

PROPHETS OF ISLAM SERIES



THE BIOGRAPHY OF

SULAIMAN

عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ



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BIOGRAPHY OF SULAIMAN (عليه السلام)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله رب العالمين، والصلاة والسلام على
سيدنا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين

SULAIMAN (عليه السلام)

Sulaiman (عليه السلام) was the son of Dawood (عليه السلام) and it is reported that he was 11 years old when Dawood (عليه السلام) took over as King after the death of Taloot.

EARLY LIFE

Sulaiman (عليه السلام) was wise and just, right from the childhood. Certain incidents of his wisdom during the lifetime of his father Dawood (عليه السلام) have been mentioned in the Quran and Ahadith.

It is reported that once when Dawood (عليه السلام) was solving the problems of his people, two men came to him; one of whom had a fruit garden. The owner of the garden said, O Prophet of Allah, this man's sheep came to my field at night and ate up the grapes and I have come to ask for the compensation'. Dawood (عليه السلام) asked the owner of the sheep, 'is this true'? He said, 'Yes'. Dawood (عليه السلام) said, then, you give him your sheep in exchange for the losses'.

Sulaiman (عليه السلام) was there with his father, listening to the whole dispute. He said, O' father, I have an opinion and if you permit, I will tell it to you. Dawood (عليه السلام) permitted him to express that opinion. Sulaiman (عليه السلام) said, the owner of the sheep can take the garden to cultivate until the grapes grow, while the other man can take the sheep and make use of their wool and milk until his field is repaired. If the grapes grow, and the field returns to its former state, then the field owner should take his garden and give back the sheep to their owner'. Dawood (عليه السلام) appreciated Sulaiman (عليه السلام) for this opinion and the case was decided as such.

It is in Hadith - Abu Hurairah (رضي الله تعالى عنه) narrated that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) said, 'there were two women, each of whom had a child with her. A wolf came along and took away the child of one of them, and so her companion

said, 'it has taken your child!' The other one said, 'no it has taken your child!' So, they both presented their case to Dawood (عليه السلام), who judged in favor of the older woman.

Then both went to Sulaiman (عليه السلام) and told him about it. He said, 'bring me a knife so that I can cut the child in half and share it between both of you. The younger woman said, 'don't do it! May Allah have mercy on you, it is her child (give it to her). (This is how he knew that the real mother was the younger woman). And, he judged in favor of the younger woman'. (Bukhari)

SULAIMAN (عليه السلام) AS THE KING

Sulaiman (عليه السلام) inherited Dawood's (عليه السلام) prophethood and Kingdom. This was not material inheritance, rather it was special beneficence of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) on Prophet Dawood (عليه السلام) and his family.

It is in Quran - وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا دَاوُودَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ عِلْمًا وَقَالَا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي فَضَّلَنَا عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ عِبَادِهِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ - وَوَرَّثَ سُلَيْمَانَ دَاوُودَ وَقَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ عَلِمْنَا مَنطِقَ الطَّيْرِ وَأَوْتَيْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَإِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْمُبِينُ - [Indeed, We granted knowledge to Dawood and Sulaiman (عليهم السلام). And they said (in acknowledgment), 'All praise is for Allah Who has privileged us over many of His faithful servants.' And Dawood (عليه السلام) was succeeded by Sulaiman (عليه السلام), who said, 'O people! We have been taught the language of birds and been given everything (we need). This is indeed a great privilege.' Sulaiman (عليه السلام) gathered an army comprised of Jinns, men and birds; they all were kept under strict discipline.] (An-Naml - 15-17)

After he took over as King after the death of his father, Sulaiman (عليه السلام) supplicated to Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) to make his kingdom unique in the world, a like of which no one should have, after him. His supplication was granted and he was blessed with exceptional abilities; like he could command the winds and understand and talk to birds and animals. He was a teacher of both men and jinns and showed them how to mine the earth and extract its minerals to make tools and weapons. He was favored with a mammoth mine of copper, a rare metal those days.

It is in Quran - قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَهَبْ لِي مُلْكًا لَا يَنْبَغِي لِأَحَدٍ مِّنْ بَعْدِي إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ - فَسَحَّرْنَا لَهُ الرِّيحَ - تَجْرِي بِأَمْرِهِ رُحَاءَ حَيْثُ أَصَابَ - وَالشَّيَاطِينَ كُلَّ بِنَاءٍ وَعَوَاصٍ - وَأَخْرَيْنَ مُقَرَّنِينَ فِي الْأَصْفَادِ - هَذَا عَطَاؤُنَا فَامْنُنْ [He said : 'My Lord! Forgive me and bestow upon me a kingdom such as shall not be given to anyone after me. You

are indeed the Giver (of all bounties).¹ So, We gave him control over the wind. Upon his orders, it gently used to blow towards the region of his choice. And (We subjected to him) Jinns, who could build (buildings) and dive (in the oceans). and others that were bound in shackles. (We said to Sulaiman - عليه السلام): 'This is Our gift, so you spend or withhold, no account will be asked.' Surely, he is in proximity with Us and will have an excellent place of final abode.] (Saad - 35-40)

It is in Quran - وَلِسُلَيْمَانَ الرِّيحَ غُدُوها شَهْرٌ وَرَواحُها شَهْرٌ وَأَسَلنا لَهُ عَينَ القَطْرِ ۖ وَمِنَ الجِنَّ مَن يَعْمَلُ بَينَ يَدَيهِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِ ۖ وَمَن يَزِغْ مِنْهُم عَن أَمْرنا نُذِقْهُ مِن عَذابِ السَّعِيرِ - يَعْمَلُونَ لَهُ ما يَشَاءُ مِن مَّحارِيبَ وَتَمائِيلَ وَجَفانٍ [And (we subjected) the wind to Sulaiman (عليه السلام); its morning course (covered) a month's journey, and its evening course (covered) a month's journey. And We made a fountain of molten copper flow for him. And among the jinn were those who worked for him with his Lord's permission. And whoever of them deviated from Our command, We made them taste the torment of the blaze. They made for him whatever he desired of; sanctuaries, statues, basins as large as reservoirs, and cooking pots fixed (into the ground).] (Saba - 12-13)

It is reported that one day Sulaiman (عليه السلام) gathered his army, which had different battalions of men, jinns, birds, and animals. They marched to a place called Askalon. When they were passing through a valley, an ant saw the approaching army and called to warn the other ants, saying, 'run to your abodes as you may be crushed under the Army of Sulaiman (عليه السلام).

It is in Quran - وَخَشِيراً لِّسُلَيْمَانَ جُنُودَهُ مِنَ الجِنَّ وَالإِنسِ وَالطَّيْرِ فَهُمْ يُوزَعُونَ - حَتَّى إِذا أَتَوْا عَلَي وادِ النَّمْلِ قالَتْ نَمْلَةٌ يا أَيُّها النَّمْلُ ادخلُوا مساكنكم لا يحطمتكم سليمانُ وجنوده وهم لا يشعرون - فَتَبَسَّمَ ضاحِكاً مِن قولِها وقالَ رَبِّ أوزعني أن أشكرَ نِعْمَتِكَ الَّتِي أنعمتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلى والِدَيَّ وَأَن أَعْمَلَ صالِحاً تَرْضاهُ وَأُدخِلني بِرَحْمَتِكَ في عبادِكَ الصَّالِحِينَ [Sulaiman (عليه السلام) gathered an army comprised of Jinns, men and birds; they all were kept under strict discipline. When they came upon the valley of the ants, one of the ants said, 'Ants enter your dwellings so that you will not be crushed by Sulaiman (عليه السلام) and his soldiers without their knowing it.' Sulaiman (عليه السلام) smiled, amused at what she (the ant) said, and prayed, 'My Lord, enable me to be grateful for the blessings You have given me and my parents, and that I may do righteous deeds (that are) accepted by You. And admit me by Your mercy into Your righteous worshippers.]' (An-Naml - 17-19)

SULAIMAN (عليه السلام) CONQUERS THE KINGDOM OF SABA

It is reported that once Sulaiman (عليه السلام) inspected all the birds under his command. During that inspection, he realized that a hoopoe bird was missing. He ordered a search for this bird and it was found that he was not seen anywhere. Sulaiman (عليه السلام) got angry on him and thought of punishing him severely for not obeying his orders.

A little later, hoopoe came and explained for the delay in arrival. He submitted, 'I have witnessed a matter that your majesty has not seen, and I have brought definite information to you from the city of Sheba (سبأ) (in Yemen). I found a queen ruling over them who has been given everything and she possesses a mighty throne. I found that she and her people worship the sun in place of Allah, for Satan has made their deeds look attractive to them and has turned them away from the (right) Path, so they do not find the way. They do not prostrate themselves to Allah, who brings out the hidden in the heavens and the earth, and He knows whatever you hide and whatever you disclose.'

Sulaiman (عليه السلام) said, 'we will see whether you are telling the truth or lying. Go with this letter of mine and deliver it to them, then stand aside and see how they will respond.'

When hoopoe delivered the letter, the Queen of Sheba, whose name was Bilquis (عليها السلام) said to her deputies, 'O chiefs, a noble letter has been delivered to me. It is from Sulaiman (عليه السلام), and it reads, 'in the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, Most Merciful. It reads, do not be arrogant against me and come to me as a Muslim (in complete submission to the Lord of the worlds).' She said, 'advise me, O' nobles in this matter. I do not decide anything until you concur.'

Her nobles responded, 'we are a people of strength and great (military) might, but the decision is yours, so decide what you will command (to us).' She said, 'whenever kings invade a land, they ruin it and humiliate its leaders, that is what they do. I will send them a gift, and I shall see what the envoys bring back.'

Her messengers brought the response to Sulaiman (عليه السلام) and presented the gifts sent by her. Sulaiman (عليه السلام) said, 'do you bring me wealth, when what Allah has given me is better than what He has given you? It is people like you who will rejoice in a gift like this. (Sulaiman - عليه السلام) said to the Head of her visiting team who had brought the present), 'go back to them (your people). If your people don't submit surely, we shall come to them with army which they

will never be able to resist, we shall drive them out from there (land) in disgrace, and they will be humiliated.'

The Queen, having received his message, decided to visit Sulaiman (عليه السلام) in Jerusalem. Knowing of her journey, Sulaiman (عليه السلام) said (to his Nobles), 'O you nobles! who among you can bring me her throne before they come to me in submission?' A strong one from the jinns named Ifrit (عَفْرِيْتُ) said, 'I will bring it to you before you rise from your place (council). Surely, I am strong and trustworthy for such task.' But the one who had knowledge of the book said, 'I can bring it to you in the blink of an eye.'

He was permitted to do so, and the throne was brought in front of Sulaiman (عليه السلام) in a blink of an eye. When Sulaiman (عليه السلام) saw it placed before him, he exclaimed, 'this is by the grace of my Lord to test me whether I am grateful or ungrateful. And whoever is grateful, it is only for their own good. But whoever is ungrateful, surely my Lord is Self-Sufficient, Most Generous.'

How the throne was brought in blink of an eye?

It was a Marvel (كرامت) by a Wali Allah. It is reported on the authority of Ibn Abbas (رضي الله تعالى عنه), and Mohammad Ibn Ishaq from Yazid bin Ruman that the name of that person (Wali Allah) who brought the throne of Queen Bilqis (عليها السلام) in a blinking of an eye was Asif bin Barkhiya (عليه السلام). Quran testifies that he had the knowledge of the book (Zaboor).

What is the meaning of the knowledge of the book?

It means that he was a learned Wali Allah during the reign of Sulaiman (عليه السلام). The unusual happenings related to Awliya Allah are known as Marvels (Karamaat - كرامات). The unusual happenings related to the Prophets are known as Miracles (Mo'jezaat - معجزات).

Quran testifies to the marvels (كرامات) related to Awliya Allah. Like Maryam (عليها السلام) used to get food and fresh fruits when she was in seclusion. Similarly, Asif bin Barqiya brought the throne of Queen Bilqis (عليها السلام) from Yemen to Jerusalem in a blinking of an eye.

In the same way, Khizr (عليه السلام), who was the follower of the Sharia of Musa (عليه السلام) was awarded with special knowledge. There are differences of opinions among scholars about Khizr (عليه السلام). Some people consider him to be a Prophet and others consider him to be a Wali Allah. Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) and His Apostle (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) know best. Whatever may be the case, he was a chosen Servant of Allah, on whom Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) had bestowed special knowledge.

Quran also mentions Luqman (عليه السلام) who was provided with wisdom. Similarly, Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) has informed us about As-habe-Kahf (عليهم السلام).

It is in Hadith - It is narrated on the authority of Abu Hurairah (رضي الله تعالى عنه), who said : 'I have memorized two kinds of knowledge from Allah's Apostle (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم). I have propagated one of them to you and if I propagated the second, then my throat would be cut (by the people). (**Bukhari Book 1**).

Awliya Allah are chosen people. They inherit their knowledge, stations, and states from Prophets.

It is in Quran - أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ - الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ - لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَىٰ فِي - عَزَّ - عَزَّ [Behold the friends of Allah - عَزَّ - عَزَّ] الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ! وَجَلَّ - عَزَّ وَجَلَّ and are mindful of (close to) Him and (have consequently abstained from everything evil). To them tidings come (from Allah - عَزَّ وَجَلَّ - عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) of a happy life both in this world and in Hereafter. The word of Allah - عَزَّ وَجَلَّ is never revoked. This in itself is a great felicity" (**Yunus - 62-64**).

Deviant sects like Kharijis/Salafis/Wahhabis/Deobandis and their likeminded groups do not believe in the Marvels (كرامات) of Awliya Allah. They consider the pious graves of Awliya Allah as places of polytheism. They treat them as idols. The Muslims who visit their graves for barakah are called by these sects as 'Grave worshipers' They do not realize that it is the practice of Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) and Sahabah who used to visit the graves of Muslims frequently, on regular intervals. There are many Ahadith in this context in almost all authentic Ahadith books. By doing blasphemy of Awliya Allah, followers of these sects surely invite the wrath of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ).

It is in Hadith - "Whoever takes a Wali of Mine an enemy, I will wage war on him; and My slave will not perform any act with which he draws closer to Me, more beloved to Me then when he fulfills what I have ordained on him; and My salve will keep drawing closer to Me by performing the Nawafil (voluntary acts of worship) until I love him, and when I love him, I will be his hearing with which he hears, his sight with which he sees, his hands with which he strikes, and his legs with which he walks; and if he asks Me, I will give him; and if he seeks refuge with Me, I will grant him refuge" (**Bukhari**).

The emphasis on "Wali of mine" in the above Hadith shows that this human being is the chosen one.

When the throne was placed in front of Sulaiman (عليه السلام) he said, 'transform her throne out of all recognition by her. let us see whether she is guided to the truth and recognizes her throne or is one of those who receive no guidance.' So when the queen arrived, she was asked, 'is your throne like this?' She replied, 'it looks as if it is the same; we have come to know that Sulaiman (عليه السلام) is not only a king but also a Prophet, therefore we have already become Muslims.'

She was told, 'enter the palace.' 'When she saw the hall, she thought it was a body of water, so she bared her shins. Sulaiman (عليه السلام) said, 'it is just a palace paved with crystal.' She declared, 'My Lord! I have certainly wronged myself (earlier). Now I (fully) submit, along with Sulaiman (عليه السلام), to Allah, the Lord of all worlds.' Later Sulaiman (عليه السلام) married her.

During Sulaiman's (عليه السلام), time horses were the common mode of transportation. They were also used by soldiers and in transportation carts. The animals were well cared for and well trained. It is reported that one day Sulaiman (عليه السلام) was reviewing a parade of his stable. The inspection got a little longer and the time for Asr was about to end. He felt not good at having been held by the chores of the Kingdom while the time for the prayer had almost gone. He repented for it.

It is in Quran - وَالْقَيْنَا عَلَى كُرْسِيِّهِ جَسَدًا ثُمَّ أَنَابَ [And indeed, We did test Sulaiman (عليه السلام) and We placed on his throne a body (so he lost his kingdom for a while), then he did return (to Allah with repentance, and to his throne by the Grace of Allah).] (Saba - 34)

There are differences of opinions among scholars as to what happened and what kind of body was placed on his throne and after how many days Sulaiman (عليه السلام) regained his Kingdom back. From the above verse, it was a test for Prophet Sulaiman (عليه السلام). When he turned towards Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) in repentance, everything was restored back. Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) granted his supplication and he was given a Kingdom, the like of which is not to be given to anyone in the world.

Ka'ba and Masjid al-Aqsa were originally built by Adam (عليه السلام). Later these were rebuilt by Ibrahim (عليه السلام).



During the time of Dawood (عليه السلام), it was decided to rebuild Masjid al-Aqsa again. The work was started, but in view of his death, it was delayed. Later it was completed by Sulaiman (عليه السلام).

Sulaiman's (عليه السلام) public works were carried out by humans and jinns both. Jinns were involved in them so that they get an opportunity to realize that they are creatures, subjected to Allah's commands and they are not all powerful and knowers of unseen, as some of them believed.

DEATH OF SULAIMAN (عليه السلام)

Sulaiman's (عليه السلام) lived in such a glory that no king in the history of mankind could even imagine. Most of the creatures were subjected to his command. He was a wonder for everyone living within his Kingdom. His death was also a wonder. When a person dies, it is immediately known to the people. But it was not the case when Sulaiman (عليه السلام) died. He was sitting on a chair overseeing the jinns working on a project. His staff was in his hand on which he was leaning. He died sitting in this position.

Many days passed like this and no one was aware of his death, for he was seen sitting erect. His body did not show any signs of death. The jinns continued their work thinking that he was watching them.

Later, an ant began nibbling his staff. Eventually, it ate the lower part of the staff from inside, until it fell out of Sulaiman's (عليه السلام) hand and his great body fell to the ground. People hurried to him, realizing that he had died a long time ago and that the jinns did not perceive the unseen, for had the jinns known the unseen, they would not have kept working, thinking that he was alive.

It is in Quran - فَلَمَّا قَضَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ الْمَوْتَ مَا دَلَّهُمْ عَلَىٰ مَوْتِهِ إِلَّا دَابَّةُ الْأَرْضِ تَأْكُلُ مِنسَأَتَهُ فَلَمَّا خَرَّ تَبَيَّنَتِ الْجِنُّ [When We decreed death for him (Sulaiman عليه السلام was leaning on his stick), no one informed the jinns of his death until a little termite of the earth chew away his stick (gradually) and he fell down. The jinns realized that if they had the knowledge of the unknown, they would never have suffered the demeaning labor.] (Saba - 14)