

Section 3: The Sure Coming of the Resurrection Proved

Surah Al-Kahf – Verses 17 – 18

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

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

17. “And (had you been there) you might have seen the sun when it rose, declining from their Cave towards the right, and when it set, leaving them away unto the left, and they were in a wide space thereof. This is of the Signs of Allah, whomever Allah guides, he is rightly guided, and whomever He leaves to stray, you shall never find for him any guiding friend.”

18. “And you might think them awake while they were asleep, and We turned them unto the right and unto the left (sides), and their dog stretching out his paws on the threshold. If you looked at them you would certainly turn back from them in flight and you would certainly be filled with terror of them.”

Through these holy couple of verses, the Qur'an has referred to the details of the wonderful life of the Companions of the Cave where it has mentioned six specialties:

1. The doorway of the Cave was set toward the north, and since its location had certainly been in the northern hemisphere, the sun did not shine directly inside the Cave, as the holy verse says:

“And (had you been there) you might have seen the sun when it rose, declining from their Cave towards the right, and when it set, leaving them away unto the left...”

Thus, the direct sunshine, whose continuation might cause their bodies to decay, did not meet them, but there was enough indirect light there from the sun.

2. The verse continues saying:

“...and they were in a wide space thereof...”

This part of the verse is an indication that the arrival of the Cave, which is usually strait, was not their dwelling-place, but they had chosen the middle parts of the Cave to be both out of sight and out of direct shining of the sun.

Here, the Qur'an ceases the thread of the current speech and pays to a spiritual conclusion, because it is the main aim of the statement of all these events.

It says:

“...This is of the Signs of Allah, whomever Allah guides, he is rightly guided, and whomever He leaves to stray, you shall never find for him any guiding friend.”

Yes, those who step in the way of Allah and struggle for Him, Allah will help them with His Grace in every single of their steps. It is not only for the basis of their work, but His Grace encompasses them in all their affairs, too.

3. Their sleep was not an ordinary sleep, because if you looked at them you might think that they were awake, but they had been sleeping.

The verse says:

“And you might think them awake while they were asleep...”

This exceptional case, perhaps, had been for the sake that harmful animals would not approach them, or for the sake that their view might become so dreadful that none would dare approach them, in a manner that this circumstance could work as a protective shield for them.

4. In order that their bodies would not decay as a result of passing a long time of years when they were in their sleep, they were turned unto the right and unto the left sides, so that their bodies could remain sound.

They were turned this side and that side for that the blood of their bodies might not concentrate in one point of the body, and the pressure and the height, which were on those muscles that were on the ground for a long time, would not affect on the body harmfully.

The verse continues saying:

“...and We turned them unto the right and unto the left (sides)...”

5. Their dog had stretched forth his two fore-legs on the threshold of the Cave, guarding them.

The verse continues saying:

“...and their dog stretching out his paws on the threshold...”

6. Another fact about them was that they had a dreadful sight, so that:

“...If you looked at them you would certainly turn back from them in flight and you would certainly be filled with terror of them.”

Explanations

1. The cave of the Companions of the Cave geographically was neither toward the East nor toward the West, but it was toward the North-eastern, where the sun would not shine into the depth of it in any season.

The ideas are divided upon the sight of the Cave. Some commentators say that it had been in the mountains around Syria which is now known as ‘the cave of the Companions of the Cave’.

Some others believe that it had been located around Omman, the capital of Jordan, where several ancient graves are found and an engraving of a dog is carved on the wall, upon which there is an old monastery, and Muslims have built a mosque thereabout, too.

However, the peculiarities of the Cave are some examples of the grace of Allah which were promised to in the previous verse

2. The Divine protection is not always seen in the form of a miracle, but sometimes the natural factors work as a means of protection.

3. The succour of Faith, leaving the people of polytheism, and taking refuge to a Cave, with those peculiarities, may not happen save by the guidance of Allah.

Surah Al-Kahf – Verses 19 – 20

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

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

19. “And in like manner We did raise them that they might question among themselves. One of them said: ‘How long have you tarried?’ They said: ‘We have tarried a day, or part of a day’.
(Finally) they said: ‘Your Lord knows best how long you have tarried. Therefore send one of you with this money of yours to the city and let him see which of them has purest food, and bring you provision from it, and let him behave with (care and) gentleness, and let him not inform any one about you.’”

20. “For verily if they prevail against you, they will stone you, or turn you back to their religion, and then never will you succeed.”

Wakefulness After a Long Sleep!

When explaining the commentary of the coming verse, we will detail that the Companions of the Cave’s sleep prolonged so much that it took about 309 years. Thus, it was a sleep like death, and its wakefulness was rather similar to Resurrection.

Therefore, the Qur’an in this verse says:

“And in like manner We did raise them...”

This statement means that in like manner that Allah was able to put them in such a long sleep, He returned them to wakefulness again.

The verse continues saying:

“...that they might question among themselves. One of them said: ‘How long have you tarried?’...”

Then, the verse adds:

“...They said: ‘We have tarried a day, or part of a day’...”

But, finally, since they could not know precisely the length of their sleep, they expressed as follows:

“...(Finally) they said: ‘Your Lord knows best how long you have tarried...’”

However, they felt a serious hunger and they needed to eat food, because what they had in reserve in their bodies were consumed.

Therefore, their first suggestion was that they would give the silver coins they had in their possession to one of their own members and send him to the city to see which of the sellers of that city had the purest food to bring them some of it enough for their provision.

The verse says:

“... Therefore send one of you with this money of yours to the city and let him see which of them has purest food, and bring you provision from it...”

Immediately after that, the verse adds:

“...and let him behave with (care and) gentleness, and let him not inform any one about you.”

The reason of that precaution was that they thought if the people of the city were informed of their position, and found them, they would stone them and might bring them back to their own creed, (the creed of idolatry).

Explanations

1. The Arabic term /wariq/, mentioned in the verse, had been called to the silver coins which had the design of the king of that time on them.
2. The Qur’anic phrase /walyatalattaf/ has been occurred exactly in the middle of the Qur’an. It means: ‘conciliation and spiritual intelligence accompanied with kindness’, which itself is a grace that the middle-word of the holy Qur’an has spiritually been made up of conciliation, mercy, and kindness.
3. The wakefulness of the Companions of the Cave had two results. One of them was for themselves that they asked question,

“...that they might question...”,

and the other was for others that they were an illustration of Resurrection and raising in Hereafter.

4. No one should surprise upon the subject of Resurrection and being raised, because every single wakefulness of men from sleep is a kind of raising and Resurrection.

Surah Al-Kahf – Verse 21

وَكَذَلِكَ أَغْتَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَأَنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا

إِذِيتَنَازَعُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَمْرَهُمْ فَقَالُوا ابْنُوا عَلَيْهِم بُيُوتًا رَبُّهُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِهِمْ قَالَ الَّذِينَ غَلَبُوا
عَلَيَّامْرِهِمْ لَنَتَّخِذَنَّ عَلَيْهِم مَّسْجِدًا

21. “And in like manner We did make (the people) to get knowledge of them that they might know that the promise of Allah is true, and that, as for the Hour (of Judgment), there is no doubt about it. When they disputed among themselves of their affair then they said: ‘Build a building (monument) over them; their Lord best knows of them.’ Those who prevailed over their affair said: ‘We will build over them a place of worship’.”

The End of the Adventure of the Cave

It did not take so long that the story of the migration of those godly gentlemen, the youths of that locality, spread everywhere, and the tyrannical king of the country became very angry of the event.

Therefore, he ordered his men that some special functionaries should search for them all the places, so that if they found any trace of them, they would pursue them until they could capture them and punish them. But the more they searched the less they found.

Now, we may trace the man who was commissioned to buy some food and see what happened to him.

As soon as he entered the city, he terribly surprised, because the shape of the buildings had utterly been changed, the features of people he saw were all unfamiliar to him, their clothes had been altered into some new models.

Even the method of their speaking, customs, and rules of civility were not as before. The ruins of yesterday had given their places to castles, and the castles of yesterday had been changed into ruins.

He still thought that their sleep in the cave lasted one day or half of a day. In that case, he wondered why there were so many changes in the city!

His wonder reached its climax when he put his hand in to his pocket to pay the price of the food he had bought. The seller was watching a coin which belonged to more than three hundred years before that time.

Perhaps, the name of Decianus, the tyrannical king of old time, was seen on it. When the seller asked him to explain about that coin, the man answered that he had obtained it not long ago.

Then, the man himself found out to what a deep and long sleep he and his companions had gone.

This question became known in the city and the people of everywhere told that story one another. A group of those people could not believe that a man could be quickened again after his death. But the

adventure of the sleep of the Companions of the Cave became a firm reasoning for those who were the adherents of the belief of resurrection of the body.

Therefore, the Qur'an in this verse says:

“And in like manner We did make (the people) to get knowledge of them that they might know that the promise of Allah is true...”

And there is no doubt about the end of the world and the occurrence of the Hereafter.

The verse continues saying:

“...and that, as for the Hour (of Judgment), there is no doubt about it...”

This sleep and wakefulness, from some points of view, was more wonderful than death and returning to life again, because there passed hundreds of years upon them and their bodies did not decay, while they neither ate any food nor did they drink any water.

Is not this event a proof to the Power of Allah (s.w.t.) upon everything and every deed? Taking such an event in mind, the life after death is certainly possible.

The man sent for buying food quickly returned to the Cave, and informed his companions of the fact. All of them surprised deeply. It was hard and difficult for them to bear that kind of life. They asked Allah that they would forsake this world and transfer unto the neighbourhood of the mercy of Allah, and it happened soon.

They passed away and their bodies were inside the Cave when the people went to see them.

At that circumstance, there occurred a dispute between the adherents of the belief of the resurrection of the bodies and their opponents. The opponents tried that the problem of the sleep and wakefulness of the Companions of the Cave to be forgotten and to take that firm proof from the hands of its adherents.

The Qur'an in this regard implies that when they were disputing upon their affair among themselves, some of them said that they should build a monument over them so that they might disappear from the eyes and that they spoke about them no longer, for their Lord is better aware of their condition.

The verse says:

“...When they disputed among themselves of their affair then they said: ‘Build a building (monument) over them; their Lord best knows of them.’...”

But those who became aware of their secret, and found it as a reasoning for Resurrection, suggested that they would build a mosque beside their graves, in order that their memory could not be forgotten.

The verse says:

“...Those who prevailed over their affair said: ‘We will build over them a place of worship’.”

This meaning shows that building a tomb and a place of worship in reverence of the graves of the saints of the religion not only is not unlawful (haram) but also it is a worthy action with Allah (s.w.t.).

Explanations

1. The Arabic term /i‘ar/ is applied for an occasional information which is obtained with no searching. In this event, people, without any trouble, became cognizant of the important secret of the Age of the Companions of the Cave by means of their silver coin.

2. In the story of the Companions of the Cave these subjects are referred to:

The Will and Power of Allah, brevity, forsaking the world, migration, concealing of faith, Allah’s succours, and lawful feeding (pure food).

3. None of Allah’s deeds is vain.

4. That ability which can keep those men alive for more than three centuries without any food, is powerful to restore the dead to life, too.

5. Sometimes human beings simply pass by some historical events while they are neglectful of the training effects of those events. The Companions of the Cave passed away after that their adventure was revealed, but, in stead of taking a lesson from it, people were thinking of building a monument over there.

Surah Al-Kahf – Verse 22

سَيَقُولُونَ ثَلَاثَةٌ رَابِعُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ خَمْسَةٌ سَادِسُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ رَجْمًا بِالْغَيْبِ
وَيَقُولُونَ سَبْعَةٌ وَثَامِنُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ قُل رَّبِّي أَعْلَمُ بِعِدَّتِهِمْ مَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ فَلَا تُمَارِ
فِيهِمْ إِلَّا مِرَاءً ظَاهِرًا وَلَا تَسْتَفْتِ فِيهِمْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا

22. “Soon they will say: ‘(They were) three, the fourth of them was their dog’; and (some) say: ‘Five, the sixth of them was their dog’, guessing at the unseen, and (yet the others) say: ‘Seven, and the eighth of them was their dog’. Say: ‘My Lord knows best their number, none knows them but a few’. So do not dispute with them, except in outward disputation, and do not ask any one for a pronouncement about them.”

This verse points to some different ideas which exist among people about the Companions of the Cave. Among them is the idea about the number of them.

The holy verse in this concern says:

“Soon they will say: ‘(They were) three, the fourth of them was their dog’...”

Here is the belief of another group of the people:

“...and (some) say: ‘Five, the sixth of them was their dog’, guessing at the unseen, and (yet the others) say: ‘Seven, and the eighth of them was their dog’...”

The verse of the Qur’an implies that all of these words are some unreasonable statements that they say, and, save a small number of people, no one knows their correct number.

The verse says:

“...Say: ‘My Lord knows best their number, none knows them but a few’...”

Then, at the end of the verse, the Qur’an adds:

“...So do not dispute with them, except in outward disputation...”

That is, you should speak with them so logically and reasonably that your logic be manifested. And you should ask no one of the people of the Book about the number of the Companions of the Cave.

The verse says:

“...and do not ask any one for a pronouncement about them.”

Explanations

1. In the text of the verse the conjunction ‘and’ has not been mentioned upon the phrases “***fourth of them***” and “***sixth of them***”, but with the phrase “***the eighth of them***” the conjunction ‘and’ has been mentioned.

It is, perhaps, for the reason that the attitude of their number being ‘three’ or ‘five’ had been offered by some ungodly people that Allah has rendered it into: “guessing at the unseen”. But the attitude of their number being ‘seven’ is from the side of the believers, the people of attention.

(This recent meaning is narrated from Amir-ul-Mu’mineen Ali (as) by the way of Ibn-‘Abbas).

That is why for these groups of people the Qur’an does not say “gussing at the unseen”, but, in order to respect them, between the number of: ‘the Companions of the Cave’ and ‘their dog’ there has occurred the conjunction ‘and’ in order to separate them from each other.

2. If the activities be valuable and human beings be with aim, their dependents and their belongings, even the animals accompanied them, should be counted, too, since being an animal and being unclean (najis) is not a reason for them to be counted valueless.

In this verse, the word 'dog' has been mentioned in three occurrences. The positive function of the 'dog' of the Companions of the Cave has been referred to in verse No. 18 of the current Surah.

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