

Sūrat Saba
Verse 18

وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ الْقُرَى الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا قُرَى ظَاهِرَةً وَقَدَرْنَا فِيهَا السَّيْرَ ۗ سِيرُوا فِيهَا لَيَالِيَ وَأَيَّامًا آمِنِينَ

Q34:18 And We made between them and the towns which We had blessed (other) towns to be easily seen, and We had ordained the course through them: ‘Travel through them in safety, night and day.’

Questions for Reflection

- 1) What type of journey would the people of Saba undertake? What blessings would make the journey pleasant?
- 2) What are some benefits of travel?

Commentary

The verse continues to describe the life of the people of Saba and the various blessings they enjoyed.

This is how Tafsir Mir Ahmed Ali describes it;

‘The old Frankincense route was the great highway between Arabia and Syria. Through Syria it connected with great and flourishing kingdoms of the Euphrates and Tigris (Furat and Dajlah) valleys on the one hand and Egypt on the other, and with the great Roman empire round the Mediterranean. At the other end, through Yemen coast, the route was connected, by sea transport, with India, Malaysia and China. The route was studded, in the days of prosperity, with many cities close to each other. The close proximity of the cities prevented the inroads of highway men.’

There is a difference of opinion regarding ‘the towns which We had blessed’. Some believe it to refer to the lands of Syria, Palestine and Jordan. In other verses of the Quran these lands have been called blessed. See 17:1 and 21:81. Other commentators believe the blessed town could be that of Makkah. Still others say it just refers to the lands of San’a and Ma’rib which were in Yemen and much closer. The other places would have been far to journey to. But the point is that the people of Saba journeyed to a land that was blessed by Allah.

‘Towns to be easily seen’ refer to the places along the journey that were visible and accessible. The people of Saba had pleasant stops along their trading journeys where they could rest, eat, and refresh themselves.

Apart from being pleasant places along the way, the towns were also safe for the people. That was an important consideration for the people. There was safety from robbers, wild animals, hunger etc. The people did not need extra protection in terms of traveling in groups, or weapons, and supplies. Travel was thus easy for them.

Note that night comes before day in this verse, perhaps to emphasize the need of safety at night. It is easier to be safe when it is daytime, but Allah says there is safety for them in this journey even at night as well as during the day.

Connecting verses

Blessed lands – 17:1, 21:81

Travel – 22:46, 10:22

Connecting Topics

1) Travel

a) Significance of traveling

<http://www.shamstoos.ir/en/news/48778/The-Status-and-Significance-of-Travelling-in-the-Quran-and-Hadiths>

b) Etiquette of Traveling

<http://www.shiavault.com/books/tahzeeb-ul-islam-islamic-etiquettes/chapters/13-etiquette-of-travelling>

c) Traveling for different purposes

<https://lampofislam.wordpress.com/2015/05/09/the-quran-calls-us-to-travel/>