

# Dhu'l Qarnayn and the muddy spring: New evidence (shorter version)

By Martin Taverille

[737hope@gmail.com](mailto:737hope@gmail.com)

<http://quranspotlight.wordpress.com>

The much more detailed, [full version of this article](#) can be found on the website. Most of the points in this summary are expanded upon, and it covers less important arguments, counter-arguments, quotations, and sections omitted for brevity in this version. Both versions are available as pdf files on the website.

Copyright for this work is held by Martin Taverille

Permission is granted to copy, distribute and/or modify this document under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution CC BY license 3.0

A copy of the license can be found at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/>

First published 6 February 2011

Last updated 3 February 2012

## Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i> .....	2
<i>First interpretation: He reached the west and east</i> .....	3
<i>Second interpretation: He reached the time of sunset and sunrise or he reached [a place at] those times</i> .....	4
<i>Third interpretation: He reached the places where the sun sets and rises</i> .....	5
<i>What do Qur'an 18:86 and 18:90 say happened next?</i> .....	10
<i>Is the story told from Dhu'l Qarnayn's point of view?</i> .....	12
<i>Is the story just a metaphor or fable?</i> .....	13
<i>Conclusion</i> .....	14
<i>Qur'an 18:83-101 for reference</i> .....	14
<i>Endnotes and references</i> .....	15

## Introduction

Deep into the 18th chapter of the Holy Qur'an can be found a pair of verses that have given rise to no small controversy. Indeed, a controversial claim that appears to undermine its very foundation – a claim that according to the Qur'an, there are specific places where the sun actually sets and rises, and worse, that the sun sets in a muddy spring. This claim is based on two verses within the Dhu'l Qarnayn episode in Qur'an 18:83-101. This passage says that Allah empowered a person called Dhu'l Qarnayn (which translates as possessor of the two horns) and gave him means or ways to all things. It narrates that he used these to go on three journeys to strange places with strange inhabitants, and finishes with him making a prophecy about the role of some of these people in the end-times. A translation and transliteration of the passage appear at the end of this article for reference.

The two controversial verses concern the first and second of Dhu'l Qarnayn's three journeys:

Until, when he reached the setting of the sun, he found it set in a spring of murky water: Near it he found a People: We said: "O Zul-qarnain! (thou hast authority,) either to punish them, or to treat them with kindness."

*Hatta itha balagha maghriba alshshamsi wjadaha taghrubu fee AAaynin hami-atin wawajada AAindaha qawman qulna ya tha alqarnayni immā an tuAAaththiba wa-immā an tattakhitha feehim husnān*

Qur'an 18:86

Until, when he came to the rising of the sun, he found it rising on a people for whom We had provided no covering protection against the sun.

*Hatta itha balagha maṭliAAa alshshamsi wjadaha taṭluAAu AAala qawmin lam najAAal lahum min dooniha sitran*

Qur'an 18:90

While much has been written about the meaning of these verses, I have found many new, important arguments, and much more evidence that can be used to shed light on this matter. I hope they will leave you in no reasonable doubt about the intended meaning of these verses.

In 18:86, Dhu'l Qarnayn travels until he reaches maghriba alshshamsi (مَغْرِبَ الشَّمْسِ), and in 18:90, he travels until he reaches maṭliAAa alshshamsi (مَطْلِعَ الشَّمْسِ). Three possible interpretations of the Arabic words maghriba alshshamsi in 18:86 and maṭliAAa alshshamsi in 18:90 have been claimed:

- The west and the east
- The time when the sun sets and the time when the sun rises
- The place where the sun sets and the place where the sun rises

First we will examine each of these interpretations in context to identify the true meaning of those words. Then we will look at what these two verses say happened when Dhu'l Qarnayn arrived and at broader questions concerning how this passage was meant to be understood.

### Note on translations and transliterations

Unless otherwise stated, the original 1934 translation of Abdullah Yusuf Ali<sup>1</sup> is used for quotations from the Qur'an. Word for word translations are those used on <http://corpus.Quran.com/>. However, these are used only to explain in English the arguments in this article, which are founded on analysis of the Arabic words of the Qur'an.

All transliterations of the Arabic Qur'an into Latin characters are from the free, widely used Muslimnet transliteration used by many popular websites such as [www.muslimaccess.com](http://www.muslimaccess.com), which has a transliteration table,<sup>2</sup> and [www.islamicity.com](http://www.islamicity.com).

## First interpretation: He reached the west and east

Al maghrib, literally meaning either “the setting place” or “the setting time” (of the sun), is a common Arabic idiom for the west, used in this way elsewhere in the Qur’an and hadith. It is the first word in the phrase maghriba alshshamsi in 18:86 (alshshamsi means “of the sun”). There are at least four serious weaknesses with the interpretation of 18:86 and 18:90 that Dhu’l Qarnayn reached the west and east, but not literal setting and rising places of the sun:

### Was alshshams ever used with al maghrib to mean the west?

When we look at how maghrib is used elsewhere in the Qur’an to mean west (e.g. 2:115, 2:177, 43:38), we see that it is always used as a stand-alone word without alshshams (“the sun”), in contrast to 18:86. Why is alshshamsi (“of the sun”) added in 18:86 when it is not in the other instances if not to emphasise a literal meaning? Indeed, alshshams is not even used with maghrib when it means the west anywhere in the 6 major Sunni hadith collections.<sup>3</sup>

Lane’s Lexicon of classical Arabic, long regarded as authoritative and drawing on many classical Arabic dictionaries and sources, says that al maghrib can signify the west, and also the time of sunset, but originally signified the place (or point) of sunset, which it says is the meaning when alshshamsi is added.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, this is what these words are used to mean elsewhere, as we shall see.

### Was al maṭliAA ever used to mean the east?

It gets even worse when we look at 18:90. Al maṭliAA means “the rising place” or “the rising time” (of the sun) and is the first word in the phrase maṭliAAa alshshamsi in 18:90. MaṭliAA, with or without alshshams, is not used to mean east anywhere else in the Qur’an, nor anywhere in the 6 major Sunni hadith collections.<sup>5</sup> The verb ṭalaAAa (“to rise”), from which it is derived, is not used in this connection either.

If verse 18:90 was about the east, then al mashriq or al sharq (from the same root) would likely have been used, as is always the case elsewhere when the Qur’an mentions the east (for aesthetic reasons, we would then also probably replace taṭluAAu with tashruqu in 18:90 – both mean “it rising”). Outside 18:86, every verse in the Qur’an that uses maghrib to mean west also uses mashriq to mean east. Furthermore, Lane’s Lexicon does not give the slightest indication that maṭliAA<sup>6</sup> nor related words like ṭalaAAa<sup>7</sup> can be used in an idiom meaning the east.

### What does wajadaha (“he found it”) refer to?

The next words after maghriba alshshamsi in 18:86 are wajadaha taghrubu, meaning “he found it setting”. Right after maṭliAAa alshshamsi in 18:90 we have the words wajadaha taṭluAAu, meaning “he found it rising”.

In both cases, wajadaha (وَجَدَهَا) means “he found it” (we can argue exactly what this verb means later). That “it”, the feminine “-ha” suffix to wajada, refers to the previous word, the sun, as the object of the verb<sup>8</sup>. Thus, the words mean “he found the sun setting” and “he found the sun rising”. However, in the west and east interpretation the sun has only been mentioned as one part of an idiom for the west or the east, yet wajadaha clearly refers back to it as a literal object. The west and east interpretation would only make sense if the sun had also been mentioned explicitly as a literal entity. It would probably omit alshshamsi in both verses, and then say, “wajada alshshamsa taghrubu...” (“he found the sun setting...”), and “wajada alshshamsa taṭluAAu...” (“he found the sun rising...”).

Better still, these verses would be worded completely differently. Even if one argues that there is some poetic reason to describe the west and east using the words we have in 18:86 and 18:90, it would be an extraordinarily poor choice of words since people reasonably understood them to be about the literal setting and rising places of the sun, as we shall see. How would we know what anything in the Qur’an means if it uses words in a unique or rare way that commonly (and when the context suggests) mean something else?

## Do the interpretations of classical commentators help?

There were certainly classical commentators in later centuries that claimed that the verses just mean that Dhu'l Qarnayn reached the west and east. However, as pointed out by S. Shamoun and J. Katz,<sup>9</sup> when we look at their reasoning, it is based not on narrated traditions or linguistic or contextual analysis, but rather on their knowledge that the obvious interpretation describes something that is impossible.

This knowledge was unknown to the Arabs until Ptolemy's *almagest* was translated in the 8th century CE after the Qur'an was completed.<sup>10 11</sup> The pre-Islamic Arabs had a simple folk astronomy based on the appearance of the sky.<sup>12 13</sup> We shall see that many contemporary Muslim and non-Muslim sources demonstrate that in the early Islamic era before the translation and study of Indian and Greek astronomy under the Abbasid Caliphate, there was a widespread popular belief in the region that the world is flat and that the sun had literal rising and setting places.

## Second interpretation: He reached the time of sunset and sunrise or he reached [a place at] those times

Maghrib is not used to mean the time of sunset anywhere in the Qur'an, but outside the Qur'an and in the hadith, al maghrib is the name given to the prayer that takes place at the time of sunset and is often used to mean that time. MaṭliAA appears once in the Qur'an meaning the rising time: Verse 97:5 says, "...hatta maṭlaAAi alfajri" ("...until the rise of morn"). However, there are many weaknesses with this modern interpretation for 18:86 and 18:90:

### Verses 18:92-93 use exactly the same introductory phrase as 18:85-86 and 18:89-90:

*Thumma atbaAAa sababan hatta itha balagha...*

Then followed he (another) way, until when he reached...

The next words are "bayna alssaddayni" ("between two mountains"). Here it cannot mean reaching a time, but each of the three journeys of Dhu'l Qarnayn begins with this phrase. Surely the exact same phrase would not be used to say that he reached a time in the first two instances, but reached a location in the third.

The word balagha (بَلَغَ), which means "he reached", precedes maghriba alshshamsi in 18:86 and maṭliAAa alshshamsi in 18:90. When we look elsewhere in the Qur'an, balagha is not used to describe the time that a person is experiencing in terms of the time when an external event occurs (such as sunset). It is only used in a time sense for a personal milestone (such as reaching marriageable age) or a personal duration (reaching an age measured in years that have passed since the person's birth). Only the widows could be said to reach their term in 2:231-232. No one other than Pharaoh's people could be said to reach the term mentioned in 7:135.

Nowhere else in the Qur'an nor in the 6 major Sunni hadith collections<sup>14</sup> is there a phrase where alshshams or maghrib or maṭliAA are used with balagha to describe reaching a time. Different wording is used elsewhere in the Quran to mean the time of sunset and sunrise (using gharaba / talaAAa 18:17; 50:39; 20:130; using ashraqa 15:73; 26:60; 38:18). Why would 18:86 and 18:90 use a different, misleading pair of phrases?

In any case, why would Dhu'l Qarnayn need to follow a sababan ("way / means / road") given by Allah (18:84) to reach the times of sunset and sunrise (similar points are made by P. Newton<sup>15</sup> and Cornelius<sup>16</sup>) and why then describe what he found the sun to be doing?

Dr. Zakir Naik claims that the relevant words mean “until when he reached at the time of sunset, he found it...”.<sup>17</sup> The verb *balagha* (“he reached”) is transitive when it means to reach and always has an explicit object elsewhere in the Qur’an, but in Dr. Naik’s reading, *balagha* is used as an intransitive verb or the thing reached is not mentioned after the verb. It is allowed in Arabic for the object (*maf’ul bihi*) of a transitive verb to be omitted (*mahdhuf*), but only if the object has been mentioned earlier, since otherwise the sentence would make no sense.<sup>18</sup> If Dr. Naik is right, we don’t know what Dhu’l Qarnayn reached and the sentence would make no sense.

*Maghriba* and *matliAAa* have the accusative case ending (the “a” suffix, an Arabic *fatha*), which you’d expect if they are the objects of the verb *balagha*. If *maghriba alshshamsi* and *matliAAa alshshamsi* are not the things reached, they would interrupt the flow of the sentence before it continues with the *wajadaha* (“he found it...”) phrases, which make any explicit mention of the time of day redundant. It would all be a very awkward and misleading way to phrase such a meaning. Hassan Radwan, who taught Qur’anic Arabic for many years, describes Dr. Naik’s claim as “nonsense”.<sup>19</sup>

### **Third interpretation: He reached the places where the sun sets and rises**

There is a large amount of strong evidence supporting this interpretation. Objections will also be discussed.

#### **Contextual issues**

This interpretation explains the purpose of the second phrase in verse 18:84 (“We gave him the ways and the means to all ends”) because reaching the setting and rising places of the sun would be an extraordinary feat and the desire to relate it to Allah is understandable.

Lane’s Lexicon indicates that a *sabab* (way/means/road in 18:84, 85, 89 and 92) is a means to an end:

*A thing (S, M, Msb, K) of any kind (S, Msb, K) by means of which one attains, reaches or gains access to another thing*<sup>20</sup>

Clearly, the setting place of the sun could be such an end, but reaching the time of sunset makes no sense as an end to which this *sabab* is a means given by Allah in 18:84.

Mentioning that Dhu’l Qarnayn found the sun setting in a spring also makes sense if he was close enough to see the place where it sets. Otherwise it could have just said that he found a people by a spring without mentioning the sun. Similarly, mentioning the people in 18:90 only in terms of how the sun affects them fits the rising place interpretation perfectly.

#### **How the relevant words were used in the hadith**

We can use the hadith quoted below simply as contemporary evidence of beliefs (to judge the likelihood that Muhammad could have said and believed such things) and how Arabic words and phrases were used and understood. The first two hadith below that refer to the setting or rising place of the sun use *maghrib* or *matliAA* followed by a possessive suffix in reference to *alshshamsu*, “the sun”, mentioned earlier in those hadith. Therefore they effectively say *maghriba alshshamsi* and *matliAAa alshshamsi*.

There are numerous hadith relating to the end of the world that use these phrases. See for example:

*...taṭluAAa alshshamsu min maghribiha...*  
...the sun rises from the place of its setting...

Sahih Muslim Book 1, Number 294<sup>21</sup>

This next hadith has, even more significantly:

...Do you know where the sun goes? [...] Rise up and go to the place whence you came, and it goes back and continues emerging out from its rising place [...] Rise up and emerge out from the place of your setting, and it will rise from the place of its setting...

Sahih Muslim (book 1, no. 297) <sup>22</sup>

Here, “mina maṭliAAihā” is translated as “from its rising place”, “mina maghribiki” as “from the place of your setting” (so the sun is commanded to go somewhere – it cannot be claimed that this is an idiomatic way of commanding the Earth to rotate), and “mina maghribihā” as “from the place of its setting”, all in reference to alshshamsu, “the sun”.

We have examples of maṭliAAa alshshamsi meaning the rising-place of the sun in *Sahih Muslim* Book 1, Number 91 <sup>23</sup> (see section 1.3 in the full version of this article for a discussion of it) and in *Sunan Al-Nasa-I*, which has the phrase:

...qala bilalun ana fastaqbala maṭliAAa alshshamsi...<sup>24</sup>

...Bilal said, “I will”. So he faced the rising-place of the sun...”

(My translation since none is available online<sup>25</sup>)

It describes how Bilal volunteered to stay up to make sure the dawn prayer was not missed. He faced the rising place of the sun, but it only awakened them when it hit their ears and is similar to *Sahih Muslim* Book 004, Number 1448.<sup>26</sup>

Another example is found in a hadith in *Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal*, which says that faith in Allah alone, then jihad, then hajj are as preferable to other work as the distance between the rising place of the sun to the setting place of it (“kama bayna maṭlaAAi alshshamsi ila maghribiha”).<sup>27</sup>

There are numerous examples of balagha meaning to reach a location in the Qur’an and the hadith. Of most importance are verses 18:93 (discussed above) and the similar example in 18:60 – 61, in a passage immediately preceding that concerning Dhu’l Qarnayn.

### **Contemporary beliefs and legends show how the words would be and were understood**

S. Shamoun quotes the following hadith, which is classified as Sahih (authentic), from Sunan Abu Dawud, book XXV - *Kitab Al-Ahruf Wa Al-Qira’at* (Book of Dialects and Readings Of The Qur’an):

Abu Dharr said: I was sitting behind the Apostle of Allah who was riding a donkey while the sun was setting. He asked: Do you know where this sets? I replied: Allah and his Apostle know best. He said: It sets in a spring of warm water.<sup>28</sup> [the reference includes a link to the Arabic]

Even if one doubts that this is an authentic report about Muhammad, it is certainly further evidence that early Muslims understood 18:86 to mean a literal setting place. The possibility that Muhammad ever taught a different interpretation thus further diminishes.

There are also numerous sahih hadith that state that the sun rises and sets between the horns of Satan, for example: *Sahih Muslim* Book 4, Number 1807<sup>29</sup> and *Sahih Muslim* Book 4, Number 1812.<sup>30</sup> *Sahih Muslim* Book 41, Number 6904<sup>31</sup> demonstrates a flat Earth belief, and *Sahih Bukhari* Volume 4, Book 53, Number 353<sup>32</sup> that the sun’s movement makes it set.

As S. Shamoun and J. Katz point out<sup>33</sup>, **al-Tabari (839-923 CE) gives a lengthy hadith on this topic in the first volume of his *History of the Prophets and Kings***. It claims that Ibn ‘Abbas gave an account of what Muhammad said about the sun and moon and the setting and rising places into and from 360 springs where the sky meets the Earth (I have seen the

full passage in the book they quote from).<sup>34</sup> Whether or not Muhammad said the things attributed to him here or said anything similar, this hadith certainly demonstrates a belief in literal rising and setting places among the early Muslims. The full version of this article quotes this hadith at length.

In volume 5 of the same work, al-Tabari quotes some verse by a Yemeni king, Tubba':

Dhu al-Qarnayn before me submitted himself [to God], a king to whom the other kings became humble and thronged [his court]. He reigned over the Eastern and Western lands, yet sought the means of knowledge from a wise, rightly guided scholar. He witnessed the setting of the sun in its resting place into a pool of black and foetid slime.<sup>35</sup>

Shamoun and Katz also quote al-Tabari's commentary (tafsir) on the Qur'an, in which he reports varying opinions concerning whether the spring was muddy or hot at the beginning of his commentary on 18:86. Al-Tabari continues the same passage giving hadith concerning the different interpretations of hamiatin. He even gives some claimed to be from Ibn 'Abbas such as:

I heard Sa'id bin Jubair say Ibn 'Abbas had read it as "in a spring hamiatin". He says, "the sun sets in black mud".  
(my translation since none is available online<sup>36</sup>)

Shamoun also quotes from al-Baydawi's commentary on the Qur'an, *The Secrets of Revelation and The Secrets of Interpretation (Asrar ut-tanzil wa Asrar ut-ta'wil; 13<sup>th</sup> century CE)*, which has the following concerning 18:86 (although in the previous sentence al-Baydawi gives his own view that perhaps Dhu'l Qarnayn went to the ocean coast and only saw it like the sun set in a spring):

It was said that Ibn 'Abbas found Mu'awiya reading it (as) hot. He told him, 'It is muddy.' Mu'awiya sent to Ka'b al-Ahbar and asked him, 'Where does the sun set?' He said in water and mud and there were some people. So he agreed with the statement of Ibn al-'Abbas.  
[The translation of the last two sentences is a loose summary of the rest of the commentary on 18:86. The first sentence is literally: "How do you find the sun setting?" He said, "In water and clay also I find in the Torah"]<sup>37</sup>

Shamoun also quotes the same work of al-Baydawi in which he gives this among various interpretations for 36:38:

For it has a cycle of three hundred and sixty sunrises and sunsets; it rises every morning from its resting-place and sets in a setting place, only to return to them the following year.<sup>38</sup>

Do we find the story outside of Muslim writings? It has been known since 1890 thanks to Theodore Nöldeke that **there is a very close similarity between the account in the Qur'an of Dhu'l Qarnayn and the Alexander Legend**. This was written in Syriac, probably around 630 CE, but incorporates older traditions such as that of the iron gate built by Alexander dating to at least the time of the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus in the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE<sup>39</sup> and journeys to the rising and setting place of the sun from the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.<sup>40</sup>

It is part of a larger collection of legends about Alexander the Great known as the *Alexander Romance*. The Alexander Legend begins with Alexander expressing his desire to explore the ends of the Earth. It then has Alexander saying that God has given him horns on his head and he asks for power over other kingdoms. After collecting seven thousand iron and brass workers from Egypt, he goes to the fetid sea at the end of the Earth. He makes some evildoers go to the shore of the fetid sea, and they die. He and his men go to the window of heaven into which the sun sets between the fetid sea and a bright sea (although it does not say that the sun actually sets into this sea). The place where the sun rises is over the sea and the people who live there must flee from it and hide in the sea. The story then describes how

Alexander<sup>41</sup> prostrates before God and travels through the heavens at night to the place where the sun rises. He then visits some mountains and the sources of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. Next it has Alexander coming to some people who tell him about the Huns within the Northern mountains (Gog, Magog and other kings are listed). He offers to build an iron and brass gate to close up the breach between the mountains, does so and prophesises that God will destroy the gate at the end of the world and the Huns will go forth through it. Next there is a battle with the Persians and their allies after they were told of his gate. It then ends with Alexander worshipping in Jerusalem and his death in Alexandria.<sup>42</sup>

Whatever the historical relationship between these texts and whether or not Dhu'l Qarnayn is meant to be Alexander the Great, it is clear from the legend that the setting and rising places interpretation of 18:86 and 18:90 was entirely compatible with contemporary beliefs in the region. Indeed, verse 18:83 tells us that what follows was supposed to relate to an already known story ("They ask thee concerning Zul-qarnain").

Very significantly, **stories influenced by the Alexander legends appear in Arabic poetry shortly before and during the time of Muhammad.** As Richard Stoneman says, "the poet Imru' l-Qays (Diwan 158) referred to a Yemeni hero who undertook a similar campaign against Gog and Magog. [...] In addition, the pre-Islamic poet al-'Asha and the contemporary of Muhammad Hassan ibn Thabit both composed verses referring to the conquest of Gog and Magog and the furthest east by Dhu 'l-Qarnayn."<sup>43</sup>

Those lines by Imru' l-Qays (died c. 540 CE) clearly mention the literal rising of the sun:

Have I not told you that destiny slays by guile,  
A slayer most treacherous indeed, it consumes men's sons.  
It banished Dhū Riyāsh from lordly citadels,  
When he had ruled the lowlands and the mountains.  
He was a valiant king; by revelation he sundered the horizons.  
He drove his vanguards to their eastern edges,  
And, where the sun climbs, barred the hills to Gog and Magog.<sup>44</sup>

The lines composed by Hāssan b. Thābit, a poet who for a time was employed by Muhammad himself, appropriate elements of the Alexander Legend to a king in the line of Himyar (called Tubba' by the Muslims):

Ours the realm of Dhu 'l-Qarnayn the glorious,  
Realm like his was never won by mortal king.  
Followed he the sun to view its setting  
When it sank into the sombre ocean-spring;  
Up he clomb to see it rise at morning,  
From within its mansion when the East it fired;  
All day long the horizons led him onward,  
All night through he watched the stars and never tired.  
Then of iron and of liquid metal  
He prepared a rampart not to be o'erpassed,  
Gog and Magog there he threw in prison  
Till on Judgement Day they shall awake at last<sup>45</sup>

As we can see, a literal setting in a spring is mentioned (in the Arabic those lines are literally, "he followed the sun nearby its sunset to observe it in its spring while lowly"<sup>46</sup>). We only have these poems from Islamic sources, so it is possible that they were composed or edited after Muhammad's death. Even if that is so, they still demonstrate how the story was understood in the early Islamic era.

The above hadith, tafsir (commentaries), legends and poetry, are strong circumstantial evidence that the literal setting of the sun in a spring and a literal rising of the sun are the intended meanings in the Qur'an's version of the same story. Otherwise there would surely be some sign of an alternative interpretation among these early sources given that there was clearly great interest in the story, and Muhammad would have corrected any

misunderstanding when people asked him about it. If we suppose that even Muhammad himself misunderstood Allah's words, then how could an all-powerful God have made such a poor choice of words if this is not the intended meaning? He would have known about the popular legend and how Arabic words and phrases were used and understood by the people, yet would have chosen wording that reinforced people's false notions about this myth and the sun. The Alexander Legend, the poetry, and the phrase "They ask thee concerning Zul-qarnain" in 18:83 suggest this was a popular belief and need not have seemed unbelievable to Muhammad. The legend, or an earlier version of the same story, provides an obvious potential source for the Quranic version.

### Counter-arguments

1). Could *maghriba alshshamsi* be the area of land on the horizon behind which the sun disappears at sunset and *maṭliAAa alshshamsi* be the place on the horizon that the sun rises from behind? The first problem with that explanation is that there are no single places on the spherical Earth behind which the sun seems to set and rise, so they would be moving targets for Dhu'l Qarnayn. Another problem is that if *maghriba* means the disappearing place or the place where the sun goes away, can you really describe a place on the horizon as the place where a much more distant object disappears, and that only from the point of view of a particular location on the rotating Earth?

Neither can these words be successfully interpreted as simply places which the sun sets or rises on as the Earth revolves. Anywhere outdoors is such a place. The same place would also simultaneously be a setting and rising place of the sun. Furthermore, there is no evidence in the Qur'an, hadith or Lane's Lexicon that *maghriba alshshamsi* and *maṭliAAa alshshamsi* have any of these meanings, and they make no contextual sense.

Nor can the words here mean the apparent points in the direction of the horizon where the sun appears to set and rise when viewed from a particular location since they are not places (how could Dhu'l Qarnayn reach them?).

2). Q21:33 and 36:40 end with "kullun fee falakin yasbahoona" (literally, "all in a rounded course floating/swimming"), in reference to the sun and moon. There are also quotes from ibn 'Abbas in *Tafsir Ibn kathir* that have him using the word *falakin* to describe the sun orbiting around the Earth or under the Earth. However, al-Tabari's history (see above) describes the sun circling the sky above a flat Earth and setting and rising in springs, in between which it moves through heaven, which his hadith says was the meaning of the "falakin" phrase in the Qur'an.

In any case, *falak* does not necessarily mean a sphere. Arabs would have understood the phrase to mean a hemisphere, as Lane's Lexicon entry for *al falak* defines the word:

*The place of the revolving of the stars; (O, K, TA;) [the celestial sphere: but generally imagined by the Arabs to be a material concave hemisphere; so that it may be termed the vault of heaven; or the firmament.]*<sup>47</sup>

Thus no conflict was seen between the *falakin* phrase in the Qur'an and the setting and rising places interpretation for 18:86 and 18:90. It is not in any case necessary to assume that the Qur'an must contain a single cosmology.

3). The apparent places of the sun's setting and rising shift back and forth along the horizon during the course of a year. A flat Earth believer might imagine there were many places where the sun sets and rises, or places that move (see above for the set of springs or places the commentators mention), but 18:86 and 18:90 only refer to one of each. *Al magharib* and *al mashariq* in 37:5, 55:17 and 70:40 could mean points on the horizon (from a flat earth perspective) or actual setting and rising places (though they are not mutually exclusive). See for example *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*,<sup>48</sup> *Tafsir al-Jalalayn*,<sup>49</sup> *Tafsir al-Tabari*,<sup>50</sup> and *Tafsir Ibn 'Abbas*.<sup>51</sup>

On the other hand, we saw above the hadith referring to "the rising place", "the setting place", "its rising place" and "your setting place" in the singular. Both there and in the Qur'an it would

mean the place where the sun set and the place where it rose on those particular days whether one or many were imagined to exist. Perhaps Muhammad imagined there were many springs in the sky-ocean like al-Tabari's hadith, or maybe the muddy spring is copied from the pre-Islamic poems quoted above, or derived from the fetid sea of the Alexander Legend, or their common source for the story, which Muhammad felt bound to follow (insofar as he correctly remembered or was informed about it) to answer the questioners in 18:83.

4). Unlike 18:90, verse 86 does not say anything about the people near the spring suffering from the sun's close proximity at sunset. There are a few possible explanations compatible with the setting and rising place interpretations. Most likely, Muhammad was simply following the outline of the popular legend he was using. The Alexander Legend itself only mentions the lack of shelter for the people at the rising place. The creator of the story may also have imagined that the people in verse 86 did have shelter, unlike those in verse 90. Finally, Muhammad might not have thought about or considered it worth mentioning how the sun affected the people in 18:86, just as he doesn't mention what Dhu'l Qarnayn said or did (if anything) to the people in verse 90.

### **What do Qur'an 18:86 and 18:90 say happened next?**

Now we look at the phrases in 18:86 and 18:90 that describe what Dhu'l Qarnayn found at his destinations.

#### **What does the context suggest?**

There is no contextual support and many contextual problems for the interpretation of later commentators that Dhu'l Qarnayn saw the sun appearing to set in an ocean. There is no reason to remark on what the sun merely appeared or was mistakenly thought to be doing in 18:86, as Cornelius argues.<sup>52</sup> We should also notice that there would be no reason to describe the nature of the spring (murky / muddy / hot) unless something happened at the spring itself.

If Dhu'l Qarnayn had just travelled until the time of sunrise or to the east in 18:90, but no closer to the sun, it seems odd that the people are described only in terms of how the sun affects them (it rises on them and they have been given no covering protection from it).

The alternative to the clear and obvious interpretation is to suppose that these features being in the text next to words that literally mean the setting and rising places of the sun are a series of strange coincidences. Given these reasons, the only interpretation that makes sense in the context is that Dhu'l Qarnayn found the sun actually setting in a spring and rising close to a people.

Incidentally, nobody would think they could see where the sun set or appeared to set into just because they could see to the horizon. It appears no larger, and therefore no closer, wherever on Earth you observe sunset.

#### **The meaning of wajada**

The word wajadaha ("he found it") in 18:86 and 18:90 is in the masculine active form, with a feminine suffix "-ha", meaning "it", which refers to the sun, a feminine noun, as the object of the verb. It must therefore mean "Dhu'l Qarnayn [verb] the sun". Lane's Lexicon has a description of the usage of wajada which we have in these verses. This is the two objective complements, ditransitive usage of wajada when it means to know something by direct experience:

*[He found, in the sense of] he knew [by experience]. (A, TA, &c.) [In this sense, it is a verb of the kind called أفعالُ القلوبِ ; having two objective complements; the first of which is called its noun, and the second its predicate.] Ex. وَجَدْتُ زَيْدًا ذَا الْحِفَاطِ / [found, or] knew Zeyd to possess*

*the quality of defending those things which should be sacred, or inviolable.*<sup>53</sup>

In verses 18:86 and 18:90 respectively, the noun is the sun (via the referent “it”) and the predicate is “setting in a muddy spring” / “rising on a people for whom We had provided no covering protection against the sun”. It is clear from the quote that this usage means that a person actually comes to know something as it really is. The full version of this article discusses some other quotes from Lane’s Lexicon on wajada.

When wajada is used in this ditransitive way, it is being used as a “verb of the heart” (that is what أفعال القلوب means in the quote), and the predicate must fit the reality, as shown on [www.learnarabiconline.com](http://www.learnarabiconline.com), which is quoted below (wajada is the 2<sup>nd</sup> verb from the bottom). What Lane calls the noun and predicate is here called the topic and comment.

Verbs in which two objects were originally topic and comment are known as Verbs of the Heart. The following seven verbs have the potential to be used as Verbs of the Heart.

Example Usage	Verb of the Heart
I <b>mistook</b> it to be worthwhile	حَسِبَ
I <b>(wrongly) thought</b> that it would be worthwhile	ظَنَّ
I <b>(wrongly) perceived</b> it to be worthwhile	خَالَ
I <b>knew</b> that it would be worthwhile	عَلِمَ
I <b>(rightfully) thought</b> it would be worthwhile	رَأَى
I <b>(rightfully) found</b> it to be worthwhile	وَجَدَ
I <b>(rightfully/wrongly) thought</b> it would be worthwhile	زَعَمَ

#### Definitions

أفعال القلوب verbs of the heart – those multi-transitive verbs, two of whose objects were originally topic and comment<sup>54</sup>

As we can clearly see in this quote (2<sup>nd</sup> row from bottom in the table), when wajada is used with a noun and predicate (also called topic and comment) as in 18:86 and 18:90, it means to “rightfully” find rather than a mistaken perception.

If 18:86 and 18:90 had a few extra words, Dr Zakir Naik’s interpretation<sup>55</sup>, that wajada refers to how the sun merely appeared to Dhu’l Qarnayn, could have worked. If a false appearance were the thing that Dhu’l Qarnayn was said to have found, there would be no problem (it could have said, “he found its appearance like it was setting in a muddy spring”). Similarly, it could have said, “he thought he found the sun setting in a spring”, and there would be no factual error in the statement. Unfortunately for Dr. Naik, this is not what the Qur’an says and we have just seen that Lane’s lexicon gives no indication that wajada can be stretched to include the meaning of those missing words. Dr. Naik is attempting to give us a meaning invented to rescue these verses from a conflict with reality.

The evidence does not suggest that wajada can mean to incorrectly perceive an objective fact or action, or to think it appears like something while knowing the perception is false, such as that the sun set in a muddy spring. On the contrary, the evidence is that if someone made a statement that used a factually incorrect predicate in the object of the verb wajada, they would have made a factually incorrect statement. For example, you would have made a factually incorrect statement if you used wajada to say “Zayd found a flying elephant”, even if he believed that he had found such a thing or merely thought that it appeared that way. Thus, the Qur’an has Allah making a factually incorrect statement in 18:86, and similarly in 18:90.

## How is wajada used in the Qur'an?

Now let us also look at how wajada is used in the Qur'an. It is used there 107 times<sup>56</sup>, as listed by Project Root List<sup>57</sup> and <http://corpus.Quran.com/> You will see if you read them that this verb never means a mere perception that conflicts with an objective reality nor an opinion of what something appears like. Of the 107 verses, there are four highly relevant ones that we look at now to help us learn what wajada means in 18:86 and 18:90. Immediately after Dhu'l Qarnayn finds the sun setting in a spring, wajada is used again:

...wawajada AAindahā qawman...  
...Near it he found a People...

Qur'an 18:86

A similar phrase with wajada occurs in the verse 93 on the next journey, and in the previous passage about Moses in 18:77. Clearly these are meant to be descriptions of what happened in real history, not a mistaken perception or an opinion of what something looked like.

The fourth important example, verse 24:39, is particularly relevant for any claim that wajada can mean a false perception. The word for word translation has:

But those who disbelieve, their deeds (are) like a mirage in a lowland,  
thinks it the thirsty one (to be) water, until when he comes to it he finds it  
not (to be) anything, but he finds Allah before him, He will pay him in full  
his due...<sup>58</sup>

Qur'an 24:39

Here wajada is used in direct contrast to perceiving a mere visual illusion! Again, we have the hatta itha ... yajidhu [a form of wajada] ... wawajada structure. Yahsabuhu (he thinks/reckons) is the verb used to describe the man's initial mistaken perception. The truth is that wajada was used to describe what was actually found because that is what it means. The thirsty man finds what he had falsely perceived as water to be nothing and finds Allah with him.

The Qur'an has many similes, in which the prefix ka- is added to a noun to which something is being compared to create the meaning "like". Ka- combined with anna, which means "that" as in "I think that" is used to mean "as if". The word kaannahā, meaning "as if it", could have been used with raahā (he saw it) in 18:86 in a similar way to verses 27:10; 28:31; and 31:7. If this pattern had been used in verse 18:86 it would have meant a mere appearance. It could have had something like the phrase, "raaha kaannahā taghrubu fee AAaynin hamiatin" ("he saw it as if it set in a spring of murky water"). It is already clear that the actual words used do not have this meaning.

Dr. Naik's other argument<sup>59</sup> is that whatever wajada means, the things found are described using figures of speech, presumably for a literal situation in 18:86 that the sun became hidden behind the spring, and in 18:90 that the sun began to shine on the people, just as it does for everyone on Earth when their day begins. This argument does not work either. It completely ignores the context (particularly the previous phrases, and the need for shelter in 18:90). It would also be a highly misleading figure of speech to say that the sun set in a muddy spring when a mere appearance is meant, especially considering that wajada was used, that the literal reading fitted a popular legend, and that early Muslims took it literally. There is no sign in Lane's Lexicon that such a phrase can be a figure of speech.<sup>60</sup> Neither can "fee" mean "behind".<sup>61</sup> The word "waraa" is used in Arabic to mean behind.

## Is the story told from Dhu'l Qarnayn's point of view?

It is argued that if Allah claims that the sun really set in a spring, wajada would be omitted.<sup>62</sup>

However, this passage is an account about Dhu'l Qarnayn, so we should expect each statement to be phrased in a way that makes clear how it relates in some way to him and

what he did (in this case finding the thing that was the objective of his journey). We saw above various early commentaries giving reports of people explicitly stating that it was understood to mean that the sun actually sets in a spring.

As noted by Cornelius,<sup>63</sup> this is explicitly an account told from Allah's point of view. It is clear from the numerous instances of the first person pronoun in reference to Allah (18:84, 18:86, 18:90, 18:91, 18:99, 18:100, 18:101) and the references to Dhu'l Qarnayn in the third person that this is supposed to be Allah's account from Allah's point of view about Dhu'l Qarnayn. Even where we have the speech of Dhu'l Qarnayn (as in 18:87-88, 18:95-18:96 and 18:98), it is preceded with qala, "he said".

Even more importantly, in between the second and third journeys, Allah remarks:

*Kathalika waqad aḥaṭna bima ladayhi khubran*

So (it was). And We knew all concerning him.

Qur'an 18:91 (M. Pickthall's translation)

The word-for-word translation says, "Thus. And verily we encompassed of what (was) with him (of the) information".<sup>64</sup>

The first word, *Kathalika*, is frequently used in the Qur'an and means literally, "like that", and is usually translated "So it was" / "even so" / "thus" in relation to the preceding text, as in 26:59. 18:68 has almost the same Arabic phrase. The word-for-word translation says, "And how can you have patience for what not you encompass of it any knowledge."<sup>65</sup>

**Verse 18:91 cannot be interpreted as coming from Dhu'l Qarnayn's recollection, so it is supposed to be what Allah is saying about the story and himself.**

### **Is the story just a metaphor or fable?**

Some might possibly argue that the entire account was intended to be understood as a metaphor or fictional fable rather than a historical narrative from which lessons could be learnt.

The most important problem with this view is that in 18:99–18:102 **Allah confirms and elaborates on a prophecy by Dhu'l Qarnayn** in 18:98 that Allah will destroy the barrier holding back Gog and Magog (mentioned again in 21:96). It must therefore be intended as a true account with future consequences.

As Cornelius points out in his article,<sup>66</sup> in verse 18:84, Allah claims to have empowered Dhu'l Qarnayn ("Verily We established his power on earth..."). This verse can only be understood as a claim about true history and conflicts with the proposed fable intention. We can also notice other places in the account where Allah is part of the unfolding story (18:86 says, "... We said: 'O Zul-qarnain! (thou hast authority,) either to punish them, or to treat them with kindness.'", and 18:90 says, "...a people for whom We had provided no covering protection against the sun.").

We also noted above that 18:91 stresses that it is a true account. It seems likely that the purpose of this verse was to emphasise that the story so far had already shown that Allah could answer the testing question from the Jews. It means that like that part of the story, Allah knows everything else there is to know about Dhu'l Qarnayn.

Finally, verse 18:83 begins, "They ask thee concerning Zul-qarnain." He was clearly a known historical figure like Moses in the previous passage. It would be deceptive to answer the question with unhistorical details, and we have seen that it was regarded as historical.

## Conclusion

The analysis above shows that the various interpretations that have been proposed for verses 18:86 and 18:90 in the Qur'an to reconcile them with scientific facts do not stand up to detailed scrutiny. It is possible that someone might propose another interpretation that has not been considered above. If so, it is highly likely to be even less plausible as the intended interpretation than those I have examined because it would be hard to think of a new one and therefore it would be even less obvious to the hearers or readers of the Qur'an.

In contrast, the evidence overwhelmingly supports the clear and obvious interpretation that this is intended to be understood as a historical account in which Dhu'l Qarnayn travelled until he reached the place where the sun sets and actually found that it went down into a muddy spring near to where a people were, and that he then travelled until he reached the place where the sun rises and actually found that it rose up above a people who lived close to the place where the sun rises.

## Qur'an 18:83-101 for reference

Translation (Yusuf Ali)	Transliteration (muslimnet)
18:83 They ask thee concerning Zul-qarnain. Say, "I will rehearse to you something of his story."	Wayas-aloonaka AAan thee alqarnayni qul saatloo AAalaykum minhu <u>thikran</u>
18:84 Verily We established his power on earth, and We gave him the ways and the means to all ends.	Inna makkanna lahu fee al-ardi waataynahu min kulli shay-in sababan
18:85 One (such) way he followed,	FaatbaAAa sababan
<b>18:86 Until, when he reached the setting of the sun, he found it set in a spring of murky water: Near it he found a People: We said: "O Zul-qarnain! (thou hast authority,) either to punish them, or to treat them with kindness."</b>	Hatta <u>itha</u> balagha maghriba alshshamsi wajadaha taghrubu fee AAaynin hami-atin wawajada AAindaha qawman qulna ya <u>tha</u> alqarnayni immā an tuAAaththiba wa-immā an tattakhitha feehim <u>husnan</u>
18:87 He said: "Whoever doth wrong, him shall we punish; then shall he be sent back to his Lord; and He will punish him with a punishment unheard-of (before).	Qala amma man <u>thalama</u> fasawfa nuAAaththibuhu thumma yuraddu ila rabbihi fayuAAaththibuhu AAathaban nukran
18:88 "But whoever believes, and works righteousness,- he shall have a goodly reward, and easy will be his task as We order it by our Command."	Waamma man <u>amana</u> waAAamila <u>salihan</u> falahu jazaan alhusna wasanaqoolu lahu min amrina yusran
18:89 Then followed he (another) way,	Thumma atbaAAa sababan
<b>18:90 Until, when he came to the rising of the sun, he found it rising on a people for whom We had provided no covering protection against the sun.</b>	Hatta <u>itha</u> balagha matliAAa alshshamsi wajadaha tafluAAu AAala qawmin lam najAAal lahum min dooniha <u>sitrān</u>
18:91 (He left them) as they were: We completely understood what was before him.	Kathalika waqad ahatna bima ladayhi khubran
18:92 Then followed he (another) way,	Thumma atbaAAa sababan
18:93 Until, when he reached (a tract) between two mountains, he found, beneath them, a people who scarcely understood a word.	Hatta <u>itha</u> balagha bayna alssaddayni wajada min doonihima qawman la yakadoona yafqahoona qawlan

- 18:94 They said: "O Zul-qarnain! the Gog and Magog (People) do great mischief on earth: shall we then render thee tribute in order that thou mightest erect a barrier between us and them?" Qaloo ya tha alqarnayni inna ya/jooja wama/jooja mufsideena fee al-ardi fahal najAAalu laka kharjan AAala an tajAAala baynana wabaynahum saddan
- 18:95 He said: "(The power) in which my Lord has established me is better (than tribute): Help me therefore with strength (and labour): I will erect a strong barrier between you and them: Qala ma makkannee feehi rabbee khayrun faaAAeenoonnee biquwwatin ajAAal baynakum wabaynahum radman
- 18:96 "Bring me blocks of iron." At length, when he had filled up the space between the two steep mountain-sides, He said, "Blow (with your bellows)" Then, when he had made it (red) as fire, he said: "Bring me, that I may pour over it, molten lead." Atoonee zubara alhadeedi hatta itha sawa bayna alsadafayni qala onfukhoon hatta itha jaAAalahu naran qala atoonee ofrigh AAalayhi qiṭran
- 18:97 Thus were they made powerless to scale it or to dig through it. Fama istaAAoo an yathharoohu wama istataAAoo lahu naqban
- 18:98 He said: "This is a mercy from my Lord: But when the promise of my Lord comes to pass, He will make it into dust; and the promise of my Lord is true." Qala hatha rahmatun min rabbee fa-itha jaa waAAadu rabbee jaAAalahu dakkaa wakana waAAadu rabbee haqqan
- 18:99 On that day We shall leave them to surge like waves on one another: the trumpet will be blown, and We shall collect them all together. Watarakna baAAadahum yawma-ithin yamooju fee baAAadin wanufikha fee alssoori fajamaAAanahum jamAAan
- 18:100 And We shall present Hell that day for Unbelievers to see, all spread out,- WaAAaradna jahannama yawma-ithin ilkafireena Aardan
- 18:101 (Unbelievers) whose eyes had been under a veil from remembrance of Me, and who had been unable even to hear. Allatheena kanat aAAayunuhum fee ghita-in AAan thikree wakanoo la yastateeAAoona samAAan

## Endnotes and references

<sup>1</sup> Ali, Abdullah Yusuf, *The Holy Qur'an: Translation and Commentary*, Lahore: 1934

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.muslimaccess.com/quraan/transliterations/index.htm> and

<http://www.muslimaccess.com/quraan/transliterations/table.html>

<sup>3</sup> based on searches in Arabic using [www.ekabakti.com](http://www.ekabakti.com) and <http://hadiith.al-islam.com>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.studyQuran.org/LaneLexicon/Volume6/00000025.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> based on searches in Arabic using [www.ekabakti.com](http://www.ekabakti.com) and <http://hadiith.al-islam.com>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.studyQuran.org/LaneLexicon/Volume5/00000155.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.studyQuran.org/LaneLexicon/Volume5/00000152.pdf>

<http://www.studyQuran.org/LaneLexicon/Volume5/00000153.pdf>

<http://www.studyQuran.org/LaneLexicon/Volume5/00000154.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> [http://arabic.speak7.com/arabic\\_pronouns.htm](http://arabic.speak7.com/arabic_pronouns.htm)

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.answering-islam.org/Quran/Science/sun\\_set.html](http://www.answering-islam.org/Quran/Science/sun_set.html)

<sup>10</sup> In reference to the Dhu'l Qarnayn episode and other tales in the Qur'an, Van Bladel says,

“When the worldview of educated Muslims after the establishment of the Arab Empire came to incorporate principles of astrology including the geocentric, spherical, Aristotelian-Ptolemaic world picture – particularly after the advent of the ‘Abbāsid dynasty in 750 – the meaning of these passages came to be interpreted in later Islamic tradition not according to the biblical-quranic cosmology, which became obsolete, but according to the Ptolemaic model, according to which the Quran itself came to be interpreted.”

Van Bladel, Kevin, “Heavenly cords and prophetic authority in the Qur'an and its Late Antique context”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 70:223-246, p.241, Cambridge University Press, 2007

<sup>11</sup> Toomer, G. J., Ptolemy and his Greek predecessors, In *Astronomy Before the Telescope*, Ed. Christopher Walker, p.86, London: British Museum Press, 1996

<sup>12</sup> King, David A., “Islamic Astronomy”, In *Astronomy Before the Telescope*, Ed. Christopher Walker, p.86, London: British Museum Press, 1996

<sup>13</sup> Hoskin, Michael and Gingerich, Owen, “Islamic Astronomy” in *The Cambridge Concise History of Astronomy*, Ed. M. Hoskin, p.50-52, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999

It can be viewed free online at

<http://books.google.com/books?id=4nmjGztfZwC&pg=PA50>

<sup>14</sup> based on searches in Arabic using <http://www.ekabakti.com/> and <http://hadiith.al-islam.com>

<sup>15</sup> <http://answering-islam.org/Authors/Newton/spring.html>

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.answering-islam.org/authors/cornelius/sun\\_in\\_muddy\\_pool.html](http://www.answering-islam.org/authors/cornelius/sun_in_muddy_pool.html)

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e-dad389i4c>

<sup>18</sup> See post #8 in <http://www.lqtoronto.com/forums/showthread.php?t=241>

<sup>19</sup> <http://councilofexmuslims.com/index.php?topic=9871.0>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.studyquran.org/LaneLexicon/Volume4/00000009.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/hadiith/muslim/001-smt.php#001.294>

For the Arabic, see #157:

<http://hadiith.al-islam.com/Page.aspx?pageid=192&TOCID=81&BookID=25&PID=297>

or alternatively, but without vocalization marks, see #218:

<http://www.ekabakti.com/hadiith.php?app=&hds=musl&rcd=92&bab=381&styp=had&hadid=382>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/hadiith/muslim/001-smt.php#001.0297>

For the Arabic, see #159:

<http://hadiith.al-islam.com/Page.aspx?pageid=192&TOCID=81&BookID=25&PID=299>

or alternatively, but without vocalization marks, see #220:

<http://www.ekabakti.com/hadiith.php?app=&hds=musl&rcd=92&bab=381&styp=had&hadid=384>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/hadiith/muslim/001-smt.php#001.0091> For the Arabic, see Hadith #70 here:

<http://www.ekabakti.com/hadiith.php?hds=musl&rcd=92&bab=176&styp=had&hadid=183>

<sup>24</sup> <http://hadiith.al-islam.com/Page.aspx?pageid=192&TOCID=358&BookID=27&PID=620>

#624 or alternatively, but without vocalization marks, see #620:

<http://www.ekabakti.com/hadiith.php?hds=nasa&rcd=799&bab=982&styp=had&hadid=986>

<sup>25</sup> This is also how *fastaqbala* (derived from *qabala*) is translated in hadith such as *Sahih Muslim Book 007, Number 2803* (“facing qibla”, “*fastaqbala alqiblata*”)

<http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/hadiith/muslim/007-smt.php#007.2803>

For the Arabic see #2129:

<http://www.ekabakti.com/hadiith.php?hds=musl&rcd=2620&bab=2765&styp=had&hadid=2766>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/hadiith/muslim/004-smt.php#004.1448>

For the Arabic see #1089:

<http://www.ekabakti.com/hadiith.php?hds=musl&rcd=1113&bab=1459&styp=had&hadid=1460>

<sup>27</sup> #18531

<http://hadith.al-islam.com/Page.aspx?pageid=192&TOCID=767&BookID=30&PID=18241>

<sup>28</sup>, *Kitab Al-Ahruf Wa Al-Qira'at* [Book of Dialects and Readings Of The Qur'an], Chapter 1498, p. 1120 in Prof. Ahmad Hasan (trans.), *Sunan Abu Dawud – English Translation With Explanatory Notes*, Volume III. Chapters 1338-1890, XXV, hadith 3991, Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1984 quoted in [http://www.answering-islam.org/authors/shamoun/mhmd\\_on\\_sunset.html](http://www.answering-islam.org/authors/shamoun/mhmd_on_sunset.html)

For the Arabic, see #4002:

<http://hadith.al-islam.com/Page.aspx?pageid=192&TOCID=1520&BookID=28&PID=3490>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/hadith/muslim/004-smt.php#004.1807>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/hadith/muslim/004-smt.php#004.1812>

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/hadith/muslim/041-smt.php#041.6904>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/hadith/bukhari/053-sbt.php#004.053.353>

<sup>33</sup> [http://answering-islam.org/Quran/Science/sun\\_set.html](http://answering-islam.org/Quran/Science/sun_set.html)

<sup>34</sup> Al-Tabari, *History of al-Tabari, Volume 1- General Introduction and from the Creation to the Flood*, trans. Franz Rosenthal, pp. 234-238, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989

<sup>35</sup> Al-Tabari, *History of al-Tabari, Volume 5 - The Sasanids, the Byzantines, the Lakhmids, and Yemen*, trans. Clifford Edmund Bosworth, pp. 173-174, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.altafsir.com/Tafasir.asp?>

[tMadhNo=0&tTafsirNo=1&tSoraNo=18&tAyahNo=86&tDisplay=yes&UserProfile=0&LanguageId=1](http://www.altafsir.com/Tafasir.asp?TMadhNo=0&tTafsirNo=1&tSoraNo=18&tAyahNo=86&tDisplay=yes&UserProfile=0&LanguageId=1)

Or with vocalization marks (select the sura 18 and ayat 86, look at -17563):

<http://quran.al-islam.com/Page.aspx?pageid=221&BookID=13&Page=1>

<sup>37</sup> Al-Baydawi, *Asrar ut-tanzil wa Asrar ut-ta'wil*, p. 399 Beirut: Dar Al Jil, 1911 quoted in (trans.)

<http://www.answering-islam.org/Responses/Shabir-Ally/science11.htm>

For the Arabic, see:

<http://www.altafsir.com/Tafasir.asp?>

[tMadhNo=0&tTafsirNo=6&tSoraNo=18&tAyahNo=86&tDisplay=yes&UserProfile=0&LanguageId=1](http://www.altafsir.com/Tafasir.asp?TMadhNo=0&tTafsirNo=6&tSoraNo=18&tAyahNo=86&tDisplay=yes&UserProfile=0&LanguageId=1)

<sup>38</sup> al-Baydawi's comments on S. 36:38 as translated and quoted by 'Abd al-Fadi, *Is the Qur'an Infallible?*, p. 29, Villach: Light of Life, 1995 quoted in <http://www.answering-islam.org/Responses/Shabir-Ally/science11.htm>

For the Arabic, see:

<http://www.altafsir.com/Tafasir.asp?>

[tMadhNo=0&tTafsirNo=6&tSoraNo=36&tAyahNo=38&tDisplay=yes&UserProfile=0&LanguageId=1](http://www.altafsir.com/Tafasir.asp?TMadhNo=0&tTafsirNo=6&tSoraNo=36&tAyahNo=38&tDisplay=yes&UserProfile=0&LanguageId=1))

<sup>39</sup> Van Bladel, Kevin, "The Alexander legend in the Qur'an 18:83-102", In *The Qur'an in Its Historical Context*, Ed. Gabriel Said Reynolds, p. 181, New York: Routledge, 2007

See Flavius Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, Book VII, Chapter VII, Verse 4

Most of the article can be previewed online at:

<http://books.google.com/books?id=sqpgtcMXIb0C&printsec=frontcover>

(I have read the full version).

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.* p.176 & p.197, note 6

See Epic of Gilgamesh, Tablet IX

<http://www.ancienttexts.org/library/mesopotamian/gilgamesh/tab9.htm> and Tablet I

<http://www.ancienttexts.org/library/mesopotamian/gilgamesh/tab1.htm>).

<sup>41</sup> Alexander, not the sun, as was incorrectly translated by A. W. Budge according to Van Bladel *op. cit.* p. 198, note 12

<sup>42</sup> A. W. Budge (trans.), "A Christian Legend Concerning Alexander" in *The History Of Alexander The Great Being The Syriac Version Of The Pseudo-Callisthenes*, pp. 144-158, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1889

The translation of the Syriac version and the much of the rest of the book can be viewed online at:

<http://books.google.com/books?id=5VI8AAAAIAAJ&printsec=frontcover#PRA3-PA144.M1>

and the translation is also quoted in full at <http://www.answering-islam.org/Books/Budge/alexander.htm>

<sup>43</sup> Stoneman, R., "Alexander the Great in the Arabic Tradition", In *The Ancient Novel and Beyond*, Eds. S. Panayotakis et al., pp. 7-8, Boston, USA: Brill Academic Publishers 2003

A preview can be seen at:

[http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=P1S1\\_ogqoqkC&pg=PA3#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=P1S1_ogqoqkC&pg=PA3#v=onepage&q&f=false)

<sup>44</sup> Imru' l-Qays, *Diwan* 158 quoted in Norris, H. T. (transl.), "Fables and Legends" In *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature*: "Abbasid Belles-Lettres", Eds. J. Ashtiany et al., p. 138-139, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990

A preview can be seen at:

<http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=4sFzGGqA6uoC&pg=PA138#v=onepage&q&f=false>

<sup>45</sup> Hāssan b. Thābit quoted in R. A. Nicholson (transl.), *A Literary History of the Arabs*, p. 18, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1907

A preview can be seen at:

<http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=LBY0AAAAIAAJ&pg=PA18#v=onepage&q&f=false>

<sup>46</sup> The Arabic text which Nicholson translates is from Von Kremer, Alfred, Altarabische Gedichte über die Volkssage von Jemen, als Textbelege zur Abhandlung "Ueber die sudarabische Sage.", pp.15-16, VIII, lines 6-11, 1867

It can be read online in the google books preview:

<http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=TsAoAAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>

or see it in this thread: <http://www.ye1.org/vb/showthread.php?t=34164>

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.studyQuran.org/LaneLexicon/Volume6/00000227.pdf>

<sup>48</sup> [http://www.qtafsir.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1521&Itemid=111](http://www.qtafsir.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1521&Itemid=111)

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.altafsir.com/Tafasir.asp?>

[tMadhNo=0&tTafsirNo=74&tSoraNo=55&tAyahNo=17&tDisplay=yes&UserProfile=0&Languageld=2](http://www.altafsir.com/Tafasir.asp?TMadhNo=0&tTafsirNo=74&tSoraNo=55&tAyahNo=17&tDisplay=yes&UserProfile=0&Languageld=2)

<sup>50</sup> <http://Quran.al-islam.com/Tafseer/DispTafsir.asp?>

[nType=1&bm=&nSeg=0&I=arb&nSora=55&nAya=17&taf=TABARY&tashkeel=1](http://Quran.al-islam.com/Tafseer/DispTafsir.asp?nType=1&bm=&nSeg=0&I=arb&nSora=55&nAya=17&taf=TABARY&tashkeel=1)

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.altafsir.com/Tafasir.asp?>

[tMadhNo=0&tTafsirNo=73&tSoraNo=37&tAyahNo=5&tDisplay=yes&UserProfile=0&Languageld=2](http://www.altafsir.com/Tafasir.asp?TMadhNo=0&tTafsirNo=73&tSoraNo=37&tAyahNo=5&tDisplay=yes&UserProfile=0&Languageld=2)

<sup>52</sup> [http://www.answering-islam.org/authors/cornelius/sun\\_in\\_muddy\\_pool.html](http://www.answering-islam.org/authors/cornelius/sun_in_muddy_pool.html)

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.studyQuran.org/LaneLexicon/Volume8/00000178.pdf>

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.learnarabiconline.com/verbal-sentences.shtml>

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e-dad389i4c>

<sup>56</sup> A relatively quick way to see all of them is to do phonetic transliteration searches

(<http://www.islamicity.com/ps/default.htm>) for wajad, yajad and tajad (yajidu and tajidu are forms of wajada in the imperfect tense), look at those results which are listed on the root list, and finally check 6:145, 9:92, 12:94, 18:36, 20:10, 20:115, 65:6 and 72:22 separately.

Alternatively, you can use this search:

<http://corpus.Quran.com/search.jsp?q=pos%3Av+%28I%29+root%3Awjd>

That only returns 106 results for some reason. Their dictionary lists 107 occurrences.

We can briefly list the 107 instances of wajada in the Qur'an. The following 10 verses use wajada as an intransitive verb which means having material means or money for a particular purpose: 2:196, 4:92, 5:89, 9:79, 9:91, 18:53, 24:33, 58:4, 58:12, 65:6.

The following 9 verses use wajada as a mono-transitive verb: 2:283, 4:43, 4:89, 5:6, 9:5, 9:57, 12:94, 33:65, 48:22.

The following verses use wajada as a ditransitive or tritransitive verb: 2:96, 2:110, 3:30, 3:37, 4:52, 4:64, 4:65, 4:82, 4:88, 4:91, 4:100, 4:110, 4:121, 4:123, 4:143, 4:145, 4:173, 5:82, 5:82, 5:104, 6:145, 7:17, 7:28, 7:44, 7:44, 7:102, 7:102, 7:157, 9:92, 9:92, 9:123, 10:78, 12:65, 12:75, 12:79, 17:68, 17:69, 17:75, 17:77, 17:86, 17:97, 18:17, 18:27, 18:36, 18:49, 18:58, 18:65, 18:69, 18:77, 18:86, 18:86, 18:90, 18:93, 20:10, 20:115, 21:53, 24:28, 24:39, 24:39, 26:74, 27:23, 27:24, 28:15, 28:23, 28:23, 28:27, 33:17, 31:21, 33:62, 35:43, 35:43, 37:102, 38:44, 43:22, 43:23, 43:24, 48:23, 51:36, 58:22, 59:9, 71:25, 72:8, 72:9, 72:22, 73:20, 93:6, 93:7, 93:8.

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.studyQuran.co.uk/PRLonline.htm>

<sup>58</sup> <http://corpus.Quran.com/wordbyword.jsp?chapter=24&verse=39>

<sup>59</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e-dad389i4c>

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.studyQuran.org/LaneLexicon/Volume6/00000024.pdf> and

<http://www.studyQuran.org/LaneLexicon/Volume6/00000025.pdf>

<sup>61</sup> <http://www.studyQuran.org/LaneLexicon/Volume6/00000250.pdf> and

<http://www.studyQuran.org/LaneLexicon/Volume6/00000251.pdf>

<sup>62</sup> For example, see <http://sunniforum.net/showthread.php?t=10750>

<sup>63</sup> [http://www.answering-islam.org/authors/cornelius/sun\\_in\\_muddy\\_pool.html](http://www.answering-islam.org/authors/cornelius/sun_in_muddy_pool.html)

<sup>64</sup> <http://corpus.Quran.com/wordbyword.jsp?chapter=18&verse=91>

<sup>65</sup> <http://corpus.Quran.com/wordbyword.jsp?chapter=18&verse=68>

<sup>66</sup> [http://www.answering-islam.org/authors/cornelius/sun\\_in\\_muddy\\_pool.html](http://www.answering-islam.org/authors/cornelius/sun_in_muddy_pool.html)