

Prophet Musa (A) and Khidhr (A) – Part 2

Learning objectives:

- To learn about the interaction that took place between Khidhr (A) and Prophet Musa (A)
- To understand why certain Khidhr (A) acted in a very surprising manner.

Prophet Musa (A) and his servant retraced their steps and reached the place where ‘the two rivers meet’. Here they found Khidhr (A). The story continues from verse 65 of Surah Kahf up to verse 82.

فَوَجَدَا عَبْدًا مِّنْ عِبَادِنَا آتَيْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِن لَّدُنَّا عِلْمًا

[There] they found one of Our servants whom We had granted a mercy from Ourselves, and taught him a knowledge from Our own. (65)

Allah (SWT) describes this man as His servant and this man was given a mercy in the form of special knowledge bestowed upon him from Allah (SWT). What was this knowledge? He could see how things transpire in the future and why certain instances took place.

Reflection:

Looking through the story think about what lesson Allah (SWT) is teaching Prophet Musa (A) and how these lessons are applicable to us?

قَالَ لَهُ مُوسَىٰ هَلْ أَتَّبِعُكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُعَلِّمَنِي مِمَّا عُلِّمْتَ رُشْدًا

Moses said to him: "May I follow you that you may teach me something of the wisdom which you have been taught?" (66)

Prophet Musa (A) approached Khidhr (A) and asked to follow him so that he could learn from Khidhr (A). The term used for knowledge is ‘Rushd’ meaning the ability to discern between right and wrong.

قَالَ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا

He said, 'Indeed you cannot have patience with me! (67)

Khidhr (A) accepted for Prophet Musa (A) to follow him. However, he said to Musa that he would not be able to bear with patience with his actions. The servant was not allowed to accompany them.

وَكَيْفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلَىٰ مَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ خُبْرًا

And how can you have patience about something you do not comprehend?' (68)

Khidhr (A) continued to say that it is natural that you are not going to be patient with me because you do not understand the reasoning behind my actions. Here Khidhr (A) is telling Prophet Musa (A) that it will be very difficult to accompany him without questioning him.

قَالَ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ صَابِرًا وَلَا أَعْصِي لَكَ أَمْرًا

Moses replied: "You shall find me, if Allah wills, patient; and I shall not disobey you in anything." (69)

Prophet Musa (A) very politely replied that he will be patient ‘if Allah (SWT) wills’.

قَالَ فَإِنِ اتَّبَعْتَنِي فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِي عَنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ أُحْدِثَ لَكَ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا

He said: "Well, if you follow me, do not ask me concerning anything until I myself mention it to you (70)

So Khidhr (A) allows Prophet Musa (A) to follow him under one strict condition. Do not ask any questions!

Prophet Musa (A) and Khidhr (A) spent a while together; however, the Qur'an mentions three incidents (below) when Prophet Musa (A) could not hold his thoughts in and questioned Khidhr (A).

فَانْطَلَقَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا رَكَبَا فِي السَّفِينَةِ خَرَقَهَا ۖ قَالَ أَخْرَقْتَهَا لِيُتَغْرَقَ أَهْلُهَا لَقَدْ

جِئْتَ شَيْئًا إِمْرًا

Then the two went forth until, when they embarked on the boat, he made a hole in it, whereupon Moses exclaimed: "Have you made a hole in it so as to drown the people in the boat? You have certainly done an awful thing." (71)

Khidhr (A) was a nomad. He used to travel from place to place fulfilling the decree of Allah (SWT). So he and Prophet Musa (A) were travelling from place to place, until there came a point that they needed to embark on a boat. They had no money or food and the people on the boat were very kind to them. These people fed them and took them on board. Prophet Musa (A) began to really like these people for their generosity and kind-heartedness. However, Khidhr (A) went into a corner of the boat and damaged it by making a hole in it. Prophet Musa (A) was taken aback by this action and he spoke out against this action.

قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا

He said, 'Did I not say that you cannot have patience with me?' (72)

قَالَ لَا تُؤَاخِذْنِي بِمَا نَسِيتُ وَلَا تُرْهِقْنِي مِنْ أَمْرِي عُسْرًا

He said, 'Do not take me to task for my forgetting, and do not be hard upon me.' (73)

Khidhr (A) replied: 'Did I not say that you cannot have patience with me?' to which Prophet Musa apologised and said please don't stop me from following you.

فَانْطَلَقَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا لَقِيَا غُلَامًا فَقَتَلَهُ قَالَ أَقْتَلْتَنِي بِنَفْسٍ زَكِيَّةٍ بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ لَّقَدْ

جِئْتَ شَيْئًا نُكْرًا

So they went on until they came upon a boy, whereat he slew him. He said, 'Did you slay an innocent soul, without [him having slain] anyone? You have certainly done a dire (horrible) thing!' (74)

They continued with their journey and arrived at a village. Here a group of children were playing and Khidhr (A) took a boy to the side and kills him. Prophet Musa (A) was horrified as this act and again spoke out against this action.

Reflection:

Was Prophet Musa (A) right to complain about the killing of the child?

Yes, of course he was. However, he only saw the action and had no idea about the reason why the boy was killed. The insight to understand such an action was lacking within Prophet Musa (A) at this time. Similarly, when natural disasters happen and many people die, we question Allah (SWT). However, we do not have the insight as to why such an event took place.

قَالَ أَمْ أَقُلُّ لَكَ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا

He said, 'Did I not tell you that you cannot have patience with me?' (75)

قَالَ إِنْ سَأَلْتُكَ عَنْ شَيْءٍ بَعْدَهَا فَلَا تُصَاحِبْنِي ۖ قَدْ بَلَغْتَ مِنْ لَدُنِّي عُذْرًا

He said, 'If I question you about anything after this, do not keep me in your company. You already have enough excuse on my part.' (76)

Having realised that Khidhr (A) had been acting on the decree of Allah (SWT), Prophet Musa (A) immediately apologised with the condition that if he spoke out again, Khidhr (A) can choose to not take him along any further in his journey.

فَانطَلَقَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَتَيَا أَهْلَ قَرْيَةٍ اسْتَطَعَمَا أَهْلَهَا فَأَبَوْا أَنْ يُضَيِّقُوهُمَا فَوَجَدَا

فِيهَا حِدَارًا يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَنْقُضَ فَأَقَامَهُ ۖ قَالَ لَوْ شِئْتَ لَاتَّخَذْتَ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا

So they went on until they came to the people of a town. They asked its people for food, but they refused to extend them any hospitality. There they found a wall which was about to collapse, so he erected it. He said, 'Had you wished, you could have taken a wage for it.' (77)

So they continued and reached a town where the people were not hospitable. They asked for some food and were refused. They even asked to be given some work in exchange for food and yet they were denied. So they carried on and saw a garden surrounded by a wall. This wall was about to collapse so Khidhr (A) began to fix the wall with the help of Prophet Musa (A). Prophet Musa (A) became surprised and asked why they didn't charge for rebuilding the wall.

قَالَ هَذَا فِرَاقُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنِكَ ۚ سَأُنَبِّئُكَ بِتَأْوِيلِ مَا لَمْ تَسْتَطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا

He said, 'This is where you and I shall part. I will inform you about the interpretation of that over which you could not maintain patience. (78)

This is when Khidhr (A) parted ways with Prophet Musa (A) because again Prophet Musa (A) asked a question. He then explains the reasoning behind the three incidents that made Prophet Musa (A) question Khidhr (A).

أَمَّا السَّفِينَةُ فَكَانَتْ لِمَسَاكِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ فِي الْبَحْرِ فَأَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَعِيبَهَا وَكَانَ

وَرَاءَهُمْ مَلِكٌ يَأْخُذُ كُلَّ سَفِينَةٍ غَصْبًا

As for the boat, it belonged to some poor people who work on the sea. I wanted to make it defective, for behind them was a king seizing every ship usurpingly. (79)

As the verse clearly explains, Khidhr (A) damaged the boat so that the king of that place would not take the ship away from these poor people. The ship was a means of sustenance for them and having their ship taken from them would have been a big loss for them. The damage made by Khidhr (A) meant that the king would not take the damaged boat and the people who own the boat could later fix the boat and use it easily.

وَأَمَّا الْغُلَامُ فَكَانَ أَبَوَاهُ مُؤْمِنَيْنِ فَخَشِينَا أَنْ يُرْهِقَهُمَا طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا

As for the boy, his parents were faithful [persons], and We feared he would overwhelm them with rebellion and unfaith. (80)

فَأَرَدْنَا أَنْ يُبَدِّلَهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُ زَكَاةً وَأَقْرَبَ رُحْمًا

So We desired that their Lord should give them in exchange one better than him in respect of purity and closer in mercy. (81)

As for the boy, he was going to grow up to be an unfaithful and rebellious child. His parents were faithful people and therefore as a mercy from Allah (SWT), this child was killed so that the child and the parents were not held accountable for his misdeeds. They were then blessed with another child that was pious and pure.

وَأَمَّا الْجِدَارُ فَكَانَ لِغُلَامَيْنِ يَتِيمَيْنِ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ وَكَانَ تَحْتَهُ كَنْزٌ لَهُمَا وَكَانَ أَبُوهُمَا

صَالِحًا فَأَرَادَ رَبُّكَ أَنْ يَبْلُغَا أَشُدَّهُمَا وَيَسْتَخْرِجَا كَنْزَهُمَا رَحْمَةً مِّن رَّبِّكَ ۗ وَمَا

فَعَلْتُهُ عَنْ أَمْرِي ۗ ذَٰلِكَ تَأْوِيلُ مَا لَمْ تَسْطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا

As for the wall, it belonged to two boy orphans in the city. Under it there was a treasure belonging to them. Their father had been a righteous man. So your Lord desired that they should come of age and take out their treasure—as a mercy from your Lord. I did not do that out of my own accord. This is the interpretation of that over which you could not maintain patience.’ (82)

Reflection:

What did Allah (SWT) want to teach Prophet Musa (A)?

Things may seem very ugly on the surface and we do not know why this is happening. However, there is an inner meaning that we are not aware of. Whatever happens in this world, there is a reason behind it. What we should realise is that Allah (SWT) is in control of all things. However, Allah (SWT) has planned everything in such a way that it goes hand in hand with our free will. For example, Pharaoh adopted Prophet Musa (A) with his own free will, yet it was the plan of Allah (SWT) all along.