

Nabi Sulaiman (Solomon) *AS

*(We must always say Alayhis Salaam when we mention the name of a Prophet. It means, "May ALLAH -Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala's blessing and mercy be on him")

Story Number

25

My Dear Children

The last example or beautiful story given to us in the Glorious Qur'an we learnt how Nabi Dawud (alayhis salaam) with his steadfast Imaan (belief, faith and confidence) in the ONE GOD could beat Jalut (Goliath the giant) and even the mighty army of the Philistines. He set a good righteous example to his soldiers who gained the courage to beat their enemy who out numbered them. The Creator also gave Nabi Dawud (alayhis salaam) the wisdom and ability to make arms and shields out of iron. He was also noted to be very fair and just in his ruling among the people.

In this issue of al mujaddid we will be talking about his son, Nabi Sulaiman (alayhis salaam) who from a very young age sat in to his father's company listening to people who had problems with one another. On one occasion when Sulaiman was only 11 he sat with his father and listened to a dispute between two people and corrected his fathers decision by suggesting a fairer ruling that would satisfy both parties.

A farmer approached the father with the following complain, "Last night some of my neighbour's sheep strayed onto my farm and ate up the small shoots of plants on my field. I will not have crops this year and I therefore beg you, O King, to make my neighbour pay for this damage."

Nabi Dawud (alayhis salaam) immediately gave his verdict, "As the sheep caused the damage, I judge that the farmer should take all the sheep as payment for this damage." Sulaiman indicated to his father that he wish to speak to him privately. In a very pleasant manner he indicated to his father that this punishment was too harsh to owner of the sheep. "The farmer has only lost one years crops whereas the shepherd would loose his entire flock for ever. I would suggest that the farmer keep the sheep, the wool they produce, the milk and the lambs for a period until he has regained his crops. When he has regained his losses he has to return the animals to the shepherd."

Nabi Dawud (alayhis salaam) who was delighted with this wisdom from his son, returned to the parties and informed them of his final decision. The farmer and the shepherd left the court, both happy with this decision and they still remain good neighbours and friends.

SULAIMAN AS A PROPHET

Nabi Sulaiman was chosen the Prophet after his father died. He was given the special gift of wisdom from ALLAH (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) where he could judge (21:79) between people in a just and fair manner. He was also given the gift of understanding as well as talk to all the plants, birds (27:16), animals, insects, wind and even the jinns (27:17- unseen creations) and Satan, the devil (38:37). He was given this gift so that he could protect and be very careful in treating all the animals and insects correctly. He also had the extraordinary gift of talking to the plants to learn what benefit and cures they carried for the human beings and animals that needed medical help. His special power of controlling the wind (21:81 &34:12) enabled him to travel very quickly and at great speed. His ability to communicate with the Jinn was to make use their labour force in working (34:13). He even used the Satans for buiding and diving into the deepest seas for its treasures.

THE PLIGHT OF THE ANTS

One day when Nabi Sulaiman (alayhis salaam) and his army reached a valley on their way to fight their enemy he heard a tiny ant cry out, "O you ants, hurry seek shelter, hide, the soldiers are coming this way. Quickly take cover or they will trample you to death(27:18)." When he heard these cries of warning from the tiny ant he stopped his army and asked his men to be very careful not to kill the tiny ants. He smiled at the wisdom of this ant and thanked (27:15) his Creator for this special favour that has been bestowed on him (27:19). He did not proceed any further. He turned around and headed home to save lives as well as save the weakest of creatures.

QUEEN BILQEES

Our Glorious Qur'an gives us another example of the gratitude of Nabi Sulaiman (alayhis salaam) when it quotes the incident of the Queen of Saba (27:15 to 44). Queen Bilqees (Sheba) lived in the land of Saba, which is now known as Yemen, in the southern part of Arabia. One day a hoopoe bird belonging to Nabi Sulaiman (alayhis salaam) disappeared for a while only to return and said to Nabi. "I have been to a place where you have never been. I have visited the land of Saba and found Queen Bilqees. She is beautiful, very rich, has a huge army and has the most magnificent throne in her palace. However, I also saw her and her people, the Sabaeans, praying to the sun." As the hoopoe was pious and righteous he ended his message with the following prayer, "Allah-there is no god but HE –Lord of the throne, Supreme. (27:26)."

Nabi Sulaiman was at first irritated with the long absence of the hoopoe bird as well as the truth in what the bird was saying. He knew that he had to convince Queen Bilqees to believe in the ONE GOD. He said, "Take this letter to Queen Bilqees and wait for their reply. The answer will indicate to me if what you are telling me is the truth."

When the Queen received the letter she called her chiefs together to ask them for their advice and to make a recommendation. Her council had the greatest confidence in her and she asked them to decide, as they will be ready to follow. The queen realised that a wise decision is necessary as war will be very destructive, spoiling the comforts of the people and also turning the best and noblest people into the meanest ones (27:34). She decided instead to send the Nabi gifts and presents so that they could have a better understanding and cooperate with one another.

When the ambassadors presented these gifts to Nabi Sulaiman (alayhis salaam) he said, "Will you give me abundance in wealth? That which ALLAH has given me is better than that which HE has given you. No thank you. It is you who should rejoice in my gift of worshipping ONE GOD (27:36)." He also warned the ambassadors to inform their Queen that she will be embarrassed, disgraced and humiliated by his most powerful army if she does not accept the message of ONE GOD.

When they left for Saba the Nabi asked his men, "Who can bring me her throne before she comes to me to submit to ALLAH (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala). A powerful and huge Jinn replied, "I will bring it to you in an instant, before you rise from your council (27:39). I will bring it to you within the second glance as I have knowledge of the power of the Creator." When the Nabi looked again he saw that the throne in front of him and said, "Alhamdoelillah by the grace of GOD I am pleased and also very grateful to our Lord for this." He even asked the Jinn to disguise her throne so that she could not recognise it unless she has the right knowledge.

When she arrived she was asked, "Is this your throne?" She replied, "It seems the same." She was asked to enter the lofty palace of the believer. She pulled up her dress over her ankles as she thought that she was going to walk through water. But when she realised it was not water she said, "This is but a palace paved with slabs of glass. It is so simple to be deceived by what we see. O my Lord I have indeed wronged my soul. I do now submit like Nabi Sulaiman (alayhis salaam) to the belief in ONE GOD, the Lord of worlds."

Nabi Sulaiman ruled for 39 years and died at the age of 89 years. He was buried near the tomb of his father.

CONCLUSION

We note that the events of the ants, the hoopoe bird, Queen Bilqees, moving the throne was not associated to magic but to the power of the Al Mighty, WHO is capable of anything as HE is the Sovereign, the Powerful and the Greatest. Every time a great feat was performed Nabi Sulaiman (alayhis salaam) would show his gratitude to the Creator by showering all the praises on HIM.

He was also very mindful to perform the correct actions as he often prayed to the Creator to enable him to perform such deeds that would please HIM.