

Can ants really talk?

The Qur'an says yes — and science agrees.

In **Surah An-Naml**, the Qur'an mentions an extraordinary scene where an ant warns its colony of an approaching army. This seemingly simple verse has amazed both scholars and scientists.

What's even more fascinating is that **modern entomology confirms that ants do communicate** — not through words, but through a complex system of chemical signals,



vibrations, and touch.

In this article, we explore the topic of **ants in Quran** and how their behavior, as described in sacred scripture, mirrors what scientists have recently uncovered.

This article explores how a Qur'anic verse aligns with the scientific study of ant communication.

□ The Qur'anic Narrative: Surah An-Naml (27:18-19) - Ants in Quran

وَقَالَ سُلَيْمَانُ وَأُولُو الْأَعْيُنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِهَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَا أَنَّ سُلَيْمَانَ عَلَّمَهُ الْغَيْبُ

“So [Solomon] smiled, amused at her speech, and said, ‘My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me...’”

— Surah An-Naml (27:19)

In Surah An-Naml, the Qur'an beautifully depicts an encounter where an ant warns its colony of Prophet Sulaiman's approaching army. This moment is profound—not only for its

imagery, but because **the Prophet understood the ant's speech**.

According to Tafsir Ibn Kathir, the ant's words reflect a concern for the safety of its community. It wasn't a random call—it was a structured, intelligent warning. This shows how **Qur'anic verses on ants** contain deep insight into social behavior and communication.

Prophet Sulaiman (AS), gifted with the ability to understand animals, responded with a smile and a heartfelt prayer, thanking Allah for such a blessing. This reflects not only his wisdom but also his humility and gratitude — two qualities celebrated throughout the Qur'an.

□ Scientific Insight: How Ants Communicate

Modern science—especially entomology—has revealed that ants possess a highly sophisticated system of communication. While they don't "talk" in human terms, **ant communication** occurs through several advanced biological mechanisms:



- □ Pheromones — Chemical signals released to send messages about food, threats, or trails.
- □ Vibrations — Also called substrate signaling, used to alert others or indicate danger.
- □ Antennae touch — Ants "feel" and interpret signals through their antennae in close interactions.

These methods enable ants to function in perfect unity, like a well-organized system. Researchers in **pheromone communication in ants** have documented behaviors such as:



- □ Alarm calls — Emitting warning pheromones when a predator is near.
- □ Danger alerts — Signaling others to reroute or protect the queen.
- □ Trail-marking — Laying chemical trails from a food source to the colony.

The study of **entomology and ants** proves that these insects use a language of chemistry and vibration—one that mirrors intentional and communal intelligence.

□ Qur'an vs Science: A Miraculous Alignment?

When we compare the Qur'anic claims in **Surah An-Naml** to what modern science has discovered about ants, the alignment is striking. Here's a side-by-side comparison that



speaks volumes:

□ Qur'anic Claim

□ Scientific Finding

Ants warned others of danger

Ants emit alarm pheromones

Prophet Sulaiman understood the speech

Scientists decode chemical and vibrational signals

Could this detailed description be a divine insight beyond 7th-century knowledge? The

Qur'an's accuracy in describing this behavior, long before it was discovered by science, leads many to reflect on its miraculous nature.

□ Reflections from Scholars & Scientists

The verse in **Surah An-Naml** has long fascinated scholars due to its depiction of animal communication and the Prophet's ability to understand it.

سَمِعَ سُلَيْمَانُ قَوْلَهُنَّ قَالَ هَٰذَا جُثَّةُ الْغَنَمِ لَكُمْ تَسَبَّحُوا لِلَّهِ يَوْمَ رَزَقَكُمْهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ كَانُمْرًا

"So he (Sulaiman) smiled, amused at her speech..."

— Surah An-Naml (27:19)

According to Tafsir Ibn Kathir, this moment reflects that Sulaiman (AS) was not only granted the ability to understand animal language, but also demonstrated gratitude and wisdom upon hearing it.

"The ant's speech in this verse is not metaphorical; it is actual communication understood by a prophet through divine ability."

— Al-Jalalayn Tafsir

From a scientific lens, research in **insect cognition and communication** has shown that ants operate using complex pheromonal and vibrational language. Entomologists confirm that ants use structured signals to warn, direct, and inform colony members.



"The Qur'an is in agreement with the most modern scientific ideas."

— Dr. Maurice Bucaille, author of *“The Bible, The Qur’an and Science”*

Interdisciplinary scholars and scientists today are increasingly acknowledging the depth of natural knowledge embedded within the Qur’an. These verses are not just spiritual lessons—they are invitations to reflect on the signs of Allah in creation.

□ Spiritual Lessons & Scientific Wonder

The story of the ant in **Surah An-Naml** is not just a biological insight—it is a spiritual reminder. It highlights how Allah’s wisdom is embedded in every part of nature, even in the smallest of creatures.

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأَى الْأُلُوفَ عُشُورًا
الَّتِي فِيهَا الْبَنَاتُ خَيْرٌ لِّمِثْلِ مَا آتَاكَ
وَكُنتَ مِّنْ السَّاجِدِينَ
وَبِالْآيَاتِ الْكُبْرَىٰ
يُنذِرُكَ وَيُغْفِرُكَ
وَيُغْفِرُ لِكُلِّ سَلِيمٍ

“My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and to do righteousness of which You approve...”

— Surah An-Naml (27:19)

This heartfelt du’a of Prophet Sulaiman (AS) shows his deep humility and awareness of divine blessings.

Through this verse, Allah not only illustrates the intelligence of animals but also teaches us to observe the world with both scientific curiosity and spiritual mindfulness.

Muslims are encouraged to explore science as a means of understanding Allah’s creation. The Qur’an repeatedly asks us to reflect:

فَإِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ
لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

“Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought.”

— Surah Ar-Rum (30:21)

Let the ant's example remind us that no creature is too small to teach us. Every sign in nature carries a message—from Allah—to reflect, understand, and be grateful.

□ Conclusion

The story of the ant in Surah An-Naml is more than symbolic—it's a real phenomenon that modern science has only recently begun to understand.

The Qur'an described ant communication over 1,400 years ago, a reality that aligns perfectly with the discoveries of entomology and neurobiology today. This is not merely coincidence—it is a reflection of the divine origin of revelation.

As believers and thinkers, we are encouraged to see no conflict between faith and science, but rather, a beautiful harmony. Every verse of the Qur'an invites us to ponder, research, and discover.

وَمَا مِنْ آيَةٍ إِلَّا هِيَ آتِيَةٌهُمْ مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ أَوْ مِنْ خَلْفَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

"We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that this is the Truth."

— Surah Fussilat (41:53)

□ Explore more signs of Allah's creation in our blog series on **Qur'an and Science**.

[□ Read More Discoveries](#)

□ Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

□ Did the Qur'an mention ant communication?

Yes. The Qur'an clearly describes a moment of ant communication in **Surah An-Naml (27:18)**, where a female ant warns her colony:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّمْلُ ادْخُلِي مَسَاكِنِكُنَّ لَعَلَّكَ تَكْفُرُ

"O ants, enter your dwellings..."

This is one of the earliest recorded references to insect communication.

□ What does Surah An-Naml say about ants?

Surah An-Naml (27:18-19) tells us about Prophet Sulaiman (AS) understanding an ant's speech. The Qur'an says:

فَتَبَسَّ بِمَسَرَّةٍ يَسَرَّةٍ وَأَعَادَ لَهَا كَلِمَاتٍ غَمَامًا

"So he smiled, amused at her speech..."

This indicates a miraculous gift of understanding languages beyond humans.

□ How do ants talk according to science?

Modern entomology confirms that ants use chemical signals (pheromones), vibrations, and antennae touches to communicate. These methods mirror the communication described in the Qur'an.

□ Is Surah An-Naml a scientific miracle?

While faith-based, many scholars see this as a miraculous alignment between revelation and science. The mention of **intentional speech by ants** was only confirmed by scientists in the 20th century.

□ References

- **Qur'an Reference:**

Surah An-Naml (27:18-19) — Describes the ant's speech and Prophet Sulaiman's (AS) understanding of it.

- **Tafsir Source:**

Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim

Explanation of the verse including ant communication and Prophet Sulaiman's gratitude.

- **Scientific Studies:**

- Hölldobler, B., & Wilson, E. O. (1990). *The Ants*. Harvard University Press.
- Markl, H. (1965). "Stridulation in leaf-cutting ants". *Science*, 149(3688), 1392-1393.
- Wilson, E. O. (1971). *The Insect Societies*. Harvard University Press.

- **Scientific Articles:**

- "Ants Talk Using Chemicals" — [National Geographic](#)
- "How Ants Use Vibrations to Communicate" — [Nature Scientific Reports](#)
- "Ant Intelligence and Colony Behavior" — [Scientific American](#)