

IMPACT OF QUR'ANIC NARRATIVES IN *SURAH AL-KAHF* ON THE LIFE OF MUSLIMS IN NORTH-WEST, NIGERIA

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Abstract: *This article assesses the significance of the Qur'anic narratives among Muslims in North-West Nigeria and its relevance to religious, cultural and social lives. The Glorious Qur'an, considered as a Divine Book by Muslims holds a central position in the belief system of Muslims the world over, including North-West Nigeria. It serves as a comprehensive guide encompassing morality, personal conduct as well as social justice. The study explores how the Qur'anic narratives shape the religious and moral identity of Muslims in the region. It highlights the role of the Qur'an in influencing belief and practice and how it provides moral and ethical principles, social norms and spiritual guidance. It also emphasizes the impact of the Qur'anic narratives on the social and political landscape of the region. The need to rely on the Qur'an to address contemporary issues and provide guidance, justice and social cohesion was also addressed. Overall, the article underscores the profound influence of the Qur'anic narratives among Muslims in north-West Nigeria. By understanding the relevance of Qur'anic narratives, policymakers, researchers and stakeholders will better be informed of the useful insights into the dynamics of the Muslim population in North-West Nigeria and foster an inclusive and informed approach to engage with this all-important religious text. It is thus in line with this backdrop that this article intends to assess the impact of Qur'anic narratives on the lives of Muslims in north-West Nigeria. To achieve the objectives of the research, the article adopts analytical phenomenological methodology.*

Keywords: *Qur'an, Narratives, Relevance, Muslims, North-West, Nigeria*

A. Introduction

Qur'anic narratives are of utmost importance among Muslims worldwide, including those Muslims in North-West Nigeria. The Glorious Qur'an contains comprehensive narratives



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that encompasses a wide range of themes, including religious, spiritual, moral, education, social, intellectual and guidance for personal conduct. These narratives play a vital role in shaping the religious and cultural identity of Muslims in North-West Nigeria. The teachings found in the Qur'an are specifically used to derive moral and ethical principles, establish social norms and provide spiritual guidance. Muslims in the study area, like Muslims elsewhere draw inspiration and guidance from the narratives told in the Glorious Qur'an for various aspects of their lives. Apart from reciting the text of the Qur'an for reward and worship, they rely on its teachings for guidance on matters related to family, society and governance. In north-West Nigeria especially where Islam has a significant presence, the Qur'anic narratives are deeply embedded in the local culture and traditions. Almost all family in the region send their wards to Qur'anic schools to learn the Qur'an and Islamic teachings. This has no doubt helped greatly in transmitting the Qur'anic narratives and its relevance among Muslim population in the region. Moreover, the Qur'anic narratives have been influential in shaping the religious and socio-political landscape of north-west Nigeria. The Glorious Qur'an's emphasis on social justice, compassion and egalitarianism resonates with the aspirations of a plethora of Muslims in the region, especially in the face of challenges such as poverty, inequality and insecurity. The Qur'anic narratives therefore holds immense relevance and significance among Muslims in north-West Nigeria to such an extent that its teachings are deeply embedded in the religious, social and cultural life influencing both individual and the broader society in the region.

B. Methodology

The research approach employed in this paper is a literature study approach. The literature study approach is essentially the same as research in general, but the research data acquired through the literature study approach are secondary data. Finding and gathering of references that are pertinent to the topic of this research is first of the researchers three processes take in preparing this paper. Secondly, in order to fully explain the intersection of the paper, a number of scientific publications that have been gathered are then analysed and elaborated. Thirdly, as the final phase of, the researchers draws a conclusion that precisely addresses title of the paper; impact of Qur'anic narratives in *surah Al-Kahf* on the life of Muslims in North-West, Nigeria

C. Result and Discussion

Narratives in the Qur'an

The Glorious Qur'an, which is the central religious text of Islam contains various narratives that are conspicuous part of it. These narratives however, are presented in various forms including narratives of Prophets, historical events, parables and moral lessons. The Qur'anic narratives serve numerous purposes in the Qur'an; moral guidance, lessons and encouragement for the believers. They in fact highlight the actions and struggles of Prophets and individuals in their quest for righteousness and submission to Allah's will. The importance as well as the position these narratives occupied evince the fact that they are worthy of being read, understood and take lessons from them for the betterment of Muslim lives. The derivable lessons and relevance of these narratives can easily be identified as religious, spiritual, moral, intellectual and social as discussed below.

1. Religious Relevance

The Glorious Qur'an, being the final Divine message revealed from the All Wise and All-Knowing Creator, is the basis of Muslims' beliefs and actions. The aim, therefore is to study what the Qur'an expresses and fathom lessons and messages contained thereof. To attain this Muslims must know why Almighty Allah mentioned these narratives, what they should learn out of them and then direct their lives towards the Qur'an for guidance and success in both lives. Thus, the Qur'an lays down general principles and parameters for human conduct and behavior.

All that one needs for one's guidance in understanding the meaning of one's life, its purpose and objectives have obviously been spelt out in the marvelous Book, Al-Qur'an. Muslims should therefore live by the precepts of Qur'an and practical illustration by Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) which serves as guiding light for the general progress and prosperity of humanity in different spheres and different epochs since the advent of Islam. It is, therefore, obvious that the narratives, told in the Glorious Qur'an, occupied an imminent position in the religious life of Muslims. Prophets of Allah being the custodians of revelation and the leaders of the recipients of this revelation/message, Muslims should have the best example in them to follow and be guided in all ramifications. Muslims generally believe that Prophets had a high degree of moral excellence, the status which made them sincere and obedient servants of Allah. To exercise their functions effectively as was commanded by Allah, the main intent as well as

wisdom embodied in their mission was made clear as to fulfill Allah's command and save Muslim Ummah from a woeful punishment.

By extension, it is inconceivable for any believer to think that communicating Allah's message is the Prophets' duty alone; hence it is incumbent upon every Muslim to summon people to the right path, enjoin them to do good and forbid them the evil and above all invite people to Islam and the Qur'an. Perhaps disseminating Allah's message is analogous to an act of *Ibadah*, such as *salat* and *sawm*. Almighty Allah enunciates this fact in the following Qur'anic verse:

And (as for) the believing men and the believing women, they are guardians of each other; they enjoin good and forbid evil and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, and obey Allah and His Messenger; (as for) these, Allah will show mercy to them; surely Allah is Mighty, Wise¹.

It is understood, from the context of the verse that the aim is to study what the Qur'an states and understand the lessons and warnings. Indeed, it is only when Muslims understand the messages in those narratives that they will benefit from them. That is why they are exhorted to understand the wisdom why Almighty Allah mentioned these narratives in the Qur'an more often and what they should get out of them rather than just mere recitation.

Muslims should never be apprehensive of anything but to put all their cases before Allah who would solve their difficulties and give them ease and comfort. When they had faith and trust in Almighty Allah, He would pave ways for them through which they may find safety and refuge in whatever they do. As Muslims they should know that lack of sincere faith in Allah is efficient to destroy the strength of one's faith and can possibly weaken it to the lowest level. In a more restrictive sense, the true servants of Allah are only those whose hearts are turned to Him in contrition; in the morning, night and at all time. They are always seeking spiritual satisfaction than the worldly grandeur. It is however believed that in as much as one acquires humility and humbleness before Allah, one will sooner or later be rewarded beyond one's expectations; and no single of one's good deeds will vanish. It may also be observed that the relevance of these narratives is apparently seen in an effort by *As'hab Al-Kahf* to guard their faith. To better safe guard their faith, they left their homes in order not to be accommodated within the embrace of the godless world. Unfortunately, a fraction of Muslims prefers to

¹ Qur'an, 9:71

compromise their assigned devotional duties to Allah (*SWT*) and to His Prophet (*SAW*) just to be accepted as part of the modern society in which they live.

To achieve this, they maintain the position they occupy in large seats-as commissioners, ministers and ambassadors- just to protect and preserve their comfortable living as witnessed in many government functionaries today. The relevance of seclusion or solitary confinement in the Cave stands as a mean through which a Muslim can be extricated from the worldly time and its vanities. Muslims should therefore renew their covenant that Almighty Allah is the supreme and His laws are also supreme. In Nigeria for instance, it is common knowledge that constitutional law is considered supreme and over weights the laws enshrined in the Glorious Qur'an. Largely, this could mean that any law which contradicts the law of the land will automatically be discarded.

Religiously, it may sometimes be difficult or even impossible for non-Muslims to denounce the resurrection, it is still possible for Muslims who had developed and strengthened their faith to reflect on the narrative of *As'hab Al-Kahf*, who stayed for a long period of time, without eating or drinking, as one of the proofs and signs of Allah's magnificent ability to resurrect dead bodies after they had decomposed². From this unpretentious analysis, it is believed that Almighty Allah who in His infinite mercy, wisdom, ability and knowledge kept these young men in this condition, despite the natural changes that occur to certain things, has power and is capable to resurrect the dead bodies after they underwent decomposition. The evidence used to justify the belief that Almighty Allah has power over everything is the fact that He is capable of doing the undo at the right time as He wishes and that Allah's promise of forgiveness and mercy to His servants, who serve Him, is true and will definitely come.

Self- aggrandizement and love for power had thrown many Muslims into losing their faith. This has naturally called for serious caution among Muslims to dissociate themselves from Soothsayers and fortune tellers. This negative trend is more pronounced among the Muslim politicians who are vying political seats in different political zones within the North-West Nigeria. With very few exceptions, Soothsayers and fortune tellers generally played great role in taking away the faith of those who had belief in them and rely upon them for whatever success they aim for. As detrimental to the belief of a number of Muslims within the area of the study, Pseudo scholars, or whatever name better described them, were believed to have possessed the power to do the undo or otherwise. Precautionary measures should therefore be taken to avoid such a thing. The more the level of one's faith the closer he is to Allah.

²Qur'an 3:27, 6:95, 10:31 and 30:19

Interestingly, every Muslim is required to put his trust in Allah alone.³ Allah's obedience should be one's priority. Anyone who prefers anything other than Allah and His obedience surely one would be tormented thereof. Based on the derivable lessons from Surah Al-Kahf, one should whole-heartedly respect and accept the advice of his compassionate brother. Destruction and life failure of any one is tight to rejection of certain advices from the people⁴. While justifying the level of one's faith, one is highly encouraged to always be contented and satisfied with Allah, alone and avoid being with bad foes. The cardinal principles applicable to all Muslims are to believe that the only hope is for Allah whereas all other worldly amusement, success and pleasure are deception and illusory.

As a matter of fact, the contemporary Muslims are expected to imbibe the foundation of hopes for the highest spiritual rewards in the hereafter. It is learnt from the Qur'anic narratives that Allah (*S.W.T.*) punishes those who disobey His command and does not show kindness to needy ones from among His creatures, and that when Allah decides to punish someone no one can offer him a helping hand to escape that punishment⁵. The more frequent one disobeys Allah the more the punishment inflicted on him. It is therefore imperative to every Muslim to lead a virtuous life and preoccupy himself within the boundary and limitations set by Almighty Allah. The reason why Muslims follow the Glorious Qur'an and *Sunnah* is because they are convinced that they are ultimately from Allah and because they trust in His guidance. This perhaps evinces the fact that no matter how true servant of Allah becomes miserably poor he can preserve his faith with Him, since he has the assurance that any economic injustice afflicted on him can be relieved of him by Allah, the Merciful. Religiously, one should not blame Allah for his miserable condition of poverty as a test from Allah and witnessed by many Muslims today.

Like many other narratives told in the Qur'an, there are many derivable lessons in the narrative of Prophet Musa (AS) and Al-Khidr. The most amazing lessons in this narrative is that it is not allowed in Islam for one to be proud⁶ having acquired much knowledge of certain fields, no matter how justified it may be. In a similar vein, the narrative of *Dhul-Qarnayn* is understood to have some good qualities expected of every leader; being just, righteous and not selfish. This will add color to one's administrative style, qualities and focus and will find ways and means of accomplishing the tasks ahead of him. The evil temptation of one's mind, as understood in this context, is capable of leading one astray. Basically, this unwelcome

³ Qur'an 18:35

⁴ Qur'an 18:37-40

⁵ Qur'an 18:35-36

⁶ I. Ahmad, Op. Cit, P. 82

development makes one unjust to people around him and largely to his own soul; and eventually one will be fond of impressing other people with his own importance and position. Muslims are however, encouraged to device a mean through which they can enjoy Allah's gift given to them but with gratitude and humility. They could never at any time puff of for the great pleasure and satisfaction bestowed on them, knowing fully they and their possessions will one time perish.

In fact, worldly pleasures should never take away their minds or possibly deceive them as to forget Allah. But when they are overpowered by their selfish desire and satanic temptation they would immediately return to Allah and keep Him in remembrance as did the companions of the cave. Ultimately, Allah (*SWT*) never get angry with His chosen servants on making any mistake, instead, He provides them with more training to make them understand things in their true color.

Apparently, discussions between Prophet Ibrahim and unrighteous ruler, identified to be Nimrud, were stressed. The later became extremely arrogant due his wealth and power and claimed that he possessed the power of creation. Claiming divinity for himself, Nimrud wrangled with Prophet Ibrahim but the Glorious Qur'an describes that he only deepened in confusion. This debate left Nimrud mystified. Prophet Ibrahim was instantly given wisdom with which confront the unrighteous ruler making him speechless. His quarrel with Nimrud could perhaps be seen as a precursor to Prophet Musa's (*A.S.*) proselytization to Pharaoh. Just the way Nimrud squabbled against Prophet Ibrahim (*A.S.*) and claimed divinity for himself so did the Pharaoh who repudiated to listen the call of Prophet Musa (*A.S.*).

It can thus be proved beyond doubt that Prophet Ibrahim (*A.S.*) demonstrated wisdom in employing logical, prudent and target-oriented speech as antagonistic to pointless arguments. One of the derivable impacts of the narrative of Prophet Ibrahim (*A.S.*) in this context is the fact that he symbolizes the highest moral values crucial to every Muslim. His prompt response to entertain the Angels sent to him with roasted calf, signifies his highest moral level and should be regarded as a model in which Muslims are expected to undertake in a comparable situation. Similarly, the narrative of Prophet Musa (*AS*) and Al-Khidr re-emphasizes the importance of obeying Prophets and Messengers. They should therefore pay attention by showing strict respect in their allegiance and that they should expect virtuousness in everything that the Messenger does and submit to him with a sincere heart. It is also learnt that if the person to whom allegiance is given feels the need to explain the wisdom behind the action, decision and words he will do so.

From religious point of view, these Qur'anic narratives demonstrate the manner in which one should invite people to way of Allah and what are the matters to be accentuated first. Of course, Muslims are in the know that the primary message of all the Prophets of Allah is the same; it also indicates that the true and accepted religion in the sight of Allah is one. This further reveals that Islamic religion is consistent with man's natural inclination and disposition. These Qur'anic narratives however serve as a confirmation of the truthfulness and Prophethood of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and therefore strengthen the Muslims' belief in him. The belief Muslims had for Prophet (SAW) was manifest though he could neither read nor write let alone to produce and punish his followers and the entire world the narrations of earlier Prophets. Almighty Allah explains this matter in the following Qur'anic verse where He says:

This is of the news of the unseen which We reveal unto you (O Muhammad SAW), neither you nor your people knew them before this. So be patient. Surely, the (good) end is for the *Muttaqun* (pious)⁷

Islam therefore, aimed at developing exceptional human beings with sound faith so much that those who believe will have excellent life and a positive influence on people around them. The exigency for religion is therefore present in every person. These narratives when studied and reflected carefully could play an important role in connecting Muslims with sincere belief in Allah (*S.W.T.*) and the conviction that He exists and His orders must be properly adhered to. It is through these Qur'anic narratives that Muslims were able to know that the Jews and Christians had distorted their original message and all their claims were put to rest. Taking this into account, many of these narratives dispel the claim of Christians and adherents of other religion that Prophet Ibrahim (*A.S.*) was on their path. Almighty Allah expounds that:

Ibrahim (Abraham) was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was a true Muslim *Hanifa* (Islamic Monotheism - to worship none but Allah Alone) and he was not of *Al-Mushrikun*. Verily, among mankind who has the best claim to Ibrahim (Abraham) are those who followed him, and this Prophet (Muhammad SAW) and those who have believed (Muslims). And Allah is the *Wali* (Protector and Helper) of the believers⁸.

Al-Fauzan emphasizes that Almighty Allah has made it clear that the (first) goal of revealing the Qur'an is for its verses to be pondered. This, according to him, implies knowing

⁷ Qur'an 11:49

⁸ Qur'an 3:67-8

its meaning, implication and information which enables one fear Allah and worships Him alone⁹. Any Muslim who actually did not have any impact of Qur'anic narratives then there is an indication that he treats the Qur'an analogous to what Allah (SWT) depicts the disbelievers in the following verse:

Do they not then think deeply in the Qur'an, or are their hearts locked up (from understanding it)¹⁰?

It is therefore understood that the purpose of the Qur'anic narratives is to emphasize the general message of Islam and also to strengthen the conviction in the teachings brought by Prophets. More so, these narratives are models of succinctness, without the required details, contributing to the total effect. The Qur'anic narratives, asserts Ahmed, are woven around human experience rather than having an abstract thought¹¹.

2. Educational Relevance

Knowledge, Muslims believe is the treasure of Allah which He gives to whosoever He wishes. Khidr, for instance in his narrative did not in any way blame Prophet Musa so much that the latter follows his own light to the best of his judgment. Prophet Musa (AS) having full faith and submissive to Allah adopts the best attitude of the learner to the teacher and promises to obey in all things. Interestingly, the teacher is doubtful but permits him to follow him but on conditions. Objectively, Muslims should imbibe the idea of reciprocating the gesture done to them and must not shake the dust of anyone off his feet or show their indignation in anywhere. Instead, they shall, out of kindness, lower their wings of humility to their fellow Muslims of whatever class or strata. It is crystal clear from the narrative of Prophet Musa (AS) that he brings his sage along on the journey. This emphasizes the significance of one-to-one education which is the best form of education. The Glorious Qur'an hinted that one-to-one education makes it easy to concentrate and pay attention.

Again, we learnt that no one gains control over his brain and prevent forgetfulness or saying the words that have been written in his destiny. Almighty Allah makes people forget whatever and whenever He wills them to. In fact, Prophet Musa (AS) was so enthusiastic to learn so much that he doesn't want his education to be terminated.

⁹ Salih Al-Fauzan, Aqidat al-Tauhid, 1st ed, Dar al-Hidaya, Misr, Alqahira, Vol. 2, P. 299

¹⁰ Qur'an 47:24

¹¹ Hasanuddin Ahmed, *Op .cit*, P. 27

3. Moral Relevance

Although morality is primarily an individual's concern, a society can make arrangements to ensure that its individuals are performing morally well. Morally good performances, as expounded in the Qur'anic narratives, are taught and rewarded in the best form. True morality can be preached in religious gatherings, and people in general make morally good individuals their ideals and leaders. An upright person deserves to be appreciated for what he is and a bad person deserves to be condemned by the society, but should be appropriately guided with a view to becoming a good member of the society. That is exactly what Almighty Allah does. Not only that, He promises the morally scrupulous rewards in the afterlife and the unscrupulous punishments.

It is on the basis of this submission that we did fathom the excellent morals have numerous expressions such as fairness, honesty, gratefulness, patience, politeness, humbleness, discipline, integrity, helpfulness, courage and many others. Likewise, bad morals have manifestations which are the very opposite of the excellent morals. It is in line with this that these narratives address moral lessons stressing the efficacy of having excellent, upright and carefully chosen friends for their ability in influencing one. In order to strengthen one's relationship with Allah, family and the larger community one has to be careful in choosing or selecting a friend. It also determines the ability of one to become responsible within the society he lives in and, at the same time, trying to reform it.

However, in such a situation Muslims should neither join the company of those who engage themselves in sinful life, greed, lust, pride and arrogance, nor identify themselves with the tyrants who rule over the Muslims when the sincere servants of Allah are subjected to marginalization and hardship. This could be a replica of Nigeria's situation where the protection of wealth received much attention and accorded priority from the government than the life of citizenry. Many examples can be cited here, particularly, in the Northern part of the country where the activities of *Boko Haram* and insurgency were so pronounced. Morally enough, in spite of Khidr's assertions that Prophet Musa (AS) would become impatient, the latter insists that he would be patient.

After the third attempt, the latter used a new strategy of persuasion to convince the former not to terminate the process of education and admonition. It is evident here that there must be a hardship and suffering on the part of those who tread the path of searching for truth and acquisition of beneficial knowledge. Prophet Musa (AS) prepared to suffer any hardship in order to be with Khidr so that he can benefit from the wisdom and admonition. Muslims should

therefore adopt the same determination and strength of character in similar situations. Khidr was portrayed in the narrative as a talented, capable and fast acting. This is clear considering the way he was able to damage the boat without anyone noticing what he was doing as well as his quick action in building a strong wall to save the hidden treasure of orphans. More importantly, all the things that Prophet Musa (AS) and Khidr experienced on their journey had already been written in their destinies and determined by Allah. The moment of parting, timing and location of their meeting were all known by Allah for He had written them in their destinies.

In order to strengthen the morality of Muslims, the Glorious Qur'an insists that they should study and draw lessons from the narratives of past nation¹² to avoid their errors and misgivings so that their conviction will be stronger. They can sift these lessons and see the possibility of adapting the good ones and shun away from the bad ones¹³. Morally speaking, these Qur'anic narratives stretch precious moral lessons to guide Muslims' conduct. They are therefore reminders that provide guidance to the Muslims societies¹⁴.

4. Social Relevance

In many world countries today, tenth of thousands of people live and die without leaving an imprint for the society they live in contrary to what *As'hab Al-Kahf* left as a legacy for anyone to emulate. Anyone who aspires to have one's name live eternally then; one must put strenuous effort in doing something that will be advantageous for the development of oneself and one's society around one. Unfortunately, today many Muslims were convinced to live in this world for themselves and their immediate family alone leaving imprints in building beautiful houses, marrying beautiful ladies and riding luxurious cars at the expense of less privileged members of society. Instead, they should embark on development projects that have direct bearing on the life of Muslims that have little to sustain their daily life let alone to think of accumulating more wealth.

Logically, the perception of Muslims should be geared towards changing their condition for better; understanding that one may definitely take several months or years before making it a reality. Patience should be allowed to take its course, because the spiritual and religious transformation took *As'hab Al-Kahf* more than three hundred years. What's our own case? This is a green light for Muslim *Ummah*, in any part of the world, to strive hard with a view to changing the untold hardship, harassment and apartheid being faced by Muslim elites. They

¹² Athar Husain, *Academy of Islamic Research and Publications*, (nd), Nadwat al-Ulama', Lucknow, India, P. 2

¹³ Yiman Workneh, *Narrative Techniques in the Holy Qur'an with Special Reference to the Five (5) Surahs (Chapters)*, (nd), being a Master of Arts in Literature presented to the School of Graduate Studies, P. 42

¹⁴ Qur'an 12:111

should also have the belief that this is a great task ahead of them. There is therefore the need for them not to scuttle in life as this will be a hindrance in their way to achieving maximum success.

Selfless service to humanity is as important as solving the problems that affect the living condition of society. The change for better must, however, start from an individual level. It is the individual's resolve that promises to bring about a change. No matter whether the society changes or not, the individual who realizes the importance of morality must change himself and also do his best to change others.

Dhul-Qarnain, in his narrative engages in selfless service to his people through erecting an iron wall and gates sufficiently enough to protect them from being scaled and attacked. However, he claims no credit for himself apart from that of discharging his duty as a ruler. Simple analysis here reveals that no protection is complete unless one seeks Allah's assistance and grace and that was what prompted *Dhul-Qarnayn* to demand the attention of his people towards Allah who provided ways through which they can be helped and attended to. It is evidently enough to comprehend that those who conceited on the works they did in this life would find those works to be of no advantage. This is because the motives behind their works are not pure and sincere and they are therefore evil or wasted. In fact, the people *Dhul-Qarnain* met had offered to pay him tribute in return for protection against the incursions of Gog and Magog, but realizing that Almighty Allah had given him power and ability, the gift that his people should enjoy, turned down their offer and refused to impose a heavy taxation on them in lieu of the services offered to them. This type of humanitarian service diminishes to the lowest level among the contemporary Muslim (political) leaders, who, most of the time, focus attention on their family and those who they want to make rich!

5. Intellectual Relevance

The acquisition of knowledge, no doubt, entails a great deal of hard work and patience. The narrative of Prophet Musa (AS) and his boy servant had further emphasized that whoever wants to be learned he must have get prepared to pass through the day and night experiencing a great deal of hard ship and fatigue. This is what was envisaged of every Muslim who wants to acquire knowledge. Despite the fact that Allah (SWT) had bestowed a great deal of knowledge to Prophet Musa (AS) yet, he discloses his zeal and interest to learn more from Al-Khidr. More importantly, it reveals that acquiring more and more beneficial knowledge is the Sunnah of Prophets of Allah. Similarly, respect for teachers and sharing ideas is highly commendable. In the search for knowledge Muslim, as a student, must express total respect to

his teacher simply because Prophet Musa (AS), though protuberant Prophet, referred his teacher Al-Khidr, very soothingly and reverentially. It is also pertinent upon a leader/master to share travelling information with his servant while on journey.

Evidently enough, we have seen how Prophet Musa (AS) told his sage, Yusha' bin Nun, the direction of their journey and the destination before their arrival. One of the relevance of Qur'anic narratives, particularly that of Prophet Musa (AS) is that it provides us understanding that the knowledge of Allah (SWT) in everything is unlimited unlike specific knowledge He granted His Prophets and His other chosen servants as well. Also, the observance of good ethics, as one of the conditions for search of knowledge, is decidedly recommended. A student should not therefore instigate any discussion on matters hidden to him until he is permitted by his teacher to do so.

The ability and eloquent style used by Prophet Ibrahim (AS) in a bid to prove his people wrong seems to be more effective and works faster than any other available means. Intellectualism should be understood beyond academia. This is for the fact that it trains an individual into such a propound knowledge and introduces him into many Islamic approaches that will enable him conduct his life in an upright manner.

6. Spiritual Relevance

Muslims, particularly those in authority, should learn to be humble, just and truthful in all their dealings no matter how extended their sway may be. As a result of these ostensible qualities, Muslim leaders are in a better position to protect the weak and punish the erring ones. In order for the Muslim leaders to strengthen and better their relationship with Allah, certain ethical values are needed to fine tune and add colour to the style of their leadership. All other ethical values that can serve as guide should be utilized for justice as well as righteousness. Often, Almighty Allah told Prophet Muhammad (SAW) that the purpose of the narrative of the companions of the cave is to make known to people that Allah's promise is true and there is no doubt about the hour.

It is therefore good to admit that power and opportunity are only given by the All-Knowing and All-powerful to whosoever He wishes and at the time He wills. Muslims whose responsibility is to satisfy the lots of their subjects should admittedly know that they were crowned with such responsibility and should believe that it is a trust occasioned by the faith they had for Allah, hence the need to actualize the objectives embodied in it. No matter how powerful and influential one becomes his power is restricted for it is human by nature. Thus; one has to appraise his domicile and take a middle course while dealing with his erring subjects.

However, one must not be boastful in the discharge of his delegatory duties as was evidently clear in most part of North-West Nigeria. Muslims are cautiously warned while exercising their powers not to be intolerant and arrogant which takes him far away from understanding the fact that his position and responsibility are limited. Importantly, one of the spiritual lessons derived in *Dhul-Qarnain's* narrative is that after he has made his people feel more secured and protected, through creating a barrier claims no single penny.

Another consideration is to strengthen their faith in Allah, acknowledging that all human precautions are likely to vanish or perish with the passage of time. But Allah's power, ability and protection remain alive and are true. The idea emphasized here is that you can take as many precautions as possible to guard or protect yourself against the expected evil but it turns to be incomplete unless you seek help and assistance of Almighty Allah. Muslims generally believe that Prophet Ibrahim had purified and sanctified the sacred house of worship and established the Hajj rites which are still followed by Muslims, the world over. The relevance of Prophet Ibrahim's narrative can also be seen in his personality and character as one of the in-depth and was specifically mentioned as being a kind and compassionate. Muslims have over the years cite Prophet Ibrahim's character as an example of how kind one must be towards people and particularly one's own parents. A similar instance of Prophet Ibrahim's compassionate nature is verified when he prayed for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah after hearing of Allah's plan through Angel Jibril for them.

Although, Angel Jibril told him that Allah's plan was the final and therefore his prayer will be of no effect, the Glorious Qur'an nonetheless reinforces Prophet Ibrahim's kind nature through this particular event.

Khidr in his narrative had demonstrated his compassionate character when he abetted the destitute for, he had desired to prevent further hardship on them from the oppressor's actions. His sympathy for the poor and needy as well as compassionate and loving character is worthy to note. In order to acquire the spiritual light, Muslims should succinctly understand and benefit from the Qur'anic narratives through receptive heart. The heart must always be opened and ready to accept the messages inform of lessons deduced from the narratives and try as much as possible to apply those lessons in their lives. In an effort to further clarify and establish the above point, Al-Khalidi observes that:

The knowledge, understanding and pondering over the Qur'an is a pure blessing from Allah and a mercy from Him. And the mercy of Allah is

not granted to someone whose heart is filled with confusion, deception and deceit¹⁵.

It is not surprising to find some Muslims studying the Qur'anic narratives with little or no impact on them nor does it guide them to the most acceptable path¹⁶. Instead, they should try as much as possible to drive home certain lessons identified in the Qur'an for their overall guidance. The conviction of Muslims should always be strengthened when Allah (SWT) protected his servants from any harm knowing fully that He has power over everything. For instance, Muslims learn that when Allah intends to protect and preserve something from the machinations of mankind none can deter Allah's plan. Such was the case with Prophet Musa (AS) when his mother cast him into the river following the command of Allah who promised to save him from the Pharaoh's evil plan of killing the sons of Israeli tribes.

Basically, Almighty Allah narrates how He dealt with the polytheists. On his part, Prophet Musa (AS) is presented as being inspired by Allah to escape the clutches of Pharaoh with the Children of Israel by night and to travel towards the sea with full trust in Allah and without fear of the obstacles in their way. More importantly, Almighty Allah reminds them that He has saved them from their enemies and has sent *manna* and quails to them. He warns the people not to commit oppression and promises that whoever repents and does good deeds will be forgiven and rewarded. What is more important to understand here is that Almighty Allah had tested the people but they failed to pass the test. The sin of the Israelites is mentioned and the obnoxious act that led them lost their faith. Albayrak through Mazharuddin Siddiki has pointed out, that the Qur'anic stories bring out most clearly the spiritual and moral element in shaping history¹⁷. More often, the Qur'anic narratives focusing on the past are intended as warning and example, not as biography, history or entertainment.

D. Conclusion

The Glorious Qur'an contains a rich tapestry of narratives that play a significant role in conveying its teachings and lessons. These narratives include but not limited to narratives of Prophets, historical events, parables and moral lessons. They also serve as guidance, inspiration and moral instructions for Muslims emphasizing the efficacy of faith, righteousness and

¹⁵ How to approach the Qur'an, P. 119

¹⁶ <http://yassarnalquran.wordpress.com> as at 9th February, 2016

¹⁷ Isma'il Albayrak, Op cit, P. 122

submission to Allah's will. Muslims find in these narratives' examples of piety, patience and resilience while also cautioning against wrongdoing and the consequences of straying from the right path.

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