The narrative of Mūsa (Moses) (peace be upon him) and Al-Khidr

Sa‘īd ibn Jubayr reported: I said to Ibn ‘Abbās: "Nawf al-Bakāli claims that Mūsa is not the Mūsa of the Children of Israel; that he is a different Mūsa." He said: "The enemy of Allah has lied. Ubay ibn Ka‘b reported: The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: “Mūsa stood to deliver a speech before the Children of Israel and the people asked him: ‘Who is the most learned person among the people?’ Mūsa replied: ‘I am.’ Allah rebuked him because he did not attribute the knowledge to Him. So Allah revealed to him: ‘At the junction of the two seas, there is a servant of Ours who is more learned than you.’ Mūsa asked: ‘O my Lord, how can I meet him?’ Allah said: ‘Take a fish and put it in a basket and then set out, and where you lose the fish, you will find him.’ So he set out along with his boy-servant Yūsha‘ ibn Nūn, and they carried a fish inside a large basket until they reached a rock (on which) they both laid their heads down and slept. The fish snuck out of the basket and slipped off through the sea. Mūsa and his boy-servant were astonished. They continued on through the rest of the night and day, and the next morning Mūsa said to his boy-servant: ‘Bring us our meal; truly, we have suffered much fatigue on this journey.’ Mūsa did not feel tired until he had passed the place that Allah had told him to look for. His boy-servant then said to him: ‘Do you remember when we rested on the rock? Well, I forgot all about the fish; and it was none other than the devil who made me forget.’ Mūsa said: ‘That was what we have been looking for,’ so they returned, retracing their footsteps. When they reached the rock, they found a man shrouded with a robe. Mūsa greeted him with the greeting of peace. Al-Khidr said: ‘Is there (such a greeting of) peace in your land?’ Mūsa said: ‘I am Mūsa.’ He said: ‘Are you the Mūsa of the Children of Israel?’ Mūsa said: ‘Yes,’ and added: ‘May I follow you so you can teach me something of the guidance that you have been taught?’ Al-Khidr said: ‘You will not be able to have patience with me. O Mūsa. I have some of Allah's knowledge, which He has bestowed upon me that you do not know, and you too, have some of Allah's knowledge, which He has bestowed upon you that I do not know.’ Mūsa said: ‘If Allah wills, you will find me patient, and I will not disobey you.’ So they set out walking along the shore, until a boat passed by and they asked the crew to let them on board. The crew recognized Al-Khidr and allowed them on board free of charge. A bird came and perched on the edge of the boat and pecked in the sea once or twice. Al-Khidr said: ‘My knowledge and your knowledge compared to Allah's knowledge are like the pecking of that bird in the sea.’ Al-Khidr then broke one of the boat's panels and pulled it out. Mūsa said to him: ‘These people gave us a free ride, yet you have broken their boat so its people will drown!’ Al-Khidr said: ‘Did I not say that you would not be able to have patience with me?’ Mūsa said: ‘Call me not to account for what I forgot and be not hard upon me in my affairs.’ So Mūsa’s first questioning was due to forgetfulness. They both continued on and came upon a boy playing with some other boys. Al-Khidr took hold of

the boy's head and pulled it right off with his hands, killing him. Mūsa said to him: ‘Have you killed an innocent soul without a right?’ He said: ‘Did I not say to you that you would not be able to have patience with me?’ Ibn ‘Uyaynah said: ‘And this was more assertive.’ They continued on until they came to a town and they asked the people for some food, but they refused to entertain them. They found a wall in the town that was on the point of falling down. Al-Khidr set it straight with his own hands. Mūsa said: ‘If you had wished, surely, you could have asked for wages for that!’ He said: "This is the parting between you and me.’" The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "May Allah have mercy on Mūsa! If only he had had more patience so Allah could have told us more about them both!"

[Authentic hadith] [Narrated by Bukhari & Muslim]

Sa‘īd ibn Jubayr said that he informed Ibn ‘Abbās that a man named Nawf al-Bakāli claimed that the Mūsa who was with Al-Khidr is not the same Mūsa that was sent to the Children of Israel, and it was another Mūsa. So Ibn ‘Abbās said: "The enemy of Allah has lied." This statement came as a rebuke and warning, not to defame Nawf, as Ibn ‘Abbās had said it in a moment of anger, and statements made in anger are usually inaccurate. Furthermore, his words were due to Al-Bakāli saying something that was not true; this does not mean that it was intentional. He then proved that Nawf had lied by relating the report of Ubay ibn Ka‘b from the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) in which Mūsa stood to give a speech to the Children of Israel and someone asked him: "Who is the most learned person among the people?" Mūsa said: "I am the most knowledgeable of the people." And Mūsa, peace be upon him, said this according to his belief. So Allah, Exalted and Glorified, rebuked him as he had not ascribed the knowledge he had to Allah by saying: "And Allah knows best." So Allah, the Exalted, revealed to him that at the junction of the two seas there is one of His servants called Al-Khidr, who is more knowledgeable than him. Mūsa said: "My Lord, how can I find him?" Allah said to him: "Carry a fish in a wicker basket and when you lose the fish, you will find Al-Khidr there." So Mūsa took off with a young servant of his named Yūsha‘ ibn Nūn, and they took a fish in a wicker basket as Allah had ordered them. And when they reached a rock on the sea shore, they put their heads down on the ground and slept. The fish snuck out of the basket and set off into the sea. Allah held the water back from the fish until it became like an arch over it. Mūsa and his servant were astonished at the fish's coming back to life and also about the water being held back from the fish until it became like a tunnel. They carried on for the rest of their night and day, and when morning came, Mūsa said to his servant: "Bring us our meal, indeed we have become tired on our journey." Mūsa (peace be upon him) had not felt tired until they had passed the place they had been told to look for and then he was overcome by exhaustion and hunger. His servant said to him: "While we were at the rock, I lost the fish." Mūsa said: "This is what we were seeking, because that was the sign of Al-Khidr's presence." So they retraced their steps back to where the fish was lost. When they came to the rock, they found a man shrouded by his robe. Mūsa greeted him with the greeting of peace and Al-Khidr said: "Is there (such a greeting of) peace in your land?" meaning: is there any peace in your land? And it was an inquiry of improbability, indicating that the people of that land were not Muslims. Mūsa said to Al-Khidr: "I am Mūsa." Al-Khidr said to him: "Are you the Mūsa who was sent to the Children of Israel?" Mūsa said: 'Yes.' This indicates that the prophets and those of lesser status do not possess knowledge of the unseen, except for what Allah, the Exalted, taught them, because, had Al-Khidr known all

matters of the unseen, he would have recognized Mūsa before asking him. It was for this statement in particular that Ibn ‘Abbās mentioned this Hadīth. Then Mūsa said to him: "May I follow you so you can teach me something of the guidance that you have been taught?" It is noteworthy that learning a non-essential religious matter from someone else does not negate him being a prophet or the possessor of divine legislation, because a Messenger must be more knowledgeable than those to whom he is sent in terms of the foundations and branches of the religion, and not in an absolute sense. Al-Khidr replied: "You will not be able to have patience with me", meaning: as I do things that appear evil on the outside, but you will not comprehend the intrinsic nature of what I do. Then he said to him: "O Mūsa, I have some of Allah's knowledge, which He has bestowed upon me that you do not know, and you too, have some of Allah's knowledge, which He has bestowed upon you that I do not know." Mūsa said to him: "If Allah wills, you will find me patient with you without rejecting or disobeying you in anything." Later, they set off walking along the seashore, as they did not have a boat. A boat passed by them and they asked the crew to let them on board. As they recognized Al-Khidr, they let them come on board free of charge. A bird came and perched on the edge of the boat and pecked in sea once or twice. Al-Khidr said: "O Mūsa, my knowledge and your knowledge compared to that of Allah are like the pecking of this bird in the sea." Then Al-Khidr broke one of the boat's panels and pulled it out with an axe, making a hole in it to drown the crew. Mūsa (peace be upon him) said to him: "These people have let us on board free of charge and you have broken their boat and made a hole in it so they will drown!" Al-Khidr reminded him of what he said before by saying: "Did I not say that you will not be able to have patience with me?" Mūsa said: "Do not hold me to account for my forgetfulness, and do not be harsh on me, as that makes it difficult for me to follow you." So Mūsa’s first mistake was due to his forgetfulness. They continued on after disembarking from the boat, until they came upon a boy playing with some other boys. Al-Khidr took the boy's head and ripped it off with his hands. Mūsa said to Al-Khidr (peace be upon him): "Did you kill a soul pure of sin? We have not seen him commit any mistake that warrant killing him, or did he kill someone and should be killed in retribution for it?" Al-Khidr said to Mūsa (peace be upon both of them): "Did I not say to you that you will not be able to have patience with me?" This time, it was with the addition of "to you," which is more rebuking; and that is why Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah, one of the narrators of the Hadīth, said: "And this is more assertive," proving it by the addition of "to you.” They continued on until they passed by a town, and they asked the people for some food, but the people refused to entertain them and they found neither lodging nor shelter in that town. They did however, find a wall there that was about to fall down and collapse, so Al-Khidr made a signal with his hand and straightened it up. Mūsa said to Al-Khidr: "If you wished, you could have gotten paid for that to support us on our journey." Al-Khidr then said to Mūsa (peace be upon him): "This third objection is the cause for the split between you and me." The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "May Allah have mercy on Mūsa! If only he had had more patience, so we could have gained more of the knowledge and wisdom exchanged between them.”

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