

Al-Kahf (The Cave) [18:63]

قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَ إِذْ أَوَيْنَا إِلَى الصَّخْرَةِ فَإِنِّي نَسِيتُ الْحُوتَ وَمَا أَذْسَنِيهِ إِلَّا
الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ أَذْكُرَهُ وَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ عَجَبًا ﴿٦٣﴾

He replied: "Don't you see (what happened) when we betook ourselves to the rock? I did indeed forget (about) the Fish: none but Satan made me forget to tell (you) about it: it took its course through the sea in a marvellous way!"

MUHAMMAD HUSAIN TABA TABAI (AR)

He said, *Do you remember when we betook ourselves to the rock? I indeed forgot the fish and none but Satan made me forget to remember it. It took its course into the sea in a strange way.*

The verse speaks of the time they reached the land of the two seas and camped where there was a boulder. The proof is the saying, "It took its course in a strange way." The young man tells Hazrat Musa that they had no food left because the fish came alive and swam away into the sea. "We had reached the boulder then and I had forgotten to tell you about it."

"Do you remember when we betook ourselves to the rock?"

They had gone there to take rest. "I indeed forgot the fish" means he forgot to relate the strange incident about the fish. "None but Satan made me forget to remember it." He says he did not forget it himself but Satan made him forget to relate the incident to Hazrat Musa.

There is no harm in relating this incident about the young man who was Hazrat Yusha bin Nun forgot because Satan made him forget. He was one of the chosen Prophets of God who was infallible to sins and mistakes but Satan is able to torment a Prophet in this way and it does not affect his infallibility to mistakes and sins.

In verse 41 of Surah Sa'ad God says, "And remember our slave Ayyub when he invoked the Lord, "verily Satan has touched me with distress and torment."

The verse continues, "It took its course into the sea in a strange way." Or the fish swam in a strange way in the sea. It has been said that the words, "these words belong to Hazrat Yusha while the word, "strange "belongs to Hazrat Musa but the verse denies this.

MIR AHMED ALI (AR)

Verse 60

In these verses the Quran describes the meeting which took place between Musa and a chosen servant of Allah, whose name, as per Islamic traditions, was Khizr. Allah told Musa that if he wanted to see a more knowledgeable person then he should go to meet him at the place where the two seas come together. The sign for that meeting-place was that a fish would disappear in the water.

Musa was the most learned man of his times, but even his wisdom did not comprehend everything. Therefore he was commanded by Allah to go in search of Khizr who would impart to him such knowledge as even he did not possess.

To meet him Musa had to reach the junction of the two seas where he lived. The distance was very long. Huquba means a long space of time, sometimes it is limited to 80 years. Musa took Yusha, his attendant, with him. When they reached the junction of the two seas where the two arms of the Red Sea join together viz., the Gulf of Aqaba and the Gulf of Suez, they stopped and took rest. Yusha put the cooked fish on a nearby rock. While Yusha was looking on, the fish took its way into the sea in a strange manner. When they had passed the meeting-place, Musa felt hungry and asked Yusha to bring the fish. Then Yusha cursed the avowed enemy of man, Shaytan, who made him forget the mentioning of it to Musa. So they immediately turned back retracing their tracks and reached the meeting place where they found Khizr, a servant from among the servants of Allah, whom He had granted mercy and whom He had taught knowledge from Himself. Verses 66 to 77 describe the actions of Khizr, during their onward journey, which baffled Musa and forced him to question Khizr inspite of the warning Khizr gave to him in the beginning that he would not be able to bear patiently with the events he could not comprehend. In verses 79 to 82 Khizr explains to Musa the interpretation of his actions which he could not bear with patience.

Musa learned from Khizr that the mysteries of life are diverse and countless. The finite mind cannot easily disentangle the web of secrets unless the all-wise Lord shows the way to have a glimpse of the unknown; that patience is essential to face the vicissitudes of life and to know the inner meanings of the external manifestations; that the working of the divine plan always brings good in the end; that in the larger interest of the human society the loss of a few lives is not a loss at all; and that good deeds should be done for the sake of good not for immediate return in terms of material gain.

Aqa Mahdi Puya says:

In verse 79 Khizr says: "I intended to damage it (the boat)"; in verse 81 he says: "We intended that their Lord would give them in exchange (a son) better in purity"; and in verse 82 he says: "So your Lord intended that they should attain their maturity." In the end he says: "I did it not of my own accord."

The reason for taking the responsibility of damaging the boat in verse 79, is not to attribute such an act to Allah as a matter of courtesy. In verse 81 the slaying of the boy deprived him of his life but it was a service to his parents, therefore "we" is used. The deprivation refers to Khizr and the advantage refers to Allah. The act referred to in verse 82 is purely good, so it has been attributed to Allah exclusively. Khizr's statement is based upon the fact that every manifestation has a cause in the final analysis. In verse 79 he refers to himself as the causative agent; in verse 81 he takes the apparent and the real causes into consideration; and in verse 82 by stating that "he did not do anything" he discards human or any created agency and points towards the real author of all events. Whatever takes place is a divine blessing in disguise even if the manifestation is apparently not favourable to an individual or a group of individuals. The knowledge of even those who have received divine revelation is not all-encompassing, and is limited according to the excellence Allah bestowed on them as mentioned in verse 253 al Baqarah and explained in the commentary of Bani Israil: 1.

AYATULLAH KAMAL FAQIH IMANI AND SEVERAL SCHOLARS

Verses 62-63

In Arabic, the morning meal is called /qada'/, and the evening meal is called /'iša'/.

When Moses (a.s.) and his attendant passed on that place, the length of their travel and the fatigue of the way caused hunger to overcome them. Moses (a.s.) remembered that they had got a food with them. Then he told his attendant to bring their food because they had got tired from their travel. The verse says:

" Then when they had passed (the seaside), Moses said unto his young companion: 'Bring us our morning meal. Indeed we have met from this our journey weariness!'"

At this time, the attendant of Moses (a.s.) told him whether he remembered the time when they took refuge on the rock to rest there. In that place he forgot to inform him the event of the fish, and it was Satan that made him forget to mention it, and that the fish jumped into the sea and went away. The verse says:

" He said: 'Did you see, when we took refuge on the rock? Then verily I forgot (to tell you the jump of) the fish and nothing made me forget to mention of it but the Satan; and it took its way into the sea in a marvelous manner!'"