

ALI 493: Reviewing Quranic Sūras

Quran: Difficult to read and understand?

Solution : Weekly 60 min knowledge packed on line sessions !

In just 60 minutes you will learn :

- 1) essential info on the sūras, (Surat al-Naml (# 27))
- 2) simple meaning of Quranic verses,
- 3) discussion select verses,
- 4) historical context, and
- 5) relevant Hadiths on the verses.

Tip : **Have your copy of the Holy Quran with translation**

Schedule: Mondays Jan 14 - Feb 18 2019, @ 8:30 – 9:30 pm NY time.

ALI 493: Intro to Sūra al-Naml

Contents: 1) warn people & give them glad tidings as shown by the starting & ending verses.

2) It covers sections from the stories of:

- a) Prophets Musa,
- b) Dāwūd, Sulayman,
- c) Sālih and
- d) Lūt (a)
- e) Tawhid and
- f) Ma‘ād

3) Sequence: 27th in the Quran & 48th chronologically

4) Numbers: Āyāt 93; 1,149 words and 4,799 letters

5) Location of revelation: Makkah

6) Feature: only sūra that contains 2 Basmalah

Reward of reciting: *Whoever recites three suras which begin with Ta Seen (al-Shu‘ara, Al-Naml, and Qasas) on the eve Friday, will be one of the friends of Allah and he will be near to Him and he will receive in His Grace and support. (Tafsīr Nūr al-Thaqalayn, 4:74).*

Al-Naml, ayat ۱ - 6

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ * طس ؕ تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْقُرْآنِ وَكِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿۱﴾ هُدًى وَبُشْرَى
لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿۲﴾ الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿۳﴾ إِنَّ
الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ زَيْنًا لَهُمْ أَعْمَاهُمْ فَهُمْ يَصَمُّونَ ﴿۴﴾ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَهُمْ سُوءُ الْعَذَابِ
وَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ هُمُ الْأَخْسَرُونَ ﴿۵﴾ وَإِنَّكَ لَتَلَقَّى الْقُرْآنَ مِنْ لَدُنِّ حَكِيمٍ عَلِيمٍ ﴿۶﴾

In the name of All, the All-beneficent, the All-Merciful. Ta, Seen.

(1) These are the signs of the Quran and a manifest Book,

(2) a guidance and good news for the faithful

(3) —those who maintain the prayer and pay the zakat, and who are certain of the Hereafter.

(4) As for those who do not believe in the Hereafter, We have made their deeds seem decorous to them, and so they are bewildered.

(5) They are the ones for whom there is a terrible punishment, and they are the ones who will be the biggest losers in the Hereafter.

(6) Indeed you receive the Quran from One who is all-wise, all-knowing.

Brief overview of 27: 1- 3

1. *Tilka* is demonstrative pronoun used for far-off objects; its used here to show loftiness of the verses, as in Q 2:2
2. This book is called Quran because it's supposed to be recited
3. Quran is Mubeen because it is clear, lucid & unambiguous about its objectives.
4. Tabarsī says that the descriptions quran and kitab indicate that this Book is communicated through both recitation and writing.
5. *Hudā* and *bushrā* are verbal nouns that serve as nominative case, like when Ali is just person, it said that Ali is justice.
6. Only two of the right deeds are mentioned as salāt pertains to God and zakat pertains to people; also salat is a bodily act of devotion and zakat is financial act of devotion. Yaqīn is their expectation.

Brief overview of 27: 4 – 6

1. In Islam this world is a path and Hereafter is the destination. Not believing in the Hereafter means being left in this world without any goal and purpose. So they are left wandering like a blind person; amah means tahayyur = confusion & hesitation.
2. They will have worldly and otherworldly punishments, thus they the greatest losers. It also mean that the good deeds of disbelievers are annulled.
3. Talqiyah is close in meaning to talqīn (dictate, impart).
4. So the Quran is from non other the Almighty God, Who is All-wise and All-knowing – the indefinite forms indicate esteem and magnification of Allah. The source of the Book is wisdom so it cannot be negated or weakened and Knowledge because it does not lie nor errs in judgement.

Story of Musa (a) in Q 27:7- 14

إِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِأَهْلِهِ إِنِّي آنستُ نَارًا سَاتِيكُمْ مِنْهَا بِخَبْرٍ أَوْ آتِيكُمْ بِشِهَابٍ
قَبَسٍ لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَصْطَلُونَ ﴿٧﴾ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهَا نُودِيَ أَنْ بُورِكَ مَنْ فِي النَّارِ وَمَنْ
حَوْلَهَا وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨﴾ يَا مُوسَىٰ إِنَّهُ أَنَا اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ
﴿٩﴾ وَأَلْقِ عَصَاكَ ۚ فَلَمَّا رآهَا تَهْتَزُّ كَأَنَّهَا جَانٌّ وَلَّى مُدْبِرًا وَلَمْ يُعَقِّبْ ۚ يَا
مُوسَىٰ لَا تَخَفْ إِنِّي لَا يَخَافُ لَدَيَّ الْمُرْسَلُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ ثُمَّ بَدَّلَ
حُسْنًا بَعْدَ سُوءٍ فَإِنِّي غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١١﴾ وَأَدْخِلْ يَدَكَ فِي جَيْبِكَ تَخْرُجْ
بَيْضَاءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوءٍ ۗ فِي تِسْعِ آيَاتٍ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَقَوْمِهِ ۚ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا
فَاسِقِينَ ﴿١٢﴾ فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَاتُنَا مُبْصِرَةً قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٣﴾
وَجَحَدُوا بِهَا وَاسْتَيْقَنَتْهَا أَنفُسُهُمْ ظُلْمًا وَعُلُوًّا ۚ فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿١٤﴾

Translation Q 27:7-14

(7) When Moses said to his family, ‘Indeed I see fire! I will bring you some news from it, or bring you a firebrand so that you may warm yourselves.’

(8) When he came to it, he was called: ‘Blessed is He who is in the fire and who is [as well] around it, and immaculate is Allah, the Lord of all the worlds!’

(9) ‘O Moses! Indeed I am Allah, the All-mighty, the All-wise.’

(10) ‘Throw down your staff!’ When he saw it wriggling, as if it were a snake, he turned his back [to flee], without looking back. ‘O Moses! ‘Do not be afraid. Indeed the apostles are not afraid before Me,

(11) nor those who do wrong and then make up for [their] fault with goodness, for indeed I am all-forgiving, all-merciful.’

(12) ‘Insert your hand into your shirt. It will emerge white and bright, without any fault—among nine signs meant for Pharaoh and his people. Indeed they are a transgressing lot.’

(13) But when Our signs came to them, as eye-openers, they said, ‘This is plain magic.’

(14) They impugned them, wrongfully and out of arrogance, though they were convinced in their hearts [of their veracity]. So observe how the fate of the agents of corruption was!

Brief overview of Musa's story in al-Naml -1

- The story is an evidence for the glad tidings mentioned earlier.
- The family of Musa is his wife (d/o Nabi Shu'ayb).
- *Aanastu* means something that bring comfort.
- *Istila* when used with fire means “warming oneself with it.”
- It seems that Musa & his family were cold and had lost their way in a very dark night.
- The verse suggests that the fire was only visible to him and not others.
- *I will bring to you* used twice because Musa refers to bringing of
 - (i) information, and
 - (ii) fire. According to *al-Mizan Blessed is He who is in the fire* was Musa and his blessedness refers to his being sanctified and chosen as a messenger (see Q 20:11-13).
- In 27:9 God introduces Himself to Musa so he knows that he is talking directly to Almighty Lord.

Reflect on v. 9 how Allah *'azza wa-jall* introduces Himself to Musa (a): *Verily it is I, God, the Mighty, the Wise* - إِنَّهُ أَنَا اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ –especially the qualities of Mighty and Wise.

Brief overview of Musa's story in al-Naml -2

- *Tabtaẓẓu* means rapid, violent motion and *jaan* means a small, fast-moving snake.
- That is why Musa *turned his back [to flee], without looking back*. Here it is said that it was a *jaann* (small, fast snake) in sūras al-A‘raf and al-Shu‘ara it mentions a *thuban* (enormous snake).
- *Al-Mizān* states: these two do not contradict, because they refer to two different aspects and qualities of the snake: swiftness and being enormous; or some say the staff miraculously transformed differently on different occasions.
- *Fear not* is a command implying that he is secure from any evil that cause fear, because he is in divine proximity and in direct conversation with God who assures him *the messengers shall not fear in My presence*.
- In 28:31 Allah tells Musa: *surely you are of those who are secure*. We should not blame Moses for retreating as it natural to flee when one sees danger. Moreover the staff was his weapon, which suddenly became the cause of fear.

Brief overview of Musa's story in al-Naml -3

27:11 it says: *nor shall he [fear] who has been unjust then does good instead after evil – Allah who is the Forgiving, the Merciful* assures all those who change their way from being zalim to being good and repentant – a universal principle for all of us to benefit.

27:12 it says *white and bright, without any fault* means not having leprosy.

The Nine Signs given to Musa (a) were:

- (1) staff turning into a serpent,
- (2) hand turning white after placing into his shirt,
- (3) the untying of a knot from his tongue
- (4) the plague of floods, locusts, lice, frogs, and blood
- (5) the parting of the sea
- (6) the blotting out of the wealth of Pharaoh & his notables
- (7) the provision of manna and quail (8) stream come forth from the rock and
- (9) the Mount Sinai. 27:13 shows their disregard of signs.

In 27:14 it states that the denial of all signs despite being convinced in the heart out of injustice and pride.

An-Naml, Ayat 15 - 19

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا دَاوُودَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ عِلْمًا ۖ وَقَالَا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي فَضَّلَنَا عَلَىٰ
كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ عِبَادِهِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَوَرِثَ سُلَيْمَانُ دَاوُودَ ۖ وَقَالَ يَا
أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ عُلِّمْنَا مَنطِقَ الطَّيْرِ وَأُوتِينَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ۖ إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ
الْفَضْلُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿١٦﴾ وَحُشِرَ لِسُلَيْمَانَ جُنُودُهُ مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالإِنسِ
وَالطَّيْرِ فَهُمْ يُوزَعُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَتَوْا عَلَىٰ وَادِ النَّمْلِ قَالَتْ نَمْلَةٌ
يَا أَيُّهَا النَّمْلُ ادْخُلُوا مَسَاكِنِكُمْ لَّا يَحْطَمَنَّكُمْ سُلَيْمَانُ وَجُنُودُهُ وَهُمْ لَّا
يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ فَتَبَسَّمَ ضَاحِكًا مِّنْ قَوْلِهَا وَقَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ
أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتِكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا
تَرْضَاهُ وَأَدْخِلْنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِي عِبَادِكَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

Translation Q 27: 15 – 19

(15) Certainly, We gave knowledge to David and Solomon, and they said, ‘All praise belongs to Allah, who granted us an advantage over many of His faithful servants.’

(16) Solomon inherited from David, and he said, ‘O people! We have been taught the speech of the birds, and we have been given out of everything. Indeed this is a manifest advantage.’

(17) [Once] Solomon’s hosts were marched out for him, comprising jinn, humans and birds, and they were held in check.

(18) When they came to the Valley of Ants, an ant said, ‘O ants! Enter your dwellings, lest Solomon and his hosts should trample on you while they are unaware.’

(19) Whereat he smiled, amused at its words, and he said, ‘My Lord! Inspire me to give thanks for Your blessing with which You have blessed me and my parents, and that I may do righteous deeds which please You, and admit me, by Your mercy, among Your righteous servants.’

Blessings received by Dāwūd & Sulayman (a)

Allah (swt) precedes Dāwūd's name, who is father.

Both of them praise Allah for the blessings.

We should have practice of praising Allah regularly. Upon waking up the Holy Prophet (s) would say:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَحْيَانِي بَعْدَ مَا أَمَاتَنِي وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ

Praise be to Allah who has given me life (afresh) after having caused me to die and to Him is the Resurrection.

The word *'ilman* is indefinite form to show its significance.

Other verses on the knowledge of the two are:

وَأَتَيْنَاهُ الْحِكْمَةَ وَفَصَلَ الْخِطَابِ – *We gave him (Dawud) wisdom and conclusive speech*(38:20)

وَكُلًّا آتَيْنَا حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا – *to each We gave judgement and knowledge* (21:79).

Praise Allah سُبْحَانَكَ وَبِحَمْدِكَ for the four blessings

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي عَرَّفَنِي نَفْسَهُ وَوَعَلَىٰ لِقَابِ رَبِّي أَنَا وَالْوَالِدَاتُ وَأَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

Praise be to Allah who made Himself known to me, and did not leave me blind of heart

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي جَعَلَنِي مِنْ أُمَّةٍ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ

Praise be to Allah who placed me from the *Ummah* of Muhammad, blessings of Allah be on him and his family

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي جَعَلَ رِزْقِي فِي يَدِهِ وَوَعَلَىٰ لِقَابِ رَبِّي أَنَا وَالْوَالِدَاتُ وَأَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

Praise be to Allah who placed my sustenance in His hands, and not in the hands of people

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي سَتَرَ عَلَيَّ عَيْبِي وَذُنُوبِي وَوَعَلَىٰ لِقَابِ رَبِّي أَنَا وَالْوَالِدَاتُ وَأَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

Praise be to Allah who covered my faults and sins and did not expose me among people.

Preference given to Dāwūd & Sulayman عليهما السلام

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي فَضَّلَنَا عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ عِبَادِهِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

All praise belongs to Allah, who preferred us over many of His faithful servants

Two possible interpretations for preference:

- (1) Preferred over others by knowledge in particular, as suggested by the context of the verse
- (2) Preference in general which includes all God's exclusive blessings upon them. For example:

To Dāwūd, Allah: made mountains and birds subservient to him, softened iron for him, and made him a king.

To Sulayman, Allah: made jinn, animals, birds and wind subservient to him, gave him huge kingdom, and taught him the language of birds.

Tabātabā'ī: the second interpretation could be confirmed by the unqualified use of the word “preference” in the verse (*Al-Mīzān*, v. 30, p. 160).

Sulaymān عليه السلام inherits Dāwūd عليه السلام

وَوَرِثَ سُلَيْمَانُ دَاوُودَ ۖ - *Sulayman inherited Dāwūd* (Q 27:16).

It is narrated from ‘Ā’isha, the wife of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وآله:

After the death of Prophet Muhammad, his daughter Fatimah asked Abu Bakr As-Siddiq to give her share of inheritance from what the Messenger of Allah (s) had left of the Fai, which Allah had given him.

Abu Bakr said to her: ‘The Messenger of Allah has said: Our Property will not be inherited, whatever we (Prophets) leave is sadaqah (to be used as charity).’

Bibi Fatima (a) quoted several Quranic verses to show that the past prophets indeed were inherited by their children.

She said Allah says in the Quran:

- a) *Sulaymān inherited from his father Dāwūd* (Q 27:16).
- b) Then she quoted Prophet Zakariyyā praying: *Oh Lord give me a child so that it may inherit from me and the descendants of Ya’qub* (Q 19:5-6).
- c) Fatima also quoted another verse which says: *Relatives have preference over strangers in inheritance from each other.* (Q 8:75)

Sulaymān mentions the Divine blessings

He said, 'O people! We have been taught the speech of the birds, and we have been given out of everything. Indeed this is a manifest advantage.' (Q 27:16).

'Allāmah Tabātabā'ī: every species of bird simple sounds during different occasions & under certain conditions. For e.g. they have sounds for mating, attacking, defending, fear, pleading & begging. However, the language of bird taught to the Prophets was an exclusive favor and beyond access of ordinary people.

Sulayman's conversation with hoopoe involves sublime teachings that cannot be conveyed by types of sounds hoopoe makes. The hoopoe talks about Satan & how he adorns the actions of people, guidance, misguidance, about the kingdom of Sheba, its queen, her throne and people and their prostrations to the Sun. Then the bird is asked by Solomon to take his letter, cast it upon them, and then wait to see how they respond.

These are deep and expansive teachings whose comprehension hinges on thousands and thousands of concepts. How could a few simple sounds convey all these things in detail?

And we have been given all things = share of every blessing that a person can be given and can benefit from, such as knowledge, Prophethood, kingdom, judgment and other material & spiritual blessings (*Al-Mizan*, Eng. Tr. v. 30, p. 163).

Sulayman in the Valley of Ants

- After mentioning in v. 17 that once Solomon's hosts marched with him, comprising jinn, humans and birds and they were held in check; verse 18 talks about Solomon and his host coming to the Valley of Ants and they were traveling on the land.
- An ant said to other ants: O ants! Enter your houses, lest Solomon and his hosts break you, i.e. step over you, while they are unaware.
- Mentioning laughter after smiling in v. 19 shows that his smile was very close to laughter. Solomon smiled with delight because of God's blessings upon him.
- So he asked God to evoke in him gratefulness for His bounties, and actions that would please him; blessing upon his parents were in a way blessing upon himself.
- God blessed Dāwūd with Prophethood, kingdom, wisdom, etc. and blessed his mother by making her the wife of the Prophet Dāwūd, giving her Prophet Sulayman as a son.
- Thus God made her part of the household of prophethood; and she was among those who followed the straight path.

Beautiful Du'ās in the Quran

Memorize these and recite in the Qunūt of your salāt

رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ
وَأَدْخِلْنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِي عِبَادِكَ الصَّالِحِينَ

My Lord! Inspire me to give thanks for Your blessing with which You have blessed me and my parents, and that I may do righteous deeds which please You, and admit me, by Your mercy, among Your righteous servants. (Q 27:19)

رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ
وَأَصْلِحْ لِي فِي ذُرِّيَّتِي ۖ إِنِّي تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَإِنِّي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

My Lord! Inspire me to give thanks for Your blessing with which You have blessed me and my parents, and that I may do righteous deeds which please You, and invest my descendants with righteousness. Indeed I have turned to you in penitence, and I am one of the Muslims (Q 46:15)

Homework: explain the difference between the two Du'ās?

Solomon talks to Hoopoe - 1

وَتَفَقَّدَ الطَّيْرَ فَقَالَ مَا لِيَ لَا أَرَى الْهُدُودَ أَمْ كَانَ مِنَ الْغَائِبِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾ لِأَعَدَّبْنَاهُ عَذَابًا
شَدِيدًا أَوْ لَأَذْبَحْنَاهُ أَوْ لِيَأْتِيَنِّي بِسُلْطَانٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٢١﴾ فَمَكَثَ غَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ فَقَالَ أَحَطْتُ
بِمَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ وَجِئْتُكَ مِنْ سَبَأٍ بِنَبَأٍ يَقِينٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ إِنِّي وَجَدْتُ امْرَأَةً تَمْلِكُهُمْ وَأُوتِيَتْ مِنْ
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَلَهَا عَرْشٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٣﴾

[One day] he reviewed the birds, and said, 'Why do I not see the hoopoe? Or is he absent?' (20) 'I will punish him with a severe punishment, or I will behead him, unless he brings me a credible excuse.' (21) He did not stay for long [before he turned up] and said, 'I have alighted on something which you have not alighted on, and I have brought you from Sheba a definite report. (22) I found a woman ruling over them, and she has been given everything, and she has a great throne. (23)

Solomon and Hoopoe

Upon inspection of birds, the Prophet could easily make out that the hoopoe was not present; a great leader is vigilant

First he blames himself that, 'Why is that I do not see?'

Then he shifts his the blame: is he amongst the absentees?

Why did he single out hoopoe? i) it knew of water place, ii) it was its duty to shield Solomon from the Sun

Why was Solomon so severe at the absence of the hoopoe?

Solomon expected a clear evidence or excuse on the absence?

I comprehend that which you have not comprehended was to attract Solomon's attention & calm down his anger

She has been given everything means everything pertaining to a great empire: authority, power, prudence, vast lands, army, etc.

Belief in Tawhid of the hoopoe

وَجَدْتُمَهَا وَقَوْمَهَا يَسْجُدُونَ لِلشَّمْسِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَصَدَّهُمْ
عَنِ السَّبِيلِ فَهُمْ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ أَلَّا يَسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ الَّذِي يُخْرِجُ الْخَبْءَ فِي
السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُخْفُونَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ رَبُّ
الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٢٦﴾ قَالَ سَنَنْظُرُ أَصَدَقْتَ أَمْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾ اذْهَبْ
بِكِتَابِي هَذَا فَأَلْقِهْ إِلَيْهِمْ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ فَانظُرْ مَاذَا يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

I found her and her people prostrating to the sun instead of Allah, and Satan has made their deeds seem decorous to them—thus he has barred them from the way [of Allah], so they are not guided— (24) so that they do not prostrate themselves to Allah, who brings forth the hidden in the heavens and the earth, and He knows whatever you hide and whatever you disclose. (25) Allah—there is no god except Him—is the Lord of the Great Throne.’ (26) He said, ‘We shall see whether you are truthful, or if you are one of the liars. (27) Take this letter of mine and deliver it to them. Then draw away from them and observe what [response] they return.’ (28)

Belief in Tawhid of the hoopoe

People of Sheba were sun-worshippers instead of Allah

Satan has beautified their deeds and misled them

They have been blocked the right, so lack the hidayah, which deprives them from prostrating Allah – Who brings forth what is hidden in the heavens (rain) and on the earth (fruits or all mysteries), and also knows what you hide and disclose.

Note Sheba's throne was mighty ('azim) but Allah is *the (real) Lord of the Mighty Throne* not the Queen (رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ)

Sajdah is done after 15 verses, 4 of which are wājib.

Despite claiming that its aware of something Solomon is unaware, the Prophet accepts the excuse from hoopoe and gives further opportunity to prove itself about the story.

Queen Sheba talks to her counsel

قَالَتْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ إِنِّي أُلْقِيَ إِلَيَّ كِتَابٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٢٩﴾ إِنَّهُ مِنْ سُلَيْمَانَ وَإِنَّهُ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿٣٠﴾ أَلَا تَعْلَمُونَ عَلَيَّ وَأْتُونِي مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ قَالَتْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ أَفْتُونِي فِي أَمْرِي مَا كُنتُ قَاطِعَةً أَمْرًا حَتَّى تَشْهَدُونِ ﴿٣٢﴾ قَالُوا نَحْنُ أَوْلُو قُوَّةٍ وَأُولُو بَأْسٍ شَدِيدٍ وَالْأَمْرُ إِلَيْكِ فَانظُرِي مَاذَا تَأْمُرِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾ قَالَتْ إِنَّ الْمُلُوكَ إِذَا دَخَلُوا قَرْيَةً أَفْسَدُوهَا وَجَعَلُوا أَعِزَّةَ أَهْلِهَا أَذِلَّةً ۗ وَكَذَلِكَ يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَإِنِّي مُرْسِلَةٌ إِلَيْهِمْ بِهَدِيَّةٍ فَنَاظِرَةٌ بِمَ يَرْجِعُ الْمُرْسَلُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

She said, 'O [members of the] elite! Indeed a noble letter has been delivered to me. (29) It is from Solomon, and it begins in the name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful. (30) [It states,] "Do not defy me, and come to me in submission." ' (31) She said, 'O [members of the] elite! Give me your opinion concerning my matter. I do not decide any matter until you are present.' (32) They said, 'We are powerful and possess a great might. But it is up to you to command. So consider what orders you will give.' (33) She said, 'Indeed when kings enter a town, they devastate it, and make the mightiest of its people the weakest. That is how they act. (34) I will send them a gift, and see what the envoys bring back.' (35)

Debate of Sheba with her advisors

She called the message *a noble letter* because: i) of its seal, ii) it was sent by Solomon, and/or iii) began with basmalah.

The message of Solomon was firm and serious: *do not exalt yourselves against me, but come unto me in submission.*

Queen's handling of the letter demonstrates her superiority and worthiness to rule. Further, she was willing to embrace true faith when challenged can be considered as Quranic model of leadership and governance, even from a female.

She says that it the way of kings and queens to overrun the order and harmony of the conquered lands.

She may have sent a lot of gifts which were taken to Solomon by messengers, instead by hoopoe alone.

Powerful Counsel of Solomon ﷺ

فَلَمَّا جَاءَ سُلَيْمَانَ قَالَ أَتُمِدُّونَنِ بِمَالٍ فَمَا آتَانِيَ اللَّهُ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا آتَاكُمْ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ بِهَدِيَّتِكُمْ تَفْرَحُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ اذْجِعْ إِلَيْهِمْ فَلَنَأْتِيَنَّهُمْ بِجُنُودٍ لَا قِبَلَ لَهُمْ بِهَا وَلَنُخْرِجَنَّهُمْ مِنْهَا أَذِلَّةً وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ قَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأَ أَيُّكُمْ يَأْتِينِي بِعَرْشِهَا قَبْلَ أَنْ يَأْتُونِي مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾ قَالَ عَفْرَيْتُ مِنَ الْجِنِّ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَقُومَ مِنْ مَقَامِكَ وَإِنِّي عَلَيْهِ لَقَوِيٌّ أَمِينٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ قَالَ الَّذِي عِنْدَهُ عِلْمٌ مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ فَلَمَّا رآهُ مُسْتَقِرًّا عِنْدَهُ قَالَ هَذَا مِنْ فَضْلِ رَبِّي لِيَبْلُوَنِي أَأَشْكُرُ أَمْ أَكْفُرُ وَمَنْ شَكَرَ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ رَبِّي غَنِيٌّ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٤٠﴾

So when he came to Solomon, he said, 'Are you aiding me with wealth? What Allah has given me is better than what He has given you. Indeed, you are proud of your gift! (36) Go back to them, for we will come at them with hosts which they cannot face, and we will expel them from it, abased and degraded.' (37) He said, 'O [members of the] elite! Which of you will bring me her throne before they come to me in submission?' (38) An afreet from among the jinn said, 'I will bring it to you before you rise from your place. I have the power to do it and am trustworthy.' (39) The one who had knowledge of the Book said, 'I will bring it to you in the twinkling of an eye.' So when he saw it set near him, he said, 'This is by the grace of my Lord, to test me if I will give thanks or be ungrateful. Whoever gives thanks, gives thanks only for his own sake. And whoever is ungrateful [should know that] my Lord is indeed all-sufficient, all-generous.' (40)

Notes on Q 27: 36 - 37

The word **جَاءَ** refers to either the gift or the messenger. The rhetoric question *Are you (pl.) aiding me with wealth?* refers to both messenger and to those back in Sheba, rebuking them all. *Malin* (wealth) is in indefinite form to show its insignificance. Solomon **العليام**: what Allah has given me (Prophethood, kingdom, wealth) are far more better than what He has given you, O queen of Sheba. Despite her huge kingdom the Prophet belittles it because it lacked belief in God. In Q 3:85 we read that Allah will never accept a religion other than Islam and the non believers will be amongst the losers in Hereafter. Furthermore *you are proud of your gift* which is unacceptable. Go back to them and warn them of our coming with full force; this shows the confidence of Sulayman- the King & Prophet.

Notes on Q 27: 38 - 39

Solomon to the chiefs: *which of you can bring to me her throne before they come to me in submission?* This he said after rejecting the gifts and sending the messenger. He wanted her throne to be brought to him before the arrival of the queen & her people. This will serve as a Prophetic miracle and the sign of his great kingdom. It would also make them submit to God readily. Additionally Solomon's severity shows his intolerance to idol or sun worshipping instead of worshiping Allah *'azza wa-jall*. An *ifrit* (audacious) jinn offered to bring her throne before Solomon rises from his place without committing any wrong in the act of bringing the throne or carrying out the duty. He is talking about his *quwwah* – strength but the one with knowledge prevails in the next verse.

Explanation of Q 27:40

Imam al-Hadi (a): the one who had some knowledge of the Book was 'Asif Barkhiya – Solomon's minister, nephew & successor. Imam al-Baqir (a): *The great name of the Allah contains seventy three letters and 'Asif b. Barkhiya knew only one letter of it, by the power of which he did such a surprising thing . . . 72 of those letters are with us [Ahlul Bayt]. (al-Mizan, 30:194).* 'Ilmun is indefinite to show high regard of his knowledge which cannot be described in words (*Al-Mizan, 30:184*). The Book could be *al-lahw al-mahfuz*, and the knowledge was special that cannot be acquired by learning. He will bring the throne to Solomon in less than the time between looking at something and knowing about it (*Ibid, p. 185*). There is implied omission saying that Solomon permitted him to bring the throne as he had said, and he did so. The omission indicates the speed of his action.

Sheba submits with Solomon to Allah ﷻ

قَالَ نَكِّرُوا لَهَا عَرْشَهَا نَنْظُرُ أَتَهْتَدِي أَمْ تَكُونُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٤١﴾ فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ
قِيلَ أَهَكَذَا عَرْشُكَ ۖ قَالَتْ كَأَنَّهُ هُوَ ۖ وَأُوتِينَا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ قَبْلِهَا وَكُنَّا مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾
وَصَدَّهَا مَا كَانَتْ تَعْبُدُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ۖ إِنَّهَا كَانَتْ مِنْ قَوْمٍ كَافِرِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾ قِيلَ لَهَا ادْخُلِي
الصَّرْحَ ۖ فَلَمَّا رَأَتْهُ حَسِبَتْهُ لُجَّةً ۖ وَكَشَفَتْ عَنْ سَاقَيْهَا ۚ قَالَ إِنَّهُ صَرْحٌ مُّمَرَّدٌ مِّن قَوَارِيرَ ۖ قَالَتْ
رَبِّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي وَأَسْلَمْتُ مَعَ سُلَيْمَانَ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾

He said, 'Disguise her throne for her, so that we may see whether she is discerning or if she is one of the undiscerning ones.' (41) *So when she came, it was said [to her], 'Is your throne like this one?'* She said, 'It seems to be the same, and we were informed before it, and we had submitted.' (42) *She had been barred [from the way of Allah] by what she used to worship besides Allah, for she belonged to a faithless people.* (43) *It was said to her, 'Enter the palace.'* So when she saw it, she supposed it to be a pool of water, and she bared her shanks. He said, 'It is a palace paved with crystal.' She said, 'My Lord! Indeed I have wronged myself, and I submit with Solomon to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds.' (44)

Notes to Q₂₇: 41 - 44

After the throne was brought, the Queen & her chiefs came to meet him, Solomon asked it to be altered in a way it cannot be recognized by her (*nakkiru laha*) and test their intellect. She finds some similarity in the throne and also said that she was already given the knowledge of Solomon's power and we were submissive (i.e. obedient) to him as ordered by him v. 31 above. Her worship of sun prevented her from submitting to God; she worshipped sun because she was of the unbelievers. King's servant asked her to enter the palace; the glass was so clear that it looked like water and she lifted her dress. Solomon informed her that it was palace made smooth with glass. By now she had seen: the hoopoe, her gifts returned and her throne brought there; now the magnificent palace. These were enough as signs of his Prophethood. So she submits in Allah after acknowledging her mistakes. Her belief in the Unity is in the last phrase *لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ* - to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds. 31

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