

On the Path of the Beloved ﷺ

The Birth of the Prophet ﷺ

In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful. Peace and blessings be upon our Prophet ﷺ.

This is the second day of Ramadan. How are you feeling? Are you still enthusiastic? Always keep in mind the six merits of fasting Ramadan, so that when you feel your strength is letting you down, these can lift your spirits up:

- 1- Forgiveness of your sins.
- 2- Escaping Hellfire.
- 3- A treasure of good deeds (multiply every good deed by 70).
- 4- The prayer of a fasting person, at the time of breaking the fast, is answered.
- 5- **“The Night of Determination ‘ Al Qadr’ is better than a thousand months” (97:3),** and we have to prepare for it as of today.
- 6- Allah’s delight with his fasting subjects.

We have agreed on our motto: **“I will worship Allah, like I have never done before.”**

We have also put a table containing six points that the Prophet ﷺ used to maintain in Ramadan, and we have said that women will be in charge of preparing the table and passing it to their men.

These points were:

- 1- Praying the five daily prayers ‘jamaa’, (in congregation).
- 2- Observing and maintaining family ties.
- 3- Daily charity.
- 4- A special daily prayer, specifically to be saved from Hellfire and to instigate the revival of our nation.
- 5- Reading the entire Qur’an.
- 6- Do at least one positive action every day (like guiding someone to the straight path or any other action of some benefit to society).

Today’s lecture consists of three parts:

1. The greatness of the Prophet for few minutes to rekindle our love for the Prophet.
2. The world before the Prophet. When the Prophet was born, what was the world like?
3. The birth and name of the Prophet ﷺ.

Let us start by catching a few glimpses of the greatness of the Prophet ﷺ. There is one ayah that I really like, and which is very touching, especially now that we are a few hundred meters away from the house of the Prophet. Allah says what can be translated as, **“And know that among you is the Messenger of Allah.” (49:7)**

Is the messenger of Allah among us? He is among you with his Sunnah, with his virtues, with what he left in you, and with the great legacy he passed on to you which will last till the day of Judgment. **“And know that among you is the Messenger of Allah”**; the ayah is not limited to a small group of people or to a certain time in history. This ayah states a truth that is fixed throughout the ages because he left humanity a very rich heritage.

Let me give you an example. Famous people, in any walk of life, are always advised not to make a lot of appearances. Why? The more exposure you get the more obvious your defects become. Because you are only human, your glossy image fades.

This is true of everyone but one person, the Prophet ﷺ. He invited people to come and meet him and deal with him as much as possible, because the more contact one has with him, the more one is bound to love him. The only person on earth to have taken this approach is the Prophet, because although, like us he is human, he is the closest to perfection. The more one knows him the more one admires his virtues and respects him. He encouraged the poor to live closest to him and not in remote areas, so over the course of ten years, their love and respect for him was ever increasing.

Also the Islamic Army that went with him to conquer Makkah, ten thousand men, and the Army that went with him to Tabook, were in daily contact with him, could not find any defects in the Prophet and ended up loving him more. In the farewell pilgrimage, he rode with a hundred thousand Muslims on a camel so that every one could see him and said, narrated by 'Abdullah bin 'Amr: The Prophet said, **“Convey (my teachings) to the people even if it were a single sentence...”**¹ He also Said, **“Learn your rites from me...”**² **“It is incumbent upon those who are present to inform those who are absent...”**³ **“Do not tell a lie against me for whoever tells a lie against me (intentionally) then he will surely enter hellfire”**⁴

Even at home, we all know that no matter how well we manage to disguise ourselves, at home our wives know us the way we really are. Nevertheless, the Prophet was mostly praised by his wives. Khadijah said about him, **“I swear; Allah will never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your Kith and kin, help the**

¹ Authentic Hadith. Sahih Bukhari. Volume 4, Book 56, Number 667.

² Narrated by Jaber Ibn Abdullah, true hadith, Al Badr-Al-Munir

³ Sahih Bukhari, Volume 1, Book 3, Number 67

⁴ Sahih Bukari, Book of knowledge, Narrated by Ali

poor and the destitute...”⁵ Ten years later Aisha (RA) said, “His virtues were the embodiment of the Qur’an.”⁶

Even his enemies could not but praise him. When Heraclius, the Roman Emperor, found out that a man from the land of Muhammad was found on Roman territory, he invited him to his court to ask him about Muhammad. The man was Abu-Sufyan, the Prophet’s most hostile enemy.

Narrated by Abdullah ibn-Abbas: Abu-Sufyan ibn-Harb informed me that Heraclius had sent a messenger to him while he had been accompanying a caravan from Quraysh. They were merchants doing business in Sham (Syria, Palestine, Lebanon and Jordan), at the time when Allah’s Prophet had signed a truce with Abu-Sufyan and Quraysh. So Abu-Sufyan and his companions went to Heraclius at Ilya (Jerusalem).

Heraclius called them to his court. Surrounded by all the senior Roman official, he called upon his translator. The translator translated Heraclius’ question; he asked, “Who amongst you is closely related to that man who claims to be a Prophet?” Abu-Sufyan replied, “I am the nearest relative to him (amongst the group).”

Heraclius said, “Bring him (Abu-Sufyan) close to me and make his companions stand behind him.” Abu-Sufyan added, Heraclius told his translator to tell my companions that he wanted to put some questions forward to me regarding that man (The Prophet) and that if I told a lie they (my companions) should contradict me.” Abu Sufyan added, “By Allah! Had I not been afraid of my companions labeling me a liar, I would not have spoken the truth about the Prophet.

The first question he asked me about him was, ‘What is his family status amongst you?’ I replied, ‘He belongs to a good (noble) family amongst us.’ Heraclius further asked, ‘Has anybody amongst you ever claimed the same (i.e. to be a Prophet) before him?’ I replied, ‘No.’ He said, ‘Was anybody amongst his ancestors a king?’ I replied, ‘No.’ Heraclius asked, ‘Do the nobles or the poor follow him?’ I replied, ‘It is the poor who follow him.’ He said, ‘Are his followers increasing decreasing (day by day)?’ I replied, ‘They are increasing.’ He then asked, ‘Does anybody amongst those who embrace his religion become displeased and renounce the religion afterwards?’ I replied, ‘No.’ Heraclius said, ‘Have you ever accused him of telling lies before his claim (to be a Prophet)?’ I replied, ‘No.’ Heraclius said, ‘Does he break his promises?’ I replied, ‘No. We are at truce with him but we do not know what he will do in it.’

I could not find opportunity to say anything against him except that. Heraclius asked, ‘Have you ever had a war with him?’ I replied, ‘Yes.’ Then he said, ‘What was the outcome of the battles?’ I replied, ‘Sometimes he was victorious and sometimes we.’ Heraclius said, ‘What does he order you to do?’ I said, ‘He tells us to worship Allah and Allah alone and not to worship anything along with Him, and to renounce all that which our ancestors had said. He orders us to pray, to speak the truth, to be

⁵ Sahih Bukhari, Book 1: Volume 1, Book 1, Number 3.

⁶ True Hadith, Al Alabani

chaste and to keep good relations with our Kith and kin.’ Heraclius asked the translator to convey to me the following, I asked you about his family and your reply was that he belonged to a very noble family. In fact all the Prophets come from noble families amongst their respective peoples. I questioned you whether anybody else amongst you claimed such a thing, your reply was in the negative. If the answer had been in the affirmative, I would have thought that this man was following the previous man’s statement. Then I asked you whether anyone of his ancestors was a king. Your reply was in the negative, and if it had been in the affirmative, I would have thought that this man wanted to take back his ancestral kingdom. I further asked whether he was ever accused of telling lies before he said what he said, and your reply was in the negative.

So I wondered how a person who does not tell a lie about others could ever tell a lie about Allah. I then asked you whether the rich people followed him or the poor. You replied that it was the poor who followed him. And in fact all apostles are followed by this very class of people. Then I asked you whether his followers were increasing or decreasing. You replied that they were increasing, and in fact this is the way of true faith, till it is complete in all respects. I further asked you whether there was anybody, who, after embracing his religion, became displeased and discarded his religion.

Your reply was in the negative, and in fact this is (the sign of) true faith, when its delight enters the hearts and mixes with them completely. I asked you whether he had ever betrayed. You replied in the negative and likewise the apostles never betray. Then I asked you what he ordered you to do. You replied that he ordered you to worship Allah and Allah alone and not to worship anything along with Him and forbade you to worship idols and ordered you to pray, to speak the truth and to be chaste.

If what you have said is true, he will very soon occupy this place underneath my feet and I knew it (from the scriptures) that he was going to appear but I did not know that he would be from you, and if I could reach him definitely, I would go immediately to meet him and if I were with him, I would certainly wash his feet.”⁷ None of his enemies ever gave him such a testimony.

Let us now move on to the second part. Let us look at the world then, but where do we start? The world, the Arabian Peninsula and finally Makkah. The world was under the power of two great empires, the Persian Empire and the Roman Empire. They were two imperialistic states, and injustice became widespread. Taxes were extremely high, racial and religious persecutions were enforced. Injustice was widespread. People lived in shocking poverty while the leaders lived in opulence. In the Roman Empire, this lavishing life style led to cruel forms of entertainment such as gladiators fighting lions. The Persians, on the other hand, were responsible for

⁷ Sahih Bukhari, Book 1, Volume 1, Number 6

the worst class system ever witnessed in history, with a huge gap between the richest and the poorest; nobility, clergymen, then the worthless mass.

Europe was enduring its darkest ages. Ignorance was widespread and there was even a paper discussing whether a woman was a human being or an animal, whether she had the right to inherit or own property. Polygamy was common. The English historian Wells says, "The world has never witnessed in its history a darker, worse, more desperate era than the 6th century AD. The world was totally paralyzed, and Europe resembled a decaying body of a giant dead man."

This is the world at the time of the birth of the Prophet. Wells then concludes, "until Muhammad, the Prophet of Muslims, appeared."

During the Prophet's time the world was a more hostile place than it is now. Therefore, we should never lose hope. We should make an effort and never despair. The Prophet started alone; and within 20 years he changed the face of the earth. Twenty years of planning, hard work, learning and sacrifice. Do you understand now the meaning of the ayah, **"And in no way have We sent you except as a mercy to the worlds" (21:107)**

Here I would like to point out that this is how all our reference books see this era. However, one can not but think, how did these civilizations rise and fall. The reality is that as generations passed, they brought with them the downfall of these empires. Every civilization has a beginning and an end. And 570 AD saw the downfall of these civilizations.

The empires had their peak then collapsed, thus Allah sent from our desert a man to bring reform based on truth and justice. The Romans and Persians fell because of injustice and we rose because of justice and fairness. Then the wheel of history turned and we fell when we let go of justice and fairness, and Europe rose because it upheld some of these aspects. This does not mean I approve of everything they do. The point is, if we were to say that everything is wrong and we are right, our reform will require a constant struggle with the west. However, it does not need to be like this. One does not find the word "struggle" in the Qur'an but find the word "competition" next to it. We want healthy competition based on reform and self esteem.

Let us move on to the Arabian Peninsula. It consisted of dispersed tribes in conflict with each other: looting, kidnapping for slavery, etc. As for religion, there were 360 statues of gods on top of the Ka'ba. Some people used to take a square stone for a god, and when traveling they would take a travel-sized pebble as a god for convenience. Others would make a god out of date paste if it were too cold to go to the place of worship. However, when hunger strikes, eating the god might be the only option! Even Omar Ibnul-Khattab did such a thing and when he was asked, **"didn't you have a brain at the time?"** He replied, **"We did, but we didn't have guidance."**

Women had no financial rights of inheritance or ownership. A woman was even part of the inheritance itself. This was the case with all women except for those of some noble origin. Hence, Khadijah was not treated like that nor Amina bint-Wahb. Moreover, the practice of burying girls alive was so common that some companions of the Prophet buried up to seven daughters before Islam, and could never cry enough afterwards for what they had done. Some girls were buried at birth, others at the age of six. Allah says what can be translated as, **“And when one of them is given the tidings of (the birth) of a female, his face lingers blackened and he is ever-repressed (with sorrow). He hides himself from (Literally: overlays himself beyond) (the sight) of the people because of the odious tidings (given) him, whether he should retain it in degradation or shove it in the dust. Verily, odious is (the way) they judge! (16:58-59).**

There might be wisdom behind the death of the Prophet’s sons and not his daughters. Whenever he saw his daughter Fatima he used to hug her and kiss her on her forehead between the eyes. On his deathbed, it was she who knew before anyone else that he was dying because he could not lift himself up to kiss her.

Can you see the changes the Prophet ﷺ brought about? Therefore, we should never despair.

Let us see Makkah now. Makkah was an international trade city. All the caravans passed by Makkah. What were the winter and summer caravans? Merchandise came from China to Yemen through the Arabian Peninsula and the traders of Quraysh then reached the Levant. Quraysh was the link between the Romans and the Persians. Therefore, it was an affluent city, and its traders were among the wealthiest in the world.

Makkah was also the centre of religious destinations, because of the Ka’ba. This brought about more trade and wealth. Makkah was also a cultural centre of media. Poets used to gather in Souk Akkadh to recite poetry. At that time Makkah was considered the safest place in the peninsula because it was the leading city of the Arabs. Allah says what can be translated as, **“And have they not seen that We have made a sanctuary secure, and mankind are snatched away all round about them? Do they then believe in untruth and disbelieve in the favor of Allah?” (29:67),** and also, **“And thus We have revealed to you an Arabic Qur’an, that you may warn the Mother of the Towns (Makkah)...” (42:7)**

There was also a parliament in Makkah called Dar An-Nadwa, where the heads of tribes met to negotiate and take decisions.

There were 360 statues of gods above the Ka’ba, but not because the Makkans worshiped all of them. It was more of a financial agreement with the surrounding tribes. The tribes would guarantee the safe passage of their trade caravans from Yemen to the Levant; in return they would be rewarded with a prestigious place for their gods above the Ka’ba. This is all Satan’s doing, because he knows that one’s

instincts will guide one to the right path and that one would eventually realize that the god is merely a stone, therefore he links it to one's financial interests.

Hence, when the Prophet ﷺ asked the Arabs to worship none but Allah, he was jeopardizing their trade, profits, religious leadership and significance. Satan has done it before and is still doing it now: he puts your interests on one hand and the truth on the other. Therefore never put your interests before the truth. Cheating in exams is an example. Teachers may say, "Let the poor students cheat"; however, there are no compromise in matters of right and wrong.

I urge the new generations to hold justice high in value above all. The disagreement between Quraysh and the Prophet was purely to keep their interests.

Take a moment to ask yourselves if you have ever put your interests over what is right.

The universe is based on justice. Never say that earning a living justifies the means. Where is justice?

Despite everything, the Prophet ﷺ focused on three things and turned them into opportunities:

1. He took advantage of the season of hajj to meet all the tribes and present them with his idea. There is an approach that is called a SWOT analysis, where you evaluate your strengths and opportunities. The Prophet seized the opportunity by emigrating to Madinah after meeting the Ansar during Hajj.
2. The language of Quraysh was understood by all the other tribes.
3. The Arabs were free people; they had never been occupied. They were courageous, they had never known humiliation. Therefore, they were capable of revival. Those who have never tasted freedom will never have the resolve, determination or time to seek it.

I urge you to teach your children to be free, to be proud, to have an opinion, so that we can achieve a revival. I am not merely telling you stories about the Seerah here: this is the vital vein of our nation. Listen to this story carefully:

The Prophet was sitting among the important men of Quraysh, and a child was sitting on his right. They were feeling thirsty so he took a jar of water and as the Sunnah says, he was supposed to start from the right. The Prophet turned to the boy and asked him, **"Do you give me permission to offer a drink to the older people first?"** The boy replied, **"No, I would not let anyone take my share of your generosity towards me."** So the Prophet looked at the men around him and said, **"This is his right, I will start with him."**

This is how we should raise our children.

When Omar Ibnul-Khattab used to walk in the street, children used to run away from him, except one child, Abdullah Ibn-Zubair. Omar asked him, **“Why did you not run like your friends?”** The child replied, **“The road is not so narrow that I need to make way, and I have done nothing wrong to run away.”** Omar looked at him and said, **“This boy will achieve a high status”** and so he did. He became a Muslim Caliph.

Our third lesson for today is self-esteem; there will be no revival without pride.

Let us move to the birth of the Prophet ﷺ. His name is Muhammad; His grand father chose the name for him. After his birth, his grand-father circumcised him at seven, made a banquet and called him Muhammad.⁸ People asked him, “What will you call him?” He replied, “Muhammad” They said in astonishment, “Why did you deviate from the names of his ancestors?” He replied, as if by divine inspiration, “I wanted him to be thanked on earth by the dwellers of the earth, and in the heavens by the dwellers of the heavens.”

What is the meaning of Muhammad? It is the ultimate state of being praised, It means ‘the person who is praised so many times’. He was also named Ahmad, which is a superlative adjective. Truly, no one has praised Allah more than him. His name in the scriptures is Ahmad and not Muhammad, because thanking Allah is of a higher status than being thanked.

Allah bestowed on him Al-Fatiha, The Opener, **“Praise be to Allah, The Lord of the worlds” (1:2)**. The Prophet ﷺ says that he will intercede on the Day of Judgment with words of praise never uttered by anyone before. We also end every task we do with words of praise. The moral is that Allah likes everything to end with words of praise, and since Muhammad is the last Prophet then his name will invoke words of praise. His name is proof of his truthfulness.

On the other hand, praise is related to revival. The frame of mind of a person who wants to create a revival is a positive thankful one. Some religious people nowadays are always frowning, and are easily angered. This is not the attitude of someone who wants to achieve a positive change. A thankful person is peaceful and content. He has to have the mentality of Muhammad ﷺ.

How about his full name?

Muhammad Ibn-Abdullah, Ibn-Abdul-muttalib, Ibn-Hashem, Ibn-Abd-zanat, Ibn-Abd-Kusay, Ibn-Kilab, Ibn-Murra, Ibn-Kaab, Ibn-Louay, Ibn-Ghaleb, Ibn-Fihr; Fihr was the father of Quraysh and Fihr was a descendent of Ismail (Ishmael), whose father was Ibrahim (Abraham).

⁸ Narrated by Abdullah Ibn-Abbas, Narrated by one person only.

The Prophet's great grandfather was Kusay, who united Quraysh. The word Quraysh is derived from *Taquarrush* which means coming closer together. He was also the one who built Dar An-Nadwa, and lead the tribe of Quraysh. After him came Hashem. He is the one who went to the Persians and Romans to negotiate with them to release the trading caravans of Quraysh. He also made the agreements with the Arabian tribes. He brought wealth to Quraysh. His immediate grand-father, Abdul-Muttalib, was the one who dug the well of Zamzam to offer water to the Arabs. Leadership ran in the veins of the family of the Prophet. However, despite the nobility and the leadership status, the family was not rich. The Prophet ﷺ was therefore, close to the poor, in lacking wealth, as well as close to the rich because of his noble ancestry. Allah ﷻ prepared the world, the continent, the peninsula, Makkah and even the Family and first name for the Prophet.

Banu-Umayyah, another branch of the family, were the wealthy side, but they were not popular. On the other hand Banu Abdul-Muttalib were not wealthy but were loved because they helped people.

Therefore, I urge our middle class not to give up their virtues and values because they are not rich; the Prophet was like you. As for the rich, do not follow in the footsteps of Banu-Umayyah who did not serve their community.

We all know the great story of Abdul-Muttalib. He is the one who stood up to Abraha when he came to conquer Makkah. The first thing Abraha did was to confiscate people's wealth. Abdul-Muttalib went to see him and reclaim his camels. Abraha laughed and said, "I thought you were coming to negotiate the matter of the Ka'ba that I intend to destroy." Abdul-Muttalib replied, "The camels are mine, but the Ka'ba has its Lord and He will protect it."

Another beautiful aspect of the birth of the Prophet is in this ayah, Allah says what can be translated as, **"Indeed there has already come to you a Messenger from (among) yourselves. Mighty (i.e., burdensome) to him is whatever distresses you. Most eager is he for your (welfare), to the believers (he is) constantly compassionate, constantly merciful." (9:128).**

What is meant by "a messenger from among yourselves"? A Prophet from your environment. This also means that we are all related to the Prophet in some way. His grand father, Kinana, was from Yeman, and his grandfather Ibrahim was from Iraq, his grandmother Hajar was from Egypt and he was from Makkah and he lived in Madinah. His father's uncles were from Madinah. His grandfather, Hashem, was buried in Gaza. Hence it is still known as Gaza of Hashim. His descendants lived in Jordan and North Africa, and he lived in the Arabian Peninsula. His suckling mother, Um-Ayman, was from Sudan, and his other suckling mother, Halima Assa'diyyah was from the desert.

The Prophet ﷺ was born on a Monday morning, on the 12th of Rabi' Al-Awwal, corresponding to the 20th of April 570 AD, 50 days before the year of the elephant.

Abraha marched to destroy the K'aba and the inhabitants of Quraysh sought refuge in the mountains. Then birds appeared carrying in their beaks black stones. The moment these stones touched a soldier, they would cause a skin disease that would burn the skin and send the soldier running in pain. Allah says what can be translated as, **“Have you not seen how your Lord performed with the companions (i.e., owners) of the elephant? Did He not make their plotting go into great error? And He sent upon them baleful birds (in flocks), Throwing against them stones of baked clay; So He made them like green blades eaten (up)” (105:1-5).**

The fact that the incident happened 50 days before the birth of the Prophet is of crucial importance. When people related the story afterwards, they said, “The Lord protected His house.” Therefore, when Amina was telling her son Muhammad, about the Lord’s miracle and the birds, and how his uncle stood up to Abraha, he would ask her about the statues over the Ka’ba, but he would get no answer. The Prophet was born after the year of the elephant so that he can find out the whole truth; hence, when the Prophet was asked once in his youth, “Do you swear by Lat and Uzza?” he replied, “I never worshiped them to swear by them.” He said that reflecting on the story of the year of the elephant. Another important lesson to be learnt from the year of the elephant is that hardships make people stronger. We as a nation are going through a grave period and there is no doubt that we will come out of this stronger; as a nation, who does not destroy but rather restore peace and harmony on earth.

Finally, the birth of the Prophet was a natural birth. After the miracle of the year of the elephant, supernatural miracles seized because the age of miracles had passed and the era of knowledge and planning began. Work hard and have strong belief and Allah will arrange for you the means to restore, reform and bring prosperity to earth.

We have come to the end of today’s lecture so let us recap. We touched on these points:

- 1- “And know that among you is the Messenger of Allah.” (49:7)**
- 2-** The world before the Prophet.
 1. Collapse of civilizations in the absence of justice
 2. Not all the western civilization is rejected, we want coexistence not struggle
- 3-** No to desperation: have hope and we will achieve a revival
- 4-** The Prophet’s honoring of women.
- 5-** Never put your interests in one hand and justice in the other hand and choose your interests.
- 6-** How to transform your few advantages into opportunities.

We then talked about the birth of the Prophet and drew a few lessons:

- a.** Those who make the revival are people who praise Allah with profusion.

- b.** Noble but poor families, keep your pride and self-esteem.
 - c.** Grave incidents produce great men.
 - d.** The time of miracles has passed.
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Lecture Notes Provided By: Imam Ghulam Moyhuddin

Seerah: Ibn Ishaq, Ibn Hisam, Ibn Kathir and Diya al-Nabi were used in the compilation of these lecture notes as well as various books of Hadith.

The selective topics and format is from Amr Khaled's Arabic lecture on Seerah of the Prophet ﷺ with renditions from the "dar al tarjma" convoy.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3oDLD8B-has>

I have included modifications for the sake of readability and clarity.