

LESSONS FROM

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Sūrah Vūsuf

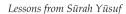
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Transliteration Table



Arabic Consonants

Initial, unexpressed medial and final: , '

With a *shaddah*, both medial and final consonants are doubled.

Vowels, diphthongs, etc.

Short:
$$a \stackrel{\frown}{-} u$$
 Long: $\bar{a} \stackrel{\frown}{-} \bar{u}$ \bar{u} Diphthongs: $\bar{u} \stackrel{\frown}{-} aw$ \bar{u}



Foreword



All Praise is due to Allah, Who revealed the Book to His Servant to be the Only Guidance, And may prayers and salutations be upon our Prophet (**) in great abundance.

The first time the Qur'ān spoke to me, it was through Sūrah Yūsuf.

I was probably 11 years old, in the mid-1980s. Like most kids my age, I had a Qur'ān teacher who helped me with reading and memorization (at this stage, I had only memorized maybe Juz 'Amma). I didn't understand Arabic then, and while, of course, I loved listening to my father's cassettes of Abdul Basit Abdul Samad, I hadn't read any translation of the Qur'ān. One day, in the summer break, completely bored at night, I curiously pulled out an old and tattered copy of the Qur'ān from my father's library – a translation of Abdullah Yūsuf Ali. I remember flicking through it, here and there, reading passages before losing interest and then turning to another passage (I was just a child after all!).

Then, seemingly at random – but of course, it was Allah's *qadr* – I came across the beginning of Sūrah Yūsuf.





I remember it vividly: the opening line just caught me like a hook, and I spent the next hour or so – way past my bedtime – turning page after page, reading every verse, and following up with every footnote in Abdullah Yusuf Ali's translation, until finally, I finished the sūrah. I was *riveted* with the story. At night as I lay in bed, my mind became filled with images from the sūrah: Yūsuf alone in the well, the torn shirt, him sitting in the palace on the King's throne. Thus began my journey into the Qur'ān.

Five years later, I would be memorizing the entire Qur'ān, and finishing Sūrah Yūsuf in a breeze. Around a decade after I first read it, I found myself studying at the University of Madinah. I would pick up little booklets in libraries and bookstores that went into more detail regarding this sūrah: some discussed *balāgha* (Arabic eloquence), others concentrated on the morals and benefits of this story. It was here as well that I began building my personal library: every month, when the students got their modest stipend, the first thing I did was to rush to the bookstores and splurge on a book that I might have had my eyes on for a while. Slowly, my *tafsīr* collection began to grow, and whatever I could find about this sūrah, I would buy.

In the summer of 2001, I was invited for my very first trip to England (since then, to date, I have been fortunate to travel more than a hundred times to the UK), and my hosts asked what intensive class I would be interested in teaching at Masjid al-Tawhid in Leyton. Immediately, and without a moment's hesitation, I said, "I would like to teach a detailed *tafsīr* of Sūrah Yūsuf!" Perhaps the child in me was still subconsciously imagining that story.



