

Prophet Yusuf (PBUH) as Treasury Manager: An Analytical Review

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research discovers the role of Prophet Yusuf (A.S) as a treasury manager through an analysis of historical and religious manuscripts. The study draws upon various sources, including Qur'anic verses, historical literature, and contemporary research, to clarify the financial and managerial strategies employed by Prophet Yusuf in antique Egypt. Key melodies include financial planning, tax incentives, agricultural reforms, production management, storage techniques, and supply chain management, all of which contributed to active treasury management during a period of economic challenge. By producing understandings from religious teachings and historical narratives, the research aims to deliver valuable lessons for contemporary financial management and leadership. The study employs a qualitative methodology, emphasizing textual analysis and thematic combination to derive meaningful perceptions.

1. Introduction

This paper aims to explore the persona of Yusuf (Peace Be upon Him) in his role as the Minister of Finance, delving into the economic, political, and social aspects of his character. It will also examine the direct and indirect reforms that contributed to economic stability during his tenure. The study will place special emphasis on the initiatives carried out by Yusuf (peace be upon him) during periods of economic turmoil. The research will begin with a brief introduction to the primary subject, highlighting essential aspects of Yusuf's (peace be upon him) character. Additionally, the paper will feature a detailed discussion on reforms implemented during instances of famine or economic hardship. (Khalida, 2019)

2. Economic Situation of Pakistan: Reason of Study

Pakistan has faced prolonged and diverse challenges, stemming from collective misdeeds, intemperance, and a departure from religious teachings (Akbar, 1997). The substantial role of governmental mismanagement has further exacerbated these difficulties. An analytical approach involving clear strategies and concrete planning is essential for addressing potential problems. Proactive planning facilitates the management of difficulties, yet a prevailing culture of carelessness in the country results in the misallocation of resources toward luxuries and festivals.

During crises, appeals for international assistance tend to be material-focused, lacking spiritual analysis. Pakistan's leaders, while seeking cooperation, often adopt short-term solutions, leading to a lack of improvement and global skepticism. In contrast, neighboring countries such as China and India have surpassed Pakistan due to robust planning, systematic

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product delivery, and enhanced reputation through quality control.

An uninterrupted electricity supply is crucial for industrial operations, and an energy crisis can hinder timely production, making products less competitive in international markets. Despite facing a 21st-century energy crisis, Pakistan has struggled to control load shedding, with recent agreements showing hope for improvement. The failure to harness nuclear energy for power generation, despite initial intentions, is a fundamental mistake by former rulers.

As an agricultural country, Pakistan has not effectively organized its agricultural sector for profitability. Modern practices have improved production, but the success is attributed more to the hard work and strategies of the farming class than to governmental policies. Political inclinations towards India, discussions of granting Most Favored Nation status, and economic disparities contribute to challenges faced by Pakistan's economy.

Inspiration can be drawn from the historical account of Hazrat Yusuf (peace be upon him), the Minister of Finance in ancient Egypt. His strategic seven-year plan to combat a global famine serves as a model for contemporary policymakers. Emulating Yusuf's approach can contribute to effective crisis management and the establishment of an organized system for procuring and distributing commodities.

3. Prophet Yusuf's (As) Personality

Yusuf ibn Ya'qub ibn Ishaq ibn Ibrahim (Arabic: يوسف ابن يعقوب ابن إسحاق ابن إبراهيم), romanized: *Yūsuf ibn Ya'qūb ibn 'Ishāq ibn 'Ibrāhīm*, lit. 'Joseph, son of Jacob, son of Isaac, son of Abraham') is a prophet mentioned in the Quran, (Keeler, Annabel 15 June 2009) and corresponds to Joseph, a person from the Tanakh, the Jewish religious scripture, and the Christian Bible, who was estimated to have lived in Egypt before the New Kingdom. (Coogan, Michael 2009) Of all of Jacob's children, Joseph was the one given the gift of prophecy.

Although the narratives of other prophets are mentioned in various *Surahs*, the complete narrative of Joseph is given only in one *Surah*, Yusuf, making it unique. It is said to be the most detailed narrative in the Qur'an and contains more details than the Biblical counterpart. (Keeler, Annabel 15 June 2009)

4. Managing Personality

Hazrat Yusuf faced a singular challenge during his imprisonment: the absence of discernible daylight, making it arduous to ascertain prayer times. In response to this difficulty, Allah imparted the knowledge to craft a clock, enabling Hazrat Yusuf to observe prayers punctually. Consequently, Hazrat Yusuf holds the distinction of being the inaugural clockmaker. The dissemination of this newfound skill subsequently emanated from Egypt to various parts of the world. Consequently, Hazrat Yusuf is acknowledged as the progenitor of clock-making.

5. Relationship With King's Family

Prophet Yusuf got out of jail and went to see the king. During their exchange, the king conversed with Yusuf in various languages known to him. Yusuf, aided by divine revelation, responded fluently in those languages. The king's admiration for Yusuf grew, prompting him to request another interpretation of his dream, which Yusuf graciously provided. Thereupon, the king said,

"Who is going to do the things that you mention?" Hz. Yusuf regarded it as an offer and said,

"If you set me over the storehouses of the land, I will take all kinds of measures for drought and famine in the best way. You can rely on me." (M. Vehbi, *ibid*, VII, 2539-41)

The king joyfully accepted Yusuf's offer. Besides, following the death of Egypt's Aziz, the country's economy began to decline. Everybody was complaining about the economic situation. Thus, the king was delighted when Yusuf expressed his willingness to work for him. Without delay,

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the king entrusted Yusuf with the state seal and bestowed upon him a magnificent throne adorned with pearls and rubies as a gift. Finally, he presented Yusuf with a crown to adorn his head. Hz. Yusuf looked at the throne and said,

"I will strengthen the state with it." He looked at the seal and said, "I will fulfil the affairs of the government with it." However, he did not like wearing the crown. He said, "The throne is something that is not worn by me or by my ancestors." Then, he gave it back.

Subsequently, after assuming the role of minister overseeing the economy with unprecedented authority, Yusuf ascended the throne and commenced his official duties. Following the appointment of Yusuf as Qitfir, the king arranged the marriage between Yusuf and Zulaykha, the wife of Qitfir, thus reuniting them. Zulaykha, transformed by the anguish of separation from Yusuf and her ensuing remorse, matured into a suitable partner for him over the years, shedding her former temperament (Patterson, 2009).

Yusuf and Zulaykha bore three children: two sons named Ephraim and Mersha (Manasseh), and a daughter named Rahmah. Rahmah later married Hz. Ayyub (Job), while Ephraim became an ancestor of Hz. Musa (C. Paşa, 23; Ebrahimi et al., 2012).

Upon assuming the mantle of economic stewardship, Yusuf promptly initiated measures to rebuild the nation and address the populace's challenges. His administration garnered widespread acclaim as he oversaw the construction of vast granaries during seven years of abundance, effectively mitigating the impact of the subsequent drought and famine in the eighth year (Shalheh et al., 2019). Despite the hardships faced by neighboring nations, Yusuf's prudent measures ensured that Egypt remained resilient. Justly distributing the

stored wheat to the needy, Yusuf's actions alleviated the suffering of his people, prompting an influx of migrants from surrounding regions seeking relief from the dire conditions.

6. Yusuf's Personality Characteristics

The life of Prophet Yusuf offers numerous valuable lessons, summarized as follows:

Chastity: Prophet Yusuf exemplified the utmost level of chastity, steadfastly rejecting the advances of Zulaykha and choosing imprisonment over compromising his virtue.

Fidelity and Loyalty: His refusal of Zulaykha's advances underscores his unwavering fidelity and loyalty. Despite residing in the palace of the Aziz of Egypt, who provided for him and showed kindness, Yusuf remained steadfastly loyal.

Patience: Yusuf's life epitomizes the virtue of patience, as he endured a series of trials with fortitude. His steadfastness eventually led to his elevation from prison to the palace, culminating in success and happiness.

Encouraging Acts of Kindness: Prophet Yusuf's life encourages acts of kindness and underscores the benefits, both worldly and spiritually, that stem from such actions.

Forgiveness: A significant lesson from Yusuf's life is the importance of pardoning those who wronged him, demonstrating tolerance, and extending kindness even to adversaries.

Interpreting Dreams: Yusuf's ability to interpret dreams, as depicted in the Quran, highlights the significance of dreams and the hidden truths they may reveal. Badiuzzaman Said Nursi elaborates on this, emphasizing the connection between true dreams and

prophetic functions, as noted in authentic Hadiths.

Dreams can be categorized into three types. As delineated in the Quran, two of these are described as "a confused medley of dreams," which, according to the text, are not worth interpreting. In these instances, either an ailment distorts the power of imagination, presenting mixed and inconsequential images, or the imagination recalls stimulating events, modifying and depicting them in various forms. Such dreams are considered a confused medley and lack interpretive significance.

The third type consists of true dreams. During sleep, as the senses that tie individuals to the Manifest World rest, the Dominical subtle faculty in human nature establishes a direct connection with the World of the Unseen, providing a window into it. (Pearce, J. C. (2004).) Through this window, one glimpses events in preparation, encounters manifestations from the Preserved Tablet, and perceives certain true occurrences. (Shaw, R., & Bransford, J. Eds. 2017.) These dreams may be governed by the imagination, taking on specific forms. True dreams vary in their realization: sometimes they materialize exactly as dreamt, at other times they are slightly veiled, as if under a fine layer, and occasionally they remain heavily obscured. (O'flaherty, W. D., & Doniger, W. 1986)

Hadiths narrate that the dreams of the Most Noble Prophet (PBUH) at the outset of the Revelations turned out as true and clear as the breaking of morning. (Ali, M. M. 2013)

Ordinary individuals may exhibit a form of sainthood, dreaming of matters related to the Unseen and the future in true dreams. For them, sleep serves as a degree of sainthood, and true dreams constitute a fine and splendid Dominical cinema. (Stein,

M.2014) The nature of these dreams reflects the character of the dreamer's thoughts, with good thoughts leading to positive dreams and vice versa. (Grotstein, J. S. 2013)

True dreams, for everyone, function as a window from the Manifest World to the World of the Unseen. They serve as an arena of infinite proportion, offering a glimpse into a sort of eternity, and a space for observing the past and the future as though they were the present. Additionally, they provide a resting place for beings with spirits who are burdened by life's responsibilities and endure great hardship.

7. Yusuf's Managing Plan

1. Pioneer of Management

Approximately 3600 years ago, during Egypt's era as a superpower, the Fifteenth Dynasty emerged from the Hyksos people, governing much of the Nile region from 1674 BC to 1535 BC. Under the reign of the third King, Saqir-Har, the kingdom witnessed significant development and growth. However, this prosperity also gave rise to numerous challenges. By the time of the fifth king, Apepi, these challenges peaked, manifesting in three primary crises:

1. The ruler became an absolute dictator and fascist.
2. The elite class engaged in increasing moral degradation.
3. Justice became subservient to the elite, leading to the wrongful imprisonment of innocent people while the elite enjoyed impunity despite their crimes.

At that time an innocent, trustworthy and respectable man were in jail. The name of that honourable man was "JOSEPH" / Prophet YUSUF (peace be upon him).(Ahmed, S.2012) During this imprisonment,

king Apepi died and his son “Khamudi”, the last king of Hyksos dynasty came into power. One day, the king saw an outstanding matter in a dream and need to interpret it. (Manassa, C.2013) Creator of the universe Allah (swt) informed us through Universal Leader Prophet Mohammad (saw) in Sura Yusuf of holy Qur’an as;

“And (one day) the king said (to his courtiers), “I have seen (in a dream) seven fat cows being eaten by seven lean ones, and seven ears of grain which are green and (seven) others which are dry. O people, tell me about my dream, if you can interpret dreams. They said, (It seems to be) a mishmash of dreams, and we do not know the interpretation of dreams. And said the one who was released (from the prison) out of the two, and recalled (Yusuf) after a long time, “I shall tell you it’s interpretation. Just send me (to Yusuf). Thus he came to the prison and said to Yusuf, “Yusuf, O the truthful one, tell us about seven fat cows eaten by seven lean ones, and seven ears of grain which are green and (seven) others which are dry, so that I may go back to the people and they may know (the interpretation of the dream.) He said, “You will grow crops for seven years consecutively. So, what you have harvested, leave it in its ear, except a little which you eat. Then seven hard years shall come after that, which shall eat up what you have stored for them, except a little which you preserve (to sow). Then there shall come after that a year in which people will have rains and in which they will extract juices. And (when this person went back and told the king about the interpretation of the dream), the king said, “Bring him to me.” So, when the messenger came to Yusuf, he said, “Go back to your lord and ask him, ‘What is the case of the women who cut their hands?’ Surely, my Lord knows well their guile.” (12:43-50.)

It was the golden chance for Yusuf (as) to take control in his hand and provide relief to the people through his skill of Leadership for Total Quality Management. (Sharifi, N.2019) So, he asked to king as reported in holy Qur’an;

“He said: set me over the Treasury of the State; verily I shall be a keeper knowing. Thus we established Yusuf in the land so that he might settle therein wherever he listed. We bestow of our mercy on whomsoever we will, and we waste not the hire of the well-doers.” (12:55-56.)

After coming into power, how did Yusuf (as) perform and show his quality of management, generally has not been given to mention. We hereby highlight his performance in following main points to be considered.

2. Team management (Resource Of Man Power)

He needed trusted people to accomplish the fulfilment of his plan. For this purpose, he had done in prison for the past eleven years. The first thing, when the authority came into hand, ordered the believers (Muslims) to release them from the jail. Through this anticipated effort, able to develop a team of trust worthy people. (Fontaine, R. 2020).

3. Motivate Peoples (Social Reform)

Egypt had been a farming country and its economy and prosperity depend on agriculture. Wheat and Cotton were major crops. But farmers have been the lowest category in society just like slaves. Yusuf (as) declared that the people who cultivate undeveloped land will be the owner of that and their status in society will be respectable. Further that the government will buy their

cultivation on market price. Thus, the poor and the farmers get the opportunity to come up and create a passion of hard work. Common people got believe that they can get the honorable place in the society by working hard. A great motivational factor had been developed in the society for betterment of the society. (Çelik, G., & Alan, Y.2006)

4. Economic Reforms

During that period, the government confronted a significant challenge: the arrangement of funds. A substantial amount was required for the acquisition of crops spanning seven years throughout Egypt, the construction of warehouses for storage, conducting a nationwide census, static recording for crop collection, implementing a system for ration distribution, and allocating funds for salaries of the workforce.

To address the funding shortfall, government officials traditionally proposed an increase in taxes. Alternatively, they suggested engaging in war with neighboring countries to accumulate wealth through "BOOTY." Yusuf (as) rejected both proposals. In the case of the first suggestion, he foresaw that common people would bear a greater financial burden, and the elite class would attempt to evade taxes through various techniques, hindering the desired results. Regarding the second proposal, immediate funds were needed to initiate the war, with no assurance of victory or the collection of the required funds. In contrast, Yusuf (as) devised an investment plan through a tax incentive scheme:

1. Tax exemption for two years if one year's tax is paid in advance.
2. No tax for taxpayers during drought years if they pay tax in advance for the first seven years of cultivation.

3. Individuals paying 20% of their income, excluding taxes, would be eligible to receive grain during drought years in exchange for the collected amount.

This scheme gained widespread popularity, successfully overcoming the challenge of capital acquisition. Hence, Yusuf (as) is credited as the first person to introduce the Tax Incentive Scheme and is considered the founder of tax amnesty. (El Daly, O.2005)

5. Statistics And Data Management

Effective management requires actual data and statistics. To achieve this, available manpower was assigned specific tasks, including:

1. Conducting a census to determine the exact population of the country and its surrounding areas, categorized by children, men, and women.
2. Classifying the population by status, distinguishing between the poor, needy, employed individuals, professionals, skilled individuals from various sectors, traders, capitalists, and the number of cities, towns, and villages.(Ramli, A., Ali, N. B., & Sa, A. 2022)

6. Agricultural Reforms

In Egypt, cultivated land along the Nile River coast mainly comprised government-owned property, priestly holdings, and feudal landlords' estates. Yusuf (as) implemented several agricultural reforms:

1. Expanded agricultural land through canal construction from the Nile.
2. Created water storage ponds for rain in the early prosperous years to enhance fertility.

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3. Organized the workforce for these lands.

4. Implemented land distribution among cultivators and organized crop collection. (Adriansen, H. K. 2009)

7. *Production Management*

The distribution of seven years' production was organized based on obtained data, involving:

1. Annual supply and distribution of wheat for food requirements.

2. Distribution of wheat for seeding purposes to farmers.

3. Collecting maximum grain for storage. (Latif, M., Kurniawan 2022)

8. *Storage Management*

To store wheat continuously for seven years while safeguarding against moisture and insects, Yusuf (as) took the following steps:

1. Stored wheat without separating it from its ears to protect against insects.

2. Constructed large warehouses in a column style with stone and clay basements to prevent moisture. Seven towers, each numbered, were built in major cities, following the first in, first out (FIFO) method. Yusuf (as) is credited not only as the inventor of the FIFO inventory management principle but also as the creator of modern warehouse-style buildings used in the

contemporary era. (Ali, A., Khan, S. N., & Shahzad, N. 2019)

9. *Supply Chain Management*

Yusuf (as) emerges as the founder of supply chain management, given the comprehensive planning and organization demonstrated in the aforementioned points.

10. *Conflicts And Stress Management*

Throughout the 15-year project, Yusuf (as) and his companions faced significant challenges and successfully navigated them through strategic planning, hard work, smart work, and teamwork.

8. *Conclusion*

In conclusion, Yusuf (as) offers valuable lessons for effective living:

1. Trust in God (Tawakkal al Allah) at all times.

2. Preservation of one's self-esteem and personal integrity.

3. Utilization of one's energy and talent to earn a living.

4. Identification of one's niche – what one can do best and is passionate about.

5. Maintenance of one's network of friends, co-workers, and relatives.

6. The importance of saving to face any emergency in the future.

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