

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ كَمَا هُوَ أَهْلُهُ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ أَدَمَ كَمَا يُحِبُّ وَيَرْضَى بِأَنْ يُصَلَّى عَلَيْهِ

Allah *azza wajal*, in Whose Name we begin, The Most Compassionate,
The Most Merciful

All Praise is due to Allah *azza wajal*, Countless Peace and Blessings be upon
His Beloved Messenger *Sallal Laahu 'Alayhi Wasallam*

The People of the Well

In Surah Furqan (25), verse 38, the Qur'an declares:

وَعَادًا وَثَمُودًا وَأَصْحَابَ الرَّسِّ وَقُرُونًا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ كَثِيرًا ﴿٣٨﴾

“And the Aad and the Thamud and the people of the well and many a generation in between.”

The meaning of “Rass” in Arabic signifies “an old well.” Therefore, when we say “Ashaab-e-Rass” it signifies the people of the well. In the Qur'an, Allah *azza wajal* has also stated about a certain nation who were called “the people of the well” and who were destroyed because of their transgression and tyranny.

In Surah Furqan, verses 38-39 the Qur'an declares that:

وَكُلًّا ضَرَبْنَاهُ الْأَمْثَلِ وَكُلًّا تَبَرَّنا تَبِيرًا ﴿٣٩﴾

“And We narrated examples to all and We obliterated all after complete annihilation.”

In Surah Qaf (50), verses 12-14:

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَأَصْحَابُ الرَّسِّ وَثَمُودُ ﴿١٢﴾ وَعَادُ وَفِرْعَوْنُ
أَخْوَنُ لُوطٍ ﴿١٣﴾ وَأَصْحَابُ الْأَيْكَةِ وَقَوْمُ تُبَّعٍ كُلٌّ كَذَّبَ الرُّسُلَ فَحَقَّ
وَعِيدُ ﴿١٤﴾

“Belied before them the people of Nuh and the men of Rass and Thamud. And the Aad, Firoan and the compatriots of Lut, And the men of wood and the people of Tubba. Every one of them belied the Messengers and so the promise of My torment was proved.”

There are many opinions of who exactly “the people of the well” were. There are many opinions which have been represented by the scholars and we will explain a few of them:

1. According to Allamah ibn Jareer the meaning could also signify a cave, that is the reason that the people described as “Ashaab-e-Uqdud” has also been referred to as the “Ashaab-e-Rass.”

2. Ibn Asaakir, in his treatise “Taarikh”, has stated that many years ago there was a nation among the people of Aad. In this nation Allah *azza wajaal* had sent a Prophet to these people named Hanzalah bin Safwaan. However, these people did not obey their Prophet and never accepted him. They killed this Prophet and because of this Allah *azza wajaal* sent punishment on the entire nation and all of them were destroyed. (Tafseer ibn Katheer, 1)

3. Ibn Abi Haatim explains that there was an old well near Azerbaijan. The people living near this well had been very rebellious and they had actually buried a Prophet inside

this well while still alive. This is the reason they are called the “Ashaab-e-Rass.” (Tafseer ibn Katheer, 1)

4. Imam Qatadah explains that near the area of Yamaamah, there was a town called Falaj. This is where the “Ashaab-e-Rass” lived. They are also addressed as “Ashaabe Qaryah.”

5. Abu Bakr Umar Nuqaas and Suhayli explain, “In the area inhabited by the ‘Ashaab-e-Rass’ there was a large well. They also used the water for drinking and watering their crops. However, they became rebellious and killed the Prophet that came to them. Hence, Divine Punishment was sent to them and all of them were destroyed.”

6. Mohammed bin Ka'ab Qarazi states that Sayyiduna Rasoolullah *Sallal Laahu 'Alayhi Wasallam* has stated that, “One of the first people to enter Jannah will be a slave.”

In relation to this, it is mentioned that Allah *azza wajaal* once sent a Prophet to a certain village. However no one believed in this Prophet except one single black slave. The people of that village then imprisoned this Prophet in a well and closed the entrance of this well with a large boulder so that no one could open this entrance. However, this black slave used to go every day to the jungle to cut wood. After selling this wood, he used to buy food and take it to the Prophet who was imprisoned inside this well. He also used to lift this large boulder and pass the food to this Prophet. One day, while this slave was in the jungle, Allah *azza wajaal* put him off to sleep. He slept in this jungle for fourteen years. When he finally opened his eyes, he thought that perhaps he had merely slept for a few hours. He then quickly chopped some wood and took it to the village. When he arrived there, he saw that the state of the village and the people had changed. When he inquired from the people in the village, only then did he come to realise the actual state. This is that black slave who Sayyiduna Rasoolullah *Sallal Laahu 'Alayhi Wasallam* has stated will be one of the first people to enter Jannah. (Murujuz Zahb, 86)

7. The famous historian, Allama Masudi, explains that the “Ashaab-e-Rass” are from the offspring's of Nabi Ismail *Alayhis Salaam*. They were actually two tribes named “Qayd mah” and “Yameen.” They resided in Yemen. (Ardul Qur'an)

8. A scholar from Egypt named Qarajullah Zaki Qarawi says that the word “Rass” is an abbreviation of the word “aras” and is to be found in the city of Qafqaaz. In this village Allah *azza wajaal* had sent a Prophet but these people belied him and with the result all of them were destroyed.

These are the eight opinions of who exactly the “Ashaab-e-Rass” were and we can also see that there has been much debate on this issue. All we can say is after looking at the Qur’an is that these people existed before the arrival of Nabi ‘Isa *Alayhis Salaam*. As for the question of whether they appeared between the time of Nabi Moosa *Alayhis Salaam* and Nabi ‘Isa *Alayhis Salaam* and in which period this was, there is no explanation given in this regard.