Jospeh In The Koran Essay, Research Paper

Stylistic differences point out an obvious distinction between the Koran and the Genesis. The essence of the Koran is admonition and guidance. No narrative thread runs through it, nor is it embedded in the history of a single person. The Koran s coherence is a product of the themes that are repeated throughout its many Suras. For all the importance it gives to one language, Arabic, its message is a more general one. In the Koran, the story of Joseph has nothing of the epic dimensions it has in Genesis but focuses instead on the smaller and more general theme of the importance of trusting God.

Joseph (Sura 12) is, of course, not a prophet in Judaism or Christianity, but he is in Islam. He is also the only one whose tale is told continuously, and the only one to be mentioned exclusively in a single Sura. The Koranic version of this story includes most of the key events of Genesis 36-38 but excludes virtually everything that links Joseph to the Hebrew nation.

In Genesis, Joseph is a divinely guided young man who is first tested severely and then becomes the leader of his nation, guiding them to prosperity in Egypt. The story does not emphasize the sufferings of Joseph. He is pictured rather as the man of action who through native ability and divine protection turns the injuries done him into advantages. The reader is not made to feel the torment in his soul. When he weeps it is because of the memory of what he had suffered and his yearning for his youngest brother, and he is in full control of the situation. His reward in the things of this world is great. Not onlly does he reveal himself as the savior of his nation but he becomes rich and powerful beyond his brothers dreams, and in a great kingdom. . In the Koran he is a divinely guided young man but not the leader of any nation.

Although God tests Joseph, it is to prove that only those who follow divine guidance prosper. In the most famous scene, the temptation by his master s wife, he is not more righteous than she, but God gives him a sign that he should not succumb. Islam does not believe in original sin, and is more accepting of human error than Genesis. Joseph s innocence in this encounter is also explicitly in Sura 12, while in Genesis only God and we see that Joseph is blameless. His master s wife is also treated in a more tolerant fashion in the Koran than in the Genesis. In a remarkable scene she shows the women of the city that they, too, would have been seduced by Joseph s angelic beauty.

In the Koran, in short, the story of Joseph has nothing of the epic dimensions as it has in Genesis but focuses instead on the smaller and more general theme of trusting in God.