## Stories from the Qur'an

### Series 24

# News from Sheba

*The Story of Prophet Solomon, the Hoopoe and the Queen of Sheba According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith*




**Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron**
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## STORIES FROM THE QUR'AN

### SERIES 24

# NEWS FROM SHEBA

*The Story of Prophet Solomon, the Hoopoe and the Queen of Sheba According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith*

قَالَ ٱلَّذِي عِندَهُۥ عِلۡمٞ مِّنَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ أَنَا۠ ءَاتِيكَ بِهِۦ قَبۡلَ أَن يَرۡتَدَّ إِلَيۡكَ طَرۡفُكَۚ فَلَمَّا رَءَاهُ مُسۡتَقِرًّا عِندَهُۥ قَالَ هَٰذَا مِن فَضۡلِ رَبِّي لِيَبۡلُوَنِيٓ ءَأَشۡكُرُ أَمۡ أَكۡفُرُۖ وَمَن شَكَرَ فَإِنَّمَا يَشۡكُرُ لِنَفۡسِهِۦۖ وَمَن كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ رَبِّي غَنِيٌّ كَرِيمٞ

"Said one who had knowledge from the Scripture, "I will bring it to you before your glance returns to you." And when [Solomon] saw it placed before him, he said, "This is from the favor of my Lord to test me whether I will be grateful or ungrateful. And whoever is grateful - his gratitude is only for [the benefit of] himself. And whoever is ungrateful - then indeed, my Lord is Free of need and Generous."."

SURAH AN-NAML 27:40

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, who made a bird a bearer of news, a letter an opening to guidance, and a palace of glass a door to faith. Blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who wrote letters of invitation to the kings of the world, and upon his family and his Companions.

This eBook is specially dedicated to my beloved wife,

**ZAHARAH MOHD LATIF**;

my dear children,

**MUHAMMAD HAFIZ, NOOR HAZWANI, ABDUL HAKIM, NOOR HIDAYAH, NOR AQILA** and **NOR ATIQAH**;

and my sons- and daughters-in-law,

**FAZILAH, MALEK, HANIN, FAIRIZAL** and **FIRWAN**.

May Allah make us grateful when given, truthful when bringing news, wise when leading, and brave enough to admit our wrong once the truth is clear. May this knowledge be ‘ilmun yuntafa‘u bih, knowledge that brings benefit.

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## ABOUT THE COVER OF THIS EBOOK

The cover of this eBook does not depict any human being. It shows the **scenery** of desert dunes and a green valley in the south of Arabia at sunset, with **a single bird** flying high in the sky toward **the setting sun**.

The bird recalls the hoopoe, who said: ***"I have come to you from Sheba with certain news"*** (27:22). The sun recalls that the people of Sheba were ***"prostrating to the sun instead of Allah"*** (27:24).

The cover does not depict Prophet Solomon, the Queen of Sheba, a throne or a palace. The **dark blue band** at the bottom, framed by **fine gold lines**, is where the author's name appears.

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*Colour guide: green box = verses of the Qur'an; gold box = Hadith; brown box = archaeological note; blue table = comparison. Underlined blue narrator names can be clicked to open the narrator's page on sunnah.com.*

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# NEWS FROM SHEBA

In Series 23, Prophet Solomon عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ smiled at the words of an ant and prayed to be grateful. This series continues the story in Surah An-Naml with the longest episode of his life: ***a missing bird***, ***a kingdom in the south***, and ***a wise queen*** who in the end submitted to Allah.

The story moves from a small bird to a great kingdom, from a letter to a palace of glass — and at every step there are lessons about ***truthfulness, leadership and gratitude***.

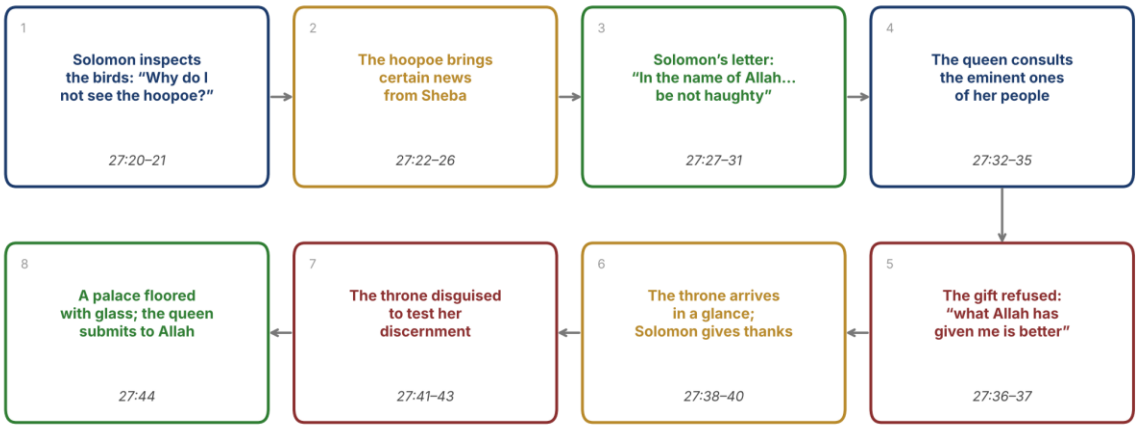



*Figure 1: The flow of the story of the hoopoe and the Queen of Sheba — from a missing bird to the queen's submission to Allah.*

*Note: The translation of the Qur'anic verses in this eBook is Sahih International. The translations of the Hadith are our own, from the Arabic text. The grade of each Hadith is stated in its Hadith box, with a link to sunnah.com.*

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# "WHY DO I NOT SEE THE HOOPOE?"

**SURAH AN-NAML 27:20**

وَتَفَقَّدَ ٱلطَّيْرَ فَقَالَ مَالِيَ لَآ أَرَى ٱلْهُدْهُدَ أَمْ كَانَ مِنَ ٱلْغَآئِبِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾

And he took attendance of the birds and said, "Why do I not see the hoopoe - or is he among the absent?"

*Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/27:20*

**SURAH AN-NAML 27:21**

لَأُعَذِّبَنَّهُۥ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا أَوْ لَأَاْذْبَحَنَّهُۥٓ أَوْ لَيَأْتِيَنِّى بِسُلْطَٰنٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٢١﴾

I will surely punish him with a severe punishment or slaughter him unless he brings me clear authorization.

*Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/27:21*

## EXPLANATION OF VERSES 27:20–21 — A LEADER WHO INSPECTS

**First: Checking on his people.** ***"And he took attendance of the birds"***. A king who commanded jinn and men still noticed the absence of ***a single bird***.

**Second: Firm but just.** He threatened a severe punishment, ***"unless he brings me clear authorization"***. No punishment is given before ***the excuse is heard***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 27:20

**HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 7138**

حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، حَدَّثَنِي مَالِكٌ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ دِينَارٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « أَلاَ كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ، وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، فَالإِمَامُ الَّذِي عَلَى النَّاسِ رَاعٍ وَهْوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، وَالرَّجُلُ رَاعٍ عَلَى أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ وَهْوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، وَالْمَرْأَةُ رَاعِيَةٌ عَلَى أَهْلِ بَيْتِ زَوْجِهَا وَوَلَدِهِ وَهِيَ مَسْئُولَةٌ عَنْهُمْ، وَعَبْدُ الرَّجُلِ رَاعٍ عَلَى مَالِ سَيِّدِهِ وَهْوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْهُ، أَلاَ فَكُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ ».

**TRANSLATION:**

'Abdullah ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنهما narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"Indeed, each of you is a shepherd, and each of you will be asked about his flock. The ruler over the people is a shepherd and will be asked about his flock. A man is a shepherd over the people of his house and will be asked**

**about them. A woman is a shepherd over her husband's house and his children and will be asked about them. A servant is a shepherd over his master's wealth and will be asked about it. Indeed, each of you is a shepherd and each of you will be asked about his flock."**

**CHAIN OF NARRATION:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Isma'il ibn Abi Uways, from Malik ibn Anas, from 'Abdullah ibn Dinar, from 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنهما.

**REFERENCE:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Judgements (Kitab al-Ahkam), Hadith No. 7138. Also narrated as No. 893, and by Muslim (No. 1829).

**GRADE:** SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

*Source:* https://sunnah.com/bukhari:7138

Every leader — a ruler, the head of a family, or a worker entrusted with wealth — ***will be asked about those in his care***. Solomon عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ shows what that means: to check, to ask, and to hear the excuse.

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## CERTAIN NEWS

**SURAH AN-NAML 27:22**

فَمَكَثَ غَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ فَقَالَ أَحَطتُ بِمَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِۦ وَجِئْتُكَ مِن سَبَإٍۭ بِنَبَإٍ يَقِينٍ ﴿٢٢﴾

But the hoopoe stayed not long and said, "I have encompassed [in knowledge] that which you have not encompassed, and I have come to you from Sheba with certain news."

*Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/27:22*

**SURAH AN-NAML 27:23**

إِنِّى وَجَدتُّ ٱمْرَأَةً تَمْلِكُهُمْ وَأُوتِيَتْ مِن كُلِّ شَىْءٍ وَلَهَا عَرْشٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٣﴾

Indeed, I found [there] a woman ruling them, and she has been given of all things, and she has a great throne.

*Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/27:23*

**SURAH AN-NAML 27:24**

وَجَدتُّهَا وَقَوْمَهَا يَسْجُدُونَ لِلشَّمْسِ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنُ أَعْمَٰلَهُمْ فَصَدَّهُمْ عَنِ ٱلسَّبِيلِ فَهُمْ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

I found her and her people prostrating to the sun instead of Allah, and Satan has made their deeds pleasing to them and averted them from [His] way, so they are not guided.

*Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/27:24*

### EXPLANATION OF VERSES 27:22–26 — A BRAVE BIRD DEVOTED TO TAWHID

**First: Knowledge the king did not have.** ***"I have encompassed [in knowledge] that which you have not encompassed"***. A small bird knew something that a prophet and king did not — a lesson that ***knowledge is not limited to the powerful***.

**Second: Certain news.** ***"with certain news"***. The hoopoe did not bring rumours, but news that was ***certain***.

**Third: The kingdom of Sheba.** ***"I found [there] a woman ruling them"***, and ***"she has a great throne"***.

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**Fourth: A concern for tawhid.** ***"I found her and her people prostrating to the sun instead of Allah"***. What troubled the hoopoe most was not their wealth but ***their worship of other than Allah***. Then he said: ***"Allah - there is no deity except Him, Lord of the Great Throne"*** (27:26). Tafsir Ibn Kathir 27:22

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# "WE WILL SEE"

**SURAH AN-NAML 27:27**

قَالَ سَنَنظُرُ أَصَدَقْتَ أَمْ كُنتَ مِنَ ٱلْكَٰذِبِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾

[Solomon] said, "We will see whether you were truthful or were of the liars."

*Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/27:27*

**SURAH AN-NAML 27:28**

ٱذْهَب بِّكِتَٰبِى هَٰذَا فَأَلْقِهْ إِلَيْهِمْ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ فَٱنظُرْ مَاذَا يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

Take this letter of mine and deliver it to them. Then leave them and see what [answer] they will return.

*Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/27:28*

## EXPLANATION OF VERSES 27:27–28 — VERIFYING THE NEWS

**First: Not accepting it blindly.** ***"We will see whether you were truthful or were of the liars"***. Although the news came from his own soldier, Solomon عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ ***verified it first***.

**Second: How he verified it.** ***"Take this letter of mine and deliver it to them. Then leave them and see what [answer] they will return"***. A great lesson for an age of fake news: ***verify before you believe, verify before you share***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 27:27

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# A NOBLE LETTER

**SURAH AN-NAML 27:29**

قَالَتۡ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلۡمَلَؤُاْ إِنِّيٓ أُلۡقِيَ إِلَيَّ كِتَٰبٞ كَرِيمٌ ٢٩

She said, "O eminent ones, indeed, to me has been delivered a noble letter."

*Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/27:29*

**SURAH AN-NAML 27:30**

إِنَّهُۥ مِن سُلَيۡمَٰنَ وَإِنَّهُۥ بِسۡمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحۡمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ ٣٠

Indeed, it is from Solomon, and indeed, it reads: 'In the name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful.

*Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/27:30*

**SURAH AN-NAML 27:31**

أَلَّا تَعۡلُواْ عَلَيَّ وَأۡتُونِي مُسۡلِمِينَ ٣١

Be not haughty with me but come to me in submission [as Muslims].

*Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/27:31*

## EXPLANATION OF VERSES 27:29–31 — A BRIEF LETTER OF INVITATION

**First: "A noble letter".** The Queen of Sheba described it as ***"a noble letter"***. The commentators mention among the reasons for its nobility that it was ***sealed***, came from a great king, and began with the name of Allah. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 27:29

**Second: Beginning with the name of Allah.** ***"In the name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful"***.

**Third: Brief and clear.** ***"Be not haughty with me but come to me in submission [as Muslims]"***. The whole call in one verse: leave arrogance, and submit to Allah.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also wrote letters of invitation to kings, and he made sure they were sealed:

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**HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 2938**

حَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ الْجَعْدِ، أَخْبَرَنَا شُعْبَةُ، عَنْ قَتَادَةَ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَنَسًا ـ رضى الله عنه ـ يَقُولُ لَمَّا أَرَادَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم أَنْ يَكْتُبَ إِلَى الرُّومِ، قِيلَ لَهُ إِنَّهُمْ لاَ يَقْرَءُونَ كِتَابًا إِلاَّ أَنْ يَكُونَ مَخْتُومًا. فَاتَّخَذَ خَاتَمًا مِنْ فِضَّةٍ، فَكَأَنِّي أَنْظُرُ إِلَى بَيَاضِهِ فِي يَدِهِ، وَنَقَشَ فِيهِ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ.

**TRANSLATION:**

Qatadah said: I heard Anas رضى الله عنه say: **When the Prophet ﷺ wanted to write to the Byzantines, he was told: They do not read a letter unless it is sealed. So he had a ring made of silver** — it is as if I can still see its whiteness on his hand — **and he had engraved on it: Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah.**

**CHAIN OF NARRATION:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from ʻAli ibn al-Jaʻd, from Shuʻbah ibn al-Hajjaj, from Qatadah ibn Diʻamah, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

**REFERENCE:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Jihad (Kitab al-Jihad wa al-Siyar), chapter on inviting the Jews and Christians, Hadith No. 2938. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 2092).

**GRADE:** SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

*Source:* https://sunnah.com/bukhari:2938

## A QUEEN WHO CONSULTED

**SURAH AN-NAML 27:32**

قَالَتْ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلْمَلَؤُا۟ أَفْتُونِى فِىٓ أَمْرِى مَا كُنتُ قَاطِعَةً أَمْرًا حَتَّىٰ تَشْهَدُونِ ﴿٣٢﴾

She said, "O eminent ones, advise me in my affair. I would not decide a matter until you witness [for] me."

*Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/27:32*

**SURAH AN-NAML 27:33**

قَالُوا۟ نَحْنُ أُو۟لُوا۟ قُوَّةٍ وَأُو۟لُوا۟ بَأْسٍ شَدِيدٍ وَٱلْأَمْرُ إِلَيْكِ فَٱنظُرِى مَاذَا تَأْمُرِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

They said, "We are men of strength and of great military might, but the command is yours, so see what you will command."

*Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/27:33*

**SURAH AN-NAML 27:34**

قَالَتْ إِنَّ ٱلْمُلُوكَ إِذَا دَخَلُوا۟ قَرْيَةً أَفْسَدُوهَا وَجَعَلُوٓا۟ أَعِزَّةَ أَهْلِهَآ أَذِلَّةً ۖ وَكَذَٰلِكَ يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

She said, "Indeed kings - when they enter a city, they ruin it and render the honored of its people humbled. And thus do they do."

*Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/27:34*

**SURAH AN-NAML 27:35**

وَإِنِّى مُرْسِلَةٌ إِلَيْهِم بِهَدِيَّةٍ فَنَاظِرَةٌۢ بِمَ يَرْجِعُ ٱلْمُرْسَلُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

But indeed, I will send to them a gift and see with what [reply] the messengers will return.

*Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/27:35*

### EXPLANATION OF VERSES 27:32–35 — THE WISDOM OF A LEADER

**First: Consultation.** ***"I would not decide a matter until you witness [for] me"***.

**Second: Nobles who relied on strength.** ***"We are men of strength and of great military might"***. Yet they left the decision to the queen.

**Third: Reading history.** ***"Indeed kings - when they enter a city, they ruin it and render the honored of its people humbled"***. The queen did not rush into war, though her army was strong.

**Fourth: A wise test.** ***"I will send to them a gift and see with what [reply] the messengers will return"***. The commentators explain: if Solomon accepted the gift, he was a worldly king who could be bargained with; if he refused, he was a prophet. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 27:35

| | Words of the Queen of Sheba | Lesson |
|---|---|---|
| Consultation (27:32) | "I would not decide a matter until you witness [for] me" | A wise leader listens to counsel before deciding |
| Caution (27:34) | "Indeed kings — when they enter a city, they ruin it" | Not rushing into war, even with a strong army (27:33) |
| Testing (27:35) | "I will send to them a gift" | Seeking proof: a worldly king, or a prophet with no need of wealth? |
| Admitting wrong (27:44) | "My Lord, indeed I have wronged myself" | Truth accepted once clear — "with Solomon to Allah" |

*Figure 2: The wisdom of the Queen of Sheba — her words in the Qur'an and their lessons.*

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# A GIFT REFUSED

**SURAH AN-NAML 27:36**

فَلَمَّا جَآءَ سُلَيۡمَٰنَ قَالَ أَتُمِدُّونَنِ بِمَالٖ فَمَآ ءَاتَىٰنِۦَ ٱللَّهُ خَيۡرٞ مِّمَّآ ءَاتَىٰكُمۡۚ بَلۡ أَنتُم بِهَدِيَّتِكُمۡ تَفۡرَحُونَ ٣٦

So when they came to Solomon, he said, "Do you provide me with wealth? But what Allah has given me is better than what He has given you. Rather, it is you who rejoice in your gift."

*Translation: Sahih International* — quran.com/27:36

## EXPLANATION OF VERSES 27:36–37 — THE CALL CANNOT BE BOUGHT

**First: A firm refusal.** ***"Do you provide me with wealth? But what Allah has given me is better than what He has given you"***.

**Second: A clear message.** Solomon عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ did not ask for wealth; he asked them ***to leave arrogance and submit to Allah***. A gift meant to change a leader's stand is a kind of bribe. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 27:36

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also taught that gifts given because of an office are not personal property:

**HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 2597**

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ، عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ، عَنْ عُرْوَةَ بْنِ الزُّبَيْرِ، عَنْ أَبِي حُمَيْدٍ السَّاعِدِيِّ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ اسْتَعْمَلَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم رَجُلاً مِنَ الأَزْدِ يُقَالُ لَهُ ابْنُ اللُّتْبِيَّةِ عَلَى الصَّدَقَةِ، فَلَمَّا قَدِمَ قَالَ هَذَا لَكُمْ، وَهَذَا أُهْدِيَ لِي. قَالَ « فَهَلاَّ جَلَسَ فِي بَيْتِ أَبِيهِ أَوْ بَيْتِ أُمِّهِ، فَيَنْظُرَ يُهْدَى لَهُ أَمْ لاَ وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لاَ يَأْخُذُ أَحَدٌ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا إِلاَّ جَاءَ بِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَحْمِلُهُ عَلَى رَقَبَتِهِ، إِنْ كَانَ بَعِيرًا لَهُ رُغَاءٌ أَوْ بَقَرَةً لَهَا خُوَارٌ أَوْ شَاةً تَيْعَرُ ـ ثُمَّ رَفَعَ بِيَدِهِ، حَتَّى رَأَيْنَا عُفْرَةَ إِبْطَيْهِ ـ اللَّهُمَّ هَلْ بَلَّغْتُ اللَّهُمَّ هَلْ بَلَّغْتُ ثَلاَثًا ».

**TRANSLATION:**

Abu Humayd al-Sa'idi رضى الله عنه said: The Prophet ﷺ appointed a man from the tribe of al-Azd called Ibn al-Lutbiyyah to collect the zakah. When he returned, he said: This is for you, and this was given to me as a gift. The Prophet said: **"Why did he not sit in the house of his father or his mother and see whether he**

**would be given gifts or not? By the One in whose hand is my soul, no one takes anything from it except that he will come with it on the Day of Resurrection carrying it on his neck…"** Then he raised his hands until we saw the whiteness of his armpits: **"O Allah, have I not conveyed?"** three times.

**CHAIN OF NARRATION:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Abdullah ibn Muhammad al-Musnadi, from Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah, from Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri, from 'Urwah ibn al-Zubayr, from Abu Humayd al-Sa'idi رضى الله عنه.

**REFERENCE:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Gifts (Kitab al-Hibah), chapter on whoever does not accept a gift for a reason, Hadith No. 2597. Also narrated as No. 6979 and 7174, and by Muslim (No. 1832).

**GRADE:** SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

*Source:* https://sunnah.com/bukhari:2597

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## A THRONE IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE

**SURAH AN-NAML 27:38**

قَالَ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلْمَلَؤُا۟ أَيُّكُمْ يَأْتِينِى بِعَرْشِهَا قَبْلَ أَن يَأْتُونِى مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾

[Solomon] said, "O assembly [of jinn], which of you will bring me her throne before they come to me in submission."

*Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/27:38*

**SURAH AN-NAML 27:39**

قَالَ عِفْرِيتٌ مِّنَ ٱلْجِنِّ أَنَا۠ ءَاتِيكَ بِهِۦ قَبْلَ أَن تَقُومَ مِن مَّقَامِكَ ۖ وَإِنِّى عَلَيْهِ لَقَوِىٌّ أَمِينٌ ﴿٣٩﴾

A powerful one from among the jinn said, "I will bring it to you before you rise from your place, and indeed, I am for this [task] strong and trustworthy."

*Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/27:39*

**SURAH AN-NAML 27:40**

قَالَ ٱلَّذِى عِندَهُۥ عِلْمٌ مِّنَ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ أَنَا۠ ءَاتِيكَ بِهِۦ قَبْلَ أَن يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ ۚ فَلَمَّا رَءَاهُ مُسْتَقِرًّا عِندَهُۥ قَالَ هَٰذَا مِن فَضْلِ رَبِّى لِيَبْلُوَنِىٓ ءَأَشْكُرُ أَمْ أَكْفُرُ ۖ وَمَن شَكَرَ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِۦ ۖ وَمَن كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ رَبِّى غَنِىٌّ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٤٠﴾

Said one who had knowledge from the Scripture, "I will bring it to you before your glance returns to you." And when [Solomon] saw it placed before him, he said, "This is from the favor of my Lord to test me whether I will be grateful or ungrateful. And whoever is grateful - his gratitude is only for [the benefit of] himself. And whoever is ungrateful - then indeed, my Lord is Free of need and Generous."

*Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/27:40*

### EXPLANATION OF VERSES 27:38–40 — KNOWLEDGE ABOVE STRENGTH

**First: Knowledge faster than an 'ifrit.** ***"Said one who had knowledge from the Scripture, "I will bring it to you before your glance returns to you.""***. What is highlighted is ***knowledge from the Scripture***, not the name of that person. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 27:40

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**Second: The response of a prophet.** When he saw the throne before him, Solomon عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ did not boast, but said: ***"This is from the favor of my Lord to test me whether I will be grateful or ungrateful"***. And ***"whoever is grateful - his gratitude is only for [the benefit of] himself"***.

**HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2999**

حَدَّثَنَا هَدَّابُ بْنُ خَالِدٍ الأَزْدِيُّ، وَشَيْبَانُ بْنُ فَرُّوخَ، جَمِيعًا عَنْ سُلَيْمَانَ بْنِ الْمُغِيرَةِ، - وَاللَّفْظُ لِشَيْبَانَ - حَدَّثَنَا سُلَيْمَانُ، حَدَّثَنَا ثَابِتٌ، عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ أَبِي لَيْلَى، عَنْ صُهَيْبٍ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم « عَجَبًا لأَمْرِ الْمُؤْمِنِ إِنَّ أَمْرَهُ كُلَّهُ خَيْرٌ وَلَيْسَ ذَاكَ لأَحَدٍ إِلاَّ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ إِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ سَرَّاءُ شَكَرَ فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ ضَرَّاءُ صَبَرَ فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ ».

**TRANSLATION:**

Suhayb رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"How wonderful is the affair of the believer!**

**All of his affair is good for him, and that is so for no one except the believer. If something pleasing befalls him, he is grateful, and that is good for him. And if something harmful befalls him, he is patient, and that is good for him."**

**CHAIN OF NARRATION:** Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Haddab ibn Khalid al-Azdi and Shayban ibn Farrukh, from Sulayman ibn al-Mughirah, from Thabit al-Bunani, from 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Abi Layla, from Suhayb al-Rumi رضى الله عنه.

**REFERENCE:** Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Asceticism (Kitab al-Zuhd wa al-Raqa'iq), chapter on the believer whose every affair is good, Hadith No. 2999.

**GRADE:** SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

*Source:* https://sunnah.com/muslim:2999

## THE TEST OF THE THRONE AND THE GLASS PALACE

**SURAH AN-NAML 27:41**

قَالَ نَكِّرُواْ لَهَا عَرْشَهَا نَنظُرْ أَتَهْتَدِيٓ أَمْ تَكُونُ مِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

He said, "Disguise for her her throne; we will see whether she will be guided [to truth] or will be of those who is not guided."

*Translation: Sahih International* — quran.com/27:41

**SURAH AN-NAML 27:42**

فَلَمَّا جَآءَتْ قِيلَ أَهَٰكَذَا عَرْشُكِۖ قَالَتْ كَأَنَّهُۥ هُوَۚ وَأُوتِينَا ٱلْعِلْمَ مِن قَبْلِهَا وَكُنَّا مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾

So when she arrived, it was said [to her], "Is your throne like this?" She said, "[It is] as though it was it." [Solomon said], "And we were given knowledge before her, and we have been Muslims [in submission to Allah]."

*Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/27:42*

## EXPLANATION OF VERSES 27:41–43 — A WISE ANSWER

**First: A test of discernment.** ***"Disguise for her her throne"***.

**Second: A careful answer.** When asked, ***"Is your throne like this?"***, she answered: ***"[It is] as though it was it"***. She neither denied nor confirmed — the answer of someone ***intelligent and careful***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 27:42

**Third: What blocks guidance.** ***"And that which she was worshipping other than Allah had averted her [from submission to Him]"***. Intelligence alone is not enough; ***custom and surroundings*** can keep a person from the truth.

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# "WITH SOLOMON, TO ALLAH"

**SURAH AN-NAML 27:44**

قِيلَ لَهَا ٱدۡخُلِي ٱلصَّرۡحَۖ فَلَمَّا رَأَتۡهُ حَسِبَتۡهُ لُجَّةٗ وَكَشَفَتۡ عَن سَاقَيۡهَاۚ قَالَ
إِنَّهُۥ صَرۡحٞ مُّمَرَّدٞ مِّن قَوَارِيرَۗ قَالَتۡ رَبِّ إِنِّي ظَلَمۡتُ نَفۡسِي وَأَسۡلَمۡتُ مَعَ
سُلَيۡمَٰنَ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ ٱلۡعَٰلَمِينَ ٤٤

She was told, "Enter the palace." But when she saw it, she thought it was a body of water and uncovered her shins [to wade through]. He said, "Indeed, it is a palace [whose floor is] made smooth with glass." She said, "My Lord, indeed I have wronged myself, and I submit with Solomon to Allah, Lord of the worlds."

*Translation: Sahih International* — quran.com/27:44

## EXPLANATION OF VERSE 27:44 — A NOBLE ADMISSION

**First: A palace floored with glass.** ***"she thought it was a body of water"***. Then it was explained: ***"Indeed, it is a palace [whose floor is] made smooth with glass"***. The commentators note that this shows ***what the eye sees is not always the reality*** — like the sun that was taken as a god. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 27:44

**Second: Admitting wrong.** ***"My Lord, indeed I have wronged myself"***.

**Third: Not submission to Solomon.** ***"and I submit with Solomon to Allah, Lord of the worlds"***. She did not say "to Solomon", but ***"with Solomon, to Allah"*** — Islam is submission to Allah, and king and queen stand equal before Him.

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# WHAT THE QUR'AN DOES NOT TELL

The story of the Queen of Sheba is adorned with many Israiliyyat. Following Sahih al-Bukhari 4485 (Series 1), we do not add outside details.

## THE POPULAR STORY AND WHAT REVELATION SAYS

| THE POPULAR STORY | WHAT THE QUR'AN AND AUTHENTIC HADITH SAY |
|---|---|
| The queen's name was Bilqis bint Sharahil. | The Qur'an does not name her; the name "Bilqis" comes from the reports of commentators. |
| The queen married Solomon after accepting Islam. | Not established in the Qur'an or authentic Hadith. |
| The queen was the mother of Menelik, the first king of Ethiopia. | An Ethiopian legend (Kebra Nagast), without basis. |
| The one who brought the throne was named Asaf ibn Barkhiya. | The Qur'an only says "one who had knowledge from the Scripture" (27:40). |
| The glass palace was built to see whether the queen's legs were hairy. | Rejected. Not mentioned by the Qur'an. |

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTE

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTE: THE KINGDOM OF SABA' AT MARIB, YEMEN

The kingdom of **Saba' (Sheba)** is an ancient kingdom **firmly attested** by archaeology at **Marib**, Yemen. In **2023**, UNESCO inscribed the **"Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba, Marib"** as a World Heritage Site — including the city of Marib, the **Awwam Temple**, the **Bar'an Temple** and the **Great Dam of Marib**. The kingdom is estimated to have flourished from at least the **8th century BCE** to the 3rd century CE.

This matches the Qur'an's picture of a prosperous kingdom (27:23; 34:15).

**Claim not included.** The Awwam Temple is known locally as "Mahram Bilqis", but **no inscription names the queen**. Therefore, the claim that "Bilqis' palace" has been found is **not included**. Ethiopian claims about a tomb or palace of the Queen of Sheba at Aksum are also **not included**.

**REFERENCES:**

World Heritage Site (UNESCO 2023). https://www.worldheritagesite.org/list/id/1700

# TRUTH, WISDOM AND GRATITUDE

This story begins with the absence of a bird and ends with the faith of a kingdom. Each character teaches something: the hoopoe ***truthfulness and courage***, Solomon عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ ***firmness, care and gratitude***, and the Queen of Sheba ***wisdom and the courage to admit she was wrong***.

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## A BRIEF COMPARISON

| CHARACTER | ATTITUDE AND LESSON |
|---|---|
| The hoopoe | Brought certain news; troubled by false worship; brave before a king (27:22–26) |
| Solomon عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ | Inspected, verified the news, refused a bribe, and gave thanks when given power (27:20–40) |
| The Queen of Sheba | Consulted, acted carefully, tested, then admitted her wrong and submitted (27:32–44) |
| The nobles of Sheba | Relied on military might, yet left the decision to the queen (27:33) |
| The one with knowledge | Knowledge from the Scripture surpassed the strength of an 'ifrit (27:39–40) |

## LESSONS FROM THIS STORY

**First: Every leader will be asked about those in his care.** (27:20; Sahih al-Bukhari 7138).

**Second: Hear the excuse before punishing.** (27:21).

**Third: Knowledge is not limited to the powerful.** (27:22).

**Fourth: Verify news before believing and sharing it.** (27:27–28).

**Fifth: A good call is brief, clear and begins with the name of Allah.** (27:30–31; Sahih al-Bukhari 2938).

**Sixth: Consult, and do not rush into war.** (27:32–35).

**Seventh: A stand cannot be bought; gifts given because of an office are a trust.** (27:36; Sahih al-Bukhari 2597).

**Eighth: Every blessing is a test of gratitude.** (27:40; Sahih Muslim 2999).

**Ninth: Have the courage to admit wrong, and submit to Allah, not to people.** (27:44).

## CONCLUSION

We live in an age of countless "news-bearing birds" — messages, videos and reports arriving every minute. This story invites us to be like the hoopoe, bringing certain news; like Solomon عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, verifying before believing; and like the Queen of Sheba, brave enough to say: "I have wronged myself".

May Allah make us grateful when given, patient when tried, and submitting to Him ***with the prophets***. Amin.

In sha Allah, the series **Stories from the Qur'an** will continue with the story of the people of Sheba and their dam (34:15–19) — with the same method: the Qur'an, authentic Hadith, and solid archaeological findings only.

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Al-Qurtubi, al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an. https://tafsir.app/qurtubi/27/44

Ibn Kathir, Qisas al-Anbiya' (chapter on Prophet Solomon), consulted for the assessment of Israiliyyat reports.

## HADITH AND COMMENTARIES

Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim — Arabic text, chains of narration and narrator pages. https://sunnah.com

Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, Fath al-Bari Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari (Book of Judgements; Book of Jihad; Book of Gifts); al-Nawawi, al-Minhaj Sharh Sahih Muslim (Book of Asceticism).

## ADDITIONAL HADITH CITED IN THE TEXT

Sahih al-Bukhari 4485 (neither believe nor disbelieve the People of the Book). https://sunnah.com/bukhari:4485

## ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

World Heritage Site. Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba, Marib (UNESCO, 2023). https://www.worldheritagesite.org/list/id/1700


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**SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:261**

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتۡ سَبۡعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٖ مِّاْئَةُ حَبَّةٖۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٦١

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

*Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:261*

**SURAH SABA' 34:39**

قُلۡ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبۡسُطُ ٱلرِّزۡقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦ وَيَقۡدِرُ لَهُۥۚ وَمَآ أَنفَقۡتُم مِّن شَيۡءٖ فَهُوَ يُخۡلِفُهُۥۖ وَهُوَ خَيۡرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ ٣٩

Say, "Indeed, my Lord extends provision for whom He wills of His servants and restricts [it] for him. But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers."

*Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:39*

**HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2588**

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، وَابْنُ، حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - وَهُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ وَمَا زَادَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا بِعَفْوٍ إِلاَّ عِزًّا وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلاَّ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ ».

**TRANSLATION:**

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Charity does not decrease wealth.

Allah does not increase a servant who forgives except in honour. And no one humbles himself for the sake of Allah except that Allah raises him in rank."

**CHAIN OF NARRATION:** Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

**REFERENCE:** Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtue, Good Manners and Joining the Ties of Kinship (Kitab al-Birr wa al-Silah wa al-Adab), chapter on the encouragement of forgiveness and humility, Hadith No. 2588.

**GRADE:** SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

*Source:* https://sunnah.com/muslim:2588

**HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1631**

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ - يَعْنِي ابْنَ سَعِيدٍ - وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - هُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « إِذَا مَاتَ الإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلاَّ مِنْ ثَلاَثَةٍ إِلاَّ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ ».

**TRANSLATION:**

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, knowledge that is benefited from, or a righteous child who prays for him."

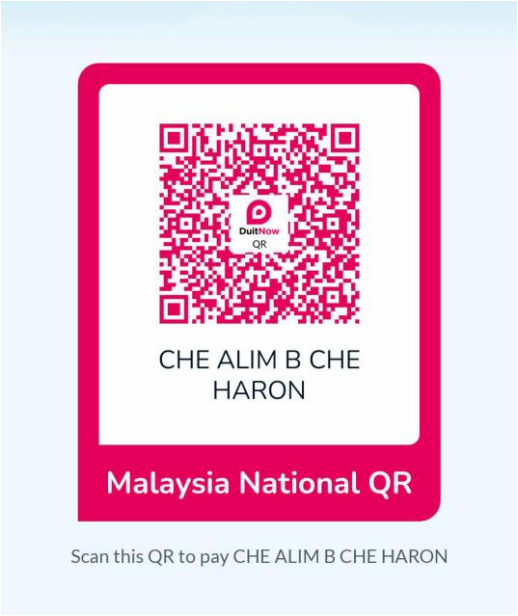
**CHAIN OF NARRATION:** Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

**REFERENCE:** Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Wills (Kitab al-Wasiyyah), chapter on the reward that reaches a person after his death, Hadith No. 1631.

**GRADE:** SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

*Source:* https://sunnah.com/muslim:1631

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