



NEW MUSLIM
ACADEMY

THE SHE-CAMEL OF SALIH

A STORY OF FAITH AND
WARNING FROM THE QURAN



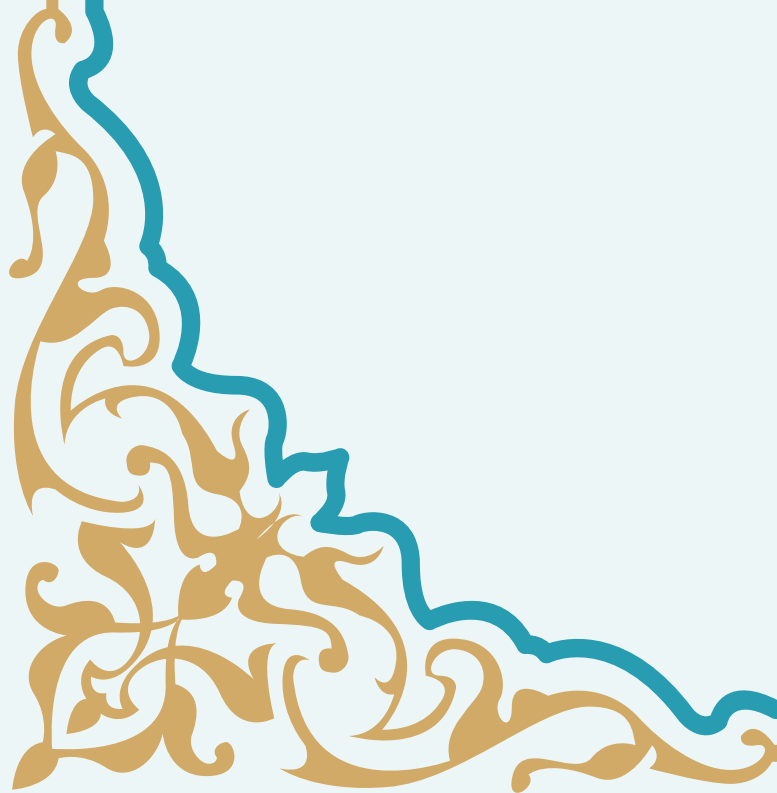
The story of Salih and the miraculous she-camel is one of the Quran's powerful narratives of faith, defiance, and divine justice. Unlike other stories recognized by those familiar with the Bible, the story of Salih is unique to the Islamic tradition and offers profound lessons for believers. Salih called his people, Thamud, to worship the One True God, to devote themselves solely to Him, and to abandon all man-made gods.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The people of Thamud were a powerful ancient Arab tribe who lived in northwestern Arabia, along the ancient trade routes. Their dwellings, carved into rocky mountains, were well-known to Arab merchants. During the expedition to Tabuk, the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ and his disciples passed by these ruins. He instructed them not to enter the ruins of this perished nation and to weep out of fear of God's punishment befalling them as it did to Thamud. Believers should reflect on the fate of this once-great nation and all other defiant nations God destroyed.

Their region is called Al-Hijr, which is the name of chapter #15 of the Quran. Thamud had been blessed with architectural skill, carving homes into mountains, and enjoyed prosperity through agriculture and wealth. Yet, despite these blessings, they turned to idolatry and worshipped false gods.



THE CALL TO FAITH

Salih, a respected and righteous man from among them, called his people to worship Allah exclusively and to shun false gods. He said, “O my people! Worship Allah—you have no other god except Him. (7:73) and ‘Will you not fear Allah?’” (26:142)

He also reminded them of God’s favors on them saying: “Remember when He made you successors after Aad and established you in the land—and you built palaces on its plains and carved homes into mountains. So remember Allah’s favors, and do not go about spreading corruption in the land.” (7:74)

He warned them: “Do you think you will be forever left secure in what you have here: amid gardens and springs, and various crops, and palm trees loaded with tender fruit; to carve homes in the mountains with great skill?” (26:146–149)



REJECTION AND ARROGANCE

Though Salih held a position of respect in the community earlier, his call to worship God alone infuriated many people. Some understood the wisdom of his words, but the majority of the people disbelieved and said, “O Salih! We truly had high hopes in you before this. How dare you forbid us to worship what our forefathers had worshipped? We are certainly in alarming doubt about what you are inviting us to.” (11:62)

They felt safe in their mountain abodes, thinking that the height and strength of the mountains would keep them safe. If no invading army or natural force can overcome a mountain, what would Salih be able to do?



THE MIRACLE OF THE SHE-CAMEL

Salih remained steadfast and continued to discharge his duty of calling his people to God. Thamud accused him of being a liar, and worse, a magician. They demanded a sign or miracle to prove his claim that he was indeed God's Messenger. That miracle would be the emergence of a she-camel that would come out of a rock. Salih asked God to bring this miracle for his people, hoping that this sign would be enough for them to believe. God responded and gave them a supernatural miracle. "We are sending the she-camel as a test for them. So watch them closely, and have patience. And tell them that the drinking water must be divided between them and her, each taking a turn to drink every other day." (54:27-28) Yet, the miracle also contained a test. They were told that they had to share their drinking water with the she-camel. One day, they could drink, and on the other day, the she-camel would drink alone as it would take all the water. However, on the she-camel's day, they could take from its milk, which would be enough for all of them.

DEFIANCE AND CRIME

Instead of submitting to God and obeying His Messenger, the people grew resentful. They became angry that they were being dictated to and that they had to share with an animal. They began to plot against Salih and the she-camel. The chiefs of the tribe asked for volunteers who would kill the she-camel and assassinate Salih. Nine men came forward to commit this crime.

They made their move. When they got next to the camel, they hesitated, because the camel was so huge. One of them – the most evil of them – took his sword and struck the camel on the front of her legs, or the shin bone. The camel fell and one of the men came forth with his sword and hamstrung her. “Thamud rejected the truth out of arrogance when the most wicked of them was roused to kill, the she-camel.” (91:11-12)



They demanded from Salih, that he should now bring God's punishment, with which they were warned of if they harmed the she-camel. "Then they killed the she-camel—defying their Lord's command—and challenged Salih, "Bring us what you threaten us with, if you are truly one of the messengers." (7:77) Not only did they do that, they went back and made a plan to assassinate Salih and his whole family. "They took an oath among each other - They vowed, 'Let us swear by God that we will take him and his family down by night. Then we will certainly say to his closest heirs, We did not witness the murder of his family. We are definitely telling the truth.'" (27:49)



DIVINE JUDGMENT

Salih gave them God's verdict. "You have only three more days to enjoy life in your homes—this is an unfailing promise." (11:65) After the three days had passed, they thought that they were safe, but on the fourth morning, the punishment came. "But the mighty blast overtook them in the morning and all they achieved was of no help to them." (15:83) God destroyed them with an awful cry; a voice so loud that it caused the earth to shake.

The people of Thamud were destroyed. "And the mighty blast overtook the wrongdoers, so they fell lifeless in their homes, as if they had never lived there. Surely Thamud denied their Lord, so away with Thamud!" (11:67-8)

"So they made a plan, but We too made a plan, while they were unaware. See then what the consequences of their plan were: We utterly destroyed them and their people all together." (27:50-51)



LESSONS FROM THE STORY

- **Persistence in Dawah**

God's Messenger, Salih, tirelessly invited his people to the worship of Allah alone, using both encouragement and warning. He never gave up on his people, even when they mocked and threatened him.

- **Reflection on Past Nations**

Wise people learn from the fate of the wicked and avoid their ways.

- **Power of Faith**

True faith instills courage, strength, and boldness.

- **Wisdom in Dialogue**

Salih used logical and thoughtful arguments in his preaching.

- **Misuse of Blessings**

Divine blessings, if misused, can turn into a curse and be a punishment.





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