



A STORY TO READ ALOUD

The Story of Ashab al-Kahf

أصحاب الكهف

Young believers whom Allah kept asleep and safe for long years.

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The Story of Ashab al-Kahf

“Indeed, they were youths who believed in their Lord, and We increased them in guidance.”

Surah al-Kahf · 18:13

Come with me. Today, we're going on a journey... far, far away... and long, long ago.

Picture this. A young man steps out of a cave, high on a mountainside, blinking in the bright morning sun. He is only going down to the city to buy some bread. He holds a single silver coin in his hand.

But when he reaches the city... nothing looks right. The walls are taller. The trees are older. The people wear strange clothes... and speak in a strange, old way. And when he holds out his little coin to pay... the shopkeeper's eyes go wide... as if he has seen a ghost.

How long was that young man really asleep in his cave? A day? A week? Something far, far stranger? Hold on to that question, little one... because the answer is one of the most amazing things Allah has ever told us.

To understand it, our story has to begin somewhere else completely, years before that morning, in a proud city that had forgotten its Lord. This is the story of Ashab al-Kahf... the People of the Cave.

Long, long ago... in a great city... there lived a small group of young men.

They were friends. They were brave. And they were believers.

They believed in one Allah. The Lord of the heavens and the earth. The One who made the stars... and the trees... and them.

But the city around them did not believe.

The king of that city had built statues of stone. He told his people to bow down to them. He told them these stones could hear their prayers.

The young men knew this was not true.

A stone cannot hear. A stone cannot answer. Only Allah hears... and only Allah answers.

But to say this... in that city... was dangerous.

The king found out about the young men. He brought them before his throne.

He told them to bow to the statues.

The young men stood very still.

And then... they spoke.

Our Lord... is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. We will never call upon any god besides Him.

The king grew angry. The court grew tense.

The young men knew what could happen next.

So they made a quiet plan.

They would leave the city. They would go where they could pray to Allah without fear. They would put their trust in their Lord... and walk.



The Choice

That night... when the city was sleeping... they slipped quietly away.

Through the gates. Past the gardens. Out into the hills.

A small group of friends... walking under a wide starry sky... toward a place only Allah knew.

They walked through the night. And into the morning.

The hills rose around them. Cool wind moved across the rocks. Their feet grew tired.

A loyal dog had followed them out of the city.

Soft eyes. Quiet steps. Padding along beside them. As if he had decided he belonged with the believers.

After a long time... they came to a hidden cave. High in the side of a mountain. Deep. Cool. Sheltered from the sun.

They looked at one another. And they understood.

This was the place.

They stepped inside.

The cave was quiet. Stone walls. Soft sand on the floor. The cool breath of the mountain.

And before they lay down to rest... they raised their hands.

And they made a beautiful dua. The Qur'an gives us their words.

Our Lord... grant us mercy from Yourself... and prepare for us... from our affair... right guidance.

A simple dua. From a tired heart. To the One who hears every whisper.

They lay down on the cool sand. The loyal dog stretched out at the mouth of the cave... his head resting on his paws... watching over them.

Their breathing slowed.

The cave grew quiet.

And one by one... they slept.

They thought they would rest for a few hours. Maybe a day.



Into the Cave

But Allah... had a different plan.

Outside the cave... the sun rose. And set. And rose again.

The Qur'an tells us... Allah caused the sun to move past their cave. Slanting in from one side at sunrise. Slipping past the other at sunset.

The light never touched them. The heat never reached them.

Allah turned them gently... from one side to the other... so that their bodies would rest. So that they would not grow stiff. So that they would be... safe.

Days passed. Then weeks. Then years.

The seasons changed. Spring rains came. Summer winds. Autumn leaves. Winter snow.

The cave stayed cool and quiet.

The young men slept.

The loyal dog slept too. His head still on his paws. Still at the cave's mouth. Still watching... in his own way.

Outside... the world kept moving.

The king who had wanted to harm them... grew old... and was forgotten.

The city that had bowed to stones... slowly... slowly... began to change.

People began to remember Allah. The truth crept back. New generations were born... who had never seen a stone idol.

And still... in their quiet cave... the young men slept.

How long, little one?

The Qur'an tells us exactly.

And they remained in their cave... three hundred years... and nine more.

Three hundred years.

And nine more.

Subhan'Allah.



The Long Sleep

To us... three hundred years feels like forever. Kingdoms rise and fall. Cities are built. Languages change. Whole peoples are born... live... and pass away.

But to Allah... three hundred years is nothing. He counts time differently than we do.

He held those young men... in His care... across all of it.

Like a mother... watching over a sleeping child... for one quiet night.

And then... one morning...

A soft golden light touched the mouth of the cave.

The young men stirred.

One of them sat up slowly. He blinked. He looked around at his sleeping friends. He looked at the stone walls.

He felt strange. As if he had slept very deeply. Very long.

The others began to wake. Stretching. Rubbing their eyes.

One of them spoke quietly.

How long... have we been here?

They thought about it. The light at the cave's mouth. The way their bodies felt.

Another answered.

A day... or part of a day.

But none of them was sure.

So they said the wisest thing anyone can say... when they do not know.

Your Lord... knows best... how long we have remained.

They were hungry. They had not eaten in... well... they thought it was just one day.

So they made a plan.

One of them would take a silver coin. He would walk down to the city. He would buy them some food.

But quietly. Carefully. So no one would notice him.



The Awakening

They still thought the king was looking for them. They still thought the city was as dangerous as it had been... yesterday.

The young man took the coin. He stepped out of the cave.

And the morning sun... met him.

He walked down the mountain.

The path looked... different.

The trees were different. Bigger. Older. In strange new places.

He came to the edge of the city.

And he stopped.

The city was not the city he had left.

The walls were different. The buildings were taller. The clothes people wore were strange to his eyes.

He listened. The language people spoke was familiar... but the words sounded older. Or maybe... newer.

His heart began to beat faster.

He kept walking. He found a market. He picked out some bread. He held out his silver coin to pay.

The shopkeeper looked at the coin.

His eyes went wide.

He had never seen a coin like that. Not in his lifetime. Not in his father's lifetime. Not in his grandfather's lifetime.

This coin was from the time of an old, old king. A king who had ruled... three hundred years ago.

A small crowd began to gather.

People asked the young man, gently... where are you from? Whose son are you?

He told them his name. He told them his father's name. He told them the king he had run from.

The crowd grew very quiet.

Because the people of this new city knew that name. They knew that king.



The Coin and the City

But not from yesterday.

From their oldest, oldest stories.

The truth slowly settled over the young man.

He had been gone... not one day.

He had been gone... three hundred years.

The people of the city had become believers. The stone idols were long gone. The world had changed.

And Allah had kept these young men safe... through all of it.

The people followed him back to the cave.

They wanted to see his friends. They wanted to honor them. They wanted to know... that Allah's promise of resurrection... was true.

Because if Allah could keep a sleeping body safe for three hundred years... then surely... He could wake us all... on the Day He has promised.

The Qur'an does not tell us exactly how many young men there were. Some people argued about it. Three? Five? Seven?

But Allah teaches us a beautiful lesson here.

He says... My Lord... is most knowing of their number.

We do not need to know everything.

We only need to know... that Allah knows.

And as for the loyal dog at the cave's mouth?

Allah honored him too. He is mentioned in the Qur'an, alongside the believers. Forever.

And now... slowly... we leave that quiet cave behind... and travel back home. To right here. Right now.

But carry the People of the Cave with you, wherever you go. Just as Allah was with Prophet Yusuf, alayhi salaam, in the dark of the well... and with Prophet Yunus, alayhi salaam, in the deep of the whale... so He was with these young men in the cool of the cave. When the whole world around them forgot Allah, they held on to Him, and He held on to them, across three hundred years and more. You never have to know everything, little one. You only need to know that Allah knows... and that He always keeps His promise.

So carry the dua of the People of the Cave with you, the very words they whispered before they slept. It means... our Lord, send down Your mercy upon us, and set our path aright.

Rabbanā ātinā min ladunka raḥmatan wa hayyi' lanā min amrinā rashadā.

Talk about it

Read a question aloud and let your child answer before you show the choices. Then ask: what would you have done?

1. In Ashab al-Kahf's story, where did the friends hide?

- a. In a mountain cave
- b. In a deep well
- c. In a big boat

2. In Ashab al-Kahf's story, why did the friends leave?

- a. To pray to Allah
- b. To find treasure
- c. To sell their sheep

3. In Ashab al-Kahf's story, what animal came along?

- a. A loyal dog
- b. A she-camel
- c. A hoopoe bird

4. In Ashab al-Kahf's story, what did the king order?

- a. Bow to stone idols
- b. Pay a heavy tax
- c. Leave the city

5. In Ashab al-Kahf's story, how long did they sleep?

- a. Three hundred years
- b. Three hundred days
- c. Three hundred nights

6. In Ashab al-Kahf's story, what did the young man carry?

- a. A silver coin
- b. A loaf of bread
- c. A clay lamp

Answers: 1a, 2a, 3a, 4a, 5a, 6a



Hear this story

Read it again online, or listen to it narrated in the Sukun Kids app.

sukunkids.app/stories/kauf

Sukun Kids: stories of the prophets for Muslim children, narrated for bedtime.

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