

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ

تفسير

سورة الكهف

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COMMENTARY ON
SŪRAH AL-KAHF
(The Cave)

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FORWARD

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْأَحَدِ الصَّمَدِ، الَّذِي لَمْ يَلِدْ وَ لَمْ يُؤَلَدْ، وَ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ، وَ الصَّلَاةُ وَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيَّ مُحَمَّدٍ عَبْدِهِ الْمُجْتَبَى، وَ رَسُولِهِ الْمُصْطَفَى، أَرْسَلَهُ إِلَى كَافَّةِ الْوَرَى، بَشِيرًا وَ نَذِيرًا وَ دَاعِيًا إِلَى اللَّهِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَ سِرَاجًا مُنِيرًا، وَ عَلَيَّ أَهْلَ بَيْتِهِ أَئِمَّةَ الْهُدَى وَ مَصَابِيحَ الدُّجَى، الَّذِينَ أَذْهَبَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ الرِّجْسَ وَ طَهَّرَهُمْ تَطْهِيرًا، وَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيَّ مَنْ اتَّبَعَ الْهُدَى.

All praise is due to Allah, the One, Unique, Everlasting who did not beget nor was begotten and there is none comparable to Him. Prayers and peace be upon Muḥammad, His servant, the chosen and His messenger, the select. (Allah) sent him to the totality of mankind as a bearer of good news; a warner and one inviting (mankind) to Allah with His permission, a brilliant light. (Prayers and peace) be upon his household, the leaders of guidance and the lamps (of guidance) in darkness. Those whom Allah removed from them impurity and purified them thoroughly. Peace be upon he who follows guidance.

The publication before you is a commentary on one of the chapters of the Glorious Qurān, *Sūrah al-Kahf*, the Cave. It gives indication upon the affairs and personalities of nations of the past. It bears witness that our prophet Muḥammad was indeed a bearer of good news to believers and a warner to mankind, past and present, who have rejected faith in God, the Mighty and Majestic.

"And when there came to them an Apostle from Allah verifying that which they have, a party of those who were given the Book threw the Book of Allah behind their backs as if they knew nothing." [al-Baqarah 2:101]

This chapter is comprised of three intriguing narratives: the companions of the cave; the prophet Mūsa and his encounter with Khidīr and the narrative of Zulqarnain, peace be upon them all. It also contains a number of memorable parables for spiritual reflection and moral advices.

Attached to this publication is my humble request for your prayers for my family and myself.

Ali Abdur-Rasheed

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(Please note that footnote reference numbers marked with boxes are active links to the footnotes and text)

تفسير سورة الكهف

مقدمة:

'Allāmah Ṭibirsi says: *"It is Makkan. Ibn 'Abbās says: Except the verse: 'And withhold yourself with those who call on their Lord...' (verse 28). It was revealed in Madinah regarding the narrative of 'Uyainah Ibn Ḥisn al-Farāzi. The number of its verses is one-hundred and eleven verses according to the Baṣri (reciters); one-hundred ten according to the Kūfi; one hundred six according to the Syrians and one hundred-five according to the Hijāzi."* ¹ A similar narration can be found in Tafsir *at-Tibyān* on the authority of Mujāhid and Qutādah.

فضيلتها:

Of the virtues of Sūrah al-Kahf, we will mention the following:

In the Tafsir *al-Amthal*, Shaikh Nāṣir Makārem Shirāzi narrates the following traditions:

The Messenger of God (ﷺ) said: *"Shall I indicate to you a Sūrah whose supporters were seventy thousand angels? At the time of its descent (the Sūrah's) greatness filled that which is between the heaven and earth? They said: Yes! The Messenger of God (ﷺ) said: Sūrah al-Kahf. He who recites it on Friday, God will forgive him until the next Friday while adding three days. He will be given a light that reaches the heaven and it will (offer) protection against the sedition of Dajjāl."* ²

Also, the Messenger of God (ﷺ) said: *"He who recites (Sūrah al-Kahf), he is protected for eight days from every trial. Then, if ad-Dajjāl emerges within these eight days, God will protect him from the trial of ad-Dajjāl. He who recites the verse which is at its end: 'I am only a mortal like you...' at the time of his sleep, his sleep is a light radiating to the Ka'bah, filling that light are angels praying for him until he rises from his sleep. If he is in Makkah and recites it, he will have a light radiating to Baitul-Ma'mūr filling that light are angels praying upon him until he awakens."* ³

The Messenger of God (ﷺ) said: *"Whomever memorizes ten verses from the beginning of Sūrah al-Kahf, and then he encounters Dajjāl, he (Dajjāl) will not harm him."* ⁴

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (AS) said: *"He who recites Sūrah al-Kahf every Friday night, he will not die except as a Martyr (Shaheed) and God will raise him with the Martyrs and he will stand on the day of judgement with the Martyrs."* ⁵

نزولها:

In his Tafsir, *Majma' al-Bayān*, 'Allāmah Ṭibirsi mentions the reason for the revelation of this Sūrah:

It is narrated from Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq with his chain of narrators on the authority of Sa'eed Ibn Jubair on the authority of 'Akramah on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, (he said): *"The Quraish dispatched Naḍr Ibn al-Ḥarith and 'Uqbah Ibn Abi Mu'eeṭ to Jewish Rabbis in Madeenah. They (the Quraish) said to them: Ask them about Muḥammad, describe for them his characteristics and inform them of his saying 'For they are the original people of the Scripture and with them is knowledge of prophets that is not with us.'"*

"They set out until reaching Madeenah. They asked the Rabbis of the Jews about the prophet (ﷺ) and they said for them whatever the Quraish had said. The Rabbis said to them: Ask him about three matters, if he answers you (correctly) about them, then, he is a delegated prophet. If he doesn't do it, then he is a deceitful man."

"Then, see your view in the matter. Ask him about youths disappearing in the early era-what is their affair for surely there is a amazing story about them. Ask him about a man (whose) travels reached the eastern (horizon) of the earth and the western (horizon)-what was his story? And ask him about the soul-what is it? "

In another tradition, it says: "If he informs you of two and does not inform you about the soul, then he is a prophet."

"They both left heading towards Makkah. They said: O kinsfolk of the Quraish! We have come to you with the details of that which is between you and Muḥammad. They narrated to them the narrative. Then, they went to the prophet (ﷺ). They questioned him. Then, he (ﷺ) said: I will inform you of that which you asked regarding it tomorrow and it will have no exceptions"

They departed from him and he (ﷺ) waited fifteen nights and Allah did not communicate any revelation with him in that nor did Jibrāeel (AS) come to him until rumors swirled among the people of Makkah and they were talking about that. The Messenger of Allah grieved about that which the people of Makkah were saying about it."

"Then, Jibrāeel came to him (ﷺ) on behalf of Allah, Glorified be He, with Sūrah al-Kahf. In it was that which they asked him about regarding the affair of the youths and the man traversing (the east and west), and it was revealed to him: 'And they ask you regarding the soul. Say: The soul is one of the commands of my Lord, and you are not given aught of knowledge but a little.' [al-Isrā 17:85]"

In another tradition, Ibn Ishāq said: *"It was mentioned to me that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to Jibrāeel (AS) at the time when he came: "Surely you have held back something from me, O Jibrāeel! Then, Jibrāeel (AS) said to him: 'And we do not descend but by the command of your Lord...' [Maryam 19:64]."*⁶

In another similar tradition, Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (AS) said: *"The cause of its revelation, meaning Sūrah al-Kahf, was that the Quraish dispatched three individuals to Najrān, an-Nadīr Ibn al-Ḥārith Ibn al-Kildah, 'Uqbah Ibn Abi Mu'eeṭ and al-'Āṣ Ibn Wail as-Sahmi in order that they could learn from the Jews and Christians matters which they could inquire of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). They departed toward Najrān to the scholars of the Jews and they inquired of them.*

They (the scholars) said: Ask him about three matters. If he answers you with that which is with us, then he is truthful. Then ask him about one matter. If he claims knowledge of it, then he is a liar. They said: And what are these matters? They said: Ask him about the youths in the early times. They departed, disappeared and slept, remaining in their sleep until they were awakened. What was their number and what thing did they have with them other than themselves and what was their narrative? Ask him about Moses when God commanded him to follow a learned man and learn from him. Who was he, how did he follow him and what was his narrative with him? Ask him about one traversing the place of the setting of the sun and its place of rising until he reached the barrier of Gog and Magog. Who is he and what is his narrative?

Then, dictate to them (the Quraish) information regarding these three matters. They said If he answers that which we have dictated to you, then he is truthful. If he informs you contrary to that, then do not affirm him. They said what is the fourth matter? They said: Ask him when will the hour (of resurrection) come? If he claims knowledge of it, then he is a liar. Surely, no one knows of the hour (of resurrection) except God, the Blessed and Exalted.

They returned to Makkah and gathered with Abū Ṭālib (AS). They said: O Abū Ṭālib! Surely your nephew asserts that information of the heavens have come to him. We will inquire of him about matters, if he answers us with its knowledge about them, then he is truthful. If he does not answer us, our knowledge is that he is a liar.

Abū Ṭālib (AS) said: Ask him about that which has become evident to you. Then, they asked him (the Messenger) about the three matters. The Messenger (ﷺ) said: Tomorrow I will inform you and it will have no exceptions. Then, revelation was held back from him for forty days until it saddened the Prophet (ﷺ) and caused doubt among his companions who had believed in him. The Quraish were gladdened. They mocked, abused and grieved Abū Ṭālib (AS). Then, after forty days Sūrah al-Kahf was revealed to him. The Messenger of God (ﷺ) said: O Jibrāeel! Had (revelation) come to an end? He (Jibrāeel) said: Surely, we are capable that we will descend only with the permission of God. Then, it was revealed: "Or, do you think that the Companions of the Cave and the Inscription (O Muḥammad!) were of Our wonderful signs." ⁷

Upon receiving the revelation, the Messenger (ﷺ) introduced the Sūrah to the people of Makkah.

﴿بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ﴾

"In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful"

﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ وَ لَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ عِوَجًا﴾

"(All) praise is due to Allah, Who revealed the Book to His servant and did not make in it any crookedness." [al-Kahf 18:1]

﴿قَيِّمًا لِّيُنذِرَ بَأْسًا شَدِيدًا مِّنْ لَّدُنْهُ يُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ

أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا حَسَنًا﴾

"Rightly directing, that he might give warning of severe punishment from him and give good news to the believers who do good that they shall have a goodly reward,"

[al-Kahf 18:2]

The Sūrah begins with God, the Exalted, praising Himself for which He is entirely worthy. Allah is the Lord Who has revealed the book to His Messenger Muḥammad (ﷺ) and in this book there is no crookedness, meaning no deviation from truth. az-Zajāj says that it means no divergence from correctness to incorrectness and from truth to falsehood.⁸

The word in the beginning of the second verse, *Qayyim* ﴿قَيِّمًا﴾, is related to the book that God revealed. Many scholars have noted that in the syntax of this verse the word *Qayyim* is placed at the beginning of the sentence although it is related to the previous sentence. As a result, Ibn 'Abbās states that the meaning of the verse is: (All) praise is due to Allah, Who revealed the rightly guiding, moderate, straightforward, upright book without any defects in it. Another meaning of ﴿قَيِّمًا﴾ is that it has a value with regard to the remaining scriptures in that it affirms them and preserves them.⁹

The grammatical relationship between *Qayyim* and the book (al-Kitāb) is that it is its Ḥāl, meaning a word which clarifies the state of the subject or object at the time of speaking. Accordingly, the word ﴿قَيِّمًا﴾, meaning: *right, rightly guiding*, clarifies that the Book of Allah (al-Kitāb), the sentence's object, is rightly guiding. The Ḥāl is always a noun in the accusative state or Naṣb (النَّصْبُ) and terminated with Fatḥah or another indicator of Naṣb.

Next, God Almighty gives the reason why He has revealed this book to His Messenger Muḥammad (ﷺ). It is so that through the Messenger (ﷺ) mankind may be warned about a severe punishment or calamity awaiting those who disbelieve in God. This punishment is divine, meaning it is not the misfortunes that soothsayers forecast, rather it is the wrath of God foretold by previous scriptures. God, the Exalted, has also revealed this book to convey good news and the encouragement of paradise for those who have faith and do good works.

Those who have faith, referred to as the *Siddiqeen* (صَدِّقِينَ), are those who have affirmed that God is true; the day of judgment is true and the faith of Islām is true. The good works (Ṣāliḥāt) are those deeds, like prayer, fasting and charity which bring about goodness in a person's life. Good works for which a believer will be greatly rewarded in the hereafter.

﴿ مَا كَثِيرٌ فِيهِ أَبَدًا ﴾

"Staying in it forever;" [al-Kahf 18:3]

﴿ وَ يُنذِرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا ﴾

"And warn those who say: Allah has taken a son." [al-Kahf 18:4]

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

"They have no knowledge of it, nor had their fathers; a grievous word that is that comes out of their mouths; they speak nothing but a lie." [al-Kahf 18:5]

Meaning that those believers described in the previous verse who do good works and are rewarded with the 'goodly reward,' meaning paradise, they will abide forever with that reward: an everlasting reward for their sacrifices in this world.

Next, as some commentators and historians have noted, the Quraish had the belief that angels were the daughters of God, perhaps it would have been more accurate to translate the verse as: *God has taken a child*, translating the word ﴿وَلَدًا﴾ *Walad* in a more generic sense. In addition, Jews and Christians have taken 'Uzair and Jesus (AS), as the sons of God.¹⁰

All of their sayings in this regard are not based on factual information but upon ignorance and blind Taqleed or following their forefather's superstitions and falsehoods. Shaikh Mughniyyah says that these people had not based their beliefs on evidence, rather, the evidence establishes the reverse,¹¹ meaning that God has not taken anyone as a child.

Such utterances about this topic are described as grievous due to it being a lie that demeans the greatness and supremacy of God Almighty. Not only does God Almighty not have a child, He also has no need for such.

﴿فَلَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَفْسِكَ عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِمْ إِن لَّمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَسَفًا﴾

"Then maybe you will kill yourself with grief, sorrowing after them, if they do not believe in this announcement." [al-Kahf 18:6]

The narrations all tend to indicate that as time passed and there was no response to the three questions posed by the Quraish, the Messenger of God was deeply troubled and anxious. After more than two weeks (some reports indicating forty days), the response was given to the Prophet. With the response, however, the Prophet was rebuked as well. God Almighty questions whether the Prophet would kill himself with anxiety due to grieving at the Quraish's rejection of the Qurān and their clamor over the delay in response to their questions. Here the Qurān is referred to as *al-Hadeeth* or an announcement.

Shaikh Nāṣir Makārem makes the point that the Prophet's reaction indicates one of the more important facets of his leadership: concern or *Ishfaq* for his nation or Ummah. As with previous Prophets, the Prophet Muḥammad was troubled by the rejection of guidance and salvation, particularly within his own clan. Why, then, the rebuke? The rebuke, like the delay in response was instructive. Verses similar to these can be found in the beginning of Sūrah ash-Shu'arā. It is followed by verses that can perhaps clarify why the Prophet was rebuked for grieving at their rejection:

- *Ṭā Sin Meem*
- *These are the verses of the Book that makes (things) clear.*
- *Perhaps you will kill yourself with grief because they do not believe.*
- *If We please, We should send down upon them a sign from the heaven so that their necks should stoop to it.*

- *And there does not come to them a new reminder from the Beneficent God but they turn aside from it.*
- *So they have indeed rejected (the truth), therefore the news of that which they mock shall soon come to them. [ash-Shu'arā 26:1-6]* ¹²

Obviously, this is a description of people whose hearts are sealed by God Almighty due to their rejection of the clear truth. The Qurān is described here as the Book that makes things clear. Rejection of this message, therefore, was due to reasons other than lack of understanding. Perhaps it was due to their arrogance, sinful lifestyle or other factors. Their rejection was of their own accord, therefore they are destined to suffer in the end on account of that which they have rejected .

The point is also made (v.3) that God Almighty has the power to send compelling signs which people cannot turn aside from. The phrase: *'So that their necks should stoop to it'*, implies bowing or submitting to that sign involuntarily.

As He is the Almighty, it would not be difficult to compel mankind to submit to His signs and faith. However, God Almighty gave mankind the unique dual characteristics of reasoning and volition. By means of Prophets and Messengers, the Almighty appeals to mankind's superior capability of reasoning through clear manifestations of His signs. God Almighty's signs are explained and defended by His Prophets and Messengers with clear arguments and sensible reasoning. God obliges man to accept the truth through these clear signs and arguments, although man is not compelled to do so.

As can be judged from history, those who were rejecting Islām did not change their position when the proper answers to their questions were revealed in this and other chapters. As mentioned in v.4, every new reminder from their Lord is turned away from or rejected. The Quraish asked for proofs from the Rabbis because they were ignorant of Jewish scriptures. The Prophet Muḥammad had claimed that these divine scriptures contained signs of his prophethood as he was also dispatched by the same God, meaning the God of Abraham, Moses and Jesus, peace be upon them all.

The Quraish requested an acid test of prophethood and were given three questions that the Rabbis asserted only one chosen by God Almighty could answer. As a result, the Quraish were given clear signs regarding matters that had been previously unknown to them. Despite the clarity of the answers and their compelling nature, the Quraish still rejected the truth as they had rejected it previously. From that perspective, we can rationalize God Almighty's rebuke: they did not believe before nor will they believe, therefore do not grieve over them.

﴿إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لَهَا لِنَبْلُوهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا﴾

"Surely, We have made whatever is on the earth an embellishment for it, so that We may try them (as to) which of them is best in works." [al-Kahf 18:7]

﴿وَإِنَّا لَجَاعِلُونَ مَا عَلَيْهَا صَعِيدًا جُرُزًا﴾

"And most surely We will make what is on it bare ground without herbage."

[al-Kahf 18:8]

All that which has been created upon the earth, such as its vast variety of vegetation, is only an embellishment or decoration for the earth. According to Mujāhid, this verse means: "We have made that which is upon the earth of the varied types of creation: organic, animal and plant, as an embellishment for the earth in order that We might test our servants as to which are better in good deeds, in other words, better in following Our commands and prohibitions and acting righteously in obedience to Us."¹³

'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabāi mentions the following narration on the authority of Ibn 'Umar:

"The Messenger of God (S) recited this verse: So that We may try them (as to) which of them is best in works. Then, I said: O Messenger of God! What is the meaning of that? He said: In order that (God) may try you as to which of you are better in reasoning and more cautious regarding the prohibitions of God and (which of you) is quicker in obedience to God."¹⁴

In describing all things upon the earth as an embellishment, it indicates that these things are not an essential part of the earth, rather, they are a variety of creation which God has situated upon the earth to satisfy mankind's needs and to give him benefit and prosperity.

The temporal nature of these embellishments are highlighted in the next verse as God Almighty reminds us that He has the power to remove these embellishments from the earth rendering it, thereafter, a wasteland. The term used, ﴿صَعِيدًا جُرُزًا﴾ indicates a land without trees and plants or a wasteland, according to Qutādah and Mujāhid, respectively.¹⁵

﴿أَمْ حَسِبْتَ أَنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْكَهْفِ وَالرَّقِيمِ كَانُوا مِنْ آيَاتِنَا عَجَبًا﴾

"Or, do you think that the Companions of the Cave and the Inscription were of Our wonderful signs." [al-Kahf 18:9]

This verse begins with the mention of the companions of the cave for which this Sūrah was named. They are referred to as the companions of the cave and inscription. There are differing opinions about the meaning of ﴿الرَّقِيمِ﴾ *Raqeem* or inscription. Most commentators are inclined to believe that both are a reference to the same thing, meaning companions of the cave because some narrations indicated that they (or someone else) wrote their names upon a slate placed at the opening of the cave.

There are other opinions as well. In *Majma'*, according to 'Allāmah Ṭibirsi: *Raqeem* is the valley where this cave existed in a mountain in the view of Ibn 'Abbās and Ḍaḥḥāk. According to al-Ḥasan (ath-Thawri) it is the mountain itself and according to Ka'b and as-Sadi it was the town from which these companions originated. According to Sa'eed Ibn Jubair it is the slate of stone where the companions of the cave wrote their story and placed it at the entrance of the cave. al-Balkhi and Jabāi agree.

Tafsir *al-Burhān*, Sayyid Baḥrāni mentions a narration from Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (AS) regarding the verse: *(Or, do you think that the companions of the cave...)*. He (AS) said: *They were people who fled and the owner of that abode wrote their names, the names of their fathers and families on a ledger made of lead, thus the saying: companions of the cave and inscription.* " ¹⁶

The verse mentions that the companions of the cave is one of God Almighty's amazing signs. According to Mujāhid, Qutādah and Ibn Ishāq, the meaning of the verse is: *"Do you not think, O Muḥammad (meaning, the Ummah or nation of Muḥammad), that the companions of the cave and inscription were among our wonderful signs? Rather, I have not created the heavens and earth and that which is between them among amazing things more amazing than the companions of the cave. My proof is its being established upon these idolaters among your people and other than them among all my servants."* ¹⁷

﴿إِذْ أَوَى الْفِتْيَةُ إِلَى الْكَهْفِ فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا آتِنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً﴾

﴿وَهَيِّئْ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا﴾

"When the youths sought refuge in the cave, they said: Our Lord! Grant us mercy from Thee, and provide for us a right course in our affair." [al-Kahf 18:10]

Regarding the term *Fityah* (الْفِتْيَةُ), it is the plural of *Fata* (فَتَى) on the same pattern as: (غُلَمَةٌ) which is the plural of (غُلَامٌ). In the same manner as the word (غُلَامٌ), the word (فَتَى) usually signifies a youth but is also used in the meaning of a servant. According to Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (AS), it does not refer to age at all but, rather to faith. A narration in *Tafsir Nūr ath-Thaqalain* confirms this:

"(al-Hindi) said: Ja'far Ibn Muḥammad (AS) said: O Sulaymān! Who is Fata? I said: May I be your ransom, with us, al-Fata are the youth (Shabāb). He said to me: Do you not know the companions of the cave all of them were middle-aged (Kuhūl). Allah named them Fityah due to their faith. O Sulaymān! He who believes in God and is God-fearing, he is al-Fata." ¹⁸

Who were these companions and what was their reason for taking refuge in the cave? In *Majma'*, 'Allāmah Ṭibirsi summarizes: *"These individuals believed in God while their ruler was an idol worshipper. They sought refuge in the cave because of their belief. Their king's name was Diqiyānūs and the name of the town was Afsūs. Their king was known to kill anyone who disputed with him about his idol worshipping faith. It is said that these events occurred before the advent of the Prophet Jesus (AS) while other opinions are that the companions were Christians. Another report says that they were Christians but their ruler was Majūsi, meaning a Zoroastrian."*

Were they actually Christians or a people whose faith predated Christianity. Considering the fact that the Quraish approached the Rabbis with the intent of gaining a clear sign by which they could contest the prophethood of Muḥammad (ﷺ). The Rabbis gave them three questions through which they could ascertain whether he was rightly guided or not. The question which comes to mind is whether Rabbis would narrate the story of the companions of the cave if they were Christians? Only a few commentators, however, indicate that their faith predated Christianity or that they may not have been Christians.

The historian Gibbon relates from the Syrian priest James of Saruc (b. 452 CE) that the companions of the cave were Christians. The king's name was Decius who ruled from 249-252 CE in what is currently known as Ephesus. Ephesus is located about 72 kilometers southeast of Izmir in western Turkey. James of Saruc claims that the Roman emperor tortured these early Christian converts. Gibbon, however, claims that the ruler at the time when these companions woke from their long sleep was Theodosius II (408-450 CE) a Christian king. Christians generally agree with this view. In the city of Ephesus, there is a place known as the cave of the seven sleepers that Christians claim is the actual cave wherein the companions slept.¹⁹

Shaikh Nāṣir Makārem gives two probabilities his Tafsir regarding the location of the cave. He says:

"There are two predominate sayings in face of the many probabilities cast upon the location of the cave. It is possible to summarize them in what follows: first, that this event occurred in the city of Afsūs and this cave is found near it. It is possible in the present time to witness the ruins of this place near to the city of Izmir, Turkey, near the town of Ayāsulūk in the mountains of Unāyirdag, where the cave is found not far from Afsūs. This cave is very spacious. It is said that it is possible that in its interior the ruins of hundreds of graves can be seen. Many believe that this cave is the cave of the companions of the cave."

"It is related from those witnessing the cave that the opening of the cave faces the north east. This place is a cause of some great commentators leaning toward doubt in this place being some place other than the cave of the companions of the cave. In its time, this place corroborated the correctness of the topic and gave more weight to the cave being the intended cave, because the evidence of the sun, at the time of rising is on the right and inclines a little toward the north east. At setting (the sun set) on the left. It is that the opening faces toward the north or inclines a little toward the north east. Naturally, the lack of there being a mosque or place of worship to (one of its) sides does not lessen the correctness of the topic whereas it is possible that their ruins could have been obliterated after the passing of seventeen centuries from the event."

"Second, the cave is located near 'Ammān the capital of Jordan. It is near a town called Rajeeb. It is possible to see the ruins of a monk's hermitage above the cave, leading back some centuries to the fifth century of the Christian era whereas it was converted (later) to a mosque possessing a Mihrāb and a place for calling the Azhān after the rule of the Muslims over that location."²⁰

In *at-Tibyān*, Shaikh Ṭūsi indicates that Raqeem is in a valley situation between Ghaḍban and Ailah, a town in present-day Jordan on the Red Sea (known today as Eilat).

This remains an issue of uncertainty. Perhaps the more important points are not the location of the cave or the faith to which they belonged but rather the strength and power of their faith itself and the story of their miraculous period of sleep.

In Tafsir *al-Qummi*, it is mentioned that this event occurred during the period between the prophets Jesus and Muḥammad, peace be upon them both. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (AS) said: *"The companions of the cave dissembled their faith and proclaimed their disbelief, then they were rewarded twice."* In the same source, the Imām (AS) also said: *"The similitude of Abū Ṭālib (AS) is like the companions of the cave, they dissembled their faith and proclaimed idolatry, then God gave them their reward twice."*²¹

'Allāmah Ṭibirsi mentions that some narrations indicate that they were among the special servants of the king each of them hiding their faith from the other. When they discovered their common faith, they joined together in a covenant and fled seeking refuge in the cave. After mentioning the companions of the cave, Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (AS) said :

*"Had your people burdened you with that which their people had burdened them. It was said to him: What did their people burden them with? He said: Polytheism (Shirk) with the Mighty God. They exhibited Shirk for them and secreted (their) faith until relief came to them."*²²

The term used in the verse *Awa* (أَوْى), meaning to seek refuge, indicates that the companions came to the cave due to some type of anxiety or compulsion. Their prayer also indicates their state of distress and fear. They prayed to God for mercy and proper guidance in their affair. The prayer for mercy is interpreted here as proper guidance and salvation, according to Ibn 'Abbās.²³

In *al-Mizān*, 'Allāmah Ṭabātabāi says that the phraseology: *Our Lord! Grant us mercy from Thee*, indicates that the object of mercy is guidance, as is the case in a similar Qurānic prayer:

﴿رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ الرَّحْمَةَ﴾

"Our Lord! Make not our hearts to deviate after You have guided us aright. Grant for us from Thyself mercy." [Āli 'Imrān 3:8]

In this verse, clearly the mercy that is requested from God is guidance as the prayer seeks to avoid deviation. Perhaps the deviation that the companions sought refuge from was forced-submission to the misguided faith of the king after having been rightly guided.

Regarding the sentence: *"And provide for us a right course in our affair."* In *at-Tibyān*, Shaikh Ṭūsi says it means: *"Make easy for us that which we seek and request of Your pleasure, meaning guide us to that in which is our salvation. (Make easy for us our flight away) from disbelief towards You from the worship of idols which our people summon us to."*

﴿فَضَرَبْنَا عَلَىٰ آذَانِهِمْ فِي الْكَهْفِ سِنِينَ عَدَدًا﴾

"So We prevented them from hearing in the cave for a number of years."

[al-Kahf 18:11]

﴿ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَاهُمْ لِنَعْلَمَ أَيُّ الْحِزْبَيْنِ أَحْصَىٰ لِمَا لَبِثُوا أَمَدًا﴾

"Then We raised them up that We might know which of the two parties was best able to compute the time from which they remained." [al-Kahf 18:12]

﴿نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ نَبَأَهُم بِالْحَقِّ ۗ إِنَّهُمْ فِتْيَةٌ آمَنُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ وَ زِدْنَاَهُمْ هُدًى﴾

"We relate to you their story with the truth; surely they were youths who believed in their Lord and We increased them in guidance." [al-Kahf 18:13]

After petitioning God Almighty for relief, the companion's prayers are answered by God Almighty who puts the companions into a deep sleep. In saying that they were prevented from hearing, there is a subtle indication that they were not dead. Nor were they intended to be awakened as we can always be awakened prematurely by noise during sleep.

'Allāmah Zamakhshāri refers to it as a veil or Ḥijāb that has been placed over their hearing preventing them from hearing just as a person in a deep sleep does not hear.²⁴ The companions were suspended in this state of deep sleep for many years. Further discussion on the duration of that period will come in verse 25.

By seeking refuge in the cave and being suspended in this way, God Almighty saved the companions from the oppression of the king. By God's grace, they outlived their king and were awakened in a time when believers were more plentiful and powerful.

After remaining in a deep sleep for a long period of time, God awakened them. According to grammar, it can be inferred from the conjunction *Thumma* ﴿ثُمَّ﴾, that a significant duration had passed in this state. Another conjunction *Fā* (فَ) indicates a shorter duration. While both can be translated to mean 'then', *Thumma* always signifies the longer duration.

Also, because their story is described in the Qurān as a wonderful sign and described by the Rabbis as amazing, we can appreciate that the duration of their sleep was the matter that made their story wondrous and amazing. It gives rise to speculation that their sleep had lasted even beyond a normal lifespan. Perhaps from one era to another.

Commentators differ on the significance of the *two parties* mentioned in the verse. Mujāhid indicates that it refers to people who came to the cave, some of whom were believers while others were not. Qutādah agrees while adding that neither actually knew the true duration of their sleep in that this knowledge was with God alone. Many commentators, however, believe that the two parties refers to two parties among the companions of the cave themselves, each party having its own estimation of their duration of sleep.²⁵

Finally, God Almighty affirms that their story is related with truth. Perhaps this phraseology is due to the fact that both Christians and Jews have their own versions of this same story with contradicting elements.

This Qurān is also known as al-Furqān (the Criterion). As Muslims, we believe that as the final divine revelation, the Qurān is the ultimate criterion by which previous divine books and faiths can be measured. The perseverance or deviation in faith of previous nations can also be deduced from this criterion as well. This verse also affirms that God Almighty blessed these companions with divine guidance due to their faith, struggle and perseverance in God's way.

With regard to this verse, Shaikh Mughniyyah relates the following tradition in his Tafsir:

"Before (the time of) the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), people have recorded the story of the people of the cave and it has been written in some books. The mention of the people of the cave had appeared in poetry. (The following being taken) from the verses of Lāmiyah Ibn Abi aṣ-Ṣallit:

وَلَيْسَ بِهَا إِلَّا الرَّقِيمُ مُجَاوِرًا وَصَيْدُهُمْ وَ الْقَوْمُ فِي الْكَهْفِ هَجَدَ

'There was nothing except Raqeem close by...

And their hunt. The people of the cave stayed awake at night (praying).'

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) asked a poet to recite for him this poetry of Ibn Abi as-Ṣallit. He (ﷺ) listened to it and said:

هَذَا رَجُلٌ آمَنَ لِسَانُهُ وَ كَفَرَ قَلْبُهُ

This is a man, his tongue has faith while his heart disbelieves."

With these words, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) affirmed the message in the poetry regarding the companions of the cave while denying the messenger himself. ²⁶

﴿وَرَبَطْنَا عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ إِذْ قَامُوا فَقَالُوا رَبُّنَا رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَن نَدْعُو مِن دُونِهَا لَقَدْ قُلْنَا إِذَا شَطَطًا﴾

"And We strengthened their hearts with patience, when they stood up and said: Our Lord is the Lord of the Heavens and the earth; we will by no means call upon any god besides Him, for then indeed we should have said an extravagant (extreme) thing."

[al-Kahf 18:14]

﴿هُؤُلَاءِ قَوْمُنَا اتَّخَذُوا مِن دُونِ آلِهَةٍ لَّوْلَا يَأْتُونَ عَلَيْهِم بِسُلْطَانٍ بَيِّنٍ ۖ فَمَن أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا﴾

"These our people have taken gods besides Him; why do they not produce any clear authority in their support? Who is then more unjust than he who forges a lie against Allah?" [al-Kahf 18:15]

﴿وَإِذِ اعْتَزَلْتُمُوهُمْ وَ مَا يَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَأْوُوا إِلَى الْكَهْفِ يَنْشُرْ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ مِن رَّحْمَتِهِ وَ يُهَيِّئْ لَكُمْ مِّنْ أَمْرِكُمْ مَّرْفَقًا﴾

"And when you forsake them and what they worship save Allah, betake yourselves for refuge to the cave; your Lord will extend to you largely of His mercy and provide for you a profitable course in your affair." [al-Kahf 18:16]

The faith of the companions of the cave and their fortitude eventually caused them to manifest their hidden faith and thereby manifest their opposition to their king. Their faith was such that they could no longer live hiding their faith among idol-worshipping people. God Almighty assisted them in strengthening their hearts with patience. Patience to bear the hardships which opposition to the king's faith was destined to produce. Patience to face even death for God's sake.

Due to the wording: ﴿إِذَا قَامُوا﴾ 'When they stood up,' many scholars believe it indicates that the companions of the cave openly manifested their faith in opposition to the king.

How, then, did they manifest their belief? In a portion of a lengthy narration from Imām 'Ali Ibn Abi Ṭālib (AS), he gives a detailed perspective on how the companions manifested their faith. His comments are in agreement with an opinion mentioned earlier from 'Allāmah Ṭibirsi who mentioned that they were special servants of the king.

"These were originally six people whom Diqiyānūs took as his ministers. Three stood on his right and three on his left. He adopted a holiday ('Eid) for them once in every year. Then, we clarified for them one day on a holiday while al-Baṭāriqah was on his right and Hirāqalah was on his left, he came to the road and was informed that the Persian armies had overcome them. Then, (Diqiyānūs) was saddened by that until the crown had fell from his head. One the three whom were on his right looked at him (said to be Tamleekha). He said to himself: If Diqiyānūs was a god and as he claimed, then he would not be saddened, worried, nor (unable to) relieve (himself), nor could he sleep. This is not the action of god.

Every day, these ministers would gather together among one of them. That day they were with Tamleekha. He prepared for them good food and then said to them: O brothers! Something has occurred in my heart preventing food, drink and sleep. They said: What is that O Tamleekha? My thinking has been engaged with the heavens. Then, I said: Who raised its ceiling (being) protected without support and without connection from above it. Who makes the sun and moon flow in (the heavens)? Two illuminating signs. Who embellished (the heavens) with stars?

Then my thinking became engaged in the earth: Who spread the earth brimming with water? Who restrained it with mountains that extend beyond everything? I engaged my thinking in my (own) soul. Who took me out as an embryo from the stomach of my mother? Who fed me? Who is my sustainer?

(My thinking is) That is there a Creator and manager other than Diqiyānūs the king? (I thought that) he is only a king among kings and a tyrant of the heavens. Then, the youths (the ministers) fell at his feet kissing them. They said: By you may God, the Exalted, guide us from misguidance toward proper guidance, then show it to us.

Then, Tamleekha jumped up and purchased dates for three thousand Dinar and shoved into his cloak and they rode their horses and left the city. When they traveled three miles, Tamleekha said to them: O brothers! Poverty of the hereafter has come and the king of the world has left. Descend from your horses and walk upon your feet, perhaps God will make for you from your affairs a relief and escape. They descended from their horses and walked seven Farāsikh in that day. Their feet were made to drip blood.

Here, a shepard faced them and they said: O shepard! Is there any milk or water (with you)? The shepard said: With me is whatever you like, but I see in your faces the faces of the kings. I believe you are only fleeing from Diqiyānūs the king. They said: O shepard! Do not make the lie lawful for us. Is the truth saved from you? Then, they informed him of their narrative. The shepard fell at their feet and kissed them saying: O people! Certainly what has occurred in my heart has occurred in your heart. Delay for me until I can return the sheep to their owner. The truth is with you.

They stopped before a single sheep. It drew closer with the dog trying to follow it. The ministers looked to the dog. Some of them said: Surely we fear it has exposed us by his barking. They abused him with stones. Then, God, Majestic is his mention, set the dog free (saying): Leave me that so that I may guard you from your enemies. Then, the shepard continued lightly with them until mountains rose above them. Then, he descended with them to the cave, it is said to be a threshold (Waseed). Suddenly, in the open space of the cave were clusters of fruit bearing trees. They ate from the fruits. While the night shielded them, they took refuge in the cave. The dog provided a look-out at the doorway of the cave and stretched out its paws before it. Then, God, the Exalted, revealed to the angel of death to take their souls (Then, God caused them to sleep, a long, deep sleep)." ²⁷

What the companions state are the fundamentals of Tauḥeed or the Unity of God as monotheist believe: My Lord alone is the Creator of the heavens and earth and, as such, is also the One Who manages heavenly and earthly affairs with authority and grace. Can one who recognizes His sovereignty over both the heavens and earth then turn to an idol or man in worship? Neither having neither the power to benefit us nor harm us aside from God, the Mighty and Majestic.

Shall we attribute God's power and mercy to that which is itself a creation of God. We can understand from the root of the word Lord or Rabb (رَبِّ) that its meaning encompasses not only God's attributes of master (المَالِكُ) but also the attribute of the Sustainer (الرَّزَاقُ) as well. Therefore, our Lord or *Rabb* is our Master and Sustainer. Can such attributes be associated with an idol or a man?

They declare openly that to say such a thing would be extreme, meaning an outrageous matter in faith. According to Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq (AS), he said (in relation to this verse): "*It means an injustice upon God if we say that He has a partner (Shareek).*" ²⁸

After stating the fundamentals of their faith, they bear witness that their people have taken up a false faith without sufficient authority in its support. What is the authority that the king's faith is based upon? His faith was based in ignorance and baseless superstitions of times past. These are not, however, innocent superstitions like believing in luck. Taking idols as partners with God Almighty, which are said to share in His power and grace, is tantamount to creating a lie against God Almighty, since these beliefs are devoid of any legitimate basis. Who, then, can be more unjust than he who forges a lie against God Almighty Himself when He is the Truth (al-Ḥaqq).

After giving the companions strength to manifest their faith and forsake their society, they are commanded to take refuge in the cave. Examining the verse from the perspective of 'Arabic, it should be noted that the word for cave is definite, as indicated by the Alif-Lām, as in: (الْكَهْفُ) *al-Kahf*, meaning: *the cave*, as opposed to: (كَهْفٌ) *Kahf*, meaning: *a cave*. According to grammar, words are definite when they refer to something designated or known. From this it can be speculated that perhaps the companions had taken refuge in the cave before as a place of prayer and meditation or became aware of its existence by other means, as the aforementioned narration from Imām 'Ali Ibn Abi Ṭālib (AS) indicated that the shepherd guided them to the cave.

As this verse is a conditional sentence (الْجُمْلَةُ الشَّرْطِيَّةُ), we can also examine it from another perspective of grammar as well. The two basic elements of the conditional sentence are the condition (الشَّرْطُ) itself and the requital (الْجَزَاءُ) of that condition. The condition being that when the companions forsake their people and that which they worship, turning away from them out of sincere devotion to God.

The requital is that upon fulfilling that condition, they should take refuge in the cave wherein they will attain God's mercy. There, they will be provided with a profitable way in their affairs. Literally, the word *Mirfaq* (مِرْفَقًا) is used for materials which bring comfort and ease.

Surely the companions faced danger in forsaking the king's faith, but in taking refuge in the cave, they had God Almighty's assurance that they would be saved and comforted in their place of refuge, out of God's mercy.

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

"And you might see the sun when it rose, decline from their cave towards the right and when it set, leave them behind on the left while they were in a wide space thereof. This is of the signs of Allah; whomsoever Allah guides, he is the rightly guided one, and whomsoever He causes to err, you shall not find for him any friend to lead (him) aright."

[al-Kahf 18:17]

﴿وَتَحْسَبُهُمْ أَيْقَاظًا وَهُمْ رُقُودٌ ط وَنُقَلِّبُهُمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَ ذَاتَ الشَّمَالِ ط وَ كَلْبُهُمْ بَاسِطٌ ذِرَاعَيْهِ بِالْوَصِيدِ ط لَوِ اطَّلَعْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَوَلَّيْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِرَارًا وَ لَمَلَّتَ مِنْهُمْ رُعبًا﴾

"And you might think them awake while they were asleep, and We turned them about to the right and to the left, while their dog (lay) outstretching its paws at the entrance; if you looked at them you would certainly turn back from them in flight, and you would certainly be filled with awe because of them." [al-Kahf 18:18]

The companions were apparently situated in the cave where they could observe the movement of the sun, at least partially. The sun, when it rose, ascended from their right. As it set, it moved away from their view and declined on their left. From these indications, it appears that they were facing northward. Shaikh Tūsi suggests that they were able to view the constellation Ursa Minor (بِنَاثُ النَّعْشِ) in which the north star is situated.²⁹ The north star is a pivotal celestial reference from which one's direction can easily be ascertained. As was the case with many ancient cultures, the knowledge of astronomy was prevalent allowing individuals to calculate calendars, travel upon the sea and land and maintain their bearings during the day or night.

In *Majma'*, 'Allāmah Ṭibirsi says of the sun's movement: *"And you might see the sun when it rose, decline from their cave towards the right,"* meaning to incline at the time of its rising away from the their cave to the right side. *'And when it set, leave them behind'* meaning it turned away from them and left them, *'On the left'* to the north of the cave, north of the cave, meaning it did not enter their cave. It is said ﴿تَفْرُضُهُمْ﴾ means to pass over them going away from them, according to Ibn 'Abbās. *'While they were in a wide space thereof.'* meaning in a spacious area of the cave. It is said to be a empty space in the cave, according to Qutādah. It is said it was a wide space entering into the cave whereas it could not be seen by one who was at its door giving them a fresh breath of the wind."

The companions of the cave were a sign of Allah's mercy and guidance having led them to safety from the oppressive and idol-worshipping king and guided them upon the path of salvation that led them to their destiny: the cave. With God Almighty's protection and mercy, the companions were placed on the path of one of the great spiritual odysseys of man.

Being rightly guided, we understand, is by the grace of God Almighty not solely due to man's quest for the truth. When God Almighty abandons man, he undoubtedly will enter into error and fall from the path of salvation. God's abandonment of man comes only after his heart has been darkened with sin and ingratitude towards God Almighty for all of His blessings and mercy. Man's abandonment is not a vengeful act by God Almighty, rather it is due to man's own negligence and lack of faith in his Creator. Without God Almighty's guidance, man cannot find salvation through other men, as no man can guide one whom God Almighty has left to err. Another verse of Qurān confirms this:

﴿وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ﴾

"And whom Allah makes err, he shall have no guide." [ar-Ra'd 13:33]

God Almighty caused them to turn from side to side, spending some time on their right side, then changing position to their left side. In the same source, Ibn 'Abbās says that their position changed from right to left once a year.³⁰ Others say the change of position occurred twice per year. Commentators explain that the reason for changing from one side to another was to prevent the destruction of the companions' bodies due to laying on one side for extended periods.

Commentators agree that the dog was situated at the doorway of the cave with its paws outstretched. The word *Waṣeed* means a threshold or open space leading into the entrance of the cave. 'Allāmah Ṭibirsi says in *Majma'* that this dog remained in this position for three-hundred and nine years without eating, drinking, sleeping or standing. The dog was said to be yellowish in color, spotted and named Qaṭmeer (قَطْمِير).

There are two narrations regarding this dog. One says that the dog belonged to one of the companions of the cave which they took with them as an indicator that they were leaving the town to go hunting. Another view is that the companions encountered a shepherd on the road after leaving the town and the dog itself chose to accompany the companions and abandoned the shepherd. In a tradition attributed to Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (AS), he says:

"These (companions) left with the ruse of hunting...they passed by a shepherd in their path. They summoned him to their affair. He did not respond to them. With the shepherd was a dog. Then, the dog responded to them and the dog departed with them." ³¹

In his Tafsir, al-Qummi presents another view which agrees with the majority of commentators, based on the opinion of Ibn 'Abbās. al-Qummi says: *"They (the companions of the cave) fled from their king at night. They came across a shepherd, with him was a dog. Then, (the shepherd) followed them in their faith and his dog followed him."*

As reported in a previously mentioned narration from Imām 'Ali Ibn Abi Ṭālib (AS), even the dog spoke to the companions:

"They stopped before a single sheep. It drew closer with the dog trying to follow it. The ministers looked to the dog. Some of them said: Surely we fear it has exposed us by his barking. They abused him with stones. Then, God, Majestic is his mention, set the dog free (saying): Leave me so that I may guard you from your enemies." (Cf. Footnote 27).

In *al-Amthal*, Shaikh Nāṣir Makārem makes the point that it should not appear unusual that an animal should serve in the way of God Almighty. He says: *"Does not the Qurān emphasize that all particles of existence in the earth and heavens and all trees and life bears God in mind. (The dog) loved Allah, its love being firmly established in its heart and the inner-most essence of its existence."* He also refers to the following verse:

﴿وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَ لَكِنْ لَا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ ط إِنَّهُمْ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا﴾

"And there is not a single thing but glorifies Him with His praise, but you do not understand their glorification; surely He is Forebearing, Forgiving." [Sūrah al-Isrā 17:44]

Next, the state of the companions of the cave were described, first saying that they appeared to be awake while they were, in fact, in a state of deep sleep. In *Majma'* 'Allāmah Ṭibirsi says al-Jubāi confers the view of many commentators that the meaning of this was that the companions were asleep with their eyes open and paused in their breathing as if they intended to speak, but they were unable to speak. In *at-Tibyān*, Shaikh Ṭūsi says it was also described that they would incite fear due to the fact that: *"their nails had grown long, likewise, their hair."* The sight of them in this state would have filled the observer's heart with fear causing them to flee from that scene.

Some commentators say that the placement of the dog at the doorway of the cave served to ward off wild animals as well as others who might happen upon this cave.

﴿وَكَذَلِكَ بَعَثْنَاهُمْ لِيَتَسَاءَلُوا بَيْنَهُمْ ط قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِنْهُمْ كَمْ لَبِثْتُمْ ط قَالُوا لَبِثْنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ ط قَالُوا رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثْتُمْ ط فَابْعَثُوا أَحَدَكُمْ بِوَرِقِكُمْ هَذِهِ إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ أَيُّهَا أَزْكَى طَعَامًا فَلْيَأْتِكُمْ بِرِزْقٍ مِنْهُ وَ لِيَتَلَطَّفَ وَ لَا يُشْعِرَنَّ بِكُمْ أَحَدًا﴾

"And thus did We rouse them that they might question each other. A speaker among them said: How long have you tarried? They said: We have tarried for a day or part of a day. (Others) said: Your Lord knows best how long you have tarried. Now send one of you with this silver (coin) of yours to the city, then let him see which of them has purest food, so let him bring you provision from it, and let him behave with gentleness, and by no means make your cave known to any one:" [al-Kahf 18:19]

﴿إِنَّهُمْ إِنْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ يَرْحُمُوكُمْ أَوْ يُعِيدُوكُمْ فِي مِلَّتِهِمْ وَلَنْ تُفْلِحُوا إِذًا أَبَدًا﴾

"For surely if they prevail against you they would stone you to death or force you back to their religion, and then you will never succeed." [al-Kahf 18:20]

According to Shaikh Ṭūsi in *at-Tibyān*, the beginning of this verse means: *"As We have preserved their state in this period, We raised them from that sleep because of one of two matters, like the other, is that only Allah, the Exalted, is capable of that. Allah clarifies that He awakened the people of the cave after their long sleep and far-fetched slumber in order that some would ask others about the duration of their situation. Then, they were awakened upon being cognizant of their maker, if they were disbelievers. If they were believers, they established an increase over that which was with them and they added their certainty to the (companion's) certainty."*

Then, Almighty informed them that a speaker among them said to the remaining (people): How long have you tarried? Seeking to understand (something) from them."

"They said in its response: We tarried a day or part of a day. They only answered with that without knowing its correctness, because information such as this is based upon a predominant assumption and, based on that, the question had occurred. The ones sleeping did not know and did not investigate the duration of their sleep except based on a predominate assumption. It is said that when they went to sleep, the sun was rising and when they were awakened, the sun was nearing sunset. Then, due to that they said: a day or part of a day. It is also said: the information that they said: we tarried a day or part of a day does not negate that they tarried a lengthy duration because it appeared to them as a short (duration)... Then, they said: 'Your Lord knows best how long you have tarried.'"

In the same Tafsir, Ibn 'Abbās says that this was the comment of their leader, Tamleekha. Then, one of the companions was sent with coins to purchase food in the town.

In *al-Kāshif*, Shaikh Mughniyyah mentions the following regarding the term ﴿بُورِقِكُمْ﴾:

"The intent of al-Wariq (الورق) are stamped coins (Darāhim). They had the picture of the king upon them who was in their time. It is said: His name is Diqiyānūs and the name of the town was Ṭarsūs... They were awakened, then felt hunger after that long period. They selected one among them for purchasing tasty food. They advised him (to proceed) with alertness and caution unless someone may come to know of their place. Then, they would kill them or torture them due to their faith."

Regarding the portion of the verse which says that one person was selected to go to the town and purchase food, the term used: ﴿أَزْكَىٰ طَعَامًا﴾ 'purest food' has a few interpretations. The view most often mentioned is that the companions did not want to eat food which had been slaughtered in the name of the idols which the people of the town worshipped. A minority view is that they wanted to purchase the best dates, as they viewed it as the purest food. This view could also be plausible if the companions viewed all the meat available as all being unpure due to being slaughtered in the name of idols.

The person who was to sent to the town was also warned that he should be subtle so as to not reveal anything about himself and, more importantly, he should not reveal anything about the remaining companions. Particularly, that the location of this cave should not become know to anyone in the town.

The fear of the companions was that should they be discovered they could face the possibility of being killed by stoning, which was the worst punishment assigned to people who were disloyal to the faith of the king. Or they faced the possibility of being forced to accept the faith from which they originally fled.

According to a tradition from Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (AS), he explains the companion's encounter in the town:

"One of them said: Take these coins and enter the city incognito they not being aware you. Then purchase some food for us. If they know of us and recognized us they will kill us or return us to their faith. "

"That man came, then he saw a city different than that which was in their era. He saw a people different than those. He didn't recognize them and they did not recognize his language and he did not recognize their language."

"They said to him: Who are you and from where did you come? He informed them. Then, the king of that city emerged with his companions along with the man until they stood at the door of the cave. They approached it and examined it... No one went forward entering upon them other than their companion. When he entered upon them he found them in fear (thinking) that the companions of Diqiyānūs was aware of them. Their companion informed them that they had been sleeping during this long time and that this was a sign for people. (The companions) cried and asked Allah, the Exalted, that He return them to their place of sleep, asleep as they had been. Then, the king said: It is necessary that we build a place a worship here and its rest place. Surely these are a believing people. " ³²

﴿وَكَذَلِكَ أَعْرَضْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَأَنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا إِذِ يَتَنَازَعُونَ
بَيْنَهُمْ أَمْرَهُمْ فَقَالُوا ابْنُوا عَلَيْهِمْ بُيُوتًا ط رَبُّهُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِهِمْ ط قَالَ الَّذِينَ غَلَبُوا عَلَىٰ أَمْرِهِمْ
لَنَنْتَحِذَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ مَسْجِدًا﴾

"And thus did We make (men) to get knowledge of them, that they might know that Allah's promise is true and that as for the hour there is no doubt about it. When they disputed among themselves about their affair and said: Erect and edifice over them-their Lord best knows them. Those who prevailed in their affair said: We will certainly raise a Masjid over them." [al-Kahf 18:21]

In *Majma'*, 'Allāmah Ṭibirsi narrates a slightly different version of the story explaining how the companions' cave was discovered:

"Summarizing what commentators have said regarding their affair and their state is that they (the companions of the cave) fled from their king (Dīqiyānūs) and secreted themselves in a cave. The king ordered that the entrance of the cave be sealed and cursed them as they were sealed in the cave that they would die there out of thirst and hunger. And that the cave that they selected would become a grave for them... Two believing men wrote the affair of the youth, their lineage, their names and their story on a slate of lead. They put it in a box of copper and put the box in the edifice at the entrance of the cave. They said: Perhaps Allah will make these youth apparent to a believing people before the day of judgement in order that they may know their story when they read this narrative."

"Then the people of this age died out and many kings succeeded one another for generations. Then, there was a king of this particular land (who was) a righteous man. He is said (to be named) Nadlees (or) Bandūsees according to Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq. The people of his kingdom had divided into numerous parties some of whom believed in Allah and knew that the last hour is true. And some who lied and denied that to the king."

"The king humbled himself and cried to God: My Lord! Certainly You see the differences of these people. Show them a sign that will clarify for them that the resurrection is true and that the hour is true. A sign that there can be no doubt in. God put some inspiration in the soul of a man from the people of this village in which the cave resides that he should tear down the edifice at the mouth of the cave. Then, he should build a fence for his prize. He did as such. Then, God raised the youth from their sleep. One of them sent for some food and people were able to realize their affair. They went to the king and informed him of the news in order to expedite his arrival before them."

"When the news reached the king, he praised God and his village rode with him until they reached the cave. Due to that is His saying:"

"When they disputed among themselves,' the dispute was about resurrection. Some rejected it, some said it was only the soul not the body. Others believed while some added other matters of their own to the concept."

"Other commenters say that the dispute is about the duration the companion of the cave had passed and their number and what happened to them after people had discovered them. That is that when the king had come upon them with his villagers they gathered and questioned them and they (the companions) died."

"The king and his followers differed in what they saw. Some said let's build an edifice just as was there, meaning as a grave. Others said let's build a Masjid at the mouth of the cave. This dispute came after knowledge of their death, according to Ibn 'Abbās. Some say that the idol worshippers of that time wanted to build an edifice to hide them from people (because it was a sign of God)."

"Those who prevailed in their affair...' is a reference to the believing king and his companions because they built a place of worship whereby people could know of these signs and get the blessing of praying at this sacred place."

"There are traditions which say that the companions of the cave prayed to God to return them to their previous state and God granted them their request."

﴿سَيَقُولُونَ ثَلَاثَةً رَابِعُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ ۚ وَيَقُولُونَ خَمْسَةً سَادِسُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ رَجْمًا بِالْغَيْبِ ۚ وَيَقُولُونَ سَبْعَةً وَثَامْنُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ ۚ قُلْ رَبِّي أَعْلَمُ بِعَدَّتِهِمْ مَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ ۗ فَلَا تُمَارِ فِيهِمْ إِلَّا مِرَاءً ظَاهِرًا ۚ وَلَا تَسْتَفْتِ فِيهِمْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا﴾

"(Some) say: (They are) three, the fourth of them being their dog; and (others) say: Five, the sixth of them being their dog, making conjectures at what is unknown; and (others) say: Seven, and the eighth of them is their dog. Say: My Lord best knows their number, none knows them but a few; therefore contend not in the matter of them but with an outward contention, and do not question concerning them any of them." [al-Kahf 18:22]

Over the centuries since this event, there has been continuing speculation regarding the number of the companions who slept in the cave. Some scholars and commentators indicate that this verse holds the answer itself. One such opinion is that of 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabāi (and others) who said in *al-Mizān*: "Regarding: ﴿رَجْمًا بِالْغَيْبِ﴾, (meaning, 'Making conjectures at what is unknown'), it is a description of the two sayings (i.e. three and five persons) that they are sayings without knowledge." In the same source, Qutādah also says its meaning is: "It is an accusation of assumption."

After mentioning the possible numbers, meaning three, five and seven, God Almighty cautions the prophet that he should say: "My Lord best knows their number, none knows them but a few" Shaikh Ṭūsī has narrated a report from one of the Tabi'een and great commentators of Qurān, Ibn 'Abbās, who says: "I am among the few who knows of that: there were seven and the eighth was their dog."

This is the consensus among Muslim scholars and commentators based on reports from the prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) who was given information from Jibrāeel (AS), according to Shaikh Ṭūsi and others.

Qutādah has said: *"It is said that this information is from Allah, the Exalted, in that there would be a controversy in their number. Then, that (controversy) occurred when Christians arrived before the prophet (ﷺ), mention of the companions of the cave came forth. The Ya'cobites among them said: They were three, the fourth was their dog. The Nestorians said: They were five, the sixth of them was their dog. The Muslims said: They were seven, the eighth of them was their dog. 'Say: (O Muḥammad!) (My Lord best knows their number, none knows them but a few,' (among people.)"*³³

Imām 'Ali Ibn Abi Ṭālib (AS) has also confirmed that the number seven is correct, even providing their names:

"Surely they were seven and the eighth of them was the dog. Their names were: Tamleekha, Maksheela and Mashleena. These were the companions of the right of the king. Marnūsh, Dabranūsh and Sādeenūsh, the companions on the left. (The king) would seek counsel from them. The seventh was the shepard who agreed with them. The name of his dog was Qatmeer and the name of their city was Afsūs." Ibn 'Abbās has also narrated the same except that he gave the name of the shepard as *Kashyūteenūs*.³⁴

There is a very interesting discussion on this verse by scholars of 'Arabic grammar. The discussion revolves around the meaning of the conjunction *Wāw* (و) in the verse. It generally it means: *And*. The verse reflects three sayings regarding the number of companions and their dog, meaning three, their dog being the fourth; five, their dog being the fifth and seven, their dog being the eighth. In the first two sayings, meaning between three and five, there is no separation with the conjunction *Wāw*, while this conjunction does separate the second from the third saying.

Some scholars of grammar indicate that there is rule of grammar which explains this. It is the rule of *Wāw ath-Thamaniyyah*, meaning the *Wāw* of the number eight. What it implies is that the 'Arabs consider the number seven to be a complete number much in the same manner that we in the west consider the number ten to be a complete number. In grammar, it implies that seven things can be listed, but the eighth requires separation with the conjunction *Wāw*, *the Wāw ath-Thamaniyyah*. In the Tafsir of al-Qurtūbi and ar-Rāzi, two verses of Qurān are given as proof of this concept:³⁵

﴿التَّائِبُونَ الْعَابِدُونَ الْحَامِدُونَ السَّائِحُونَ الرَّاكِعُونَ السَّاجِدُونَ الْآمِرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَالتَّاهُونَ
عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَ الْحَافِظُونَ لِحُدُودِ اللَّهِ...﴾

"They who turn (to Allah), who serve (Him), who praise (Him), who fast, who bow down, who prostrate themselves, who enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, and who keep the limits of Allah..." [at-Taubah 9:112]

In this verse, the qualities of a believer are enumerated. Seven are mentioned without any conjunction separating them, meaning: *"They who turn (to Allah), who serve (Him), who praise (Him), who fast, who bow down, who prostrate themselves, who enjoin what is good."* The eighth attribute, namely: *"and forbid what is evil,"* is separated from the seventh with the conjunction *Wāw ath-Thamaniyyah*. Another verse also displays this same pattern:

﴿عَسَىٰ رَبُّهُ إِنْ طَلَّقَنَّ أَنْ يُبَدِّلَهُ أَزْوَاجًا خَيْرًا مِنْكَنَّ مُسْلِمَاتٍ مُؤْمِنَاتٍ قَانِتَاتٍ تَائِبَاتٍ
عَابِدَاتٍ سَائِحَاتٍ ثَيِّبَاتٍ وَأَبْكَارًا﴾

"Maybe, his Lord, if he divorces you, will give him in your place wives better than you, submissive, faithful, obedient, penitent, adorers, fasters, widows and virgins."
[at-Taḥreem 66:5]

In this Sūrah, the prophet Muḥammad is advised about his domestic situation regarding his wives. In this verse, the wives are advised that God Almighty could easily replace any wife that he (ﷻ) chose to divorce with a better wife. Then, the qualities of those better wives were enumerated. Again, the first seven attributes were mentioned without any conjunction, while the last attribute, also being the eighth mentioned, is separated from the seventh with the *Wāw ath-Thamaniyyah*.

In *at-Tibyān*, Shaikh Ṭūsi mentions the opinion of al-Balkhi who narrates on behalf of other scholars: *"The obligatory in reckoning (something) is counting: one, two, three, four, then when you reach seven you say: and eight."*

In the end, there is a warning not to contend among yourselves regarding these companions except outwardly. According to Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid and Qutādah it means that one should not contend or argue regarding their number with the Ahl al-Kitāb (meaning Christians and Jews) and do not ask an opinion of them from their perspective, according to Shaikh Ṭūsī in *at-Tibyān*.

﴿وَلَا تَقُولَنَّ لِشَآئٍ إِنِّي فَاعِلٌ ذَٰلِكَ غَدًا﴾

"And do not say of anything: Surely I will do it tomorrow," [al-Kahf 18:23]

﴿إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ نَزِ وَأَذْكُرُ رَبِّي إِذْ نَسِيتَ وَقُلْ عَسَى أَنْ يَهْدِيَنِّي رَبِّي لِأَقْرَبَ مِنْ هَٰذَا رَشَدًا﴾

"Unless Allah pleases; and remember your Lord when you forget and say: Maybe my Lord will guide me to a nearer course to the right than this." [al-Kahf 18:24]

In the beginning of this document, the background history of this Sūrah mentions that after the prophet (ﷺ) was asked questions given to the Quraish by Jewish leaders, The prophet (ﷺ) promised that he would answer the next day. Then, Jibrāeel did not come with any revelation for a period as long as forty days, much to the dismay of the prophet (ﷺ). This is referenced in a tradition of Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (AS) on the authority of his forefather 'Ali Ibn Abi Ṭālib (AS):

"When a person swears by Allah, then he has praise for it up to forty days. That is that a people of the Jews asked the prophet about something and he said: Come to me tomorrow and (nothing) will be excluded so that I will inform you. Then, Jibrāeel (AS) was restrained (from revelation) for forty days, then he came to him. Jibrāil (AS) said: 'And do not say of anything: Surely I will do it tomorrow, unless Allah pleases; and remember your Lord when you forget ...'" ³⁶

Another narration on the authority Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir (AS) explains the last portion of the verse:

"He said: Allah said: 'And do not say of anything: Surely I will do it tomorrow, unless Allah pleases...' Then, the will of Allah is to be preceded in that I cannot do it and I am not capable of doing it. Then, due to that, Allah said: 'And remember your Lord when you forget...' in other words, make an exception for the volition of Allah in your actions." ³⁷

In *at-Tibyān*, Shaikh Ṭūsi says that it means: "Allah, the Exalted, prohibited his prophet from saying: *Surely I will do something tomorrow, except that his saying should be restricted with the volition of Allah. Then, he says: If Allah wills. It is because it does not make safe his destruction (without saying such), then his information will be a lie. When he restricts his saying with: If Allah pleases, then he does not do it, he will not be a liar. The intent of the speaker is everyone obliged (by an oath, for example). When someone informs one to be given information about his opinion and his determination that he will do something afterward, then he does not do it, he will not become a liar because he informed him of his opinion and he was truthful in it.*"

Some commentators indicate that when we forget to link our statements to God Almighty's will, particularly in oaths and promises, it can also be added after the fact, as indicated in the following narration from Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (AS):

"Except after forty days. Then, for the servant is the exception in an oath between forty days when forgotten." ³⁸ According Ibn 'Abbās, its meaning is more general than forty days, he said: *"Although it be a day, a month or a year."* ³⁹

Scholars agree that these narrations are generally related to oaths which invoke the name of God Almighty, like: (وَ اللّٰهُ، تَاللّٰهِ), meaning: *By God*. Similarly, expressions of resoluteness, certainty and promises are also covered in the meaning of this verse. Often such expressions are begun with *the Particles of Emphasis*, (أَعْرَفُ التَّأْكِيدِ), like: (إِنَّ، أِنَّ، كَأَنَّ، لَ)، generally translated as: *certainly or surely*, even though the name of God may not be invoked. Often, this meaning of emphasis remains untranslated in English.

Indeed, while man has his own will or volition, we are reminded to always bear in mind that it is God Almighty's will which has precedence over all other matters. By virtue of God's will we can accomplish whatever we desire to accomplish and perform whatever we intend to perform. In saying: *In Shā-llah*, we acknowledge God Almighty's omnipotence and dominion over all matters.

﴿وَلَبِثُوا فِي كَهْفِهِمْ ثَلَاثَ مِائَةٍ سِنِينَ وَازْدَادُوا تِسْعًا﴾

"And they remained in their cave three hundred years and (some) add (another) nine."
[al-Kahf 18:25]

Historically, the Christians have said that the companions of the cave remained in their deep sleep for three-hundred years while Muslims, of course, take that which is mentioned here as the correct number. In reality, the information in this verse offers no point of contention with the view of the Christians, as Shaikh Nāṣir Makārem explains in his Tafsir, *al-Amthal*:

"In accordance with the verse, then surely the sum of their sleep and remaining in the cave is 309 years. Some believe that the mention of 309 is a detail substituting for its mention in one sentence. It returns to the difference between the solar year and the lunar year whereas they slept for 300 solar years and in lunar (years, it being) equivalent to 309 years." ⁴⁰

Certainly, this difference between the solar and lunar calendars can account for the phraseology of the verse when it says: *"and (some) add (another) nine."* In the solar calendar, the year is longer than the lunar year. The former is 365 days while the latter is 354 days. When you multiply the numbers of days in the solar calendar by 300 it is equivalent to 109,500 days. When that number is divided by the number of days in the lunar calendar, the number of years is 309.32 or 309 years, one month and two days (without the consideration of leap years).

﴿قَالَ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثُوا ۚ لَهُ غَيْبُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ وَ أَبْصَرُ بِهِ ۖ وَ أَسْمِعُ ۖ مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ ۚ وَ لَا يُشْرِكُ فِي حُكْمِهِ أَحَدًا﴾

"Say: Allah knows best how long they remained; to Him are (known) the unseen things of the heavens and the earth; how clear His sight and how clear His hearing! There is none to be a guardian for them besides Him, and He does not make any one His associate in His judgement." [al-Kahf 18:26]

As God Almighty is the knower of whatever is seen and unseen, nothing can escape his knowledge as He is '*Aleem* (العَلِيمُ) or *All-Knowing*, meaning His knowledge encompasses all things.

The unseen or *Ghaib* (الغَيْبُ) is that which is unperceivable to mankind through his sense of sight and hearing. Whereas God Almighty, being able to perceive all that happens in the heavens and earth is the most capable of being totally aware of their situation. None can know better than He nor can any one be a better guardian over their affairs than He.

Therefore, when all things, seen and unseen are encompassed in God Almighty's knowledge Who can know better how long the companions remained asleep in their cave than He. As God Almighty Himself has described the depth of His knowledge and awareness:

﴿وَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ ۖ وَ مَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا ۖ وَ لَا حَبَّةٌ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْأَرْضِ وَ لَا رَطْبٍ وَ لَا يَابِسٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ﴾

"...And He knows what is in the land and the sea; and there falls not a leaf but He knows it, nor a grain in the darkness of the earth, nor anything green nor dry but (it is all) in a clear book." [al-An'ām 6:59]

In *at-Tibyān*, Shaikh Tūsi interprets it as meaning: *"In other words there is not for creation, and it is said that it (also here) refers to the people of the cave, meaning there is not for them, besides Allah, any guardian nor helper. He, meaning Allah, does not share with anyone in His rule in that which He informs (people) of the unseen."*

﴿وَأْتْلُ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ كِتَابِ رَبِّكَ ۚ لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ ۚ وَنَسَىٰ ۚ وَ لَنْ تَجِدَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مُلْتَحَدًا﴾

"And recite what has been revealed to you of the Book of your Lord; there is none who can alter His words; and you shall not find any refuge besides Him." [al-Kahf 18:27]

In *Majma'*, 'Allāmah Ṭibirsi suggests this verse is directed at the prophet who is commanded: *"And recite what has been revealed to you of the Book of your Lord,"* meaning: *recite to them the news of the companions of the cave and other than them, for surely it is the truth. It is said its meaning is: follow the Qurān and act according to it and do not alter its words. In other words there is no alteration in that which Allah has informed you of in it nor that which He has commanded you. According to this the estimation is: do not alter the ruling of His words."*

"And you shall not find any refuge besides Him.' Its meaning is if you don't follow the Qurān, you will not find, besides Allah, any refuge, according to Mujāhid. (It is said to mean:) no place of retreat, according to Ibn 'Abbās (or) no refuge, according to Qutādah. (It is said to mean) no one to rectify nor any place of retreat, according to az-Zajāj and Ibn Muslim."

Shaikh Nāṣir Makārem's interpretation, in *al-Amthal*, is: *"Don't strip important verses (down to that of) other sayings mixed with lies, superstitions and coinage. It is obligatory that your dependence in these matters be upon divine revelation only, because nothing is found to be able to alter His, the Exalted's, words. The word of Allah and His knowledge, then is not from the (same) root as the knowledge of man which (man) daily submits to alteration and substitution due to reasons of new discoveries and new realizations. Due to that, it is not possible to depend upon it and rely upon it one hundred per-cent. "*

"Due to these reasons: 'You shall not find any refuge besides Him.' ﴿مُلْتَحَدًا﴾ is derived from (لَحَدٌ) on the same pattern as (مَهْدٌ). It is a hole whose side inclines toward one of the sides (it is the same hole used for the grave of man). Due to this reason, it is said of the place which man inclines towards is Multahad. Then, it was used after that in the meaning of (مَلْجَأٌ), a place of refuge."

"It is important to notice that these last two verses clarify the comprehensiveness of the knowledge of the Creator, the Sublime and Lofty, of all created existence and that is through a number of paths. In accordance to which follows: At first, the verse clarifies that the unseen (matters) of the heaven and earth are with Him. Due to this, He the Exalted, encompasses all (the unseen in His knowledge)."

With this verse, the discussion of the companions of the cave is concluded.

﴿ وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ ۚ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرْطًا ۙ ﴾

"And withhold yourself with those who call on their Lord morning and evening desiring His goodwill, and let not your eyes pass from them, desiring the beauties of this world's life; and do not follow him whose heart We have made unmindful to Our remembrance, and he follows his low desires and his case is one in which due bounds are exceeded."

[al-Kahf 18:28]

In *al-Amthal*, Shaikh Nāṣir Makārem says regarding the revelation of this verse: "Commentators have related the reason for the revelation of the first verse in this portion of the blessed *Sūrah al-Kahf*: 'And withhold yourself with those who call on...' is that a group of the noblemen of the Quraish and of (those) close to their hearts came to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and said to him: O Messenger of Allah! You sit in the center of the (group) sitting. Move these (people) away from us and the smell of their armpits. (Upon them were garments of wool). We will sit with you and take (advice) from you because nothing prevents us from entering upon you except these (individuals)."

These noblemen of the Quraish and those close to their hearts intended by their words the oppressed ones and the poor among the companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) like *Salmān al-Farsi*, *Abū Zharr al-Ghaffari*, *Ṣuhaib*, *'Ammār Ibn Yāsir*, *Khabāb* and others among he who was of their kind. Then, these were of those who were connected to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and of those who were close to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

Due to that, the noblemen made it conditional on the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) that he dismiss the likes of these poor persons from his (group) sitting (with him) and they described them, just as we recited a little before, with various descriptions."

Here, then, the blessed verse descended upon the Messenger (ﷺ): 'And withhold yourself with those who call on their Lord morning and evening desiring ...' When the verse descended, the prophet (ﷺ) stood and made a request of them and he took them to the rear of the Masjid reciting remembrance Allah, the Mighty and Majestic. Then, he (ﷺ) said: The praise is only for Allah Who did not try me until he had commanded me that I should withhold myself with the men of my Ummah (nation). With you is my life and with you is my death, the barefooted, the most pure."

The Shaikh goes on to say: *"Of the lessons which we gain benefit from in the narrative of the companions of the cave is that the standard of judging the value of a person is not by apparent rank or wealth. Rather, whenever one travels upon the path of Allah, he is similar to the ministers (of the king) or the shepard. The verse which we are studying emphasizes this important reality. This command came to the Messenger (ﷺ): 'And withhold yourself with those who call on their Lord morning and evening desiring His goodwill.' It made apparent the pressure of the arrogant enemies and the idol-worshippers until the group of believing poor would move away from them. Due to that, the divine command came for patience and opposition facing this growing pressure and that he must not surrender to it."*

In describing the Messenger's companions as being of those who call upon their Lord morning and evening, Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq and his father, blessings and peace be upon them both, said: *"It is only in taking care of prayer."*⁴¹ Meaning they call upon their Lord morning and evening due to paying attention to their prayers. Shaikh Ṭūsī, in *at-Tibyān*, says that they do this in order that they glorify Allah and seek closeness to him without (performing) eye-service and (seeking) reputation.

The Messenger of Allah was commanded not to turn away from these righteous and loyal companions: *"And let not your eyes pass from them, desiring the beauties of this world's life; and do not follow him whose heart We have made unmindful to Our remembrance,"* al-Qummi (and others) say that this verse was revealed regarding 'Uyainah Ibn Ḥaṣeen: *"This verse was revealed about Salmān al-Farsi who had a cloak, in it was his food. It was his blanket and (outer) garment. It was a cloak of wool. 'Uyainah Ibn Ḥaṣeen came upon the prophet (ﷺ) while Salmān was with him. 'Uyainah was bothered by the odor of the cloak of Salmān. He had sweated in it and it was a intensely hot day and he had sweated in the cloak."*

"He ('Uyainah) said: O Messenger of Allah! When we enter upon you, then remove this (person) and make him leave from you. Then, when we leave, then you can enter whomever you desire. Then, Allah revealed: "And do not follow him whose heart We have made unmindful to Our remembrance" It is (revealed about) 'Uyainah Ibn Ḥaseen Ibn Huzhaifah Ibn Badr al-Fazāri." ⁴²

There are many versions of this same narration. In *al-Amthal*, Shaikh Nāṣir Makārem says: "The real believers were the poor. Their hearts were filled with love of Allah. They remembered Him continuously and strived for Him. Opposite (of them) were the arrogant, wealthy (who were) negligent in the remembrance of Allah. (As well) as those who followed only their desires and they had emerged from within the limits of moderation in all of their affairs (they were) immoderate and extravagant."

﴿وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۖ فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ ۚ إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ نَارًا أَحَاطَ بِهِمْ سُرَادِقُهَا ۗ وَإِنْ يَسْتَعِينُوا يُوَسَّوْا بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ ۗ كَالْمُهْلِ يَشْوِي الْوُجُوهَ ۗ بِئْسَ الشَّرَابُ ۗ وَسَاءَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا﴾

"And say: The truth is from your Lord, so let him who please believe, and let him who please disbelieve; surely We have prepared for the iniquitous a fire, the curtains of which shall encompass them about; and if they cry for water, they shall be given water like molten brass which will scald their faces; evil drink and ill the resting place."

[al-Kahf 18:29]

In *at-Tibyān*, Shaikh Ṭūsi explains this verse's meaning as such: "Then, Allah commanded his prophet (ﷺ) that he say to those who came to you: It is truth from your Lord Who created you - 'So let him who please believe, and let him who please disbelieve.' Its form is the form of a command and the intent in it is a threat. It is emphatic in threatening in that it was commanded in that (matter) which obliges its disdain (meaning disbelief). Then (Allah) informs that He has prepared the hellfire for the unjust sinners (the fire's) curtain surrounding them. The curtain ﴿سُرَادِقُهَا﴾ is (a type of) surrounding of that which is transferred (in meaning) with it. The origin of *Surādiq* is the *Fisṭāṭ* or a tent or pavilion (usually composed of animal-hair). According to Ibn 'Abbās, the curtain is a wall of fire surrounding them. It is (also) said that it is the (the fire's) smoke before they are placed in the fire."

*"If (those placed in the fire) seek help, meaning they seek help and salvation, and they seek water, due to the severity of that which is embodied in the punishment, they will be given the help of water like Mahl. Mahl is something melted until it is liquified, like brass, lead, gold and iron and other than that, in the saying of Ibn Mas'ūd. Mujāhid said it is puss and blood. Ibn 'Abbās said it is the sediment of oil. Sa'eed Ibn Jubair said it is something its heat has reached its climax - **which will scald their faces**, in other words, burn (their faces) from the intensity of its heat when it comes near the face. Then, the Exalted, informs us that it is an **evil drink**, meaning that molten drink, **and ill the resting place.**"*

In *Majma'*, 'Allāmah Ṭibirsi interprets the meaning of truth as: *"This truth is from your Lord, meaning the Qurān. az-Zajāj says it means the truth which comes to you (O Muḥammad!) is from your Lord, meaning when it comes before yourself, it only comes from Allah. It is also said its meaning is: The proof is made apparent, the truth is made evident from your Lord and the uncertainty is removed."*

Regarding those referred to as iniquitous or unjust ﴿الظَالِمِينَ﴾, there is a tradition from Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (AS) in Tafsir al-'Ayyāshi clarifying the types of injustice: *"Injustice is of three types: an injustice Allah does not forgive; an injustice Allah forgives and an injustice He does not omit. As for the injustice Allah does not forgive, it is polytheism (Shirk); as for the injustice Allah forgives, it is the injustice of the man of his (own) soul and as for the injustice which He does not omit, it is the sin between servants."*

In the same source, another tradition is also mentioned from the same Imām: *"Jibrāeel descended with this verse as such to Muḥammad: 'Say: **the truth is from your Lord, so let him who please believe, and let him who please disbelieve.**' Surely We have prepared a fire for the unjust toward the family of Muḥammad (regarding) their rights."* ⁴³

Shaikh Mughniyyah interprets this verse as emphasizing verse twenty-eight, also saying that it is similar to a verse in Sūrah ad-Dahr [76:3]:

﴿إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا أَوْ إِمَّا كَفُورًا﴾

'Surely We have shown him the way: he may be thankful or unthankful.'

Shaikh Mughniyyah says: *"This verse indicates man has free-will (مُخَيَّرٌ) and is not controlled (مُسَيَّرٌ). ar-Rāzi refutes whoever seeks to indicate with (this verse) that the will of man is not of his (own) making but of the making of Allah. Based on (that view), then man is controlled not (possessing his own) free-will."*

"We say in reply: the volition of man is a product of circumstances and inciting causes. For example, a man sees a beautiful woman and his soul is inclined toward her. Faith requires in a situation similar to this that he reign in his desire and that he not rush quickly behind her. There is no doubt that this is within his capability. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) has designated it as the Greater Jihād (الجهاد الأكبر)... He (ﷺ) said: 'It is the Jihād of the soul. Certainly, the most virtuous Jihād is from he who struggles with his (own) soul which is between his sides.'"

Shaikh Nāṣir Makārem also agrees that this verse is connected with and emphasizes the verse preceding it.

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ إِنَّا لَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ عَمَلًا﴾

"Surely (as for) those who believe and do good, We do not waste the reward of him who does a good work." [al-Kahf 18:30]

﴿أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ عَدْنٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَ يَلْبَسُونَ ثِيَابًا خُضْرًا مِنْ سُندُسٍ وَ اسْتَبْرَقٍ مُتَّكِنِينَ فِيهَا عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ ط نِعْمَ الثَّوَابُ ط وَ حَسُنَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا﴾

"These it is for whom are gardens of perpetuity beneath which rivers flow; ornaments shall be given to them therein of bracelets of gold, and they shall wear green robes of fine silk and thick silk brocade interwoven with gold, reclining therein on raised couches; excellent the recompense and goodly the resting place." [al-Kahf 18:31]

'Allāmah Ṭibirsi gives the following interpretation of these two verses in *Majma'*: "When advancing the promise of their punishment, Glorified is He, with the mention of the promise: Surely (as for) those who believe and do good (out of obedience) We do not waste the reward of him who does a good work, in other words, We do not abandon their work (having you) to take it as a loss. Rather, We will compensate them and fulfill their reward without any diminishment. These it is for whom are gardens of perpetuity, in other words, a resurrection for them because they will remain therein along with Allah's remaining, permanently, forever.

"It is said of (عَدْنٍ) it is the belly of paradise, meaning at its center. It is one of the gardens of paradise, according to Ibn Mas'ūd. Based on that, then it is only a sum of its spaciousness because every corner of it is proper that it be (described) as paradise."

"Beneath which rivers flow, because they are in chambers in the garden, as it is said: They are in the chambers of the believers. It is said that the river of paradise flows in a furrow from the earth. Due to that, He said: *beneath which rivers flow. Ornaments shall be given to them therein of bracelets of gold*, in other words, meaning there will be made for them in paradise bracelets of jewelry. It is said that each one will be dressed with jewelry of three kinds of bracelets: a bracelet of silver; a bracelet of gold and a bracelet of pearls and rubies, according to Sa'eed Ibn Jubair. *They shall wear green robes of fine silk and thick silk brocade interwoven with gold*, in other words, composed of silk, sheer and thick. It is said that the brocade ﴿إِسْتَبْرَقٌ﴾ is arabicized from Persian, its origin is (إِسْتَبْرَقٌ). It is said it is a brocade interwoven with gold."

"Reclining therein on raised couches, in other words, enjoying these gardens upon beds under canopies. It is only said to be ﴿مَتَكِينٌ﴾ because because (its root اِتَّكأَ) implies that it is enjoyed in safety and comfort because man does not recline except in the state of safety and peace."

"Excellent the recompense, meaning how excellent is their reward and greatness, according to Ibn 'Abbās, and goodly (the couches are as) the resting place, in other words a place of resting. It is said to be a house, a place of sitting and gathering."

﴿وَأَضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلًا رَجُلَيْنِ جَعَلْنَا لِأَحَدِهِمَا جَنَّتَيْنِ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَحَفَفْنَاهُمَا بِنَخْلٍ وَجَعَلْنَا
بَيْنَهُمَا زُرْعًا﴾

"And set forth to them a parable of two men, for one of them We made two gardens of grape vines, and We surrounded them both with palms, and in the midst of them We made cornfields." [al-Kahf 18:32]

﴿كَلَّتَا الْجَنَّتَيْنِ آتَتْ أُكُلَهَا وَلَمْ تَظْلِمْ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا وَفَجَّرْنَا خِلَالَهُمَا نَهْرًا﴾

"Both of these gardens yielded their fruits, and failed not aught thereof, and We caused a river to gush forth in their midst." [al-Kahf 18:33]

﴿وَكَانَ لَهُ ثَمَرٌ ۚ فَقَالَ لِسَاحِبِهِ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَنَا أَكْثَرُ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَ أَعَزُّ نَفَرًا﴾

"And he possessed much wealth; so he said to his companion, while he disputed with him: I have greater wealth than you, and am mightier in followers." [al-Kahf 18:34]

﴿وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهُ وَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ ۚ قَالَ مَا أَظُنُّ أَن تَبِيدَ هَذِهِ أَبَدًا﴾

"And he entered his garden while he was unjust to himself. He said: I do not think that this will ever perish." [al-Kahf 18:35]

﴿وَمَا أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً وَلَئِن رُّدِدْتُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي لَأَجِدَنَّ خَيْرًا مِنْهَا مُنْقَلَبًا﴾

"And I do not think the hour will come, and even if I am returned to my Lord I will most certainly find a returning place better than this." [al-Kahf 18:36]

﴿قَالَ لَهُ سَاحِبُهُ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَكَفَرْتَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَكَ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ سَوَّكَ رَجُلًا﴾

"His companion said to him while disputing with him: Do you disbelieve in Him Who created you from dust, then from a small seed, then He made you a perfect man?"

[al-Kahf 18:37]

﴿لَكِنَّا هُوَ اللَّهُ رَبِّي وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا﴾

"But as for me, He, Allah, is my Lord, and I do not associate anyone with my Lord."

[al-Kahf 18:38]

﴿وَلَوْلَا إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ ۚ إِن تَرِنَا أَنَا أَقَلُّ مَالًا وَ
وَلَدًا﴾

"And wherefore did you not say when you entered your garden: It is as Allah has pleased, there is no power save in Allah. If you consider me to be inferior to you in wealth and children," [al-Kahf 18:39]

﴿فَعَسَىٰ رَبِّي أَن يُؤْتِيَنِي خَيْرًا مِّنْ جَنَّتِكَ وَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهَا حُسْبَانًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فَتُصْبِحَ صَعِيدًا
زَلَقًا﴾

"Then maybe my Lord will give me what is better than your garden, and send of it a thunderbolt from heaven so that it shall become even ground without plant,"

[al-Kahf 18:40]

﴿أَوْ يُصْبِحَ مَأْوَاهَا غَوْرًا فَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ لَهُ طَلْبًا﴾

"Or its waters should sink down into the ground so that you are unable to find it."

[al-Kahf 18:41]

﴿وَأُحِيطَ بِثَمَرِهِ فَأَصْبَحَ يُقَلِّبُ كَفَّيْهِ عَلَىٰ مَا أَنْفَقَ فِيهَا وَ هِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَىٰ عُرُوشِهَا وَيَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُشْرِكْ بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا﴾

"And his wealth was destroyed; so he began to wring his hands for what he had spent on it, while it lay, having fallen down upon its roofs, and he said: Ah me! would that I had not associated anyone with my Lord." [al-Kahf 18:42]

﴿وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ فِئَةٌ يَنْصُرُونَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَ مَا كَانَ مُنْتَصِرًا﴾

"And he had no host to help him besides Allah nor could he defend himself."

[al-Kahf 18:43]

﴿هُنَالِكَ الْوَلَايَةُ لِلَّهِ الْحَقِّ ۖ هُوَ خَيْرٌ ثَوَابًا وَ خَيْرٌ عُقْبًا﴾

"Here is protection only Allah's, the True One; He is best in (the giving of) reward and best in requiting." [al-Kahf 18:44]

In Majma', 'Allāmah Ṭibirsi relates from Ibn 'Abbās that these verses are a reference to a king of the Bani Israel who died and left behind two sons and great wealth. One of the sons seized the rights of the other who was the believer among the two. He sought closeness to God Almighty while the other seized his right, took possession over it and wasted these two gardens. No further details were provided, however.

On the other hand, in *al-Kāshif*, Shaikh Mughniyyah deems this verse to be connected to those which precede it and believes that the prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) is the one to whom this verse is addressed to. He says: "*The prophet (ﷺ) is told to set forth a parable for them, meaning for the idol-worshippers whom had said to the prophet (ﷺ): Send away the believers! Or the pronoun refers to every arrogant person living in ease. Intended by 'two men' is a rich and poor man between both of whom occurs a discussion (spanning a period of time).*"

"What is known from the methodology of the Qurān is that it is abundant in bringing forth parables for selfless reflection and general principles. It makes comparisons between perceived matters, like it compares faith to light and disbelief to darkness. It compares one perceived matter with another explaining and clarifying it, like comparing the apostate to the faith of a panting dog. The purpose of that is elucidation and clarification with the addition of an advice and a moral lesson:"

﴿وَعَادًا وَثَمُودًا وَأَصْحَابِ الرَّسِّ وَقُرُونًا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ كَثِيرًا، وَكُلًّا ضَرَبْنَا لَهُ الْأَمْثَالَ ن وَ كُؤَالًا
تَبَّرْنَا تَبِيرًا﴾

'And 'Ad and Thamūd and the dwellers of the Rass and many generations between them. And to every one We gave examples and every one did We destroy with utter destruction.' [al-Furqān 25: 38-39]

"Here (in these verses) God, be He glorified, likens the state of the ornate despots with an arrogant, ignorant non-believer possessing two gardens. In both is a river and crops of grains, trees bearing choice fruits. Among them were fresh dates, grapes and every type of crop. Trees yielded its produce in season sufficiently and perfectly without anything being deficient. He, be He Glorified, likens the believers to a humble wise man. However, the poor man does not own anything."

"The following discussion occurred between the two: 'So he said to his companion,' the speaker being the wealthy, arrogant infidel and his companion was the wise, humble believer, 'While he disputed with him,' he debated with him in speech: 'I have greater wealth than you, and am mightier in followers.' So when he had abundance in wealth and men, (he understood) he was greater and more perfect. Because wealth and rank is the standard of greatness and perfection. As for in faith and sincerity, it is speech without meaning. This is ancient, insolent, corrupt logic and speech."

"Then, the value of each man, with them, is what he owns not in whatever he excels in knowledge or deeds. This is the essential logic which pulled down the misfortunate among mankind. 'And he entered his garden while he was unjust to himself,' because he responded to his lower inclinations and desires and embarked upon destruction, completely, like he who responds to his child with that in which is its injury and destruction. 'He said: I do not think that this will ever perish. '"

"(Commentator) ar-Rāzi said: How could he say: 'I do not think that this will ever perish,' with perception indicating that the world with its kin are parting and nonpermanent? We say that the intent is that the period of life of (the garden's companion) would not perish nor his existence. The correct answer is that ignorance and delusion blinds the companion of the garden regarding every thing even his perceptions and the visible world. The Mighty One among the speakers said:

﴿لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا ۖ وَ لَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا ۖ وَ لَهُمْ آذَانٌ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ﴾

"...They have hearts with which they do not understand, and they have eyes with which they do not see, and they have ears with which they do not hear; they are as cattle, nay, they are in worse errors; these are the heedless ones.' [al-A'rāf 7:179]

"And I do not think the hour will come.' This assumption cannot be attributed to anything except his pride, delusion, imagination and fantasy that his comfort is everlasting, not causing anything to perish."

"With this, we find the commentary refuting those who deny the day of reckoning of the despots and ones living in opulence. 'Even if I am returned to my Lord I will most certainly find a returning place better than this,' because the one living in opulence here is the one living in opulence there and in every place in his region. Its understanding is an analogy of the absent for the present. He does not understand that salvation on that day will be for the righteous, not for the despots, the ones living in opulence."

﴿مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنِّي مَالِيهِ، هَلَكَ عَنِّي سُلْطَانِيهِ﴾

'My wealth has availed me nothing, my authority is gone away from me.'

[al-Hāqqah 69:28-29]

"His companion said to him while disputing with him: Do you disbelieve in Him Who created you from dust, then from a small seed, then He made you a perfect man?' The believer said to the non-believer rebuking and censoring him: Do you deny your Creator while His proofs are manifest in you? Where did your life come from by its reasoning, and your hearing and seeing, while you were before: 'Not worth mentioning'[ad-Dahr 76:1]?"

"But as for me, He, Allah, is my Lord, and I do not associate anyone with my Lord.' As for me, my (natural) disposition and reasoning has guided me to my Creator and the Creator of all things. I believe that He alone is the Creator, the Sustainer."

"Then, the believer says, mentioning to the non-believer, the blessings of Allah for him and the obligation of its thankfulness and the praise of Allah for it: 'And wherefore did you not say when you entered your garden: It is as Allah has pleased, there is no power save in Allah.' Had you been possessing proper guidance and insight, certainly you would have recognized that goodness and virtue that is plentiful in your knowledge is not a master. That pride in your Creator is not in your rank and that you should know that there is no strength nor power except in Allah, the Unique, the Subduer. Then, He alone is who grants might and rank."

"The rich man conveys (his words) to the poor man; the poor man to the rich man: what He desires it was and whatever He does not desire it will not be. 'If you consider me to be inferior to you in wealth and children, then maybe my Lord will give me what is better than your garden, and send of it a thunderbolt from heaven so that it shall become even ground without plant, or its waters should sink down into the ground so that you are unable to find it.' The non-believer became over-bearing to the believer and the Exalted made incumbent upon (the poor) his wealth. Then, he said to the believer: the rich and the poor, after turning attention to Allah, it is not perceived that I am before Him richer than you and more honorable and that He has amassed for me in the (ever) lasting world that which is better than this your garden which your are proud of and deem as great."

"Rather, that which He perceives is that He has made me wealthy and He has made you poor between evening and morning. You are conceited and proud of your wealth because man envies you due to it. Does their envy repulse from you that which conceals a lifetime of punishment for you? Are you in a place of safety from Allah and His wrath. Do you not fear that lightening will descend upon you and your garden from the sky. Then, you and what you possess will be destroyed completely afterward."

"And his wealth was destroyed; so he began to wring his hands for what he had spent on it, while it lay, having fallen down upon its roofs.' The crops perished, the trees fell on every side. The water dissipated until, in the end, there were only drops of it. The earth became slippery with no foot being able to be fixed upon it. It became (worth) nothing. The situation of the poor man became the station of the rich man. The depression of the station of the farmer, the lowliness and loss is the station of significance and greatness."

"This is the fruit of disbelief, rebelliousness and corruption. Rather, the fruit of negligence and delusion...distress and regrets over striving and wealth, negligence and heedlessness. 'He said: Ah me! would that I had not associated anyone with my Lord.' What he intended by this statement was that his garden returned to that which was behind it and (to Whom) had given it:"

﴿لَا يَنْفَعُ نَفْسًا إِيْمَانُهَا لَمْ تَكُنْ آمَنَتْ مِنْ قَبْلُ أَوْ كَسَبَتْ فِي إِيْمَانِهَا خَيْرًا﴾

'...Its faith shall not profit a soul which did not believe before, or earn good through its faith.' [al-An'ām 6:158]

"And he had no host to help him besides Allah nor could he defend himself" ...forever, no companion, no family, no rank no wealth. Absolutely nothing except Allah:

﴿قُلْ إِنِّي لَنْ يُجِيرَنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ أَحَدٌ وَلَنْ أَجِدَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مُلْتَحَدًا﴾

"Say: Surely no one can protect me against Allah, nor can I find besides Him and place of refuge.' [al-Jinn 72:22]

"Here is protection only Allah's, the True One; He is best in (the giving of) reward and best in requiting.' There is an indication of the day of judgment. Walāyah (وَلَايَةٌ), with Fathah on the Wāw is: assistance (نُصْرَةٌ). The pronoun returns to Allah, the outcome and the punishment."

"The meaning is that when some assistance is found in this life and protection or it distinguishes something for him, surely on the day of judgment, he will not find any strategy, medium nor helper except Allah, alone. Allah, be He Glorified, is with the righteous. He has prepared for them a noble reward and an excellent place of return."

﴿وَأَضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَا ءَأَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ فَأَصْبَحَ هَشِيمًا تَذْرُوهُ الرِّيَّاحُ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّقْتَدِرًا﴾

"And set forth to them the parable of the life of this world; like water which We send down from the cloud so the herbage of the earth becomes tangled on account of it, then it becomes dry, broken into pieces which the winds scatter; and Allah is the holder of power over all things." [al-Kahf 18:45]

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

"Wealth and children are an adornment of the life of this world; and the ever-abiding, the good works, are better with your Lord in reward and better in expectation."

[al-Kahf 18:46]

In *Majma'*, 'Allāmah Ṭibirsi says: "God Almighty commanded the prophet (ﷺ) to set forth a parable for this world renouncing it while showing desire for the next life. Meaning that water grows vegetation, some intertwining with others, excelling in goodness and succulent. Then the vegetation becomes dry, meaning broken and crumbled, scattered by the wind from place to place. The transformation of this world, then, is like the transformation of these plants. Allah is capable, meaning it is not permitted that there be an obstacle for Him. al-Ḥasan said, in other words, Allah is the holder of power over all things even before its existence. It is said that it is news of the past and an indication of the future."

"This parable is only for the arrogant who are deluded by their wealth and their disdain of sitting with poor believers. Allah, be He glorified, informs them that whatever in this world Allah, be He Glorified, has no intent for. It is like the good plants with rain, not its material. It grows excellently with that which mixes with that water. Then, when the rain ceases, it reverts to dry vegetation having no use."

As for the verse regarding wealth and children, Nāṣir Makārem mentions in *al-Amthal*, that the meaning of: *an adornment of life* ﴿زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا﴾ is that property and children may be a source of pride and adornment in this life but in the hereafter they have no benefit. They are named *Zeenah* because with regard to property it is beauty and with regard to children, it is strength and protection. They become an adornment of this life while neither will remain for man to benefit from in the hereafter.

al-'Ayyāshi quotes in his Tafsir a narration from Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (AS) who says:

"Allah, the Mighty and Majestic said: 'Wealth and children are an adornment of the life of this world' just as the eight Rak'āt the servant prays at the end of the night is an adornment of the hereafter." 44

Regarding the term ﴿البَقِيَّاتُ الصَّالِحَاتُ﴾ *Baqiyāt Ṣāliḥāt* (the everlasting good deeds), al-'Ayyāshi narrates the following from Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (AS) :

"The Messenger of God (Ṣ) said: Get your shields! They said to him: Messenger of God! is an enemy present? He (Ṣ) said: No, get your shields from the hellfire! They said: With what, O Messenger of God, shall we take as a shield from the hellfire? He (Ṣ) said: Glorified is God; All praise is for God; There is no God except Allah and Allah is the Greatest. Then, these will come on the day of judgement and they will have that which had come before and that which had come after; that which was saved and that which was left behind. These are the 'Everlasting Good.' Then, Abū 'Abdillah (AS) said: 'Certainly the remembrance of Allah is the greatest.' [29:45] He said: Remember God with every allowed or forbidden thing and (things resembling) that and that which is to be paid later." 45

Shaikh Ṣadūq mentions in *at-Tibyān* that the meaning of *Baqiyāt Ṣāliḥāt*, according to Ibn 'Abbās, is obedience to God because its reward remains forever. It is the best disjoined benefit having no end. The *Bāqiyāt* brings happiness and its goodness is continual.

Obedience brings eternal rewards with God Almighty that are the most beneficial for man. Because God summons man toward the *Ṣāliḥāt*, it has happiness and continual good for him. The Shaikh also mentions other narrations that mention that the *Baqiyāt Ṣāliḥāt* is the Night Prayer (Tahajjud). It also the five daily prayers, according to Ibn Mas'ūd or even, according to traditions, saying the following:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

The praise is only for Allah, there is no God except Allah and Allah is the Greatest.

﴿وَيَوْمَ نُسَيِّرُ الْجِبَالَ وَتَرَى الْأَرْضَ بَارِزَةً وَحَشَرْنَاهُمْ فَلَمْ نُغَادِرْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا﴾

"And the day on which We will cause the mountains to pass away and you will see the earth a leveled plain and We will gather them and leave not any one of them behind."

[al-Kahf 18:47]

Nāṣir Makārem mentions that this type of phrase has been mentioned in numerous other verses: ⁴⁶

(١) ﴿وَسُيِّرَتِ الْجِبَالُ فَكَانَتْ سَرَابًا﴾

"And the mountains shall be moved off so that they shall remain a mere semblance."

[an-Naba 78:20]

(٢) ﴿وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ سُيِّرَتْ﴾

"And when the mountains are made to pass away." [at-Takweer 81:3]

(٣) ﴿وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ نُسِفَتْ﴾

"And when the mountains are carried away as dust." [al-Mursalāt 77:10]

(٤) ﴿وَحُمِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَالْجِبَالُ فَدُكَّتَا دَكَّةً وَاحِدَةً﴾

"And the earth and the mountains are borne and crushed with a single crushing."

[al-Hāqqah 69:14]

(٥) ﴿يَوْمَ تَرْجُفُ الْأَرْضُ وَالْجِبَالُ وَكَانَتِ الْجِبَالُ كَثِيبًا مَّهِيلًا﴾

"On the day when the earth and the mountains shall quake and the mountains shall become (as) heaps of sand let lose." [al-Muzammil 73:14]

(٦) ﴿وَبُئِسَتِ الْجِبَالُ بَسًّا فَكَانَتْ هَبَاءً مُنْبَثًّا﴾

"And the mountains shall be made to crumble with an (awful) crumbling. So that they shall be as scattered dust." [al-Wāqi'ah 56:5-6]

(٧) ﴿وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ الْمَنْفُوشِ﴾

"And the mountains shall become as loosened wool." [al-Qāri'ah 101:5]

In the Tafsir *Nūr ath-Thaqalain*, the following is narrated from Ibn 'Abbās:

*"When this verse descended upon the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), he fainted and he was carried to the house of Umm Salmah. His companions awaited him at the time of prayer but he did not emerge. The Muslims gathered and they said: What is the matter with the Messenger of Allah? Umm Salmah said: The prophet is occupied. Then, he emerged after that and ascended upon the minbar, then said: O people! Surely you will be gathered on the day of judgment just as you were created naked. Then, he recited (this verse) to his companions: "We will gather them and leave not any one of them behind [al-Kahf 18:47]; "As We originated the first creation, so We shall reproduce it; a promise (binding on Us); surely We will bring it about." [al-Anbiyā 21:104]."*⁴⁷

In Tafsir *al-Kāshif*, Shaikh Mughniyyah says: *"This gathering is mentioned numerous times throughout the Qurān with two descriptions: one is that God will remove all places from the earth eliminating them like clouds are dispersed. The second is that all corners of the earth and its contents will become visible or apparent, meaning that nothing will be concealed and at that time God will gather mankind, present, future and past for their accounting and reward."*

With regard to the place of this gathering of mankind, the Tafsir *Nūr ath-Thaqalain* mentions a narration taken from Shaikh Mufeed's *Rauḍah al-Wā'izeen* in which 'Abdullah Ibn Salām asked the Messenger of God (ﷺ) the following question:

*"O Muḥammad! Inform me where the center of the world is? He (ﷺ) said: Baitul-Muqaddas (Jerusalem). Ibn Saḫām asked: Why is this? He (ﷺ) said: Because it is the place of the gathering and the scattering. From it, the Throne will rise. In it are the bridge and the scale. Ibn Saḫām said: You have spoken truthfully, O Muḥammad."*⁴⁸

﴿وَعُرِضُوا عَلَىٰ رَبِّكَ صَفًّا لَّقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا كَمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ ۚ بَلْ زَعَمْتُمْ أَلَّنْ نَجْعَلَ لَكُمْ مَوْعِدًا﴾

"And they shall be brought before your Lord, standing in ranks: Now certainly you have come to Us as We created you at first. Nay, you thought that We had not appointed to you a time of the fulfillment of the promise." [al-Kahf 18:48]

Regarding this verse, Shaikh Ṣadūq says in *at-Tibyān*: *"It is said its meaning is: They will be brought (before Allah) row after row like the rows in prayer. It is said: The meaning is that they will be brought before their Lord, no one from among them will be hidden, they will be one row. It is said of them: You have come to Us as We created you at first, meaning you have come to the place which no one has an affair in it except Allah, just as He created you at first: You will not own anything. It is narrated from the prophet (ﷺ) that he said: They will be gathered barefooted, naked and isolated."*

'Allāmah Ṭibirsi relates the following tradition from the prophet (ﷺ):

The Messenger of God (ﷺ) said: *"Mankind will be gathered from their graves on the day of judgement barefoot, naked as an uncircumcised child. 'A'ishah said: O Muḥammad!, will not some of them be ashamed before others? He (ﷺ) said: For every person from them, on that day, it is a matter that will be superfluous."* ⁴⁹

In the Tafsir *al-Kāshif*, Shaikh Muḡhniyyah mentions that *"God had caused us to emerge from our mothers bellies barefoot, naked and isolated from all things. Likewise, we will emerge from our graves with no difference except that the first time we were not accountable for anything and the second time we will be asked about our deeds and beliefs."*

In Tafsir *Kanz ad-Daḡāiq*, a similar narration is reported wherein the prophet (ﷺ) is asked: *"Are you informing me that people on the day of judgement will be gathered naked? He said: Yes, they will be gathered in their shrouds (Akḡān). He said: From where is the shrouds and they have become worn. He (ﷺ): He Who shall enliven their bodies will enliven their shrouds. He said: Then, for he who dies without a shroud? He (ﷺ) said: Allah will cover his private parts with whatever He wishes from whatever is with Him."* ⁵⁰

﴿وُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ فَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُشْفِقِينَ مِمَّا فِيهِ وَيَقُولُونَ يَا وَيْلَتَنَا مَا لِهَذَا الْكِتَابِ لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً إِلَّا أَحْصَاهَا وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا وَلَا يَظْلِمُ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا﴾

"And the Book shall be placed, then you will see the guilty fearing from what is in it, and they will say: Ah! woe to us! What a book is this! It does not omit a small one nor a great one, but numbers them (all); and what they had done they shall find present (there); and your Lord does not deal unjustly with anyone." [al-Kahf 18:49]

In *Majma'*, 'Allāmah Ṭibirsi says: "The Book (here) is a collective noun. Its meaning is: the scrolls of the children of Adam will be placed in their hands. It is said its meaning is: the reckoning will be placed and the reckoning is interpreted as the Book because they will be reckoned according to their recorded deeds, according to al-Kalabi."

'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabāi, in *al-Mizān*, says: "Is the apparent context that it is one book placed for the reckoning of all deeds? That does not negate placing a particular book for each person. The Qurānic verses indicate that for each man there is a book and for each nation (Ummah) there is a book and for each book, the Exalted says:

﴿وَكُلَّ إِنْسَانٍ أَلْزَمْنَاهُ طَائِرَهُ فِي عُنُقِهِ ۖ وَنُخْرِجُ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ كِتَابًا يَلْقَاهُ مَنشُورًا﴾

'And We have made every man's actions to cling to his neck, and We will bring forth to him on the resurrection day a book which he will find wide open.' [al-Isrā 17:13]

(As for the Book for each nation or Ummah):

﴿وَتَرَى كُلَّ أُمَّةٍ جَائِيَةً كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ تُدْعَىٰ إِلَىٰ كِتَابِهَا ۗ الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ، هَذَا كِتَابُنَا يَنْطِقُ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ ۗ إِنَّا كُنَّا نَسْتَنسِخُ مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ﴾

'And you shall see every nation kneeling down; every nation shall be called to its book; today you shall be rewarded for what you did. This is Our book that speaks against you with justice; surely We wrote what you did.' [Jāthiyah 45:28-29]"

The verse describes the guilty as ﴿مُشْفِقِينَ﴾ *Mushfiqeen* translated here as: *fearing*. The root word (إشفاق) has two meanings: *sympathy and anxiety*. Regarding the latter meaning, the linguist Rāghib says in his book, *al-Mufridāt*: "*Ishfaq is concern mixed with fear because the anxious one obligates fear upon himself and fears that which is connected with (his anxiety)*." ⁵¹

The verse also mentions the source of the guilty's fear: the book which is given to them does not leave out any sin, whether big or small, all sins will all be recorded and presented to them on that day. In addition, they will know that Allah, be He Exalted, will deal with each person fairly and justly, meaning that whatever a person has earned, he will receive its reward or punishment on that day, as the following verses indicate:

﴿يَوْمَئِذٍ يَصُدُّرُ النَّاسُ أَشْتَاتًا لِيُرَوْا أَعْمَالَهُمْ، فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ، وَ مَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ﴾

"On that day men shall come forth in sundry bodies that they may be shown their works. So, he who has done an atom's weight of good shall see it. And he who has done an atom's weight of evil shall see it." [az-Zilzāl 99:6-8]

On this day, God, Be He Glorified, will say to those denied the resurrection:

﴿هَذَا يَوْمُ الْفَصْلِ الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تُكَذِّبُونَ﴾

"This is the day of judgment which you called a lie." [aş-Şaffāt 37:21]

Everyone will be given their book of deeds in their hand and God Almighty will say to them:

﴿إِقْرَأْ كِتَابَكَ ط كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا﴾

"Read your book; your own self is sufficient as a reckoner against you this day."

[al-Isrā 17:14]

In *al-Amthal*, Shaikh Nāṣir Makārem says: *"They will read it while shuddering from fear with which there is no hope nor any expectation of salvation. Had they feared the punishment of fire before and moved away from its path, surely that day they would be in safety and security, but they were in safety there (in this world), then they are in fear here. 'They will say: Ah! woe to us! What a book is this! It does not omit a small one nor a great one, but numbers them (all).'* Before this they were saying: *There is no book nor reckoning. They did not respond to reasoning nor faith. 'What they had done they shall find present (there),'* without any addition or omission. *'Your Lord does not deal unjustly with anyone.'* Not in reward nor in punishment. Rather, He multiplies the reward of he who does the best and He excuses he who has done evil."

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

"And when We said to the angels: Make obeisance to Adam; they made obeisance but Iblees (did it not). He was of the jinn, so he transgressed the commandment of his Lord. What! would you then take him and his offspring for friends rather than Me, and they are your enemies? Evil is (this) change for the unjust." [al-Kahf 18:50]

In *at-Tibyān*, Shaikh Ṣadūq states that this saying is repeated in the Qurān because that which follows it is requiring connection to it. Then, it is the meaning which benefits a matter in numerous places. He also refers to this as an indication of the differing nature in the creation of the Jinn and Angels. He also says: *"He who says that Iblees has offspring and the angels do not have offspring and do not marry and do not have lineage are interpreting information which is unknown. Regarding eating and drinking, in the angels, if it was known, it is lost. We do not know that Iblees was eating and drinking."*

al-'Ayyāshi narrates a reply which Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq gave regarding the Jinn:

"Jameel Ibn Darāj said: I asked Abū 'Abdillah about Iblees: Was he one of the angels? Did he have any authority in the matters of the heaven? He (AS) said: He was not an angel and he did not have any authority in the affairs of the heaven. He was a Jinn and was with the angels and the angels saw him as one of themselves. Allah informed them that he was not one of them. Then, when He commanded prostration, he was he who was (disobedient)." 52

There is a narration attributed to Ibn 'Abbās giving more detail about Iblees' history:

"Iblees was he who lived in the community of angels. They were said to be Jinn. They were created from a fire of hot wind amidst the angels. His (Iblees') name was al-Ḥārith. He was a trustee of the treasure troves of paradise. (Allah said): I created all of the angels from light except this life. The Jinn which were mentioned in the Qurān were created from a flame of fire (meaning) a point of fire which flamed up upon being ignited. Man was created from clay. The first to inhabit the earth were Jinn. They spread corruption in the earth, shedded blood and killed one another."

"Then, Allah sent Iblees to them in an army of angels. This life, which was called Jinn, Iblees and those with him slaughtered them until they caught up with them on the shores of the seas and the tops of mountains. When Iblees accomplished that, he became conceited about himself and said: I have done something that no one else has done. Allah was aware of that which was in his heart although the angels who were with him were unaware of it." ⁵³

In *Majma'*, 'Allāmah Ṭibirsi says that Allah addresses the idolaters in saying: *"What! would you then take him and his offspring for friends rather than Me, and they are your enemies?"* Meaning that they are all enemies for you. The reasoning person is entitled to accuse his enemy for himself. This is understood in the meaning of denial and rebuke. Mujāhid said his offspring are the Shayāṭeen. al-Ḥasan said the Jinn are his offspring. *Evil is (this) change for the unjust.* In other words, evil is that which you seek to exchange in the worship of your Lord when you are obedient to Iblees, according to al-Ḥasan. It is said evil is the exchange: obedience to Shayṭān for obedience to the Most Merciful, according to Qutādah. "

Shaikh Mughniyyah, in *al-Kāshif*, says of the same verse: *"We explain the offspring of Iblees as his army and his helpers. His friends are those who seek falsehood with lies and forge lies against the truth. It is not remote that these are interpreted as the offspring of Iblees due to the allusion to the strength of the likeness between their actions and his actions. Or he praises you with that which is not in you. Therefore, he is an enemy for you, he may know that or he may not know. Regarding he who contrives a legend around Iblees and other than him, then he is the enemy of Allah, his messenger and mankind."*

﴿ مَا أَشْهَدْتُهُمْ خَلْقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَا خَلْقَ أَنْفُسِهِمْ ۚ وَمَا كُنْتُ مَتَّخِذَ الْمُضِلِّينَ عَضُدًا ﴾

"I did not make them witnesses of the creation of the heavens and the earth, nor of the creation of their own souls; nor could I take those who lead (others) astray for aiders."
[al-Kahf 18:51]

In *Majma'*, 'Allāmah Ṭibirsi interprets the verse as meaning: *"I did not have Iblees and his offspring present during the creation of the heaven and earth nor the creation of their own souls seeking their assistance in that. Nor did I call upon some of them for help in creating others. This information is about the perfection of His capabilities and His lack of need of helpers and assistance and His saying indicates upon this: Nor could I take those who lead (others) astray for aiders, meaning to take the Shayāṭeen who were misguiding mankind as assisting and aiding Me."*

"It is said the meaning is that I did not have the idol-worshippers of the 'Arab and these non-believers to witness the creation of the heavens and the earth nor the creation of their own souls nor did I have some of them witness the creation of others. Rather, they were not existing. From where do they say that the angels are the daughters of Allah and from where do they allege that?"

In *al-Kāshif*, Shaikh Mughniyyah says: *"The pronoun in: ﴿ أَشْهَدْتُهُمْ ﴾ returns back to Iblees and his offspring (meaning) I did not make them witness, meaning I did not have them present at the time of the creation of existence nor when I created them. (The word عَضُدٌ means) helper, someone designated. Intended by this speech are the disobedient who denied the command of Allah. The meaning is that when Allah, be He Glorified, desires something, he say: Be and it is. Not taking counsel of anyone nor seeking anyone's assistance because He is free of need of the worlds. When (Allah) created existence none of them were present. How, then, when they were (themselves) misled and misleading others, like Iblees and his army, as long as the command continued as such, how could they disobey the Creator of the heavens and the earth and obey he who holds no benefit for this own soul nor can defend it from any danger?"*

Regarding the last section of this verse, namely: *"Nor could I take those who lead (others) astray for aiders,"* In his Tafsir, al-'Ayyāshi reports the following narration on the authority of Imām al-Bāqir (AS) who said:

"Surely, the Messenger of God said: 'O Allah! Strengthen the faith (of Islām) with 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb or Abū Jahl Ibn Hāshim. Then, Allah revealed: 'Nor could I take those who lead (others) astray for aiders,' meaning the two ('Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb and Abū Jahl)."⁵⁴

﴿وَيَوْمَ يَقُولُ نَادُوا شُرَكَائِيَ الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ فَدَعَوْهُمْ فَلَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَوْبِقًا﴾

"And on the day when He shall say: Call on those whom you considered to be my associates. So they shall call on them, but they shall not answer them, and We will cause a separation between them." [al-Kahf 18:52]

﴿وَرَأَى الْمُجْرِمُونَ النَّارَ فَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ مُوَاقِعُوهَا وَلَمْ يَجِدُوا عَنْهَا مَصْرِفًا﴾

"And the guilty shall see the fire, then they shall know that they are going to fall into it, and they shall not find a place to which to turn away from it." [al-Kahf 18:53]

In *at-Tibyān*, Shaikh Ṭūsi says: "Then, Allah explains their (the idol-worshippers) state on the day of judgment...Allah, the Exalted says to the idol-worshippers: Call My partners which you claim, (speaking) from the perspective of censure and rebuke. They will seek assistance from them, then summon them, meaning the idol-worshippers will call upon those partners whom they worshipped along with Allah. They will not answer them. Then, Allah will say: 'We will cause a separation between them.' (and their idols). Ibn 'Abbās says: In other words, destruction (Muhlik). Qutādah, Ḍaḥḥāk and Ibn Zaid say (the same). He is he whose sins will ruin him, meaning destroy him. al-Ḥasan says the meaning of Maubiq is animosity. He said animosity is destruction. Anis Ibn Mālik says it is a valley in Jahannam (made) of pus and blood."

'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, in *al-Mizān*, says: "The meaning is that We will make a place of destruction between the idol-worshippers and their partners (with Allah). People have explained the place of separation as destruction by fire or a place of fire destroying the two parties in it: the idol-worshippers and their partners (with Allah). The arrangement in His speech, the Exalted, does help them. Then, the verse applies to the partners (with Allah) and in them, perhaps there are many, the angels, some prophets and Auliya'. The pronoun returns to them, for those possess reasoning, time after time. There is no indication of their particularity with the benefit of Jinn or man. The event of making a Maubiq between them is an indication of the initial speech. Perhaps the intent in making a Maubiq between them is the nullification of the relationship and its elimination between them."

"You see in this world between them and their partners (with Allah) is a relationship of lordship and governance and cause and effect. Then, an allusion is made to that by making a Maubiq between them destroying the relationship in it and connection without destroying the two sides. There is a pointing to that with the subtle indication in its expression of their calling upon them, first with Nidā (A summoning) whereas it is said: 'Call on those whom you considered to be my associates.' Nidā is only from remote and it is an indication of the remoteness between them. Similar to this meaning is (a verse) of His saying in another place:"

﴿ مَا نَرَىٰ مَعَكُمْ شُفَعَاءَ كُفَّارِ الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّهُمْ فِيكُمْ شُرَكَاءَ ۗ لَقَدْ تَقَطَّعَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَ ضَلَّ عَنْكُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ ﴾

'...We do not see with you your intercessors about whom you asserted that they were (Allah's) associates in respect to you; certainly the ties between you are now cut off and what you asserted is gone from you.' [al-An'ām 6:94]

"And (also) His, the Exalted's saying:

﴿ وَ يَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ نَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا مَكَانَكُمْ أَنْتُمْ وَ شُرَكَاءُكُمْ ۖ فَزَيَّلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ وَ قَالَ شُرَكَاءُهُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ إِيَّانَا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴾

'And on the day when We shall gather them all together, then We will say to those who associated others (with Allah); Keep where you are, you and your associates; then We shall separate them widely one from another and their associates would say: It was us that you served.' [Yūnus 10:28]"

Regarding the second verse, Shaikh Nāṣir Makārem, in *al-Amthal*, says: "The verse which is after it tells clearly of the punishment of those who followed Shaiṭān and the idol-worshippers: the guilty will see the fire and it will uncover for them a fire which they had never affirmed. It becomes apparent before their eyes and, here, sensing their mistakes, they will be certain that they will be soon entered into it. They assume that it is their place and they have become certain that there is no savior for them from it: 'And they shall not find a place to which to turn away from it.' No savior that day for them from the fire, no diety nor any intercessor. There is no lie, or any plea for escape and power."

'Allāmah Ṭibirsi quotes a small portion of a long speech of Imām 'Alī Ibn Abi Ṭālib (AS) in his book, *al-Iḥtijāj*. He (AS) says:

"At times some of the suppositions (Zann) of the non-believers are certainty (Yaqeen). That is His saying: 'And the guilty shall see the fire, then they shall know that they are going to fall into it,' meaning they will be certain of their falling into it." ⁵⁵

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

"And certainly we have explained in this Qurān every kind of example; and man is most of all given to contention." [al-Kahf 18:54]

﴿وَمَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا إِذْ جَاءَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ سُنَّةُ الْأَوَّلِينَ
أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ قُبُلًا﴾

"And nothing prevents men from believing when the guidance comes to them, and from asking forgiveness of their Lord, except that what happened to the ancients should overtake them, or that the chastisement should come face to face with them."

[al-Kahf 18:55]

﴿وَمَا نُؤَسِّلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا مَبَشِّرِينَ وَ مُنذِرِينَ ۚ وَ يُجَادِلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالْبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوا بِهِ
الْحَقَّ وَ اتَّخَذُوا آيَاتِي وَ مَا أَنْذَرُوا هُزُوعًا﴾

"And We do not send apostles but as givers of good news and warning, and those who disbelieve make a false contention that they may render null thereby the truth, and they take My commandments and that with which they are warned for a mockery."

[al-Kahf 18:56]

Regarding the first verse, Shaikh Mugniyyah says in his Tafsir, *al-Kāshif*: "The intent in (saying) most of mankind is due to the Exalted's saying in numerous verses: 'Surely, most of them do not understand.' [49:4]; 'But most men do not know.' [29:63]; 'But most men do not believe.' [11:17].

Regarding the Noble Qurān, it is the Book of Allah for His servants threatening them by its evidences and admonishments. It urges them to adhere to its rulings and teachings. (Allah), be He Glorified, explains these admonitions and evidences by various methods. By virtue of that, He puts forth numerous parables, among them the two men mentioned in verse 32 and the likeness of life to water (mentioned in) verse 45 of this Sūrah.

However, most men do not reason and they dispute with the clearest of clear (matters). They attempt to nullify the truth and invalidate it with wrangling and lies.

In mentioning the portion of the verse saying: *"And man is most of all given to contention."* 'Allāmah Ṭibirsi mentions in *Majma'* two names: an-Naḍir Ibn Ḥārith and Abū Ibn Khalaf on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās and al-Kalabi, respectively. However, no additional information mentioned as to why that is the case. az-Zajāj says: *"It means the non-believers and (Allah's) saying indicates upon that: "And those who disbelieve make a false contention that they may render null thereby the truth."* [al-Kahf 18:56].

Regarding the following verse: *"And nothing prevents men from believing when the guidance comes to them, and from asking forgiveness of their Lord..."* 'Allāmah Ṭibirsi says: *"What prevents them from faith after the coming of evidence. (What prevents them) from seeking forgiveness of their Lord is what has been sent forth in their disobedience." 'Except that what happened to the ancients should overtake them...' In other words, they seek that the customs of the ancients in punishment of annihilation whereas punishment comes to them from where they are unaware at a time when they are prevented from accepting guidance and faith."*

"Or that the chastisement should come face to face with them." Or seeking that punishment should come to them as an evident encounter whereas they see it and interpret that it prevents them from faith on the level of he who seeks this until he believes with aversion due to their not (actually) believing until they see the painful punishment. This is as the speaker who says to another: What prevents you from accepting my word except the parable that the idol-worshippers have sought similar to that, then the idol-worshippers said: O Allah! If this is the truth from You, then rain rocks upon us from the sky or bring upon us a painful punishment."

In *al-Mizān*, 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'i says of the verse: *"And We do not send apostles but as givers of good news and warning..."* It is a consolation for the prophet (ﷺ) that the denial of the deniers would not tighten his breast (meaning distress him) and their turning away from the remembrance of Allah. It, then, was only the duty of the prophets to convey good news and warnings. Nothing was obligatory upon them beyond that for he who does evil. In it is compassion towards that which has already passed from His saying in the beginning of the Sūrah: *'Then maybe you will kill yourself with grief, sorrowing after them, if they do to believe in this announcement.'* [al-Kahf 18:6]. In the verse also is a type of threat for the mocking non-believers: *'They take My commandments and that with which they are warned for a mockery.'*

﴿وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ ذُكِرَ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ فَأَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا وَنَسِيَ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاؤُهُ ۖ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ فِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقُرْآءٍ وَإِنْ تَدْعُهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَىٰ فَلَنْ يَهْتَدُوا إِلَّا أَيَّامًا مِّنْ قَبْلِهِمْ﴾

"And who is more unjust than he who is reminded of the communications of this Lord, then he turns away from them and forgets what his two hands have sent before? Surely We have placed veils over their hearts lest they should understand it and a heaviness in their ears; and if you call them to guidance, they will not ever follow the right course in that case." [al-Kahf 18:57]

﴿وَرَبُّكَ الْعَفُورُ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ ۖ لَوْ يُؤَاخِذُهُمْ بِمَا كَسَبُوا لَعَجَّلَ لَهُمُ الْعَذَابَ ۗ بَلْ لَهُمْ مَوْعِدٌ لَّنْ يَجِدُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ مَوْثِقًا﴾

"And your Lord is Forgiving, the Lord of Mercy; were He to punish them for what they earn, He would certainly have hastened the chastisement for them; but for them there is an appointed time from which they shall not find refuge." [al-Kahf 18:58]

In *Majma'*, 'Allāmah Ṭibirsi says: "Its meaning is who is more unjust to himself than he who for whom it is mentioned, meaning he is admonished by the Qurān and its verses and he is informed of the evidences of Tauḥeed (Unity of God), then he turns aside from it. "And forgets what his two hands have sent before." Meaning the disobedient person who is deserving of punishment forgets. It is said its meaning is he remembers and is engaged in minimizing it and minimizes awareness of his punishment because he has forgotten that. (Allah) be He Glorified said: "Surely We have placed veils over their hearts," meaning it is disliked to understand it or that it should not be understood. "And a heaviness in their ears." It is made as a similitude as (Allah) has said in another place:

﴿وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتُنَا وَوَلَّىٰ مُسْتَكْبِرًا كَأَن لَّمْ يَسْمَعْهَا كَأَنَّ فِي أُذُنَيْهِ وَقْرًا﴾

'And when Our communications are recited to him, he turns back proudly, as if he had not heard them, as though in his ears were a heaviness...' [Luqmān 31:7]

"The meaning is there was upon their hearts a veil (preventing) understanding and in their ears a heaviness (preventing) hearing. "If you call them to guidance, they will not ever follow the right course in that case." (Allah), be He Glorified, informs that they will never believe, then they will die in disbelief."

In *al-Amthal*, Shaikh Nāṣir Makārem says: "(Allah) does not hasten the divine punishment of the previous verses. They speak of a group of fanatical non-believers and the ones unjust to their souls. The verses before us continues in this same discussion. Then, in the beginning of His, the Exalted's saying: "And who is more unjust than he who is reminded of the communications of this Lord, then he turns away from them and forgets what his two hands have sent before?" It employs the phrase 'reminded' as it only points the teachings of the prophet for them and it is with the return to the mention of the realities of existence in an innate form in the depths of man and that the importance of prophets is the removal of the veil from the purity and transparency of this innate nature."

Regarding the second verse, 'Allāmah Ṭibirsi, in *Majma'* says: "Your Lord is the Veil upon His servants, the Forgiver of sins of believers, the Lord of Mercy and the Bestower of blessings upon his creation. It is said: The Forgiver, the One Often Turning to Repenters, the Lord of Mercy for the persistent in that He delays and does not hasten. It is said: the Forgiver He does not blame them hastily, the Lord of Mercy, he defers them in order for their repentance."

"Were He to punish them for what they earn, He would certainly have hastened the chastisement for them," in this world. "But for them there is an appointed time," the day of judgment and resurrection, "From which they shall not find refuge," or *Malja* (مَلْجَأً), a place of refuge, according to Ibn 'Abbās and *Qutādah*. It is said (to be) a *Maḥraz* (مَحْرَزًا), an impregnable place, according to *Mujāhid*, and a *Manja*, a place of salvation (مَنْجَا), according to *Abū 'Ubaidah*.

﴿وَتِلْكَ الْقُرَىٰ أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ لَمَّا ظَلَمُوا وَجَعَلْنَا لِمَهْلِكِهِم مَّوْعِدًا﴾

"And (as for) these towns, We destroyed them when they acted unjustly, and We have appointed a time for their destruction." [al-Kahf 18:59]

In *Majma'*, 'Allāmah Ṭibirsi says this verse is related to the people of 'Ad, Thamūd and others who were punished due to their denial of the prophets of God and their repudiation of God's messengers and signs. A time is appointed, with God, for their destruction. He also notes that it is not the towns themselves that are destroyed, rather its people are the ones deserving of destruction.

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

"And when Mūsa said to his servant: I will not cease until I reach the junction of the two rivers or I will go on for years." [al-Kahf 18:60]

﴿فَلَمَّا بَلَغَا مَجْمَعَ بَيْنَهُمَا نَسِيَا حُوتَهُمَا فَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ سَرَبًا﴾

"So when they had reached the junction of the two (rivers), they forgot their fish, and it took its way into the sea, going away." [al-Kahf 18:61]

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

"But when they had gone farther, he said to his servant: Bring to us our morning meal, certainly we have met with fatigue from this our journey." [al-Kahf 18:62]

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

"He said: Did you see when we took refuge on the rock, then I forgot the fish, and nothing made me forget to speak of it but the Shaiṭān, and it took its way into the river; what a wonder!" [al-Kahf 18:63]

﴿قَالَ ذَلِكَ مَا كُنَّا نَبْغُ ۗ فَارْتَدَّا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِمَا قَصَصًا﴾

"He said: This is what we sought for; so they returned retracing their footsteps."
[al-Kahf 18:64]

In his Tafsir, al-Qummi attributes the reason of revelation of these verses, and those which follow, to the Quraish who, upon hearing the narrative of the companions of the cave, asked the prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) to inform them who was the learned man whom God commanded Mūsa (AS) to follow and what was his narrative? Then God revealed the following verse: '*And when Mūsa said to his servant: I will not cease until I reach the junction of the two rivers or I will go on for years.*' al-Qummi says the reason for that was that when Allah spoke to Mūsa and the tablets were revealed to him...As Allah said:

﴿ وَكَتَبْنَا لَهُ فِي الْأَلْوَابِ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَوْعِظَةً وَتَفْصِيلًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ ۖ فَخَذَهَا بِقُوَّةٍ وَأَمَرَ قَوْمَكَ بِأَخْذِهَا بِأَحْسَنِهَا سَأُرِيكُمْ دَارَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴾

'And We ordained for him in the tablets admonition of every kind and clear explanation of all things; so take hold of them with firmness and enjoin your people to take hold of what is best thereof; I will show you the abode of the transgressors.' [al-A'rāf 7:145]

"Mūsa returned to the Bani Israel and ascended upon the Minbar and informed them that Allah had revealed the Taurāh to him and spoke with him. To himself he said: Allah has not created a creation more knowledgeable than I. Then, Allah revealed to Jibrāeel that he should go to Mūsa for me may be destroyed. Inform him that at the place where the two rivers meet at a rock there is a man more knowledgeable than you, then go to him and learn from his knowledge. Then, Jibrāeel descended to Mūsa (AS) and informed him. Mūsa felt humiliated in himself and he knew he was mistaken. Then, fear entered into him and he said to his trustee, Yausha' Ibn Nūn (Joshua): Allah has commanded me to follow a man at the meeting of the two rivers and learn from him."

"Yausha' took a salted fish as a provision. They (both) left and when they left and reached that place they found a man lying on the back of his head, and they did not recognize him. Mūsa took out the fish and washed it in the water and placed it on the rock. Time passed and they forgot the fish. That water was the water of animals and the fish became alive and entered into the water."

"Then, Mūsa went on, with Yausha' accompanying him, until evening. Then, Mūsa said to this trustee: 'Bring to us our morning meal, certainly we have met with fatigue from this our journey.' Meaning, in difficulty, his trustee remembered the fish. Then, he said to Mūsa: 'I forgot the fish,' on the rock. Then, Mūsa said: That man which we saw at the rock, he was who we had sought and they returned: 'So they returned retracing their footsteps,' meaning, to the man, and he was engaged in his prayers. Mūsa waited until he finished his prayers and greeted him."

In *Majma'*, 'Allāmah Ṭibirsi says: "Most of the commentators are (agreed) that it was Mūsa Ibn 'Imrān and his servant Yausha' Ibn Nūn. He is called his servant because he accompanied him and he required him to travel and he was present in order to learn from him. It is said: he was in his service. Due to this, he said: 'Bring to us our morning meal...' He was Yausha' Ibn Nūn Ibn Afrāim Ibn Yūsuf Ibn Ya'qūb. Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq says the Ahl al-Kitāb say Mūsa was he who sought Khidīr, but he was Mūsa Ibn Meesha Ibn Yūsuf and he was a prophet of the Bani Israel before Mūsa Ibn 'Imrān."

In *al-Amthal*, Shaikh Nāṣir Makārem says of this narrative: "Surely this narrative of Mūsa and Khidīr has other odd curiosities. In the narrative, it turns our attention to witness an amazing matter. We see an Ūlul-'Azam prophet in every sense of (its meaning) and his station in his time. He lives bound in his knowledge and conscientiousness from some perspectives. Due to that, he goes to a learned teacher (the most-learned of his time) in order to study and learn before him."

"We see that this teacher establishes in his teaching a lesson, one more amazing than the other. Then, this narrative envelopes, as we will see, very important observations. In the beginning of the verse, you recite His, the Exalted's saying: 'And when Mūsa said to his servant: I will not cease until I reach the junction of the two rivers or I will go on for years.' The meaning of the verse is, he is Mūsa Ibn 'Imrān, without a doubt, known as an Ūlul-'Azam prophet. Despite it, some commentators hold out the possibility that the Mūsa mentioned in the verse is other than Mūsa Ibn 'Imrān. We will see, in what follows, that ar-Rāzi has depended upon this due to their lack of ability to unravel some of the difficulties mentioned in the narrative. Due to that, we see they are obliged to emerge from that (view) that Mūsa mentioned in the verse is other than the prophet Mūsa Ibn 'Imrān, in variance with what is related in the verse."

"Regarding the meaning of the word (فَتَى) *Fatah*, it is as most commentators have said and just as numerous narrations have indicated upon that: Yausha' Ibn Nūn, a brave and rightly guided believer of the Bani Israel. The word *Fatah* is employed in his description. It may be by reason of this prominent description or by reason of his service to Mūsa (AS) and his attendance to him."

"The conjunction of the two rivers or ﴿مَجْمَعُ الْبَحْرَيْنِ﴾ is in the meaning of the place of meeting of two rivers. There, there is much talk among commentators regarding the name of these two rivers. However, in a general form, it is possible to summarize the conversation with three probabilities, they are: first, intended by the conjunction of two rivers is the place where the Gulf of 'Aqabah meets with the gulf of Suez. (Then it is known that the Red Sea branches southward into two branches: one branch toward the south east where it forms the Gulf of 'Aqabah. The second toward the north west and is named the Gulf of Suez. These two gulfs connect in the south and flow to the Red Sea.)"

Second, intended by the two rivers is the place where the Indian Ocean connects to the Red Sea in the region of Bāb al-Mandeb (the straights between south-west 'Arabiyah and Africa). Third, the place of the Middle River (which is named also the river of Rome and the White River) and the Atlantic Ocean, meaning the place itself upon which the name Straights of Tāriq Mountain is applied, near the city of Tangiers. "

"The third probability is remote due to the remoteness of the place of Mūsa to the Ṭāriq Mountain which is the distance of a long journey from it. It could take a period of a number of months for his (AS) arrival when traveling by conventional means. Regarding the second probability, with traveling between it and the place of Mūsa (AS) is near, except that it is also somewhat remote."

"The first probability remains the closest whereas it is close to the place of Mūsa's being and living. What gives precedence of this opinion is that which is gained from the verse, in general, that Mūsa (AS) did not travel long upon the road, despite they had prepared to journey to whatever place necessary in order to reach their intended goal. That which is emphasized in the first probability of the place of the conjunction of the two rivers is that which is possible that we can understand from some of the narrations in that."

"The word ﴿حُثْبًا﴾, it means: a long period, which some have explained as eighty years. What was intended by Mūsa (AS) with this word is that: Surely I will not abandon the effort and endeavor to come across that which I have lost, even if for the completion of that I have to travel for several years. From the summary of what we have mentioned is its importance, clarifying for us that Mūsa (AS) was sent for something important and had made firm his resolve. His decision was deeply rooted upon his intended goal and there was absolutely no lack of neglect in that. "

"That lost thing which Mūsa (AS) was sent for would have a great effect in his future. By coming across it, it would open new details for his life. Yes, he was dispatched to a learned man to remove the veil before his eyes and show him new realities and open the doors of knowledge in front of him. We will quickly recognize that Mūsa (AS) possessed a sign in order to come across the place of this great learned man. He was obliged to move toward this sign."

"In His, the Exalted's saying: 'So when they had reached the junction of the two (rivers), they forgot their fish, and it took its way into the sea, going away.' Here, there is much talk among the commentators regarding the type of this fish which was apparently prepared for food, except that the fish had made its way back to the river in an amazing manner. In some of the books of Tafsir there is a narration regarding a spring that gives life and that when the fish met with a quantity of the water of this spring, life returned to it. There is another probability in that the fish was Hubbah, in the meaning that it had not completely died whereas some types of fish remain at the limits of life for a period after their removal from water. It returned to life when it was returned during this period to the water."

"In the completion of the narrative, after passing by the conjunction of the two rivers, Mūsa and his companion became aware of hunger. During this, Mūsa (AS) mentioned that he had brought food with him. With that he said to his companion. 'But when they had gone farther, he said to his servant: Bring to us our morning meal, certainly we have met with fatigue from this our journey.'"

"The word (غَدَاءٌ) Ghada' is said of a meal which its taking is completed in the first day or half (of the first day). However, we understand from the phrase found in the books of language that they, in previous times, applied the word Ghada' on food which its taking was completed in the first day (because it is taken from the word Ghadwah (عَدْوَةٌ) which means in the beginning of the day). When the words (غَدَاءٌ) and (تَغْدِي) are applied today in 'Arabic it is upon food taken in the afternoon. In any case, this sentence makes it apparent that Mūsa and Yausha' had taken a path that we can call a journey, except that this phrase itself gives the meaning that the journey was not long."

During this time, his companion said: '...Did you see when we took refuge on the rock, then I forgot the fish, and nothing made me forget to speak of it but the Shaiṭān, and it took its way into the river; what a wonder!' Due to this incident and topic, in general, it was a sign for Mūsa (AS) due to his passing, during it, the place of the learned man for whom he had left seeking. Due to that he said: That is what we desired. Here, they returned upon the same path: 'He said: This is what we sought for; so they returned retracing their footsteps.'"

"Here, we may submit this question: Is it possible for a prophet like Mūsa (AS) to be afflicted with forgetfulness whereas the Qurān says they forgot their fish? Then, why did the companion of Mūsa (AS) attribute his forgetfulness to Shaiṭān?"

"In reply we say: There doesn't exist there any obstacle to being afflicted with forgetfulness in issues and circumstances not connected to divine rulings and matters of conveyance (of their message).

"Regarding the connection between forgetfulness of his companion and Shaiṭān, then it is possible that it is the reason for the matter of the fish's connection with coming across that learned man, in that Shaiṭān establishes allurements. Due to that, during this action, (Shaiṭān) wanted that there would be forgetfulness, that they would be delayed in arriving to that learned man. It may be a prerequisite of forgetfulness as it became clear to Yausha' himself where he had not been attentive and given much importance to this matter."

﴿فَوَجَدَا عَبْدًا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا آتَيْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِنْ عِنْدِنَا وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِنْ لَدُنَّا عِلْمًا﴾

"Then they found one from among Our servants who We had granted mercy from Us and who We had taught knowledge from Ourselves." [al-Kahf 18:65]

﴿قَالَ لَهُ مُوسَىٰ هَلْ أَتَّبِعُكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُعَلِّمَنِي مِمَّا عُلِّمْتَ رُشْدًا﴾

"Mūsa said to him: Shall I follow you on condition that you should teach me right knowledge of what you have been taught?" [al-Kahf 18:66]

﴿قَالَ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا﴾

"He said: Surely you cannot have patience with me:" [al-Kahf 18:67]

﴿وَكَيفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلَىٰ مَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ خُبْرًا﴾

"And how can you have patience in that of which you have not got a comprehensive knowledge?" [al-Kahf 18:68]

﴿قَالَ سَتَجِدُنِي إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ صَابِرًا وَلَا أَعْصِي لَكَ أَمْرًا﴾

"He said: If Allah pleases, you will find me patient and I shall not disobey you in any matter." [al-Kahf 18:69]

﴿قَالَ فَإِنِ اتَّبَعْتَنِي فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِي عَنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ أُحَدِّثَ لَكَ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا﴾

"He said: If you would follow me, then do not question me about any thing until I myself speak to you about it." [al-Kahf 18:70]

This narrative is one of the more mystical narratives found in the Qurān. Neither the servant of Mūsa nor the learned man Mūsa (AS) sought are mentioned by name in the Qurān. His servant we know to be Yausha' Ibn Nūn Ibn Afrāim Ibn Yūsuf Ibn Ya'qūb (AS), also a prophet of the Bani Israel. He is known as Joshua in the Bible, the prophet who led Mūsa's followers to Holy Land of Palestine. According to Shaikh Mughniyyah, he was the son of Mūsa's sister and Mūsa's successor after his brother Hārūn (AS).

Khidr was not the name of the learned man, rather it was his Laqab. His name is said to be Baliyā Ibn Malikān, according to Shaikh Mughniyyah in *al-Kāshif*. Shaikh Sādūq mentions a narration attributed to Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (AS): *"He was a prophet-messenger. Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, sent him to his people and he summoned them to the unity of God and the affirmation of His prophets, messengers and books. His (miraculous) sign was that he did not sit on dry grass nor upon the white earth except that it blossomed in green. He is named Khidr only due to that. His name was Taliya Ibn Malikān Ibn Āmir Ibn Arafkhasheed Ibn Shām Ibn Nūh, upon him be peace."* ⁵⁶

In a narration attributed to Imām al-Kāẓim (AS), he mentions this encounter between Mūsa and Khidr. He, (AS) says: *"Mūsa came to the learned man, then encountered him on one of the peninsula of the river. Mūsa greeted him, he refused to acknowledge the greeting, when, it was a land in which there was no greeting (of peace). He said: Who are you? He said: I am Mūsa Ibn 'Imrān. He said: You are Mūsa Ibn 'Imrān whom Allah spoke with? He said: Yes. He said: What is your need? He said: I came to you in order that you teach me from that which you have learned of right guidance. He said: I have been commissioned in a matter you are not able to bear and I am commissioned in a matter that I am not able to bear the news of at length."* ⁵⁷

Regarding the verse: *'Then they found one from among Our servants who We had granted mercy from Us and who We had taught knowledge from Ourselves,'* Shaikh Mughniyyah writes in *al-Kāshif*: *His saying: 'Knowledge from Ourselves,' is for the meaning of Tab'eed meaning some, a portion). The intent of knowledge here is knowledge of the unseen, meaning We have provided him something of the knowledge of the unseen (al-Ghaib). That points to his piercing of the boat and his killing of the child."*

"Sufis depend on this verse for the correctness of their sect, one speaking of mystical intuition ('Ilm Laduni) or spontaneous knowledge without any medium. The meaning is that Mūsa and his servant at the time of arriving at the place which they found a man of the righteous servants of Allah, that Allah may show him mercy and bless him with abundant beneficial knowledge. Mūsa greeted him with the most excellent single greeting from him. Mūsa said to him: You are my desire, then will you allow me to keep company with you and teach me that through which rightful guidance is sought and is beneficial?"

"This gives evidence upon those speaking of prophethood for this righteous man. They give evidence of His saying: 'We had granted mercy from Us,' because mercy, it is prophethood. "

"It is perceived that mercy is more general (in meaning) than prophethood and the existence of the general does not indicated upon the existence of the particular. Then, when I say I have eaten fruit, certainly your saying would be that this does not indicate that I have eaten grapes because the word fruit covers grapes and other than it among fruits."

"He said: Surely you cannot have patience with me: And how can you have patience in that of which you have not got a comprehensive knowledge?' The righteous man said to Mūsa: If you accompany me you will see strange things making it difficult upon you to remain silent and not object to it because it is abominable in its outward appearance and its facts are unknown to you. You are not able to have patience in its refutation."

"He (Mūsa) said: If Allah pleases, you will find me patient and I shall not disobey you in any matter.' Mūsa made an exception in patience with his saying: 'If Allah pleases,' fearing that me may not be able to control himself in silence and not object, just as it happened in reality."

"He (the companion of Mūsa) said: If you would follow me, then do not question me about any thing until I myself speak to you about it.' The righteous man made it conditional upon Mūsa that he not ask about that which would happen. Mūsa accepted the conditions because he set off with him just as it is made clear in what follows:"

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

"So they when (their way) until then they embarked in the boat he made a hole in it. (Mūsa) said: Have you made a hole in it to drown its inmates? Certainly you have done a grievous thing." [al-Kahf 18:71]

﴿قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا﴾

"He said: Did I not say that you will not be able to have patience with me? [al-Kahf 18:72]

﴿قَالَ لَا تُؤَاخِذْنِي بِمَا نَسِيتُ وَلَا تُرْهِقْنِي مِنْ أَمْرِي عُسْرًا﴾

"He said: Blame me not for what I forgot, and do not constrain me to a difficult thing in my affair." [al-Kahf 18:73]

In *at-Tibyān*, Shaikh Ṭūsi writes of the first incident between Mūsa (AS) and his companion: "Allah, be He Exalted, gives information about Mūsa (AS) and his companion which he followed him in order to learn from him. They left until they reached the river. The rode in a boat, then his companion pierced the boat, meaning he disabled it. When Allah had informed (his companion) of the benefit in that, Mūsa said it was a Munkar (an act of evil) for that was based on the apparent state: 'Have you made a hole in it to drown its inmates?' In other words, your point in that is to drown the people who will ride in it. The possibility is that he said that seeking to understand, meaning you did that to drown its people or other than that? The first possibility is stronger due to his saying after that: 'Certainly you have done a grievous thing.' In the words of Mujāhid, Imr (إِمْرٌ) is Munkar... (إِمْرٌ) is taken from (أَمْرٌ) because it is the corruption which requires to command its abandonment in favor righteousness. From (this meaning) is the man (described as Imr) when his opinion is weak because it is required that he is commanded (to righteousness) until his opinion is strengthened."

"Then, Khidīr says to him: 'Did I not say,' in that which was before, 'that you will not be able to have patience with me?' Meaning, that which you witness of my actions will not be insignificant upon you and it will be difficult for you because you are not aware of the benefit in it. He did not intend the capability of obedience because Mūsa was capable in the state in which he spoke to him about that, and he was not incapable. This is as one of us says: I am not capable of looking at you. It only means it is difficult for me without negating the capability in that."

"Mūsa said to him in response: 'Blame me not for what I forgot.' It is narrated that he said that when he saw the water had not entered into the boat with its being pierced. He knew that it was the benefit Allah intended for it, then he said: 'Blame me not for what I forgot.'"

﴿فَانْطَلَقَا ۗ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَلْقِيَ غُلَامًا فَقَتَلَهُ قَالَ أَقْتَلْتَنِي بِنَفْسٍ زَكِيَّةٍ بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ ۖ لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا نُكْرًا﴾

"So they went on until, when they met a boy, he slew him. (Mūsa) said: Have you slain an innocent person otherwise than for manslaughter? Certainly you have done an evil thing."

[al-Kahf 18:74]

﴿قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا﴾

"He said: Did I not say that you will not be able to have patience with me? [al-Kahf 18:75]

﴿قَالَ إِن سَأَلْتُكَ عَنْ شَيْءٍ بَعْدَهَا فَلَا تُصَاحِبْنِي ۚ قَدْ بَلَغْتَ مِنْ لَدُنِّي عُذْرًا﴾

"He said: If I ask you about anything after this, keep me not in your company; indeed you shall have (then) found an excuse in my case." [al-Kahf 18:76]

﴿فَانْطَلَقَا ۗ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَتَيَا أَهْلَ قَرْيَةٍ اسْتَطْعَمَ أَهْلُهَا فَأَبَوْا أَنْ يُضَيِّفُوهُمَا فَوَجَدَا فِيهَا جِدَارًا يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَنْقَضَ فَأَقَامَهُ ۖ قَالَ لَوْ شِئْتَ لَتَّخَذْتَ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا﴾

"So they went on until when they came to the people of a town, they asked them for food, but they refused to entertain them as guests. Then, they found in it a wall which was on the point of falling, so he put it into a right state. (Mūsa) said: If you had pleased, you might certainly have taken a recompense for it." [al-Kahf 18:77]

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

"He said: This shall be separation between me and you; now I will inform you of the significance of that with which you could not have patience." [al-Kahf 18:78]

In *al-Kāshif*, Shaikh Mughniyyah speaks of the second and third incident between Mūsa (AS) and his companion: 'So they went on until, when they met a boy, he slew him.' The heart of Mūsa was frightened by the killing: 'Have you slain an innocent person otherwise than for manslaughter? Certainly you have done an evil thing.' What crime has this poor person committed? Have you intentionally killed him without his being charged with a crime? This was an act of evil in his eyes."

"Did I not say that you will not be able to have patience with me?' He said, a second time while reminding him of the condition (he submitted to). Also, the second time Mūsa made an excuse: 'If I ask you about anything after this, keep me not in your company.' The righteous servant had made it conditional before that he not ask him. Now, Mūsa was making it conditional upon himself that he make it an undoing of his accompaniment if he should ask. The believers are with their conditions, then why should it not be so for prophets. 'Indeed you shall have (then) found an excuse in my case.' You may prevent me from every excuse that you justify."

"So they went on until when they came to the people of a town, they asked them for food.' They sought food from them as guests, 'But they refused to entertain them as guests.' Commentators say: He only said they refused to host the two as guests and did not say: they refused to feed the two, due to the indication that the people of the town were lowly people because no one refuses the guest except the lowly, in particular when the guests were strangers."

"Then, they found in it a wall which was on the point of falling, so he put it into a right state.' The pronoun in ﴿فِيهَا﴾ returns to the town. The pronoun for: ﴿فَأَتَامَهُ﴾ is for the righteous servant. Intended here was the meaning: ﴿يَكَادُ﴾ 'on the verge' of falling. Meaning that Mūsa and his companion both saw a wall on the verge of falling. Mūsa became amazed at that: 'If you had pleased, you might certainly have taken a recompense for it.' Have you repaired a wall free of charge for a people who refused us as guests, and we are in immediate need of them? Did you not seek compensation for your work in order to spend for the cost of our food?"

"Puncturing the boat, killing the boy are two examples of that which was evidently evil in its apparent form not its inward form. The repair of the wall was an example of the reverse."

"He said: This shall be separation between me and you; now I will inform you of the significance of that with which you could not have patience.' The righteous servant had made it conditional upon Mūsa that he not ask questions and Mūsa accepted the condition. With that, he asked (anyway). When he mentioned the condition, (Mūsa) made an excuse. However, he asked (again) after the excuse. When he had mentioned it a second time, he broke the covenant upon himself that the righteous servant had made in undoing his accompaniment if he asked afterward... but he asked (again). He was bent on taking the righteous servant as a companion."

"Mūsa was excused in each (situation) which he asked because he could bear patience in goodness and things known as good (Ma'rūf). As for that which he saw as evil (Munkar) he could not and he was not able to bear patience with it until and if he had conveyed that to the opposite of his promise and condition. Meaning the scale for the promised (matters) and conditions is that when they convey abandoning enjoining good and forbidding evil, the personal instinct and other than that does discourage and oppose that except by a power stronger than it and more firm. There is nothing more firm than correct faith, it gains victory over all inclinations and desires. He who gains victory over something (in inclinations and desire), then that is from the correct faith in something."

"Although you pray, fast make pilgrimage to the sacred house of Allah, this the separation between me and you. For you is a road and for me is another road. As such, his companion said to Mūsa, and before the two separated, the righteous servant informed him of his wisdom which he refuted."

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

"As for the boat, it belonged to (some) poor men who worked on the river and I wished that I should damage it, and there was behind them a king who seized every boat by force." [al-Kahf 18:79]

﴿وَأَمَّا الْغُلَامُ فَكَانَ أَبَوَاهُ مُؤْمِنَيْنِ فَخَشِينَا أَنْ يُرْهِقَهُمَا طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا﴾

"And as for the boy, his parents were believers and we feared lest he should make disobedience and ingratitude to come upon them:" [al-Kahf 18:80]

﴿فَأَرَدْنَا أَنْ يُبَدِّلَهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا خَيْرًا مِنْهُ زَكَاءً وَ أَقْرَبَ رُحْمًا﴾

"So we desired that their Lord might give them in his place one better than him in purity and nearer to having compassion." [al-Kahf 18:81]

﴿وَأَمَّا الْجِدَارُ فَكَانَ لِغُلَامَيْنِ يَتِيمَيْنِ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ وَكَانَ تَحْتَهُ كَنْزٌ لَهُمَا وَكَانَ أَبُوهُمَا صَالِحاً فَأَرَادَ رَبُّكَ أَنْ يَبْلُغَا أَشُدَّهُمَا وَيَسْتَخْرِجَا كَنْزَهُمَا رَحْمَةً مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَ مَا فَعَلْتُهُ عَنْ أَمْرِي ۗ ذَٰلِكَ تَأْوِيلُ مَا لَمْ تَسْطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا﴾

"And as for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the city, and there was beneath it a treasure belonging to them, and their father was a righteous man; so your Lord desired that they should attain their maturity and take out their treasure, a mercy from your Lord, and I did not do it of my own accord. This is the significance of that with which you could not have patience." [al-Kahf 18:82]

In *al-Amthal*, Shaikh Nāṣir Makārem says of the righteous servant's separation from Mūsa (AS): *"After the separation between Mūsa and Khidīr became a definite matter, it was required that the divine master establish clarification of the secrets of his actions which Mūsa was unable to have patience with. Then, certainly Mūsa could benefit from his companionship absorbing an understanding of the secrets of these three amazing events. That which is possible is that it opened numerous issues and answered different questions."*

"Then, in the beginning, he mentioned the narrative of the boat: 'As for the boat, it belonged to (some) poor men who worked on the river and I wished that I should damage it, and there was behind them a king who seized every boat by force.' In this arrangement, therefore, it was an aim of good in piercing the boat which appeared at its time of doing to be a dishonorable evil. The aim was to save them from the seizure of the king by force. This king would leave the damaged boat and turn his attention away from it. Then, the particular intent in the first event it was preservation of the interests of a group of poor people."

"The word ﴿وَرَاءَ﴾ does not mean a portion of a place, it is only an allusion to the danger surrounding them (danger of the king) without their knowing of it, with that man is not aware of or is encircled by events which will soon affect him being connected to that. The verse employs the expression (in place of its mention). In addition to that, whenever man is humbled before individual or societal pressure, the expression 'behind' is employed, as in (someone's) saying: Debt collectors are behind me and they won't leave me. In verse sixteen of Sūrah Ibrāhim, we recite His, the Exalted's saying:

﴿مَنْ وَرَاءَهُ جَهَنَّمَ وَيُسْقَىٰ مِنْ مَاءٍ صَدِيدٍ﴾

"Hell is (behind) him and he shall be given to drink festering water." [Ibrāhim 14:16]

"(Meaning) hell is in pursuit and follows the sinners. As such, the word ﴿وَرَاءَ﴾ is employed. Employing the word ﴿مُسْكِينٍ﴾ means that a Miskeen (or poor person) is not he who absolutely does not own anything. Rather, it is a description applied upon persons possessing property and wealth, but it does not preserve their needs. It is also probable that the reason in applying the description of Miskeen upon them is not due to the reason of poverty of wealth, rather by reason of their impoverishment of power and capability. This expression is employed in the 'Arabic language."

"After that, the learned man moved to the explanation of the secret of the second event in which he killed the young boy. Then, he said: 'And as for the boy, his parents were believers and we feared lest he should make disobedience and ingratitude to come upon them:' A group of commentators consider it probable that the intent of the verse is not that which explains its apparent (aspect) that the boy is a non-believer and disobedient and could deviate his parents. The intent is only that his disobedience and ingratitude hurt his parents very much. However, the first explanation is closer to correct."

"In any case, the learned man had killed this boy. It expresses the reason of that is for the father and mother the remaining of the son would occur as a shackle in life. In the passage of remarks, we will answer the ambiguity of (punishment before the crime), which was refuted due to this act of Khidir."

"The word ﴿حَشِينَا﴾ 'we feared' comprises great meaning. This expression makes clear that this learned man was considering himself responsible for the future of people and was not prepared to afflict the believing mother or father with evil by reason of the deviation of their son. Just as the word 'we feared' comes in the meaning: 'we do not desire' and otherwise, not the meaning of fear from the likes of these situations with relation to a person of this level of knowledge, consciousness and capability. In another phraseology: if the aim is protection from the occurrence of evil, we desire to purify the parents of him on the basis of love of them both. It is possible that the expression is in the meaning of 'we knew' as is recorded from Ibn 'Abbās, meaning surely we know that the boy, in the situation of his remaining (alive), would the cause of painful events for his father and his mother in the future."

"As for using the pronoun of the speaker in the state of the plural whereas the speaker was one individual, the reason for that is clear whereas it is not the first time in which the Qurān employs this form. In the speech of the 'Arab, whenever senior persons speaks of themselves, they use the pronoun of the plural."

"The reason for that is that is that these persons have people under them and give them commands in order to execute actions. Allah gives commands to angels and men give commands to those who are under them. Then, the verses relate, in the language of the 'Arab: 'So we desired that their Lord might give them in his place one better than him in purity and nearer to having compassion.'"

"The expression ﴿أَرَدْنَا﴾ and ﴿رَبُّهُمَا﴾ comprise great meanings: We will appoint it after a while (زَكَاتٌ) in the meaning a pure and clean (child). It has a wide meaning whereas it includes faith and good actions. It extends to religious matters and material matters. It may be in this expression that is the answer for the objections of Mūsa (AS) which he said: 'Have you slain an innocent person?' The learned person said in response: This person is not pure and they intended to exchange for them a pure son in exchange for that (impure one). In numerous narrations, we read that Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, exchanged him for a better child than this boy. In one narration, we read that: Allah exchanged him for a girl from whom was born seventy prophets."

As a side note, in the Tafsir of al-'Ayyāshi, there is a related tradition of Imam aṣ-Ṣādiq (AS) narrated on the authority of Ishāq Ibn 'Ammār who says: *"I heard him (AS) saying: 'While the learned man walked with Mūsa, they suddenly came upon a boy playing ('He slew him.'). The learned man struck him with his fist and killed him. Then, Mūsa said to him: 'Have you slain an innocent person otherwise than for manslaughter? Certainly you have done an evil thing.' Then, the learned man entered his hand and uncovered his shoulder. Then, upon (his shoulder) was written: Kāfir (non-believer) imprinted (upon him)."*⁵⁸

Returning to *al-Amthal*, Shaikh Nāṣir Makārem concludes the explanation of the amazing events witnessed by Mūsa (AS) at the hands of the righteous servant. He says: *"In the last of the verses which we are discussing, the learned man uncovers the third event which summons him to building a wall, then he says: 'And as for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the city, and there was beneath it a treasure belonging to them, and their father was a righteous man; so your Lord desired that they should attain their maturity and take out their treasure, a mercy from your Lord.' I was commanded to build this wall by reason of the beauty and excellence of the parents of these two orphans, in order that it not fall and uncover the treasure. It was a situation of danger. In the end of the discussion, in order to negate whatever probable uncertainties or doubt that were before Mūsa (AS) and in order that he be certain that these actions were in accordance with a plan and a particular lofty guidance, the learned man said: 'I did not do it of my own accord. This is the significance of that with which you could not have patience.'"*

﴿وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْقَرْنَيْنِ ط قُلْ سَأَتْلُوا عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا﴾

"And they ask you about Zulqarnain, Say: I will recite to you an account of him."
[al-Kahf 18:83]

﴿إِنَّا مَكَّنَّا لَهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَآتَيْنَاهُ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ سَبَبًا﴾

"Surely We established him in the land and granted him means of access to every thing,"
[al-Kahf 18:84]

﴿فَاتَّبَعَ سَبَبًا﴾

"So he followed a course." [al-Kahf 18:85]

﴿حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَغْرِبَ الشَّمْسِ وَوَجَدَهَا تَغْرُبُ فِي عَيْنٍ حَمِئَةٍ وَوَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا قَوْمًا ط قُلْنَا يَا
ذَا الْقَرْنَيْنِ إِمَّا أَنْ تُعَذِّبَ وَ إِمَّا أَنْ نَتَّخِذَ فِيهِمْ حُسْنًا﴾

"Until he reached the place where the sun set, he found it going down into a black sea, and found by it a people. We said: O Zulqarnain! either give them a chastisement or do them a benefit." [al-Kahf 18:86]

﴿قَالَ أَمَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ فَسَوْفَ نُعَذِّبُهُ ثُمَّ يُرَدُّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ فَيُعَذِّبُهُ عَذَابًا نُكَرًا﴾

"He said: As to him who is unjust, we will chastise him, then shall he be returned to his Lord, and He will chastise him with an exemplary chastisement." [al-Kahf 18:87]

﴿وَأَمَّا مَنْ آمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُ جَزَاءٌ الْحُسْنَىٰ ء وَ سَنَقُولُ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِنَا يُسْرًا﴾

"And as for him who believes and does good, he shall have goodly reward, and We will speak to him an easy word of Our command." [al-Kahf 18:88]

At this point, we find the final narrative contained in this Sūrah: the narrative of Zulqarnain, the man possessing two horns. As with the other narratives found in this Sūrah, the companions of the cave and Mūsa and Khidīr, this narrative is also mystical and shrouded in mystery which leaves questions which can not be easily answered.

As for the reason of revelation of this Sūrah (أَسْبَابُ التُّرُودِ), al-Qummi reports in his Tafsir on the authority of 'Ali Ibn Ibrāhim *"When the Messenger of Allah informed people about the report of Mūsa, his servant and Khidīr, they asked him: Inform us about the traveler traveling between the east and the west. Who is he and what is his narrative? Then, Allah sent down: 'And they ask you about Zulqarnain, Say: I will recite to you an account of him. Surely We established him in the land and granted him means of access to every thing,' Meaning a guide. 'So he followed a course.'"* ⁵⁹

As for Zulqarnain himself, his history is complicated by conflicting traditions. Some traditions indicate that he was not a prophet while others indicate that he was. Some reports indicate that he was a king. Again, other reports contradict this. Even with regard to his name and the reason for this name, there are conflicting traditions.

In the same source, there is a lengthy tradition, of which we will only mention a part, that provides some background on Zulqarnain. It is narrated from Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (AS) on the authority of Abū Baṣeēr who said:

"I asked about the saying of Allah: 'And they ask you about Zulqarnain, Say: I will recite to you an account of him. Surely We established him in the land and granted him means of access to every thing.' He (AS) said: Allah sent Zulqarnain to his people, then they struck him upon the right-side of his head. Allah caused him to die for five-hundred years. Then, He raised him after that to them. They struck him on the left-side of his head. Then, Allah caused him to die for (another) five-hundred years. Then, after that, He raised him after that to them and he ruled the eastern part of the earth and its west from where the sun rose till where it set." ⁶⁰

In Tafsir *al-'Ayyāshi*, there is another tradition narrated on the authority of Aṣḥbagh from Imām Ali Ibn Abi Ṭālib (AS), the Imām denies that he is a prophet or a king: Ibn al-Kuwā said to Ameer al-Mumineen (AS): *"O Ameer al-Mumineen! Tell me about Zulqarnain: is he a king or is he a prophet? And inform me about his two horns: are they gold or are they silver? He (AS) said: He is neither a prophet nor a king. His horns are neither gold nor silver. However, he was a servant, he loved Allah and Allah loved him. He was sincere to Allah and Allah was sincere to him. He was only named Zulqarnain because he called his people (to faith) and they struck him upon the top-side (of his head). Then, he disappeared from them. He returned to them, then they struck him with a sword upon the other side (of his head) and among you are the likes of him."* ⁶¹

In Tafsir *al-Burhān*, there is a tradition from Imam Mūsa al-Kāẓim (AS) on the authority of Ibrāhim Ibn 'Abdul-Ḥameed wherein the Imām says: *"Zulqarnain ruled while he was a (child) of twelve years and he ruled in his kingdom for thirty years."* ⁶²

In another contradictory tradition, also cited by al-'Ayyāshi and attributed to Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (AS), he says: *"Certainly Allah has not sent prophets as kings on the earth except four after Nūḥ (Noah). The first of them is Zulqarnain and his name is 'Ayyāsh, Dawoud, Sulaimān and Yūsuf. Regarding 'Ayyāsh, he ruled that which was between the east and west. Regarding Dawoud, he ruled that which was between the lands of Syria to the city of Iṣṭakhar (in SW Iran). Likewise, was the king Sulaimān. Regarding Yūsuf, he ruled Egypt and its desert but did not extend to other than that."* ⁶³

Regarding the name Zulqarnain, there are also numerous explanations for it. In *Majma'*, 'Allāmah Ṭibirsi gives numerous sayings: *"1) He was named (Zulqarnain) because he had two braids, according to al-Ḥasan. 2) On his head was something resembling two horns hidden by the turban, according to Ya'lah Ibn 'Ubaid. 3) Because he reached the two regions of the earth from the east to the west, then he was named that due to his taking possession of the summit of the sun from its west and its summit from its place of rising, according to az-Zuhri and az-Zajāj has selected it (as his preference). 4) It is because he saw in a dream that he had drawn near to the sun until he had taken it by its two horns in the east and west. Then, he narrated the story of his vision to his people, then they named him Zulqarnain, according to Wahab. 5) He lived a life of two centuries. Then, in his time two centuries of people perished while he was alive. 6) He was a nobleman from two sides of an honorable house from his father and mother. Mu'ād Ibn Jabal said he was a son of Rome and his name was Iskandar (Alexander) and it was he who built Iskandariyyah (Alexandria)."*

In *al-Kāshif*, Shaikh Mughniyyah say: *"They differ in this Zulqarnain, who is he? It is said: He is one of the angels, and this is strange. It is said: rather, he is a prophet. On the authority of Imām 'Ali (AS): 'He is a righteous servant.' There is no doubt in his righteousness because his deeds and words are that which Allah has recorded in His book and it bears witness to his virtue and righteousness. It is said he is Iskandar al-Maḡdūni (Alexander), the student of Aristotle. This was before the birth (of Christ) by similar to 330 years. This is the strangest saying because Iskandar al-Maḡdūni was a pagan worshipping Idols, while Zulqarnain was a believer in Allah and the last day."*

"ar-Rāzi and Abū Hayyān al-Andulusi report on the authority of Abū ar-Raiḥān al-Bairūni that Zulqarnain was a Yemeni 'Arab from the Ḥumair tribe. His name was Abū Bakr."

"They also differ on why he was named with this Laqab Zulqarnain. It is said he is a nobleman from two parents. It is said he had two braids. It is said because he ruled the east and west and other than these sayings and differences which do not present itself in the import of the Qurān for a reason. When did the Qurān give importance to names and reasons of naming. If there were something beneficial in it, certainly the Qurān would not have remained quiet about it. Then, it is unusual that the commentators engage themselves and people with them in that which there is no good in it in this world or the hereafter. Due to that, we stand with the apparent meaning of the text."

"Regarding the meaning of the verses themselves, Nāṣir Makārem writes in al-Amthal: 'And they ask you about Zulqarnain,' then the reply is on the tongue of the select Messenger (ﷺ): 'Say: I will recite to you an account of him.' Because the letter Seen (س) in ﴿سَأْتَلُوا﴾ is used customarily for the near future, the Messenger here speaks directly to them about Zulqarnain. One of the probabilities is that is out of respect and regard for etiquette, an etiquette mixed with calmness and reflection. The etiquette which means he is seeking divine inspiration for knowledge from Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, and conveying it to people."

"The beginning of the verse makes it clear for us that the narrative of Zulqarnain has been handed down successively and is known among people. However, it is surrounded by vagueness and ambiguity. Due to this reason, the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) sought proofs around (the narrative) with compelling explanations."

"In initiating the discussion about Zulqarnain, the Exalted says: 'Surely We established him in the land, meaning We granted him the means to power, ability and wisdom. 'And granted him means of access to every thing,' Commentators limit the meaning of ﴿السَّبَبُ﴾, which means the rope used in climbing date trees. As a means of usage, (it is used in the meaning of) implementing actions. Is it not clear from the meaning of the verse that the word mentioned intends its meaning and broad understanding whereas Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, granted Zulqarnain the reasons for connecting to all things: reasoning, sufficient knowledge, sound management, power, ability, armies and human powers, in addition to material capabilities. Meaning that he was granted every reason, material means and assuring meaning to realize the pursued objective."

"Then, after that, the Qurān points to the benefits derived by Zulqarnain from this access of means. "

"So he followed a course.' Then, 'Until he reached the place where the sun set,' Then, he saw: 'he found it going down into a black sea, and found by it a people.' These people they were whom Allah spoke to Zulqarnain regarding their affair: 'We said: O Zulqarnain! either give them a chastisement or do them a benefit.'"

"Some commentators are of the view that the word ﴿قُلْنَا﴾ 'We said' is evidence of the prophethood of Zulqarnain. However, there is a possibility that the intent of this expression is inspiration of the heart which the Creator, the Majestic and Lofty, grants for (people) other than prophets. This in spite that people are not able to refute that the aforementioned expression, in reality, points to prophethood."

"After that, the verse mentions the reply of Zulqarnain who said: 'He said: As to him who is unjust, we will chastise him, then shall he be returned to his Lord, and He will chastise him with an exemplary chastisement.' Meaning, the unjust will soon be given worldly and heavenly punishment together."

"And as for him who believes and does good, he shall have goodly reward, and We will speak to him an easy word of Our command.' Meaning, We shall deal with him with a goodly saying, besides We shall lighten (their burdens) and We will not make them face difficulties and troubles. In addition, we will not impose many impositions upon him. The apparent meaning is that Zulqarnain intended from that people will be divided into two groups. The first: those who graciously receive (Allah's) divine plan and His call to the Unity of God, faith and resistance to injustice, idolatry and corruption. These shall be rewarded with goodness and the live a life of faith and tranquility."

"Regarding the second (group), they will take a hostile stand against the call of Zulqarnain in an opposition front, continuing in its idolatry, injustice and persistence of its corruption. Due to that, the results of (the group's) position is this severe punishment."

"In comparison his saying: 'He said: As to him who is unjust,' with his saying: 'And as for him who believes and does good,' it clarifies for us that injustice, here meaning idolatry and unrighteous deeds, are counted as the fruit of the inauspicious tree of idolatry."

﴿ثُمَّ أَتْبَعَ سَبَبًا﴾

"Then he followed (another) course." [al-Kahf 18:89]

﴿حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَطْلِعَ الشَّمْسِ وَجْدهَا تَطَّلُعُ عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ لَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُم مِّن دُونِهَا سِتْرًا﴾

"Until when he reached the land of the rising sun, he found it rising on a people to whom We had given no shelter from it;" [al-Kahf 18:90]

﴿كَذٰلِكَ ۗ وَقَدْ أَحَطْنَا بِمَا لَدَيْهِ خُبْرًا﴾

"Even so! and We had a full knowledge of what he had." [al-Kahf 18:91]

﴿ثُمَّ أَتْبَعَ سَبَبًا﴾

"Then he followed (another) course." [al-Kahf 18:92]

﴿حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ بَيْنَ السَّدَّيْنِ وَجَدَ مِن دُونِهِمَا قَوْمًا لَا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ قَوْلًا﴾

"Until when he reached (a place) between two mountains, he found on that side of them a people who could hardly understand a word." [al-Kahf 18:93]

﴿قَالُوا يَا ذَا الْقُرْنَيْنِ إِنَّ يَا جُوجَ وَ مَا جُوجَ مُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَهَلْ نَجْعَلُ لَكَ خَرْجًا عَلَىٰ أَنْ تَجْعَلَ بَيْنَنَا وَ بَيْنَهُمْ سَدًّا﴾

"They said: O Zulqarnain! surely Gog and Magog make mischief in the land. Shall we then pay you a tribute on the condition that you should raise a barrier between us and them." [al-Kahf 18:94]

﴿قَالَ مَا مَكَّنِّي فِيهِ رَبِّي خَيْرٌ فَأَعِينُونِي بِقُوَّةٍ أَجْعَلْ بَيْنَكَ وَ بَيْنَهُمْ رَدْمًا﴾

"He said: That in which my Lord has established me is better, therefore you only help me with workers, I will make a fortified barrier between you and them;" [al-Kahf 18:95]

﴿آتُونِي زُبَرَ الْحَدِيدِ ۖ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا سَاوَىٰ بَيْنَ الصَّدَفَيْنِ قَالَ انْفُخُوا ۖ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَعَلَهُ نَارًا قَالَ
آتُونِي أُفْرِغْ عَلَيْهِ قِطْرًا﴾

"Bring me blocks of iron; until when he had filled up the space between the two mountain sides, he said: Blow; until when he had made it (as) fire, he said: Bring me molten brass which I may pour over it." [al-Kahf 18:96]

﴿فَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا أَنْ يَظْهَرُوهُ وَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا لَهُ نَقْبًا﴾

"So they were not able to scale it nor could they make a hole in it." [al-Kahf 18:97]

﴿قَالَ هَذَا رَحْمَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّي ۖ فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي جَعَلَهُ دَكَّاءَ ۖ وَكَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي حَقًّا﴾

"He said: This is a mercy from my Lord, but when the promise of my Lord comes to pass He will make it level with the ground, and the promise of my Lord is ever true."

[al-Kahf 18:98]

In the Tafsir of *al-'Ayyāshi*, he says: "When (Zulqarnain) ended (the course) at the place of the rising of the sun: 'He found it rising on a people to whom We had given no shelter from it; Even so! and We had a full knowledge of what he had.'"

Then al-'Ayyashi Quotes a tradition from 'Ali Ibn Abi Ṭālib (AS) who said: "Zulqarnain arrived at a people (who) the sun had burned them and changed their bodies and color until they became like darkness."

"Then, Zulqarnain followed a course in the area of darkness until he arrived between two mountain sides. He found beside them a people hardly able to understand a word, they said: 'They said: O Zulqarnain! surely Gog and Magog make mischief in the land' behind these two mountains. When our crops and fruits ripen, they emerge upon us from these mountain sides, then ravage our fruits and crops until nothing remains of it. 'Shall we then pay you a tribute' we can contribute to you every year 'On the condition that you should raise a barrier between us and them; Bring me blocks of iron.'"

"He (AS) said: They dug for him a mountain of iron, then pulled out for him the likeness of bricks. They placed some upon other into that which was between the two mountains. Zulqarnain was the first to build a dam upon the earth. Then, he collected firewood upon it and kindled a fire in it. He placed bellows upon it, then blew upon (the fire). Then when it melted, he said: Bring me...red hot copper."

"He (AS) said: They dug for him a mountain for red hot copper and they threw it upon the iron, it melted and mixed with it : 'So they were not able to scale it nor could they make a hole in it,' meaning Yajūj and Majūj (Gog and Magog). He said: This is a mercy from my Lord, but when the promise of my Lord comes to pass..." ⁶⁴

In Tafsir *al-Kāshif*, Shaikh Mughniyyah writes of verse 93: *"Then he followed (another) course.' Zulqarnain returned to a third land east of the black sea. Living in it were the Slavs (Ṣaqālibah), as it was said, and (Allah), Glorified is He, pointed to them in His saying: 'Until when he reached (a place) between two mountains, he found on that side of them a people who could hardly understand a word.' The intent here of ﴿السَّائِينَ﴾ is two mountains."*

"The people whom Zulqarnain found there could not understand his language, nor the language of whoever was with him. Nor could he or whomever was with him understand the language of the people, but he understood their requests by indications or by means of an interpreter as indicated by His, the Exalted's saying: 'They said: O Zulqarnain! surely Gog and Magog make mischief in the land. Shall we then pay you a tribute on the condition that you should raise a barrier between us and them.'"

"Shaikh Murāghī also says in his Tafsir: Yajūj (Gog) they are the Tartars and Majūj (Magog) are the Moghols. Both their origins are from one father, named Turk. Their land extended from Tibet and China to the Artic Ocean. From them are Ghengis Khan and Hulākū."

"Then, he records from a publication of the year 1888 that the barrier of Zulqarnain is situated behind Jaiḥūn in the district of Balkh (in Khurīsān). Its name is the Gate of Iron and it is near the city of Tirmizh. The Spanish scholar, Silad Barjur mentioned it in his travels which were in the beginning of the fifteenth century. Also, the Spanish historian Kalāfiju mentioned it in his travels in the year 1403."

"Wherever it is, the people sought from Zulqarnain that he build a barrier for them preventing Gog and Magog from them. They were committing aggressions in their lands and placing unreasonable demands of them with evil punishment of killings, abuse and plunder. They made it conditional upon themselves that they give a tribute from their wealth when he would build the barrier."

"He said: That in which my Lord has established me,' He has given me authority and wealth (which) 'is better,' than that which Allah has given you. You are in greater need of your wealth. Then, support it to your advantage.'Therefore you only help me with workers, I will make a fortified barrier between you and them.'"

The intent of power (قُوَّة) here are workers and tools for building. (The intent) of الرِّدْمَاءُ is a barrier (سَدًّا) and dividing wall. 'Bring me blocks of iron;' meaning pieces of it, 'Until when he had filled up the space between the two mountain sides,' الصَّدْفَيْنِ are sides of the mountain because they meet one another (يَتَصَادَفَانِ)... In the speech which is unwritten, he came to it with iron and he placed some it above others until it blocked that which was between the two mountains until it was elevated over both mountains. Then, he brought firewood and ignited a fire in it. He placed bellows and 'He said: Blow; until when he had made it (as) fire,' meaning, he blew upon it, then the barrier became like fire, blazing and glowing. With it, he said: 'Bring me molten brass which I may pour over it.' قَطْرًا it is melted metal. He brought it to (the barrier) and poured it upon the burning iron. Then, some of (the molten metal) adhered to other (materials) and it became a mountain of iron."

"So they were not able' the pronoun 'they' is for Yajūj and Majūj, 'To scale it,' that they could ascend above (the barrier) in order to pass over it. 'Nor could they make a hole in it,' due to its hardness and denseness."

"He said: This is a mercy from my Lord,' pointing to the barrier. In he who says the pronoun returns to Zulqarnain, he had praised Allah, be He Glorified, for this mercy and blessing which He had given to both from His power. Thus, the sincere believer was humbled before Allah and gave thanks to Him for all of that which had followed in the blessings of Allah."

"The building of this barrier was the truest example, in the history of man, of cooperation and compassion between a nation of great wealth and a weak growing nation. Between a people who possessed the means of development and a people who did not possess it."

﴿وَتَرَكْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَمُوجُ فِي بَعْضٍ وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَجَمَعْنَاهُمْ جَمْعًا﴾

"And on that day We will leave part of them in conflict with another part, and the trumpet will be blown, so We will gather them all together." [al-Kahf 18:99]

﴿وَعَرَّضْنَا جَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَرَضًا﴾

"And We will bring forth hell, exposed to view, on that day before the unbelievers." [al-Kahf 18:100]

﴿الَّذِينَ كَانَتْ أَعْيُنُهُمْ فِي غِطَاءٍ عَنِ ذِكْرِي وَ كَانُوا لَا يَسْتَشْعِرُونَ سَمْعًا﴾

"They whose eyes were under cover from My reminder and they could not even hear." [al-Kahf 18:101]

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

"What! do then those who disbelieve think that they can take My servants to be guardians besides Me? Surely We have prepared hell for the entertainment of the unbelievers." [al-Kahf 18:102]

﴿قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِالْأَخْسَرِينَ أَعْمَالًا﴾

"Say: Shall We inform you of the greatest losers in (their) deeds?" [al-Kahf 18:103]

﴿الَّذِينَ ضَلَّ سَعْيُهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَ هُمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعًا﴾

"(These are) they whose labor is lost in this world's life and they think that they are well versed in skill of the work of hands." [al-Kahf 18:104]

﴿أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَ لِقَائِهِ فَحَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فَلَا نُقِيمُ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَزَنًا﴾

"These are they who disbelieve in the communications of their Lord and His meeting, so their deeds become null, and therefore We will not set up a balance for them on the day of resurrection." [al-Kahf 18:105]

﴿ذَلِكَ جَزَاءُهُمْ بِمَا كَفَرُوا وَ اتَّخَذُوا آيَاتِي وَ رُسُلِي هُزُوًا﴾

"Thus it is that their recompense is hell, because they disbelieved and held My communications and My apostles in mockery." [al-Kahf 18:106]

In *Majma'*, Shaikh Ṭibirsi says of verse 99: "Then (Allah), be He Glorified, advises about the state of these nations 'And on that day We will leave part of them in conflict with another part,' meaning on the day of completion of the matter of the barrier, We will leave Yajūj and Majūj surging in this world mixing with most humans and their state will be like the state of water which surges with the clash of its waves. It is said that it intends the remaining creation of Jinn and man, meaning on the day of emergence of Yajūj and Majūj, We will leave some mixing with others because that is the knowledge of the hour."

"Then, (Allah) be He Glorified, mentions the blowing of the trumpet: 'And the trumpet will be blown,' because the emergence of Yajūj and Majūj is one of the portents of the day of judgment. There are differences in ﴿الضُّورُ﴾, it is said it is a horn blown into, according to Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn 'Umar. It is said it is the plural of (الضُّورَةُ) to form or fashion), because Allah, be He Glorified, will fashion creation in their graves just as He fashioned them in the wombs of their mothers. Then, He will blow souls into them just as He blew while they were in the wombs of their mothers, according to al-Ḥasan and Abū 'Ubaidah."

"It is said that Isrāfeel will blow into the horn three times. The first breath is: (نَفْحَةُ الْفَرَجِ) the breath of fright (where all in the heaven and earth will become frightened); the second breath is: (نَفْحَةُ الصَّعِقِ) the breath of unconsciousness which will bring unconsciousness to whomever is in the heaven and the earth, then they will die; the third breath is: (نَفْحَةُ الْقِيَامَةِ) the breath of Qiyāmah for the Lord of the worlds. With it, He will gather people from their graves. 'So We will gather them all together.' meaning We will gather them, the creation, all of them, on one plateau."

"And We will bring forth hell, exposed to view, on that day before the unbelievers.' meaning He will make hell evident for us and show it to them until they witness it and see the types of punishments before being entered into it."

"Then, (Allah) describes the non-believers: 'They whose eyes were under cover from My reminder.' (Allah), be He Glorified, mentions the reason for which they are deserving of hell, meaning they were negligent of consideration of My capabilities obligating My remembrance. They turned aside from reflection upon My communications and My proofs. Then, they became on the level of one who has a cover over his eyes preventing him from perception. 'And they could not even hear.' Meaning it was difficult for them to listen to the Qurān and remember Allah, the Exalted, just as it is said that so-and-so is not able to look at you nor able to hear your words, meaning that became difficult for them. The intent of eyes here is the eyes of the heart as blindness will be attached to the heart."

"'What! do then those who disbelieve think that they can take My servants to be guardians besides Me?' Its meaning is do you think those who reject the Unity of Allah (Tauḥeed) that they will be given mastership aside from Me, assisting (the non-believers) and deflecting My punishment from them? The intent of ﴿عِبَادِي﴾ is the Messiah and angels whom the disbelievers worshipped aside from Allah while they were disavowed from them and every one associating partners with Allah, the Exalted."

"It is said its meaning is do you think those who disbelieve whom you take as a god besides Me while I, Myself, am not angry with them nor will not punish them? (This is) according to Ibn 'Abbās. Indication upon this is the unspoken in His words."

"'Surely We have prepared hell for the entertainment of the unbelievers.' ﴿نُزُلًا﴾ meaning a halting place, according to az-Zajāj. It is the meaning of the saying of Ibn 'Abbās he intended in (مَتَوَاهِمٌ وَ مَصِيرُهُمْ), i.e. their abode or their (place of) destiny. It is (also) said its meaning is We will make the hellfire a place of destiny with Us, it is prepared for the non-believers just as a resting place is prepared for the guest."

"'Say:' O Muḥammad! 'Shall We inform you of the greatest losers in (their) deeds?' Meaning the most at loss in their deeds among people. The meaning is the people which are most at loss among man in that which they perform, they are the non-believers of the People of the Book, the Jews and Christians. '(These are) they whose labor is lost,' meaning their deeds and efforts are rendered invalid (Bāṭil), 'In this world's life and they think that they are well versed in skill of the work of hands.' Meaning they believe that in their deeds they are good and that their deeds are obedience and bringing about nearness (to Allah)."

"In his Tafsir, al-'Ayyāshi narrated, with his chain of narrators: 'Ibn al-Kuwā rose before Ameer al-Mumineen (AS) and asked him about the people of this verse: *'Say: Shall We inform you of the greatest losers in (their) deeds?'* He (AS) said: "These are the People of the Book, they disbelieved in their Lord and created innovations in their faith. Then, their deeds will come to nothing. It is not remote that it is the People of Nahr among them, meaning the Khawārij.'⁶⁵ *These are they who disbelieve in the communications of their Lord and His meeting, so their deeds become null,'* meaning they rejected the proofs of Allah and its evidences and meeting with its recompense in the next life. Then, their deeds become invalid and their deeds are lost because they are made to occur in contradiction to the purpose which Allah commanded for it. *'And therefore We will not set up a balance for them on the day of resurrection.'* Meaning, there is no worth for them with Us nor any respect. We will not prepare for them, rather we will look down upon them and We will punish them."

"It is related in a authentic tradition (aṣ-Ṣaḥeeh) that the prophet said: Surely a great obese man will come on the day of judgment not weighing the weight of the wing of a gnat. *'Thus it is that their recompense is hell,'* Meaning the matter of that which was mentioned is among the (matters bringing about the) loss of their deeds and the failure of their ability."

"Then, (Allah), be He Glorified, begins and says: Thus their reward is hell, *'Because they disbelieved and held My communications and My apostles in mockery,'* meaning due to their disbelief and their taking of my signs and proofs indicating upon My unity, meaning the Qurān and My Messengers, in mockery, meaning (as something) being mocked at."

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ الْفِرْدَوْسِ نُزُلًا﴾

"Surely (as for) those who believe and do good deeds, their place of entertainment shall be the gardens of paradise." [al-Kahf 18:107]

﴿خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يَبْغُونَ عَنْهَا حِوَلًا﴾

"Abiding therein; they shall not desire removal from them." [al-Kahf 18:108]

﴿قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَادًا لِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّي لَنَفِدَا الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَنْفَدَ كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّي وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِثْلِهِ مَدَدًا﴾

"Say: If the sea were ink for the words of my Lord, the sea would surely be consumed before the words of my Lord are exhausted, though We were to bring the like of that (sea) to add thereto." [al-Kahf 18:109]

In the Tafsir, *al-Amthal*, Shaikh Nāṣir Makārem says: "The cause of revelation (of this verse), according to Ibn 'Abbās, the Jews said, when the prophet (Ṣ) recited (the following verse) to them:

﴿وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا﴾

"And you are not given aught of knowledge but a little." [al-Isrā 17:85]

"They said: And how and we have already been given the Taurāh and he who is given the Taurāh is 'Indeed given a great good?' Then, His, the Exalted's, words descended: "Say: If the sea were ink for the words of my Lord..."⁶⁶

In his Tafsir, *at-Tibyān*, Shaikh Ṭūsi says of verse 107: "Then (we) are informed about the state of those who verified the prophet and believed in Allah and performed good deeds (Ṣāliḥāt), that for them are the gardens of Firdaus as a halting place, meaning an abode. Firdaus is a garden in which plants and fruits are gathered together as well as various things which are enjoyable and delicious. Qutādah said: 'It is the most pleasurable place in paradise.'

"In a defective narration (Marfū'), it is narrated that it is the highest place in paradise and the most excellent. az-Zajāj said: 'al-Firdaus is the garden in which is gathered the good things of every garden.' (Allah's) saying: ﴿ذُرْوَةٌ﴾, means an abode, meaning the literal place of arrival (or descent). az-Zajāj relates that it is a valley in which grows numerous types of vegetation."

In Tafsir *al-Burhān*, there is a tradition from 'Ali Ibn Abi Ṭālib (AS) narrated on the authority of al-Hārith in which the Imām says: "For everything there is a summit (ذُرْوَةٌ) and the summit of paradise is al-Firdaus. It is for Muḥammad and the partisans of Muḥammad, peace be upon him and upon them all." ⁶⁷

al-'Ayyāshi has recorded a tradition in his Tafsir from Ibn 'Abbās on the authority of 'Akramah: "There is not in the Qurān the verse 'Those who believe and do good deeds,' except it has over it its leader and its eminent (personality). There has not been a man of the companions of Muḥammad, except Allah has rebuked him while 'Ali has not been mentioned except in (matters of) goodness." ⁶⁸

In *Majma'*, Ṭibirsi says of al-Firdaus: "It is the most pleasurable place in paradise, its center, its most virtuous and loftiest (place), according to Quṭādah."

In the *Tafsir of al-Qummi*, he quotes a tradition from Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (AS) on the authority of Abū Baṣeer regarding the verse: 'If the sea were ink for the words of my Lord, the sea would surely be consumed before the words of my Lord are exhausted, though We were to bring the like of that (sea) to add thereto. Abiding therein; they shall not desire removal from them.' He (AS) said: 'Residing in it forever not being removed from it nor desiring removal from it. They would not desire any exchange for it. I said: His saying: 'Say: If the sea were ink for the words of my Lord...' (until the end), he (AS) said: It informs you that the words of Allah have no ending or extreme limit, there is never any severance. I said: His words: 'Surely (as for) those who believe and do good deeds, their place of entertainment shall be the gardens of paradise.' He (AS) said: This descended in (regards to) Abū Zharr, Salmān, Miqdād and 'Ammār Ibn Yāsir. Allah will place them in the gardens of Firdaus as a halting place, meaning an abode." ⁶⁹

In *at-Tibyān*, Shaikh Ṭūsi says of the verse: 'If the sea were ink for the words of my Lord...' "Ibn Juraij said: Hayy Ibn Akḥṭab said (regarding its meaning, Allah says): O Muḥammad! It is claimed that We have not given you of knowledge except a little. You say: 'Whomever is granted wisdom, he indeed is given great good.' [al-Baqarah 2:269]"

"Then, how are the two (verses) joined together? Then, His, the Exalted's, word descended: 'If the sea were ink for the words of my Lord...' And (the verse) descended: 'And were every tree that is in the earth (made into) pens and the sea (to supply it with ink), with seven more seas to increase it, the words of Allah would not come to an end; surely Allah is Mighty, Wise.' [Luqmān 31:27] "

Shaikh Mughniyyah says of this verse in *al-Kāshif*: "Baḥr (الْبَحْرُ) is a collective noun covering (in its meaning) every type of sea and Midād (مِدَادًا) is ink. (The verb) Nafida (نَفَدًا) is the cessation or end (of something). The intent is that His, the Exalted's, words will not be exhausted, without exception. The meaning is that if the seas, in their totality, were ink for writing the words of Allah, certainly the ink would be exhausted and His words would remain until no end. In the meaning of the verse is His, the Exalted's, saying: 'And were every tree that is in the earth (made into) pens and the sea (to supply it with ink), with seven more seas to increase it, the words of Allah would not come to an end...' [Luqmān 31:27]. It is not the intent here that the words of Allah are composed of the letters of the alphabet, nor the matter of action which is the interpretation of His saying: كُنْ فَيَكُنْ 'Be, so it is,' because this matter is one (matter), there is no duplicity in it:

﴿وَمَا أَمْرُنَا إِلَّا وَاحِدَةٌ كَلَمْحٍ بِالْبَصَرِ﴾

"And our command is but one, as the twinkling of an eye." [al-Qamar 54:50]

"The intent here in His words is only the capability of bringing created things into existence when He desires. It being the same whether He says for it to 'be' in actuality or it shall 'be' in the future, the near or distant future. This capability has no end nor any limit. Regarding the seas and trees and its likes along with it, they are finite (مُتَنَاهِيَةٌ) and every thing finite ends in annihilation."

In the final words, every thing exists or will exist, except Allah, it is temporal and halting. Regarding His, the Exalted's, capability (قُدْرَةٌ), of bringing things into existence, then they can remain with His remaining. We will explain the thought with this example: a man understands the fundamentals of agriculture. Then, recognition of these fundamentals are inseparable in their essence and cannot be separated. Regarding his agriculture and its cultivation, then, it is temporal and it will cease (to exist). The capability of Allah, Glorified is He, does not diminish nor become depleted because it remains eternally. Regarding His creation, then they are temporal. For every temporal matter, there is a beginning and for every beginning, there is an end."

﴿قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ فَمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا﴾

"Say: I am only a mortal like you; it is revealed to me that your god is one God, therefore whoever hopes to meet his Lord, he should do good deeds, and not join any one in the service of his Lord." [al-Kahf 18:110]

In the book *al-Ihtijāj* by 'Allāmah Ṭibirsi, he quotes a tradition from Imām al-Ḥasan al-'Askari (AS), he says: "I said to my father, 'Ali Ibn Muḥammad, peace upon them both: Did the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, debate the Jews and idol-Worshippers (Mushrikeen) when they rebuked him and (did he) debate with them? He said: Numerous times. (He said): One day, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, was sitting in Makkah in the courtyard of the Ka'bah, when 'Abdullah Ibn Abi Ummayyah al-Makhzūmi said: O Muḥammad! You have made a great allegation and you have spoken a surprising proposition! You have claimed that you are the Messenger of the Lord of the worlds and it is appropriate for the Lord of the worlds and the Creator of all creation, that the likes of you, His messenger, is a human! You eat like we eat and you walk in the markets, as we walk!"

"Then, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family said: O Allah! You are the hearer of every voice and knowledgeable of every thing. You know what your servant has said. Then, Allah revealed to him: O Muḥammad!:"

﴿وَقَالُوا مَالِ هَذَا الرَّسُولِ يَأْكُلُ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشِي فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ ط لَوْلَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ فَيَكُونُ مَعَهُ نَذِيرًا﴾

"And they say: What is the matter with this Apostle that he eats food and goes about in the markets; why has not an angel been sent down to him, so that he should have been a warner with him?"

﴿أَوْ يُلْقَىٰ إِلَيْهِ كَنْزٌ أَوْ تَكُونُ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ يَأْكُلُ مِنْهَا ط وَقَالَ الظَّالِمُونَ إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا رَجُلًا مَّسْحُورًا﴾

"Or (why is not) a treasure sent down to him, or he is made to have a garden from which he should eat? And the unjust say: You do not follow any but a man deprived of reason."

[al-Furqān 25:7-8]

"Then, Allah, the Exalted, revealed (the verse): O Muḥammad! 'Say: I am only a mortal like you;' meaning I eat food; 'It is revealed to me that your god is one God,' meaning, say to them: I am human like you but my Lord has favored me with prophethood aside from you. Just as he has favored some people with wealth, good health and beauty aside from other people. Then, do not deny that He has favored me also with prophethood."

Shaikh Mughniyyah says in *al-Kāshif*: "This tradition, in its entirety, is put forth in regards to His, the Exalted's saying: 'And they say: We will by no means believe in you until you cause a fountain to gush forth from the earth for us.'" [al-Isrā 17:90]⁷⁰

Also in *al-Kāshif*, Shaikh Mughniyyah reports a tradition from Ibn 'Abbās: "Allah instructed his prophet in humility with this verse. Then, He commanded him to resolve upon himself that he is Ādami (human) as others besides him are the same, and that Allah honored him with revelation."⁷¹ The Shaikh adds: "We attach to the words of Ibn 'Abbās: 'So that the Muslims would not say regarding Muḥammad (Ṣ) that which the Christians have said regarding 'Isā (AS).'"

Regarding the portion of the verse: 'Therefore whoever hopes to meet his Lord, he should do good deeds...' 'Allāmah Ṭibirsi says in *Majma'*: "It means, he who aspires to meet the reward of his Lord; hopes in Him and has resolved in the resurrection to Him and standing before Him. It is said its meaning is: he who fears meeting the punishment of his Lord. It is said that (الرَّجَاءُ) 'hope' covers both meanings: fear and hope. I recite the words of the poet in regards to that:

«فَلَا كُلُّ مَا تَرْجُو مِنَ الْخَيْرِ كَائِنٌ وَلَا كُلُّ مَا تَرْجُو مِنَ الشَّرِّ وَاقِعٌ»

'Not all of that in which you hope for in good exists;
Nor all of that in which you hope for in bad happens'"

al-'Ayyāshi narrates a tradition in his Tafsir from Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (AS): "There isn't a man who does something of righteousness not seeking from it the objective of Allah. He only seeks the credibility of people being desirous that people will hear of it. That is that in which he makes a partner (with Allah) in the worship of his Lord."⁷²

In his Tafsir, al-Qummi mentions a tradition also from Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (AS) on the authority of Abū al-Jārūd, he (AS): *"The Messenger of Allah was asked about the explanation of the saying of Allah: 'Therefore whoever hopes to meet his Lord...' (until the end), he (Ṣ) said: Whomever prays in eyeservice to people, then he is a Mushrik (one who makes a partner with Allah); whomever gives Zakāh in eyeservice to people, then he is a Mushrik; whomever fasts in eyeservice to people, then he is a Mushrik; whomever performs pilgrimage in eyeservice to people, then he is a Mushrik. He who performs a deed commanded by Allah in eyeservice to people, then he is a Mushrik. Allah does not accept the deeds (performed for) eyeservice."* ⁷³

In Tafsir *al-Burhān*, Sayyid al-Baḥrāni quotes a tradition narrated from Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (AS) on the authority of 'Ali Ibn Sālim, he (AS) said: *"Allah, the Blessed and Exalted said: I am the best partner for he who makes a partner of Me in his deeds. I will only accept that which is for Me in sincerity."* ⁷⁴

In the Tafsir *Nūr ath-Thaqalain*, there is a tradition narrated from the prophet (Ṣ) wherein he (Ṣ) says: *"Allah, the Mighty and Majestic said: I am the most free of need of partners (in those having a need) of a partner. Then, he who performs a deed making a partner in it other than Me, then I am disavowed from him. Then, he is for that which he has made a partner."* ⁷⁵

In *Kitāb at-Tauḥeed* by Shaikh Ṣadūq, there is a tradition of 'Ali Ibn Abi Ṭālib (AS), which says that a man asked him regarding that which appeared similar to him in verses. (He said): *regarding His saying 'Nay, they are disbelievers in the meeting of their Lord.' [as-Sajdah 32:10], meaning disbelievers in resurrection. Then, Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, named it His meeting. Like that, is His saying: 'Whoever hopes to meet his Lord, he should do good deeds.' [al-Kahf 18:110] and His saying 'Whoever hopes to meet Allah, the term appointed by Allah will then most surely come.' [al-'Ankabūt 29:5]. With His saying it means he who believes that he will be resurrected, then certainly the promise of Allah of reward and punishment will surely come. Then there, the meeting there is not a vision, the meeting is resurrection. Then, I understand all of that which is in the Book of Allah in regards to His meeting, it means that: resurrection."* ⁷⁶

In *at-Tibyān*, Shaikh Ṭūsi mentions that it is said that this verse is the last of that which was revealed in the Qurān.

Peace and blessings be upon prophet Muḥammad, his noble family, his pure successors, his righteous companions and his nation.

The messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to Ameer al-Mumineen (AS): *I will teach you a supplication whereby you will not forget the Qurān. Say:*

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِرْحَمْنِيْ بِتَرْكِ مَعَاصِيكَ اَبَدًا مَا اَبْقَيْتَنِيْ، وَ اِرْحَمْنِيْ مِنْ تَكْلُفِ مَا لَا يَغْنِيْنِيْ،
وَ اِرْزُقْنِيْ حُسْنَ الْمَنْظَرِ فَيَمَا يُرْضِيكَ عَنِّيْ، وَ اَلْزِمْ قَلْبِيْ حِفْظَ كِتَابِكَ كَمَا عَلَّمْتَنِيْ، وَ اِرْزُقْنِيْ
اَنْ اَتْلُوهُ عَلَي النَّحْوِ الَّذِي يُرْضِيكَ عَنِّيْ، نَوِّرْ بِكِتَابِكَ بَصْرِيْ وَ اَشْرَحْ صَدْرِيْ، وَ فَرِّحْ بِهٖ قَلْبِيْ،
وَ اَطْلِقْ بِهٖ لِسَانِيْ وَ اسْتَعْمِلْ بِهٖ بِدَنِيْ، وَ قَوِّنِيْ عَلٰى ذٰلِكَ وَ اَعِنِّيْ عَلَيْهِ اِنَّهُ لَا مُعِيْنَ عَلَيْهِ
اِلَّا اَنْتَ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اَنْتَ.

"O Allah! Show me mercy to abandon disobedience to You forever as long as You keep me alive. Show mercy to me to constrain me from that which I do not know. Sustain me with a good understanding in that which pleases You about me. Require my heart to preserve Your Book as You have taught me. Sustain me in reciting it in the manner in which You will be pleased with me. With Your Book, illuminate my vision and expand my chest. With it, exhilarate my heart. Set loose my tongue with it. Give use to my body with it. In that strengthen me with it and preoccupy me with it. Surely, no One is appointed over it except You. There is no god except You."

(al-Kāfi, vol 2, pg. 577)

FOOTNOTES

1. Majma' al-Bayān.

2. From al-Amthal:

قال رسول الله (ص): «ألا أدلكم على سورة شيعتها سبعون ألف ملك حين نزلت ملأت أعظمتها ما بين السماء و الأرض؟ قالو: بلى، قال رسول الله (ص): سورة الكهف، من قرأها يوم الجمعة غفر الله له إلى الجمعة الأخرى و زيادة ثلاثة أيام و أعطى نور يبلغ السماء و وقى فتنة الدجال»

A similar narration is found in Majma' al-Bayān.

3. From Majma' al-Bayān:

عن أبي بن كعب عن النبي (ص)، قال: «من قراها فهو معصوم ثمانية أيام من كل فتنة، فإن خرج الدجال في تلك الثمانية الأيام عصمه الله من فتنة الدجال، و من قرأ الآية في آخر: إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ الآية يأخذ مضجعه كان له مضجعه نور يتلألأ إلى الكعبة حشو ذلك النور ملائكة يصلون عليه حتى يقوم من مضجعه، فإن كان في مكة فتلاها كان له نوراً يتلألأ إلى البيت المعمور حشو ذلك النور ملائكة يصلون عليه حتى يستيقظ.»

4. From Tafsir al-Amthal:

قال رسول الله (ص): «من حفظ عشر آيات من أول سورة الكهف ثم أدرك الدجال لم يضره، و من حفظ خواتم سورة الكهف كانت نوراً يوم القيامة»

5. Ibid:

عن الصادق (ع): «من قرأ سورة الكهف في كل ليلة جمعة لم يمت إلا شهيداً و بعثه الله مع الشهداء و وقف يوم القيامة مع الشهداء»

6. From Majma' al-Bayān:

«محمد بن إسحاق بإسناده عن سعيد بن جبير و عكرمة عن ابن عباس: ان النضر بن الحارث بن كلدة و عقبة بن أبي معيط أنفذهما قريش إلى أحبار يهود بالمدينة، فقالوا لهما: سلاه عن محمد و صفا لهم صفته و خبراهم بقوله: فإنهم أهل الكتاب الأول، و عندهم من علم الأنبياء ما ليس عندنا.

فخرجا حتى قدما المدينة، فسألأ أحبار اليهود عن النبي (ص)، و قالأ لهم ما قالت قريش، فقال لهم أحبار اليهود أسألوه عن ثلاث، فإن أخبركم بهن فهو نبي مرسل و إن لم يفعل فهو رجل متقول،

فأوأ فيه رأيكم سلوه عن فتية ذهبوا في الدهر الأول ما كان أمرهم فإنه قد كان لهم حديث عجيب و سلوه عن رجل طواف قد بلغ مشارق الأرض و مغاربها ما كان نبؤه و سلوه عن الروح ما هو.

(و في رواية أخرى: فإن أخبركم عن الثنتين و لم يخبركم بالروح فهو نبي.)

فانصرفا إلى مكة فقالا يا معاشر قريش! قد جئناكم بفصل ما بينكم و بين محمد و قصاً عليهم القصة، فجاؤوا إلى النبي (ص) فسألوه فقال: أخبركم بما سألتم عنه غداً و لم يستثن، فانصرفوا عنه، فمكث (ص) خمس عشرة ليلة لا يحدث الله إليه في ذلك و حياً و لا يأتيه جبرائيل حتى أرجف أهل مكة و تكلموا في ذلك، فشق على رسول الله (ص) ما يتكلم به أهل مكة عليه،

ثم جاءه جبرائيل (ع) عن الله سبحانه بسورة الكهف و فيها ما سأله عنه عن أمر الفتية و الرجل الطواف و أنزل عليه: ﴿وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ﴾ الآية،

قال ابن إسحاق فذكر لي أن رسول الله (ص) قال لجبرائيل حين جاءه فقد احتبست عني يا جبرائيل، فقال له جبرائيل (ع): ﴿وَمَا تَنْزَلُ إِلَّا بِأَمْرِ رَبِّكَ لَهُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِينَا﴾ الآية

7. From Tafsir al-Qummi:

قال علي بن إبراهيم فحدثني أبي عن ابن أبي عمير عن أبي بصير عن أبي عبد الله: «قال: كان سبب نزولها يعني سورة الكهف أن قريشاً بعثوا ثلاثة نفر نجران، النضر بن الحارث بن كلدة و عقبة بن أبي معيط و العاص بن وائل السهمي ليتعلموا من اليهود و النصرى مسائل يسألونه رسول الله (ص) فخرجوا إلى نجران إلى علماء اليهود، فسألوهم،

فقالوا: سلوه عن ثلاث مسائل فإن أجابكم فيها على ما عندنا فهو صادق، ثم سلوه عن مسألة واحدة فإن ادعى علمها فهو كاذب، قالوا: و ما هذه المسائل؟ قالوا: سلوه عن فتية كانوا في الزمن الأول فخرجوا و غابوا و ناموا و كم بقوا في نومهم حتى انتبهوا؟ و كم كان عددهم؟ و أي شيء كان معهم من غيرهم و ما كان قصتهم؟ و أسأله عن موسى حين أمره الله أن يتبع العالم و يتعلم منه من هو و كيف تبعه و ما كان قصته معه و أن أسأله عن طائف طاف من مغرب الشمس و مطلعها حتى بلغ سد يأجوج و مأجوج من هو و كيف كان قصته؟

ثم أملوا عليهم أخبار هذا الثلاث مسائل و قالوا لهم إن أجابكم بما قد أملينا عليكم فهو صادق و إن أخبركم بخلاف ذلك فلا تصدقوه، قالوا: فما المسألة الرابعة؟ قال: سأله متى تقوم الساعة؟ فإن ادعى علمها فهو كاذب فان قيام الساعة لا يعلمها إلا الله تبارك و تعالی،

فرجعوا إلى مكة و اجتمعوا إلى أبي طالب (ع) فقال: يا أبا طالب، إن ابن أخيك يزعم أنه خبر السماء يأتيه و نحن نسأله عن مسائل فإن أجابنا عنها علمها أنه صادق و إن لم يجبنا علمنا أنه كاذب، فقال أبو طالب: سلوه عما بدا لكم، فسأله عن الثلاث مسائل، فقال رسول الله (ص) غداً أخبركم و لم يستثن.

فاحتبس الوحي عليه أربعين يوماً حتى اعتم النبي (ص) و شك أصحابه الذين كانوا آمنوا به و فرحت قريش و استهزوا و آذوا و حزن أبو طالب (ع)، فما كان بعد أربعين يوماً نزل عليه بسورة الكهف، فقال رسول الله: يا جبرائيل لقد أطأت؟ فقال: إنا نقدر أن ننزل إلا بإذن الله، فانزل ﴿أَمْ حَسِبْتَ﴾ يا محمد ﴿أَنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْكَهْفِ وَالرَّقِيمِ كَانُوا مِنْ آيَاتِنَا عَجَبًا﴾.

8. Majma' al-Bayān.

9. at-Tibyān.

10. Majma' al-Bayān, on the authority of al-Ḥasan and Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq. Also found in Tafsir al-Qummi, Tafsir al-Amthal and al-Mizān.

11. al-Kāshif.

12. al-Amthal.

13. at-Tibyān.

14. al-Mizān:

في الدر المنثور أخرج ابن جرير و ابن أبي حاتم و ابن مردويه و الحاكم في التاريخ عن ابن عمر قال: «تلا رسول الله هذه الآية: ﴿لِنَبْلُوهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا﴾ فقلت: ما معنى ذلك يا رسول الله؟ قال: ليبلوكم أيكم أحسن عقلاً و أروع عن محارم الله و أسرع في طاعة الله»

15. at-Tibyān.

16. From Tafsir al-Burhān:

عن محمد عن أحمد بن علي عن أبي عبد الله في قوله ﴿أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْكَهْفِ وَالرَّقِيمِ كَانُوا مِنْ آيَاتِنَا عَجَبًا﴾، قال: «هم قوم فروا و كتب ملك الديار بأسمائهم و أسماء آبائهم و عشائهم في صحف من رصاص فهو قوله: ﴿أَصْحَابَ الْكَهْفِ وَالرَّقِيمِ﴾»

17. at-Tibyān.

18. From Nūr ath-Thaqalain:

عن سليمان بن جعفر الهندي قال: «قال جعفر بن محمد (ع): يا سليمان من الفتى؟ قال: قلت فذاك، الفتى عندنا الشباب، قال لي: أما علمت أن أصحاب الكهف كانوا كلهم كهولاً، فسماهم الله الفتية بإيمانهم، يا سليمان! من آمن بالله و اتقى هو الفتى»

19. The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire by Edward Gibbon, 1737-1794.

20. Tafsir al-Amthal.

21. Tafsir al-Qummi:

العياشي عن أبي بصير عن أبي عبد الله قال: «أن أصحاب الكهف أسروا بالإيمان و أظهروا الكفر فأجرهم مرتين» و عن علي بن إبراهيم عن أبيه عن أبي عمير عن هشام بن سالم عن أبي عبد الله قال: «أن مثل أبي طالب (ع) مثل أصحاب الكهف أسروا بالإيمان و أظهروا الشرك فأتاهم الله أجرهم مرتين»

22. From Tafsir al-'Ayyāshi:

عن عبيد الله بن يحيى عن أبي عبد الله أنه ذكر أصحاب الكهف و فقال: «لو كلفكم قومكم ما كلفهم قومهم، فليل له: ما كلفهم قومهم؟ فقال: كلفوهم الشرك بالله العظيم، فآظهروا لهم الشرك و أسروا بالإيمان حتى جاءهم الفرج»

23. Majma' al-Bayān.

24. Tafsir al-Kashāf.

25. al-Amthal, al-Mizān.

26. al-Kāshif.

27. Taken from Majma' al-Bayān:

في رواية أمير المؤمنين علي بن أبي طالب (ع) ورد حديث مفصل عن قصة أصحاب الكهف: «لقد كان هؤلاء الأصل ستة نفر اتخذهم (ديقيانوس) وزراءه فأقام ثلاثة عن يمينه و ثلاثة عن يساره. و اتخذ لهم عيداً في كل سنة مرة، فبينما هم ذات يوم في عيد و البطارقة عن يمينه و الهراقلة عن يساره، إذ أتاه بطريق فأخبره أن عساكر الفرس قد غشيت، فاعتم لذلك حتى سقط التاج عن رأسه، فنظر إليه أحد الثلاثة الذين كانوا عن يمينه و يقال له (تمليخا) فقال في نفسه: لو كان (ديقيانوس) إلهاً كما يزعم إذا ما كان يغتم و ما كان يبول و لا يتغوط، و ما كان ينام، و ليس هذا من فعل الإله.

و قد كان هؤلاء الوزراء الستة يجتمعون كل يوم عند أحدهم، و كانوا ذلك اليوم عند (تمليخا) فاتخذ لهم من طيب الطعام ثم قال لهم: يا إخوتاه، قد وقع في قلبي شيء منعني الطعام و الشراب و المنام. قالوا: و ما ذلك يا تمليخا؟ قال: أطلت فكري في هذه السماء فقلت من رفع سقفها محفوظة بلا عمد و لا علاقة من فوقها، و من أجرى فيها شمساً و قمراً، آيتين مبصرتين، و من زينها بالنجوم.

ثم أطلت الفكر في الأرض فقلت: من سطحها على صميم الماء الزخار، و من حبسها بالجبال أن تميد على كل شيء؟ و أطلت فكري في نفسي من أخرجني جنيماً من بطن أمي و من غذاني و من رباني؟ إن لها صناعاً و مدبراً غير (ديقيانوس الملك)، و ما هو إلا ملك الملوك و جبار السماوات. فانكب الفتية (الوزراء) على رجليه يقبلونها و قالوا: بك هدانا الله تعالى من الضلاله إلى الهدى فاشر علينا.

و هنا وشب (تمليخا) فباع تمرّاً من حائل له بثلاثة آلاف درهم و صرّها في ردائه و ركبوا خيولهم و خرجوا من المدينة، فلما ساروا ثلاثة أميال قال لهم تمليخا: يا إخوتاه جاءت مسكنة الآخرة و ذهب ملك الدنيا، أنزلوا عن خيولكم و امشوا على أرجلكم لعل الله أن يجعل لكم من أمركم فرجاً و مخرجاً، فنزلوا عن خيولهم و مشوا على أرجلهم سبعة فراسخ في ذلك اليوم، فجعل أرجلهم تقطر دما و هنا استقبلهم راع، فقالوا: يا أيها الراع، هل من شربة لبن أو ماء؟ فقال الراعي: عندي ما تحبون، و لكن أرى وجوهكم وجوه الملوك، و ما أظنكم إلا هربا من ديقيانوس الملك، قالوا يا أيها الراعي لا يحل لنا الكذب أفينحنينا منك الصدق؟ فاخبروه بقصتهم، فانكب الراعي على أرجلهم يقبلها و يقول: يا قوم لقد وقع في قلبي ما وقع في قلوبكم و لكن أمهلوني حتى أرد الأغنام على أربابها و الحق بكم، فتوقفوا له فرد الأغنام، و أقبل يسعى يتبعه الكلب.. فنظر الفتية (الوزراء) إلى الكلب و قال بعضهم: إنا نخاف أن يفضحنا بنباحه، فالحوا عليه بالحجارة، فانطلق الله تعالى جل ذكره، الكلب (قائلاً) ذروني حتى أحرسكم من عدوكم. فلم يزل الراعي يسير بهم حتى علا بهم جبلاً فانحط بهم على كهف يقال له (الوصيد) فإذا بفناء الكهف عيون الشجار مثمرة فأكلوا من الثمر و شربوا من الماء، و جنهم الليل، فأووا إلى الكهف و ربض الكلب على باب الكهف و مد يديه عليه، فأوحى الله تعالى إلى ملك الموت بقبض أرواحهم (فأنامهم الله نوماً طويلاً و عميقاً)»

28. Taken from Tafsir al-Qummi:

في رواية أبي الجارود عن أبي جعفر (ع) في قوله ﴿لَنْ نَدْعُو مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَهًا لَقَدْ قُلْنَا إِذَا شَطَطًا﴾ «يعني جوراً على الله إن قلنا أن له شريك»

29. at-Tibyān.

30. Majma' al-Bayān.

31. Taken from Tafsir al-Qummi:

قال الصادق (ع): «فخرج هؤلاء بحيلة الصيد و ذلك أنهم مروا براع في طريقهم فدعوه إلى أمرهم فلم يجيبهم و كان مع الراع كلب فاجابهم الكلب»

32. Taken from Tafsir al-Qummi:

عن الصادق (ع)، قال: « فجاء ذلك الرجل فرأى مدينة بخلاف الذي عهدنا و رأى قوماً بخلاف أولئك لم يعرفهم و لم يعرفوا لغته و لم يعرف لغتهم، فقالوا له من أنت و أين جئت؟ فأخبرهم فخرج ملك تلك المدينة مع أصحابه و الرجل معهم حتى وقفوا على باب الكهف و اقبلوا يتطلعون فيه... فلم يكن أحد يقدر بالدخول عليهم غير صاحبهم فانه لما دخل إليهم وجدهم خائفين أن يكون أصحاب دقيانوس شعروا بهم فأخبرهم صاحبهم أنهم كانوا نائمين هذا الزمان الطويل و أنهم آية للناس فبكوا و سألوا الله تعالى أن يعيدهم إلى مضاجعهم نائمين كما كانوا ثم قال الملك: ينبغي أن نبني ههنا مسجداً فان هؤلاء قوم مؤمنين»

33. Taken from Majma' al-Bayān:

عن قتادة: «و قيل أن هذا أخبار من الله تعالى بأنه سيقع نزاع في عددهم ثم وقع ذلك لما وفد نصارى نجران إلى النبي (ص) مجرى ذكرى أصحاب الكهف فقالت اليعقوبية منهم: كانوا ثلاثة رابعهم كلبهم و قالت النسطورية: كانوا خمسة سادسهم كلبهم و قال المسلمون: كانوا سبعة و ثامنهم كلبهم، ﴿قُلْ﴾ يا محمد! ﴿رَبِّي أَعْلَمُ بَعَدَّتِهِمْ مَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ﴾ من الناس»

34. Taken from Kanz ad-Daqāiq:

عن أمير المؤمنين (ع): «إنهم سبعة و ثامنهم كلبهم، أسماءهم: تملیخا و كلشلینا و مشلینا، هؤلاء أصحاب يمين الملك، و مرنوش و دبرنوش و سادینوش أصحاب يساره، و كان يستشيرهم، و السابع الراعي الذي وافقهم، و إسم كلبهم قطمير و إسم مدينتهم أفسوس» و روي ابن عباس هذه الرواية بزيادة: «إسم الراعي كشوطبنونس» نقل من مجمع البيان.

35. Tafsir al-Jāmi' Li-Aḥkām al-Qurān by al-Qurṭūbi and Mufātiḥ al-Ghaib by Fakhruddeen ar-Rāzi.

36. Taken from Tafsir al-'Ayyāshi:

عن عبد الله بن ميمون عن أبي عبد الله (ع) عن أبيه علي بن أبي طالب (ع) «قال إذا أحلف الرجل بالله فله ثنياها إلى أربعين يوماً و ذلك أن قوماً من اليهود سألوا النبي (ص) عن شيء فقال إئتوني غداً و لم يستثن حتى أخبركم، فاحتبس عنه جبرائيل (ع) أربعين يوماً ثم أتاه، و قال: ﴿و لا تَقُولَنَّ لِشَائِي إِنْني فاعِلٌ ذَلكَ غَداً، إِلاَّ أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ نَوِ اذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ إِذْ نَسِيتَ﴾»

37. Also, taken from the Tafsir of al-'Ayyāshi:

عن سلام بن المستنير عن أبي جعفر (ع) قال: «قال الله: ﴿و لا تَقُولَنَّ لِشَائِي إِنْني فاعِلٌ ذَلكَ غَداً، إِلاَّ أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ﴾ ألا أفعله فسبق مشية الله في أن لا أفعل فلا أقدر على أن أفعله قال: فلذلك قال الله: ﴿و اذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ إِذْ نَسِيتَ﴾ أي استثن مشية الله في فعلك»

38. Taken from Nūr ath-Thaqalain:

في رواية عبد الله بن ميمون عن أبي عبد الله (ع) في قوله: «﴿و لا تَقُولَنَّ لِشَائِي إِنْني فاعِلٌ ذَلكَ غَداً، إِلاَّ أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ نَوِ اذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ إِذْ نَسِيتَ﴾ أن تقول إلا من بعد الأربعين فللعبد الإستثناء في اليمين ما بينه و بين أربعين يوماً إذا نسي»

39. Kanz ad-Daqa'iq.

40. Tafsir al-Amthal. Similar points are made in other Tafsir, such as al-Kāshif, al-Mizān, Kanz ad-Daqa'iq, Majma' al-Bayān and others.

41. From Tafsir al-'Ayyāshi:

عن زرارة و حمران عن أبي جعفر و أبي عبد الله (ع) في قوله: ﴿و اصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَ الْعَشِيِّ﴾، «قال: إنما عنى بها الصلاة»

42. Taken from Tafsir al-Qummi:

«فهذه نزلت في سلمان الفارسي، كان عليه كساء في طعامه و هو دثاره و رداؤه، و كان كساء من صفوف، فدخل عيينة بن حصين على النبي (ص) و سلمان عنده، فتأذى عيينة بريح كساء سلمان و قد كان عرق فيه و كان يوم شديد الحر فغرق في الكساء، فقال: يا رسول الله! إذا نحن دخلنا عليك فاخرج هذا و اصرفه عندك فإذا نحن خرجنا فادخل من شئت، فأنزل الله ﴿وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا﴾ و هو عيينة بن حصين بن حذيفة بن بدر الفزاري»

43. Both taken from Tafsir al-Ayyāshi:

عن سعد بن طريف عن أبي عبد الله (ع) قال: «الظلم ثلاثة: ظلم لا يغفره الله، و ظلم يغفره الله، و ظلم لا يدعه، فأما الظلم الذي لا يغفره الله الشرك، و أما الظلم يغفره الله فظلم الرجل نفسه، و أما الظلم الذي لا يدعه فالذنب بين العباد»

عن أبي حمزة عن أبي عبد الله (ع) قال: «نزل جبرائيل بهذه الآية هكذا على محمد (ص): ﴿وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۖ فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ﴾، إنا أعتدنا للظالمين آل محمد حقهم ناراً»

44. Taken from Tafsir al-'Ayyāshi:

«قال اله عز و جل: ﴿الْمَالُ وَ الْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا﴾ كما أن ثمانى ركعات يصليها العبد آخر الليل زينة الآخرة.»

45. Taken from Tafsir al-'Ayyāshi:

«قال رسول الله (ص): خذوا جننكم، قالوا: يا رسول الله عدو حضر؟ قال: لا، و لكن خذوا جننكم من النار، فقالوا: بما نأخذ جنننا يا رسول الله من النار؟ سبحان الله و الحمد لله و لا إله إلا الله و الله أكبر، فأنهن يأتين يوم القيامة و لهن مقدمات و مؤخرات و منجيات و معقبات، و هن الباقيات الصالحات، ثم قال أبو عبد الله (ع): و ﴿لَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ﴾، قال: ذكر الله عندما أحل أو حرم و شبه هذا و مؤخرات»

46. Taken from al-Amthal.

47. Taken from Tafsir Nūr ath-Thaqalain:

«لما نزلت هذه الآية على رسول الله (ص) غشى عليه و حمل إلى حجرة أم سلمة، فانتظره أصحابه وقت الصلاة فلم يخرج، فاجتمع المسلمون فقالوا: ما لنبي الله؟ قالت أم سلمة: إن نبي الله عنكم مشغول، ثم خرج بعد ذلك فرقى المنبر فقال: أيها الناس! أنكم تحشرون يوم القيامة كما خلقتم عرأة، ثم قرأ على أصحابه»

48. Taken from Nūr ath-Thaqalain:

«يا محمد اخبرني عن وسط الدنيا؟ قال: بيت المقدس، قال: لما ذلك؟ قال: لأن فيها المحشر و المنشر، و منه ارتفع العرش، و فيه الصراط و الميزان، قال: صدقت يا محمد»

49. Taken from Majma' al-Bayān:

«روي عن النبي (ص) أنه قال: يحشر الناس من قبورهم يوم القيامة حفاة عرأة غرلاً، فقالت عائشة: يا محمد! أما يستحيي بعضهم من بعض؟ فقال: لكل إمرء منهم يومئذ شأن يغنيه»

Also narrated in Nūr ath-Thaqalain.

50. Taken from Kanz ad-Daqa'iq:

«قال السائل للنبي (ص): أخبرني عن الناس يحشرون يوم القيامة عرأة؟ قال: بل يحشرون في أكفانهم، قال: أنى لهم بالأكفان و قد بليت؟، قال: إن الذي أحیی أبدانهم جدد أكفانهم، قال: فمن مات بلا كفن؟، قال: يستر الله عورته بما يشاء من عنده»

51. al-Mizān.

52. Taken from Tafsir al-'Ayyāshi:

«عن جميل بن دراج عن أبي عبد الله (ع) قال: سألته عن إبليس أكان من الملائكة؟ و هل كان يلي من أمر السماء؟ قال: أنه لم يكن من الملائكة و لم يكن يلي من أمر السماء، كان من الجن و كان مع الملائكة و كانت الملائكة تراه منها، و كان الله يعلم أنه ليس منها، فلما أمر بالسجود كان الذي كان»

53. Taken from the History of Ṭabari (تأريخ الطبري), vol. 1, pg. 84:

«عن ابن عباس، قال: كان إبليس من حي من أحياء الملائكة يقال لهم الجن، خلقوا من نار السموم من بين الملائكة، قال و كان اسمه الحارث، قال: و كان خازناً من خزان الجنة، قال: و خلقت الملائكة كلهم من نور غير هذا الحي، قال: خلقت الجن الذين ذكروا في قرآن من مارج من نار، و هو لسان النار الذي يكون في طرفها إذا ألهمت، قال: و خلق الإنسان من طين،

فأول من سكن الأرض الجن فأفسدوا فيها و سفقوا الدماء و قتل بعضهم بعضاً، قال: فبعث الله إبليس في جند من الملائكة و هم هذا الحي الذين يقال لهم الجن، فقتلهم إبليس و من معه حتى ألحقهم بجزائر البحور و أطراف الجبال، فلما فعل إبليس ذلك إغتر في نفسه، و قال: قد صنعت شيئاً لم يصنع أحد، قال: فاطلع الله على ذلك من قلبه و لم تطلع عليه الملائكة الذين معه»

54. Taken from Tafsir al-'Ayyāshi (also reported in Tafsir al-Burhān, Nūr ath-Thaqalain and Kanz ad-Daqaīq):

«عن محمد بن مروان عن أبي جعفر (ع) في قوله: ﴿وَمَا كُنْتُ مَتَّخِذَ الْمُضِلِّينَ عَضُدًا﴾، قال: إن رسول الله (ص) قال: اللهم أعز الدين بعمر بن الخطاب أو بأبي جهل بن هاشم، فأنزل الله: ﴿وَمَا كُنْتُ مَتَّخِذَ الْمُضِلِّينَ عَضُدًا﴾ يعنيهما»

55. Taken from Nūr ath -Thaqalain:

في كتاب الإحتجاج للطبرسي (ره) عن أمير المؤمنين (ع) حديث طويل يقول فيه عليه السلام: «قد يكون بعض ظن الكافرين يقيناً، و ذلك قوله: ﴿وَرَأَى الْمُجْرِمُونَ النَّارَ فَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ مُوَاقِعُوهَا﴾ أي أيقنوا أنهم مواقعوها»

56. Taken from the book 'Ilāl ash-Sharāi' by Shaikh Sadūq:

في كتاب علل الشرائع باسنادث إلى جعفر بن محمد بن عمارة عن أبيه عن جعفر بن محمد (ع) انه قال: «ان الخضر كان نبياً مرسلأ بعثه الله تبارك و تعالى إلى قومه، فدعاهم إلى توحيد و الإقرار بأنبيائه و رسله و كتبه. و كانت آيته أنه كان لا يجلس على خشبة يابسة، و لا أرض بيضاء إلا ازهرت خضراً، و إنما سمي خضراً لذلك و كان اسمه تاليا بن ملكان بن عامر بن ارفخشيد بن شام بن نوح عليه السلام» روي أيضاً عن ابن بابويه عن جعفر بن محمد.

57. Taken from Majma' al-Bayān:

قال ابن إبراهيم: حدثني محمد بن علي بن بلال قال إختلف يونس و هشام بن إبراهيم في العالم الذي أتاه موسى أيهما كان أعلم و هل يجوز أن يكون على موسى حجة في وقته و هو حجة الله على خلقه فكتبوا إلى أبي الحسن الرضا (ع) يسألونه عن ذلك، فكتب في الجواب: «أتى موسى العالم فأصابه في جزيرة من جزائر البحر، فسلم عليه موسى فانكر السلام إذ كان بأرض ليس بها السلام، قال من أنت؟، قال: أنا موسى بن عمران، قال: أنت موسى بن عمران الذي كلمه الله تكليماً؟ قال: نعم، قال: ما حاجتك؟، قال: جئت لتعلمني مما علمت رشداً، قال: إني وكلت بأمر لا تطيقه و وكلت بأمر لا أطيقه الخبر بطوله»

58. Taken from Tafsir al-'Ayyāshi:

«عن إسحاق بن عمار عن أبي عبد الله (ع) قال: سمعت يقول: بينما العالم يمشي مع موسى إذ هم بسلام بلعب ﴿فَقَتَلَهُ﴾ قال: وكزه العالم فقتله، قال له موسى: ﴿أَقْتَلْتَ نَفْساً زَكِيَّةً بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ ۗ لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئاً نُكْرًا﴾ فادخل العالم يده فاقتلع كتفه فإذا عليه مكتوب كافر مطبوع» روي أيضاً في نور الثقلين و البرهان.

59. Taken from Tafsir al-Qummi:

قال علي بن إبراهيم: «فلما أخبر رسول الله (ص) بخبر موسى و فتاه و الخضر قالوا: فأخبرنا عن طائف طاف المشرق و المغرب من هو و ما قصته؟ فأنزل الله: ﴿وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ ذِي الْقَرْنَيْنِ ۗ قُلْ سَأَتْلُوا عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا، إِنَّا مَكِّنَّا لَهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَآتَيْنَاهُ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ سَبَبًا﴾ أي دليلاً ﴿فَاتَّبَعَ سَبَبًا﴾»

60. Taken from Tafsir al-Qummi:

حدثنا جعفر بن أحمد عن عبد الله بن موسى عن الحسن بن علي عن أبي حمزة عن أبيه عن أبي بصير عن أبي عبد الله (ع)، قال: «سألته عن قول الله: ﴿وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ ذِي الْقَرْنَيْنِ ۗ قُلْ سَأَتْلُوا عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا﴾ قال: أن ذا القرنين بعثه الله إلى قومه فضربوه على قرنه الأيمن فأماته الله خمسمائة عام، ثم بعثه الله إليهم بعد ذلك فضربوه على قرنه الأيسر فأماته الله خمسمائة عام، ثم بعثه إليهم بعد ذلك فملكه مشارق الأرض و مغاربها من حيث تطلع الشمس إلى حيث تغرب»

61. Taken from Tafsir al-'Ayyāshi:

عن إبت بابويه عن أبيه عن محمد بن يحيى العطار عن الحسين بن الحسن بن أبان عن محمد بن أورمة قال حدثني القاسم بن عروة عن بريد العجلي عن أصبغ بن نباتة قال: قام ابن الكو إلى أمير المؤمنين (ع) فقال: «يا أمير المؤمنين اخبرني عن ذي القرنين أملك كان أم نبي؟ و اخبرني عن قرناه أذهب أو فضة؟ قال (ع): أنه لم يكن النبي و لا ملك، و لم يكن قرناه ذهب و لا فضة و لكنه كان عبداً أحب الله فأحبه و نصح لله فنصح له، و إنما سمي ذو القرنين لانه دعا قومه فضربوه على قرنه فغاب عنهم، ثم عاد إليهم فدعاهم فضربوه بالسيف على قرنه الآخر، و فيكم مثله» و روي أيضاً في تفسير نور الثقلين.

62. Taken from Tafsir al-Burhān:

عن أحمد بن محمد بن خالد البرقي عن محمد بن عيسى اليقطيني عن عبيد الله الدهقان عن درست بن أبي منصور الواسطي عن إبراهيم بن عبد الحميد عن أبي الحسن موسى بن جعفر (ع) قال: «ملك ذو القرنين و هو ابن إثنتا عشرة سنة و ملك في ملكه ثلاثين سنة»

63. Taken from Tafsir al-'Ayyāshi:

عن أبي حمزة الشمالي عن أبي جعفر (ع) قال: «ان الله لم يبعث أنبياءً ملوكاً في الأرض إلا أربعة بعد نوح، أولهم ذو القرنين و اسمه عياش، و داود و سليمان و يوسف، فأما عياش فملك ما بين المشرق و المغرب، و أما داود فملك ما بين الشامات إلى بلاد اصطخر و كذلك ملك سليمان، فاما يوسف فملك مصر و براريها لم يجاوزها إلى غيرها»

64. From Tafsir al-'Ayyāshi on the authority of 'Ali Ibn al-Ḥasan and Muḥammad Ibn Naṣeer:

قال أمير المؤمنين (ع): «إن ذا القرنين ورد على قوم أحرقتهم الشمس و غيرت أجسادهم و ألوانهم حتى إذا بلغ بين السدين وجد من دونهما قوماً لا يكادون يفقهون قولاً ﴿قَالُوا يَا ذَا الْقَرْنَيْنِ إِنَّ يَأْجُوجَ وَ مَاْجُوجَ مُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ﴾ خلف هذين الجبلين و هم يفسدون في الأرض، إذ أبان زروعنا و ثمارنا خرجوا علينا من هذين السدين فرعوا من ثمارنا و زروعنا حتى لا يبقون منها شيء، ﴿فَهَلْ نَجْعَلُ لَكَ خَرْجاً﴾ نؤديه إليك كل عام ﴿عَلَى أَنْ تَجْعَلَ بَيْنَنَا وَ بَيْنَهُمْ سَدًّا﴾ إلى قوله ﴿زُبْرَ الْحَدِيدِ﴾، قال: فأحتفر له جبل حديد فقلعوا له أمثال اللبن، فطرح بعضه على بعض فيما بين الصدفين، و كان ذو القرنين هو أول من بنى ردماً على الأرض، ثم جمع عليه الحطب و ألهب فيه النار، و وضع عليه المنافيخ فنفخوا عليه، فلما ذاب قال: آتوني بقسر و هو المس الأحمر، قال: فأحتفروا له جبلاً من مس فطرحوه على الحديد فذاب معه و اختلط به، قال: ﴿فَمَا اسْطَاعُوا أَنْ يَظْهَرُوهُ وَ مَا اسْتَطَاعُوا لَهُ نَقْباً﴾، يعني يأجوج و مأجوج ﴿قَالَ هَذَا رَحْمَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّي ۖ فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي جَعَلَهُ دَكَّاءَ ۗ وَ كَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي حَقًّا﴾

65. Taken from Majma' al-Bayān:

روى العياشي بإسناده عن قوله تعالى: ﴿أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَ لِقَائِهِ فَحَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فَلَا نُقِيمُ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَزْنًا﴾ قال: «قام ابن الكواء إلى أمير المؤمنين (ع) فسأله أهل هذا آية فقال: أولئك أهل الكتاب كفروا بربهم و ابتدعوا في دينهم فحبطت أعمالهم و ما أهل النهر ببعيد يعني الخوارج»

66. Taken from Tafsir al-Amthal:

عن ابن عباس قال: «قالت اليهود لما قال لهم النبي (ص): ﴿مَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا﴾، قالوا: و كيف و قد أوتينا التوراة و من أوتى التوراة ﴿فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا﴾؟ فنزل قوله تعالى: ﴿قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَادًا لِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّي﴾»

67. Taken from Tafsir al-Burhān:

قال حدثنا محمد بن الحسين الخثعمي، عن محمد بن يحيى الحجري، عن عمر بن صخر الهذلي، عن الصباح بن يحيى، عن أبي إسحاق، عن الحارث عن علي (ع) أنه قال: «لكل شيء ذروة و ذروة الجنة الفردوس و هي لمحمد و آل محمد صلى الله عليه و عليهم أجمعين»

68. Taken from Tafsir al-'Ayyāshi:

عن عكرمة عن ابن عباس قال: «ما في القرآن آية ﴿الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَ عَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ﴾ إلا و علي أميرها و شريفها، و ما من أصحاب محمد رجل إلا و قد عاتبه الله، و ما ذكر علياً إلا بخير»

69. Taken from Tafsir al-Qummi:

عن جعفر بن أحمد عن عبيد الله بن موسى عن الحسن بن علي بن أبي حمزة عن أبيه عن أبي بصير عن أبي عبد الله (ع) في قوله: ﴿خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يَبْغُونَ عَنْهَا حِوَلًا﴾ «قال: خالدین فیہا لا یریدون بہا بدلاً، قلت: قوله: ﴿قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَادًا لِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّي﴾ إلخ، قال: قد اخبرك أن كلام الله ليس له آخر و لا غاية و ينقطع أبداً، قلت قوله: ﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ الْفِرْدَوْسِ نُزُلًا﴾ قال: نزلت في أبي ذر و سلمان و المقداد و عمار بن ياسر جعل لهم جنات الفردوس نزلاً أي مأوى و منزلاً»

70. Taken from Tafsir al-Burhān:

في كتاب الإحتجاج للطبرسي و عن أبي محمد الحسن العسكري (ع)، قال: «قلت لأبي علي بن محمد، عليهما السلام: هل كان رسول الله (ص) يناظر اليهود و المشركين إذا عاتبوه و يحاجهم؟ قال: مراراً كثيراً، أن رسول الله (ص) كان قاعداً ذات يوم بمكة بفناء الكعبة إذا ابتدأ عبد الله بن أبي أمية المخزومي فقال: يا محمد لقد إدعيت دعوى عظيمة، و قلت مقالاً هائلاً، زعمت انك رسول رب العالمين، و ما ينبغي لرب العالمين و خالق الخلق أجمعين أن يكون مثلك رسوله بشراً مثلنا تأكل كما نأكل و تمشي في الأسواق كما نمشي،

فقال رسول الله (ص): أَللّٰهُمَّ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ لِكُلِّ صَوْتٍ، وَ الْعَالِمُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ، تَعْلَمُ مَا قَالَهُ عِبَادُكَ، فَانزِلْ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ يَا مُحَمَّد: ﴿وَ قَالُوا مَا لِهَذَا الرَّسُولِ يَأْكُلُ الطَّعَامَ وَ يَمْشِي فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ﴾ إلى قوله ﴿رَجُلًا مَسْحُورًا﴾ ثم أنزل الله تعالى: يا محمد ﴿قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ﴾ يعني أكل الطعام، ﴿يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ﴾ يعني قل لهم أنا في البشرية مثلكم و لكن خصني ربي بالنبوة دونكم كما يخص بعض البشر بالغني و الصحة و الجمال دون بعض من البشر، فلا تنكروا أن يخصني أيضاً بالنبوة» تقدم الحديث بطوله في قوله تعالى: ﴿وَ قَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّىٰ تَفْجُرَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ يَنْبُوعًا﴾

71. Taken from Tafsir al-Kāshif:

قال ابن عباس: «علم الله نبيه التواضع بهذه الآية، فأمره أن يقر على نفسه بأنه آدمي كغيره سوى أن الله أكرمه بالوحي»

72. Taken from Tafsir al-'Ayyāshi:

عن جراح عن أبي عبد الله (ص) عن قوله تعالى: ﴿فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا﴾ قال (ع): «انه ليس من رجل يعمل شيئاً من البر لا يطلب به وجه الله إنما يطلب به تزكية الناس يشتهي أن يسمع به الناس، فذاك الذي أشرك بعبادة ربه»

73. Taken from Tafsir al-Qummi:

في رواية أبي الجارود عن أبي جعفر (ع) قال: «سئل رسول الله (ص) عن تفسير قول الله: ﴿فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ﴾ الخ فقال: من صلى مراعاة الناس فهو مشرك، و من زكى مراعاة الناس فهو مشرك و من صام مراعاة الناس فهو مشرك و من حج مراعاة الناس فهو مشرك، و من عمل عملاً مما أمر الله به مراعاة الناس فهو مشرك، و لا يقبل الله عمل مراعاة»

74. Taken from Tafsir Nūr ath-Thaqalain:

روي عن النبي (ص) قال: «قال الله عز و جل: أنا أغنى الشركاء عن الشرك فمن عمل عملاً أشرك فيه غيري فأنا منه بريء فهو للذي أشرك» أورده مسلم في الصحيح

75. Taken from Nūr ath-Thaqalain:

روي عن النبي (ص) أنه قال: «قال الله عز و جل: أنا أغنى الشركاء عن الشرك فمن عمل عملاً أشرك فيه غيري فإنه منه بريء، فهو للذي أشرك»

76. Taken from the Book of Tauḥeed(كتاب التوحيد) by Shaikh Ṣadūq:

و في كتاب التوحيد: عن علي (ع) حديث طويل، يقول فيه و قد سأله رجل عما إشتبه عليه من الآية: «فأما قوله: ﴿بَلْ هُمْ بِلِقَائِ رَبِّهِمْ كَافِرُونَ﴾ يعني: بالبعث، فسماه عز و جل لقاءه، و كذلك قوله: ﴿فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا﴾ و قوله: ﴿مَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ أَجَلَ اللَّهِ لَآتٍ﴾، يعني بقوله: من يؤمن بأنه مبعوث فإن وعد الله لآت من الثواب و العقاب، فللقاء ههنا ليس بالرؤية، و لقاء هو البعث، فأفهم جميع ما في كتاب الله من لقاءه فانه يعني ذلك: البعث»

سيرة ذي القرنين

He was the first ruler after Nūḥ (Noah). His name was 'Ayyāsh and he ruled the earth. He was in the era of Ibrāhim, al-Khaleel (AS). They met and shook hands, then at the time of his leaving, (the rulership) passed to (Ibrāhim) al-Khaleel (AS). Ibrāhim accepted it and he shook his hand.

It is said that this righteous man was a citizen of Alexandria and he was not a prophet nor a king. Rather, he was a righteous servant, he loved Allah, the Exalted, and Allah loved him. He was sincere and acted purely for his Lord. It is said he was called Iskandarūs. He had literary knowledge, ethics and modesty since his youth until he matured and became a man. One night in his dream, he saw that it was like he was close to the sun until he took it by its two horns in the east and west. When he narrated his vision to his people, they named him Zulqarnain (posessor of the two horns).

Then, when he saw this vision, his importance become known remotely, his voice was elevated and he became mighty among his people until he became revered among them and obeyed. That was in the days of his elderly mother. When his affair was elevated and his capability became important among his people, the first of that which he resolved in his affair was that he said: *I surrender to Allah, the Mighty and Majestic*. Then, he took to summoning his people to faith in Allah, the Exalted. They made their believing a reverence for him until a sufficient number of his city accepted Islam at his hand. His city was named Dūmah al-Jandal (دومة الجندل) in which he had a home (said to be located in a valley between Jordan and Najd).

Allah, the Exalted, mentioned his narrative in a summary manner in His, be He Glorified's, saying: *"And they ask you about Zulqarnain, Say: I will recite to you an account of him. Surely We established him in the land and granted him means of access to every thing,"* until its end, [al-Kahf 18:83-84]. It is also narrated that he lived five hundred years and in his life two centuries of people became extinct. It is said that is the reason of his being named Zulqarnain and his fame. Or because he traveled the two corners of the world, meaning its east and its west, or other than that.

Because Zulqarnain was sincere and pure toward Allah, be He Glorified, He inspired him in some affairs and strengthened him in the earth. Allah gave him power, bravery and reverence. Then, Allah granted him brilliant reasoning capabilities and piercing insight. His love entered into the hearts of people and Allah gave him knowledge of all things by which he could recognize truth from falsehood.

Then, Allah revealed to him that he should travel to the west of the earth and to its east as your city had come under your fold and that was worship for you. Allah made a companion of one of the angels for him, said to be Raqāeel, then he became his friend. He would descend to him and converse in whatever he liked and he took him into his confidence.

Allah made clouds subservient for him and he was able to select between two types: Dhulūl (ذلول), and it was that which had no thunder, no lightning nor any lightning bolts and Ṣa'b (صعب), and it was that which included the three matters or some of them. Zulqarnain selected from the two Dhulūl. Zulqarnain rode the cloud and traveled in the land and called the populace of servants to Allah, be He Glorified, and he was a messenger in himself. (Allah) extended for him the means and spread for him light until the night and the day were the same for him. He could see and perceive in the night just as he could perceive during the day. Allah, the Exalted, assisted him with fear. People upon seeing him, their stomachs would become filled with terror of him and reverence for him and fear of his influence. When he would descend into a town, he would roar in it just like an angry lion.

Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, revealed to him: O Zulqarnain! You are My proof upon all creation between the heart beats from the place of the rising of the sun to the place of its setting and this is the interpretation of your vision. Then, he said: My God! Surely You are assigning me a great matter no one is capable of except for You.

Inform me about this nation, in which people are their majority; by which number can I vanquish them; with which stratagem is their deception; by which patience can I bear them; with which tongue can I speak with them; how can I recognize their language; by what hearing am I capable of (understanding) their words; by which insight can I penetrate them; by which proof can I debate with them; in which heart may I ignore from them; with which wisdom may I organize their affairs; in which forbearance may I persevere over them; with which justice shall I be fair with them; with which understanding shall I make separation between them; with which knowledge shall I bring their affairs to perfection; with which reasoning shall I hold them accountable; with which army shall I fight them?

I have nothing with me of that which You have mentioned. O my Lord! Protect me against them for You are the Merciful Lord. You do not burden a soul except with that which it is capable; You do not burden us except with what we can bear.

Then Allah, Majestic is His splendor, revealed to him: Surely I will give you the ability of that which you can bear and I will lay open for you your heart, then you will hear every thing. I will expand for you your understanding and give you a deep understanding of every thing. I will set loose your tongue for every thing.

I will account for you, then you will not miss anything; I will preserve you and nothing will depart from you; I will strengthen your back so nothing will frighten you; I will dress you with awe, then nothing will scare you; I will guide your opinion for you and you will achieve every thing; I will make your body subservient for you and you will perceive every thing; I will make subservient for you light and darkness and make both two soldiers of your army; the light will guide you and the darkness will prevent nations from behind you.

Then, when the people of his town accepted faith at his hand, they gathered around him and revered him. He ordered them that they build a central place of worship, its length was four hundred Zharā'i (approx. 272 m./680 ft.) and its width was 200 Zharā'i (approx. 136 m./340 ft.). Then, they said to him: How can wood reach across the two walls for you? He said: When you finish, make it obligatory upon every believer something of gold and silver within his ability. After gathering the gold and silver they cut each of those like nail clippings. Then, they mixed it with soil and squeezed it and filled that which was between the two walls with that soil mixed with the two metals until it became suitable for raising across the two walls. When they finished with that, they came with sheets of copper melting it above that mixture of soil which the higher level became level with the earth until the copper became one piece and a roof supported by the four sides of the walls.

Then, they summoned the poor to transfer that soil from under the roof in order to vacate (the soil) collected in it. Along with making every transfer of something from the soil, each one became the owner of all of that gold and silver in it. Quickly, they went to it being desirous of the metal in it. The people responded to that and obeyed his command. They constructed the place of worship for him and worked as he commanded. When the poor had evacuated the soil from inside of the place of worship, the roof was independent in itself resting upon the walls. The poor benefited from that and they become free of need in their lives and they gathered around Zulqarnain compliant with his commands, quickly being most obedient in that which they were ordered.

At that time, the army of Zulqarnain was four armies, each army being ten thousand. He distributed them in the country for the call to truth. Then, he decided himself to travel in parts of the earth after he gathered around him armies and power of that which only Allah had taught him. In that is His, be He Glorified's saying: *"We had a full knowledge of what he had."* [al-Kahf 18:91], in the meaning that the most of what was achieved is only encompassed by the knowledge of the Sublime, All-Informed (God).

The people of his city gathered around him and requested him to stay among them and beseeched him to change his decision to travel away from them saying: O Zulqarnain! By God we implore you: do not favor yourself with other than us. We are most deserving of seeing you and in us is the place to rest your head. Among us you originated and you were raised. This is our wealth and ourselves before you and you are the judge in it. This is your very elderly mother, she is the greatest creation of Allah in rights over you and it behooves you not to disobey her and differ with her in your departing.

He said to them: By God! Surely the sayings are your sayings and the view is your view but I am at the level of one seized by his heart, his hearing and sight and driven to that before him and pushed from behind him. I don't know where it will take me nor what is intended. When his departure became near, groups gathered with him crying due to his departure. In the forefront of them was his poor mother. She was near to death from the severity of anxiety. Due to her being impaired, she had not bore a child except him and was not close to anyone other than he because her husband was the father of Alexander which it is said that he was Failfūs, the Greek. He had died in a period far from him.

In the end, (Zulqarnain) revealed a will for his people emphasizing that they stay firm in faith to Allah, the Exalted, and warned them of varying from him and warned them about (their) destruction. Then he sought out the influential men of his city and commanded them to fill his Masjid with worship after him and that they console his mother regarding his departure after his leaving for his journey. Then, he started his journey setting off in the mission of his Lord, the Mighty and Majestic.

Allah strengthened him in that which He had promised him. He had not passed by any nation except that he would call them to Allah, the Exalted. Then, they would respond and believe in Allah before them. If they did not respond, darkness covered them, then their cities, their towns, their fortresses and their homes until their eyes were covered. Something, like smoke, entered into their mouths, their noses and their stomachs. They would continue in it like the absent-minded until they responded to him and believed in Allah, the Mighty and Majestic.

After that, he conquered the rulership of the west and defeated them and humbled them before Allah, the Exalted. He devoted himself in traveling until he ended up at the Green River. Then, he returned to Egypt and built a city and named it with his name. Then, he set his sights on the lands of Syria and entered it after the Hebrews, the Copts and Berbers paid allegiance to him.

Then, he turned toward Armenia and the Gate of Gates. Then, toward the land of Persia. He conquered their rulers and took control over their capitals. Then, he set his intentions for India and China and that which is behind them among the remote nations and he humbled them for Allah, the Exalted. Then, he returned to Khurisān and 'Irāq and built many cities and he gained control over the east of the earth and its west and north.

When Zulqarnain ended his journey at the place of the setting of the sun, meaning the edge of civilization on the western side, he saw that it was like the sun was setting into a black sea, meaning it possessed putrid black clay, with that the star never disappeared or entered into the sea, but Zulqarnain never saw it like that as in the ocean he saw it setting into the ocean. He who is in the desert will find it setting into the smooth earth. Due to that, Allah, the Exalted said: *"Until he reached the place where the sun set, he found it..." meaning he saw it, "going down into a black sea..."* He found there an abundant nation possessing numerous (people) no one could count them except Allah. They possessed power and strong fortitude no one could gain mastery over them except the Master, the Omnipotent (Allah), the Mighty and Lofty.

They possessed varying languages, wintry air, differing hearts, He descended to them and summoned them to Allah. He dealt with them with the same conduct of whomever he had met before them. Then, whomever of them believed, he made him safe and they accepted his faith from him. Whomever did not believe, he killed them or he punished them with imprisonment ...This is the saying of Allah, the Exalted: *"Until he reached the place where the sun set..."* Until His, the Exalted's saying: *"And found by it a people. We said: O Zulqarnain! either give them a chastisement or do them a benefit."* [al-Kahf 18:86] (meaning) by imprisonment, education or forgiveness, until His, be He Glorified's saying: *"Then he followed (another) course."* [al-Kahf 18:89], meaning he followed another path and he pursued his journey *"Until when he reached the land of the rising sun..."* Meaning the last place, and he found it inhabited in a corner of the east. There, he also met an abundant nation, bulky and numerous. He dealt them the same conduct.

"Then he followed (another) course." [al-Kahf 18:92], the third. *"Until when he reached (a place) between two mountains..."* at-Ṭibirsi says they are behind the Mediterranean Sea (Baḥr ar-Rūm), near their rear is al-Baḥr al-Muḥeet, the distance between the two being three miles. *"He found on that side of them a people who could hardly understand a word."* [al-Kahf 18:93]

Zulqarnain descended (upon them) with his huge army to their direction. An abundant nation gathered toward him which they beseeched his assistance in defending them against the harm of Yajūj and Majūj. They were two tribes which were near to them. When they were hungry they roamed the land. They did not leave anything which came to them without spoiling it and eating it. When they came to a land, its people moved out from it and abandoned it. None of the people knew their number and where was their beginning or their end. No creation had conquered them. When they went to a region, they filled all of its area whereas no one of the creation of Allah could have the ability to sit in the area nor any place to go forward. No one was able to fill their eyes looking at them nor able to draw near to them due to the excess of their squalor, impurity and the abhorrence of their odor.

When Zulqarnain descended to this region, this abundant nation gathered living near the mountain which Yajūj and Majūj were behind. They sought Zulqarnain's help, they said to him: It has come to us that which Allah gave you in rulership and authority and that which He has given you in reverence. He has strengthened you with light and darkness and an army of the earth. Our neighbors are Yajūj and Majūj and there is nothing between us except this mountain and there is no path to us except through this opening between these two mountains. If they incline toward us they will surely hasten us from our land and that is due to their excessive (numbers). All the time we fear that the first of them will overtake us from between these two mountains. Allah has given you the stratagem and power of that which He has not given to any one in the world. Then, we will gather for you from our wealth something and make a barrier between us and them, then with that we may be safe from their evil and corruption?

Allah has pointed to this in the Noble Qurān with His, the Exalted's words: *"They said: O Zulqarnain! surely Gog and Magog make mischief in the land. Shall we then pay you a tribute on the condition that you should raise a barrier between us and them. He said: That in which my Lord has established me is better, therefore you only help me with workers, I will make a fortified barrier between you and them,"* meaning a fortified barrier. *"Bring me blocks of iron..."* [al-Kahf 18:94-96]

Zulqarnain sought from them that they bring him pieces of iron and copper with which he could fill that which was between the two mountains widthwise and raise it. They said: From where is this iron and copper which can encompass this work? He said: I will show you the mine of iron and copper.

Then, he came with them to two other mountains there and they struck in it until they split them and uncovered in both mines of iron and copper. When the people saw that, they debated in their affair. They said: By which power will enable us to cut these two minerals? Then, Zulqarnain showed them a third mineral stronger than iron and copper called as-Sāmūr. It was white like ice. That mineral was also removed for them and tools were made from it to extract the iron and copper. They extracted some, then some (more).

With this Sāmūr, Sulaimān Ibn Dawoud cut the columns of Bait al-Muqaddas from its mines. As such, the huge bolders were that which the Jinn moved by (Sulaimān's) command to wherever he desired.

After accepting the command of Zulqarnain to take a sufficient quantity of minerals from the two mines, he ordered them to dig a foundation between the two mountains in the width of a mile. They dug until they reached water and the foundation was filled with blocks of iron. The copper was melted, then placed in the gaps of iron. The pieces of iron became on the level of bricks and stone and the copper on the level of clay between the pieces. Some were thrown upon others until it became a layer of copper and a layer of iron until it became level to the face of the earth. Then, they built upon it as such from iron and copper by raising it two-hundred Zharā' (approx. 136 m./340 ft.) until it became level with the height of the two mountains. It was the first dam built on the face of the earth. Then, fire was ignited on all of it and bellows were placed upon it and they blew air on it until the pieces melted together and it all became one smooth piece. An unshakable barrier, the yellow and red of copper and the black of iron along with its hardness.

Then, Zulqarnain showed them a mine of red copper (المِسْكُ) in a mountain there. They dug in the mine and extracted the red copper from it. It is the molten brass (الْقَطْرُ) mentioned in the Noble Qurān and it is stronger in hardness than iron and copper. They melted it until it mixed with (iron and copper), as it was said: *"Until when he had filled up the space between the two mountain sides, he said: Blow; until when he had made it (as) fire, he said: Bring me molten brass which I may pour over it."* [al-Kahf 18:96] When the parts of that barrier mixed with other parts of it, it became a rigid mountain of intense strength and power.

Regarding Yajūj and Majūj, they were roaming in their land, at the time they stopped at the barrier, then the dam blocked them off. *"So they were not able to scale it,"* meaning they were unable to get above it by ascending it due to its height and smoothness. *"Nor could they make a hole in it."* [al-Kahf 18:97] due to the ample width and due to its hardness.

Zulqarnain and his people realized that, then was pleased with it. Zulqarnain gave thanks to his Lord for enabling that for him: *"He said: This is a mercy from my Lord,"* that the worshippers were safe as well as the land from the corruption of this filth and their evil until end times and the conditions of the final hour (appear) along with the signs of Qiyāmah: *"But when the promise of my Lord comes to pass,"* with the emergence of Yajūj and Majūj and the day of judgment drawing near, *"He will make it level with the ground,"* [al-Kahf 18:98] and enable the tribes of Yajūj and Majūj to pass by the barrier. The description of their emergence came in the Qurān with His, the Exalted's saying: *"Even when Gog and Magog are let loose and they shall break forth from every elevated place and the true promise shall draw nigh."* [al-Anbiyā 21:96] At that time, they will emerge toward lands and create corruption in the various regions of the earth and people will take protection fearing their evil, excesses and tyranny until Allah sends to them a worm with which will be their destruction.

When Zulqarnain finished with the work of the barrier, he departed with his huge army and his military which could not be counted. Whereas he was traveling with them when they ended up before a Shaikh praying in the middle of his path. Then when this massive assembly passed by him, he paid no attention to anything from them nor interrupted his prayer, nor faced toward other than his Lord. He continued in his humbleness in his prayer. Zulqarnain became amazed at him and stopped before him with the masses of his army until the Shaikh finished his prayer. He advanced toward him and said to him: O Shaikh! How did that which you see of my army not frighten you? The Shaikh said: I was intimating with He who is greater than you in forces, might, authority and stronger in power. Had I turned my face toward you, I could not have realized my need before you.

With his answer, Zulqarnain increased his delight. He recognized him as a pure servant and he liked him and desired that he accompany him. He said to him: Would you like to depart with me and I will help you myself and get assistance from you in some of my affairs? He said: Yes, if you guarantee for me four qualities. When Zulqarnain asked him about them, he said: Happiness, not ceasing; health, no sickness in it; youth no senility in it and life, no death in it.

Zulqarnain said: And which creation is capable of these qualities? The Shaikh said: I am with He who is capable of it, He is Master of it and you. Then, Zulqarnain bid farewell to him left him with his worship.

Of that which has been conveyed from reports of his wisdom, his knowledge and his reflection is that in his travels he passed by the final man to come to him as an test. He said to him: O Zulqarnain! Inform me of two things standing since Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, created them; and about two things (that are) neighbors; about two things differing and about two things which hate one another. Zulqarnain said: Regarding the two things standing are the heavens and the earth; regarding the two neighbors, it is the sun and the moon; regarding the two things differing, it is the day and night and regarding the two things hating one another, it is death and life. The man said: Depart, surely you are knowledgeable.

Then, he left him and traveled with he whom was with him until they ended at a righteous nation. They were those whom Allah took from their loins a rightly guided nation from the people of Mūsa (AS) which were praised in His Noble Book and He described them in His, the Exalted's saying: *"And Mūsa's people was a party who guided (people) with truth, and thereby did they do justice."* [al-A'rāf 7:159] Zulqarnain descended to them and found them to be a fair nation, just, dividing with equality and ruling with justice. Each currying favor with one another and merciful to one another. Their situation was one, their words were agreeable, their hearts were united, their path was straight, their conduct was beautiful, the graves of their dead were in the courtyard in front of their homes. There were no doors for their homes. There were no rulers nor among them any judges. There were no rich, no kings, no nobility, no dissimilarity, no preferences, no differences, no rivalries, no intrigue, no quarreling, no fighting and no plagues befell them until there was nothing other than that of praiseworthy qualities and numerous good attributes.

Zulqarnain was perplexed by them, confused and filled with amazement and wonder. He asked them about that saying: O people! Inform me of your news. Surely, I have circled the earth, all of it, its east and west, its land and its sea, its plains and its mountains, its light and its darkness. I have not seen the likes of you and the likes of that which you have in attributes and conditions. They said: When we placed the graves of our dead at the doors of our homes and in our courtyards until we could not forget death nor will its remembrance leave from our hearts. Regarding our homes not having doors, then there are no thieves amongst us nor any treasures and each of us is truthful. Regarding that there is no ruler over us, then certainly we do commit injustice. There is no judge because we do not dispute. there are no kings among us because we do not have abundance. There are no nobility because we have no rivalries and there is no superiority, no differences because we curried favor among us and are merciful to one another. We had no intrigue and no quarrels in order to unite our hearts and have righteousness amongst us.

There was no intrigue nor any fighting because we restrained our nature with resolve. Regarding our words being one and our path being straight, then it is because we do not lie and deceive and we do not slander some of us others. There are no poor or indigent amongst us because we divide with equality. There are no uncouth nor crude amongst us while amongst us are the humble and modest. By this, Allah, the Exalted has made us the longest in age because we are engaged in the truth and we rule with justice. Droughts do not afflict us nor calamities because we are not neglectful in seeking forgiveness. We are not sorrowful because we have made ourselves accustom to calamity and we covet and blame ourselves. We are not afflicted with plague because we do not depend on other than Allah and we do not seek rain with stars and constellations. As such, we found our fathers acting.

They were merciful to their indigent and seeking favor among their poor and forgiving whoever oppressed them and doing good toward whomever did ill toward them. They sought forgiveness for their evil-doers and maintained connections to their relatives, and fulfilled their trusts, they were truthful and did not lie. Allah, the Mighty and Majestic improved for them their affairs till in the end is that which they mention of the praiseworthy (nature) of their attributes.

Zulqarnain became intimate with them and liked them and stayed with them a long period of time. It is said that he resided with them at the end of his life until he died and was buried among their graves. Likewise, it is also said that he was buried in Dūmah al-Jandal.

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