

Youth Vessel in Tempestuous Winds

Friday Sermon Presented by

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It is customary in the Holy Qur'an to present a comparison between the present and the past, or between the past examples and what is required of this Ummah in the present time. When the Holy Qur'an narrates the stories of the Messengers that were sent before the Prophet (pbuh), it also connects them with the Sira (the biography) of the Prophet, our Master, (pbuh). Consequently, the stories of the previous Messengers become as examples for us to guide the people of faith.

When other than the Messengers is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, it is to say to the rejecters and unbelievers in our time: "Your result and end will be like theirs". On the other hand, when the people of faith of the previous nations are mentioned, the Holy Qur'an talks about the people of faith in this Ummah too, so that the past becomes connected with the present.

Whoever reads the Holy Qur'an can see this fact clearly. The Holy Qur'an never mentions something from the past but to connect it with the present.

In the sermon of today, I'd like to present examples from the Holy Qur'an in which there is description of a group of the people of belief who were steadfast on the right, and how after that, the Holy Qur'an moves directly to talk about a group present in the Islamic Ummah.

The example I'll refer to is mentioned in Surat Al Kahf (the Cave). It is the story of a group of youth who are the people of the Cave. After relating their story, the Holy Qur'an directly, and without interruption, relates the story of the youth who were reared under the care of our Master, Muhammad (pbuh).

Whoever reads the Qur'an without considering the occasions of its stories will not benefit from it, nor will he realize the dimensions that should be settled in his inner heart.

While reading one of the Holy Qur'an Suwar (plural of chapter), do meditate upon the occasions of its stories. The Holy Qur'an never talks about disconnected ideas, nor about dispersed beads of stories. It rather threads the beads in a unique necklace. So whoever has good understanding, and the Exalted Allah opens the windows of his heart, can realize this unique necklace and observe its occasions.

The subject displayed in the following two examples is closely related to the youth whose hearts were directed to Allah. They rebelled against customs and inherited traditions that contradict the purposes of religion. They rebelled against idolatry in which self and personal passions are worshipped, in addition to worshipping illusions and superstitions.

I am not going to present these example with the purpose of relating historical incidents. Certainly not. I'd rather relate them because I can see that the vessel that the youth of our Ummah embark is running amidst tempestuous winds. Nowadays, the youths read the Qur'an and feel related to its environment, but at the same time, they suffer from many outside influences. Consequently, papers become mixed and concepts become ambiguous to them.

How many the people are who employ Islamic concepts and titles from the Qur'an to assault the Qur'an and to destroy its contents!

How many the people are who take the example of filial piety saying to the youth: "Allah has decreed that you should treat your parents kindly", but at the same time, this youth receives instructions that distract him from the Qur'an, from its environment, and from the people of the Qur'an. Then it is said to him: "Aren't you the one who is related to the Qur'an? So, obey your parents".

In such circumstances, the youth feels lost. He becomes unable to distinguish between priorities. He imagines that filial piety obliges him with an obedience that contradicts obeying the

Exalted Allah and His Messenger, as well as the priorities of his education and his goals. Consequently, he gets lost. This is one of the general examples. The youth problems are too many today. They should present their problems so that the people of education assume their role in answering their inquiries and, consequently, papers be rearranged properly.

Let us go back to the two examples mentioned in Surat Al Kahf.

The Exalted Allah begins this Surah by the story of the People of the Cave, then directly after it, He addresses the Prophet (pbuh) saying: "**And keep your soul content with those who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His Countenance**" (Al Kahf, 28). There is no division between the two statements. When the Prophet went out and saw the youth such as Ammar Bin Yaser, and Suhaib Ar Rumi, he smiled to them and said: "**Thanks to Lord that makes among my Ummah people whom He commands me to be patient with**".

Let us review briefly part of these two paragraphs in this Surah. The Exalted Allah said:

-"**Do you believe**". From the beginning of this address, the Exalted Allah connects the past with the present addressing our Master, Muhammad (pbuh). He does not say: "Tell about the People of the Cave and the inscription". The address is directed to a present addressee about a past story.

"that the companions of the cave and of the inscription were wonders among our Signs?" (Al Kahf, 9).

'The Cave' represents the specialty of the place and the purity of the environment. No sound healthy education can be practiced without a place in which there is specialty and pure environment.

Then the Exalted Allah mentions Ar Raqin (the **inscription**). It is the inscribed Book that was one of the past heavenly Books like the Holy Qur'an, and it represented reference in the method.

The education of the youth is valueless when they aim at promotion, but they are not related to a place in which there are

specialty and purity, and they do not depend on reference in the method, such an education.

"Behold, the youths fled for haven to the cave". Let us meditate upon the word : 'fled for haven', a similar meaning is mentioned in Surat Ad Duha, when the Exalted Allah addressed His Beloved (pbuh) saying: "Did He not find you an orphan and give you shelter {and care}" (Ad Duha, 6). The Exalted Allah is like a father in whose protection the child seeks refuge, but when the child finds that his father and mother behave in a way that contradicts the instructions of Allah and His Messenger, he appeals to the Cave.

How many the youth were who migrated from Mecca to Medina, leaving behind them their parents!

One of the examples is the young lad, Khaled Bin Sa'id. After hearing the words of the Prophet (pbuh), and his breast became comforted by Islam, and when his father heard that his son had embraced Islam, and said to him: "I am going to prevent you sustenance", he answered saying: "

This is how priorities should be arranged, that is, even if the father is a disbeliever, he should be esteemed and treated kindly, only concerning worldly companionship, but the child should not receive wrong ideas from him. The Exalted Allah said: "But if they strive to make you join in worship with Me things of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them". In spite of the fact that the Holy Qur'an enjoins children to obey their parents, it said: "Do not obey them, (if they are disbelievers), yet bear them company in this life with justice {and consideration}" (Luqman, 15).

Companionship of the parents necessitates treating them with reverence and supporting them financially. Moreover, the child should be tolerant with them, bearing their harm, their anger, their excitement, but he should not receive wrong ideas from them. Islam does not enjoin importing ideas unless they are derived from the Book, through which the Exalted Allah directs mankind, including parents, and husband and wife.

Thus, the Holy Qur'an said: "Did He not find you an orphan and give you shelter {and care}", and here, He said: "Behold, the

youths fled for haven to the cave" where there was pure environment that had the characteristics of the parents because it was a haven, and it is usually equal to the care and protection of the parents.

-**"they said, our Lord bestow on us mercy from Yourself"**, for mercy and bounty can be received only from the Exalted Allah.

-**"And dispose of our affair for us in the right way"** (Al Kahf, 10), i.e., guide us to the path of safety, to the path of promotion, and prosperity.

Then the Holy Qur'an presents description of the qualities of the of people who are connected with the Muhammadan Excellency as an example. He said:

1- **"They were youths"**. The word 'youth' is a praised in the Holy Qur'an because the Exalted Allah describes His most Intimate Slave, Abraham, by it. He said: **"They said, we heard a youth talk of them; he is called Abraham"** (Al Anbiya', 60).

"They were youths". In them, the high resolution of youth was implicit and explicit. But this did not make them the servants of this world or their passion.

"Who believed in their Lord". Thus, activity and youth joined together with faith through which the heart travels to the world of lights, and consequently, believes in the One, the Compeller.

When the two mentioned issues were verified in them, i.e., youth and faith, the Exalted Allah's support and favor were bestowed upon them. The Exalted Allah said:

2-**"And we advanced them in guidance"** (Al Kahf, 13). Oh youth, do not think that if you seek Allah, He turns away from you. Allah negates that, for He said: **"If man draws near to Me an arm's length, I draw near to him a fathom's length. And if he comes to Me walking, I go to him at speed"**.

3-**"We gave strength to their hearts"**. The first support was by guiding them and supplying them with knowledge, and the second was by making them steadfast so that they do not become shaken and unstable in their way to Allah.4-**"Behold,**

they stood up". They lived in an ignorant society whose members worshipped customs, self-passion, and persons. The Exalted Allah said, "they stood up", for standing is different from sitting. Standing implies renaissance that is full of activity, and a resolution that makes man alive, not dead, active not frozen and stationary.

-**"They said: 'our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and of the earth"**. Notice how the youth is in harmony with the universe.

When one worships his own passion, he becomes incongruous with the universe. Heavens and earth always glorify the Exalted Allah and obey Him. When your Lord, who is obeyed by heavens and earth, is your Deity, certainly, you will obey Him and heavens and earth do. It is not said: **"Our Lord is Allah"**, but more details are given: **"Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and of the earth"**. So, we can be in harmony with the universe because all the universe is obedient to Allah

The sun is obedient to Allah, so is the moon, the air, the clouds, the trees, the mountains, the earth, the earthquakes, and everything around us is obedient to Allah. Hence, why should we be abnormal among all the obedient phenomena of the universe.

"They said: 'our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and of the earth". They announced their servitude to the Exalted Allah, and denounced worshipping other than Him, because they wanted to be in harmony with the obedient universe.

"Never shall we call upon any god other than him". There is pun in this statement. The statement "Never shall we call" may mean either, "We shall not worship other than him", or "We shall not call to other than Him to be worshipped".

Since, the statement "Never shall we call" may mean either of the two meanings, therefore calling is directed only to Allah. The following verse emphasizes this meaning: **"Yet when the**

Devotee of Allah stands forth to invoke Him" (Al Jinn, 19). Consequently, the linguistic meaning refers to the two following meanings: When Allah's slave worships Allah, and when he calls to Allah.

"We should indeed have uttered encroachment" (Al Kahf, 14). Linguistically speaking, 'encroachment' means 'exaggeration', and when one raises somebody, who is unworthy of worship, to the rank of deity, he becomes a transgressor. In other words, when you make your father or your ruler, your deity, you will be a transgressor. So is the case when you make your lust, instinctive desires, and your self-interests, your deity, you become a transgressor and exaggerator.

These people are example of the youth who enjoyed freedom and were verified by faith. They stood and announced their servitude to Allah. They attained the stage of moderation. When one renounces encroachment, one becomes moderate.

7-"**These our people have taken for worship gods other than him. Why do they not bring forward an authority clear (and convincing) for what they do?**" (Al Kahf, 15).

"Clear evidence" is the obvious proof. No one can say this statement unless he has a proof. This is another quality added to the description of the youth mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. They were the people of proof who stood in their society to say "Present your proof and evidence if your are true. We have our proof, so where is yours?"

If the youth do not have proof, they will not be able to call to Allah.

Consequently, these are the characteristics of the youth: faith, activity, holding the responsibility of proselytizing, announcing servitude to Allah, moderation, proof... .

Then the Exalted Allah said:

"When you turn away from them and the things they worship other than Allah", i.e., When you forsake them and the deities they worship. This is a new quality added to the youth. It is the quality of distinguishing, i.e., distinguishing the right from the wrong.

It is similar in meaning to the Exalted Allah's statement: "But when it became clear to him that he was an enemy to Allah, he dissociated himself from him" (At Tawbah, 114).

And: "Say: O you that reject Faith! I worship not that which you worship, Nor will you worship that which I worship, And I will not worship that which you have been wont to worship, Nor will you worship that which I worship. To you be your Way, and to me mine" (Al Kafirun, 1-6).

It is the state of distinguishing the right from the wrong. It is a state in which there is no reconciliation, nor giving in.

Behavioral giving in is somehow admissible, but giving in of fundamentals is definitely unpermitted.

Beware of being of those who believe in part of the Book, and reject its other part.

"But beware of them lest they beguile thee from any of that {teaching} which Allah has sent down to thee" (Al Ma'idah, 49). Accept the Qur'an as a whole, and so do for Islam.

"Resort to the cave". Notice the repetition of the meaning of 'haven' in the Holy Qur'an. The concept of 'haven' in the Qur'an is to make one understand that if he does not resort to the haven, he will be distracted and confused. Moreover, if one does not resort to a haven in which he can find mercy and tranquility, lights and purity of environment, one will feel ever confused. Consequently, when one's relationship with the haven weakens, he becomes weak as well.

Let us ask ourselves the following question: Why do the youth become a kindled torch of light after they get out of their seclusion in the last ten days of Ramadan?

It is because they have been in 'the haven'.

9-"your Lord will shower his mercies on you", i.e., great, honoring, bountiful support will come to you.

10-"And dispose of your affair towards comfort and ease" (Al Kahf, 16), i.e., the Exalted Allah will prepare for you means of His mercy.

Islam presents convenience and facilities, whereas, society, customs, and new idolatry, all present difficulty.

Islam presents means of facilities, so that one feels convenient, but other than Islam presents nothing but difficulty and impediments. The Exalted Allah tells about that saying: "Allah intends every facility for you; He does not want to put you to difficulties" (Al Baqarah, 185).

Today, society presents difficulties. One of these examples is when a youth wants to marry, he finds nothing but impediments set in his way due to social customs that impose on him too many demands he is obliged to hold.

It is planned for the youths to deviate from the right moral way. The 'ego' is prevalent in society. The circumstances of the youth are not taken into consideration, nor is their financial state. Instincts are stirred, and currents of dissolution of morality are directed to the youth from all sides. Moreover, those who claim to be the people of Islam and faith are the first who present difficulties.

Dowry of the bride should be high. The bridegroom should present a car, a spacious house, and expensive gold presents.

Not all people own gold, but the problem is not in the 'gold', it is rather in the intellect that has become absent from the minds, so people are changed into worshippers of gold.

Our religion is the religion of facilities. There is no one item in our religion that implies difficulty.

Oh youth, the problem is not in Islam. It is rather in the heathen customs. I advise you to resort to 'the Cave' whenever you find this paganism surround you. There, you will find facilities, and he means of help to get you out of your dilemmas.

In the end of the story of the People of the Cave, the Holy Qur'an directly presents the example of the youths who lived with our Master, Muhammad (pbuh). They represent the

example of the Islamic youths who are ever present in the Muhammadan Ummah in every time. The Exalted Allah said:

"And keep your soul content with those who call on their Lord". Herein, the youth "call on their Lord", as is mentioned previously, "Never shall we call upon any god other than him". Thus, the first mentioned meaning is, "they call their Lord", then comes next the second one "they call on to their Lord".

If we understand the meaning of "they call their Lord" in the light of what is presented concerning the Exalted Allah's words: "Yet when the Devotee of Allah stands forth to invoke Him", We can realize that the Muhammadan example of the youth of today call their Lord and call to their Lord as well.

"seeking His Countenance", they never aim at anything in their advancement but the Exalted Allah's Countenance. They aim at nothing but wiping off the traces of other interests from their hearts, just for the sake of Allah, the Subduer, the One.

This is similar to the statement concerning the Youth of the Cave who said: "our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and of the earth", and here, they said: " Seeking His Countenance". They announce their servitude to Him only, because they want nobody but Him.

"And let not your eyes pass beyond them, seeking the pomp and glitter of this life". The Exalted Allah commands His Beloved (pbuh), the one whom He calls "We sent thee not, but as a Mercy for all creatures" (Al Anbiya', 107), to direct the attention of his eyes and the care of his heart to them

Consequently, mercy is directed to this type of youth in the Muhammadan Ummah. This reminds us of the Youth of the Cave when they said: "your Lord will shower his mercies on you", and here, it means mercy for these youths.

There is correspondence in meaning, for in the above mentioned verse, the Exalted Allah said: "[Your Lord will shower his mercies on you](#)", and here, addressing the Prophet, the Mercy for all the world (pbuh), He said: "[and let not your eyes pass beyond them](#)".

"[Nor obey him whose heart we have permitted to neglect the remembrance of us, one who follows his own desires](#)". This statement is similar to "[When you turn away from them and the things they worship other than Allah](#)".

It is the ability of distinction.

These are different words of the same meanings, for the Holy Qur'an does not repeat the same vocabularies. It rather repeats the same meanings to draw the attention to the homogeneity in description.

"[Whose case has gone beyond all bounds](#)" (Al Kahf, 28).

As above mentioned, the Exalted Allah said: "[We should indeed have uttered encroachment](#)", i.e., if we said as our folk said, we would have been transgressors; and here, they said: "[whose case has gone beyond all bounds](#)", which also means exaggeration, that is, going beyond ordinary limits. Hence, in the previous verse, there is excess, and in the present one, there is exaggeration.

Consequently, there is homogeneity in the two examples because the description is the same in both of them.

I do not like to speak in more details about the subject, but I advise you to read the verses carefully, elaborately and with much consideration, so that, oh youth, you derive method out of them, and so that your vessel become settled however stormy the winds are: "[And We strengthened their hearts](#)".

If it is Allah who binds your hearts, your vessel will never be drowned. But you have to understand the required characteristics and be verified by them. Once you do that, your vessel will be settled however the winds are stormy, but if you do otherwise, your vessel will certainly be drowned.

Allahum..., guide us to You favorably, and make us from those who listen to wisdom and follow the best of it.

I say my words and ask Allah's forgiveness.