

السَّلَامُ عَلَى سُلَيْمَانَ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ (ع)

PROPHET SULAYMĀN^[A.S.]

نَبِي اللَّهِ سُلَيْمَانَ (ع)

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

Level 5

Prophet Sulaymān (Solomon)

As we have learnt in previous years, Prophet Sulaymān (as) is a Prophet of Allah (SWT) and was the son of Prophet Dawūd (David). Being a Prophet, he was ma'sūm, or sinless. He is one of the Prophet who is mentioned several times in the Holy Qur'an.

SOLOMON (AS) IN THE BIBLE

Prophet Sulaymān (as) is also one of the personalities mentioned in the current Bible. Unfortunately, the Bible describes him as a king, who had hundreds of wives, and did many terrible things to become king. It paints a very disrespectful picture of this great prophet.

Unfortunately, some of these stories have penetrated Muslim hadith texts¹. We have to be especially careful of such traditions that go against the Holy Qur'an and the basic principles of Islam.

PROPHET SULAYMĀN IN THE QUR'AN

In the Holy Quran, Prophet Sulaymān (as) is introduced as one of the greatest Prophets, a wise king and a servant of Allah (SWT). He was granted wisdom as well as some special miracles. Some of his miracles include:

- having control over natural phenomena like the wind,
- Being able to communicate with animals
- Having control over the Jinn

“And to Solomon [We subjected] the wind, blowing forcefully, proceeding by his command toward the land which We had blessed. And We are ever, of all things, Knowing.” (21:81)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Be introduced to Prophet Sulaymān as a sinless Prophet of Allah (SWT)
- Discuss the scope of the kingdom of Prophet Sulaymān (as)
- Discuss the issue of Islamic governance in relation to Prophet Sulaymān
- Understand that Allah (SWT) gives great power to His Trustees who submit to Him.

Prophet Sulaymān (as) was granted these powers and gifts. He did not ask for a mighty kingdom and authority because he wanted fame, power and glory; rather, his aim was to guide his people and to establish justice in the world. At no time does history show that Prophet Sulaymān (as) ever used his powers for his own ambitions or for personal gain. In fact, he placed his great power and means at the service of his people to guide them so that the banner of belief in One God. This is the supplication of Prophet Sulaymān (as) to his Lord:

“My Lord! grant me that I should be grateful for Your favour which You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I should do good such as You are pleased with, and include me, by Your mercy, in the ranks of Your righteous servants.” (27:19)

The Holy Quran presents Prophet Sulaymān (as) as a wise and just leader, who was appointed by Allah (SWT). The story of this prophet emphasises to us that in Islam, there is no distinction between religion and state (or government). Allah (SWT) uses the example of Prophet Sulaymān and the story of the Ants and the story of the throne of Bilqīs (that has been discussed in previous years) to show that however powerful a leader is, he

- 1- Must be subservient to Allah (SWT)
- 2- Must not use his power to suppress and oppress his subjects (as in the story of the ants)
- 3- Must always be just and fair in his dealings with his subjects (as in the story of the people of Saba’)
- 4- Must not be arrogant and know that it is Allah (SWT) that grants such positions.

When we look at the world around us, it is important to see whether the leaders of our world or our nation have these characteristics. If they do not, we cannot accept them as leaders.

THE POSITION OF GOVERNMENT IN ISLAM

As stated earlier, in Islam, there is no distinction or separation between religion and state. Prophet Sulaymān (as) was granted an absolute dominion over not only the physical subjects, but also super natural subjects (Jinn). Prophet Sulaymān (as) was not only the religious leader but also the political leader of his community, just as the Holy Prophet (saw) was at his time.

The natural order of the world is such that Allah (SWT) always grants the most perfect human being at any one time the complete dominion over *all* His creatures. Allah says in the Holy Quran:

To Memorise

إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً

“I am going to place in the earth a khalifah...” (2:30)

This khalifah or representative is not only chosen by Allah (SWT) but has been granted complete dominion over the entire universe including the social, economic, moral, religious and psychological aspects of human beings. Today, this representative or proof (Ḥujjah) is Imam Mahdi (as).

In recent times the debate over whether religion should interfere in the affairs of the state has erupted. Usually the ignorance of the principles of Islam leads some people to suggest that state and religion should not mix and should be kept separate.

In Islam, aside from historical precedents set by the likes of Prophet Dawūd (as), Prophet Sulaymān (as), our Holy Prophet (S), and Imam ‘Ali (as), we can also consider the following points which demonstrate the inseparability of state and religion in Islam:

1. The Rule belongs solely to Allah (SWT)

As Muslims, we all believe that Allah, the Exalted, is our Creator, Nurturer, and Guide. He is All-Knowing of what would benefit His creation and slaves in their worldly and religious affairs.

Therefore, mankind must submit to Allah, His divine legislation and His just, wise laws in all stages of his life. Allah, the Exalted says:

“the rule is only for Allah, He declares the truth, and He is the Best Judge.” (6:57).

2. Islamic Jurisprudence is the Constitution for Life, including Government

Islamic jurisprudence is not a set of individual rules of worship only. Rather, it includes the constitution for life, including Islamic government. It encompasses financial laws, civil laws (e.g. marriage and divorce) military laws, judicial laws etc...

Thus Islamic jurisprudence is the constitution of the Islamic government in its entirety.

3. Islamic Government is a Necessary Part of an Islamic Society

The endurance of Islamic jurisprudence necessarily requires there to be an Islamic government which ensures that Islamic jurisprudence is put into practice and which takes up the role of implementing it. Otherwise, the divine laws will be overlooked, as is the current situation in many countries which are 'Islamic' by name.

4. The Necessity of Appointing a Leader who will Implement Islamic Law

Because we need an Islamic government, we also need a trusted ruler who is well versed in the divine laws so he can implement them.

The Islamic Ruler must be the most knowledgeable of people about the laws of Allah and the most just amongst the Muslims. Of course, when an infallible Imam is present, he is obviously the leader.

5. It is not Permissible to Suspend Divine Laws in the Era of Occultation

However, during the ghaybah (occultation) of our Imam Mahdi (as), who will implement the laws of Islam and rule by Allah's command?

There is no doubt that the laws of Islam continue till Resurrection Day, they are not somehow 'put on hold' until Imam Mahdi (as) reappears. Otherwise, it would mean that the greater period of time was excluded from these laws. It would also lead to the spread of sins and corruption during the ghaybah, and this is definitely something that Allah (SWT) does not want.

Thus, during the ghaybah, when we do not have an infallible ruler, we have two choices. Either we:

1. Ignore Governance: but this will be ignoring something important (Islamic Government) which people need in order to organize their worldly life and Hereafter

2. We say that the Allah (SWT) left it to the community to run their own affairs as they see fit, according to democracy, dictatorship or any other doctrine that is popular at the time.

Both options are obviously invalid, because an important need of the Muslim community is ignored. Which need is greater than the need for the most knowledgeable (in the laws of God) and just person to manage the affairs of the community and maintain the order of the Muslim lands during the ghaybah, while maintaining and implementing the Islamic laws?

Therefore, the only option we have is to have an Islamic government. This government must be led by the most knowledge scholar of the time, who does his best to establish the laws of Islam in the land.

The important point to remember is that Islam and government are not separated, but go hand in hand. This is one of the most important lessons we can learn from the life of Prophet Sulaymān (as).

Review Questions

Q1. Prophet Sulaymān (as) is:

- Only mentioned in the Qur'an
- Is only considered sinless in the Qur'an
- Is not mentioned in the Bible

Q2. Prophet Sulaymān (as) was:

- A Prophet only
- A King only
- A prophet and a King

ⁱ See Story of Sulayman in Hayat Qulub (Allamah Majlisi) <http://www.al-islam.org/hayat-al-qulub-vol1-allamah-muhammad-baqir-al-majlisi/23.htm>