

The Lit Cave

Surah Al Kahf

April 5, 2020

Surah Kahf is about safety, protection from trials. Musa AS and Khidr AS, their story is how to upgrade knowledge. Musa AS is mentioned so much in the Quran because he was always one to start things, to initiate matters on his own. Despite having been given a book, there was still much he had to learn, to know. The highest level of learning takes place when the situations that we go through show us who we really are, subhanAllah. It is like mirroring.

The story of Musa and Khidr AS takes part in phases. The ayaat before this 60-64 were about preparing to meet, the meeting point etc. Ayaat 65-70 is about the meeting between Musa AS and Khidr AS, which is like a contract - requiring clarification of everything from the start. This is a good thing, clarification from both ends before going into anything, that is why this is like a contract. The third part is about the journey itself, from place to place, and action to action, in ayaat 71-78. The fourth part is the clarification of everything that happened. The main lesson we learn from this is to be patient and take things as they come because the explanations will come when the time is right. Musa AS is already from the best of messengers, but the fact that he could also improve on his knowledge is also an important lesson.

فَوَجَدَا عَبْدًا مِّنْ عِبَادِنَا آتَيْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِن لَّدُنَّا عِلْمًا - 18:65

And they found a servant from among Our servants to whom we had given mercy from us and had taught him from Us a [certain] knowledge.

قَالَ لَهُ مُوسَىٰ هَلْ أَتَّبِعُكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُعَلِّمَنِي مِمَّا عُلِّمْتَ رُشْدًا - 18:66

Moses said to him, "May I follow you on [the condition] that you teach me from what you have been taught of sound judgment?"

قَالَ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا - 18:67

He said, "Indeed, with me you will never be able to have patience.

وَكَيْفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلَىٰ مَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ خُبْرًا - 18:68

And how can you have patience for what you do not encompass in knowledge?"

قَالَ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ صَابِرًا وَلَا أَعْصِي لَكَ أَمْرًا - 18:69

[Moses] said, "You will find me, if Allah wills, patient, and I will not disobey you in [any] order."

قَالَ فَإِنِ اتَّبَعْتَنِي فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِي عَنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى أُحَدِّثَ لَكَ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا - 18:70

He said, "Then if you follow me, do not ask me about anything until I make to you about it mention."

When you look here at who the teacher is and who the student is, it shows us we can learn from anyone. Musa AS already has Banu Israaeel as students but Khidr has just one student, Musa AS. So this is a very personal journey of special knowledge.

Khidr AS is attached to Allah SWT and he was given special mercy from Allah SWT, and divine and special knowledge of hidden and deep mysteries. And these are the best qualities of a teacher, of a nurturer.

Musa AS came to Khidr AS, and asks him permission to follow him and be taught by him - giving respect and seeking permission from a teacher is very important. He, Musa AS, asks for 'rushd', the cream of knowledge - this is the reflection, the crux of the matter. In Surah Kahf, rushd is given a lot of importance.

Khidr AS told Musa AS in a very straight forward manner that he could follow him but that Musa AS would not have patience with him on this journey because this requires an immense amount of patience and mercy. Musa AS had more knowledge than Khidr AS in some things, but Khidr AS was in possession of a special knowledge that Musa AS didn't have.

Khidr AS was not someone who knew the ghaib, or unseen, and nobody knows this except for those that Allah SWT teaches through His Actions on them, and that is how Khidr AS knew Musa AS would not have patience but he had to so that the decree could be fulfilled. He tells Musa AS that unless you can encompass the matter, you cannot be patient with it.

Musa AS is determined though, he didn't ask for details etc. Musa AS focused on his own actions and said that he would be patient if Allah SWT willed it. And this is human nature before we start anything we are confident in our actions. And when we say inshaAllah, it shows determination and belief in Allah SWT, but we also have to be patient.

When the Banu Israaeel said inshaAllah, they were guided but when Musa AS said it, he didn't become patient. This shows his test was different. He asked questions at all steps. Musa AS also said that he would not disobey him in any matters. It is important to know that Musa AS is Kaleem Allah and he is from the messengers of determination, so one must respect and honor him.

Khidr let Musa AS follow him but with the condition to not ask about any matter. When a person asks question after question, then he limits/restricts himself. On the other hand, when a person listens, whether he understands or not, then understanding will come to him.

Musa AS was not to bring up anything until something happens and Khidhr reminds him. This is very similar to when Yusha ibn Noon mentioned the fish only after Musa AS mentioned it.

We have to experience something ourselves in order to learn more about who we are, about ourselves. When there are many interruptions, then the knowledge experience is diluted. Khidr AS wants to clarify it for Musa AS when the time is right.