Bismillah Rahman Rahim

Surah Kahaf

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Acknowledgement

All praise and glory belong to Allah (subhanahu wa ta'ala), who enabled me to compile the teachings of Surah Al-Kahf based on classical tafsir and relevant scholarly works. This book is the result of a journey that took nearly eight years to complete.

This journey began during the COVID period, when I had the opportunity to deliver Jumu'ah sermons and lectures during Taraweeh prayers at our Musallah. Over time, these lessons were preserved in PowerPoint presentations, written notes, and documents. They were further enriched through real-life experiences, practical challenges faced by families—particularly in Western contexts—and through ongoing questions, discussions, and readings.

In Ramadan 2026, I was blessed with the opportunity to review, refine, and compile all these materials into this book.

I am deeply grateful to Islamic scholar Mamoon al-Azami (UK) for his thorough review, valuable feedback, and encouragement. I also extend my sincere thanks to Shaikh Yahya Ibrahim and Mufti Zeeyad Ravat (Australia) for their support and guidance.

My heartfelt appreciation goes to my beloved parents, my wife, and my daughters—Nameera, Ayesha, and Afra—for their constant encouragement and thoughtful feedback.

Finally, I express my gratitude to the community of Wisdom Institute Madrasah (Learn Quran & Arabic Centre), Clyde North, VIC, Australia—especially the attendees of Jumu'ah prayers, and all brothers, sisters, and families. Their participation and engagement during Qur'anic lectures, particularly in the nights of Ramadan, inspired and motivated me to complete this work.

Peace and blessings be upon our beloved leader, the final Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), his family, and all Muslims until the Day of Judgment.

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Story of Abbad (R) & Surah Kahaf

It was the fourth year after the Hijrah. On the way back, the Prophet pitched camp in a valley for a night. As soon as the Muslims had settled their camel mounts, the Prophet peace be on him, asked: "Who will be our guard tonight?" "We, O Messenger of God," said Abbad ibn Bishr and Ammar ibn Yasir both of whom had been paired off as 'brothers' by the Prophet when he arrived in Madinah after the Hijrah.

Abbad and Ammar left for the mouth of the valley to take up duty. Abbad saw that his "brother" was tired and asked him: "What part of the night do you wish to sleep, the first or the second?" "I shall sleep during the first part," said Ammar who was soon fast asleep quite close to Abbad.

The night was clear, calm and peaceful. The stars, the trees, and the rocks all appeared to celebrate in silence the praises of their Lord. Abbad felt serene. There was no movement, no threatening sign. Why not spend the time in ibadah (worship) and reciting the Quran? How delightful it would be to combine the performance of Salat with the measured recitation of the Quran which he so much enjoyed.

In fact Abbad was enthralled by the Quran from the moment he first heard it being recited by the mellow and beautiful voice of Musab ibn Umayr. That was before the Hijrah when Abbad was just about fifteen years old. The Quran had found a special place in his heart and day and night thereafter he would be heard repeating the glorious words of God so much so that he became known among the Prophet's companions as the "friend of the Quran".

Late at night, the Prophet once stood up to perform the Tahajjud Prayer in Aishah's house which adjoined the masjid. He heard a voice reciting the Quran, pure and sweet and as fresh as when the angel Jibril revealed the words to him. He asked: "Aishah, is that the voice of Abbad ibn Bishr?" "Yes, O Messenger of God," replied Aishah. "O Lord, forgive him," prayed the Prophet out of love for him.

And so in the stillness of the night, at the mouth of the valley in Najd, Abbad stood up and faced the Qiblah. Raising his hand in surrender to God, he entered into the state of Prayer. Finishing the compulsory opening chapter of the Quran, he began reciting Surah al-Kahf in his sweet, captivating voice. Surah al-Kahf is a long Surah of one hundred and ten verses which deals in part with the virtues of faith, truth and patience and with the relativity of time.

While he was thus absorbed in reciting and reflecting upon the divine words, eternal words of illumination and wisdom,

a stranger stalked the outskirts of the valley in search of Muhammad and his followers. He was one of those who had planned to attack the Prophet but who had fled into the mountains on the approach of the Muslims. His wife whom he had left in the village had been taken as a hostage by one of the Muslims. When he eventually found that his wife was gone, he swore by al-Lat and al-Uzzah that he would pursue Muhammad and his companions and that he would not return unless he had drawn blood.

From a distance, the man saw the figure of Abbad silhouetted at the mouth of the valley and he knew that the Prophet and his followers must be inside the valley. Silently he drew his bow and let fly an arrow. Unerringly it embedded itself in Abbad's flesh.

Calmly, Abbad pulled out the arrow from his body and went on with his recitation, still absorbed in his Salat. The attacker shot a second and a third arrow both of which also found their mark. Abbad pulled out one and then the other. He finished his recitation, made ruku and then sujud. Weak and in pain, he stretched out his right hand while still in prostration and shook his sleeping companion. A mmar awoke. Silently, Abbad continued the Salat to its end and then said: "Get up and stand guard in my place. I have been wounded."

Ammar jumped up and began to yell. Seeing them both the attacker fled into the darkness. Ammar turned to Abbad as he lay on the ground, blood flowing from his wounds.

"Ya Subhanallah (Glory be to God)! Why didn't you wake me when you were hit by the first arrow?" "I was in the midst of reciting verses of the Quran which filled my soul with awe and I did not want to cut short the recitation. The Prophet had commanded me to commit this surah to memory. Death would have been dearer to me than that the recitation of this surah should be interrupted."

(Musnad Ahmad (Hadith 14755) and Sunan Abi Dawud (198))

Narrations that Mention Surah al-Kahf

Serenity and Angels descending upon the recitation of the Noble Qur'an

Bukhari narrated on the authority of Bara' (R):

"A man was reciting Surah al-Kahf with his horse next to him, tied with two ropes. A cloud suddenly covered him and started approaching him whilst his horse was trying to break loose.

"In the morning, he went to the Prophet (sm) and related this to him. The Prophet (sm) said,

لَطِيف

Latif means
gentle, kind, subtle.

The middle word of the Qur'an is:
wal-yatalaṭṭaf (be gentle)

The Qur'an places *gentleness* at its *center*.

Both Surah Al-Fatiha and Surah Al-Kahf begin
with **Alhamdulillah**.

Showing contrasts in six stories of Sura Kahaf:

We can identify following six stories from the Surah:

(Story 1) : A cruel king oppressing the believers

(Story 2) : The wealth of the arrogant was destroyed in this world

(Story 3) : The sustenance of the poor people was preserved

(Story 4) : A young boy was killed to give the long-term benefits to the parents

(Story 5) : The believing parents died and their two young kids' (orphans) future wealth was preserved by Allah

(Story 6) : Dhulkarnain maintaining justice to criminals (Ya'juj & Ma'juj) The following contrasts can be observed betwenn the stories:

- The wealth of the arrogant was destroyed in this world, but Allah preserved the sustenance of the poor people. (contrast between story 2 & 3)
- A young boy was killed to give the long term benefits to the parents. In contrast, The believing parents died (martyred) and their two young kids' (orphans) future wealth was preserved by Allah. (contrast between story 4 & 5)
- A cruel king oppressing good people (story 1), in contrast to the just king (Dhu'l-Qarnayn) protecting the nation from criminals / oppressors (Gog & Magog) (contrast between 1st & last story)

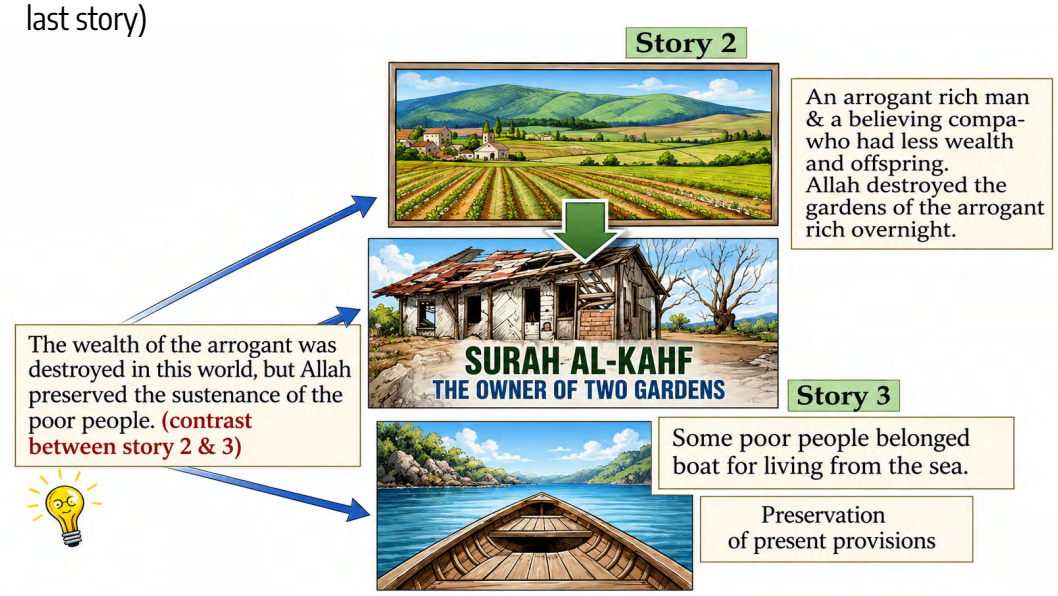


Figure 1 The downfall of arrogant wealth versus the quiet preservation of humble provision—Allah removes excess to protect what truly sustains.

Figure 2 This diagram highlights the key contrasts in Surah Al-Kahf. What appears as loss brings long-term mercy, while apparent gain can lead to destruction. A boy's death protects believing parents, while orphaned children have their future wealth preserved. A cruel king oppresses believers, while a just ruler (Dhul-Qarnayn) protects people from oppression. Allah's wisdom works beyond what is immediately seen

actions are performed.

Example 1: Quality Deeds on the Difficult Path: And We have pointed out to him the two highways of good and evil. But he attempted not to ascent bravely. And do you know what the ascent is? It is the freeing of a slave. Or feeding in a day of hunger. An orphan near of kin, Or a poor man lying in the dust. (Surah Balad: 10-16)

Example 2: The Best Words Are Those That Lead to Allah: Allah says: And who is better in speech than he who invites men to Allah and does good works and says, 'I am surely among the Muslims?' **(Surah Fussilat : 33)**

Example 3: Good Manners / Character equals many fasts and prayers: Aisha reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Verily, the believer may reach by his good character the rank of one who regularly fasts and stands for prayer at night." **Source: Sunan Abi Dawud: 4798**

Example 4: Making peace — one of the noblest deeds: The Prophet (sm) said: "Shall I not tell you of something that is better than fasting, prayer and charity?" They said: Yes.

He said: "Reconciling between two people, for the corruption of that which is between the hearts is the shaver (destroyer). It is the shaver, and I do not say that it shaves hair, rather that it shaves religious commitment. **(Sunan al-Tirmidhi – 2509, hasan)**

Examples:

- Resolving disputes between husband and wife
- Reconciling disagreements between Muslims

Allah says, Ahsanu 'amala, or those best in conduct. F**or an 'Amal to have husn, or excellence, it must have specific attributes.** The more of these attributes it has, the weightier the action is on the Day of Judgement, and the higher your abode in Jannah (Paradise). The more of these attributes our conduct fulfills, the better that action is in the sight of Allah. We should try for our actions to have:

1. Yaqeen: We have conviction that we are successful right here and now
2. Sincerity: The action is done purely for the sake of Allah

Lesson: Holding Onto Faith: The Hardest Test and the Highest Reward:

The People of the Cave chose to abandon their families, wealth, social status, and worldly comfort, taking shelter solely to protect their faith (Iman). Their story shows that when belief is under threat, preserving faith takes priority over every worldly attachment, even the things people hold most dear.

Qurtubi (R) said: "one's children, relations, friends and wealth are what one fears for in times of trials. The Messenger of Allah (sm) and his Companions left all they had of homeland, families, children and relations to safeguard their religion from the Unbelievers."

The hardest tests in times of trial are not physical harm, but attachment to what we love most—our family, wealth, friends, and homeland. These are the very things people fear losing, so they often compromise their faith to protect them. The Prophet (sm) and his Companions proved the opposite path: they were willing to leave behind their homes, families, and possessions to preserve their religion. This teaches that faith must come before comfort, and that true success lies in protecting one's belief even when it demands great sacrifice. Trials expose what we truly value, and the strongest believers are those who choose Allah over everything else.

The Prophet (sm) said:

"There will come a time when the one who holds firmly to his religion will be like one holding a burning coal." (Tirmidhi 2260, graded Hasan Sahih by Albani)

Staying faithful near the end of times will feel painful and difficult, just like holding hot coal — because of pressure from society, temptations, ridicule, and trials. Yet whoever holds on patiently earns great reward.

The Prophet (sm) also said:

"Indeed, behind you are days of patience. For the one who holds firmly to the religion during them, there will be the reward of fifty of you."

The Companions asked (R): "Fifty of them or fifty of us?"
He (sm) replied: "Fifty of you." **(Tirmidhi 3058, Abu Dawud 4341)**

Lesson: Struggle + DUA

Fityah means the young men who sought refuge in the cave were in the prime of their youth, or fityan. They were perhaps in their twenties, and when they entered the cave they made a dua: "Our Lord, give us Your mercy and make our affairs firm and straight".

Note here that these young men were fleeing from a problem, seeking refuge, and the first thing they did when they entered the cave was turn to Allah in dua. From this we learn that when in a difficult situation, we must do two things: one, a physical act of this world (dunyawi), and another, a spiritual act (dini).

If we are ill, we go to the doctor and we make **dua.**

If we are unemployed, we send our résumé to potential employers and make dua.

If we are not trained, we go to university and make **dua.**

The Messenger of Allah (sm) himself used to make similar supplications and taught them to his Ummah. He would say:

"O Allah, whatever decree You have decided for us, make its outcome one of right guidance." (Musnad Ahmad, 4/181)

Lesson: Hadith on Youth person:

The Messenger of Allah (sm) said:

"Seven types of people Allah will shade with His Shade on the Day when there will be no shade except His Shade:

1. A just ruler;
2. A youth who grew up in the worship of Allah;
3. A man whose heart is attached to the mosques;
4. Two people who love one another for the sake of Allah, meeting and parting for His sake;
5. A man whom a beautiful, high-ranking woman calls to immorality, but he says, 'I fear Allah';
6. A person who gives charity so secretly that his left hand does not know what his right hand has given; and
7. A person who remembers Allah in solitude and his eyes overflow with tears."

(Bukhari 660 and Muslim 1031).

Interestingly, a young person can attain any of these seven qualities in order to be

6. **Seeking continual guidance –** We should continually ask Allah for greater guidance and certainty beyond our current state.

"And say, 'Perhaps my Lord will guide me to that which is nearer to right conduct'" **(Qur'an 18:24).**

And Allah alone give success.

وَٱتْلُ مَآ أُوحِىَ إِلَيْكَ مِن كِتَابِ رَبِّكَ ۖ لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَـٰتِهِۦ
وَلَن تَجِدَ مِن دُونِهِۦ مُلْتَحَدًا ﴿٢٧﴾

Recite what has been revealed to you from the Book of your Lord. None can change His Words, nor can you find any refuge besides Him.

After the story of the Sleepers ends, Allah gives us two lessions:
Lesson 1 : Take Quran as a metaphoric cave (to take refuge). (V. 18:27)
Lesson 2 : Importance of good friendship (V. 18:28)

Lesson: How hearts become closed:

"Do not obey those whose hearts We have made heedless of Our remembrance." Meaning - People are **not misled by accident**. First, they choose to turn away from truth. Then Allah allows their hearts to become closed.

That's why Allah also says:
"When they turned away, Allah turned their hearts away." **(61:5)**

So, whenever the Qur'an or Hadith mentions "those whom Allah misguides," that means: **They walked away first. Allah did not force them.**

Muhammad ibn al-Uthaymeen explained:
One of the **worst punishments for sin** is not losing money or loved ones — it is when the **heart becomes sick and distant from Allah.**

Ibn al-Qayyim said:
"I am not most afraid of sins, because sins can be forgiven. What I truly fear is when the heart stops letting the Qur'an guide it".

Lesson: True Friendship or Social Status? A Test of the Heart:

Is it easy to build friendships when it requires sacrificing social status, profession, or comfort? Many people follow their feelings or the crowd. Some say they believe in Allah, yet neglect prayer, copy their friends, and compete socially, thinking faith alone is enough.

The Prophet (sm) taught that true honor is not in appearance or status. He said that a person who lives simply out of humility, even while wealthy, will be clothed by Allah with nobility and wisdom (Abu Dawud). 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (ra) said: "Get used to rough living, for luxury doesn't last forever."

Ibn al-Qayyim reminded us that when harmful companionship becomes unavoidable, protect your heart—be present in body but distant in spirit—until Allah opens a way out.

True faith is shown not by following people, but by choosing humility, discipline, and the company that brings us closer to Allah.

When the verse says “They desire His Face,” it means that their only wish is to meet Allah and see Him. They are not attached to anything else. Their hearts are focused only on Allah, not on rewards, status, or worldly things.

Imam al-Ghazali explained that worship done out of fear of Hell or hope for Paradise is still correct and acceptable. However, the highest level of sincerity is to worship Allah purely because He deserves to be worshipped, not for reward or fear. Ruwaym said that true sincerity is when a person does not seek any reward in this world or the next. This level belongs to the most truthful servants of Allah.

وَقُلِ ٱلۡحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكُمۡۖ فَمَن شَآءَ فَلۡيُؤۡمِن وَمَن شَآءَ فَلۡيَكۡفُرۡۚ إِنَّآ أَعۡتَدۡنَا
لِلظَّٰلِمِينَ نَارًا أَحَاطَ بِهِمۡ سُرَادِقُهَاۚ وَإِن يَسۡتَغِيثُواْ يُغَاثُواْ بِمَآءٖ كَٱلۡمُهۡلِ
يَشۡوِي ٱلۡوُجُوهَۚ بِئۡسَ ٱلشَّرَابُ وَسَآءَتۡ مُرۡتَفَقًا ٢٩

And say, O Prophet, “This is the truth from your Lord. Whoever wills let them believe, and whoever wills let them disbelieve.” Surely We have prepared for the wrongdoers a Fire whose walls will completely surround them. When they cry for aid, they will be aided with water like molten metal, which will burn their faces. What a horrible drink! And what a terrible place to rest!

Allah tells His Prophet ﷺ to say to the people:

“What I bring to you from my Lord is the truth. There is no doubt in it. Now whoever wants to believe may believe, and whoever wants to reject may reject.”

Those who reject the truth will have **Hell** prepared for them. They will be trapped inside it like prisoners, surrounded by walls, completely helpless. A hadith states that the width of each wall of Hell is equal to a journey of **forty years**, and those walls are made of fire **(Musnad Aḥmad).**

The drink of Hell is described as a thick, filthy liquid, like the dregs of olive oil, or like blood and pus—extremely hot. **(Qur’an 18:29).**

The water of Hell is black, Hell itself is black, and its people are blackened. The liquid is foul-smelling, thick, and intensely hot. When it comes near the face, it burns the skin and scorches it. **(Musnad Aḥmad).**

When they complain of thirst, they will be given **boiling water**. As it approaches their mouths, it will roast their flesh, and when they drink it, it will cut and destroy their insides **(Qur’an 22:19–20; 47:15).**

“Indeed, it is an evil resting place and an evil home.” **(Qur’an 25:66)**

The garden of grapevines and crops, including weaker plants, was surrounded by strong palm trees, providing natural protection from damaging winds. This thoughtful layout created a balanced ecosystem where every plant benefited from shelter and support. The gardens produced abundant crops and fruits, with nothing wasted—showing that resources such as land, water, sunlight, and plant placement were used to their maximum potential. In addition, a river flowed through the garden, supplying continuous natural irrigation, eliminating the need for artificial watering and reducing loss from drought or uneven moisture. Altogether, these factors indicate near-perfect production efficiency: minimal input, minimal waste, and maximum output, reflecting a highly profitable and well-optimized agricultural system designed to achieve the highest possible yields.

It shows a profitable, self-sustaining source of income that can build and maintain strong wealth.

وَكَانَ لَهُۥ ثَمَرٌ فَقَالَ لِصَٰحِبِهِۦ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُۥٓ أَنَا۠ أَكْثَرُ مِنكَ مَالًا وَأَعَزُّ نَفَرًا ﴿٣٤﴾

Lesson: The Myth of Wealth as a Measure of Happiness:

If wealth was the key to happiness, the world's richest should be the most happy. Instead, depression and suicide is highest among the prosperous industrial societies, and the tragic lives of the rich and famous fill the columns of their daily tabloids.

Claim	Supporting Evidence
Wealth increases happiness only up to a point	Easterlin paradox: rising incomes don't lead to rising societal happiness over time. Beyond a certain point, rising GDP and income growth do not translate into increasing life satisfaction across a society.
More money doesn't reliably reduce depression	Major review shows mixed or inverse links between wealth and depression.
Suicide isn't rare in wealthy contexts	Analyses find suicide risk can be high in affluent communities.
Social connections are better predictors of happiness	Studies on well-being emphasize friendships and relationships.

وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهُۥ وَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِۦ قَالَ مَآ أَظُنُّ أَن تَبِيدَ هَٰذِهِۦٓ أَبَدًا ﴿٣٥﴾

And he entered his property, while wronging his soul, saying, “I do not think this will ever perish, The four pronouns (“he,” “his,” “he,” and “himself”) all refer back to the man. The word garden (janna) is not in the dual form here because it is referring to gardens in general. Alternatively, it has been suggested that it is in the singular because it is impossible to enter both gardens at once; one can only enter one after the other.

Al-Kashshaf says:

“If you were to ask why the word garden (janna) appears in the singular after having appeared in the dual form, my reply is that it means he entered what was heaven for him (jannatuhu). He will have no heaven apart from it; that is, he will have no share of the heaven promised to the believers. What he owned in the world will be his only heaven. It does not mean the two (earthly) gardens or even one of them.”

Lesson: The Illusion of Permanence in Worldly Life:

When people turn away from the remembrance of their Lord, they become occupied with worldly adornments and the apparent causes around them. They cling to the present situation as they see it and assume it will continue as it is.

This is what is meant by believing that outward causes are permanent and worldly attractions are everlasting. That is why, as Allah relates, the man says, “I do not think that this will ever perish,” rather than saying, “This will never perish”—revealing uncertainty mixed with false hope, not true certainty. **(Tabatabai)**

The garden becomes a mirror for his ego, not a sign pointing to Allah. **When a blessing lasts long enough, the heart begins to think it is natural rather than granted.**

Prophet (sm) said: “A servant says, ‘My wealth, my wealth,’ but out of his wealth three things are only his:

*whatever he eats and makes use of,

whatever he wears and it wears out,

or what he gives in charity — and this is what he stored for himself (as a reward for the Hereafter).

Whatever is beyond this will depart and be left for other people.”

(Sahih Muslim 2959a)

Common Mistakes About Faith in Allah's Power

1. Believing something is impossible for Allah because

- There's no way this situation can change."
- This disease is beyond cure."

2. Believing someone controls outcomes independently of Allah

- Only this doctor can save me."
- Without this person, I'm finished.

3. Depending on causes while forgetting the Creator of causes

- Trusting money, contacts or systems absolutely, while neglecting dua' and tawakkul.

This mirrors the garden owner's mistake, judging Allah by human limits.

Correct belief is: Allah heals — doctors are only means.

Remember: Allah is the All-Powerful, the Builder of causes and the Turner of hearts.

Practical Examples Similar to This Shirk

1. Believing something is impossible for Allah because it's impossible for humans
   Example: "There's no way this situation can change." "This disease is beyond cure."

2. This mirrors the garden owner's mistake: judging Allah by human limits. Believing someone controls outcomes independently of Allah
   Example: "Only this doctor can save me." "Without this person, I'm finished."
   Correct belief is: Allah heals — doctors are only means.

3. Depending on causes while forgetting the Creator of causes
   Example: Trusting money, contacts, or systems absolutely, while neglecting dua and tawakkul.

Abdul Qadir al-Jilani (d. 1166)'s statement is relevant in this context: "All you who complain to other people about your misfortunes! What good does it do you to complain to creatures like yourselves? They can't bring you any harm or benefit. If you rely only upon them, then you'll be associating partners with the Lord of Truth, and they'll make you distant from Him and plunge you into His displeasure."

وَلَوْلَآ إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِٱللَّهِ
ۚ إِن تَرَنِ أَنَا۠ أَقَلَّ مِنكَ مَالًا وَوَلَدًا ﴿٣٩﴾

If only you had said, upon entering your property, 'This is what Allah has willed! There is no power except with Allah!' Even though you see me inferior to you in wealth and offspring,

Lesson: The Virtue and Protection of "Ma Sha' Allahu La Quwwata Illa Billah":

The Beloved Prophet (peace be upon him) has said that when a person is in a state of peace and happiness or attains any means of comfort, it is their duty to say:

"Ma sha' Allahu la quwwata illa billah" (What Allah wills [will happen]; there is no power except with Allah).

If one says this, their wealth and assets remain safe from all kinds of calamities and misfortunes. Some narrations state that if someone recites this prayer upon seeing their own wealth or home, it will remain safe from the "evil eye" of others. (Tafsir Nurul Qu'ran)

His making ‘partners’ with Allah doesn’t necessarily mean that he was an idol-worshipper.

The Prophet defined two levels of doing shirk or making partners in Allah’s divinity and power.

The **first level** is in the obvious worship of idols or elevating any creature into a divine role besides Allah. In verse 38, the man thinks resurrection is impossible because he judges Allah by human limits. He assumes Allah works like people do. This lowers Allah to the level of creation. That is why this thinking becomes shirk—treating Allah as equal to created beings.

The second level is s**howing off (al-riya)—when pride makes a person seek recognition instead of Allah**. The Prophet (sm) warned that this “small shirk” will bring no reward, as Allah will tell such people to seek their reward from those they tried to impress. **(Ahmad)**

Figure 4 Two Lessons for the Humanity for the story of the Man with two gardens

وَيَوْمَ نُسَيِّرُ ٱلْجِبَالَ وَتَرَى ٱلْأَرْضَ بَارِزَةً وَحَشَرْنَٰهُمْ فَلَمْ نُغَادِرْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا ﴿٤٧﴾

Beware of the Day We will blow the mountains away, and you will see the earth laid bare. And We will gather all humankind, leaving none behind.

Many people refuse to believe because **they wait for miracles or punishment to appear.** This shows ignorance, because the righteous are sent as mercy—to warn gently and give glad tidings. Instead of listening, people mock them and turn away from their reminders.

There is no greater injustice than being reminded of Allah and His signs, yet becoming arrogant and turning away while forgetting one's own sins. This happens because hearts become covered by repeated wrongdoing, making a person unable to benefit from advice or warnings.

Even when such people are invited to guidance, they often refuse because of what Allah has already decreed. Still, Allah delays punishment out of mercy—but when its appointed time arrives, there will be no escape or refuge.

We ask Allah to protect us through His mercy and grace. **(Ibn Ajibah)**

Dr. Bilal Philips mentioned that the West studied ancient civilizations mainly out of pride, wanting to prove that European civilization was always superior, even once presenting Egyptian civilization as European. Later, archaeologists discovered very old cities all over the world—many older than Greece and Rome—and their beautiful remains are now displayed in museums. Some cities were destroyed by natural disasters, like Pompeii, while in other cases the causes are unclear. Most people see these ruins and think the people were just unlucky victims. But these remains should remind us that no civilization is permanent, and that Allah has full power over life and death—He can destroy or protect anyone, anywhere, at any time.

Appendix: Traps of Shaytan / Iblis

Allah swt says: "... Would you then take him (Iblis) and his descendants as patrons instead of Me, although they are your enemy? What an evil alternative for the wrongdoers to choose!" **(V. 50)**

We need to aware of the tricks of Shaytan to be protected from falling into sins.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya explained seven step-by-step traps of Shaytan (summarised from in Madarij al-Salikin):

If Shaytan cannot destroy the faith of a believer, he changes strategy—trying to reduce reward, delay spiritual growth, or distract the heart from Allah.

1. **Disbelief (Kufr & Shirk).** Shaytan's first goal is to make a person reject Allah completely. Someone may begin saying, "Religion is outdated; I trust only science and myself," slowly abandoning prayer and feeling they no longer need Allah.

2. **Innovation in religion (Bidah).** If disbelief fails, Shaytan pushes the believer toward false religious practices. A person may invent new forms of worship or follow spiritual trends with no Islamic basis, convincing themselves, "This feels powerful, so it must be right."

3. **Major sins (Kabair).** When innovation does not succeed, Shaytan tempts the believer into major sins such as zina, alcohol, or injustice. Casual flirting may slowly lead to zina, or social drinking may turn into addiction, while Shaytan makes it feel normal, hidden, and acceptable.

4. **Minor sins (Saghair).** If major sins are resisted, Shaytan moves to small sins and makes them seem harmless until they pile up. Constant "small lies," watching haram clips, or backbiting in group chats may feel tiny, but together they harden the heart.

5. **Busy with useless halal things.** Shaytan then occupies the believer with lawful activities that waste time and steal reward. Hours of scrolling social media, binge-watching shows, or endless gaming are not haram, yet salah is delayed, Qur'an is ignored, and time disappears.

6. **Busy with good deeds instead of better deeds.** If that fails, Shaytan keeps the believer busy doing something good while neglecting what Allah loves more. Someone may focus on optional charity while neglecting parents, or attend many lectures while avoiding fixing bad character—good is done, but priority good is skipped.

7. **Personal attacks and distractions.** Finally, Shaytan uses whispers, doubts, people problems, and stress—anything to weaken the believer, even at the moment of death. Sudden thoughts arise like "Am I good enough?" criticism increases, family conflicts appear when one becomes more religious, and emotional pressure builds, all trying to pull the believer away from Allah until the very end.

قَالَ إِنَّكَ لَن تَسۡتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبۡرٗا ٦٧

He said, “You certainly cannot be patient enough with me.

وَكَيۡفَ تَصۡبِرُ عَلَىٰ مَا لَمۡ تُحِطۡ بِهِۦ خُبۡرٗا ٦٨

He said, “You certainly cannot be patient enough with me.

قَالَ سَتَجِدُنِيٓ إِن شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ صَابِرٗا وَلَآ أَعۡصِي لَكَ أَمۡرٗا ٦٩

Musa (A) assured him, “You will find me patient, Allah willing,
and I will not disobey any of your orders.”

Lesson: Humility of a student (Musa (A)) to a teacher (Khidr (R)):

Tabatabai reflected: Everything Musa (A) said showed humility from beginning to end. He was polite and did not demand to be taught. Instead, he asked gently, showing self-control. He described staying with al-Khidr as following him, not as an equal partnership. He did not make learning a condition, but said, “in return for you teaching me.”

Musa (A) clearly placed himself in the role of a student. He also raised al-Khidr’s status by saying “what you have been taught” rather than “what you know,” showing that al-Khidr’s knowledge came from Allah. He praised him by calling his guidance right (rushdan).

Musa (A) was careful and humble in what he asked for. He requested only some of the knowledge al-Khidr had been taught, not all of it. He treated al-Khidr’s guidance as something to be obeyed, even seeing any mistake on his own part as disobedience.

Finally, Musa (A) did not make a firm promise in a confident way. Instead, he showed humility and reliance on Allah by saying, “If Allah wills, you will find me patient, and I will not disobey you in anything.”

The indications of Musa (A)’s humility are shown within the following verses:

Musa (A) said to him, “May I follow you, provided that you teach me some of the right guidance you have been taught?” **(V. 77)**

Musa (A) assured him, “You will find me patient, Allah willing, and I will not disobey any of your orders.” **(V. 79)**

Al-Khidr was polite and gentle. He did not reject Musa (A) straight away. Instead, he calmly told him that he would probably not be able to stay patient. When Musa (A) promised patience (if Allah willed), al-Khidr still did not order him to follow. He spoke humbly, saying, “If you would follow me,” showing respect and not forcing the decision.

Al-Khidr also did not strictly forbid Musa (A) from asking questions. Instead of giving a harsh command, he made it a condition: “If you follow me, then do not question me.” This helped Musa (A) understand that it was not an absolute prohibition, but simply a rule connected to staying with him.

Lesson: Knowledge is not the same as direct witnessing mostly

There is one rule for knowledge and another for seeing what is done on the basis of that knowledge. It is like when Musa (A) returned from the meeting place to his people and saw that they had worshiped the calf a er he had gone; he was filled with rage, threw down the tablets, and took his brother by the head, dragging him toward him. God had told him about that while he was at the meeting place:

“Indeed, We have tried your people after you left, and the Samiri has led them astray.” — Qur’an 20:85

However, Musa (A) did not do anything like what he later did:

“And when Musa (A) returned to his people, angry and grieved, he threw down the tablets and seized his brother by the head, dragging him toward him…” — Qur’an 7:150

This dramatic response occurred only after direct observation, not merely after being informed. Therefore, Knowledge is not the same as direct witnessing mostly.

Same principle (Knowledge is not the same as direct witnessing mostly) also applies for Jannah & Jahannam:

The Prophet (sm) said:

“If you knew what I know (i.e., realities of the Hereafter, etc), you would laugh little and weep much.” (**Bukhari 6486, Muslim 2359)**

The Prophet (sm) said that Allah said:

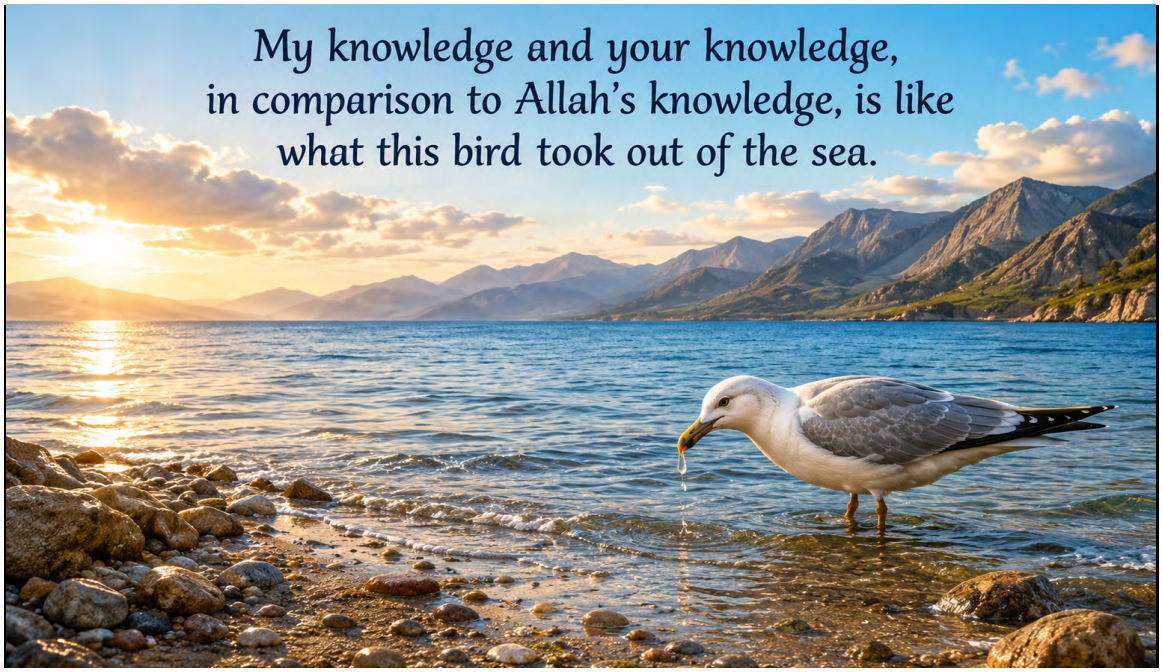
"I have prepared for My righteous servants what no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, and no human heart has ever imagined." **(Bukhari 3244, Muslim 2824)**

قَالَ فَإِنِ ٱتَّبَعْتَنِى فَلَا تَسْـَٔلْنِى عَن شَىْءٍ حَتَّىٰٓ أُحْدِثَ لَكَ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا ﴿٧٠﴾

He responded, "Then if you follow me, do not question me about anything until I 'myself' clarify it for you."

The portion of the following hadith is noteworthy in this context:

Khidr (R) told Musa (A): "My knowledge and your knowledge, in comparison to Allah's knowledge, is like what this bird took out of the sea." **(Bukhari)**



Lesson: Principle of following the People of Knowledge (from the Verses 66-70)

Al-Wartujibi said, "Allah swt tested Musa (A) with the companionship of Khidhr, due to the uprightness of the Path, and to apprise us of the correct way to follow the Scholars. And this is an example for the disciples and seekers in their service to the Shaykhs of the Path."

Qushayri said, about his words, **"Then don't ask me about anything..."** "The disciple cannot

say, 'Why?' to his shaykh. Nor can should the student say such to his teacher, nor the ordinary person to the Mufti regarding his ruling or legal opinion."

The story of Musa (A) and Khidr teaches that the path of knowledge requires patience, humility, and trust in qualified authority. Just as a seeker does not object to the guide before understanding, so too the layperson follows the scholar until equipped with knowledge.

These statements do **not** call for blind obedience. Rather, they establish a **methodological discipline.** The **unqualified seeker** does not challenge method while learning. The **student** suspends objection until understanding is attained. The **layperson** relies on the scholar's (Mufti) expertise in legal matters.

Allah swt says:

"So ask the people of knowledge if you do not know." **(Qur'ān 16:43; 21:7)**

Imam al-Nawawi states in al-Majmu:

"It is obligatory upon the one who is not qualified for independent reasoning (ijtihad) to follow a scholar."

Imam al-Ghazali in Ihyaʾ ʿUlum al-Din said:

"The layperson has no madhhab except the madhhab of his scholar."

Ibn Taymiyyah sates in Majmuʿ al-Fatawa: "The one who is unable to derive rulings must follow someone who is able."

Imam al-Shatibi in al-Muwafaqat said:

"Independent reasoning by the unqualified leads to misguidance and corruption."

Imam al-Shafi said in Al-Risalah:

"It is not permissible for anyone to issue rulings except a man who knows the Book of Allah, its abrogation and abrogated, its clear and ambiguous, its Makkan and Madinan verses..."

فَٱنطَلَقَا حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا رَكِبَا فِى ٱلسَّفِينَةِ خَرَقَهَا ۖ قَالَ أَخَرَقْتَهَا لِتُغْرِقَ أَهْلَهَا
لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْـًٔا إِمْرًا ﴿٧١﴾

So, they set out, but after they had boarded a ship, the man made a hole in it. Musa (A) protested, "Have you done this to drown its people? You have certainly done a terrible thing!"

- **Failing an exam** feels bad, but it can stop a complete career collapse.
- **An economic slowdown** is difficult, but it can prevent long-term collapse.

Therefore, what looks like a loss may actually be **mercy, protection, or a warning.** Small hardships often stop much greater harm. We may not like them, but they can save us in ways we don't see at the time. Baydawi said, "The order of mentioning the intention and the fear of punishment is because, **when two harms conflict, it is necessary to endure the lesser of them in order to avert the greater.** This is an agreed-upon principle, although the Divine Laws apply it in different ways."

Lesson: The Hidden Treasure of Wisdom

Narrated on the authority of Ali (R) and recorded by Bayhaqi, the treasure beneath the wall was a gold tablet on which was inscribed:

- There is no God but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.
- It is amazing that anyone who remembers that death is true is joyful.
- It is amazing that anyone who remembers that hell is true laughs.
- It is amazing that anyone who remembers that ordainment is true, is sorrowful.
- It is amazing that anyone who sees the world and its disposal of the people in it, state after state, has confidence in it.

Lesson: The Manners of Khidr (R) in Speaking About Allah

Tabatabai said: Al-Khidr showed **beautiful manners with Allah** in the way he spoke. When an action involved **harm or something that could seem wrong,** he attributed it to **himself**, saying things like "I wished to damage it." When an action involved **shared wisdom or caution**, he spoke using "we," showing humility. But when an action was **pure good and clearly part of Allah's authority**, he attributed it **only to Allah**, saying "your Lord desired". This shows his deep respect for Allah—taking responsibility for what appears imperfect, sharing speech where appropriate, and giving full credit to Allah alone for what belongs only to His lordship and perfect control. The Manners of Khidr (R) in Speaking About Allah are shown in following verses: "As for the ship, it belonged to some poor people, working at sea. So I intended to damage it, for there was a tyrant king ahead of them who seizes every good ship by force. (V. 79) "And as for the boy, his parents were true believers, and we feared that he would pressure them into defiance and disbelief. (V. 80) So we hoped that their Lord would give them another, more virtuous and caring in his place. (V. 81)

Lesson: Understanding Followers by the Leader: A Lesson from Musa (A)

The story of **Musa (A)** and **Khidr (R)** teaches a simple leadership lesson.

Musa (A) became impatient with Khidr (R) because he could not understand his actions. Later, Musa (A) realized that his own people were impatient with him in the same way. Scholars say that this helped him grow as a leader.

The Qur'an shows that a good leader understands how followers think and feel. People may not see the full picture, so leaders must be patient and empathetic. A true leader stays connected to the struggles and limits of those they lead.

They said yes. Their forefathers helped the poor, forgave those who wronged them, treated kindly those who treated them badly, were patient with the ignorant, kept family ties, fulfilled trusts, prayed on time, and kept their promises. Because of this, Allah corrected their affairs and protected them. They felt it was their duty to continue that way of life.

Dhu'l-Qarnayn said,

"If I were to settle anywhere, I would settle among you. But I have not been commanded to do so."

This story was reported by Al-Thaʿlabi.

Good Rulers in Prophetic Teachings: The Case of Dhul-Qarnayn:

The Messenger of Allah (sm) said:

"The best of your leaders are those whom you love and who love you, who pray for you and you pray for them.

And the worst of your leaders are those whom you hate and who hate you, whom you curse and who curse you." **(Muslim)**

A righteous ruler is emotionally connected with the people.

1. Dhu'l Qarnain governed with justice (rewarding good, restraining evil). Moral rule creates love and respect among people.
   "Whoever does wrong, we will punish him... but whoever believes and does righteousness will have a good reward."
   (18:87–88)

2. Dhu'l Qarnain protected oppressed communities.
   When a helpless people begged for help against Gog and Magog, he intervened:
   "They said: Gog and Magog are spreading corruption in the land..."
   (18:94)
   He used power to defend the weak, not exploit them.

3. Dhu'l Qarnain refused to accept payment and personal gain. This is a key trait of leaders people love.
   "What my Lord has given me is better."
   (18:95)

4. He worked with the people, not above them. Participatory leadership builds mutual goodwill.
   "So help me with strength..."
   (18:95–96)

5. He credited success to Allah, not himself.
   After completing the barrier:
   "This is a mercy from my Lord."
   (18:98)
   It reflects his humility — not self-praise. That inspires people's prayers for him eventually.

The Messenger of Allah (sm) said:

"The most beloved of people to Allah on the Day of Resurrection and the closest to Him in position is a just ruler." **(Tirmidhi)**

Ibn Taymiyyah repeatedly stresses that justice is the core purpose of political authority:

Allah supports a just state even if it is unbelieving, and He does not support an unjust state even if it is believing. (Paraphrased from al-Siyasah al-Shariyyah)

Al-Ghazali said in Nasihat al-Muluk and Ihya Ulum al-Din:

Religion is the foundation, and authority is its guard. What has no foundation collapses, and what has no guard is lost.

Student of Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn al-Qayyim states in Ilam al-Muwaqqiin:

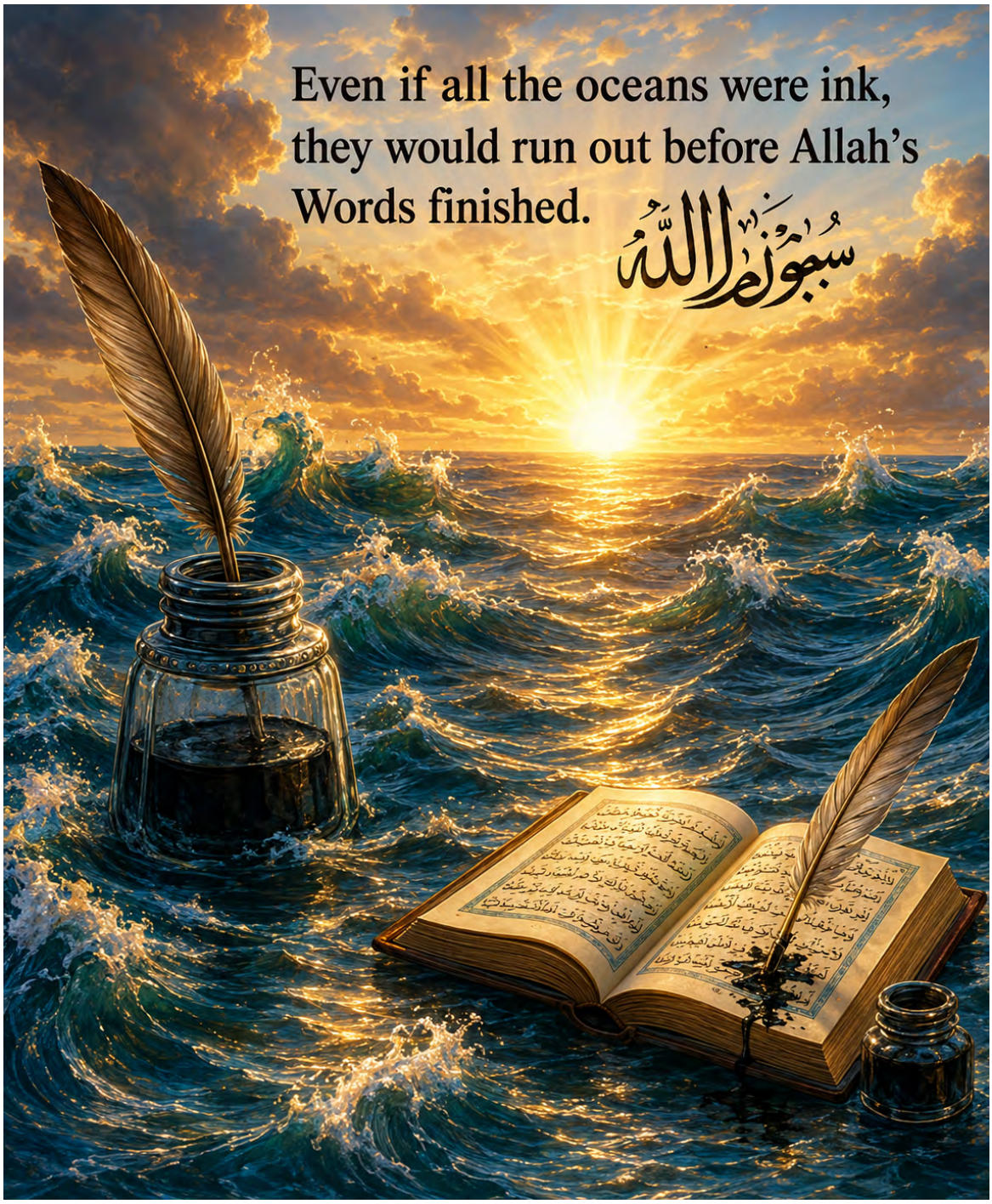
Shariah is entirely justice, mercy, benefit, and wisdom. Any ruling that departs from justice to injustice... is not from Shariah, even if claimed so by interpretation.

Al-Mawaradi in Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyyah outlined practical qualities for a ruler:

- Moral integrity
- Knowledge to judge correctly
- Physical & mental competence
- Ability to protect citizens
- Commitment to public interest

We observe all those qualities in Dhu'l Qarnayn.

The endless journey



Lesson: How specific Quranic verses show that God's wisdom and purposes are endless

According to Tabatabai, This verse explains how specific Quranic verses show that God's wisdom and purposes are endless. While these verses could stand alone, they are connected to the rest of the chapter through several key themes:

- Waking to Reality: The chapter begins by noting that people are currently "asleep" to divine truths (by way of consolation to the Prophet over his grief over people's turning their backs on remembrance) but will eventually wake up. The story of the Companions of the Cave is cited with regard to that.

- Hidden Meanings: The stories of the Musa (A) with al-Khiḍr demonstrate that outward appearances often hide deeper divine secrets that humans may not immediately understand. At that Prophet (sm)'s anxiety was calmed.

- Divine Protection: The story of Dhul-Qarnayn and the barrier against Yajuj and Majuj shows God's power to prevent chaos and mischief.

The stories and verses in the Qur'an act as windows into deep, hidden secrets that reveal God's infinite wisdom and divine plans. This specific verse highlights that God's words and purposes are truly endless and can never be fully exhausted by human explanation. Coming at the end of the chapter, it serves as a powerful closing statement, essentially saying that while there is an infinite amount more that could be discussed, we should be satisfied with the profound lessons already shared.

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