

Loving the Prophet ﷺ 1500 Years After His Birth

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The Prophet ﷺ was born in the most sacred city of Mecca on Monday, the 12th of Rabi' al-Awwal in the Year of the Elephant, 1500 years ago. At his birth ﷺ the Prophet's mother saw a light emanate that illuminated the palaces of Greater Syria. His father 'Abd-Allah passed away before he was born and his mother Amina passed when he was at the tender age of six. He spent most of his life as an orphan. Instead of disadvantaging him, this only further proved that he was guided and nurtured by Allah ﷻ.

In adulthood, he became a merchant, interacting with different kinds of people. His integrity became evident, granting him renown as 'The Trustworthy' (*al-Amin*).

When he ﷺ reached the age of forty, Allah ﷻ sent him as a Messenger to all people. As the Prophet ﷺ was devoting himself to Allah ﷻ in the Cave of Hirā, the Archangel Jibril came to him and said, "Recite." He replied, "I am not a reciter." The Prophet said, "*He then took me and squeezed me until I could almost take it no more. Then he let me go. He then said, 'Recite.' I replied, 'I am not a reciter.' He then took me and squeezed me until I could almost take it no more.*" After the third time, he said, "**Read in the Name of your Lord Who created—created humans from a clinging clot. Read! And your Lord is Most Generous, Who taught by the Pen—taught humanity what they knew not.**" [Quran 96:1-5]

The Prophet ﷺ called people to the Oneness of Allah. In return, he and his Companions faced unspeakable persecution. Some were even tortured to death, and a group of them migrated to Abyssinia, which was ruled by a Christian king, known as al-Najāshī. In the 7th year of his mission, a ban was placed on the Prophet ﷺ and his tribe. They were confined to a specific area and almost starved to death. They survived by eating tree leaves, bark, and animal skin. After going through this for almost three years, Allah ﷻ brought them relief. Shortly thereafter, the Prophet's beloved wife and strongest supporter, Khadija j passed away, as did the Prophet's beloved uncle, Abu

Talib.

Allah ﷻ then took His beloved a on a night journey from the Sacred Mosque in Mecca to Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. On the way, he ﷺ visited Madina, Mount Sinai, and Bethlehem. In Jerusalem, all the Prophets and Messengers f were brought together and the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ led them all in Prayer. Allah ﷻ then had him ascend to the highest heavens. He brought him close, spoke to him intimately, and made the Prayer an obligation upon him.

In the 13th year, a group of believers from Madina traveled to Mecca to perform Hajj. They pledged their allegiance to the Prophet ﷺ on behalf of their people, agreeing that he and his Companions would migrate to them, and that they would protect him the way that they would protect their own selves and families. The Prophet ﷺ then migrated to Madina, and upon his arrival, he was greeted by its people with songs of celebration and joy. History has immortalized their song:

The full moon has risen over us

From the Valley of Wadā'

We owe it to show thankfulness

Whenever a caller invites to Allah

In the second year after the Hijra, Allah ﷻ granted the Messenger ﷺ permission to fight in jihad to protect the call to Allah. The Prophet ﷺ took part in 29 battles, including the battles of Badr, Uhud, the Trench, and the Conquest of Mecca.

In the 6th year after the Hijra, the Treaty of Hudaibiya was established between the Muslims and the polytheists. Some of the Companions felt that the truce was a compromise, but in fact, it was a victory. Allah ﷻ said regarding it, "**Truly, We have given you [O Prophet] a clear triumph!**" [Quran 48:1]

As the fires of war were calmed by the peace, people became more willing to listen to the invitation of Islam. During this time, the Prophet ﷺ engaged with the leaders of surrounding lands by sending letters to the kings of Persia, Byzantine, Abyssinia, Egypt, and Syro-Palestine.

In the 8th year after the Hijra, the Conquest of Mecca took place. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, when conquering Mecca, entered with utmost humility, with his noble head bowed low, witnessing Allah's favor upon him. After experiencing 21 years of persecution, the Prophet ﷺ now had the upper hand. The people who used to harm him and his Companions surrounded him, and he addressed them, "*O gathering of Quraysh, what do you think I am going to do with you?*" They replied, "Treat us well. You are a noble brother, the son of a noble brother." He said, "*You are all free to go.*" In an act of unparalleled mercy, he issued a general amnesty by which he pardoned them all. People then understood the exaltedness of this man and of his way, and that he did not desire domination or vengeance. Safwan ibn Umayya said, "Only a Prophet could be so gracious." After witnessing the beauty of the Prophet Muhammad's character ﷺ, people embraced Islam in great numbers.

Ten years after his migration, Islam spread throughout the Arabian Peninsula. In that same year, the Prophet ﷺ led the people in the Farewell Hajj. He gave his famous sermon at 'Arafa, in which he reminded people of the foundation of Islam and counseled them to be morally upright. On that day, Allah ﷻ revealed to him ﷺ, "**Today I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and am pleased with Islam as your religion.**" [Quran 5:3]

After conveying the message, fulfilling the trust, establishing Islam and the worship of Allah alone, putting an end to falsehood, and forming a just and rightly-guided Muslim Ummah of believers over the course of 23 years, he ﷺ returned to Allah ﷻ in the 11th year after the Hijra. He was 63 years old.

Although the Ummah still yearns for him ﷺ, he left behind an undying source of guidance for us: "*The Book of Allah and the Sunna of His Prophet.*" Through embodying the message and guidance of both, we remain connected to him ﷺ.

When studying the Prophet's legacy ﷺ, it is summed up in the following narration: When 'Aisha j was asked what the most wondrous thing about the Prophet ﷺ was, she replied, "Everything about him was wondrous." [Ibn Hibban] When studying his accomplishments in his lifetime—and their continuous impact—they bewilder the mind.

In twenty-three years, the Prophet ﷺ was able to bring about unprecedented civilizational, educational, and moral transformation. This is especially miraculous, considering that he ﷺ was unlettered and he was sent to a people who had made no major

civilizational contributions to the world.

The word "Madina," which the Prophet's city is lovingly referred as, also means a place of civilization. A city previously known for fever and pollution was turned into a place of healing and hygiene. The Prophet ﷺ not only brought about spiritual healing through asking Allah ﷻ to remove the fever that plagued many of its residents, he also appointed one of his Companions to be responsible for sanitizing its wells to provide clean water to its residents.

The first word of the Quran to be revealed was, "**Read!**" [Quran 96:1] The Prophet ﷺ allowed captives to earn their freedom by teaching ten children to read. He ﷺ instilled within his community a deep love and appreciation for knowledge, inspiring some of the greatest discoveries in the fields of astronomy, medicine, and science. Despite being unlettered himself (since his knowledge was entirely divinely-inspired), it has been said that the greatest single promoter of literacy was the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

He established a moral code that refined a generation of people steeped in ignorance and created the greatest generation of human beings to ever walk the face of the earth. Allah ﷻ says of him, "**You are truly preeminent in magnificent character.**" [Quran 68:4] He cared for the weak, gave to the needy, and forgave those who wronged him. He taught us the importance of family harmony and showing kindness and mercy to our spouses and children. At the Battle of Uhud, when seventy of his Companions were martyred, he raised his hands in supplication, "*O Allah, forgive my people, for they do not know.*" Through showing amnesty when conquering Mecca, the Prophet ﷺ established a firm foundation of forgiveness and reconciliation. His example continues to be a source of guidance, inspiration, and spiritual purification for his Ummah today.

As Imam al-Busiri says in his poem praising the Prophet ﷺ, known as *al-Burda*,

*Finding such knowledge in one unlettered
Living in the Age of Ignorance is enough of a miracle—
And such refinement despite being an orphan!*

The miraculous contributions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ are summarized by Imam al-Ghazali in Book 20 of his magnum opus, *Ihya' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*,

Know that if one witnesses the Prophet's states and lends an attentive ear to the transmitted reports detailing his qualities of character and his actions, virtuous states, habits, disposition, his manner of ruling over various classes of people, his guiding them to uprightness, his bringing together the diverse strata of people and his leading them to his obedience,

together with what is related of his wondrous answers to perplexing questions, his astonishing manner of managing the wellbeing of the creation, his excellent indications about the details of the exoteric law... there shall remain for him no doubt or misgiving that these traits were *not* attained by human means. Nay, that is utterly inconceivable save by seeking help and heavenly support and divine power.

As we commemorate the 1500th year after the Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ birth, the Ummah continues to express its undying love for the Best of Creation. At his birth ﷺ, the Prophet's mother saw a brilliant radiance that illuminated the palaces of Greater Syria. He ﷺ said of his birth, *"I will inform you of my beginning: I am the supplication of my father Abraham, the good news that Jesus shared, and the vision my mother had when she gave birth to me, when a light emanated for her that lit up the palaces of Greater Syria."* [Ahmad] Also highlighting the blessedness of his birth ﷺ, when asked by his Companions why he would fast on Mondays, he said, *"I was born on that day."* [Muslim]

Long before we came into the world, our beloved Prophet ﷺ expressed his love for us. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ loved us even before our own mothers and fathers loved us. He ﷺ once visited the Baqi' Cemetery in Madina and addressed the believers buried there. He said, *"Peace be upon you, O home of believing people. We will, God willing, follow after you."* He was expressing his love for members of his Ummah who had already passed. When visiting the graves of his Companions, the memory of those who had left the world invoked a longing within the Prophet ﷺ for those who had not yet come. He said, *"I would have loved to have seen our brethren."* The Companions asked, *"Are we not your brethren?"* He replied ﷺ, *"Rather, you are my Companions. Our brethren are those who have not yet come...I will be awaiting them at the Basin [of Kawthar]."* [Muslim] It is as if, in that moment, he was looking across the vast expanse of time and expressing his love for us.

Despite a millennium and a half passing since his arrival, the Prophet's ﷺ indelible impact on the Ummah and the world remains strong. His life and teachings remain ever-present in the hearts and minds of over two billion Muslims today. Devotional poems of love and praise of the Messenger ﷺ are sung in countless languages across the world. No matter how much the world is enshrouded in darkness, his light continues to guide the way for us. To quote Imam al-Busiri again as he says in his poem, *al-Burda*,

He truly is the Sun of virtue and

*the Prophets are the constellations in his orbit,
Their lights manifest for people in times of darkness*

This connection we must have, as part of our faith, comes as no surprise. Allah ﷻ informs us in the Qur'an of the intimate connection the Prophet ﷺ has with his Ummah, *"...The Prophet has a stronger affinity to the believers than their [own] souls. And his wives are their mothers..."* [Al-Ahzab, 33:6]

Sidi Ahmad ibn 'Ajība, in his *Bahr al-Madīd*, says, *"... The Prophet has a stronger affinity to the believers ..."* means that the Prophet has more right to the believers in everything related to religious and worldly matters, and his ruling is more binding. *"... than their [own] souls ..."* because he only commands them to, and is pleased with, what benefits them and brings them success.

This verse contains many layers of meaning. It could also be translated as, *"... The Prophet is closer to the believers than they are to their [own] souls ..."* or, *"... The Prophet is more caring towards the believers than they are to their [own] souls ..."*

And in a hadith narrated by al-Bukhārī, the Prophet ﷺ said,

"I am closer to every single believer than their own souls in this life and the next. Recite, if you so wish, "... The Prophet has a stronger affinity to the believers than their [own] souls ..." Any believer who leaves behind wealth, then his relatives will inherit it; but if he leaves behind a debt or dependents, let them come to me and I will be his benefactor."

Reflect on the extent of the Prophet's love and concern for us. If he ﷺ cares so much about a believer's financial debts, what then is his level of concern for our wellbeing in the next life? Some of the Pious Predecessors, particularly those among the Prophetic household, said that the most hope-inspiring verse of the Qur'an is, *"And [surely] your Lord will give so much to you that you will be pleased."* [Al-Duha, 93:5] This is because the Prophet ﷺ will not be pleased until every member of his Ummah is in Paradise.

Celebrating the Prophet's birth ﷺ ignites love and reverence within the hearts of Muslims. This love, which is so central to our faith, gives us a more complete religious experience that goes beyond the shell of outward obedience. Love naturally brings about a willingness to obey, but obedience does not necessarily inspire love.

In recent times, there are some who oversimplify the understanding of the love a Muslim should have for the Prophet ﷺ by equating it to obedience. This simplistic approach has resulted in a type of dry, superficial commitment to outward acts of obedience,

often leaving people searching for something more meaningful. When people experience the realities of faith *through* love, they then taste its sweetness.

This is why the celebrations for the Messenger of Allah's birth ﷺ, that span from as far East as Indonesia to as far West as California, inspire hope that great openings are in store for the Ummah. It shows us that multitudes of Muslims are returning to their faith and revering the things made sacred and blessed by Allah ﷻ. In a time when selfish desires and materialism run rampant, Muslims celebrate the greatest manifestation of spiritual perfection and guidance. This choice speaks volumes about their love and loyalty for Allah and His Messenger. It is as if the mute eloquence of their states continues to affirm,

*Glad tidings for us, O assembly of Muslims,
For truly we have a pillar of support
That can never be destroyed!
When God named the one who called us to Him
"The noblest of Messengers,"
We then became the noblest of communities*

This is why love of the Prophet ﷺ is a central element of faith and why it has always been the Ummah's guiding light. This love, when we leave this

world, sustains us into the next life. As mentioned, the Prophet ﷺ said, *"I am closer to every single believer than their own souls in this life and the next."* [Bukhārī] By reorienting ourselves to our Prophet, our greatest exemplar, and our guide, the Ummah finds direction, strength, and purpose.

And you, when you were born,

The earth and horizons filled with your light!

And we—in that radiance and in that light—

Traverse the paths of guidance

1500 years later, the Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ light still shines brightly for all those who seek guidance.

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— Mohammed Namous