CONCLUSION

When I thought of taking up this task even then I knew it will be a very tough one. But its real hardness and complication was revealed to me only when I started working on it. I had to deal with this poem, which is undoubtedly a master piece of Arabic literary tradition, as depicted in the holy books like the Quaran and the Bible, which are of course peerless at the same time. The central character of this poem is Joseph and his steadfastness and strong belief in God is the gist of the story whereas other figures except Jacob are very much worldly characters.

Before discussing the concerned poem, I would like to say some thing about the story of Joseph and his brothers. It has been taken up by so many poets of different languages and literatures. Specially, Persian literature seems to be greatly influenced and enchanted by it. Like Jami, one of the greatest poets of Iranian literary history, has written a *masnawi* (مَسْنَوِی) on this, but like most of the other poets, he has taken mainly one side of the coin i.e. the romantic aspect of it, where Zulaykha is as important as Joseph.

However, they have added some respectability to their imaginative thoughts through their spiritualism. Jami says that the love of Zulaykha for Joseph was of heavenly nature. Jami says that during Joseph's confinement to the well Zulaykha had lost her senses and she went almost mad. The reason of
her sudden collapse was not known to anyone and it was nothing but an outcome of her spiritual love for Joseph, even before she knew him, which casted an unknown impact upon Zulaykha. Interestingly enough, he has mentioned in his *masnawi* another female character, who also loves Joseph in her heart, but could not confess it publicly, while Zulaykha not only reveals her love, but tried to cash it too. Here a sincere reader becomes confused about the interpretation of Jami, about how he relates Zulaykha’s love for Joseph, as a spiritual one.

Here I have mentioned Jami as an example to prove the point that our poet, never crosses his limits and never tries to mix even a grain of salt with this holy story. No doubt our unknown poet had unparalleled poetic merit and class. This is the reason we see in this poem, that it revolves around a central theme and narrates the prescribed theme or event in full detail. Right from the beginning to the end, it goes through different stages keeping the story and its character intact without undermining its natural fabric. Without any fear of contradiction, I can say that our poet has written history in the fine form of literature.

The purpose of my study of this story of Joseph in the poem, is to draw attention of the scholars to the existence of a hitherto unknown Arabic poem, concerned with the subject of Joseph and his brethren, by an unknown writer. The poet deals with a story which is called by the Qu’ran and the poem, the
most beautiful of stories, and of which Renan\(^1\) remarked that it "was not only the oldest novel but the only novel which never grows old". Among its many admirers is Voltaire, who adds that the story of Joseph was worthy of being told in the form of an epic poem.

Our poet makes much use of picturesque detail to adorn his narrative, some of which is taken from the elaboration of the story in Quran and the Muslim tradition, while some of it is no doubt his original contribution. Jacob, for example, is represented at the beginning of the poem, holding the sleeping Joseph on his lap.

A preliminary examination of the poem, shows that the poem depends much more on the Quran than on the Bible. Probably the reason is that the poet was a Muslim and hence, he derives his material mainly from the Quran.

It seems that there is no other composition about this theme in Arabic literature, and therefore, the work appears to deserve our attention and study, both on the grounds of its undoubted literary merits and also its apparent uniqueness.

\(^1\) Quoted by V. Serres, L'histoire de Joseph by J. Spiro, in Tunisian Review, 1907, p. 420.
Though this poem itself, has been studied by some men of letters along with other poems, no one has tried to study it separately and exclusively. have tried to do precisely this in order to describe its message and merit.

It is a story that deals with God's mercy on those who err. The story of forgiveness and tolerance from the side of Jacob to his sons and from the side of Joseph to his brothers gives a clear message of human values. Inspite of all his sufferings and painful memories, Joseph not only gives pardon to his brothers, he receives them with an open arm and offers his best services. Joseph's life resembles that of the holy prophet in relation to Quraish (a tribe of Macca) when he made history by announcing forgiveness for all those who were against him.

The story illustrates a number of truths, not just about messengers but about all human beings in their life and relationship with God. The story of the poem belongs manifestly to the oral tradition and bears all such characteristics.

Linguistically, it is composed in a special language as a mixture of classical form (necessitated by the many quotations and allusions to the Quran) and middle Arabic i.e. the spoken language.

The story is highly artistic and its skilled narrative leads to a climax, when Joseph the ruler of Egypt, discloses his identity to his brothers who had
sold him into slavery. It is a unified literary narrative, as it is not compiled from separate narratives.

It is meant to be heard and read. Its shape is clearly defined as a narrative. Apart from its technique, the story includes dramatic elements such as interpretation of dreams, Joseph’s coat, famine, forgiveness and plot of temptation. In this course of dramatic events the ruler of Egypt, the Pharaoh admired Joseph and described him in a wise statement: “God is with Joseph at the low and high points of his life”. The effect of God's blessing is directed on the individual but it also gains a universal scope when Joseph averts famine in Egypt. He is God fearing and a lover of peace, who heals the rift in the family of Jacob, who blesses and also saves him. He seeks to avert indecency and evil and make possible forgiveness and reconciliation. Indeed the story addresses itself to the human mind and heart as well, and becomes a torch bearer in our worldly life and the life hereafter. I think that this story will remain in the collective consciousness of the human society till the dooms day and will occupy an exclusive space in human soul and mind.