

Yaqub (Jacob) and ending with the Prophet Isa (Jesus). He was a truthful and righteous man.

The Prophet Ishaq's birth was foretold by the angels to the Prophet Ibrahim when they were on their way to destroy the people of the Prophet Lut, for their sins. When he was born, both the Prophet Ibrahim and his wife, Sarah were in old age. The birth of the Prophet Ishaq was a gift (*nafila*) given by Allah to the Prophet Ibrahim. It was a gift for the display of his faith in Allah by readily agreeing to sacrifice his only son, the Prophet Ismail, at Allah's behest.

## 53. The Kabah

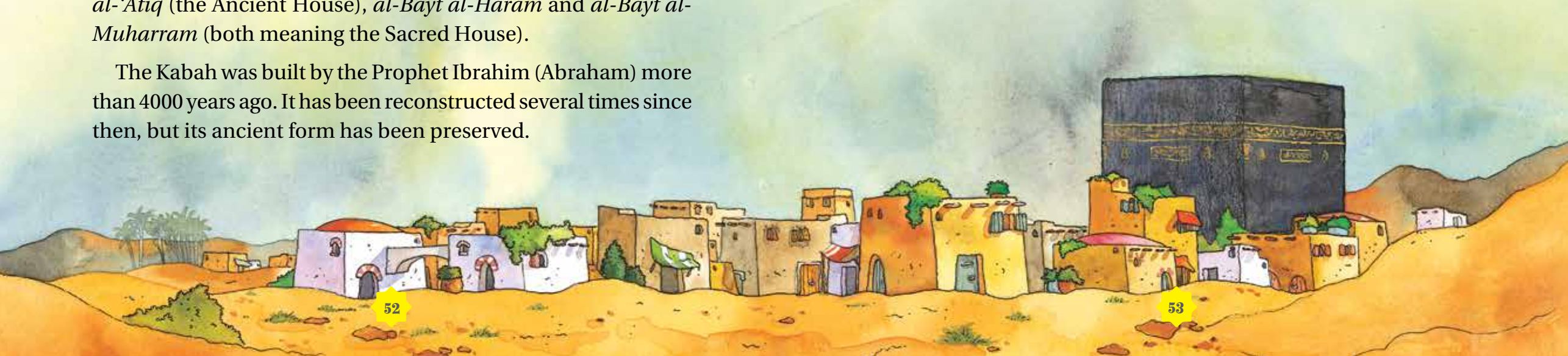
It is towards the Kabah that five times every day more than a quarter of the world's population direct themselves in prayer. Neither the Kabah nor the Black Stone are objects of worship; they are symbols (*sha'airullah*) providing a focal point for the unity of the Muslim ummah. The Quran also calls it *al-Bayt al-'Atiq* (the Ancient House), *al-Bayt al-Haram* and *al-Bayt al-Muharram* (both meaning the Sacred House).

The Kabah was built by the Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) more than 4000 years ago. It has been reconstructed several times since then, but its ancient form has been preserved.

The Kabah's walls are about 50 feet high, two of them being 35 feet in length and the other two being 40 feet. It is made of graystone taken from the surrounding hills of Makkah. It stands upon a one-foot high a marble base. Its corners are known as *arkan*. The eastern corner is called *al-Rukn al-Aswad*, after the Black Stone. The other three corners are named after the countries they face. The southern corner, facing Yemen is called *al-Rukn al-Yamani*, the northern corner, facing Iraq is called *al-Rukn al-'Iraqi* and the western corner, facing Syria is called *al-Rukn al-Shami*.

All the four walls of the Kabah are draped with a black brocaded covering called *kiswah*, meaning 'a robe,' which reaches to the ground where it is fastened with strong copper rings fixed in the *shadharwan* (the marble base).

The door of the Kabah is on its northern side, some seven feet above ground level. It is also covered with a similar curtain like the *kiswah*, but is called the *burqa* (the veil) and has *ayat* from the Quran upon it.



Allah waited for the people to listen to the Prophet Shuayb. He waited for them to stop cheating. But they did not bother about what the Prophet Shuayb said. Then a terrible thing happened! Allah sent an earthquake. The earth trembled. The houses shook, the walls crumbled. Stones from the walls and ceilings fell on the sleeping people. They were crushed to death.

Only the Prophet Shuayb عليه السلام and good people were saved. Allah dislikes cheating. He dislikes lying. He loves people who do not cheat and do not lie. He loves honest and truthful people.

## 64. 'The Most Beautiful Story...'

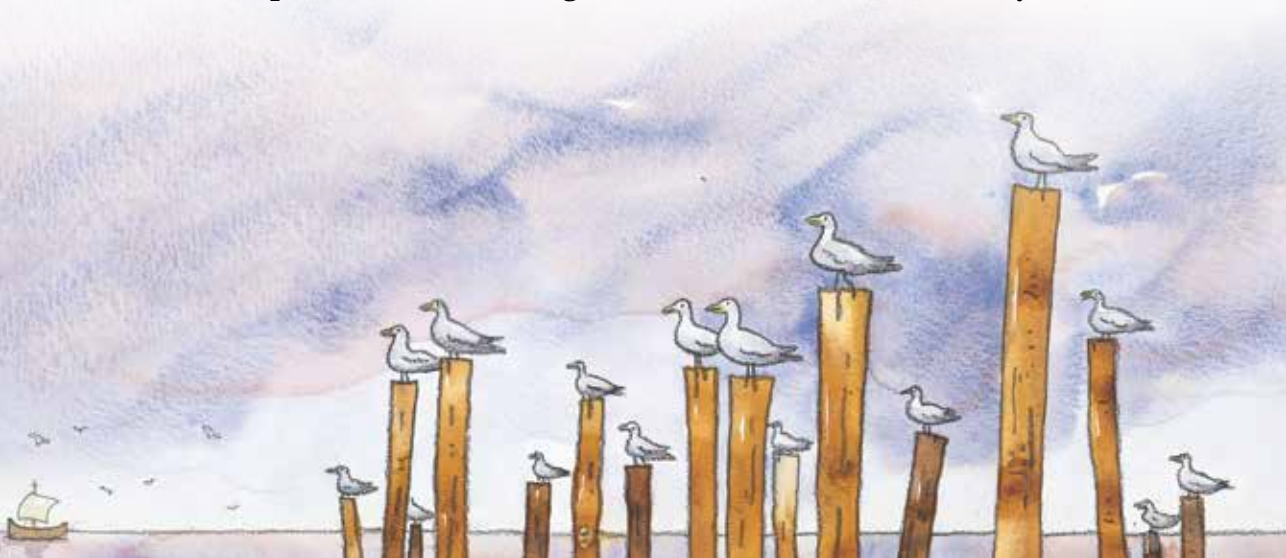
The Quran devotes almost the entire twelfth *surah*, or chapter, to the story of the Prophet Yusuf عليه السلام. It is a story that shows us the power of love and compassion and the ability of man, with God's help, to find the right path in spite of all the difficulties and pain that may block the way. Allah revealed this story to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ at a time when his enemies, who wanted to stamp out God's message, had escalated their cruelty to the

وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيْتَنِي صَغِيرًا ﴿٤٤﴾

My Lord, be merciful to them both, as they raised me up when I was little.

*Al-Isra 17:24*

point of plotting his murder. It was during the last days of the Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ stay in Makkah after the death of his wife Khadijah, a time in his life known as the Year of Sorrow. Muhammad ﷺ was dispirited, and his companions and followers were in need of encouragement. At this difficult moment some of the Prophet opponents challenged him to prove that he was really a prophet by answering questions about one of the prophets of the Children of Israel whose story was not known among the Arabs—Yusuf. The Prophet's enemies hoped to catch him making secret inquiries of the Jews about Yusuf, and then they would shout out loud that he was a fraud. As it turned out, they were disappointed. The story of the Prophet Yusuf given to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ at this critical time was a lesson and a source of inspiration for him and his followers. As the Quran says: "Surely in Yusuf and his brothers there are signs for asking men." The story of Yusuf عليه السلام and his brothers is very similar to the Prophet Muhammad's trials and ultimate triumph. The prophet's opponents in Makkah acted toward him just as Yusuf's brothers had toward Yusuf, and, like Yusuf, Muhammad ﷺ eventually attained a higher social stature than any of his opponents could imagine and succeeded in his God-given mission to establish the message of Islam.



يَأْتِيهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ﴿٢٧﴾ أَرْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ رَاضِيَةً  
مَّرْضِيَةً ﴿٢٨﴾ فَأَدْخِلِي فِي عِبَادِي ﴿٢٩﴾ وَأَدْخِلِي جَنَّتِي ﴿٣٠﴾

O soul at peace, return to your Lord, well-pleased,  
well-pleasing. Join My servants. Enter My Paradise.

*Al-Fajr 89:27-30*

This caravan was carrying apricots, dried apples, figs, spices, balm and incense. It also carried woollen cloth, and some other goods. All of these things were packed in saddlebags carried by the camels, whose broad feet spread comfortably on the sand tracks.

Although the camels' movements were silent, there was a constant tinkling sound of their halter bells. There were also the long, low calls, made by the camel-drivers, one by one, as they moved at an even pace along the well-known track. They were expecting to reach the next well very soon, and when they did, the water carrier was sent off to draw some water for the animals and the travelers.

When they reached home without Binyamin, the brothers told their ailing father that his son had committed a theft and that the king’s minister had kept him as a punishment. The brothers swore to their father that this was the truth, and they even made the people of the caravan bear witness. Yaqub عليه السلام was absolutely stunned by the story. He knew his little Binyamin too well to believe that he had stolen anything. He flatly refused to believe them, thinking they had plotted to get rid of their youngest brother just as they had plotted against Yusuf. So he cried out, “No! Your souls have tempted you to evil. But I will have sweet patience (*sabr jamil*). Allah may bring them all to me... He alone is All-Knowing and Wise.”

## 106. Yaqub عليه السلام Loses his Eyesight

The loss of Yusuf and now Binyamin was so hard for Yaqub عليه السلام to bear that he lost his eyesight weeping. Ruefully, he thought of how Yusuf’s boyhood dreams had augured his greatness. For himself, the whole world had been plunged into darkness. He poured out his distraction and grief only to Allah. His faith was



وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا ۝١١٤

My Lord, increase my knowledge.

*Ta Ha 20:114*

still as strong as ever and he observed the discipline of patience—the greatest virtue of the faithful.

Turning away from his sons, Yaqub عليه السلام cried, “How great is my grief for Yusuf!” The sons retorted, “By God! You will never cease to remember Yusuf until you ruin your health or die.” But Yaqub عليه السلام forgave the sting and malice in the words of his sons and, like a prophet of Allah, he still wished them well, gave sound advice, and did not lose hope.

“O my sons! Go and enquire about Yusuf and his brother, and never give up hope of Allah’s soothing mercy,” Yaqub عليه السلام said. “Truly, no one despairs of Allah’s soothing mercy, except those who have no faith.”

## 107. “None Shall Reproach You...”

So the sons of Yaqub عليه السلام once again set out for Egypt in the hope that the king’s minister would agree to their request to release Binyamin.

Finally they reached Egypt, met Yusuf and pleaded with him to release Binyamin. They told him that their father was an old man who deeply grieved for his son. They also pleaded with Yusuf عليه السلام

## 114. Prophet Yunus <sup>عليه السلام</sup> and his People

This happened a long, long time ago. In the city of Nineveh there lived a prophet. He was called Yunus, or Jonah <sup>عليه السلام</sup>.

Allah sends prophets when He wants to tell people something special. He sent the Prophet Yunus <sup>عليه السلام</sup> to teach people about Allah. But the people did not listen to the Prophet Yunus. They laughed at him. The Prophet Yunus got very angry with these people and moved away from the city of Nineveh.

The Prophet Yunus went to the seashore. A ship was about to sail. Without thinking twice, he jumped on and boarded the ship.

## 115. The Big Fish

The ship boarded by the Prophet Yunus <sup>عليه السلام</sup> reached the middle of the sea. Suddenly it became dark and a strong wind began to blow. A terrible storm tossed the ship to and fro.

The sailors and passengers got scared. The ship was overloaded. They cast lots to determine who would leave the ship. It fell on the Prophet Yunus. The sailors, then, got hold of the Prophet Yunus and threw him overboard. The Prophet Yunus tried to swim.

But a big fish came and swallowed him. Soon he found himself inside its huge stomach. Frightened, he remembered Allah.

He prayed: "There is no god but You! Glory be to You! I have done wrong."

He realised that he shouldn't have run away from his people, as he had not done what Allah wanted him to do!

