

March 7, 2009

Saturday



Title: [Prophet Mohammed \(sal\): The Light Beyond The Man](#)

DVD title: Honoring the Mawlid of Prophet Muhammad (sal):  
The Prophet is Present through the Living Light

Dinner blessing: O Allah, help us to remember You in these challenging times, and be grateful for the food on our table and the roofs over our heads, and the security in our work so far, *insh'allah, alhamdulillah*. We ask You, Allah, to send Your most precious blessings on our Prophet (sal) on the anniversary of his birth, the 12<sup>th</sup> of Rabī' al Awwal. We hope we can feel and sense his living presence in our lives as You are living in our life. And to remember the beginning of our own time and the beginning of our own soul's existence as we celebrate being surrounded by the truth, light, and love and beauty and majesty of Your creation. And thanks a lot for the spring day, by the way. We are ready for a few more. *Amin*.

Sohbet: [We will] continue our discussion on the Prophet Mohammed (*salla-Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) in honor of his birthday. In Suratu-l-Hadīd, Allah (*Subhānahu wa ta'ālā*) says:

**O you who believe! Fear Allah and believe in His messenger Mohammed (pbuh). He will give you a double portion of His mercy, and He will give you a light by which you shall walk straight, and He will forgive you, and Allah is all forgiving and most merciful. (57:28)**

Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Abbas (*radiya-Llāhu*) reported that the last *sūrah* that was revealed to

the Prophet Mohammed (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) was Surat-n-Nasr, because there was no complete *sūrah* that was sent down after that. According to Sidna Umar (*radiya-Llāhu*), this *sūrah* was sent down to the Prophet (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) on the occasion of his farewell pilgrimage, in the middle of the *tashrik* days in Mina. After that, the Prophet (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) rode on his she-camel and gave his well known final sermon.

As related from the tradition of Hazrat Serabin Nabhan, the sermon which the Prophet (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) gave, she says:

**At the farewell pilgrimage I heard the Holy Prophet say: “O people, do you know what day this is?” They said, “Allah and His Messenger have the best knowledge.” And he said, “This is the middle day of the *tashrik* days.” Then he said, “Do you know what the place is?” And they said, “Allah and His Messenger have the best knowledge.” And he said, “This is the *masharīl harām*.” Then he said, “I might not meet you here again. Beware: your bloods and your honors are forbidden, until you appear before your Lord and He questions you about your deeds. Listen: let the one who is near convey it to him who is far away. Listen: I have conveyed the message to you.” Then when we returned to Medina, the holy Prophet passed away not many days after that.**

If you read both of these traditions together, it appears there was an interval of about three months and a few days between the revelation of Surat-n-Nasr and the death of the Prophet Mohammed (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*). Historically, the same interval was between the farewell pilgrimage and his passing. Ibn Abbas (*radiya-Llāhu*) said that when this *sūrah*

was revealed, the Holy Prophet (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said that he had been informed of his own death and his time had approached. These are all Sahih Hadith that have been attested to by many people. In other traditions related to Ibn Abbas, it has been said that at the time of this revelation, the Holy Prophet (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) understood that he had been informed of his departure from the world. So a tradition grew up around this knowledge. Hazrat Uma Habiba (*radiya-Llāhu ‘anhā*) said that when this *sūrah* was revealed, the Holy Prophet (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said to her that he would leave this world in that year. Hearing that, Hazrat Fatima wept, and he said, “From among my family, you will be the first to join me.” Hearing this, she laughed happily. A similar tradition was reported by other Sahaba. Ibn Abbas said:

**Hazrat Umar used to invite me to sit in his assembly along with some of the important elderly companions who fought in Badr. This was not liked by some of them, and they complained that they also had sons who were like this boy. Why then was he in particular invited to sit in the assembly? Hazrat Umar said the boy enjoyed the position and distinction because of his knowledge. Then one day, he invited the Companions of Badr and called me also to sit with them. I understood that he had invited me to that assembly to show his strength.**

**During that conversation, Hazrat Umar asked the Companions of Badr, “What do you say about *idhjah nasrulahe wal fath*? He wanted to know their interpretation of this *sūrah*. Some said, “In it we have been enjoined to praise Allah and ask for His forgiveness when His succor comes and we attain victory.” Some others said it implied that there**

**were large conquests of cities, villages, and forts. But some of them didn't say anything. Hazrat Umar said to me, "Do you attest to the same thing?" I said no. He said, "What is your view?" I said, "I submit that it implies the Last Hour. And in that Last Hour, the Prophet (*salla-Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was informed that when Allah's succor comes and victory is attained, it would be a sign that his hour had come. Therefore, he should praise Allah and ask for His forgiveness." And Hazrat Umar said, "I know nothing but what you have said. (And in other versions he continues:) How can you (all) blame me when you, yourselves, have seen why I have invited him (meaning Ibn Abbas)?"**

The whole story of the relationship between the *Sahaba* becomes clarified. There are certain things about the Prophet Mohammed (*salla-Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) that we should take to heart in the world we live in today, if we really believe in some level that these *awliyā* are still alive, still among us, though their bodies may be in the grave. Then we have to act as if they are among us. That's not such an easy thing to do. We are used to dead people being dead. They can't be dead and among us. So we say nice things like, "They'll always live forever in your memory." Your memory isn't going to be forever anyway. People get complacent and miss the subtleties of such stories, and their real meaning.

In this *sūrah*, Allah tells the Prophet that when meant that when Islam attains complete victory in Arabia, then the people will start entering Allah's religion in great numbers. It would mean that the mission for which he had been sent to this world had been fulfilled. You see how many people flock to the Hajj every year. It's a good percentage of the

world's population. It is also implying that our own illnesses, weaknesses and fears disappear when we have something else that is distracting us. The Prophet (*salla-Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was trying to teach us that we are in this Divine presence. It is a metaphor: it is not just that victory will come and people will put their heads on the ground and be happy. It's a metaphor for a state of being.

When people come rushing toward the *Dīn* of Islam, that is great. What's not so great is how much of Islam is ready to receive those who are rushing toward it? How do we know? Islam is not monolithic. "The doors are open, and the souls are rushing toward Islam." Which Islam are they rushing towards? So many souls are released into the atmosphere at one time, so to speak. But some are so minuscule that you can't see them or measure them. If you can't measure something, it doesn't exist. There is need on one side, and potential on the other side, but there is a barrier between the two. The Prophet Mohammed (*salla-Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) is the bridge between them. Wherever you find a barrier, then you invoke the Prophet Mohammed (*salla-Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*).

He is the bridge Allah (*Subhānahu wa ta'ālā*) sent to humanity for the specific purpose of bringing unity, uniting people, coalescing, condensing, and focusing on the message. The Prophet Mohammed (*salla-Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was a very revolutionary person. He asked people to stop their behavior towards girls, as they weren't chattel. He asked people to lend a hand or money to those who were in need in the community. Many expressions of the Prophet (*salla-Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) became embedded in the hearts of real people, whose names we don't even remember. We do know the names of the *Sahaba* and some of the *Taba'ain*. But mostly we don't know their names. ...[He] started with a very small number of people, and in a very short period of time, Islam has spread throughout the

known world.

[To act] in the name of Prophet Mohammed (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) was to say to people, here’s an example of a pious Muslim. [It is as if Allah is saying:] This is what you should copy. Don’t take this Book and open it up and take literally the word of Allah with your own mind and what you think it means. We have sent to you *anbiyā*. For this Book and this teaching, We have sent this man called Prophet Mohammed (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*). Allah gives people more fully what they want than they even knew they wanted, in hopes that it will build humility. Allah gives power to someone, like the new President, to see what that kind of power or knowledge does to other individuals. Most people try to run away from it or escape it. They may say, “That person is too hard to talk to. They are so intellectual; I can’t understand a thing they are saying.” Well, you are exactly the person who should be with them to get some learning. Your humility and your acceptance that you don’t understand something is the doorway you can walk through.

That’s why it is so important to read the *Sīrah* of Prophet Mohammed, and know his life story. Not just because it is a pleasant story to tell the children, but it is important to see how character and patience develop. He was an incredibly patient human being, and very disturbed about the things unbalanced in the world. If you were to characterize the first 13 years of his life, he was dissatisfied with just about everything around him. He set out to change it. The light, power, energy, patience, perseverance, belief, trust, non-arrogant self confidence are all characteristics of the Prophet (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*). He manifests his light through people like that (the *anbiyā*). If they maintain their honesty, integrity, and sincerity, you are someone in the company of Prophet Mohammed (*salla-*

*Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*). It is that light and that value system—it doesn’t matter what name you put on it—that is living.

I’m not saying any man is like Prophet Mohammed (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*). I am saying the qualities and values of life that the Prophet lived can be seen in other human beings. That is the light, the *Nur i Mohammed*. Someone else might call it something else. Christians say God. They can’t understand Allah is the same thing. They can’t understand that if you are thirsty and in Spain, you don’t say, “water.” You say “*agua*.” Why should we just put the Prophet Mohammed (sal) in a little historical box and say, “There he is. He is back there.” He, himself, said he was born before Adam. His light existed before Adam for all those millennia, and then he existed in the physical world, in *dunya*, in an historical time where records were kept, and all of a sudden now he dies? I don’t think so.

On the birth of the Prophet Mohammed (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) you sing happy birthday, in whatever way you sing it. You attend the cake cutting. Some surrogate cuts the cake, but everything is about the Prophet. The Prophet is present. This is not a metaphor. This is a reality. When you mention his name, he is present. There were so many people who are with this man, who reported the same thing. If you look at the light of the sun, and I look, and someone else on the other side of the world who doesn’t speak my language looks at the sun, and 5 million 253 thousand people from 5 million tribes look at the sun, what will they see? Light—the same light. It’s hard to wrap your head around the living Prophet Mohammed when you are thinking of the casing, not of the content. [When] you are looking at the content, [what you see] is light.

When we celebrate the Prophet Mohammed's birthday (*salla-Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*), we are celebrating the continuation of light that began from the very beginning of time, and eventually took the shape of a human being, who was to exemplify exactly the same principles and qualities of life [that we want to exemplify today]. The same sincerity and humility that people exemplified 1400 years ago, or 4000 years ago—that's how we have to be today. In many cases, the Prophet is used as a stick over your kid's head. It's like going to the Catholic priest and having to confess all the time. Allah knows your heart. When you are headed in one direction, Allah gets you there safely, or brings you there under the right time and condition. Why should we expect anything different from the Prophet (*salla-Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*)?

If you treat the Prophet as if he is alive, [then he is alive.] You don't have to think of his physical body, but you treat in your heart this person who loves their life, loves their work, loves serving people, loves seeing other people respond to that service, loves being there for people. [It is] like being a chocolatier. People come in and buy chocolate because they are uptight, or they're going to make a special dish (after they eat half of it themselves). The Prophet (*salla-Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) is like a chocolate bar. You want to partake of something very delicious. You don't have to *think* about him as being some physical being that transcended time and space but his body is still present. It's not about that. It's about his light, his wisdom, his love, his sincerity, his submission, and his trust. They are all alive. They are alive in the *Sahaba*, and the *Taba'ain*, and the *Taba-taba'ain*, and they are still alive today.

It's very hard sometimes for people to get their heads around the Prophet Mohammed. They treat him just as an historical being. But he is not just an historical being. It's said

that he used to recite, “(Arabic)” before his death. He was asked, “O Messenger of Allah, what are these words you have started reciting?” He replied, “A sign has been appointed for me so that when I see it, I should recite these words.” In another tradition, Hazrat Aisha reported that the Prophet (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) also recited these words in his *ruku* and in his in *sajdah*. Without creating a ‘son of God’ kind of myth; how do you get the reality of Allah’s ever-living presence, and the reality of the ever-living Prophet? You take it out of the realm of visualizing two entities that are still living, walking the earth and leaving footprints in the sand. You start to think about the most beautiful values, commitments, promises, trusts and challenges that were given to each one of us from our birth and add to that a little bit of the light of the Prophet Mohammed (sal).

How you do that is: after you struggle with it for many days, weeks, months, years, you finally realize that the Messenger is the message. The Prophet Mohammed (sal) is somehow a materialized expression of the *rahmāt*, the *rahīm*, the *hubb*, the *sabr* that we know are the qualities and names of Allah. Many people will be doing *dhikr*, making *qawwali*, praying, and trying to show their love of the Prophet Mohammed (sal), reaching *out* to the Prophet. But the secret is to reach *in* to the Prophet, to reach in to your own self. When you do that, it all starts to make sense. [It all makes sense] when you stop anthropomorphizing God, when you stop thinking of the Prophet Mohammed as somehow living on a mountain somewhere, and you realize what you are dealing with are these lenses, these gems of perception and understanding that they come from the deep profound qualities of the names, and [from the] quality of action, of expression of those names.

You read a book and learn about the Prophet Muhammad (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*), and you struggle with the relationship with this Prophet, and who he is. We have to remove our attention for some time—I don’t mean totally—but we have to move our attention away from the man, and look at the man’s action. [We have to move] away from the words he spoke, and look at where those words originated, which was in his piety, away from the supplications as if you were a beggar, to realize those supplications are a form of appreciation. This is the way you show Allah you get the message. You understand that Allah is not a being who sits on a throne, and Prophet Mohammed is not just the man who lived in that body.

For me, personally, there is always a long journey to understand who this Prophet Muhammed (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) is. [It is not enough to] just say that he is an example of this and that. All these things are true: He was a pacifist for 13 years, then fought some battles, then was a pacifist again. You can tell all this stuff about his life. I was always trying to understand what he meant when he said, “I existed before Adam,” and what it meant that he was someone we ask Allah to send blessings on—not that he needs those blessings. When I finally in some way figured it out, at least in a way that made me happy, I have to try at least to help other people understand this.

Most people I think have a hard time understanding. “*Wa ashadu enla illaha il’Allah*” is easy. “*Wa ashadu anna Muhammedan Rasula*” is hard. It was hard for the early believers, as is spoken in Qur’an and Hadith. It is hard. What I was hoping to do tonight was to try to just express to you, with a certain amount of intensity and inner reflection (which is why I wasn’t looking at you a lot), from the place where the Prophet (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) resides in us. With Allah, it’s a question of qualities, attributes,

compassion, mercy, and understanding. Of course there are Ninety-Nine names of Prophet Mohammed also; but with the Prophet, it's not talking about just the qualities, but speaking about a presence (like Allah is present), a presence that is an assistance to you and to me, a friend.

Remember what I said the other day about remembering, as if you were there? It's the flip side of that. You are there, and this light of Prophet Mohammed is there. People use it in certain ways. People want to understand it. You lose something; you make a *du'ā* and say, "Ya Muhammad (*salla-Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*), I lost this. Help me find it." The Prophet is there. It's not that a person is there. It's the whole, aggregated, complete quality of submission. It was reported that after the revelation of Suratu-n-Nasr, Prophet Mohammed (sal) began to work so intensively and so devotedly hard for the Hereafter like he had never done before. Even he, when this revelation comes to him, puts his whole attention on what's on the other side of the door. That's an example to all of us. As we receive these revelations and stories of Prophet Muhammad [we put our attention there].

I know it sounds like a religious talk. But it's not about religion. It's about aspects, qualities, forces, light, and living knowledge/*hikma* that are always within our grasp. When you grasp and learn something, that's when you realize it comes by the light of *Nur i Muhammad*. When you understand something, it comes from the knowledge of the Prophet Mohammed. Get away from thinking about him just as a man. Think about this man as being constructed of light, force, wisdom, and knowledge. Because Allah can't be contained, He manifests these aspects and qualities in this human being. If you just try, every once in a while during the day, to reflect and refer back to the Prophet (*salla-Llāhu*

*'alayhi wa sallam*), than you have the whole formula. You have the Asmā' al Husna, the aspects and qualities of God, and then you have the One Who delivers / manifests them to you, and who evokes them from your own soul. That's all.