

Sūrat al-Anbiya Verse 81

وَكُسَلَيْمَانَ الرَّيْحَ عَاصِفَةً تَجْرِي بِأَمْرِهِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا ۖ وَكُنَّا بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَالِمِينَ

21:81 - And [We disposed] for Sulaymān the turbulent wind which blew by his command toward the land which We have blessed, and We have knowledge of all things.

Question for Reflection

- 1) Why did Allah give Prophet Sulaymān power over the wind?
- 2) How did the Prophet navigate the wind?
- 3) Why is God's knowledge mentioned in the last part of this verse, rather than His power, or mercy, etc?

Commentary

This verse talks about a special blessing of Allah granted to Prophet Sulaymān (a). The verse is a continuation of verse 79 which talks about blessings for Prophet Dāwūd (a), and now here the blessings for his son are mentioned. Although it mentions turbulent or violent winds, Prophet Sulaymān had control over all types of wind. In another place the Quran says; *So We disposed the wind for him, blowing softly wherever he intended by his command* (38:36). The turbulent winds are mentioned here to show that it was a significant power that the Prophet was given, for such type of winds are harder to control and the ability to do that is more wondrous.

The land mentioned in the verse is Syria, where Prophet Sulaymān ruled. But he could also direct the wind to any place he chose, as shown in 38:36. Syria is particularly specified here to show the centre of Prophet Sulaymān's kingdom, which extended far and wide. Many Prophets and civilizations were present in this land.

Note: Quran verses elaborate on one another, when talking about the same topic. That is why it is important not to interpret a verse in isolation. Putting together all verses regarding something, looking at how the Divine leaders explained it, considering the context of the verse, etc. are all very important in understanding the true meaning of a verse. Sadly, the land of Syria has been facing a lot of political challenges and instability recently and we pray that Allah may help the people there.

How exactly did Prophet Sulaymān (a) control the wind? What did he do with it? History has not given authentic details about how the Prophet used this gift. Some scholars believe that it is possible he used it to help people in his country farm better. Syria was an agricultural land and many people farmed for a living. The wind would have helped in pollination, clearing the land after harvesting, etc. It would have also been useful for moving boats. Other scholars say however that he probably used it for other purposes also.

Another verse of Quran specifies the distance the wind traveled under his command - *And for Solomon [We subjected] the wind: its morning course was a month's journey and its evening course was a month's journey* (34:12). Through that power Prophet Sulaymān was able to travel the distance traveled in a

month by any other means of transport. He could thus travel to and back from a place which would normally take two months to traverse. It is interesting to note that Allah creates *barakah* in time for those who He knows are sincere in their desire to serve Him. Time is in the hands of Allah and many of our Imams achieved high stages although they were young in age. We also have stories of great scholars like Ayatullah Baqir al-Sadr who died in his forties but has left so much knowledge for posterity. Prophet Sulaymān had a large kingdom and every man and Jinn, Satan and devil, birds, and wild animals was subservient to his command. This gift made his work easier for him.

Allah ends the verse by saying that He knows all things. He has knowledge of how the wind works and how it can be made to work for someone else. He also knows the results of that, and how things would change. This control over the forces of nature has been mentioned by the Masumin (a). For examples, Duas no.3 and 19 in Sahifa Sajjadiyyah talk about these phenomena. When granting the gift of control over the wind to Prophet Sulaymān Allah is not unaware of its effects on him, on the land, as well as on the system in nature in general. Everything is subservient to His knowledge.

Lessons

- 1) Allah has created all the forces in nature and they are in His control. He can change what He wishes in these forces.
- 2) The chosen ones of Allah can have control over nature, a gift granted to them by Allah.
- 3) Prophet Sulaymān was given control over the wind. He used this to help his people and to rule over them wisely.

Connecting verses

- 1) All forces belong to Allah – 48:7
- 2) Changes in the forces of nature for those whom Allah chooses;
 - a) The fire turns cold for Prophet Ibrahim (a) - 21:69
 - b) The sea splits for Prophet Musa (a) – 26:63
 - c) The stick that turns into a snake – 26:32

Connecting Topics

- 1) Miracles of the Prophets
<https://www.al-islam.org/prophethood-sayyid-saeed-akhtar-rizvi/miracles>
- 2) Using talents wisely. A continuation of the theme from last week.