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Also Inside: **Lessons from the Story of Moses and Khidr**

An exploration with the figure known as Khidr and an introduction to his encounter with Prophet Moses.



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Lessons from the Story of Moses and Khidr

Part 1 of 2: Who is Khidr?

The life of Prophet Moses. It is a fascinating story filled with anecdotes and life lessons that are applicable today as they were in the time of Moses. Briefly, in the final part of that series, the story of Moses and Khidr is retold, based on the original story told by Ibn Kathir in his work, *The Stories of the Prophets* and what the Quran tells us about this momentous meeting. In this two part article we will look at the lessons learned specifically from the relationship between Moses and Khidr. We will find that their interactions form the basis of lessons that still, all these generations later, teach us how to deal with problems that confront us every day. Before we look at how the paths of these two wise men crossed we will try to discover who the man we call Khidr was.

It was during the years that Moses and the Children of Israel wandered the desert, unable to enter the Promised Land; Moses met and spent time with Khidr. The name Khidr is taken to mean “the green one” colloquially associated with the Arabic word for green, *al-akhdar*. In his traditions Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, relates that, “He was named Khidr because he sat on a dry, barren piece of land and it suddenly became green under him.”

The majority of Islamic scholars are of the opinion the Khidr was a Prophet. The Quran, specifically chapter 18 does not outline the role or title or name of Khidr, it refers to him as one of God’s servants who was granted knowledge, comprehension and mercy.

“Then they found one from among Our servants to whom We had granted mercy from Us and whom We had taught knowledge from Ourselves.” (Quran 18: 65)

It is from the traditions of Prophet Muhammad that we learn that the wise, knowledgeable man

who instructs Moses is in fact Khidr. As Muslims we believe that God has only seen fit to tell us the names of some of the Prophets but we know that all nations throughout time were sent someone to warn them of the punishment that awaited those who disobeyed God, and to guide them to the correct way to worship. Therefore it is certainly within the realms of possibility and perfectly acceptable to have the opinion that Khidr was one of the Prophets.

The name Khidr or the “green one” has been connected with knowledgeable and mystical figures throughout different time periods and in varied religions. He is invariably associated with wisdom and imparting knowledge. Modern historians hypothesise that Khidr is in fact *Kothar wa Khasis*, a figure first noted in Ugaritic (Northern Syrian) literature and mythology. *Kothar* is a wise man, associated with among other things, dragon slaying; which may account for myths associating Khidr with St George the dragon slayer of Christian mythology.

Other Christian scholars suggest that Khidr is the Green Knight from the Arthurian tale *Sir Gwain and the Green Knight*, thus the character may have come into European/Christian literature via the intermingling of cultures during the tumultuous period of the Crusades. Still other scholars propose that the legend and story of Khidr derive from an Irish myth that predates the Crusades featuring *Cu Chulain*.

There are similar stories in Jewish literature that associate the character of Khidr with the Prophet Elijah and myths and stories abound across the Indian sub-continent that associate Khidr with a river spirit. From the area now known as Syria and Iraq we find the romanticised tale in which Khidr is a contemporary of Alexander the Great, his deputy

and cook, who gained immortality by drinking the water of eternal life. Interestingly Alexander the Great has often been taken to be Dhul Qarnayn, the King who also features in chapter 18 of the Quran.

Faced with all these various myths, legends and stories about Khidr just what should a believing person trust or believe in? First of all it is worth bearing in mind that all we need to know about the religion of Islam and our purpose in life is contained in the Quran and the authentic teachings of Prophet Muhammad. There are many things that are not revealed to us and thus we should assume that knowing them can in no way benefit or improve our worship of God. However, is there harm in pondering why a figure such as Khidr can be found in so many myths across religious and ethnic boundaries? Of course there is not, so long as anything we choose to believe does not contradict the teachings of God and His Messenger. Ibn Kathir himself was known to use stories found in the Jewish traditions when they gave weight to or resembled authentic Islamic literature. Thus there is no harm in thinking that the man we know as Khidr influenced the Irish myths of Cu Chulain or the Persian tales of Alexander the Great. The harm comes from imagining that these myths and stories influenced the stories in the Quran. This is just not possible.

At this point it might be worthwhile revisiting the story of Khidr and Moses in the Quran. Ibn Kathir narrates that Moses was once asked by someone, "O Messenger of God, is there another

man on earth more learned than you?" Moses replied, "No!" believing that since God had allowed him to perform miracles and had given him the Torah, he must surely be the most learned man alive. This however was not the case thus when Moses learned of Khidr's existence he set out to find him.

God instructed Moses to take a live fish in a container and that when the fish disappeared he would find the man he sought. Moses set out on his journey, accompanied by a young man who carried the container with the fish. Eventually they did meet Khidr in just the way God had assured Moses they would. Full details of this journey can be found at www.IslamReligion.com. Before moving on to article two where we discuss the lessons to be learned from Moses' and Khidr's encounter it would be both wise and beneficial to read the story from the Quran. You will find this at Quran 18:66-82 beginning with Moses acknowledging that there is much he can learn from Khidr and Khidr pointing out that Moses will not have the patience to find the meaning behind Khidr's actions.

"Moses said to him, "May I follow you on [the condition] that you teach me from what you have been taught of sound judgment?" He said, "Indeed, with me you will never be able to have patience. And how can you have patience for what you do not encompass in knowledge?" Moses said, "You will find me, if Allah wills, patient, and I will not disobey you in any order."(Quran 18:66-70)

By Aisha Stacey

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Lessons from the Story of Moses and Khidr

Part 2 of 2: A Journey of Lessons

Muslims both love and respect Moses; God mentions him in the Quran more than 120 times. His story is told across several chapters one of them being chapter 18 -The Cave. It is here that the story of meeting between Prophet Moses and the wise, knowledgeable man known as Khidr can be found.

This story serves to remind us that God is the Most Wise. God brings together two of history's most wise men and teaches us that God's decree stems from His supreme and absolute wisdom. The life of a human being is sometimes beset by trials, tragedies or calamities that appear to make no sense but in retrospect we see them for what they really are, lessons from the Most Wise designed to take us closer to the supreme reward, Al-Jannah, or Paradise.

Contentment with God's decree, whether we initially feel it to be pleasant or unpleasant is the most important lesson we can take away from the story of Moses and Khidr. Belief in the divine decree is one of the six pillars of the Islamic faith. Therefore, not only accepting but also understanding what this entails is important. The problems that we face in life can be a source of good for us.

Prophet Muhammad said: "How wonderful is the affair of the believer, for his affairs are all good, and this applies to no one but the believer. If something good happens to him, he is thankful for it and that is good for him. If something bad happens to him, he bears it with patience and that is good for him."

At this point, if you are not already familiar with the story of Moses and Khidr as told in the Quran it would be of great benefit to read it for yourself and have it fresh in your mind as we follow Moses on his journey. Moses quest is to seek the man with more knowledge than he himself has. He sets out with a boy, possibly Joshua, the pious man who leads the Children of Israel after Moses'

death. God had instructed them to carry a live fish in a container, and said that where the fish disappeared they would find the man they were seeking. So the story begins and throughout the story God imparts His wisdom and knowledge to us.

While Moses was taking a nap his companion saw the fish wriggle away and slip into the water, however he forgot to inform Prophet Moses until much later when they had already moved further on up the road. What Moses did when his companion told him what had happened was to hastily retrace his steps. There was no scolding, no lamentations about having gone off course, or wasting time and effort. What had happened had happened; it was the will of God. Prophet Moses' behaviour is that of a person satisfied with God's decree. Once he learned that he had stepped away from the correct path he took the necessary action to return to the right way. This is a lesson for all of us. In this life, so many of us choose the wrong path but are afraid or too embarrassed to turn and face in a different direction. Once a person realizes he is heading in the wrong direction in life he must immediately turn around and get back onto the Straight Path. One should not consider this a defeat; rather, it is a victory.

Upon returning to the place from which the fish escaped Moses found the man he had been searching for, Khidr. At this time God choses to educate Prophet Moses through three events that take place while Moses is in the company of Khidr. Khidr is hesitant to travel with Moses because he believes Moses will not have the patience to see the events through and learn from them. However Moses convinces Khidr that he is anxious to learn and they set off together.

Prophet Muhammad constantly stressed the importance of knowledge. He tells us in his traditions that the angels pray for the scholars, that God assists the person seeking knowledge,

and that the scholars are the inheritors of the Prophets.

In the first event Khidr and Moses board a ship, whereupon Khidr bores a hole in the ship making it defective and unable to sail. Moses is horrified and calls what Khidr does an evil thing. Khidr then reminds Moses that he had agreed to have patience and not ask questions. Moses reaffirmed his promise and they continued on, Quran tells us that when they came across a young boy Khidr killed him. Moses was horrified, and forgot his promise. Khidr reminded him once again and they continued on. At last they came to a town and asked the people to feed them for they were hungry after the long journey. The people refused and instead of confronting the people or leaving the town Khidr rebuilt a wall that was collapsing. Moses could not understand why he didn't ask for payment. Khidr then informed Moses that this was the end of their journey together and he would explain the reasons why he acted the way he did in all three situations.

Khidr had caused minor damage to the ship to protect it from greater harm. There was a King coming behind them seizing all sea worthy vessels. Instead of losing their boat, livelihood and possibly their lives the fishermen now had only to repair the damage. As for taking the young boys life, he was destined to grow up and over burden his parents with his sins and actions of disbelief, therefore God intended to replace him with a pious good child. In the final event Khidr rebuilt the wall even though the town's people were unfriendly because God had instructed him to do so. Beneath the wall lay a treasure destined to belong to two orphan boys. God wanted it to remain hidden until they were grown men and could take their treasure without fear of harassment or thievery. Their father, God said, was a righteous man.

Khidr acted the way he did in all three situations in obedience to God's commands, he did not choose to do these things because of his personal judgement and nor did he

have absolute knowledge of the unseen. It is important to understand that God does not create evil for its own sake, but rather it is often the forerunner of good. These three events illustrate this point. When we understand this we will never feel victimised or treated unfairly. Sometimes the good in a difficult situation does not become clear until a long time afterwards, at other times it is apparent immediately. The story of Moses and Khidr tells us to be patient and trust in the mercy and wisdom of God. It tells us that God does not treat anyone unfairly and that His decree for us is most just and inherently generous.

By Aisha Stacey

Ready More at www.IslamReligion.com



The topic of inner peace addresses a universal need. There is nobody on this planet that does not desire inner peace. It is not a desire that is new to our time; rather, it is something that everybody has been searching for throughout the ages, regardless of colour, creed, religion, race, nationality, age, sex, wealth, ability or technological advancement.

People have taken a variety of different paths in trying to achieve inner peace, some through accumulating material possessions and wealth, others through drugs; some through music, others through meditation; some through their husbands and wives, others through their careers and some through their children's achievements. And the list goes on

Yet the search also goes on. In our time we have been led to believe that technological advancement and modernisation will produce for us physical comforts and and through these we will attain inner peace.

However, if we were to take the most technologically advanced and most industrialised nation in the world, America, then we would see that what we have been led to believe is not factual. The statistics show that in America some 20 million adults suffer from depression yearly; and what is depression but a total lack of inner peace? Furthermore in the year 2000 death rate due to suicide was double the rate of those who die from Aids. However, the news media being what it is, we hear more about those who die from Aids than we do about those who die by committing suicide. Also more people die from suicide in America than from homicide, and the homicide rates themselves are massive.

So the reality is that technological advancement and modernisation have not bought inner peace and tranquillity. Rather in spite of the creature comforts that modernisation has brought us, we are further away from inner peace than our ancestors were.

Inner peace is for the most part of our lives very elusive; we never seem to get our hands on it.

Many of us mistake personal pleasures for inner peace; we achieve elements of pleasure from a variety of things, be it wealth, sexual relations or other than that. But these do not last, they come and go. Yes we have personal pleasures from time to time and we are pleased with various things from time to time, but this is not inner peace. True inner peace is a sense of stability and contentment which carries us

The Search for

through all the trials and difficulties of life.

We need to understand that peace is not something that will exist in this world around us because when we define peace according to the dictionary definition it states that peace is freedom from war or civil strife. Where do we have this? There is always a war or some sort of civil unrest happening somewhere in the world. If we look at peace in terms of the state level then peace is freedom from public disorder and security, but where in the world do we have this in a complete form? If we look at peace on a social level, family and work, then peace is freedom from disagreements and arguments, but is there such a social environment that never has disagreements or arguments? In terms of location, then yes, we can have a place which is calm, peaceful and tranquil, some islands for example, but this external peace only exists for a small amount of time, sooner or later a storm or a hurricane will come.

Allaah says:

"Verily, I have created man in toil (struggle)."
(Al-Balad 90:4)

This is the nature of our lives; we are in toil and struggle, ups and downs, times of difficulties and time of ease.

or Inner Peace

themselves. We have to be aware of them, because if we cannot identify them then we cannot remove them

The second step is to accept them as obstacles within ourselves. For example anger is one of the biggest obstacles to inner peace, for example. If a person is angry worked up and has blown a fuse, how can he or she have inner peace in that circumstance? It is not possible. So the person needs to recognise that anger is an obstacle to inner peace.

However, if a person states that, "Yes, it is an obstacle but I do not get angry", then such a person has a problem. He has not accepted that obstacle as a problem and is in a state of self denial. As such he cannot remove it.

If we look at the obstacles in life we can put them under a variety of headings: personal problems, family issues, financial dilemmas, work pressures and spiritual confusion. And there are many issues under these headings.

We have so many problems, so many obstacles that they are like illnesses. If we try to deal with them one by one we will never get through them. We need to identify them, put them in some general categories and tackle them as a group as opposed to trying to tackle each individual obstacle and problem.

To do this we have to first of all remove obstacles that are beyond our control. We have to be able to distinguish which obstacles are within our control and which ones are beyond our control. While we perceive the ones that are beyond our control as obstacles the reality is that they are not. They are the things that Allaah has destined for us in our lives, they are not really obstacles, but we have misinterpreted them as being obstacles.

For example, in this time one might find oneself born black in a world that favours white people over black people; or born poor in a world that favours the rich over the poor, or born short, or crippled, or any other physical condition which is considered a handicap.

These are all things that were and are beyond our control. We did not choose which family to be born in to; we did not choose which body for our spirit to be blown into, this is not our choice. So whatever we find of these kinds of obstacles then we just have to be patient with them and realise that, in fact, they are not really obstacles. Allaah told us:

"...and it may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you and that you like a thing

(Continued Page 8)

It is a life full of tests as Allaah says:

"And certainly, We shall test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits, but give glad tidings to as-Saabirin (the patient ones, etc.)." (Al-Baqarah 2:155)

To deal with our circumstances, the circumstances of toil and struggle in which we live, patience is the key.

But if we go back to the inner peace that we are looking for, then patience cannot manifest itself if we do not have that inner peace.

We are living in a world of toil and struggle, but yet within ourselves it is possible to attain inner peace, peace with the environment, with the world in which we live.

Obviously there are some obstacles which prevent us from attaining peace. So first we have to identify the obstacles in our lives which prevent us from achieving maximum inner peace and develop some kind of strategy to remove them. The obstacles will not be removed just by thinking that we need to remove them; we have to develop some steps to achieve this. So how do we go about removing these obstacles so that we can achieve what is possible of inner peace?

The first step is to identify the obstacles

The Search for Inner Peace

(Part 2)

which is bad for you. Allaah knows but you do not know.” (Soorah Al-Baqarah 2:216)

So the obstacles that are beyond our control, we may dislike them and we may want to change them, and some actually people spend a lot of money trying to change them. Michael Jackson is a classic example. He was born black in a world that favours white people, so he spent a lot of money trying to change himself but he only ended up making a mess of himself.

Inner peace can only be achieved if the obstacles that are beyond our control are accepted by us patiently as part of Allaah's destiny.

Know that whatever happens which we had or have no control over, then Allaah has put in it some good, whether or not we are able to grasp what is good in it; the good is still there. So we accept it!

There was an article in a newspaper which had a photograph of a smiling Egyptian man. He had a smile on his face from ear to ear with his hands stretched out and both thumbs sticking up; his father was kissing him on one cheek and his sister on the other cheek.

Underneath the photograph it had a caption. He was supposed to have been on a Gulf Air flight the day before, Cairo to Bahrain. He had dashed down to the airport to catch the flight and when he got there he had one stamp missing on his Passport (In Cairo you have to have many stamps on your documents. You get this person to stamp this and sign that and that person to stamp that and sign this) But there he was at the airport with one stamp missing. As he was a teacher in Bahrain and this flight was the last one back to Bahrain which would enable him to report back on time, missing it meant that he

would have lost his job. So he nagged them to let him on the flight. He became frantic, started crying and screaming and going berserk, but he could not get on the plane. It took off without him. He went (to his home in Cairo) distraught, thinking that he was finished and that his career was over. His family comforted him and told him not to worry about it. The next day, he heard the news that the plane he was meant to be on crashed and everybody on board died. And then there he was, ecstatic that he did not make the flight. But the day before it was the end of his life, a tragedy that he did not get on the flight.

These are signs, and such signs can be found in the story of Moosaa and Khidr (which we should read every Jumu'ah, i.e. Soorah al-Kahf). When Khidr made a hole in the boat of the people who were kind enough to take him and Moosaa across the river, Moosaa asked why he (Khidr) did that.

When the owners of the boat saw the hole in the boat they wondered who did it and thought that it was a nasty thing to have done. A short while later the king came down to the river and forcefully took away all the boats except the one with a hole in it. So the owners of the boat praised Allaah due to the fact that there was a hole in their boat. [1]

There are other obstacles or rather things which are perceived as obstacles in our life. These are things in which we cannot figure out what is beyond them. A thing happens and we do not know why, we do not have an explanation for it. For some people this drives them into disbelief. If one listens to an atheist he has no inner peace and has rejected God. Why did that person become an atheist? It is abnormal to disbelieve in God, whereas it is normal for us to believe in God because Allaah created us with a natural inclination to believe

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in Him.

Allaah says:

“So set you (O Muhammad) your face towards the religion of pure Islaamic Monotheism Hanifa (worship none but Allaah Alone) Allaah’s Fitrah (i.e. Allaah’s Islaamic Monotheism), with which He has created mankind. No change let there be in Khalq-illah (i.e. the Religion of Allaah Islaamic Monotheism), that is the straight religion, but most of men know not.” (Ar-Rum 30:30) [2]

The Prophet Muhammad (sall-Allaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said:

“Every child is born with a pure nature (as a Muslim with a natural inclination to believe on God)...” (Saheeh al-Bukhaaree & Saheeh Muslim)

This is the nature of human beings, but a person who becomes an atheist without having been taught it from childhood usually does so because of a tragedy. If a tragedy happens in their life they have no explanations as to why it happened.

For example, a person who became an atheist may say that he/she had a wonderful auntie; she was a very good person and everybody loved her, but one day whilst she was out crossing the road a car came out of nowhere and hit her and she died. Why did this happen to her of all people? Why? No explanations! Or a person (who became an atheist) may have had a child who died and say why did this happen to my child? Why? No explanations! As a result of such tragedies they then think that there can’t possibly be a God.

Going back to the story of Moosaa and Khidr, after they crossed the river they came across a child and Khidr cut that child’s head off. Moosaa asked Khidr how he could possibly do such a thing? The child was innocent and Khidr cut his head off! Khidr told Moosaa that the child had righteous parents and if the child had grown up (Allaah knew that) he would have become such a terror for his parents that he would have driven them into disbelief, so Allaah ordered the death of the child.

Of course the parents grieved when they found their child dead. However, Allaah replaced their child with one who was righteous and better for them. This child honoured them and was good to and for them, but the parents would always have a hole in their heart due to losing their first child, right until the Day of Judgement when they will stand before Allaah

and He will reveal to them the reason why He took the soul of their first child and then they will then understand and praise Allaah.

So this is the nature of our lives. There are things, things which are apparently negative, things which happen in our lives which seem to be obstacles to inner peace because we do not understand them or why they happened to us, but we have to put them aside.

They are from Allaah and we have to believe that ultimately there is good behind them, whether we can see it or not. Then we move on to those things that we can change. First we identify them, then we move to the second major step and that is removing the obstacles by developing solutions for them. To remove the obstacles we have to focus mostly on self-change and this is because Allaah says:

“Verily! Allaah will not change the good condition of a people as long as they do not change their state of good within themselves...” (Ra’d 13:11)

This is an area which we have control over. We can even develop patience, although the common idea is that some people are just born patient. A man came to the Prophet (sall-Allaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) and asked what he needed to do to get to Paradise, so the Prophet (sall-Allaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) told him: “Do not get angry.” (Saheeh al-Bukhaaree)

The man was an individual who would get angry quickly, so the Prophet (sall-Allaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) told the man that he needed to do change his angry nature. So changing oneself and one’s character is something achievable. The Prophet (sall-Allaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) also said: “Whoever pretends to be patient (with a desire to be patient) Allaah will give him patience.” This is recorded in Saheeh al Bukhaaree This means that although some people are born patient the rest of us can learn to be patient.

Interestingly in western psychiatry and psychology they used to tell us to get it off our chest, don’t hold it in because if we did we would explode, so better to let it all out.

Later on they discovered that when people let it all out small blood vessels would burst in their brain because they were so angry. They found that it was actually dangerous and potentially damaging to let it all out. So now they say it is better not to let it all out.

(Continued Page 10)

The Search for Inner Peace (Part 3)

The Prophet (sall-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) told us to try to be patient, so externally we should give that façade of being patient even when internally we are boiling. And we do not try to be patient externally in order to deceive people; rather, we do so in order to develop patience. If we are consistent in this then the external image of patience also becomes internal and as a result complete patience is achieved and is achievable as mentioned in the Hadeeth quoted above.

Among the methods is to look at how the material elements of our lives play a major part with regards to patience and us achieving it.

The Prophet (sall-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) gave us advice on how to deal with these elements by saying: "Do not look to those above you who are more fortunate, instead, look to those below you or less fortunate..."

This is because no matter what our situation is, there are always those who are worse off than us. This should be our general strategy with regards to the material life. Nowadays the material life is a huge part of our life, we seem to be obsessed with it; gaining all we can in this world seems to be the main point that most of us focus our energies towards. So if one must do this then they should not let it affect their inner peace.

While dealing with the material world we should not keep focusing on those who are better off than us otherwise we will never be satisfied with what we have. The Prophet (sall-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said:

"If you give the son of Aadam a valley of gold he would want another one." (Saheeh Muslim)

The say that the grass is always greener on the other side, the more a person has the more a person wants. We cannot achieve satisfaction in the material world if we are chasing after it in such a way; rather, we should look to those who are less fortunate, this way we will remember the gifts, benefits and mercy that Allaah has bestowed upon us with regards to our own wealth, no matter how little it may seem.

There is another hadeeth which helps us in the realm of the material world to put our affairs in their proper perspective, and is a Prophetic example of Steven Covey's [3] principle of "first things first". The Prophet (sall-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) stated this principle over 1400 years ago and laid this principle down for the believers

by saying, "Whoever makes this world his goal Allaah will confuse his affairs and place poverty before his eyes and he will be able to attain nothing from this world except for what Allaah has already written for him..." (Ibn Maajah & Ibn Hibbaan)

So a person's affairs will not come together for him, he will be all over the place, like a chicken with its head cut off, running wild if he makes this world his goal. Allaah will place poverty before his eyes and no matter how much money he has he will feel poor. Every time someone is nice to him or smiles at him he feels that they are only doing so because they want his money, he can't trust anyone and is not happy.

When the stock market crashes you read about some of those who invested in it committing suicide. A person may have had 8 million and lost 5 million with 3 million left after the market crashed, but losing that 5 million seems to him to be the end. He sees no point in living after that, as Allaah has put poverty between his eyes.

We have to keep in mind that a person will not get from this world except what Allaah has already written for them, this is the bottom line. After all that running around, staying up late at night, being a workaholic a person will only get that which Allaah has already destined for him or her. The Prophet (sall-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said:

"Whoever sets the Hereafter as his goal, Allaah gathers his affairs for him, gives him richness of (faith in) the heart and the world will come to him grudgingly and submissively." (Ibn Maajah & Ibn Hibbaan)

Such a person attains richness of the heart. Richness is not about having a lot of wealth, but richness is having wealth of the heart, and what is wealth of the heart? It is contentment, and this is where the peace comes from, when a person submits themselves to Allaah, and this is Islaam.

The inner peace is accepting Islaam in our hearts and living by the principles of Islaam. So Allaah will put richness in a person's heart and this world will come to him submissively, on its knees and humbled. such a person will not have to chase it.

This is the Promise of the Prophet (sall-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) if a person puts "first things first", and that is the Hereafter. If it is Paradise that we want then that should be

manifest in our lives, it should be the point of our focus, what we keep putting in the forefront.

So how do we know when the Hereafter is our focus? If we sit down with a person and all we talk about are the latest cars, expensive houses, travelling and holidays and money, if the majority of our conversations is about material things or it is gossip, talking about this person and that person then it means that the Hereafter is not our focus. If the Hereafter was our focus then it would be reflected in our conversation. This is a very basic level in which we can judge ourselves, so we should stop and ask ourselves, "what do we spend most of our time talking about"?

If we find that our priority is this world, then we need to re-focus, we need to put "first things first", meaning the Hereafter before the life of this world, and if we do this we can achieve inner peace, and Allaah informed us of this in the Qur'aan, a precise step to take in order to attain inner peace, and Allaah says:

"Verily, in the remembrance of Allaah do hearts find rest." (Ra'd 13:28)

So it is only by the remembrance of Allaah that hearts find rest. This is the inner peace. The remembrance of Allaah is in everything we do as Muslims. Islaam is living a life remembering Allaah, and Allaah says:

"Perform the prayer for my remembrance..." (Ta-Ha 20:14)

Everything that we do (in Islaam) involves the remembrance of Allaah as Muslims. Allaah says:

"Say: 'Indeed, my prayer, my sacrifice, my living and dying are for Allaah, Lord of all the worlds.'" (Al-An'am 6:162)

So here is the way to achieve inner peace, to remember Allaah (subhaanahu wa ta'aala) in all aspects of our lives.

This remembrance (dhikr) is not as some people think i.e. to sit in the corner of a dark room constantly repeating "Allaah, Allaah, Allaah..." This is not how we remember Allaah. Yes, such a person is saying Allaah's name, but if we think about it, if somebody came to you (and for example your name is Muhammad) and kept saying "Muhammad, Muhammad, Muhammad..." you would wonder what is wrong with that person. Does he want something? Is there something that he needs? What is the purpose of repeating my name without further talk?

This is not the way to remember Allaah

because this is not how the Prophet (sall-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) remembered Allaah and there is no record of him doing that. Some people say that we should remember Allaah by dancing around or swaying from side to side. This is not the way to remember Allaah, as this too is not how the Prophet (sall-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) remembered Allaah and there is no record of him doing that.

The Prophet (sall-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) remembered Allaah in his life. His life was a life of remembrance of Allaah, he lived a life in remembrance of Allaah and this is the true remembrance, in our prayers and in our living and our dying.

In summary, the search for inner peace involves recognising the problems that we have in our lives, recognising our obstacles, recognising that inner peace will only come when we identify those obstacles and understand which of them we can change and that we focus on those obstacles we can change, the ones which are related to our self.

If we change our self then Allaah will change the world around us and give us the means to deal with the world around us. Even though the world is in turmoil Allaah gives us inner peace with it.

Whatever happens we know that it is Allaah's destiny and that it is Allaah's trials and we know that ultimately it is for our good. and has good in it. Allaah created us in this world and the world as a means to attain Paradise and the trials of this world is our own spiritual growth. If we can accept all this, accepting Allaah in our hearts then we can find inner peace.

-- Dr. Bilal Philips

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Transcribers Footnotes:

[1] *The king was an oppressor and was known for seizing every good boat by force, but the people who owned the boat were poor people and it was their only means of benefit so Khidr wanted the boat to appear to be faulty so that the king did not seize it in order for the poor people to carry on benefiting from it*

[2] *This aayah was added to the transcription by the transcribers*

[3] *Stephen Covey is an internationally respected leadership authority and founder of Covey Leadership Centre. He received his M.B*

The Prophet Muhammad's Last Sermon

This sermon was delivered on the Ninth Day of Dhul Hijjah 10 A.H. in the 'Uranah valley of Mount Arafat' (in Mecca).

After praising, and thanking Allah he said:

“O People, lend me an attentive ear, for I know not whether after this year, I shall ever be amongst you again. Therefore listen to what I am saying to you very carefully and TAKE THESE WORDS TO THOSE WHO COULD NOT BE PRESENT HERE TODAY.

O People, just as you regard this month, this day, this city as Sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you. Remember that you will indeed meet your LORD, and that HE will indeed reckon your deeds. ALLAH has forbidden you to take usury (interest), therefore all interest obligation shall henceforth be waived. Your capital, however, is yours to keep. You will neither inflict nor suffer any inequity. Allah has Judged that there shall be no interest and that all the interest due to Abbas ibn 'Abd'al Muttalib (Prophet's uncle) shall henceforth be waived...

Beware of Satan, for the safety of your religion. He has lost all hope that he will ever be able to lead you astray in big things, so beware of following him in small things.

O People, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women, but they also have rights over you. Remember that you have taken them as your wives only under Allah's trust and with His permission. If they abide by your right then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat your

women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with any one of whom you do not approve, as well as never to be unchaste.

O People, listen to me in earnest, worship ALLAH, say your five daily prayers (Salah), fast during the month of Ramadan, and give your wealth in Zakat (charity). Perform Hajj if you can afford to.

All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over black nor a black has any superiority over white; except by piety and good action. Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood. Nothing shall be legitimate to a Muslim which belongs to a fellow Muslim unless it was given freely and willingly. Do not, therefore, do injustice to yourselves.

Remember, one day you will appear before ALLAH and answer your deeds. So beware, do not stray from the path of righteousness after I am gone.

O People, no prophet or apostle will come after me and no new faith will be born. Reason well, therefore, O People, and understand words which I convey to you. I leave behind me two things, the QURAN and my example, the SUNNAH and if you follow these you will never go astray.

All those who listen to me shall pass on my words to others and those to others again; and may the last ones understand my words better than those who listen to me directly. Be my witness, O ALLAH, that I have conveyed your message to your people”.

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