that Yusuf was right and the wife of the high-ranking official was guilty. The high-ranking official's wife cannot be blamed one hundred percent, because she actually had a *qusuran* husband (a man who is not interested in women).<sup>30</sup> Her marriage to him was just a status thing. She did not get her rights as a wife. Although the guilty party was the wife, for the sake of the reputation of the palace, it was Yusuf who was imprisoned.

While Joseph was still in prison,<sup>31</sup> the king of Egypt dreamed of seeing seven green and seven dry barley and seven fat cows being eaten by seven skinny cows. In this case there was no one who could interpret the dream. Then Joseph was the one who could interpret the dream. The meaning of the dream is that there will be a harvest season for seven years and after that will experience a seven-year famine as well.<sup>32</sup> From here, the imprisoned prophet Joseph was released and given the trust to oversee the Egyptian economy by being appointed prime minister.

During his time as prime minister, Egypt experienced the same seasonal changes as the interpretation of the king's dream: seven years of harvest and seven years of famine. It was during this lean season that many people from outside Egypt - including the Kan'an region of Palestine where Joseph's brother's family lived - looked to the king for compassion due to the large stock of staple foods he had. It was at this point that Joseph met his brothers who came to Egypt expecting tribute (staple food). Then he applied his beautiful political strategy to the people who had wronged him

<sup>27</sup> Abu> Bakr Muh}ammad bin Ibra> hi> m bin Mundhir al-Naysabu> ri, *Tafsi> r al-Qur'a> n* (Madinah: Da> r al-Ma'a> thir, 2002), QS. 12:15.

<sup>28</sup> Abu> Muh}ammad al-H{usayn bin Mas'u> d al-Baghawi> , *Ma'a> lim al-Tanzi> l* (Cairo: Da> r T{aybah, 1997), vol. 4, 225. Ala> ' al-Di> n Ali bin Muh}ammad bin Ibra> hi> m al-Kha> zin, *Luba> b al-Ta'wi> l fi> Ma'a> ni al-Tanzi> l* (Beirut: Da> r al-Fikr, 1979), vol. 3, 272.

<sup>29</sup> Abu> 'Abd Alla> h Muh}ammad bin Ah}mad bin Abu> Bakr bin Farh} Shams al-Di> n al-Qurt}ubi> , *al-Ja> mi' Li' ah}ka> m al-Qur'a> n* (Cairo: Da> r al-Kutub al-Mis}riyah, 1964), QS. 12:26.

<sup>30</sup> Abdur Rohman, *Tafsir Kediri* (Dummy Book, 2022), QS. 12:23, 121; Ibn Kathir, *The Story of the Prophets*, ed. Saefulloh MS (Jakarta: Pustaka al-Kautsar, 2016), 328.

<sup>31</sup> Amrullah Harun, *The Story of Joseph/Joseph in the Qur'an and the Bible*, Tafseer, vol. 7. No. 1, 2019, 35.

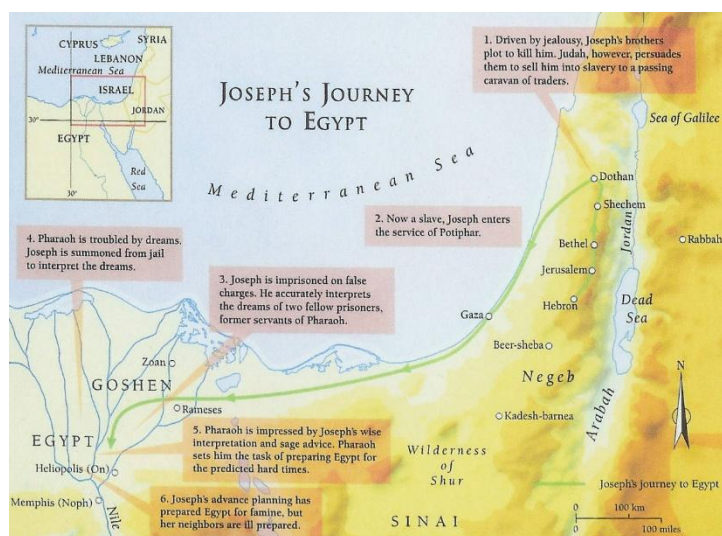
<sup>32</sup> Muh}ammad bin Jari> r bin Yazid bin Kathi> r bin Gha> lib Abu> Ja'far al-T{abari, *Ja> mi' al-Baya> n fi> Ta'wi> l al-Qur'a> n* (Cairo: Mu'assasah al-Risa> ah, 2000), QS. 12:46-48.





## Prophet Joseph's Politics to his Brothers to Avoid Political Dynasties

Joseph's beautiful politics began with the arrival of ten of Joseph's brothers with different mothers, namely Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher and Naphtali. The brother who was of the same mother, Benjamin, was not included in this matter. They came to Egypt to ask for rations (a kind of food or raskin) to the Egyptian kingdom. The King gave the rations according to the goods they exchanged. They came all the way from Kan'an to Egypt<sup>33</sup> in a state of complete deprivation. Egypt and its surroundings at that time were indeed experiencing a severe famine situation. Prophet Ya'qub ordered his sons to go to Egypt so that they could get food rations.<sup>34</sup>



Arriving in Egypt, they entered the palace and were entertained by Joseph like a special guest welcomed by his host. Joseph knew them, but they did not recognize him. This illustrates the psychology of people who will not forget those who have wronged them even though it has been a long time. To confirm his knowledge, he asked them, "Where are you from?" They then answered, "We are from Kan'an, we have a father named Ya'qub" Then the prophet Joseph asked again, "Do you have other brothers besides these?" They replied, "Yes, we were actually twelve brothers, then the smallest of us went and was lost in the Sahara, even though he was the most beloved child by our father. While the present one is his sibling, who lives with our father"

<sup>33</sup> Abu> al-H{asan Muqa> til bin Sulayma> n, *Tafsi> r Muqa> til bin Sulayma> n* (Beirut: Da> r al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 2003), vol. 2, 155.

<sup>34</sup> Rudi Salam, Azmiral Anwar, and Syawaluddin Nasution, "Social and Spiritual Transformation in the Leadership of Prophet Yusuf: Sociological and Spiritual Analysis in Egypt in 16 BC," *JUSPI (Journal of the History of Islamic Civilization)* 8, no. 2 (10 January 2025): 310-18, <https://doi.org/10.30829/juspi.v8i2.21280>; Mahmut Akar, "Yusuf in the Well: Contemporary Prophet and His Self-Search in Abdulrazak Gurnah's Paradise," *İçtimaiyat* 8, no. 1 (May 31, 2024): 17-28, <https://doi.org/10.33709/ictimaiyat.1364580>.







The factors that caused them to no longer recognize Joseph were: First, they thought that Joseph had perished, either died or disappeared somewhere because they had thrown him into the well. Secondly, it had been a long time since their separation from Joseph, decades. Thirdly, Joseph's position was completely unexpected by them as he was a very honorable court official. While their brothers remained *poor*<sup>35</sup> who expected the mercy of food rations from the kingdom of Egypt.

As Prophet Joseph prepared food for them, he said, "*Bring me your brother who is of the same father as you (Benjamin)*".<sup>36</sup> This verse describes the psychological of a very noble Prophet of God. He is the *prototype* of a person who could take revenge but he did not. He is a true forgiver, because a true forgiver is someone who still forgives even though he is able to retaliate. If Joseph had taken revenge for their treatment when he threw him into the well, they would have gotten a disgraceful fate. This could have happened because Joseph was then the ruler in Egypt, while his brothers were "beggars" who expected pity from Joseph. But it turned out that he had a big heart. He took all the mistakes for granted and looked forward to the future. He asked about the whereabouts of his brother who was still in the house. He asked that his brother be brought to Egypt. The banquet for the guests was a *signal* that Joseph's character was "repaying evil with good". He himself took part in loading the food onto their camels while they were eating. It was then that Joseph ordered his servants to return the 'tribute money' to their sacks.<sup>37</sup>

Joseph said *Do you not see that I have perfected the measure?*<sup>38</sup> This was the first 'politics of merit' instilled by Joseph. First, he treated the guests well. Secondly, he did not take revenge for their bad treatment in the past. Thirdly, he participated in loading the cattle onto his brothers' camels and even gave the full load beyond the nominal 'exchange money'. Fourthly, he returned the 'sukatan purchase money' without their knowledge. The good deed that he did had a purpose, namely to make his wish to bring his brother (Benjamin) to Egypt come true. After he had done this good deed, he threatened that *if you did not bring him to me, then you would not get any more grain from me and would not come near me*.<sup>39</sup> This statement *signaled* that in the following years, they would no longer get rations if they did not bring their brother Benjamin to Egypt. They then agreed to this and would persuade their father

<sup>35</sup> Abdur Rohman, *Tafsir Kediri; Surah Yu> suf*. 2022.

<sup>36</sup> Wahbah bin Mus{t}afa> al-Zuh{ayli>, *Tafsi> r al-Muni> r fi> al-'Aqi> dah wa al-Shari> 'ah wa al-Manhaj* (Damshiq: Da> r al-Fikr al-Ma'a> sjir, 2012), QS. 12:59; Ibn Jazi, *al-Tashi> l Li 'Ulu> m al-Tanzi> l* (al-Maktabah al-Sha> milah), QS. 12:59; Abu> Muh}ammad al-H{usayn ibn Mas'u> d al-Bagha> wi>, *Ma'a> lim al-Tanzi> l* (Da> r T{aybah, 1997), QS. 12:59.

<sup>37</sup> Sheikh Muhammad Ali and Muhammad Fiyaz Akram, "حضرت یوسف علیہ السلام اور سبط یعقوب کا تعارف بائبل اور قرآن کی روشنی میں", *Tanazur* 5, no. 1 (March 26, 2024): 1350-75.

<sup>38</sup> QS. Yu> suf [12]:59.

<sup>39</sup> QS. Yu> suf [12]:60.





to allow Benjamin to be taken to Egypt. This is the politics of good merit that makes the opponent 'forced' to follow Joseph's wishes because he has contributed greatly, especially if the wish is not followed, there is a threat that will worsen their fate.<sup>40</sup>

To realize Joseph's wish - by bringing Benjamin to Egypt - was not easy. First, the figure of Benjamin was the most beloved child by the prophet Ya'qub after the departure of Joseph. After all, his father had been traumatized by the events that befell Joseph at that time, namely leaving and not returning. Because of this, they also had to rack their brains on how to seduce their father who no longer believed in them because they had betrayed the promise to take care of Joseph at that time. Secondly, evidence of his affection for Benjamin is reflected in this storyline that the prophet Ya'qub so that accompanied by Benjamin, while the others please go to look for tribes to Egypt.<sup>41</sup>

They then returned to Kan'an and persuaded his father to give them permission to take Benjamin to Egypt. The first reason they told their father was *"O our father! We will not get any more rations if we do not take Benjamin to Egypt and we will really take care of him.* This first appeal did not work, because Ya'qub said *"How will I entrust him (Benjamin) to you, as I entrusted his brother (Joseph) to you before?"*<sup>42</sup> Seeing two similar situations, namely their oath when they were going to invite Joseph first with their invitation to Benjamin, the instinct of a father would immediately remember the sad event, namely losing his favorite son. Roughly speaking, prophet Ya'qub in this case 'did not give permission', because he remembered very well the past events that resulted in him not being able to see Joseph again. He did not want to lose his favorite son for the second time.<sup>43</sup>

The first excuse to woo her father arguably failed. They then came up with a second excuse. *When they opened their goods, they found their (exchange) goods returned to them).*<sup>44</sup> This is a reasonable reason and is enough to convince Ya'qub that the kindness of the Egyptian officials is not just a story. That is, if indeed at that time they had run out of money to exchange for more 'groceries', then the returned money could be used again. Thus Ya'qub's family could easily meet their needs in the future. In this case Joseph instilled merit so that they felt indebted and wanted to follow Joseph's advice.

<sup>40</sup> Roots, "Joseph in the Well."

<sup>41</sup> Dr. Mohammad Mohiuddin and Nadya Farisha Binti Radhilufti, "Resilience Redefined: A Quranic Perspective Through The Story Of Prophet Yusuf," *AL-BURHĀN: JOURNAL OF QUR'ĀN AND SUNNAH STUDIES* 9, no. 1 (February 28, 2025): 92–107, <https://doi.org/10.31436/alburhn.v9i1.369>.

<sup>42</sup> QS. Yu> suf [12]:63-64.

<sup>43</sup> Osama Kanaker, Norhayati Rafida Abdul Rahim, and Ishaq Ibrahim, "Exploring Prominent Qur'anic Discourse Styles (QDS) In The Story Of Prophet Yusuf And Incorporating Them Into Media Content," *Al-Qanatir: International Journal of Islamic Studies* 33, no. 6 (November 14, 2024): 245-56.

<sup>44</sup> Abu> al-Fida> ' Isma> 'i> l bin 'Amr bin Kathi> r, *Tafsi> r al-Qur'a> n al-'Az'i> m* (Cairo: Da> r T{aybah, 2000), 12:63.





With the money returned, they could have hope of returning to Egypt again. This meant that if his father gave permission for Benjamin to be taken with them to Egypt, then it would make the kindness of the Egyptian officials more kind to them. Because, the wishes of the Egyptian officials were granted by them. However, Joseph's brothers did not tell their father that the Egyptians wanted to take their brother there. They only stated that if they asked for the tribe back, it would not be given if they did not bring their brother.

Although this second reason was quite reasonable, Ya'qub still could not forget their betrayal. Therefore, he allowed them to take Benjamin on the condition that they swear an oath and promise to bring him back under any circumstances. They then swore and Prophet Ya'qub stated that *Allah is a witness to what we say*. After that, Prophet Ya'qub advised that *you should not enter from one gate enter from different gates*. This is where the secret of Allah was divulged to Ya'qub. <sup>45</sup>

When Benjamin entered Egypt from a different door than his brothers, he was able to meet Joseph. He said, *Behold, I am your brother (Joseph)*. The Prophet Joseph then declared that he was Joseph, his brother by blood. His father was Ya'qub and his mother was Rachel. The feelings of both of them at that time were mixed, between happiness and emotion. They were happy because after all this time they had been separated and even rumored to have 'died'. They were touched because they did not expect the meeting between them to actually happen. As if in disbelief, Joseph finally embraced his brother. <sup>46</sup>

One thing that Joseph reminded Benjamin was that you should not grieve over what your brothers have done to me. Joseph only wanted to look forward that the past should be past, it is not appropriate for badness to be repaid with badness even though at that time Joseph could easily do it. In the secret conversation, the prophet Joseph and Benjamin wanted to 'engineer' a case so that he remained in Egypt in an honorable state. This is the second beautiful politics carried out by Joseph, namely the *setting-an* case. <sup>47</sup>

After the prophet Joseph met with Benjamin, they then met the other brothers who had different mothers. Then like a guest and indeed a family relation, the prophet Joseph had prepared the best banquet for them. While they were enjoying the meal, Joseph hurried to the place where the

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<sup>45</sup> Nuriz et al., "Political Philosophy of Prophet Yusuf in Qur'an."

<sup>46</sup> Ade Arip Ardiansyah, Izzuddin Musthafa, and Acep Hermawan, "Analysis of The Dialogical Narration in The Story of Prophet Yusuf in The Quran," *Ta'lim al-'Arabiyyah: Journal of Arabic Language & Linguistics Education* 7, no. 2 (December 1, 2023): 278–98, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jpba.v7i2.25684>.

<sup>47</sup> Asyiqin Ab Halim, "Quranic Stories In Introducing Messages And Values: An Analysis On The Story Of Prophet Yusuf A.S.," *Journal of Al-Tamaddun* 11, no. 1 (June 30, 2016): 59–66.





food items were to be brought back to Kan'an. It was then that Joseph put the *siqayah* into Benjamin's sack. *Siqayah* is a drinking vessel like a glass or cup but made of gold. He put it in so that Benjamin would be accused of stealing and detained in Egypt. Thus he could be with Joseph.

When the palace officials found out that they lost the *siqayah*, the palace official named Ephraim<sup>48</sup> shouted *O caravan! Surely you must be thieves!*). O travelers from Kan'an, surely you must be thieves, for the *siqayah* was lost after your arrival. They then asked *what did you lose?* They replied *We lost the king's trophy and whoever can return it will get (foodstuffs as heavy as) a camel's burden*). This is the legal basis of a gift in Islam. Similar to the term 'sandiwara' in Javanese culture, whoever can return it, will get a reward. The reward is basic foodstuffs as heavy as a camel's burden. That is if they handed over the trophy willingly. But they still didn't feel like they had stolen, so the sandiwara was dropped and the law of inspection was applied.<sup>49</sup>

Before the examination, the court official who chased the group said, "*What will be your punishment if it is proven that you stole the siqayah and your oath and confession were lies?*" They replied *that the punishment would be that whoever found the missing item in his sack would be the one to receive the punishment*. This was the prevailing punishment at that time, i.e. the one who stole was the one who would bear the consequences of his theft. The Shari'ah ruling at the time of Prophet Ya'qub was that whoever stole would become the slave of the owner of the stolen item.<sup>50</sup>

Yusuf also participated in the chase. He himself conducted the inspection. Prophet Joseph started checking the sacks of his other brothers who had different mothers before he checked his own brother's luggage. He did not find the item in his brother's sack. Then he checked Benjamin's sack and found the cup in it. The evidence shocked the other brothers, because they did not think that a Benjamin stole. From here on, they were confused and scared. Because this would be a big disaster for them, namely Benjamin was arrested and they failed to bring him home, even though they promised his father to bring Benjamin home no matter what.

In addition to the Sharia law that was in force at the time, there was also an Egyptian constitutional law that was different from the Sharia law of the time. The constitutional law was that one could not punish one's own brother. In this case, Benjamin's position could not be used as a slave,

<sup>48</sup> Isma'īl H{aqqi, *Ru' al-Baya'n* (Cairo: Da'ir al-Tura' th al-'Arabi', 1715), QS. 12:70.

<sup>49</sup> Rusliy, Setya Yuwana Sudikan, and Haris Supratno, "The Sacred Language of Madurese in Serat Yusuf (Study of Oral Traditional Macapat Madura)," *KnE Social Sciences* 9, no. 9 (March 15, 2024): 186–96, <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v9i9.15669>.

<sup>50</sup> Asyhad Abdillah Rosyid, "Logical Intuitive Aspect of the Story in the Quran: Sayyid Quthb's Perspective," *International Journal of Islamic Thought and Humanities* 3, no. 1 (March 5, 2024): 106–14, <https://doi.org/10.54298/ijith.v3i1.189>.





because he was Joseph's brother by marriage.<sup>51</sup> But no one else knew that they were siblings. This is where Benjamin could escape legally. However, this case must continue with the consequences of being resolved in a family manner.

It was from here that the negotiations continued. Joseph's brothers said, "*O noble one, he (Benjamin) has an old father*". He is a child who takes care of his parents. But his parents could not bear to part with him (Benjamin), because in the past he had lost the son he loved so much. *So take one of us in his place*. This means take one of us ten brothers as a prisoner or as a slave, as long as it is not Benjamin. They said this for a reason, namely that they had previously promised their father to bring Benjamin home no matter what, even if he died. That's why they tried their best to keep Benjamin out of captivity. These words were not out of pity for Benjamin - even though he was the one accused of being a thief and had to take responsibility for his actions - but rather out of concern for their father's message. They had betrayed their father during Joseph's childhood and this time it would happen again. If they really couldn't bring Benjamin home, then his father's trust in them was gone.<sup>52</sup>

They wanted to seduce Joseph by stating that *indeed we see you among those who do good*. The closing of this verse is really beautiful. It shows the deadly seduction that came out of their mouths and was immortalized by the Qur'an. They saw Joseph and the palace officials as good people. This they said not without data. When they first went there to exchange the sukatan, the money that was originally to exchange the sukatan was returned in the sack. After that, they were also welcomed with banquets and excellent service from the Egyptian kingdom. In addition, they also received a lot more than the number of sukatan that they were supposed to get. Nevertheless, the prophet Joseph remained firm in his stance of holding Benjamin and did not want to be replaced by others.<sup>53</sup>

Reuben was the oldest brother among them. He declared to his brothers, "*Do you not know that your father took a promise from you in the name of Allah, and before that you wasted Joseph?*" (Reuben). This means that before this event you had also done bad things to Joseph, namely throwing him into the well. The difficult situation they faced turned out to have no solution. They finally gave up and returned home to Kan'an while thinking about what was the right reason to tell his father. The first

<sup>51</sup> Isma'ili H{aqqi, QS. 12:76.

<sup>52</sup> Zakaria Abdelaziz Zakaria Mahmoud, "The Story of Yusuf's False Killing in the Holy Quran: A Text-World Theory Approach," *Journal of the Faculty of Arts (JFA)* 84, no. 4 (October 14, 2024), <https://jfa.cu.edu.eg/journal/vol84/iss4/14>.

<sup>53</sup> Siti Robikah, "Tafsir Surah Yusuf in the Quran with Mustansir Mir's Literary Approach," *Al-Bayan: Journal of Qur'an and Tafsir Studies* 4, no. 1 (June 30, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.15575/al-bayan.v4i1.4208>.





reason they put forward was *O our father! Indeed your son has stolen*.<sup>54</sup> We witnessed the incident with our own eyes.

The first argument of Joseph's brothers was not answered by his father, but they put forward a second argument, namely *ask (the inhabitants of) the country where we are*), namely the inhabitants of Egypt who witnessed the theft. This argument was not answered by the prophet Ya'qub but they put forward a third argument, namely 'ask the caravan that came to us', namely the travelers from Kan'an who were with us.

From here the prophet Ya'qub then replied *Actually only yourself who looks good at that (bad) business*. What was conveyed by the prophet Ya'qub was actually a rejection of all the reasons they put forward. In this situation, prophet Ya'qub who was old and helpless, there was no other word but to be patient and hope that Allah would gather all his lost children. The Prophet Ya'qub then turned away from them because of his deep sorrow "*O my sorrow for Joseph*". This expression is actually the peak of Ya'qub's sadness, when he lost the prophet Joseph. He then remembered Joseph who disappeared decades ago. The sadness had not disappeared in Ya'qub's eyes, but again his sons acted again and Benjamin did not return.<sup>55</sup>

The protracted sadness blinded both of her eyes. Nonetheless, he held back his anger and resentment towards his children. When his sons saw their father's worsening condition, they wanted to alleviate the situation by saying "*By Allah, you do not stop remembering Joseph, so you (have a serious illness)*".<sup>56</sup> They disagreed with the complaint of the prophet Ya'qub who still remembered Joseph. Even though news of him has been absent for decades. They hoped that Ya'qub would forget Joseph so that his suffering would not be protracted.

Hearing that advice, prophet Ya'qub still remained optimistic and convinced that he only complained to Allah for the problems that befell him. Prophet Ya'qub said so based on three factors. First, it indicates a person whose faith is strong. Allah is the place to lean on and the place to complain about all the complaints of His servants. Second, the situation of Prophet Ya'qub was not possible. Prophet Ya'qub at that time was already old and worsened by his blind eyes. Perhaps, if he was still physically healthy and his eyesight was normal, he himself would go looking for his lost children. The culmination of the conversation between the prophet Ya'qub and his children was recorded by

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<sup>54</sup> Bowo Cahyono, Sri Lestari, *Psychology of the Qur'an*, in *Spiritualist Scientific Journal: Journal of Islamic Thought and Sufism*. Vol. 7, no. 1, 2021.

<sup>55</sup> Roots, "Joseph in the Well."

<sup>56</sup> Team of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, *al-Qur'an and its Translations* (Surabaya: Assalam Library, 2010).





the Qur'an that *I know from Allah what you do not know*. He was sure as sure as he could that he would find his lost children. He remained convinced that Joseph's decades-old dream would come true, that the prophet Joseph would become a great man and all his family would submit to him.<sup>57</sup>

After that, Prophet Ya'qub told his sons to go again to Egypt to find news about Joseph and Benjamin. This was reaffirmed by the prophet Ya'qub as one of their responsibilities who had promised to bring his children home. They then set off again to Egypt to meet the royal officials. After they got there and met Yusuf - at that time they did not know him -, they expressed the purpose of coming *"O al-'Aziz! We and our families have been afflicted with misery, namely hunger and deprivation. Expecting pity from the Egyptian officials and a humble plea, they exchanged worthless items such as used cloth and money that was not suitable for transactions to be exchanged for rations."*<sup>58</sup>

When the prophet Joseph listened to the complaints of his brothers, it was the right time to show who he was. Joseph said, *"Do you know what you have done to Joseph and his brother?"*. Hearing these words they were stunned and seemed not to believe because the event of dropping into the well was very secret and only 10 of his brothers and Joseph himself knew. Thus, if the man knew, he must be Joseph. They looked at each other with mixed thoughts. In a broken voice, they asked *"Are you really Joseph?"*. Taking off his crown, the prophet Joseph replied *"I am Joseph, this is my brother (Benjamin)"*. They recognized him immediately because Joseph had a birthmark, a mole on his forehead. This mole was not visible if he wore a crown, but when the crown was removed the mole was visible.<sup>59</sup>

The Prophet Joseph then told them that *indeed Allah had bestowed His bounty on us* Joseph and Benjamin) while reminding his *despotic* brothers that *whoever fears and is patient, then indeed, Allah does not waste the reward of those who do good*. His brothers then declared that *by Allah, indeed Allah has favored you over us*. Joseph's brothers now knew that the person who had been doing good to them by entertaining guests as well as possible, giving more than the price of the goods exchanged many times, was Joseph, his own brother. Allah has really exceeded you with honor, glory, possession of

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<sup>57</sup> Rizal Fatur Rahman Purnama, "The Story Of The Prophet Yusuf In The Qur'an: Julia Kristeva's Intertextual Approach," *Contemplation: Journal of Ushuluddin Sciences* 9, no. 2 (2021): 269–92, <https://doi.org/10.21274/kontem.2021.9.2.269-292>.

<sup>58</sup> Roots, "Joseph in the Well."

<sup>59</sup> Susilo Sudarman, "Social Ethics In The Story Of Prophet Yusuf And Its Relevance To Millennial Youth Semiotic Analysis Of Umberto Eco's Communication," *TASAMUH* 21, no. 1 (June 15, 2023): 23–44, <https://doi.org/10.20414/tasamuh.v21i1.7164>.





wealth, good looks and rank over us. They were *wong kere*<sup>60</sup> (poor people) who came to Egypt many times just to expect the mercy of Egyptian officials to just buy 'groceries'.

They then admitted their past mistake of throwing Joseph into the well and begged for forgiveness. It was then that the prophet Joseph wanted to immediately end the past debate by stating that *Today there is no reproach against you*. He did not want to bring up the past and wanted to focus on the future. He immediately took steps for the future. He ordered his brothers to go to Kan'an with his robe. The robe was the clothes of the prophets that had been passed down from generation to generation. It came from heaven. When the prophet Abraham was burnt, Allah put on the robe so that he was saved, then the robe was given to his descendants. When the prophet Joseph was put into the well, he wore the robe around his neck. Yusuf advised, when you get home, then wipe the robe on my father's face, then he can see again. The Prophet Yusuf also requested that the entire family of Ya'qub be brought to Egypt.<sup>61</sup>

While the brothers were still on the road, the prophet Ya'qub smelled the odor of Yusuf. He shouted 'I smell Yusuf-I smell Yusuf'. This shout was considered a cry (*ndleming*) by some people who were around Ya'qub. This happened because of the strength of the spiritual and emotional connection between them. Nature will send codes and carry those codes towards a force that can be used to communicate. Javanese people call it the term *tembus roso* (penetrating feeling). This means that what Ya'qub experienced actually describes what happened at that time. The distance between the Egyptian palace and Kan'an at that time was about 80 *farsakh*<sup>62</sup> (about 440 km). While the separation between the prophet Ya'qub and Joseph was about 25 years.

Not long after, the bearer of good news from Egypt came. He immediately met the prophet Ya'qub and rubbed Joseph's robe on his face. At that moment, prophet Ya'qub's sight was restored. The expression of incomparable joy after decades of not meeting his favorite son could make a dead heart come alive again. The spirit of life that had been pent up now returned again and he was very confident that Joseph's dream for decades would come true. It was then that the prophet Ya'qub stated that "*Have I not told you that I know from Allah what you do not know*". This is a magic sentence uttered by the prophet Ya'qub for the umpteenth time. He was sure that one day Joseph's dream as a child

<sup>60</sup> Abdur Rohman, *Tafsir Kediri* (Dummy: Surah Yu> suf, t. th).

<sup>61</sup> ماضوي Madoui and خليفة Khalida, "Crises' Management between the Divine Grace and Strategic Safeguards," 7 □□□□ □□□□, no. 2 (May 28, 2019): 360-78.

<sup>62</sup> Isma'> 'i> l H{aqqi, Ru> h} al-Baya> n (Cairo: Da> r Ih}ya> ' al-Tura> th al-'Arabi> , 1715), Vol. 4., 185.







would come true, that is, he would become an honorable person and his family was united in submission to him.<sup>63</sup>

Joseph's brothers, represented by Judah, begged the prophet Ya'qub, his father, for forgiveness for the sins he had committed earlier, namely dropping Joseph into the well and separating him from Benjamin. He first admitted his guilt before his father before his father knew the story from Joseph. If the incident was told by Joseph himself, surely they would get severe punishment. Prophet Ya'qub then wanted to ask for forgiveness for his despotic sons if he had met Joseph. In the narration of Ibn Mas'ud it is explained that the prophet Ya'qub postponed their request for forgiveness until dawn. While Isma'il H{aqqi explained that the prophet Ya'qub postponed their request for forgiveness until all of them met with Yusuf.<sup>64</sup>

The group of Ya'qub's family then departed from Kan'an towards Egypt. When it was heard that they were close to the Egyptian palace, the Prophet Joseph immediately welcomed them outside the palace, welcoming the prophetullah Ya'qub, there is even an opinion that states that the king of Egypt also came. After the prophet Joseph met them, he immediately embraced his mother and father. They have been separated for decades and there is no news about his whereabouts. Emotion mixed with happiness enveloped all parties of the family was no exception. Joseph had prepared the best dishes for them. The arrival of the prophet Ya'qub in Egypt was on the night of Friday the 10th of the month of *Suro* (Muharram) at midnight, namely at dawn. Arriving there, Prophet Ya'qub led the prayer then asked for forgiveness for his impatience with Joseph and asked for the forgiveness of his children. At that time the prophets Joseph and Benjamin agreed as well as his other brothers behind them both. Then the word of Allah came down, that Allah forgave him and all his sons.<sup>65</sup>

After that the prophet Joseph invited his father to sit next to his throne, then immediately the prophet Ya'qub and others bowed down to the prophet Joseph as a form of respect. The prophet Joseph then said "*O my father, this is the interpretation of my previous dream, which is to see eleven stars, the sun and the moon bowing down to me. The eleven stars are his eleven brothers, the sun is his father and the moon is his mother. The Prophet Joseph at that time became a kind of prime minister of Egypt in charge of the economy and government. This is the end of a divine drama that touches*

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<sup>63</sup> Cyril Orji, "A Reappropriation of the Joseph Story in Genesis 39 and Surah 12 for Contemporary Race-Discourse," *Horizons* 51, no. 1 (June 2024): 1–32, <https://doi.org/10.1017/hor.2024.5>.

<sup>64</sup> Isma'>'i> l H{aqqi, QS. 12:97-98.

<sup>65</sup> Rahmawati Baharuddin, "The Story Of Joseph In The Genesis And Surah Yusuf," *ULUL ALBAB Journal of Islamic Studies* 10, no. 2 (2009): 155–72, <https://doi.org/10.18860/ua.v10i2.6057>.





the soul and at the same time becomes the end of the famine that hit Egypt and its surroundings. Allah bestows immense grace for his people who are patient and consistent in goodness.

### **Dynastic Politics in Indonesia from the Perspective of Prophet Joseph's Politics in the Qur'an**

The story of the Prophet Joseph in the Qur'an provides an interesting illustration of how political strategy can be applied intelligently, calculatingly, and without repressive coercion. Joseph's politics was not only about how he achieved power, but also how he managed his opponents in a way that made them submit without the need for open resistance. This strategy involved several important elements: the *politics of planting merit*, *controlling opponents*, and *the strategy of placing confidants in strategic positions*.<sup>66</sup>

When it comes to the current state of Indonesian politics, specifically related to dynastic politics around President Joko Widodo and how Prabowo Subianto is embracing the dynasty in the 2024 presidential election, we can see a similar pattern to the strategy applied by Prophet Joseph. Joseph did not directly conquer his brothers by force, but created conditions where they eventually submitted to him. Dynastic politics in Indonesia, especially those involving Jokowi's family, also apply a similar strategy of building dependency and placing family members in key positions to ensure continuity of power.<sup>67</sup>

Dynastic politics in Indonesia has recently become stronger, especially with the involvement of President Joko Widodo's family in various strategic positions. This phenomenon has similarities with the political strategy of the Prophet Joseph in the Qur'an, where he subtly organized his opponents to submit to his leadership through a strategy of cultivating merit and controlling opponents. Joseph did not use violence, but created dependency, so that his brothers could not resist his will. One of Prophet Joseph's political strategies was *the politics of planting merit*, where he first extended kindness to his opponents before then steering them into his political scenario. He entertained his brothers well, gave them food, and even helped lift *groceries* onto their camels. This is a clever tactic, as it builds gratitude and dependency, so that the opponents have no reason to refuse his request.<sup>68</sup>

In Indonesian politics, this strategy can also be seen in how Jokowi has built a populist image during his two terms of leadership. Social programs such as Direct Cash Assistance (BLT), Smart

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<sup>66</sup> Baharuddin.

<sup>67</sup> FatimatuZZahra and Dewi, "The Pattern of Joko Widodo's Political Dynasty Practices."

<sup>68</sup> Roots, "Joseph in the Well."





Indonesia Card (KIP), Healthy Indonesia Card (KIS), and massive infrastructure development became a form of 'planting services' to the community. This is not just a social policy, but also a political strategy that builds voters' dependence on him and his party.<sup>69</sup>

The politics of planting merit is also evident in how Gibran Rakabuming Raka is being groomed to become a national leader. Since the beginning of his time as Mayor of Solo, Gibran has conducted many social programs, developed MSMEs, and shown closeness to the people—a similar image to his father. With this step, when he was announced as Prabowo's vice president, many people already felt familiar with him and accepted his presence on the national political stage more easily.<sup>70</sup>

Another political strategy of Prophet Joseph was *opponent control*—he did not destroy his opponents directly, but created a situation where they could not resist his will. This is evident in how he devised a scenario to keep Benjamin in Egypt, as well as how his brothers were forced to return to Egypt repeatedly until they finally submitted to Joseph. In Indonesian politics, this strategy is evident in how Jokowi and Prabowo manage their political rivalry. After fierce battles in the 2014 and 2019 presidential elections, where Prabowo became Jokowi's main opposition, he eventually joined the cabinet as Minister of Defense. This is a form of *opponent control* strategy in politics, where the opposition is approached, given strategic positions, and eventually becomes part of the existing system, so that it is no longer a threat.<sup>71</sup>

In the context of dynastic politics, the strategy of controlling opponents is also seen in how the decision of the Constitutional Court (MK) opened the way for Gibran to run as vice president. His nomination process caused controversy because it involved a decision of the Constitutional Court (MK) which paved the way for young people under the age of 40 to run for the presidential election, provided they had experience as regional heads. This decision drew criticism because at that time the Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court was Anwar Usman, Gibran's uncle. Later, Anwar Usman was dismissed from his position because he was considered to have violated ethics in deciding cases related to his family.<sup>72</sup> However, the decision still had a big impact because Gibran was finally able

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<sup>69</sup> Kiki Novilia et al., "Jokowi's Political Dynasties: Impact and Its Comparison to Nehru-Gandhi Dynasties," *Journal of Islamic World and Politics* 7, no. 2 (2023): 235–44, <https://doi.org/10.18196/jiwp.v7i2.76>.

<sup>70</sup> Widia Novita Lukitasari W. A et al., "Joko Widodo's Leadership in the Context of Dynastic Politics," *CENDEKIA: Journal of Science* 5, no. 1 (February 24, 2025): 338–46, <https://doi.org/10.51878/cendekia.v5i1.4498>.

<sup>71</sup> Titin Purwaningsih et al., "Political Dynasties in Indonesia: Campaign Issues and Sustainability," SSRN Scholarly Paper (Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network, March 20, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5186185>.

<sup>72</sup> Jackson Andre William Kumaat, "Symbolization of President Joko Widodo on Gibran Rakabuming Raka 2018–2024 in Kompas Media and Youtube Account of the Secretariat of the President of the Republic of Indonesia," *Science and Culture* 45, no. 2 (2 December 2024): 109–16, <https://doi.org/10.47313/jidb.v45i2.3839>.





to run alongside Prabowo. This is a form of power control strategy through legal channels, where rules are adjusted to ensure political positions remain favorable to certain groups.

In addition, President Jokowi's son-in-law, Bobby Nasution, serves as Mayor of Medan and is now touted as a strong candidate for Governor of North Sumatra. Meanwhile, Jokowi's younger siblings also hold strategic positions in various regions, such as Idayati who is married to the Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court, and his other siblings, such as Anwar Usman and Sudjatmoko, who are active in law and politics.<sup>73</sup> This phenomenon is reminiscent of how the Prophet Joseph arranged a strategic position for his brother, Benjamin, to remain in Egypt, and how his other brothers eventually submitted to his leadership after going through various political scenarios.

On the other hand, Prabowo Subianto, as an important figure in the 2024 presidential election, also has interesting political dynamics. He was Jokowi's political rival in two consecutive presidential elections (2014 and 2019), but then joined the cabinet as Minister of Defense. This move can be seen as a form of controlling political opponents, similar to how the Prophet Joseph embraced his brothers after they submitted. Now, with Gibran as his vice president, Prabowo is showing a similar political strategy: embracing Jokowi's political dynasty to strengthen his support base and ensure a safer transition of power.

When compared to Yusuf's political strategy, there are similarities in how these political actors build dependencies and use strategic positions to control the course of power. Yusuf built scenarios so that his brothers had no choice but to follow his plans, similar to how Jokowi's family has filled key positions in Indonesia's political system today. However, the main difference lies in the end goal. Yusuf used his political strategy to save the Egyptian people from crisis and reunite his family in an atmosphere of peace, while in Indonesian politics, the acquisition of strategic positions is more often associated with the perpetuation of power rather than the interests of the people at large.

This phenomenon shows that dynastic politics in Indonesia is not just a power struggle, but also a long-term strategy to control the political system by exerting influence in various sectors. Like Joseph's brothers who eventually came to depend on him, many political actors in Indonesia have slowly joined the circle of power because of the political and economic attachments that have been built. However, the question is: will dynastic politics really bring benefits to society, or will it narrow

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<sup>73</sup> Ajrina Rizkiananda Rusmana et al., "A Study of Political Dynasties: Reality and Impact in Indonesia from the Perspective of Political Ethics," *Nusantara: Journal of Education, Arts, Science and Social Humanities* 2, no. 01 (May 22, 2024), <https://journal.forikami.com/index.php/nusantara/article/view/684>.





the democratic space? If we take a lesson from the story of the Prophet Joseph, politics should not only be oriented towards power, but also bring real benefits to the people being led.

## Conclusion

This article concludes that: First, Joseph applied the politics of service (indebtedness) by entertaining with the best dishes of those who had harmed him, loading his own 'groceries' onto their camels and returning the exchange money into their sacks so that they could return again in the future. Secondly, Joseph practiced the politics of desire. He wished for his brother Benjamin to be brought to Egypt. If this wish was not granted, then they would be in danger of not getting rations again in the future. Joseph's threat was the third political scenario. Fourth, he applied policy politics by *setting cases* so that opponents became suspects and ultimately followed the advice or rules that applied. This is the fifth political scheme carried out by Yusuf, namely controlling opponents. Sixth, Yusuf conveyed his identity in the right situation and conditions. While the last point of Joseph's politics is to be able to gather his entire family without any victims or parties being hurt. He could have taken revenge but that's not what he did. He could have taught them a little lesson just to say 'let me know the taste'. But he was a true forgiver of his brothers' wrongs, because a true forgiver is one who forgives when he can.

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