

Tafseer of Surah Al Kahf - Part 2

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Course Outline

Course topics:

1. Death and Sleep
2. The miracle is their 'Resurrection'
3. The background of the story according to Judaeo-Christian tradition
4. The principle of bringing proof
5. The encounter with the king
6. Trust in Allaah
7. Divine care during sleep I
8. Divine care during sleep II
9. The dog
10. The dispute over the length of the period of sleep
11. Sending one to the market to buy food
12. The story being a sign of Allaah's power

Course objectives:

1. To increase Emaan through studying universal signs in the world, and the stories of the righteous and Allaah's protection for them
2. To build a Muslim personality which does not fear death and is ready to sacrifice life and wealth for helping the Deen
3. To encourage the learners to take the righteous people as their role models

QUESTION & ANSWER BUCKET

TRANSCRIPTS

ASSESSMENT

Multiple Choice Questions

Match the Columns

True or False

COURSE DURATION

Video	–	2 hours 30 min
Study Guide	–	35 min
Assessment	–	15 min
Total Duration	–	3 hours 20 mins

Lesson 1: Tafseer of Surah Al Kahf-Part 7

1. Death and Sleep

Allaah says, " (And then we would resurrect (bring them back to life, wakefulness), so as to know which of the two groups is more accurate in calculating the time of their sleep."

Allaah in the Qur'aan uses the word Ba'atha which means 'to resurrect', even though they didn't die, but they were in a very long and deep sleep. And that is similar to the Prophet's (pbuh) statement, "sleep is the brother of death". When you go to sleep, your soul travels and you have dreams and so on. It is similar to death.

Allaah says in the Qur'aan, (Allaah is the one who takes away the souls at the time of death, and those that do not die [He takes during sleep]. Those on whom He passed the decree of death He keeps back (from returning to life). But the rest He sends (to their bodies).

So, Allaah mentions in the Qur'aan that sleep and death are similar in some regards, and they are closely related to one another.

2. The Miracle is their 'Resurrection'

So, from the perfection of the completion of this miracle of Allaah is that he allows people to realise that it is a miracle to see that it is a sign from Allaah. And we use the word 'miracle' not in the sense of Mu'jizah but in the sense of Karaamah, which is given to those righteous people (the Awlia) who are lesser in status than the prophets and messengers of Allaah.

And from the amazing aspects of this miracle is that this miracle was such that even though they slept for centuries, they didn't feel to have slept for more than a day or so. And because they differed as to whether it was a part of a day or a full day where it was, Allaah says, "We showed them" because the miracle is not only for other people who will discover them, but for them as well.

Why for them? The miracle is for them to show them how Allaah protects them; how Allaah gave them his mercy; how Allaah made them steadfast; how Allaah helped them because they are from His Awlia.

And it is a miracle for others, a lesson for them because they will see the power and the majesty of Allaah. It is a sign that should bring them closer to Allaah.

Allaah then says, "Indeed, We relate their story to you in truth".

The salient features of the stories of the Qur'aan:

- i. Number one is that they are always truthful.
- ii. Number two, that they are the most eloquent of stories, the best of stories as Allaah says in Surah Yusuf (We have revealed to you the best of stories) in the Qur'aan.
- iii. Number three, these stories are stories that are full of lessons.

Allaah describes the people of the cave as "youngsters who believed in their lord, and Allaah increased them in guidance). They had to stand against all and oppose with the true faith they chose all false faiths of the authorities and the public. They declared, Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, we will never invoke besides Him another god. If we do so, then we have said something which is indeed grievous.

3. The Background of the Story according to Judaeo-Christian traditions

- i. There was a festival of their disbelieving people. They did not want to partake in their festival or disbelief. They individually excused themselves and left the place, not knowingly each other.
- ii. They happened to gather in one place and get acquainted with each other.
- iii. Their king was a very oppressive and tyrannical Byzantine Roman ruler, who would not allow any other faith in his kingdom
- iv. They started to know each other and find they are belonging to the same faith. They started to worship the true God, despite the danger.
- v. Some men happened to pass by them and discovered that they had a different worship
- vi. They were brought before the king, who questioned them and found them firm and steadfast on their faith.

Lesson 2: Tafseer of Surah Al Kahf-Part 8

4. The Principle of Bringing Proof

Allaah says that the people of the cave said, "These are our people who have taken besides Allaah, other gods that they have worshipped besides Allaah. If only they had clear proof for them.

This is because sound belief is based upon proof. The Qur'aan condemns speaking about Allaah or his religion without knowledge. It is one of the great major sins. Speaking about issues of what is allowed and what is not allowed in religion without knowledge is a grave crime.

The Qur'aan gives three challenges for those who doubted the Qur'aan:

- i. If you don't think the Qur'aan is truthful, bring something similar to the Qur'aan. Allaah affirms, if all of the humans and all of the jinn would unite to bring something similar to this Qur'aan, they will not be able to do so even if they were helping and cooperating with one another).
- ii. Do they say that the Qur'aan is fabricated, then bring just 10 Surahs like it.
- iii. Do they say that the Qur'aan is fabricated, then let them bring one chapter similar to it.

The worship one does should be endorsed by Allaah and the messenger (pbuh).

The companions of the Prophet understood this principle. Abu Musa Al Ash'ari came to the house of Omar and he knocked seeking permission to enter. He found silence. He sought permission three times, and when he got no response.

He left. Omar called him back and asked him for the reason for his departure. He informed him that it was based on what the prophet instruction to seek permission three times and to leave if no response is given.

Omar asked for witnesses to confirm this. The other companions confirmed. Omar finally said, I wasn't accusing you of lying, but I wanted the people to know that it is a serious matter when it comes to statements of the Prophet (pbuh).

5. The Encounter with the King

According to the Israelite traditions, they met the king, boldly declared their faith and surprisingly the king let them go.

Then they realised very quickly that now they were on very dangerous ground. They realised that they should leave the city; they had to go to a distant place; they had to migrate to a different land. And so, they had to seek refuge before that ruler changed his mind.

Is leaving the land of religious persecution obligatory?

If you are unable to practise your religion freely in the place, do you leave? Or is it better for you to stay and be patient. Some of the scholars said that it is better for you to be patient, just as the Prophet (pbuh) was patient in Makkah for 13 years.

But if you are able to leave to another place to go and stay there and worship Allaah, then that is something you should do as well, because the Prophet (pbuh) actively sought from the tribes of Arabia, those people who would give refuge and asylum to the Muslims during that time.

6. Trust in Allaah

But at the same time, look at the hope and the trust that they have in Allaah. And this is because the believer, irrespective of how difficult and dire the circumstances may be, there are people who are optimistic. The Muslim is someone who trusts in Allaah was certainty in the promise of Allaah.

So, these young people as they are leaving, they say "seek refuge in a cave and Allaah will spread for us His mercy". And Allaah will make your affairs gentle for you. They are people who are optimistic.

While in very tough circumstances such as when they were digging the Trench anticipating a collective attack from the pagan armies, and as the Sahaabah were faced with a stubborn boulder, they asked the Prophet to break it.

Each time he hit at it, he told his companions that they would conquer one of the superpowers, the two great forces of the Romans and the Persian.

This gives us a great lesson of trust in Allaah and optimism

7. Divine Care during their Sleep I

Many steps have been taken to protect the people sleeping in the cave. These include:

- i. Deep sleep, where they were prevented from hearing any sound
- ii. The management of the sunlight.

Allaah says, you 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.

Therefore, their bodies got the necessary sunlight that was not too hot lest it should wake them up.

- iii. They were moved by Allaah from left to right and from right to left to avoid having bedsores.

Look at how Allaah is giving us a lively picture about the rising and setting of sun in relation to this cave.

Why? Because Allaah wants to show us His power that Allaah when he gives his divine protection and care and mercy to someone uses the universe because he is the owner and the master of the universe.

Lesson 4: Tafseer of Surah Al Kahf - Part 10

8. Divine Care during their Sleep II

Allaah said, (If you were to have seen them, you would have thought that they were awake, even though they were asleep). This is actually made them look like.

Allaah also said in describing the sleep, (and We allow them to be moved to the right and to the left). This is very good for blood circulation.

Allaah also said, "and their dog was lying at the mouth of the cave, with its legs and paws outstretched. Why is the dog mentioned in the first place?

According to the Israelite tradition quoted by some of the scholars of Tafseer, as those people of the cave were leaving from the palace, and as they were making their way towards the cave to seek refuge in it, they passed by a farm. And as they passed by a farm, the dog that was in the farm happened to follow them, meaning that the dog did not belong to one of those people of the cave.

9. The Dog

As the dog was in the company of those young believing men, he too was put to sleep and he too is mentioned in the Qur'aan as his companions are.

Why was the dog there?

- i. Because the dog will also act as a deterrent as a way of preserving and protecting their sleep.
- ii. Allaah is praising the dog. Allaah says that it was their dog. Allaah gives it the sleep that he gave to those people of the cave, and Allaah mentions the dog, up until Yawmal Qiyaamah; it's mention will remain in the Qur'aan.

Another deterrent to preserve their sleep

Allaah said about the people of the cave, "if you had seen them, you would have been filled with terror, and you would have run away from them"; you would have fled from the people of the cave, because the way that Allaah had made them seem to the outsider, so as not to have the others disturb their sleep.

Lesson 5: Tafseer of Surah Al Kahf-Part 11

10. The Dispute over the Length of the Period of Sleep

Allaah says (and thus We caused them to be awoken). And again, Allaah uses the word that linguistically means resurrection, Ba'th. Now, we cause them to be resurrected because again, sleep is like the brother of death as Allaah mentions in other places in the Qur'aan, and as the Prophet told us (pbuh). The purpose of 'resurrection' is state to be "so that they may ask one another, how long have you stayed?".

There are two groups amongst them with some of them said we slept for part of the day.

And others thought that maybe perhaps e had slept for over a day like a very long sleep, and then they had woken up.

But the point is, look at how Allaah has preserved their sleep, to the extent thinking that they have only slept a few hours, not realising that it has been hundreds of years.

11. Sending One to the Market to Buy Food

As the people of the cave did not take provisions with them, they needed to send one of them to the nearest town to buy food.

But what type of food? The purest (according to some scholars of Tafseer, is the most Halaal). Why? Because they thought people would be disbelievers eating unlawful food. So, they do not just want any type of food.

In Islaamic law, when one is in an emergency case, where no other means are available, one may consume what would usually be Haraam, but these people, due to their strong faith and love of what is lawful, they make it clear from the beginning that they need only the lawful food.

Because the Prophet told us SallAllaahu Alaihi Wasallam, that anything which is nourished upon Haram, then the fire has more right to it.

On sending the man to the marketplace, they demanded utmost secrecy ("wal yatalattaf").

Why? Because they have woken up with that same state of fear and terror in which they went to sleep. Hundreds of years have passed. Yet they still thought that the same system was still ruling.

But Allaah preserved their sleep in such a way that when they wake up not only were their bodies preserved, but also their minds preserved that they haven't gone senile or frail in mind due to old age, but even the emotions with which they went to sleep were still present when they woke up.

They believed that; if they capture us, they will stone us; they will punish us; they will harm us. Or they will make us turn away from our religion and go back to their religion.

High level of precaution was demanded of that man. But Allaah had a different plan. Allaah wanted the miracle to be complete. And it would only be complete, if the people discovered them so that the people of the cave will then realise how much time had passed, how long they had slept.

And for those people of that time in which they awoke, it would be a sign for them as well about the power of Allaah, and His ability, and how they should worship Allaah alone.

When he went to the market and found the food he wanted to purchase, he offered them his old currency. So, the shopkeeper consulted many of his friends as regards the money. Through this circulation of the currency, he became known in the market.

People suspected that perhaps he had a forged currency. They informed the authorities, and the man was summoned by the king, who was a better king than the one he knew. The people of the time had heard of the story of the people of the cave.

Lesson 6: Tafseer of Surah Al Kahf-Part 12

12. The Story being a Sign of Allaah's Power

Only the people of Eemaan benefit from miracles and signs. Those people who have Eemaan. they know that it is a sign from Allaah.

Because now the miracle had been completed. They had been discovered; they realised, themselves, what Allaah had done for them, and the people of that time had also realised, so Allaah caused them to die.

So now those people had a difference of opinion; they disputed what do they do with them? Do they bury them? What do they do with them? Where do they bury them?

People whose affair had overcome them, said we will take the place of burial as a masjid, as a place of worship.

Look at how Allaah gives them a sign. But that sign instead of bringing them closer to Allaah drives them further away so they build this tomb upon them instead.

Allaah showed them His power, His ability, His divine protection, His care, His mercy, but this would only drive them further away from Allaah. If a person's heart is hard, it is closed to the remembrance of Allaah, then even the greatest of signs cannot benefit them.

Question and Answer Bucket

1. **In what way are the people of the cave similar to the prophet Muhammad (pbuh), in avoiding what is Haraam?**

Ans. The Prophet, SallAllaahu Alaihi Wasallam, at the beginning of Islaam before he became a prophet felt uncomfortable with the worship of Quraysh to the idols, so he never used to partake in the festivals; he never used to worship the idols and so on. These people of the cave, they too used to feel uncomfortable. So, when the Eid came, they came out and did not celebrate.

2. **What are the Israelite traditions?**

Ans. They are traditions and narrations that are taken from previous scriptures, from the Torah and the Gospel and so on and so forth. They are taken from the Bible, and from other Judeo-Christian works. They are Judeo Christian narrations known as in Arabic as Israeliyyaat; in English, Israelite traditions. The Prophet said narrate from the people of Israel, the children of Israel and there is no harm in doing so. The Scholars say that this hadith means that if we come across their narrations, those narrations that oppose our religion, we must reject them because they oppose what is in the Qur'aan, or what the

Prophet (pbuh), said explicitly. Those things that we find in their narrations Judeo-Christian narrations that confirm they agree with our religion we must accept not because they are their narrations, but because our Qur'aan and our Prophet mentioned them to be so as well. And as for everything else, that is neither affirmed nor denied, It is allowed for you to narrate them only, but you don't necessarily believe in them.

3. Did anyone else in history sleep for a similar long period?

Ans. Allaah mentions in Surah Al Baqarah a story similar to the story of the people of the cave in the sense that someone else was given the miracle of sleep. And that was the prophet Uzair, who passed by the Jerusalem city in ruins after it was demolished by a Roman king. He said, how may Allaah bring this back to life after it is dead.

Allaah caused him to die for one hundred years and then He brought him back to life when the city had already been flourishing.

How long did you remain in that state? He replied, "for a day or part of a day".