

Paper

Quddús and the Story of Joseph: A Typological Exploration

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Abstract

The story of Joseph, son of Jacob, as told in the Book of Genesis and the Qur'án, has been widely interpreted as a parable of sacrifice, patience, and divine favour. Its significance has been explored across Judaic, Christian, Islamic, Bábí, and Bahá'í traditions. This paper examines how Quddús, the most outstanding disciple of the Báb, can be meaningfully understood through the lens of Joseph's narrative. In one of His Writings, Bahá'u'lláh likens the figure of Quddús to that of Joseph. Rather than asserting a direct and absolute analogy, this study offers a typological framework for exploring shared motifs, including exile, leadership, trials, and ultimate vindication. A key objective is to provide a structured and reasoned approach to typological figuration, addressing both the possibilities and limits of drawing such comparisons.

Editorial note: This article was revised on 24 Sept 2025; one sentence on pp 5 has been changed from 'In the Bahá'í Faith, Joseph is considered a minor prophet rather than a Manifestation of God.' to 'According to the Guardian, Joseph was one of the "Sent Ones" of the Qur'an, meaning a Manifestation of God.'

Introduction

The connections between Joseph's story and the ministries of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh have been broadly explored.¹ These analyses frame the Joseph narrative as a metanarrative for spiritual

¹ Nosratollah Mohammadhosseini, 'The Commentary on the Sura of Joseph', in *A Most Noble Pattern*, ed. by Todd Lawson and Omid Ghaemmaghami (Oxford: George Ronald, 2012), pp. 6-27.

Nosratollah Mohammadhosseini, 'Qoddus, Moḥammad-'Alī Bārforuši', *Encyclopædia Iranica* (2009), <https://iranicaonline.org/articles/qoddus-mohammad-ali-barforusi> [accessed 1 May 2025].

Jim Stokes, 'Story of Joseph in Five Religious Traditions', *World Order*, 28.3 (Spring 1997), pp. 35-46.

Nader Saiedi, *Gate of the Heart: Understanding the Writings of the Báb* (Ottawa and Waterloo, ON: Association for Bahá'í Studies and Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2008).

Nader Saiedi, 'Concealment and Revelation in Bahá'u'lláh's Book of the River', *The Journal of Bahá'í Studies*, 9.3 (1999), pp. 25-56.

Todd Lawson, 'Typological Figuration and the Meaning of "Spiritual": The Qur'anic Story of Joseph', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 132.2 (2012), pp. 221-244.

Todd Lawson, 'Joseph's Dreams and the Day of the Covenant: Poetics of Quranic Pedagogy in Sura Yūsuf', in *Teachers and Students: Reflections on Learning in Near and Middle Eastern Cultures* (Leiden: Brill, 2024), pp. 403-440.

S. Le Wei, 'Typological Figuration of Mystical Elements in Jesuit Figurists' Re-interpretation of Chinese Classics', in *Encountering China's Past. New Frontiers in Translation Studies*, ed. by L. Qi S. and Tobias

transformation across Abrahamic religions. This paper extends that reasoning to Quddús, examining how his life resonates with aspects of Joseph's journey.

Rather than positioning Quddús as a definitive Joseph-figure, this study uses a typological approach to examine significant shared themes. The paper begins with an overview of Quddús' life and historical significance. It then contextualizes the Súrih of Joseph and its Bahá'í interpretations. Subsequently, the study explores key thematic parallels between Joseph and Quddús, clarifying how these insights serve as an interpretive lens rather than a rigid framework.

Methodology: A Structured Approach to Typological Figuration

The methodology used in the analysis below is typological figuration, where mythical figures and legends are juxtaposed across times and spaces to generate new, shared interpretations of history. It belongs to the field of theological symbolism and allows authors to go beyond a single context, paralleling human and community experiences in dual religious events.²

Typological figuration cannot only portray discrete events but also generate metaphors and unleash human imagination into the realm of divine mysteries. These perspectives project a historical space where the analysis is not focused on the story itself but also the significance of small events, taken at distinct entry points of the narrative and somehow disconnected from the main plot. Such versatility allows the examination of biographies from a horizontal rather than a vertical structure with unexpected caveats and nuisances inviting more profound reflections. The resulting analogies between cases are meant to point out something greater than the events themselves.³

Shoghi Effendi seems to use this methodology when comparing the lives of the Báb and Jesus: "... we cannot fail to discern a remarkable similarity [the Báb's] to the distinguishing features of the career of Jesus Christ".⁴ Parallels between John the Baptist and the Báb have been made by Bahá'u'lláh.⁵

Typological figuration, as applied here, contrasts historical figures to reveal shared archetypal patterns without asserting absolute equivalence. This method emphasizes theological symbolism, where parallels serve to illuminate broader spiritual meanings rather than proving direct historical relationships⁶. This paper follows the following structured framework:

- Theme Selection – Identifying shared motifs (e.g., exile, sacrifice, leadership, divine favor).
- Contextual Validation – Establishing scriptural and historical grounding for each motif.
- Counterpoints – Acknowledging where the analogy does not fully hold and considering alternative comparisons.
- Significance – Discussing how the Joseph-Quddús connection enhances understanding of Quddús' role in Bahá'í history.

(Singapore: Springer, 2022), pp. 145–163, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-0648-0_9 [accessed 1 May 2025].

² Wei, 'Typological Figuration'.

³ Lawson, 'Typological Figuration'.

⁴ Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* (Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1979), p. 56.

⁵ Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitáb-i-Badí'* (Hofheim: Bahá'í-Verlag, 2008), p. 79, provisionally translated by Adib Masumian and Necati Alkan, August 2019. <https://adibmasumian.com/translations/bahauallah-on-john-the-baptist/> [accessed 1 May 2025].

⁶ Ibid.; Lawson, 'Typological Figuration'; Lawson, 'Joseph's Dreams'.

Typological analogies, while engaging, often rest on broad similarities that could apply to other figures. Without deeper textual analysis from sacred Writings—beyond this paper's scope—these comparisons remain limited and non-exclusive to Quddús.

About Quddús

Quddús was the last of the eighteen Letters of the Living, a title bestowed by the Báb (1819-1850) on His first disciples. The Báb claimed to be the *Gate of God*, the new Messenger of God hailed as the return of prophet Elijah (Malachi 4:5, King James Version) and John the Baptist (Matthew 16:13–16), and the appearance of the Promised One of Islam, namely, the Qá'im ("He Who shall arise" or "He Who ariseth").⁷ Quddús' encounter with the Báb and immediate conversion was a turning point, marking his life forever.

In a Tablet from the Báb to Quddús, published in the Dawn-Breakers,⁸ he is referred to as the "Eighteenth Temple".⁹ About him, the Báb wrote, "Thou art the first, for there is no first save thee, and the last, for there is no last save thee."¹⁰

The Báb referred to the exalted station of Quddús as "in whom God hath gloried before the Concourse on high by virtue of his absolute detachment...".¹¹ His title, Quddús (in Arabic, "Holy"), was given by Bahá'u'lláh. In a Tablet of Visitation revealed by the Báb in honour of His young disciple, he is referred to as the "beloved of my heart, my king of glory, and my irrevocable purpose, the sovereign Lord of my beginning and end!"¹²

Quddús was chosen to accompany the Báb to Mecca in 1844. He had previously studied in prestigious Islamic schools in Mashhad and Karbilá, gaining extensive theological knowledge, and became known for his piety. Quddús spread the Báb's teachings throughout Iran, leading to the first mass enrolments. He was a significant figure at the historic Conference of Badasht, where the laws of the Báb were openly proclaimed. He actively defended the Faith of the Báb in the midst of severe persecution and opposition.

Quddús is considered the most illustrious of the believers in the Báb and played a significant role in the formation and development of the early Bábí community. Quddús was a dynamic leader, along with his companion Mullá Husayn —the first Letter of the Living, during the battles at the Shaykh Ṭabarsí fort where over five hundred believers were sieged by Persian state forces between October 1848 to May 1849. These violent clashes resulted in the death of hundreds of believers.¹³ Despite being largely outnumbered, the defenders showed extraordinary resilience and faith.

⁷ Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 58.

⁸ Nabíl-i-A'zam, *The Dawn-Breakers: Nabil's Narrative of the Early Days of the Bahá'í Revelation*. (Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1970).

⁹ Stephen Lambden, *Muhammad 'Alí Bārfurushí Quddús*, 2021, <https://hurqalya.ucmerced.edu/node/4081> [accessed 30 April 2024].

¹⁰ The Báb, *Tablet of Visitation for Quddús*. Provisional translation authorized by the Bahá'í World Centre. This Tablet of Visitation was originally published in Muhammad 'Alí Malik Khusraví, *Tarikh-i-shubadāyi Amr*, I. Ṭihrán, 130 B.E./1973-4, pp. 412-14.

¹¹ The Báb, *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*. (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1982), pp. 89-90.

¹² The Báb, *Tablet of Visitation for Quddús*.

¹³ Siyamak Zabihi-Moghaddam. "The Bábí-state Conflict at Shaykh Ṭabarsí." *Iranian Studies*, 35, no. 1-3, (2002), pp. 87-112.

In the battles and violent conflicts that followed, his spirit remained unwavering and rejuvenated. In deadly clashes, Quddús displayed matchless bravery, leaving a testament to his unwavering certainty, leadership, and uncompromising defence of his beliefs. The siege was a momentous and yet dreadful event in the history of the Faith of the Báb. After being deceived by the monarch's representative with an offer of free passage, Quddús was detained, and the fort survivors were massacred at the site. Subsequently, he was subjected to a three-day farcical trial to be finally martyred in his home city of Bárfurúsh on 16 May 1849 at the age of twenty-seven years. After being killed with knives by a fanatic mob in the public square, his body was beheaded and literally torn to pieces, with the shattered limbs subsequently set on fire.¹⁴

Educated personally by the Prophet for a year, Quddús best embodied His attributes and, therefore, can be considered the finest mirror to understand His revelation. Quddús' spiritual transformation sprang from being a motherless country child, from a dispossessed rice farming family to becoming one of the most significant figures in religious history. Essential components of his story are told in the book *The Dawn-Breakers: Nabil's Narrative of the Early Days of the Bahá'í Revelation*.¹⁵

Quddús was identified as one of the three messengers accused of imposture mentioned in the Qur'án (36:13, Arberry version), along with the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.¹⁶ 'Abdu'l-Bahá referred to Quddús as the “*Moon of Guidance*” and the Báb as the “*Sun of Reality*”¹⁷ and identified both of them as the two ‘Witnesses’ of the Latter Days (Revelation 1:1–14) and as the spiritual return of Prophet Muḥammad and the Imam ‘Alí.¹⁸ ‘Abdu'l-Bahá also stated that the Báb and Quddús, “these two Personages—one the founder and the other the promoter—arose and were as two candlesticks, for they illumined the whole world with the light of truth”.¹⁹ However, the Universal House of Justice advises that, “It is apparent that, despite his uniquely high station, Quddús is not regarded as a Manifestation of God”.²⁰

Furthermore, in the Bahá'í Writings and historical sources, Quddús is compared to other sacred figures. For instance, ‘Abdu'l-Bahá likens Quddús to Imám ‘Alí;²¹ in *The Dawn-Breakers*, His *Tafsír-i-Şád* is compared to the *Qur'án*,²² and according to a statement attributed to Bahá'u'lláh, his martyrdom is likened to that of Christ.²³

¹⁴ Boris Handal, *Quddús: The First in Rank* (IngramSparks, 2025).

¹⁵ Nabil-i-A'zam, *The Dawn-Breakers*.

¹⁶ Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*; Saiedi, ‘*Concealment and Revelation*’.

¹⁷ ‘Abdu'l-Bahá *Some Answered Questions*. 2nd ed. (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 2014). Ch 11, sect. 30.

¹⁸ Ibid.; ‘Alí (c. 600—661 CE), the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muḥammad, was designated as His successor.

¹⁹ Ibid. Ch 11, sect. 29.

²⁰ The Universal House of Justice is the supreme body of the Bahá'í Faith.

The Universal House of Justice. *Letters of Living, Dawn-Breakers, Quddús, Terraces*. Letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer dated August 1975. https://bahai-library.com/uwj_letters_Quddús_dawnbreakers [accessed 1 May 2025].

²¹ ‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, Ch 11, sect. 28.

²² Nabil-i-A'zam, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 357.

²³ Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, pp. 49-50.

The Súrih of Joseph

In Islam, a whole Súrih (chapter) in the Qur'án is dedicated to Joseph. This chapter is referred to as the "Best of the Stories" (Qur'án 12:3) probably because of its mystical wealth and enchanting narrative. It is also the only self-contained Súrih dedicated to a single prophet, encompassing a beginning and a happy end.

The Báb wrote a commentary on the Súrih of Joseph, also called the *Qayyúmu'l-Asmá'*. The term *Qayyúmu'l-Asmá'* can be translated as "The Self-Subsisting Lord of All Names".²⁴ This Book was revealed on the eve of the Báb's Declaration to Mullá Husayn on the 23rd of May 1844. The *Qayyúmu'l-Asmá'* offers a comprehensive and excellent interpretation of the mystical significance of the story of Joseph. In His Writings, the Báb referred to the prophetic figure of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*. Such a designation was given by the Báb to the Promised One to follow Him, namely, Bahá'u'lláh (1817-1892), a title in Arabic that means the "Glory of God".

In brief, in both the Biblical and Quranic accounts, Jacob, Abraham's grandson, is a patriarch and a prophet (Qur'án 2:102). His son Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers yet rose to become Egypt's most senior magistrate. Later, while buying grain in Egypt for their family, Joseph's brothers recognized him only through a sequence of unexpected events. Joseph ultimately reunited with his father, Jacob, and forgave his brothers. The central theme of the story are Joseph's tests from youth to maturity.

The Tablet of Mubáhilih

The *Tablet of Mubáhilih*, or Tablet of the Confrontation, was revealed in Adrianople at the time when Mírzá Yahyá, Bahá'u'lláh's half-brother, openly rebelled against Him and sought the leadership of the Bábí-Bahá'í community. It was addressed to Mullá Šádiq-i-Khurasání where Bahá'u'lláh compared Quddús to the biblical Joseph.²⁵ The following is a provisional translation from extracts of the *Tablet of Mubáhilih*:

This is a Tablet which hath been expounded from the Preserved Tablet, that it may be a guide and mercy unto all who dwell in the heavens and on earth. And therein hath been mentioned a remnant of My kindred, he who hath endured in the path of his Lord that which caused the company of the well-favoured to tremble. Blessed art thou, O My Name, for the breezes of the fragrances of the garment of the mighty Joseph who hath been known as Muḥammad-‘Alí [Quddús]²⁶, have wafted over thee. He, verily, is the one who hath been called by Our name, Quddús among the Concourse on High, and by Subbúḥ [the most Sanctified One] in the cities of eternity, and by all the names in the kingdom of names. Through him, My sovereignty and My power, My grandeur and My majesty were made manifest, if ye be of them that comprehend this truth. We sprinkled upon him from this Sea that which caused him to be severed from all other than Me, moving him from the west of stillness to the east of exhilaration, until he sacrificed his life in My Path. So was his inner being rejoiced, though the eyes of the favoured ones were made to weep. Blessed art thou that thou didst have the honour of meeting him, and of hearing his melodies, and of

²⁴ Saiedi, *Gate of the Heart*, p. 130.

²⁵ Bahá'u'lláh, *Lanḥ-i-Mubáhilih*. pp. 277-281. <https://www.bahai.org/fa/library/authoritative-texts/bahauallah/additional-tablets-bahauallah/138668755/1#119537332> [accessed 1 May 2025].

²⁶ Muḥammad ‘Alí is the birth name of Quddús. ‘Alí Muḥammad is the birth name of the Báb.

communing with his wronged and lonely soul. He standeth present before the Throne, and weepeth sore over that which hath been inflicted upon Me by the army of evil ones.²⁷

Joseph's Story in the Bahá'í Writings

Joseph's life is outlined in the book of Genesis (Chapters 37-50) and in the Súrih of Joseph. Joseph is also mentioned *in passing* in John (4:5); Acts (7:9-18); Hebrews (11:21-22) and the Book of Revelation (7:8).

In the Qur'án, Joseph is one of the twenty-five prophets (*nabí*) recorded in that Holy Book. A passage of the Qur'án reads: "Verily Joseph came to you with clear signs before..." (40:34). Joseph is mentioned in the *Kitáb-i-Íqán*²⁸ and in several other Writings. According to the Guardian, 'Joseph was one of the "Sent Ones" of the Qur'an, meaning a Manifestation of God'.²⁹ In verse 12:6, the Qur'án asserts Joseph's station:

... It is thus that thy Lord shall choose thee and will teach thee the interpretation of dark sayings, and will perfect his favours on thee and on the family of Jacob, as of old he perfected it on thy fathers Abraham and Isaac; verily thy Lord is Knowing, Wise!

The story of Joseph has plenty of rich metaphors, which have been elaborated in the Writings of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Some of these metaphors relate to the chronology of the account, although some are more mystical with little historical context. Various primary and minor themes appear in the Bahá'í Writings, sometimes with multiple meanings.

Among these major themes are the mystical dimension of places and events, the theme of longing for God, the spiritual significance of the concept of garment and the space of revelation, which intertwine with the figures of the Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb and Quddús.

In the Bahá'í Writings, the identified places in the story have mystical meanings in addition to the geography. For instance, Egypt is called "the Egypt of love".³⁰ Egypt plays a central role in the story. Being more than the Pharaonic kingdom, in the Bahá'í Writings, Egypt is also called the "celestial Egypt"³¹ and the "Egypt of the spirit".³² As such, Egypt is where the "Joseph-like beauty of the Friend" resides.³³

Referring to Joseph being sold in Egypt as a child apparently in a bazaar, 'Abdu'l-Bahá exhorts that we should, as persons striving to acquire the spiritual attributes of Joseph, "give our all to buy the Divine Joseph in the market place".³⁴ According to Bahá'u'lláh, "In Egypt he [Joseph] hid his station from

²⁷ Provisional translation authorized by the Bahá'í World Centre. Bahá'u'lláh, *Lamḥ-i-Mubábilih* (Tablet of Confrontation I), in 'Abdu'l-Hamíd Ishráq-Khávari (ed.). *Ma'iydih-i-Ásmání*, 4, pp. 277-81. <https://www.bahai.org/fa/library/authoritative-texts/bahaullah/additional-tablets-bahaullah/138668755/1#119537332> [accessed 1 May 2025].

²⁸ Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán* (Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1989). sect. 28.

²⁹ From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, July 30, 1941. Cited in *Lights of Guidance*, sect. 1265.

³⁰ Bahá'u'lláh, *The Call of the Divine Beloved, 'The Seven Valleys'*, sect. 2:17.

³¹ Bahá'u'lláh, *Gems of Divine Mysteries (Javáhiru'l-Asrár)*. (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 2002), sect. 29.

³² 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Light of the World: 76 Selected Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*. (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 2021), sect. 70.

³³ Bahá'u'lláh, *The Call of the Divine Beloved, 'The Seven Valleys'*, sect. 2:17.

³⁴ 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Memorials of the Faithful*. (Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1971), p. 31.

people because he found them heedless and pretenders”³⁵ and “When Joseph—peace be upon him—unveiled his bright countenance in the Egypt of beauty, he set ablaze the souls of a myriad buyers”.³⁶

Jacob had always hoped that he would eventually reunite with Joseph and knew he was alive somewhere. Jacob's longing to meet his lost son is an essential component of the story that Bahá'u'lláh highlighted, particularly in the Seven Valleys: “How many Jacobs will he see, hunting after his Joseph”.³⁷

Another central metaphor revolves around Joseph's garment (Qamīš, in Arabic, representing a robe, coat, tunic, or shirt). In Joseph's story, the fragrance of his garments is the vehicle for his father, who is too distant and blind to recognize him (Qur'án 12:18; Genesis 25-27; 93). According to Lawson “the Qur'án calls a shirt (qamīš) and the Hebrew Bible calls a coat of many colors (kethoneth)”.³⁸ The metaphor has various meanings. For instance, in referring to the incident when Joseph's brothers dipped Joseph's garments in goat blood, ‘Abdu'l-Bahá says that such an evil deed was done “with the blood of vain imaginings”.³⁹

The Bahá'í Writings also explain that the garment metaphor represents recognition of divinity. The metaphor of the garment as a divine vehicle also appears in the New Testament: “People brought all their sick to him [Jesus] and begged him to let the sick just touch the hem of his garment, and all who touched it were healed” (Matthew 14:35). In the Qur'án (12:93), Joseph said to his brothers, “[And now] go and take this garment of mine and lay it over my father's face, and he will recover his sight”, and so it happened. As seen before, when the brothers return from Egypt, Jacob, from a distance, senses the fragrances of Joseph's shirt and says: “You may think I am senile, but I certainly sense the smell of Joseph” (Qur'án 12:94).

The following analysis of the mystical associations among the story of Joseph, Bahá'u'lláh, and the Báb has been done separately. However, some themes apply simultaneously to both Central Figures of the Faith.

The Báb as a Joseph

It is noteworthy that in various instances in Their writings, Bahá'u'lláh⁴⁰ and the Báb⁴¹ identified Themselves as Joseph. The Báb refers to Himself as “the Joseph of Divine Unity” and “the Joseph of the Supreme Origin”.⁴² Likewise, according to Nosratollah Mohammadhosseini, “In the Book of Names (Kitáb al-Asmá'), in the chapter entitled ‘The Name of God, the Bearer of Glad-Tidings’ (Ismu'lláh al-Bashír), the Báb identifies himself as a herald to the Joseph of Bahá' (Yusuf al-Bahá'), namely the Promised One”.⁴³ The same author affirms that “By Joseph, He [the Báb] says, is meant

³⁵ ‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *Makātib-i Abd al-Bahá*, vol. 2. Cairo, 1330/1912. p. 176.

³⁶ ‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *Light of the World*, sect. 70.

³⁷ Bahá'u'lláh, *Call of the Divine Beloved*, sect. 2:9.

³⁸ Lawson, ‘Typological Figuration’, p. 232.

³⁹ ‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *Light of the World*, sect. 63.

⁴⁰ Bahá'u'lláh, *Gems of Divine Mysteries*, sect. 29 ; Anton Haddad “*Tablet of Joseph (Lawh-i Yusuf)*, by Bahá'u'lláh (provisional translation).” Untitled 1904 compilation, vol 1 (Bahá'í Board of Counsel, 1904), pp.1-8. https://bahai-library.com/bahauallah_lawh_yusuf/ [accessed 1 May 2025].

⁴¹ Saiedi, *Gate of the Heart*, p.142 ; Mohammadhosseini, ‘The Commentary on the Surah of Joseph’, p. 10.

⁴² Saiedi, *Gate of the Heart*, p. 184.

⁴³ Mohammadhosseini, ‘The Commentary on the Surah of Joseph’, p. 19.

the Qá'im (the Báb Himself) and the promised Remnant of God. By Jacob is meant Muḥammad, the Messenger of God, or his descendants who are the Báb's forefathers".⁴⁴

Divine Powers

Some central themes can be drawn from Joseph's story. According to Nader Saiedi, "the Báb interpreted the ultimate meaning of the obeisance of the moon, the sun, and the eleven stars before Joseph as recognition of the Báb by Muḥammad and the [eleven] Imáms".⁴⁵ When Jacob urged Joseph (Qur'án 12:5) not to tell his dream to his brothers to avoid jealousy, accordingly "the Báb should not reveal the whole truth to the people and should be patient with them".⁴⁶ Further, Jacob's observations to his son, "Thus will thy Lord choose thee and teach thee the interpretation of stories" (Qur'án 12:6), infers "that God has chosen the Báb as the recipient of his Revelation".⁴⁷

The Well

According to Nader Saiedi, the Báb sheds new light on many aspects of Joseph's story through His multiple interpretations. "The well stands for the well of Absolute Unity", wrote Nader Saiedi. "It is deep and dark, a place where all differentiations and distinctions are obliterated—the unfathomable realm of utter effacement and nothingness".⁴⁸ Mohammadhosseini wrote that "According to the Báb ... by Zulaykha is meant a person or the people who will turn away from the Báb".⁴⁹ Nader Saiedi adds that in the Writings of the Báb, "The prisoners' dreams [in Joseph's cell] relate to the letters of affirmation and the letters of negation".⁵⁰

The Caravan

Joseph's residence is alluded to as the "celestial Canaan," and it is stated that the brothers, referred to as a caravan of buyers, also came from remote Karbilá, searching for the Promised One, the Báb.⁵¹ The brothers' caravan from Canaan to Egypt, in the Báb's interpretation, is more a mystical journey to recognize the beloved than a mere commercial transaction. They pass through several cities whose ultimate purpose is the recognition of the Promised One veiled in His mysteries.⁵² Further, Mohammadhosseini suggests that "By Joseph's brothers is meant the people who have not already recognized the sublime station of the Báb, and He [the Báb] is trying to introduce Himself to them".⁵³

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Imáms are the descendant of the Prophet Muḥammad. 'Alí, His successor, and eleven of his direct descendants in the direct line of succession constitute the exponents of the Islam Shí'ih religion; Saiedi, *Gate of the Heart*, p. 149.

⁴⁶ Mohammadhosseini, 'The Commentary on the Surah of Joseph', p. 11.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Saiedi, *Gate of the Heart*, p. 119.

⁴⁹ Mohammadhosseini, 'The Commentary on the Surah of Joseph', p. 11.

⁵⁰ Saiedi, *Gate of the Heart*, p. 156.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., p. 152.

⁵³ Mohammadhosseini, 'The Commentary on the Surah of Joseph', p. 11.

The Pharaoh's Court

About the Pharaoh's disturbing dream, Mohammadhosseini affirms that "the Báb interprets the seven years of abundance as his own Revelation and the advent of the Promised One of the Báb and the years of dryness and famine to the people who will turn away from him".⁵⁴ Furthermore, Bahá'u'lláh has affirmed that the food Joseph stockpiled and provided (Genesis 41:55-56) was spiritual. The Bahá'í Writings explains that the power of Joseph was the power of God⁵⁵ and that his court was the throne where he put his parents (Qur'án 12: 100). In the *Four Valleys* Bahá'u'lláh seems to allude to that throne as a mystical space, "If the mystic knowers be among them that have attained the beauty of the Beloved, this station is the throne of the inmost heart and the secret of divine guidance".⁵⁶

Bahá'u'lláh as Joseph

In the *Lawh-i-Ghulámu'l-Khuld* (Tablet of the Immortal Youth), Bahá'u'lláh associates Himself with the Joseph of the Qur'án,⁵⁷ as the "most noble Angel", the "immortal Youth" that has "come with a mighty cause", "a transcendent cause," "with a mighty spirit," "with an ancient light," and "with enchanting grace".⁵⁸

Joseph's Fragrance

Further, on the significance of the mystical fragrances of Joseph's garment, the Báb wrote, "It behooveth the faithful to inhale the fragrance of sweet savours"⁵⁹ and in turn, Bahá'u'lláh wrote in the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, "From My laws the sweet-smelling savor of My garment can be smelled...".⁶⁰ The Blessed Beauty also wrote in the *Four Valleys* about the "musk-scented fragrance of the garment of Há from the Joseph of Bahá", and He added, "verily He seemeth near at hand, though ye may think Him far away".⁶¹

These mystical fragrances represent a metaphor for spiritual reality⁶² with a hidden mystical curative effect. When Jacob recovered his sight after so much crying and missing his sons, according to the Bahá'í Writings, he also recovered his inner eye. According to Bahá'u'lláh, "...until, like Jacob, thou forsake thine outward eyes, thou shalt never open the eye of thine inward being".⁶³

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Bahá'u'lláh, *Call of the Divine Beloved*, sect. 7.

⁵⁷ Bahá'u'lláh, *Days of Remembrance*, *Lawh-i-Ghulámu'l-Khuld* (Tablet of the Immortal Youth). (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 2017). sect. 12, <https://www.bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/bahauallah/days-remembrance/> [accessed 1 May 2025].

⁵⁸ See Ibid., sect. 6, sect. 3, sect. 4, sect. 5, sect. 6 and sect. 21 respectively.

⁵⁹ Saiedi, *Gate of the Heart*, p. 81.

⁶⁰ Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1992), sect. 4.

⁶¹ Bahá'u'lláh, *The Call of the Divine Beloved*, *The Four Valleys*, sect. 7:33.

⁶² Lawson, 'Typological Figuration', p. 231.

⁶³ Bahá'u'lláh. *The Call of the Divine Beloved*, *The Seven Valleys*, sect. 2:17.

Egypt

Egypt, in the Bahá'í Writings, also represent a place of revelation. Alluding to Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá explained that:

Now the Joseph of the celestial Canaan, the ruler of the Egypt of the spirit ... hath rent asunder the veils and emerged resplendent in the midmost heart of the world. But alas, all the buyers have busied themselves with the world of water and clay, have pursued their selfish desires, and have hence been deprived of beholding His Countenance and attaining His presence. Render thou thanks unto God that thou hast been among the buyers who seek that Divine Beauty, and among those who are enamoured by the Mystic Beloved. The glory of God rest upon thee and upon all those who have been enraptured by His Beauty.⁶⁴

The Breaking of the Covenant

An additional central theme refers to Bahá'u'lláh as the victim of His brother Mírzá Yahyá's iniquities. 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote, "Since in His commentary on the Súrih of Joseph, the Báb — may my life be offered up for His sake — hath identified Joseph as the Manifest Beauty [Bahá'u'lláh], the true Joseph, and hath referred to Him as "our great and omnipotent Master", then whenever thou readest it, thou wilt but weep and grieve for the wrongs suffered by the Blessed Beauty".⁶⁵

In this regard, Shoghi Effendi has also highlighted that the *Qayyúmu'l-Asmá'* also known as the *Commentary on the Súrih of Joseph* had as a "fundamental purpose...to forecast what the true Joseph (Bahá'u'lláh) would, in a succeeding Dispensation, endure at the hands of one who was at once His arch-enemy and blood brother".⁶⁶ In a Tablet also revealed in Adrianople, according to historian Adib Taherzadeh, Bahá'u'lláh "refers to Himself allegorically as the One who has been thrown into a deep well by reason of the envy of those who had been among His servants, who were created through one word from Him and who have now arisen against their Lord".⁶⁷

Commenting on this violation of the Covenant of God, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote, "The robe of the Joseph of the all-glorious and unseen Kingdom is dyed with blood, the raiment of the Ancient Beauty stained crimson".⁶⁸ In a similar vein, 'Abdu'l-Bahá interprets the narrative of Joseph's being cast into the well as an allegorical reference to the violation of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant during His ministry.

He is the All Glorious!

O thou who hast drunk from the fountain of life: Verily, the caravan of the Kingdom set out into the wilderness of the heavenly Realm and sent forth its search party to find water in a dark and gloomy well. As they lowered the pail they announced, "Joyful tidings: behold, the youth of the Covenant who, falsely accused, was abandoned in this deep well by His brothers and was subsequently sold [into slavery] for a paltry price. Woe, then, unto them

⁶⁴ 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Light of the World*, sect. 70.

⁶⁵ Ibid., sect. 465.

⁶⁶ Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 23.

⁶⁷ Adib Taherzadeh. *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh: Mazra'ih and Bahjí: 1877–1892*, vol. 4. (Oxford: George Ronald, 1987), p. 81.

⁶⁸ 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Light of the World*, sect. 414.

for that which they have done, and glory be upon those who acquired Him from His brothers".⁶⁹

Joseph as an Expression of Beauty

Both the Bible (Genesis 39:6) and the Qur'án (12:31) refer to Joseph's physical and spiritual beauty. 'Abdu'l-Bahá described him as having "a face radiant as the sun and a beauty far above the praise and description of such as are endued with understanding".⁷⁰ This concept of spiritual Beauty has passed to the Bahá'í Faith, which refers to Bahá'u'lláh as the "Blessed Beauty" or "Ancient Beauty." In His words, "Naught is seen in My temple but the Temple of God, and in My beauty but His Beauty".⁷¹ Referring to the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá commented:

Such is the case with the holy Manifestations of God. Such in particular is the case with the divine reality of the Most Great Name, the Abhá Beauty. When once He standeth revealed unto the assembled peoples of the world and appeareth with such comeliness, such enchantments — alluring as a Joseph in the Egypt of the spirit — He enslaveth all the lovers on earth.⁷²

Highlighting these mystical associations between the believer and the Beloved within Joseph's story, Bahá'u'lláh wrote:

Cleanse thy heart from every blasphemous whispering and evil allusion thou hast heard in the past, that thou mayest inhale the sweet savours of eternity from the Joseph of faithfulness, gain admittance into the celestial Egypt, and perceive the fragrances of enlightenment.⁷³

In narrating the exile of Bahá'u'lláh and His companions to the prison city of 'Akká on 31 August 1868, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote, "Once they were thrown into a pit, a kind of well, and suffered agonies all through the night"⁷⁴ and that the next day, a believer lamented: "O you who oppress us! Are we Joseph the Prophet that you have thrown us in this well? Remember how He rose out of the well as high as the full moon? We too walk the pathway of God, we too are down here for His sake, and we know that these depths are the heights of the Lord".⁷⁵ Furthermore, on the subject of opposition, Bahá'u'lláh in the Suriy-i-Javád revealed:

Say: O people! Dust fill your mouths, and ashes blind your eyes, for having bartered away the Divine Joseph for the most paltry of prices. Oh, the misery that resteth upon you, ye that are far astray! Have ye imagined in your hearts that ye possess the power to outstrip

⁶⁹ Youness Afroukhteh, *Memories of Nine Years in 'Akká*. Tr. Riaz Masrour (Oxford: George Ronald, 2003), pp. 57.

⁷⁰ 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Light of the World*, sect. 70.

⁷¹ Shoghi Effendi. *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh* (Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974), p. 109.

⁷² 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1978), p. 64.

⁷³ Bahá'u'lláh, *Gems of Divine Mysteries*, sect. 29.

⁷⁴ 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Memorials of the Faithful*, p. 121.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

Him and His Cause? Far from it! To this He, Himself, the All-Powerful, the Most Exalted, the Most Great, doth testify.⁷⁶

Interestingly, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá compared the teaching of the Faith “to perfume the senses of the seekers with the fragrance of the robe of the divine Joseph”.⁷⁷

Quddús and Joseph

Quddús’ life contains various personal, immanent, mystical and historical motifs, paralleling Joseph's narrative described in Genesis and in the Qur’án with the life of Quddús. Innumerable mystical motifs can be derived from Joseph's life and applied to Quddús. Some might look chronological, while others appear to have a more open spiritual domain. These motifs seem highly metaphorical as they point to a spiritual significance rather than a discrete event.

Personal Themes

The section below outlines some similarities in (a) their shared provenance and personal development and (b) Quddús’ and Joseph's attributes.

Within the first of the aforementioned two clusters, *their rural origin* is evident. Both Quddús and Joseph came from a countryside background. Joseph was a shepherd (37:2). When the Pharaoh asked his brothers about their occupation, they answered, “We thy servants are shepherds, from our infancy until now, both we and our fathers” (46:34). According to Hushmand Dehghan, Quddús’ father was a poor farmer living in the outskirts of Bárforúsh.⁷⁸

Likewise, it can be said that both experienced similar *family developments*. Both Quddús⁷⁹ and Joseph’s⁸⁰ mothers died when they were very young. Some Bible scholars argue that the *kethoneth* (long coloured garment) represented the birthright of the first born.⁸¹ Reuben had forfeited his birthright, Joseph's oldest brother, because of incest (1 Chronicles 5:1). Hence, his birthright as the oldest brother was forfeited and transferred to Joseph, who became Jacob’s *primogenito* (in Latin, “firstborn”) de facto.⁸² Quddús’ also held the family primogenitary from his father, Áqá Muḥammad Šáliḥ.⁸³

Furthermore, *Quddús’ provenance* can be traced back to Jacob himself through Muḥammad. Abraham had three wives Sarah, Hagar and Keturah. Jacob was born in Sarah, whereas Ishmael came from Hagar. In the Bible, the Jewish and the Arab people are considered descendants of Jacob and Ishmael, respectively (Genesis 25:18). Jacob was named Israel (in Hebrew, God persists or rules) and the patriarch of the twelve Jewish tribes while to Ishmael, God promised that his

⁷⁶ Bahá’u’lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*. Tr. Shoghi Effendi. (Wilmette, IL: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1978). Ch3 sect. 4.

⁷⁷ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Light of the World*, sect. 21.

⁷⁸ Hushmand Dehghan, *Ganj-i-Pinhán: Sargozasht va Asare Hazrate Ghodoos* (Luxembourg: Adel, 2016), p. 32.

⁷⁹ Mohammadhosseini, ‘Qoddus, Moḥammad-‘Ali Bārforúši’.

⁸⁰ Frederick M. Strickert, *Rachel weeping: Jews, Christians, and Muslims at the fortress tomb* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007).

⁸¹ William Wilson, *Old Testament Word Studies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1979).

⁸² Years later, Jacob formalized this birthright on one of Joseph’s grandchildren (Genesis 48:17).

⁸³ Fazel Mazandarani, *Taríkh Zubúr al-Haqq (History of the Manifestation of Truth)*, vol 3. Tíhrán. 1944.

people would become a great nation (Genesis 21:13; 17:20), the Arabs. The Qur'án (2:127-129; 14:37) implies that Muḥammad was a descendant of Ishmael and consequently from Abraham. Such a connection is confirmed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.⁸⁴ Interestingly, Quddús's mother came from Muḥammad's lineage,⁸⁵ making Quddús a logical descendant of Abraham, Joseph's grandfather.

It is within the realm of individual attributes where spiritual themes began to emerge to enrich human experience. Both Quddús and Joseph had *noble and magnetic personalities* which were admired by all and crowned by supreme spiritual beauty.⁸⁶ Similarly, the Writings of the Báb and the Qur'án both referred to Joseph and Quddús as angels.⁸⁷ In addition, both Joseph and Quddús were referred to as "youth" in the Qur'án (12:31), and by the Báb respectively.⁸⁸ Joseph and Quddús were of similar age when they arrived in Egypt and Iraq, respectively. Joseph was seventeen when he was sent to Egypt as an enslaved person and Quddús was eighteen when he began his Islamic studies in Iraq, in both cases hundreds of kilometres away (Genesis 42:23).

Fraternal forgiveness is a central component of Joseph's and Quddús' stories. According to the Qur'án story (12:95), Joseph, the second youngest of the twelve brothers, becomes the "big brother", pardoning his sinful brethren. In the same way, Quddús, one of the youngest Letters of the Living, pardoned the people of Bárfurúsh before his martyrdom. Likewise, Joseph blames his brothers' actions on their ignorance (Qur'án 12: 78-81), whereas Quddús, once commiserated with his enemies and prayed to God to turn the Bábís' enemies' ignorance into faith.⁸⁹ Furthermore, Joseph said later to his brothers, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives" (Genesis 50:20). Quddús' last words bear witness to those sentiments, "I have striven to show them the path that leads to their salvation".⁹⁰

Joseph and Quddús taught us about *submitting themselves to the Will of God*. Joseph prayed, "O Originator of the heavens and the earth! You are my Guardian in this world and the Hereafter. Allow me to die as one who submits and join me with the righteous" (Qur'án 12:101). For instance, on the night of 24-25 January 1849, after being shot in his face, Quddús said to the Bábís at Shaykh Ṭabarsí "We should submit to whatever is the will of God. We should stand firm and steadfast in the hour of trial... Though my body be afflicted, my soul is immersed in gladness. My gratitude to God knows no bounds."⁹¹

⁸⁴ 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, ch. 4, para. 4.

⁸⁵ Dehghan, *Ganj-i-Pinhán*, p. 32.

⁸⁶ Nabíl-i-A'ẓam, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 183.

Ruhi, Ibrahim (or Kirmání, Shaykh Ibrahim). *Kitáb-i-Quddúsiyyih (Book of Quddús)* also called *Tarikh al-Quddúsí*. Unpublished biography of Quddús. Kerman manuscript, Muharram AH 1339. p. 57.

⁸⁷ Book of Revelation, 4:4; 4:17; 11:16.; Qur'án 12:32.

⁸⁸ Nabíl-i-A'ẓam, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 70. It is noteworthy that the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh referred to themselves as the "Arabian Youth". See: The Báb. *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, pp.41 and 50; Bahá'u'lláh. *Lawh-i-Malláḥul-Quds (Tablet of the Holy Mariner) - Arabic*. https://oceanoflights.org/Baháullah-st-055-1-en/?lang=en&stems=arabian_youth"es=¶Id=para_33 [accessed 1 May 2025].

⁸⁹ Nabíl-i-A'ẓam, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 411.

⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 411.

⁹¹ Ibid. p. 368.

In addition to the above, the New Testament uses Joseph's account to *illustrate faith and reliance on God*: "It was by faith that Joseph, when he was about to die, said confidently that the people of Israel would leave Egypt. He even commanded them to take his bones with them when they left" (Hebrews 11:22). In Genesis (50:20), after being betrayed by his brothers, Joseph told them, "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today." Likewise, Quddús was praised by the Báb for "his being wholly devoted to the Will of God".⁹² For them, trials and tribulations catalysed growth and further development.

Both narratives exemplify the *profound humility* inherent in surrendering totally to divine guidance and mercy. About his divine capacity to interpret dreams, Joseph humbly gives glory to God over and over again, saying "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer" (Genesis, 41:16), and "God has shown to Pharaoh what He is about to do" (Genesis 41:28). And in the Qur'án, we found Joseph praying, "Cause me to die in submission to Thee, and join me with the righteous" (12:101). Joseph humbles himself in the sight of the Lord and makes sure that God is the one who gets all the glory. Even when empowered to seek vengeance, Joseph forgives his brothers, epitomizing submission to God's will, he told them, "No blame will there be upon you today" (Qur'án, 12:92).

Quddús' assertion of lacking significance himself, parallels Joseph's humility in attributing glory to God. Referring to himself, Quddús draws parallels to the revered fish of the Israelites while indicating being a descendant of Prophet Muḥammad: "Although, I have no rank or station, but I am no less than the fish of Israelites"⁹³ in the viewpoint of my holy ancestors, may the peace of God be upon them".⁹⁴ His prayers for divine alignment, those that have remained to posterity, mirror Joseph's acknowledgment of God's sovereignty. Furthermore, in Genesis (50:19) Joseph reminds his brothers that no matter how powerful he has become in Egypt, *he is not God*, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God?" In turn, Quddús confessed in his communions, "Thy Glory beareth witness, there is no desire for me but Thee, no station but in Thy presence, no companion except Thee, and no place of dwelling but Thine" and "There is none other God but Him, the Most Exalted, the Most Great".⁹⁵

Moreover, Joseph is considered a symbol of *purity* for his virtues and in part for rejecting Zulaykha's advances remaining committed to his chastity. Due to his godliness and inner spirituality, Shoghi Effendi referred to Quddús as "the essence of sanctity and purity".⁹⁶

In general, about one-third of all comparisons were related to shared personal characteristics, whereas the personal attribute cluster emerged strong because of the warmth and humanness of the accounts. Several joint individual qualities were identified which, understandingly, made Joseph and Quddús moral leaders of their times.

⁹² The Báb, *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 89.

⁹³ Reference to a story in the Qur'án (7:163-166) about a Jewish village that tried to circumvent Sabbath and continue fishing as recorded in the Qur'án. For the sin of working on the day of Sabbath and fishing on that day, they were turned into monkeys. According to the Qur'án, "But We [God] said to them, Be disgraced apes! When they stubbornly persisted in violation" (7:166).

⁹⁴ Dehghan, *Ganj-i-Pinhán*, p. 209.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 175.

⁹⁶ Shoghi Effendi, *Lawḥ-i-Garn-i-Áhibáy-i-Sharq*, Tehran, Naw-Rúz, 101 B.E. p. 31.

Immanent Themes

Through these immanent motifs, Quddús' and Joseph's accounts highlight their (a) stations and (b) spirituality or powers and capacities. They received their various spiritual designations and were worthy of personal attributes and faculties shared by both of them.

In regard to their station, both Quddús and Joseph had clear indications of the *divine authority* conferred upon them. According to the Qur'án (12:15), God sent a revelation to Joseph in Egypt (Qur'án 12:37). In turn, the Báb affirmed that Quddús is a "manifestation of Myself"⁹⁷ and that He has revealed unto him "Mine own essence."⁹⁸

God said in the Qur'án (12:56), "Thus did we empower Joseph over the land ... We shower our mercy upon whomever we will..." About Quddús, the Báb stated: "From time immemorial and throughout eternity thou hast been immeasurably exalted with majesty, and wilt unto everlasting remain in the inaccessible retreats of holiness and beauty".⁹⁹

The *exalted position* of both of them in the eternal Covenant of God has also been highlighted. Qur'án (12:6) affirms that Jacob said to Joseph, "Thus, your Lord will select you, teach you the interpretation of dreams, and grant His favors to you and the family of Jacob, just as He granted His favors to your fathers, Abraham and Isaac. Your Lord is certainly All-knowing and All-wise." In turn, the Báb wrote about Quddús, "Through thee, all beings extol God; through thee, all beings glorify His sanctity; through thee, all beings magnify His oneness; through thee, all beings celebrate His grandeur"¹⁰⁰

Not surprisingly, the Scriptures reveal their *fruitful lives and their impact on humanity*. Jacob described his son as "a fruitful vine, a fruitful vine near a spring, whose branches climb over a wall" (Genesis 49:22). According to Bahá'u'lláh, through Quddús' and Mullá Husayn's lives, "the Most Great Announcement was declared ... God's bounty was bestowed...the suns of knowledge dawned forth, the skies of religion were illumined, the rays of the lights of sciences shone radiantly among various peoples, and the spheres of arts were widened in the world".¹⁰¹

There were also external signs of their *investitures*. Pharaoh gave Joseph a new title, *Zaphenath-Paneah* ("God speaks and he lives") (Genesis 41:45). The Báb gave Quddús exalted titles such as *Ismu'lláhu'l Ákhir* ("The Last Name of God"), Bahá'u'lláh naming him as the "Last Point"¹⁰², 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the "Moon of Guidance"¹⁰³ among several other exalted designations. Likewise, according to Genesis (41:42), "Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on Joseph's finger. He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck." While in *Shaykh Ṭabarsí*, Quddús received a silk turban and a pencil case from the Báb.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁷ In Arabic, literally "Maẓhar nafsi" (مظهر نفسي).

Stephen Lambden, *Muḥammad 'Alī Bārfurushī Quddūs*, 2021, <https://hurqalya.ucmerced.edu/node/4081> [accessed 30 April 2024].

⁹⁸ In Arabic, literally "Gud tajalit lih benafsi" (قد تجلّيت له بنفسي).

⁹⁹ The Báb, *Tablet of Visitation for Quddús*.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Bahá'u'lláh, *Ziyárat-Námiy-i-Bábu'l-Báb wa Quddús*. Mss: British Library Or15714.077. Included in list "Bahá'u'lláh's best known Works" prepared by Shoghi Effendi in *The Bahá'í World*, vol. 16, pp. 574-575. The original Arabic version is available in *Bahá'í Reference Library here and the English version here*.

¹⁰² Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 49.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 49.

¹⁰⁴ H.M. Balyuzi, *The Báb: The Herald of the Day of Days*. (Oxford: George Ronald, 1973).

This element of *Chosenness* was also present in other privileges. Joseph was favoured by his father Jacob over the other sons and given a “long coat of many colours” (Genesis 37:3), while Quddús was privileged to be the most outstanding believer of the Báb, the one who was specially chosen as His companion to go on pilgrimage to Mecca.

The second group of immanent themes pertains to their divine powers and capacities. Joseph revealed his spiritual gifts through *interpreting dreams and the art of divination* (Qur’án 12: 45-49; Genesis 44:15). Similarly, Quddús’ inner genius lay in interpreting the spiritual meaning of Holy Scriptures, such as his extensive Commentary on the letter S of the *Súrih al-Ikhlás*,¹⁰⁵ a treatise that was three times as long as the actual Qur’án, written during the siege of *Shaykh* Ṭabarsí. Likewise, as Joseph experienced visionary dreams (Qur’án 12: 4), Quddús also had prophetic visions before¹⁰⁶ and after¹⁰⁷ the Revelation of the Báb. Like Joseph, who had *foreseen* the fate of his two cell companions in Egypt and seven years of famine, Quddús foresaw the place and time of his martyrdom, which he associated with a mystical wedding,¹⁰⁸ as well as the circumstances of his burial.¹⁰⁹

Their *inspiration* indeed came from God. According to Genesis (40:8), when the two prisoners asked him to interpret their dreams, Joseph responded, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Please tell them to me." In his writings Quddús also claimed that he was inspired by the Voice of God:

In the Name of the Lord, the All-Compelling, the Unconstrained, the All-Subduing. O thou nightingale who art warbling wondrously from behind the clouds of glory, give thou ear unto this: the highest degree of attraction to the mystery of the Essence for the denizens of the eternal realm is enshrined in the effusions of the mystery of the verse, “*Verih, I am the Truth. No God is there but He.*” The exalted mystery of the verses lieth within this verse. Say then to the faithful who have all gathered by the fire of light: Give ear unto my call, which is raised by the mystery of the verse through the Crimson Tree in the seas of Divine Oneness.¹¹⁰

In brief, the immanent attributes cluster highlighted the spiritual powers with which they were divinely endowed. As per the personal attributes cluster, one-third of the total observations focused on their stations, capacities and roles. In this immanent group analysis, the analogies revealed a broad range of shared supra human faculties enabling them to influence individuals and societies.

¹⁰⁵ *Súrih of the Sincerity*, the 112th chapter of the Qur’án consisting of four verses.

¹⁰⁶ Mírzá Ḥabíbu’lláh Afnán. *The Genesis of the Bábi-Bahá'í Faiths in Shíráz and Fárs*. Tr. Ahang Rabbani. (Leiden: Brill, 2008). https://bahai-library.com/pdf/a/afnan_rabbani_genesis_faiths.pdf [accessed 1 May 2025].

¹⁰⁷ Dehghan, *Ganj-i-Pinhán*, pp. 60-61.

¹⁰⁸ Nabíl-i-A‘ẓam. *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 413.

¹⁰⁹ E.G. Browne (ed.). *Tarikh-i-Jadíd or New History of Mírzá Ali Muhammad the Bab*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1893), <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.83178/page/n157/mode/2up> [accessed 1 May 2025].

¹¹⁰ E.G. Browne, “Catalogue and Description of 27 Bábi Manuscripts.” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, (1892), p. 486. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25197107> [accessed 1 May 2025] Tr. Javid Atai.

Mystical Themes

The more metaphysical themes shared by Quddús and Joseph derive from various Writings of the Báb, such as the *Kitáb-i-Panj Sha'n* ("The Book of Five Modes or Grades"), and from some of the more mystical works by Bahá'u'lláh such as the *Four Valleys*, the *Seven Valleys* and *Gems of Divine Mystery*.

The *garment motif* is one of the most mystical themes, rich in meaning and significance. Both Joseph (Genesis 37:3) and Quddús had colourful garments.¹¹¹ Similarly, the coloured garment that Jacob gave to Joseph was a sign of his uniqueness (Genesis 37:3). In the *Kitáb-i-Panj Sha'n*, the Báb affirms that during the first four years of His revelation He kept himself in the station of the gates¹¹² but later He removed that garment and emerged as the Promised One, and He gave His previous garment to Quddús.¹¹³

Secondly, the motif of *spiritual concealment* represents the period where Quddús and Joseph's stations were not evident to the people around them. For instance, Quddús' was referred to as a "Hidden Treasure"¹¹⁴ by the Báb to Mullá Husayn. For several years, Quddús stayed in his native Mázindarán somewhat disconnected from the Bábí community but heavily engaged in teaching the new Faith until Mullá Husayn "discovered" him. In a way, his concealment was a kind of protection from the persecution uproar running like wildfire throughout Iran. The Báb wrote referring to Quddús: "Thou art manifest through the manifestation of thy Lord, and art concealed through the concealment of thy Lord".¹¹⁵ Joseph, in turn, piously concealed his station from his brothers because they were heedless¹¹⁶ until the time came up when he disclosed himself fully (Qur'án 12:90). Joseph told his brothers the wisdom of hiding his identity, which was reuniting the family in Egypt, "God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance (Qur'án 45:7). At his act of concealment Joseph said to his brothers, "... it was not you who sent me here, but God" (Genesis 45:8) while Quddús revealed his sacred identity to the people of Bárfurúsh, "I am the regent to the Lord of the Age [the Báb]".¹¹⁷ Furthermore, when Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to buy grain, they could not recognize him (Qur'án 12:58), but later, he made himself known to his brethren (Qur'án 12: 88-90). In Quddús' story, it is not until his three-day public trial that the non-Bábí society heard from him championing the glory of the Revelation of the Báb, which he represented, and when some people recognized his virtues.

¹¹¹ A photograph of Quddús' shirt and shawl appears in Dehghan, *Ganj-i-Pinhán*, p. 10.

¹¹² The "gates" (874–941 CE) were the last four representatives of the twelfth (and final) of the Prophet Muḥammad's successors (also called Imáms). The twelfth Imám was referred to as the "Lord of the Age". The Báb affirmed that He was the return of the Lord of the Age.

¹¹³ The Báb, *Kitáb-i-Panj Sha'n* (Five Modes). MS facsimile. Tíhrán, 196X? [sic]. Published in digital facsimile. Lansing, Mi., H-Bahai, 2000. <http://www.h-net.org/~bahai/areprint/bab/M-R/panj/panjshan.htm> [accessed 1 May 2025].

¹¹⁴ Nabíl-i-A'zam, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 262.

¹¹⁵ The Báb, Tablet of Visitation for Quddús.

¹¹⁶ Adib Masumian, "A Tablet of Abdu'l-Bahá on the Historical Joseph vs. the Divine Joseph" (provisional translation - with translator's permission), 2022. Tablet originally published in Makátib-i-Haḍrat-i-'Abdu'l-Bahá, vol. 9, p. 176, Cairo, 1330/1912. <https://adibmasumian.com/translations/ab06890/> [accessed 1 May 2025].

¹¹⁷ Habib Borjian, "A Mazandarani Account of the Babi Incident at Shaikh Tabarsi", *Iranian Studies*, 39.3 (2006) p. 390.

The third mystical shared motif pertains to the *symbolic nature of geographical spaces*. For instance, Joseph was put into an empty cistern (Qur'án 12:10) while Quddús was placed under house arrest at the home of Muḥammad-Taqí, the leading clergy of Sári and banned from any contact. According to the Qur'án, some travellers found Joseph in the cistern and carried him to Egypt (Qur'án 12: 14-15), the “Egypt of the hearts”¹¹⁸ as the Báb called it. Whereas Quddús, at Bahá'u'lláh's instructions, was rescued from his confinement in Sári and taken to Shaykh Ṭabarsí. The Báb referred to Shaykh Ṭabarsí as “hallowed ground” and “holy earth”.¹¹⁹ Also, the Bábís in Shaykh Ṭabarsí considered it as their Karbilá,¹²⁰ their place of sacrifice and love.¹²¹ Both places had a mystical association beyond the physical meaning.

The Qur'án affirms that Joseph raised his parents to *the throne* (‘arsh) beside himself” (12:100). According to some Islamic exegetes, the Qur'án reserves the use of the term ‘arsh for the throne of God signifying Joseph's divine status.¹²² On Quddús' martyrdom, the Báb wrote, “Thou hast ascended through the realm of existence unto a horizon wherein none hath preceded thee, and been seated upon the Throne of Might in the loftiest mansions of Paradise, a station that none, in the compass of God's knowledge, hath surpassed”.¹²³

Finally, an association can be drawn on the mystical notion of *reunion with the Beloved*. Joseph was reunited with his father when Jacob entered Egypt (Qur'án 12:100). It is noteworthy that the Báb once promised Quddús that four years later they will eventually be reunited in martyrdom.¹²⁴

The preceding discussion was drawn mainly from references derived from the Bahá'í Writings on mystical themes shared by both Quddús and Joseph. However, it is valid to say that the mystical vein in their stories is pulsating across the whole analysis. The special meaning attributed to the physical notion of a garment, the act of concealment and disclosure as a sign of divine grace, and the symbolic nature of temporal spaces to create a metanarrative all reveal the limitless possibilities that such rich stories can provide to mind and soul to enrich the spiritual experience from an event that looked, primarily, a physical one.

Opposition Themes

These themes emanate from Quddús' chronology and mostly relate to his sufferings paralleling similar tribulations experienced by Joseph. The events can be loosely grouped into moral and physical injustices.

Both Quddús and Joseph *suffered greatly*. Joseph was betrayed by his brothers, abandoned in a well, and then sold twice into slavery. He was later falsely accused of moral impropriety and put in

¹¹⁸ Todd Lawson, “Interpretation as Revelation: The Qur'án Commentary of the Báb, Sayyid ‘Alí Muḥammad Shirází (1819–1850).” *The Báb and the Bábí Community of Iran*, edited by Fereydun Vahman, (London: OneWorld Academic, 2020), p. 264.

¹¹⁹ Nabíl-i-A‘ẓam, *The Dawn-Breakers*, pp. 431-432.

¹²⁰ Karbilá is renowned as a centre of Islamic Shi‘ih theology and religious pilgrimage. Pilgrims visit and venerate the site of the remains of Imám Ḥusayn (CE 626–680). Imám Ḥusayn, the martyred grandson of the Prophet Muḥammad, was killed violently in Karbilá, and his death represents a symbol of martyrdom and sacrifice.

¹²¹ E. G. Browne, *A Year Amongst the Persians: Impressions as to the Life, Character, & Thought of the People of Persia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927), p. 615.

¹²² Lawson, ‘Joseph's Dream’.

¹²³ The Báb, *Tablet of Visitation for Quddús*.

¹²⁴ Nabíl-i-A‘ẓam, *The Dawn-Breakers*, pp. 142-3.

prison for two years (Genesis 41:1). In turn, the Báb said of Quddús' trials and tribulations, "Verily, thy suffering waxed so grievous that the sufferings of all created things were as naught compared to it"¹²⁵. And yet, both of them responded to those troubles with humility, faith and meekness.

Their behaviour attracted jealousy and hatred towards them. Joseph's brethren were jealous of him (Qur'án 12:8). In turn, during Quddús' life in his hometown, Mullá Sa'íd Bárfurúshí entitled the Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá, along with his clergy, were jealous of Quddús because of his knowledge and charisma from a young age. Likewise, Joseph's position was not recognized by his half-brothers, who faced him with opposition (Qur'án 42:6, 8). Calumnies about the figure of Quddús were common among the Muslim population and in current times. He was referred to as a person who "deceives the people", an "apostate"¹²⁶, an "unclean infidel"¹²⁷ and guilty "of heresy"¹²⁸ and of "aiming at the subversion of the Persian Government".¹²⁹

According to the Qur'án, Joseph said that "Satan had induced [estrangement] between me and my brothers" (12:100). The leading *agitator of discord* among the population of Bárfurúsh against Quddús was the "hysterical, the cruel and overbearing Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá",¹³⁰ the "diabolical",¹³¹ "the fanatical, the ferocious and shameless mujtahid of Bárfurúsh".¹³² Furthermore, his behaviour was characterized as immersed in "irreligion, immorality, and worldliness".¹³³ Abbas Amanat, in his book *Resurrection and Renewal*, wrote that "in the days preceding Ṭabarsí, Quddús was recognized by the Bábís as the 'Spirit of the Messiah' who soon would descend in the 'Green Island' [Mázindarán] and destroy the forces of the Antichrist (Dajjál, deceiver)".¹³⁴

False accusations were raised against Joseph, who demonstrated his innocence (Qur'án 12, 26-27). As with Quddús, he was accused of political insurrection against the Shah and heresy. Nevertheless, he cleared himself of all those charges in brilliant defences in front of the Prince-Governor, with some locals pleading, "Don't kill him; he is a fine young fellow, it is a pity to kill him".¹³⁵ Even some of Quddús' enemies recognized their errors and self-doubted the righteousness of their treatment towards him¹³⁶ as it happened in the case of Joseph (Qur'án 12:91).

Both became *victims of prejudice in their own time*. When Joseph's brothers arrived in Egypt, they were discriminated against by the Egyptian officer on the basis of their religious beliefs, even he, who was a high-ranking government figure: "Joseph was served at one table and his brothers at another. The Egyptians who were eating there were served separately because they considered it

¹²⁵ The Báb, *Tablet of Visitation for Quddús*.

¹²⁶ Dehghan, *Ganj-i-Pinhán*, pp. 60-61.

¹²⁷ Borjjan, 'A Mazandarani Account of the Babi Incident at Shaikh Tabarsi', p. 390.

¹²⁸ Nabíl-i-A'zam, *The Dawn-Breakers*, pp. 146-147.

¹²⁹ Muhammad Ali Maulana. *History and Doctrines of the Babi Movement*. (Ohio: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore Inc., 1998), p. 7.

¹³⁰ Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 39.

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 42.

¹³² Ibid., p. 83.

¹³³ Browne, *Tarikh-i-Jadid*, p. 92.

¹³⁴ Abbás Amanat, *Resurrection and Renewal: The Making of the Bábí Movement in Iran, 1844–1850* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 187.

¹³⁵ Borjjan, 'A Mazandarani Account of the Babi Incident at Shaikh Tabarsi', pp. 393-394.

¹³⁶ Zabihi-Moghaddam, 'The Bábí-state Conflict at Shaykh Ṭabarsí'.

beneath their dignity to eat with Hebrews" (Genesis 43:32). In his local town, Quddús and his family were considered "impure" (*najis*) for being non-Muslims and therefore personal touching of him or his clothes or any utensil used by him, even attending a mosque, was barred. It is narrated that Áqá Muḥammad Šádiq, half-brother of Quddús, was called a "najis" (impure) at a mosque in Bárfurúsh. Áqá Muḥammad Šádiq is told by the Mulla leading the congregational prayer: "O Bábí, how come you come to the mosque and stand behind me".¹³⁷

Further, the above moral injustices were accompanied by *physical suffering*: exile, imprisonment and torment. Joseph's brothers wanted to kill and did expatriate him (Qur'án 12:9), whereas Quddús was threatened by death and was *exiled* from his town to the village of Píá-kulá. Joseph and Quddús were *cast into prison* though they were innocent (Qur'án 39:20). Joseph was wrongly accused of impropriety and imprisoned with two other people – the first eventually enjoyed freedom and happiness while the other one had an opposite fate (Genesis 41: 1-23). Following the episode of *Shaykh* Ṭabarsí, Quddús was imprisoned in Bárfurúsh also with two people, one of them remained faithful while the second became a traitor.¹³⁸ Furthermore, the Book of Psalms (105: 18) informs that in prison, "They hurt his [Joseph's] feet with fetters; he was laid in irons". Likewise, Quddús was imprisoned in Bárfurúsh and paraded in *fetters and chains* before his martyrdom.¹³⁹

Joseph was betrayed by his half-brothers (Qur'án 12:8-9), being dangerously abandoned in a well, while Quddús was betrayed by the Prince-Governor, the military commander of the government forces, and his allies when they broke a promise of liberty and free passage after the *Shaykh* Ṭabarsí episode. Likewise, Joseph was *sold by his brothers for silver coins* according to Genesis (37:28-29), while Quddús was surrendered to the Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá in return for payment to the Prince-Governor.

Finally, Genesis (23:3) states that "when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the robe of many colors that he wore" and then he was thrown into a pit. At Quddús' last sufferings, his garments were taken away from him, and as such, he was paraded publicly to his martyrdom. Although in a different context, Joseph's trials and sufferings from seventeen to thirty years of age mirrors Quddús persecutions and tribulations from twenty-two to twenty-seven years of age culminating in his martyrdom.

In the process of drawing historical parallels between Quddús and Joseph, a method of deconstructing separate chronological accounts and reconstructing a new joint figurative narrative in the light of the Bahá'í Writings, was developed. These analogies exposed their shared moral and physical suffering, humiliation, religious prejudice, betrayal and imprisonment.

Leadership Themes

Joseph' and Quddús' *process of personal growth* during life shows parallel patterns. Whereas Joseph, who was initially a modest shepherd boy, arose from being a slaved person to become the country's

¹³⁷ Fazel Mazandarani, *Tarikh Zubúr al-Haq* (*History of the Manifestation of Truth*), vol 8. Ṭihrán. 1944. p. 823.

¹³⁸ Nabil-i-A'zam, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 411. Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn. *Vaqa'i-i Mimiyyih*. Persian MS (authored c. 1849). University of Michigan British Manuscript Project 749(4), no. 1. East Lansing, Mi.: H-Bahai, 2001. <http://www.h-net.org/~bahai/arabic/vol5/mimiyyih/mimiyyih.htm> [accessed 1 May 2025].

¹³⁹ Mírzá Ḥusayn Hamadání. *The New History (Tarikh-i-Jadid) of Mirza Ali-Muhammed the Bab*. Tr E. G. Browne. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1893). https://bahai-library.com/hamadani_browne_Tarikh_Jadid [accessed 1 May 2025].

principal treasurer (Qur'án 12:55) in charge of overseeing the whole land of Egypt (Genesis 41:39–44), Quddús also arose from a peasant background to hold the first rank in the Bábi Dispensation, after the Báb.¹⁴⁰

Their *rise to prominence* is also significant. According to Genesis (42:6), Joseph's brothers “bowed themselves bowed before him with their faces to the earth”. Similarly, we have seen how the glory of Quddús has survived across three centuries, reaching the international scene. Representatives of the United Nations,¹⁴¹ the European Union¹⁴² and the governments of the United States,¹⁴³ United Kingdom¹⁴⁴ and Denmark¹⁴⁵ arose to defend the memory of Quddús when his shrine was demolished in 2004. Furthermore, references to him as a holy figure of the Bahá'í Faith have appeared in newspapers in ten countries and in ten languages attracting momentous international attention.

The legacy reflects their awareness of having a mission, and a leadership role and a mission to play. On the one hand, such an *appointment was either conferred or acquired*. For instance, because of his wisdom, Joseph was made proxy king (Qur'án 12: 55-57; Genesis 41:39-44), whereas Quddús acted as the Báb's chief lieutenant while He was kept in captivity. Interestingly, according to the Qur'án (12:21), God established Joseph as second only to the Pharaoh of Egypt, having ruled for eight decades (Genesis 41:46; 50:22) while Quddús was the leader of the *Shaykh* Ṭabarsí fort for eight months.

On the other hand, they were both *messengers of good news and joy*. The Qur'án informs that “when the messenger of good news came [from Egypt] he threw Joseph's shirt over Jacob's face, whereupon he regained his sight” (Qur'án 12:96). The said verse does not mention who the “messenger of good news” was—perhaps one of the brothers, an angel or one of the Egyptian officers who were sent by the Pharaoh with royal carts to fetch Jacob from Canaan (Genesis 45:21). Quddús is also a “messenger of good news” for his people, and once he declared, “... today is not as it was aforetime, and verily I have a great message of joy”.¹⁴⁶

Their *sense of mission* was conspicuous. Quddús has been called the “apostle of Mázindarán” by Gobineau¹⁴⁷ for his teaching initiatives in his native province. Quddús' efforts and activities over the course of two years were focused on creating a community of believers and spreading awareness of the Faith of the Báb's among the local and surrounding populace.¹⁴⁸ According to the history of the Báb written by the French A.L.M. Nicolas, it is stated that Quddús converted 300

¹⁴⁰ Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 9.

¹⁴¹ United Nations General Assembly. *Elimination of All Forms of Religious Intolerance*. 16 September 2004.

¹⁴² European Union. *EU Annual Report on Human Rights*. 13 September 2004.

¹⁴³ US State Department. *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom*, 2004.

¹⁴⁴ United Kingdom Parliament. *Bahá'í Holy Sites*—EDM (Early Day Motion) 1145, tabled on 6 May 2004.

¹⁴⁵ Denmark Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. *Third Report from the Foreign Affairs Committee Session 2003–2004 Iran*, May 2004.

¹⁴⁶ E.G. Browne, *Materials for the Study of the Babi Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1918), p. 210. <https://ia800200.us.archive.org/3/items/materialsforstud00browuoft/materialsforstud00browuoft.pdf> [accessed 1 May 2025].

¹⁴⁷ Geoffrey Nash and Daniel O'Donoghue (eds.) *Comte de Gobineau and Orientalism: Selected Eastern Writings* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 146.

¹⁴⁸ Mohammadhosseini, ‘Qoddus, Moḥammad-‘Ali Bārforuši’.

persons to the new Faith in less than a week.¹⁴⁹ Likewise, Joseph taught the Faith of Abraham in Egypt even when he was imprisoned emphasizing monotheism and the life hereafter (Qur'án 12: 38-41]. Egyptians were polytheistic. The Book of Psalms tells that God “ordained in Joseph for a testimony, when he went out through the land of Egypt” (Qur'án 81:5).

On the *triumph of the religion*, Joseph announced the ultimate victory by assuring their ultimate return to Canaan (Genesis 50:24-25). Political conditions deteriorated, and the Jewish people were enslaved, living under oppressive conditions. It was Moses' that after 430 years of Hebrew exile in Egypt freed his people so that they could come back to Canaan (Exodus 14: 19-31) through obtaining a great victory over the Pharaoh's armies at the Red Sea crossing. In turn, Quddús appears to have said regarding the eventual spiritual victory of the Cause of the Báb, “we are the rightful sovereign, and the world is under our signet-ring, and all the kings in the East and the West will become humble before us.”¹⁵⁰ As a point of fact, the religion of the Báb evolved into the Bahá'í Faith, encompassing more than 100,000 communities worldwide.¹⁵¹

Christian author Andy Walker, reflecting on the *consequentiality* of Joseph's life events on the fortunes of the people of Israel, wrote, “If Joseph had not been sold into slavery, he would not have made it to Egypt. If Potiphar had not mistreated him, he would not have been imprisoned. If he had not been imprisoned, he would not have met Pharaoh and risen through the ranks ... Joseph served the people of Israel”.¹⁵² Such consequentiality had also its counterpart in the Bábí Faith. According to Shoghi Effendi the historical episode of *Shaykh* Ṭabarsí led by Quddús can be seen as one of the most powerful agencies that shaped the Faith of the Báb “generating the very seeds which, in a later age, were to blossom into world-wide administrative institutions, and which must, in the fullness of time, yield their golden fruit in the shape of a world-redeeming, earth-encircling Order”.¹⁵³ Quddús' actions sent shockwaves domestically and internationally overseas by proclaiming that there is a global religion emerging from its obscurity, with their own Prophet, their Holy Book and their martyrs.

In summary, Joseph and Quddús had a significant and long-lasting impact on their followers, influencing the development of their own religious communities, even after their deaths. In that process, they acted as a role model, dealing with royalty with the same nature that they would relate with the peasant.

Concluding Remarks

A number of points and counterpoints also emerge of these analogies. Many prophetic figures experience exile and betrayal (e.g., Jesus, Muhammad, the Báb). What distinguishes Quddús is the intensity of his trials within the context of early Bábí history. Also, unlike Joseph, Quddús did not achieve worldly power. However, his spiritual leadership within the Bábí community mirrors Joseph's eventual ascendance. Furthermore, the garment symbolism is widely used across religious

¹⁴⁹ A.L.M. Nicolas, *Seyyèd Ali-Mohammed dit le Báb*. (Paris: Dujarric & Co, 1905), p. 296, https://bahai-library.com/nicolas_seyyed_ali_mohammed [accessed 1 May 2025].

¹⁵⁰ E.G. Browne (ed.). *Kitáb-i Nuqtatu'l-Káfi: Being the Earliest History of the Babís*. (Leiden: Brill, 1910), p. 162, Persian text available in <https://archive.org/details/in.gov.ignca.20700> [accessed 1 May 2025].

¹⁵¹ Douglas Martin, “The Bahá'í Faith in its Second Century”. *The Bahá'í Faith and Islam* (ed. Heshmat Moayyad), proceedings of a symposium, McGill University, 23–25 March 1984, pp. 57-72.

¹⁵² Andy Walker, “The Role of Genesis 37:1-11 in the Joseph Novella.” *Leaven*, 24.4, issue 3, (2016), p. 4. <https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/leaven/vol24/iss4/3> [accessed 1 May 2025].

¹⁵³ Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 38.

traditions and the strength of the Quddús-Joseph connection lies in its layered meaning within Bábí theology. Finally, while Joseph's forgiveness led to family reconciliation, Quddús' martyrdom ended in tragedy. However, both figures exemplify redemptive suffering.

While the Joseph-Quddús comparison is rich in thematic depth, it is important to recognize some limitations. For instance, other figures in Bábí/Bahá'í history might also fit Josephic themes (e.g., Bahá'u'lláh in exile, the Báb's suffering). Further, the analogy should not be overstated; rather, it serves as an interpretive tool rather than a doctrinal assertion. Differences in historical context and station must be acknowledged. Unlike Joseph, Quddús did not live to see the triumph of his cause. This study offered a nuanced approach to typological figuration, presenting Quddús as a figure whose life reflects key Josephic themes. While the analogy should be seen as an interpretive lens rather than a central thesis, it provides a compelling way to deepen understanding of Quddús' spiritual significance. Future studies might explore how these themes apply to other figures in Bahá'í history, further enriching the discussion on divine archetypes in religious thought.

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