

ANSWER: The barrier of Dhul-Qarnain

SŪRAH AL-KAHF: VERSES 92-98

Thereafter he followed a way [92]

until when he reached between the two mountains, he found on their hither side a people who did not seem to understand anything said. [93]

They said, “O Dhul-Qarnain, the Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj (Gog and Magog) are mischief-makers on the earth. So shall we set for you a revenue, provided that you make a barrier between us and them?” [94]

He said, “That which my Lord has placed under my control is better, so help me with strength and I shall make a rampart between you and them. [95]

Bring me ingots of iron.” (They proceeded accordingly) until when he levelled up (the gap) between the two mountain-sides, he said, “Blow.” (They complied) until when he made it (like) fire, he said, 'Bring me molten copper and I will pour it upon this!' [96]

So they (Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj) were not able to climb it, nor were they able to make a hole in it. [97]

He said, “This is a mercy from my Lord. Then, when the promise of my Lord will come, He will make it levelled to the ground. And the promise of my Lord is always true.” [98]

COMMENTARY

Explanation of Difficult Words

1. The word '*as-sadda*' used in the expression: '*baynas-saddayn*' denotes what becomes a barrier against something. It may be a wall or mountain and it may be natural or artificial. At this place, the word: (*as-saddayn*) means two mountains that stood as a barrier against the intrusion of Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj. But, they still attacked through the pass in between the two mountains and which was closed by Dhul-Qarnain.
2. The word: (*zubar*) in: (**zubar al-ḥadīd - 96**) is the plural of: (*zubrah*) which means sheets in the sense of pieces, fragments or ingots of iron which were to be used in the wall designed to block the pass, obviously a stronger device as compared to bricks and rocks.
3. The word: (**aṣ-ṣadafain - 96**) signifies the two sides of the mountain facing each other.
4. According to most commentators, the last word: (*qitr*) in **verse 96** means molten copper. There are some others who have explained '*qitr*' as molten iron or pewter. (al-Qurṭubī)
5. The expression: (**dakkā'a - 98**) used about the wall means what would crumble down to the level of the ground.

The identity of Ya'jūj Ma'jūj and the location of the wall of Dhul-Qarnain

A lot of absurd and strange things disseminated through Isrā'īlī narratives and historical stories have found currency to the extent that some commentators have also reported them in terms of their historical status,

though they themselves do not find them trustworthy. The truth of the matter is that the Qur'ān has mentioned it briefly and the Holy Prophet ﷺ has informed his community also about the details as and where necessary. What has to be believed in as part of one's faith is limited to what has been covered in the Qur'ān, and Ḥadīth. Beyond that, whatever historical and geographical information has been provided by commentators, Ḥadīth experts and historians could be correct, or might as well prove incorrect. As for the variant sayings of historians from among those mentioned above, they are based on traces, analogies and conjectures. Whether they are true or false, it simply does not affect what the Qur'ān says.

(The respected author mentions ḥadīth reports about Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj and then draws a conclusion. For length, we will be adding the conclusion the author draws. Please refer to the relevant kitāb for full ḥadīth reports)

Conclusions drawn from the narrations of Ḥadīth

That which stands proved about Ya'jūj Ma'jūj from the statements of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as in the Aḥadīth cited above is given below:

- (1) Ya'jūj Ma'jūj are the progeny of Sayyidnā Nūḥ 'alayhis salām like the rest of human beings. The majority of Ḥadīth experts and historians identify them as the progeny of Yāfith, the son of Nūḥ 'alayhis salām. And it is also obvious that the progeny of Yāfith son of Nūḥ had spread itself out far and wide among different tribes, nationalities and many a populated areas between the period of Sayyidnā Nūḥ 'alayhis salām and that of Dhul-Qarnain. Thus, it is not necessary that the races known as Ya'jūj Ma'jūj were pinned down as a whole exclusively behind the Wall of Dhul-Qarnain. There must have been some of their tribes and nationalities living on the other side of the Wall of Dhul-Qarnain. However, it can be said that the savage killers and destroyers among them were restrained through the Wall of Dhul-Qarnain. Historians refer to them generally as Turks, Mangkhol or Mongols. But, from among these, the name of Ya'jūj Ma'jūj applies only to the savage, uncivilized, blood-thirsty tyrants who remained untouched by civilization. The Turks, Mangkhols or Mongols who became civilized stand unsubstantiated by this name.
- (2) The number of Ya'jūj Ma'jūj is several times higher than the number of the human beings of the whole world, at least at the ratio of one to ten. (Ḥadīth #2)
- (3) The tribes and nationalities of Ya'jūj Ma'jūj stopped from crossing over to the other side of the Wall of Dhul-Qarnain will remain so restrained right through the close of the zero Hour of the Last Day of Qiyāmah. The time destined for their emergence will be preceded by the appearance of Mahdī and Masīḥ 'alayhimā salām and that of Dajjāl (the anti-Christ). They will be released exactly after Īsā 'alayhis salām has descended and has killed Dajjāl. (Ḥadīth #1)

(4) At the time Ya'jūj Ma'jūj are to be released, the Wall of Dhul-Qarnain will crumble down all levelled to the ground (**verse 18:98**). The merciless hordes of Ya'jūj Ma'jūj would present an spectacle when, coming down from the mountain slopes all simultaneously, the speed of their descent would give the impression that they are sliding down to the ground en masse. These countless savage humans will hit the whole earth and its population. No one would be able to stand up against the killing and plunder by them. The apostle of Allah, Sayyidnā Īsā 'alayhis salām will, under Divine command, take refuge on Mount Ṭūr along with his believing companions. People in other habitations of the world will seek asylum in available safe places. When supplies run out, necessities of life will become highly expensive. As for the rest of human population, these savages will finish them off and lick out their rivers. (Ḥadīth #1)

(5) Then, it will be through the prayer of Sayyidnā Īsā 'alayhis salām and his companions that these countless locust like peoples will be destroyed simultaneously. The earth will be covered up with their dead bodies and the stench from which would make human rehabilitation on the earth difficult. (Ḥadīth #1)

(6) Then, it will be through the prayer of Sayyidnā Īsā 'alayhis salām and his companions once again that their dead bodies would be disposed of into the sea or made to disappear altogether and the whole earth will be washed clean through a universal rain. (Ḥadīth #1)

(7) After that, there shall come a reign of peace lasting for nearly forty years. The earth will open the gates of its blessings. No one will remain poor and needy. No one will hurt or harass anyone. Peace and comfort shall prevail universally. (Ḥadīth #3)

(8) During this period of peace, the Hajj and 'Umrah of Baytullah will continue. (Ḥadīth #4) As for the death of Sayyidnā Īsā 'alayhis salām and his burial in the Sacred Mausoleum, it already stands proved from the narrations of Ḥadīth. This too will transpire when he will travel to Ḥijāz for Hajj or 'Umrah. (As reported by Muslim from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah raḍī'allāhu 'anhu - explanatory note). After that, he will die in al-Madīnah al-Ṭaiyyibah and buried in the Sacred Mausoleum.

(9) During the later period of the life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ he was shown a dream activated through a revelation (*waḥy*) that a hole had opened up in the Wall of Dhul-Qarnain, which he declared to be a sign of impending evil for Arabia. Some Hadith experts (*al-muḥaddithīn*) have interpreted the opening of a hole in this Wall as real. Some others have taken it figuratively in the sense that this Wall of Dhul-Qarnain has become weak, the time of the emergence of Ya'jūj Ma'jūj has come close and its effects will show up in the form of Arab decline. Allah knows best.

(10) After his descent, he will stay on the earth for forty years. (Ḥadīth #3) Earlier than him, the period of

Mahdī ‘alayhis salām will also be that of forty years, part of which will feature the confluence and cooperation of both. In his book, *Ashrāṭ al-Sā’ah* (p.145), Sayyid Sharīf Barzanjī has said that the period of Sayyidnā Īsā ‘alayhis salām will follow the killing of Dajjāl and the peace prevailing thereafter and extend to forty years. This will make his total stay in the world for a period of forty-five years. And, it has been mentioned on page 112 that Mahdī ‘alayhis salām will appear a thirty plus years before Sayyidnā Īsā ‘alayhis salām and the total period credited to him will be that of forty years. Thus, the presence of the two blessed souls shall coincide for a number of five, or seven years, and both their periods will be marked by a reign of justice throughout the world. The earth will open up the gates of its blessings, neither will anyone remain poor, nor will anyone bear malice and hostility against anyone else. Of course, the great trial of the appearance of Dajjāl will hit the whole world during the later period of Mahdī ‘alayhis salām with the exception of Makkah, Madinah, Baytul-Maqdis and the Mount of Ṭūr. This trial will be the greatest as compared to the rest of the trials the world has faced. Dajjāl and his disorder will last for forty days only. But, out of these forty days, the first day will be that of one year, the second day that of one week and the rest of days will be like they usually are. One way this can happen is that these days are really made to be that long - because, during those later times, nearly all events will be extraordinary and miraculous in nature. Then, it is also possible that the days and nights keep alternating as they usually do. But, it stands proved from Ḥadīth that Dajjāl would be a great magician. When so, it is also possible that, under the spell of his magic, common people remain unable to notice this revolutionary change in the alternation of days and nights and continue seeing this phenomena as nothing but one usual day. As for the injunction in Hadith of performing Salah during that day on the estimated analogy of usual days, it also seems to support the assumption that the days and nights would be changing really, but people would not realize it cognitively. Therefore, in this day of one year, the order given was to perform Salah for three hundred sixty days. Otherwise, had the day been really one day only, the rules of the Sharī’ah would have required only five Ṣalāhs as obligatory for one day as such. In short, the total period of Dajjal will have forty such days. After that, Sayyidnā Īsā ‘alayhis salām will descend, kill the Dajjāl and put an end to the disorder created by him. However, quite close to that the Ya’jūj Ma’jūj will emerge unleashing another spate of disorder, pillage and killing. But, the period of their presence will not go beyond a few days when they too will be destroyed all simultaneously as a result of the prayer of Sayyidnā Īsā ‘alayhis salām. In short, there will be two ominous trials of Dajjāl and Ya’jūj Ma’jūj during the later period of Sayyidnā Mahdī ‘alayhis salām and the early period of Sayyidnā Īsā ‘alayhis salām which will shake the people of the entire earth upside down. Before and after these counted few days, however, the whole world will experience justice, peace and blessings. During the period of Sayyidnā Īsā ‘alayhis salām, there will remain on the earth no creed and religion other than Islam. The earth will start sending forth its hidden treasures. No one will remain poor and needy. Even beasts and poisonous life forms will not hurt anyone.

An essential point of guidance:

As far as the information given above about the Ya’jūj Ma’jūj and the Wall of Dhul-Qarnain, these have

been communicated to the Muslim Ummah by the Qur'ān, and the Ḥadīth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Believing in it as such is necessary and opposition, impermissible. Now there remains the area of geographical and racial investigation as to questions like - Where is the wall of Dhul-Qarnain located? Who are these people called Ya'jūj Ma'jūj? Where do they live now? Here, it can be said that no Islamic 'Aqīdah (article of faith) depends on knowing this, nor does the understanding of any verse of the Qur'ān hinge on it. But, the religious scholars of the Muslim Ummah, only in order to answer the absurdities dished out by antagonists and to provide additional insight, have discussed this subject in details. A part of it is being reported here. (Please refer to Ma'āriful Qur'ān to read further as the subject matter is quite lengthy once again)

The Wall of Dhul-Qarnain: Is it still there? Will it be there until Qiyāmah? Or, has it disintegrated?

Historians and geographers of Europe do not recognize the presence of any of these northern Walls in our time, nor do they admit that the passage of the Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj is still blocked. On that basis, some Muslim historians have also started saying and writing that the event of the emergence of the Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj mentioned in the Qur'ān, and Ḥadīth has already taken place. Some of them have declared the great onslaught of Tātārs in the sixth century Hijrah as being the emergence of Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj mentioned by the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. Still others have found it sufficient to equate the contemporary rise of the Russian, Chinese and European peoples with the emergence of the Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj and have thereby closed the case conveniently. But, all this is - as stated earlier with reference to Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī - totally wrong. To say that the particular emergence of the Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj mentioned by the Qur'ān was a sign of Qiyāmah translates as a denial of Ṣaḥīḥ Aḥādīth. The Ṣaḥīḥ Ḥadīth of Muslim narrated by al-Nawwās ibn Sam'ān raḍī'allāhu 'anhu, and others says that Qiyāmah will come after three events have taken place. These events will be the emergence of Dajjāl (anti-Christ), the descent of Sayyidnā 'Īsā 'alayhis salām and the killing of Dajjāl. How can it be said that it has already come to pass! The reason is obvious. The Dajjāl has not emerged. Sayyidnā 'Īsā 'alayhis salām has yet to descend. And there is no doubt about it.

Nevertheless, it is not counter to any textual authority (*naṣṣ*) of Qur'ān, and Sunnah that the Wall of Dhul-Qarnain may have disintegrated now and some people from among the Ya'jūj Ma'jūj may have come on this side. However, this will remain subject to the condition that one admits that their last and the most massive onslaught, which will prove to be the destroyer of the entire human population, has not come yet. In fact, it will come after the great manifestation of the signs of Qiyāmah mentioned earlier, that is, the appearance of the Dajjāl and the descent of Sayyidnā 'Īsā 'alayhis salām.

The considered view of 'Allāmah Kashmīrī raḥimahullah in this matter is that the European assertion that they have scanned the whole world and have found no trace of this Wall bears no weight. First of all, the reason is that they themselves have clearly admitted that, despite having reached the zenith of travel and research, there remain many forests, rivers and islands about which they had been unable to collect

information. Then, not too remote is the probability that the Wall, despite being pre- sent, may now have taken the form of a mountain because of mountains crumbling and joining together. But, no absolute textual authority (*naṣṣ*) contradicts the fact of this Wall disintegrating before Qiyāmah, or of some people from the Ya'jūj Ma'jūj crossing over to this side by taking some distant and long-winding route.

The strongest argument put forward in favor of this Wall of Dhul-Qarnain surviving until the last day of Qiyāmah is based on the statement of the Qur'ān: (98). Here, Dhul-Qarnain says, '**when the promise of my Lord will materialize (that is, the time will come for the Ya'jūj Ma'jūj to appear), Allah Ta'ālā will make this Wall crumble down to ground level.**' The proponents of this argument have interpreted the words: **(the promise of my Lord)** in this verse in the sense of Qiyāmah, the Last Day - although, the words of the Qur'ān not definite and categorical about it. The reason is that the Qur'ānic words: **(the promise of my Lord)** carry a very clear sense of their own. So, what is meant here is that the arrangement made by Dhul-Qarnain to block the entry of the Ya'jūj Ma'jūj may not necessarily remain there, as is, forever. When Allah Ta'ālā wills to have the passage open to them, this Wall will lie demolished. Therefore, it is not necessary that it would happen precisely close to the Qiyāmah. Accordingly, all commentators have mentioned both probabilities in the sense of: **(the promise of my Lord)**. It appears in *Tafsīr al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ*: *And the promise has the probability that meant by it is the Day of Qiyāmah and that meant by it is the time of the emergence of the Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj.*

One way of verifying this could be the eventuality that the Wall lies demolished, the passage has opened up and the onslaught of the Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj has begun. It does not matter whether its beginning is taken to be from the havoc caused by the Tātār in the sixth century Hijrah, or from the present ascendancy of the peoples of Europe, Russia and China. But, it is evident that the aggressive emergence of these civilized peoples - something taking place in a constitutional and legal framework - can- not be classed as rank disorder which is being particularly pointed out by the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. The anatomy of havoc given there is that it will unfold in the form of such a magnitude of merciless bloodshed and devastation that it will eliminate the entire human population. Rather, the outcome will, then, be that some nationalities of these very Ya'jūj Ma'jūj had turned civilized after having moved to this side. They certainly turned out to be the source of great disorder and trial for Islamic countries. But, till now, their savage counterparts who know nothing but bloodshed have not come to this side as destined - and the majority of them are of that kind. These will emerge very close to Qiyāmah.

The source of the second argument is the Ḥadīth of Tirmidhī and the Musnad of Aḥmad where it is said that the Ya'jūj Ma'jūj keep digging this Wall everyday. But, first of all, Ibn Kathīr has declared this Ḥadīth to be *ma'lūl* (defective despite its apparently correct chain of narrators). Secondly, in the Ḥadīth itself, there is no clarification that the day Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj will cross over the Wall by virtue of saying Insha'Allah the thing will happen necessarily close to the Qiyāmah. Then, the Ḥadīth does not provide any

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proof either that the whole lot of the Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj will remain restrained behind the Wall. Even if some groups, or nationalities, from among them were to come to this side by taking some distant and long-winding route, it will still not be too far out an eventuality in the presence of powerful modern ships. In fact, some historians have mentioned that the Ya'jūj Ma'jūj have found the way to reach this side via long sea travel. If so, the Ḥadīth does not contradict that either.

In short, there is no clear and definite proof in the Qur'ān and Sunnah that goes on to establish that the Wall of Dhul-Qarnain will remain standing right through the last day of Qiyāmah. Or, their elementary and insignificant attacks against the human population on this side will not be possible. However, in all certainty, the time of that horrific and devastating onslaught which will destroy the entire human population will be but close to the Qiyāmah as has been mentioned repeatedly. To sum up, it can be said that based on the textual authority (*naṣṣ*) of the Qur'ān, and Sunnah, it is not possible to give an absolute verdict that the Wall against the Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj has disintegrated leaving the passage open. Nor can it be said that, according to the Qur'ān, and Sunnah, it is necessary that it survives up to the Qiyāmah. Both probabilities exist. And Pure and High is Allah who knows reality best.

This concludes the commentary for Day 27.