

[Home](#) > [Kamaaluddin wa Tamaamun Ni'ma Vol. 2](#) > [Chapter 38: Statements of al-Askari \(a.s.\) regarding the occurrence of Ghaibat](#) > Narrations of Abu Muhammad Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) regarding Nass in favor of his son, al-Qaim, the Master of the time

Chapter 38: Statements of al-Askari (a.s.) regarding the occurrence of Ghaibat

1 – Narrated to us Ali bin Abdullah Warraq: Narrated to us Saad bin Abdullah from Ahmad bin Ishaq bin Saad al-Ashari that he said:

“I went to Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) and wanted to inquire about his successor. His Eminence, preceded me in the matter and said as follows: “O Ahmad bin Ishaq! The Almighty Allah has not left the earth without a Divine Proof since the creation of Adam (a.s.) and would not leave it without a Divine Proof till the hour shall be established (Day of Judgment). Through the Divine Proof calamities are repelled from the inhabitants of the Earth, rain falls and the bounties of the earth come out.”

After hearing these words Ahmad asked His Eminence: “Who is the Imam and Caliph after you?” Imam Hasan Askari arose from his seat and hurried inside his house and returned after a short while, in such a way that upon his neck on his shoulders sat a boy, whose face seemed to be like the full moon and it seemed that he was three years old. After that, His Eminence, Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) said:

“O Ahmad! If you were not having a special and exalted position before Allah and the Proof of Allah, I would not have shown this son of mine to you. His name and patronymic is the same as that of the Messenger of Allah (S). He would fill the earth with justice and equity, as it would be fraught with injustice and oppression. O Ahmad! In this community his example is like that of Khizr and Dhulqarnain. By Allah! He will have an occultation and none shall be safe from destruction but one whom Allah has kept steadfast in the belief of his Imam and given the divine opportunity (Taufeeq) to pray for his reappearance.”

Ahmad immediately asked, “Is there any sign or symbol so that it may satisfy my heart?”

Just then the boy, who looked like a full moon, began to speak and he said:

“I am the remnant of Allah on His earth and the revenge- taker from His enemies and do not demand proof after what is before you...”

After hearing these words of the Proof of Allah, Ahmad went out of the house of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) in such a condition that his complete being was surrounded by joy. When again he came to Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) the next day he said: “O son of Allah’s Messenger! I was very much pleased with the favor you bestowed me that day. Thus what is the continuing practice of Khizr and Dhulqarnain?”

Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) said in reply, “Prolonged occultation.”

Ahmad at once said, “O son of Allah’s Messenger, would the occultation of the Promised Imam (a.s.) be also prolonged?”

Imam (a.s.) replied, “By my Lord! Yes, so much so, that even those who had accepted him, would turn away from their belief and none shall remain except one from whom Allah has taken the covenant of our guardianship and in whose hearts is rooted our love and those who support it with their hearts.

O Ahmad! This is the command of Allah and one of the divine secrets and one of the Unseen matters of Allah. So remember what I am telling you and keep it confidential and be of the thankful ones so that you may reside in the position of Illiyeen with us.”

The author says: I heard this tradition only from Ali bin Abdullah Warraq and found it only in his writings. So I asked him about it and he narrated it to me from Saad bin Abdullah from Ahmad bin Ishaq which I have mentioned.

Narration of Prophet Khizr (a.s.)

1 – Narrated to me Muhammad bin Ibrahim bin Ishaq (r.a.): Narrated to us Abdul Aziz bin Yahya Basri: Narrated to us Muhammad bin Atiyah: Narrated to us Hisham bin Ja’far from Hammad from Abdullah Ibne Sulaiman that he said:

“I read in some books of Allah, the Mighty and Sublime that Dhulqarnain was a righteous man. Allah appointed him as a proof on His servants and did not appoint him as a prophet. Allah gave him power in the earth and things worked out in his favor. He described to him the spring of life and said that one who drinks from this, never dies till he hears the blowing of the horn. Thus he set out in search of this spring till he reached to the area in which it was located. There were 360 springs in that place. Khizr was in the vanguard of his army and he was the Dhulqarnain’s favorite. Dhulqarnain gave to Khizr and other men a salted dry fish each and instructed them to wash it in different springs and stressed that each of them should wash in only one spring. Each of them headed for different springs. When Khizr placed the fish in his spring, it became alive and swam away. When Khizr noticed this he realized that he has come to the spring of life.

So he washed his clothes in the same spring, bathed and also drank the water. All the people returned with fish but Khizr did not have any. On being asked Khizr narrated the whole story. Dhulqarnain asked: Did you drink that water? He replied: Yes. Dhulqarnain said: The spring was destined for you. Congratulations for you. You will remain in the world concealed from the eyes of the people till the blowing of the horn.”

2 – Narrated to us Ali bin Ahmad bin Abdullah bin Abi Abdullah Ali bin Ahmad bin Abdullah bin Ahmad bin Abi Abdullah Barqi: Narrated to us my father from his grandfather Ahmad bin Abi Abdullah from his father from Muhammad bin Abi Umair from Hamza bin Humran and others from As-Sadiq Ja’far bin Muhammad (a.s.) that he said:

“Abu Ja’far Muhammad bin Ali al-Baqir (a.s.) stood in an extremely worried condition leaning on a wall in Medina. A man approached him and said: O Abu Ja’far, what has aggrieved you? If you are worried about the world, you should know that the sustenance of Allah is there and both the good as well as the bad have a share in it. If you are worried about the hereafter, the promise of the powerful Lord is true. Abu Ja’far (a.s.) said: It is not sorrow, I am worried about the mischief of Ibne Zubair. That person said: Have you seen anyone fearing Allah but not getting deliverance? Anyone relying on Allah for whom Allah did not suffice? One who took refuge with Allah but whom Allah did not give refuge? Abu Ja’far said: No. That person went away. The Imam was asked: Who was that man? He replied: It was Khizr (a.s.).”

The author says: The above report is such but in another report it is mentioned that this incident occurred with Ali bin al-Husain (a.s.).

3 – Narrated to us my father (r.a.): Narrated to me Saad bin Abdullah and Abdullah bin Ja’far Himyari that they said: Narrated to us Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Isa from Muhammad bin Khalid Barqi from Ahmad bin Zaid Nishapuri: Narrated to me Umar bin Ibrahim Hashimi from Abdul Malik bin Umair from Usaid Ibne Safwan, a companion of the Messenger of Allah (S) that he said:

“On the day Amirul Momineen (a.s.) passed away, Kufa echoed with wails and lamentations and people were horrified like on the day the Messenger of Allah (S) had passed away. A man came weeping and saying: Verily we belong to Allah and Him we shall return. Today the caliphate of the Prophet has been cut off. And he stood at the door of the house where Amirul Momineen (a.s.) lay.

Then he said: May Allah have mercy on you, O Abal Hasan, you were the foremost in Islam, you had the purest faith, the deepest certainty and most feared Allah, the Mighty and Sublime. In comparison to other companions you fulfilled the covenant of the Prophet more. Your excellences are supreme, your precedences are most honorable, your grade is the highest, you were most proximate to the Prophet and most resembling the Prophet in word and behavior and in aims and actions. Your status was lofty and honored. May Allah give you a good reward on behalf of Islam, Muslims and the Prophet. When the companions fell weak you strengthened Islam. When they displayed sloth you showed your initiative.

When they left the Prophet alone you rendered help to him. You turned to the clear path of the

Messenger of Allah (S) when the companions were in confusion. You are the rightful caliph in which there is no doubt, even though the hypocrites may dislike and the sinners may be disheartened.

You established the divine command when the people ignored it. You spoke up the rightful when people hesitated to speak the truth, you walked in the light of Allah when others remained still. If they had followed you they would have received guidance. Among all the people your voice was soft, your sign was strength, your speech was little, your words accurate, your view reliable, your heart most valiant, your certainty most deep, your action, the best and you knew most about the affairs.

By Allah, you are the chief of religion, for the believers you were a kind father and one who cared for his family and its well being. Thus you lifted the burden when others showed weakness and took care of the things that they wasted. And you were caring of that in which they were careless. When they were defeated in fighting, you rekindled the fire. And when they were victims of inferiority complex you encouraged them. When they expressed helplessness you showed determination. If they lagged behind you reached them and through you they used to reach that they could not even imagine.

You were severe on the disbelievers and a cloud of joy and mercy for the believers. By Allah, bounties were released for your sake. And you succeeded in your aim. And you got the first of them. You left the world with your merits, and your proof did not become invalid. You were never discouraged. Your insight never weakened and cowardice never invaded your self.

Your example was like that of a mountain that a fast wind cannot shake and the thunder cannot move. Regarding you the Holy Prophet (S) had said: Even though your body is weak but you are strong in divine legislation. You are humble, proximate to the Almighty, His chosen one, great on the earth, owner of dignity in the view of believers. No one can point out any defect in you. No one can ridicule you.

No one can make fun of you. You were very particular in observing the divine limits. The weak and the downtrodden is strong in your view till you don't restore his rights. And the strong one is lowly in your view till you don't take away from him the rights of others he had usurped. The far and the near were same for you. Truthfulness and loyalty are your main qualities. Your statements are firm and true. Your command is forbearance and your opinion is knowledge. You found the path. Through you the chastisement was removed. Moderation came in religion because of you.

Allah revealed His command even though the disbelievers found it despicable. Through you faith was strengthened and through you Islam and believers became steadfast. You went much beyond that and bore utmost difficulties for the sake of Islam. The tragedy of your demise is severe upon the people. Your tragedy is great for the folks of the heavens and the creatures have been shaken up by your sorrow. Verily we belong to Allah and to Him we shall return. By Allah the Muslims can never reach to your level.

You were refuge for the believers and destruction for the disbelievers. May Allah join you with His Prophet and may He not deprive us from the reward of following you. May He guard us from deviation

after you. The companions of the Prophet wept upon hearing this discourse. Then they searched for this person but was nowhere to be found.”

4 – Narrated to us Muzaffar bin Ja’far bin Muzaffar Alwai Umari Samarqandi (r.a.): Narrated to us Ja’far bin Muhammad bin Masud from his father Muhammad bin Masud from Ja’far bin Ahmad from Hasan bin Ali bin Faddal that he said: I heard Abul Hasan Ali bin Musa ar-Reza (a.s.) say:

“Khizr (a.s.) drank from the nectar of life. Thus he is alive and will not die till the bugle is blown. Indeed he comes to us and he greets us by Salaam. His voice is audible but he could not be seen. And he is present wherever his name is mentioned. Thus whomsoever of you mentions him, must say Salaam to him. Every year he is present in the ceremonies of Hajj. He performs all the rituals and he camps at Arafat; says Amen to the prayers of believers. And the Almighty Allah changes the loneliness of our Qaim (a.s.) during his occultation into his companionship and removes his loneliness through him (Khizr).”

5 – And through the same chain of narrators he said: Abul Hasan Ali bin Musa ar-Reza (a.s.) said:

“When the Prophet (S) passed away from this world and calamities came down on the holy Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) at that time Amirul Momineen, Fatima, Hasan and Husain (a.s.) were present in the room in which the holy body of the holy Prophet (S) was laid. Suddenly there came a voice, “Assalaamu alaikum O Ahlul Bayt! Every living being will taste the taste of death. Your reward will be given fully to you in the Qiyamat. If anyone dies, verily, Allah is his substitute and successor Who provides patience in every calamity and He is the remover of its harm. He compensates every loss. So rely only on Him because the (real) loser is he who loses the reward of Allah.” Amirul Momineen (a.s.) said, “He (the invisible speaker) is my brother Khizr (a.s.). He has come to condole you on the death of your Prophet (S).”

6 – Narrated to us Muhammad bin Ibrahim bin Ishaq (r.a.): Informed us Ahmad bin Muhammad Hamadani: Narrated to us Ali bin Husain bin Ali bin Faddal from his father from Abul Hasan Ali bin Musa ar-Reza (a.s.) that he said:

“When the Prophet (S) passed away from this world a man came and stood behind the house presenting his condolences. Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) heard him but could not see him. So Ali Ibne Abi Talib (a.s.) said: This is Khizr (a.s.), who has come to give condolence for your Prophet.”

7 – Narrated to us Muhammad bin Ibrahim bin Ishaq (r.a.): Narrated to us Abu Ahmad Abdullah bin Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Isa: Narrated to us Ali bin Saeed bin Basheer: Narrated to us Ibne Kasib: Narrated to us Abdullah bin Maimoon Makki: Narrated to us Ja’far bin Muhammad from his father from Ali bin Husain (a.s.) in a lengthy tradition at the end of which he said:

“When the Prophet (S) passed away a man came to present his condolences. They could hear him but were not able to see him. He said: “Peace be on you and the mercy of Allah and His bounties. Every living being will taste the taste of death. Your reward will be given fully to you in the Qiyamat. If anyone

dies, verily, Allah is his substitute and successor Who provides patience in every calamity and He is the remover of its harm. He compensates every loss. So rely only on Him because the (real) loser is he who loses the reward of Allah.” Ali Ibne Abi Talib (a.s.) said, “Do you know who that is?” “No,” they replied. He said, “It is Khizr (a.s.).”

The author says: Most of our opponents accept the traditions about Khizr (a.s.) and they believe that he is alive but he cannot be seen, and that he is present where he is remembered. Neither the opponents deny his long life nor say that these traditions are illogical. However they object to the long life of the Qaim (a.s.). These people believe that it is within the power of Allah to keep a person alive till the blowing of the horn. They agree to the life and occultation of the accursed Iblees till the known time. But they do not accept the longevity and occultation of the Proof of Allah even though authentic traditions have come down from the Messenger of Allah (S) regarding his name and clarifying about his genealogy and origin.

Narrations regarding Dhulqarnain

1 – Narrated to us my father (r.a.): Narrated to us Saad bin Abdullah from Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Isa from Ali bin Noman from Harun bin Kharija from Abi Baseer from Abi Ja’far (a.s.) that he said:

“Dhulqarnain was not a prophet, but he was a righteous man. He love Allah and Allah loved him. He was sincere for Allah and Allah was his well wisher. He called his people to fear Allah. They hit on one side of his head and he disappeared from them for a long time. Then he returned to them and they again hit on his head. And there is among you who is on his Sunnah (practice)

2 – Narrated to us Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Hasan Bazzaz: Narrated to us Muhammad bin Yaqoob bin Yusuf: Narrated to us Ahmad bin Abdul Jabbar Utaridi: Narrated to us Yunus bin Bukair from Muhammad bin Ishaq bin Yasar Madani from Amr bin Thabit from Simak bin Harith from a man of Bani Asad that he said:

“A person asked Ali (a.s.): How was Dhulqarnain able to reach to the east and the west of the earth? He replied: Allah gave the cloud under his control, provided him with facilities and bestowed him with light. The night and the days were same for him.”

3 – Narrated to us Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Yahya al-Attar (r.a.): Narrated to us my father from Husain bin Hasan bin Aban from Muhammad bin Urmiya: Narrated to me Qasim bin Urwah from Yazid Arhabi from Saad bin Tareef from Asbagh bin Nubatah that he said:

“Ibne Kawwa stood up and asked Amirul Momineen (a.s.) when he was on the pulpit: O Amirul Momineen (a.s.), tell me about Dhulqarnain, whether he was a Prophet or a king, and whether his horns were of gold or silver. Ali (a.s.) said, “Dhulqarnain was a king and not a Prophet. His horns were neither of gold nor silver. He was a righteous servant of Allah. He loved the Lord and was loved by Him. He

performed many tasks for the Almighty and the Lord helped him in return. He was named Dhulqarnain because he invited the people towards Allah. The people slashed one side of his head and martyred him. But Allah made him alive and sent him for a community. He again called them towards the Lord. These people hit him on the right side of his head. And there is one like him among you.”

4 – Narrated to us Abu Talib Muzaffar bin Ja’far bin Muzaffar Alawi Samarqandi: Narrated to us Ja’far bin Muhammad bin Masud from his father: Narrated to me Muhammad bin Naseer: Narrated to us Muhammad bin Isa [from Hammad bin Isa] from Amr bin Shimr from Jabir bin Yazid Jofi from Jabir Ibne Abdullah Ansari that he said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (S) say:

“Dhulqarnain was a righteous servant of Allah whom the Almighty Allah appointed as a Divine Proof on the people. So he called his people to God and piety. They hit on one side of his head and he disappeared from them for a long time till they began to debate about him saying: He has died or he has gone into which wilderness? After that he reappeared and came back to his community, but once again they happened to strike at his head. And there is among you (Muslims) someone who is on his practice and manner.

And indeed Allah, the Mighty and Sublime settled Dhulqarnain in the earth and bestowed him with a cause of everything. He reached up to the eastern and the western limits of the earth. The Almighty Allah would repeat his Sunnah in the Qaim of my progeny till he conquers the east and the west of the earth. Till there does not remain any wet and dry place, mountain and highland, that Dhulqarnain had crossed. And the Almighty Allah would expose for him the treasures and mines and He would help him by giving him awe and through him He would fill the earth with justice and equity in the same way as it would be full of injustice and oppression.”

Other traditions about Dhulqarnain are as follows:

5 – Muhammad bin Ibrahim bin Ishaq (r.a.) said: Narrated to us Abdul Aziz Yahya bin Saeed Basri: Narrated to us Muhammad bin Atiyah: Narrated to us Abdul bin Umar [and] bin Saeed Basri: Narrated to us Hisham bin Ja’far bin Hammad from Abdullah bin Sulaiman who was a reciter of books that he said:

“I have come across the fact in some heavenly books that Dhulqarnain belonged to Alexandria. His aged mother also belonged to the same place and that he was her only son. He was known as Iskandari. Since the time of his childhood, he was kind, well-mannered, good natured and a person with pure character. Till he reached adulthood. He dreamt that he had reached near the sun and both its edges (Qarn) were under his control. When he related the dream to his people they named him ‘Dhulqarnain’ (Possessor of two ‘Qarns’) (Sides/edges).

After this dream he acquired more courage and became famous and powerful among his people. Since he was obedient to the Lord of the scholars and he was a Muslim, the first thing that he decided to do was to call the people towards Islam. The majority of the people accepted Islam due to his dominant

personality. He ordered the people to build a Mosque. The people accepted his suggestion willingly.

Dhulqarnain said that the length of the Mosque should be 400 hands and the breadth 200 hands. Each of the walls should be 22 hands thick and 100 hands high. The people asked him where they can obtain wood that can bear the weight of the walls. And the wood that shall serve as the foundation of these walls. The people also had no idea how they would be able to construct such a high ceiling. Dhulqarnain told them that when they finish the construction of two wells they should fill it with mud and earth till the upper edges of the walls. Then they should collect gold and silver according to the capacity of people. The gold and silver (powder) should be mixed thoroughly with the earth filled in the Mosque.

After this the ceiling can be laid upon the walls. It may consist of copper or brass or any other material selected by the people. After the ceiling is complete the poor and needy people can be permitted to carry out the mud from within. Since it would contain gold and silver filings, the needy people will be eager to participate in the emptying of the mud.

Thus the people followed the directions of Dhulqarnain. The Mosque was built and the ceiling constructed. The needy people earned gold and silver and became self-sufficient.

Dhulqarnain divided his army into four battalions. Each battalion consisted of 10000 soldiers. Then he spread them in different towns and decided to visit the different places. When his people learnt of the intention they came to him together and said, "Dhulqarnain! By Allah we assure you, you shall never be deprived of our service. So do not go and settle in some other city because we are more entitled to your company.

You were born at this place and bred and brought up here. All our wealth and property is for your sake. Order us whatever you want. Your mother has also become aged. She has more rights on you than any other person. It is not appropriate that you disobey and oppose her."

"By Allah!" said Dhulqarnain, "What you say is true. Your advice is reasonable. But my condition is that of a person whose heart, eyes and flesh have been possessed. Murder is in front of him and he is chased from behind. He does not know where he is being taken and for what purpose. But come! Let us all enter this mosque together and (you all) become Muslims. Do not oppose or you shall be destroyed."

He summoned the villagers and the wealthy ones of Alexandria and advised them to frequent the Mosque, and consoled his mother on his separation. After these requests and advices Dhulqarnain departed from his city. His mother was aggrieved and wept much. Her weeping did not decrease even with the passage of time.

A villager thought of a scheme to console the old woman. He organized a grand feast and commissioned a town crier to inform the villagers of it. All the people were invited. But on the appointed day it was announced that only those who have not suffered any grief can participate in the feast.

Only those who are immune from every difficulty and distress may attend. The people stood up and said, “None of us are absolutely free of troubles and stress. All of us have suffered the sorrow of the death of some friend or relative. When the mother of Dhulqarnain heard all these, she found it interesting but she was unaware of the intention of the villager who had organized the event.

After a few days the same villager organized a feast. This time he told the town-crier to announce that only those people can attend who have some problem or the other. Those who are free from troubles cannot attend the feast. And neither can those who are not aggrieved or sorrowful. Because one who has no trouble has no goodness.

When the people heard this announcement they remarked that the villager had previously acted miserly and that now he had regretted his mistake and wished to rectify himself and conceal his defect. The people gathered and this villager delivered a sermon. He said, “I have not called you for a feast. I wish to speak about Dhulqarnain. And discuss the grief that we all experience due to his absence, and the fact that we are not able to serve him. Remember Adam (a.s.) whom Allah created by His powerful hands and blew His spirit into him.

Then He ordered the Angels to prostrate before him. He settled Adam (a.s.) in the Garden and bestowed him with the virtues not bestowed on any other creature. Then He subjected him to the most severe calamity and sent him out of the Garden. No difficulty is as serious as that of Adam (a.s.).

Then Ibrahim (a.s.) underwent the torment of being thrown into the fire and of obeying the command to slaughter his son – Yaqoob faced the sorrow – Yusuf (a.s.) bore the trouble of being enslaved – Ayyub was subjected to a terrible disease – Yahya was afflicted and Zakariya (a.s.) martyred – Isa was arrested – Except Allah no one knows the number of people who have suffered something or the other. Come let us go and console the mother of Alexander. Let us see how much patience she has. Because she is the most aggrieved one due to her son’s separation.”

So all the people went to the old lady and asked if she had attended the gathering and heard the sermon. She said that she saw everything that had occurred and heard every word of the speech.

“There was no one among you who was more aggrieved than me,” she said. “Now Allah has given me patience and satisfied me. He has strengthened my heart. I have faith that my reward shall be proportionate to my grief. And also hope for your reward that you deserve in lieu of your sorrow for your brother. And I also hope for the reward that you have earned for consoling and comforting his mother, and hope that Allah would forgive me and you all and have mercy on you and me.”

The people witnessed the formidable patience of this wise lady they returned to their homes. Dhulqarnain continued to travel towards the west and had come quite far. Hence by this time his soldiers were weary and disheveled. The Almighty sent him a revelation that he was the Proof of Allah upon all the creatures of the east and the west. And that it was the interpretation of his dream.

“My Lord you wish to give me such a great responsibility and except for You no one is aware of its greatness,” said Dhulqarnain. “How can I face and vanquish the great army without proper manpower and equipment? How can I make them obedient to me? Where is the patience to bear their oppression? Where is the tongue to speak to them? How can I understand the various languages?

Where is the hearing capability to listen to them? Where are the eyes to see them and where is the courage to confront them? Where is the perception to understand their desires? Where is the wisdom to solve their problems? Where is the forbearance to bear their injustices and remain patient? Where is the justice to judge them? Where is the recognition (Marefat) to rule over them? Where is the army to conquer them? Verily! I do not possess a single quality.

Hence bestow me power over them. Certainly, you are a Kind Lord. You do not impose a duty beyond ones capacity. Neither do You impose a burden exceeding ones strength.”

The Almighty revealed to him that he would be given the strength and power soon to carry out the responsibility entrusted to him. The Lord said, “I shall expand your breast so that you can hear everything, and widen your understanding. So that you understand everything. I shall bestow the power to your tongue so that you can speak to everything.

I shall make the affairs easy for you. You will not lose anything and I will guard your affair. So that nothing is hidden from you. I shall strengthen your back so that you are not fearful of any kind of danger. I wish to bestow such a personality that you will not fear anything. I will make your advice acceptable.

So that you may not make a mistake. I shall subdue your body to you so that you can feel every type of emotion. I shall give you authority over light and darkness and they will serve you as two armies. The light shall guide you and show you the way. The darkness shall protect you and gather the communities from behind you and bring them in front of you.”

Thus Dhulqarnain set out with the message of his Lord. The Almighty helped him and fulfilled all His promises. He set out towards the place where the sun sets. No community came in contact with him but that he invited them towards truth. Dhulqarnain was satisfied with those who accepted faith but appointed darkness upon those who refused to believe. The darkness would darken their cities, villages, houses and buildings. It penetrated and filled their nose, mouth and bellies. They remained in a state of shock for sometime and then ultimately accepted invitation towards belief. They came in submission to him at last.

Finally, Dhulqarnain reached the place where the sun sets. Here a group of people came to him and he dealt with them in the same way as he had with the people he had encountered before. Thus, he completed the conquest of the west. During his campaign he met so many different tribes that only Allah knows the magnitude. He was bestowed with such strength and splendor that no one can achieve except by the Grace of Allah.

His army became peopled with soldiers of different linguistic areas and various sensualities also struck his men. He traveled in the darkness for eight days and nights till he reached a large mountain that had covered a large area. Suddenly he sighted an angel who clung to the mountain and recited:

سبن نري ين نان نى ممتهالر ر ، سبحن نري يمنأل لالدا اى بأخرها، ن نري ين نموضعكي يى بعش شري يى ، ن نري
ين نمى نة ةى بالنور

Glory be to my Lord from this moment till the end of time.

Glory be to my Lord from the beginning of the world to its end.

Glory be to my Lord Who is sufficient from this place to the Arsh.

Glory be to my Lord Who ends the darkness to light.

When Dhulqarnain heard these words he went into prostration and did not lift his head till the Almighty gifted him the strength to see that world.

The angel asked him how he had achieved such power that he reached the place where no man has ever stepped.

Dhulqarnain said, "I have received the capability to reach this place from the same One Who has subdued this mountain to you. One Who surrounds all the earth."

"You are right," said the angel, "If this mountain had not been there the earth would have shook with its inhabitants and smothered them. There is no mountain larger than this on the face of the earth. And this is the first mountain to have been created by Allah for this earth. The peak of this mountain touches the first heaven. Its roots reach upto the seventh layer below the earth and surround the whole earth like a circle. The root (foundations) of every city is connected to this mountain. When Allah desires to send earthquake to a particular area He sends a revelation upon me and I shake the roots of that area. Thus the area has earthquake."

Before returning Dhulqarnain requested this angel to give him some moral advice. The angel said, "Do not be aggrieved for your sustenance. Do not postpone today's job for tomorrow. Do not shed tears on something that you have lost. Be helpful and hospitable. Do not be insolent. Do not be arrogant and oppressive."

After receiving this advice Dhulqarnain returned to his companions. Then he directed his mighty splendor towards East. And whenever he came across people he invited them towards Allah and guided in the same way as he had guided the people of the West. He made them obedient like the inhabitants of the western region. After completing the mission of East and West he turned his attention towards the valley that finds a mention in the Holy Quran. He met a people who did not understand any language.

Beyond the valley lived another community that was known as Yajooj and Majooj.

These creatures resembled the quadrupeds. They ate and drank and had children. They had females and males and their physical features resembled the human beings. But they were much smaller than human beings. Like children, they did not exceed five spans. All of them were created naked and wore neither clothes nor shoes. Each had a hump like camels. It protected them from cold and heat. They had two ears.

One of the ears was covered with hair from the outside as well inside and the other ear had humps. Instead of nails they had claws like animals, and had fangs and jaws. When they slept they spread out one ear and covered themselves with the other from head to toe. Their food consisted of fishes that rained from a cloud every year. This enabled them to lead a comfortable life. When it was time for the fishes to rain they would wait in expectation like people await the rains. When they received the rain of fishes their conditions improved and they prospered. They bred quickly and their population increased.

The fishes lasted them a whole year and they did not feed or anything else. Their population increased so much that only Allah knows its magnitude. If they did not get fish in a particular year there was famine. They used to starve to death and their progeny perished as a result. They walked like the quadrupeds and mated wherever they went. In the year they did not get rain of fish they would head towards the towns and wreaked havoc wherever they struck and did not spare anything. Their scourge was worst than that of locusts and hailstorms.

Wherever they attacked the inhabitants deserted their homes and fled from that area, because no one could confront them. When they attacked a particular area they covered it so completely that no one could stop them. No creature of Allah knew their population. It was not possible to look at them or go near them because they were extremely dirty and despicable. That's why they could subdue the people. When they rushed towards a town they made a sound akin to a storm traveling at the speed of hundred farsakhs and heavy rain.

This was due to their sheer number. When they fell upon a city their buzzing resembled that of the bees or rather more intense than nothing could be heard beyond that din. All the animals fled the land ravaged by these creatures. For they filled the whole area and did not leave any space for other creatures. An astonishing fact was that each of them knew the time of their death. Because neither the male nor the female died till it had produced a thousand offspring. When the number of their offspring reached a thousand they knew they had to die. It used to leave the herd and spread out its hands and legs to die.

They appeared in the time of Dhulqarnain and destroyed city after city. They aimed at each community and forced the people out of their homes. They did not turn from wherever they aimed and neither did they look left or right. When this particular community heard their sound approaching they came to Dhulqarnain and petitioned him saying, "We have heard that whatever you have been bestowed by Allah is like rulership and kingship.

You possess a forceful personality and have been helped by darkness and light and the armies of the earth. We happen to reside in the neighborhood of Yajooj and Majooj. Between us and them is a mountain and nothing else. Between the two mountains is a pass. If they attack us they will drive us out of our houses. We cannot withstand their attack. They have a teeming population. They look like humans but they move about here and there and graze. But they can attack and kill like carnivorous animals.

They eat anything that has life, including snakes and scorpions. None of the creatures can equal their population. We know that one day they would cover the whole earth and purge it of all its people. They would spread corruption in the earth. All the time we dread their attack through the mountain pass. The Almighty has given you strength and might, not given to any other person. Shall we collect some donations to offer you tithe? So that you may build a barrier between us?"

Dhulqarnain said, "Whatever Allah has gifted me is better than your contribution. But you can help by providing manpower so that I can accomplish the task of constructing a barrier. Get me iron slabs."

"Where can we get so much iron and copper to build the wall?" they asked.

Dhulqarnain informed them of iron and copper mines. When they asked him as to how they could cut the metal, Dhulqarnain guided them towards another mine that produced a material called saamoor. Saamoor was extremely white and it melted any metal it came in contact with. The people made some mining tools with it and the same types of tools were used by Sulaiman (a.s.) to cut the slabs of stone for construction of Baitul Muqaddas. The jinns had brought these instruments for Sulaiman (a.s.).

Thus the people brought to Dhulqarnain all the iron and copper that was sufficient to build the barrier. The iron was melted and shaped like slabs. Instead of bricks the wall was raised with these iron slabs. In place of cement and mortar molten copper was poured between the iron slabs. There was a distance of one farsakh between two parallel mountains.

Dhulqarnain first commanded that a foundation be dug for building the wall. The people dug till they reached water. The thickness of the barrier was one mile. After laying the iron bricks they melted the copper into a thin liquid and poured it over the iron wall. It seemed as if it was a single piece. The barrier touched the mountains on either side. It shone like a red and black fabric due to iron and copper.

Yajooj and Majooj come near this wall every year because they tour different areas. But when they reach the barrier they could not traverse it and thus go back from where they had come. They will continue this practice every year till time for Qiyamat nears. One of the signs of Qiyamat is the reappearance of Qaim of the Progeny of Muhammad (S). The Almighty will open the barrier. As mentioned in the Holy Quran:

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فُتِحَتْ يَأْجُوجُ وَمَأْجُوجُ وَهُمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ حَدَبٍ يَنْسِلُونَ

“...when Gog and Magog are let loose and they shall break forth from every elevated place.”¹

“I have read in some books that when Dhulqarnain accomplished the construction of the barrier he returned with his army. On his way he saw an aged person busy in prayers. Dhulqarnain halted near him with his army till he finished his prayers. Dhulqarnain asked him, “Why were you not frightened of my army when it stopped near you?”

“I was supplicating the One who has a much more powerful army than yours. And One whose kingdom is much greater than your rule. And One who is much stronger than you. If I had turned my attention towards you I would not have been able to seek His favor.”

Dhulqarnain asked him if he would accompany them so that he can involve him in his administration and seek his help in some affairs. The worshipper agreed upon the condition that Dhulqarnain will bestow him four things: “One, a bounty that is never destroyed, secondly, a physical condition that is not affected by any disease. Thirdly, a youth that will never transform into old age. Fourthly, a life that does not end in death.

“Who can have control over all this?” asked Dhulqarnain.

He said, “I am with the One who is having power over all these things and controls all the affairs. You are also in His control.”

Dhulqarnain then passed by a scholar. He asked Dhulqarnain, “Tell me what are those two things that still exist from the time Allah created them. And two things that continue and two things that always come after one another. And those two things that are mutual enemies.

Dhulqarnain said, “The two things that remain established are the sky and the earth. The two things in motion are the moon and the sun. The two things that follow each other are day and night. The two things that are enemies of each other are life and death.”

“You may proceed on your way. You are a wise man,” said the scholar.

Dhulqarnain was going around the cities when he came across an old man. He had collected human skulls and was turning them around in two hands and inspecting them closely. Dhulqarnain stopped with his army and asked him why he was turning the skulls around. He replied that by this action of his he wanted to know which of them had been noble, and which of them stylish, which were the rich ones and who were poverty stricken.

“I am studying these skulls for 20 years but still cannot make out the difference,” he said. Dhulqarnain moved ahead saying, “He only wanted to warn me, that’s all.”

On his excursions around the earth he reached a community of Musa (a.s.). These people practiced utmost justice. Dhulqarnain said, “Tell me about yourself. For I have visited the east and the west, the

deserts, mountains and plains, the light and darkness. But I have never seen people like you. Why have you made the graves of your dead right opposite the entrance of your houses?”

“So that we may never forget death,” they replied.

“Why have you not fixed doors to your houses?” asked Dhulqarnain.

“Because we have no thieves and cheats. All of us are trustworthy.”

“Why didn’t you have any officers and administrators?”

“We do not oppress each other,” they said.

“Why are there no rulers amongst you?”

“Because we do not fight among ourselves.”

“Why are there no kings among you?”

“Because we do not exploit each other.”

“Why is there no disparity among the people as regards their economical condition?”

“Because we consider all people equal and we distribute equally all the excess profits. And we have mercy upon each other.”

“Why are there no disputes and controversies among you?”

They said, “Because we are loyal to each other and we do not have corruption.”

“Why don’t people murder and imprison each other?”

“We have control over ourselves with correct intentions, we have guided ourselves with forbearance and self-respect.”

“How come you have the same opinion and correct way of doing things?”

“Because we never lie” and we do not backbite and criticize each other.”

“How can you account for the complete absence to the poor and destitute among you?”

“It is so because we distribute our wealth equally.”

“Why are there no vicious and cruel people among you?”

“Because we have made humility and lowliness as our symbols.”

“Why are your life–span greater than ordinary people?”

“Because we fulfill the rights of each other and rule with justice. We do not oppress.”

“Why do you never experience famines?”

“Because we never forgo repentance.”

“Why are you never sorrowful or aggrieved?”

“We control ourselves during calamities and console ourselves in difficult times.”

“Why do disasters never strike you or your property?”

“Because we do not rely on anyone but Allah and we do not consider the stars as causes of calamities. We regard all affairs from our Lord.”

Dhulqarnain asked them if they had seen their forefathers practicing the same things.

“Yes,” they replied, “Our elders were also kind to the destitute, behaved equitably with the beggars. If someone oppressed them, they forgave. If someone did evil to them, they responded with goodness. They did not pilfer the trusted property. They spoke the truth and refrained from lying. Because of all this, Allah improved their conditions.”

After having acquired all the information, Dhulqarnain decided to settle among them. He remained there till the time his soul departed for the heavenly abode. His age was 500 years.

Narrations of Abu Muhammad Hasan al–Askari (a.s.) regarding Nass in favor of his son, al–Qaim, the Master of the time

2 – Narrated to us Abu Talib Muzaffar bin Ja’far bin Muzaffar Alawi Samarqandi: Narrated to us Ja’far bin Muhammad bin Masud from his father Muhammad bin Masud Ayyashi: Narrated to us Adam bin Muhammad Balkhi: Narrated to me Ali bin Husain bin Harun Daqqaq: Narrated to us Ja’far bin Muhammad bin Abdullah bin Qasim bin Ibrahim bin Malik Ashtar that he said: Narrated to me Yaqoob bin Manqoosh that he said:

“I went to Abi Muhammad Hasan bin Ali (a.s.) to find him sitting on his usual place in his house. There was a room to his right with a curtain at its entrance. I asked the Imam: Who is the master of this affair? He replied: Lift that curtain. When I lifted the curtain I saw a boy aged eight or ten years, having a broad forehead, fair complexion, pearl–like upper lip. Soft and clear palms, broad shoulders, long knees, a mole on the right cheek, hair reaching to the forehead, came out and went on to sit in the Imam’s lap.

The Imam said: This is your master. Then he said to the child: Son, go back till the appointed Hour. So

the child arose and went into the room. I was looking at him continuously. Then the Imam said to me: Yaqoob, go and look in the room. When I entered that room there was no one there.”

3 – Narrated to us Ali bin Abdullah Warraq: Narrated to us Saad bin Abdullah: Narrated to me Musa bin Ja’far bin Wahab Baghdadi that the following missive came from Abu Muhammad (a.s.):

“They thought that they could plan to murder me so that my progeny may be cut off. And the Almighty Allah rendered their word and their plots ineffective and thanks and gratitude is to the Allah, the High.”

4 – Narrated to us Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Asim (r.a.): Narrated to us Muhammad bin Yaqoob Kulaini: Narrated to me Allan ar-Raazi: Informed me some of our associates that when his slave maid became pregnant Abu Muhammad (a.s.) said:

“You are pregnant with a male whose name is Muhammad and he is the Qaim after me.”

5 – Narrated to us Abu Talib Muzaffar bin Ja’far bin Muzaffar Alawi (r.a.): Narrated to us Ja’far bin Muhammad bin Masud from his father: Narrated to us Ahmad bin Ali bin Kulthum: Narrated to us Ali bin Ahmad ar-Raazi:

“One of our brothers from the people of Rayy went out to investigate the situation after the passing away of Abu Muhammad (a.s.). As he was in the course of his search in the Masjid of Kufa, thinking about the enterprise he had come for and touching the pebbles of the masjid with his hand, a pebble appeared to him that bore the writing: M.H.M.D. He saw that the writing was not engraved into the stone, but rather the inscription stood above and was raised over the surface of the pebble, as it had been created on it.”

6 – Narrated to us Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Yahya al-Attar (r.a.): Narrated to me my father from Ja’far bin Muhammad bin Malik Fazari: Narrated to me Muhammad bin Ahmad Madayni from Abi Ghanim that he said: I heard Aba Muhammad Hasan bin Ali (a.s.) say:

“My Shias will divide up in the year 260.”

In that year Abu Muhammad (a.s.) passed away and his Shias and supporters went different ways. Some of them followed Ja’far, some of them went astray and were seized by doubts; some of them remained on their perplexity; and some of them remained steadfast on their religion through the help of Allah, the Mighty and Sublime.

7 – Narrated to us Muzaffar bin Ja’far bin Muzaffar Alawi Samarqandi (r.a.): Narrated to us Ja’far bin Muhammad bin Masud Ayyashi from his father from Ahmad bin Ali bin Kulthum from Ali bin Ahmad ar-Raazi from Ahmad bin Ishaq bin Saeed that he said: I heard Aba Muhammad Hasan bin Ali al-Askari (a.s.) say:

“All praise is due to Allah, the One who did not take me from the world until He showed me the heir after me, the one who from all of us, is most resembling the Messenger of Allah (S) in his physique and in his

character. May Allah, the High, protect him in his occultation and then manifest him, so that he may fill the earth with justice and equity as it would be fraught with injustice and tyranny.”

8 – Narrated to us Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Yahya al-Attar (r.a.): Narrated to us Saad bin Abdullah: Narrated to us Musa bin Ja’far bin Wahab Baghdadi that he said: I heard Aba Muhammad Hasan bin Ali (a.s.) say:

“As if I can see you disputing after me with regard to my successor. Behold, someone who professes faith in all the Imams after the Messenger of Allah (S) yet denies my son, is like someone who professes faith in all prophets and messengers of Allah and then rejects the prophethood of Muhammad the Messenger of Allah (S); and the denier of the Messenger of Allah (S) is like one who rejects all the prophets.

Because, obedience to our last one is obedience to our first one and rejecter of our last one is the rejecter of our first one. Behold, my son will have an occultation in which people will doubt except the ones whom Allah, the Mighty and Sublime saves.”

9 – Narrated to us Muhammad bin Ibrahim bin Ishaq (r.a.): Narrated to me Abu Ali bin Hammam: I heard Muhammad bin Uthman al-Umari (q.s.) say: I heard my father say:

“Abu Muhammad al-Hasan bin Ali (a.s.) was asked, while I was with him, about traditions narrated from his forefathers, peace be on them, that the earth does not remain without the Proof of Allah on His creatures until the Judgment Day and that if anyone dies without the cognition of the Imam of his time, he dies the death of a pagan. The Imam said: This is as true as the daylight. It was said: O son of Allah’s Messenger, who is the Proof and the Imam after you? He replied: My son, M.H.M.D. Whoever dies not knowing him, will die a pagan death. Behold, he will have an occultation during which the ignorant will be perplexed and the invalidators will perish and the time-assigners will lie. Then he will rise. As if I am gazing at the white standards waving over his head in the Najaf of Kufa.”

[1.](#) Surah Anbiya 21:96

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