

THE LEGEND OF SOLOMON

The legend of Solomon (Sulaymān) is from the *Kitāb al-ansāb* (The book of genealogies) by al-ʿAwtabī of the Banū Tāḥīya, a branch of the Banū Azd, who lived in the 10th century.

al-ʿAwtabī, *Kitāb al-ansāb* II, 281-282

While Sulaymān b. Dāʿwud was travelling and the wind transported him above the earth, he told the wind: “Go to Šām” and he ended in the land of Oman where he saw in the desert a palace that looked like the builders had just finished it, and there was an eagle perched on top of it. He told the wind: “Let me down!” Then he talked to the people who were with him: “Go into the palace” and they walked inside, they did not see anything so they went back to tell him so. Then Sulaymān called the eagle and told him: “Who owns this palace?” “I don’t know, I have been here for 800 years and this is the way I found it.”

Another manuscript reports that Sulaymān b. Dāʿwud, peace be with him, travelled from the land of Fāris, from the city of Iṣṭaḥr, to Oman in half a day until he reached the place where there is the palace of Salut, a building that looked like the builders had just finished it. In those days there was an eagle perched on top of it. The Prophet of God talked to the eagle which replied: “Oh Prophet of God, I have learned from my father who knew from his father and he knew from his grandfather that the latter saw him in this place.”

Therefore some devils bound to Sulaymān, peace be with him, said:

*“We left in the early morning from the city of Iṣṭaḥr
to reach the palace and there we rested
about the palace we inquired:
‘it was finished when we found it’.*

*One thing is measured and compared
against the other.*

*The man is measured against another man
when the man asks for it.”*

It is said, and God is the One who knows, that Sulaymān b. Dāʿwud, peace be with him, reached Oman where the people were nomads; he stayed there for 10 days and ordered the demons to dig a thousand canals each day. He left when the water already filled a thousand canals.

(Translation by D. Amaldi)