

Gog Magog and Dhul'Qarnain

Monthly Taleem Focus Slides
April 2015

Mentioned in Surah Al-Kahf 18:84

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ ذِي الْقَرْنَيْنِ ^{صلى} قُلْ سَأَتْلُو عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا

And they ask thee about Dhu'l Qarnain. Say, 'I will certainly recite to you something of his story.'

Meanings of the word القرنين (Al-Qarnain)

- It is the dual form of the word “Al-Qarn” meaning two Qarn
- Potential meanings
 - Horns of an animal
 - 100 years or a century
 - Metaphorically it is used to refer to the Western and Eastern world and their countries
 - To connect two things

Commentary – First Caliph's (ra) view

- The First Caliph (Maulvi Hakeem Nuruddin^{ra}) was of the opinion that Dhu'l Qarnain referred to King Cyrus who ruled over Media and Persia. This is on the basis of a dream that Daniel received in which he saw a ram with two horns. This goat was very powerful and no other animal could oppose it. Daniel interpreted this dream and claimed that the ram represented a king of Media and Persia (Daniel 8)

Daniel's dream

- “I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to this will, and became great” (Daniel 8:4)
- Interestingly, in the Quran Dhu'l Qarnain is also recorded to have undertaken 3 journeys as mentioned in verses 87, 91, and 94 surah al-Kahf. This coincides with Daniel's dream cited above

Qualities of Dhu'l Qarnian mentioned in Quran

- He built a wall to stop the inroads of Gog and Magog
 - Verses 94-98
- He marched to the West and made great conquests till he came to a place where the sun setting in a pool of murky water and then he turned to the East and conquered and subdued vast territories
 - Verses 85,87,88,89
- He was a great conqueror and a kind and just ruler; and he treated the nations he conquered benevolently
 - Verses 85,89
- He was a righteous servant of God and he was blessed with divine revelation
 - Verses 87,92,99

Dhu'l Qarnain was a righteous man

- That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd and shall perform all my pleasure : even saying to Jerusalem . . . Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus whose righthand I have holden, to subdue nations before him. . . (Isaiah 44:28, 45:1-3)
- The Bible also calls him:
 - Jehova's friend
 - Anointed
 - Shepherd

Dhu'l Qarnain was a great conqueror

- “Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, the Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he hath charged me to build Him a house at Jerusalem” (Ezra 1:2)
- He was a generous ruler:
 - I knew that there were some who willingly obeyed Cyrus, that were many days' journey, and others that were even some months' journey distant from him, some, too who had never seen him and some who knew very well that they never should see him; and yet they readily submitted to his government; for he so far excelled all other kings. . . He spared and made gifts to conquered enemies . . (Historians History of the World, under Cyrus)

Dhu'l Qarnain ruled an empire in the East and the West

- Empire extended from the Black Sea in the West to Afghanistan, Samarcand and Bukhara in the East
- Later on he was challenged by the King of Lydia named Croesus who he defeated leading to more conquests in Babylon, Nineveh, the Greek colonies from Asia Minor to the Sea of Marmora. And thus he had reached “the pool of murky water” as mentioned in the Quran

Dhu'l Qarnain battles Gog & Magog

- He turned his attention to a region wherein the people were constantly being attacked by the people of Gog and Magog. He builds a wall to keep them out
- Herodotus talks about the famous wall of Derbent which was built to keep the people of Gog and Magog from entering into Persian territories.
 - Some people believe that Alexander the Great was the one who built this wall but this contradicts other historical facts. He conquered a large part of the world so swiftly that he would not have had the time to undertake such a tremendous project. This inaccuracy could have been due to the fact that some commentators of the Quran mistook Dhu'l Qarnain for Alexander.

Who were the people of Gog & Magog?

- According to the Bible these were the people of Russia, Moscow, and Tobolsk (Ezekiel 38:2-6)
- Historically, these people had also conquered Persia. These people are also known as the Scythians. Cyrus defeats these people and delivers the Persians from their rule.

The Promised Messiah & Dhu'l Qarnain

- The Quran is not a mere book of stories and thus behind each story is a prophecy. Similarly, the story of Dhu'l Qarnain is a prophecy for the time of the Promised Messiah^{as}
- The Promised Messiah (as) has mentioned that God has also referred to him as Dhu'l Qarnain since he resembled the qualities of all previous prophets. For this umma (the people who have believed in the Prophet Muhammad^{sa}) the Promised Messiah (as) is Dhu'l Qarnain
- Another meaning of Dhu'l Qarnain is “one who witnesses two centuries.”
 - The Promised Messiah mentions that he is amazed at the fact that whichever calendar you look at whether it be the Islamic, Western, Hindu or any other calendar, my life span has been such that I have seen the turn of a new century in all of these.

Gog & Magog at the time of Promised Messiah^{as}

- It has been prophecied in hadith that at the time of Promised Messiah Gog & Magog will rule the world yet other Ahadith point out that Christian powers will be in control.
- Promised Messiahas resolved this apparent contradiction by explaining that Gog & Magog are none other than Western Christian powers.
- Gog & Magog are known as Yajuj & Majuj in Arabic which is derived from the Arabic word Ajij meaning fire. Thus Western nations which pioneered the extensive use of fire (modren modes of transportation) and subdued the whole world with it are Yajuj & Majuj.
- He called the Christian clerics of the time Dajjal