



Preview Version

ALKAUTHAR
INSTITUTE

WEEKEND
SEMINAR

SURAH KAHF

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Reflections from the cave: a methodology of reconciling and change

During times of trials and tribulations, when darkness increases in density, as the clouds of whims and desires hover over the ceiling of life, as hope disappears in thin air, as hearts become disheartened, as doors of opportunities shut and ambiguity prevails, the refuge of a cave is needed for protection just as much as a guiding light that will lead us back to the righteous path, to free us from the prison of this life, to the vastness of the Hereafter.

As we ponder and reflect through *Sūrat al-Kahf*, we will find peace and tranquillity of the heart, mind, and soul in submission to Allah.

Surat al-Kahf at a glance

Ever wondered why we read *Sūrat al-Kahf* on a weekly basis? There must be a reason. There must be a hidden message that Allah wants us to decipher in order for us to reconcile and change; reconcile the relationship between us and Him, our Creator, between us and creation ... change within us and change without.

Methods used for this course:

1. The Qur'an is a book of guidance.
2. The course aims to encourage us to ponder and reflect over the Qur'anic verses and inspire us to live through it with our hearts, mind, and soul.
3. Providing a reflective lens between the Qur'an and practicality; our painful reality, and a hopeful future, providing practical solutions.
4. Deriving the obligations of *tarbiyah* (nurturing) to improve ourselves, the obligations of *da'wah* (propagation) to improve the community, and understanding Allah.'s guidance to achieve the goals of the Ummah.

Virtues of Surat al-Kahf

The <i>sakīnah</i> of Allah descends with this sūrah	On the authority of al-Barā'a b. Athib R.A., "There was a man reciting <i>Sūrat al-Kahf</i> sitting next to a horse tied to a thick long rope; when a cloud hovered over them and kept on descending towards them; the horse became agitated; the following morning he went to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and informed him. The Prophet replied, 'This is peace and tranquility that descended with the Qur'an.'"
The first ten verses are a protection from the Dajjāl	Abū Dardā' reported Allah's Apostle (<i>ṣalla'llāhu 'alayhi wa-sallam</i>) as saying: If anyone learns by heart the first ten verses of the sūrah al-Kahf, he will be protected from the Dajjāl. (<i>Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Book #004, Hadith #1766</i>)
A shining light for the believer from Friday to Friday	<p>There are <i>ṣaḥīḥ aḥādīth</i> from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) concerning the virtues of reciting <i>Sūrat al-Kahf</i> during Jumū'ah:</p> <p>From Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī , who said: "Whoever reads <i>Sūrat al-Kahf</i> on the night of Jumū'ah, will have a light that will stretch between him and the Ancient House (the Ka'bah)." (<i>Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi': Ṣaḥīḥ, 6471</i>)</p> <p>"Whoever reads <i>Sūrat al-Kahf</i> on the day of Jumū'ah, will have a light that will shine from him from one Friday to the next." (<i>Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi': Ṣaḥīḥ, 6470</i>)</p> <p>It was narrated that Ibn 'Umar said: "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'Whoever reads <i>Sūrat al-Kahf</i> on the day of Jumū'ah, a light will shine for him from beneath his feet to the clouds of the sky, which will shine for him on the Day of Resurrection, and he will be forgiven (his sins) between the two Fridays.'"</p>

Opinions regarding when on Friday *Sūrat al-Kahf* should be recited:

The sūrah may be read during the night or the day of Jumū'ah. The night of Jumū'ah starts from sunset on Thursday, and the day of Jumū'ah ends at sunset. Therefore the time for reading this Sūrat extends from sunset on Thursday to sunset on Friday.

Al-Mannāwī said:

Al-Ḥāfiẓ ibn Ḥajar said in his *Amāli*: “In some reports it says ‘the day of Jumū'ah’ and in some reports it says ‘the night of Jumū'ah’. They may be reconciled by saying that what is meant is the day which includes the night and vice versa.” (*Fayd al-qadīr*)

Al-Mannāwī also said:

“It is recommended to read it during the day or night of Jumū'ah, as al-Shāfi'ī (may Allah have mercy on him) stated.” (*Fayd al-qadīr*)

Reason for revelation

Muḥammad b. Ishāq cites the reason behind *Sūrat al-Kahf*'s revelation: Ibn ʿAbbās said:

The Quraysh sent al-Nadr b. al-Ḥārith and ʿUqbah b. Abī Muʿit to the rabbis of al-Madinah, and told them: 'Ask them (the rabbis) about Muḥammad, describe him to them, and tell them what he is saying. They are the people of the first Book, and they have more knowledge of the prophets than we do.'

So they set out and when they reached al-Madinah, they asked the rabbis about the Messenger of Allah, they described him to them and told them some of what he had said. They said, 'You are the people of the Torah and we have come to you so that you can tell us about this companion of ours.'

They (the rabbis) replied, 'Ask him about three things, and if he answers them then he is a prophet who has been sent (by Allah); if not, then his call is not true, in which case how you will deal with him will be up to you: Ask him about some young men in ancient times, what was their story. For theirs is a strange and wondrous tale. Ask him about a man who travelled a great deal and reached the east and the west of the earth. And ask him about the *Rūḥ* (soul or spirit) what is it. If he tells you about these things, then he is a prophet, so follow him, but if he does not, then he is a man who is making things up, so deal with him as you see fit.'

So Al-Nadr and ʿUqbah left and came back to the Quraysh, and said: 'O people of Quraysh, we have come to you with a decisive solution which will put an end to the problem between you and Muḥammad. The Jewish rabbis told us to ask him about some matters,' and they told the Quraysh what they were.

They came to the Messenger of Allah and said, 'O Muḥammad, tell us...' and they asked him about the things they had been told to ask. The Messenger of Allah said, 'I will tell you tomorrow about what you have asked me.' but he did not say 'If Allah wills.' So they went away, and the Messenger of Allah stayed for fifteen days without any revelation from Allah concerning that, and Jibrīl, peace be upon him, did not come to him either. The people of Makkah started to doubt him, and said, 'Muḥammad promised to tell us the next day, and now fifteen days have gone by and he has not told us anything in response to the questions we asked.' The Messenger of Allah felt sad because of the delay in revelation, and was grieved by what the people were saying about him. Then Jibrīl came to him from Allah with *Sūrat al-Kahf*, which also rebukes him for feeling sad about the idolaters. The *sūrah* responds to the questions that were put to him regarding the young men and the traveller. The question about the *Rūḥ*

was answered: in another revelation, Q. 17:85, *And they ask you concern al-Rūḥ. Say, 'al-Rūḥ is...*

The concept of the 'Prophetic light'

Indeed, the light the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) promised, is not what some people believe appears in the manner of shaking their bodies crying, and then going through a harsh awakening from their daydream pretending to have received it. On the contrary, the light intended, is the methodology of truth that starts in a state of weakness, while being chased, then in its midst, a fruitful dialogue, and at the end a victorious control.

Each one of these stages has its own path that cannot be deviated from:

1. When a minority of believers, live among a majority of disbelieving tyrants, we use:

وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ وَلَا يُشْعِرَنَّ بِكُمْ أَحَدًا

And let him be careful and let no man know of you (Q. 18:19)

2. When speaking to family and friends we use:

قَالَ لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ

His companion said to him (Q. 18:37)

3. When the believers have the authority and power, we use:

فَاعِينُونِي بِقُوَّةٍ

So help me with strength (Q. 18:95)

Minhaj versus sharī‘ah

What is the difference between *minhaj* (‘methodology’) and sharī‘ah (‘legislation’)?

Sharī‘ah is the explicit ruling; for example, the obligation of prayers.

Minhaj, is how we arrive at the ruling that prayers are obligatory, i.e., through the Qur’an and Sunnah.

<p>Qur’an and Sunnah</p>	<p>لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَا جَاءَ <i>To each among you, We have prescribed a law and a clear way (Q. 5:48)</i></p>
	<p>Qiyas (analogy): as in the Hadith of the woman from Khuth’um, as she was asking the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) if she can make up Hajj for her ailing father; he said: “Yes, if your father had a debt, will you not pay it”? If he answered her directly, by saying makeup Hajj for your father, it would’ve been a ruling, but he chose to explain the methodology he came up with the ruling.</p>
	<p>Shūrā: (Consultation) as a methodology for taking decisions, as in to battle inside of outside of Madinah, or in front of water well or behind it, and so on.) وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ <i>And consult them in the affairs (Sūrat Āl-‘Imrān, 3:159)</i></p>
	<p>Istinbat: (Deriving) as in <i>āyat al-wuḍū’</i> (ablution) Allah (SWT) gives us the applicable ruling for <i>wuḍū’</i>, <i>ghusl</i>, and <i>tayammum</i>: يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَأَمْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ جُنُبًا فَاطَّهَّرُوا وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُم مِّنَ الْعَابِطِ أَوْ لَمَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ مِنْهُ مَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ حَرَجٍ وَلَٰكِنْ يُرِيدُ لِيُظَهِّرَكُمْ وَلِيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٥﴾ <i>O you who believe! When you intend to offer As-Salāt (the prayer), wash your faces and your hands (forearms) up to the elbows, rub (by passing wet hands over) your heads, and (wash) your feet up to ankles. If you are in a state of Janāba (i.e. after a sexual discharge), purify yourself (bathe your whole body). But if you are ill or on a journey</i></p>

	<p><i>or any of you comes after answering the call of nature, or you have been in contact with women (i.e. sexual intercourse) and you find no water, then perform tayammum with clean earth and rub therewith your faces and hands.</i></p> <p>However, at the end of the verse, He said,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">مَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ حَرَجٍ</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Allah does not want to place you in difficulty (Sūrat al-Mā'idah, 5:6)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Difficulties come with ease: In Bukhari, narrated by Anas R.A., the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Make it easy, not difficult, give glad tidings, and (do) not repel." Teaching us to grant ease at the time of Fatwa and give Dawah in the best manner. 2. Midst of the path: When Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr told Imam Mālik R.A. to come up with a book that omits the tough rulings of Ibn 'Umar R.A., the permissions of Ibn Abbass R.A., and the strays of Ibn Mas'ūd R.A.
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We will approach *Sūrat al-Kahf* with a methodology aiming at revival and empowerment for life, and not via the traditional *tafsīr*, as we are accustomed.

**1 | Stages of change:
position of weakness => dialogue => power**

فُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ ﴿٧٤﴾

Arise and warn! (Sūrat al-Mudathir 74:2).

By these words, the life of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) changed forever. ‘Change’ was an obligation 10 years before *ṣalāt* (prayers), 15 years before *zakāt* and *ṣiyām* (alms and fasting), and 18 years before *hajj* (major pilgrimage).

Indeed, *Sūrat al-Kahf* offers a comprehensive and balanced methodology for change through the current of the following stories:

- The companions of the cave
- The two friends
- Mūsā (PBUH) and the Khidr (A.S.)
- Dhū'l-Qarnayn

***Sūrat al-Kahf* as a methodology for change**

There are three stories relating a struggle between good and evil and one mentions cooperation between two virtuous groups, in all truth prevails:

<p>Companions of the cave</p>	<p>The truth starts out weak and persecuted as in the verses revealed in the honour of righteous companions of the cave.</p> <p>إِنَّهُمْ إِنْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ يَرْجُمُوكُمْ أَوْ يُعِيدُوكُمْ فِي مِلَّتِهِمْ وَلَنْ تُفْلِحُوا إِذًا أَبَدًا ﴿٢٠﴾</p> <p><i>For if they come to know of you, they will stone you (to death or abuse and harm you) or turn you back to their religion, and in that case you will never be successful (Sūrat al-Kahf, 18:20)</i></p> <p>In this case, it’s not smart to confront such tyrant regimes, but to use the following methodology:</p> <p>وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ وَلَا يُشْعِرَنَّ بِكُمْ أَحَدًا ﴿١٩﴾</p> <p><i>“And let him be careful and let no man know of you.” (Sūrat al-Kahf, 18:19)</i></p> <p>The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used the same methodology at the beginning of Dawah in the Makkan era when they were persecuted until the first migration to Al-Habasha:</p> <p>أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ قِيلَ لَهُمْ كُفُّوا أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ ﴿١٠٦﴾</p> <p><i>“Have you not seen those who were told to hold back their hands (from fighting) and perform As-Salāt (Iqāmat-as-</i></p>
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	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Salāt</i>)” (Sūrat al-Nisā³, 4:77)</p> <p>Even when Sumaiyah R.A. was killed by a spear in her chastity, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, “Be patient O family of Yasir, indeed, your rendezvous is in Jannah.”</p>
<p>Two friends</p>	<p>The story between the two friends. There is equality in ownership as they are both owners of their own gardens; not in resources and skills. However, 1 chose belief, and the other disbelief.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهُ وَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ قَالَ مَا أَظُنُّ أَن تَبِيدَ هَذِهِ أَبَدًا ﴿٣٥﴾ وَمَا أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً وَلَئِن رُّدِدْتُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي لَأَجِدَنَّ خَيْرًا مِنْهَا مُنْقَلَبًا ﴿٣٦﴾</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>And he went into his garden while in a state (of pride and disbelief) unjust to himself. He said: "I think not that this will ever perish. (35) "And I think not the Hour will ever come, and if indeed I am brought back to my Lord, (on the Day of Resurrection), I surely shall find better than this when I return to Him." (Sūrat al-Kahf 18: 35–6)</i></p> <p>The believing friend had 3 choices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Disengage 2. Attack 3. Dialogue <p>He chose dialogue. Observe ‘dialogue’ is the only word that is mentioned twice in the whole story.</p>
<p>Dhū’l-Qarnayn</p>	<p>In the case of Dhū’l-Qarnayn, Allah (SWT) gave him all the resources and means to change by the methodology of power.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">إِنَّا مَكَّنَّا لَهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَءَاتَيْنَاهُ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ سَبَبًا ﴿٨٥﴾</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Verily, We established him in the earth, and We gave him the means of everything.</i></p> <p>If you don’t use it, you lose it:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">فَاتَّبَعَ سَبَبًا ﴿٨٦﴾</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>So he followed a way.</i></p> <p>Then a declaration of justice:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">قَالَ أَمَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ فَسَوْفَ نُعَذِّبُهُ ثُمَّ يُرَدُّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ فَيُعَذِّبُهُ عَذَابًا نُكْرًا ﴿٨٧﴾ وَأَمَّا مَنْ ءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُ جَزَاءً الْحَسَنَىٰ وَسَنُقُولُ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِنَا يُسْرًا ﴿٨٨﴾</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>He said: ‘As for him (a disbeliever in the Oneness of</i></p>

	<p><i>Allah) who does wrong, we shall punish him; and then he will be brought back unto his Lord; Who will punish him with a terrible torment (Hell). (87) But as for him who believes (in Allah’s Oneness) and works righteousness, he shall have the best reward, (Paradise), and we (Dhū’l-Qarnayn) shall speak unto him mild words (as instructions).’</i></p> <p>When people complained about Gog and Magog, the answer was not leniency, but power.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">فَاعِينُونِي بِقُوَّةٍ</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“So help me with strength (of men).”</p> <p>This power is the power that Allah gave mankind to enjoin good and forbid evil:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">﴿وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْوَبْرِ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ كَثِيرٍ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا﴾</p> <p><i>And indeed We have honoured the Children of Adam, and We have carried them on land and sea, and have provided them with al-ṭayyibāt (lawful good things), and have preferred them above many of those whom We have created with a marked preferment.</i></p> <p>Indeed, that’s exactly what the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did after migration and building of the Ummah, when he declared his famous utterance, “Now we invade them and they invade us not.” (Ibn Kathīr, the book of the beginning and the end)</p>
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The methodology in dealing between the truth and falsehood

وَإِنَّا أَوْ إِيَّاكُمْ لَعَلَىٰ هُدًى أَوْ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

And verily, (either) we or you are rightly guided or in plain error (S ū rat Saba³, 34:24)

ادْعُ إِلَىٰ سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجِدِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ

Invite (mankind, O Muḥammad) to the Way of your Lord with wisdom (i.e. with the Divine Revelation and the Qur'an) and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better (Sūrat al-Nahl, 16:125)

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

‘Gentleness beautifies matters when used and ruins it when removed from it’ (Muslim)

This is the greatest challenge for those who want to work in *da‘wah*. So, here’s what you have to do in this stage:

- Study Islam in a comprehensive way focusing on *akhlāq* (manners), *‘ibādāt* (worship), *mu‘āmalāt* (dealings), *‘aqīdah* (creed), and *sharī‘ah*.
- Study the society you live in. Learn its history. Understand the practical situation and the environment and know the pains, goals, and challenges it faces.
- Acquire the latest and best means of communication to be able to reach all different segments of the society with understanding the keys for each.