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ANSWER: Majma' al-Bahrayn

SŪRAH AL-KAHF: VERSES 60-70

And when Mūsā said to his young man, "I shall not give up until I reach the meeting point of the two seas or else I shall go on for years. [60]

So, when they reached the meeting point of the two seas, they forgot their fish and it made its way into the sea as in a tunnel. [61]

When they went further, he said to his young man, "Bring us our morning meal; we have, indeed, had much fatigue from this journey of ours!" [62]

He said, "You see, when we stayed at the rock, I forgot the fish. It was none but Satan who made me forget it to tell you about it - and, amazingly, it made its way into the sea." [63]

He said, "That was what we were looking for!" So they returned, retracing their footsteps. [64]

Then they found one of Our servants whom We blessed with mercy from Us and whom We gave knowledge, a knowledge from Our own. [61]

Mūsā said to him, "May I follow you on (the undertaking) that you teach me a bit of right knowledge you have been given!" [66]

He said, "You can never afford to keep patient while with me. [67]

And how would you keep pa- tient over something your comprehension cannot grasp?" [68]

He (Mūsā) said, "You will find me patient, if Allah wills, and I shall not disobey any order from you!" [69]

He said, "Well, if you follow me, do not ask me about anything unless I, on my own initiative, tell you about it." [70]

COMMENTARY

In the description of this event referred to in: **(And when Mūsā said to his young man)**, the opening sentence of **verse 60**, 'Mūsā' means the famous prophet, Mūsā son of 'Imrān 'alayhis salām. The attribution of this event to some other Mūsā by Nawf al-Bakālī has been sternly refuted by Sayyidnā

'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās raḍī'allāhu 'anhu as reported in the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī.

As for the word: (*fatā*), it literally means a young man. When this word is used as attributed to a particular person, it carries the sense of his attendant or servant because it is usually a young and strong man who is taken in for this kind of service in order that he could handle all sorts of jobs. Incidentally, it also happens to be an article of good Islamic etiquette that a servant or attendant should be addressed nicely, either by his name, or an appellation such as 'young man.' The ground rule is that even servants are not to be addressed as servants. At this place, the attribution of '*fatā*' is to Sayyidnā Mūsā 'alayhis salām, therefore, it means Sayyidnā Mūsā's attendant in service. It appears in Ḥadīth narratives that the name of this attendant was Yūsha' son of Nūn, son of Ifrā'im, son of Yūsuf 'alayhis salām. Some narratives identify him as the maternal nephew of Sayyidnā Mūsā 'alayhis salām. But, no categorical decision can be taken in this matter. As for his name being Yūsha' ibn Nūn, that much stands proved on the authority of sound narratives. However, there is no proof for the rest of the antecedents. (Qurṭubī)

The word: (*majma' al-baḥrayn*) literally means every such place where two waters meet - and it is obvious that they are many all around the world. Exactly which place is meant by '*majma' al-baḥrayn*' in this context? Since the Qur'ān, and Ḥadīth have not pinpointed it precisely, therefore, sayings of commentators differ in terms of traces and contexts. According to Qatādah, it signifies the meeting point of the seas of Fāris (Persia) and Rūm. Ibn 'Atiyyah has identified a place near Azerbaijan. Some point out to the confluence of the Gulf of 'Aqabah in Jordan and the Red Sea (Sharm ash-Shaykh). Some others have said that this place is located in Ṭanjah (Tangiers in North Africa). Sayyidnā 'Ubayy ibn Ka'b raḍī'allāhu 'anhu reports that it is in Africa. Suddiyy gives its location in Armenia. Some give its location at the meeting point of the sea of Andulus (Gibraltar) and the Great Ocean (Atlantic). Allah knows best. However, this much is clear that Allah Ta'ālā had told Sayyidnā Mūsā 'alayhis salām the fixed geographical location of this place towards which he had made his journey. (Qurṭubī)

The Story of Sayyidnā Mūsā 'alayhis salām (Moses) and Al-Khaḍir (Elias)

Details of this event appear in the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī and Muslim. There, according to a narration of Sayyidnā Ubaiyy ibn Ka'b raḍī'allāhu 'anhu, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been reported to have said: "*Once when Mūsā 'alayhis salām rose to address his people, the Banī Isra'īl, those present there asked him, 'of all human beings, who is the foremost in knowledge?' Since (in the knowledge of Sayyidnā Mūsā 'alayhis salām there was no one more knowledgeable than himself) therefore, he said, 'I am the foremost in knowledge.'* (Allah Ta'ālā has His special ways of grooming prophets close to Him, therefore, this statement was not welcome. The etiquette of the situation demanded that he should have resigned his answer to the ultimate knowledge of Allah and said that 'Allah alone knows as to who is the foremost in knowledge among His entire creation'). So, the answer given by Mūsā 'alayhis salām brought displeasure from Allah Ta'ālā and to him it was revealed: 'Present on the meeting point of the two seas, there is a

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servant of Ours. He is more knowledgeable than you.' (When Mūsā 'alayhis salām came to know this, he submitted before Allah Ta'ālā that it was incumbent on him to travel and learn from the person who is superior to him in knowledge). So, he said: *'O Allah, tell me where to find him.'* Allah Ta'ālā said, *'put a fish in your basket and travel in the direction of the meeting point of the two seas. When you reach the place where this fish disappears, that shall be the place where you meet that servant of Ours.'* As commanded, Mūsā 'alayhis salām put a fish in the basket and set out. His attendant, Yūshā' ibn Nūn was also with him. During the course of travel, they reached a rock where they lied down resting their heads against it. All of a sudden, on that spot, the fish moved, left the basket and went into the sea. (With this miracle of the fish coming alive and slipping out into the sea, yet another miracle unfolded when) Allah Ta'ālā stopped the flow of water currents all along the way the fish took into the sea making the place like a tunnel into the sea. (Yūshā' ibn Nūn witnessed this extraordinary event while Mūsā 'alayhis salām was asleep). When he woke up, Yūshā' ibn Nūn forgot to mention this strange happening before him and resumed their journey onwards from there. They travelled for a whole day and night. When came the morning of the next day, Mūsā 'alayhis salām asked his companion of the journey, *'bring us our morning meal. We have, indeed, had much fatigue from this journey of ours.'* The Holy Prophet ﷺ said that (as Divinely arranged) Mūsā 'alayhis salām felt no fatigue at all before that, so much so that he had over-traversed the spot where he had to reach. It was only when Mūsā 'alayhis salām asked for his morning meal that Yūshā' ibn Nūn recalled the fate of the fish, tendered his excuse for having forgotten to mention it for the Satan had made him forget about the need to report this matter to him earlier. After that, he disclosed that the dead fish had come alive and gone into the sea in an amazing manner. Thereupon, Mūsā 'alayhis salām said: *'that was what we were looking for.'* (That is, the place where the fish comes alive and disappears was the desired destination).

So they turned back that very instant and took the same route they had taken earlier in order to find the spot they were looking for. Now, when they reached the familiar rock, they saw that someone was lying there covered with a sheet from the head down to the feet. Mūsā 'alayhis salām (taking things as they were) offered the greeting of salām. Al-Khaḍīr 'alayhis salām asked, 'where in the world does this 'salām' come from in this (uninhabited) wilderness?' Thereupon, Mūsā 'alayhis salām said, 'I am Mūsā.' Al-Khaḍīr 'alayhis salām asked, 'Mūsā Banī Isrā'īl?' He confirmed, 'Yes, I am Mūsā Banī Isrā'īl. I have come here to ask you to teach me the knowledge Allah has given to you specially.'

Al-Khaḍīr 'alayhis salām said, 'you will be unable to remain patient with me. O Mūsā, there is a knowledge Allah has given to me and which you do not have while there is a knowledge which Allah has given to you which I do not have.' Mūsā 'alayhis salām said, *'if Allah wills, you will find me patient. I shall not disobey you in any of your orders.'*

Al-Khaḍīr 'alayhis salām said, 'If you are to be with me, do not ask me about anything unless I tell you

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about it first.'

After having said this, they started walking by the shore. Then came a boat. A ride was negotiated. The boat people recognized al-Khaḍir ‘alayhis salām and let them come on board free of any charges. No sooner did he step into the boat, al-Khaḍir ‘alayhis salām forced out a panel of the boat with the help of an axe. Mūsā ‘alayhis salām could not restrain himself. He said, 'These people gave us a free ride on the boat. This is what you did to them in return. You tore their boat apart so that they would drown. You have really done something very bad.' Al-Khaḍir ‘alayhis salām said, 'Did I not tell you before that you will be unable to remain patient with me?' Thereupon, Mūsā ‘alayhis salām offered his excuse that he had forgotten his promise and requested him not to take him to task on his act of inadvertent omission.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ, after relating this event, said, "The first objection raised by Mūsā ‘alayhis salām against al-Khaḍir ‘alayhis salām was activated by forgetfulness, the second as a condition and the third by intention. (Meanwhile) a bird came, sat down on the side of the boat and took out a beak-full of water from the sea. Thereupon, addressing Mūsā ‘alayhis salām al-Khaḍir said, "even the combined knowledge of the two of us, yours and mine, cannot claim a status against Divine knowledge that could be compared even with the water in the beak of this bird as related to this sea."

Then, having disembarked from the boat, they started walking on the shore. All of a sudden, al-Khaḍir ‘alayhis salām saw a boy playing with other boys. Al-Khaḍir ‘alayhis salām killed the boy with his own hands. The boy died. Mūsā ‘alayhis salām said, 'you took an innocent life unjustly. Indeed, this was a grave sin you committed.' Al-Khaḍir ‘alayhis salām said, 'Did I not tell you before that you will be unable to remain patient with me?' Mūsā ‘alayhis salām noticed that this matter was far more serious than the first one. Therefore, he said, 'if I question you after this, you will be free to remove me from your company. As far as I am concerned, you have reached the limit of excuses from me.'

After that, they started walking again until they passed by a village. They requested the village people to house them as guests. They refused. In this habitation, they noticed a wall that was about to collapse. Al-Khaḍir ‘alayhis salām made it stand straight with his own hands. Surprised, Mūsā ‘alayhis salām said, 'we requested their hospitality. They refused. Now you did such a big job for them. If you wished, you could have charged wages from them to do it.' Al-Khaḍir ‘alayhis salām said: hāthā firāqu baynī wa baynika (It means that the condition now stands fulfilled, therefore, time has come for you and me to part company).

Then, after telling Mūsā ‘alayhis salām the reality behind the three events, Al-Khaḍir ‘alayhis salām said: thālīka ta'wīlu mā lam taṣṭī'u 'alayhi ṣabran which means: "That was the reality of the events over which you were unable to remain patient."

Once he had narrated this entire event, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, *"I wish Mūsā 'alayhis salām could have remained more patient so that we would have come to know more about the two of them."*

This lengthy Ḥadīth appears in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim in a manner that it establishes three things. It clearly mentions the name of Sayyidnā Mūsā 'alayhis salām as Mūsā Banī Isrā'īl and his companion during the travel as Yūshā' ibn Nūn and the name of the 'servant of Allah' to whom Sayyidnā Mūsā 'alayhis salām was sent towards 'the meeting point of the two seas as Al-Khaḍir. Now, from this point onwards, we shall take up the verses of the Qur'ān, and explain their sense.

Some rules of the road and a model of high prophetic determination

The first statement made in **verse 60**: (**"I shall not give up until I reach the meeting of the two seas or else I shall go on for years"**) was from Sayyidnā Mūsā 'alayhis salām as addressed to his traveling companion, Yūshā' ibn Nūn. The purpose was to inform him about the direction and destination of the intended journey. This too releases a refinement in manners for he was taking the necessary steps to orient his companion and attendant with the knowledge of things essential for the journey. Proud and arrogant people just do not regard servants and attendants worth addressing, nor would they pass on any information to them about a projected journey.

The word: (*ḥuqubā*: years) is the plural of: (*ḥuqbah*). According to lexicographers, *ḥuqbah* is a period of eighty years. Some add more years to this definition. The truth of the matter is that *ḥuqbah* refers to a long period of time. There are no set limits about it. Here, Sayyidnā Mūsā 'alayhis salām told his companion on the trip that he has to reach a particular place at the meeting point of the two seas. There he must reach as commanded by Allah Ta'ālā and that he was determined to continue his journey until he reaches that destination no matter how long the journey takes. When ready to obey the command of their Lord, this is a model of high determination exhibited by prophets.

Precedence of Sayyidnā Mūsā 'alayhis salām over Al-Khaḍir 'alayhis salām, his upbringing and miracles

In the next verse, it was said: **So, when they reached the meeting point of the two seas, they forgot their fish and it made its way into the sea as in a tunnel - 61**. Before we explain the nature of the extraordinary happening there, it is appropriate to first refer to the distinct position bestowed upon Sayyidnā Mūsā 'alayhis salām in the comity of prophets. This has been mentioned explicitly in the Qur'ān, and Sunnah. The special distinction of having conversed with Allah Ta'ālā is his hallmark. With al-Khaḍir 'alayhis salām, the matter is different. To begin with, the very fact of his being a prophet has been debated. Even if his prophet-hood (*nubuwwah*) is acknowledged, he does not hold the station of a messenger (Rasūl) of Allah. Neither is he credited with a Book, nor does he have a distinct community of followers. Therefore, considering all related aspects, Sayyidnā Mūsā 'alayhis salām has marked

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precedence over al-Khaḍir ‘alayhis salām. But, Allah Ta‘ālā has His own wise ways to help those close to Him perform better. He would not let the least want or short coming go uncorrected and not amended. This process of reform at the highest level would even bring serious displeasure from Allah and it is through an equally serious measure that they are made to repair for it. This whole story reflects the same mode of personal training. By saying: (*anā*: I), he had said: 'I am the foremost in knowledge.' Allah Ta‘ālā did not like it. So, as a measure of warning, he was given the whereabouts of a servant who had a field of knowledge specially given to him by Allah. This Sayyidnā Mūsā ‘alayhis salām did not have. Though the knowledge of Sayyidnā Mūsā ‘alayhis salām was far higher in rank than that given to him, but the truth of the matter was that Sayyidnā Mūsā ‘alayhis salām just did not have it. On the other side, Allah Ta‘ālā had blessed Sayyidnā Mūsā ‘alayhis salām with an intense desire to seek knowledge. As soon as he smelt the scent of knowledge elsewhere too, knowledge that he did not have, he was all set to go for it traveling like an ardent student and it was Allah Ta‘ālā Himself that he turned to for the address of that servant of His (al-Khaḍir ‘alayhis salām) Now, there is something worth pondering at this point. Had it been the will of Allah Ta‘ālā that Mūsā ‘alayhis salām should meet al-Khaḍir at that spot, He could have ranged that easily. Or, if Sayyidnā Mūsā ‘alayhis salām himself was divinely destined to travel, he could have been given a clear address to help him reach it without any botheration. But, what happened here was different. The address given to him was far from being precise - **'when you reach the place where the dead fish stirs and disappears, that will be the place you will find Our servant.'**

Just about what this Ḥadīth of the Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī proves is that the command to put a fish in their basket came from Allah Ta‘ālā. Beyond that, it is not known whether the order was to carry a fish for eating or that it was to be carried as separate from what was to be eaten. Both probabilities exist. Therefore, some of the commentators said that this grilled fish was put in to eat and, during the course of the journey, the two travellers kept eating out of it as well. Eaten thus was almost half of it. After that, miraculously enough, this grilled and half-eaten fish came alive and went into the sea.

Ibn 'Atiyyah and many others also observed that this fish kept surviving in the world as a matter of miracle and there were those who even saw that it had only one side intact while the other was eaten. Ibn 'Atiyyah has also put his personal sighting on record. (Qurtubī)

And there are other commentators who have said that the command was to put a fish in a basket separate from that for food. The fish was put as commanded. Here too, at least this much is definite that the fish was dead. Its stirring up, becoming alive and going into the sea was nothing but a miracle.

We have said a little earlier that the address of al-Khaḍir ‘alayhis salām was left imprecise in a manner that it would not remain easy to pinpoint it. Obviously, this too was nothing but a trial and test for Sayyidnā Mūsā ‘alayhis salām. As though this was not enough, the scenario of an additional test was

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activated for them when they had reached the exact spot but forgot the fish. In the verse of the Qur'ān, this act of forgetting has been attributed to Sayyidnā Mūsā 'alayhis salām and his companion both: **(they forgot their fish - 61)**. But, as regards the story proved from the Ḥadīth of al-Bukhārī, it seems to indicate that Sayyidnā Mūsā 'alayhis salām was asleep when came the time for the fish to become alive and go into the sea. This extraordinary event was witnessed by Yūshā' ibn Nūn only and he had intended that he would relate it to Sayyidnā Mūsā 'alayhis salām as soon as he woke up. But, soon after that happened, Allah Ta'ālā cast a state of oblivion on him and he forgot to do that. If so, the attribution of forgetfulness to both of them would be similar to the statement of the Qur'ān: **55:22**. Here it has been said that pearl and coral are extracted from both sweet and brackish waters - although, these are collected from the later only. But, saying something like this in usage is common. Then it is also possible that since both respected elders had forgotten to take this fish along with them as far as the journey from that point onwards was concerned. Therefore, forgetfulness was attributed to both.

Nevertheless, this was yet another test. After having reached the projected destination, the fish came alive and disappeared into the sea. The reality had unfolded and the place was pinpointed. But, that was not the end. The seeker of truth had to undergo yet another test. Therefore, forgetfulness overtook both of them and it was only after having travelled one day and one night more that they realized hunger and fatigue. This was the third test, because any realization of fatigue and hunger should have naturally come earlier than that. If they had recalled the fish at that earlier time and place, they would have not suffered from such a long additional journey. But, such was the will of Allah Ta'ālā that they had to face a little more of hardship. It was only after having gone through the grind of such a long journey that they felt hungry and thirsty and there it was that they remembered the fish and found out that they had come far ahead of their desired destination. Therefore, they returned back on the same footprints they had left earlier.

The first mention of the fish going into the sea was made through the word: **(sarabā - 61)**. Sarab means a tunnel that is dug to open up a passage through the mountains or an underground subway in cities. This tells us that the fish when it went into the sea had a tunnel-like passage forming itself in whatever direction it moved. Water currents did not obstruct its passage at all, rather left it open - as made explicit by the narrative from the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī. The second time, when Yūshā' ibn Nūn related this event before Sayyidnā Mūsā 'alayhis salām after their long journey, it was done in the following words: **(and, amazingly, it made its way into the sea - 63)**. There is no contradiction between the two, because the incidence of a tunnel forming itself into the sea was by itself an extraordinarily amazing event.

About al-Khaḍir 'alayhis salām the issue of his prophet-hood

Though the name of the person concerned in this event has not been mentioned in the Qur'ān - in fact, he has been called: **(a servant from among Our servants - 65)** - but, in the Ḥadīth of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, his name has been given as: (al-Khaḍir). Literally, it means green, verdant. Giving the reason for his name

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being al-Khaḍir, commentators at large say that grass would grow at the spot where he would sit, no matter what the nature of the land. It would just turn green. The Qur'ān has also not made it clear whether al-Khaḍir 'alayhis salām was prophet, or was one of the men of Allah. But, in the sight of the majority of religious scholars, the proof of his being a prophet is embedded within the events mentioned in the Qur'ān. There is a reason for it. Some of the proved events during this journey that issued forth from al-Khaḍir 'alayhis salām are absolutely counter to the Sharī'ah and there can be no exemption from an injunction of the Sharī'ah except under the authority of a Divine revelation, something restricted to a prophet and messenger of Allah. A waliyy (man of Allah) could also come to know something either through Kashf (illumination) or Ilhām (inspiration). But, that is not an authority to prove a rule of Sharī'ah. No injunction of the externally codified Sharī'ah can be changed on that basis. Therefore, it stands established that al-Khaḍir 'alayhis salām was a prophet and messenger of Allah. Given to him were some of those particular injunctions, injunctions that were counter to the codified Sharī'ah. Whatever he did, he did under the authority of this excepted injunction. He himself has attested to that in the sentence of the Qur'ān saying: **(and I did not do it under my authority - 82)** that is, did it under Divine authority.

In short, according to the majority of religious scholars of the Muslim community, al-Khaḍir 'alayhis salām too is a prophet and messenger. But, it was an imperative of creation that some duties were assigned to him from Allah. The knowledge given to him related to these very duties. Of this Sayyidnā Mūsā 'alayhis salām had no information, therefore, he objected. This subject has been dealt with in Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī, al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ of Abū Ḥayyān and in most commentaries variously.

It is not lawful for any waliyy or man of Allah to contravene the injunction of codified Sharī'ah

Right from here we learn that there is no shortage of ignorant and misguided Ṣūfīs who give a bad name to Taṣawwuf. The likes of them would say that Sharī'ah is something else and Ṭarīqah is something else. There are many things taken as *ḥarām* in the Sharī'ah, but they are permissible in the Ṭarīqah. Therefore, even if you see a *waliyy* (man of Allah) involved in a major sin openly and clearly, you cannot raise an objection against him! This is heresy, flagrant and false. No *waliyy*, no man of Allah anywhere in this world can be taken on the analogy of al-Khaḍir 'alayhis salām, nor can any act contrary to the codified Sharī'ah issuing forth from him be called permissible.

Following the teacher is incumbent on the student

In **verse 66**: Sayyidnā Mūsā 'alayhis salām, despite being a prophet and messenger of great resolve, has most reverentially requested al-Khaḍir 'alayhis salām if he could follow him to learn his knowledge from him. This tells us that the etiquette of acquiring knowledge is nothing but that the student should show respect for the teacher and follow him (as an individual who is eager to learn) - even if the student happens to be superior to his teacher. (Qurṭubī, Maḥzarī)

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It is not permissible for an 'Ālim of the 'Sharī'ah' to patiently bear what is contrary to the Sharī'ah
By saying: **(You can never be able to keep patient while with me. And how would you keep patient over something your comprehension cannot grasp? - 67, 68)**, al-Khaḍir 'alayhis salām was telling Sayyidnā Mūsā 'alayhis salām about the fact and the reason why he would be unable to keep patient with him. He knew nothing about the reality of the thing. What he meant was that the nature of knowledge given to him was different from the knowledge of Sayyidnā Mūsā 'alayhis salām, therefore, things he did would appear to be objectionable in his sight, until he himself was to apprise him of their reality. Thus, the objections he would raise against such actions would be triggered by the dictates of his mission as a prophet.

Since Sayyidnā Mūsā 'alayhis salām was ordered to go to and learn from al-Khaḍir 'alayhis salām by none but Allah Ta'ālā, therefore, he was initially at peace with himself hoping that nothing he did would really be counter to the Sharī'ah - though, he may not understand it externally. So, he promised to keep patient. Otherwise, the making of such a promise is not permissible for any 'Ālim of Dīn. But, later on, overtaken by his strong sense of honor relating to the Sharī'ah, he forgot about this promise.

The first event was really not that serious. That the boat people would suffer from financial loss or the boat may sink remained at the level of an impending danger only - which stood removed later on. But, in the case of the event that took place thereafter, Mūsā 'alayhis salām did not even make that promise of not objecting. In fact, when he saw the incident of a boy having been killed, he objected vehemently and did not offer any excuse whatsoever for his objection either. He simply said if he came up with an objection next time, al-Khaḍir 'alayhis salām would have the right of not keeping him in his company. The underlying logic was that no prophet and messenger of Allah can bear by seeing things being done against the norms of the Sharī'ah and yet maintaining a stance of peevish patience. However, this was a unique situation. There were prophets on both sides. Therefore, the reality unfolded. It finally turned out that these fragmentary events were exempted for al-Khaḍir 'alayhis salām from the purview of the general rules of the Sharī'ah. Whatever he did, he did only in accordance with the dictates of the Divine Waḥy (revelation). (Maḏharī)

Basic difference in the knowledge of Sayyidnā Mūsā 'alayhis salām and al-Khaḍir 'alayhis salām: Resolution of an apparent dichotomy

Naturally, a question arises here. We see that, according to the explanation of al-Khaḍir 'alayhis salām, the nature of the knowledge given to him was different from that of the knowledge of Sayyidnā Mūsā 'alayhis salām. Now, when both these two areas of knowledge were given by Allah Ta'ālā alone, why did this contradiction and difference show up in their two respective injunctions? Qāḍī Thanauḷlāh of Pānīpat has given a research-based answer to this question in his Tafsīr Maḏharī. It is the closest to being right and appealing. Given below is a gist of what I understand from his presentation: 'The blessed souls Allah

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Ta'ālā honors with His revelation and prophet-hood are generally those who are entrusted with the mission of making people better. Sent to them is a Book and Sharī'ah which offer principles and rules that serve as blueprints of guidance and betterment for the creation of Allah. Blessed prophets and messengers mentioned in the noble Qur'ān as such were all assigned with the mission of Law and Reform. To this related the Revelation they received. But then, there are services essential to the realm of creation (*takwīn*) as well. Generally, appointed to take care of these are the angels of Allah. However, Allah Ta'ālā has specifically chosen some from among the group of prophets also in order to carry out the services of *takwīn* (whereby the decisions of Allah's will relating to the management of His creation are enforced). Al-Khaḍir 'alayhis salām belongs to this very group. These imperatives of *takwīn* relate to minor incidents and events, that a certain person should be saved from getting drowned, or someone should be killed, promoted or demoted or subdued. These matters do not relate to common people at all, nor are they addressed by these imperatives. In such events of minor consequences, one may confront some of those situations where killing a person is against the religious law. But, under the imperative of creation, that particular event has been exempted from the general religious law and the act has been made permissible for the person who has been appointed to carry out this imperative of *takwīn*. Under such conditions, the experts of religious law are not aware of this exempted injunction and are compelled to call it '*ḥarām*' (unlawful) and the person who has been exempted from this law under the imperative of *takwīn* remains in the right in his own place.

In short, wherever such a contradiction is perceived, it is no contradiction in the real sense. It is simply the exemption of some minor events from the general religious law. In al-Baḥr al-Muḥīt, Abū Ḥayyān said: The majority holds Al-Khaḍir 'alayhis salām to be a prophet and his knowledge was the gnosis of (the inner dimensions of the human) self which was revealed to him and the knowledge of Mūsā 'alayhis salām was of the injunctions and rulings on the apparent. (Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīt, p. 147, v. 6)

For the aforesaid reason, it is also necessary that this exemption should take effect through revelation to a prophet. The Kashf (illumination) and Ilhām (inspiration) of some Waliyy (man of Allah) are never sufficient to make such an exemption effective. This is the reason why the act of al-Khaḍir 'alayhis salām in a killing a boy apparently without a just reason was *ḥarām* (unlawful) in the sight of the Sharī'ah which rules on the apparent. But, as for al-Khaḍir 'alayhis salām, he was appointed to do that while exempted from this law as an imperative of creation (*takwīn*). Taking the Kashf and Ilhām of some non-prophet on the analogy of al-Khaḍir 'alayhis salām and thereby taking something *ḥarām* (unlawful) to be *ḥalāl* (lawful) - as popular among some ignorant Ṣūfīs - is totally anti-religion and certainly, a rebellion against Islam.

Ibn Abī Shaibah reports an event relating to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās raḍī'allāhu 'anhu by saying that Najdah Harūrī (a Kharijite) wrote a letter to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās and asked as to how did al-Khaḍir 'alayhis

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salām kill a minor boy when the Holy Prophet ﷺ has prohibited the killing of minors. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās answered his letter by saying, *'if you were to receive the same knowledge about some minor as was received by Sayyidnā Mūsā's man of knowledge'* (that is, al-Khaḍir 'alayhis salām), the killing of a minor would become permissible for you too!' What he meant was that al-Khaḍir 'alayhis salām had received his knowledge about it only through revelation exclusive to a prophet. That nobody can have now because prophet-hood has ended. There is to be no prophet after the Last among Prophets, that is, Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafā ﷺ, who could have through revelation knowledge about some particular person to have been exempted under Divine command in the case of such events. (Maḏharī)

From this event too, the real thing becomes clear, that is, no one other than a revelation-receiving prophet has the right to declare anyone as exempted from any Islamic legal injunction.

This concludes the commentary for Day 15.