

Period of revelation:

Soorah Al-Kahf was revealed in the beginning of 5 prophet-hood, before the revelation of soorah Az-Zumar and before the migration to Abyssinia (Rajab, 5 prophet-hood), when the Muslims were suffering the cruelties of the Makkan pagans. The Muslims were trained to propagate Islam among the Christians of Abyssinia. In order to achieve success in the test of Tawheed, like the companions of the cave (seven sleepers), the young companions were taught to avoid the pressure of oppressive chiefs and pagan parents.

Excellences of soorah Al-Kahf

Many traditions have been reported from the prophet (pbuh) regarding the merits of this soorah.

1- "Anyone who memorises the first ten verses of soorah Al-Kahf will be saved from Dajjaal." ﴿ وَمَنْ حَفِظَ عَشْرَ اٰيَاتٍ مِنْ أَوِّلِ سُورَةِ الْكُهْفِ عُصِمَ مِنَ الدَّجَّالِ ﴾

(Saheeh Muslim, Hadeeth: 1,919)

2- "Anyone who recites the first three verses of Soorah Al-Kahf will be saved from the trial of Dajjaal." ﴿ وَمَنْ قَرَأُ ثُلَاكَ ايَاتٍ مِنْ آوَّلِ الْكَهْفِ، عُصِمَ مِنْ فِتُنَةِ النَّاجَالِ ﴾

(Tirmizi, Hadeeth: 2,868, sound)

3- "Any of you who finds Dajjaal should recite the initial verses of soorah Al-Kahf because this soorah protects from the trial of Dajjaal."

(Abu Dawood, Hadeeth: 4,323, sound)

(Perhaps the deception of Dajjaal will involve man in the attractions of this world and will make him forget the Day of Judgement and the life hereafter.)

4- A man recited soorah Al-Kahf. The horse that was tied in his house started shying off. He raised his head and saw a mist or cloud overcast the sky. He mentioned it to the prophet (pbuh) and he said:

"It was the light of satisfaction which descends by reciting Quran or at the time while Quran is recited."

(Saheeh Muslim, Hadeeth: 1,893)

5- "Anyone who recites soorah Al-Kahf on Friday a light will be lit for him which will stay (with him) for the period (of one week) between the two Fridays."

(Sunan Al-Bayhaqi, Hadeeth: 5,792)

(It means that the light of the teachings of soorah Al-Kahf will remain in his heart and mind for a weak and he will be safe from the trials of the world and its adornments.) 6- "Anyone who recites soorah Al-Kahf, will have a light extending from his house to Makkah and anyone who recites its last ten verses will be safe from the trial of Dajjaal when he appears."

The relationship of soorah Al-Kahf with the Book

In the last soorah (Bani Israa'eel) the foundations of Islamic society and the just Islamic state were mentioned. Here, in soorah Al-Kahf, the difficulties of this way and the story of a just king, Zul-Qarnain have been mentioned. A just society and a just state can be established only when a party of devotees comes into being which completely believes in Tawheed and meeting with their Lord and which can succeed in every test by the dint of their good deeds.

Important key words and subjects

There are some important words which have been repeated again and again in soorah Al-Kahf. Understanding this soorah becomes easier if these key words are understood properly. For example: ﴿وَلِيَاتُوْهُوْ "Le Nablowahum" (so that We can test them),﴿وَلِيَاتُ "Zeenat" (adornment),﴿وَلِيَاتُ اللّهُ الللّهُ اللّهُ اللّهُ اللّهُ اللّهُ الللّهُ اللّهُ اللّهُ اللّهُ اللللللللللللللللللللل

1- Use of the word "Zeenat" in soorah Al-Kahf:

The word "Zeenat" (adornment) has been used three times in this soorah in verses 7, 28, and 46.

- (a) The purpose of all the adornment of the earth is to examine the human deeds. It is the central subject of this soorah. ﴿ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِيْنَةً لَّهَالِتَبُلُوهُ أَنْ أَنْهُمُ أَخْسَنُ عَمَالًا﴾ "We have decked the earth with all kinds of adornments to test the people and see who does the best deeds." (Verse: 7)
- (b) The prophet (pbuh) has been given three instructions: (1) He should adhere to his companions. (2) He should avoid the adornments of this world.
 - (3) He should not accept the pressure of the infidel leadership.

﴿ثُرِيْدُزِيْنَةَ الْحَيْوِةِالنَّانُيَاوَلَا تُطِعُ مَن أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهْ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوْهُ وَكَانَ آمُرُهُ فُرُطًا ﴾

"(Keep yourself content with those who call on their Lord morning and evening

seeking His good pleasure; and let not your eyes turn away from them) desiring the attraction of worldly life; nor obey the one whose heart We have permitted to neglect Our remembrance, who follows his own desires and goes to extremes in the conduct of his affairs." (Verse: 28)

(c) The wealth and the children are also the ornaments of this world.

﴿ٱلْمَالُ وَالْمَنُونَ إِيْنَةُ الْحَيْوِةِ النُّرنيا وَالْبِقِيثُ الصّْلِحْتُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَرَيِّكَ قَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ أَمَلاً ﴾

"The wealth and children are an attraction of this worldly life; yet, honourable deeds that last for ever are better rewarded by your Lord and hold for you a better hope (of salvation)." (Verse: 46)

2- Meaningfulness of the word "Wilaayat" (guardianship) to explain the Tawheed of Authority:

The protection and guardianship of Allah has been established in this soorah and the belief of the unbelievers about the false gods that they can protect has been refuted. The words "Wali" (guardian, protector), "Auliyaa" (guardians), "Wilaayat" (guardianship) have been used repeatedly. (Verses: 17, 26, 44, 50 and 102)

- (a) The one who is misled by Allah cannot be guided by anyone. (Verse: 17)
- (b) No one except Allah can protect people. He does not let anyone share in giving the commandments. (Verse: 26)
- (c) The destruction of the garden of arrogant land-owner established that only Allah can protect. (Verse: 44)
- (d) Have you left Allah and chosen the Satan and his children as your protectors, although he is your enemy? What a bad substitute you have chosen? (Verse: 50)
- (e) The unbelievers who leave Allah and chose His slaves as their protectors, will go to Hell. (Verse: 102)
- 3- The description of special features of Quran in soorah Al-Kahf:

The special features of Quran have been described in detail in this soorah.

(Verses: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 27, 29 and 54)

- (a) There is no crookedness in the holy Quran. (Verse: 1)
- (b) The holy Quran is straightforward. It is a Book which says everything in a straight manner. (Verse: 2)
- (c) The purpose of holy Quran is to give warning. (Verse: 2)
- (d) It gives good news to the righteous people. (Verse: 2)

- (e) It is a warning for the Christians as well. (Verse: 4) It refutes the wrong beliefs of the Christians.
- (f) Alteration has been used in the holy Quran. The facts have been exposed in different ways and styles so that the people may believe in them.

4- The subject of freedom of faith in soorah Al-Kahf:

This soorah has two verses regarding the freedom of faith. (Verses: 20, 29)

- (b) The verse: ﴿ ﴿ الْمُعَالِّدُو كُمْ أَوْ يُعِينُو كُمْ فِي مِلْتِهِمْ "They will stone you to death, or force you back into their faith" (20) shows that if those youth had not hidden in the cave they would have been stoned to death or they would have returned to their old religion. They did not have the freedom of faith.

5- Use of the word "Al-Hayaatud-Dunyaa" for three times in soorah Al-Kahf:

The word ﴿ وَالْحِياةَ النَّانِيا ﴾ "Al-Hayaatud-Dunyaa" (the worldly life) has been used thrice in this soorah. The reality of this life has been described in this soorah.

- (a) The worldly life is like the crop which gets dry and the winds blow it. (Verse:45)
- (b) The wealth and the children are the ornaments of the life of this world, but the good deeds remain behind. (Verse: 46)
- (c) Those whose efforts are only for the worldly life, they are at a loss as for as their deeds are concerned. They have the misunderstanding that they are doing good deeds. (Verse: 104)

6- The topic of "Liqaa" (meeting with the Lord) in soorah Al-Kahf:

The word ﴿ لَقَامُ "Liqaa" (meeting with the Lord) has been used twice in this soorah.

- (a) The deeds of those who deny the meeting with their Lord will be wasted and will have no weight on the Day of Judgement. (Verse: 105)
- (b) Anyone who believes in the meeting with his Lord, must give up Shirk and do good deeds.(Verse: 110)

7- Description of the events of the Day of Judgement in soorah Al-Kahf:

There are many verses about the scenes of the Day of Judgement.

(Verses: 21, 47, 48, 49, 52, 98)

- (a) Allah's promise is true. There should be no doubt about the Day of Judgement. (Verse: 21)
- (b) The mountains will be made to move and the earth will be laid bare on the Day of Resurrection. (Verse: 47)
- (c) People will be brought before their Lord in rows. (Verse: 48)
- (d) When they will see their book of deeds, they will say: It is a strange book which has left nothing big or small from reporting. (Verse: 49)
- (e) Allah will order them to call those whom they associated with Him, but they will not be able to help them. (Verse: 52)
- (f) Even the strong embankments will come to pieces on the Doomsday. (Verse:98)

Macro-structure of soorah Al-Kahf

Soorah Al-Kahf consists of six paragraphs. The first paragraph is the introduction and the last paragraph is the summary. In the four paragraphs which are in between, four stories have been reported which aim at some kind of trial. ﴿ وَلَمُتَالَّوُهُمُ ** So that We may test them." (Verse: 7)

A review has been given at the end of the first two stories.

- (1) The first story is about the young men who went to a cave and slept there. They were tested for their belief. They had to seek refuge in a cave otherwise they would have been stoned to death.
- (2) The other story is about two land owners. The test of decrease and increase of wealth is mentioned in this story.
- (3) The third story is about the meeting of prophet Moosaa and Khidhr.
 The test of decrease and increase of knowledge is mentioned in this story.
- (4) The fourth story is about a just king Zul-Qarnain. The test of power is mentioned in this story.

- 1- Verses: 1 to 8: The first paragraph is introductory. Man has been informed of the purpose of his life, after the introduction of the holy Quran.
- (a) There is no crookedness in the holy Quran. (Verse: 1)
- (b) The holy Quran is straightforward. It is a Book which says everything in a straight manner. (Verse: 2)
- (e) The purpose of holy Quran is to give warning. (Verse: 2)
- (d) It gives good news to the righteous people. (Verse: 2)
- (e) It is a warning for the Christians as well. (Verse: 4) It refutes the wrong beliefs of the Christians. The anxiousness of the prophet (pbuh) for his invitation has been appreciated that he is compassionate about the guidance of mankind. (Verse: 6) The purpose of the whole of adornment of the earth is to test and examine the deeds of mankind. (Verse: 7)

The scenes of the Doomsday have been portrayed that the adornment of the earth will be ruined. (Verse: 8)

2- Verses: 9 to 31: In the second paragraph, the story of the companions of the cave (seven sleepers) has been described.

Their faith became a test for them. They had to seek refuge in the cave, otherwise the government of their time would have stoned them to death. The second paragraph has two subsidiary paragraphs.

The first sub paragraph consists of verses 9 to 26, in which the story has been described. The second sub paragraph consists of verses 27 to 31, in which the story has been reviewed and the messenger (pbuh) of Allah and his companions have been advised. The companions of the cave were monotheists. The companions of the prophet (pbuh) were advised to be steadfast on Tawheed like the companions of the cave.

- (a) Those young men who believed in Allah Alone had a strong relation with Him.

 (Verse: 10)
- (b) Allah had chosen them as far as guidance is concerned. ﴿ وَرِكْنَامُ هُنَّكُ ﴾ "And we advanced them in guidance." (Verse: 13)
- (c) Allah strengthened their hearts and granted them steadfastness. "(Verse: 14)
- (d) These young men were disgusted with the Shirk. They followed Tawheed.

 They believed that Allah is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. They declared without any reservation: ﴿ الْمُنْ مُنْ مُوامِنْ كُوْلِهِ إِلَيْهَا ﴾ "Never shall we call any god other than Him. (Verse:14)

(e) These young men were disgusted with their nation and took refuge in the cave for fear of their revenge. (Verses: 15 to 17) They feared for their lives from the government of their time. Allah made them sleep for a long time and thus provided a proof of life after death. Allah's promise is true. The Day of Judgement will surely come.

"Thus did We make their وَ كُلُلِكَ اَعُثَرُنَاعَلَيْهِمْ لِيَعُلَمُوْا اللَّهِ عَنَّى وَالسَّاعَةُ لاَرْيُتِ فِيهَا ﴾ "Thus did We make their case known to the people so that they might know that the promise of Allah is true and that there is no doubt about the coming of the Hour of Judgement."

(Verse; 21)

The Christians differed after the death of those young men. Some said: "Erect an edifice over their remains." Some others said: "Let us erect a place of worship over them." (Verse: 21)

People were advised not to argue about the number of the companions of the cave but to learn a lesson from this event! Do not get involved in their number and other unnecessary aspects of the event. (Verse: 22)

- (f) In the second sub paragraph, the prophet (pbuh) has been advised to accompany the righteous believers, not to be allured by the adornments of this world and avoid the obedience of rebellious and transgressing leadership of Quraish. It was told that this faith is a test. The companions of the cave did not have the fundamental rights of faith. They had to take refuge in the cave. The Muslims are advised to grant this right because there is no compulsion in religion.
- 3- Verses: 32 to 59: In the third paragraph, the story of two landowners has been described. One of them was a big landowner and the other was comparatively small.

These are two living historical characters. One is the materialistic polytheist and the other is a monotheist who believes in the life after death. The first is ungrateful and the other is grateful. The purpose of this story is to establish the test of decrease and increase in the wealth.

This paragraph also has two sub paragraphs.

In the first sub paragraph (Verses: 32 to 44), the story has been told and in the second sub paragraph (Verses: 45 to 59) there is a review of it.

- The characteristics of the big landlord:
- (a) The big landlord was proud and arrogant. He used to show off. He said:

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 (Verse: 34)
- (b) He was a materialist and thought that these blessings will never vanish.

 His wealth will remain forever and his garden will never be ruined.

 ﴿ مَاۤ اَكُنُ اَن تَعِيدَا هٰ اِللَّهُ اَن تَعِيدُا هٰ اِللَّهُ اَلَا اللَّهُ اَن تَعِيدُا هٰ اِللَّهُ اللَّهُ الل

- (c) He denied the life after death. He said: ﴿ وَمَا أَطُنُ السَّاعَةُ قَائِمَةُ ﴾ "I do not believe that the hour of Judgement will ever come." (Verse: 36)
- (d) He had suspicions about the life after death and false hopes had misled him. He thought: ﴿ وَلَكُنُ دُودُتُ إِلَىٰ رَبِيْ لَا جِدَنَّ خَيْرًا مِنْهَا مُنْقَلَّما ﴾ "Even if I am returned to my Lord, I will surely find even a better place than this." (Verse: 36)
- (e) He used to commit Shirk. When his garden was ruined, he had these words on his lips: ﴿ الْمُولِثُ مِنْ اللَّهُ مُنْ اللَّهُ اللّلَّا اللَّهُ الللللَّاللَّا اللَّهُ الللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللّ
- (f) Neither he himself nor anyone else could help him. (Perhaps, he also believed in false intercession.) ﴿ وَلَمْ تَكُنُ لَّهُ وَلَهُ مِنْ مُؤْتِ اللّٰهِ وَمَا كَانَ مُنْتَحِرًا ﴾ "He could neither find anyone to help him besides Allah, nor could he himself avert (that catastrophe)." (Verse: 43)
- Characteristics of the small landowner:
- (a) The small landowner was a monotheist. He said clearly:

 (Verse: 38)

 (a) The small landowner was a monotheist. He said clearly:
- (b) He was also a preacher. He used to enjoin the good and forbid the evil. He reproached the big landlord and said: "Why do you deny your Lord Who has favoured you? Why didn't you say when you entered your garden:

﴿مَاشَاءُ اللهُ لَا حُولَ وَلَا قُوَّةً وَالَّا بِاللَّهِ

'It is as Allah pleased; no one has power except Allah.'" (Verse:39)

- (c) He believed in the worldly law of punishment and reward and in the reward and punishment of the next world. (Verse: 40, 41)
- (d) He said to the big landlord: "Your garden is temporary. It can be ruined."

 When the garden was ruined, it was found that only Allah has the power to protect. Allah's reward and the requital is the best.
 - "It was then (that he realised) that the real protection comes only from Allah. His is the best reward and His is the best requital." (Verse: 44)
- There is a review in the sub paragraph (verses 45 to 49) that the worldly life is like the harvest. It was clarified that the children and the wealth are the ornaments of the worldly life.

The satanic attitude of the Makkan pagans has been criticised through the story of Adam and Iblees that they are making fun of teachings of Allah. They have been threatened with annihilation.

4- Verses: 60 to 82: The story of prophet Moosaa and Khidhr has been described in the fourth paragraph. It has been established that the decrease an increase of knowledge is also a test.

The purpose was to teach prophet Moosaa (pbuh) that Allah has given to some men like Khidhr more knowledge than him and that there is some hidden wisdom behind everything that Allah wills. Prophet Moosaa met Khidhr, a slave of Allah (probably an angel) at the confluence of the rivers.

There they found one of our servants." (Verse: 65)

Prophet Moosaa said: Can I accompany you so that I may learn the wisdom that has been given to you.

"May I follow you so that you may teach me "from that true knowledge which you have been taught." (Verse: 66)

Patience is essential for knowledge: Khidhr said: ﴿ وَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعُ مَنِي صَبُرًا ﴾ "You will not be able to be patient with me. How can you be patient about that which is not in your knowledge?" (Verse: 67)

Prophet Moosaa said: "I will be patient. You will not find me disobedient." Khidhr said: "You can accompany me on the condition that you will not ask any question until I tell you myself." Then they set forth.

"If you want to follow me, then do ﴿ وَإِنِ التَّبَعْتَىٰ فَلاَ تَسْمُلُنِي عَنْ شَيْئٍ حَتَّى أَمُرِثَ لَكَ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا ﴾ "If you want to follow me, then do not question me about anything until I tell you about it myself." (Verse: 70)

Some strange actions of Khidhr:

- (a) Khidhr made a hole in the boat. Prophet Moosaa objected that why did he do that? ﴿ فَانْعَلْقًا حَتَّى اِذَارَ كِمَا فِي السَّفِينَةِ خَرَقَهَا ﴾ "They set forth but when they embarked in a boat (to cross the river), he (Khidhr) made a hole in it." (Verse:71)
- (b) Khidhr killed a boy and prophet Moosaa abruptly said: "Why did you do that?" ﴿ وَالْقِياعُ اللَّهِ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهِ اللَّهُ اللَّا اللَّهُ الللَّهُ الللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللّل
- (c) Khidhr built a falling wall in spite of the fact that they were not welcomed as guests in that place. Prophet Moosaa said abruptly:

"Why did you do that?"

"There they found a wall on the point of falling ﴿ فَوَجَدَا فِيُهَا جِدَارًا يُرِيدُانَ يَنْقَضَّ فَأَقَامَهُ ﴾ down, so he restored it."

"This is the parting between you and me." ﴿ هٰذَا فِرَاقَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْدِك ﴾ "Khidhr said

Revelation of the wisdom behind the strange actions of Khidhr:

- (a) The boat belonged to some poor fishermen. The oppressive king snatched the boats which were perfect. I made a hole in it so that the king may not snatch it. (Verse: 79)
- (b) The parents of the boy were believers. It was expected that he will annoy them with his rebellion and infidelity. I have killed him so that Allah may give them better children.
- (c) There is the treasure of the two orphans under the wall whose father was a righteous person. I have erected the wall so that they may get their treasure when they grow up. It is the Mercy of Allah. I did not do anything with my own will or authority. This is the interpretation of the actions on which you could not be patient. (Verse: 82)
- 5- Verses: 83 to 102: The story of Zul-Qarnain has been described in the fifth paragraph. It has been established that the power is a test as well. Zul-Qarnain was an ideal ruler.
- (a) Zul-Qarnain was given the power. ﴿مَكْنَالُهُ فِي الْرَرْضِ "We established his power in the land." (Verse: 84)
- (b) He was provided with all kinds of resources. ﴿ وَٱتَيُنَهُ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْعَ سَبَبًا ﴾ "We gave him all kinds of ways and means." (Verse: 84)
- (c) He was a preacher. He invited his subjects towards Tawheed. He used his power and authority for propagation of Islam. He said that he will give punishment to the wrong-doers in this world; then Allah will give them severer punishment in the hereafter. He said: ﴿

 ﴿ قَالَ اَمَّا مُنْ ظُلُمٌ فَسَوُفَ نُعَلِّبُهُ أَنُم يُورُول رَبِّهِ فَيُعَلِّبُهُ عَلَاكًا لِكُول وَ الله عَلَا الله وَ الله عَلَا الله وَ الله وَالله وَ الله وَ الله وَالله وَالله
 - People were told that the righteous believers will be given the best reward.

 They will be provided with ease. ﴿ وَٱلْمَامُنُ الْمَنْ الْمُولِكُ اللَّهُ عَلَى اللَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى اللَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى اللَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللّلَّهُ اللَّهُ الل
- (d) He protected the oppressed nation from the attacks of Yaajooj and Maajooj (Gog and Magog).
- (e) He had no greed for wealth. He built the dam for them free of cost and without taking any kind of tax from them. That nation wanted to pay him the cost of building the dam which he refused saying:

- "That which my Lord has granted me is more than enough." (Verse: 95) After the construction of the dam, the people of Yaajooj and Maajooj could neither break through the wall nor climb over it. (Verse: 97)
- (f) Zul-Qarnain thanked Allah at the completion of the dam. He was a humble and grateful slave of Allah. ﴿وَعَالَ هَنَا وَحَدَّ اللهِ الل
- (g) He was afraid of the punishment of the Day of Judgement. He believed that even the strongest thing of the universe is temporary. He said:
 ﴿ الْمُعَالِمُونَا اللَّهُ الللَّهُ اللَّهُ الل
- (h) He had the wisdom and the technology but did not have enough labour; therefore, he took help from the local people. There is a lesson in the construction of this strong wall and dam that the mixture of physical, material and spiritual resources with the mental, intellectual and rational resources is essential for saving yourselves from the evil of the unbelievers.
- 6- Verses: 103 to 110: The sixth and last paragraph is the conclusion and the summary. The materialism has been refuted in it.

The vain hopes of those who are involved in the worldly life and its activities, have been refuted. (Verse: 104) They are the people who deny the meeting with their Lord and make fun of Allah's revelations and His messengers. Their abode is Hell. On the contrary, those who believe and do righteous deeds have been given the good news of Paradise. (Verse: 108)

In the last verse, the summary of the invitation of Tawheed, prophet-hood and life hereafter has been presented. Whoever believes that Allah is the only God, believes that Muhammad (pbuh) is a man and a messenger of Allah and believes in the meeting with his Lord; he must avoid the Shirk in worship and do good deeds. (Verse: 110)

Central subject

The purpose of variegation of all the things that exist on earth and the wisdom behind it is the test and trial of deeds. Whether it is the test of steadfastness on Tawheed, or the test of abundance of wealth, popularity and manpower, or the test of wealth and children or the test of power and authority; there is some kind of wisdom behind all these tests. Man should avoid the love of this world and material things; accept the Quranic invitation of Tawheed and life hereafter and should be eager to do good deeds.