

الجزء
الخامس عشر

The Fifteenth Chapter



مكتبة
الشيخ
محمد
صالح
العثيمين

MASUMA ABDUL-MUHT

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الجزء الخامس عشر The Fifteenth Chapter

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Surah Isra - 17 - The Night Journey

This Surah was revealed in Makkah the year before the Prophet ﷺ migrated to Madinah. Furthermore, it took place shortly after 'The Year of Sorrow', in which the Prophet ﷺ lost both his beloved wife, Khadijah, and his uncle, Abu Talib, who was his guardian for most of his life.

The Introduction

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى الَّذِي
بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

(1) Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing.

This Surah begins with the word 'Subhan', which is an exclamation of amazement. This is because Allah is telling us of a miraculous event.

Two events happened on the night mentioned in this Surah, the Isra and Mi'raj.

The Isra, which is literally translated as 'the night journey' was the journey the Prophet ﷺ took from Makkah to Bayt al-Maqdis (Masjid al-Aqsa) in Jerusalem.

The Mi'raj refers to the the Prophet's ﷺ ascension to the heavens.

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Allah ﷻ uses the term عبده (*abdahu*) - 'His servant' when referring to the Prophet ﷺ. There are three reasons for this:

- 1 - To be referred to directly as Allah's servant is an honour. Allah ﷻ is telling us of the Prophet's ﷺ status to Him, and also expressing His love for Muhammed.
- 2 - In referring to the Prophet ﷺ as a 'servant', it extinguishes all possibility of him being anything more; a misconception made by the Christians upon Isa's (as) ascension to the heavens.
- 3 - The term 'Abd refers to both the روح soul, as well as the جسم body. This emphasises the fact that the Prophet ﷺ travelled to Jerusalem, then up to the heavens both physically and whilst he was conscious.¹

The Night Journey

During the night, the Prophet ﷺ preferred to go to Al-Masjid Al-Haram as there are not many people so that he could pray next to the Ka'bah peacefully. He performed his prayer, and then sat in the Hateem. As he sat there, doing Dhikr, three angels came to him; Jibril, Israfil and Mikail.

They carried him from Hateem to the well of Zamzam which was next to the Ka'ba. Jibril put the Prophet ﷺ on the floor and opened his chest for the second time, he took his heart and told Mikail to bring a container of Zamzam water so that he may purify it. Mikail gave him three containers of Zamzam water to do this. Jibril washed the Prophet's ﷺ chest and his heart. After that, he bought forth five more vessels, contained in each vessel were Iman (faith), Hikmah (wisdom), Yaqeen (certainty), Hilm

¹ Some scholars are of the opinion that this journey was travelled mentally, not physically.

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(forbearance) and 'Ilm (knowledge). Jibril put these things inside the heart of the Prophet ﷺ. He then closed his heart and chest.

The other two angels brought forward a Buraq - an animal which was between the size of a horse and a donkey. Jibril mounted the Burāq, the Prophet ﷺ behind him; their destination was Masjid Al-Aqṣā.

On their way, they stopped they stopped at a place unknown to the Prophet ﷺ, and Jibril instructed him to perform 2 units of prayer. He then asked the Prophet ﷺ, "Do you know where you prayed?" The Prophet ﷺ shook his head, no. Jibril told him it was Yathrib, the place which he would later migrate to.

They then stopped at another place and the same thing happened, Jibril told the Prophet ﷺ that this place was Madyan, specifically, the tree where Musa met the two women, one of whom he went on to marry.

They continued until they reached the middle of Sayna (desert) and again Jibrīl instructed the Prophet ﷺ to perform two units, he said "You prayed in At-Tur." The mountain where Allah ﷻ revealed the Torah to Mūsā.

Then they went to Bait-Laḥam (Bethlehem), the Prophet ﷺ prayed, and Jibrīl told him this was where 'īsā was born.

Thereafter they went to Jerusalem. Therein sat Al-Masjid Al-Aqṣā, it was an expansive area, with a church on one side and a rock on the other. When they came they stopped and Jibril took the rein of the Burāq and tied it to the rock.

Jibril called the Prophet ﷺ to him. the Prophet ﷺ looked around and noticed that there were hundreds, maybe even thousands of people there, including angels. Jibril again instructed the Prophet ﷺ to perform two units of prayer, and thereafter asked everyone

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to get ready to pray. Everyone thought Jibril would lead the congregation, however he took the Prophet's ﷺ hand and told him to lead.

The Prophet ﷺ lead the massive congregation in two units of prayer. After the prayer concluded, Jibril asked the Prophet ﷺ, "Do you know who prayed behind you?" The Prophet ﷺ did not know. "Every man Allah ﷻ has ever sent to earth as a Prophet prayed behind you tonight."

124,000 angels were sent in total. 315 from them came with a new Shari'ah.

After this they both stood on the rock - As-Sakhrāh - and this was the place of Mi'rāj, when angels would come and go, they would use rock. So the Prophet ﷺ sat on the rock and he went up to the first heaven.

As they approached the gate to the first heaven, Jibril knocked and a voice arose, asking, "Who are you?"

"It is I, Jibril," the voice then asked who was with Jibril, he said, "Muhammad."

It then asked, "Did Allah ﷻ give him permission to come?" He said yes and then they opened the gate and welcomed them both.

As the Prophet ﷺ entered, he saw a large man in the distance. As he approached this man, he took in his physique and saw that he was very handsome.

The man was acting in a strange way, on his right side there was a cluster of black spots so when he would look at his right side he will smile. Likewise there were black spots on his left side and when he would look at his left side he would be sad. the Prophet ﷺ asked Jibril who this man was, and he replied, "This is your father, Ādam."

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He then asked Jibril, "Why is he doing this?" Jibril told him that Allah ﷻ is showing him all the souls of his offspring until the day of Judgement. So all those on his right side will go to paradise and that makes him happy, those on the left side will go to the hellfire so that makes him sad. the Prophet ﷺ approached Ādam (as).

Ādam greeted the Prophet ﷺ saying, "Welcome my righteous son and righteous Prophet," and he made du'ā for him.

They then went to the second heaven. The same thing happened as with the first gate, and they entered.

The Prophet ﷺ saw two young men, 'īsā and Yahya. They greeted him saying, "Welcome righteous brother and righteous Prophet." They made du'ā for the Prophet.

When they entered the third heaven, the Prophet ﷺ saw a very beautiful man. His beauty was such that it seemed as if his face contained half of the beauty of the world, Jibril said this is Yūsuf. The difference between his beauty and the other people's beauty is like the difference between the full moon and the planets. Yusuf greeted him saying, "Welcome righteous brother and righteous Prophet."

When they entered the next heaven, the Prophet ﷺ was greeted by Idrīs.

They then went to the fifth heaven, and the Prophet ﷺ saw a man whose beard - its hair half black and half white - stretched to his navel, this man was Hārūn, the brother of Mūsā. Hārūn was a very soft and gentle person, he was the love of his people. Where the Banū Israil were afraid of Musa, who was tough, they loved Harun dearly.

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When the Prophet ﷺ went to the sixth heaven, he saw a man making du'ā as if he were shouting furiously at Allah ﷻ. He was told that this was Mūsā, Allah ﷻ recognised the nature of Mūsā and understood his manner of speech. The two spoke and as the Prophet ﷺ left, Mūsā said, "The Banū Israil claim that I am the best Prophet but this is not true, this Israil, Muhammad is better than me. They also claim their ummah is the best but this is not true as the ummah of this man is better."

The Prophet ﷺ then went to the seventh heaven, there he saw a house like the Ka'bah, as it was at the time of Ibrāhīm. Jibril said that it was Al-Bait Al-Ma'mūr - the Frequented House.

Beside the Ka'bah, the Prophet ﷺ saw an old man sitting and he asked Jibril who this man. Jibril said, "This is your father, Ibrahim so go and give him salām."

Ibrahim looked was very similar to the Prophet ﷺ, just older. The Prophet ﷺ said to Ibrahim, "Oh my father when I come back my people are going to ask about Jannah so how should I respond to them."

Ibrahim said, "I will tell you something which you can tell them. There is a massive land, rich with soil. However, it needs plants, and for plants to grow, seeds must be sown. And what will cause these seeds to grow? The glorification, remembrance and praise of Allah ﷻ."

The Prophet ﷺ then went up to the next level where he saw a very large tree, this tree was called Sidratu Al-Muntaha - the Farthest Tree. He noticed flowing from beneath it were rivers. One of wine, one of milk, one of water, one of honey. These rivers flow down through each of the seven heavens. He also saw a body of very special, clear water, and beneath it were not rocks, but precious jewels, sparkling under the glint of light as the crystal

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clear water flowed over them. Jibril said, "This is Al-Kawthar الكوثر, what Allah ﷻ promised you to have." The Prophet ﷺ drank from it and it said it was the sweetest thing he had ever tasted, sweeter than honey of which its smell was richer than the fragrance of musk.

The Prophet ﷺ then entered paradise and he said it was so beautiful that he could not even describe it for us. Therein lay that which no eye had ever seen, nor and ear had ever heard, that which was beyond the imagination of man.

The Prophet ﷺ remained there for some time, then Jibrīl took him to Jahannam. While they were walking, the Prophet ﷺ was met with a smell so foul he felt sickened.

He saw a man swimming in a river full of blood and whenever he would come to the side of the river there were some angels who would put stones in his mouth which he would swallow, Jibril said these people are those who would partake in usury.

The Prophet ﷺ also saw angels smashing peoples' heads with rocks. The Prophet ﷺ asked Jibril and he said these people neglected their prayers and felt it as a heavy burden.

He saw people walking like camels and sheep, eating the plants & stones of the hell fire. These people did not pay their zakat.

He saw people who in front of them had nice food to one side, and to the other, bad food. They would eat the bad food. He said, they had Halāl options but they chose the Haram.

He saw angels pressing the tongues of people with big spanners. Jibril said they are those who give sermons but did not practice that which they preached.

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When this finished, Allah ﷻ put a partition between the Prophet ﷺ and Jahannam and he returned to Sidratul Muntaha. There is a place higher than that, An-Nihāyah, from here, the Prophet ﷺ could hear the scratching noise of hundreds of thousands of pens.

They eventually got to a stage where Jibril said to the Prophet ﷺ that he must go forward alone, he could not go further as he would have burnt. He told him not to worry, as his name was written on the leg of the throne of Allah ﷻ.

Then he saw the light, as if a cloud came and surrounded him, he knew that he was in front of Allah ﷻ so he fell into prostration to Allah ﷻ. He recited the Thanā.

The angels said the Shahādah. Allah ﷻ then asked His beloved Prophet ﷺ, "What you want from me?"

The Prophet ﷺ said, "You took Ibrahim as a friend, You spoke to Mūsā directly, You gave Dāwūd an expansive Kingdom, and blessed Sulayman a unique Kingdom. You taught Isa the Torah and Injil, gave him many miracles. So what will you give to me, my Lord?"

Allah ﷻ replied, "You are my beloved and I sent you to the whole of mankind. I opened your chest, I exalted your name. I have made your ummah the best ummah in existence. I gave you something I didn't give anyone before you, Sūrah Fātiḥah, and the last three verses of Sūrah Baqarah, from a treasure from under the throne. I give you three things:

سيد المرسلين *Sayyid al-Mursaleen* - Master of the Messengers

إمام المتقين *Imam al-Muttaqeen* - Leader of the God-conscious

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قائد الغر المحجلين *Qa'id al-Gurr al-Muhajjaleen* - The Illuminated One²

Also, whoever is about to do a good deed, even if he doesn't do it then he will get the reward of doing it. If he does it he will get ten rewards. For a bad deed, if he doesn't do it then no sin. For one bad deed, then one sin (shirk)."

Allah ﷻ then commanded the ummah of the Prophet ﷺ to pray 50 times and do ghusl - bathe 7 times from Janābah - major ritual impurity, and wash clothes 7 times for Najāsah - impurities.

The meeting was finished and Allah ﷻ gave the Prophet ﷺ permission to return to earth. The Prophet ﷺ went back to Jibrīl who was waiting for him, they left and passed Sidratul Muntahā and the seventh sky. They met Ibrahim in the next heaven, and thereafter, they saw Musa.

Mūsā stopped the Prophet ﷺ and asked him what Allah ﷻ commanded him. The Prophet ﷺ told him of the fifty prayers and seven purifications. Mūsā said to him, "I have a lot of experience with Banū Israil, my Ummah had less and they were not able to fulfil it, so go back and ask to have less." The Prophet looked at Jibril and he said it's okay. So he went back to Allah ﷻ and asked Him to reduce it. Allah ﷻ reduced the amount to forty prayers and six purifications.

Again, on his way back down, he saw Ibrahim. For the second time, Mūsā stopped him. He said, "Based on my experience this number is too much, ask him again." So the Prophet ﷺ went again to Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ reduced the prayers to thirty five and the purification to five. Again when he went back to Mūsā, Mūsā urged the Prophet ﷺ to have the amount reduced. The prayers

² This term is in reference to a certain coveted breed of black horse which has a white stripe on its forehead. It refers to people who will be illuminated due to their wudhu on the Day of Judgement.

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were reduced to thirty, then fifteen, then ten, then finally, to five. The number of times for purification was eventually reduced to one.

Mūsā stopped the Prophet ﷺ again, and asked him of the amount. Mūsā told the Prophet ﷺ to go again and ask Allah ﷻ to reduce the number, the Prophet ﷺ looked at Jibril, the Prophet ﷺ realised that he could not go back, he felt too ashamed; perhaps this will be sufficient. Allah ﷻ said to him, "When I created the heavens and the earth I commanded them to pray fifty, this will not change so their five prayers are equivalent to fifty. The prayers will be five in action, but fifty in reward."

The Prophet ﷺ returned to Baytul Maqdis. All the Prophets gathered there and they had a gathering together. They asked Ibrāhīm when will the Day of Judgement was to take place, and he replied, "I do not know when it will happen."

When the Prophet ﷺ returned, the next morning, he informed the people of the journey he has been on. He was met with mocking jeers from the Makkans. They knew now for sure that Muhammed was crazy, as the journey to Jerusalem was usually at least one month of travel.

When Abu Bakr came to the gathering, they were sure he would finally leave the Prophet ﷺ, however when the Prophet ﷺ told him, he embraced him and told his friend he believed his story. This is why Abu Bakr is given the title As-Siddiq - The Truthful.

The Makkans bought a man whom had returned from a trip to Jerusalem recently to test the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ panicked at first when they asked him to describe Masjid al-Aqsa, as he has travelled there under the darkness of night. However, Jibril projected an image only the Prophet ﷺ could see before

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him, and he described the mosque in such detail that the man could not deny the Prophet ﷺ had actually been there.

Allah's Protection Over His Believers

وَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ جَعَلْنَا بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ حِجَابًا مَّسْتُورًا

(45) And when you recite the Qur'an, We put between you and those who do not believe in the Hereafter a concealed partition.

Umm Jameel, the woman is referred to as 'The Carrier of Firewood' in Surah Lahab came looking for the Prophet ﷺ after that Surah was revealed. She had planned to hurt him as revenge for sharing a Surah with his followers that mocked her.

She made her way to the centre of Makkah, knowing Muhammed was there, however when arrived, she could only see Abu Bakr. When she asked Abu Bakr where Muhammed was, he was very confused. The Prophet ﷺ was in fact standing next to Abu Bakr, but Umm Jameel could not see him.

Qurtubi, the famous Mufassir tells a story in his commentary of this verse. He was out after curfew when Spain was going through an invasion. As he was returning home, he was caught by the police and ran. As he ran, he read this verse, and all of a sudden the policemen pursuing him stopped in their tracks as they had lost sight of him. They simply said, "he is Diablo."

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The Prophet Held Hope for the Makkans

وَمَا مَنَعَنَا أَنْ نُرْسِلَ بِالْآيَاتِ إِلَّا أَنْ كَذَّبَ بِهَا الْأَوَّلُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَآتَيْنَا ثَمُودَ النَّاقَةَ مُبْصِرَةً
فَظَلَمُوا بِهَا ﴿٦٠﴾ وَمَا نُرْسِلُ بِالْآيَاتِ إِلَّا تَخْوِيفًا

(59) And nothing has prevented Us from sending signs except that the former peoples denied them. And We gave Thamud the she-camel as a visible sign, but they wronged her. And We send not the signs except as a warning.

Allah does not send signs in vain, people need to take heed. If they do not, they are punished.

Ibn ‘Abbas narrates the cause of revelation for this verse:

“The people of Mecca asked the Prophet ﷺ to turn al-Safa hill into gold and remove the mountains for them so that they can engage in agriculture.

It was said to him, “If you wish to wait for them until We may select people from them [to believe in you], or you can give them what they have asked for. But if they disbelieve after that, We will destroy them like We destroyed those before them.”

The Prophet ﷺ said, “No, I would rather wait,” And so Allah revealed this verse.”

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There are no Compromises in Tawhid

وَإِنْ كَادُوا لَيَفْتِنُونَكَ عَنِ الَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ لِتَفْتَرِيَ عَلَيْنَا غَيْرَهُ وَإِذَا لَا تَأْخُذُوكَ
خَلِيلًا

(73) *And indeed, they were about to tempt you away from that which We revealed to you in order to [make] you invent about Us something else; and then they would have taken you as a friend.*

Ibn ‘Abbas narrates the cause of revelation for this verse:

“This was revealed about the delegation of Thaqif. They went to see the Prophet ﷺ and asked for unacceptable things. They said, “Allow us to worship al-Lat (idol) for one year and make our valley inviolable - its trees, birds and wild animals - just as you have made Mecca inviolable’. They wanted their city to become the second Makkah.

They persisted and insisted even though the Prophet ﷺ rejected all of their demands.

The people of Thaqif said, “We want the Arabs to know our merit over them. If you dislike what we say and you are afraid of what the Arabs say, you have given them that which you did not give us, simply say that Allah has commanded you to do so’.

The Prophet ﷺ did not answer them and this raised their hope. However, Umar stood and loudly shouted, “Do you not see that the Messenger of Allah did not answer you because he does not like what you have come for?’

The Prophet ﷺ was on the verge of giving them what they wanted. And so Allah revealed this verse”.

The Prophet ﷺ did not say no to them, but they were respectable and influential people, so he didn’t want to insult them. Allah sent this verse down to end the situation there and then.

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The Spirit

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ ^{صَلِّ} قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

(85) *And they ask you, [O Muhammad], about the soul. Say, "The soul is of the affair of my Lord. And mankind have not been given of knowledge except a little."*

The Quraysh, who feared the rapid growth of Islam and the increasing reception of Muahmmmed's role as messenger went to the Jews and asked, "Tell us something of something which we can ask this man."

Thew Jews said, "Ask him about the Spirit," and so this verse was revealed."

The Names of Allah

قُلِ ادْعُوا اللَّهَ أَوْ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمَنَ ^{صَلِّ} أَيًّا مَا تَدْعُوا فَلَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ ^ج وَلَا تَجْهَرُ بِصَلَاتِكَ وَلَا تُخَافِتْ بِهَا وَابْتَغِ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا

(110) *Say, "Call upon Allah or call upon the Most Merciful. Whichever [name] you call - to Him belong the best names." And do not recite [too] loudly in your prayer or [too] quietly but seek between that an [intermediate] way.*

One night in Mecca, the Prophet ﷺ stood up for the night prayer. He kept saying in his prostration, "Ya Rahman! Ya Rahim!"

The Makkans heard this and said, "Muhammad used to call unto one Allah; now he is calling unto two gods, Allah and the Beneficent. We do not know of anyone by the name of the Beneficent except the beneficent of al-Yamamah (meaning Musaylimah the liar),"

In response, Allah ﷻ revealed this verse.

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Surah Kahf - The Cave

Verses 1-74

For ease of flow, the ending of Surah Kahf will be included in this chapter.

For Surah Kahf, as four stories are told back to back within the Surah, I've sufficed with just mentioning the stories in this Chapter. Insha'Allah with the next chapter we shall resume the usual format.

Key Themes

- People of the cave,
- Musa and Khidr,
- The men who owned two gardens,
- Dhul Qarnain

Virtues - Protection from Dajjal

- Some say memorising the first or last ten verses has the same effects.
- One who recites the first and last 10 - there is light from his feet to his head, and for the whole surah, from the earth to sky.
- Jumuah day - sins committed from the last Jumuah will be forgiven.

Lessons

- Faith is the most important thing and wins out in the battle between materialism.

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- The sleepers of the cave choose to leave their lives to escape a tyrant, giving up what could be an easy life if they just commit shirk
- The man who owned the garden chose materials and saw calamity befall him
- Musa was taught key lessons in having faith in God, in that there is a reason for everything.

Cause of Revelation

The Makkans asked the Jews what questions they could ask the Prophet ﷺ in order to disprove his prophethood.

The Jews replied, "We will give you three questions which you must ask this man, after you have done so, you shall bring us his answers. We will then be able to tell you if he is a Prophet, or not." And so the men recorded the three questions, "First, ask him about Fityah (the young men) who used to live a long time ago, they have an amazing story. Second ask him about Mālik Ṭawāf, who would travel east to west and west to east. Lastly, ask him about the Rūḥ. Come back with the answers and we will tell you." So they took them to the Makkan people and they went to the Prophet ﷺ with the three questions.

The *Quraysh* sent two men to question the Prophet ﷺ. They presented him the questions and he replied, "I will answer tomorrow," however, he did not say *Inshā'Allah* ﷻ. Due to this there was no revelation on the following day. The *Quraysh* came to the Prophet ﷺ and asked him, and he informed them that *Jibrīl* had not come to him. Every day they came to him, and he would give them the same reply. This caused a lot of stress for the Prophet ﷺ, and only served to amuse the Mushriks.

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This continued for 15 days until *Jibrīl* finally came, the Prophet ﷺ asked him why Allah ﷻ has not sent him sooner. *Jibrīl* simply replied that it was up to Allah ﷻ to decide, not him.

The People of the Cave

At a time after Isa (as) and before the birth of the Prophet ﷺ, a tyrant king demanded his Christian subjects bow to him in worship. Allah guided a group of pious youths to unite together in their belief (and disbelief of the King). The King caught wind of these youths and called them to him. However, he did not punish or imprison them straight away as they were the sons of affluent men, so he allowed them time to rectify their actions. They youths bravely invited the king to worship their One true God beside them. He refused, obviously.

The youths, forsaking their comfortable lives for the sake of Allah, fled to a cave in a remote place with their dog as a guard.

فَضْرَبْنَا عَلَى آذَانِهِمْ فِي الْكَهْفِ سِنِينَ عَدَدًا

(11) So We cast [a cover of sleep] over their ears within the cave for a number of years.

They fell asleep for what they assumed was a few hours, when in actual fact, they had slept for hundreds of years.

وَتَرَى الشَّمْسَ إِذَا طَلَعَتْ تَزَاوَرُ عَنْ كَهْفِهِمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَإِذَا غَرَبَتْ تَقَرَّبُ إِلَيْهِمْ ذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ وَهُمْ فِي فَجْوَةٍ مِّنْهُ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ ۚ لَنْ يَهْدِيَ اللَّهُ الْقَوْمَ الضَّالِّينَ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلْ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ وَلِيًّا مُّرْشِدًا

(17) And [had you been present], you would see the sun when it rose, inclining away from their cave on the right, and when it set, passing away from them on the left, while they were [laying] within an open space thereof. That was from

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the signs of Allah. He whom Allah guides is the [rightly] guided, but he whom He leaves astray - never will you find for him a protecting guide.

When they awoke, they discussed this, and then elected one from amongst them to go and buy food in a nearby market.

Much to his surprise, as the youth journeyed to the market, he caught sight of a cross hanging from one of the city gates – had the king had a change of heart?

The boy looked around, spotting all of the familiar landmarks of his childhood, but was baffled by the unfamiliarity of it all also.

Ignoring his odd surroundings, he set out to fulfil his task; to buy food. He found a stall and approached its owner, and as he handed over his money, the owner stared down at the coins in his hands in wonder – he recognised the inscriptions and asked the youth where he had come by such old currency. The youth, confused, questioned the merchant in turn. As the two spoke, locals gathered around, intrigued by this odd youth, dressed in dated garments, arguing with a stall owner.

When the youth eventually came to realise the reality of his situation, he agreed to meet with the just King of the people. Unlike this tyrant the Sleepers had originally fled from, this King was a devout servant of God.

وَتَحْسَبُهُمْ أَيْقَاظًا وَهُمْ رُقُودٌ ۚ وَنُقَلِّبُهُمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ ۖ وَكَلْبُهُمْ بَاسِطٌ
ذِرَاعَيْهِ بِالْوَصِيدِ ۚ لَوِ اطَّلَعْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَوَلَّيْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِرَارًا وَلَمُلِئْتَ مِنْهُمْ رُعبًا

(18) And you would think them awake, while they were asleep. And We turned them to the right and to the left, while their dog stretched his forelegs at the entrance. If you had looked at them, you would have turned from them in flight .and been filled by them with terror

The youth told the King of his story and the King insisted on meeting his companions. And so he led the King and the townspeople to the cave where he and his friends had slept.

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After going inside alone to fetch his friends, the King awaited the return of the youth. But he did not return. Eventually, he ventured into the cave to seek out the group and found them all, along with their dog, lifeless.

The King ordered the cave to be sealed, and the Sleepers of the Cave were left as Allah had ordered them.

Moral of the story: the nobility of religion, and the status of one's standing with God comes before anything else.

المَالُ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ^ط وَالْبَاقِيَاتُ الصَّالِحَاتُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ
أَمَلًا

(46) Wealth and children are [but] adornment of the worldly life. But the enduring good deeds are better to your Lord for reward and better for [one's] hope.

These youths left their homes and their lives, where they were considered nobility themselves, because they saw that they were believers before anything else. They put the infinite nobility of God before their own ephemeral nobility.

The Two Gardens

وَاضْرِبْ لَهُم مَّثَلًا رَجُلَيْنِ جَعَلْنَا لِأَحَدِهِمَا جَنَّتَيْنِ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَحَفَفْنَاهُمَا بِنَخْلٍ
وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمَا زُرْعًا

(32) And present to them an example of two men: We granted to one of them two gardens of grapevines, and We bordered them with palm trees and placed between them [fields of] crops.

Allah tells us of two friends who live next to each other. He tells us of the riches of the first man, who owns not one, but two thriving vineyards, lined with date palms. Picture these sprawling gardens, covered in row upon row of grapevines, lined at all of its sides with

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date palms stretching into the sky and a stream of pure water flowing down the middle.

But what about the other man? Allah mentions two men in the beginning. But the wealth of the second is not discussed, so we assume he did not have anything of significance. Some are of the opinion that he once had wealth equal to that of his friend, but gave it all away for the sake of Allah.

One day, the owner of the gardens said to his friend, "I have quite a lot more wealth than you. And, I have many people with me," his gardens employed many people.

Money, is a veil of delusion draped heavily over the eyes of those who worship it. Such was the state of the owner of the gardens. He was a true believer, but unfortunately the success Allah blessed him with turned him from his belief.

قَالَ مَا أَظُنُّ أَنْ تَبِيدَ هَذِهِ أَبَدًا

(35) He said, "I do not think that this will perish - ever.

He began to praise himself for his thriving gardens and business and haughtily said, "These gardens will never perish." However, he does not stop at arrogance in his own wealth, he went on to say, "I don't really think the final hour will come to me." This man's delusion led him to believe that the fortified walls of his garden could save him from the end of the world.

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

(37) His companion said to him while he was conversing with him, "Have you disbelieved in He who created you from dust and then from a sperm-drop and then proportioned you [as] a man?"

The poorer man was shocked to hear such words from his friend, "Are you really denying the fact that these bounties are from

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Allah?" He tries to remind his friend of all of the bounties Allah ﷻ has blessed him with, but he did not take heed.

Allah destroyed the man's livelihood, within a matter of moments, his once lush gardens were now but ruins of remnant vegetation. The man stood amidst the destruction:

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

(42) And his fruits were encompassed [by ruin], so he began to turn his hands about [in dismay] over what he had spent on it, while it had collapsed upon its trellises, and said, "Oh, I wish I had not associated with my Lord anyone."

An outstanding lesson we can take from this story is the mercy Allah displayed towards His ungrateful servant. Instead of allowing this man to carry on ignorantly in this haughty and egoistical manner, Allah chose instead to teach him a lesson and allow him to repent. Allah could have let him carry on and punished him in the afterlife, a punishment which would have been severe beyond human comprehension, but He didn't. He allowed the man to repent, to turn back to Him and seek forgiveness and redeem himself.

Every hardship is a lesson, take from it whatever you can. You may not see it immediately, but one day, eventually, you'll see that Allah makes everything happen for a reason, the good and the bad.

Musa and Khidr

Who is Khidr? Some say he's a prophet, some say he's a Wali of Allah ('saint' – someone who, through devout worship and devotion gains a special spiritual connection with God), and others say Khidr was the minister of a king who searched the world for

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the fountain of youth, which he found and drank from, granting him a long life. Some people believe that Khidr is still alive to this day.

This story is essentially a story of the pursuit of knowledge, portrayed through the relationship between a teacher and a student. Musa (as) was the prophet of the Bani Israel (Jews), and one day, he was delivering a speech to his people. The people were in awe and asked Musa, “Who is the most knowledgeable person on earth?” Musa, not knowing of any other prophets other than himself and his brother Harun, replied that he was the most knowledgeable person; generally, this was understood of the prophets. However, Musa failed to consult Allah before giving this answer, thus Allah ﷻ wanted to teach him a lesson.

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِفَتَاهُ لَا أَبْرَحُ حَتَّىٰ أَبْلُغَ مَجْمَعَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ أَوْ أَمْضِيَ حُقْبًا

(61) *But when they reached the junction between them, they forgot their fish, and it took its course into the sea, slipping away.*

Allah ﷻ instructed Musa to go to meet a man who was indeed more knowledgeable than he was. Intrigued and eager to meet this man, Musa set out to meet Khidr ‘where the two seas met’.

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

(65) *And they found a servant from among Our servants to whom we had given mercy from us and had taught him from Us a [certain] knowledge.*

Despite Musa’s status as a prophet, when he met Khidr – a man draped in a fine green cloak – he asked him humbly, “May I travel with you so that I may partake in the knowledge Allah ﷻ has granted you?”

Khidr regarded Musa, and instead of saying ‘yes’ or ‘no’, he warned Musa that he would not be able to remain patient through

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the events which were to unfold. Musa, adamant to fulfil the purpose Allah had sent him for, assured Khidr that he would remain patient. Khidr eventually agreed, but told Musa he was not to question anything he did. Musa agreed, and so the two set off on their journey together.

قَالَ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ صَابِرًا وَلَا أَعْصِي لَكَ أَمْرًا

(69) [Moses] said, "You will find me, if Allah wills, patient, and I will not disobey you in [any] order."

The two men searched for a ship to sail them across the sea to their intended destination and eventually came across a small boat. The owner of the boat allowed the pair to board it free of charge, so Musa was shocked when the time came for them to leave the boat, he saw Khidr tearing away one of its planks. "Do you intend to drown these people?!" He exclaimed, confused and unable to understand Khidr's intentions.

Khidr did not explain himself however, instead, he reminded Musa of the condition of their journey – which Musa had just violated. Abashed, Musa sought Khidr's forgiveness and assured him he would not violate this condition again.

قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ إِنَّكَ لَن تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا

(72) [Al-Khidhr] said, "Did I not say that with me you would never be able to have patience?"

The pair were now travelling on foot, walking through an area dotted with trees when they heard the sounds of children playing in the distance. Musa noticed a child running in their path, and before he could comprehend what was happening, Khidr has laid the young boy down and slit his throat, killing him.

Musa stared in shock, dumbfounded. And forgetting his promise to Khidr, he shouts, "Did you kill the boy for not other reason but

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to take his life?! How could you?! You have committed a disgusting act!”

Khidr, unfazed, replied, “Did I not warn you that you will not be able to bare patiently?”

Allah ﷻ provided Musa with the forbearance to swallow his shock and horror and he promises Khidr, “I will not ask anything else from now, please excuse me.”

They then journeyed to a small town, and as they arrived, they came across what we would call nowadays a hostel. At that time, these kinds of places – ‘Musafir khana’, as some call it – dotted popular travel routes. They provided simple food, drink and a place to wash up and sleep for the night. Musa and Khidr went to the ‘hostel’, but entry.

The two men, tired from the excursion of their journey find a wall and rest beside it. As they’re resting, Khidr realisesd that the wall was damaged, and so despite being tired and hungry, he went about fixing the wall which was on the brink of collapse.

Musa watched Khidr in wonder, and distracted by his confusion, he makes a comment, “If you had wanted, you could have asked for payment.”

This was the last straw for Khidr. “Musa of Bani Israel, this is the difference between the two of us,” he says to the prophet. Musa knows that this time, he cannot simply apologise, their journey has come to an end. However, before Khidr leaves Musa, he decides to explain the events of the past couple of weeks.

Firstly, he explains the ship he ruined. The ruler of the people who owned the ship had put out an order for all ships to be seized for his own use. Khidr knew that the ship was the main source of income for the family who owned it, so he pulled out a specific plank which would deem the ship unfit for service. However, he

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was cautious enough to not ruin it to the extent that it could not get fixed.

The next incident was that of the killing of the young boy. Khidr told Musa that this boy would have grown into a treacherous and evil man who would drive his parents – who were firm believers – to commit such acts out of love for their son which would lead them to transgression and disbelief. It was a mercy from Allah that this child's life was taken when he was young and accountable for his actions, still untouched by the evil whispers of the devil.

It is said that the death of their child bought the parents closer to Allah, and Allah ﷻ granted them a daughter some years later whose bloodline bore many prophets from Bani Israel.

Lastly, we have the wall renovation. Khidr explains that under the wall was buried the treasures of two orphaned boys. Their father was a righteous man who had hidden it there for them to find when the time was right. Some say the hidden treasure were a pure gold form of the shahada. Had they left the wall be, the wall would have fallen and the boys would have come in to their fortune too early to know what to do with it.

Lessons From This Story

1 – Always know, no matter how much you may know, or how much intelligence Allah has gifted you, there is someone smarter than you out there. Humble yourself, no matter what your situation.

2 – Always seek the company of those more learned than you. Remember, with anyone you meet, theres something you can learn from them.

3 – Remember your manners and your place. Sometimes those who have seniority over you will do things you won't understand,

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make decisions that don't make sense, or speak in a way which sounds completely foreign – have patience, and remember, there's a reason behind everything. It may not be clear now, it may not even be clear for another twenty years, but that's life. Sometimes you have to be content in not knowing.

Dhul Qarnain

It is said that in history, only four people have ever had total dominance over the earth, two good and two bad. The two good were Sulayman (as) and Dhul Qarnain, and the two evil men were Nebuchadnezzar (Bukht Nasar), a tyrant from the time of Zakariyyah and Maryam, and Nimrood – a king who slapped himself to death due to there being an insect in his ear.

Dhul Qarnain, like Khidr, probably was. Not a prophet. But Allah ﷻ says in Surah Kahf that he was given stability and power on earth – as well as control over all of its resources.

إِنَّا مَكَّنَّا لَهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَآتَيْنَاهُ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ سَبَبًا

(84) *Indeed We established him upon the earth, and We gave him to everything a way.*

It is said that his real name was Abu Bakr Ibn Afriqash, although the more popular opinions hold that his name was Sikander (Alexander).

He travelled from the the lands of the rising of the sun, to the places where it set, conquering all the lands on the coast of the Mediterranean sea, including Tunis and Morocco. Some are of the opinion that he established a city called Afriqiah – which later influenced the name of the whole continent. He was nicknamed

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Dhul Qarnain as he had a helmet with two horns – symbolising the lands he had conquered.³

Unlike many rulers throughout history who held such power, Dhul Qarnain was a humble and kind-hearted man. He would conquer cities and liberate their peoples, often helping them in whatever way he could with his ample resources.

Surah Kahf tells the story of Dhul Qarnain doing such things as he comes across primitive tribes on his journey, eventually, getting to a people who had barely anything, whatever little they did have had been ransacked by a savage people across the valley – Ya'juj and Ma'juj.

So Dhul Qarnain, with the help of the tribespeople began to build this wall. They formed large metal blocks and stacked them on top of each other, fusing them together by pouring molten copper over the top – making the wall impenetrable and impossible to scale.

Although this is only a brief account of this story, the main takeaway is that Dhul Qarnain was quite literally given the world and all it had to offer, and instead of becoming an oppressive tyrant, he used his powers to help others, and not only that, but to search out people in the most remote places on earth just to see how he could help them.

³ One of many opinions in regards to the meaning behind his name.