

Surah 18. Al-Kahf

Asad: AND IN THIS way²⁷ have We drawn [people's] attention to their story,²⁸ so that they might know - whenever they debate among themselves as to what happened to those [Men of the Cave]²⁹ - that God's promise [of resurrection] is true, and that there can be no doubt as to [the coming of] the Last Hour. And so, some [people] said: "Erect a building in their memory;³⁰ God knows best what happened to them." Said they whose opinion prevailed in the end: "Indeed, we must surely raise a house of worship in their memory!"

Malik: Thus did We reveal their secret to the people so that they might know that the promise of Allah is true and that there is no doubt about the coming of the Hour of Judgement. (But what a pity that instead of considering the Hour of Judgement) they started arguing among themselves about the companions of the cave. Some said: "Erect an edifice over their remains." Their Rabb is quite aware of them. Those who finally prevailed over their matter said: "Let us erect a place of worship over them."

Pickthall: And in like manner We disclosed them (to the people of the city) that they might know that the promise of Allah is true, and that, as for the Hour, there is no doubt concerning it. When (the people of the city) disputed of their case among themselves, they said: Build over them a building; their Lord knoweth best concerning them. Those who won their point said: We verily shall build a place of worship over them.

Yusuf Ali: Thus did We make their case known to the people that they might know that the promise of Allah is true and that there can be no doubt about the Hour of Judgment. Behold they dispute among themselves as to their affair. (Some) said "Construct a building over them": their Lord knows best about them: those who prevailed over their affair said "Let us surely build a place of worship over them." ^{2357 2358}

Transliteration: Wakathalika aAtharna AAalayhim liyaAAlamoo anna waAAda Allahi haqqun waanna alsaAAata la rayba feeha ith yatanazaAAoona baynahum amrahum faqaloo ibnoo AAalayhim bunyanan rabbuhum aAlamu bihim qala allatheena ghalaboo AAala amrihim lanattakhihanna AAalayhim masjidan
Khatab:

That is how We caused them to be discovered so that their people might know that Allah's promise of resurrection is true and that there is no doubt about the Hour.¹ When the people disputed with each other about the case of the youth after their death?,² some proposed, "Build a structure around them. Their Lord knows best about them." Those who prevailed in the matter said, "We will surely build a place of worship over them."

Author Comments

27 - I.e., by means of the legend which has grown up around the Men of the Cave and, more particularly, by means of the allegoric use which the Qur'an makes of this legend.

28 - Lit., "given knowledge about them [to others]".

29 - Lit., "debate their case (amrahum) among themselves": an indication of the fact that the legend of the Men of the Cave occupied men's minds for a long time, leading to many discussions and conflicting interpretations. The next sentence explains why God has "drawn [people's] attention" to this story in the context of the Qur'an.

30 - This, to my mind, is the meaning of the expression 'alayhim (lit., "over them") occurring here as well as in the subsequent reference to the building of a house of worship at the suggestion of those "whose opinion prevailed in the end" (alladhina ghalabu 'ala amrihim).

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Their antique silver coins gave them away. People rushed to the cave to greet the youths, who finally passed away and were buried in the cave. The King decided to build a place of worship at the cave to commemorate their story.

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Some pagans suggested that a wall should be built to seal off the cave, whereas the believers decided to build a place of worship at the cave to honour those youths.

2357 - Thus: in this way, by these means, i.e., by the sending out of one of the Sleepers with the old money to the town to buy provisions. His old-fashioned dress, appearance, and speech, and the old uncurrent money which he brought, at once drew the attention of people to him. When they learnt his story, they realised that Allah, Who can protect His servants thus and raise them up from sleep after such a long time, has power to raise up men for the Resurrection, and that His promise of goodness and mercy

to those who serve Him is true and was exemplified in this striking way. On the other hand, to the men of the Cave themselves, it became clear that Allah can change the situation before we are aware, and our hope in Him is not futile, and that even when we are on the brink of despair, a revolution is surely working in the world before the world itself realises it.

2358 - The perversity of man is such that as soon as ever a glimpse of truth becomes manifest, men fall into controversies about it. The Sleepers could not judge about the duration of their stay in the Cave, but they wisely left the matter and attended to the urgent business of their lives. The townsfolk could not agree as to the significance of the event; they fell to discussing immaterial details. What sort of a memorial should they raise?-a house or a place of worship or a tablet? The place of worship was built. But the real significance was missed until explained in the Qur-an.

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