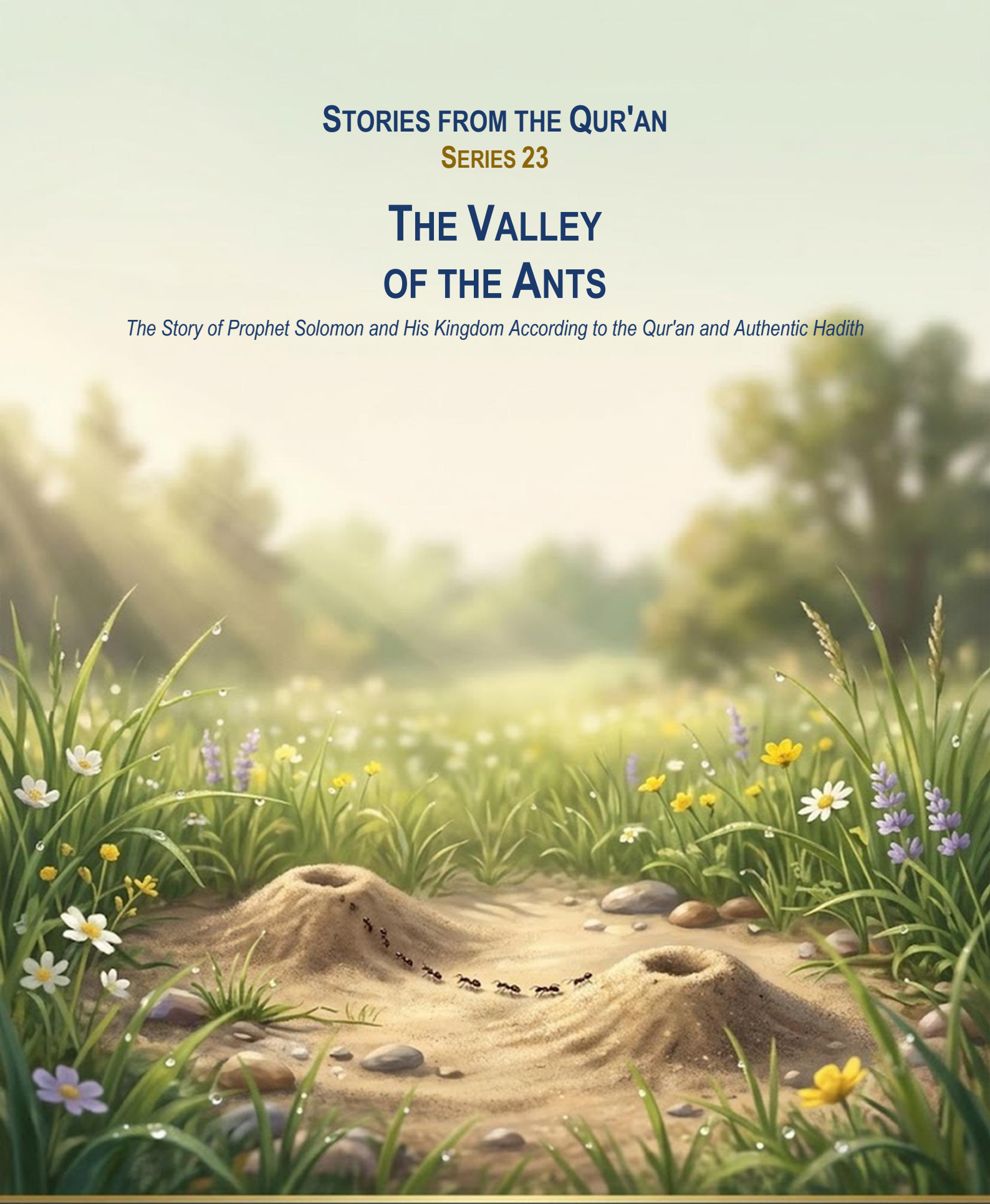
STORIES FROM THE QUR'AN

SERIES 23

THE VALLEY OF THE ANTS

The Story of Prophet Solomon and His Kingdom According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith



HJ CHE ALIM HJ CHE HARON

AK (KELANTAN)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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فَتَبَسَّمَ ضَاحِكًا مِّن قَوْلِهَا وَقَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِيٓ أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ ٱلَّتِيٓ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَٰلِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَٰلِحًا تَرْضَىٰهُ وَأَدْخِلْنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِي عِبَادِكَ ٱلصَّٰلِحِينَ

"So [Solomon] smiled, amused at her speech, and said, "My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents and to do righteousness of which You approve. And admit me by Your mercy into [the ranks of] Your righteous servants."."

SURAH AN-NAML 27:19

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, who let a king hear the voice of an ant, and made that king smile and give thanks. Blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who honoured the prayer of his brother Solomon, 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 inspire us to be grateful for His favours, make us gentle with small creatures, and admit us by His mercy into the ranks of His righteous servants. 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 a **quiet meadow** in the morning, with **small ant hills** on sandy ground, wild flowers and soft sunlight.

The scene is taken from the words of Allah: ***"when they came upon the valley of the ants, an ant said"*** (27:18). Its calm recalls how ***"smiled, amused at her speech"*** (27:19).

The cover does not depict Prophet Solomon, his army, the jinn or his throne. 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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THE VALLEY OF THE ANTS

In Series 22, we came to know Prophet David عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ as successor and judge, and saw his son Solomon عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ (Sulayman) given understanding in judgement (21:79). This series tells of Solomon عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ himself: ***"An excellent servant, indeed he was one repeatedly turning back [to Allah]"*** (38:30).

Allah gave him a kingdom like no other: the language of birds, the wind, the jinn and a spring of copper. Yet the most beautiful moment of his story is not when he commands the jinn — but when he ***smiles at the words of an ant***, and prays to remain grateful.

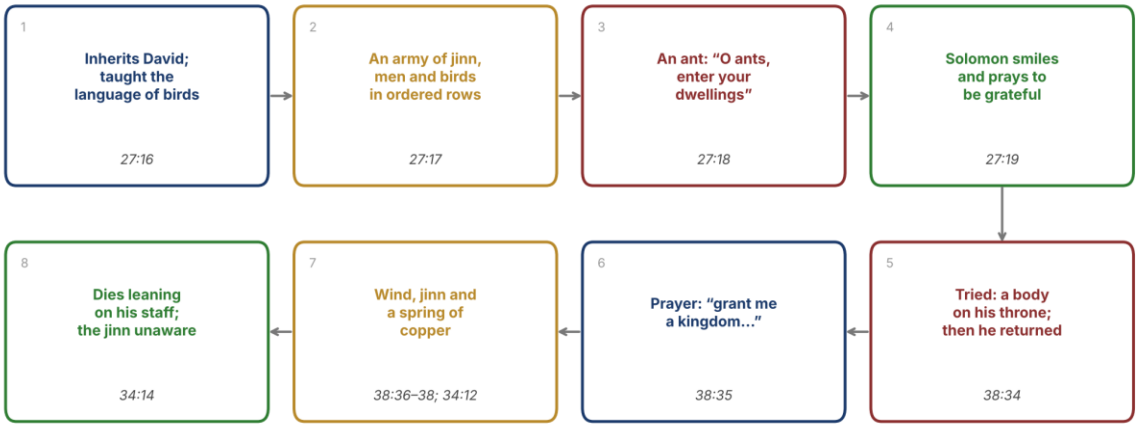


Figure 1: The flow of the story of Prophet Solomon — from inheriting David to dying leaning on his staff.

The story of the Queen of Sheba and the hoopoe (27:20–44) will be told in the next series, in sha 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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INHERITING DAVID AND THE LANGUAGE OF BIRDS

SURAH AN-NAML 27:15

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا دَاوُۥدَ وَسُلَيْمَٰنَ عِلْمًا ۖ وَقَالَا ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ٱلَّذِى فَضَّلَنَا عَلَىٰ كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ عِبَادِهِ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٥﴾

And We had certainly given to David and Solomon knowledge, and they said, "Praise [is due] to Allah, who has favored us over many of His believing servants."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/27:15

SURAH AN-NAML 27:16

وَوَرِثَ سُلَيْمَٰنُ دَاوُۥدَ ۖ وَقَالَ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ عُلِّمْنَا مَنطِقَ ٱلطَّيْرِ وَأُوتِينَا مِن كُلِّ شَىْءٍ ۖ إِنَّ هَٰذَا لَهُوَ ٱلْفَضْلُ ٱلْمُبِينُ ﴿١٦﴾

And Solomon inherited David. He said, "O people, we have been taught the language of birds, and we have been given from all things. Indeed, this is evident bounty."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/27:16

EXPLANATION OF VERSES 27:15–16 — AN INHERITANCE OF KNOWLEDGE, NOT WEALTH

First: Knowledge before kingship. The passage begins with ***"We had certainly given to David and Solomon knowledge"***, and they met it with praise of Allah.

Second: What was inherited. ***"And Solomon inherited David"***. The commentators explain that what he inherited was ***prophethood, knowledge and kingship***, not wealth — for Prophet David عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ had other sons. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 27:16

Third: The language of birds. ***"we have been taught the language of birds, and we have been given from all things"***. And Solomon عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ did not boast: ***"Indeed, this is evident bounty"***.

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AN ARMY IN ORDERED ROWS

SURAH AN-NAML 27:17

وَحُشِرَ لِسُلَيۡمَٰنَ جُنُودُهُۥ مِنَ ٱلۡجِنِّ وَٱلۡإِنسِ وَٱلطَّيۡرِ فَهُمۡ يُوزَعُونَ ١٧

And gathered for Solomon were his soldiers of the jinn and men and birds, and they were [marching] in rows.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/27:17

EXPLANATION OF VERSE 27:17 — STRENGTH WITH DISCIPLINE

First: Three kinds of creatures. ***"And gathered for Solomon were his soldiers of the jinn and men and birds"***. A kingdom that united very different creatures.

Second: In order. ***"they were [marching] in rows"***. The word ***yūzaʿūn*** means held back and arranged so that the front ranks do not outpace those behind. Great strength needs ***discipline and order***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 27:17

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AN ANT IN THE VALLEY OF THE ANTS

SURAH AN-NAML 27:18

حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَآ أَتَوۡاْ عَلَىٰ وَادِ ٱلنَّمۡلِ قَالَتۡ نَمۡلَةٞ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّمۡلُ ٱدۡخُلُواْ مَسَٰكِنَكُمۡ لَا يَحۡطِمَنَّكُمۡ سُلَيۡمَٰنُ وَجُنُودُهُۥ وَهُمۡ لَا يَشۡعُرُونَ ١٨

Until, when they came upon the valley of the ants, an ant said, "O ants, enter your dwellings that you not be crushed by Solomon and his soldiers while they perceive not."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/27:18

EXPLANATION OF VERSE 27:18 — A CARING LEADER

First: An ant's warning. ***"O ants, enter your dwellings"***. A single ant acts as a leader ***concerned for her people***.

Second: Thinking well of others. ***"while they perceive not"***. The ant did not accuse Solomon عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ and his soldiers of ill intent; she only feared they would ***not notice***. The commentators see here a high manner — thinking well even of the powerful. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 27:18

Third: Small creatures that glorify Allah. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ told of a prophet who was rebuked by Allah for burning an ants' nest:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3319

حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ بْنُ أَبِي أُوَيْسٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي مَالِكٌ، عَنْ أَبِي الزِّنَادِ، عَنِ الأَعْرَجِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « نَزَلَ نَبِيٌّ مِنَ الأَنْبِيَاءِ تَحْتَ شَجَرَةٍ فَلَدَغَتْهُ نَمْلَةٌ، فَأَمَرَ بِجَهَازِهِ فَأُخْرِجَ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا، ثُمَّ أَمَرَ بِبَيْتِهَا فَأُحْرِقَ بِالنَّارِ، فَأَوْحَى اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ فَهَلاَّ نَمْلَةً وَاحِدَةً ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"One of the prophets stopped beneath a tree, and an ant bit him. He ordered his belongings to be taken out from under it, then ordered its nest to be burned with fire. So Allah revealed to him: Why not just one ant?"**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Isma'il ibn Abi Uways, from Malik ibn Anas, from Abu al-Zinad, from 'Abd al-Rahman al-A'raj, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

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REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Beginning of Creation (Kitab Bad' al-Khalq), Hadith No. 3319. Also narrated as No. 3019, and by Muslim (No. 2241).

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:3319

This Hadith does not name that prophet. Its lesson is clear: ***punishment must be proportionate***, and even a creature as small as an ant belongs to a community that glorifies Allah.

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A SMILE AND A PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

SURAH AN-NAML 27:19

فَتَبَسَّمَ ضَاحِكًا مِّن قَوْلِهَا وَقَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِيٓ أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ ٱلَّتِيٓ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَٰلِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَٰلِحًا تَرْضَىٰهُ وَأَدْخِلْنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِي عِبَادِكَ ٱلصَّٰلِحِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

So [Solomon] smiled, amused at her speech, and said, "My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents and to do righteousness of which You approve. And admit me by Your mercy into [the ranks of] Your righteous servants."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/27:19

EXPLANATION OF VERSE 27:19 — THE GRATITUDE OF A KING

First: He smiled. ***"So [Solomon] smiled, amused at her speech"***. A king who commanded jinn and wind did not look down on the voice of an ant.

Second: Asking to be enabled to give thanks. ***"My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents"***. Gratitude itself is ***a gift from Allah***; so he asked for it.

Third: Deeds that please Allah. ***"to do righteousness of which You approve"***.

Fourth: Among the righteous. ***"And admit me by Your mercy into [the ranks of] Your righteous servants"***. A prophet and king asks to enter Paradise ***by Allah's mercy***, not by his kingdom. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 27:19

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2734

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، وَابْنُ نُمَيْرٍ - وَاللَّفْظُ لاِبْنِ نُمَيْرٍ - قَالاَ حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو أُسَامَةَ وَمُحَمَّدُ بْنُ بِشْرٍ عَنْ زَكَرِيَّاءَ بْنِ أَبِي زَائِدَةَ، عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ أَبِي بُرْدَةَ، عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم « إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَيَرْضَى عَنِ الْعَبْدِ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ الأَكْلَةَ فَيَحْمَدَهُ عَلَيْهَا أَوْ يَشْرَبَ الشَّرْبَةَ فَيَحْمَدَهُ عَلَيْهَا ».

TRANSLATION:

Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"Indeed, Allah is pleased with the servant who eats a morsel and praises Him for it, or drinks a sip and praises Him for it."**

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CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah and Muhammad ibn 'Abdillah ibn Numayr, from Abu Usamah Hammad ibn Usamah and Muhammad ibn Bishr, from Zakariyya ibn Abi Za'idah, from Sa'id ibn Abi Burdah, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Remembrance and Supplication (Kitab al-Dhikr wa al-Du'a'), chapter on praising Allah after eating and drinking, Hadith No. 2734.

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

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2734

If Allah is pleased with praise for a single morsel, what of praise for a whole kingdom? Gratitude begins with ***small blessings***.

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THE SWIFT HORSES

SURAH SAD 38:31

إِذْ عُرِضَ عَلَيْهِ بِٱلْعَشِيِّ ٱلصَّٰفِنَٰتُ ٱلْجِيَادُ ﴿٣١﴾

[Mention] when there were exhibited before him in the afternoon the poised [standing] racehorses.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/38:31

SURAH SAD 38:32

فَقَالَ إِنِّىٓ أَحْبَبْتُ حُبَّ ٱلْخَيْرِ عَن ذِكْرِ رَبِّى حَتَّىٰ تَوَارَتْ بِٱلْحِجَابِ ﴿٣٢﴾

And he said, "Indeed, I gave preference to the love of good [things] over the remembrance of my Lord until the sun disappeared into the curtain [of darkness]."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/38:32

SURAH SAD 38:33

رُدُّوهَا عَلَىَّ ۖ فَطَفِقَ مَسْحًۢا بِٱلسُّوقِ وَٱلْأَعْنَاقِ ﴿٣٣﴾

[He said], "Return them to me," and set about striking [their] legs and necks.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/38:33

EXPLANATION OF VERSES 38:31–33 — TWO INTERPRETATIONS OF THE SCHOLARS

First: The event. ***"there were exhibited before him in the afternoon the poised [standing] racehorses"*** — horses prepared for striving in Allah's cause.

Second: Two interpretations. Some commentators (among them Ibn Kathir) held that he missed his afternoon remembrance or prayer because he was absorbed, then regretted it and sacrificed the horses for the sake of Allah — and the Sahih International rendering, ***"striking [their] legs and necks"***, follows this view. Others (among them al-Tabari) held that he stroked their legs and necks out of affection and inspection, and that his love for the horses was ***for the sake of remembering his Lord***. The Malay translation of Basmeih follows the meaning "stroking". Tafsir Ibn Kathir 38:31

Third: A shared lesson. Both interpretations teach that ***wealth and strength must not distract from the remembrance of Allah***.

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A TRIAL ON THE THRONE

SURAH SAD 38:34

وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا سُلَيْمَٰنَ وَأَلْقَيْنَا عَلَىٰ كُرْسِيِّهِۦ جَسَدًا ثُمَّ أَنَابَ ﴿٣٤﴾

And We certainly tried Solomon and placed on his throne a body; then he returned.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/38:34

EXPLANATION OF VERSE 38:34 — THE TRIAL OF A PROPHET

First: The Qur'an does not give details. ***"And We certainly tried Solomon and placed on his throne a body; then he returned"***. Allah does not explain what the "body" was.

Second: A Hadith linked by the commentators. Some commentators connect this verse with the following authentic Hadith:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3424

حَدَّثَنَا خَالِدُ بْنُ مَخْلَدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا مُغِيرَةُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ، عَنْ أَبِي الزِّنَادِ، عَنِ الأَعْرَجِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « قَالَ سُلَيْمَانُ بْنُ دَاوُدَ لأَطُوفَنَّ اللَّيْلَةَ عَلَى سَبْعِينَ امْرَأَةً تَحْمِلُ كُلُّ امْرَأَةٍ فَارِسًا يُجَاهِدُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ، فَقَالَ لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ. فَلَمْ يَقُلْ، وَلَمْ تَحْمِلْ شَيْئًا إِلاَّ وَاحِدًا سَاقِطًا إِحْدَى شِقَّيْهِ ». فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم « لَوْ قَالَهَا لَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ». قَالَ شُعَيْبٌ وَابْنُ أَبِي الزِّنَادِ « تِسْعِينَ ». وَهْوَ أَصَحُّ.

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"Solomon son of David said: Tonight I will go round to my wives (seventy of them), and each will bear a horseman who will strive in the way of Allah. His companion said to him: In sha Allah (if Allah wills). But he did not say it. So none of them conceived except one, who gave birth to a child with one side missing."** Then the Prophet ﷺ said: **"Had he said it, they would all have striven in the way of Allah."** (In another narration: ninety, and that is more correct.)

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Khalid ibn Makhlad, from al-Mughirah ibn 'Abd al-Rahman al-Hizami, from Abu al-Zinad, from 'Abd al-Rahman al-A'raj, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Prophets (Kitab Ahadith al-Anbiya'), chapter on the statement of Allah "And to David We gave Solomon", Hadith No. 3424. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 1654).

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:3424

Third: The lesson. This Hadith shows that ***every plan depends on the will of Allah***. The Qur'an also taught the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: ***"Except [when adding], "If Allah wills.""*** (18:24). And Solomon عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, like his father, ***returned*** to Allah at once. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 38:34

A KINGDOM LIKE NO OTHER

SURAH SAD 38:35

قَالَ رَبِّ ٱغۡفِرۡ لِي وَهَبۡ لِي مُلۡكٗا لَّا يَنۢبَغِي لِأَحَدٖ مِّنۢ بَعۡدِيٓۖ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ ٱلۡوَهَّابُ ٣٥

He said, "My Lord, forgive me and grant me a kingdom such as will not belong to anyone after me. Indeed, You are the Bestower."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/38:35

EXPLANATION OF VERSES 38:35–40 — A PRAYER ANSWERED

First: The prayer. He first asked forgiveness, then asked for ***"a kingdom such as will not belong to anyone after me"***.

Second: The wind. ***"So We subjected to him the wind blowing by his command, gently, wherever he directed"*** (38:36); ***"its morning [journey was that of] a month - and its afternoon [journey was that of] a month"*** (34:12).

Third: The jinn and copper. ***"We made flow for him a spring of [liquid] copper"***; and among the jinn ***"were those who worked for him by the permission of his Lord"*** (34:12) — ***"every builder and diver"*** (38:37).

Fourth: Without account. ***"This is Our gift, so grant or withhold without account"***; and ***"indeed, for him is nearness to Us and a good place of return"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 38:35

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 461

حَدَّثَنَا إِسْحَاقُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنَا رَوْحٌ، وَمُحَمَّدُ بْنُ جَعْفَرٍ، عَنْ شُعْبَةَ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ زِيَادٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « إِنَّ عِفْرِيتًا مِنَ الْجِنِّ تَفَلَّتَ عَلَىَّ الْبَارِحَةَ - أَوْ كَلِمَةً نَحْوَهَا - لِيَقْطَعَ عَلَىَّ الصَّلاَةَ، فَأَمْكَنَنِي اللَّهُ مِنْهُ، فَأَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَرْبِطَهُ إِلَى سَارِيَةٍ مِنْ سَوَارِي الْمَسْجِدِ، حَتَّى تُصْبِحُوا وَتَنْظُرُوا إِلَيْهِ كُلُّكُمْ، فَذَكَرْتُ قَوْلَ أَخِي سُلَيْمَانَ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مُلْكًا لاَ يَنْبَغِي لأَحَدٍ مِنْ بَعْدِي ». قَالَ رَوْحٌ فَرَدَّهُ خَاسِئًا.

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"An 'ifrit from among the jinn attacked me suddenly last night to interrupt my prayer. Allah gave me power over him, and I wanted to tie him to**

one of the pillars of the mosque so that you could all see him in the morning. Then I remembered the words of my brother Solomon: {My Lord, grant me a kingdom such as will not belong to anyone after me}." Rawh said: So he sent him away humiliated.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Ishaq ibn Ibrahim (Ibn Rahawayh), from Rawh ibn 'Ubadah and Muhammad ibn Ja'far (Ghundar), from Shu'bah ibn al-Hajjaj, from Muhammad ibn Ziyad al-Qurashi, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Prayer (Kitab al-Salah), chapter on tying a captive or debtor in the mosque, Hadith No. 461. Also narrated as No. 3423, and by Muslim (No. 541).

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:461

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was able to tie up the 'ifrit, yet he ***honoured the prayer of his brother Solomon***. This Hadith also confirms that power over the jinn was a special feature of Solomon's عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ kingdom.

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DYING LEANING ON HIS STAFF

SURAH SABA' 34:14

فَلَمَّا قَضَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ ٱلْمَوْتَ مَا دَلَّهُمْ عَلَىٰ مَوْتِهِۦٓ إِلَّا دَآبَّةُ ٱلْأَرْضِ تَأْكُلُ مِنسَأَتَهُۥ ۖ فَلَمَّا خَرَّ تَبَيَّنَتِ ٱلْجِنُّ أَن لَّوْ كَانُوا۟ يَعْلَمُونَ ٱلْغَيْبَ مَا لَبِثُوا۟ فِى ٱلْعَذَابِ ٱلْمُهِينِ ﴿١٤﴾

And when We decreed for Solomon death, nothing indicated to the jinn his death except a creature of the earth eating his staff. But when he fell, it became clear to the jinn that if they had known the unseen, they would not have remained in humiliating punishment.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:14

EXPLANATION OF VERSE 34:14 — THE JINN DO NOT KNOW THE UNSEEN

First: A death no one noticed. ***"nothing indicated to the jinn his death except a creature of the earth eating his staff"***. The king who commanded the jinn died leaning on his staff, and they went on working.

Second: The limits of the jinn's knowledge. ***"if they had known the unseen, they would not have remained in humiliating punishment"***. This verse refutes the claim that the jinn know the unseen — an important lesson for anyone who trusts shamans and fortune-tellers. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 34:14

Third: A story that begins and ends with small creatures. An ant at the start of the story, and a creature eating his staff at its end — a reminder that ***however great a kingdom is, it finally bows to Allah's decree***.

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"IT WAS NOT SOLOMON WHO DISBELIEVED"

After the time of Solomon عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, devils spread magic and attributed it to him. The Qur'an clears his name: ***"It was not Solomon who disbelieved, but the devils disbelieved, teaching people magic"*** (2:102).

Solomon's عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ power over the jinn was ***a miracle and a gift from Allah***, not the result of magic, amulets or a "magic ring". Whoever claims to control the jinn through the "knowledge of Prophet Solomon" is repeating the lie the Qur'an rejected. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 2:102

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WHAT THE QUR'AN DOES NOT TELL

The story of Solomon is rich in Israiliyyat. Following Sahih al-Bukhari 4485 (Series 1), we do not add outside details to it.

THE POPULAR STORY AND WHAT REVELATION SAYS

THE POPULAR STORY	WHAT THE QUR'AN AND AUTHENTIC HADITH SAY
Solomon's power lay in a ring; a devil stole it and sat on his throne for 40 days.	Rejected by careful scholars such as Ibn Kathir. The Qur'an only says "a body" (38:34).
Solomon beheaded the horses in anger.	The scholars differ over 38:33 (striking or stroking).
The ant was named "Tahiya" and was as big as a wolf.	The Qur'an only says "an ant" (27:18).
Solomon had a thousand wives and concubines.	The authentic Hadith mentions seventy or ninety (Sahih al-Bukhari 3424). The figure of a thousand comes from the Bible.
Solomon worshipped idols at the end of his life.	Rejected. Allah calls him "an excellent servant" (38:30) with "a good place of return" (38:40).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTE: THE COPPER MINES OF TIMNA

The Qur'an says: "We made flow for him a spring of [liquid] copper" (34:12). In the **Timna Valley**, in the south of Palestine, there are traces of **hundreds of copper-smelting furnaces** and heaps of slag. In **2013**, a Tel Aviv University team led by **Erez Ben-Yosef** carried out **radiocarbon dating** at Oxford and found that the smelting activity dates to the **10th century BCE**.

So a **large-scale copper industry** existed in that era, though the researchers think it was worked by the **Edomites**.

Claim not included. The claim that Timna was "King Solomon's mines", or that it proves the "spring of copper" in verse 34:12, is **not included**. Claims about "Solomon's stables" at Megiddo are also **not included**.

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POWER, GRATITUDE AND HUMILITY

Prophet Solomon عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ had a kingdom that no one after him would have. Yet the Qur'an chose to preserve the moment he ***smiled at an ant*** and ***asked to be enabled to give thanks***. True power is power that makes its owner more humble.

A BRIEF COMPARISON

	Gift / Trial	Solomon's Response
Language of birds (27:16)	"We have been taught the language of birds"	"Indeed, this is evident bounty"
The voice of an ant (27:18)	The ant feared being crushed "while they perceive not"	Smiled, then prayed: "My Lord, enable me to be grateful"
A trial on the throne (38:34)	"We... placed on his throne a body"	"My Lord, forgive me" (38:35)
Power over the jinn (34:12)	They worked for him "by the permission of his Lord"	The command to his family: "Work, O family of David, in gratitude"

Figure 2: Gifts and trials in the story of Prophet Solomon — and his response to each.

LESSONS FROM THIS STORY

First: The inheritance of the prophets is knowledge. (27:16).

Second: Every advantage is Allah's bounty. (27:16).

Third: Strength needs discipline and order. (27:17).

Fourth: A good leader cares for her people and thinks well of others. (27:18).

Fifth: Be merciful to small creatures; punishment must be proportionate. (Sahih al-Bukhari 3319).

Sixth: Gratitude is a gift — ask Allah for it. (27:19; Sahih Muslim 2734).

Seventh: Say "In sha Allah" in every plan. (18:24; Sahih al-Bukhari 3424).

Eighth: The jinn do not know the unseen. (34:14).

Ninth: Solomon's power was a miracle, not magic. (2:102).

CONCLUSION

Each of us will pass through a "valley of the ants" — small moments that test whether we notice weak creatures and small blessings. This story invites us to stop, smile, and pray as Solomon عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ prayed.

Rabbi awzi'nī an asykura ni'matakal-latī an'amta 'alayya wa 'alā wālidayya wa an a'mala ṣāliḥan tarḍāh. Amin.

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In sha Allah, the series **Stories from the Qur'an** will continue with the story of Prophet Solomon عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, the hoopoe and the Queen of Sheba — with the same method: the Qur'an, authentic Hadith, and solid archaeological findings only.

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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 .

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GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

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

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