

# Dhul Qarnayn

# ذو القرنين

Monthly Taleem Focus Slides  
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# The Background

- Dhu'l Qarnayn (ذوالقرنين) is a historical figure described in the Holy Quran
- The story is narrated in Surah Al-Kahf (verses 84-99)

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ ذِي الْقَرْنَيْنِ ۖ قُلْ سَأَتْلُو عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا إِنَّا مَكَّنَّا لَهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَآتَيْنَاهُ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ سَبَبًا

And they ask thee about Dhu'l Qarnain. Say, 'I will certainly recite to you something of his story.' We established him in the earth and gave him the means to accomplish everything. (18:84-85)

- Surah Al-Kahf is a very important chapter that talks about the people of the cave, the story of Moses' travels with a companion and various incidents that occurred on their journey, and the story of Dhu'l Qarnayn
- Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever commits to memory the first ten Ayat of the Surat Al-Kahf (and the last ten in another narration), will be protected from (the trial of) Ad-Dajjal" (Muslim)

# The Story in Al-Kahf

- [18:84] And they ask thee about Dhu'l Qarnayn. Say, 'I will certainly recite to you something of his story.'
- [18:85] We established him in the earth and gave him the means to accomplish everything.
- [18:86] Then he followed a certain way
- [18:87] Until, when he reached the setting of the sun, he found it setting in a pool of murky water, and near it he found a people. We said, 'O Dhu'l Qarnayn, either punish them, or treat them with kindness.'
- [18:88] He said, 'As for him who does wrong, we shall certainly punish him; then shall he be brought back to his Lord, Who will punish him with a dreadful punishment.'
- [18:89] But as for him who believes and acts righteously, he will have a good reward, and We shall speak to him easy words of Our command.
- [18:90] Then indeed he followed another way
- [18:91] Until, when he reached the rising of the sun, he found it rising on a people for whom We had made no shelter against it.

# The Story in Al-Kahf

- [18:92] Thus indeed it was. Verily, We encompassed with Our knowledge all that was with him.
- [18:93] Then he followed another way
- [18:94] Until, when he reached the place between the two mountains, he found beneath them a people who would scarcely understand a word.
- [18:95] They said, 'O Dhu'l Qarnain, verily, Gog and Magog are creating disorder in the earth; shall we then pay thee tribute on condition that thou set up a barrier between us and them?'
- [18:96] He replied, 'The power with which my Lord has endowed me about this is better, but you may help me with physical strength; I will set up between you and them a rampart.
- [18:97] 'Bring me blocks of iron.' They did so till, when he had levelled up the space between the two mountain sides, he said, 'Now blow with your bellows.' They blew till, when he had made it red as fire, he said, 'Bring me molten copper that I may pour it thereon.'
- [18:98] So they (Gog and Magog) were not able to scale it, nor were they able to dig through it.
- [18:99] Thereupon he said, 'This is a mercy from my Lord. But when the promise of my Lord shall come to pass, He will break it into pieces. And the promise of my Lord is certainly true.'

# Who was Dhu'l Qarnayn

- Historians have disagreed who this historical person was. Many have assumed it to be Alexander the Great
- However, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih I (ra) through his research in to the biblical accounts of the same person concluded it to be one of the Persian kings.
- Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra) through further research and correlating his characteristics described in the Quran have concluded that it was King Cyrus the Great of Persia.
- Dhu'l Qarnayn in Arabic means the one with two horns or the one of the two eras/centuries

# Quranic and Biblical Description

- Quran has described four distinctive marks for Dhu'l Qarnayn
  - He was a righteous servant of God and blessed with divine revelation
  - He was a just and kind and benevolent conqueror
  - He made conquests in the West till he arrived at a pool of Murky water and the made conquests in the East
  - Lastly, he made his way to the middle region where lived a people who were savaged by people of Gog and Magog. He built a wall to stop the attacks from Gog and Magog.
- In the old Testament, prophet Daniel's dream is described , "I saw a 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 his will and became great (Daniel 8:4)

# Cyrus the Great

- Cyrus was born to the king of Media (northwestern Iran) around 600 BC.
- He inherited the throne from his father and soon built the largest empire ever seen up till that time stretching from Easter Europe (Balkans region) o the Indus River in modern-day Pakistan.
- He was known as a just ruler throughout his territories
- He allowed the Jews who had been displaced by Nebuchadnezzar to the Babylon to return to Jerusalem and build the second temple
- He built the Derbent wall to stop the attacks of Scythians in his territories through Caucasus mountains. (Some historians believe Alexander built it)
- He died around 530 BC



An image of Cyrus the Great carved into stone



Tomb of Cyrus the Great in Pasargade, Iran



Scythians



City of Derbent along the Caspian



Some surviving sections of Derbent Wall

# Promised Messiah and Dhu'l Qarnayn

- The story of Dhu'l Qarnayn is not merely an historical account.
- Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> said “I will now set out the meanings of the verses in Surah Al-Kahf which relate the story of Dhu'l Qarnayn, and the prophecy they contain about me, of which I have been informed by God Almighty. I do not deny the meaning of these verses which relates to the past, but what has been revealed to me is about the future”
- He further says that the verse 85 discussed earlier refers to, “the Promised Messiah, who will also be known as Dhu'l Qarnayn, in such a way that no one will be able to harm him; and We shall provide him with all the means for achieving his purpose and shall make everything easy and plain for him”.
- Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> also came at the turn of the two centuries and eras in Islamic, Christian and other calendars as the name Dhu'l Qarnayn implies

# Setting Sun in the Pool of Murky Water

Hazrat Masih Ma'ud<sup>as</sup> says, “when Dhu'l Qarnayn (who is the Promised Messiah), is furnished with all the means, he will follow a certain path, (i.e., he will resolve to reform the people of the West). He will find that the sun of truth and righteousness has set in a muddy pool, near which he will find a people in the darkness. (These are the Christians of the West who will be steeped in darkness; they will have no sun to get light from, nor will they have clean water to drink, i.e., both in practice and doctrine they will be in a terrible state; they will be bereft of spiritual light and spiritual water.) Then We shall say to Dhu'l Qarnayn, it is up to you either to punish them or to treat them with kindness. Dhu'l Qarnayn (the Promised Messiah) will say: We only desire the wrongdoers to be punished. They will be punished in this life (through our supplications), and will suffer severe torment in the hereafter. But he who does not deny the truth and does good deeds will have his reward. He will be required only to do what can be done with facility and ease.’ In short, these verses contain a prophecy that the Promised Messiah will appear at a time when the people of the West will be steeped in darkness.”

# People in the Scorching Sun

Hazrat Masih Ma'ud<sup>as</sup> says, “That is, Dhu'l Qarnayn (the Promised Messiah who will be equipped with every means) shall follow another path, (i.e., he will observe the state of the people of the East) and will discover a people at the place of the rising of the sun of truth who will be so ignorant that they will have no means of protecting themselves from the glare of the sun (i.e., they will be scorched by the heat generated by their adherence to the letter and their extremism), and they will be unaware of the truth. Dhu'l Qarnayn (the Promised Messiah) will have all the means of true peace and happiness of which We are aware, but the people will not accept them. They will have no shelter against the glare of their extremism—neither houses, nor shady trees nor suitable clothes to protect them from the heat. In this way the rising sun of truth will bring about their ruin.’ This is an instance of people who have the light of the sun of guidance available to them, and who are not like those whose sun has set, but they derive no benefit from the sun of guidance; only their skins are scorched, their complexion is darkened and they lose their eyesight.”

# Build The Wall...Your Payment Not Needed

He says, “Dhu’l Qarnayn (the Promised Messiah) will then follow another course and will find himself at a very critical time, which can be described as between two barriers or mountains. This means that he will find a time when people on either side will be in fear, and the powers of darkness, in collaboration with the powers of state, will present an awe-striking spectacle. Under both these powers he will find a people who will find it difficult to understand him, i.e., they will be the victims of false beliefs on account of which they will find it difficult to understand the guidance which he will present to them. But in the end they will understand him. These are the third kind of people who will benefit from the guidance of the Promised Messiah. They will say to him: Dhu’l Qarnayn, Gog and Magog have filled the land with disorder. If you so please, **let us collect a fund for you so that you may erect a barrier between them and us.**’ He will say in reply: **‘The power God has given me is better than your funds,** but if you be so inclined, you can help me according to your means so that I may erect a wall between you and your opponents (i.e., he would put forth such conclusive proofs and arguments that their enemies will not be left with any ground for criticism or objection against their religion.) He will say to them: ‘Bring me slabs of iron so that their movement can be stopped, (i.e., hold fast to my teachings and my arguments, be steadfast, and block the enemy’s onslaught like a wall of iron.) Then blow fire into the iron until it appears to be fire itself (i.e., feed the flames of love for God until you yourselves assume the Divine complexion)....

# Build The Wall...Your Payment Not Needed

He says, “After these verses, God Almighty goes on to say: Then Dhu’l Qarnayn (the Promised Messiah) will say to the people who are afraid of Gog and Magog: ‘Bring me copper so that I may melt it and pour it over the wall. Thereafter, Gog and Magog will not have the power to scale it or to make holes in it.’

Here it should be noted that though iron assumes the qualities of fire when left in it for a long time, it does not melt easily. Copper, on the other hand, melts very quickly; and it is necessary for a seeker to melt in the path of God. This means that the Promised Messiah will need such eager hearts and mild dispositions as would melt under the influence of Divine signs. These signs have no effect on the hard-hearted. A person can only become immune to Satanic attacks when he becomes steadfast like iron and that iron becomes like fire when touched by the fire of Divine love, and then the melted heart should melt and cover the iron to secure it against disintegration and decay. These are the three conditions which, when combined, form a wall which cannot be scaled or bored through by the spirit of Satan. Then God says that all this will come about by His grace. It is His hands which will accomplish everything and human design will have no part in it. When the Day of Judgement approaches, mischief will reign supreme once again. This is the promise of God.”