

Sūrat al-Naml Verse 32

قَالَتْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ أَفْتُونِي فِي أَمْرِي مَا كُنْتُ قَاطِعَةً أَمْرًا حَتَّىٰ تَشْهَدُونِ

27:32 - She said, 'O chiefs! Give me your opinion concerning my matter. I do not decide any matter until you are present.

Questions for Reflection

- 1) Why did the queen of Sheba not make her own decision about the matter?
- 2) Is it humiliating to ask for help in making a decision?

Commentary

After telling her ministers about the letter from Prophet Sulaymān, the queen asks for their opinion on what the next step should be. She uses the word 'aftuni' from the word 'fatwa' which means a reasonable ruling, showing that the matter was serious and needed a ruling for it. She also wants to make sure they understand that there was no room for a mistake in the decision. It would have serious consequences.

The queen is keen to show her respect for the ministers and also wants to make a decision which they feel a part of. Despite being the ruler with a lot of wealth and authority, she does not want to make the decision alone. Good leadership is based on co-operation with others. A dictatorial leadership cannot win people and makes life difficult both for the ruler and the ruled. From the words of the queen it seems that even in the past she has not made decisions all by herself. The presence of the chiefs means their opinions are all put together and then a decision is made.

Lessons

- 1) A good leader makes a decision after consulting with others.
- 2) Teamwork is when a group decides together after thinking about various choices.
- 3) Making a decision as a group allows everyone to feel they belong and each member takes responsibility.

Connecting verses

- 1) Consultation – 3:159

Hadith

He who acts solely according to his own opinion gets ruined, and he who consults other people shares in their understanding

Imam Ali (a), Nahjul Balagha, Saying 161

Connecting topics

- 1) Consultation

<https://www.al-islam.org/leading-ummah-jafar-subhani/chapter-9-consultation-islam>

- 2) Rights of the one who seeks advice and one whose advice is sought

<https://www.al-islam.org/treatise-rights-risalat-al-huquq-imam-ali-zayn-al-abidin/rights-others#40-right-one-who-seeks-advice>