

## Critical Analysis on the Exemplary Devotion of Youths of the Cave, Lessons and Ethical Implications

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### Abstract:

This paper will discuss the story of youths of the cave how they are been resolute in their adoption of the faith, betraying no hesitation whatsoever. Indeed they are shown to be very strong physically and mentally, and strong in their faith and in their rejection of the way followed by their community. In fact, the misfortune event, which viewed through a lens of divine wisdom of Allah the Almighty, patience, and accountability, are not seen as random events but as part of a larger plan from Allah, it carries multiple purposes, such as a test of faith of his servants, purification of their sins, or an opportunity for spiritual growth. Islam discourages superstition and fatalism while promoting a balanced and constructive response. The research paper will elaborate the lessons in the story of people of the cave through depicting the effect faith that Allah has on believers; giving them reassurance and inner peace. Hence, they prefer it to all material riches and pleasures. When they find it hard to live as believers within their community, they seek refuge in a cave where they receive Allah's care and protection and enjoy his grace. Going by the ethical implication of the subject matter, misfortune may appear to be bad, but Allah, in his infinite wisdom, has a greater plan that will lead to a positive outcome later on. The Qur'an reminds believers, saying: "...it may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you and that you like a thing that is bad for you. Allah knows but you do not know"<sup>2</sup> Finally the primary objective of this research is to shade light on the original sources of an Islamic events which serves as a sustainable solution to any misfortunes befalls on Muslims in particular or Humans at large, because misfortune sometimes can be a reminder or sign of love from Allah, The most difficult trials are often faced by the prophets and the most righteous people, a sign of their elevated status and Allah's love for them. And for those who have become arrogant or neglectful among Muslims, misfortune can be a reminder of their dependence on Allah and opportunity for their self-reflection and repentance.

**Keywords:** *Explanatory devotion, Youths of the Cave, Lessons, and Ethical Implications*

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<sup>2</sup> Qur'an 2:216

## 1. Introduction:

In the name of Allah, the most gracious and most merciful, Allah is all-knowing of everything, because his will is the divine decree and predestination of all things. He says in the Qur'an:

*“And Allah has dominion over the heavens and the earth, and Allah is overall things competent”*<sup>3</sup>

In another quotation of the Qur'an he said:

*“The decree of Allah is always just and irreversible.”*<sup>4</sup>

Allah in his wisdom, divided human development into childhood, adolescence, and old age, each of the stages requiring reflection and responsible management. With regards to Youth, is a trust bestowed upon individuals, best utilized by maintaining good health and making the most of leisure.

Islam made emphasis on utilizing five divine gifts wisely, which are youth, health, wealth, free time and life itself. Eventually, these gifts are fleeting and the opportunity to benefit from them may not last forever in most cases. The efficient performance of youth is essential, can be achieved through applying drastic majors, such as pure intentions, following the Quran, reading books discussing the implications of youth, and having a righteous mentor.

Islamic teaching encourages Muslims to have a balance between spiritual and worldly efforts. Therefore, In addition to prayer offered by individuals, one should take practical, science-based actions to mitigate a disaster or solve a problem happening. Dismissing the spiritual aspect is wrong, but so is relying solely on spiritual solutions without constructive action. It is important to maintain a balanced perspective and avoid common misunderstandings. It is not appropriate to assume a misfortune occurred solely because of a particular person's sins. Attributing the cause to a specific individual is a speculative and judgmental mindset that is discouraged in Islam. Besides, losing hope in Allah's mercy is a sign of disbelief. A Muslim should always remain optimistic that there is good to be found in every situation. Attributing misfortune to bad omens, black cats, or other superstitions is a form of associating partners with Allah, in deed all affairs are subject to Allah's will alone.

The story of People of the Cave offers a powerful example. The young men striving to worship Allah in a hostile environment, they found strength and solidarity by coming together. As a result

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<sup>3</sup> Qur'an 3:189

<sup>4</sup> Quran 6: 115

of that Allah blessed them with his support. So, reinforcing the idea that faith-based communities provide resilience against external challenges.

## 2. Definition Of The Term Youths:

Regarding the age of youth, Scholars differed in opinions and will be highlighted as follows:

Ash-Shawkaani, said according to Shaafi': "The linguistic origin of the term youth SHABAAB denotes movement and activity. It is a noun used in reference to those who have reached puberty until they reach the age of thirty."

Reported by the author of Al-Fat-h. Al-Qurtubi said in Al-Mufhim: A person is described as child until the age of sixteen, then youth or young person until the age of thirty-two, and then mature person.

Az-Zamakhshari said: Youth starts from reaching puberty until the age of thirty-two.' The Maliki scholar Ibn Shaas said in his book Al-Jawahir: '... until the age of forty.

An-Nawawi said that the sound chosen opinion is that a Youth is the one who reached puberty and is not past the age of thirty. Afterward, he is Kahl until he passes the age of forty; afterward, he is Shaykh elderly."

Indeed, there are authentic texts indicating the virtue of worshipping Allah, The most Exalted, at a young age, like in the Hadeeth that discuss about the seven persons whom Allah will shade in the Shade of his throne, and among them will be a youth who grew up worshipping Allah. Moreover, it was narrated by Imaam Ahmad in Al-Musnad, on the authority of 'Uqbah ibn 'Aamir that the Prophet, (SAW), said: "Allah, The Exalted, wonders practices which entails that He is greatly pleased with a youth who has no inclination to worldly pleasures."<sup>5</sup> Whoever is at that age and devotes himself to the worship of Allah, the most exalted, and obeying Him, is hoped to earn this great reward.

Moreover, with regards to the above quotations, a person in his twenties is still at the age of youth, and he shall earn the reward of worshipping Allah, during youth if he strives in worship. Nevertheless, whoever past the age of youth and reached thirty or forty or more, still has the chance to catch up. Actually, striving to obey Allah, The most exalted, diligently at any age, keenly seeks to earn his pleasure, and repents to him sincerely, then, Allah will compensate and reward for his obedience because Allah, The most exalted, does not allow the reward of those

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<sup>5</sup> Narrated by uqbah ibn 'aamir al-juhani, Repoted By Muslim

who do good to be lost. However, the rewards earned by young persons are more perfect because of their physical strength and inner inclination to follow lusts.<sup>6</sup>

### **3. Youthful Devotion from Islamic Perspective:**

Technically, the term Youthful devotion refers to the passionate commitment young people can have towards Allah the Almighty, a cause, or a set of ideals, sometime seen as a powerful and positive force for good. In deed this initial fervor can provide a strong foundation for a life of purpose and service, it needs to be channeled constructively according to the teaching of Islam to avoid being wasted on unproductive desires and that may lead to disillusionment. However, maintenance of this devotion requires conscious effort, a supportive community and guidance to focus on righteousness, love and peace, rather than succumbing to worldly temptations.

Youthful devotion also described as a harvest, an eager and pure expression of loyalty that sets the stage for a lifelong commitment. Mostly young people possess abundant energy that can be channeled into productive ventures and acts of service for Allah and others. Those who serve Allah in their youthful age can become a role model for others who are younger, because they are demonstrating how to them live a Godly life.

Actually, without proper guidance, youthful energy can be diverted to harmful pursuits like drug abuse, crime or uncontrolled desires, according to one source, which may lead to a perverted sense of destiny.

There is need to avoid youthful lusts -uncontrolled desires for pleasure-, wealth, and worldly validation that can pull young people away from Allah's guidance. Likewise, the initial enthusiasm of devotion needs to be sustained, and individuals must learn to overcome immaturity and make a conscious choice to continue following the teaching of Islam.

However, being surrounded by pious people who are model respect and love can help nurture of young person's devotion. As a matter of fact, regularly engaging in reading Qur'an and observing prayers is an essential tool for understanding Allah's purpose and developing a deeper more mature faith.

Recommendably, considering guidance of the Qur'an as the central focus in all aspects of life school, relationships and hobbies allows young people to glorify Allah through their choices, which is an alternative Instead of giving in to the transient activities of life, surly, that will cultivate devotional habits in youth helps in developing eternal perspective.

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<sup>6</sup> Fatwa 242842, Date:26-12-2019

There is no stage in life without challenges, if mistakes made during youthful age can have lasting consequences. As expressed in the poetry works of Abul Hataiyah and Torfatul bn Abd, time reveals unexpected events, underlining the importance of preparation. Therefore, youth should avoid pitfalls like procrastination and committing sins. Habitual sinning can lead to Allah's displeasure and distance from one's faith. Youth should focus on faith, worship, beneficial knowledge and worthwhile ambitions. Surly, these are the foundations of a fulfilling life.

#### 4. Exemplary Devotion by the Youths of the Cave:

It is reported that the reason for the revelation of the story and that of Dhul-Qarnayn, was related later in the surah, is that the Jews persuaded the people of Makkah to put to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) questions concerning them, and also the spirit. Also by the people of Makkah themselves asking the Jews to prepare some questions for them to test whether Muhammad (SAW) was a true Prophet.

This may be partially or totally true, especially since the account giving the history of Dhul-Qarnayn begins with, they will ask you about Dhul-Qarnayn. Say:

*“I will give you an account of him.”<sup>7</sup>*

But no reference is made to any question about the people of the cave, though, their story is clearly relevant to the main theme of the surah.

The structure of the story begins with a short summary before its narration in detail. And it is shown in a series of scenes with some gaps left in between. In the verses 9-12 Allah the Almighty said:

*“Do you think that the people of the cave and the inscription were a wonder among our signs? When those youths took refuge in the cave, they said: ‘Our Lord! Bestow on us your grace and provide for us right guidance in our affair.’ So we drew a veil over their ears in the cave, for a number of years, and then we awakened them so that we might mark out which of the two parties managed to calculate the time they had remained in that state.”<sup>8</sup>*

The above verses explain the main lines of the story and features.

1. That the people of the cave were youths, whose number is not mentioned,

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<sup>7</sup> Quran 18: 83)

<sup>8</sup> Qur'an 18: 9-12

2. They went to the cave to isolate themselves from their community because they believed in Allah the Almighty and fear him.
3. They were accidentally made to sleep in the cave for a number of years, before they were aroused from their long slumber.
4. That the two groups arguing about them, so they were awakened to make clear which of the two groups calculated their stay in the cave better.
5. It is clearly shown that it is strange as their history is, it is not particularly marvelous among the miracles and signs given by God. Indeed there are numerous things that are much more marvelous and miraculous in the universe than the story of the cave people.
6. That those youths are referred to in the surah as the people of the cave and the inscription.
7. The cave is a natural chamber in a mountain or under rocky ground, while the inscription refers, most probably, to the record of their names which was, perhaps, the one hung at the entrance of the cave, where they were eventually found.

The surah begins by stating that the account about to be given is the whole truth concerning their affair: Allah says:

*“We shall relate to you their story in all truth. They were young men who believed in their Lord, so we increased them in guidance”. “We put courage in their hearts, so that they stood up and said: ‘Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. Never shall we call upon any deity other than Him. If we did, we should indeed have uttered an enormity!’” “These people of ours have taken for worship deities other than Him, without being able to show any convincing proof of their beliefs. Who does more wrong than he who invents a lie about God?” “Hence, now that you have withdrawn from them and all that they worship instead of Allah, take refuge in the cave. God may well spread His grace over you and make fitting arrangements for you in your affairs.””<sup>9</sup>*

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<sup>9</sup> Quran 18: 13-16)

9. Moulana Zakariyya Harneker/ in Community Building, Featured Articles, Islam, Prophetic Guidance, November 25, 2024

10. Story of Youth of the Cave, by Sayyid Qutb. Muslim Intellectual — Egypt. <https://www.onIslamweb.net>

11. Sharh Sahih Muslim by Al-Imam Al-Nawawi, translated by Adil Salih

12. Muslim youth Identities through devotional songs and poetry in south Yorkshire communities. By Andrey Rosowsky. October 2017, Doi:10.4324/9781315528014

## 5. Discussions:

The above verses shows that:

1. Those believing youths were increased in guidance in order to be able to manage their affairs with their community.
2. In addition to the increased guidance, we put courage in their hearts, to make them solid in their attitude, firm in their belief in the truth, proud of the faith they had chosen.
3. That they stood up, which signifies a movement indicating resolve and firmness. {They stood up and said: ‘Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth.} (Al-Kahf 18:14) He is indeed the Creator, Lord and Sustainer of the whole universe. Allah says: “Never shall we call upon any deity other than Him.} (Al-Kahf 18:14) For He is the One without partners of any sort. We make this pledge, because if we were to call upon anyone else, “we should indeed have uttered an enormity!” (Al-Kahf 18:14) We would have gone beyond all proper limits and be in total error.
4. After then, they now turn to the prevailing situation among their people and express to them their rejection of it. So, they are clear that what their people do has no foundation whatsoever: “These people of ours have taken for worship deities other than Him, without being able to show any convincing proof of their beliefs.” (Al-Kahf 18:15)
5. Actually, any faith of believe should be founded on solid evidence of the truth. Only with such evidence can it have its say to turn people’s hearts and minds to its argument. Without such evidence, it is utter fabrication. What is worse is that such falsehood is asserted in relation to Allah Himself: “who does more wrong than he who invents a lie about Allah?” (Al-Kahf 18:15)

## 6. Conceptual Analysis:

1. The attitude of the youths appears to be clear, open and straightforward, they are resolute in their adoption of the faith, betraying no hesitation whatsoever. Indeed they are shown to be very strong physically and mentally and strong in their faith and in their rejection of the way followed by their community.
2. However, they are talking about two vastly different ways of life, there can be no meeting point between the two, and there can be no participation by these young believers in the

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13. Al-Muffin Lima Ashkala min Talkhis kits Muslim, the commentary of Sahih Muslim, by Imam Abu Abbas Ahmad AlQurtubi

life of their community. They had no choice but to flee in order to protect their faith, they are not prophets still they are able to present to their community the true faith, calling on them to accept it, they are simply a group of young people who have been able to discern the right path out of a bleak, unbelieving environment.

3. They stood up in public to declare their faith, they might well not have been able to withstand the pressure on them to abandon it. Nor could they resort to pretense and avoidance, appearing to concur with their people while worshipping Allah in secret.
4. Furthermore, it shows that, most probably, their secret was found out hence they had no option but to flee seeking Allah's protection and support.
5. As the matter of fact, as young believers came to the conclusion that they had to leave their homes and families and live in a cave to protect their faith, they immediately put this decision into effect: "Hence, now that you have withdrawn from them and all that they worship instead of Allah, take refuge in the cave. Allah may well spread his grace over you and make fitting arrangements for you in your affairs." (Al-Kahf 18:16)
6. The young believers who have abandoned their people and families, forsaking all the pleasures of this life and preferring instead to sleep rough in a small dark cave, begin to sense Allah's grace. They feel it coming, easy, comforting, abundant and limitless. It is spread over them to change the quality of their life in the cave: "Allah may well spread his grace over you." (Al-Kahf 18:16)
7. Then the cave becomes like a wide expanse, where Allah's grace is been bestowed in abundance to change their whole outlook on life and bring about comfort and contentment. The solid rocky walls of the cave are made to overlook a wide horizon and loneliness in the cave is totally dispelled, for Allah has spread his grace over their young hearts and He takes care of them arranged something for their comfort.
8. This is an aspect of what faith can do to a person. All appearances undergo a fundamental change.
9. People may value all their concepts with regard to life and happiness, which is not matter, when the heart is full of faith, it sees totally different world, where Allah's grace imparts reassurance and genuine happiness.
10. Therefore, whatever turn events may take will be accepted, because the total result is comforting and fitting for one's life in this world and in the life to come: "Allah may well



spread his grace over you and make fitting arrangements for you in your affairs.” (Al-Kahf 18:16)

## 7. Ethical Implication of the Concept:

There are to be Avoidance of disputes and argumentation, except where it concerns mutual reminder and discussion in order a Muslim to discover and confirm the truth of a matter with ease light heartedness, and hearts devoid of obstinacy and disputation.

Necessity of Consultancy of the hearts about situations that occur. The Prophet may Allah bless him and give him peace said, “Consult your heart. And even if you seek the verdict from others and they give you their verdict, virtue is that in which the heart is at rest and still. And sinfulness is that which irritates the breast and cause it to causes doubt.” The hearts that should rightly be consulted are purified hearts that are illuminated by the remembrance of Allah, abstaining from all apart from Allah. Indeed, if they obtain that attribute, only the Real will appear within them. And purified hearts will only rest with the truth, unlike hearts that are submerged in love of the world and desires.

There is need for surrendering to the will and decision of Allah, and being content with whatever emerges from his decree, such that they cling to nothing, nor resolve to do any action, except when they relate that with the will of Allah. They look towards that which Allah will do. It was reported in the authority of the Hikam that, “The intelligent person enters the day looking towards what Allah will do with him, while the ignorant person enters the day looking to that which he will do with himself.”

In fact, the verses of the Qur’an are to be preoccupied with remembrance and contemplation, until they are absent from all apart from the one they are remembering. Allah the most exalted said, “And remember your Lord whenever you forget.” In other words, “When you forget all apart from Him, then you will be one who truly remembers.” Indeed, true remembrance causes the one who remembers to be absent from witnessing himself, and his own attributes and senses, such that the Real Allah the most Exalted should be the one who speaks on his tongue, due to the person’s complete immersion in him the most Exalted.

Indeed, in the verses of the Qur’an there is prayer for elevation and increase in guidance and certainty. Each time a seeker reaches a station, it is incumbent that he seeks the station that is immediately beyond it. And there will not end to his knowledge and greatness he Allah the most

Exalted. “And say, ‘Perhaps my Lord will guide me to that which is nearer than this to right conduct.’”

## **8. Conclusion:**

Ethical analysis of the youthful devotion requires ethical framework for building communities that foster healthy religious identities, discussions with youth might emphasize empowerment and self-discovery. There is need for exploring how communities can create environments that nurture strong religious identities, emphasizing the Islamic perspective on identity and its role in positive social action and stronger networks. Islamic ethical thought with its focus on conservation and community responsibility offers valuable principles that align with the teaching of Islam to reduce the intensity of youth’s bad behavior and build Islamic focus.

From an Islamic perspective, formation of someone identity begins early. Initially, children are free of moral accountability. Once they grow up, they learn to distinguish right from wrong before reaching the age of accountability. However, Adolescence is a critical period for answering fundamental identity questions, as youth grapple with external influences and internal struggles.

In fact, we are living in a hedonistic society where desires are often given precedence over moral and spiritual values. In deed these external influences, combined with societal pressures, can shape identity in ways that cause conflict with Islamic values.

## **9. Recommendations:**

1. Consequently, the youth stage is a powerful phase that should be guided by righteousness and responsible actions, as it eventually transitions into old age. Recall that everything returns to its initial state, and youthfulness is an opportunity that should be used judiciously.
2. There should be an urgent call upon our young generation to reach for the stars and strive for excellence through youthful devotion. Like climbers ascending the highest peaks of mountains with unwavering confidence, our youth are the future torchbearers of hope and change in our Islamic societies.
3. Going by the story of the youth of the cave, all the young men and women of substance to raise their voices, not in defiance but in determination. Let it be known to all that we are unswayed by the fear of consequences. The challenges that lie ahead are but stepping stones on the path to greatness.

4. Indeed, it's high time for our Muslim youths to reconnect with the values that define our society, we rediscover our purpose and discern the significance of our actions. In any passing day we move closer to a future, where happiness knows no bounds, and even the most obstinate oppressor cannot remain blind to the truth.
5. Actually, fear has no place in the hearts of our Muslim youth who armed with the wisdom and guidance found in the Quran, absolutely there is no obstacle too great to overcome. Our noble Quran is a shield that will never waver, a source of strength that will see us through the toughest of times. It is a compass that will unfailingly guide our path towards righteousness in all times.
6. Muslims should believe that nothing in this life will be achieved without the will of Allah the Almighty, because every action a servant being does or omits to do, is subject to Allah's will.
7. Actually, our eyes as humans cannot discern what is behind that curtain, and our minds are finite, regardless of our level of advanced our knowledge. Hence a Muslim must never say that he is definitely doing something tomorrow unless he attaches his intention to Allah's will, because tomorrow belongs to the realm that lies beyond the reach of human perception. Therefore, we do not make any assertion about it.
8. Muslims should not be fatalistic, giving no thought to the future and making no plans for it. He should not live for the present moment, cutting himself off from his past and future. No, this is not what the directive implies. All matters belong to Allah at the beginning and at the end.