

Sura18: Al-Kahf (The Cave)

In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy

A major part of this Sura is dedicated to the narration of a number of stories. The rest of the Sura provides a commentary on these stories, in addition to a description of a scene from the Day of Judgment. The stories narrated include the story of the companions of the cave, the story of the two gardens, the story of Moses (PBUH) and the righteous man, and the story of Zulqarnain. In addition, there is a brief reference to the story of Adam (PBUH) and Iblis. The stories are used to emphasize the main topical theme of the Sura. The main topical theme of the Sura discusses the use of true faith as a standard to define the foundation of the sound way of life and its values.

Hawwa mentions that the stories of the companions of the cave and Zulqarnain were narrated in response to the questions posed by the pagans of Mecca. He quotes al-Souoti in narrating the following story.

The pagans of Mecca consulted with the Jews of Medina about how to ascertain the prophethood of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The Jews suggested that they should ask him about three things: What is the spirit, what is the story of the companions of the cave, and what is the story of Zulqarnain. They said that if he answered these questions correctly, this would prove that he is a true prophet. The answer to the first question was given in Surat al-Israa, while the answers to the other two questions was mentioned in this Sura.

Hawwa also mentions the great benefits and blessings that accrue as a result of reciting Surat al-Kahf especially on Fridays.

Verses 1 to 27:

- 1. Praise be to God who sent down the Book upon His servant, and did not place any crookedness in it.*
- 2. (He has made it) Straight (and clear) in order that He may warn (the godless) of a terrible punishment from Him, and that He may give glad tidings to the believers who do good deeds, that they shall have a goodly reward.*
- 3. In which they shall remain forever.*
- 4. And to warn those who say, "God has taken a son."*
- 5. They have no knowledge of such a thing, nor had their fathers. Grave is the word that comes out of their mouths. They speak nothing but a lie.*
- 6. Perchance you would fret yourself to death, in grief, over them if they do not believe in this message.*
- 7. We have made whatever is on the earth an embellishment for it, so that We may try them (as to) which of them is best in deeds.*
- 8. Verily, We shall make what is on earth a barren ground.*
- 9. Or did you think that the Companions of the Cave and of the Inscription were some of Our wonderful signs?*
- 10. When the young men fled to the cave seeking refuge and said, "Our Lord, grant us mercy from Your presence, and provide for us a right course in our affair."*

11. *Then We sealed up their hearing in the Cave for a number of years.*
12. *Then We roused them, in order to test which of the two parties was best at calculating the time they had remained.*
13. *We narrate to you their story with truth. They were young men who believed in their Lord, and We increased them in guidance.*
14. *We strengthened their hearts when they stood up and said, "Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. We call upon no god beside Him, for then we would be uttering a transgression.*
15. *These, our people, have taken gods other than Him though they bring no clear proof. Who is in greater wrong than he who invents a lie against God?*
16. *And when you abandon them and that which they worship except God, then seek refuge in the cave; your Lord will spread for you of His mercy and will prepare for you an easy way out from your ordeal."*
17. *And (had you been present) you would have seen the sun, when it rose, declining to the right from their cave, and when it set, turning away from them to the left, while they lay in the open space in the midst of the cave. Such are among the signs of God. He whom God guides is rightly guided; but he whom God leaves to go astray, for him you will not find a protecting guardian to guide him.*
18. *(Had you seen them) You would have thought they were awake, while they were asleep, and We turned them on their right and on their left sides, their dog stretching his two fore-legs on the threshold. Had you seen them, you would have certainly turned back from them in flight, and would certainly have been filled with terror of them.*
19. *And thus We awakened them that they might question one another. A speaker from among them said, "How long have you remained?" They said, "We remained a day or some part of a day." (Others) said, "Your Lord knows best how long you remained. Now send one of you with this silver coin of yours to the city, and let him see what food is purest there and bring you a supply thereof. Let him be courteous and let no one know of you.*
20. *For if they should come upon you, they would stone you or force you to return to their cult, and in that case you would never succeed."*
21. *Thus did We make their case known to the people, that they might know that the promise of God is true, and that there can be no doubt about the Hour of Judgment. They disputed among themselves as to their affair. (Some) said, "Construct a building over them," Their Lord knows best about them. Those who prevailed over their affair said, "Let us surely build a place of worship over them."*
22. *(Some) will say they were three, the dog being the fourth among them; and (some) say they were five, the dog being the sixth, doubtfully guessing at the unknown; (yet others) say they were seven, the dog being the eighth. Say, "My Lord knows best their number." It is but few that know their (real case). Enter not, therefore, into controversies concerning them, except on a matter that is clear, nor consult any of them about (the affair of) them (the sleepers).*
23. *And never say of anything, "Indeed I shall do that tomorrow,"*
24. *Except if God wills. And remember your Lord when you forget, and say, "It may be that my Lord guides me to a way nearer to the truth than this."*
25. *And (it is said) they remained in their cave three hundred years plus nine.*

26. Say, "God knows best how long they stayed." With Him is (the knowledge of) the secrets of the heavens and the earth. How clearly He sees, how finely He hears (everything.) They have no protecting guardian other than Him; nor does He share His command with any person whatsoever.
27. And recite that which has been revealed to you of the Book of your Lord. None can change His words, and you will not a refuge other than Him. (18: 1 - 27)

"Praise be to God who sent down the Book upon His servant, and did not place any crookedness in it. (He has made it) Straight (and Clear) in order that He may warn (the godless) of a terrible punishment from Him, and that He may give glad tidings to the believers who do good deeds, that they shall have a goodly reward, In which they shall remain forever. And to warn those who say, "God has taken a son." They have no knowledge of such a thing, nor had their fathers. Grave is the word that comes out of their mouths. They speak nothing but a lie. Perchance you would fret yourself to death, in grief, over them if they do not believe in this Message. We have made whatever is on the earth an embellishment for it, so that We may try them (as to) which of them is best in deeds. Verily, We shall make what is on earth a barren ground." From the outset the verses set a clear framework for the doctrine. God is the One who revealed the Book, we should be grateful to God, Muhammad (PBUH) is God's servant, and God did not beget a son. The verses emphasize the clarity and authenticity of the Book. Its meanings are forthright and there is no deviation or ambiguity in them. The goal of the Book is clear; it brings a warning and a glad tidings. The language used to issue the warning is stern. First a general warning is issued followed by a specific warning to those who claim that God has begotten a son. They have no knowledge to support their claim. This is a major sin since it deals with the essence of the faith. The way the verse was worded magnifies the gravity of the sin by suggesting that their uttering is like a bullet coming out of their mouths. Then it emphasizes the falsity of their claim.

One can detect a note of disapproval, *"Perchance you would fret yourself to death, in grief, over them if they do not believe in this message."* The verse addresses the Prophet (PBUH) telling him that he should not feel bad about those people who rejected guidance. God created the earth and its ornaments as a testing ground for people. God knows what each and every one will do but He will only hold people accountable for their actions not according to His knowledge. This is out of God's immense mercy and fairness. In the end the earth will lose all its ornaments and become a barren ground.

The following verses tell the story of the companions of the cave. The story portrays an example of how faith brings security to the believing soul. The companions of the cave preferred to flee with their faith seeking refuge in an abandoned cave rather than enjoy the pleasures of life living in a faithless atmosphere. God rewarded them for their deeds and made them an example for humanity. The verses present a summary for the story first then it delves into the details of the story.

"Or did you think that the Companions of the Cave and of the Inscription were some of Our wonderful signs? When the young men fled to the cave seeking refuge and said, 'Our Lord, grant us mercy from Your presence, and provide for us a right course in our affair.' Then We sealed up their hearing in the Cave for a number of years. Then We roused them, in order to test which of

the two parties was best at calculating the time they had remained.” This is a summary of the story from which we know that the companions of the cave were young people – of unknown number – who were believers and they sought refuge in a cave. God put them to sleep for a number of years then He aroused them after their long sleep. Although this is an amazing story, but God’s signs in the universe around us are more amazing.

This was the summary, now we come to the details, *“We narrate to you their story with truth. They were young men who believed in their Lord, and We increased them in guidance. We strengthened their hearts when they stood up and said, “Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. We call upon no god beside Him, for then we would be uttering a transgression. These, our people, have taken gods other than Him though they bring no clear proof. Who is in greater wrong than he who invents a lie against God?”* This is the first scene in the story. Because they were young believers they received more guidance from God which enabled them to make the right decision. God strengthened their hearts and filled them with security and pride in their faith. They stood up against their people who were idol worshipers and acknowledged their own monotheistic faith. They were steadfast in rejecting any form of associating partners with God. They had no recourse but to part ways with their people because their ways became irreconcilable. They decided to flee with their faith. They were not messengers of God so they were not responsible for guiding their people to the right path. They were simply a group of young men who believed in God and could not live in this disbelieving environment. They made their belief known. They must have been persecuted by their people. Their only course of action which was available for them to escape the persecution was to flee to a cave. .

“And when you abandon them and that which they worship except God, then seek refuge in the cave; your Lord will spread for you of His mercy and will prepare for you an easy way out from your ordeal.” It is amazing how the mercy of God fills the hearts of the believers who abandoned their people and left the comfortable life of the city to the rugged life of the cave. God’s mercy filled their hearts with tranquility and strength so they felt comfortable in the cave.

“And (had you been present) you would have seen the sun, when it rose, declining to the right from their cave, and when it set, turning away from them to the left, while they lay in the open space in the midst of the cave. Such are among the signs of God. He whom God guides is rightly guided; but he whom God leaves to go astray, for him you will not find a protecting guardian to guide him. (Had you seen them) You would have thought they were awake, while they were asleep, and We turned them on their right and on their left sides, their dog stretching his two fore-legs on the threshold. Had you seen them, you would have certainly turned back from them in flight, and would certainly have been filled with terror of them.” The verses paint a dynamic scene as if it were a movie showing how the young men slept and how the sun moved away from the cave so that it would not disturb their sleep. These are signs of God. They stayed alive all this time. God’s guidance is controlled by His law. There are means for seeking and receiving guidance. Those who seek guidance and use the means that God has decreed will be guided by God. Those who reject guidance will never find anyone to guide them. The depiction of the scene continues. God moved them around in their sleep and the dog was sitting at the entrance of the cave as if it was providing protection. Anyone who saw them would run away in fear. This

was God's plan.

Then they got up, *“And thus We awakened them that they might question one another. A speaker from among them said, ‘How long have you remained?’ They said, ‘We remained a day or some part of a day.’ (Others) said, ‘Your Lord knows best how long you remained. Now send one of you with this silver coin of yours to the city, and let him see what food is purest there and bring you a supply thereof. Let him be courteous and let no one know of you. For if they should come upon you, they would stone you or force you to return to their cult, and in that case you would never succeed.’”* The verses describe the scene when they woke up. They did not know how long they had slept. Since they had no way of knowing how long they slept, they continued to discuss how they were going to get food from the town without being detected. They were afraid that if they were detected they would be captured and tortured or executed; and if they were forced to abandon their faith then this would be the greatest loss.

We understand from the narrative that while the young men were sleeping in the cave the people of the town had become believers. The people of the town celebrated the return of the young people. One can imagine the enormity of the surprise the young men must have experienced when they realized how long the period they spent sleeping. Their return was a miracle and people treated them as celebrities. But they have lost all ties to the community. The people they knew and cared for were all long gone. It was the mercy of God that now they would actually die. We can imagine all these intermediate scenes, but the Quran moves directly to the scene when they died. People were arguing how they should celebrate their story to keep their memory alive, *“Thus did We make their case known to the people, that they might know that the promise of God is true, and that there can be no doubt about the Hour of Judgment. They disputed among themselves as to their affair. (Some) said, ‘Construct a building over them,’ their Lord knows best about them. Those who prevailed over their affair said, ‘Let us surely build a place of worship over them.’”* The main lesson to be learned from this story is the fact that God is able to resurrect people after death. There is no doubt that God's promise will be fulfilled and that the Day of Judgement will come.

There were several stories about the number of these young people, *“(Some) will say they were three, the dog being the fourth among them; and (some) say they were five, the dog being the sixth, doubtfully guessing at the unknown; (yet others) say they were seven, the dog being the eighth. Say, ‘My Lord knows best their number.’ It is but few that know their (real case). Enter not, therefore, into controversies concerning them, except on a matter that is clear, nor consult any of them about (the affair of) them (the sleepers).”* It is really not important to know how many they were. God knows their exact count. The objective of the story has been achieved whether they were many or few. So the Quran commands the Prophet (PBUH) not to get into an argument with anyone about their number.

“And never say of anything, ‘Indeed I shall do that tomorrow,’” Every move one makes and every breath one inhales is controlled by God's will. Humankind is unable to see beyond the present moment. So do not say that you will do this tomorrow, because tomorrow is unseen as far as mortals are concerned. This does not mean that we stop thinking and planning about the

future, but what it means is that we need to enlist God's help for the success of our plans. Humankind must think and plan but he should realize that his thoughts and his planning are a blessing from God. One has to do one's best to achieve his/her goal but should realize that the results are in the hand of God. One has to accept the results that God has decreed and submit to His will, *"Except if God wills. And remember your Lord when you forget, and say, 'It may be that my Lord guides me to a nearer way of truth than this.'"*

The narrative comes back to the story of the companions of the cave, *"And (it is said) they remained in their cave three hundred years plus nine. Say, 'God knows best how long they stayed.' With Him is (the knowledge of) the secrets of the heavens and the earth. How clearly He sees, how finely He hears (everything.) They have no protecting guardian other than Him; nor does He share His Command with any person whatsoever."* The verse states the principle of the oneness of God which is the underlying theme of the story.

A command was then issued to the Prophet (PBUH), *"And recites that which has been revealed to you of the Book of your Lord. None can change His words, and you will not a refuge other than Him."*

Verses 28 to 46

28. *And persevere with those who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His Face; and let not your eyes pass beyond them, seeking the pomp and glitter of this Life; nor obey any whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance, who follows his own whim and whose affair is ever in neglect.*
29. *And Say, "The truth is from your Lord." Then whosoever wills, let him believe, and whosoever wills, let him disbelieve. We have prepared for the disbelievers Fire. They will be surrounded by it from all sides. If they ask for relief, they will be showered with water like molten lead which burns the faces, evil the drink and ill the resting-place.*
30. *As to those who believe and do good deeds, verily We shall not waste the reward of any who does a good deed.*
31. *For them will be Gardens of Eden; beneath them rivers will flow; they will be adorned therein with bracelets of gold, and they will wear green garments of fine silk and heavy brocade. They will recline therein on raised couches. Excellent is the recompense and good is the resting place.*
32. *Set forth to them the parable of two men. For one of them We provided two gardens of grape-vines and surrounded them with date palms; in between the two We placed corn-fields.*
33. *Each of those gardens brought forth its produce, and failed not in the least therein. In the midst of them We caused a river to flow.*
34. *(Abundant) was the produce this man had. He said to his companion, in the course of a mutual argument, "I have more wealth, honour, and power than you."*
35. *And he went into his garden, while he (thus) wronged himself. He said, "I think not that all this will ever perish."*

36. *I do not think that the Hour will ever come, and if indeed I am brought back to my Lord I will most certainly find better than this as a resort.*
37. *His companion said to him, in the course of the argument with him, "Did you reject Him who created you out of dust, then out of a sperm-drop, then fashioned you into a man?"*
38. *But He is God, my Lord, and I do not associate anyone with my Lord.*
39. *If only, when you entered your garden, you had said, "That which God wills (will come to pass.) There is no strength save that given by God. Though you see me as less than you in wealth and children,*
40. *Yet it may be that my Lord will give me better than your garden, and will send on it a bolt from the sky, and some morning it will be a smooth ground without plants;*
41. *Or the water of the garden will run off underground so that you will never be able to find it."*
42. *So his fruits were destroyed, and he remained twisting and turning his hands over what he had spent on his property, which had (now) tumbled to pieces to its very foundations, and he could only say, "I wish I had not associated partners with my Lord."*
43. *And he had no one to help him against God, nor could he save himself.*
44. *Protection comes only from the True God, He provides the best reward, and guarantees the best outcome.*
45. *Set forth to them the similitude of the life of this world. It is like the rain which we send down from the skies. The earth's vegetation absorbs it, but soon it becomes dry stubble, which the winds do scatter. It is (only) God who has power over all things.*
46. *Wealth and children are the ornament of the life of this world. But good deeds which endure are better in your Lord's sight for reward, and better grounds for hope. (18: 28 – 46)*

The following verses establish the values which are entrenched in the Islamic faith. Wealth, authority, power, and material pleasures are not the true values of human life. These are all transient commodities. Islam allows its adherents to enjoy these pleasures when they are obtained through legitimate means. One should be grateful to God that allowed the enjoyment of such pleasures. However, these pleasures should not be an end in themselves and the good deeds that endure are better than the transient pleasures. The Quran commands the Prophet (PBUH) to choose the company of those who remember God over the company of those who are heedless, *"And persevere with those who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His Face; and let not your eyes pass beyond them, seeking the pomp and glitter of this Life; nor obey any whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance, who follows his own whim and whose affair is ever in neglect. And Say, "The truth is from your Lord." Then whosoever wills, let him believe, and whosoever wills, let him disbelieve. We have prepared for the disbelievers Fire. They will be surrounded by it from all sides. If they ask for relief, they will be relieved with water like molten lead which burns the faces, evil the drink and ill the resting-place."*

It is narrated that this verse was revealed when some of the chiefs of Quraish wanted a private audience with the Prophet (PBUH) that does not include the poverty stricken Muslims like Bilal (RA), Suhaib (RA), 'Ammar (RA) and others. The Prophet (PBUH) thought that may be if he granted the chiefs their request they would adopt Islam. This verse came down to establish a fundamental principle and to outline the correct values of life. The Prophet (PBUH) should be

perseverant and continue with those who continuously seek God's blessings. These are the people who will be willing to support the message wholeheartedly. The Prophet (PBUH) was commanded to keep their company and not to listen to a person, "*whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance, who follows his own whim and whose affair is ever in neglect.*" A heart that is full of love for the transient worldly pleasures has no room for God's remembrance, it is a heedless heart.

Islam came to make all people equal. The status of people should neither be decided on the basis of wealth nor on the basis of power. The status of people is decided on the basis of their dedication and devotion to God.

The Prophet (PBUH) was commanded to, "*Say, 'The truth is from your Lord.'* Then whosoever wills, let him believe, and whosoever wills, let him disbelieve." This is an unequivocal statement that establishes a firm rule. There is no compromise regarding matters of doctrine. The doctrine has been established by God, no one else has the power to change it.

The end of the disbelievers is presented through a depiction of one of the scenes of the Day of Judgment, "*We have prepared for disbelievers Fire. They will be surrounded by it from all sides. If they ask for relief, they will be relieved with water like molten lead which burns the faces, evil is the drink and ill is the resting-place.*" But the believers will enjoy their reward, "*As to those who believe and do good deeds, verily We shall not waste the reward of any who does a good deed. For them will be Gardens of Eden; beneath them rivers will flow; they will be adorned therein with bracelets of gold, and they will wear green garments of fine silk and heavy brocade. They will recline therein on raised couches. Excellent is the recompense and good is the resting place.*"

The subsequent verses narrate the story of two men one of them had two gardens while the other did not have any. The story depicts two kinds of people, the rich man who embraced the worldly life and the poor man who finds his pride in his faith. The rich man whose indulgence in the worldly pleasures made him forget about God and the Hereafter; and the believing man who continuously remembers God realizing that whatever he has is a blessing from God for which he should express his gratitude. The first scene is the scene of two blooming gardens, "*Set forth to them the parable of two men. For one of them We provided two gardens of grape-vines and surrounded them with date palms; in between the two We placed corn-fields. Each of those gardens brought forth its produce, and failed not in the least therein. In the midst of them We caused a river to flow. (Abundant) was the produce this man had.*" The two gardens were blooming with grapes, the palm trees produced dates, and there are plenty of crops in between. It is a beautiful scene that reflects vivid life and richness. The gardens gave their produce in full, nothing was lost. When the owner of the gardens looked at them he became arrogant, "*He said to his companion, in the course of a mutual argument, 'I have more wealth, honour, and power than you.'*" He forgot that it is God who bestows His bounty on people. His arrogance made him reject the truth of the Day of Judgement, "*And he went into his garden, while he (thus) wronged himself. He said, 'I think not that all this will ever perish. I do not think that the Hour will ever come, and if indeed I am brought back to my Lord I will most certainly find better than this as a*

resort.”

The other man did not have gardens and he was poor but he was proud to espouse the everlasting values of this life. He was proud of his faith and proud of the blessings of God. He warned his companion of the evil consequences of his attitude; he advised him to remember God’s bounty and to show gratitude to God, *“His companion said to him, in the course of the argument with him, ‘Did you reject Him who created you out of dust, then out of a sperm-drop, then fashioned you into a man? But He is God, my Lord, and I do not associate anyone with my Lord. If only, when you entered your garden, you had said, “That which God wills (will come to pass.) There is no strength save that given by God.” Though you see me as less than you in wealth and children, Yet it may be that my Lord will give me better than your garden, and will send on it a bolt from the sky, and some morning it will be a smooth ground without plants; or the water of the garden will run off underground so that you will never be able to find it.’”*

The narrative suddenly moved from the scene of the blooming gardens to the scene of destruction and devastation. The arrogant man became sorry for what he had done. What the believing man had expected happened, *“So his fruits were destroyed, and he remained twisting and turning his hands over what he had spent on his property, which had (now) tumbled to pieces to its very foundations, and he could only say, ‘I wish I had not associated partners with my Lord.’”* The two gardens were completely destroyed and no produce was left.

Only God has the absolute power, *“And he had no one to help him against God, nor could he save himself. Protection comes only from the True God, He provides the best reward, and guarantees the best outcome.”*

The example of the life of this world is like the example of the two gardens. It will not last long, *“Set forth to them the similitude of the life of this world. It is like the rain which we send down from the skies. The earth's vegetation absorbs it, but soon it becomes dry stubble, which the winds do scatter. It is (only) God who has power over all things.”* This is a very short scene appropriate for the example being struck for the short duration of the life of this world. But the real value of this life is given, *“Wealth and children are the ornament of the life of this world. But good deeds which endure are better in your Lord's sight for reward, and better grounds for hope.”* Wealth and children are the ornaments of this worldly life but they should not be used as criteria for determining the eminence of people. The real value is gained by doing good deeds which endure.

Verses 47 to 59:

- 47. And (warn of) the day on which We will cause the mountains to pass away and you will see the earth exposed and We will gather them and leave not any one of them behind.*
- 48. And they will be marshalled before your Lord in ranks, (and it will be said to them),
“Now you have come to Us as We created you the first time and you thought We shall not fulfill the appointment made to you to meet (Us).”*

49. *And the record will be placed, and you will see the guilty fearful of that which is therein, and they will say, "What kind of record is this that does leave out neither a small thing nor a great thing but counted it." And they will find all that they did present (before them), and your Lord wrongs no one.*
50. *And (remember) when We said to the angels, "Fall prostrate before Adam," and they fell prostrate, all save Iblis. He was of the jinn, so he rebelled against his Lord's command. Will you take him and his seed as your protecting guardians instead of Me, when they are your enemy? Wretched it is for the wrongdoers as an exchange.*
51. *I did not make them to witness the creation of the heavens and the earth, nor their own creation; I would not have taken those who lead (others) astray as helpers.*
52. *And (be mindful of) the Day when He will say, "Call those whom you claimed as partners of Mine." Then they will call them, but they will not respond to their call, and We shall set a gulf of doom between them.*
53. *And the guilty will see the Fire and will know that they are about to fall therein, and they will find no way of escape from it.*
54. *Verily, We have explained in detail in this Quran, for the benefit of humankind, every kind of similitude; but humankind is more contentious than any other 'thing.'*
55. *And what prevented people from believing now that guidance has come to them, and from asking the forgiveness of their Lord, except that what happened to the ancients should overtake them, or (that) they should be confronted with the torment.*
56. *We only send the messengers to give glad tidings and to give warnings. But the disbelievers dispute with vain argument, in order therewith to weaken the truth; and they treat My revelation and the warning that had been issued to them as a jest.*
57. *And who does greater wrong than one who is reminded of the revelations of his Lord, but turns away from them, forgetting the (deeds) which his hands have sent forth? Verily We have set veils over their hearts lest they should understand this, and deafness over their ears. If you call them to guidance, they will never follow the right course.*
58. *Your Lord is All-Forgiving, Full of Mercy. If He took them to task (now) for what they earned, He would hasten on the torment for them; but theirs is an appointed term from which they will find no escape.*
59. *And (all) those townships, We destroyed them when they acted unjustly, and We have appointed a time for their destruction. (18: 47 – 59)*

"And (warn of) the day on which We will cause the mountains to pass away and you will see the earth exposed and We will gather them and leave not any one of them behind. And they will be marshalled before your Lord in ranks, (and it will be said to them), "Now you have come to Us as We created you the first time and you thought We shall not fulfill the appointment made to you to meet (Us)." The verses paint a scene using elements from the nature to emphasize the horror on the Day of Judgment. The panic on that day will move the heavy stable mountains. The earth will be exposed as an open flat page; similarly, the secrets of the hearts will be exposed. Everyone will be gathered, from the time of Adam (PBUH) to the end of time, and they will be standing in rows in front of their Lord. The narrative changes from the mode of description to the mode of addressing people who will be gathered on that day. They thought that this day will never come but here it is and you are standing in front of your Lord feeling humiliated.

Then the narrative continues, *“And the record will be placed, and you will see the guilty fearful of that which is therein, and they will say, ‘What kind of record is this that does leave out neither a small thing nor a great thing but counted it.’ And they will find all that they did present (before them), and your Lord wrongs no one.”* They will get their records, very meticulous records that do not leave anything out. They will be held accountable for what they did and they will get their fair recompense. God does not wrong anyone.

Those who will be regretting their actions on the Day of Judgement were forewarned about Satan and how he was determined to lead them astray, in spite of that they followed him, *“And (remember) when We said to the angels, ‘Fall prostrate before Adam,’ and they fell prostrate, all save Iblis. He was of the jinn, so he rebelled against his Lord's command. Will you take him and his seed as your protecting friends instead of Me, when they are your enemy? Wretched it is for the wrongdoers as an exchange.”* The reference to the story of Adam (PBUH) and Iblis is made to express how amazing it is that the descendants of Adam (PBUH) still fall for the temptation of the descendants of Iblis after they had realized that they were their enemies. They have taken the descendants of Satan as their protecting friends when they fell for their temptation and disobeyed God. Why did the criminals take the descendants of Satan as protecting friends while they had no extraordinary knowledge or power, *“I did not make them to witness the creation of the heavens and the earth, nor their own creation; I would not have taken those who lead (others) astray as helpers.”* God is independent, He does not need helpers but the verse exposes the myth that the idolaters were propagating. They thought that Satan and his descendants have extraordinary knowledge and power.

On the Day of Judgement God will address the guilty, *“And (be mindful of) the Day when He will say, ‘Call those whom you claimed as partners of Mine.’ Then they will call them, but they will not respond to their call, and We shall set a gulf of doom between them. And the guilty will see the Fire and will know that they are about to fall therein, and they will find no way of escape from it.”* The disbelievers will be placed in a difficult position. They will be asked to produce those whom they associated with God but they will not find them. They will look up and see the Fire and will realize that this is their end.

“Verily, We have explained in detail in this Quran, for the benefit of humankind, every kind of similitude; but humankind is more contentious than any other ‘thing.’” The verse refers to humankind as a *“thing,”* and as *“contentious,”* to induce humankind to moderate his arrogance and make him realize that God has created so many other creatures. Humankind was more contentious than any of the other creatures of God.

“And what prevented people from believing now that guidance has come to them, and from asking the forgiveness of their Lord, except that what happened to the ancients should overtake them, or (that) they should be confronted with the torment.” Many earlier generations received guidance from God but they always challenged the messengers to bring about the punishment that they were threatened with. The messengers’ role was only to deliver the message not to exact punishment, *“We only send the messengers to give glad tidings and to give warnings. But*

the disbelievers dispute with vain argument, in order therewith to weaken the truth; and they treat My revelation and the warning that had been issued to them as a jest.” The truth was obvious to them but they argued falsely against it, “And who does greater wrong than one who is reminded of the revelations of his Lord, but turns away from them, forgetting the (deeds) which his hands have sent forth? Verily We have set veils over their hearts lest they should understand this, and deafness over their ears. If you call them to guidance, they will never follow the right course.” There is no hope that those who were mocking the Prophet (PBUH), and the verses of the Quran, will ever find guidance. God gave them respite to a specified term, “Your Lord is the All-Forgiving, Full of Mercy. If He took them to task (now) for what they earned, He would hasten on the torment for them; but theirs is an appointed term from which they will find no escape.” They should not misunderstand God’s reprieve because the term will end and they will meet the promised destiny, “And (all) those townships, We destroyed them when they acted unjustly, and We have appointed a time for their destruction.

Verses 60 to 82:

60. *And when Moses said to his servant, “I will not give up until I reach the point where the two seas meet, or will continue on for ages.”*
61. *But when they reached the junction, they forgot (about) their fish, which took its course into the sea, slipping away.*
62. *And when they had gone further, he said to his servant, “Bring us our midday meal. Verily we have become tired in our journey.”*
63. *He said, “Did you see, when we took refuge on the rock, I forgot the fish - and none but Satan caused me to forget to mention it - it took its way into the sea amazingly.”*
64. *He (Moses) said, “This was what we were seeking.” So they retraced their steps again.*
65. *Then they found one of Our servants, to whom We had given mercy from Us, and had taught him knowledge from Our presence.*
66. *Moses said to him, “May I follow you; that you may teach me from what you have been taught of sound judgment?”*
67. *(The other) said, “Verily you will not be able to have patience with me;*
68. *And how can you have patience about things about which you did not get a comprehensive knowledge?”*
69. *Moses said, “You will find me, if God so wills, perseverant; nor shall I disobey you in any matter.”*
70. *He said, “If you go with me, ask me not concerning anything till I myself make mention of it to you.”*
71. *So they both proceeded until, when they were in the boat, he made a hole therein. (Moses) said, “Did you make a hole therein to drown its people?” You verily did a dreadful thing.”*
72. *He answered, “Did I not say that you will not be able to have patience with me?”*
73. *Moses said, “Do not rebuke me for forgetting, nor be hard upon me for my fault.”*
74. *Then they proceeded until, when they met a young man, he slew him. Moses said, “Did you slew an innocent person who had slain none? Truly you have done a horrid thing.”*
75. *He answered, “Did I not tell you that you will not be able to have patience with me?”*

76. *(Moses) said, "If I ever ask you about anything after this, keep me not in your company. You have received an excuse from me."*
77. *Then they proceeded until, when they came to the inhabitants of a town, they asked them for food, but they refused them hospitality. They found there a wall on the point of falling down, but he set it up straight. (Moses) said, "If you had wished, you could have taken some payment for it."*
78. *He answered, "This is the parting between you and me. Now I will tell you the interpretation of (those things) over which you were unable to hold patience."*
79. *As for the boat, it belonged to poor people working at sea. I wanted to mar it, for there was after them a king who used to seize every boat by force.*
80. *And as for the lad, his parents were believers and we feared that he would oppress them by rebellion and disbelief.*
81. *So we desired that their Lord would give them in exchange (a son) better in purity (of conduct) and closer in affection.*
82. *As for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the town; and there was a treasure buried beneath it, to which they were entitled. Their father had been a righteous man. So your Lord desired that they should attain their age of full strength and get out their treasure - a mercy (and favour) from your Lord. I did it not of my own accord. Such is the interpretation of (those things) over which you were unable to hold patience." (18: 60 - 82)*

This episode from the story of Prophet Moses (PBUH) appears in this Sura only. The Quran does not specify the location in which it took place. The location is only referred to as, *"the point where the two seas meet."* The Quran also did not fix the date of this episode. No information was given about the righteous servant of God whom Moses (PBUH) was looking for.

We understand from the narrative that Moses (PBUH) was determined to reach the point at which the two seas meet no matter how difficult it was or how long it would take him to get there, *"And when Moses said to his servant, 'I will not give up until I reach the point where the two seas meet, or will continue on for ages.'"*

"But when they reached the junction, they forgot (about) their fish, which took its course into the sea, slipping away. And when they had gone further, he said to his servant, 'Bring us our midday meal. Verily we have become tired in our journey.' He said, 'Did you see, when we took refuge on the rock, I forgot the fish - and none but Satan caused me to forget to mention it - it took its way into the sea amazingly.'" Moses (PBUH) realized that he missed the place where he was supposed to meet the righteous servant of God. So Moses (PBUH) and his servant went back and he found the righteous man at the rock, *"He (Moses) said, 'This was what we were seeking.' So they retraced their steps again. Then they found one of Our servants, to whom We had given mercy from Us, and had taught him knowledge from Our presence."*

It seems that the encounter between Moses (PBUH) and the righteous man was meant to be a confidential meeting. So there is no mention of Moses' (PBUH) servant in the following verses,

“Moses said to him, ‘May I follow you, that you may teach me from what you have been taught of sound judgment?’” Moses (PBUH) requested the righteous man’s company in a very polite way, a way that is befitting of a prophet. He wanted to learn from the righteous man. The knowledge that this man had was not normal human knowledge but it was a special kind of knowledge which the man had received from his Lord. The man realized that Moses (PBUH), being not privy to such knowledge, will not be able to put up with the strange things that they will encounter. So he warned Moses (PBUH), “*(The other) said, ‘Verily you will not be able to have patience with me; and how can you have patience about things about which you did not get comprehensive knowledge?’*” But Moses (PBUH) was determined to accompany the man; he enlisted the help of God to give him patience, “*Moses said, ‘You will find me, if God so wills, perseverant; nor shall I disobey you in any matter.’*” The man then outlined his conditions to allow Moses (PBUH) to accompany him, “*He said, ‘If you go with me, ask me not concerning anything till I myself make mention of it to you.’*” Moses (PBUH) agreed. They proceeded together. The following verse describes the first scene of the trip, “*So they both proceeded until, when they were in the boat, he made a hole therein. (Moses) said, ‘Did you make a hole therein to drown its people? You verily did a dreadful thing.’*” Moses (PBUH) was surprised by what the righteous man did when they boarded the ship among others. The ship was at sea and the righteous man drilled a hole in the ship. It was apparent that this action will cause the ship to sink and subject the people to drowning. Why would the man do this? Moses (PBUH) forgot what the man told him and forgot his promise to the man. Sometimes one agrees to do something in principle but gets to appreciate the gravity of the consequences of the deed when one actually has to perform what he had agreed upon. Moses (PBUH) was told that he would not be able to be patient, seeing surprising things which are happening without an apparent justification. Nevertheless, Moses (PBUH) was determined to accompany the righteous man. Moses asked God for help and made up his mind to be patient but when he saw the man drilling a hole in the ship he could not stand by and watch silently. This behavior was in conformity with Moses (PBUH) personality. It appears that Moses (PBUH) was an emotional and impulsive man. This nature was apparent when he tried to support his fellow Jew and pushed the Egyptian who was fighting with the Jew and the Egyptian fell dead. Moses (PBUH) asked God for forgiveness and God forgave him, but the next day the same story was about to be repeated again.

The righteous man responded to Moses’ (PBUH) objection calmly and nicely, “*He answered, ‘Did I not say that you will not be able to have patience with me?’*” Moses (PBUH) remembered the promise he made so he apologized, “*Moses said, ‘Do not rebuke me for forgetting, nor be hard upon me for my fault.’*” The righteous man accepted his apology and they continued on their trip, “*Then they proceeded until, when they met a young man, he slew him. Moses said, ‘Did you slew an innocent person who had slain none? Truly you have done a horrid thing.’*” Moses (PBUH) could not have stood silent seeing an innocent young man being killed. He objected strenuously. The righteous man responded, “*He answered, ‘Did I not tell you that you will not be able to have patience with me?’*” One can notice the emphasis in the righteous man’s second response, “*Did I not tell you.*” Moses (PBUH) asked the righteous man to give him one last chance, “*(Moses) said, ‘If I ever ask you about anything after this, keep me not in your company. You have received an excuse from me.’*”

They proceeded, *“until, when they came to the inhabitants of a town, they asked them for food, but they refused them hospitality. They found there a wall on the point of falling down, but he set it up straight. (Moses) said, ‘If you had wished, you could have taken some payment for it.’”* They were hungry, the people of the town refused to feed them but the man saw a wall that was about to collapse so he volunteered to repair it. That looked contradictory to Moses (PBUH), again he could not keep himself from sounding his objection. This was his last chance, *“He answered, ‘This is the parting between you and me. Now I will tell you the interpretation of (those things) over which you were unable to hold patience.’”*

So far we are in the same boat as Moses (PBUH). We are facing these surprising acts that the righteous man performed without having any inkling of what was behind them. We do not even know the name of the righteous man. However, what do we gain had we known his name? The lesson that we learn is that the divine wisdom may allow things, which seems unreasonable to us, to happen because they will result in the achievement of beneficial goals in the long term. The fact that the identity of the righteous man was kept hidden is befitting to a story that deals with the knowledge of the unseen.

The righteous man started to explain the reasons behind his actions, *“As for the boat, it belonged to poor people working at sea. I wanted to mar it, for there was after them a king who used to seize every boat by force.”* The hole that the righteous man drilled would render the boat undesirable in the sight of the king and its owners will be able to keep it.

“And as for the lad, his parents were believers and we feared that he would oppress them by rebellion and disbelief. So we desired that their Lord would give them in exchange (a son) better in purity (of conduct) and closer in affection.” The young man may have been innocent but he was going to be a tyrant and had he been allowed to live he would have caused his parents a great deal of agony and harm. The decision to kill the young man was based on divine knowledge revealed to the righteous man. Such a decision is not a human prerogative. Human judgement should only be based on known facts. According to Islamic law since the young man did not commit a crime so far he should not have been killed. But here we are dealing with the knowledge of the unseen.

Finally, the matter of the wall is explained, *“As for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the town; and there was a treasure buried beneath it, to which they were entitled. Their father had been a righteous man. So your Lord desired that they should attain their age of full strength and get out their treasure - a mercy (and favour) from your Lord. I did it not of my own accord. Such is the interpretation of (those things) over which you were unable to hold patience.”* God wanted the two orphans to grow up and reclaim the treasure which their father left for them. The treasure was buried under the wall and had the man not repaired the wall the treasure would have been exposed and the two boys would have lost their treasure. Their father was a righteous man so God wanted to reward them for their father’s deeds.

The story of the righteous man and the story of the companions of the cave share the common theme of trusting the unseen to God. He manages the affairs according to His divine wisdom and

comprehensive and absolute knowledge. Such knowledge is kept hidden from people to be revealed only to whom God wills and at the right time.

Verses 83 to 110:

83. *And they ask you about Zulqarnain. Say, "I will recite to you an account of him."*
84. *Verily We established him on earth, and We gave him the ways and the means to all ends.*
85. *And he followed a road;*
86. *Till, when he reached the setting-place of the sun, he found it setting in a muddy spring, and found a people thereabout. We said, "Zulqarnain, either you torment or show them kindness."*
87. *He said, "We will torment whoever does wrong, then he will be sent back to his Lord; and He will punish him an awful torment.*
88. *But whoever believes, and does good deeds, he shall have a goodly reward, and easy will be his task as we order it by our command."*
89. *Then he followed a road;*
90. *Till, when he reached the rising-place of the sun, he found it rising on a people for whom We had given no shelter therefrom.*
91. *So (it was). And We knew all about him.*
92. *Then he followed a road;*
93. *Till, when he reached (a pass) between the two mountains, he found beside them a people who could hardly understand a word.*
94. *They said, "Zulqarnain, verily Gog and Magog make mischief in the land. Shall we then pay you a tribute on condition that you erect a barrier between us and them?"*
95. *He said, "That which the Lord empowered me with is better (than your tribute). Help me therefore with strength (labour), I will erect a strong barrier between you and them.*
96. *Bring me blocks of iron." At length, when he had filled up the space between the two steep mountain-sides, He said, "Blow (with your bellows.)" Then, when he had made it (red) as fire, he said, "Bring me molten copper to pour upon it."*
97. *And (Gog and Magog) were not able to surmount, nor could they pierce (it).*
98. *He said, "This is a mercy from my Lord. But when the promise of my Lord comes to pass, He will make it into dust; and the promise of my Lord is true."*
99. *On that Day We shall leave them to surge like waves on one another. The trumpet will be blown, and We shall gather them all together.*
100. *And We shall present Hell that Day for disbelievers to see, all spread out.*
101. *Those whose eyes were blind to My reminder, and who could not even hear.*
102. *Did the disbelievers think that they can take My servants as protecting guardians besides Me? Verily We have prepared Hell as a lodge for the disbelievers.*
103. *Say, "Shall we tell you of those who lose most in respect of their deeds?"*
104. *Those whose efforts have been wasted in this life, while they thought that they were doing good deeds?*
105. *Those are they who disbelieved in the revelations of their Lord and in the meeting with Him. Therefor their deeds are in vain, and on the Day of Resurrection We assign no weight to them.*
106. *That is their reward, Hell, because they disbelieved, and made a jest of Our revelations and Our messengers.*

107. *As to those who believed and did good deeds, they have, for their lodging, the gardens of paradise,*
108. *Wherein they shall dwell for ever with no desire to be removed from them.”*
109. *Say, “If the sea became ink for the words of my Lord, verily the sea would be used up before the words of my Lord were exhausted, even if We brought the like of it as a supplement.”*
110. *Say, “I am only a mortal like you. It has been revealed to me that your God is only One God. And whoever hopes for the meeting with his Lord, let him do good deeds, and do not associate partners with his Lord.” (18: 83 – 110)*

“*And they ask you about Zulqarnain. Say, ‘I will recite to you an account of him.’*” Muhammad bin Ishaq narrated (through a chain of narration that quoted Ibn Abbas (RA)) that this Sura was revealed to answer questions that the idolater Arabs asked the Prophet (PBUH). Quraish sent Al-Nadar bin Al-Hareth and ‘Oquobah bin Abi Ma’et to ask the Jews of Medina about Muhammad (PBUH). The Jews of Medina came up with three questions for Quraish to ask Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). They said to them only a prophet would be able to give the correct answers to these questions. The questions were about the companions of the cave, a man who travelled from one end of the earth to the other end, and the nature of the spirit. Al-Nadar and ‘Oquobah came back from Medina and told their people the three questions. The chiefs of Quraish went to the Prophet (PBUH) and asked him to give them answers to the three questions. The Prophet (PBUH) told them that he will give them the answers the following day. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) waited for a revelation from God to give him the answers however; his waiting period went on for two weeks. The chiefs of Quraish started to be critical of the Prophet (PBUH). He was saddened by what the chiefs of Quraish were saying. At the end of the two weeks the angel Gabriel came to him and gave him Surat Al-Kahf, telling him not to be saddened by what the chiefs of Quraish were saying and giving him the answers to the three questions.

There are other narrations which deal with the reasons behind the revelation of this Sura. It is better not to dwell on them. It is better to focus on the Quranic text which indicates that the questions were posed to the Prophet (PBUH). However, the Quran does not indicate who asked the questions, “*And they ask you about Zulqarnain.*” The answer to this question indicated that God gave Zulqarnain great power which enabled him to establish a vast kingdom, “*Verily We established him on earth, and We gave him the ways and the means to all ends.*” Zulqarnain travelled westward, “*And he followed a road; till, when he reached the setting-place of the sun, he found it setting in a muddy spring, and found a people thereabout. We said, ‘Zulqarnain, either you torment or show them kindness.’*” It is difficult to determine the place that he reached in his travel but it seems that he was able to reach a place from which he saw that the sun was setting into a lake. He found a people there. God gave him the choice to either punish them or to treat them kindly. This may had been either a revelation or an inspiration. Zulqarnain announced his policy regarding treating the people whom he conquered, “*He said, ‘We will torment whoever does wrong, then he will be sent back to his Lord; and He will punish him an awful torment. But whoever believes, and does good deeds, he shall have a goodly reward, and easy will be his task as we order it by our command.’*” He announced that the wrongdoers will be punished in this life; then they will get their just recompense in the Hereafter. The believers who do good deeds will be treated kindly and God will reward them nicely on the Day of Judgment.

Then he travelled eastward, *“Till, when he reached the rising-place of the sun, he found it rising on a people for whom We had given no shelter therefrom. So (it was). And We knew all about him.”* Again we have no certain knowledge where his travel took him eastward, but it seems that he reached a place where the land was flat with no mountains or trees. Most likely this was a desert where a person would have no place to hide from the sun’s heat. One can draw a likeness between the open flat land and the psyche of Zulqarnain. Like the open flat land, Zulqarnain had no hidden agenda. His plans and policies were declared and made known.

He continued until he reached a place where he found a people who had great difficulty understanding him, *“Then he followed a road; till, when he reached (a pass) between the two mountains, he found beside them a people who could hardly understand a word.”* However, somehow they communicated to him their needs. They wanted a barrier to protect them from the attacks of Gog and Magog, *“They said, ‘Zulqarnain, verily Gog and Magog make mischief in the land. Shall we then pay you a tribute on condition that you erect a barrier between us and them?’”* According to his policies which supported the righteous and fought the wrongdoers, Zulqarnain agreed to offer his help without compensation. He wanted to build a dam that extended from one mountain to the other. Instead of compensation, he asked them to help him with their manual labor, *“He said, ‘That which the Lord empowered me with is better (than your tribute). Help me therefore with strength (labour), I will erect a strong barrier between you and them. Bring me blocks of iron.’”* He blocked the passage between the two mountains with blocks of iron. Then he asked them to heat the iron, *“At length, when he had filled up the space between the two steep mountain-sides, He said, ‘Blow (with your bellows.)’ Then, when he had made it (red) as fire, he said, ‘Bring me molten copper to pour upon it.’”* When the iron melted and looked as if it were a fire, he poured over it molten copper. Thus the dam was made from an iron alloy. The dam was very strong so, *“Gog and Magog were not able to surmount, nor could they pierce (it).”*

The concept of the alloys was only discovered recently, but Zulqarnain was far ahead of his time. When Zulqarnain saw the great barrier he built; he remembered that the power and the knowledge that he had were a gift from God. He expressed his gratitude to God. He also reminded the people that all these great buildings will be destroyed on the Day of Judgment, *“He said, ‘This is a mercy from my Lord. But when the promise of my Lord comes to pass, He will make it into dust; and the promise of my Lord is true.’”*

This is the story of a righteous king; God gave him power and knowledge that helped him establish a vast kingdom and was able to travel the earth from one end to the other but never became conceited or arrogant. He acknowledged the bounty of God and expressed his gratitude to Him.

The Sura ends with a scene from the Day of Judgment, *“On that day We shall leave them to surge like waves on one another. The trumpet will be blown, and We shall gather them all together. And We shall present Hell that day for the disbelievers to see, all spread out. Those whose eyes were blind to My reminder, and who could not even hear.”* It is a scene that depicts a multitude of people of different races, colors, places, and ages gathered together moving randomly shoving and pushing each other in a chaotic way like sea waves. When the trumpet is

blown they will all stand in lines and Hellfire will be presented to them. The disbelievers will not be able to turn away from it as they used to turn away from God's revelations before. Did they think that they could find support in God's creatures against Him, *"Did the disbelievers think that they can take My servants as protecting guardians besides Me? Verily We have prepared Hell as a lodge for the disbelievers."* The disbelievers will find their resting place in Hellfire.

The Sura ends with three short statements. The first statement juxtaposes the values of the disbelievers versus those of the believers, *"Say, 'Shall we tell you of those who lose most in respect of their deeds? Those whose efforts have been wasted in this life, while they thought that they were doing good deeds? Those are they who disbelieved in the revelations of their Lord and in the meeting with Him. Therefore their deeds are in vain, and on the Day of Resurrection We assign no weight to them.'"* These are the values of the disbelievers who lost their way in the worldly life. They thought that they were doing good deeds but they were heedless and their heedlessness rendered all their deeds in vain. Their deeds will be worthless on the Day of Judgement and they will end up in Hell fire, *"That is their reward, Hell, because they disbelieved, and made a jest of Our revelations and Our messengers."* But those who believed, *"As to those who believed and did good deeds, they have, for their lodging, the gardens of paradise, wherein they shall dwell for ever with no desire to be removed from them."* One may reflect on the expression, *"with no desire to be removed from them."* The nature of the human being rejects monotony. People like change even when they are living in paradise. The need for change is appropriate for the worldly life because it fosters curiosity, creativity and discovery which are needed for the progression of life on earth. However, in heaven the nature of people will be different and they will not be looking for any change in their comfortable and beautiful abode.

The second statement compares the extent of divine knowledge with the extent of human knowledge. God's knowledge is limitless and His words are infinite, *"Say, 'If the sea became ink for the words of my Lord, verily the sea would be used up before the words of my Lord were exhausted, even if We brought the like of it as a supplement.'"* This is an example which helps people appreciate the extent of God's knowledge.

Finally, the third statement is presented. It is a statement which puts in perspective the difference between God's power and the power of mortals; even if these mortals were messengers sent by God, *"Say, 'I am only a mortal like you. It has been revealed to me that your God is only One God. And whoever hopes for the meeting with his Lord, let him do good deeds, and do not associate partners with his Lord.'"* This is the way to obtain the permit to meet God. Those who hope to meet God should do good deeds and never associate partners with Him.