

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

A. Analysis to Variant Meanings of Term عبد in Verse al-Kahf Chapter

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The research about Khidr it seems visible complicated to on identification. To explanatory, the commentators much more lean to *hadith* of the Prophet, and it was not sufficient to bring the theme of Khidr to a conclusion which could be considered of valid.

From the reviews regarding the interpretation of the word “*‘abd*” contained in *sūrah* al-Kahf *ayāh* 65, as has been described in chapter three related to the interpretation of the word ‘*abd*’ are exegesis by the commentator from the classical era, mid, until modern. Here we can see that *jumhūr mufassīr* provide a statement that ‘*abd*’ in verse sixty-five *Sūrah al-Kahf* is that Khidr, but Khidr is not the original name.

The name is basically just a nickname or *laqab*,¹ nickname for someone is oftentimes we find in Arab land. The epithet (*laqab*) was related to personality traits, attitudes, actions or *nisbah*.² The Prophet Muḥammad, has a lot of nicknames, among them *al-amīn*, because the Prophet Muḥammad can be trusted ‘Trustworthy’ or *al-ummī*, because the

¹ The *laqab* (Arabic: لقب “cognomen” / “surname”) is intended as a description of the person. For example, the Abbasid Caliph Haroun al-Rashid (of *A Thousand and One Nights* fame). Haroun is the Arabic form for Aaron and "al-Rashid" means "the rightly-guided". The *laqab* was very popular in ancient Arab societies, ca. 1000 years ago. Today, the *Laqab* is only used if it is actually a person's birth Surname/Family name. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_name (08/11/13)

² The *nisbah* (Arabic: نسبة) Surname. It could be an everyday name, but is mostly the name of the ancestors' tribe, city, country, or any other term used to show relevance. It follows a family through several generations. Note: The *Laqab* and the *Nisbah* are similar in use, thus, a name rarely contains both. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_name (08/11/13)

Prophet known do not know to read and write, allotment of this epithet also happens to naming Khiḍr.

God deliberately let the mystery was not revealed, until then through the hadīths we all know that the person or ‘*abd*’ is Khiḍr. Regarding the name Khiḍr there are some authentic hadīth which mention it, in *Shahīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Prophet Muḥammad said;

إِنَّمَا سُمِّيَ الْخَضِرُ لِأَنَّهُ جَلَسَ عَلَى فَرْوَةٍ بَيِّضَاءَ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَهْتَرُ مِنْ تَحْتِهِ
خَضِرَاءَ

“He was called Khiḍr because he sat on a barren Farwah that turned white, then it turned green (Khaḍra) beneath him.” (Bukhārī report)

Because al-Qur’ān never mentions the name of a (Pious Slave) *al-‘abd aṣ-ṣhālīh* which Moses was learned to him, then the above hadīth gives us clues about the early mention of Khiḍr for the Moses friend. *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* also refer to a hadīth narrated by Bukhārī to explain the name of this servant of God. As explained in the previous discussion, Moses which ordered of God to take a knowledge to his servant the more clever of him, that is, Khiḍr.

From multiple sources, who called him with the title Khiḍr Balyan bin Malkan, here is some opinions³ about the origin of the Khiḍr name;

1. The Report of Ibnu ‘Abbas

Khiḍr is the name from the grandchild of Prophet Adam devout worship to God Almighty. and extended his age, as explained from

³ Moḥammad Sanusi and Muḥammad Ali Fakir RA, *Membaca Misteri Nabi Khiḍir as.*, Mitra Pustaka, Yogyakarta, 2010, p. 11-12.

the book *Al-Ifrād* by Daruquthnī and Ibnu Asakir which narrative from Ibn ‘Abbās.

2. In the *Fathūl Bari*, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah* and *Ruhūl Ma’ānī*
 Khiḍr mothers coming from Roman, whereas his father stak from Persian.
3. an-Nawāwī
 al-Alusi said that Khiḍr is the son of a king, his father’s is Balkan (King of Persian) whereas his mother’s is Alha binti Faris.
4. Khiḍr have a three of name, namely the real name, *kunyah* (nickname), and *laqab* (epithet). His real name is Balya bin Malkān bin Flakh bin Anbār bin Salakh bin Arfakhsyadz bin Sam bin Nūh as. bin Lamak bin Mutawasylikh bin Idrīs as. bin Yard bin Mahlail bin Qainān bin Yanasy bin Syits bin Adam as.
5. Khiḍr also called with Abul Abbās al-Khiḍr as a surname which *laqab* from Khiḍir or Khaḍir.
6. Khiḍr have a another name Talia bin Malīk bin Abīr bin Arfakhsyadz bin Sam (Shem) bin Nūh as.
7. *Ruhūl Ma’ānī* vol. X page 319
 Khiḍr also called with *Khaḍir*, *al-Khaḍir* or *al-Khiḍir*.
8. *Report* from Ibnu Asakir and Mujahid
 Khiḍr mean ‘green’, then it turned green (Khaḍra’) beneath him.
9. Report from Bukhārī in *Fathūl Bari*’ vol. VI page 309; *Tarikh aṭ-Ṭabārī* vol. I page 194.
 He was called Khiḍr because he sat on a barren *Farwah* that turned white, then it turned green (Khaḍra’) beneath him.
10. Khiḍr form son of Pharaoh (Fir’aūn).

11. Annemarie Schimmel in her work *Mystical Dimension of Islam* write, Prophet Khidr is considered as one of the four living prophet today, known as 'eternal figure'. The other three are Idris, Ilyās and Prophet Isā, Khidr becoming immortal because he was drinking from the water of life (immortality).

It is said so from the scholars of describe about Khidr. The opinions above, certainly suggests a controversial stance, it could not be separated from the existence of Khidr life, which seems unclear. However, that is all, of controversial attitudes of the scholars although peculiarity of understanding about Khidr, form of a God power. Khidr was including which the mystery itself. God give this characteristic to him as a *rahmah*. Because from this *rahmah*, Khidr become a human that seemed "strange" in our understanding, but Khidr keep pouring in our believe that his one from The Prophet of God.

B. Khidr as Prophet and *Walī*

According to the Islamic sources, Prophet Muḥammad is considered to have three major attributes. First, he has *risāla*; he is a *rasūl*, that is., he carries a message. This is the feature of the prophet that has to do with his mission as the conveyer (messenger) of the divine law (*syarī'a*).

Second, he has *nubuwwah*; he is a *nabī*, that is, a prophet, and this has to do with his task as the conveyer of a path (*ṭariqa*), a set of practices to bring the faithful closer to God.

Finally, he has *walāya*, that is, as a *walī*, he is intimate with God and therefore, rivy to the inner mystery of God (*haqiqa*). Now, *walāya* is basic to all prophecy, but not *nubuwwa* and *risāla*. In the Islamic tradition, a very select number of other prophets are considered to have all three of these attributes, among whom Jesus and Moses figure prominent scholar

of Islamic thought, Henry Corbin, uses the following metaphor, “the *risāla* is like the shell, the *nubuwwa* is like the almonds.”⁴ The *risāla* concerns the exoteric aspect of prophet Muḥammad’s mission, *nubuwwa* has to do with the esoteric—it goes beyond concern about communal behavior and social justice, it aims to build character and bring the believer to spiritual realization—and *walāya* concern the esoteric of the esoteric (*bāṭin al-bāṭin*)—that is, the truth unveiled to one who is in truth.⁵

In any event, Moses—according to his passage of the Qur’ān—is in search of the junction of the two seas (*majm’a al-bahrāin*)—a place the significance of which is not discussed in that episode but it does have the implication of the site where the physical and the spiritual converge.⁶ Moses is supposed to meet a servant (*‘ābid*) of God who will instruct him in divine knowledge. Now this is interesting in that in the Islamic tradition, Moses is considered a *rasūl*, that is, a prophet in the full sense of the word (*walī + nabī + rasūl*). So what does he have to learn from this other person?

In order to make sense of this encounter with the Islamic account of prophecy developed so far, Moses, in the episode related in verses 60-82 of the *al-Kahf*, must not have yet attained *wilāya*, and I submit that it is precisely in the engagement with Khidr that Moses receives the necessary instruction. Therefore, Khidr must be a *walī*, and this is evidenced by the description of Khidr as one “on whom we had bestowed mercy from ourselves and whom we had taught knowledge from our own presence (*al-ladunnā*: 18:65).” Abdullah Yusuf Ali connects this knowledge to the

⁴ Henry Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, translated by Liadain Sherrard, Kegan Paul International, London, 1993, p. 44.

⁵ Lalu Agus Satriawan, *Analisa Sufistik Kenabian Teosofi*, Journal TEOSOFI, June 2011, vol. I, p. 27-8.

⁶ Palgrave Macmillan, *Crisis, Call, and Leadership in the Abrahamic Traditions*, p. 161. http://books.google.co.id/books?id=7ZXDAAAAQBAJ&dq=Khidr+knowledge&hl=id&source=gbs_navlinks_s (22/10/13)

meaning of “Khiḍr.” ‘Khiḍr’ means ‘Green’: his knowledge is fresh and green, and drawn out of the living sources of life, for it is drawn from God’s own Presence.”⁷ This privileged knowledge by presence I take to be the subtle knowledge of the *walī*, the intimate of God. It is the knowledge that is available from the source of revelation—that is, *awwāl*—through the process of interpreting (*ta’wīl*). Khiḍr has it⁸ and Moses is in search of it. This is not to underestimate the strength and the magnificence of Moses’ prophecy once he attains *wilāya*. There are many passages in the Qur’ān testifying to the privileged status of Moses needs to learn the art of *ta’wīl* from Khiḍr.

Moses and his companion miss the junction of the two seas, where they are supposed to meet Khiḍr, because they forget to look for a definite sign. They remember it subsequently, return to the junction, and encounter Khiḍr. Upon meeting Khiḍr, Moses embarks with him on a journey. Three principle events take place during this journey and Moses protests each time Khiḍr adopts a course of action.

In Islam, as we have seen, the community’s subjugation to the divine law is central to the practice of the religion. All Muslims are considered equal, and the prophet, who is a human being, is considered the final prophet (*rasūl*) and with him the line of prophecy (*risāla*) comes to an end. All these go to emphasize equality, but in Islam, egalitarianism is compounded with a concern for the individual, which is also derived from the scripture. For instance, each Muslim is commanded to devote a percentage of his income to the poor or charitable causes. In the Qur’ānic episode at hand, Khiḍr’s anonymous preservation of the sign marking the site of the treasure belonging to the involves a perception of the good in the particular situation. Perhaps the point of the episode is that divine

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

justice is not mainly comparative and based on divine command deontology (as expressed in the *syarī'a*): it also addresses particular situations and attends the good reflected in them.

C. Analysis to Story of Moses and Khidr as Figures in al-Qur'ān

Read the narrative story of Moses and Khidr means an attempt to perform the demolition of the ideological value of text.⁹ The ideological value of this text is hidden, and can become of value of moral, aesthetic, and even theology.¹⁰ Literary works, as well as the narrative of Moses and Khidr, can mediate of ideological values (myth), because it is a representation of social reality, politics, economics and culture. As a text which meets the category of literature, the story of Moses and Khidr also loaded with myths.

The story of Moses and Khidr remains a literary work that become of theme and purpose of the 'author'. This mean, the ideological message conveyed through by the author with the text (narrative text of Moses and Khidr), in generating of narrative, the author not only make of the text, but at the same time he has created a myth. Read the story of Moses and Khidr mean the demolition of the ideological context or myth which tucked in between the stories.

Three episodes present Moses with appearances of impropriety and transgression on the part of Khidr. First, Khidr opens a breach in the hull of a boat; Moses cannot prevent himself from expressing the suspicion that Khidr did so to drown the people who were on board, and strongly voices his moral outrage. Next, Khidr kills a young man, whom they had encountered on their way; Moses blames his companion for this action. Finally, after having been denied hospitality by the inhabitants of a certain

⁹ see Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, Hill and Wang, New York, 1974, p. 4

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

city, Khiḍr rebuilds a wall that was about to crumble without asking a salary for it, as Moses had suggested he do.

Before parting from his companion, Khiḍr provides Moses with the answers for which he has not been able to wait: *first*, the boat was damaged because it would otherwise have been appropriated by a king, thereby ruining the poor people who owned it. *Second*, the young man was going to impose rebellion and unfaithfulness upon his parents. *Third*, as for the wall, it belonged to two young boys: their father had buried a treasury underneath, and Khiḍr did not want them to find it before they had become adults. As a conclusion to his explanation, Khiḍr unequivocally states that he has performed none of these seemingly bad actions “I did it not of my own accord” (*wa mā fa’altuhū ‘an amrī*) there by alluding to his serving and executing God’s will. Upon each of Khiḍr’s actions, Moses expresses his shock and indignation, in conformity with the moral and legal perspective that he embodies.

The Qur’ān particularly emphasizes his lack of “patience”, and Khiḍr had actually prophesied from the outset that Moses would not be patient with him ¹¹ (إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا) founding this prediction on Moses’ lack of knowledge. Khiḍr’s knowledge of God’s way is direct, or inspired, whereas Moses is indirect and legal; Khiḍr’s point of view is synthetic: he is able to situate actions and events within the “greater picture” of God’s Will, the All-Possibility that transcends purely moral apprehensions of the Divine, while Moses can only understand God’s Will on the level of His injunctions and proscriptions. Moses’ lack of patience is connected to his inability to consider reality beyond the level of phenomenal existence and literal meaning. Khiḍr embodies the demiurgic unfolding of possibilities inasmuch as he actualizes these possibilities in conformity with the providential order, but on a level where the truth and

¹¹ QS. Al-Kahf/18: 67.

justice of these manifestations may not be understood *prima facie*. Khidr represents the amoral perspective of metaphysics, a perspective that is not accessible from the strict point of view of the Law.

It is interesting to note that Khidr's explanation of his own actions is expressed in three different grammatical ways, with three different subjects: in the first account, Khidr relates the intent of his action in the first person singular: "I wanted (*aradtū*)¹² to damage (the boat)" (18:79); in the second instance, the subject of the verb is in the first person plural, "we wanted (*aradnā*)¹³ that" (18:81); while in the third case, the subject is in the third person singular, "your Lord wanted" (*fa arāda rabbuka*)¹⁴ (18:82). This grammatical shift is highly illustrative of the various levels of Divine Will. The Divine Will is first considered from the standpoint of the "demiurge's" apparent initiative; it is then envisaged in the perspective of a fusion of the demiurgic and Divine Will *stricto sensu*; while it is finally presented as God's highest decree. This mobility of perspective, which takes place within the space of a few verses, is clearly indicative of a possible shift in the level of understanding of the onto-cosmological unfolding. Let us not, however, that Khidr embodies an "enlightened" demiurgic perspective, in the science that he remains fully aware of God's will as it is manifested to him: he is a *servant* (*'abd*) in a full and direct science, and not only a passive and unconscious instrument of God's will.¹⁵

A few additional remarks are in order concerning the implications of the demiurgic process as illustrated in the *Sūrah* of the Cave. We should

QS. Al-Kahf/18: 69. فَأَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَعِيبَهَا وَكَانَ وَرَاءَهُمْ مَلَكٌ يَأْخُذُ كُلَّ سَفِينَةٍ غَصْبًا¹²

QS. Al-Kahf/18: 81. فَأَرَدْنَا أَنْ يُبَدِّلَهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا خَيْرًا مِنْهُ زَكَوَةً وَأَقْرَبَ رَحْمًا¹³

QS. Al-Kahf: 82. فَأَرَادَ رَبُّكَ أَنْ يَبْلُغَا أَشُدَّهُمَا وَيَسْتَخْرِجَا كَثْرَهُمَا رَحْمَةً مِنْ رَبِّكَ¹⁴

¹⁵ *Divine Play, Sacred Laughter, and Spiritual Understanding*, p. 33-5. Access at: http://books.google.co.id/books/about/Divine_Play_Sacred_Laughter_and_Spiritua.html?id=BmRJUMXZ2fgC&redir_esc=y (23/10/13).

notice, first, that the narrative introduces Moses and his servant at the point where the former has just lost his fish at the meeting place of the two seas. These two seas have been traditionally interpreted, in the context of Sufi metaphysics, as the Lower and Higher Waters: their confluence is the *barzakh*, or isthmus, that lies between the anemic and spiritual realms, the soul and the Spirit-Intellect. It is in this *barzakh* that is situated the “inversion” which makes it possible to pass to the other side of the mirror, that is, to change perspective in the sense of not taking the soul any longer as point of reference and identifying with the Intellect as center of consciousness. In this context, the fish represents the spiritual symbol, the “sacramental” and transcendent means that allows one to “swim” from one sea into the other. Khiḍr is himself “at home” in both domains, and one of his functions is actually to “join” the two worlds of light and darkness.

From another standpoint, which is the metaphysical complement to the aforementioned spiritual point of view, the fish may point to the unity of being (*wahdāt al-wujūd*) since it bears witness to a continuity between the two oceans. Nevertheless, having lost his fish, a symbol of the Spirit, Moses cannot progress any further and he finds himself obliged to retrace his steps, and perhaps even gets lost (18:64). It is precisely at this moment that he meets the mysterious traveler who will henceforth serve as his spiritual guide, in the verses that follow, Moses and Khiḍr are described as wanderers, as if their lack of a clear and intended direction alluded to the “providence” of God’s will over their path. Let us note that, by contrast, Moses’ initial intent was particularly clear in terms of its goal: “*Behold, Moses said to his attendant, “I will not give up until I reach the junction of the two seas or (until) I spend years and years in travel.”*” (18:60). On this mysterious and unsettling way, the patience demanded by Khiḍr of Moses is none other than the trust required from the soul on the spiritual path inasmuch, or as long as, it cannot reach the level of vision that is the purview of the Intellect. The soul’s relative “darkness” prevents man from

being totally transparent to the Intellect, and this is the reason why the soul must “wait” before being revealed the “full picture” of Reality. Moreover, the “separation” (*hāz̄ā firāqu baynī wa baynika*) (18:68) that puts an end to the association of Khidr with Moses, marks, in a certain sense, the failure of the soul to be totally trusting in the Spirit. The Law, and the Revelation that vehicles it, and which Moses “embodies” is required precisely because of the opacity of man, or of the overwhelming majority of men, to remain “connected” to the Intellect, and to be, so to speak, transparent to it.

Glance at the text there is no explanation, who is Moses and also who is Khidr? Why did Moses ask to be allowed to accompany him (Khidr)? What kind of knowledge is meant in this narrative so that Moses would not be able to be patient if require it.

A.1. Moses

Moses in this context is a someone who is inquiring to seek knowledge. He comes to someone who in this context has the shape of knowledge, and then he asks permission to him to follow for this journey and teach a some of knowledge. Here Moses is a prospective student from Khidr.

The next question is, whether Moses is a historical fact or just a legend. Etymologically, the name of Moses coming from Hebrews language ‘*Mosche*’ is mean ‘water’.¹⁶ It is certainly very reasonable because from the other story, Moses was born in a not conducive political system with the result that his mothers sweep away on the river. In short,

¹⁶ Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism (Moses dan Monotheisme)* translate by Burhan Ali, Jendela, Yogyakarta, 2003, p. 2.

Pharaoh's wife took Moses.¹⁷ Moses or *Mosche* means 'taken from the water'.

A.2. Khiḍr

In this story, the Khiḍr name is not shown explicit. He is present in the form of the pronoun 'he' (*damīr*) sharpness *damīr huwa*. This word indicates the male person (single) plural 'hum'. Khiḍr name only exists in the imagination of reader, Khiḍr figure living in the *meeting of two seas*, al-Zamakhsharī in *al-Kashahāf* mentions of two meetings this sea as mean the meeting of two areas of knowledge, Moses knowledge and Khiḍr knowledge.¹⁸

If Moses can be examined by historical biography, Khiḍr is not so. So far, both from commentators note (classic, the middle, until modern) and an explanation of al- Qur'ān and hadīth, has not found clear information about him, he is a very mysterious person in a historical context. In Islamic tradition, Khiḍr often imagined as a powerful, having a divine knowledge (*al-'ilm al-ladunī*), mysterious, and some said that Khiḍr is still alive (immortal) until now.

Such delineation does not exist in the text, in this case Khiḍr just a figure that has a very high knowledge so that Moses wanted to learn from him. Therefore, Khiḍr is spiritual guide of Moses. At first Khiḍr refused to be a teacher of Moses, because he knows that Moses does not qualify as a patient man. However, because a encouragement from Moses, finally Khiḍr be able to become a guide from Moses, but with a note that Moses should not be asked about anything until own Khiḍr explained to him.

¹⁷ About this story, we can see for example in QS. Al-Qaṣaṣ/28: 9. See more Muhammad A. Khalafullah, *Al-Fann al-Qaṣaṣ fī Al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, translated by Zuhairi Misrawī and Anis Maftukhin, Paramadina, Jakarta, 2002, p. 223.

¹⁸ al-Zamakhsharī, *op. cit.*, p. 490.

A.3. Knowledge

The main object in the opening this dialogue is 'knowledge', Moses ask to be taught some knowledge from Khiḍr which be obtained directly from God. About Khiḍr knowledge, there is not an accurate description above of knowledge owned Khiḍr, whether Khiḍr knowledge is one of from the dualism of knowledge which initiated by W. Dilthey?¹⁹

وَكَيْفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلَىٰ مَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ خُبْرًا²⁰.

“And how can you have patience about things about which your understanding is not complete?”²¹

Khiḍr statement in this verse can reinforce the thesis of commentators who said that knowledge owned by Khiḍr is previously unknown by Moses, it is a witchcrafts (*ilm al-ghāyb*) or non-physical (not reached by the five senses and Moses predictions) from this statement; Moses could not able to be patient.

This knowledge clarify coming from God (*rusyda*), according to al-Ghazālī the knowledge derived from God it has *clear* and *distance* of characteristic, therefore This knowledge is absolutely real without going through the process of verification.²² However, this kind of knowledge is an experience which is esoteric²³ nature.

¹⁹ As we known, W. Dilthey share knowledge based on object (which have consequences on the methodological) into two regions, first is the *Naturwissenschaften* and second is *Geisteswissenschaften*, see E Sumaryono, *Hermeneutika*, Kanisius, Yogyakarta, 1993, p. 47.

²⁰ QS. Al-Kahf/18: 68.

²¹ QS. Al-Kahf/18: 68. ‘Abdullah Yūsuf Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 351.

²² In the philosophy of science, the principle of verification is testing the truth of a theory. In other word, a theory can be said of science, when it was tested through with a verification process, see Rizal Musytansyir, *Filsafat Analitik; Sejarah, Perkembangan dan Peran Para Tokohnya*, Pustaka Pelajar, Yogyakarta, 2001, p. 92.

²³ Esotericism or Esoterism signifies the holding of esoteric opinions or beliefs, that is, ideas preserved or understood by a small group of those specially initiated, or of rare or unusual interest. The term derives from the Greek ἑσωτερικός (*esôterikos*), a compound of ἔσω (*esô*):

Talk about the process of learning of this knowledge, which is in the reader's mind is how the process takes place. Khidr as a teacher from Moses not showed attempt to explain or give any theories, and then how the activities of learning and teaching going on?²⁴

D. The Correlation of Khidr and Laduni

فَوَجَدَا عَبْدًا مِّنْ عِبَادِنَا آتَيْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِن لَّدُنَّا عِلْمًا²⁵

“So they found one of Our servants, on whom We had bestowed Mercy from Ourselves and whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence.”²⁶

Allah describes the fact that He had granted special knowledge to Khidr (وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِن لَّدُنَّا عِلْمًا) as a special mercy from Himself towards him (آتَيْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا). I find this very interesting, the fact that knowledge from Allah is actually a manifestation of His special mercy.²⁷

"within", thus pertaining to interiority or mysticism. Its antonym is "exoteric". <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esotericism> (04/10/13)

²⁴ The questions concerning Moses desire to seek knowledge to Khidr, actually not just stop at the only practical activities, but also in ontology regions and epistemological knowledge which Khidr have. In the context above, briefly revealed that Khidr knowledge is constitute knowledge which taught directly from God, If this is true then Khidr knowledge may be included in category al-Jabiri as epistemology 'irfani. See Muhammad Abid al-Jabiri, *Bunyat al-'Aql al-'Arabi*, Markaz Dirasat al-Wihdah al-'Arabiyyah, Beirut, 1990. Logical reasoning ('irfani) form the another name from the intuitive logical (*zauq*) and the intuitive logical is a form which highly abstract (*ghayb*) which cannot be tested (verified) the truth, like social sciences and natural sciences. If the Khidr knowledge cannot be tested and proved, then also can be taught. The knowledge like this can only be obtained through with a process *ghayb* which is prevalent among the Sufis. Al-Ghazali, to achieve direct knowledge of God, make a method of *Zauq* (feeling) and explore the life of Sufi (*Suluk* or mysticism), not to learn as commonly practiced in the areas of natural sciences and humanities. See Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, "*al-Munqid min al-Dalal*". In *Majmu' Rasail al-Imam al-Ghazali*, Dar al-Fikr, Beirut, 1996, p. 552.

²⁵ QS. Al-Kahf/18: 65.

²⁶ QS. Al-Kahf/18: 65. 'Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 351.

²⁷ Access on <http://sadaffarooqi.com/2013/01/06/prophet-Moses-and-khidr-the-quest-for-divine-knowledge/> (14/10/13)

This is because, in the current age at least, we tend to staunchly believe that education and knowledge (of any kind, even practical training) is restricted inside schools, institutes, colleges and universities. Whereas here was Khiḍr, who had been taught special knowledge directly from Allah, which he was about to impart to Moses (to obtain which, Moses had intended to go on searching for Khiḍr, even if it took him years and years to find him), and this knowledge did not require a classroom setting to be learned/acquired.

This is the kind of learning/knowledge that Allah bestowed upon Prophet Yusuf As. as well, whom He subjected to trials, making him endure extreme physical hardships, betrayals, and emotional let-downs from close people (those whom he trusted, primarily his brothers).

Allah claims in the Quran, that He made Prophet Yusuf go through these trying events in order to teach him how to ‘get to the depth of matters’, or to ‘interpret life events’:

وَكَذَلِكَ يَجْتَبِيكَ رَبُّكَ وَيُعَلِّمُكَ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ وَيُتِمُّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ²⁸

*“Thus will your Lord choose you and teach you the interpretation of stories (and events) and perfect His favor to you...”*²⁹

وَكَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلِنُعَلِّمَهُ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ³⁰

“Thus did We establish Joseph in the land, that We might teach him the interpretation of stories (and events)”.³¹

Coming back to Prophet Moses and Khiḍr, we see a wonderful picture of what etiquette a seeker of knowledge should observe when he or

²⁸ QS. Yūsuf/12: 6.

²⁹ QS. Yūsuf/12: 6. ‘Abdullah Yūsuf Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

³⁰ QS. Yūsuf/12: 21.

³¹ QS. Yūsuf/12: 21. ‘Abdullah Yūsuf Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 270

she wants to learn from a person of knowledge. The kind of learning Prophet Moses wanted to undertake did not involve classes, with a teacher sitting before his or her students giving talks or lectures on a subject, but rather, it consisted of practical “field work” or on-the-job apprenticeship, as they are known in the modern age, in which learning took place mostly via observation.

Prophet Moses humbled himself and sought permission from Khidr to learn from him:

قَالَ لَهُ مُوسَى هَلْ أَتَّبِعُكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُعَلِّمَنِي مِمَّا عَلَّمْتَ رُشْدًا³²

“Moses said to him: “May I follow you, on the footing that you teach me something of the (Higher) Truth which you have been taught?”³³

We are talking about a Prophet of Allah here (Moses). The fact that he seek permission to learn from Khidr indicates to us how, even if we occupy positions of unquestionable and exclusive authority over people. We should seek permission when seeking knowledge—of any kind—from someone else, be it that of a practical skill, or literary expertise, even if the person who will be imparting that knowledge to us belongs to a lower social, economic or financial stratum.

The reply given by Khidr is very interesting, to say the least. He said:

قَالَ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا³⁴

“(The other) said: “Verily you will not be able to have patience with me!”³⁵

³² QS. Al-Kahf/18: 66.

³³ QS. Al-Kahf/18: 66. ‘Abdullah Yūsuf Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 352.

³⁴ QS. Al-Kahf/18: 67.

³⁵ QS. Al-Kahf/18: 67. ‘Abdullah Yūsuf Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 352.

He used the word “لَنْ”, not “لَا” – which carries much more certainty within itself. He continued:

وَكَيْفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلَىٰ مَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ خُبْرًا³⁶

“And how can you have patience about things about which your understanding is not complete?”³⁷

Based upon his innate wisdom, he probably foresaw Moses’s innate impatience and haste in the quest for knowledge. From narratives in several other places in the Quran, we get to know more about Prophet Moses’s nature. It is possible that Khidr was able to gauge this aspect of his nature just by meeting him and talking to him, because wise sages have eyes that see beyond the superficial, and they can sense the true nature of someone just by being in their presence.

Secondly, Khidr explained that the reason he believed that Prophet Moses “would never” (لَنْ) be able to be patient enough to learn from him, was because he did not possess enough life experience to keep silent. This is also true, that younger people, or those who have not had vast and rich life experiences, tend to be more naive and superficial when judging the reality of events, tending to take them at face value instead of being able to grasp their deeper, hidden truths.

قَالَ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ صَابِرًا وَلَا أَعْصِي لَكَ أَمْرًا³⁸

“Moses said: “You will find me, if Allah so wills, (truly) patient: nor shall I disobey you in aught.”³⁹

³⁶ QS. Al-Kahf/18: 68.

³⁷ QS. Al-Kahf/18: 68. ‘Abdullah Yūsuf Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 352.

³⁸ QS. Al-Kahf/18: 69.

³⁹ QS. Al-Kahf/18: 69. ‘Abdullah Yūsuf Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 352.

Prophet Moses insisted that he would practice patience *إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ* (by the will of Allah). Khidr then permitted him to come along to learn from him, on the condition that Moses not ask him any questions about anything that he saw him doing, until he spoke of it himself.

قَالَ فَإِنْ أَتَيْتَنِي فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِي عَنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى أُحَدِّثَ لَكَ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا⁴⁰

“The other said: “If then you would follow me, ask me no questions about anything until I myself speak to you concerning it.”⁴¹

In order to learn from someone who has been blessed with knowledge from the Divine Himself (*عَلَّمَنَا مِنْ لَدُنَّا عَلِمًا*), we must be careful not to show impatience and haste, e.g. by asking unnecessary questions, or frequently criticizing the way they do things. One of the most prominent traits of an ignorant and dumb person is that they ask too many questions, and speak too much like fools, passing unnecessary and idiotic comments about others’ actions, and expressing their unasked-for opinions about those who are more knowledgeable than they are, even though no one asks them for their opinions. Remember one thing: the more someone talks, especially in the company of others in a social setting (where people are gathered together), the less knowledge they possess (I am not talking about lectures and classes here, in which the people of knowledge are requested to speak, but what I mean is, informal social get-togethers). Like Khidr, people who have been blessed with knowledge from Allah talk less, and act/observe more: they are deep thinkers and wonderers, and they absolutely hate being asked unnecessary questions. They spend less time in explaining themselves, and instead focus more on doing things

⁴⁰ QS. Al-Kahf/18: 70.

⁴¹ QS. Al-Kahf/18: 70. ‘Abdullah Yūsuf Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 352.

according to the pleasure of Allah. They have no patience with fools who keep asking them ignorance-based questions.

Purposing of divine knowledge (*al-‘ilm al-ladunī*) indeed close to God, however the closeness it then ignore the usual process of human learning; here is the problem. The controversial story of Khiḍr recognized in a Sufi manner form early birth of divine knowledge (*al-‘ilm al-ladunī*) in Islamic science. Nevertheless, that does not mean eliminate or negate the essence of learning. Story of Khiḍr and Moses, is a paradigm of the survival of the learning process and the specific features of knowledge received by a person.