

Surah al Kahf (the Cave) – 18

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سُورَةُ الْكَهْفِ
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Introduction

This is one of the most recited Surah in Islamic tradition which is based on the hadith by the Prophet (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam). The preferred day for reciting this Surah is on Friday. Many scholars state that the merit of this Surah is that it offers protection from the fitnah (trial) of the Dajjal. According to the advice of the Prophet (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam) Allah (swt) will offer us some protection from this trial in this Surah. Mahathir Hassan Ghahari argued that the lessons of this Surah are not just in the recitation of this Surah so that we can be safe from the Dajjal. The teachings of this Surah have a lot to do with how to deal with this fitnah. The introduction of the previous Surah began with the history of the earlier Muslims – the Jews. This Surah is tied to the future of the current Muslims. It is almost like a continuous timeline that is thematically tied together.

The ending of the previous Surah was “Qul Alhamdulillah.” This Surah responds to that call – if one is told to say Alhamdulillah then they respond with Alhamdulillah. This Surah begins with Alhamdulillah – it is linked to the previous Surah in that it responds to the call of saying alhamdulillah.

The status of a Messenger - especially our Messenger (salallahu 3alayhi wasalm) – the greatest honour that he was given was that he was given permission to travel miraculously not just to meet the previous Prophets but he also met with Allah (swt). Prior to the Prophet’s (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam) ascension the greatest height or honour a human had reached was on top of a mountain – Musa (3alayhi salaam). Communicating with Allah on top of a mountain was the greatest status a human being had ever reached.

The lowest status you can give to someone (in terms of language) is a slave. In Islam when you become a slave to Allah (swt) there is no higher status than that. There are two incredible things that happened to the Prophet (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam). Firstly, he travelled to receive revelation. Usually revelation was brought down to him. Here Allah (swt) honoured the slave in that the revelation was not sent down but rather the slave went up to seek revelation (revelation was salah). In Surah Al-Israa it begins with: سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَىٰ بِعَبْدِهِ ۗ which implies that the Messenger (Salallahu 3alayhi wasalam) travelled to receive revelation. This surah begins by returning to the original process by which revelation is communicated: الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ - “All praise and gratitude belongs to Allah who sent the Book down upon His slave”. In the previous surah it is the slave that travels to seek revelation and in this surah it is the revelation that travels to the slave. Allah (swt)

uses the term عَبْدِهِ in particular in order to highlight that this is the highest status that one can reach – not the lowest as we tend to think of it in our society. We do not separate ourselves from the Messenger (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam) in that he is a slave.

This is the third surah that begins with اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ. There is a different lesson taught with each surah that begins with this phrase.

- Surah Al-Fatiha: the reason we are to be grateful is that Allah (swt) is Lord of all the people and the worlds.
- In this Surah as mentioned by Sheikh Al-Sha3rawi (rahimahul allah) – Allah (swt) intended to clarify to us that He does not own His creation only in a physical way. There is another ownership and mastery, it's a spiritual ownership. Allah (swt) ensures the growth of the human being physically and spiritually. He mentioned here the true status of the creation of the human being in that He was not created merely for his physical, mortal being but for a higher and noble purpose. He was created so that he may know the Maintainer and the Master and learn to uphold that relationship.

Ayah 1

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِي اَنْزَلَ عَلٰى عَبْدِهِ الْكِتٰبَ وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهٗ عَوَجًا

Alhamdu lillahi allathee anzala 3ala 3abdihi alkitaba walam yaj3al lahu 3iwaja

All praise and gratitude belongs to Allah who sent the Book down upon His slave. And He did not place in it [the book] any crookedness.

عَوَجًا – used both literally and figuratively in the Arabic language. Its literal meaning is deviation or crookedness. For example you could use this term to describe a bumpy road. It is also used to refer to bodily flaws. For example, this term can be applied to a person who cannot walk straight and have a crookedness in their walk. In the figurative sense it means something that is complicated, not very clear or it may have some sort of flaw or confusion in it.

This is one of the qualities of the Quran – this teaches us that each surah is leading up to something. It is not just randomly putting things together – they are leading to a point – a straight direction.

Ayah 2

فَيِّمًا لِّيُنذِرَ بَأْسًا شَدِيدًا مِّنْ لَّدُنْهُ وَيُبَشِّرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا حَسَنًا

Qayyiman liyunthira ba'san shadeedan min ladunhu wayubashshira almu'mineena allatheena ya3maloon assalihati anna lahum ajran hasana

It remains upright so that [the Book] may warn of an intense war especially from God. And to send good news to the believers. Those who act righteously, that they are going to have a great compensation.

Qayyim means upright and something that maintains or holds other things up. This Quality that the Allah (swt) gives to the Quran firstly... that it is not deviated itself and

secondly it keeps societies, families and people that believe in it from deviating. It ensures that they remain straight. This is mentioned because with previous revelations people introduced deviations within the revelations and then that in turn caused the people to deviate.

It may also mean so that Allah (swt) may warn.

بِأَسَا – it can mean difficulty or it can also refer to economic and social trouble and in the worst case scenario it can also mean war. It is everything that surrounds the difficulties of war – economic and social difficulties.

لَدُنْهُ /Ladun and lada – they are both the same word – ladun is used with مِّن and if مِّن is not present then lada is used. What is the difference between 3inda and ladun considering they both mean ‘to have’.

3indi – to have something but it is not necessarily with you.

Ladun – to have something and it is immediately accessible to you.

The way in which Allah (swt) has structured this ayah indicates that this war is unavoidable as it is His decree. Most scholars interpret this war to refer to the Last Days – the arrival of the Dajjal and all the calamities that will take place.

The warning is being directed to all humans. However, when Allah (swt) sends congratulations, it is only directed towards the believers. In Makkan Quran warning is directed towards the disbelievers and good news is for the believers. Allah (swt) does not honour the disbelievers by mentioning them yet he does so with the believers. The threat of a war is being directed to both the Muslims and the Non-Muslims.

Usually the word mu'min is not qualified in the Quran. However, this trial that is going to come upon us is so great that to be a believer is not enough. One must follow that with good deeds.

When the warning is given it is in relation to trials that will occur in duniya. When good news is mentioned it is in relation to the afterlife. During this great trial your reward will not be seen in the duniya but rather your reward lies in the afterlife.

Ayah 3

مَّاكِثِينَ فِيهِ أَبَدًا

Makitheena feehi abada

In which they will remain in anticipation forever.

مَّاكِثٍ – to remain somewhere in anticipation of something.

This refers to the eternity of paradise. For eternity you will be in anticipation of better things to come. The excitement will never cease.

Ayah 4

وَيُنذِرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا

Wayunthira allatheena qaloo ittakhatha Allahu walada
And it came to warn those who said Allah had taken a son.

These are all purposes for which the Book must remain intact and straight because there will be no more Messengers who will be sent to warn people. The Prophet (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam) was the final Messenger. The previous Surah spoke about the Jews and this Surah speaks about the Christians.

Ayah 5

مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ وَلَا لِآبَائِهِمْ كَبُرَتْ كَلِمَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ إِنْ يَقُولُونَ إِلَّا كَذِبًا

Ma lahum bihi min 3ilmin wala li-aba-ihim kaburat kalimatan takhruju min
afwahihimin yaqooloona illa kathiba

They have no knowledge of it whatsoever nor their ancestors. What an enormity the word is that comes out of their mouths. They say nothing but a lie.

مَا is a refutation and مِنْ is used to remove all doubts that they indeed have no knowledge.

Kalam is not used here as it refers to speech – kalima is a single word. This single word that comes out of their mouth is enormous.

Ayah 6

فَلَعَلَّكَ بَلِغٌ نَفْسِكَ عَلَىٰ ءَاثَرِهِمْ إِنْ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَسَفًا

Fala3allaka bakhi3un nafsaka 3ala atharihim in lam yu'minoo bihatha alhadeethi
asafa

Then there is a possibility that you may kill yourself out of grief when you see the destruction that they [the Christians] will leave if they don't come to believe in this speech and out of sadness.

لَعَلَّكَ - is usually used in the meaning of hopefully, maybe or so that.

فَلَعَلَّكَ - فَ refers to the Christians and لَكَ refers to the Prophet (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam).

بَلِغٌ - To cause another person to grieve or become enraged. To agitate someone with sadness and anger so much so that this grief overwhelms them and they die. A form of killing someone without the use of a weapon. The Prophet (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam) in his wisdom can see the consequences of the Christian faith.

أثر – literally means footsteps. It also refers to traces, remains, consequences or when something is left in the wake of destruction.

بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ – the Quran – the fact that the word حَدِيثٍ is used implies that the Quran will remain alive through speech.

أَسْفًا – sadness in a situation in which you do not have any control.

The Christian faith is one of accepting the trinity. One of the fundamental premises of the trinity is that God has a son. The Christian world entered into the dark ages and they went to the Muslims for education. Many of those who studied in the Muslim world went back and they essentially were played a role in the Renaissance. These people of knowledge begin discussing areas in science and reasoning. This clashes with their religious beliefs and because the Christian society at the time was so powerful they tried to suppress such conversations. Libraries were burnt down and people were hung in public in order to suppress scientific thinking and reform. As a result, the former Christians developed a hate for Christianity and religion in general and this is the birth of secularism.

Secularism argues that religion hates science, reasoning, rationale and intellectual freedom. Religion must not hold a powerful position within society – it should be personal. Religion is for the closed-minded. That reaction to Christianity extended to all religions. When you hate religion, you also hold no regard for God. Such people believe that it is science that will help them develop world systems and that God is not responsible for what they create – for example, economies, military weapons, road and factories, etc. Where is the Dark Ages the focus was on God, during the Enlightenment the focus shifted to science and the study of the universe. The Physical universe replaced their worship of God.

The first element from the unseen that was gone was God. When that is gone your focus is no longer on the hereafter but the worldly life. One no longer reflects about the afterlife – all reflection is on this world. When the Christians believed in the afterlife they made their current life one of misery and torture. For example, we had the implementation of the Spanish Inquisition which tortured and killed people who were not of the Christian faith. The Christians say that although you may be suffering physically they are trying to save your soul. Post-revolution the Europeans argue that there is no soul. The soul is replaced with the body. This Surah teaches us that the consequence of the Christian faith was globalised materialism. Materialism is internalised so deeply that subconsciously any person whether Muslim or non-Muslim will have doubts about the afterlife.

Ayah 7

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لَّهَا لِنَبْلُوهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا

Inna ja3alna ma 3ala al-ardi zeenatan laha linabluwahum ayyuhum ahsanu 3amala

No doubt We have made whatever is on this Earth as a means of beautifying it to test them which of them is better in terms of their actions.

The theme of actions is quite prevalent in this Surah.

Ayah 8

وَإِنَّا لَجَاعِلُونَ مَا عَلَيْهَا صَعِيدًا جُرُزًا

Wa-inna laja3iloonna ma3alayha sa3eedan juruza

No doubt We are going to transform whatever is on it [the Earth] into layers of dust [and] dry land.

صَعِيدًا – to climb. It also means the gathering of dust.

جُرُزًا – to cut - dry land in which nothing will grow.

This Surah is going to teach us four stories and in between these stories there will be commentary from Allah (swt).

Ayah 9

أَمْ حَسِبْتَ أَنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْكَهْفِ وَالرَّقِيمِ كَانُوا مِنْ آيَاتِنَا عَجَبًا

Am hasibta anna as-haba alkahfi warraqeemi kanoo min ayatina 3ajaba

Have you ever assumed that the companions of the cave and the inscriptions that were from our miraculous signs were strange?

الرَّقِيمِ – close to the word marqum. رقيم is used to describe something that has been inscribed and is hard to erase - etched or carved

رقيم is used to inform you that it lasted a long time. The carving that was made lasted centuries.

Ayah 10

إِذْ أَوَى الْفِتْيَةُ إِلَى الْكَهْفِ فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا آتِنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً وَهَيِّئْ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا

Ith awa alfityatu ila alkahfi faqaloo rabbana atina min ladunka rahmatan wahayyi' lana min amrina rashada

When the young people turned to the cave they said, “Our Master grant us especially from yourself a mercy and provide for us from our decision a straight way.

أَوَى in Arabic means to join something or to use something for protection.

الْفِتْيَةُ – young men

The ayah above refers to beautifying the world and those who find the world the most beautiful are the youth – its temptations, its joys, its entertainment are most consumed by the young person. It is the young who have the most trouble removing

materialism from their heart and in particular the young man – Allah (swt) is highlighting the young man here.

The popular position taken by the scholars on this matter is that this event occurred after the Messenger Issa (3alayhi salam) had been taken up. When the Jews attempted to have an uprising against the Romans. The Romans destroyed them and only a handful of Muslims remained. Some believed that these some of these Muslims were followers of Issa (3alayhi salaam). When these people were caught they were brought to trial and the King asked them whether they were indeed Muslims. The court testimony is also recorded and is shown later on in this Surah. They were given a deadline to change their faith and if they did not do so then they would be killed. They felt that their only option was to leave and seek protection in this cave.

Previously in this Surah Allah (swt) mentions that there will be a war especially from Him. Here Allah (swt) informs us that if there is a war from Him then you should also ask Him for a mercy that is especially from Him.

وَهَيِّئْ – to create a shape – figuratively it means to create the circumstances - May Allah (swt) make it happen for you or may Allah (swt) make it easy for you, provide for us, make a situation for us.

رَشَدًا – this also refers to guidance, not just in the figurative sense but literally – they need to escape and need a safe place to hide.

Ayah 11

فَضَرَبْنَا عَلَىٰ آذَانِهِمْ فِي الْكَهْفِ سِنِينَ عَدَدًا

Fadarabna 3ala athanihim fee alkahfi sineena 3adada

Then We struck on their ears in the cave for a number of years.

When an individual gets hit on their ears they are unable to hear. To strike someone on their ears is a figure of speech which means to take one's hearing away. This was done because their sleep would be disrupted by noise from outside.

There is a powerful Quranic lesson in not revealing the exact number of years that they were in the cave. This goes back to the Jews who would constantly seek out minute details that have no benefit to them – they do not provide guidance. Allah (swt) leaves some things out because they have nothing to do with guidance. For example, knowing the names of those who were imprisoned with Yusuf (3alayhi salaam) does not provide any benefit.

Ayah 12

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا لَهُمْ لِنَعْلَمَ أَيُّ الْحِزْبَيْنِ أَحْصَىٰ لِمَا لَبِثُوا أَمَدًا

Thumma ba3athnahum lina3lama ayyu alhizbayni ahsa lima labithoo amada

Then We raised them again so We may know which of the two factions is going to count how long they remained stationary.

حزب – another word for جماعة (group). حزب in particular means a group that is harsh. It can also refer to a faction in an army because they are tough. It can also mean a group in which everyone thinks alike or people united under a flag.

حزب is used here because when they woke up they were divided as to how long they were asleep for. This demonstrates how easy it is for people to get into an argument.

أحصى – حصاة is a pebble – previously the counting mechanism of the Arabs was to use pebbles. We then get the word أحصى which means to count and keep record.

أمدًا – Used for a time and place that is prolonged.

Ayah 13

نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ نَبَأَهُم بِالْحَقِّ إِنَّهُمْ فِتْيَةٌ آمَنُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ وَزِدْنَاهُمْ هُدًى

Nahnu naqussu 3alayka nabaahum bilhaqqi innahum fityatun amanoo birabbihim wazidnahum huda

We are narrating onto you their account with truth. No doubt they were young people. They believed in their Master and We increased them in terms of guidance.

This is an interjection from Allah (swt). This is known as Itifat in the Quran – when you are in the middle of narrating a story and you take a step back and you make a special comment. This story is truthful and it is being told to you with a purpose. The purpose is tied to what has been mentioned before – the battle against materialism and concern for the afterlife.

This ayah is targeting the youth and implying that it is the youth who will leave luxury for religion – the people of sacrifice will be the youth. It is trying to get the youth to wake up to themselves and the gain control of the temptations that surround them.

Ilham – Where Allah (swt) places a certain feeling and inclination in you that guides towards something. They were guided to the mountain by Allah (swt).

Ayah 14

وَرَبَطْنَا عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ إِذْ قَامُوا فَقَالُوا رَبُّنَا رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَن نَّدْعُوَ مِنْ دُونِهِ ۗ إِلَهًا لَّقَدْ قُلْنَا إِذًا شَطَطًا

Warabatna 3ala quloobihim ith qamoo faqaloo rabbuna rabbu assamawati wal-ardi lan nad3uwa min doonih ilahan laqad qulna ithan shatata

We put firmness on their hearts. When they stood they said, “Our Master is the Master of the skies and the Earth. We are not going to call upon another God to be worthy of worship except Him and if we did say that it would be a huge exaggeration.

This ayah has now gone back in time to their court appearance. It is not easy for a young person to stand before the King, in front of soldiers and judges. They may be brave but it is also quite intimidating.

وَرَبَطْنَا عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ - This phrase is used in the Quran in situations where had Allah (swt) not placed this firmness in their hearts they would not have been able to have carried themselves emotionally. This is a gift from Allah (swt).

قَامُوا - They stood up to the King – this is an act of bravery.

Exaggeration is untruthful but شَطَطًا goes way beyond the limits - a crazy lie. In other words they publicly declared that the religion they are being asked to follow is way beyond the limits and totally incorrect.

Ayah 15

هَٰؤُلَاءِ قَوْمُنَا اتَّخَذُوا مِن دُونِهِ ءَالِهَةً لَّا يَأْتُونَ عَلَيْهِم بِسُلْطٰنٍ بَيِّنٍ فَمَن أَظْلَمُ
مِمَّن افترىٰ علىٰ الله كذبًا

Haola-i qawmuna ittakhathoo min doonihi alihatan lawla ya'toona 3alayhim bisultanin bayyinin faman athlamu mimmani iftara 3ala Allahi kathiba

These are our nation they have taken up other gods besides Him. Why do they not bring authoritative proof? Who is the worst wrong doer than those that make up a lie against Allah?

Ayah 16

وَإِذْ أَعْتَزَلْتُمُوهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ فَأُو۟ءَالِي ٱلْكَهْفِ يَنْشُرْ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُم مِّن رَّحْمَتِهِ ؕ
وَيُهَيِّئْ لَكُمْ مِّنْ أَمْرِكُمْ مَّرْفَقًا

Wa-ithi i3tazaltumoohum wama ya3budoona illa Allaha fa'woo ila alkahfi yanshur lakum rabbukum min rahmatihi wayuhayyi' lakum min amrikum mirfaqa

When you cut yourself away from them and whatever they worship other than Allah then seek protection at the cave. Your Master is going to expand for you from His mercy and He will provide for you from your decision a means of relaxation.

عَزَلْ / أَعْتَزَلْتُمُوهُمْ – to take a side step, to avoid something, to be detached from something, to be alone.

The space within a cave is usually closed and tight. This is contrasted with the word يَنْشُرْ which means to expand

مَّرْفَقًا – to recline, relax

رفيق a person that makes you relax, a friend who you feel comfortable around and unthreatened in his presence.

سُورَةُ الْكَهْفِ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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هَؤُلَاءِ قَوْمُنَا اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ ءَالِهَةً لَوْلَا يَأْتُونَ عَلَيْهِم بِسُلْطَانٍ بَيِّنٍ فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ
مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا

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These are our nation they have taken up other gods besides Him. Why do they not bring authoritative proof? Who is the worst wrong doer than those that make up a lie against Allah?

This phrase combines two sentiments. On the one hand you are talking down to a people that have done wrong because they have associated partners with Allah (swt). However, at the same time they have not said they have no concern for them. They are concerned because the Idfa is made to themselves “هَؤُلَاءِ قَوْمُنَا” – they are still our people.

Ayah 16

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وَيَهَيِّئْ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَمْرِكُمْ مِرْفَقًا

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رفيق a person that makes you relax, a friend who you feel comfortable around and unthreatened in his presence.

Part 2

Ayah 17

وَتَرَى الشَّمْسَ إِذَا طَلَعَتْ تَزَاوَرُ عَنْ كَهْفِهِمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَإِذَا غَرَبَتْ تَقْرِضُهُمْ ذَاتَ الشَّمَالِ وَهُمْ فِي فَجْوَةٍ مِنْهُ ذَلِكَ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ وَمَنْ يُضِلِّ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ وَلِيًّا مُرْشِدًا

Watara ashshamsa itha tala3at tazawaru 3an kahfihim thata alyameeni wa-itha gharabat taqriduhum thata ashshimali wahum fee fajwatin minhu thalika min ayati Allahi man yahdi Allahu fahuwa almuhtadi waman yudlil falan tajida lahu waliyyan murshida

And you will see the sun when it will rise circumventing away from their cave on the right and as the sun sets it sidesteps away from them on the left. And they are in a pathway right in between. That is from the miraculous signs of Allah. Whoever Allah guides then He is committed in fact to guidance. And whoever He would mislead then you will not find any protective friend for them nor will you find anyone to guide them

You can almost visualise the sun. No-one actually sees the sun there but Allah (swt) wants you to imagine it.

تَزَاوَرُ – to sidestep, or curve, to circumvent. In other words when the light streams into the cave it bends – the sunlight does not enter straight into the cave but its light is reflected off the rocks.

تَقْرِضُهُمْ – to sidestep

There would be less people travelling early in the morning. If one was to hike to the mountain they would reach it in the evening which is why the sun is not directly shining upon them in the evening.

فَجْوَةٍ – a valley or any small opening between two mountains.

Allowing the sunlight to enter the cave is also a means of protection as it provides heat.

Guidance – literally in the sense that they were guided to the cave and guided to sleep in that particular location where the sun does not hit them directly. It also refers to guidance in faith.

مُرْشِدًا – literally a person who guides you through a valley or on a journey.

Ayah 18

وَتَحْسَبُهُمْ آيِقَاطًا وَهُمْ رُقُودٌ وَنُقَلِّبُهُمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَذَاتَ الشَّمَالِ وَكَلْبُهُمْ بَاسِطٌ ذِرَاعَيْهِ بِالْوَصِيدِ لَوِ اطَّلَعْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَوَلَّيْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِرَارًا وَلَمَلِئْتَ مِنْهُمْ رُعْبًا

Watahsabuhum ayqathan wahum ruqoodun wanuqallibuhum thata alyameeni wathata ashshimali wakalbuhum basitun thira3ayhi bilwaseedi lawi ittala3ta 3alayhim lawallayta minhum firaran walamuli'ta minhum ru3ba

And you would think that they were sitting awake and they are in a light sleep. And We would turn them to the right and the left. And their dog stretched out its paws at the entrance. Had you risen upon them you would have run away and you would have been filled with terror by them.

رُقُودٌ – An enjoyable sleep/light nap

Some have interpreted this to mean that Allah (swt) would physically turn them to the left or right depending on the direction of the sunlight. Others have interpreted this to mean that in order to keep the blood flowing and so that they do not wake up aching all over, Allah (swt) moves them from side to side.

بَلَسِطٌ – to stretch out

وَصِيدَةٌ – the closing – The entrance to the cave is so narrow that it appears to be closed off. One would not see it as the entrance to the cave. To seal one thing off with another. The appearance of the entrance to the cave is more like a closing than an opening.

أَطَّلَعَتْ in Arabic is from tulu3 – which means rise
أَطَّلَعَتْ – to discover something after climbing up.

Ayah 19

وَكَذَلِكَ بَعَثْنَاهُمْ لِيَتَسَاءَلُوا بَيْنَهُمْ قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِّنْهُمْ كَمْ لَبِثْتُمْ قَالُوا لَبِثْنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ
يَوْمٍ قَالُوا رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثْتُمْ فَابْعَثُوا أَحَدَكُمْ بِوَرِقِكُمْ هَذِهِ إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ أَيُّهَا
أَزْكَىٰ طَعَامًا فَلْيَأْتِكُمْ بِرِزْقٍ مِّنْهُ وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ وَلَا يُشْعِرَنَّ بِكُمْ أَحَدًا

Wakathalika ba3athnahum liyatasaaloo baynahum qala qa-ilun minhum kam labithtum qaloo labithna yawman aw ba3da yawmin qaloo rabbukum a3lamu bima labithtum fab3athoo ahadakum biwariqikum hathihi ila almadeenati falyanthur ayyuha azka ta3aman falya'tikum birizqin minhu walyatalattaf wala yush3iranna bikum ahada

And in that state We raised them so they can ask each other. One of them said: “How long were you here?” They said, “We remained here a day or some days.” They said, “Your Master knows better how long you were here. Appoint one of you that will take this money to the city and watch out for food which is pure, then he should bring some provision from it. Nobody should realise who you actually are.

قَالَ – refers to one person

قَالُوا – refers to three or more. There are at least two groups each with three members and then there is also the young man who asked the initial question which brings there total to approximately seven people. This may or may not be the total number of people who escaped.

وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ (Latif) – subtlety – in other words blend in and be cautious of your surroundings and don't bring attention to yourself.

Later we will come to realise that these people have been in the cave for three-hundred years. Things change overtime including fashion, currency and language. Also note that it is amongst the youth where fashion changes regularly. Young people whose dress sense goes against the norm are quite conspicuous.

Ayah 20

إِنَّهُمْ إِنْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ يَرْجُمُوكُمْ أَوْ يُعِيدُوكُمْ فِي مِلَّتِهِمْ وَلَنْ تُفْلِحُوا إِذًا أَبَدًا

Innahum in yathharoo 3alaykum yarjumookum aw yu3eedookum fee millatihim walan tuflihoo ithan abada

If they overcome you they will stone you to death or they will assimilate you back into their nation and you will never succeed in that case.

مِلَّتِهِمْ is used instead of deen because they saw their religion as a part of their national identity. In other words leaving that religion was interpreted as being a traitor to your country. There is a confusion made between one's national identity and one's religion.

Ayah 21

وَكَذَلِكَ أَعَثَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَأَنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا إِذْ يَتَنَزَّعُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَمْرَهُمْ فَقَالُوا ابْنُوا عَلَيْهِم بُنْيَانًا رَبُّهُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِهِمْ قَالَ الَّذِينَ غَلَبُوا عَلَىٰ أَمْرِهِمْ لَنَتَّخِذَنَّ عَلَيْهِم مَّسْجِدًا

Wakathalika a3tharna 3alayhim liya3lamoo anna wa3da Allahi haqqun waanna asa3ata la rayba feeha ith yatanaza3oona baynahum amraham faqaloo ibnoo 3alayhim bunyanan rabbuhum a3lamu bihim qala allatheena ghalaboo 3ala amrihim lanattakhithanna 3alayhim masjid

And that is how We made them slip so that all of them may know that the promise of Allah is true and that the Hour there is no doubt in it whatsoever. When they argued between themselves over their decision so they said, "We should build a building right over them." Their Master knows better what to do with them. Those who came and dominated the conversation said "We will build a masjid over them."

وَكَذَلِكَ refers to the event in the previous ayah in which one of the young men was to go into town to get food.

أَعَثَرَ – slip/ to stumble upon them – figuratively it refers to accidentally letting a secret slip – slip of the tongue.

This is the first story mentioned in this Surah and it is a battle against materialism. Materialism is a product of this world. When one is reminded through a physical miracle that the One who can control this life and keep it in place for centuries has the power to give life and death.

The main lesson that Allah (swt) is teaching them is that the promise of Allah (swt) is true and that the hour will occur. Within this time the dominant faith was Christianity and these young men were seen as close followers of Issa (3alayhi salaam). People see them as believers even though they are currently unaware of the theological differences between them. However, before they were able to interact with these people for a long period of time, they died. The point of keeping them alive was to give the later generation a sign.

يَنْتَزِعُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَمْرَهُمْ^ط - In other words they should have focussed more on the sign that Allah (swt) had sent to them than constructing a monument for them. There were those among them who realised that the building of a monument would lead to Shirk – associating others with Allah (swt).

عَلَيْهِمْ - means over them and in their memory. They do this so they do not lose sight of why Allah (swt) sent them – as a means of getting closer to Allah (swt).

Ayah 22

سَيَقُولُونَ ثَلَاثَةٌ رَّابِعُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ خَمْسَةٌ سَادِسُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ رَجْمًا بِالْغَيْبِ وَيَقُولُونَ سَبْعَةٌ وَثَامِنُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ قُلْ رَبِّي أَعْلَمُ بِعَدَّتِهِمْ مَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ فَلَا تُمَارِ فِيهِمْ إِلَّا مِرَاءً ظَاهِرًا وَلَا تَسْتَفْتِ فِيهِمْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا

Sayaqooloona thalathatun rabi3uhum kalbuhum wayaqooloona khamsatun sadisuhum kalbuhum rajman bilghaybi wayaqooloona sab3atun wathaminuhum kalbuhum qul rabbee a3lamu bi3iddatihim ma ya3lamuhum illa qaleelun fala tumari feehim illa miraan thahiran wala tastafti feehim minhum ahada

They say there were three, the fourth being their dog and they say they were five, the sixth being their dog. All of this is pelting stones in the dark. And they say they were seven and the eighth one being their dog. Tell them my Master knows better what their number was. Only a few people know them. Do not argue about them except if you do it in an obvious, clear way with proofs and don't try to enquire more about them with [those who argue with you] from anyone.

Throwing stones in the dark is a figure of speech in Arabic which means taking a wild guess.

Emphasis is used here with the eighth one – ‘و’

تُمَارِ – Mara/yumari/maran/mumaratan – To argue about something the conclusion of which is hard to accept.

The Jews asked the question in relation to who the people of the cave were.

Ayah 23

وَلَا تَقُولَنَّ لِيْشَاءِ إِنْى فَاعِلٌ ذَٰلِكَ غَدًا

Wala taqoolanna lishay-in innee fa3ilun thalika ghada

And don't you dare say about anything that I am definitely going to be doing this tomorrow.

Some tie this ayah to revelation – They say that the Prophet (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam) was asked this question by the Jews (regarding the people of the cave) and he said that he would get them an answer the following day but he did not say insha-allah. Then Allah (swt) stopped sending revelation. When revelation stopped the Jews began to mock the Prophet (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam). Then these ayat followed soon after.

Ayah 24

إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ إِذَا نَسِيتَ وَقُلْ عَسَى أَنْ يَهْدِيَنِي رَبِّي لِأَقْرَبَ مِنْ هَذَا رَشَدًا

Illa an yashaa Allahu wathkur rabbaka itha naseeta waqul 3asaan yahdiyani rabbee li-aqraba min hatha rashada

Except that Allah wills and mention your Master if you forget and say, “Perhaps my Master is going to guide me to something closer than this in terms of guidance.”

The word insha-allah does not necessarily have to be said in the presence of others. This is between you and Allah (swt). However, if you forget to mention it in the presence of others and you remember it after, you can still say Insha-allah.

Saying insha-allah does not necessarily guarantee that what you have planned will occur. Allah (swt) may have planned something better for you so you must always leave the door open for other options. All of us are on a journey to guidance. All of us at some point in our life come to stage where we begin to understand our religion. Allah (swt) will then introduce you to another teacher, book, a new circle of friends or a different source of knowledge that will increase you in guidance. Then you may realise that your knowledge is increasing but your character needs improvement. Allah (swt) may introduce you to certain people who will assist you in developing your character. Although one has plans to partake in certain events or complete certain actions the ultimate goal is to hope for an increase in guidance.

A beautiful du'a to make. Also when one is asking Allah (swt) for things they have planned then we must use Insha-allah. However, when one is referring to something that Allah (swt) will do such as forgiveness, patience, good character and knowledge, or to enter us into Jannah – there are no ambiguities here, we are certain that these are good things for us. When one is asking for things to do with this world such as a new job then Insha-allah must be used as we do not know whether it is good for us. Dua is asking for what Allah (swt) will do and the use of Insha-allah is necessary when asking for things that you have planned to do.

Ayah 25

وَلَبِثُوا فِي كَهْفِهِمْ ثَلَاثَ مِائَةٍ سِنِينَ وَازْدَادُوا تِسْعًا

Walabithoo fee kahfihim thalatha mi-atin sineena wazdadoo tis3a

They remained in their cave for three-hundred years and they added nine years.

The Jews came to the Prophet (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam) enquiring about the additional nine years. The scholars have discussed this and concluded that 300 solar years amount to 309 lunar years.

Ayah 26

قُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثُوا لَهُ غَيْبُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَبْصِرَ بِهِ وَأَسْمِعَ مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا يُشْرِكُ فِي حُكْمِهِ أَحَدًا

Quli Allahu a3lamu bima labithoo lahu ghaybu assamawati wal-ardi absir bihi waasmi3 ma lahum min doonih min waliyyin wala yushriku fee hukmihi ahada

Tell them Allah knows better about how long they stayed. He exclusively owns the unseen of the skies and the Earth. How amazingly well He sees and hears. You will not find besides Him any protector friend and no-one to partner up with him in his rule whatsoever.

This is one of the few places in the Quran where seeing is mention before hearing. The people of the cave were hidden and multiple barriers were put in place so that they would not be discovered. However, although nobody else could see them Allah (swt) could see them very well. The people in the cave would have had various conversations but Allah (swt) shared only the highlights of their conversation with us. The selected conversations have a lesson for us in them.

Ayah 27

وَأْتْلُ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ كِتَابِ رَبِّكَ لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مُتْتَحِدًا

Watlu ma oohiya ilayka min kitabi rabbika la mubaddila likalimatih walan tajida min doonih multahada

You keep on reading what has been revealed to you from your Master. No-one is going to change His words and you will not find in anyone other than Him refuge.

In other words Allah (swt) is telling the Prophet (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam) not to allow them to dictate what he should and should not talk about. The Quran will dictate to you what you should talk about. When they continually ask you questions do not worry as Allah (swt) will provide you with the answers. Allah (swt) is telling the Prophet (Salallahu 3alayhi wasalam) not to be intimidated with their questions and to just deliver what has been sent down to him. Allah (swt) will take care of those who are asking questions.

This is a sharp pun and an attack on what the People of the Book have done to previous revelations. Now no-one will be able to change His words.

مُتْتَحِدًا – refuge

لَحْدٌ – a space that has room for you to move around in – it is not too tight. For example, you have been tied up but the ropes are not too tight and you are able to free yourself – this is a type of لَحْدٌ

Ayah 28

وَأَصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْعَدْوَةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا

Wasbir nafsaka ma3a allatheena yad3oona rabbahum bilghadati wal3ashiyyi yureedoona wajhahu wala ta3du 3aynaka 3anhum tureedu zeenata alhayati addunya wala tuti3 man aghfalna qalbahu 3an thikrina wattaba3a hawahu wakana amruhu furuta

Make yourself patient with those who call upon your Master, in the late morning until the early evening. All they want is His pleasure. Don't allow your eyes to cross the fence beyond them. Do you want the beauty of worldly life? And don't follow and be influenced by the person whose heart We have emptied from Our remembrance. He follows his empty desires and everything he does in in excess.

The Jewish problem has now been dealt with but we have the problem of the leaders of Quraish. We have two elite groups in this society. You have the intellectual elite and the political/social elite. The intellectual elite make you feel as though you are intellectually inadequate when you are talking about this Book – they want something deeper. The social elite refuse to have any dealings with the Prophet (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam) because he is surrounded by lower class peasants. If he does not associate with such people then they would meet with him.

وَأَصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ - Hold back/stay content

عَشِيٍّ – before Maghrib when the sun is setting but has not yet set. Allah (swt) is telling the Prophet (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam) to be patient with those who have left everything to follow His cause – the Companions.

تَعْدُ – to cross a line/ to cross a fence – Allah (swt) is describing the Sahaba of how far in expectation and love the Prophet's (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam) eyes should go. He should not accept the demands of the Quraish and leave his companions in order to get the leaders of Quraish on board. This is one of the most powerful ayat of the Quran in regards to the leadership of the Prophet (Salallahu 3alayhi wasalam). The Prophet (Salallahu 3alayhi wasalam) wants to make da3wah to the leaders of Quraish because if they come to Islam the religion will be empowered. The Prophet (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam) wants to bring the scholars to Islam because then they will bring an entire community to the religion.

When Islam came there was a new way of organising society. The new way of organising society was that “the best of you are those who have the most taqwa” -

”إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاهُ“

An individual’s social status, academic status, political status or their seniority no longer matters. The only standard is the belief in the oneness of Allah (swt). This new standard allows everyone to be on an equal footing and the only difference between them is the people who believe in the oneness of Allah (swt) and the people who deny the oneness of Allah (swt). The only thing that sets the people who believe in the oneness of Allah (swt) apart are the people who have taqwa. The ambassador of that message is the Prophet (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam). If he gives the impression that some people are more important than others, even for the da3wa of Islam, it will appear to the weaker Sahaba that though he says everyone is equal and all that sets you apart is taqwa he still appears to be giving more importance to the wealthy.

The social hierarchies that existed before Islam are still maintained to some extent. Islam came to eradicate those social hierarchies when it came to the work of Da3wa. In other spheres of life it is impossible to eliminate those hierarchies – for example there will always be a hierarchy between students and teachers and rulers and their followers. When it comes to delivering the message of Islam the hierarchy must be eliminated because it undermines the foundation of the message itself. The Prophet (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam) is warned to be happy with those who are around him and to not allow his eyes to cross over them to the leaders of Quraish or the Rabbis of Bani-Israel. This may make his followers feel worthless. One’s value is no longer determined by human beings but by Allah (swt) and thus everyone becomes equally valuable and the leader must communicate this message through his behaviour.

The Prophet (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam) does not desire castles, rulership or governance. His only desire is that the word of Allah (swt) is supreme. Yet because the standard of the Messenger (Salallahu 3alayhi wasalam) is so high this is still considered to be a worldly desire.

Reference to this issue is also found in the later Surah Abasa.

These social hierarchies are still present within the Muslim community today. For example, we are required to respect our scholars and teachers but there is a certain range or limit in how we treat these people – in particular those who hold a role in leadership. We need to remember that they are also slaves of Allah (swt) and should be placed on an equal footing. In general there is a hierarchy in which the elders within that society should be given priority. In the time of the Prophet (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam) Sa3ad Ibn Abi Waqqas (an eighteen-year-old) is given the position of General over Abu Bakr. In order to eliminate this hierarchy you need to crush it so that such thoughts are removed from the minds of people. The first thing that had to be removed from a society that was engaged in da3wa was any sense of entitlement based on their standings. The only entitlement that will be given is that on Judgement Day which is based on Taqwa and Taqwa cannot be gauged here as it resides in the heart.

تُطِعَ – to follow and to be influenced by

هُوَئِلَهُ – empty desires

فُرْطًا – Excessive evil/ to go overboard/ in excess of

Ayah 29

وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ إِنََّّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ نَارًا
أَحَاطَ بِهِنَّ سُرَادِقُهَا وَإِنْ يَسْتَعِينُوا يَغَاثُوا بِمَاءٍ كَأَلْمُهْلِ يَشْوِي الْوُجُوهَ بِئْسَ الشَّرَابُ
وَسَاءَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا

Waqli alhaqqu min rabbikum faman shaa falyu'min waman shaa falyakfur inna
a3tadna liththalimeena naran ahata bihim suradiquha wa-in yastagheethoo
yughathoo bima-in kalmuhli yashwee alwujooha bi'sa ashsharabu wasaat murtafaqa

And tell them the truth is from your Master. Whoever wants to can believe and whoever wants to can disbelieve. No doubt We have already prepared for the wrongdoers a fire, its walls have already surrounded them. And if they ask for rain, they will be rained upon immediately with a water, like yellow pus that will roast their faces. What a horrible drink and what a horrible place to relax.

Allah (swt) is telling the Prophet (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam) that he does not need to convince those who disbelieve to turn to Islam in desperation. If one is to offer an incentive to the disbelievers, one would assume that it would be something positive. However, here Allah (swt) promises them hellfire.

سُرَادِقُهَا – Comes from Farsi – it is a tent that does not have a roof (frequently used in South-East Asian weddings).

غِيث – rain that is just enough to solve the issue – it's not too heavy nor is it too light.

كَأَلْمُهْلِ – pus that drips from a corpse/ yellow formation of melted copper/ any liquid that is either disgusting or scary

يَشْوِي – to roast – If an individual stands in the rain it will not fall onto their faces first as one usually puts their head down. However, because this is hellfire their necks will be held back and every drop will roast their faces. This water will not just hit their faces but it will also travel down their throats.

Ayah 30

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ إِنَّا لَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ عَمَلًا

Inna allatheena amanoo wa3amiloo assalihati inna lanudee3u ajra man ahsana
3amala

On the other hand those who have believed and have done the good deeds asked of them, no doubt, We will not waste the compensation of the one who excelled in good deeds.

Ayah 31

أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَيَلْبَسُونَ ثِيَابًا خُضْرًا مِّنْ سُندُسٍ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٍ مُّتَّكِينَ فِيهَا عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ نِعْمَ الثَّوَابُ وَحَسُنَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا

Ola-ika lahum jannatu 3adnin tajree min tahtihimu al-anharu yuhallawna feeha min asawira min thahabin waylbasoona thiyaban khudran min sundusin wa-istabraqin muttaki-eena feeha 3ala al-ara-iki ni3ma aththawabu wahasunat murtafaqa

Those are the people that are going to have higher levels of paradise, from underneath them are rivers. They will be adorned with bracelets made of gold and they will be dressed in clothes that are green in colour and made of light silk and heavy silk, reclining back on large cushions. What an awesome reward and how beautiful it is as a place to relax.

Previously water was raining down on the disbelievers from above as a source of torture. In Paradise water runs beneath the believers and it is a source of joy.

يُحَلَّوْنَ – adorned/ crowned with jewellery

سُندُسٍ is also a Farsi word which means light silk

In real life one only sees the above description being applied to royalty. This ayah implies that those who receive paradise will be treated like royalty.

There is a contrast between the use of وَسَاءَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا and وَحَسُنَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا. One is being held back and tortured while the other is relaxed.

Ayah 32

وَأَضْرَبَ لَهُم مَّثَلًا رَّجُلَيْنِ جَعَلْنَا لِأَحَدِهِمَا جَنَّتَيْنِ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَحَفَفْنَاهُمَا بِنَخْلٍ وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمَا زُرْعًا

Wadrib lahum mathalan rajulayni ja3alna li-ahadihima jannatayni min a3nabin wahafafnahuma binakhlin waja3alna baynahuma zar3a

Give them an example of two men: for one of them We set up for him two gardens made of grapes and We surrounded both with palm trees, and between both of them We had [other types of] crops.

We have just been given an example of the one who will enter hellfire and the one who will be rewarded with paradise in the afterlife. We will now be given an example that relates to this world.

Allah (swt) mentions two people here but the conversation will focus mainly on one person and what Allah (swt) did for him.

Hafa – to surround something from both sides

وَ حَفَفْنَاهُمَا - We fortified the gardens from both sides. This was done to protect the grapevines from being damaged by the wind.

The fa3il in both جَعَلْنَا and وَحَفَفْنَا لَهُمَا is Allah (swt). Allah (swt) set up the gardens and the palm trees which must mean they are perfectly set. Allah (swt) did not say that he had two gardens but rather that He set the man up with two gardens. Moreover, He did not say the gardens had trees around them but that He surrounded the garden with trees. The fact that Allah (swt) attributes this to himself demonstrates that it was really well set up. This is a reminder to the wealthy that they were not the ones who established this garden but that it was Allah (swt) who provided them with the grapevines and fortification.

Ayah 33

كَلْنَا الْجَنَّتَيْنِ ءَأَنْتِ أَكْلَهَا وَلَمْ تَنْظِمِ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا وَفَجَّرْنَا خِلَالَهُمَا نَهْرًا

Kilta aljannatayni atat okulaha walam tathlim minhu shay-an wafajjarna khilalahuma nahara

The entirety of the two gardens produced its fruit and they [the two gardens] did not fall short in any way and We caused right through both of them a river.

كَلْنَا is the feminine form of kul in the muthana

Kul is mufrad/ Kila is muthana/ and kilta is the feminine muthana

الْجَنَّتَيْنِ already implies that there are two gardens. The use of كَلْنَا refers to all of the two gardens in their entirety.

Each garden in its entirety – meaning each grapevine, each branch and each stick was carrying fruit. All of it was productive. If one was to only say أَأَنْتِ أَكْلَهَا then that would mean that both gardens are producing fruit but they are not 100% productive.

It is as though Allah (swt) is saying that these two gardens are like His employees and they would never make a mistake in regards to their productivity – they were at His service.

Ayah 34

وَكَانَ لَهُ ثَمْرٌ فَقَالَ لِصَاحِبِهِ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَنَا أَكْثَرُ مَالًا وَأَعَزُّ نَفَرًا

Wakana lahu thamarun faqala lisahibihi wahuwa yuhawiruhu ana aktharu minka malan waa3azzu nafara

The man with the fruit so he said to his neighbour while he initiated the conversation, “I have more money than you and I am more dignified than you are [in regards to] manpower.”

Previously this man had gardens attributed to him. Now he is referred to as the man with the fruit. This is because the purpose of his gardens was to produce fruit.

ثَمْرٌ – fruit/ it can also mean wealth (this connects the idea that production of fruit produces wealth).

This man has a neighbour who has such insignificant property that Allah (swt) does not even mention it.

In a conversation that was initiated by the man with the two gardens, he manages to somehow hint to his neighbour that he is wealthier than him. In other words he did not directly state that he was wealthier.

أَعَزَّ – authority and respect

An employer has two things – as a result of his authority he enjoys respect. He believes that he has greater authority and respect than his neighbour because he has a greater number of employees.

نَفَرًا – manpower

Ayah 35

وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهُ ۖ وَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ ۗ قَالَ مَا أَظُنُّ أَن تَبِيدَ هَذِهِ ۗ أَبَدًا

Wadakhala jannatahu wahuwa thalimun linafsihi qala ma athunnu an tabeeda hathihi abada

And he entered his garden while he was doing wrong to himself and he says, “I am convinced that this is never going to dry up.

Allah (swt) does not say that he committed wrong by his neighbour but that he did wrong by his own self.

تَبِيدَ – The destruction of farms/gardens – when the land becomes barren/ the death of a land.

Ayah 36

وَمَا أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً وَلَئِن رُّدِدْتُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي لَأَجِدَنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهَا مُنْقَلَبًا

Wama athunnu assa3ata qa-imatan wala-in rudidtu ila rabbee laajidanna khayran minha munqalaba

And I do not think that the Hour is approaching and even if I was returned to my Master, I swear that I would find better than this in return.

A focus on materialism results in a focus on this world which in turn takes away focus from the hereafter. This man became so caught up in this world that he no longer believed that the Day of Judgement is approaching.

He does not say “If I went back to my Master” but instead states “If I would get taken to my Master.”

مُنْقَلَبًا – in return – This man believes that as compensation for being taken away from his beautiful garden he should be given something better in the hereafter.

Ayah 37

قَالَ لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَكَفَرْتَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَكَ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ
سَوَّاهُ رَجُلًا

Qala lahu sahibuhu wahuwa yuhawiruhu akafarta billathee khalaqaka min turabin thumma min nutfatin thumma sawwaka rajula

His neighbour said to him while he was the one who initiated conversation, “Are you being ungrateful to Allah, the one who created you from dirt, then he created you from a drop of fluid, then he moulded you into a man.”

Again the neighbour does not go over to the man and bluntly tell him that he is committing shirk but instead advises him while they are in the middle of a conversation amongst other things.

Ayah 38

لَكِنَّا هُوَ اللَّهُ رَبِّي وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا

Lakinna huwa Allahu rabbee wala oshriku birabbee ahada

However, as far as I am concerned, He is Allah, my Master, and I am not going to associate any partners with my Master at all.

لَكِنَّا - Made up of لَكِن (but) and أَنَا (I) – He is so humble and meek that he cannot pronounce the full word أَنَا and instead only pronounces the ن

What shirk is being referred to here considering that the man was not worshipping idols and that he made mention of returning to the one God previously. This is the shirk of trusting duniya. Your reliance is not on Allah (swt) but rather it is reliance on your garden and investments. Other examples of reliance on other than Allah (swt) include:

- When you start your car in the morning and the engine is running you attribute it to reliable car manufacturer but in reality it is Allah (swt) who allowed your car to start.
- When taking medication for your headache you attribute your relief to the pills you took when in reality it was Allah (swt) who removed your pain.
- When you are in remission after cancer you attribute it to the chemotherapy but in reality it was Allah (swt) who removed the cancer from you.

The man with the two gardens was not responsible for his own success. It was Allah (swt) who made it possible and He is the One who take credit for everything that was created and produced.

Ayah 39

وَلَوْلَا إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ إِذْ تَرَى أَنَا أَقَلَّ مِنْكَ مَالًا
وَوَلَدًا

Walawla ith dakhalta jannataka qulta ma shaa Allahu la quwwata illa billahi in tarani ana aqalla minka malan wawalada

And why was it not the case that as you walked into your garden you said, “Whatever Allah wills there is no power in existence except in the hands of Allah. If you really see me as less than you in wealth and children

Masha-allah does not solely refer to good occasions – for example when one is getting married you may say “Masha-allah” but if someone is ill you’re not likely to say this. Technically one should say it because it means whatever Allah wills – good or bad – that is up to Allah (swt). Whatever we have around us is the product of Allah’s will.

When the neighbour refers to the will and power of Allah (swt) he is attempting to teach the man that what Allah (swt) bestows upon us is all a test and is not associated with who is better in character and deeds.

Ayah 40

فَعَسَىٰ رَبِّي أَن يُؤْتِيَنِي خَيْرًا مِّنْ جَنَّتِكَ وَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهَا حُسْبَانًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فَتُصْبِحُ صَعِيدًا زَلَقًا

Fa3asa rabbee an yu'tiyani khayran min jannatika wayursila 3alayha husbanan mina assama-i fatusbiha sa3eedan zalaqa

Possibly my Master can give me a garden much better than yours and He may send upon yours a timely destruction from the sky and it will become dusty [and] slippery.

حُسْبَانًا – a timely destruction

Also referred to as a lightning strike from the sky that creates a wild fire.

صَعِيدًا – something that gathers dust

زَلَقًا – becomes so flat and dusty that when you step on it, it becomes slippery and you fall.

Ayah 41

أَوْ يُصْبِحَ مَأْوَاهَا غَوْرًا فَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ لَهُ طَلَبًا

Aw yusbiha maoha ghawran falan tastatee3a lahu talaba

Or the river will dry up; you won't be able to seek it out.

غَوْرًا – for water to get sucked into the land

In other words he will not be able to recover the water that has been lost.

Ayah 42

وَأُحِيطَ بِثَمَرِهِ ۖ فَأَصْبَحَ يُقَلِّبُ كَفَّيْهِ عَلَىٰ مَا أَنفَقَ فِيهَا وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَىٰ عُرُوشِهَا
وَيَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُشْرِكْ بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا

Waoheeta bithamarihi faasbaha yuqallibu kaffayhi 3ala ma anfaqa feeha wahiya
khawiyatun 3ala 3urooshiha wayaqoolu ya laytanee lam oshrik birabbee ahada

His fruit was surrounded and he began to turn his hands over everything that he had spent in it and it was torn on top of its trellises and he said, "Oh if only I had not associated partners with my Master at all."

عُرُوشِهَا – the sticks that you place into the ground in order for the vines to wrap themselves around.

Allah (swt) does not state that his garden was surrounded – he only mentions the fruit because that was what the man loved so much.

كَفَّيْهِ – the palm of your hand

The ending of the story can actually be considered to be a happy ending because the man repented to Allah (swt). Losing his wealth was something positive for him.

What one considers to be good or bad is being redefined in a revolutionary way by Allah (swt). First it was in relation to social hierarchy and now it is in relation to wealth.

Ayah 43

وَلَمْ تَكُن لَّهُ ۚ فِتْنَةٌ يَنْصُرُونَهُ ۚ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانَ مُنتَصِرًا

Walam takun lahu fi-atun yansuroonahu min dooni Allahi wama kana muntasira

And you are never going to find any helpful group that are going to aid them against an enemy and besides Allah and he cannot even take vengeance himself.

فِتْنَةٌ means any group of people that helps

Ayah 44

هُنَالِكَ الْوَلَايَةُ لِلَّهِ الْحَقِّ هُوَ خَيْرٌ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ عُقْبًا

Hunalika alwalayatu lillahi alhaqqi huwa khayrun thawaban wakhayrun 3uqba

Know that in cases like this, protective help belongs only to the true, Allah, He is way better in giving compensation and way better in the final outcome.

Wilayah – responsibility

وَلَايَةٌ (walayah)– aid/ protective help

Ayah 45

وَأَضْرَبَ لَهُمْ مَثَلًا الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ فَأَصْبَحَ هَشِيمًا تَذْرُوهُ الرِّيْحُ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُقْتَدِرًا

Wadrib lahum mathala alhayati addunya kama-in anzalnahu mina assama-l fakhtalata bihi nabatu al-ardi faasbaha hasheeman tathroohu arriyahu wakana Allahu 3ala kulli shay-in muqtadira

Give them the example of worldly life: worldly life is like water that comes down from the sky, then the nutrients of the land begin to mix with it, then the entire land and its crops become defeated, winds can carry and throw them away and Allah has always been in complete control over all things.

فَاخْتَلَطَ – to mix

هَشِيمًا – to be defeated

تَذْرُوهُ – to throw up in the air

In other words, whatever worldly success we enjoy will come from Allah (swt) but it will not be permanent.

The primary focus of this surah is attacking materialism – we are learning that the great fitnah of our time is materialism. This is the final fitnah. The Dajjal make this world seem better by bringing the dead to life and barren lands fruitful. Allah (swt) is setting the stage for that person to come with the materialism that is widespread today.

سُورَةُ الْكَهْفِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Part 3

Ayah 46

الْمَالُ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْبَاقِيَاتُ الصَّالِحَاتُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ أَمَلًا

Almalu walbanoona zeenatu alhayati addunya walbaqiyatu assalihatu khayrun 3inda rabbika thawaban wakhayrun amala

Money and children (sons) are the beauty of worldly life. And the remaining things are the righteous deeds as far as your Master is concerned in terms of compensation and in terms of having hope in the future.

Allah (swt) summarises assets and children – **الْبُنُونَ** is not just used for physical children but it is also used for manpower.

وَالْبُنُونَ – Refers to children but it could also mean employees, army, manpower, gang, etc.

Most people have future hopes regarding their money and children. However, Allah (swt) states that good deeds that leave a lasting legacy in which you do things that benefit others are what you should be placing your hopes in because it is the hereafter that is the real future.

Ayah 47

وَيَوْمَ نُسَيِّرُ الْجِبَالَ وَتَرَى الْأَرْضَ بَارِزَةً وَحَشَرْنَاهُمْ فَلَمْ نُغَادِرْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا

Wayawma nusayyiru aljibala watara al-arda barizatan wahasharnahum falam nughadir minhum ahada

And the day on which We are going to make the mountains sail away and you are going to see the Earth come out of hiding and We are going to herd them, then We are not going to spare any one of them.

نُسَيِّرُ – to walk casually

Mountains will be moving as though it is nothing.

بَارِزَةً – to come face to face/ it can also mean to come out and not be concealed anymore – to come out of hiding

حَشَر – Herd – this word is usually used for animals. The word جمع is used for humans

Ghadar – In modern Arabic this means ‘to leave’. However, in Classical Arabic the definition differs slightly – to leave something behind. For example, if you are selecting soldiers for the army you would leave the weak men behind or someone is spared from receiving a punishment.

In this context it means that everyone will be herded and not a single soul will be left behind.

The scene that Allah (swt) depicts is that the mountains will be shaking, the earth is bringing out the secrets it had inside and people are in chaos, running like wild animals and Allah (swt) is herding them to one direction.

Ayah 48

وَعَرَضُوا عَلَىٰ رَبِّكَ صَفًّا لَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا كَمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ بَلْ زَعَمْتُمْ أَلَّن نَجْعَلَ لَكُم مَّوَدًّا

Wa3uridoo 3ala rabbika saffan laqad ji'tumoonaa kama khalaqnakum awwala marratin bal za3amtum allan naj3ala lakum maw3ida

And they will be brought before your Master rows upon rows: “You have come to us the way We created you the first time. However you were very confident in assuming that We were not going to appoint in sort of meeting with you.”

The creation of humans the first time round was referred to in Surah Al-A3raf when we were in Allah’s (swt) company. Here Allah (swt) is telling us that this is the second meeting we are having.

مَوْعِدًا - means an appointment or promised time

In other words you did not think that We would fulfil the promised time with you.

Ayah 49

وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ فَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُشْفِقِينَ مِمَّا فِيهِ وَيَقُولُونَ يَا وَيْلَتَنَا مَا لِ هَذَا الْكِتَابِ لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً إِلَّا أَحْصَاهَا وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا وَلَا يَظُنُّ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا

Wawudi3a alkitab u fatara almujrimeena mushfiqeena mimma feehi wayaqooloona yawaylatana ma lihatha alkitabi layughadiru sagheeratan wala kabeeratan illa ahsaha wawajadoo ma 3amiloo hadiran wala yathlimu rabbuka ahada

And the Book will be put down then you are going to see the criminals overwhelmingly terrified of what is in it and they are going to be saying: “What a terrible and horrible destruction has fallen upon us. What is wrong with this Book? It does not spare the smallest detail, nor the biggest event except that it counted it like pebbles are counted. And they are going to find whatever they had done presented before them. And your master is not going to be doing wrong to any one of them.

مُشْفِقِينَ /Shafaq – Captures the part of the day that is both light and dark. For example, when the sky is turning orange and the clouds begin to cover the sky – the day is getting darker than it was but it is still day time. It combines elements of light and dark.

In Arabic shafaq combines two meanings – for example, it combines love and fear, light and dark.

The criminals will see their book and they may have a glimmer of hope that they have some good deeds but overwhelmingly they will realise what is in there.

There is a transition of tenses – وَوَجَدُوا – is past tense. Allah (swt) does not use the word ‘youjadoo’ which implies that you are continually being shown your deeds. It is as though Allah (swt) piled all of their deeds and this colossal monument of their deeds is being shown to them in one slide.

This ayah shows that the human story ends on Judgement Day and the next ayah tells us how the human story began.

Ayah 50

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ كَانَ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَفَسَقَ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِ أَفَتَتَّخِذُونَهُ وَذُرِّيَّتَهُ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِي وَهُمْ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ بِئْسَ لِلظَّالِمِينَ بَدَلًا

Wa-ith qulna lilmala-ikati osjudoo li-adama fasajadoo illa ibleesa kana mina aljinni fafasaqa 3an amri rabbihi afatattakhithoonahu wathurriyyatahu awliyaa min doonee wahum lakum 3aduwwun bi'sa liththalimeena badala

When We had said to the Angels make prostration to Adam. Then they all made prostration except Iblis; he used to be from the Jinn. He violated the commandment of his Master. Are you going to take him and his offspring as guardians as opposed to Myself? And they are clearly enemies especially to you. What a terrible alternative for the wrongdoers!

The use of the word فَفَسَقَ in فَ implies a cause and effect situation – as a result of Iblis being from the Jinn, he violated Allah's command. Angels do not violate God's commands but because Iblis is from among the Jinn it was possible for him to do so. This Surah deals with the beliefs the Christians hold – one of the beliefs they hold in regards to Iblis is that he is a fallen angel. Here Allah (swt) makes it clear that he could not have been from amongst the Angels because he disobeyed a command – something which the Angels do not do. Allah (swt) did not say that he disbelieved and therefore became one of the kafireen. This Surah focusses on action – he violated the commandment of Allah (swt). Again this important when looking at Christian beliefs as they have come to believe that deeds are secondary – you don't have to work on your deeds as you are already saved. Having Jesus in their heart is more important than their actions – he is their saviour. The Christians do not take into account the law of the Torah – the Book of Moses (3alayhi salaam) as they believe that they have already been saved. They believe that they can violate God's commands and disregard eating kosher food or attending the Sabbath. Violating Allah's (swt) command [فَسَقَ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِ] is a quality of Iblis.

There is a connection here with Surah Al-Israa. In the previous Surah in a conversation between the Prophet (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam) and the Quraish, the Quraish asked him why he does not send them an Angel. They say that they would follow an Angel. Allah responds by saying that if an Angel is not sent down why is it that they resort to following Satan. They refuse to follow a human – in this case the perfect creature – or the Jinn.

Ayah 51

مَا أَشْهَدْتُهُمْ خَلْقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَا خَلْقَ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمَا كُنْتُ مَتَّخِذَ الْمُضِلِّينَ عَضُدًا

Ma ashhadtuhum khalqa assamawati wal-ardi wala khalqa anfusihim wama kuntu muttakhitha almudilleena 3aduda

I did not make them a witness when I created the skies and the Earth and I did not make them witness to their own creation. And I would never be one to take those who misguide as back-up.

عَضُدًا - muscles from elbow to shoulder.

In the Arabic expression, عَضُدًا is used to refer to back-up.

Ayah 52

وَيَوْمَ يَقُولُ نَادُوا شُرَكَاءِيَ الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ فَدَعَوْهُمْ فَلَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَوْبِقًا

Wayawma yaqoolu nadoo shuraka-iya allatheena za3amtum fada3awhum falam yastajeeboo lahum waja3alna baynahum mawbiqa

The Day on which We will say go and call of My partners the ones you had so much confidence in, then they are not going to be responding to them in the least and We are going to create between them a huge cavity

زَعَمْتُمْ – the ones you had placed all these assumptions in

Allah (swt) does not say يجيب because that would leave the door open in receiving a response. They may try to respond but choose not to. So Allah (swt) states that these partners that they have associated with Him will not even try to respond to their calls.

مَوْبِقًا – A place of death/ a valley of death.

This means that hellfire will be cast between them – they will see those who they used to call upon and they will call out to them but Allah (swt) will place a gap between them.

Ayah 53

وَرَاءَ الْمُجْرِمُونَ النَّارَ فَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ مُوَاقِعُوهَا وَلَمْ يَجِدُوا عَنْهَا مَصْرِفًا

Waraa almujrimeoona annara fathannoo annahum muwaqi3ooha walam yajidoo 3anha masrifa

The criminals will see the fire, then they will realise that they will be falling into it and they are not going to find any escape.

وقع –to fall hard

وَاقِع – this is the mufa3il form - when you attempt to stop yourself from falling but still fall hard anyway.

مَصْرِفًا – a place to escape/ an alternative route

Ayah 54

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَكْثَرَ شَيْءٍ جَدَلًا

Walaqad sarrafna fee hatha alqur-ani linnasi min kulli mathalin wakana al-insanu akthara shay-in jadala

And We have explained in multiple ways for the people all kinds of examples, however, the human being has been in most things extremely argumentative and aggressive.

صَرَّفْنَا - to alternate, to change

The first impulse of the human being is to be negative and critical.

Ayah 55

وَمَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا إِذْ جَاءَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ سُنَّةٌ الْأُولَىٰ أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ قُبُلًا

Wama mana3a annasa anyu'minoo ith jaahumu alhuda wayastaghfiroo rabbahum illa an ta'tiyahum sunnatu al-awwaleena away'tiyahumu al3athabu qubula

And what prevented people from believing when guidance had come to them and [what prevented them] from asking forgiving of their Master? Except the same things that befell on those who came before them or the punishment would come to them face to face.

قُبُلًا - face to face

Ayah 56

وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَيَجِدِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالْبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوا بِهِ الْحَقَّ وَاتَّخَذُوا آيَاتِي وَمَا أُنذِرُوا هُزُوًا

Wama nursilu almursaleena illa mubashshireena wamunthireena wayujadilu allatheena kafaroo bilbatili liyudhidoo bihi alhaqqa wattakhathoo ayatee wama onthiroo huzuwa

And We never sent any Messengers at all except that we sent them for the purpose of giving good news and warning. However, the disbelievers debate using falsehood so they can dismantle by means of that the truth. And they took My Miraculous Signs and My Warnings as something to make fun of.

لِيُدْحِضُوا – To undue the proofs of the Prophets – to try to dismantle the foundations of the religion.

دحض -When you present an argument with proof but your evidence is worthless – it did not stand the test of inquiry.

The most powerful way to undermine an argument is to make fun of it or to scoff at it.

Ayah 57

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ ذُكِّرَ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ فَأَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا وَنَسِيَ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاؤُنَا إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا
عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا وَإِنْ تَدْعُهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَى فَلَنْ يَهْتَدُوا
إِذَا أَبَدًا

Waman athlamu mimman thukkira bi-ayati rabbihi faa3rada 3anha wanasiya ma qaddamat yadahu inna ja3alna 3ala quloobihim akinnatan an yafqahoohu wafee athanihim waqran wa-in tad3uhum ila alhuda falan yahtadoo ithan abada

Who could be a worse wrongdoer than someone who was reminded of the miraculous signs of their Master then he ignored them? And he forgot whatever his hand had sent ahead We place over their hearts a seal that prevents light from entering and from understanding deeply; and in their ears there is a barrier in place. And if you were to call them to guidance they would not be committed to guidance, ever.

In other words, who could be worse than a person who was given advice and counsel through the Quran but then ignored them? This is talking to the disbelievers. As Muslims we are constantly listening to ayat from the Quran whether it be in salah or at Jumm3ah. These ayat give us guidance and advice pertaining to our everyday life and yet we too are ignoring them.

The opposite of ذُكِّرَ (remembrance) is نَسِيَ (forgetfulness)

One no longer cares about their deeds or their behaviour. While we are being reminded of the Quran, we should be taking reminder by keeping tab on our deeds, our behaviours, our mistakes of the past and the things that we are going to have to answer before Allah (swt). When you forget about the deeds you have done, and you believe that all has been forgiven, then you will not care to look at the Quran in a different light.

أَكِنَّةً – a seal or lock that prevents light from entering – revelation is light.

يَفْقَهُوهُ – Their ability to understand is gone

Understanding of the term fiqh – There is a difference between understanding and internalising. For example, one may understand truth to be good but one may not have internalised it. Fiqh is deep knowledge that has become a part of you – this is knowledge which has been internalised. Allah (swt) is saying that they may understand the ayah in regards to being able to recite it and understanding the vocabulary associated with it and the research behind it but they have not internalised it.

وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا – there is a type of filter in place - they hear the Quran being recited but at the same time they don't hear it. For example, after one has listened to a Khutba they may have enjoyed it but believe that if the Khatib included certain points

during their talk it would have been better. It is being looked at as though it is a performance and a critical review is being written by the audience. Such a person has not internalised the content of the speech but has focussed solely on the performance of the speech. This is not deep understanding. What comes out of the heart goes to the heart. If it is not from the heart, it will not reach the heart. If you are not taking it into your heart, you will not be able to give it to someone else's heart.

Ayah 58

وَرَبُّكَ الْعَفُورُ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ لَوْ يُؤَاخِذُهُمْ بِمَا كَسَبُوا لَعَجَّلَ لَهُمُ الْعَذَابَ بَلْ لَهُمْ مَوْعِدٌ لَنْ يَجِدُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ مَوْيلاً

Warabbuka alghafooru thoo arrahmati law yu-akhithuhum bima kasaboo la3ajjala lahumu al3athaba bal lahum maw3idun lan yajidoo mindoonihi maw-ila

And your Master is exceedingly forgiving if He were to seize them because of what they had earned then punishment would have been expedited for them but rather they have a deadline they are not going to find any sort of encampment to be safe in.

Allah (swt) possesses and owns mercy.

Mawila – A barn or a fenced of field where sheep and cattle are kept to keep them safe from wolves and thieves

Even the language suggests that they will attempt to hide like animals hide.

Ayah 59

وَتِلْكَ الْقُرَىٰ أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ لَمَّا ظَلَمُوا وَجَعَلْنَا لِمَهْلِكِهِمْ مَوْعِدًا

Watilka alqura ahlaknahum lamma thalamoo waja3alna limahlikihim maw3ida

Those towns We annihilated them when they had done wrong and We appointed for their time and place of destruction.

إِذْ لَمَّا ظَلَمُوا – use of such language is extremely important. لَمَّا ظَلَمُوا is different from لَمَّا ظَلَمُوا – when they did wrong. لَمَّا ظَلَمُوا refers to countless evil actions not just one bad deed.

Ayah 60

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِفَتَاهُ لَا أَبْرَحُ حَتَّىٰ أَبْلُغَ مَجْمَعَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ أَوْ أَمْضِيَ حُقُبًا

Wa-ith qala moosa lifatahu la abrahu hatta ablughu majma3a albahrayni aw amdiya huquba

And when Musa said to his young man, “I am not going to leave this mission until I reached the merging of the two seas or spend numerous lifetimes searching”.

Some scholars say that this young man was Yusha ibn Noon – He would spend time with Musa (3alayhi salaam) learning from him. Here we learn that you could not find a more knowledgeable and experienced person at the time than Musa (3alayhi

salaam). A young man should be at the service of a scholar/teacher – be in company with them.

حُتْب – According to the most conservative estimate is an eighty year period. Figuratively speaking it becomes defined as lifetime upon lifetime.

The background to this story that we learn from Hadith literature is that Allah (swt) told Musa (3alayhi salaam) that there is someone more knowledgeable than him and that he will find him where the two seas meet. He is so dedicated to learning. We already have a student/teacher relationship established between Musa (3alayhi salaam) and this young man. A real teacher is the one who says that they themselves need a teacher. Musa (3alayhi salaam) is in quest of a teacher.

Ayah 61

فَلَمَّا بَلَغَا مَجْمَعَ بَيْنِهِمَا نَسِيَا حُوتَهُمَا فَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ سَرَبًا

Falamma balagha majma3a baynihima nasiya hootahuma fattakhatha sabeelahu fee albahri saraba

When they both reached the union between the two bodies of water, they forgot their fish and it took its course in the ocean making waves

They had both forgotten to take the fish with them. Allah (swt) gave Musa (3alayhi salaam) instructions to take food (a large cooked fish) to sustain them on their journey.

سَرَبًا – a tunnel
Saraab – imagery of water

In other words, the fish jumps out and leaves a wake/path behind it.

Ayah 62

فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَا قَالَ لِفَتَاهُ آتِنَا غَدَاءَنَا لَقَدْ لَقِينَا مِنْ سَفَرِنَا هَذَا نَصَبًا

Falamma jawaza qala lifatahu atina ghadaana laqad laqeena min safarina hatha nasaba

When they crossed it he said to his young man, “Bring our lunch. We have met with some exhaustion as a result of this journey.”

جَاوَزَا – to cross

They passed the junction in which they were supposed to stop at. The moment they reached the spot, the fish jumped out which was a sign that this is where they were meant to stop.

Some scholars say that they would not have felt hunger if they had stopped at their meeting point. The fact that they felt hungry means they went further than they were supposed to. Hunger was a sign that they had travelled too far.

Ayah 63

قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَ إِذْ أَوْيْنَا إِلَى الصَّخْرَةِ فَإِنِّي نَسِيتُ الْحُوتَ وَمَا أَنسَانِيهِ إِلَّا الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ
أَذْكُرَهُ وَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ عَجَبًا

Qala araaayta ith awayna ila assakhrati fa-innee naseetu alhoota wama ansaneehu
illa ashshaytanu an athkurahu wattakhatha sabeelahu fee albahri 3ajaba

He [the young man] said, “Did you see when we came close to the boulder? I forgot the fish and nothing made me forget except Satan and it took a strange path into the ocean.”

Some scholars state that the only power Satan has is to make one forget. This is the second time forgetfulness is being mentioned. The first was that they both forgot their fish. This implies that Allah (swt) issued responsibility to both of them for forgetting the fish.

It was strange because the fish had been cooked but Allah (swt) brought it back to life.

Ayah 64

قَالَ ذَٰلِكَ مَا كُنَّا نَبْغُ فَأَرْتَدَّا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِمَا قَصَصًا

Qala thalika ma kunna nabghi fartadda 3ala atharihim qasasa

He [Musa] said, “That is what we have been looking for.” Then they turned around retracing their footsteps very precisely.

قَصَصًا – To retrace ones steps/ to follow very closely.

Ayah 65

فَوَجَدَا عَبْدًا مِّنْ عِبَادِنَا ءَاتَيْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِن لَّدُنَّا عِلْمًا

Fawajada 3abdan min 3ibadina ataynahu rahmatan min 3indina wa3allamnahu min
ladunna 3ilma

Then they found a slave from one of Our slaves, We had given him mercy especially from Ourselves and We had taught him a knowledge that comes from Us.

Umar (radiallahu 3anhu) thought that this slave was an Angel. Others say that he is an extremely old man.

عِنْدِنَا is used in the first section and لَّدُنَّا is used in the second section. In other words Allah (swt) gave him more knowledge than mercy – emphasis is on knowledge.

Ayah 66

قَالَ لَهُ ۖ مُوسَىٰ هَلْ أَتَّبِعُكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُعَلِّمَنِي مِمَّا عَلَّمْتَ رُشْدًا

Qala lahu moosa hal attabi3uka 3an tu3allimani mimma 3ullimta rushda

Musa said to him, “Can I follow you around based on the hope that you will teach me from what you have been taught of righteousness.”

Beautiful transition – we had a teacher and a student but now the roles have changed. The teacher is now about to become the student. In the previous case we saw that the student forgot certain instructions and now the teacher [Musa (3alayhi salaam)] is going to forget certain instructions.

Musa (3alayhi salaam) humbles himself to a great degree

Ayah 67

قَالَ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا

Qala innaka lan tastatee3a ma3iya sabra

He said, “No doubt, you are not going to be able to be patient with me.”

This implies that this teacher already knows something about Musa (3alayhi salaam) that Allah (swt) has informed him of.

Ayah 68

وَكَيْفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلَىٰ مَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ خُبْرًا

Wakayfa tasbiru 3ala malam tuhit bihi khubra

“How can you be patient over something that you have not been given full news of.”

When a person witnesses something that does not make sense they become upset. Musa (3alayhi salaam) has a previous track record. When Musa (3alayhi salaam) saw the girls on the farm struggling with their sheep, he does not understand why there is no man to take care of such duties. It does not make any sense to him because he does not have full knowledge of this family and their situation. Musa (3alayhi salaam) has a tendency to resolve things that he does not understand.

Ayah 69

قَالَ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ صَابِرًا وَلَا أَعْصِي لَكَ أَمْرًا

Qala satajidunee in shaa Allahu sabiran wala a3see laka amra

He said: “You will find me if Allah wills patient and I will not disobey you in any decision.”

إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ was mentioned previously in this surah so this is a case study of how one should use the word. Notice that in the first half of the ayah, Insha-allah was used but Musa (3alayhi salaam) does not mention it in the second half of the ayah. He will ask questions but he will be patient. However, because the word Insha-allah was not used Musa (3alayhi salaam) does disobey him in the decisions he makes.

Ayah 70

قَالَ فَإِنِ اتَّبَعْتَنِي فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِي عَن شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ أُحْدِثَ لَكَ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا

Qala fa-ini ittaba3tanee falatas-alnee 3an shay-in hatta ohditha laka minhu thikra

He said, "Then if you are going to follow me do not ask me about anything until I mention something to you about it".

Ayah 71

فَانْطَلَقَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا رَكِبَا فِي السَّفِينَةِ خَرَقَهَا قَالَ أَخَرَقْتَهَا لِتُغْرِقَ أَهْلَهَا لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا
إِمْرًا

Fantalaqa hatta itha rakiba fee assafeenati kharaqaha qala akharaqtaaha litughriqa ahlaha laqad ji'ta shay-an imra

So they went ahead until they boarded both of them onto a ship [and] he tore it. He [Musa] said, "Did you tear it up so that you could drown its people? You have done something unethical and illogical.

خرق – to tear

The imagery is that he boards a ship and tears a plank from the bottom which results in water gushing into the ship.

إِمْرًا – that which is unethical and illogical.

Ayah 72

قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا

Qala alam aqul innaka lan tastatee3a ma3iya sabra

He said, "Did I not say that you are not capable of patience with me?"

Ayah 73

قَالَ لَا تُؤَاخِذْنِي بِمَا نَسِيتُ وَلَا تُرْهِقْنِي مِنْ أَمْرِي عُسْرًا

Qala la tu-akhithnee bima naseetu wala turhiqnee min amree 3usra

He [Musa] said, "Do not scold me for what I forgot. Do not impose on me in my decision more difficulty."

تُؤَاخِذْنِي – to scold

Muaakhatha – to hold somebody responsible

Parallel here between the response the young man gave to Musa (3alayhi salaam) and the response Musa (3alayhi salaam) gives to Al-Khidr. However, Musa (3alayhi salaam) does not pass the blame over to Satan as he is more mature.

In Arabic, there is a saying which translates into the following: Don't crush me with your harshness and Allah (swt) will not crush you with His harshness one day.

تُرْهِقْنِي / Irhaaq – to enforce and to impose something on someone.

Ayah 74

فَانطَلَقَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا لَقِيَا غُلَامًا فَقَتَلَهُ ۖ قَالَ أَقْتَلْتَنِي نَفْسًا زَكِيَّةً بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ لَّقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا
نُّكْرًا

Fantalaqa hatta itha laqiya ghulaman faqatalahu qala aqatalta nafsan zakiyyatan bighayri nafsini laqad ji'ta shay-an nukra

They went ahead until they both met a boy, he killed him. "You killed a person that is pure without him having murdered anyone. You have committed something unheard of."

The age of the boy is said to be between eight to ten years of age.

زَكِيَّةٌ – pure/innocent – it can also mean intelligent.

لَّقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا – usually means 'you have come with something'. In this context it is defined as 'you have committed something'.

نُّكْرًا – something unheard of – no individual in any society would say that this is something good. It is not recognised by any society as a good deed.

Ayah 75

قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَّكَ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا

Qala alam aqul laka innaka lan tastatee3a ma3iya sabra

He said, "Did I not say to you that you are not going to be patient with me."

An extra word is added here - لَّكَ (to you) - to emphasise Al-Khidr's growing anger.

Ayah 76

قَالَ إِن سَأَلْتُكَ عَنْ شَيْءٍ بَعْدَهَا فَلَا تُصَاحِبْنِي ۖ قَدْ بَلَغْتَ مِن لَدُنِّي عُذْرًا

Qala in saaltuka 3an shay-in ba3daha fala tusahibnee qad balaghta min ladunnee 3uthra

He [Musa] said, "If I ask you about anything after it then you are rightful in not accompanying me, then as far as I am concerned you will have the excuse to leave me."

Ayah 77

فَانطَلَقَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَتَيَا أَهْلَ قَرْيَةٍ اسْتَطْعَمَا أَهْلَهَا فَأَبَوْا أَن يُضَيِّفُوهُمَا فَوَجَدَا فِيهَا
جِدَارًا يُرِيدُ أَن يَنْقُضَ فَأَقَامَهُ ۖ قَالَ لَوْ شِئْتَ لَتَّخَذْتَ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا

Fantalaqa hatta itha ataya ahla qaryatin istat3ama ahlaha faabaw an yudayyifoohuma fawajada feeha jidaran yureedu an yanqadda faaqamahu qala law shi'ta lattakhaththa 3alayhi ajra

Then they went ahead until they eventually reached the citizens of a town. So they asked for food from its citizens, but they refused to be hospitable to either of them. They both found a wall about to fall so he made it straight. He [Musa] said, "Had you wanted you could have got compensation for it."

Allah (swt) does not say that they reached a town but rather that they reached the citizens of a town. In other words, before they reached the town they met some of their people.

أَسْتَطْعَمًا – to ask for food

أَهْلَهَا – citizens

Naqada – to violate/ to break

يَنْفَضُّ – to break itself – the wall wants to fall apart

In other words because Al-Khidr fixed the wall he should have been paid for his labour. Musa (3alayhi salaam) is extremely smart. He did not say, "How come you did not ask for compensation?" He did not make it a question because he previously stated that he would not ask any further questions.

Ayah 78

قَالَ هَذَا فِرَاقُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنِكَ سَأُنَبِّئُكَ بِتَأْوِيلِ مَا لَمْ تَسْتَطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا

Qala hatha firaqu baynee wabaynika saonabbi-oka bita'weeli ma lam tastati3 3alayhi sabra

He said, "This is the parting between me and you. I will tell you the interpretation of what you could not bear to have patience over."

The use of the word "me" first implies that Al-Khidr is leaving but Musa (3alayhi salaam) can remain there if he wants to. If he had said "you" first that would have implied that Musa (3alayhi salaam) is to leave and Al-Khidr will remain.

Ayah 79

أَمَّا السَّفِينَةُ فَكَانَتْ لِمَسَاكِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ فِي الْبَحْرِ فَأَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَعِيبَهَا وَكَانَ وَرَاءَهُمْ مَلِكٌ يَأْخُذُ كُلَّ سَفِينَةٍ غَصْبًا

Amma assafeenatu fakanat limasakeena ya3maloona fee albahri faaradtu ana 3eebaha wakana waraahum malikun ya'khuthu kulla safeenatin ghasba

"As for the ship, it was for poor people that were working in the ocean and I wanted to cause a flaw in it and right behind them was a King he is confiscating every ship forcefully."

أَعِيبَ – a flaw

In other words the naval ships belonging to the King were right behind them.

وَرَاءَهُمْ – Right behind them but not in view.

غَصَب – to snatch something/ to hold onto something that does not belong to you/
confiscating – in this context commandeering

The King wants to build his navy and he is confiscating any ship that comes their way. If they find that the ship is not damaged they will not take it.

Ayah 80

وَأَمَّا الْغُلَامُ فَكَانَ أَبَوَاهُ مُؤْمِنَيْنِ فَخَشِينَا أَنْ يُرْهِقَهُمَا طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا

Waamma alghulamun fakana abawahu mu'minayni fakhasheena an yurhiqahuma tughyanan wakufra

“And as for the boy, then both his parents were believers, then we were afraid that he would force them to rebellion and disbelief.”

Musa (3alayhi salaam) referred to this boy as intelligent – zaky. However, intelligence can lead to good or bad. He will be so compelling and so powerful in his personality that he won't be a disbeliever by himself; he will force his parents into disbelief. He will have a negative impact on them. He will force on them his rebellion and his disbelief.

Ayah 81

فَأَرَدْنَا أَنْ يُبَدِّلَهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُ زَكَاةً وَأَقْرَبَ رُحْمًا

Faaradna an yubdilahuma rabbuhuma khayran minhu zakatan waaqraba ruhma

Then We intended that He, your Master, replace for them someone better than him in terms of intelligence and purity and he will be closer in mercy and keeping family ties.

Notice that previously Al-Khidr used the phrase 'I intended' whereas here he says "We intended."

رُحْمًا rather than rahma (mercy) is used here because it refers to both family ties and mercy.

Ayah 82

وَأَمَّا الْجِدَارُ فَكَانَ لِغُلَامَيْنِ يَتِيمَيْنِ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ وَكَانَ تَحْتَهُ كَنْزٌ لَهُمَا وَكَانَ أَبُوهُمَا صَالِحًا فَأَرَادَ رَبُّكَ أَنْ يَبْلُغَا أَشُدَّهُمَا وَيَسْتَخْرِجَا كَنْزَهُمَا رَحْمَةً مِّنْ رَبِّكَ وَمَا فَعَلْتُهُ عَنْ أَمْرِي ذَٰلِكَ تَأْوِيلُ مَا لَمْ تَسْطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا

Waamma aljidarun fakana lighulamayni yateemayni fee almadeenati wakana tahtahu kanzun lahuma wakana aboohuma salihan faarada rabbuka an yablughu ashuddahuma wayastakhrija kanzahuma rahmatan min rabbika wama fa3altuhu 3an amree thalika ta'weelu ma lam tasti3 3alayhi sabra

And as for the wall, it was for two other boys, both of them were orphans in the city and they had a treasure in their possession meant for them. And their father had been a righteous man, so your Master intended that both of them should reach mature age and they can extract their treasure as a source of mercy from your Master. And I did not do any of this from my command. That is the interpretation of what you were not able to be patient with.

Allah (swt) is coming to the aid of the children who had a righteous father. When a person dies they are unable to care for their children anymore but Allah (swt) compensates them. This is part of the blessing given to the children in this world as a result of having a righteous father.

كَانَ لَهُمَا كَنْزٌ لَّهُمَا – The treasure belongs to them but they cannot have it right now.

كَانَ لَهُمَا كَنْزٌ هُمَا – The treasure now belongs to them – they have possession of the treasure now.

They had to wait to have possession of the treasure because at a young age they would not be able to defend themselves from the greedy townspeople who would have found a way to take it from them.

Previously تَسْطَع had an extra ta at the end – In other words, he is leaving and has no time to complete the word. Their journey together is over.

Lessons from the story: The planning of Allah (swt)

- The first stop that was made was in regards to saving a group of people from economic hardship.
- The second stop that was made focussed on a family situation and saving a society from crime – a criminal was about to be raised within that family.
- The third situation is one of social welfare – Taking care of those who cannot help themselves.

In all of the above situations there is better in them – immediate harm and eventual benefit even in the worldly sense. Allah's (swt) plans are long term and they are not only duniya vs akhira. Sometimes we may not understand something bad which has happened now that good will come out of it later.

We are also learning about mannerisms – we see this in relation to both of the teacher/student relationships. This teacher (Al-khidr) did not engage in teaching until the end of the journey. Musa (3alayhi salaam) was taught these lessons at the end of their journey. When he states that 'he damaged the ship' he does not use the word "We" because damage is not a word that is befitting to use with Allah (swt). However, at the end of their journey, he explains that all of this was from the will of Allah (swt).

When things happen in this world, there is an outside reality and an inside reality. The outside reality may be bad but Allah (swt) knows that the inside reality is good. Most people are not mature enough to judge things by their inside reality. As a result of many people judging things in terms of their outside reality, they end up making inappropriate statements regarding Allah (swt) – Why is Allah doing this...? The whole point of these lessons was to teach Musa (3alayhi salaam) that there is an internal reality that he is not aware of.

Tearing the plank would appear to be a bad thing when looking at it from an outside reality. As a result, he does not associate Allah (swt) with this action and uses the word “I”. However, building a wall would appear to be a good thing if one looks at it from an outside reality and He therefore uses the word “We” to include Allah (swt) in the completion of this action. He does not take any credit here because he states that “it was your Master that intended for both of them.”

The middle incident has two parts to it – the first part is the killing of the child. On the outside that would appear to be extremely bad. The second part is that there is another child who is better on the way. He begins with “We intended” as though he and Allah (swt) were united in intent for what was to happen. The good that is apparent is credited to Allah (swt) whereas he is left with the killing of the child. He does not repeat the full course of the action because he realises that killing is extremely difficult to talk about. He uses one noun titles to provide some account of what he did i.e. as for the ship, as for the boy and as for the wall because it is obvious what action he took in regards to each of those things.

Non-Muslims tend to focus on this story and use it as a means to criticise Islam. They talk about how Islam condones the killing of innocent children. Firstly, this is a Prophet and this is not the first time in the Quran in which the killing of a child has been sanctioned – Ibrahim (3alayhi salaam) was commanded to sacrifice his son Ismail (3alayhi salaam). This is something that even they believe in. Prophets are given extremely difficult challenges that ordinary humans are not given. No religious interpretation has ever suggested that we must fulfill the sunnah of Ibrahim (3alayhi salaam) and to sacrifice our children. These people only take revelation as a joke. One should not feel the need to respond to such accusations because if you do feel the need to respond and justify it to them then just remember what Allah (swt) said to the Prophet (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam): Do not worry about them, just concern yourself with what We have revealed to you, nobody is going to change these words. No-one is going to change these words to meet the expectations of certain disbelievers. They are useless people – do not pay attention to them.

سُورَةُ الْكَهْفِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Part 4

Introduction

Originally in Islamic history when attempting to gain more knowledge in regards to Dhul-Qarnayn it was quite difficult because they had limited access to global historical sources. There have been many interpretations in identifying who Dhul-Qarnayn was. Some even went as far as saying that he was Alexander the Great because it was unknown as to who could have travelled so far to the east and so far to the west and who could have had such an expansive kingdom. Such information was not widely known. As Islamic civilisation expanded and our exposure to other civilisations and history also expanded our opinions on such historical events also evolved. The most correct opinion that has been popularised now is that Dhul-

Qarnayn was known as Cyrus who was a Persian ruler. We have some knowledge of him but more needs to be done in terms of research.

Approximately forty years ago Iran celebrated the 2,500th anniversary of Dhul-Qarnayn. Around that time they also dug up the remains of his grave and they found a monument that had been built with some relics.

Qarn means horn – and his crown had two horns on it which set a historical precedent. Persia (Iran) was originally separated into two kingdoms and it is historically documented that this was the King who reunited the two kingdoms and the expanded the Persian Empire further.

The Jews asked the Prophet who Dhul-Qarnayn was. The relationship between the Jews and Dhul-Qarnayn was that he was Persian himself. The Babylonians were conquered by Iranians and most argue that they defeated by Dhul-Qarnayn. It was under his rule that the Jews who had been captured previously as slaves by another ruler were given permission to leave Iraq and settle in Jerusalem. They look to him as someone who did them a great favour and as a result he became famous figure in Jewish history. This occurred approximately 500 years or so before Issa (3alayhi salaam).

Dhul-Qarnayn was born a royal and there was an attempt to assassinate him because he was in line to take the throne. He was taken from his village and protected in some obscure land in Persia. There he came into contact with a Prophet or Prophetic teachings. He was raised in an Islamic environment and once he came to power he applied the teachings of Islam that he had acquired. The Quranic view is that he may have had ilham (this is the most conservative view) that Allah (swt) gave him a feeling and he acted according to that feeling. The extreme view of this was that he was in fact a Prophet. Allah (swt) does say that He spoke to him in which case if it was direct then one must take this as a form of revelation and assume that he was in fact a Prophet. If it was not direct then it is considered ilham in that he was inspired to take certain action and Allah (swt) expresses that by saying “Qulna” – “We said to Dhul-Qarnayn you could either punish them or do right by them” – in other words Allah (swt) put that sense of judgement in him.

Ayah 83

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ ذِي الْقَرْنَيْنِ قُلْ سَأَتْلُوا عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا

Wayas-aloonaka 3an thee alqarnayni qul saatloo 3alaykum minhu thikra

They ask you about Dhul-Qarnayn, tell them, “I will narrate onto you some mention of him.”

In other words, they will be given some information about Dhul-Qarnayn but not extensive information about him.

The use of the *سَأَلُوا* in *سَأَلُوا* refers to a future occurrence. Previously it was mentioned that if the Prophet (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam) is asked about something he must say Insha-allah – if God wills. However, here the use of Insha-allah is not mentioned because Allah (swt) is commanding the Prophet (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam) to tell them *قُلْ*.

Ayah 84

إِنَّا مَكَّنَّا لَهُ ۖ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَءَاتَيْنَاهُ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ سَبَبًا

Inna ma kkanna lahu fee al-ardi waataynahu min kulli shay-in sababa

We had given him stability and We had furnished for him especially in the land and We had given him resources of all types.

This includes military resources, financial resources, social resources, material resources, natural resources – he had everything at his disposal.

Ayah 85

فَاتَّبَعَ سَبَبًا

Faatba3a sababa

He went on a mission.

Sababa – it is defined as resources but it can also mean a mission

If this is Dhul-Qarnayn, then he travelled towards the Mediterranean and eventually he headed east and he ended up in what is now Pakistan. So he went from one coast to another and then ended up near the mountain range near Cyprus.

Ayah 86

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَغْرِبَ الشَّمْسِ وَجَدَهَا تَغْرُبُ فِي عَيْنٍ حَمِئَةٍ وَوَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا قَوْمًا قُلْنَا
يَا أَيُّهَا الْقَرْنَيْنِ إِمَّا أَنْ تُعَذِّبَ وَإِمَّا أَنْ تَتَّخِذَ فِيهِمْ حُسْنًا

Hatta itha balagha maghriba ashshamsi wajadaha taghrubu fee 3aynin hami-atin wawajada 3indaha qawman qulna ya tha alqarnayni imma an tu3aththiba wa-imma an tattakhitha feehim husna

Until he reached the setting of the sun and he found it sinking into the murky water spring, and he found a nation. We said Dhul-Qarnayn if you want to torture them then do so or it may be that you can take good out of them.

This does not mean that he reached the place where the sun sets. Imagery is being used here – he reached the coast and saw that the sun was setting. Some orientalists state that the Quran has scientific mistakes because Dhul-Qarnayn apparently reached the drowning of the sun. Such phrasing is used quite frequently in literature and it is not something that should be taken quite should be taken literally.

Hamiat – murky water

In other words he was on a military expedition and conquered the nation. When one conquers a nation they have two options: to torture them or make good use out of them. This means that he could either put them to work or find good in them – you consider could in them and leave them be. This was a test from Allah (swt) to see what position he would take as a ruler.

Ayah 87

قَالَ أَمَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ فَسَوْفَ نَعَذِّبُهُ ثُمَّ يُرَدُّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ فَيُعَذِّبُهُ عَذَابًا نُكَرًا

Qala amma man thalama fasawfa nu3aththibuhu thumma yuraddu ila rabbihi fayu3aththibuhu 3athaban nukra

He said, “As for the one who did wrong then we will be punishing him and then he will be returned back to his Master and He [Allah] will torture him with a punishment that is far worse.”

The criminals in this land will be punished both in this world and the hereafter – it is as though he has declared this in a public statement to his nation.

Ayah 88

وَأَمَّا مَنْ ءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُ جَزَاءٌ الْحُسْنَىٰ وَسَنَقُولُ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِنَا يُسْرًا

Waamma man amana wa3amila salihan falahu jazaan alhusna wasanaqoolu lahu min amrina yusra

“And as for the one who believed and acted righteously, then he will have a great compensation and we will speak to them on our authority softly.”

In other words, they will receive the best reward possible and when they are spoken to harsh words are not used with them – they are approached in a civil manner.

Ayah 89

ثُمَّ اتَّبَعَ سَبَبًا

Thumma atba3a sababa

Then he went on a mission.

He is done establishing justice in this part of the land and is now on another mission.

Ayah 90

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَطْلِعَ الشَّمْسِ وَجَدَهَا تَطْلُعُ عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ لَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهَا سِتْرًا

Hatta itha balagha matli3a ashshamsi wajadaha tatlu3u 3ala qawmin lam naj3al lahum min dooniha sitra

Until he found the rising place of the sun and he found it rising upon a nation and We did not find for them any cover [from the sun].

The rising place of the sun refers to the fact that he was now headed east.

This is referring to nations that were primitive in their lifestyle. For example, he found that the houses in this nation were so primitive that they had no roof.

سِتْرًا – barrier/ cover

Ayah 91

كَذَٰلِكَ وَقَدْ أَحَطْنَا بِمَا لَدَيْهِ خُبْرًا

Kathalika waqad ahatna bima ladayhi khubra

Just as it was before and We had encircled whatever happened with him with complete news.

In other words, in the same way that Allah (swt) revealed to him previously regarding the treatment of a nation it was also revealed to him in the same way here. The way in which he deals with the previous nation is captured here in one phrase كَذَٰلِكَ

Ayah 92

ثُمَّ اتَّبَعَ سَبَبًا

Thumma atba3a sababa

Then he went on another mission.

Ayah 93

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ بَيْنَ السَّدَّيْنِ وَجَدَ مِنْ دُونِهِمَا قَوْمًا لَّا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ قَوْلًا

Hatta itha balagha bayna assaddayni wajada min doonihima qawman la yakadoona yafqahoona qawla

Until he reached the place where two large mountains meet, he found a nation between them that almost does not understand his speech.

سد – A phrase used for a mountain if it serves the passage of water. If the mountain has something to do with water passing through then this is the term used to describe it. Dams are also referred to as سد.

كَاد – almost

Somehow they found a way to communicate with each other.

Ayah 94

قَالُوا يَا قَرْنَيْنِ إِنَّ يَأْجُوجَ وَمَأْجُوجَ مُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَهَلْ نَجْعَلُ لَكَ خَرْجًا عَلَىٰ أَنْ تَجْعَلَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُمْ سَدًّا

Qaloo ya tha alqarnayni inna ya'jooja wama'jooja mufsidoona fee al-ardi fahal naj3alu laka kharjan 3ala an taj3ala baynana wabaynahum sadda

They said, “Dhul-Qarnayn, indeed Gog and Magog cause great corruption in the land. Can we install an extract from our budget for you so that you can construct a barrier between us.

They recognised that he was someone who would enforce justice. Rather than begging for mercy for themselves, they immediately discuss with him their problem.

According to what we find in the Torah, these are the offspring of Yafiz (Yafiz is a son of Nuh (3alayhi salaam). Some sources (Christian, Jewish and Muslim) suggest that the oriental nations and Western and Eastern European nations are all offspring of Yafiz and within them is Gog and Magog. A common myth is that they are from China and that the wall that was built is the Great Wall of China. This is not true. The dam mentioned in the Quran has also been found.

Gog and Magog will come in waves and will cause a lot of destruction. They are mentioned in two places in the Quran. These are a type of warrior people who come and pillage other nations and take their resources.

خَرَجًا – means exit – in other words they have a set amount of money (budget) and they will set some money aside for him to lead a military campaign to help them fend off Gog and Magog.

Ayah 95

قَالَ مَا مَكَّنِّي فِيهِ رَبِّي خَيْرٌ فَأَعِينُونِي بِقُوَّةٍ أَجْعَلْ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ رَدْمًا

Qala ma makkannee feehee rabbee khayrun faa3eenoonnee biquwwatin aj3al baynakum wabaynahum radma

He said whatever my Master has provided to me is better. However, aid me with your manpower I will install between you and them

Sheikh Al-Shi'rawy says that a dam can be damaged but a ردم is a different type of barrier. Two walls are built instead of one and the middle is filled with sand. In this way it can withstand earthquakes.

ردم – Literally means to put layers of sand one on top of the other.

Ayah 96

ءَاتُونِي زُبَرَ الْحَدِيدِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا سَاوَىٰ بَيْنَ الصَّدَفَيْنِ قَالَ أَنفُخُوا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَعَلَهُ نَارًا
قَالَ ءَاتُونِي أُفْرِغْ عَلَيْهِ قِطْرًا

Atoonee zubara alhadeedi hatta itha sawa bayna asadafayni qala onfukhoo hatta itha ja3alahu naran qala atoonee ofrigh 3alayhi qitra

Bring me plates of metal until it gets filled between both sides. He said, “Keep pouring until the metal melts.” Then he said, “Come to me and I will pour molten copper onto it.”

He sees that they are a primitive society so he teaches them how to build a dam. There are two processes involved the first is the metal (iron) walls and then they are reinforced with copper. Copper gives it a smooth finish which is important because that will prevent them from scaling the wall.

Ayah 97

فَمَا اسْتَطَعُوا أَنْ يَظْهَرُوهُ وَمَا اسْتَطَعُوا لَهُ نَقْبًا

Fama ista3oo an yathharoohu wama istata3oo lahu naqba

They were not capable of scaling it and they were not able to bore a hole into it.

They were unable to dig through because the metal was reinforced with copper on both sides.

Ayah 98

قَالَ هَذَا رَحْمَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّي فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي جَعَلَهُ دَكَّاءَ وَكَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي حَقًّا

Qala hatha rahmatun min rabbee fa-itha jaa wa3du rabbee ja3alahu dakkaa wakana wa3du rabbee haqqa

He said, "This is a mercy from my Master and when the promise of my Master comes He is going to turn it into nothing. And the promise of my Master has always been true."

When an architect accomplishes something they take pride in their design and their work and attribute it to themselves. Yet here Dhul-Qarnayn attributes what they have accomplished as a mercy from Allah (swt).

فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي جَعَلَهُ دَكَّاءَ - This refers to the promise of Allah (swt) regarding the Day of Judgement – everything on the Earth will be crushed and will be destroyed. Some scholars have interpreted this to mean the day in which Gog and Magog dig their way through the wall.

It was the Jews who asked the Prophet (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam) to tell them about Dhul-Qarnayn. It was also the Jews who had gotten rid of the belief of the promise of the Hereafter. So when Allah (swt) mentions some things about Dhul-Qarnayn he includes the fact that the promise of the hereafter is true.

Ayah 99

وَتَرَكْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَمُوجُ فِي بَعْضٍ وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَجَمَعْنَاهُمْ جَمْعًا

Watarakna ba3dahum yawma-ithin yamooju fee ba3din wanufikha fee assoori fajama3nahum jam3a

And We left them on that day to come out wave upon wave and the second blowing of the trumpet will occur and then We will gather them altogether.

وَتَرَكْنَا – We left them/ We are going to allow them

The use of wave upon wave is playing on the imagery of the dam. It is referring to the way in which people will be pouring out on the Day of Judgement. Some scholars interpret this to mean the day in which Gog and Magog will come out in waves upon

waves. They will continue to come out as though their population does not come to an end.

Why are these two things combined? On the one hand there is the release of Gog and Magog into the world who will come out wave upon wave. On the other hand we have the commencement of the Day of Judgement. The significance of this is that until the Day of Judgement you will not have seen an army this size before. The only other time one will witness such large numbers of people coming out is when the second blowing of the trumpet occurs.

Ayah 100

وَعَرَضْنَا جَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَرْضًا

Wa3aradna jahannama yawma-ithin lilkafireena 3arda

And they will bring forth hellfire on that day especially for the disbelievers, a thorough presentation.

Hellfire will be right in front of them.

Ayah 101

الَّذِينَ كَانَتْ أَعْيُنُهُمْ فِي غِطَاءٍ عَن ذِكْرِي وَكَانُوا لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَمْعًا

Allatheena kanat a3yunuhum fee ghita-in 3an thikree wakanoo la yastatee3oona sam3a

Those whose eyes have been covered from remembrance and they were not able to listen to good advice.

غِطَاءٌ – a veil/ a cover/ something which blocks sunlight.

Usually the heart is mentioned in relation to one who does not engage in remembrance of Allah (swt). In this particular ayah the eyes are mentioned because in this Surah, the signs that are being described and are alluded to by Allah (swt) are those of the Day of Judgement. The signs of the Day of Judgement are not going to be heard, they are going to be seen. People will see these signs manifest yet they still will not believe. Even before seeing these signs they were given counsel in regards to the revelation but they did not listen to the advice that was being given to them.

Ayah 102

أَفَحَسِبَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنْ يَتَّخِذُوا عِبَادِي مِنْ دُونِي أَوْلِيَاءَ إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا جَهَنَّمَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ نُزُلًا

Afahasiba allatheena kafaroo an yattakhithoo 3ibadee min doonee awliyaa inna a3tadna jahannama lilkafireena nuzula

Have those who disbelieved assumed that they are going to be able to take my slaves other than Myself as protective friends and guardians? We have prepared hellfire for the disbelievers as an initial treat for them.

On one hand this is an attack on shirk – do they believe that they can take Issa (3alayhi salaam), or their elders, or the wise whom they created statues out of and worshipped as associates to Allah (swt)? On the other hand, the Jews thought that their saviour would be Dhul-Qarnayn and Allah (swt) is asking them if they believe that he is their saviour.

نُزُلًا – When you go to someone’s house and before they give you the meal they give you some appetisers/snacks. The initial hospitality and when you receive it you are anticipating better to come. Sarcasm is used here to imply that these guests (the disbelievers) will be treated to an initial treat of hellfire.

Ayah 103

قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِالْأَخْسَرِينَ أَعْمَالًا

Qul hal nunabbi-okum bil-akhsareena a3mala

Tell them, “Should we inform you of the worst losers in terms of their deeds.”

Ayah 104

الَّذِينَ ضَلَّ سَعْيُهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعًا

Allatheena dalla sa3yuhum fee alhayati addunya wahum yahsaboona annahum yuhsinoona sun3a

“The people whose efforts were exhausted in worldly life and they assume that they have excelled in manufacturing something.

سَعْيُهُمْ – an effort – An effort could be material or religious but the motives behind it are just worldly. There could be religious efforts that are not concerned with the hereafter and are only concerned with this world. Religion could also be turned into an industry. It could be a means of expanding one’s control – use of military power in the name of God but in the end it is all for political and economic reasons.

They are so proud of what they have built – this could refer to material things such as building a company, an empire, university or it could be religious – building a masjid.

This is relevant because it is mentioned immediately after the narration of Dhul-Qarnayn who accomplished some amazing things. When the most powerful and greatest accomplishment was achieved he immediately gave credit to Allah (swt). He did not take pride in his work.

Ayah 105

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَلِقَائِهِ ۖ فَحَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فَلَا نُقِيمُ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَزَنًا

Ola-ika allatheena kafaroo bi-ayati rabbihim waliqa-ih i fahabitat a3maluhum fala nuqeemu lahum yawma alqiyamati wazna

Those are the people that have disbelieved in the revelation of their Master and their meeting with Him. Their deeds are seized and We will not establish on the Day of Judgement any weight.

أَعْمَلُ is usually used to refer to good deeds. In other words their deeds will hold no weight whatsoever.

Ayah 106

ذَلِكَ جَزَاؤُهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ بِمَا كَفَرُوا وَاتَّخَذُوا آيَاتِي وَرُسُلِي هُزُوًا

Thalika jazaohum jahannamu bima kafaroo wattakhathoo ayatee warusulee huzuwa

That is their compensation, hellfire, because of how they disbelieved and they had taken My signs and their Prophets as a mockery.

The most materialistic of people make fun of revelation and Messengers. The common factor between revelation and Messengers is that they want to direct your mind in a way that will prioritise the hereafter and that this world is just a means to gain success in the afterlife. They cannot stand that fact and so they make a mockery out of it.

Ayah 107

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ الْفِرْدَوْسِ نُزُلًا

Inna allatheena amanoo wa3amiloo assalihati kanat lahum jannatu alfir dawsi nuzula

No doubt those who believed and acted righteously they will have the gardens of Firdaws as initial entertainment.

There is a famous Hadith in which the Prophet (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam) praised people in the last generation where one of them would equate to ten of the Sahaba. The Sahaba thought that he was mistaken and meant that one Sahaba would be equal to ten people from the last generation. He corrected them and told them that those who come after them will believe in him without having seen him. Some scholars have commented that these people will be living in the time of the Dajjal and at a time when the world has been beautified for them and they will still choose allegiance to the Prophet (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam) and his cause over worldly temptations. They will be given the highest ranking – Firdaws.

Ayah 108

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يَبْغُونَ عَنْهَا حِوَالًا

Khalideena feeha layabghoona 3anha hiwala

They will remain in that entertainment constantly anticipating better and they will not want any changes to this.

نُزُلًا – you are hoping for the next thing to show up

حَوْلًا – change

They will be so happy with what Allah (swt) has rewarded them with that they will not want anything else. However, Allah (swt) will still continue to give them something better.

Ayah 109

قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَادًا لَكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّي لَنَفِدَ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَنْفَدَ كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّي وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِثْلِهِ مَدَدًا

Qul law kana albahru midadan likalimati rabbee lanafida albahru qabla an tanfada kalimatu rabbee walaw ji'na bimitlihi madada

Tell them “If the oceans were turned into ink for the words of my Master the oceans would run out before the words of my Master would run out, even if We brought another ocean like it to further extend it.”

In the same way that the Surah opens with a praise of the Quran it also concludes with a praise of the Quran.

مِدَادًا – حبر is usually used to refer to ink in Arabic. Another word used to refer to ink is مَدَاد

It comes from the word مد which means extension. The ink becomes the extension of your hand, thoughts and understanding. A part of you is now on paper. It also refers to a large pot of ink. It is also used to properly communicate what Allah (swt) wants. Ink may or may not communicate what Allah (swt) intends but when مَدَاد is used it is an extension of the self. It would not fall short of properly communicating what Allah (swt) intends.

The words of Allah (swt) are of two kinds:

- Revelations that He sends
- Every one of His instructions – every instruction that is given by Allah (swt) is

a word of His: إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

“When He intends a thing a thing that He says to it ‘Be’ and it is”

Every كُن is an instruction of Allah (swt) – How many matters are being executed by Allah (swt) at any given moment? If oceans were used as a means to document the instructions Allah (swt) gives, oceans would run out before the words of Allah (swt) run out.

Ayah 110

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ اللَّهُ وَأَحَدٌ فَمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ
فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا

Qul innama ana basharun mithlukum yooha ilayya annama ilahukum ilahun wahidun faman kana yarjoo liqaa rabbihi falya3mal 3amalan salihan wala yushrik bi3ibadati rabbihi ahada

Say, "I am just a human being like you revelation has been given to me. The only entity worthy of worship for you is one single entity. Then whoever was hopeful of meeting with your Master. Then you should act righteously and let them not commit any association in worshipping his Master with anybody.

On the one hand we have the greatness of the Quran and on the other hand we have the humility of the Prophet (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam). The Quran's greatness and its credit belongs to Allah (swt) even though the medium of its delivery is the Prophet (salallahu 3alyhi wasalam). He wants to ensure that people direct their praise to Allah (swt) and not to himself.

The death of materialism occurs when someone is hopeful of meeting Allah (swt) because there is nothing more desirable than meeting Allah (swt). One who really wants to meet with Allah (swt) loses all interest in worldly life – this will be seen in the next Surah.

The Surah began and ended alluding to the problems with Christian theology. In the next Surah (Surah Maryam) Allah (swt) dedicates the entire chapter to this issue.

Overview

Mahathir Hassan Ghahari attempted to tie together several accounts of ahadith, signs of the Last Day and the trials that the Ummah will go through and this Surah. He states that the Ummah will go through several phases especially towards the end of time where Muslims will be ruled by tyrants. The Prophet (salallahu 3alyahi wasalam) describes that eventually the rule of Allah (swt) will be re-instated.

When the Muslims are being ruled by these tyrants in order to protect the faith one must go into hiding. Surah Kahf reminds us of this – you have to retreat and preserve the faith. It is the youth who will be the pioneers of preserving this faith.

He argues that when the most of the Muslim world was colonised by Europeans, the scholars who attempted to fight the onslaught of colonisation were losing badly. A large number of scholars were being executed on the battlefield. There was an unofficial consensus amongst those in the Muslim world that the traditional scholars of Islam are going to retreat from the battle and set up learning institutions that are cut off from society. They will not follow the Roman calendar, nor eat with a fork and spoon, nor will they learn English, German or French. They will maintain the Arabic language and study the Quran and Sunnah because people are losing it. They formed these cave-like institutions to protect the faith. While the vast majority of Muslims were being Westernised they were preserving the religion. When the

colonisers leave (most likely to be a few hundred years later) the scholars will reappear making their way back into society and reintroducing Islam back into the community. However, the remnants of the colonisation would have been left behind and the greatest remnant they leave behind is that of materialism. Yet because of this society would reject them and claim that they do not belong in their community.

The second story in Surah Al-Kahf is about materialism – the two men and the garden. Today, some of the world's most valuable resources are under the Muslims feet and yet Allah (swt) has stripped them of those same resources – they can't even use them. Allah (swt) continues to humiliate and degrade the Muslims as a result of their reliance on materialism and maybe they will return back to the Master just as the man with the garden did.

The Muslims will then see the trials and tribulations that our Ummah is going through and will wonder why we are having all these problems if we are the chosen Ummah, the Ummah of Muhammad (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam) and if we are the people of Quran? We will become increasingly frustrated with injustice but we don't understand that this is part of a larger plan – links to the story of Musa (3alayhi salaam) where patience is required.

Eventually the rule of Allah (swt) will be brought East and West. The Prophet (salallahu 3alayhi wasalam) said that Allah (swt) folded the Earth up for him and he saw the East and the West and he saw the flag of Islam everywhere. This links to the story of Dhul-Qarnayn – he goes East and West establishes justice wherever he goes.

There is a parallel between the four stories and the path of the Ummah.

Make it a habit to recite this Surah every Friday insha-allah.