

Allah SWT says in Surah Al Baqara ayah 259

أَوْ كَالَّذِي مَرَّ عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا قَالَ أَنَّى يُحْيِي هَذِهِ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا فَأَمَاتَهُ اللَّهُ مِائَةَ عَامٍ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُ قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتَ قَالَ لَبِثْتُ يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالَ بَلْ لَبِثْتَ مِائَةَ عَامٍ فَانظُرْ إِلَى طَعَامِكَ وَشَرَابِكَ لَمْ يَتَسَنَّهْ وَانظُرْ إِلَى حِمَارِكَ وَلِنَجْعَلَكَ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَانظُرْ إِلَى الْعِظَامِ كَيْفَ نُنشِزُهَا ثُمَّ نَكْسُوهَا لَحْمًا فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ قَالَ أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (259)

Or [consider such an example] as the one who passed by a township which had fallen into ruin. He said, "How will Allah bring this to life after its death?" So Allah caused him to die for a hundred years; then He revived him. He said, "How long have you remained?" The man said, "I have remained a day or part of a day." He said, "Rather, you have remained one hundred years. Look at your food and your drink; it has not changed with time. And look at your donkey; and We will make you a sign for the people. And look at the bones [of this donkey] - how We raise them and then We cover them with flesh." And when it became clear to him, he said, "I know that Allah is over all things competent."

Who is the man mentioned in this ayah?

Why is it that when one is sleeping he/she does not feel time?

Why is it that the food and drink did not change after 100 years but the donkey decomposed and became bones?

AssalamuAlaikum,

We loved reading about the science involved in the stages of the brain when a person goes to sleep. This is from the greatness of Allah in his creation. MashaAllah.

أَوْ كَالَّذِي مَرَّ عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا قَالَ أَنَّى يُحْيِي هَذِهِ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا فَأَمَاتَهُ اللَّهُ مِائَةَ عَامٍ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُ قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتَ قَالَ لَبِثْتُ يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالَ بَلْ لَبِثْتَ مِائَةَ عَامٍ فَانظُرْ إِلَى طَعَامِكَ وَشَرَابِكَ لَمْ يَتَسَنَّهْ وَانظُرْ إِلَى حِمَارِكَ وَلِنَجْعَلَكَ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَانظُرْ إِلَى الْعِظَامِ كَيْفَ نُنشِزُهَا ثُمَّ نَكْسُوهَا لَحْمًا فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ قَالَ أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (259)

Or [consider such an example] as the one who passed by a township which had fallen into ruin. He said, "How will Allah bring this to life after its death?" So Allah caused him to die for a hundred years; then He revived him. He said, "How long have you remained?" The man said, "I have remained a day or part of a day." He said, "Rather, you have remained one hundred years. Look at your food and your drink; it has not changed with time. And look at your donkey; and We will make you a sign for the people. And look at the bones [of this donkey] - how We raise them and then We cover them with flesh." And when it became clear to him, he said, "I know that Allah is over all things competent."

The story described in the ayah above in Surah Al-Baqarah comes to follow the story of the Nimrod whom Prophet Ibrahim challenged, and that's why the ayah started with (أَوْ).

The Ayah does not reveal the name of the righteous man mentioned in the Ayah, nor the name of the township as Allah SWT wants us to focus on the story rather than the names of the righteous man or the township. But from the tafseer, the man was most likely (عزير) Uzayer. And the township may have been Bait Al Maqdis.

As Sheikh Sharawi says, a person realizes how time passes by watching and recognizing events as they happen. When someone watches a football game for 3 and 1/2 hours, at the end of the game he/she knows that 3 and 1/2 hours passed because they know that is the length of the game. When a person is asleep, the person is not watching events as the human brain goes through the different stages of sleep and so the person does not realize how much time passed. Many of us when we wake up in the middle of the night, sometimes we don't realize how much time passed until we look at the clock. When the righteous man passed by the township and found it destroyed with homes ceiling and walls collapsed and no people in it, he asked the question to himself, and pondered how would Allah SWT would bring life back to this township. He asked that not in the form of denying the power of Allah, rather glorifying the power of Allah SWT just like prophet Ibrahim PBUH did when he asked Allah SWT to show him how he brings the dead back to life. Then Allah SWT made the righteous man go in sleep for 100 years then brought him back. Then asked him through the angel, how long he spent in sleep? The righteous man said a day or part of a day. The reason he said that is because he looked at himself and did not see anything changed in him, for example, if he woke up with a very long beard, he would know that he probably spent a long time because a long beard needs a long time to grow. But he woke up with the same condition that he went to sleep with, so to him it must be just part of a day. Also looking at the sun and seeing that the sun was still there close to how he left it when he went to sleep. Then Allah SWT made him aware that he spent 100 years in sleep. Was the righteous man telling the truth when he said he spent part of a day? Yes, and that is because of the condition of his food that did not change when he looked at it. Was Allah SWT saying the truth that he spent 100 years? Yes, and that is because of the condition of his donkey. The significance of the story here is that food can spoil faster than the donkey decomposes, and so 100 years passed and the donkey decomposed and the food is still the same unchanged? This is from the power of Allah SWT.

With this, Allah SWT is (يقبض و يبسط) Allah SWT withholds and grants. So, Allah SWT withheld the time from the food and kept it from spoiling and granted the time towards the donkey and made it rot. Then Allah SWT showed him how Allah SWT brought the donkey back to life right before the righteous man's eyes. When the righteous man saw that he said I know that Allah is over all things competent.