

The Tafsīr of Sūrat Al-Kahf (Chapter - 18)

Which was revealed in Makkah

What has been mentioned about the Virtues of this Sūrah and the first and last ten Āyāt, which provide protection from the Dajjāl

Imām Aḥmad recorded that Al-Barā' said: "A man recited *Al-Kahf* and there was an animal in the house which began acting in a nervous manner. He looked, and saw a fog or cloud overhead. He mentioned this to the Prophet ﷺ, who said:

«أَفْرَأَ فَلَانُ، فَإِنَّهَا السَّكِينَةُ تَنْزِلُ عِنْدَ الْقُرْآنِ أَوْ تَنْزِلَتْ لِلْقُرْآنِ»

«Keep on reciting so and so, for this is the tranquillity which descends when one reads Qur'ān or because of reading Qur'ān;»^[1]

This was also recorded in the Two Ṣaḥīḥs.^[2] This man who recited it was Usayd bin Al-Huḍayr, as we have previously mentioned in our *Tafsīr of Sūrat Al-Baqarah*.

Imām Aḥmad recorded from Abu Ad-Dardā' that the Prophet ﷺ said:

«مَنْ حَفِظَ عَشْرَ آيَاتٍ مِنْ أَوَّلِ سُورَةِ الْكَهْفِ عُصِمَ مِنَ الدَّجَالِ»

«Whoever memorizes ten Āyāt from the beginning of Sūrat Al-Kahf will be protected from the Dajjāl.»^[3]

This was also recorded by Muslim, Abu Dāwud, An-Nasā'ī and At-Tirmidhi. According to the version recorded by At-Tirmidhi,

«مَنْ حَفِظَ ثَلَاثَ آيَاتٍ مِنْ أَوَّلِ الْكَهْفِ»

«Whoever memorizes three Āyāt from the beginning of Al-Kahf.»

[1] Aḥmad 4:281.

[2] *Fath Al-Bārī* 6:719, Muslim 1:548.

[3] Aḥmad 5:196.

He said, it is "*Ḥasan Ṣaḥīḥ*."^[1]

In his *Mustadrak*, Al-Ḥākim recorded from Abu Sa'īd that the Prophet ﷺ said:

«مَنْ قَرَأَ سُورَةَ الْكَهْفِ فِي يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ أَضَاءَ لَهُ مِنَ النُّورِ مَا بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ الْجُمُعَتَيْنِ»

«Whoever recites Sūrat Al-Kahf on Friday, it will illuminate him with light from one Friday to the next.»

Then he said: "This *Ḥadīth* has a *Ṣaḥīḥ* chain, but they (Al-Bukhārī and Muslim) did not record it."^[2] Al-Ḥāfiẓ Abu Bakr Al-Bayhaqī also recorded it in his *Sunan* from Al-Ḥākim, then he narrated with his own chain that the Prophet ﷺ said:

«مَنْ قَرَأَ سُورَةَ الْكَهْفِ كَمَا نَزَلَتْ، كَانَتْ لَهُ نُورًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ»

«Whoever recites Sūrat Al-Kahf as it was revealed, it will be a light for him on the Day of Resurrection.»^[3]

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَمْ عِوَجًا ۖ قِيمًا يُنْذِرَ بَأْسًا شَدِيدًا لِمَنِ لَدُنْهُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا حَسَنًا ۚ تَتَكَبَّرُ فِيهِ اأَبْدَانُ ۚ وَيُنْذِرُ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا ۚ مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ وَلَا لِآبَائِهِمْ كَبُرَتْ كَلِمَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ إِنَّ يَقُولُونَ إِلَّا كَذِبًا ۖ﴾

﴿1. All praise is due to Allāh, Who has sent down to His servant the Book, and has not placed therein any crookedness.﴾

﴿2. (He has made it) straight to give warning of a severe punishment from Him, and to give good news to the believers, who do righteous deeds, that they shall have a fair reward.﴾

﴿3. They shall abide therein forever.﴾

﴿4. And to warn those who say, "Allāh has begotten a child."﴾

﴿5. No knowledge have they of such a thing, nor had their fathers. Mighty is the word that comes out of their mouths. They utter nothing but a lie.﴾

[1] Muslim 1:555, Abu Dāwūd 4:497, An-Nasā'ī in *Al-Kubrā* 6:236 & *Tuhfat Al-Aḥwadhī* 8:195.

[2] Al-Ḥākim 2:368.

[3] Al-Bayhaqī 3:249.

The Revelation of the Qur'ān brings both Good News and a Warning

In the beginning of this *Tafsīr*, we mentioned that Allāh, praises His Holy Self at the beginning and end of matters, for He is the One to be praised in all circumstances, all praise and thanks be to Him, in the beginning and in the end. He praises Himself for revealing His Mighty Book to His Noble Messenger Muḥammad ﷺ, which is the greatest blessing that Allāh has granted the people of this earth. Through the Qur'ān, He brings them out of the darkness into light. He has made it a Book that is straight, neither distorted nor confusion therein. It clearly guides to a straight path, plain and manifest, giving a warning to the disbelievers and good news to the believers. This is why Allāh says:

﴿وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَّهُ عِوَجًا﴾

﴿and has not placed therein any crookedness.﴾ meaning, there is nothing twisted or confusing about it. But He has made it balanced and straightforward as He said;

﴿يَسَا﴾

﴿(He has made it) straight﴾, meaning straightforward,

﴿لِيُنذِرَ بَأْسًا شَدِيدًا مِّنْ لَّدُنْهُ﴾

﴿to give warning of a severe punishment from Him,﴾

meaning, to those who oppose His Prophet ﷺ and disbelieve in His Book, He issues a warning of severe punishment hastened in this world and postponed to the world Hereafter.

﴿مِّنْ لَّدُنْهُ﴾

﴿from Him﴾ means, from Allāh. For none can punish as He punishes and none is stronger or more reliable than Him.

﴿وَبَشِّرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾

﴿and to give good news to the believers,﴾ means, those who believe in this Qur'ān and confirm their faith by righteous actions.

﴿أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا حَسَنًا﴾

﴿that they shall have a fair reward.﴾ means, a beautiful reward from Allāh.

﴿تَكِينٌ فِيهِ﴾

﴿They shall abide therein﴾ means, in what Allāh rewards them with, and that is Paradise, where they will live forever.

﴿أَبَدًا﴾

﴿forever.﴾ means, for always, never ending or ceasing to be.

﴿وَسُذِرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا﴾

﴿And to warn those who say, "Allāh has begotten a child."﴾

Ibn Ishāq said: "These are the pagan Arabs, who said, 'We worship the angels who are the daughters of Allāh.'"^[1]

﴿مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ﴾

﴿No knowledge have they of such a thing,﴾ meaning, this thing that they have fabricated and made up.

﴿وَلَا لِآبَائِهِمْ﴾

﴿nor had their fathers.﴾ meaning, their predecessors.

﴿كَرِهُتْ كَلِمَةً﴾

﴿Mighty is the word﴾ This highlights the seriousness and enormity of the lie they have made up. Allāh says:

﴿كَرِهُتْ كَلِمَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ﴾

﴿Mighty is the word that comes out of their mouths.﴾

meaning, it has no basis apart from what they say, and they have no evidence for it apart from their own lies and fabrications. Hence Allāh says:

﴿إِنْ يَقُولُونَ إِلَّا كَذِبًا﴾

﴿They utter nothing but a lie.﴾

Reason why this Sūrah was revealed

Muḥammad bin Ishāq mentioned the reason why this Sūrah was revealed. He said that an old man from among the people of Egypt who came to them some forty-odd years ago told him,

^[1] At-Ṭabari 17:595.

from 'Ikrimah that Ibn 'Abbās said:

"The Quraysh sent An-Naḍr bin Al-Ḥārith and 'Uqbah bin Abi Muṭṭ to the Jewish rabbis in Al-Madīnah, and told them: 'Ask them (the rabbis) about Muḥammad, and describe him to them, and tell them what he is saying. They are the people of the first Book, and they have more knowledge of the Prophets than we do.' So they set out and when they reached Al-Madīnah, they asked the Jewish rabbis about the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. They described him to them and told them some of what he had said. They said, 'You are the people of the Tawrāh and we have come to you so that you can tell us about this companion of ours.' They (the rabbis) said, 'Ask him about three things which we will tell you to ask, and if he answers them then he is a Prophet who has been sent (by Allāh); if he does not, then he is saying things that are not true, in which case how you will deal with him will be up to you. Ask him about some young men in ancient times, what was their story? For theirs is a strange and wondrous tale. Ask him about a man who travelled a great deal and reached the east and the west of the earth. What was his story? And ask him about the Rūh (soul or spirit) – what is it? If he tells you about these things, then he is a Prophet, so follow him, but if he does not tell you, then he is a man who is making things up, so deal with him as you see fit.' So An-Naḍr and 'Uqbah left and came back to the Quraysh, and said: 'O people of Quraysh, we have come to you with a decisive solution which will put an end to the problem between you and Muḥammad. The Jewish rabbis told us to ask him about some matters,' and they told the Quraysh what they were. Then they came to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and said, 'O Muḥammad, tell us,' and they asked him about the things they had been told to ask. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

«أَخْبِرُكُمْ غَدًا عَمَّا سَأَلْتُمْ عَنْهُ»

«I will tell you tomorrow about what you have asked me.»

but he did not say 'If Allāh wills.' So they went away, and the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ stayed for fifteen days without any revelation from Allāh concerning that, and Jibrīl, peace be upon him, did not come to him either. The people of Makkah started to doubt him, and said, 'Muḥammad promised to tell

مَّا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ وَلَا يَأْتِيهِمْ كِبَرٌ كَلِمَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ إِنْ يَقُولُوا إِلَّا كَذِبًا ﴿٥﴾ فَلَمَّا لَكَ يَنْجِعُ نَفْسَكَ عَلَى آثَرِهِمْ إِنْ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَسَفًا ﴿٦﴾ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لِّمَن يَسْبُوهُرُ أَتَيْتُهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ﴿٧﴾ وَإِنَّا لَجَاعِلُونَ مَا عَلَيْهَا صَعِيدًا جُرًّا ﴿٨﴾ أَمْ حَسِبْتَ أَنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْكَهْفِ وَالرَّقِيعِ كَانُوا مِنْ آيَاتِنَا عَجَبًا ﴿٩﴾ إِذْ أَوَى الْفِتْيَةُ إِلَى الْكَهْفِ فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّا مِن لَّدُنكَ رَحْمَةً وَهَيِّئْ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا ﴿١٠﴾ فَضَرَبْنَا عَلَى آذَانِهِمْ فِي الْكَهْفِ سِنِينَ عَدَدًا ﴿١١﴾ ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَاهُمْ لِنَعْلَمَ أَيَّ الْحِزْبَيْنِ أَحْصَى لِمَا لِسِرًّا مَّا ﴿١٢﴾ تَحَنَّنَ قَفْضُ عَلَيْنَا بِمَا هُمْ بِالْحَقِّ إِنَّهُمْ فِتْيَةٌ آمَنُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ وَزِدْنَاهُمْ هُدًى ﴿١٣﴾ وَرَبَطْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ إِذْ قَامُوا فَقَالُوا رَبُّنَا رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَنْ نَدْعُو مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَهًا لَقَدْ قُلْنَا إِذَا شَطَطًا ﴿١٤﴾ هَؤُلَاءِ قَوْمُنَا اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ آلِهَةً لَّوْ لَا يَأْتُونَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِسُلْطَانٍ بَيِّنٍ فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ أَفَرَقْنِي عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا ﴿١٥﴾

us the next day, and now fifteen days have gone by and he has not told us anything in response to the questions we asked.' The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ felt sad because of the delay in revelation, and was grieved by what the people of Makkah were saying about him. Then Jibril came to him from Allāh with the Sūrah about the companions of Al-Kahf, which also contained a rebuke for feeling sad about the idolators. The Sūrah also told him about the things they had asked him about, the young men and the traveler. The

question about the Rūh was answered in the Āyah;

﴿وَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ﴾

﴿And they ask you concerning the Rūh (the spirit); say: "The Rūh..."﴾ [17:85].^[1]

﴿فَلَمَّا لَكَ يَنْجِعُ نَفْسَكَ عَلَى آثَرِهِمْ إِنْ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَسَفًا ﴿٦﴾ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لِّمَن يَسْبُوهُرُ أَتَيْتُهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ﴿٧﴾ وَإِنَّا لَجَاعِلُونَ مَا عَلَيْهَا صَعِيدًا جُرًّا ﴿٨﴾﴾

46. Perhaps, you would kill yourself in grief, over their footsteps, because they believe not in this narration.﴾

47. Verily, we have made that which is on earth an adornment

[1] At-Tabari 17:592.

for it, in order that We may test which of them are best in deeds.﴾

﴿8. And verily, We shall make all that is on it bare, dry soil.﴾

Do not feel sorry because the Idolators do not believe

Allāh consoles His Messenger ﷺ for his sorrow over the idolators because they would not believe and keep away from him. He also said:

﴿فَلَا تَذْهَبْ نَفْسُكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَتٍ﴾

﴿So destroy not yourself in sorrow for them.﴾ [35:8]

﴿وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ﴾

﴿And grieve not over them.﴾ [16:127]

﴿فَلَمَّا كَبِجَ نَفْسُكَ أَلَّا يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ﴾

﴿It may be that you are going to kill yourself with grief, that they do not become believers.﴾ [26:3]

meaning, maybe you will destroy yourself with your grief over them. Allāh says:

﴿فَلَمَّا كَبِجَ نَفْسُكَ عَلَىٰ مَا تَرْكَبُ إِن لَّكَ بِؤْمِنُوا بِهِذَا الْحَدِيثِ﴾

﴿Perhaps, you would kill yourself in grief, over their footsteps, because they believe not in this narration.﴾

meaning the Qur'ān.

﴿أَسَفًا﴾

﴿in grief﴾

Allāh is saying, 'do not destroy yourself with regret.' Qatādah said: "killing yourself with anger and grief over them."^[1] Mujāhid said: "with anxiety."^[2] These are synonymous, so the meaning is: 'Do not feel sorry for them, just convey the Message of Allāh to them. Whoever goes the right way, then he goes the right way only for the benefit of himself. And whoever goes astray, then he strays at his own loss, so do not destroy yourself in sorrow for them.'

[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 17: 597-598.

[2] Aṭ-Ṭabari 17:598.

This World is the Place of Trial

Then Allāh tells us that He has made this world a temporary abode, adorned with transient beauty, and He made it a place of trial, not a place of settlement. So He says:

﴿إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لَّآ نَبْلُوهُم أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ۖ﴾

﴿Verily, we have made that which is on earth an adornment for it, in order that We may test which of them are best in deeds.﴾

Abu Maslamah narrated from Abu Naḍrah from Abu Saʿīd that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

«إِنَّ الدُّنْيَا حُلُوءٌ خَضِرَةٌ، وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ مُسْتَخْلِفُكُمْ فِيهَا فَنَظِيرٌ مَّاذَا تَعْمَلُونَ، فَاتَّقُوا الدُّنْيَا، وَاتَّقُوا النِّسَاءَ، فَإِنَّ أَوَّلَ فِتْنَةٍ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ كَانَتْ فِي النِّسَاءِ»

«This world is sweet and green, and Allāh makes you generations succeeding one another, so He is watching what you will do. Beware of (the beguilements of) this world and beware of women, for the first affliction that Children of Israel suffered from was that of women.»^[1]

Then Allāh tells us that this world will pass away and come to an end, as He says:

﴿وَأَنَّا لَجَاعِلُونَ مَا عَلَيْهَا صَعِيدًا جُرُثًا ۖ﴾

﴿And verily, We shall make all that is on it bare, dry soil.﴾

means, 'after having adorned it, We will destroy it and make everything on it bare and dry, with no vegetation or any other benefit.'

Al-'Awfī reported from Ibn 'Abbās that this means everything on it would be wiped out and destroyed.^[2] Mujāhid said: "a dry and barren plain."^[3] Qatādah said, "A plain on which there are no trees or vegetation."^[4]

﴿أَمْ حَسِبْتَ أَنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْكَهْفِ وَالرَّقِيمِ كَانُوا مِن آيَاتِنَا عَجَبًا ۖ﴾ إِذْ أَوَى الْفِتْيَةُ إِلَى الْكَهْفِ فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا آتِنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ رَحْمَةً وَهَيِّئْ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا ۖ﴾ فَضَرَبْنَا عَلَىٰ أَعْيُنِهِم

[1] Aḥmad 3:22.

[2] Aṭ-Ṭabari 17:599.

[3] Aṭ-Ṭabari 17:599.

[4] Aṭ-Ṭabari 17:600.

﴿فِي الْكَهْفِ سِنِينَ عَدَدًا ۚ ثُمَّ بَدَّلْنَاهُمْ نَوْمَهُمْ إِذْ يَخْتَوُونَ لِمَا لَبِثُوا أَمْدَانِ ۚ﴾

﴿9. Do you think that the people of Al-Kahf and Ar-Raqīm were a wonder among Our signs?﴾

﴿10. When the young men fled for refuge to Al-Kahf. They said: "Our Lord! Bestow on us mercy from Yourself, and facilitate for us our affair in the right way!"﴾

﴿11. Therefore, We covered up their hearing in Al-Kahf for a number of years.﴾

﴿12. Then We raised them up, that We might test which of the two parties was best at calculating the time period they tarried.﴾

The Story of the People of Al-Kahf

Here Allāh tells us about the story of the people of Al-Kahf in brief and general terms, then He explains it in more detail. He says:

﴿أَزْ حَسِبْتَ﴾

﴿Do you think﴾ – O Muḥammad –

﴿أَنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْكَهْفِ وَالرَّقِيمِ كَانُوا مِنْ آيَاتِنَا عَجَبًا﴾

﴿that the people of Al-Kahf and Ar-Raqīm were a wonder among Our signs?﴾

meaning, their case was not something amazing compared to Our power and ability, for the creation of the heavens and earth, the alternation of night and day and the subjugation of the sun, moon and heavenly bodies, and other mighty signs indicate the great power of Allāh and show that He is able to do whatever He wills. He is not incapable of doing more amazing things than the story of the people of the Cave. Similarly, Ibn Jurayj reported Mujāhid saying about,

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

﴿Do you think that the people of Al-Kahf and Ar-Raqīm were a wonder among Our signs?﴾

"Among Our signs are things that are more amazing than this."^[1]

[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 17:601.

Al-'Awfī reported that Ibn 'Abbās said:

﴿أَزْ حَيْثَ أَنْ أَصْحَبَ الْكَهْفَ وَالرَّقِيمِ كَانُوا مِنْ آيَاتِنَا عَجَبًا﴾

﴿Do you think that the people of Al-Kahf and Ar-Raqīm were a wonder among Our signs?﴾

"What I have given to you of knowledge, the *Sunnah* and the Book is far better than the story of the people of *Al-Kahf* and *Ar-Raqīm*."^[1] Muḥammad bin Ishāq said: "(It means) I have not shown My creatures a proof more amazing than the story of the people of the *Al-Kahf* and *Ar-Raqīm*."^[2]

Al-Kahf refers to a cave in a mountain, which is where the young men sought refuge. With regard to the word *Ar-Raqīm*, Al-'Awfī reported from Ibn 'Abbās that it is a valley near Aylah.^[3] This was also said [in another narration] by 'Aṭīyah Al-'Awfī and Qatādah. Aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk said: "As for *Al-Kahf*, it is a cave in the valley,^[4] and *Ar-Raqīm* is the name of the valley." Mujāhid said, "*Ar-Raqīm* refers to their buildings." Others said it refers to the valley in which their cave was.^[5]

'Abdur-Razzāq recorded that Ibn 'Abbās said about *Ar-Raqīm*: "Ka'b used to say that it was the town." Ibn Jurayj reported that Ibn 'Abbās said, "*Ar-Raqīm* is the mountain in which the cave was." Sa'īd bin Jubayr said, "*Ar-Raqīm* is a tablet of stone on which they wrote the story of the people of the Cave, then they placed it at the entrance to the Cave."^[6]

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

﴿(Remember) when the young men fled for refuge to Al-Kahf. They said: "Our Lord! Bestow on us mercy from Yourself, and facilitate for us our affair in the right way!"﴾

Here Allāh tells us about those young men who fled from their people for the sake of their religion, fearing persecution. So

[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 17:601.

[2] Aṭ-Ṭabari 17:601.

[3] Aṭ-Ṭabari 17:602.

[4] Aṭ-Ṭabari 17:602.

[5] Aṭ-Ṭabari 17:602.

[6] Aṭ-Ṭabari 17:603.

they fled taking refuge in the cave of a mountain, where they hid from their people. When they entered the cave, they asked Allāh to show mercy and kindness towards them,

﴿رَبَّنَا ءَاتِنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ رَحْمَةً﴾

﴿Our Lord! Bestow on us mercy from Yourself,﴾

meaning, 'give us Your mercy and conceal us from our people.'

﴿وَيَسِّرْ لَّنَا مِّنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا﴾

﴿and facilitate for us our affair in the right way.﴾

means, direct our matter well, i.e., grant us a good end. As was reported in the Ḥadīth:

«وَمَا قَضَيْتُ لَنَا مِنْ قَضَاءٍ فَاجْعَلْ عَاقِبَتَهُ رَشَدًا»

«Whatever You have decreed for us, make its consequences good».^[1]

﴿فَضَرَبْنَا عَلَىٰ ءَاذَانِهِم فِي الْكَهْفِ سِنِينَ عَدَدًا﴾

﴿Therefore, We covered up their hearing in the cave for a number of years.﴾

meaning, 'We caused them to sleep when they entered the cave, and they slept for many years.'

﴿ثُمَّ بَدَّلْنَاهُم مِّنْ مَّوْجِهِم مَّوْجًا ۖ وَجَدْنَاهُمْ لَدَىٰ مَوْبِقٍ ۚ كُلًّا مِّنْ دُونِهَا ۚ وَكَرِهْنَاهُمْ آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ ۖ فَضَرَبْنَا عَلَىٰ ءَاذَانِهِم سِنِينَ عَدَدًا﴾

﴿Then We raised them up﴾ from that slumber, and one of them went out with his *Dirhams* (silver coins) to buy them some food, as it will be discussed in more detail below. Allāh says:

﴿ثُمَّ بَدَّلْنَاهُم مِّنْ مَّوْجِهِم مَّوْجًا ۖ وَجَدْنَاهُمْ لَدَىٰ مَوْبِقٍ ۚ كُلًّا مِّنْ دُونِهَا ۚ وَكَرِهْنَاهُمْ آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ ۖ فَضَرَبْنَا عَلَىٰ ءَاذَانِهِم سِنِينَ عَدَدًا﴾

﴿Then We raised them up, that We might test which of the two parties﴾

meaning, the two parties who disputed about them,

﴿أَحْسَنَ لِّمَا لَبِئُوا أَمَدًا﴾

﴿was best at calculating the time period that they tarried.﴾

It was said that this refers to how long they stayed in the cave.

﴿ثُمَّ بَدَّلْنَاهُم مِّنْ مَّوْجِهِم مَّوْجًا ۖ وَجَدْنَاهُمْ لَدَىٰ مَوْبِقٍ ۚ كُلًّا مِّنْ دُونِهَا ۚ وَكَرِهْنَاهُمْ آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ ۖ فَضَرَبْنَا عَلَىٰ ءَاذَانِهِم سِنِينَ عَدَدًا﴾

^[1] Aḥmad 6: 147.

قُلُوبِهِمْ إِذْ قَامُوا فَقَالُوا رَبُّنَا رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَنْ نَدْعُو مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَهًا لَقَدْ قُلْنَا إِذًا شَطَطًا ﴿١٣﴾ هَؤُلَاءِ قَوْمُنَا اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ آلِهَةً لَوْلَا يَأْتُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِسُلْطَانٍ بَيِّنٍ فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا ﴿١٤﴾ وَإِذْ أَعْرَضْنَا عَنْهُمْ وَإِنَّا لَمَعْلَمُونَ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ فَأَوْفُوا بِالْكَهْفِ يُنْشَرْ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَيُهَيِّجْ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَمْرِكُمْ مِزْقًا ﴿١٥﴾

﴿13. We narrate unto you their story with truth: Truly, they were young men who believed in their Lord (Allāh), and We increased them in guidance.﴾

﴿14. And We made their hearts firm and strong when they stood up and said: "Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, never shall we call upon any god other than Him; if we did, we should indeed have uttered an enormity in disbelief.﴾

﴿15. These our people have taken for worship gods other than Him. Why do they not bring for them a clear authority? And who does more wrong than he who invents a lie against Allāh.﴾

﴿16. (The young men said to one another:) "And when you withdraw from them, and that which they worship, except Allāh, then seek refuge in the cave; your Lord will open a way for you from His mercy and will make easy for you your affair."﴾

Their Belief in Allāh and their Retreat from their People

From here Allāh begins to explain the story in detail. He states that they were boys or young men, and that they were more accepting of the truth and more guided than the elders who had become stubbornly set in their ways and clung to the religion of falsehood. For the same reason, most of those who responded to Allāh and His Messenger ﷺ were young people. As for the elders of Quraysh, most of them kept to their religion and only a few of them became Muslims. So Allāh tells us that the people of the cave were young men. Mujāhid said, "I was informed that some of them wore some kind of earrings, then Allāh guided them and inspired them to fear Him, so they recognized His Oneness, and bore witness that there is no god besides Him."^[1]

[1] *Fath Al-Bārī* 1 :60.

﴿وَزِدْنَاهُمْ هُدًى﴾

﴿and We increased them in guidance.﴾

From this and other similar Āyāt, several scholars, such as Al-Bukhārī and others, understood that faith may increase, that it may vary in degrees, and that it may fluctuate.^[1] Allāh says:

﴿وَزِدْنَاهُمْ هُدًى﴾

﴿and We increased them in guidance.﴾ as He said elsewhere:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا زَادَهُمْ هُدًى وَآيَاتِهِمْ نِقْمَتُهُمْ ۖ﴾

﴿While as for those who accept guidance, He increases their guidance and bestows on them their Taqwā.﴾ [47:17]

﴿فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَرَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَهُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ ۝﴾

﴿As for those who believe, it has increased their faith, and they rejoice.﴾ [9:124],

﴿لِيَزَادُوا إِيمَانًا مَعَ إِيمَانِهِمْ﴾

﴿...that they may grow more in faith along with their (present) faith.﴾ [48:4]

There are other Āyāt indicating the same thing.

It has been mentioned that they were followers of the religion of Al-Masīḥ 'Īsā, 'Īsā bin Maryam, but Allāh knows best. It seems that they lived before the time of Christianity altogether, because if they had been Christians, the Jewish rabbis would not have cared about preserving because of their differences. We have mentioned above the report from Ibn 'Abbās that the Quraysh sent a message to the Jewish rabbis in Al-Madīnah to ask them for things with which they could test the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, and they told them to ask him about these young men, and about Dhul-Qarnayn (the man who traveled much) and about the Rūḥ. This indicates that this story was something recorded in the books of the People of the Book, and that it came before Christianity. And Allāh knows best.

[1] *Fath Al-Bārī* 6:426.

﴿وَرَبَطْنَا عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ إِذْ قَامُوا فَقَالُوا رَبُّنَا رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ﴾

﴿And We made their hearts firm and strong when they stood up and said: "Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth,﴾

Here Allāh is saying: 'We gave them the patience to go against their people and their city, and to leave behind the life of luxury and ease that they had been living.' Several of the earlier and later *Tafsīr* scholars have mentioned that they were sons of the kings and leaders of Byzantium, and that they went out one day to one of the festivals of their people. They used to gather once a year outside the city, and they would worship idols and offer sacrifices to them. They had an arrogant, tyrannical king who was called Decianus, who commanded and encouraged the people to do that. When the people went out to attend this gathering, these young men went out with their fathers and their people, and when they saw their people's actions with clear insight, they realized that the prostrations and sacrifices the people were offering to their idols should only be dedicated to Allāh, Who created the heavens and the earth. Each of them started to withdraw from his people and keep aloof from them. The first one of them to move away on his own went and sat in the shade of a tree, then another came and sat with him, then another came and sat with them, then four more followed suit one by one. None of them knew the others, but they were brought together by the One Who instilled faith in their hearts.

As it says in the *Ḥadīth* recorded by Al-Bukhārī with an incomplete chain of narrators from 'A'ishah (may Allāh be pleased with her), the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

«الْأَرْوَاحُ جُنُودٌ مُجْتَمِعَةٌ، فَمَا تَعَارَفَ مِنْهَا التَّلَفَ وَمَا تَنَافَرَ مِنْهَا اخْتَلَفَ»

«Souls are like recruited soldiers. Those that recognize one another will come together, and those that do not recognize one another will turn away from each another».^[1]

Muslim also recorded this in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* from the *Ḥadīth* of Suhayl from his father from Abu Hurayrah from the

[1] Muslim 4:2031.

Messenger of Allāh ﷺ.^[1] People say that similar qualities or characteristics are what bring people together.

So each of the young men was trying to conceal what he really believed from the others, out of fear of them, not knowing that they were like him. Then one of them said, "O people, you know by Allāh that only one thing is making you leave your people and isolate yourselves from them, so let each one of you say what it is in his case." Another said, "As for me, by Allāh I saw what my people are doing and I realized that it was false, and that the only One Who deserves to be worshipped Alone with out partner or associate is Allāh Who created everything, the heavens, the earth and everything in between." Another said, "By Allāh, the same thing happened to me." The others said the same, and they all agreed and became brothers in faith. They adopted a particular location as a place of worship and began worshipping Allāh there, but their people found out about them and told their king about them. The king ordered them to appear before him, and asked them about their beliefs. They told him the truth and called him to Allāh, as Allāh says about them:

﴿وَرَبَطْنَا عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ إِذْ قَامُوا فَقَالُوا رَبُّنَا رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَن نَّدْعُوهُ مِن دُونِهِ ۚ إِنَّهَا﴾

﴿And We made their hearts firm and strong when they stood up and said: "Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, never shall we call upon any god other than Him..."﴾

"Never" (Lan) implies an absolute and eternal negation, meaning, 'this will never happen, and if we were to do that it would be false.' So Allāh says about them:

﴿لَقَدْ كُنَّا إِذَا سَطَطْنَا﴾

﴿...if we did, we should indeed have uttered an enormity in disbelief.﴾

meaning, untruth and utter falsehood.

﴿هَٰؤُلَاءِ قَوْمُنَا اتَّخَذُوا مِن دُونِهِ ۖ آلِهَةً لَّا يَأْتُوا عَلَيْهِمُ الْبُيُوتُ ۚ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ﴾

﴿These, our people, have taken for worship gods other than Him (Allāh). Why do they not bring for them a clear authority?﴾

[1] Fath Al-Bāri 1:87.

meaning, why do they not produce some clear evidence and genuine proof for their behavior?

﴿فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا﴾

«And who does more wrong than he who invents a lie against Allāh.﴾

They said: 'but by saying that they are lying transgressors.' It was said that when they called their king to believe in Allāh, he refused, and warned and threatened them. He commanded them to be stripped of their clothing bearing the adornments of their people, then he gave them some time to think about the situation, hoping that they would return to their former religion. This was a way that Allāh showed kindness for them, because during that time they managed to escape from him and flee from persecution for the sake of their religion. This is what is prescribed in the *Sharī'ah* during times of trial and persecution – a person who fears for his religion should flee from his persecutors, as was reported in the *Ḥadīth*:

«يُوشِكُ أَنْ يَكُونَ خَيْرُ مَالٍ أَحَدِكُمْ غَنَمًا يَتَّبِعُ بِهَا شَعَفَ الْجِبَالِ وَمَوَاقِعَ الْقَطْرِ يَفِرُّ
بِدِينِهِ مِنَ الْفِتَنِ»

«Soon there will come a time when the best wealth any of you can have will be sheep, which he can follow to the tops of the mountains and places where rain falls, (fleeing) for the sake of his religion from persecution.»^[1]

In such cases, it is allowed to seclude oneself from people, but this is not prescribed in any other case, because by such seclusion one loses the benefits of congregational and Friday prayers.

These young men were determined to flee from their people, and Allāh decreed that for them, as He says about them,

﴿وَرِثَافَةً لَهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ﴾

«And when you withdraw from them, and that which they worship, except Allāh,﴾

meaning, when you depart from them and follow a different religion, opposing their worship of others besides Allāh, then

[1] *Faṭḥ Al-Bārī* 7:11.

separate from them in a physical sense too,

﴿فَأَنذَرْنَا إِلَى الْكَهْفِ بَنِيكَ لَكَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ﴾

﴿then seek refuge in the cave; your Lord will open a way for you from His mercy﴾

meaning, He will bestow His mercy upon you, by which He will conceal you from your people.

﴿وَمَتِّعْنَا لَكَ مِنْ أَمْرِكَ يُرَفِّقًا﴾

﴿and will make easy for you your affair.﴾ means, He will give you what you need.

So they left and fled to the cave where they sought refuge. Then their people noticed they were missing, and the king looked for them, and it was said when he could not find them that Allāh concealed them from him so that he could not find any trace of them or any information about them, as Allāh concealed His Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and his Companion [Abu Bakr] Aṣ-Ṣiddīq, when they sought refuge in the cave of Thawr. The Quraysh idolators came in pursuit, but they did not find him even though they passed right by him. When the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ noticed that Aṣ-Ṣiddīq was anxious and said, "O Messenger of Allāh, if one of them looks down at the place of his feet, he will see us," he told him:

﴿يَا أَبَا بَكْرٍ مَا ظَنُّكَ بِأَنْتَيْنِ اللَّهُ تَالِهُمَا؟﴾

«O Abu Bakr, what do you think of two who have Allāh as their third?»

And Allāh said:

﴿إِلَّا نَصْرُهُ فَكَذَلِكَ نَصَرَهُ اللَّهُ إِذْ أَخْرَجَهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ثَوَابِتِ إِذْ هُمَا فِي الْكَافِرِ إِذْ يَقُولُ لِصَاحِبِهِ لَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّا اللَّهُ مَعَ الْكَافِرِ فَانْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَيَّدَهُ بِجُشُودٍ لَمْ تَرَوْهَا وَجَعَلَ كَلِمَةَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا السُّفْلَى وَكَلِمَةُ اللَّهِ هِيَ الْعُلْيَا وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ﴾

﴿If you help him not, for Allāh did indeed help him when the disbelievers drove him out, the second of the two; when they were in the cave, he said to his companion: "Do not grieve, surely, Allāh is with us." Then Allāh sent down His tranquillity upon him, and strengthened him with forces which

you saw not, and made the word of those who disbelieved the lower, while the Word of Allāh became the higher; and Allāh is All-Mighty, All-Wise. ﴿9:40﴾

The story of this cave (*Thawr*) is far greater and more wondrous than that of the people of the Cave.

﴿وَرَى الشَّمْسُ إِذَا طَلَعَتْ تَزَوُّرًا عَنْ كُهُفِهِمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَإِذَا غَرَبَتْ تَقَرُّهُمْ ذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ وَهُمْ فِي فَتْوَرَةٍ يَنْتَهُ ذَلِكَ مِنْ مَّائِدَةِ اللَّهِ مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلْ فَلَنْ يَجِدَ لَهُ وَلِيًّا مُرْشِدًا﴾ ﴿١٧﴾

﴿17. And you might have seen the sun, when it rose, declining to the right from their cave, and when it set, turning away from them to the left, while they lay in the midst of the cave. That is from the Āyāt of Allāh. He whom Allāh guides, he is the rightly-guided; but he whom He sends astray, for him you will find no guardian to lead him.﴾

The Location of the Cave

This indicates that the entrance to the cave faced north, because Allāh tells us that when the sun was rising, sunlight entered the cave

﴿ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ﴾

﴿the right﴾, meaning that the shade decreased towards the right, as Ibn ‘Abbās, Sa‘īd bin Jubayr and Qatādah said:

﴿تَزَوُّرًا﴾

﴿declining﴾ means leaning.^[1] Every time the sun rises on the horizon, its rays decline until there is nothing left in such a place when it reaches its zenith. So Allāh said,

﴿وَإِذَا غَرَبَتْ تَقَرُّهُمْ ذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ﴾

﴿and when it set, turning away from them to the left,﴾

meaning, it entered their cave from the left of its entrance, which means from the west. This proves what we say, and it is clear to anyone who thinks about the matter and has some knowledge of astronomy and the paths of the sun, moon and stars. If the

[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 17:620.

entrance of the cave faced east, nothing would have entered it when the sun set, and if it faced the direction of the *Qiblah* (in this case, south), nothing would have entered it at the time of sunrise or sunset, and the shadows would have leaned neither to the right nor the left. If it had faced west, nothing would have entered it at the time of sunrise, until after the sun had passed its zenith, and would have stayed until sunset. This supports what we have said, and to Allāh is the praise.

Ibn ‘Abbās, Mujāhid and Qatādah said that “turning away from them” means that it would shine on them and then leave them.^[1] Allāh has told us this, and He wants us to understand it and ponder its meaning, but He did not tell us the location of this cave, i.e., in which country on earth it is, because there is no benefit for us in knowing that, and no legislative objective behind it. If there was any spiritual or religious interest that could be served by our knowing that, Allāh and His Messenger would have taught us about it, as the Prophet ﷺ said:

«مَا تَرَكْتُ شَيْئًا يُقَرِّبُكُمْ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَيُبَاعِدُكُمْ مِنَ النَّارِ إِلَّا وَقَدْ أَعْلَمْتُكُمْ بِهِ»

‘I have not left anything that will bring you closer to Paradise and keep you further away from Hell but I have certainly taught you about it.’^[2]

So Allāh has told us about the features of the cave, but He did not tell us where it is, and He said,

﴿وَرَأَى الشَّمْسُ إِذَا طَلَعَتْ تَزَوُّرًا عَنْ كَهْفِهِمْ﴾

‘And you might have seen the sun, when it rose, declining from their cave.’

Mālik narrated from Zayd bin Aslam, “Leaning.”

﴿ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَإِذَا غَرَبَتْ تَقَرَّبُ مِنْهُمْ ذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ وَهُمْ فِي فَجْوَةٍ مِنْهُ﴾

‘the right, and when it set, turning away from them to the left, while they lay in the midst of the cave.’

meaning, the sun entered the cave without touching them, because if it had touched them, it would have burnt their

[1] At-Ṭabari 17:621,622.

[2] ‘Abdur-Razzāq 11:125.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَإِذْ أَعْرَضْنَا عَنْهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَأَوْرَأْنَا إِلَى الْكَهْفِ
يُنشِرُ لَكُمْ رُجُوكُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَيُهَيِّئْ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَمْرِكُمْ مَرْفَقًا
﴿١٦﴾ وَتَرَى الشَّمْسَ إِذَا طَلَعَتْ تَرُورَعْنَ كَهْفِهِمْ ذَاتَ
الْيَمِينِ وَإِذَا غَرَبَتْ تَقَرُّضُهُمْ ذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ وَهُمْ فِي فَجْوَةٍ
مِنْهُ ذَلِكَ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ وَمَنْ
يُضِلِلْ فَلَنْ يَجِدَ لَهُ وَلِيًّا مُرْسِدًا ﴿١٧﴾ وَتَحْسَبُهُمْ أَيْقَاظًا
وَهُمْ رُقُودٌ وَنُقِلْتُمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ وَكَلْبُهُمْ
بَسِيطٌ ذِرَاعِيهِ بِالْوَصِيدِ لَوِ اطَّلَعْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَوَلَّيْتَ مِنْهُمْ
فِرَارًا وَلَمُلَمْتَ مِنْهُمْ رُعبًا ﴿١٨﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ بَعَثْنَاهُمْ
لِتَسَاءَلُوا بَيْنَهُمْ قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِنْهُمْ كَمْ لَبِثْتُمْ قَالُوا لَبِثْنَا
يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالُوا رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثْتُمْ فَابْعَثُوا
أَحَدَكُمْ بِرُفْقِكُمْ هَذِهِ إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ فَلْيَنْظُرُوا أَيُّهَا أَزْكَى
طَعَامًا فَلْيَأْتِكُمْ بِرُزْقٍ مِنْهُ وَلْيَسْأَلْهُمْ وَلَا يَشْعُرَنَّ
بِكُمْ أَحَدًا ﴿١٩﴾ إِنَّهُمْ إِنْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ يَرْجُمُوكُمْ
أَوْ يُعِيدُوكُمْ فِي مِلَّتِهِمْ وَلَنْ تُفْلِحُوا إِذًا أَبَدًا ﴿٢٠﴾

bodies and clothes. This was the view of Ibn 'Abbās.^[1]

﴿ذَلِكَ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ﴾

﴿That is from the Āyāt of Allāh﴾, how He guided them to this cave where He kept them alive, and the sun and wind entered the cave preserving their bodies. Allāh says,

﴿ذَلِكَ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ﴾

﴿That is from the Āyāt of Allāh﴾. Then He says:

﴿مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ﴾

﴿He whom Allāh guides, he is the rightly-guided﴾; meaning that He is the One Who guided these young men to

true guidance among their people, for the one whom Allāh guides is truly guided, and the one whom Allāh leaves astray will find no one to guide him.

﴿وَتَحْسَبُهُمْ أَيْقَاظًا وَهُمْ رُقُودٌ وَنُقِلْتُمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ وَكَلْبُهُمْ بَسِيطٌ ذِرَاعِيهِ

بِالْوَصِيدِ لَوِ اطَّلَعْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَوَلَّيْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِرَارًا وَلَمُلَمْتَ مِنْهُمْ رُعبًا﴾ ﴿١٨﴾

﴿18. And you would have thought them awake, whereas they were asleep. And We turned them on their right and on their left sides, and their dog stretching forth his two forelegs at the Waṣīd. Had you happened upon them, you would certainly have turned back from them in flight, and would certainly have been filled with awe of them.﴾

[1] At-Ṭabari 17:620.

Their Sleep in the Cave

Some of the scholars mentioned that when Allāh caused them to sleep, their eyelids did not close, lest disintegration took hold of them. If their eyes remained open to the air, this would be better for the sake of preservation. Allāh says:

﴿وَنَحْنُهُمْ أَفْكَاهُمْ وَمِم رُفُودُ﴾

﴿And you would have thought them awake, whereas they were asleep.﴾

It was mentioned that when the wolf sleeps, it closes one eye and keeps one eye open, then it switches eyes while asleep.

﴿وَنُفِّلْنَاهُمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ﴾

﴿And We turned them on their right and on their left sides,﴾

Ibn 'Abbās said: "If they did not turn over, the earth would have consumed them."^[1]

﴿وَكَلْبُهُمْ بَاسِطٌ ذِرَاعَيْهِ بِالْوَصِيدِ﴾

﴿and their dog stretching forth his two forelegs at the Waṣīd﴾

Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, Sa'īd bin Jubayr and Qatādah said: "The Waṣīd means the threshold."^[2] Ibn 'Abbās said: "By the door."^[3] It was said: "On the ground." The correct view is that it means on the threshold, i.e., at the door.

﴿إِنَّا عَلَيْهِمْ مُّؤَصَّدَةٌ﴾

﴿Verily, it shall be closed upon them﴾ [104:8]

Their dog lay down at the door, as is the habit of dogs. Ibn Jurayj said, "He was guarding the door for them."^[4] It was his nature and habit to lie down at their door as if guarding them. He was sitting outside the door, because the angels do not enter a house in which there is a dog, as was reported in Aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ, nor do they enter a house in which there is an image, a person in a state of ritual impurity or a disbeliever, as was

[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 17:620.

[2] Aṭ-Ṭabari 17:624,625.

[3] Aṭ-Ṭabari 17:625.

[4] Aṭ-Ṭabari 17:625.

narrated in the *Hasan Hadīth*.^[1] The blessing they enjoyed extended to their dog, so the sleep that overtook them overtook him too. This is the benefit of accompanying good people, and so this dog attained fame and stature. It was said that he was the hunting dog of one of the people which is the more appropriate view, or that he was the dog of the king's cook, who shared their religious views, and brought his dog with him. And Allāh knows best.

Allāh says:

﴿لَوْ أَطْلَعْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَوَلَّيْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِرَارًا وَلَمَلِئْتَ مِنْهُمْ رُعبًا﴾

﴿Had you happened upon them, you would certainly have turned back from them in flight, and would certainly have been filled with awe of them.﴾

meaning that Allāh made them appear dreadful, so that no one could look at them without being filled with terror, because of the frightening appearance they had been given. This was so that no one would come near them or touch them until the appointed time when their sleep would come to an end as Allāh willed, because of the wisdom, clear proof and great mercy involved in that.

﴿وَكَذَلِكَ بَعَثْنَاهُمْ لِيَتَسَاءَلُوا بَيْنَهُمْ قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِنْهُمْ كَمْ لَبِئْتُمْ قَالَوْا لَيْسَ يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالُوا رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِئْتُمْ فَاسْتَفْتَا أَحَدَكُمْ بِرُؤُوسِكُمْ هَذِهِ إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ أَيُّهَا أَزْكَى طَعَامًا فَلْيَأْتِكُمْ بِرِزْقٍ مِنْهُ وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ وَلَا يُشْعِرَنَّ بِكُمْ أَحَدًا ۚ إِنَّهُمْ إِنْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ يَرْجُمُوكُمْ أَوْ يُعَذِّبُكُمْ فِي مَلِيئِهِمْ وَلَنْ تَنَالُوا أَبَدًا ۚ﴾

﴿19. Likewise, We woke them that they might question one another. A speaker among them said: "How long have you stayed (here)?" They said: "We have stayed a day or part of a day." They said: "Your Lord knows best how long you have stayed (here). So send one of you with this silver coin of yours to the town, and let him find out which is the Azkā food, and bring some of that to you. And let him be careful and let no man know of you."﴾

﴿20. "For, if they come to know of you, they will stone you or turn you back to their religion; and in that case you will never be successful."﴾

[1] Abu Dāwūd 2:192-193 with different wording.

Their awakening and sending One of Themselves to buy Food

Allāh says: 'just as We caused them to sleep, We resurrected them with their bodies, hair and skin intact, and nothing lacking in their form and appearance.' This was after three hundred and nine years. This is why they asked each other,

﴿كَمْ لَبِثْتُمْ﴾

﴿How long have you stayed (here)?﴾ meaning, 'how long have you slept?'

﴿قَالُوا لَبِثْنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ﴾

﴿They said: "We have stayed a day or part of a day."﴾

because they entered the cave at the beginning of the day, and they woke up at the end of the day, which is why they then said,

﴿أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالُوا رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثْتُمْ﴾

﴿"...or a part of a day." They said: "Your Lord knows best how long you have stayed..."﴾

meaning, 'Allāh knows best about your situation.' It seems that they were not sure about how long they had slept, and Allāh knows best. Then they turned their attention to more pressing matters, like their need for food and drink, so they said:

﴿كَاتِبَتُوا أَمْذَكُم بِوَرِقِكُمْ﴾

﴿So send one of you with this silver coin of yours﴾

They had brought with them some *Dirhams* (silver coins) from their homes, to buy whatever they might need, and they had given some in charity and kept some, so they said:

﴿كَاتِبَتُوا أَمْذَكُم بِوَرِقِكُمْ هَذِهِ إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ﴾

﴿So send one of you with this silver coin of yours to the town,﴾

meaning to their city, which they had left. The definite article indicates that they were referring to a known city.

﴿فَلْيَنْظُرْ آتِيَا أَزْكَى طَعَامًا﴾

﴿and let him find out which is the Azkā food.﴾ Azkā means "purest", as Allāh says elsewhere,

﴿وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ مَا زَكَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ أَبَدًا﴾

«And had it not been for the grace of Allāh and His mercy on you, not one of you would ever have been pure [Zakā] from sins» [24:21] and

﴿قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّى﴾

«Indeed whosoever purifies himself [Tazakkā] shall achieve success.» [87:14]

From the same root also comes the word *Zakāh*, which makes one's wealth good and purifies it.

﴿وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ﴾

«And let him be careful» meaning when he goes out buying food and coming back. They were telling him to conceal himself as much as he could,

﴿وَلَا يُنَوِّرْ بِكُمْ أَحَدًا﴾ ﴿٢١﴾ إِنَّمَا إِنْ بَطَّهَرُوا عَلَيْكَ يَرْجُمُوكُمْ﴾

«and let no man know of you. For, if they come to know of you, they will stone you»

means, 'if they find out where you are,'

﴿يَرْجُمُوكُمْ أَوْ يُبَيِّدُكُمْ فِي دِينِهِمْ﴾

«they will stone you or turn you back to their religion;»

They were referring to the followers of Decianus, who they were afraid might find out where they were, and punish them with all kinds of torture until they made them go back to their former religion, or until they died, for if they agreed to go back to their (old) religion, they would never attain success in this world or the Hereafter. So they said:

﴿وَلَنْ تَقْلِبُوا إِذَا أَبَدَا﴾

«and in that case you will never be successful.»

﴿وَكَذَلِكَ أَعْرَضْنَا عَنْهُمْ لِيَعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ وَعْدُ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَأَنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا إِذْ يَتَنَزَّعُونَ مِنْهُمْ أَمْرَهُمْ فَقَالُوا ابْنُوا عَلَيْهِم بُنْيَانًا رَدُّهُمْ أَكْثَمُ بِهِمْ قَالَ الَّذِينَ غَلَبُوا عَلَى أَمْرِهِمْ لَنَتَّخِذَنَّ عَلَيْهِم مِّنْجِدًا﴾ ﴿٢٢﴾

«21. And thus We made their case known, that they might know that the promise of Allāh is true, and that there can be no doubt about the Hour. (Remember) when they (the people)

disputed among themselves about their case, they said: "Construct a building over them; their Lord knows best about them," (then) those who won their point said: "We verily, shall build a place of worship over them."﴿

How the People of the City came to know about Them; building a Memorial over the Cave

﴿رَكَدَ ذَٰلِكَ أَعْرَضْنَا عَنْهُمْ﴾ .

﴿And thus We made their case known,﴾ means, 'We caused the people to find them.'

﴿لِيَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَإِنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا﴾

﴿that they might know that the promise of Allāh is true, and that there can be no doubt about the Hour.﴾

Several scholars of the Salaf mentioned that the people of that time were skeptical about the Resurrection. 'Ikrimah said: "There was a group of them who said that the souls would be resurrected but not the bodies, so Allāh resurrected the people of the Cave as a sign and proof of resurrection."^[1] They mentioned that when they wanted to send one of their members out to the city to buy them something to eat, he disguised himself and set out walking by a different route, until he reached the city, which they said was called Daqsūs. He thought that it was not long since he left it, but in fact century after century, generation after generation, nation after nation had passed, and the country and its people had changed. He saw no local landmarks that he recognized, and he did not recognize any of the people, elite or commoners. He began to feel confused and said to himself, "Maybe I am crazy or deluded, maybe I am dreaming." Then he said, "By Allāh, I am nothing of the sort, what I know I saw last night was different from this." Then he said, "I had better get out of here." Then he went to one of the men selling food, gave him the money he had and asked him to sell him some food. When the man saw the money he did not recognize it or its imprint, so he passed it to his neighbor and they all began to pass it

[1] *Tārīkh Aṭ-Ṭabari* 2:9.

around, saying, "Maybe this man found some treasure." They asked him who he was and where he got this money. Had he found a treasure? Who was he? He said, "I am from this land, I was living here yesterday and Decianus was the ruler." They accused him of being crazy and took him to the governor who questioned him about his circumstances, and he told him. He was confused about his situation. When he told them about it, they – the king and the people of the city – went with him to the cave, where he told them, "Let me go in first and let my companions know." It was said that the people did not know how he entered it, and that the people did not know about their story. It was also said that they did enter the cave and see them, and the king greeted them and embraced them. Apparently he was a Muslim, and his name was Tedosis. They rejoiced at meeting him and spoke with him, then they bid farewell to him and went back to sleep, then Allāh caused them to die. And Allāh knows best.^[1]

﴿وَكَذَلِكَ أَغْتَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ﴾

﴿And thus We made their case known,﴾ meaning, 'just as We caused them to sleep then woke them up physically intact, We made their story known to the people of that time.'

﴿لِيَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَأَنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا إِذْ يَتَنَزَّعُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَمْرَهُمْ﴾

﴿that they might know that the promise of Allāh is true, and that there can be no doubt about the Hour. (Remember) when they (the people) disputed among themselves about their case,﴾

meaning, about Resurrection. Some believed in it and some denied it, so Allāh made their discovery of the people of the cave evidence either in their favor or against them.

﴿فَقَالُوا ابْنُوا عَلَيْهِم بُنْيَانًا رَبُّهُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِهِمْ﴾

﴿they said: "Construct a building over them; their Lord knows best about them,"﴾

meaning, seal the door of their cave over them, and leave them as they are.

﴿قَالَ الَّذِينَ عَلَى أَمْرِهِمْ لِنَتَّخِذَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ مَسْجِدًا﴾

[1] Tārīkh Aṭ-Ṭabari 2:9.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَكَذَلِكَ أَغْتَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ لِيُعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ وَعْدُ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَأَنَّ
السَّاعَةَ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا إِذْ يَتَنَزَّعُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَمْرُهُمْ فَقَالُوا
أَتَبُوا عَلَيْهِمْ بُنْيَانَهُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِهِمْ قَالَ الَّذِينَ غَلَبُوا عَلَى
أَمْرِهِمْ لَنَتَّخِذَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ مَسْجِدًا ﴿٢١﴾ سَيَقُولُونَ ثَلَاثَةٌ
رَأَيْبُهُمْ كُلُّهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ خَمْسَةٌ سَادُسُهُمْ كُلُّهُمْ رَجُلًا
بِالْغَيْبِ وَيَقُولُونَ سَبْعَةٌ وَثَامِنُهُمْ كُلُّهُمْ قُلْ رَبِّي أَعْلَمُ
بِعِدَّتِهِمْ مَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ فَلَا تُمَارِ فِيهِمْ إِلَّا مِرًّا ظَهَرَا
وَلَا تَسْتَفْتِ فِيهِمْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا ﴿٢٢﴾ وَلَا تَقُولَنَّ لَشَايٍ
إِنِّي فَاعِلٌ ذَلِكَ غَدًا ﴿٢٣﴾ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ
إِذَا نَسِيتَ وَقُلْ عَسَى أَنْ يَهْدِيَنَّ رَبِّي لِأَقْرَبٍ مِنْ هَذَا رُسَدًا
﴿٢٤﴾ وَلِيُتْرَا فِي كَهْفِهِمْ ثَلَاثَ مِائَةٍ سِنِينَ وَازْدَادُوا تِسْعًا
﴿٢٥﴾ قُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لِيُتْرَا لَهُ غَيْبُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
أَبْصَرِيهِ وَأَسْمِعْ مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا يُشْرِكُ
فِي حُكْمِهِ أَحَدًا ﴿٢٦﴾ وَأَتْلُ مَا أَوْحَى إِلَيْكَ مِنْ كِتَابِ
رَبِّكَ لَا تُبَدِّلْ لِكَلِمَتِهِ وَلَنْ يُجَادِمَنَّ دُونَهُ مَلْتَحَدًا ﴿٢٧﴾

those who won their point said: "We verily, shall build a place of worship over them." ﴿٢١﴾

Those who said this were the people of power and influence, but were they good people or not? There is some debate on this point, because the Prophet ﷺ said:

«لَعَنَ اللَّهُ الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَى
اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ
وَصَالِحِيهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ»

«Allāh has cursed the Jews and the Christians who took the graves of their Prophets and righteous people as places of worship»^[1] Warning against what they did.

We have reported about the Commander

of the faithful 'Umar bin Al-Khaṭṭāb that when he found the grave of Dānyāl (Daniel) in Irāq during his period of rule, he gave orders that news of this grave should be withheld from the people, and that the inscription containing mention of battles etc., that they found there should be buried.^[2]

﴿سَيَقُولُونَ ثَلَاثَةٌ رَأَيْبُهُمْ كُلُّهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ خَمْسَةٌ سَادُسُهُمْ كُلُّهُمْ رَجُلًا بِالْغَيْبِ وَيَقُولُونَ
سَبْعَةٌ وَثَامِنُهُمْ كُلُّهُمْ قُلْ رَبِّي أَعْلَمُ بِعِدَّتِهِمْ مَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ فَلَا تُمَارِ فِيهِمْ إِلَّا مِرًّا ظَهَرَا
وَلَا تَسْتَفْتِ فِيهِمْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا ﴿٢٢﴾﴾

﴿22. They say they were three, the dog being the fourth among

[1] Fath Al-Bāri 1:634.

[2] Al-Bidāyah Wan-Nihāyah 7:88.

them; and they say they were five, the dog being the sixth, guessing at the unseen; and they say they were seven, and the dog being the eighth. Say: "My Lord knows best their number; none knows them but a few." So debate not except with the clear proof. And consult not any of them (about the people of the Cave).﴾

Their Number

Allāh tells us that people disputed over the number of the people of the Cave. The *Āyah* mentions three views, proving that there was no fourth suggestion. Allāh indicates that the first two opinions are invalid, by saying,

﴿رَبَّمَا بِالْغَيْبِ﴾

﴿guessing at the unseen﴾, meaning that they spoke without knowledge, like a person who aims at an unknown target – he is hardly likely to hit it, and if he does, it was not on purpose.

Then Allāh mentions the third opinion, and does not comment on it, or He affirms it by saying,

﴿وَنَائِمُهُمْ كَذِبٌ﴾

﴿and the dog being the eighth.﴾ indicating that this is correct and this is what happened.

﴿قُلْ رَبِّيَ أَعْلَمُ بِعَدَّتِهِمْ﴾

﴿Say: "My Lord knows best their number..."﴾

indicating that the best thing to do in matters like this is to refer knowledge to Allāh, because there is no need to indulge in discussing such matters without knowledge. If we are given knowledge of a matter, then we may talk about it, otherwise we should refrain.

﴿مَّا يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ﴾

﴿none knows them but a few.﴾ of mankind. Qatādah said that Ibn 'Abbās said: "I am one of the few mentioned in this *Āyah*; they were seven."^[1] Ibn Jurayj also narrated that 'Atā' Al-Khurāsāni narrated from him, "I am one of those referred to in this *Āyah*,"

^[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 17:642.

and he would say: "Their number was seven."^[1] Ibn Jarīr recorded that Ibn 'Abbās said:

﴿مَّا يَتْلُوهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ﴾

﴿none knows them but a few.﴾ "I am one of the few, and they were seven." The chains of these reports narrated from Ibn 'Abbās, which say that they were seven, are *Ṣaḥīḥ*, and this is in accordance with what we have stated above.

﴿فَلَا تُنَازِرْ فِيهِمْ إِلَّا لِرَدِّهِمْ إِلَىٰ رِجَاكَ ظَهَرَ﴾

﴿So debate not except with the clear proof.﴾

meaning, gently and politely, for there is not a great deal to be gained from knowing about that.

﴿وَلَا تَسْتَفْتِ فِيهِمْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا﴾

﴿And consult not any of them (about the people of the Cave).﴾

meaning, They do not have any knowledge about it except what they make up, guessing at the unseen; they have no evidence from an infallible source. But Allāh has sent you, O Muḥammad, with the truth in which there is no doubt or confusion, which is to be given priority over all previous books and sayings.'

﴿وَلَا تَقُولَنَّ لِشَيْءٍ إِنِّي فَاعِلٌ ذَٰلِكَ غَدًا ۚ ﴿٢٣﴾ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ ۚ وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ إِذَا نَسِيتَ

وَقُلْ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَهْدِيَنِي رَّبِّي لِأَقْرَبَ مِنْ هَٰذَا رَشَدًا ۚ ﴿٢٤﴾﴾

﴿23. And never say of anything, "I shall do such and such thing tomorrow."﴾

﴿24. Except (with the saying), "If Allāh wills!" And remember your Lord when you forget and say: "It may be that my Lord guides me to a nearer way of truth than this."﴾

Saying "If Allāh wills" when determining to do Something in the Future

Here Allāh, may He be glorified, shows His Messenger ﷺ the correct etiquette when determining to do something in the future; this should always be referred to the will of Allāh, the

[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 17:642.

Knower of the Unseen, Who knows what was and what is yet to be and what is not to be, and how it will be if it is to be. It was recorded in the Two *Ṣaḥīḥs* that Abu Hurayrah said that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

«قَالَ سُلَيْمَانُ بْنُ دَاوُدَ عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَامُ: لَا طُوفَاقَ اللَّيْلَةِ عَلَى سَبْعِينَ امْرَأَةً - وَفِي رِوَايَةٍ: سَبْعِينَ امْرَأَةً، وَفِي رِوَايَةٍ: مِائَةِ امْرَأَةٍ - تِلْدُ كُلُّ امْرَأَةٍ مِنْهُنَّ غُلَامًا يُقَاتِلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ، فَقِيلَ لَهُ - وَفِي رِوَايَةٍ قَالَ لَهُ الْمَلَكُ: - قُلْ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ، فَلَمْ يَقُلْ، فَطَافَ بِهِمْ فَلَمْ تِلْدُ مِنْهُنَّ إِلَّا امْرَأَةً وَاحِدَةً نَضَفَ إِنْسَانٌ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ، لَوْ قَالَ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَمْ يَخْتَفِ، وَكَانَ دَرَكًا لِحَاجَتِهِ» وَفِي رِوَايَةٍ: «وَلَقَاتَلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فُرْسَانًا أَجْمَعُونَ»

«Sulaymān bin Dāwud (peace be upon them both) said: "Tonight I will go around to seventy women [according to some reports, it was ninety or one hundred women] so that each one of them will give birth to a son who will fight for the sake of Allāh." It was said to him, [according to one report, the angel said to him] "Say: 'If Allāh wills'", but he did not say it. He went around to the women but none of them gave birth except for one who gave birth to a half-formed child.» The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, «By the One in Whose hand is my soul, had he said, "If Allāh wills," he would not have broken his oath, and that would have helped him to attain what he wanted.» According to another report, «They would all have fought as horsemen in the cause of Allāh.»^[1]

At the beginning of this *Sūrah* we discussed the reason why this *Āyah* was revealed: when the Prophet ﷺ was asked about the story of the people of the Cave, he said, "I will tell you tomorrow." Then the revelation was delayed for fifteen days.^[2]

Since we discussed this at length at the beginning of the *Sūrah*, there is no need to repeat it here.

﴿وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ إِذَا نَسِيتَ﴾

﴿And remember your Lord when you forget﴾

[1] *Faḥ Al-Bārī* 6:41 Muslim 3:1275.

[2] *Aṭ-Ṭabari* 17:592.

It was said that this means, if you forget to say "If Allāh wills", then say it when you remember. This was the view of Abu Al-'Āliyah and Al-Ḥasan Al-Baṣri.^[1] Hushaym reported from Al-A'mash from Mujāhid that concerning a man who swears an oath, Ibn 'Abbās said "He may say 'If Allāh wills' even if it is a year later." Ibn 'Abbās used to interpret this Āyah:

﴿وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ إِذَا نَسِيتَ﴾

﴿And remember your Lord when you forget﴾

in this way. Al-A'mash was asked, "Did you hear this from Mujāhid?" He said, "Layth bin Abi Salīm told it to me."^[2] The meaning of Ibn 'Abbās' view, that a person may say "If Allāh wills", even if it is a year later, is that if he forgets to say it when he makes the oath or when he speaks, and he remembers it later, even a year later, the Sunnah is that he should say it, so that he will still be following the Sunnah of saying "If Allāh wills", even if that is after breaking his oath. This was also the view of Ibn Jarīr,^[3] but he stated that this does not make up for breaking the oath or mean that one is no longer obliged to offer expiation. What Ibn Jarīr said is correct, and it is more appropriate to understand the words of Ibn Abbās in this way. And Allāh knows best.

﴿وَلَا تَقُولَنَّ لِشَيْءٍ إِنِّي فَاعِلٌ ذَٰلِكَ غَدًا ۚ ﴿٣٠﴾ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ ۚ وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ إِذَا نَسِيتَ﴾

﴿And never say of anything, "I shall do such and such thing tomorrow." Except (with the saying), "If Allāh wills!" And remember your Lord when you forget﴾

Aṭ-Ṭabarānī recorded that Ibn 'Abbās said that this meant saying, "If Allāh wills."^[4]

﴿وَقُلْ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَهْدِيَنِي رَبِّي لِأَقْرَبَ مِنْ هَٰذَا رَشَدًا﴾

﴿and say: "It may be that my Lord guides me to a nearer way of truth than this."﴾

meaning, 'if you (O Prophet) are asked about something you

[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 17:645.

[2] Aṭ-Ṭabari 17:645.

[3] Aṭ-Ṭabari 17:646.

[4] Aṭ-Ṭabarānī in *Al-Awsaṭ* 7:4545.

know nothing about, ask Allāh about it, and turn to Him so that He may guide you to what is right.' And Allāh knows best.

﴿وَلَيْسُوا فِي كَهْفِهِمْ ثَلَاثَ مِائَةٍ سِنِينَ وَازْدَادُوا تِسْعًا ۖ قُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَيْسُوا لَهُ غِيبُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَبْصِرْ بِهِ وَأَسْمِعْ مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا يُشْرِكُ فِي حُكْمِهِ أَحَدًا﴾

﴿25. And they stayed in their cave three hundred years, adding nine.﴾

﴿26. Say: "Allāh knows best how long they stayed. With Him is the unseen of the heavens and the earth." How clearly He sees, and hears (everything)! They have no protector other than Him, and He makes none to share in His decision and His rule.﴾

The Length of their Stay in the Cave

Here Allāh tells His Messenger ﷺ the length of time the people of the Cave spent in their cave, from the time when He caused them to sleep until the time when He resurrected them and caused the people of that era to find them. The length of time was three hundred plus nine years in lunar years, which is three hundred years in solar years. The difference between one hundred lunar years and one hundred solar years is three years, which is why after mentioning three hundred, Allāh says, 'adding nine.'

﴿قُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَيْسُوا﴾

﴿Say: "Allāh knows best how long they stayed..."﴾

If you are asked about how long they stayed, and you have no knowledge of that and no revelation from Allāh about it, then do not say anything. Rather say something like this:

﴿اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَيْسُوا لَهُ غِيبُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ﴾

﴿Allāh knows best how long they stayed. With Him is (the knowledge of) the Unseen of the heavens and the earth.﴾"

meaning, no one knows about that except Him, and whoever among His creatures He chooses to tell. What we have said here is the view of more than one of the scholars of Tafsīr,

such as Mujāhid and others among the earlier and later generations.

﴿وَلَبِثُوا فِي كَهْفِهِمْ ثَلَاثَ مِائَةٍ سِنِينَ﴾

﴿And they stayed in their cave three hundred years,﴾

Qatādah said, this was the view of the People of the Book, and Allāh refuted it by saying:

﴿قُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثُوا﴾

﴿Say: "Allāh knows best how long they stayed..."﴾

meaning, that Allāh knows better than what the people say.^[1] This was also the view of Muṭarrāf bin 'Abdullāh.^[2] However, this view is open to debate, because when the People of the Book said that they stayed in the cave for three hundred years, without the extra nine, they were referring to solar years, and if Allāh was merely narrating what they had said, He would not have said,

﴿وَأَزَادُوا تِسْعًا﴾

﴿adding nine.﴾

The apparent meaning of the Āyah is that Allāh is stating the facts, not narrating what was said. This is the view of Ibn Jarīr (may Allāh have mercy on him). And Allāh knows best.

﴿أَبْصَرَ بِهِمْ وَأَسْمِعُ﴾

﴿How clearly He sees, and hears (everything)!﴾

He sees them and hears them. Ibn Jarīr said, "The language used is an eloquent expression of praise."^[3] The phrase may be understood to mean, how much Allāh sees of everything that exists and how much He hears of everything that is to be heard, for nothing is hidden from Him! It was narrated that Qatādah commented on this Āyah:

﴿أَبْصَرَ بِهِمْ وَأَسْمِعُ﴾

[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 17:647.

[2] Aṭ-Ṭabari 17:648.

[3] Aṭ-Ṭabari 17:650.

﴿How clearly He sees, and hears (everything)!﴾

“No one hears or sees more than Allāh.”^[1]

﴿مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا يُشْرِكُ فِي حُكْمِهِ أَحَدًا﴾

﴿They have no protector other than Him, and He makes none to share in His decision and His rule.﴾

meaning, He, may He be glorified, is the One Who has the power to create and to command, the One Whose ruling cannot be overturned; He has no adviser, supporter or partner, may He be exalted and hallowed.

﴿وَأَنذِرْ مَا أَوْحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ كِتَابِ رَبِّكَ لَا مَبْدَلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مُلْتَحِمًا ۚ
وَأَمِيرٌ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ وَلَا تَقْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ
رُبُّدٌ رِيْسَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا تَطْفِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ
قُرْطَابًا ۚ﴾

﴿27. And recite what has been revealed to you (O Muḥammad) of your Lord's Book. None can change His Words, and none will you find as refuge other than Him.﴾

﴿28. And keep yourself (O Muḥammad) patiently with those who call on their Lord morning and afternoon, seeking His Face; and let not your eyes overlook them, desiring the pomp and glitter of the life of the world; and obey not him whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance, and who follows his own lusts, and whose affair has been lost.﴾

The Command to recite the Qur'ān and to patiently keep Company with the Believers

Commanding His Messenger ﷺ to recite His Holy Book and convey it to mankind, Allāh says,

﴿لَا مَبْدَلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ﴾

﴿None can change His Words,﴾ meaning, no one can alter them, distort them or misinterpret them.

^[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 17:650.

﴿وَلَنْ يَجِدَ مِن دُونِهِ مُلْتَحًٰٓٔا﴾

﴿and none will you find as a refuge other than Him.﴾

It was reported that Mujāhid said, "A shelter,"^[1] and that Qatādah said, "A helper or supporter."^[2] Ibn Jarīr said: "Allāh is saying, 'if you O Muḥammad, do not recite what is revealed to you of the Book of your Lord, then you will have no refuge from Allāh.'"^[3] As Allāh says:

﴿يٰٓاَيُّهَا الرُّسُوْلُ بَلِّغْ مَا اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ وَاِنْ لَّمْ تَفْعَلْ مَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسٰلَتَهُ وَاَللّٰهُ يَصْمُكُ
مِنَ النَّاسِ﴾

﴿O Messenger! Proclaim (the Message) which has been sent down to you from your Lord. And if you do not, then you have not conveyed His Message. Allāh will protect you from mankind.﴾[5:67]

﴿اِنَّ اِلٰٓهِيَ فَرَضَ عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْاٰنَ لَرٰٰٓٔكَ اِلٰى مَعٰرِ﴾

﴿Verily, He Who has given you the Qur'ān, will surely bring you back to the place of return.﴾ [28:85]

meaning, 'He will call you to account for the duty of conveying the Message which He entrusted you with.'

﴿وَاَصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدُوِّ وَالْءَشِيِّ يُرِيْدُوْنَ وَجْهَهُ﴾

﴿And keep yourself patiently with those who call on their Lord morning and afternoon, seeking His Face;﴾

meaning, sit with those who remember Allāh, who say "Lā Ilāha Illallāh", who praise Him, glorify Him, declare His greatness and call on Him, morning and evening, all the servants of Allāh, whether rich or poor, strong or weak. It was said that this was revealed about the nobles of Quraysh when they asked the Prophet ﷺ to sit with them on his own, and not to bring his weak Companions with him, such as Bilāl,

[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 17:651.

[2] Aṭ-Ṭabari 17:651.

[3] Aṭ-Ṭabari 17:651.

'Ammār, Ṣuhayb, Khabbāb and Ibn Mas'ūd. They wanted him to sit with them on his own, but Allāh forbade him from doing that, and said,

﴿وَلَا تَقْرُؤْ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْفَدَوِّ وَالْمَيْتِ﴾

﴿And turn not away those who invoke their Lord, morning and afternoon.﴾

Allāh commanded him to patiently content himself with sitting with those people (the weak believers), and said:

﴿وَأَمْسِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْفَدَوِّ وَالْمَيْتِ﴾

﴿And keep yourself patiently with those who call on their Lord morning and afternoon...﴾

Imām Muslim recorded in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* that Sa'd bin Abi Waqqāṣ who said: "There was a group of six of us with the Prophet ﷺ. The idolators said, 'Tell these people to leave so they will not offend us.' There was myself, Ibn Mas'ūd, a man from Huḍayl, Bilāl and two other men whose names I have forgotten. Allāh's Messenger ﷺ thought to himself about whatever Allāh willed he should think about, then Allāh revealed:

﴿وَلَا تَقْرُؤْ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْفَدَوِّ وَالْمَيْتِ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ﴾

﴿And turn not away those who invoke their Lord, morning and afternoon.﴾

Only Muslim reported this; excluding Al-Bukhārī.^[1]

﴿وَلَا تَقْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا﴾

﴿and let not your eyes overlook them, desiring the pomp and glitter of the life of the world;﴾

Ibn 'Abbās said, '(this means) do not favor others over them,^[2] meaning do not seek the people of nobility and wealth instead of them.'

﴿وَلَا تُطِيعَنَّ مَنْ أَفْغَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَن ذِكْرِنَا﴾

﴿and obey not him whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance ﴾

[1] Muslim 4:1878.

[2] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:6.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي

وَأَصْبَرَ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدْوَةِ وَالْعَفَى
يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ، وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ
الدُّنْيَا وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ، عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ
أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا ﴿٢٩٨﴾ وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ
شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ نَارًا أَحَاطَ بِهِمْ سُرَادِقُهَا
وَإِنْ يَسْتَعِثُوا بِعِبَادِ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ يَتْلُوا الْوَجْهَ يُنْسِقُ
الشَّرَابَ وَسَاءَتْ مُرْتَقَقًا ﴿٢٩٩﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ إِنَّا لَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ عَمَلًا ﴿٣٠٠﴾ أُولَئِكَ
لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ يَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ
مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَيَلْبَسُونَ ثِيَابًا خُضْرًا مِنْ سُنْدُسٍ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٍ مُتَّكِئِينَ
فِيهَا عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ يَنعمُ الثَّوَابُ وَحَسُنَتْ مُرْتَقَقًا ﴿٣٠١﴾ وَأَضْرِبْ
لَهُمْ مَثَلًا رِطْلَيْنِ جَعَلْنَا لِأَحَدِهِمَا جَنَّتَيْنِ مِنْ أَعْنَبٍ وَحَفَفْتَهُمَا
بِنَخْلٍ وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمَا زُرْعًا ﴿٣٠٢﴾ كِلَا الْجَنَّتَيْنِ ءَاتَتْ أَكْثُفًا وَلَمْ
تُظْلِمْنِيهِمَا شَيْئًا وَفَجَّرْنَا خِلْفَهُمَا نَهْرًا ﴿٣٠٣﴾ وَكَانَ لَهُ ثَمَرٌ فَقَالَ
لِصَاحِبِهِ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَنَا أَكْرَمُ مِنْكَ مَا لَآ وَاعِزُّنَا ﴿٣٠٤﴾

means, those who are distracted by this world from being committed to the religion and from worshipping their Lord.

﴿وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا﴾

﴿and whose affair (deeds) has been lost.﴾ means, his actions and deeds are a foolish waste of time. Do not obey him or admire his way or envy what he has. As Allāh says elsewhere:

﴿وَلَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِنْهُمْ زَهْرَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا لِنَفْثَنَّهُمْ فِيهِ يُرِيقُ رَبُّكَ خَيْرٌ وَلَاقَىٰ ﴿٣١١﴾﴾

﴿And strain not your eyes in longing for the

things We have given for enjoyment to various groups of them, the splendor of the life of this world, that We may test them thereby. But the provision of your Lord is better and more lasting.﴾ [20:131]

﴿وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ نَارًا أَحَاطَ بِهِمْ سُرَادِقُهَا وَإِنْ يَسْتَعِثُوا بِعِبَادِ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ يَتْلُوا الْوَجْهَ يُنْسِقُ الشَّرَابَ وَسَاءَتْ مُرْتَقَقًا ﴿٢٩٩﴾﴾

﴿29. And say: "The truth is from your Lord." Then whosoever wills, let him believe; and whosoever wills, let him disbelieve. Verily, We have prepared for the wrongdoers, a Fire whose walls will be surrounding them. And if they ask for drink, they will be granted water like Al-Muhl, that will scald their faces. Terrible is the drink, and an evil Murtafaq!﴾

The Truth is from Allāh, and the Punishment of Those Who do not believe in it

Allāh says to His Messenger Muḥammad ﷺ: "Say to the people, 'What I have brought to you from your Lord is the truth, in which there is no confusion or doubt.'"

﴿فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ﴾

﴿Then whosoever wills, let him believe; and whosoever wills, let him disbelieve.﴾

This is a type of threat and stern warning, after which Allāh says,

﴿إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا﴾

﴿Verily, We have prepared﴾, meaning made ready,

﴿الْغَالِيِينَ﴾

﴿for the wrongdoers,﴾ meaning those who disbelieve in Allāh, His Messenger ﷺ and His Book,

﴿نَارًا أَحَاطَ بِهَا نَارُهَا﴾

﴿a Fire whose walls will be surrounding them.﴾

Ibn Jurayj said that Ibn 'Abbās said,

﴿أَحَاطَ بِهَا نَارُهَا﴾

﴿a Fire whose walls will be surrounding them.﴾ "A wall of fire."^[1]

﴿وَلَنْ يَسْتَفِيدُوا مِنْهَا بِمَاءٍ وَلَا مِنْهُ بِشَيْءٍ الْوُجُوهُ﴾

﴿And if they ask for drink, they will be granted water like Al-Muhl, that will scald their faces.﴾

Ibn 'Abbās said; "Al-Muhl is thick water which is similar to the sediment in oil."^[2] Mujāhid said, "It is like blood and pus."^[3] 'Ikrimah said, "It is the thing that is heated to the ultimate temperature." Others said: "It is everything that is melted."^[4]

[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:11.

[2] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:13.

[3] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:13.

[4] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:12.

Qatādah said, "Ibn Mas'ūd melted some gold in a grove, and when it became liquid and foam rose to the top, he said, this is the thing that is most like *Al-Muhl*."^[1] Aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk said: "The water of Hell is black, and it itself is black and its people are black."^[2] There is nothing contradictory in these comments, for *Al-Muhl* includes all of these unpleasant characteristics, it is black, evil-smelling, thick and hot, as Allāh said,

﴿يَسْخَرُونَ اَلْوُجُوهُ﴾

﴿[it] will scald their faces.﴾ meaning because of its heat. When the disbeliever wants to drink it and brings it close to his face, it will scald it so that the skin of his face falls off into it.

Sa'īd bin Jubayr said, "When the people of Hell get hungry, they will ask for relief from it, and they will be given the tree of *Zaqqūm* from which they will eat. The tree will tear off the skin of their faces, and if anyone who knew them were to pass by, he would recognize the skin of their faces in the tree. Then they will feel thirsty, so they will ask for drink, and they will be granted water like *Al-Muhl*, that is what has been heated to the ultimate temperature. When it is brought near their mouths, the flesh of their faces from which the skin has been torn off will be baked."^[3] After describing this drink in these horrifying qualities, Allāh says:

﴿يَنفَكُ الشَّرَابُ﴾

﴿Terrible is the drink,﴾ meaning, how awful this drink is. Similarly, He says in another *Āyah*:

﴿وَسُقُوا مَاءً حَمِيماً فَقَطَّعَ اٰمَاقَهُمْ﴾

﴿and be given to drink boiling water so that it cuts up their bowels.﴾ [47:15]

﴿تُسْقَىٰ مِنْ عَيْنٍ اٰتِيَةٍ﴾

﴿They will be given to drink from a boiling spring.﴾ [88:5]

﴿وَيَذَرُوهَا كَيْدَ اٰنٍ﴾

[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:13.

[2] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:13.

[3] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:14.

﴿They will go between it (Hell) and the fierce boiling water.﴾
[55:44]

﴿وَسَاءَتْ مُرْتَقَا﴾

﴿and an evil Murtafaq!﴾ means, how evil a place is the Fire to dwell and rest and gather. As Allāh says elsewhere:

﴿إِنَّهَا سَاءَتْ مُسْتَقَرًّا وَمُقَامًا﴾

﴿Evil indeed it (Hell) is as an abode and as a place to rest in.﴾
[25:66]

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ إِنَّا لَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ عَمَلًا ۖ أَتُوبُكَ لَمْ
جَنَّتْ عَنِّي تَجْرَىٰ مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ يُجَلَّوْنَ فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَيَلْبَسُونَ ثِيَابًا خُضْرًا مِنْ
سُنْدُسٍ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٍ مُتَّكِئِينَ فِيهَا عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ يَمُومُ ۖ الْوَأَبْجَاءُ الْحَمْدُ وَحَسَنَتْ مُرْتَقَا﴾

﴿30. Verily, as for those who believed and did righteous deeds, certainly We shall not make the reward of anyone to be lost who does his (righteous) deeds in the most perfect manner.﴾

﴿31. These! For them will be Jannātu 'Adn; wherein rivers flow beneath them; therein they will be adorned with bracelets of gold, and they will wear green garments of Sundus and Istabraq. They will be Muttaki'in therein on Arā'ik. How good is the reward, and what an excellent Murtafaq!﴾

The Reward of those Who believe and do Righteous Deeds

When Allāh mentions the state of those who are doomed, He follows that by mentioning the blessed who believed in Allāh and believed what His Messengers brought, those who did the righteous deeds that they commanded them to do. They will have Jannātu 'Adn. 'Adn means lasting.

﴿تَجْرَىٰ مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ﴾

﴿wherein rivers flow beneath them,﴾ means, from beneath its rooms and dwellings. Fir'awn said:

﴿وَمَذِيءُ الْأَنْهَارِ تَجْرَىٰ مِنْ تَحْتِي﴾

﴿and these rivers flowing beneath me...﴾ [43:51]

﴿يُجَلَّوْنَ﴾

﴿they will be adorned﴾ means, with jewelry.

﴿فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ﴾

﴿with bracelets of gold,﴾ Allāh says elsewhere:

﴿وَلَوْثَلَا وَرِثَاتُهُمْ فِيهَا حَرِيرٌ ۝﴾

﴿and pearls and their garments therein will be of silk﴾ [22:23].

This is explained in more detail here, where Allāh says:

﴿وَيَلْبَسُونَ رِيبَآ حُضْرًا مِنْ سُندُسٍ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٍ﴾

﴿and they will wear green garments of Sundus and Istabraq.﴾

Sundus refers to a fine garment, like a shirt and the like, and Istabraq is thick and shiny velvet.

﴿مُتَّكِينَ فِيهَا عَلَى الْأَرَآئِكِ﴾

﴿They will be Muttaki'in therein on Arā'ik.﴾

The word *Muttaki'in* implies lying down, or it was said that it means sitting with one's legs crossed, which is closer to the meaning here. In a *Ṣaḥīḥ Ḥadīth*, the Prophet ﷺ said:

«أَنَا أَتَا فَلَا أَكُلُ مُتَّكِنًا»

«As for me, I do not eat sitting with legs crossed (Muttaki'an)».^[1]

Arā'ik is the plural of *Arīkah*, which is a bed under a canopy. And Allāh knows best.

﴿يَعْمُ الرَّابِّ وَحَسَنَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا﴾

﴿How good is the reward, and what an excellent place of rest (Murtafaq)!﴾

means, how blessed is Paradise as a reward for their good deeds. And what an excellent *Murtafaq* means, and how good a place to dwell and rest and stay. Previously, Allāh had said of Hell,

﴿يَنْسُ الرَّابِّ وَمَسَاءَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا﴾

﴿Terrible is the drink, and an evil place of rest (Murtafaq)!﴾ [18:29].

[1] *Tuhfat Al-Aḥwadhī* 5:557.

In a similar way, He contrasts the two (Paradise and Hell) in *Sūrat Al-Furqān*, where He says:

﴿إِنَّهَا سَاءَتْ مُسَقَّرًا وَمَقَامًا ۝﴾

﴿Evil indeed it (Hell) is as an abode, and as a place to rest in.﴾
[25:66].

Then He mentions the qualities of the believers, then says:

﴿أُولَٰئِكَ يُجْزَوْنَ الْغُرَّةَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا وَنُفِقُوا فِيهَا بِكَايِمَةٍ وَسَلَامًا ۝﴾
﴿فِيهَا حُتَّتْ مُسَقَّرًا وَمَقَامًا ۝﴾

﴿Those will be rewarded with the highest place because of their patience. Therein they shall be met with greetings and the word of peace and respect. Abiding therein excellent it is as an abode, and as a place to rest in.﴾ [25:75-76]

﴿وَأَنْزَلْنَا لَهُمْ مَثَلًا رَّجُلَيْنِ جَمَلًا لِأَحَدِهِمَا جَنَّتَيْنِ مِنْ أَنْثَبٍ وَحَفَفْتُهُمَا بِتِنِّيلٍ وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمَا زُرْعًا ۝﴾
﴿كُنَّا لَلْجَنَّتَيْنِ مَائَاتَ أَكْطَا وَلَمْ نَجِدْ فِيهِ شَيْئًا وَقَفَرْنَا جَنَّتَهُمَا نَهْرًا ۝﴾
﴿وَكَاثَ لَمْ نَمُرْ فَقَالَ لِصَاحِبِهِ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَنَا أَكْثَرُ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَأَعَزُّ نَفَرًا ۝﴾
﴿وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهُ وَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ قَالَ مَا أَظُنُّ أَنْ يَبْعِدَ هَذِهِ أَلَمًا ۝﴾
﴿وَمَا أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً وَلَئِنْ رُودْتُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي لَأُجِدَنَّ خَيْرًا مِنْهَا مُنْقَلَبًا ۝﴾

432. And put forward to them the example of two men: unto one of them We had given two gardens of grapes, and We had surrounded both with date palms; and had put between them green crops (cultivated fields).﴾

433. Each of those two gardens brought forth its produce, and failed not in the least therein, and We caused a river to gush forth in the midst of both.﴾

434. And he had Tamar, and he said to his companion in the course of discussion: "I am greater than you in wealth and have a mightier entourage."﴾

435. And he went into his garden while having been unjust to himself. He said: "I do not think that this will ever perish."﴾

436. "And I do not think the Hour will ever come, and if indeed I am brought back to my Lord, I surely, shall find better than this when I return to Him."﴾

The Example of the Rich Idolators and the Poor Muslims

After mentioning the idolators who were too arrogant to sit with the poor and weak among Muslims, showing off before them with their wealth and noble lineage, Allāh then gives a parable for them of two men, one of whom Allāh gave two gardens of grapes, surrounded with palm trees and cultivated with crops throughout. All of the trees and plants were abundantly fruitful, providing readily accessible, good quality produce. Allāh says:

﴿كُنَّا لِبَنَيْنِ مِائَتِ أَكْهَامَ﴾

﴿Each of those two gardens brought forth its produce,﴾
meaning, produced its fruits,

﴿وَلَمْ تَنْقُصْ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا﴾

﴿and failed not in the least therein,﴾ meaning, nothing at all was diminishing.

﴿وَفَجَّرْنَا خِلَالَهُمَا نَهْرًا﴾

﴿and We caused a river to gush forth in the midst of both.﴾
means, rivers were flowing through them here and there.

﴿وَكَانَ لَهُ نَهْرٌ﴾

﴿And he had Thamar,﴾ It was said that what was meant here was wealth, and it was said that what was meant were fruits, which is the more apparent meaning here. This is also supported by the alternative recitation, *Thumr*, which is the plural of *Thamrah* (fruit) just as *Khushb* is the plural of *Khashab* (wood). Others recite it as *Thamar*.^[1]

﴿فَقَالَ﴾

﴿and he said﴾ the owner of the two gardens

﴿لِصَاحِبِهِ وَهُوَ يُحَادِّثُهُ﴾

﴿to his companion in the course of discussion﴾

means, while he was disputing with him and boasting to him and showing off,

^[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:21.

﴿أَنَا أَكْثَرُ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَأَعَزُّ نَفَرًا﴾

﴿I am greater than you in wealth and have a mightier entourage.﴾

meaning, 'I have more servants, attendants and children.' Qatādah said, "This, by Allāh, is the wish of the immoral to have a lot of wealth and a large entourage."^[1]

﴿وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهُ وَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ﴾

﴿And he went into his garden having been unjust to himself.﴾

meaning, in his disbelief, rebellion, arrogance and denial of the Hereafter.

﴿قَالَ مَا أَظُنُّ أَن يَبْدَهُ هَٰذَا أَبَدًا﴾

﴿He said: "I do not think this will ever perish."﴾

Thus he was allowing himself to be deceived because of the plants, fruits and trees that he saw, and the rivers flowing through the different parts of his gardens. He thought that it could never come to an end or cease or be destroyed. This was because of his lack of understanding and the weakness of his faith in Allāh, and because he was enamored with this world and its adornments, and because he disbelieved in the Hereafter. So he said:

﴿وَمَا أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَآبِةً﴾

﴿"And I do not think the Hour will ever come..."﴾ meaning, will ever happen

﴿وَلَكِن رُّدِدْتُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي لَأَجِدَنَّ خَيْرًا مِنْهَا مُنْقَلَبًا﴾

﴿and if indeed I am brought back to my Lord, I surely shall find better than this when I return to Him.﴾

meaning, 'if there is a Hereafter and a return to Allāh, then I will have a better share than this with my Lord, for if it were not that I am dear to Him, He would not have given me all this.' As Allāh says elsewhere:

﴿وَلَكِن تُرْجِعُنِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّي إِنَّ لِي عِنْدَهُ لَلْخُسْرَىٰ﴾

[1] At-Ṭabari 18:22.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

٢٩٨

الْكَافِرُونَ

وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهُ وَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ قَالَ مَا أَظُنُّ أَن تَبِيدَ هَٰذَا ۖ
 أَبَدًا ﴿٣٥﴾ وَمَا أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً وَلَئِن رُّدِدْتُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي
 لَأَجِدَنَّ خَيْرًا مِنْهَا مُنْقَلَبًا ﴿٣٦﴾ قَالَ لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ
 أَكَفَرْتَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَكَ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ سَوَّكَ رَجُلًا
 ﴿٣٧﴾ لَنُكَفِّرَنَّ هُوَ اللَّهُ رَبِّي وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا ﴿٣٨﴾ وَلَوْلَا إِذْ
 دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ إِن تَرَنِ أَنَا
 أَقَلُّ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَلَوْلَا ﴿٣٩﴾ فَعَسَىٰ رَبِّي أَن يُؤْتِيَنِي خَيْرًا مِنْ
 جَنَّتِكَ وَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهَا حُسْبَانًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَتُصْبِحَ صَعِيدًا
 زَلَقًا ﴿٤٠﴾ أَوْ يُصْبِحَ مَاؤها غُورًا فَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ لَهُ طَلَبًا ﴿٤١﴾
 وَأُحِيط بِشَعْرَةٍ فَاصْبَحَ يَقْلَبُ كَفَيْهِ عَلَىٰ مَا أَنْفَقَ فِيهَا وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ
 عَلَىٰ عُرُوشِهَا وَيَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُشْرِكْ بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا ﴿٤٢﴾ وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ
 فِتْنَةٌ يَصُورُوهَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانَ مُنْصَرًّا ﴿٤٣﴾ هَٰذَا لِكِ الْوَلِيَّةِ
 لِلَّهِ الْحَقُّ هُوَ خَيْرٌ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ عُقْبًا ﴿٤٤﴾ وَاضْرِبْ لَهُم مَّثَلِ الْخَيْوَةِ
 الَّتِي كَانَتْ أَتْرَلَنَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَأَخْلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ
 فَأَصْبَحَ هَشِيمًا تَذْرُوهُ الرِّيحُ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّقْدِرًا ﴿٤٥﴾

﴿But if I am brought back to my Lord, surely there will be for me the best with Him.﴾ [41:50]

﴿أَفَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ بِآيَاتِنَا وَقَالَ لَاؤْتِيَنِيكَ مَالًا وَلَوْلَا ۖ﴾

﴿Have you seen him who disbelieved in Our Āyāt and said: "I shall certainly be given wealth and children [if I will be alive again]."﴾ [19:77]

He took it for granted that Allāh would give him this, without any sound evidence for that. The reason why this Āyah was revealed was because of Al-‘Āsh bin Wā’il, as we will explain in the appropriate place, if Allāh wills. In Allāh we put our trust.

﴿قَالَ لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَكَفَرْتَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَكَ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ سَوَّكَ رَجُلًا ۖ
 لَنُكَفِّرَنَّ هُوَ اللَّهُ رَبِّي وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا ۖ وَلَوْلَا إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَا قُوَّةَ
 إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ إِن تَرَنِ أَنَا أَقَلُّ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَلَوْلَا ۖ﴾ فَعَسَىٰ رَبِّي أَن يُؤْتِيَنِي خَيْرًا مِنْ جَنَّتِكَ وَيُرْسِلَ
 عَلَيْهَا حُسْبَانًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَتُصْبِحَ صَعِيدًا زَلَقًا ۖ أَوْ يُصْبِحَ مَاؤها غُورًا فَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ لَهُ طَلَبًا ۖ﴾

﴿37. His companion said to him during his discussion: "Do you disbelieve in Him Who created you out of dust, then out of Nutfah,^[1] then fashioned you into a man?"﴾

[1] A drop of sperm. Usually used to refer to the mixture of the male and female discharge.

﴿38. "But as for my part, (I believe) that He is Allāh, my Lord, and none shall I associate as partner with my Lord."﴾

﴿39. "It was better for you to say, when you entered your garden: 'That which Allāh wills! There is no power but with Allāh!' If you see me less than you in wealth, and children,"﴾

﴿40. "It may be that my Lord will give me something better than your garden, and will send on it Huṣḥān from the sky, then it will be as a barren slippery earth."﴾

﴿41. "Or the water thereof becomes Ghawran so that you will never be able to seek it."﴾

The Response of the Poor Believer

Allāh tells us how the rich man's believing companion replied to him, warning and rebuking him for his disbelief in Allāh and allowing himself to be deceived.

﴿أَكْفَرْتَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَكَ مِنْ تُرَابٍ﴾

﴿Do you disbelieve in Him Who created you out of dust...?﴾

This is a denunciation, pointing out the seriousness of his rejection of his Lord Who created and formed man out of dust – that is, refering to Ādam – then made his offspring from despised liquid, as Allāh says:

﴿كَيْفَ نَكْفُرُكَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنْتُمْ أَمْوَاتًا فَأَحْيَاكُمْ﴾

﴿How can you disbelieve in Allāh? Seeing that you were dead and He gave you life﴾ [2:28]

meaning, how can you reject your Lord and His clear signs to you, which every one recognizes in himself, for there is no one among His creatures who does not know that he was nothing, then he came to be, and his existence is not due to himself or any other creature. He knows that his existence is due to his Creator, beside Whom there is no other god, the Creator of all things. So the believer said:

﴿لَيْكِنَّا مُوَالِدُ اللَّهِ رَبِّ﴾

﴿But as for my part, (I believe) that He is Allāh, my Lord,﴾

meaning, 'I do not say what you say; rather I acknowledge the Oneness and Lordship of Allāh,'

﴿وَلَا أَشْرِكُ بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا﴾

﴿and none shall I associate as partner with my Lord.﴾

meaning, He is Allāh, the One Who is to be worshipped Alone, with no partner or associate.

Then he said:

﴿وَلَوْلَا إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ إِنْ تَرَىٰ أَنَا أَقْلَ مِنْكَ مَا لَا

وَلَكَا ۖ﴾

﴿It was better for you to say, when you entered your garden, 'That which Allāh wills! There is no power but with Allāh!' If you see me less than you in wealth, and children.﴾

Here he was urging and encouraging him to say that, as if he was saying, "When you entered your garden and looked at it and liked it, why would'nt you praise Allāh for the blessings He gave you and the wealth and children that He has given to you and not to others? Why did you not say 'That which Allāh wills! There is no power but with Allāh!?' " One of the Salaf said, "Whoever is delighted with something in his circumstances or his wealth or his children, let him say, 'That which Allāh wills! There is no power but with Allāh!'" This is based on this *Āyah*. It was reported in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* from Abu Mūsā that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

«أَلَا أَدُلُّكَ عَلَىٰ كَثْرٍ مِّنْ ثُنُوزِ الْجَنَّةِ؟ لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ»

«Shall I not tell you about some of the treasure of Paradise? *Lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billāh* (There is no power or might but with Allāh).»^[1]

﴿فَمَعَىٰ رَبِّي أَن يُؤْتِيَنِي خَيْرًا مِّنْ جَنَّتِكَ﴾

﴿It may be that my Lord will give me something better than your garden,﴾ in the Hereafter

﴿وَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهَا﴾

﴿and will send on it﴾ on your garden in this world, which you think will never come to an end or cease to be,

[1] *Faḥ Al-Bāri* 11 :217, Muslim 4 :2076.

﴿حُسْبَانًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ﴾

﴿Husbān from the sky,﴾ Ibn 'Abbās, Aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk and Qatādah^[1] said – and Mālik narrated that Az-Zuhri said – a punishment from heaven. The apparent meaning is that it is a mighty rain which would disrupt his garden and uproot its plants and trees. As he said:

﴿تَنْصَبِحَ صَبِيحًا رَلْفًا﴾

﴿then it will be as a barren slippery earth.﴾ meaning, smooth mud in which one cannot get a foothold. Ibn 'Abbās said, "Like land without vegetation, where nothing grows."^[2]

﴿أَوْ يُصْبِحَ مَآؤُهَا غَوْرًا﴾

﴿Or the water thereof becomes Ghawran﴾

means, it disappears into the earth, which is the opposite of flowing water that seeks the surface of the earth. So Ghā'ir is to go lower. as Allāh says:

﴿قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَصْبَحَ مَآؤُكُمْ غَوْرًا فَمَنْ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِمَآءٍ مُعِينٍ﴾

﴿Say: "Tell me! If your water were Ghawran, who then can supply you with flowing water?"﴾ [67:30]

meaning, water that flows in all directions. And here Allāh says:

﴿أَوْ يُصْبِحَ مَآؤُهَا غَوْرًا فَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ لَهُمُ طَلَبًا﴾

﴿Or the water thereof (of the gardens) becomes deep-sunken (underground) so that you will never be able to seek it.﴾

Ghawr is from the same root as Ghā'ir and has a similar meaning, but is more intensive.

﴿وَالْحَبِطَ يَشْمَرُ فَاصْبَحَ بَقْلٌ كَفَيْهِ عَلَى مَا أَفْقَ فِيهَا وَهِيَ حَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا وَيَقُولُ بَلَغْنِي لَرَأَيْتُكَ بِرَقٍّ أَحَدًا﴾ (١٢) وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ فِتْنَةٌ يَصْخَرُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانَ مُنْصَرِفًا﴾ (١٣) هُنَالِكَ الْوَلَايَةُ لِلَّهِ الْحَقِّ هُوَ خَيْرٌ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ عُقْبًا﴾ (١٤)

42. So his fruits were encircled (with ruin). And began Yuqallibu his hands over what he had spent upon it, while it

[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:25.

[2] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:26.

was all destroyed on its trellises, and he could only say:
"Would that I had ascribed no partners to my Lord!"

﴿43. And he had no group of men to help him against Allāh, nor could he defend (or save) himself.﴾

﴿44. There (on the Day of Resurrection), Al-Walāyah will be for Allāh (Alone), the True God. He (Allāh) is the best for reward and the best for the final end.﴾

The Evil Results of Kufr

Allāh says:

﴿وَلَحِيطَ بِشَمْرُو﴾

﴿So his fruits were encircled﴾, meaning his wealth, or according to the other opinion, his crops. What is meant is that what this disbeliever was afraid of and what the believer had terrified him actually had happened. A storm struck his garden, a garden which he had erroneously thought would last forever, distracting him from thoughts of Allāh, may He be glorified.

﴿فَأَمْسَحَ يَدَيْهِ عَلَىٰ مَا أَنفَقَ فِيهَا﴾

﴿And he began Yuqallibu his hands over what he had spent upon it,﴾

Qatādah said: "He was clasping his hands together in a gesture of regret and grief for the wealth he had lost."

﴿وَيَقُولُ بَلِّغُنِي لِمَ أَتْرَكْتُ مِرْقَٰ أَحَدًا ۚ وَلَمْ تَكُن لِّمِ يَتَّةَ﴾

﴿and he could only say: "Would that I had ascribed no partners to my Lord!" And he had no group of men﴾^[1]

meaning a clan or children, as he had vainly boasted,

﴿يَعْمُرُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانَ مُنْتَصِرًا ۚ هَٰذَا الَّذِي يَزَعُ لِقَائِهِ﴾

﴿to help him against Allāh, nor could he defend himself. There, Al-Walāyah will be for Allāh, the True God.﴾

Here there are differences in recitation. Some of the reciters pause at the word there,

﴿وَمَا كَانَ مُنْتَصِرًا ۚ هَٰذَا الَّذِي﴾

^[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:27.

﴿nor could he defend himself there.﴾, i.e., at that time, when Allāh sends the punishment upon him, there will be no one to save him. Then they start the next phrase with *Al-Walāyah*;

﴿الْوَلِيَّةُ لِلَّهِ الْحَقِّ﴾

﴿*Al-Walāyah will be for Allāh, the True God.*﴾

Some of them pause at the phrase

﴿وَمَا كَانَ مُنْصِرًا﴾

﴿nor could he defend himself﴾ and start the next phrase;

﴿هُنَالِكَ الْوَلِيَّةُ لِلَّهِ الْحَقِّ﴾

﴿*There, Al-Walāyah will be for Allāh, the True God.*﴾

There is a further difference in the recitation of the word *Al-Walāyah*. Some read it as *Al-Walāyah*, which gives the meaning that all allegiance will be to Allāh, i.e., on that Day everyone, believer or disbeliever, will return to Allāh, for allegiance and submission to Him when the punishment comes to pass. This is like the *Āyah*:

﴿فَلَمَّا رَأَوْا بَأْسَنَا قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَكَفَرْنَا بِمَا كُنَّا بِهِ مُشْرِكِينَ﴾

﴿*So when they saw Our punishment, they said: "We believe in Allāh Alone and reject (all) that we used to associate with Him as partners."*﴾ [40:84] and Allah says concerning the Fir'awn;

﴿حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَذْرَكَهُ الْغَرَقُ قَالَ آمَنْتُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا الَّذِي آمَنْتُ بِهِ، بَنُو إِسْرَءِيلَ وَآنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ﴾

﴿*Till when drowning overtook him, he said: "I believe that none has the right to be worshipped but He in Whom the Children of Israel believe, and I am one of the Muslims."* Now! While you refused to believe before and you were one of the mischief-makers.﴾ [10:90-91]

Some others read it as *Al-Wilāyah*, meaning that on that Day the rule will belong to Allāh, the True God. Some read *Haquq* (True) refering to *Al-Wilāyah*, as in the *Āyah*;

﴿أَلَمْ تَكُنْ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْحَقُّ لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَكَانَ يَوْمًا عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا﴾

﴿*The sovereignty on that Day will be the true (sovereignty),*

belonging to the Most Gracious (Allāh), and it will be a hard Day for the disbelievers» [25:26].

Others it read *Haqqi* referring to Allāh, may He be glorified, as in the *Āyah*:

﴿ثُمَّ رُدُّوْا۟ اِلَى اللّٰهِ مَوْلٰهُمُ الْحَقُّ﴾

﴿Then they are returned to Allāh, their True Protector.﴾ [6:62]

So Allāh says:

﴿هُوَ خَيْرٌ نَّوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ عُقْبًا﴾

﴿He (Allāh) is the best to reward and the best for the final end.﴾

for deeds that were done for the sake of Allāh, their reward is good and their consequences are all good.

﴿وَأَضْرَبَ لَھُم مَّثَلًا لِّلْحَيٰوِۃِ الدُّنْيَا کَمَاۤ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ فَاَخْتَلَطَ بِهٖ نَبَاتٌ الْاَرْضِ فَاَصْبَحَ ھٰیْمًا تَدْرُوْهُ الرِّیْحُ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰی کُلِّ شَیْءٍ مُّقْتَدِرٌۭ ۝۶۵ اَلْمَالُ وَالْبَنُوۡنَ زِیْنَةُ الْحٰیٰوِۃِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْبٰتِیۡنَاتُ الّٰتِیۡلِحٰتُ خٰیۡرٌ عِنۡدَ رَبِّکَ نَوَابًا وَخٰیۡرٌ اٰمَلًا ۝۶۶﴾

﴿45. And mention the parable of the worldly life: it is like the water which We send down from the sky, and the vegetation of the earth mingles with it, and becomes fresh and green. But (later) it becomes dry and broken pieces, which the winds scatter. And Allāh is able to do everything.﴾

﴿46. Wealth and children are the adornment of the life of this world. But the good righteous deeds that last, are better with your Lord for reward and better for hope.﴾

The Parable of the Worldly Life

Allāh says:

﴿وَأَضْرَبَ لَھُم﴾

﴿And mention﴾ O Muḥammad, to the people,

﴿مَّثَلًا لِّلْحَيٰوِۃِ الدُّنْيَا﴾

﴿the parable of the worldly life﴾, its transient nature and how it will eventually cease and come to an end.

﴿کَمَاۤ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ فَاَخْتَلَطَ بِهٖ نَبَاتٌ الْاَرْضِ﴾

﴿it is like the water which We send down from the sky, and the vegetation of the earth mingles with it,﴾

It mingles with the seeds that are in the earth, so they grow and become good, producing bright, fresh flowers, then after that,

﴿فَأَصْبَحَ حُشْبًا﴾

﴿it becomes dry and broken pieces,﴾ withered up,

﴿تَذَرُهُمُ الرِّيحُ﴾

﴿which the winds scatter.﴾ tossing them about right and left.

﴿وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّقْتَدِرًا﴾

﴿And Allāh is able to do everything﴾ He has the power to do this and that. In the Qur'ān Allāh often gives parables like this of the life of this world, as He says in Sūrah Yūnus,

﴿إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاءٍ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ مِمَّا يَأْكُلُ النَّاسُ وَالْأَنْعَامُ﴾

﴿The parable of the worldly life is but that of water which We send down from the sky so by it arises the intermingled produce of the earth of which men and cattle eat...﴾ [10:24] and in Sūrat Az-Zumar:

﴿أَلَمْ نَرِ أَنْ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَلَكُمْ مِنْهُ نَظِيرُ يَخْرُجُ بِهِ زَرْعًا مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهُ﴾

﴿See you not that Allāh sends down water from the sky, and causes it to penetrate the earth, then out from it comes crops of different colors.﴾ [39:21] and in Sūrat Al-Ḥadīd:

﴿اعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا لِلدُّنْيَا لُبٌّ وَلَهُمْ دَرِيَّةٌ وَفَخَارَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَكَانُوا فِي الْأُمُورِ وَالْأَرْوَاحِ كَنَلٍ غِيثٍ أَحْبَبَ الْكُفَّارَ بَنَانُهُ﴾

﴿Know that the life of this world is only play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting among you, and rivalry in respect of wealth and children. (It is) like the parable of vegetation after rain, thereof the growth is pleasing to the tiller...﴾ [57:20] and in the Ṣaḥīḥ Ḥadīth:

«الدُّنْيَا حُلْوَةٌ خَضِرَةٌ»

«This world is sweet and green.»^[1]

Between Wealth and Good Deeds

«الْمَالُ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا»

«Wealth and children are the adornment of the life of this world. »

This is like the Āyah:

«زَيْنٌ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ»

«Beautified for men is the love of things they covet; women, children, vaulted hoards of gold...» [3:14].

Allāh says:

«إِنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ»

«Your wealth and your children are only a trial, whereas Allāh! With Him is a great reward (Paradise).» [64:15]

turning towards Allāh and worshipping Him is better for you than keeping busy with them, and accumulating wealth for them and going to extremes in feeling pity and compassion for them. Allāh says:

«وَالْبَقِيَّةُ الصَّالِحَاتُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ أَمَلًا»

«But the good righteous deeds that last, are better with your Lord for reward and better for hope.»

Ibn 'Abbās, Sa'īd bin Jubayr and others among the Salaf said that the good righteous deeds that last are the five daily prayers.^[2] 'Atā' bin Abi Rabāh and Sa'īd bin Jubayr narrated from Ibn 'Abbās, "The good righteous deeds that last are 'Subhān Allāh (glory be to Allāh)', 'Al-Ḥamdu Lillāh (praise be to Allāh)', 'Lā ilāha illallāh (there is none worthy of worship except Allāh)', and 'Allāhu Akbar (Allāh is Most Great)."^[3] The Commander of the faithful, 'Uthmān bin 'Affān was

^[1] Muslim 4:2098.

^[2] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:32.

^[3] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:33.

questioned, "Which are the good righteous deeds that last?" He replied, "They are: 'Lā ilāha illallāh, Subhān Allāh, Al-Ḥamdu Lillāh, Allāhu Akbar and Lā hawla wa lā quwwata illā billāh hil-'Alīyūl-'Azīm (there is no strength and no power except with Allāh the Exalted, the Almighty).'" This was recorded by Imām Aḥmad.^[1]

Imām Aḥmad also recorded from a freed slave of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ that he said:

«يَعِ بِعَ لِحْمَسٍ مَا أَثْقَلَهُنَّ فِي الْمِيزَانِ: لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ، وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ، وَالْوَلَدُ الصَّالِحُ يُتَوَفَّى فَيُخْتَبِئُهُ وَالِدُهُ - وَقَالَ: - يَعِ بِعَ لِحْمَسٍ مَنْ لَقِيَ اللَّهَ مُسْتَتِيفًا بَيْنَ دَخَلِ الْجَنَّةِ: يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ، وَبِالْجَنَّةِ وَالنَّارِ، وَبِالْبَيْتِ بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ، وَبِالْحِسَابِ»

«Well done! Well done for five things! (How heavy they will weigh in the balance! "Lā ilāha illallāh, Allāhu Akbar, Subhān Allāh, and Al-Ḥamdu Lillāh," and a righteous son who dies and his parents seek the reward of Allāh.)» And he said: «Well done! Well done for five things! Whoever meets Allāh believing in them, he will enter Paradise; if he believes in Allāh, the Last Day, Paradise and Hell, resurrection after death, and the Reckoning».^[2]

﴿وَالَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ﴾

«the good righteous deeds that last,» 'Ali bin Abi Ṭalḥah reported that Ibn 'Abbās said, "This is the celebration of the remembrance of Allāh, saying 'Lā ilāha illallāh, Allāhu Akbar, Subhān Allāh, Al-Ḥamdu Lillāh, Tabāarak Allāh, Lā hawla wa lā quwwata illā billāh, Astaghfirallāh, Ṣallallāhu 'alā Rasūl-Allāh', and fasting, prayer, Ḥajj, Ṣadaqah (charity), freeing slaves, Jihād, maintaining ties of kinship, and all other good deeds. These are the righteous good deeds that last, which will remain in Paradise for those who do them for as long as heaven and earth remain."^[3] Al-'Awfi reported from Ibn 'Abbās: "They are

[1] Aḥmad 1:71.

[2] Aḥmad 4:237.

[3] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:35.

سُورَةُ الْكَافِرَاتِ

٢٩٩

الْبَنُونَ

أَلْمَالُ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الدُّنْيَا وَالْبَاقِيَةُ الصَّالِحَاتُ
خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ أَمَلًا ﴿٤٧﴾ وَيَوْمَ نُسِيْرُ الْجِبَالَ وَنَرَى
الْأَرْضَ بَارِزَةً وَحَشَرْنَهُمْ فَلَمْ نُغَادِرْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا ﴿٤٨﴾ وَعَرَضُوا
عَلَىٰ رَبِّكَ صَفًّا لَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا كَمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ بَلْ زَعَمْتُمْ
أَلَّنْ نَجْعَلَ لَكُم مَّوْعِدًا ﴿٤٩﴾ وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ فَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ
مُسْفِقِينَ إِمَّا فِيهِ وَيَقُولُونَ يَا وَيْلَتَنَا مَالِ هَذَا الْكِتَابِ
لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً إِلَّا أَحْصَاهَا وَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا
حَاضِرًا وَلَا يَظُنُّ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا ﴿٥٠﴾ وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا
لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ كَانَ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَفَسَقَ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِ
أَفَلَسْخَذُوهُ وَذُرِّيَّتَهُ أُولِيََاءَ مِنْ دُونِ وَهُمْ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ
بِئْسَ لِلظَّالِمِينَ بَدَلًا ﴿٥١﴾ مَا أَشْهَدُهُمْ خَلْقَ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَا خَلْقَ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ مُتَعَدِّينَ عُسْداً
﴿٥٢﴾ وَيَوْمَ يَقُولُ نَادُوا شُرَكَاءِيَ الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ فَذَعَبُوهُمْ
فَلَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُم مَّوْبِقًا ﴿٥٣﴾ وَرَأَى الْمُجْرِمُونَ
النَّارَ فَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ مُوَاقِعُوهَا وَلَمْ يَجِدُوا عَنْهَا مَصْرِفًا ﴿٥٤﴾

good words.”^[1]
'Abdur-Rahmān bin Zayd bin Aslam said, “They are all righteous deeds.”^[2] This was also the view chosen by Ibn Jarīr, may Allāh have mercy on him.

﴿وَيَوْمَ نُسِيْرُ الْجِبَالَ وَنَرَى الْأَرْضَ بَارِزَةً وَحَشَرْنَهُمْ فَلَمْ نُغَادِرْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا﴾ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَعَرَضُوا عَلَىٰ رَبِّكَ صَفًّا لَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا كَمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ بَلْ زَعَمْتُمْ أَلَّنْ نَجْعَلَ لَكُم مَّوْعِدًا ﴿٤٩﴾ وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ فَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُسْفِقِينَ إِمَّا فِيهِ وَيَقُولُونَ يَا وَيْلَتَنَا مَالِ هَذَا الْكِتَابِ لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً إِلَّا أَحْصَاهَا وَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا وَلَا يَظُنُّ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا ﴿٥٠﴾

﴿47. And (remember) the Day We shall cause the mountains to pass away, and you will see the earth as a levelled plain, and We shall gather them so that We will leave not one of them behind.﴾

﴿48. And they will be set before your Lord, aligned. (He will say:) “Now indeed, you have come to Us as We created you the first time. Nay, but you thought that We had appointed no meeting for you (with Us).”﴾

﴿49. And the Book will be produced, and you will see the criminals, fearful of that which is therein. They will say: “Woe

[1] At-Tabari 18:35.

[2] At-Tabari 18:35.

to us! What sort of Book is this that leaves neither a small thing nor a large thing, but has recorded it with numbers!" And they will find all that they did, present, and your Lord treats no one with injustice.﴾

The Major Terrors of the Hour

Allāh tells us of the terrors of the Day of Resurrection, and the awesome things that will come to pass, as He says elsewhere:

﴿يَوْمَ تَمُورُ السَّمَاءُ مَوْرًا ۚ وَتَبِيرُ الْجِبَالُ سَبْرًا ۚ﴾

﴿On the Day when the heaven will shake with a dreadful shaking, And the mountains pass moving away.﴾ [52:9-10]

meaning, they will move from their places and will vanish. As Allāh says:

﴿وَرَوَى الْجِبَالُ كَظَبَايَ دُحَىٰ ۚ وَهِيَ تَمُورُ مَرَّ السَّحَابِ﴾

﴿And you will see the mountains and think them solid, but they shall pass away as the passing away of the clouds.﴾ [27:88]

﴿وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ الْمَنفُوشِ﴾

﴿And the mountains will be like carded wool.﴾ [101:5]

﴿وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْجِبَالِ فَقُلْ يَنْسِفُهَا رَبِّي نَسْفًا ۖ فَيَذَرُهَا قَاعًا صَفْصَفًا ۖ لَا تَرَىٰ فِيهَا عِوَجًا وَلَا أَمْتًا ۚ﴾

﴿And they ask you about the mountains, say: "My Lord will pulverize them scattering [their dust]. To leave them as a barren plain. You will not see in it crookness or curve.﴾ [20:105-107]

Allāh tells us that He will cause the mountains to vanish and be levelled, and the earth will be left as a smooth plain, a level surface with nothing crooked or curved therein, no valleys or mountains. So Allāh says:

﴿وَرَوَى الْأَرْضَ بَازِغَةً﴾

﴿and you will see the earth as a levelled plain,﴾

meaning clear and open, with no features that anyone may recognize and nothing for anyone to hide behind. All creatures

will be visible to their Lord, and not one of them will be hidden from Him. Mujāhid and Qatādah said,

﴿وَرَى الْأَرْضَ بَارِزَةً﴾

﴿and you will see the earth as a levelled plain,﴾

"No one will be hidden or absent."^[1] Qatādah said, "There will be no buildings and no trees."^[2]

﴿وَحَشَرْنَاهُمْ فَلَمْ نُغَادِرْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا﴾

﴿and we shall gather them, so that We will not leave one of them behind.﴾

means, 'We shall gather them all, the first of them and the last of them, and We shall not leave anyone behind, young or old.' As Allāh says:

﴿قُلْ إِنِّي الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ ﴿١٨﴾ لَمَجْمُوعُونَ إِلَىٰ مِيقَاتِ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُومٍ ﴿١٩﴾﴾

﴿Say: "(yes) verily, those of old, and those of later times. All will surely be gathered together for an appointed meeting of a known Day.﴾ [56:49,50]

﴿ذَٰلِكَ يَوْمٌ يَجْمَعُ لَهُ الْكَاثِرُ وَذَٰلِكَ يَوْمٌ مَّشْهُودٌ﴾

﴿That is a Day whereon mankind will be gathered together, and that is a Day when all will be present﴾ [11:103].

﴿وَعُرِضُوا عَلَىٰ رَبِّكَ صَفًّا﴾

﴿And they will be set before your Lord, aligned.﴾

This may mean that all of creation will stand before Allāh in one row, as Allāh says:

﴿يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الرُّوحُ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ صَفًّا لَا يَتَكَلَّمُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ وَقَالَ صَوَابًا ﴿٢٨﴾﴾

﴿The Day that Ar-Rūḥ (Jibrīl) and the angels will stand aligned, they will not speak except him whom the Most Gracious (Allāh) allows, and he will speak what is right﴾ [78:38];

or it may mean that they will stand in rows, as Allāh says:

﴿وَيَمَّا رُبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا﴾

[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:36.

[2] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:36.

﴿And your Lord comes with the angels in rows.﴾ [89:22]

﴿لَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا كَمَا خَلَقْنَا أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ﴾

﴿Now indeed, you have come to Us as We created you the first time.﴾

This is a rebuke to those who denied the Hereafter, a reprimand before all creation. This is why Allāh says to them:

﴿بَلْ زَعَمْتَ أَنَّ جَعَلَ لَكَ مَوْعِدًا﴾

﴿Nay, but you thought that We had appointed no meeting for you (with Us).﴾,

meaning, you did not think that this would happen to you or that it would come to pass.

﴿وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ﴾

﴿And the Book will be produced,﴾ the Book of deeds, which contains a record of everything, major or minor, significant or insignificant, great or small.

﴿فَذَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُشْفِقِينَ مِمَّا فِيهِ﴾

﴿and you will see the criminals, fearful of that which is therein.﴾ of their evil deeds and reprehensible actions.

﴿وَيَقُولُونَ بَوَئِذَا بَرَأْنَا﴾

﴿They will say, "Woe to us!"﴾ expressing words of regret for having wasted their lives.

﴿مَا لَ هَذَا الْكِتَابِ لَا يَغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً إِلَّا أَحْصَاهَا﴾

﴿What sort of Book is this that leaves neither a small thing nor a large thing, but has recorded it with numbers!﴾

it has left no sin, major or minor, and no action, no matter how small, but it has recorded it with the utmost precision and accuracy.

﴿وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا﴾

﴿And they will find all that they did, present,﴾ everything, both good and evil, as Allāh says,

﴿يَوْمَ تَجِدُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مُقْتَصَرًا﴾

﴿On the Day when every person will be confronted with all the good he has done﴾ [3:30].

Allāh says:

﴿يُنَادِ الْإِنْسُ يَوْمَهُمْ بِمَا قَدَّمَ وَأَخَّرَ﴾

﴿On that Day man will be informed of what he sent forward, and what he left behind.﴾ [75:13]

And Allāh says:

﴿يَوْمَ تُنْفَخُ الْكَوَابِرُ﴾

﴿The Day when all the secrets will be exposed.﴾ [86:9]

meaning, everything that is hidden in people's hearts will become known. Imām Aḥmad recorded from Anas that the Prophet ﷺ said,

«لِكُلِّ غَادِرٍ لَوَاءٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يُعْرَفُ بِهِ»

«Every traitor will have a banner on the Day of Resurrection, by which he will be known.»^[1]

It was also narrated in the Two Ṣaḥīḥs, where one narration says,

«يُرْفَعُ لِكُلِّ غَادِرٍ لَوَاءٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عِنْدَ اسْتِهِ بِقَدْرِ غَدْرِهِ، يُقَالُ: هَذِهِ غَدْرَةُ فُلَانٍ بْنِ فُلَانٍ»

«On the Day of Resurrection, for every traitor a banner will be erected by his backside, and it will be said, "This is the betrayer of so-and-so the son of so-and-so."»^[2]

﴿وَلَا يَظِلُّ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا﴾

﴿and your Lord treats no one with injustice.﴾

means, He will judge between His creatures for all of their deeds, and He will not treat any of His creatures with injustice. He will overlook and forgive and have mercy, and He will punish whomever He wills by His power, wisdom and justice. He will fill Hell with the disbelievers and those who have been disobedient. Then He will rescue the disobedient,

[1] Aḥmad 3:142.

[2] Faṭḥ Al-Bārī 12:354, Muslim 3:1361.

and leave the disbelievers there for eternity. He is the Judge Who never wrongs or oppresses. Allāh says:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ شَيْئًا وَلَئِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ حَسَنَةٌ لَّيَكُنَّ أَكْثَرُ بِكُمْ وَإِنْ تَعْلَمُونَ سِرَّهُ﴾

﴿Surely, Allāh wrongs not even of the weight of a speck of dust, but if there is any good, He doubles it.﴾ [4:40]

﴿وَنَضَعُ الْمَوَازِينَ الْقِسْطَ لِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ فَلَا تُظْلَمُ نَفْسٌ شَيْئًا﴾

﴿And We shall set up Balances of justice on the Day of Resurrection, then none will be dealt with unjustly in anything.﴾ Until His saying;

﴿حَسِيبٌ﴾

﴿to take account﴾ [21:47]

And there are many similar *Ayāt*.

Imām Aḥmad recorded that ‘Abdullāh bin Muḥammad bin ‘Aqīl heard Jābir bin ‘Abdullāh say, “I was told about a *Ḥadīth* which a man heard from the Prophet ﷺ, so I bought a camel and put my saddle on it, then I traveled on it for a month until I came to Ash-Shām,^[1] where ‘Abdullāh bin Unays was. I said to the doorkeeper, ‘Tell him that Jābir is at the door.’ He said, ‘Jābir bin ‘Abdullāh?’ I said, ‘Yes.’ So he came out, still putting his garment on, and embraced me, and I embraced him, and said: ‘I heard a *Ḥadīth* narrated by you, that you heard from the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ about reciprocal punishments. I was afraid that you or I would die before I could hear it.’ He said, ‘I heard the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ say:

«يَحْشُرُ اللَّهُ عَرَّ وَجَلَّ النَّاسَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ - أَوْ قَالَ: الْعِبَادَ - عُرَاةً غُرْلًا بَعْثًا»

«Allāh will gather the people - or His servants - on the Day of Resurrection, naked, uncircumcised and Buhman.» I asked, ‘What is *Buhman*?’ He said,

لَيْسَ مَعَهُمْ شَيْءٌ، ثُمَّ يُتَادِيهِمْ بِصُورٍ يَسْمَعُهُ مَنْ بَعْدَ كَمَا يَسْمَعُهُ مَنْ قَرَبَ: أَنَا الْمَلِكُ، أَنَا الدَّيَّانُ لَا يَنْبَغِي لِأَحَدٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ النَّارِ أَنْ يَدْخُلَ النَّارَ وَلَهُ عِنْدَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ حَقٌّ حَتَّى أَقِصَّهُ مِنْهُ، وَلَا يَنْبَغِي لِأَحَدٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ أَنْ يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ

^[1] Greater Syria.

وَلَهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ مِنْ أَهْلِ النَّارِ حَقٌّ حَتَّى أَقِصَهُ مِنْهُ حَتَّى اللَّطْمَةُ

«They will have nothing with them. Then a voice will call out to them that will be heard by those far away just as easily as it will be heard by those near: "I am the Sovereign, I am the Judge. None of the people of Hell should enter Hell if he is owed something by one of the people of Paradise, until I have settled the matter, and none of the people of Paradise should enter Paradise if he is owed something by one of the people of Hell, until I settle the matter - even if it is only the case of a slap." »

We said, 'How will that be, when we have come before Allāh barefooted, naked, uncircumcised and having nothing with us?' He said,

«بِالْحَسَنَاتِ وَالسَّيِّئَاتِ»

«By [merit for] good deeds, and [recompense] for evil deeds.»^[1]

Shu'bah narrated from Al-'Awwām bin Muzāḥim from Abu 'Uthmān from 'Uthmān bin 'Affān, may Allāh be pleased with him, that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

«إِنَّ الْجَمَاءَ لَتَنْقُصُ مِنَ الْقُرْنَاءِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ»

«The animal who lost a horn will settle the score with the one that has horns on the Day of Resurrection.»^[2]

It was recorded by 'Abdullāh the son of Imām Aḥmad, and there are corroborating narrations through other routes.

﴿وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ كَانَ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَفَسَقَ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِ
أَفَتَتَّخِذُونَهُ وَذُرِّيَّتَهُ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ عَنْهُمْ عَدُوٌّ يُرَى لِلظَّالِمِينَ بَدَلًا﴾

450. And (remember) when We said to the angels: "Prostrate yourselves unto Ādam." So they prostrated themselves, except Iblīs. He was one of the Jinn; he disobeyed the command of his Lord. Will you then take him and his offspring as protectors and helpers rather than Me while they are enemies to you? What an evil is the exchange for the wrongdoers. ﴿

^[1] Aḥmad 3:495.

^[2] Zawā'id Al-Musnad, 1:12.

The Story of Ādam and Iblīs

Allāh points out to the Children of Ādam the enmity of Iblīs towards them and their father before them, and rebukes those who follow him and go against their Creator and Master. It is He who created them from nothing and sustains and nourishes them by His kindness, yet they still took Iblīs as their friend and declared their enmity towards Allāh. So Allāh says:

﴿وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ﴾

﴿And (remember) when We said to the angels﴾,

meaning all the angels, as was mentioned in the beginning of *Sūrat Al-Baqarah*.^[1]

﴿أَسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ﴾

﴿Prostrate yourselves unto Ādam﴾ a prostration of respect and honour, as Allāh says:

﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي خَالِقٌ بَشَرًا مِّن مَّصْصَلٍ مِّن حَمَلٍ مُّسْتَوٍ ﴿٢٨﴾ فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِن رُّوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾﴾

﴿And (remember) when your Lord said to the angels, "I am going to create a human (Ādam) from dried (sounding) clay of altered mud. So, when I have fashioned him completely and breathed into him the soul which I created for him, then fall (you) down prostrating yourselves unto him.﴾ [15:28-29]

﴿فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ كَانَ مِنَ الْجِنِّ﴾

﴿So they prostrated themselves except Iblīs. He was one of the Jinn﴾;

meaning, his original nature betrayed him. He had been created from smokeless fire, whereas the angels had been created from light, as is stated in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* where it is reported that 'Ā'ishah, may Allāh be pleased with her, said that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

«خُلِقَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ مِن نُّورٍ، وَخُلِقَ إِبْلِيسُ مِن مَّارِجٍ مِّن نَّارٍ، وَخُلِقَ آدَمُ مِن مِّمَّا وَصِفَ لَكُمْ»

[1] See volume one, the *Tafsir* of *Sūrat Al-Baqarah* 2:36.

«The angels were created from light, Iblīs was created from smokeless fire, and Ādam was created from that which has been described to you.»^[1]

When matters are crucial, every vessel leaks that which it contains and is betrayed by its true nature. Iblīs used to do what the angels did and resembled them in their devotion and worship, so he was included when they were addressed, but he disobeyed and went against what he was told to do. So Allāh points out here that he was one of the *Jinn*, i.e., he was created from fire, as He says elsewhere:

﴿أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِنْهُ خَلَقْنِي مِنْ نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِينٍ﴾

«I am better than he. You created me from fire, and You created him from clay.» [38:76]

Al-Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī said, "Iblīs was not one of the angels, not even for a second. He was the origin of the *Jinn* just as Ādam, upon him be peace, was the origin of mankind." This was narrated by Ibn Jarīr with a *Ṣaḥīḥ* chain.^[2]

﴿فَنَسَقَ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِ﴾

«he disobeyed the command of his Lord.»

meaning by stepping beyond the bounds of obedience to Allāh. *Fisq* (disobeying) implies going out or stepping beyond. When the date emerges from its flower, the verb used in Arabic is *Fasaqat*; the same verb is used to describe a mouse coming out of its hole when it comes out to do damage. Then Allāh says, rebuking those who follow and obey Iblīs:

﴿أَفَتَتَّخِذُونَهُ وَذُرِّيَّتَهُ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِي﴾

«Will you then take him and his offspring as protectors and helpers rather than Me»

meaning, instead of Me. This is why Allāh says:

﴿يَنْتَقِلُ لِلظَّالِمِينَ بَدَلًا﴾

«What an evil is the exchange for the wrongdoers.»

This is like the Āyah in Sūrah Yā Sīn where, after mentioning

[1] Muslim 4:2294.

[2] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:506.

the Resurrection and its terrors, and the ultimate end of the blessed and the doomed, Allāh then says:

﴿وَأَنشُرُوا النَّيْمَ أَيُّهَا الْمُجْرِمُونَ﴾

﴿(It will be said): "And O you the criminals! Get you apart this Day (from the believers).﴾ until;

﴿أَفَلَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ﴾

﴿Did you not then understand?﴾ [36:59-62]

﴿وَمَا أَشْهَدُهُمْ خَلْقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَا خَلْقَ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمَا كُنْتُ مُتَّخِذَ الْمُضِلِّينَ عَضُدًا﴾

451. They did not witness the creation of the heavens and the earth nor their own creation, nor did I take those who mislead as 'Aḍudan.﴾

The gods of the Idolators did not witness the Creation of anything, not even Themselves

Allāh says: 'These whom you take as helpers instead of Me are creatures just like you. They do not possess anything and did not witness the creation of heaven and earth, because they did not exist at that time.' Allāh says, 'I am the One Who independently and exclusively creates and controls all things, and I have no partner, associate or advisor in that.' As Allāh says:

﴿قُلْ أَدْعُوا إِلَيْكَ رَزَقَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ يَشْفَعُ ذَرْبٌ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا هُمْ فِيهِمَا مِنْ شِرْكٍ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْهُمْ مِنْ ظَهِيرٍ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَلَا تَنْفَعُ الشَّفَعَةُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا لِمَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ﴾

﴿Say: "Call upon those you claim besides Allāh, they possess not even a speck of dust in the heavens or on the earth, nor have they any share in either, nor is there for Him any assistant among them. Intercession with Him profits not except for him whom He permits.﴾ [34:22-23]

Similarly Allāh says here:

﴿وَمَا كُنْتُ مُتَّخِذَ الْمُضِلِّينَ عَضُدًا﴾

﴿nor did I take those who mislead as 'Aḍudan.﴾ Mālik said: "Assistants."

﴿وَيَوْمَ يَقُولُ نَادُوا شُرَكَائِيَ الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ فَدَعَوْهُمْ فَلَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُم مَّوْبِقًا ﴿٥٢﴾
رَدًّا الْمُجْرِمُونَ النَّارَ فَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُم مُّوَافِقُوهَا وَلَمْ يَجِدُوا عِنَهَا مَصْرِفًا ﴿٥٣﴾﴾

﴿52. And (remember) the Day He will say: "Call those (so-called) partners of Mine whom you claimed." Then they will cry unto them, but they will not answer them, and We shall put Mawbiq between them.﴾

﴿53. And the criminals shall see the Fire and apprehend that they are to fall therein. And they will find no way of escape from it.﴾

Their Partners are not able to respond and the Criminals are brought to the Fire

Allāh tells us how He will address the idolators on the Day of Resurrection before all of creation, rebuking and scolding them,

﴿نَادُوا شُرَكَائِيَ الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ﴾

﴿Call those (so-called) partners of Mine whom you claimed.﴾

meaning, in the world. Call them today to save you from the situation you are in! Allāh says:

﴿وَلَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا فُرَادَىٰ كَمَا خَلَقْتُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَرَبُّكُمْ مَا حَوْلَكُمْ رِوَاةً ظَاهِرًا وَمَا نَرَىٰ مَعَكُمْ
شُفَعَاءَ كُفُّوا أَلْسِنَهُمْ لِمَا قَالُوا لِقَدْ تَفَعَّلَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَصَلَّ عَنْكُمْ مَا كُنتُمْ
تَرْعَوْنَ ﴿٩٤﴾﴾

﴿And truly, you have come unto Us alone as We created you the first time. You have left what you were given behind your backs and We do see not with you your intercessors whom you claimed were your partners. Now all relations between you and them have been cut off, and all that you used to claim has vanished from you.﴾ [6:94]

﴿فَدَعَوْهُمْ فَلَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَهُمْ﴾

﴿Then they will cry unto them, but they will not answer them.﴾ As Allāh says:

﴿وَقِيلَ ادْعُوا شُرَكَاءَكُمْ فَدَعَوْهُم فَلَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَهُمْ﴾

﴿And it will be said (to them): "Call upon those partners of yours," then they will call upon them, but they will not answer them.﴾ [28:64]

And the Āyah:

﴿وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّن يَدْعُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَنْ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُ لَهُمْ﴾

﴿And who is more astray than one who calls others besides Allāh, such as will not answer him﴾ [46:5]

Until the end of the two Āyāt;

﴿وَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ آلِهَةً لِيَكُونُوا لَهُمْ عِزًّا ۖ كَلَّا سَيَكْفُرُونَ بِبِصَادِقِهِمْ وَيَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ ضِدًّا ۖ﴾

﴿And they have taken gods besides Allāh, that they may grant them honor. Nay, but they will deny their worship of them, and become opponents to them.﴾ [19:81-82]

﴿وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَوْبِقًا﴾

﴿and We shall put Mawbiq between them.﴾

Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah and others said: "Destruction."^[1] The meaning is that Allāh is stating that these idolators will have no way of reaching the gods they claimed in this world. He will separate them in the Hereafter and neither party will have any means of reaching the other. There will be devastation, great horrors and other terrible things in between them. 'Abdullāh bin 'Amr understood the pronoun in the phrase "between them" to refer to the believers and the disbelievers,^[2] meaning that the people of guidance and the people of misguidance will be separated. This then is like the Āyāt:

﴿وَيَوْمَ نَقُومُ السَّاعَةَ يُؤْمِرُ بِنْفَرٍ﴾

﴿And on the Day when the Hour will be established – that Day shall (all men) be separated.﴾ [30:14]

﴿يَوْمَ يُصَدَّعُونَ﴾

﴿On that Day men shall be divided.﴾ [30:43],

[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:46.

[2] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:46.

﴿وَأَنشُرُوا إِلَيْهِمُ الْيَوْمَ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا يُشْرِكُونَ﴾

﴿(It will be said), "And O you the criminals! Get you apart this Day (from the believers).﴾ [36:59]

﴿وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جِمْماً ثُمَّ نَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا مَكَانَكُمْ أَنتُمْ وَشُرَكَاءُكُمْ فَزَلْنَاهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ﴾

﴿And on the Day when We shall gather them all together, then We shall say to those who joined partners, "Stop in your place! You and your partners." Then We shall separate between them...﴾ until,

﴿وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ﴾

﴿And what they invented will vanish from them.﴾ [10:28-30]

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

﴿And the criminals shall see the Fire and apprehend that they are to fall therein. And they will find no way of escape from it.﴾

meaning when they see Hell with their own eyes, since it is being dragged forth by seventy thousand reins, each pulled by seventy thousand angels. When,

﴿وَرَأَى الْمُجْرِمُونَ النَّارَ﴾

﴿the criminals shall see the Fire﴾,

they will realize that they cannot escape being thrown into it, and that will only intensify their anxiety and distress, because the anticipation and fear of punishment is in itself a real punishment.

﴿وَلَمْ يَجِدُوا عَنْهَا مَصْرِفًا﴾

﴿And they will find no way of escape from it.﴾

means, they will have no way of fleeing, it will be inevitable.

﴿وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنِ لِلنَّاسِ مِن كُلِّ مَثَلٍ وَكَانَ الْإِنسَانُ أَكْثَرَ شَيْئًا جَدَلًا﴾

﴿54. And indeed We have given every kind of example in this Qur'an for mankind. But, man is ever more quarrelsome than anything.﴾

Examples put forth in the Qur'ān

Allāh says, 'In this Qur'ān, We have explained to mankind and given clear details of matters so that they will not stray from the truth or be misled from the path of guidance. Despite this explanation, man is very quarrelsome and opposes truth with falsehood,' except for those whom Allāh guides to the path of salvation. Imām Aḥmad recorded that 'Ali bin Abi Ṭālib said that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ came to visit him and Fāṭimah, the daughter of Allāh's Messenger at night, and said,

«أَلَا تُصَلِّيَانِ؟»

«Are you not going to pray?»

I said, "O Messenger of Allāh, our souls are in the Hand of Allāh. If He wills to wake us, He will wake us." When I said that, he went away without returning. Then I heard him as he was walking away, slapping his thigh and saying,

«وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَكْثَرَ شَيْءٍ جَدَلًا»

«But, man is ever more quarrelsome than anything.»^[1]

It was also recorded in the Two Ṣaḥīḥs.^[2]

﴿وَمَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا إِذْ جَاءَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ سُنَّةٌ الْأَوَّلِينَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ قُبُلًا ۖ وَمَا تُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ ۚ وَجَدِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالْبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوا بِهِ الْحَقَّ وَاتَّخَذُوا آيَاتِي وَمَا أُنْزِلُ فِي هَٰذَا ۖ﴾

455. And nothing prevents men from believing, while the guidance has come to them, and from asking forgiveness of their Lord, except that the ways of the ancients be repeated with them, or the torment be brought to them face to face.﴾

456. And We send not the Messengers except as bearers of good news and warners. But those who disbelieve, argue with falsehood, in order to refute the truth thereby. And they take My Āyāt and that which they are warned for jest!﴾

[1] Aḥmad 1:112.

[2] Faṭḥ Al-Bārī 3:13, Muslim 1:538.

The Rebellion of the Disbelievers

Allāh tells us about the rebellion of the disbelievers in ancient times and in more recent times, and how they rejected the obvious truth even when they witnessed clear signs and proofs. Nothing stopped them from following the truth except their demand to witness with their own eyes the punishment which they were being warned about. As some of them said to their Prophet:

﴿فَأَسْقِطْ عَلَيْنَا كِسْفًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ إِن كُنتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ١٨٧﴾

﴿So cause a piece of the heaven to fall on us, if you are of the truthful!﴾ [26:187],

Others said:

﴿أَتَيْنَا بِعَذَابِ اللَّهِ إِن كُنتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ١٨٨﴾

﴿Bring Allāh's torment upon us if you are one of the truthful.﴾ [29:29]

The Quraysh said:

﴿اللَّهُمَّ إِن كَانَتْ هَذِهِ حَقًّا مِّنْ عِنْدِكَ فَامْطِرْ عَلَيْنَا حِجَابًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ أَوْ أْتِنَا بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ١٨٩﴾

﴿O Allāh! If this is indeed the truth from You, then rain down stones on us from the sky or bring upon us a painful torment.﴾ [8:32]

﴿وَقَالُوا يَأْتِيَنَا الَّذِي يُزِيلُ عَلَيْهِ الذِّكْرُ إِنَّكَ لَمَجْنُونٌ ١٩٠ لَوْ مَا تَأْتِيَنَا بِالْحَقِّ إِن كُنتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ١٩١﴾

﴿And they say: "O you to whom the Reminder has been sent down! Verily, you are a mad man! Why do you not bring angels to us if you are of the truthful?"﴾ [15:6-7].

There are other Āyāt refering to the same thing. Then Allāh says:

﴿إِلَّا أَن تَأْتِيَهُم مِّنْهُمُ الْآلَاءُ﴾

﴿except that the ways of the ancients be repeated with them,﴾ meaning, their overwhelming punishment, destroying every last one of them.

﴿أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ قُبُلًا﴾

﴿or the torment be brought to them face to face.﴾

they see it with their own eyes, being directly confronted with it. Then Allāh says:

﴿وَمَا رُسُلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ﴾

﴿And We send not the Messengers except as bearers of good news and warners.﴾

before the punishment they give good news to those who believe in them and follow them, and warnings to those who reject them and oppose them. Then Allāh tells us about the disbelievers who argue:

﴿بِالْبَطِيلِ لِيُضِلُّوا بِهِ الْحَقَّ﴾

﴿with falsehood, in order to refute the truth thereby.﴾

they try to weaken the truth that the Messengers brought, but they cannot achieve that.

﴿وَاتَّخَذُوا مَا بَيْنِي وَمَا أَنزَرُوا هُزُؤًا﴾

﴿And they take My Āyāt and that which they are warned for jest!﴾

they take the proof, evidence and miracles sent with the Messengers to warn them, and make them fear the punishment;

﴿هُزُؤًا﴾

﴿as a jest and mockery﴾ and they make fun of them, which is the worst type of disbelief.

﴿وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ ذُكِّرَ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ فَأَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا وَنَسِيَ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا وَإِنْ تَدْعُهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَى فَلَنْ يَهْتَدُوا إِلَّا إِذَا أَبْدَأَ ۖ وَرَبُّكَ الْغَفُورُ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ لَوْ يُؤَاخِذُهُمْ بِمَا كَسَبُوا لَسَجَلُ لَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ بَلْ لَهُمْ مَوْعِدٌ لَّنْ يَجِدُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ مَوْعِدًا ۝ وَيَلَاكُ الْفُرْقَى أَفَلَا تَكْتَنَهُمْ لَمَّا ظَلَمُوا وَجَعَلْنَا لِمَهْلِكِهِمْ مَوْعِدًا ۝﴾

57. And who does more wrong than he who is reminded of the Āyāt (signs) of his Lord, but turns away from them, forgetting what his hands have sent forth. Truly, We have set over their hearts Akinnaḥ, lest they should understand this (the Qur'ān),

and in their ears, deafness. And if you call them to guidance, even then they will never be guided.﴾

﴿58. And your Lord is Most Forgiving, Owner of mercy. Were He to call them to account for what they have earned, then surely, He would have hastened their punishment. But they have their appointed time, beyond which they will find no escape.﴾

﴿59. And these towns, We destroyed them when they did wrong. And We appointed a fixed time for their destruction.﴾

The Worst People are Those Who turn away after being reminded

Allāh says, 'Who among My creatures does more wrong than one who is reminded of the signs of Allāh then turns away from them,' i.e., ignores them and does not listen or pay attention to them.

﴿وَنَسِيَ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ﴾

﴿forgetting what his hands have sent forth.﴾ means, bad deeds and evil actions.

﴿إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ﴾

﴿Truly, We have set over their hearts﴾ means, the hearts of these people,

﴿أَكِنَّةٌ﴾

﴿Akinnaah﴾ means, coverings.

﴿أَن يَفْقَهُوهُ﴾

﴿lest they should understand this,﴾ means, so that they will not understand this Qur'ān and its clear Message

﴿وَفِي أَعْيُنِهِمْ﴾

﴿and in their ears, deafness.﴾ means that they will be deaf in an abstract way, to guidance.

﴿وَلَن نَّدْعَهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَىٰ فَلَن يَهْتَدُوا إِذًا أَبَدًا﴾

﴿And if you call them to guidance, even then they will never be guided.﴾

﴿وَرَبُّكَ الْغَفُورُ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ﴾

﴿And your Lord is Most Forgiving, Owner of mercy.﴾

means, 'your Lord, O Muḥammad, is forgiving and has great mercy.'

﴿لَوْ يُوَاجِذُهُمْ بِمَا كَسَبُوا لَعَجَلَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ﴾

﴿Were He to call them to account for what they have earned, then surely, He would have hastened their punishment.﴾

This is like the *Āyah*:

﴿وَلَوْ يُوَاجِذُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِمَا كَسَبُوا مَا تَرَكَ عَلَى ظَهْرٍهَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ﴾

﴿And if Allāh were to punish men for that which they earned, He would not leave a moving creature on the surface of the earth.﴾ [35:45]

﴿وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُو مَغْفِرَةٍ لِّلنَّاسِ عَلَى ظُلُمِهِمْ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَشَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ﴾

﴿But verily, your Lord is full of forgiveness for mankind in spite of their wrongdoing. And verily, your Lord is (also) severe in punishment﴾ [13:6].

And there are many *Āyāt* which say the same thing.

Then Allāh tells us that He is patient, He conceals faults and forgives sins. He may guide some of them from wrongdoing to true guidance, and whoever continues in his evil ways, then there will come to him a Day when infants will turn grey and every pregnant female will shed her load. He says:

﴿بَلْ لَهُمْ مَوْعِدٌ لَّنْ يَجِدُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ مَوْعِدًا﴾

﴿But they have their appointed time, beyond which they will find no escape.﴾

meaning, they will find no way out.

﴿وَذَٰلِكَ الْقُرَىٰ أَفْلَكْتُمْ لَنَا ظَمُونًا﴾

﴿And these towns, We destroyed them when they did wrong.﴾

This refers to earlier nations in times past; 'We destroyed them because of their stubborn disbelief.'

﴿وَجَعَلْنَا لِمَوْلَانَا مَوْعِدًا﴾

﴿And We appointed a fixed time for their destruction.﴾

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

٣٠٠

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنِ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ وَكَانَ
الْإِنْسَانُ أَكْفَرُ شَيْءٍ وَجَدَلًا ﴿٦٠﴾ وَمَنْعَ النَّاسِ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا
إِذْ جَاءَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ سُنَّةٌ
أَلَوَّلَىٰ أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ قُبُلًا ﴿٦١﴾ وَمَا يُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ
إِلَّا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَمُجَدِّدِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَبْطُلُ
لِيُدْحِضُوا بِهِ الْحَقَّ وَاتَّخَذُوا آيَاتِي وَمَا أُنذِرُوا هُزُوًا ﴿٦٢﴾ وَمَنْ
أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ ذُكِّرَ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ فَأَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا وَنَسِيَ مَا قَدْ مَتَّيَدَاهُ
إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا
وَإِنْ تَدْعُهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَىٰ فَلَنْ يَهْتَدُوا إِذًا أَبَدًا ﴿٦٣﴾ وَرَبُّكَ
الْغَفُورُ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ لَوْ يُؤَاخِذُهُمْ بِمَا كَسَبُوا لَعَجَلَهُمْ
الْعَذَابَ بَلْ لَهُمْ مَوْعِدٌ لَنْ يَجْعَدُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ مَوْعِلًا ﴿٦٤﴾
وَبَلَاكُمُ الْقُرْآنَ أَهْلَكَتُمْ لَمَّا ظَنَّمُوا وَجَعَلْنَا لَعْنَهُمْ
مَوْعِدًا ﴿٦٥﴾ وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَتْلِهِ لَا آتِبُحُ حَقِّي
أَتَبْلُغُ مَجْمَعَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ أَوْ أَمْضِي حُقُبًا ﴿٦٦﴾ فَلَمَّا بَلَغَا
مَجْمَعَ بَيْنَهُمَا نَسِيَا حُوتَهُمَا فَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ سَرَبًا ﴿٦٧﴾

'We appointed for them a set time limit, not to be increased or decreased. The same applies to you, O idolators, so beware or what happened to them will happen to you too, for you have rejected the noblest Messenger and greatest Prophet, and you are not dearer to Us than them, so fear My punishment and wrath.'

﴿٦٠﴾ وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَتْلِهِ لَا
أَتَبْرَحُ حَقِّي أَتَبْلُغُ مَجْمَعَ
الْبَحْرَيْنِ أَوْ أَمْضِي حُقُبًا ﴿٦١﴾
فَلَمَّا بَلَغَا مَجْمَعَ بَيْنَهُمَا نَسِيَا
حُوتَهُمَا فَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ
سَرَبًا ﴿٦٢﴾ فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَا قَالَ لِقَتْلِهِ

﴿٦٣﴾ إِنَّا غَدَاةً لَقِيْنَا مِنْ سَفَرِنَا

هَٰذَا نَسَبًا ﴿٦٤﴾ قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَ إِذْ أَوْتَيْنَا إِلَى الْغَصَصِ فَإِنِّي نَبِيتُ الْخَوْتُ وَمَا أُنْسِيهِ إِلَّا الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ أَذْكُرَهُ
وَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ عَجَبًا ﴿٦٥﴾ قَالَ ذَلِكَ مَا كُنَّا نَبْغِ فَارْتَدَّا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِمَا قَصَصًا ﴿٦٦﴾ فَوَجَدَا عَبْدًا
مِنْ عِبَادِنَا لَمْ يَتَّبِعْهُ رَحْمَةً مِنْ عَدُوِّنَا وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِنْ لَدُنَّا عِلْمًا ﴿٦٧﴾

﴿60. And (remember) when Mūsā said to his boy-servant: "I will not give up until I reach the junction of the two seas or a Huqub passes."﴾

﴿61. But when they reached the junction of the two seas, they forgot their fish, and it took its way through the sea as in a tunnel.﴾

﴿62. So when they passed further on, Mūsā said to his boy-servant: "Bring us our morning meal; truly, we have suffered

Naṣaban in this, our journey."﴾

﴿63. He said: "Do you remember when we betook ourselves to the rock? I indeed forgot the fish; none but Shayṭān made me forget to remember it. It took its course into the sea in a strange (way)!"﴾

﴿64. [Mūsā] said: "That is what we have been seeking." So they went back retracing their footsteps.﴾

﴿65. Then they found one of Our servants, on whom We had bestowed mercy from Us, and whom We had taught knowledge from Us.﴾

The Story of Mūsā and Al-Khiḍr

The reason for Mūsā's conversation with the boy-servant, Yūsha' bin Nūn, was that he had been told about one of the servants of Allāh at the junction of the two seas, who had knowledge which Mūsā had not been granted, so he wanted to travel to meet him. So he said to that boy-servant of his:

﴿لَا أَبْرَحُ﴾

﴿I will not give up﴾ meaning, I will keep on traveling,

﴿حَتَّى أَتْلُجَّ مَجْمَعَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ﴾

﴿until I reach the junction of the two seas﴾ meaning, the place where the two seas met.

﴿أَوْ أَمُوتَ حَقْبًا﴾

﴿or a Ḥuqub passes.﴾ meaning, even if I have to travel for a very long time. Ibn Jarīr (may Allāh have mercy on him) said, "Some of the scholars of the Arabic language said that Ḥuqub means a year in the dialect of [the tribe of] Qays,"^[1] then he narrated that 'Abdullāh bin 'Amr said, "Ḥuqub means eighty years."^[2] Mujāhid said, "Seventy years."^[3] 'Alī bin Abi Ṭalḥah reported that Ibn 'Abbās said that it means a lifetime.^[4] Qatādah and

^[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:56.

^[2] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:56.

^[3] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:56.

^[4] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:57.

Ibn Zayd said likewise.^[1]

﴿فَلَمَّا بَلَغَا مَجْمَعَ بَيْنَهُمَا نَسِيَا حُوتَهُمَا﴾

«But when they reached the junction of the two seas, they forgot their fish,»

He had been commanded to carry a salted fish with him, and it had been said to him, when you lose the fish, that will be a sign that you have reached the right place. So they set out and traveled until they reached the junction of the two seas, where there was a spring called 'Ayn Al-Hāyāt (the Spring of Life). They went to sleep there, and the fish felt the drops of that water, so it came back to life. It was in a vessel with Yūsha', upon him be peace, and it jumped out of the vessel towards the sea. Yūsha' woke up and the fish fell into the water and started to swim through the water, leaving a track or channel behind it. Allāh said:

﴿فَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ سَرَبًا﴾

«and it took its way through the sea as in a tunnel.»

meaning, like going through a tunnel on land. Ibn Jurayj said, "Ibn 'Abbās said, 'It left a trace as if it were a rock.'"^[2]

﴿فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَا﴾

«So when they had passed further on,» means, past the place where they had forgotten the fish. Forgetfulness is attributed to them both even though it was actually Yūsha' who forgot. This is like the Āyah:

﴿يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُمَا اللُّؤْلُؤُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ﴾

«Out of them both come out pearl and coral.» [55:22],

although they come from the salt water, according to one of the two opinions.

When they had passed one stage beyond the place where they had forgotten the fish,

﴿قَالَ لِفَتْنِهِ إِنِّي نَدَمْتُ لَأَنِّي كَفَيْتُ مِنْ سَفَرِنَا هَذَا﴾

«[Mūsā] said to his boy-servant: "Bring us our morning meal;

[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:57.

[2] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:57.

truly, we have suffered in this, our journey»

meaning, their journey beyond the place where they should have stopped.

﴿نَصَابًا﴾

﴿Naṣāban﴾ means, exhaustion.

﴿قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَ إِذْ أَوْرَثْنَا إِلَى الصَّخَرَةِ فَإِنِّي نَسِيتُ الْخَمُوتَ وَمَا أَنَسِينِي إِلَّا الشَّيْطَانُ أَنِ أَذْكُرَ﴾

﴿He said: "Do you remember when we betook ourselves to the rock? I indeed forgot the fish; none but Shayṭān made me forget to remember it..."﴾

Then he said,

﴿وَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ﴾

﴿It took its course﴾, meaning its path,

﴿فِي الْبَحْرِ عَجَبًا ۚ قَالَ ذَلِكَ مَا كُنَّا نَبْتَغِ﴾

﴿"...into the sea in a strange (way)!" [Mūsā] said: "That is what we have been seeking."﴾

meaning, this is what we have been looking for.

﴿فَارْتَدَّا﴾

﴿So they went back﴾

﴿عَلَىٰ أَثَارِهِمَا﴾

﴿their footsteps.﴾

﴿فَوَجَدَا عَبْدًا مِّنْ عِبَادِنَا عَلَيْهِ رَحْمَةٌ مِّنْ عِندِنَا وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِن لَّدُنَّا عِلْمًا﴾

﴿Then they found one of Our servants, on whom We had bestowed mercy from Us, and whom We had taught knowledge from Us.﴾

This was Al-Khiḍr, peace be upon him, as is indicated by the authentic Ḥādīths narrated from the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. Al-Bukhārī recorded that Saʿīd bin Jubayr said, "I said to Ibn ʿAbbās: Nawf Al-Bikālī claims that Mūsā, the companion of Al-Khiḍr was not the Mūsā of the Children of Israel.' Ibn ʿAbbās said, 'The enemy of Allāh has told a lie.' Ubayy bin Ka'b narrated that he heard the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ say,

«إِنَّ مُوسَى قَامَ خَطِيبًا فِي بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ فُسِّلَ: أَيُّ النَّاسِ أَعْلَمُ؟ قَالَ: أَنَا، فَعَتَبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ إِذْ لَمْ يَرُدَّ الْعِلْمَ إِلَيْهِ، فَأَوْحَى اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ إِنَّ لِي عَبْدًا بِمَجْمَعِ الْبَحْرَيْنِ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ مِنْكَ. قَالَ مُوسَى: يَا رَبِّ وَكَيْفَ لِي بِهِ؟ قَالَ: تَأْخُذْ مَعَكَ حُوتًا فَتَجْعَلْهُ بِمِكَتَلٍ، فَحَيْثُمَا قَعَدْتَ الْحُوتَ فَهُوَ ثَمٌّ، فَأَخَذَ حُوتًا فَجَعَلْهُ بِمِكَتَلٍ، ثُمَّ انْطَلَقَ وَانْطَلَقَ مَعَهُ فَتَاهُ يُوْشَعَ بْنِ نُونٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ، حَتَّى إِذَا أَتَيَا الصَّخْرَةَ وَضَعَا رُءُوسَهُمَا فَنَامَا، وَاضْطَرَبَ الْحُوتُ فِي الْمِكَتَلِ، فَخَرَجَ مِنْهُ فَسَقَطَ فِي الْبَحْرِ فَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ سَرَبًا، وَأَمْسَكَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْحُوتِ جُزْيَةَ الْمَاءِ، فَصَارَ عَلَيْهِ مِثْلُ الطَّاقِ، فَلَمَّا اسْتَيْقَظَ، نَسِيَ صَاحِبَهُ أَنْ يُخْبِرَهُ بِالْحُوتِ، فَانْطَلَقَا بَقِيَّةَ يَوْمِهِمَا وَلَيْلَتُهُمَا حَتَّى إِذَا كَانَ مِنَ الْغَدِ قَالَ مُوسَى لِفَتَاهُ: ﴿إِنِّي غَدَاةً نَا لَقَدْ لَقِينَا مِنْ سَفَرِنَا هَذَا نَصَبًا﴾

«Mūsā got up to deliver a speech before the Children of Israel and he was asked, "Who is the most learned person among the people?" Mūsā replied, "I am." Allāh rebuked him because he did not refer the knowledge to Allāh. So Allāh revealed to him: "At the junction of the two seas there is a servant of Ours who is more learned than you." Mūsā asked, "O my Lord, how can I meet him?" Allāh said, "Take a fish and put it in a vessel and then set out, and where you lose the fish, you will find him." So Mūsā took a fish, put it in a vessel and set out, along with his boy-servant Yūsha' bin Nūn, peace be upon him, till they reached a rock (on which) they both lay down their heads and slept. The fish moved vigorously in the vessel and got out of it and fell into the sea and there it took its way through the sea (straight) as in a tunnel. Allāh stopped the flow of water on both sides of the way created by the fish, and so that way was like a tunnel. When Mūsā got up, his companion forgot to tell him about the fish, and so they carried on their journey during the rest of the day and the whole night. The next morning Mūsā said to his boy-servant,

﴿"Bring us our morning meal; truly, we have suffered much fatigue in this, our journey."﴾

وَلَمْ يَجِدْ مُوسَى النَّصَبَ حَتَّى جَاوَزَ الْمَكَانَ الَّذِي أَمَرَهُ اللَّهُ بِهِ، قَالَ لَهُ فَتَاهُ: ﴿أَرَأَيْتَ إِذْ أَوْنَيْنَا إِلَى الصَّخْرَةِ فَإِنِّي نَبِئْتُ الْمَوْتَ وَمَا أُنْسِينَهُ إِلَّا الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ أَذْكَرُ وَأَغْفَدُ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ عَجَبًا﴾ قَالَ: فَكَانَ لِلْحُوتِ سَرَبًا، وَلِمُوسَى وَفَتَاهُ عَجَبًا، فَقَالَ:

﴿ذَلِكَ مَا كُنَّا نَبِغُ فَارْتَدَّا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهَا فَصَصَا﴾ قَالَ: فَرَجَعَا يَفْضَانِ أَثَرَهُمَا حَتَّىٰ انْتَهَيَا إِلَى الصَّخْرَةِ، فَإِذَا رَجُلٌ مُسَجًى بِثَوْبٍ، فَسَلَّمَ عَلَيْهِ مُوسَى فَقَالَ الْخَضِرُ: وَأَنْتَى بِأَرْضِكَ السَّلَامُ. فَقَالَ: أَنَا مُوسَى. فَقَالَ: مُوسَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ؟ قَالَ: نَعَمْ، قَالَ: أَتَيْتُكَ لِتُعَلِّمَنِي مِمَّا عُلِّمْتَ رُشْدًا ﴿قَالَ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا﴾ يَا مُوسَى إِنِّي عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِ اللَّهِ عَلَّمَنِيهِ لَا تَعْلَمُهُ أَنْتَ وَأَنْتَ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِ اللَّهِ عَلَّمَكُهُ اللَّهُ لَا أَعْلَمُهُ.

Mūsā did not get tired till he had passed the place that Allāh had ordered him to look for. His boy-servant then said to him,

﴿"Do you remember when we betook ourselves to the rock? I indeed forgot the fish; none but Shayṭān made me forget to remember it. It took its course into the sea in a strange way."﴾

There was a tunnel for the fish and Mūsā and his boy-servant were amazed. Mūsā said,

﴿"That is what we have been seeking." So they went back retracing their footsteps."﴾

So they went back retracing their steps until they reached the rock. There they found a man covered with a garment. Mūsā greeted him. Al-Khiḍr said, "Is there such a greeting in your land?" Mūsā said, "I am Mūsā." He said, "Are you the Mūsā of the Children of Israel?" Mūsā said, "Yes," and added, "I have come to you so that you may teach me something of that knowledge which you have been taught." Al-Khiḍr said,

﴿"You will not be able to have patience with me."﴾

O Mūsā! I have some of Allāh's knowledge which He has bestowed upon me but you do not know it; and you too, have some of Allāh's knowledge which He has bestowed upon you, but I do not know it."

فَقَالَ مُوسَى: ﴿سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ سَائِرًا وَلَا أَعْصِي لَكَ أَمْرًا﴾ قَالَ لَهُ الْخَضِرُ: ﴿فَإِنِ اتَّبَعْتَنِي فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِي عَنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ أُحْدِثَ لَكَ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا﴾ فَاذْهَبَا يَمْشِيَانِ عَلَى سَاحِلِ الْبَحْرِ فَمَرَّتْ سَفِينَةٌ، فَكَلَّمُوهُمْ أَنْ يَحْمِلُوهُمْ، فَعَرَفُوا الْخَضِرَ فَحَمَلُوهُمْ بِغَيْرِ نَوْلٍ، فَلَمَّا رَكِبَا فِي السَّفِينَةِ لَمْ يَفْجَأْ إِلَّا وَالْخَضِرُ قَدْ قَلَعَ لَوْحًا مِنَ الْأَوَاجِ السَّفِينَةَ بِالْقُدُومِ، فَقَالَ لَهُ مُوسَى: قَدْ حَمَلُونَا بِغَيْرِ نَوْلٍ، فَعَمِدْتَ إِلَى سَفِينَتِهِمْ فَخَرَقْتَهَا لِتُغْرِقَ أَهْلَهَا؟

لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا إِمْرًا ﴿قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا﴾ ۖ قَالَ لَا تُؤَاخِذْنِي بِمَا نَسِيتُ وَلَا تُرْهِقْنِي مِنْ أَمْرِي عُسْرًا ﴿١٧﴾

Mūsā said, ﴿“If Allāh wills, you will find me patient, and I will not disobey you in aught.”﴾

Al-Khiḍr said to him, ﴿“Then, if you follow me, ask me not about anything till I myself mention it to you.”﴾

So they set out walking along the shore, until a boat passed by and they asked the crew to let them go on board. The crew recognized Al-Khiḍr and allowed them to go on board free of charge. When they went on board, suddenly Mūsā saw that Al-Khiḍr had pulled out one of the planks of the ship with an adz. Mūsā said to him, “These people gave us a free ride, yet you have broken their boat so that its people will drown! Verily, you have done a terrible thing!

﴿“Al-Khiḍr said, “Did I not tell you, that you would not be able to have patience with me?”﴾

﴿Mūsā said, “Call me not to account for what I forgot and be not hard upon me for my affair (with you).”﴾

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

فَكَانَتْ الْأُولَى مِنْ مُوسَى نَسِيَانًا، قَالَ: وَجَاءَ عُضْفُورٌ فَوَقَعَ عَلَى حَرْبِ السَّيْفِيَّةِ، فَتَقَرَّرَ فِي الْبَحْرِ نَقْرَةً أَوْ ثَلَاثَتَيْنِ فَقَالَ لَهُ الْخَضِيرُ: مَا عَلِمِي وَعِلْمُكَ فِي عِلْمِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا بِمِثْلِ مَا تَقْصُصُ هَذَا الْعُضْفُورُ مِنْ هَذَا الْبَحْرِ ثُمَّ خَرَجَا مِنَ السَّيْفِيَّةِ فَبَيَّنَمَا هُمَا يَمْشِيَانِ عَلَى السَّاحِلِ إِذْ أَبْصَرَ الْخَضِيرُ غُلَامًا يَلْعَبُ مَعَ الْغُلَمَانِ، فَأَخَذَ الْخَضِيرُ رَأْسَهُ فَأَقْلَعَهُ بِيَدِهِ فَقَتَلَهُ، فَقَالَ لَهُ مُوسَى: ﴿أَقْلَعْتَ نَفْسًا زَكِيَّةً بِئْسَ لَكَ نَصِيرٌ لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا ثَكْرًا﴾ ۖ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكَ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ﴿١٨﴾

«In the first instance, Mūsā asked Al-Khiḍr because he had forgotten his promise. Then a bird came and sat on the edge of the boat, dipping its beak once or twice in the sea. Al-Khiḍr said to Mūsā, “My knowledge and your knowledge, in comparison to Allāh’s knowledge, is like what this bird has taken out of the sea.” Then they both disembarked from the boat, and while they were walking on the shore, Al-Khiḍr saw a boy playing with other boys. Al-Khiḍr took hold of the boy’s head and pulled it off with his hands, killing him. Mūsā said to him,

﴿"Have you killed an innocent person who had killed none! Verily, you have committed a thing Nukr!" He said, "Did I not tell you that you would not be able to have patience with me?"﴾

قَالَ: وَهَذِهِ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْأُولَى، ﴿قَالَ إِنْ سَأَلْتُكَ عَنْ حُكْمٍ بَعْدَهَا فَلَا تُصِجْنِي قَدْ بَلَّغْتَ مِنْ لَدُنِّي عَذْرًا﴾ ٧٦ ﴿فَانْطَلَقَا حَتَّى إِذَا آتَا أَهْلَ قَرْيَةٍ اسْتَظَمَّ أَهْلُهَا فَأَبَوْا أَنْ يُضَيِّقُوا لَهُمَا فَوَجَدَا فِيهَا جِدَارًا يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَنْقَضَ﴾ أَيْ مَائِلًا، فَقَالَ الْخَضِرُ بِيَدِهِ ﴿فَأَقِمْ﴾ فَقَالَ مُوسَى: قَوْمُ أَتَيْنَاهُمْ فَلَمْ يُطْعِمُونَا وَلَمْ يُضَيِّقُوا ﴿لَوْ شِئْتَ لَخِذْتَ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا﴾ ٧٧ ﴿قَالَ هَذَا فِرَاقُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكَ سَأْنَيْتُكَ بِتَأْوِيلِ مَا لَمْ تَتْلُحْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا﴾ ٧٨ ﴿

[The narrator] said, "The second blame was stronger than the first one".

﴿Mūsā said, "If I ask you anything after this, keep me not in your company; you have received an excuse from me." Then they both proceeded until they came to the people of a town. They asked them for food but they refused to entertain them. (Then) they found there a wall on the point of falling down.﴾

(Al-Khiḍr) set it up straight with his own hands. Mūsā said, "We came to these people, but they neither fed us nor received us as guests.

﴿If you had wished, surely, you could have taken wages for it!" (Al-Khiḍr) said: "This is the parting between you and I. I will tell you the interpretation of (those) things over which you were unable to be patient."﴾

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

﴿وَوَدِدْنَا أَنْ مُوسَى كَانَ صَبْرًا حَتَّى يَقْصُرَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ خَيْرِهِمَا﴾

«We wish that Mūsā was patient so that Allāh would have told us more about both of them.»

Saʿd bin Jubayr said: "Ibn ʿAbbās used to recite [Āyah no. 79]

﴿وَكَانَ أَمَامَهُمْ مَلِكٌ يَأْخُذُ كُلَّ سَفِينَةٍ صَالِحَةٍ عَظْبًا﴾

(There was a king before them who seized every good-conditioned ship by force) and [Āyah no 80]

﴿وَأَمَّا الْعُلَامَ فَكَانَ كَافِرًا وَكَانَ آبَاءُ مُؤْمِنِينَ﴾

(As for the boy, he was a disbeliever and his parents were believers.)^[1]

Then (in another narration) Al-Bukhārī recorded a similar account which says:

فَخَرَجَ مُوسَى وَمَعَهُ فَتَاهُ يُوْشَعَ بْنِ نُوْنٍ وَمَعَهُمَا الْحُوْتُ، حَتَّى اتَتْهُمَا إِلَى الصَّخْرَةِ، فَتَزَلَّا عِنْدَهَا، قَالَ: فَوَضَعَ مُوسَى رَأْسَهُ فَتَنَامَ، قَالَ: وَفِي أَضِلِّ الصَّخْرَةِ عَيْنٌ يُقَالُ لَهَا الْحَيَاءُ لَا يُصِيبُ مِنْ مَائِهَا شَيْءٌ إِلَّا حَيِيَ فَأَصَابَ الْحُوْتُ مِنْ مَاءِ ذَلِكَ الْعَيْنِ، فَتَحَرَّكَ وَانْتَسَلَ مِنَ الْمِكْتَلِ فَدَخَلَ الْبَحْرَ، فَلَمَّا اسْتَيْقَظَ قَالَ مُوسَى لِفَتَاهُ: ﴿غَدَاةَنَا﴾

«...then Mūsā set out and with him was his boy-servant Yūsha' bin Nūn, and they had the fish with them. When they reached the rock, they camped there, and Mūsā lay down his head and slept. At the base of the rock there was a spring called Al-Hāyāt; its water never touched a thing but it brought it to life. Some of its water touched the fish, so it began to move and jumped out of the vessel and into the sea. When he woke up, Mūsā said to his boy-servant:

﴿Bring us our morning meal.﴾»

Then he quoted the rest of the Ḥadīth.

Then a bird came and perched on the edge of the ship, and dipped its beak in the sea, and Al-Khiḍr said to Mūsā, "My knowledge and your knowledge and the knowledge of all of creation, in comparison to the knowledge of Allāh, is like what this bird has taken from the sea." Then he mentioned the rest of the report.^[2]

﴿قَالَ لَهُ مُوسَى هَلْ أَتَيْتَكَ عَلَى أَنْ تَعْلِمَنِي مِمَّا عَلِمْتَ رُشْدًا ۖ﴾ (١١) قَالَ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ۖ﴾ (١٢) وَكَيْفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلَى مَا نَرَى يُحِطُّ بِهِ. ﴿حُبْرًا ۖ﴾ (١٣) قَالَ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ صَابِرًا وَلَا أَعْصِي لَكَ أَمْرًا ۖ﴾ (١٤) قَالَ فَإِنِ اتَّبَعْتَنِي فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِي عَنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى أُحْدِثَ لَكَ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا ۖ﴾ (١٥)

﴿66. Mūsā said to him: "May I follow you so that you teach me something of that knowledge which you have been taught (by Allāh)?"﴾

[1] Faṭḥ Al-Bārī 8:262.

[2] Faṭḥ Al-Bārī 8:272.

﴿67. He said: "Verily, you will not be able to have patience with me!"﴾

﴿68. "And how can you have patience about a thing which you know not?"﴾

﴿69. Mūsā said: "If Allāh wills, you will find me patient, and I will not disobey you in aught."﴾

﴿70. He said: "Then, if you follow me, ask me not about anything till I myself mention of it to you."﴾

Mūsā meeting with Al-Khiḍr and accompanying Him

Allāh tells us what Mūsā said to that learned man, who was Al-Khiḍr. He was one to whom Allāh had given knowledge that He had not given to Mūsā, just as He had given Mūsā knowledge that He had not given to Al-Khiḍr.

﴿قَالَ لَهُ مُوسَى هَلْ أَتَّبَعُكَ﴾

﴿Mūsā said to him: "May I follow you..."﴾

This is a question phrased in gentle terms, with no sense of force or coercion. This is the manner in which the seeker of knowledge should address the scholar.

﴿أَتَّبَعُكَ﴾

﴿I follow you﴾ means, I accompany you and spend time with you.

﴿عَلَى أَنْ تُعَلِّمَنِي مِمَّا عُلِّمْتَ رُسُلًا﴾

﴿so that you teach me something of that knowledge which you have been taught﴾

meaning, teach me something from that which Allāh has taught you so that I may be guided by it and learn something beneficial and do righteous deeds. At this point,

﴿قَالَ﴾

﴿He said﴾ meaning, Al-Khiḍr said to Mūsā,

﴿إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا﴾

﴿Verily, you will not be able to have patience with me!﴾

meaning, 'You will not be able to accompany with me when you see me doing things that go against your law, because I

have knowledge from Allāh that He has not taught you, and you have knowledge from Allāh that He has not taught me. Each of us has responsibilities before Allāh that the other does not share, and you will not be able to stay with me,'

﴿وَكَيْفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلَىٰ مَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ خُبْرًا ۝٧٨﴾

﴿And how can you have patience about a thing which you know not?﴾

'For I know that you will denounce me justifiably, but I have knowledge of Allāh's wisdom and the hidden interests which I can see but you cannot.'

﴿قَالَ﴾

﴿He said﴾ meaning, Mūsā said:

﴿سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ صَابِرًا﴾

﴿If Allāh wills, you will find me patient,﴾ with whatever I see of your affairs,

﴿وَلَا أَغْصِي لَكَ أَمْرًا﴾

﴿and I will not disobey you in aught.﴾ means, 'I will not go against you in anything.' At that point, Al-Khidr, upon him be peace, set a condition:

﴿قَالَ فَإِنِ اتَّبَعْتَنِي فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِي عَنْ شَيْءٍ﴾

﴿Then, if you follow me, ask me not about anything﴾ do not initiate any discussion of the matter,

﴿حَتَّىٰ أَذْكُرَ لَكَ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا﴾

﴿till I myself mention of it to you.﴾ meaning, 'until I initiate the discussion, before you ask me about it.'

﴿فَاسْلُقَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا رَكِبَا فِي السَّفِينَةِ خَرَقَهَا قَالَ أَخَرَقَهَا لِتَمُوتَ أَهْلُهَا لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا إِمْرًا ۝٧٩﴾

﴿قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ إِنَّكَ لَن تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ۝٨٠﴾ قَالَ لَا تُؤَاخِذْنِي بِمَا نَسِيتُ وَلَا تُرْهِقْنِي مِنْ أَمْرِي

عُسْرًا ۝٨١﴾

﴿71. So they both proceeded, till, when they boarded the boat, he (Khidr) damaged it. Mūsā said: "Have you damaged it wherein its people will drown? Verily, you have committed a thing Imr."﴾

﴿72. He said: "Did I not tell you, that you would not be able to have patience with me?"﴾

﴿73. He said: "Call me not to account for what I forgot, and be not hard upon me for my affair (with you).">﴾

Damaging the Boat

Allāh tells us that Mūsā and his companion Al-Khiḍr set out having come to an agreement and reached an understanding. Al-Khiḍr had made the condition that Mūsā should not ask him about anything he found distasteful until he himself initiated the discussion and offered an explanation. So they went on board the ship, as described in the *Ḥadīth* quoted above – the crew recognized Al-Khiḍr and let them ride on board free of charge, as an honor to Al-Khiḍr. When the boat took them out to sea and they were far from the shore, Al-Khiḍr got up and damaged the boat, pulling out one of its planks and then patching it up again. Mūsā, peace be upon him, could not restrain himself from denouncing him, so he said:

﴿أَرَقْنَهَا لِتَغْرَقَ أَهْلُهَا﴾

﴿Have you damaged it wherein its people will drown?﴾

The grammatical structure of the sentence in Arabic implies that this was the consequence, not the purpose, of his action.

﴿لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا إِمْرًا﴾

﴿Verily, you have committed a thing Imr.﴾ About 'Imr', Mujāhid said: "An evil thing."^[1] Qatādah said, "An astounding thing."^[2] At this point, reminding him of the previously-agreed condition, Al-Khiḍr said:

﴿أَلَمْ أَقُلْ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا﴾

﴿Did I not tell you, that you would not be able to have patience with me?﴾

meaning, 'this thing that I did deliberately is one of the things I told you not to denounce me for, because you do not know

^[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:72.

^[2] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:72.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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الْحَدِيثُ

فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَا قَالَ لِفَتْنِهِ إِنِّي نَادَيْتُهُ نَادًا لَّيِّنًا مِّنْ سَفَرِنَا
هَذَا انصَبَا ﴿٧٤﴾ قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَ إِذْ أَوَّيْنَا إِلَى الصَّخْرَةِ فَإِنِّي نَبِئْتُ
الْحَوْتَ وَمَا أُنْسِيهِ إِلَّا الشَّيْطَانُ أَن أَذْكُرَهُ، وَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ
فِي الْبَحْرِ عَجَبًا ﴿٧٥﴾ قَالَ ذَلِكَ مَا كُنَّا نَبْعُ فَارْتَدَّ عَلَى آثَارِهِمَا
قَصَصًا ﴿٧٦﴾ فَوَجَدَا عَبْدًا مِّنْ عِبَادِنَا آتَيْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ
عِنْدِنَا وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِمَّا نَافَعَلْنَا ﴿٧٧﴾ قَالَ لَهُ مُوسَى هَلْ أَتَبَعَكَ
عَلَىٰ أَن تُعَلِّمَنِي مِمَّا عَلَّمْتَ رُسُلًا ﴿٧٨﴾ قَالَ إِنَّكَ لَن تَسْتَطِيعَ
مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ﴿٧٩﴾ وَكَيْفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلَىٰ مَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ خُبْرًا ﴿٨٠﴾ قَالَ
سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ صَابِرًا وَلَا أَعْصِي لَكَ أَمْرًا ﴿٨١﴾ قَالَ
فَإِن أَتَبَعْتَنِي فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِي عَنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ أُحْدِثَ لَكَ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا
﴿٨٢﴾ فَانْطَلَقَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا رَكِبَا فِي السَّفِينَةِ خَرَقَهَا قَالَ أَخَرَقْنَاهَا
لِنُغْرِقَ أَهْلَهَا لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا أَمْرًا ﴿٨٣﴾ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ إِنَّكَ
لَن تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ﴿٨٤﴾ قَالَ لَا تُؤَاخِذْنِي بِمَا نَبِئْتُ وَلَا
تُرْهِقْنِي مِنْ أَمْرِي عُسْرًا ﴿٨٥﴾ فَانْطَلَقَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا لَقِيَا غُلَامًا فَقَتَلَهُ
قَالَ أَقَتَلْتُ نَفْسًا رَّكِيَةً بَغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا نُكْرًا ﴿٨٦﴾

the full story, and there is a reason and purpose for it that you do not know about.'

قَالَ

﴿He said﴾, meaning, Mūsā said:

﴿لَا تُؤَاخِذْنِي بِمَا نَبِئْتُ وَلَا تُرْهِقْنِي مِنْ أَمْرِي عُسْرًا﴾

﴿Call me not to account for what I forgot, and be not hard upon me for my affair (with you).﴾

meaning, 'do not be harsh with me.' Hence it says in the Ḥadīth quoted above from the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ:

«كَانَتْ الْأُولَىٰ مِنْ مُّوسَىٰ نِسْيَانًا»

«In the first instance, Mūsā asked Al-Khidr because he had forgotten his promise.»^[1]

﴿فَانْطَلَقَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا لَقِيَا غُلَامًا فَقَتَلَهُ قَالَ أَقَتَلْتُ نَفْسًا رَّكِيَةً بَغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا نُكْرًا ﴿٨٦﴾﴾
﴿قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ إِنَّكَ لَن تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ﴿٨٤﴾﴾ قَالَ إِن سَأَلْتُكَ عَنْ شَيْءٍ بَعْدَهَا فَلَا تُصَحِّحْنِي قَدْ بَلَغْتَ مِن لَّدُنِّي عُذْرًا ﴿٨٥﴾﴾

﴿74. Then they both proceeded till they met a boy, and he (Khidr) killed him. Mūsā said: "Have you killed an innocent person without Nafs? Verily, you have committed a thing Nukr!"﴾

﴿75. He said: "Did I not tell you that you can have no

[1] Faṭḥ Al-Bārī 8:262.

patience with me?"

﴿76. He said: "If I ask you anything after this, keep me not in your company, you have received an excuse from me."﴾

The Story of killing the Boy

﴿فَاطْلُقَا﴾

﴿Then they both proceeded,﴾ means, after the first incident,

﴿حَتَّىٰ إِذَا لَقِيََا غُلَامًا فَقَتَلَهُ﴾

﴿till they met a boy, and he (Khidr) killed him.﴾

It has been stated previously that this boy was playing with other boys in one of the towns, and that Al-Khidr deliberately singled him out. He was the finest and most handsome of them all, and Al-Khidr killed him. When Mūsā, peace be upon him, saw that he denounced him even more fervently than in the first case, and said hastily:

﴿أَفَلَيْتَ نَفْسًا زَكِيَّةً﴾

﴿Have you killed an innocent person?﴾

meaning, a young person who had not yet committed any sin or done anything wrong, yet you killed him

﴿بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ﴾

﴿without Nafs﴾ with no reason for killing him.

﴿لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا نُكْرًا﴾

﴿Verily, you have committed a thing Nukr!﴾ meaning, something that is clearly evil.

﴿قَالَ أَتَرَأَىٰ لَكَ إِنَّا لَنَسْتَبِيحُ بِمِثْلِ مَا صَنَعْتَ﴾

﴿He said: "Did I not tell you that you can have no patience with me?"﴾

Once again, Al-Khidr reiterates the condition set in the first place, so Mūsā says to him:

﴿إِنْ سَأَلْتُكَ عَنْ شَيْءٍ بَعْدَهَا﴾

﴿If I ask you anything after this,﴾ meaning, 'if I object to anything else you do after this,'

﴿فَلَا تُصَاحِبْنِي فَمَا بَلَغْتَ مِن لَّدُنِّي عُذْرًا﴾

﴿keep me not in your company, you have received an excuse from me.﴾

'you have accepted my apology twice.' Ibn Jarīr narrated from Ibn 'Abbās that Ubayy bin Ka'b said: "Whenever the Prophet ﷺ mentioned anyone, he would pray for himself first. One day he said:

«رَحِمَهُ اللهُ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَى مُوسَى لَوْ لَبِثَ مَعَ صَاحِبِهِ لَا يَبْصُرُ الْعَجَبَ، وَلَكِنَّهُ قَالَ: ﴿إِنْ سَأَلْتَنِي عَنْ شَيْءٍ بَعْدَهَا فَلَا تُصَاحِبْنِي فَمَا بَلَغْتَ مِن لَّدُنِّي عُذْرًا﴾»^[1]

«May the mercy of Allāh be upon us and upon Mūsā. If he had stayed with his companion he would have seen wonders, but he said, 'If I ask you anything after this, keep me not in your company, you have received an excuse from me.'»^[1]

﴿فَانْطَلَقَا حَتَّى إِذَا أَتَا أَهْلَ قَرْيَةٍ اسْتَطْعَمَا أَهْلَهَا فَأَبَوْا أَنْ يُضَيِّفُوهُمَا فَوَجَدَا فِيهَا جِدَارًا يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَنْقَضَ فَأَقَامَهُ قَالَ لَوْ شِئْتَ لَتَّخَذْتَ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا ﴿٧٧﴾ قَالَ هَذَا فِرَاقُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنِكَ سَأُنَبِّئُكَ بِمَا أُوَيْدَ مَا لَمْ تَشْتَطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا ﴿٧٨﴾﴾

﴿77. Then they both proceeded till when they came to the people of a town, they asked them for food, but they refused to entertain them. Then they found therein a wall about to collapse and he set it up straight. (Mūsā) said: "If you had wished, surely you could have taken wages for it!"﴾

﴿78. He said: "This is the parting between you and I, I will tell you the interpretation of (those) things over which you were not able to be patient."﴾

The Story of repairing the Wall

Allāh tells us that

﴿فَانْطَلَقَا﴾

﴿they both proceeded﴾ after the first two instances,

﴿حَتَّى إِذَا أَتَا أَهْلَ قَرْيَةٍ﴾

^[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:77.

﴿till when they came to the people of a town,﴾

Ibn Jarīr narrated from Ibn Sīrīn that this was Al-Aylah.^[1]
According to the Ḥadīth;

«حَتَّى إِذَا أَتَى أَهْلَ قَرْيَةٍ لَنَا»

«When they came there, the people of the town were mean.»^[2]
i.e., miserly

﴿اَسْتَعْلَمَ أَهْلُهَا فَأَبَوْا أَنْ يُضَيِّقُوا لَهُمْ فَوَجَدَا فِيهَا جِدَارًا يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَنْقَضَ﴾

﴿they asked them for food, but they refused to entertain them.
Then they found therein a wall about to collapse and he (Khidr)
set it up straight.﴾

means, he fixed it so it was standing upright properly. We have already seen in the Ḥadīth quoted above that he set it up with his own hands, supporting it until it was standing straight again, which is something extraordinary. At this point Mūsā said to him:

﴿لَوْ شِئْتَ لَتَنَحَذَّتْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا﴾

﴿If you had wished, surely you could have taken wages for it!﴾
meaning, because they did not entertain us as guests, you should not have worked for them for free.

﴿قَالَ هَذَا فِرَاقُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكَ﴾

﴿He said: "This is the parting between you and I﴾

meaning, because you said after the boy was killed that if you asked me anything after that, you would not accompany me any further. So this is the parting of the ways between me and you.

﴿سَأُنَبِّئُكَ بِتَأْوِيلِ﴾

﴿I will tell you the interpretation﴾ meaning explanation,

﴿مَا لَمْ تَسْطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا﴾

﴿of (those) things over which you were not able to be patient.﴾

^[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:78.

^[2] Aḥmad 5:119.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

٣٠٢

الْمَرْءُ النَّاصِيَةُ

﴿٧٩﴾ قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَ لَكَ إِنَّا لَنَنصِيبُكَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ﴿٧٩﴾ قَالَ إِنْ سَأَلْتُكَ عَنْ شَيْءٍ بَعْدَ هَٰذَا فَلَا تُصْنِ عَنِّي قَدْ بَلَغْتَ مِن لَدُنِّي عُذْرًا ﴿٨٠﴾ فَأَنْطَلَقَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَتَيَا أَهْلَ قَرْيَةٍ اسْتَطْعَمَا أَهْلُهَا فَأَبَوْا أَن يُصَيِّفُوهُمَا فَوَجَدَا فِيهَا جِدَارًا يُرِيدُ أَن يَنْقَضَ فَأَقَامَهُ ﴿٨١﴾ قَالَ لَوِ شِئْتُ لَخَذْتُ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا ﴿٨١﴾ قَالَ هَٰذَا فِرَاقُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنِكَ سَأُنَبِّئُكَ بِمَا أُرِيدُ مَا لَمْ تَسْتَطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا ﴿٨٢﴾ أَمَّا السَّفِينَةُ فَكَانَتْ لِمَسْكِينٍ يَعْمَلُونَ فِي الْبَحْرِ فَأَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَعِيبَهَا وَكَانَ وَرَاءَهُمْ مَلِكٌ يَأْخُذُ كُلَّ سَفِينَةٍ غَصْبًا ﴿٨٣﴾ وَأَمَّا الْفُلَانُ فكَانَ أَبُوهُمَا صَالِحًا فَأَرَادَ رَبُّكَ أَنْ يَبْلُغَا أَشُدَّهُمَا وَيَسْتَخْرِجَا كَنْزَهُمَا رَحْمَةً مِن رَّبِّكَ وَمَا فَعَلْتَهُ ﴿٨٤﴾ عَن أَمْرِي ذَٰلِكَ تَأْوِيلُ مَا لَمْ تَسْطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا ﴿٨٥﴾ وَتَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ ذِي الْقُرْنَيْنِ قُلْ سَأَتْلُو عَلَيْكُم مِّنْهُ ذِكْرًا ﴿٨٦﴾

﴿٧٩﴾ أَمَّا السَّفِينَةُ فَكَانَتْ لِمَسْكِينٍ يَعْمَلُونَ فِي الْبَحْرِ فَأَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَعِيبَهَا وَكَانَ وَرَاءَهُمْ مَلِكٌ يَأْخُذُ كُلَّ سَفِينَةٍ غَصْبًا ﴿٨٠﴾

﴿79. "As for the boat, it belonged to poor people working in the sea. So I wished to make a defective damage in it, as there was a king behind them who seized every boat by force."﴾

Interpretations of why the Ship was damaged

This is an explanation of what Mūsā found so hard to understand, and the appearance of which he condemned. Allāh showed Al-Khidr the hidden reasons, so

he said, "I damaged the ship to make it faulty, because they used to pass by a king who was one of the oppressors, who

﴿يَأْخُذُ كُلَّ سَفِينَةٍ﴾

﴿seized every boat﴾, i.e., every good, sound boat

﴿غَصْبًا﴾

﴿by force.﴾ 'So I wanted to prevent him from taking this boat by making it appear faulty, so that its poor owners who had nothing else could benefit from it.' It was also said that they were orphans.

﴿وَأَمَّا الْفُلَانُ فكَانَ أَبُوهُمَا صَالِحًا فَأَرَادَ رَبُّكَ أَنْ يَبْلُغَا أَشُدَّهُمَا وَيَسْتَخْرِجَا كَنْزَهُمَا رَحْمَةً مِن رَّبِّكَ وَمَا فَعَلْتَهُ﴾

﴿٨٦﴾

﴿80. "And as for the boy, his parents were believers, and we feared he would oppress them by rebellion and disbelief."﴾

﴿81. "So we intended that their Lord should exchange him for them for one better in righteousness and nearer to mercy."﴾

Interpretation of why the Boy was killed

Ibn 'Abbās narrated from Ubayy bin Ka'b that the Prophet ﷺ said:

«الْغُلَامُ الَّذِي قَتَلَهُ الْخَضِرُ طُعِيَ يَوْمَ طُعِيَ كَافِرًا»

«The boy Al-Khidr killed was destined to be a disbeliever from the day he was created.»

It was recorded by Ibn Jarīr from Ibn 'Abbās.^[1] He said:

﴿كَانَ أَبَاؤُهُ مُؤْمِنَيْنِ فَخَشِينَا أَنْ يُرْهَقَهُمَا طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا﴾

«his parents were believers, and we feared he would oppress them by rebellion and disbelief»

Their love for him might make them follow him in disbelief. Qatādah said, "His parents rejoiced when he was born and grieved for him when he was killed. If he had stayed alive, he would have been the cause of their doom. So let a man be content with the decree of Allāh, for the decree of Allāh for the believer, if he dislikes it, is better for him than if He were to decree something that he likes for him."^[2] An authentic Ḥadīth says;

«لَا يَقْضِي اللَّهُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ مِنْ قَضَاءٍ إِلَّا كَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ»

«Allāh does not decree anything for the believer except it is good for him.»^[3]

And Allāh says:

﴿وَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ﴾

«and it may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you.»
[2:216].

﴿فَأَرْزُقْنَا أَنْ يُدْخِلَهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا خَيْرًا مِنْهُ زَكَاةً وَأَقْرَبَ رُحْمًا﴾

[1] Muslim 2380, Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:85.

[2] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:86.

[3] Aḥmad 3:117.

﴿So we intended that their Lord should exchange him for them for one better in righteousness and nearer to mercy.﴾

A child who was better than this one, a child for whom they would feel more compassion. This was the view of Ibn Jurayj.^[1]

﴿وَأَمَّا الْجِدَارُ فَكَانَ لِغُلَامَيْنِ يَتِيمَيْنِ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ وَكَانَ تَحْتَهُ كَنْزٌ لَهُمَا وَكَانَ أَبُوهُمَا صَالِحًا فَأَرَادَ رَبُّكَ أَنْ يَبْلُغَا أَشُدَّهُمَا وَيَسْتَخْرِجَا كَنْزَهُمَا رَحْمَةً مِن رَّبِّكَ وَمَا قَعَلْتُمْ عَنْ أَمْرِي ذَلِكَ تَأْوِيلُ مَا لَمْ تَسْطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا﴾

482. "And as for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the town; and there was under it a treasure belonging to them; and their father was a righteous man, and your Lord intended that they should attain their age of full strength and take out their treasure as a mercy from your Lord. And I did them not of my own accord. That is the interpretation of those (things) over which you could not be patient.﴾

Interpretation of why the Wall was repaired for no Charge

In this Āyah there is a proof that the word Qaryah (village) may be used to refer to a city (Madīnah), because Allāh first says,

﴿حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَتَىٰ أَهْلَ قَرْيَةٍ﴾

﴿till when they came to the people of a town (Qaryah)﴾ [18:77], but here He says:

﴿وَكَانَ لِغُلَامَيْنِ يَتِيمَيْنِ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ﴾

﴿it belonged to two orphan boys in the town (Al-Madīnah);﴾

This is like the Āyāt:

﴿وَكَايَنَ يَنْ قَرْيَةٍ هِيَ أَشَدُّ قُوَّةً مِن قَرْيَتِكَ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَكَ﴾

﴿And many a town (Qaryah), stronger than your town which has driven you out We have destroyed﴾ [47:13] and;

﴿وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ عَلَىٰ رَجُلٍ مِّنَ الْقَرْيَتَيْنِ عَظِيمٍ﴾

^[1] At-Ṭabari 18:86-87.

﴿And they say: "Why is not this Qur'ān sent down to some great man of the two towns (Al-Qaryatayn)?"﴾ [43:31]

meaning Makkah and At-Ta'if.

The meaning of the *Āyah* [18:82] is: "I repaired this wall because it belonged to two orphan boys in the city, and underneath it was some treasure belonging to them." 'Ikrimah, Qatādah and others said, "Underneath it there was some wealth that was buried for them."^[1] This meaning is apparent from the context of the *Āyah*, and is the view chosen by Ibn Jarīr (may Allāh have mercy on him).

﴿وَكَانَ أَبُوفُصْلًا صَالِحًا﴾

﴿their father was a righteous man,﴾ indicates that a righteous person's offspring will be taken care of, and that the blessing of his worship will extend to them in this world and in the Hereafter. This will occur through his intercession for them, as well as their status being raised to the highest levels of Paradise, so that he may find joy in them. This was stated in the Qur'ān and reported in the Sunnah. Sa'īd bin Jubayr narrated from Ibn 'Abbās: "They were taken care of because their father was a righteous man, although it is not stated that they themselves were righteous."^[2]

﴿فَأَرَادَ رَبُّكَ أَنْ يَبْلُغَا أَشُدَّهُمَا وَيَسْتَخْرِجَا كَنْزَهُمَا﴾

﴿your Lord intended that they should attain their age of full strength and take out their treasure﴾

Here will is attributed to Allāh, the Exalted, because no one else is able to bring them to the age of full strength and puberty except Allāh. In contrast, He said about the boy:

﴿فَأَرَدْنَا أَنْ يُبْدِلَهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا خَيْرًا مِمَّا بَدَّلْنَاهُ﴾

﴿So we intended that their Lord should exchange him for them for one better in righteousness﴾

and concerning the ship:

﴿فَأَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَمْلِكَهَا﴾

[1] At-Ṭabari 18:90.

[2] At-Ṭabari 18:90.

﴿So I wished to make a defective damage in it,﴾

And Allāh knows best.

Was Al-Khiḍr a Prophet?

﴿رَحْمَةً مِن رَّبِّكَ وَمَا فَعَلْتُمْ عَنْ أَمْرِي﴾

﴿as a mercy from your Lord. And I did them not of my own accord.﴾

Meaning, These three things that I did, come from the mercy of Allāh for those we have mentioned, the crew of the ship, the parents of the boy and the two sons of the righteous man; I was only commanded to do these things that were enjoined upon me.' This is proof and evidence in support of those who say that Al-Khiḍr, peace be upon him, was a Prophet, along with the Āyah which we have already quoted:

﴿فَوَجَدَا عَبْدًا مِّنْ عِبَادِنَا عَلَيْهِ رَحْمَةٌ مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِن لَّدُنَّا عِلْمًا﴾

﴿Then they found one of Our servants, on whom We had bestowed mercy from Us, and whom We had taught knowledge from Us.﴾ [18:65]

Why he was called Al-Khiḍr?

Imām Aḥmad recorded that Abu Hurayrah, may Allāh be pleased with him, said that the Prophet ﷺ said concerning Al-Khiḍr;

«إِنَّمَا سُمِّيَ خَضِرًا لِأَنَّهُ جَلَسَ عَلَى قَرْوَةٍ بَيْضَاءَ، فَإِذَا هِيَ تَهْتَرُ مِنْ تَحْتِهِ خَضِرَاءُ»

«He was called Al-Khiḍr because he sat on a barren Farwah that turned white, then it turned green (Khaḍrā') beneath him.»^[1]

Imām Aḥmad also recorded this from 'Abdur-Razzāq.^[2] It was also recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī from Hammām from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

«إِنَّمَا سُمِّيَ الْخَضِرُ لِأَنَّهُ جَلَسَ عَلَى قَرْوَةٍ، فَإِذَا هِيَ تَهْتَرُ مِنْ تَحْتِهِ خَضِرَاءُ»

«He was called Al-Khiḍr because he sat on a barren Farwah and

[1] Aḥmad 2:312.

[2] Aḥmad 2:318.

it turned green (Khaḍrā') beneath him.»^[1]

The meaning of *Farwah* here is a patch of withered vegetation. This was the view of 'Abdur-Razzāq.^[2] It was also said that it means the face of the earth.

﴿ذَلِكَ تَأْوِيلُ مَا لَمْ تَسْطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا﴾

«That is the interpretation of those (things) over which you could not be patient.»

meaning, 'this is the explanation of the things which you could not put up with or be patient with until I took the initiative of explaining them to you.' When he explained them and made them clear and solved the confusion, he used a milder form of the verb,

﴿تَسْطِعْ﴾

«you could» When the matter was still confusing and very difficult, a more intensive form was used,

﴿سَأُنَبِّتُكَ بِتَأْوِيلِ مَا لَمْ تَسْطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا﴾

«I will tell you the interpretation of (those) things over which you were unable to be patient with» [18:78].

The intensity of the verbal form used reflects the intensity of the confusion felt. This is like the *Āyah*:

﴿فَمَا اسْتَطَعُوا أَنْ يَظْهَرُوهُ﴾

«So they (Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj) were not able to scale it» [18:97]

which means ascending to its highest point,

﴿وَمَا اسْتَطَعُوا أَنْ يَقْبِضُوا﴾

«nor are they able to dig through it» [18:97] which is more difficult than the former. The intensity of the verbal form used reflects the difficulty of the action, which has to do with the subtleties of meaning. And Allāh knows best.

If one were to ask, what happened to the boy-servant of Mūsā who appears at the beginning of the story but then is not mentioned? The answer is that the objective of the story is

^[1] *Faṭḥ Al-Bārī* 6:499.

^[2] *Aḥmad* 2:318.

what happened between Mūsā and Al-Khidr. Mūsā's boy-servant was with him, following him. It is clearly mentioned in the *Ṣaḥīḥ Ḥadīths* referred to above that he was Yūsha' bin Nūn, who was the one who became the leader of the Children of Israel after Mūsā, peace be upon him.

﴿وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنْ ذِي الْفَرْقَيْنِ قُلْ سَأَتْلُوا عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا ﴿٨٣﴾ إِنَّا مَكَنَّا لَهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَعَلَيْنَاهُ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ سَبِيلًا ﴿٨٤﴾﴾

﴿83. And they ask you about Dhul-Qarnayn. Say: "I shall recite to you something of his story."﴾

﴿84. Verily, We established him in the earth, and We gave him the means of everything.﴾

The Story of Dhul-Qarnayn

Allāh says to His Prophet ﷺ,

﴿وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ﴾

﴿And they ask you﴾ O Muḥammad ﷺ,

﴿عَنْ ذِي الْفَرْقَيْنِ﴾

﴿about Dhul-Qarnayn﴾ i.e., about his story. We have already mentioned how the disbelievers of Makkah sent word to the People of the Book and asked them for some information with which they could test the Prophet ﷺ. They (the People of the Book) said, 'Ask him about a man who traveled extensively throughout the earth, and about some young men who nobody knows what they did, and about the *Rūh* (the soul),' then *Sūrat Al-Kahf* was revealed.

Dhul-Qarnayn had great Power

﴿إِنَّا مَكَنَّا لَهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ﴾

﴿Verily, We established him in the earth﴾ means, 'We have given him great power, so that he had all that kings could have of might, armies, war equipment and siege machinery.' So he had dominion over the east and the west, all countries and their kings submitted to him, and all the nations, Arab and non-Arab, served him. Some of them said he was called Dhul-Qarnayn (the one with two horns) because he reached the two

"Horns" of the sun, east and west, where it rises and where it sets.

﴿وَأَلَيْنَاهُ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ سَبِيلًا﴾

﴿and We gave him the means of everything.﴾

Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, Sa'īd bin Jubayr, 'Ikrimah, As-Suddi, Qatādah, Aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk and others said, "This means knowledge."^[1] Qatādah also said,

﴿وَأَلَيْنَاهُ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ سَبِيلًا﴾

﴿and We gave him the means of everything.﴾

"The different parts and features of the earth."^[2] Concerning Bilqīs, Allāh said,

﴿وَأَوْفَيْتُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَنزِلٍ﴾

﴿she has been given all things﴾ [27:23], meaning all things that monarchs like her are given. Thus too was Dhul-Qarnayn: Allāh gave him the means of all things, meaning the means and power to conquer all areas, regions and countries, to defeat enemies, suppress the kings of the earth and humiliate the people of *Shirk*. He was given all that a man like him would need. And Allāh knows best.

﴿فَأَنجَ سَبِيلًا ۝۸۵﴾ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَغْرِبَ الشَّمْسِ وَجَدَهَا تَغْرُبُ فِي عَيْنٍ حَمِئَةٍ وَوَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا قَوْمًا قُلْنَا يَبْنَؤُا الْفَرْتَيْنِ إِنَّمَا أَنْ تُصِيبَ وَإِنَّمَا أَنْ تُنَجِّدَ فِيهِمْ حُسْنًا ۝۸۶﴾ قَالَ أَمَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ فَسَوْفَ نُعَذِّبُهُ ثُمَّ يُرَدُّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ فَيُعَذِّبُهُ عَذَابًا لَّكَرًا ۝۸۷﴾ وَأَمَّا مَنْ آمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُ جَزَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ وَسَنَقُولُ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِنَا يُسْرًا ۝۸۸﴾

﴿85. So he followed a way.﴾

﴿86. Until, when he reached the setting place of the sun, he found it setting in a spring of Hami'ah. And he found near it a people. We said: "O Dhul-Qarnayn! Either you punish them or treat them with kindness."﴾

﴿87. He said: "As for him who does wrong, we shall punish him, and then he will be brought back unto his Lord, Who will punish him with a terrible torment (Hell).">﴾

[1] *Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah* 2:106, Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:94-95.

[2] *Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah* 2:106, Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:94-95.

﴿88. "But as for him who believes and works righteousness, he shall have the best reward, and we shall speak unto him mild words."﴾

His traveling and reaching the Place where the Sun sets (the West)

﴿فَاتَّبَعَ سَبِيلًا﴾

﴿So he followed a way.﴾ Ibn 'Abbās said that he followed different routes to achieve what he wanted.^[1]

﴿فَاتَّبَعَ سَبِيلًا﴾

﴿So he followed a way.﴾

Mujāhid said that he followed different routes, east and west.^[2] According to one report narrated from Mujāhid, he said:

﴿سَبِيلًا﴾

﴿a way﴾ means, "A route through the land."^[3] Qatādah said, "It means he followed the routes and landmarks of the earth."^[4]

﴿حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَقْرَبَ الْمَشْرِقِ﴾

﴿Until, when he reached the setting place of the sun,﴾

means, he followed a route until he reached the furthest point that could be reached in the direction of the sun's setting, which is the west of the earth. As for the idea of his reaching the place in the sky where the sun sets, this is something impossible, and the tales told by storytellers that he traveled so far to the west that the sun set behind him are not true at all. Most of these stories come from the myths of the People of the Book and the fabrications and lies of their heretics.

﴿وَجَدَهَا تَرْبُؤُا فِي عَيْنٍ حَمِئَةٍ﴾

﴿he found it setting in a spring of Hami'ah﴾

[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:99.

[2] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:95.

[3] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:95.

[4] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:99.

meaning, he saw the sun as if it were setting in the ocean. This is something which everyone who goes to the coast can see: it looks as if the sun is setting into the sea but in fact it never leaves its path in which it is fixed. *Hami'ah* is, according to one of the two views, derived from the word *Hama'ah*, which means mud. This is like the *Āyah*:

﴿إِنِّي خَلَقْتُ بَشَرًا مِّن صَلَاطِ مِّنْ حَمَلٍ مَّسْنُونٍ﴾^[1]

﴿"I am going to create a man (Ādam) from dried clay of altered Hama'h (mud)﴾ [15:28],

which means smooth mud, as we have discussed above.

﴿وَوَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا قَوْمًا﴾

﴿And he found near it a people.﴾ meaning a nation. They mentioned that they were a great nation from among the sons of Ādam.

﴿قُلْنَا يَا آلِ قَارِثِينَ إِنَّمَا أَنْتُمْ مُعَذِّبُونَ وَإِنَّا أَنْتَجِدُ فِيهِمْ عُتَا﴾

﴿We (Allāh) said (by inspiration): "O Dhul-Qarnayn! Either you punish them or treat them with kindness"﴾

means, Allāh gave him power over them and gave him the choice: if he wanted to, he could kill the men and take the women and children captive, or if he wanted to, he could set them free, with or without a ransom. His justice and faith became apparent in the ruling he pronounced:

﴿أَمَّا مَن ظَلَمَ﴾

﴿As for him who does wrong,﴾ meaning who persists in his Kufr and in associating others in worship with his Lord,

﴿فَسَوْفَ نُعَذِّبُهُ﴾

﴿we shall punish him,﴾ Qatādah said, i.e., by killing him.^[1]

﴿ثُمَّ يَرْدُّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ فَيُعَذِّبُهُ عَذَابًا نَّكَارًا﴾

﴿and then he will be brought back unto his Lord, Who will punish him with a terrible torment.﴾

meaning a severe, far-reaching and painful punishment. This

[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:98.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي

إِنَّمَا كُنَّا لَهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَءَايَتُهُ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَسِيًّا ﴿٨٩﴾ فَأَنْبَغُ سَبِيًّا
 حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَقْرِبَ السَّمْعِ وَجَدَهَا تَرْغُبُ فِي عَذَابٍ مُّجْتَمِعَةٍ
 وَوَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا قَوْمًا قُلْنَا يَا الْقَارِئِينَ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ تُعَذِّبُ وَإِنَّمَا تُلْجِئُ
 فِيهِمْ حُسْنًا ﴿٩٠﴾ قَالَ أَمَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ فَسَوْفَ نُعَذِّبُهُ ثُمَّ نُرْثِيهِ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ
 فَيُعَذِّبُهُ عَذَابًا مُّكْرًا ﴿٩١﴾ وَأَمَّا مَنْ آمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُ جَزَاءُ
 الْحُسْنَىٰ وَسَنَقُولُ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِنَا يُسْرًا ﴿٩٢﴾ ثُمَّ أَنْبَغُ سَبِيًّا ﴿٩٣﴾ حَتَّىٰ
 إِذَا بَلَغَ مَطْلِعَ السَّمْعِ وَجَدَهَا تَطْلُعُ عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ لَّمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهُمْ مِنْ
 دُونِهَا سِتْرًا ﴿٩٤﴾ كَذَلِكَ وَقَدْ أَحَطْنَا بِمَا لَدَيْهِ خُبْرًا ﴿٩٥﴾ ثُمَّ أَنْبَغُ
 سَبِيًّا ﴿٩٦﴾ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ بَيْنَ السَّدَّيْنِ وَجَدَ مِنْ دُونِهِمَا قَوْمًا
 لَا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ قَوْلًا ﴿٩٧﴾ قَالُوا يَا الْقَارِئِينَ إِنِّي يَأْجُوحٌ وَمَأْجُوحٌ
 مُّفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَهَلْ نَجْعَلُ لَكَ خَرْجًا عَلَىٰ أَنْ تَجْعَلَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُمْ
 سَدًّا ﴿٩٨﴾ قَالَ مَا مَكَّنِّي فِيهِ رَبِّي خَيْرٌ فَأَعِينُونِي بِقُوَّةٍ أَجْعَلْ بَيْنَكُمْ
 وَبَيْنَهُمْ رَدْمًا ﴿٩٩﴾ ءَاتُونِي زُبَرَ الْحَدِيدِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا سَاوَىٰ بَيْنَ الصَّدَفَيْنِ
 قَالَ انْقُضُوا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَعَلَهُ نَارًا ءَاتُونِي أَفْغِ عَلَيْهِ قِطْرًا ﴿١٠٠﴾
 فَمَا اسْتَطَعُوا أَنْ يَظْهَرُوهُ وَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا لَهُ نَقْبًا ﴿١٠١﴾

implies a confirmation of the Hereafter and the reward and punishment.

﴿وَأَمَّا مَنْ آمَنَ﴾

﴿But as for him who believes﴾, meaning 'who follows us in our call to worship Allāh Alone with no partner or associate,'

﴿فَلَهُ جَزَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ﴾

﴿he shall have the best reward﴾, meaning in the Hereafter, with Allāh.

﴿وَسَنَقُولُ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِنَا يُسْرًا﴾

﴿and we (Dhul-Qarnayn) shall speak unto him mild words﴾. Mujāhid said, '(words of) kindness.'^[1]

﴿ثُمَّ أَنْبَغُ سَبِيًّا﴾ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَطْلِعَ السَّمْعِ وَجَدَهَا تَطْلُعُ عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ لَّمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهَا سِتْرًا ﴿٩٤﴾ كَذَلِكَ وَقَدْ أَحَطْنَا بِمَا لَدَيْهِ خُبْرًا ﴿٩٥﴾

﴿89. Then he followed (another) way,﴾

﴿90. Until, when he came to the rising place of the sun, he found it rising on a people for whom We (Allāh) had provided no shelter against the sun.﴾

﴿91. So (it was)! And We knew all about him (Dhul-Qarnayn).﴾

[1] At-Ṭabari 18:99.

His Journey East

Allāh tells us that Dhul-Qarnayn then traveled from the west of the earth towards the east. Every time he passed a nation, he subjugated the people and called them to Allāh. If they obeyed him, all well and good, otherwise he would humiliate them and take their wealth and possessions. From every nation he took what his armies needed to fight the next nation. When he reached the place where the sun rises, as Allāh says,

﴿وَجَدَهَا تَطْلُعُ عَلَى قَوْمٍ﴾

﴿he found it rising on a people﴾ meaning a nation,

﴿لَهُمْ جَعَلَ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهَا يَنْتَظِرُ﴾

﴿for whom We (Allāh) had provided no shelter against the sun.﴾

meaning, they had no buildings or trees to cover them and shade them from the heat of the sun.

Qatādah said, "It was mentioned to us that they were in a land where nothing grew, so when the sun rose they would go into tunnels until it had passed its zenith, then they would come out to go about their daily lives and earn themselves a living."^[1]

﴿كَذَلِكَ وَقَدْ أَحَطْنَا بِمَا لَدَيْهِ خَيْرٌ﴾

﴿So (it was)! And We knew all about him.﴾

Mujāhid and As-Suddi said, "This means that Allāh knew everything about him and his army, and nothing was hidden from Him, even though they came from so many different nations and lands. For,

﴿لَا يَخْفَىٰ عَلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ﴾

﴿Truly, nothing is hidden from Allāh, in the earth or in the heaven.﴾ [3:5]^[2]

﴿ثُمَّ أَتَىٰ سَبْعًا ۚ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ بَيْنَ السَّدَّيْنِ وَجَدَ مِنْ دُونِهِمَا قَوْمًا لَا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ قَوْلًا ۚ﴾

[1] At-Ṭabari 18:100.

[2] At-Ṭabari 18:101.

قَالُوا بَنَدَا الْقَرْيَتَيْنِ إِنَّا بِالْأَجُوجِ وَمَالِجُوجٍ مُّشِيدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَهَلْ جَعَلَ لَكَ خَرْمًا عَلَىٰ أَنْ تَجْعَلَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُمْ
سَدًّا ﴿٩٢﴾ قَالَ مَا مَكَّنِّي فِيهِ رَبِّي خَيْرٌ فَأَعِينُونِي بِقُوَّةٍ أَجْعَلْ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ رَدْمًا ﴿٩٣﴾ تَأْتُونَهُمْ رُبَّمَا لَوَالِدٌ
حَقٌّ إِذَا سَأَوِي بَيْنَ الضَّعِيفِينَ قَالَ أَنْفَخُوا حَقًّا إِذَا جَعَلَهُم نَارًا قَالَ مَا تَأْتُونَهُمْ أَفَرِغَ عَلَيْهِمْ قِطْرًا ﴿٩٤﴾

﴿92. Then he followed (another) way,﴾

﴿93. Until, when he reached between two mountains, he found before them a people who scarcely understood a word.﴾

﴿94. They said: "O Dhul-Qarnayn! Verily, Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj are doing great mischief in the land. Shall we then pay you a tribute in order that you might erect a barrier between us and them?"﴾

﴿95. He said: "That in which my Lord had established me is better. So help me with strength, I will erect between you and them a barrier."﴾

﴿96. "Give me Zubar of iron," then, when he had filled up the gap between the two mountain-cliffs, he said: "Blow;" then when he had made them (red as) fire, he said: "Bring me Qiṭran to pour over them."﴾

His Journey to the Land of Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj, and building the Barrier

Allāh says of Dhul-Qarnayn:

﴿ثُمَّ أَتْنَعُ سَبَاءَ﴾

﴿Then he followed (another) way﴾ meaning, he traveled from the east of the earth until he reached a place between the two mountains which were next to one another with a valley in between, from which Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj (God and Magog) will emerge into the land of the Turks and spread mischief there, destroying crops and people. Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj are among the progeny of Ādam, peace be upon him, as was recorded in the Two *Ṣaḥīḥs*;

«إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى يَقُولُ: يَا آدَمُ قِيْلُ: لَيْتَكَ وَسَعْدَيْكَ قِيْلُ: ابْعَثْ بَعَثَ النَّارِ، قِيْلُ: وَمَا بَعَثَ النَّارِ؟ قِيْلُ: مِنْ كُلِّ أَلْفٍ تِسْعِمِائَةٍ وَتِسْعَةٌ وَتَسْعُونَ إِلَى النَّارِ وَوَاجِدٌ إِلَى الْحَيَّةِ، فَجِيْلُ يَتِيْبُ الصَّغِيرِ وَتَضَعُ كُلُّ ذَاتِ حَمَلٍ حَمْلَهَا. فَقَالَ: إِنَّ فِيكُمْ أُمَّتَيْنِ مَا كَانَتَا فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا كَثَرْتَاهُ يَأْجُوجَ وَمَأْجُوجَ»

"Allāh said: "O Ādam." Ādam said, "Here I am at Your service." Allāh said, "Send forth the group of Hellfire." Ādam said, "What is the group of Hellfire?" Allāh said: "Out of every thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine will go to Hell and one will go to Paradise." At that time young men will turn grey and every pregnant female will drop her load. Among you are two nations who never come to anything but they overwhelm it with their huge numbers. (They are) Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj."^[1]

﴿وَجَدَ مِنْ دُونِهِمَا قَوْمًا لَا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ قَوْلًا﴾

﴿he found before them a people who scarcely understood a word.﴾

he could not understand their speech, because they were so isolated from other people.

﴿قَالُوا يَنْدَا الْقَرْنَيْنِ إِنَّ يَأْجُوجَ وَمَأْجُوجَ مُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَهَلْ يُعْمَلُ لَكَ خَرْبًا﴾

﴿They said: "O Dhul-Qarnayn! Verily, Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj are doing great mischief in the land. Shall we then pay you a tribute?"﴾

Ibn Jurayj reported from 'Atā' from Ibn 'Abbās that this meant a great reward,^[2] i.e., they wanted to collect money among themselves to give to him so that he would create a barrier between them and Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj. Dhul-Qarnayn said with kindness, righteousness and good intentions,

﴿مَا مَكَّنِّي فِيهِ رَبِّي خَيْرٌ﴾

﴿That in which my Lord had established me is better (than your tribute).﴾

meaning, the power and authority that Allāh has given me is better for me than what you have collected. This is like when Sulaymān (Solomon), peace be upon him, said:

﴿أَتَيْدُونَنِي بِسَالٍ مِمَّا مَتَنِي اللَّهُ خَيْرٌ مِمَّا مَتَنَكُمُ﴾

﴿Will you help me in wealth? What Allāh has given me is better than that which He has given you!﴾ [27:36]

[1] *Fath Al-Bāri* 8:295, Muslim 1:201.

[2] *Aṭ-Ṭabari* 18:112.

Similarly, Dhul-Qarnayn said: 'What I have is better than what you want to give me, but help me with strength,' i.e., with your labor and construction equipment,

﴿نَعْمَلْ بَيْنَكُمُ وَبَيْنَهُمْ رَدْمًا ۚ إِنَّمَا نُوَدِّعُ الرَّحْمَةَ﴾

﴿I will erect between you and them a barrier. Give me Zubar of iron,﴾

Zubar is the plural of Zubrah, which means pieces or chunks of something. This was the view of Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid and Qatādah.^[1] These pieces were like bricks or blocks, and it was said that each block weighed one Damascene Qinṭār^[2] or more.

﴿حَتَّىٰ إِذَا سَاوَىٰ بَيْنَ الصَّدَفَيْنِ﴾

﴿then, when he had filled up the gap between the two mountain-cliffs,﴾

means, he put the blocks on top of one another, starting at the bottom, until he reached the tops of the mountains, filling the width and height of the gap. The scholars differed about the precise width and height.

﴿قَالَ انْفُخُوا﴾

﴿he said: "Blow;"﴾ means, he lit a fire until the whole thing was burning hot.

﴿قَالَ مَا تَوَدُّ أَنُفِخَ عَلَيْهِ فَنَطْرًا﴾

﴿he said: "Bring me Qiṭran to pour over them."﴾

Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah, Aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk, Qatādah and As-Suddi said it was copper. Some of them added that it was molten.^[3] This is similar to the Āyah:

﴿وَأَسْلَمْنَا لَمْ يَخْرُجْ إِلَّا نَارًا﴾

﴿And We caused a fount of Qiṭran to flow for him﴾ [34:12].

So it resembled a striped cloak.

[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:114.

[2] Qinṭār; a unit of weight equivalent to 256.4 kg. (Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic). See the explanation of Sūrah Āl 'Imrān 3:14.

[3] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:116-117, Ad-Durr Al-Manthūr 5:460.

Then Allāh said:

﴿فَمَا اسْتَطَعُوا أَنْ يَظْهَرُوهُ وَمَا اسْتَطَعُوا لَهُمْ نَقْبًا﴾ ٩٧ قَالَ هَذَا رَحْمَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّي فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي جَمَلًا دَكَّاهُ وَكَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي حَقًّا ٩٨ وَرَكَعًا يُصَبِّحُ مِنْهُمُ مُبْعِدٌ وَغُصَّةٌ فِي الْأَصْوَارِ يَهْمِلُهُمْ جَمْعًا ٩٩

﴿97. So they could not scale it or dig through it.﴾

﴿98. He said: "This is a mercy from my Lord, but when the promise of my Lord comes, He shall Dakkā' it down to the ground. And the promise of my Lord is ever true.﴾

﴿99. And on that Day, We shall leave some of them to surge like waves on one another; and the Trumpet will be blown, and We shall collect them (the creatures) all together.﴾

The Barrier restrains Them, but It will be breached when the Hour draws nigh

Allāh tells us that Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj could not climb over the barrier or penetrate its lower portion. Varying forms of the verb are used here in the Arabic text to reflect the difficulty of the action referred to.

﴿فَمَا اسْتَطَعُوا أَنْ يَظْهَرُوهُ وَمَا اسْتَطَعُوا لَهُمْ نَقْبًا﴾ ٩٧

﴿So they (Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj) could not scale it or dig through it.﴾

This indicates that they could not penetrate it or dig through it.

Imām Aḥmad recorded that Zaynab bint Jaḥsh, the wife of the Prophet ﷺ said, "The Prophet ﷺ woke from sleep, and he was red in the face. He said,

«لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَيْلٌ لِلْعَرَبِ مِنْ شَرِّ قَدْ اقْتَرَبَ فُتِحَ الْيَوْمَ مِنْ رَدْمِ بَأْجُوجَ وَمَأْجُوجَ
مِثْلُ هَذَا»

«Lā ilāha illallāh! Woe to the Arabs from the evil that has approached (them). Today a hole has been opened in the barrier of Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj like this.»

and he made a circle with his index finger and thumb. I [Zaynab] said, 'O Messenger of Allāh, will we be destroyed even though there will be righteous people among us?' He said:

نَعْمَ إِذَا كَثُرَ الْخَبَثُ

«Yes, if evil increases.»^[1] This is a *Ṣaḥīḥ Ḥadīth*, both Al-Bukhārī and Muslim recorded it.^[2]

قَالَ هَذَا رَحْمَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّي

«(Dhul-Qarnayn) said: "This is a mercy from my Lord..."» meaning, after it was built by Dhul-Qarnayn.

قَالَ هَذَا رَحْمَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّي

«He said: This is a mercy from my Lord» for the people, when he placed a barrier between them and Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj, to stop them from spreading evil and corruption on earth.

فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي

«but when the promise of my Lord comes» means, when the true promise comes

جَعَلَهُ دَكَّاءَ

«He shall Dakkā' it down to the ground.» means, will make it flat. The Arabs use *Dakkā'* to describe a female camel whose back is flat and has no hump. And Allāh says:

فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ رَأْسَهُ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُ دَكًّا

«So when his Lord appeared to the mountain, He made it Dakkan» [7:143] meaning, level to the ground.

وَكَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي حَقًّا

«And the promise of my Lord is ever true.» means, it will come to pass without a doubt.

وَرَكْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ

«We shall leave some of them» meaning mankind, on that day, the day when the barrier will be breached and these people (Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj) will come out surging over mankind to destroy their wealth and property.

وَرَكْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَمُوجُ فِي بَعْضٍ

[1] Aḥmad 6:428.

[2] *Faṭḥ Al-Bārī* 6:440, Muslim 4:2208.

﴿We shall leave some of them to surge like waves on one another;﴾

As-Suddi said: "That is when they emerge upon the people."^[1] All of this will happen before the Day of Resurrection and after the Dajjāl, as we will explain when discussing the *Āyāt*:

﴿حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فُجِعَتْ بِأَوجٍ وَمَاجُوجٍ وَهُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ حَدَبٍ يَنْسِلُونَ ۖ وَاقْتَرَبَ الْوَعْدُ الْحَقُّ﴾

﴿Until, when Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj are let loose, and they swoop down from every Ḥadab. And the true promise shall draw near...﴾ [21:96-97]

﴿وَيَفِخُ فِي الصُّورِ﴾

﴿and Aṣ-Ṣūr will be blown.﴾ Aṣ-Ṣūr, as explained in the *Ḥadīth*, is a horn that is blown into. The one who will blow into it is (the angel) Isrāfīl, peace be upon him, as has been explained in the *Ḥadīth* quoted at length above, and there are many *Ḥadīths* on this topic.^[2] According to a *Ḥadīth* narrated from 'Aṭīyah from Ibn 'Abbas^[3] and Abu Sa'īd, and attributed to the Prophet ﷺ,

«كَيْفَ أَنْعَمُ وَصَاحِبُ الْقُرْنِ قَدْ انْقَمَ الْقُرْنُ وَخَنَى جَبْهَتَهُ وَاسْتَمَعَ مَتَى يُؤْمَرُ؟»

«How can I relax when the one with the Horn has put the Horn in his mouth and has knelt down, listening out for the command to be given to him?» They said, "What should we say?" He said:

«قُولُوا: حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ عَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا»

«Say: "Allāh is Sufficient for us and the best Disposer of affairs, in Allāh have we put our trust."»^[4]

﴿يَجْمَعُهُمْ جَمَاعًا﴾

﴿and We shall collect them (the creatures) all together.﴾ means, 'We shall bring them all together for Reckoning.'

[1] *Ad-Durr Al-Manthūr* 4:454.

[2] *Tuhfat Al-Aḥwadhī* 9:116.

[3] *Aṭ-Ṭabari* 18:122.

[4] *Tuhfat Al-Aḥwadhī* 7:117.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

٣٠٤

الْحَافِظُ

قَالَ هَذَا رَحْمَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّي فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي جَعَلَهُ دَكَّاءَ وَكَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي حَقًّا ﴿١٠٠﴾ وَتَرَكْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَمُوجُ فِي بَعْضٍ وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَجُمِعْنَاهُمْ جَمْعًا ﴿١٠١﴾ وَعَرَضْنَا جَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَرْضًا ﴿١٠٢﴾ الَّذِينَ كَانَتْ أَعْيُنُهُمْ فِي غِطَاءٍ عَنْ ذِكْرِي وَكَانُوا لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَمْعًا ﴿١٠٣﴾ أَفَحَسِبَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنْ يَتَّخِذُوا عِبَادِي مِنْ دُونِي أَوْلِيَاءَ إِنَّا أَعِندَنَا جَهَنَّمَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ نُزُلًا ﴿١٠٤﴾ قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِالْأَخْسَرِينَ أَعْمَالًا ﴿١٠٥﴾ الَّذِينَ ضَلَّ سَعْيُهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعًا ﴿١٠٦﴾ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَإِنَّا بِنَارِهِمْ وَلِقَائِهِ فِي حِفْظٍ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فَلَا نُقِيمُ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ وَزَنًا ﴿١٠٧﴾ ذَلِكَ جَزَاءُكُمْ جَهَنَّمَ بِمَا كَفَرُوا وَتَآخَذُوا آيَاتِي وَرُسُلِي هُزُولًا ﴿١٠٨﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ الْفِرْدَوْسِ نُزُلًا ﴿١٠٩﴾ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يَبْغُونَ عَنْهَا حِوْلًا ﴿١١٠﴾ قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَادًا لِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّي لَنَفِدَ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ أَنْ نُنْفِذَ كَلِمَاتِ رَبِّي وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِسَبِيلِهِ مِئْدَادًا ﴿١١١﴾ قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ يُوحَى إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ اللَّهُ وَاحِدٌ فَمَنْ كَانَ زَعْوًا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ إِنَّ أَحَدًا ﴿١١٢﴾

﴿قُلْ إِنَّ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ ﴿١٠٩﴾ لَنَجْجُوهُنَّ إِلَى يَمِينٍ يَوْمَ تَقُومُ السُّعُورُ﴾

﴿Say: "(Yes) verily, those of old, and those of later times. All will surely be gathered together for appointed meeting of a known Day.﴾ [56:49-50]

﴿وَحَضَرْتَهُمْ فَلَمْ تَقَادِرْ عَلَيْهِمْ أَحَدًا﴾

﴿and we shall gather them all together so as to leave not one of them behind.﴾ [18:47]

﴿وَعَرَضْنَا جَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَرْضًا ﴿١٠٢﴾ الَّذِينَ كَانَتْ أَعْيُنُهُمْ فِي غِطَاءٍ عَنْ ذِكْرِي وَكَانُوا لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَمْعًا ﴿١٠٣﴾ أَفَحَسِبَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنْ يَتَّخِذُوا عِبَادِي مِنْ دُونِي أَوْلِيَاءَ إِنَّا أَعِندَنَا جَهَنَّمَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ نُزُلًا﴾

﴿100. And on that Day We shall present Hell to the disbelievers, plain to view.﴾

﴿101. (To) those whose eyes had been under a covering from My Reminder, and they could not bear to hear (it).﴾

﴿102. Do then those who disbelieved think that they can take My servants as Awliyā' [protectors] besides Me? Verily, We have prepared Hell as an entertainment for the disbelievers.﴾

Hell will be displayed before the Disbelievers on the Day of Resurrection

Allāh tells us what He will do to the disbelievers on the Day of Resurrection. He will show Hell to them, meaning He will bring it forth for them to see its punishment and torment before

they enter it. This will intensify their distress and grief. In *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* it is recorded that Ibn Mas'ūd said, "The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

«يُؤْتَى بِجَهَنَّمَ تَقَادُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ بِسَبْعِينَ أَلْفَ زِمَامٍ، مَعَ كُلِّ زِمَامٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ مَلَكٍ»

«Hell will be brought forth on the Day of Resurrection, pulled by means of seventy thousand reins, each of which will be held by seventy thousand angels.»^[1]

Then Allāh says of them:

﴿الَّذِينَ كَانَتْ أَعْيُنُهُمْ فِي غِطَاءٍ عَنْ ذِكْرِي﴾

﴿(To) those whose eyes had been under a covering from My Reminder,﴾

meaning, they neglected it, turning a blind eye and a deaf ear to it, refusing to accept guidance and follow the truth. As Allāh says:

﴿وَمَنْ يَتُخَلَّصْ عَن ذِكْرِ الرَّحْمَنِ نُقَيِّضْ لَهُ شَيْطَانًا فَهُوَ لَهُ قَرِينٌ﴾

﴿And whosoever turns away blindly from the remembrance of the Most Gracious, We appoint for him a Shayṭān to be a companion for him.﴾ [43:36]

And here Allāh says:

﴿وَكَاذِبًا لَا يَتْلِيهِمْ سَمْعًا﴾

﴿and they could not bear to hear (it).﴾ meaning, they did not understand the commands and prohibitions of Allāh. Then He says:

﴿أَفَحَسِبَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنْ يَتَّخِذُوا عِبَادِي مِن دُونِي أَوْلِيَاءَ﴾

﴿Do then those who disbelieved think that they can take My servants as Awliyā' [protectors] besides Me?﴾

meaning, do they think that this is right for them and that it is going to benefit them?

﴿كَلَّا سَيَكْفُرُونَ بِبَادِيهِمْ وَيَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ ضِدًّا﴾

﴿Nay, but they will deny their worship of them, and become opponents to them﴾ [19:82].

^[1] Muslim 4:2184.

Allāh says that He has prepared Hell as their abode on the Day of Resurrection.

﴿قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِالْأَخْسَرِ أَعْمَالًا ۝١٠٣ الَّذِينَ ضَلَّ سَمِيْعُهُمْ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُونَ ۝١٠٤ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَلِقَآئِهِ. فَحَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فَلَا نُقِيمُ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ وَزَنًا ۝١٠٥ ذَٰلِكَ جَزَآؤُهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ بِمَا كَفَرُوا وَآفَعَدُوا مَا إِنِّي وَرَسُولِي مَرْسَلًا ۝١٠٦﴾

﴿103. Say: "Shall We tell you the greatest losers in respect of (their) deeds?"﴾

﴿104. "Those whose efforts have been wasted in this life while they thought that they were acquiring good by their deeds."﴾

﴿105. "They are those who deny the Āyāt of their Lord and the meeting with Him. So their works are in vain, and on the Day of Resurrection, We shall assign no weight for them."﴾

﴿106. "That shall be their recompense, Hell; because they disbelieved and took My Āyāt and My Messengers for jest."﴾

The Greatest Losers in respect of (Their) Deeds

Al-Bukhārī recorded from 'Amr that Muṣ'ab who said: "I asked my father – meaning Sa'd bin Abi Waqqāṣ – about Allāh's saying,

﴿قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِالْأَخْسَرِ أَعْمَالًا ۝١٠٣﴾

﴿Say: "Shall We tell you the greatest losers in respect of (their) deeds?"﴾

'Are they the Ḥarūriyyah?' He said, 'No, they are the Jews and Christians. As for the Jews, they disbelieved in Muḥammad ﷺ, and as for the Christians, they disbelieved in Paradise and said that there is no food or drink there, and the Ḥarūriyyah are those who break Allāh's covenant after ratifying it.' Sa'd used to call them *Al-Fāsiqīn* (the corrupt).^[1] 'Ali bin Abi Ṭālib,^[2] Aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk and others said: "They are the Ḥarūriyyah," so this means, that according to 'Ali, may Allāh be pleased with him, this Āyah includes the Ḥarūriyyah just as it includes the Jews, the Christians and others. This does not mean that the Āyah was revealed concerning any of these

[1] *Faṭḥ Al-Bārī* 8:278.

[2] *Aṭ-Ṭabari* 18:128.

groups in particular; it is more general than that, because the *Āyah* was revealed in Makkah, before the Qur'ān addressed the Jews and Christians, and before the Khawārij existed at all. So the *Āyah* is general and refers to everyone who worships Allāh in a way that is not acceptable, thinking that he is right in doing that and that his deeds will be accepted, but he is mistaken and his deeds will be rejected, as Allāh says:

﴿وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَشِعَةٌ ۚ عَامِلَةٌ نَاصِبَةٌ ۚ تَصَلَّىٰ نَارًا حَامِيَةً ۚ﴾

﴿Some faces, that Day will be humiliated. Laboring, weary. They will enter in the hot blazing Fire.﴾ [88:2-4]

﴿وَقَدْ مَنَّآ إِلَىٰ مَا عَمِلُوا مِنْ عَمَلٍ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ هَبَاءً مَنْثُورًا ۚ﴾

﴿And We shall turn to whatever deeds they did, and We shall make such deeds as scattered floating particles of dust.﴾ [25:23]

﴿وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍ بِفِغْفَوٍ يَحْسِبُهُ الْفُلُكُنُ مَاءً حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَهُمْ لَمْ يَجِدْهُ سَيْبًا ۖ﴾

﴿As for those who disbelieved, their deeds are like a mirage in a desert. The thirsty one thinks it to be water, until he comes up to it, he finds it to be nothing﴾ [24:39]

And in this *Āyah* Allāh says:

﴿قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُمْ﴾

﴿Say: "Shall We tell you..."﴾ meaning, 'Shall We inform you;'

﴿بِالْآخِزِينَ أَعْمَلَ﴾

﴿the greatest losers in respect of (their) deeds?﴾

Then Allāh explains who they are, and says:

﴿الَّذِينَ ضَلَّ سَبِيلَهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا﴾

﴿Those whose efforts have been wasted in this life﴾

meaning, they did deeds that do not count, deeds that are not in accordance with the prescribed way that is acceptable to Allāh.

﴿وَمَا يَحْسِبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعًا﴾

﴿while they thought that they were acquiring good by their deeds.﴾

means, they thought that there was some basis for their deeds and that they were accepted and loved.

﴿أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَلِقَائِهِ﴾

﴿They are those who deny the Āyāt of their Lord and the meeting with Him.﴾

they denied the signs of Allāh in this world, the proofs that He has established of His Oneness and of the truth of His Messengers, and they denied the Hereafter.

﴿فَلَا نُعِمْ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ وَتَنَاءً﴾

﴿and on the Day of Resurrection, We shall assign no weight for them.﴾

means, 'We will not make their Balance heavy because it is empty of any goodness.' Al-Bukhārī recorded that Abu Hurayrah said that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

«إِنَّهُ لَيَأْتِي الرَّجُلَ الْعَظِيمُ السَّمِينُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا يَزُنُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ جَنَاحَ بُعُوضَةٍ - وَقَالَ: - أَقْرَأُوا إِن شِئْتُمْ: ﴿فَلَا نُعِمْ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ وَتَنَاءً﴾»

«A huge fat man will come forward on the Day of Resurrection and he will weigh no more than the wing of a gnat to Allāh. Recite, if you wish:»

﴿and on the Day of Resurrection, We shall assign no weight for them﴾

It was also recorded by Muslim.^[1]

﴿ذَٰلِكَ جَزَاؤُهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ بِمَا كَفَرُوا﴾

﴿That shall be their recompense, Hell; because they disbelieved﴾

means, 'We will punish them with that because of their disbelief and because they took the signs and Messengers of Allāh as a joke, mocking them and disbelieving them in the worst way.'

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ الْفِرْدَوْسِ نُزُلًا ﴿١٧﴾ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يَسْغُرُونَ عَنْهَا ﴿١٨﴾﴾

﴿107. "Verily, those who believe and do righteous deeds, shall

^[1] Fath Al-Bārī 8:279, Muslim 4:2147.

have the Gardens of Al-Firdaws for their entertainment."﴾

﴿108. "Wherein they shall dwell (forever). No desire will they have for removal therefrom."﴾

The Reward of the Righteous Believers

Allāh tells us about His blessed servants, those who believed in Allāh and His Messengers and accepted as truth what the Messengers brought. He tells us that they will have the Gardens of Al-Firdaws (Paradise). Abu Umāmah said, "Al-Firdaws is the center of Paradise."^[1] Qatādah said, "Al-Firdaws is a hill in Paradise, at its center, the best of it."^[2] This was also narrated from Samurah and attributed to the Prophet ﷺ,

«الْفِرْدَوْسُ رُبُوعُ الْجَنَّةِ أَوْسَطُهَا وَأَحْسَنُهَا»

«Al-Firdaws is a hill in Paradise, at its center, the best of it.»

A similar report was narrated from Qatādah from Anas bin Mālik, and attributed to the Prophet ﷺ. All of the preceding reports were narrated by Ibn Jarīr, may Allāh have mercy on him.^[3] The following is in the Ṣaḥīḥ,

«إِذَا سَأَلْتُمُ اللَّهَ الْجَنَّةَ، فَاسْأَلُوهُ الْفِرْدَوْسَ فَإِنَّهُ أَعْلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَأَوْسَطُ الْجَنَّةِ، وَمِنْهُ تَفْجَرُ أَنْهَارُ الْجَنَّةِ»

«If you ask Allāh for Paradise, then ask Him for Al-Firdaws, for it is the highest part of Paradise, in the middle of Paradise, and from it spring the rivers of Paradise.»^[4]

﴿تَزَلُّوا﴾

﴿entertainment﴾ means offered to them as hospitality.

﴿خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا﴾

﴿Wherein they shall dwell (forever).﴾ means, they will stay there and never leave.

[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:130.

[2] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:130.

[3] Aṭ-Ṭabari 18:134.

[4] Faṭḥ Al-Bāri 13:415.

﴿لَا يَتُوبُونَ عَلَيْهَا حَتَّىٰ﴾

﴿No desire will they have for removal therefrom.﴾

means, they will never choose or want anything else. This Āyah tells us how much they love and desire it, even though one might imagine that a person who is to stay in one place forever would get tired and bored of it. But Allāh tells us that despite this eternal stay, they will never choose to change or move from where they are.

﴿قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَادًا لِّكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّي لَنَفِدَ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَنفَدَ كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّي وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِثْلِهِ﴾

﴿مِدَادًا﴾

﴿109. Say: "If the sea were ink for the Words of my Lord, surely, the sea would be exhausted before the Words of my Lord would be finished, even if We brought like it for its aid."﴾

The Words of the Lord can never be finished

Allāh says: 'Say, O Muḥammad, if the water of the sea were ink for a pen to write down the words, wisdom and signs of Allāh, the sea would run dry before it all could be written down.

﴿وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِثْلِهِ﴾

﴿even if We brought like it﴾ means, another sea, then another, and so on, additional seas to be used for writing. The Words of Allāh would still never run out. As Allāh says:

﴿وَلَوْ أَنَّ فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ أَقْلَدٌ وَالْبَحْرُ يَمْدُّ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ سَبْعَةُ آبْحَرٍ مَا نَفِدَتْ﴾

﴿كَلِمَاتُ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ﴾

﴿And if all the trees on the earth were pens and the sea (were ink), with seven seas behind it to increase it, yet the Words of Allāh would not be exhausted. Verily, Allāh is All-Mighty, All-Wise.﴾ [31:27]

Ar-Rabī' bin Anas said, "The parable of the knowledge of all of mankind, in comparison to the knowledge of Allāh, is that of a drop of water in comparison to all of the oceans." Allāh revealed that:

﴿قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَادًا لِّكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّي لَنَفِدَ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَنفَدَ كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّي﴾

﴿Say: "If the sea were ink for the Words of my Lord, surely, the sea would be exhausted before the Words of my Lord would be finished,﴾

Allāh says that even if those oceans were ink for the Words of Allāh, and all the trees were pens, the pens would be broken and the water of the sea would run dry, and the Words of Allāh would remain, for nothing can outlast them. For no one can comprehend the greatness of Allāh or praise Him as He deserves to be praised, except the One Who praises Himself. Our Lord is as He says He is and He is beyond what we can say. The blessings of this world, the beginning and end of it, in comparison to the blessings of the Hereafter, are like a mustard seed compared to the entire world.

﴿قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَىٰ أَنَا إِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ فَمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ ۚ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ﴾

﴿110. Say: "I am only a man like you. It has been revealed to me that your God is One God. So whoever hopes for the meeting with his Lord, let him work righteousness and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord."﴾

Muḥammad ﷺ is a Human Being and a Messenger, and the God is One

Allāh says to His Messenger Muḥammad ﷺ,

﴿قُلْ﴾

﴿Say﴾ to these idolators who reject your message to them,

﴿قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ﴾

﴿'I am only a man like you.﴾ Whoever claims that I am lying, let him bring something like this that I have brought. For I did not know the Unseen, the matters of the past which you asked me about and I told you about, the story of the people of the Cave and of Dhul-Qarnayn, stories which are true – I did not know any of this except for what Allāh made known to me. And I tell you,

﴿أَنَا إِلَهُكُمْ﴾

﴿that your God﴾, Who calls you to worship Him,

﴿إِلَهُ وَحْدَهُ﴾

﴿is One God﴾, with no partner or associate.'

﴿فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ﴾

﴿So whoever hopes for the meeting with his Lord,﴾ i.e., hopes for a good reward and recompense,

﴿فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا﴾

﴿let him work righteousness﴾ meaning, in accordance with the prescribed laws of Allāh,

﴿وَلَا يَشْرِكْ بِمَعَادَةِ رَبِّهِ لَمَّا﴾

﴿and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord.﴾

This is what is meant by seeking the pleasure of Allāh alone with no associate or partner. These are the two basic features of acceptable deeds: their intent is for the sake of Allāh alone, and are done in accordance with the way of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ.

Imām Aḥmad recorded that Maḥmūd bin Labīd said that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

«إِنَّ أَخْوَفَ مَا أَخَافَ عَلَيْكُمُ الشِّرْكَ الْأَصْغَرُ»

«What I fear the most for you is the small Shirk.»

“They said: What is the small Shirk, O Messenger of Allāh?” He said,

«الرِّيَاءُ، يَقُولُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِذَا جَزَى النَّاسَ بِأَعْمَالِهِمْ: اذْهَبُوا إِلَى الَّذِينَ كُنتُمْ تُرَاءُونَ فِي الدُّنْيَا، فَاَنْظُرُوا هَلْ تَجِدُونَ عَنْدهُمْ جَزَاءً؟»

«Showing off (Ar-Riyā'). Allāh will say on the Day of Resurrection, when the people are rewarded or punished for their deeds, “Go to the one for whom you were showing off in the world and see if you will find any reward with him.”»^[1]

Imām Aḥmad recorded that Abu Saʿīd bin Abi Faḍālah Al-Anṣārī, who was one of the Companions, said: “I heard the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ say,

^[1] Aḥmad 5:428.

«إِذَا جَمَعَ اللَّهُ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ لِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَيُزِمَ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ نَادَى مُنَادٍ: مَنْ كَانَ أَشْرَكَ فِي عَمَلٍ عَمِلَهُ اللَّهُ أَحَدًا فَلْيَطْلُبْ ثَوَابَهُ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ أَغْنَى الشُّرَكَاءَ عَنِ الشُّرْكِ»

«Allāh will gather the first and the last on the Day of Resurrection, the Day concerning which there is no doubt. A voice will call out, "Whoever used to associate anyone with Allāh in the deeds which he did, let him seek his reward from someone other than Allāh, for Allāh is the least in need of any partner or associate.»^[1]

It was also recorded by At-Tirmidhi and Ibn Mājah.^[2]

This is the end of the *Tafsīr* of *Sūrat Al-Kahf*. Praise be to Allāh, the Lord of all that exists.

[1] Aḥmad 4:215.

[2] *Tuḥfat Al-Aḥwadhī* 8:599, Ibn Mājah 2:1406.