SAMPLE

Sulayman: The Wise King and the Wind

The Story of Prophet Sulayman (سليمان) in the Quran and Islamic Tradition

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Introduction

Sulayman (عليه السلام) — Solomon — is the prophet of wisdom. He inherited the kingdom of his father Dawud and transformed it into the most magnificent realm in the history of the Israelites. He commanded the wind, spoke to the birds, ruled over jinn and humans, judged with surpassing insight, and built the Temple that would become the center of Israelite worship. His story is the Quran's most vivid depiction of what happens when prophethood and absolute power are held by a person of perfect wisdom.

The Quran mentions Sulayman seventeen times across multiple surahs. His narrative is most extensively told in Surah An-Naml (27:15-44), which details his encounter with the Queen of Sheba, his knowledge of the ant, and his command over the wind. Surah Sad (38:30-40) describes his judgment, his kingdom, and his devotion. Surah Saba (34:12-14) describes the jinn who worked for him and the news of his death. Surah Al-Anbiya (21:78-82) records his judgment alongside his father's.

Sulayman's story is the Quran's teaching on the responsible use of extraordinary gifts. He was given more than any other prophet in terms of worldly power — kingdom, wealth, armies of jinn, control of the wind, knowledge of the natural world — and the Quran shows him using every gift in the service of Allah. He did not use his power for self-glorification but for justice, for worship, and for the demonstration that all power ultimately belongs to Allah.

But Sulayman's story also contains a warning. The Quran hints at a trial — something that distracted him from his devotions — and his response was immediate repentance. Even the wisest of kings was tested, and even the most powerful of prophets needed to return to Allah. The combination of supreme power and humble repentance is the Quran's portrait of the ideal ruler.

This book traces Sulayman's story through the Quran: his inheritance of the kingdom, his wisdom and judgment, his command over the wind and the jinn, his encounter with the Queen of Sheba, his trial and repentance, his legacy, and the lessons for every person who is given gifts and must decide how to use them. It is the eighteenth light in the NurOne - The Prophets series — the light that ruled with wisdom, the light that commanded creation, the light that showed that the greatest power is the power that submits to Allah.

The Kingdom and the Wind

The Quran depicts Sulayman as a prophet and a king given knowledge, power, and authority unlike any before him. In Surah An-Naml, Allah says: "And to Sulayman the wind — its morning stride was a month, and its evening stride was a month. And We made a fountain of molten copper flow for him, and of the jinn were those who worked before him by the permission of his Lord. And whoever deviated among them from My command — We will make him taste of the punishment of the Blaze" (34:12). The verse describes a kingdom that spans the natural and the supernatural — wind for transportation, copper for industry, jinn for labor. Sulayman's dominion was not merely political. It was a sign of what Allah can give to a prophet who uses power in obedience to the One who gave it.

What Sulayman Teaches

The Quran reinforces this Sulayman's attitude toward his power. In Surah Sad, when Sulayman saw the horses trained for battle, he said: "Indeed, I have loved the love of good things over the remembrance of my Lord — until they were hidden behind the veil. Return them to me. And he began striking their legs and necks" (38:32-33). The verse shows a moment of self-correction. Sulayman recognized that his enjoyment of his horses had begun to distract him from remembering Allah, and he acted immediately to correct the imbalance. The Quran shows this not as a sin but as a sign of Sulayman's devotion: even a king of incomparable wealth checked himself when he felt the pull of worldly love and returned to what mattered.

The chapters that follow trace Sulayman's story across the surahs where it appears, from the judgment about the sheep, to the Case of the Hoopoe, to the encounter with the Queen of Saba, to the final moment of his death and the jinn who did not know he had passed.

The Aftermath: Sulayman

The Quran deepens this point Sulayman's death with a detail that is both striking and instructive. In Surah Saba: "And when We decreed for Sulayman death, nothing indicated to them that he had died 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 torment" (34:14). The verse describes a king so powerful that the jinn continued working for him after he died, unaware that the one commanding them was already gone. The point is not the death of Sulayman. The point is the ignorance of the jinn. If the jinn truly had knowledge of the unseen, they would have known their master was dead. But they did not know. The Quran uses

this moment to demolish the claim of anyone — human or jinn — who pretends to know what only Allah knows.

The Queen and the Truth

The Quran extends this principle the famous encounter between Sulayman and the Queen of Saba. In Surah An-Naml, the Queen says after seeing Sulayman's kingdom and his faith: "My Lord, indeed I have wronged myself, and I submit with Sulayman to Allah, Lord of the worlds" (27:44). The verse records the conversion of a queen from sun-worship to the worship of the One who made the sun. Sulayman's power did not produce this conversion. His faith did. The Queen saw in Sulayman not merely a king but a king who used his power as an act of worship.

The Quran introduces this as the ideal model of prophetic kingship — not a ruler who dominates but a ruler whose dominion is a sign, and whose justice leads others to the One who gave him the throne. The chapters that follow trace Sulayman's story across every surah where it appears, from his inheritance of the kingdom, through the wind and the jinn, through the case of the hoopoe, through the conversion of the Queen, to the silent death that revealed the limits of all earthly power.

The Silent Death of a King

The Quran offers a portrait of Sulayman's death as a moment that revealed the truth about all earthly power. In Surah Saba: "And when We decreed for Sulayman death, nothing indicated to them that he had died 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 torment" (34:14). The king who commanded the wind and the jinn died in silence, and the jinn continued working, not knowing that the one they served was already gone.

The verse is the Quran's final statement about the limits of power: a king so great that even his death went unnoticed by his servants, and a world that continues for a moment after the king is gone, as if nothing has changed. But everything has changed. The king is dead. The power is ended. The throne is empty. And the jinn who thought they knew things did not know the most basic fact of all: their master had departed. The chapters that follow trace the complete story of Sulayman, from inheritance to glory to death to silence.

The example of Sulayman reveals that power held in obedience is a sign, and power held in arrogance is a curse. Sulayman was given more than any king

before him, and he used it in worship. When he noticed distraction, he corrected. When he saw injustice, he judged. The Quran sets before us his kingdom as a model and his death as a reminder: every throne is temporary.

The Quran says in Surah Sad about Sulayman: And to Sulayman We subjected the wind — its morning stride was a month, and its evening stride was a month. And We made a fountain of molten copper flow for him. And of the jinn were those who worked before him by the permission of his Lord. And whoever deviated among them from Our command — We will make him taste of the punishment of the Blaze. They made for him what he willed of elevated chambers, statues, bowls like reservoirs, and stationary kettles. Work, O family of Dawud, in gratitude. And few of My servants are grateful. The passage describes a kingdom built through wind, copper, jinn, and labor. And the single command that governs it all: work in gratitude. The Quran places gratitude at the heart of Sulayman's entire enterprise. Everything was given. Everything was a sign. And the response required was simple: be grateful.

Chapter 1: Sulayman in the Quran

1.1 The Original Text

Sulayman (عليه السلام) appears in multiple surahs:

Surah An-Naml (27:15-44) — The most detailed narrative. Covers Sulayman's inheritance of knowledge, his encounter with the ant, his inspection of the birds, the hoopoe's report of the Queen of Sheba, his letter to her, her visit, and her submission.

Surah Sad (38:30-40) — Sulayman's judgment, his kingdom, his devotion, and his trial. "And to Dawud We gave Sulayman — an excellent servant. Indeed, he was one who repeatedly turned in repentance" (38:30).

Surah Saba (34:12-14) — The jinn who worked for Sulayman, the wind at his command, and the news of his death concealed from the jinn until the earth consumed his staff.

Surah Al-Anbiya (21:78-82) — The judgment of the field (shared with Dawud), Sulayman's understanding, and the subjugated jinn who worked for him.

Surah Al-Baqarah (2:102) — A reference to the jinn and the magic attributed to Sulayman's era, with the Quran clarifying: "Sulayman did not disbelieve, but the devils disbelieved."

Surah An-Nisa (4:163) — Sulayman in the prophetic list.

Surah Al-An'am (6:84) — "From his descendants, Dawud and Sulayman."

1.2 The Inheritance

The Quran establishes that Sulayman inherited from Dawud:

"And We gave Dawud and Sulayman knowledge, and they said: Praise to Allah who has favored us over many of His believing servants" (27:15).

The inheritance was not just the kingdom; it was knowledge. Sulayman inherited Dawud's wisdom alongside his throne. The Quran's phrase "We gave Dawud and Sulayman knowledge" places both prophets in the same sentence — the father and son, both recipients of divine knowledge, both praising Allah for the favor.

The response to the gift was gratitude: "Praise to Allah who has favored us."

The prophets did not credit themselves; they credited Allah. The knowledge, the kingdom, the wisdom — all were divine favors, not human achievements. The gratitude was the first act of the inherited king: before he ruled, he praised.

1.3 The Title: "Excellent Servant"

The Quran gives Sulayman a title of remarkable beauty:

"And to Dawud We gave Sulayman — an excellent servant (*ni'mal 'abd*). Indeed, he was one who repeatedly turned in repentance (*awwab*)" (38:30).

Two descriptions:

Excellent servant. *Ni'mal 'abd* — "what an excellent servant." The word *'abd* — servant, slave — is the highest title the Quran gives. It is the title given to the Prophet Muhammad (17:1, 25:63), to Ayyub (38:44), and to Sulayman. The servant who serves Allah with everything he has — kingdom, wisdom, power, wealth — is the excellent servant. The title reframes the kingship: Sulayman was not a king who happened to be a servant; he was a servant who happened to be a king.

Repeatedly turning in repentance. *Awwab* — one who turns back, again and again. The word implies habitual repentance — not a single act of return but a pattern of turning back to Allah. The king who ruled the world was also the servant who constantly returned to his Lord. The *awwab* is the one whose orientation is always toward Allah, even when — especially when — they hold everything else.

1.4 The Pairing with Dawud

In every Quranic list, Sulayman is paired with Dawud:

"From his descendants, Dawud and Sulayman" (6:84).

"And We gave Dawud and Sulayman knowledge" (27:15).

"And Dawud and Sulayman, when they judged concerning the field" (21:78).

The pairing is consistent: the Quran does not mention one without the other. The father and son are a prophetic unit — two kings, two prophets, two rulers. The father established the kingdom in war; the son perfected it in wisdom. The father made armor; the son built the Temple. The father received the Zabur; the son inherited the wisdom. Together, they represent the Quran's complete model of prophetic kingship — the establishment and the perfection.

1.5 The Scope of His Kingdom

The Quran describes Sulayman's kingdom in terms that exceed any other prophet's temporal power:

The wind. "And to Sulayman We subjected the wind, blowing by his command to the land that We had blessed" (21:81). And: "And We subjected to Sulayman the wind — its morning was a month's journey, and its evening was a month's journey" (34:12).

The jinn. "And of the jinn were those who worked before him by the permission of his Lord" (34:12). The jinn were Sulayman's labor force — they built, dived, and served under his command.

The birds. "And Sulayman's hosts were assembled for him from the jinn, the humans, and the birds, and they were arranged in rows" (27:17).

Knowledge of the natural world. "He said: O people, we have been taught the language of birds, and we have been given from all things" (27:16).

The scope is staggering: wind, jinn, birds, humans, and the language of the natural world. Sulayman's kingdom was not just political; it was cosmic. He ruled not only the human realm but the natural and the supernatural. The breadth of his power was the breadth of his test — the more one is given, the more one is accountable for.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Aira Aurora is an independent researcher and writer specializing in Quranic studies. Her work focuses on close reading of the Quranic text, exploring its themes, narratives, and moral framework with attention to both the original Arabic and the broader human context.

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Her work is published under the pen name Aira Aurora.

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