

On the Path of the Beloved ﷺ

Difficulties And Choices

Today's lecture is divided into two parts: the first is about the last ten days of Ramadan; and the second is about the events of the 4th year after Hijrah.

The First Part:

We are now starting the last third of Ramadan. You know, Allah (SWT) selects people who have good traits from among his worshipers, as He knows the hearts, selves and His universe. Allah (SWT) says to Musa (AS) "Moses" , **"And I, Ever I, have chosen you; so listen to whatever is revealed"** (13:20), and to Maryam, **"O Maryam, (Mary) surely Allah (SWT) has elected you and purified you and has elected you over the women of the worlds"** (3:42).

Allah (SWT) selected the Messengers from among people. He selected Muhammad to be the seal of Prophet (SAW)s. He selected his companions for him , and He selected this Prophet (SAW)'s nation of all other nations; Allah (SWT) says , **"You have been the most charitable nation brought out to mankind"** (3:110). From Muhammad's nation He selected the martyrs, **"...take to Him martyr-witnesses from among you..."** (3:140). From this nation Allah (SWT) selected the ones good with the Qur'an and made them His favorite and closest people. He selected Jibril (AS) "Gabriel" of all other angels, Makkah of all other cities, Ramadan of all other months, the 10 days of the month Zu-al-Hijja of all other days, and finally Laylatul-Qadr (the Night of Determination) of all other nights. This is what I wanted to reach.

Allah (SWT) selects those who will witness Laylatul-Qadr every year. Can you just believe that Allah (SWT) by His grace has chosen you from 6 billion people on earth to be a Muslim; and from all Muslims He made you love worship in Ramadan. He chose you to witness Ramadan (many people died before it); and witness the first 20 days; and now He is choosing you to live until Laylatul-Qadr.

It is called Al-Qadr for its value; Allah (SWT) says , **"And what makes you realize what the Night of Determination is?"** (97:2). No matter what, you can never imagine its value and the reward you will get from it. It is also said that it is called so because Allah (SWT)'s boon is estimated for all people on that night.

On that night myriads of angels, and Jibril (AS) among them, come down to earth. It is like a big festival, as if angels celebrate the beginning of Muhammad's Message, the first revelation of the holy Qur'an. Allah (SWT) says, **"Peace it is, till the rising of the dawn"** (97:5). It is a night when Allah (SWT) makes peace with His worshipers, forgives them, exempts them from hellfire and answers their prayers all night long till the break of

dawn.

It is a night more charitable (i.e., better) than a thousand months, which means 84 years (the human's average age). It means that if you worshipped Him on that night, it is as if you have worshiped Him for 84 years. It is a night:

1. full of rewards and good deeds,
2. full of exemption from Hellfire,
3. when Allah (SWT) answers your prayers.

With the start of the last ten days of Ramadan, the Prophet (SAW) used to tighten his waist belt (i.e. work hard), pray all the night and keep his family awake for the prayers. He also used to fold his bed (i.e. no time for sleeping). The women with their monthly period or in their postpartum period must mention and praise Allah (SWT) a lot on these days and make Dua'a (supplication) a lot to get rewarded.

The Second Part:

What happened after Uhud? We know that the battle of Badr raised the companions' spirits, but after it came the battle of Uhud and caused their spirits to break. Writers say that it was not a defeat, but rather a breakdown. I do not know whether they say this out of their embarrassment of saying we lost on the military basis or that we lost while the Prophet (SAW) was among us.

On the military basis, I find it not embarrassing at all to lose; yet, military experts assert that it was a breakdown and not a loss. But being embarrassed to say that we lost while the Prophet (SAW) was with us is something I do not agree of. It was a lesson for Muslims teaching them that if they disobeyed Allah (SWT) and His Messenger and did not follow the universal laws, they will lose even if the Prophet (SAW) himself was with them. Allah (SWT) sides with no one. It is good that this happened while the Prophet (SAW) was among them so that the Muslims would learn that even if you prayed for many years without following and using the universal reasons, you will lose. The last 200 years are good evidence on what I am saying today; millions of people now disobey the Prophet (SAW) and many of them never even obeyed him once in their lives. That's why victory never comes although we pray hard; it will never come as long as we do not obey and use the reasons of victory.

As a result of Uhud, the Jews in Madinah wanted to tear down the constitution, and the hypocrites started backbiting the Muslims. Moreover, the tribes felt Muhammad was weak, and they wanted to end their treaties with him and return to be with Quraysh. Quraysh itself became bolder and thought of re-attacking the Muslims in Madinah. The hypocrites started telling Muslims that they are not qualified to be counseled or to follow democracy. They asked, "How come you Muslims lose and 70 of you get killed while the Messenger of Allah (SWT) was with you?" The Muslims wondered, "Where were the angels? Why didn't they come and save us?". The answers came through the

Qur'anic revelation of Surat Al-'Imran.

The first ayah was , **“take counsel of them” (3:159)**, which means that counseling is a principle in Islam even if it did not bring about victory.

The second question was “How did we lose while the Prophet (SAW) was with us?”. Allah (SWT) says , **“And is it that as soon as an affliction befell (Literally: afflicted) you, (and) you had already afflicted (i.e. afflicted) twice over the like of it, did you say, “However is this?” Say, “It is from your own selves” (3:165)**; i.e. you did not take the reasons of victory, so you lost even when the Prophet (SAW) was with you.

About the angels, Allah (SWT) says , **“And in no way has Allah (SWT) made (this supply) except as good tidings to you and that thereby your hearts may be composed; and in no way does victory (come) except from the Providence of Allah (SWT), The Ever-Mighty, The Ever-Wise” (3:126)**, i.e. Allah (SWT) is the One Who brings victory; angels are just to support you after you work hard.

The Prophet (SAW) felt angry with those who disobeyed him, so Allah (SWT) told him , **“So it was by (some) mercy from Allah (SWT) that you have been lenient with them; and if you had been stern (and) harsh of heart, they would indeed have broken away from round about you. So be clement towards them, and ask forgiveness for them, and take counsel of them in the command” (3:159)**.

As for the broken spirited companions, Allah (SWT) told them , **“And do not feel feeble nor grieve; and you are the most exalted in case you are believers. In case a blow touches you, (This refers to the battle of 'Uhud) then a like blow has already touched the (disbelieving) people. And such days We interchange (i.e. the change of fortune) among mankind” (3:139-140)**; and **“And do not feel fee bled in seeking the people (i.e., the “enemy” people). In case you feel pain, then surely they (also) feel pain as you feel pain, and you are hoping from Allah (SWT) that for which they do not hope; and Allah (SWT) has been Ever-Knowing, Ever-Wise” (4:104)**. So the Qur'an came down to answer all the questions and heal all wounds.

The Prophet (SAW) knew that Quraysh was resting 8 miles away from Madinah in a place called Hamraa Al-Asad. Therefore, the next day after reaching Madinah and after Salatul-Fajr (Dawn Prayer), the Prophet (SAW) ordered that all those who witnessed Uhud must gather and go with him to meet Quraysh, even if they were wounded. He did not want a fight, but wanted to raise the broken spirit of the companions, abort any idea for Quraysh to re-attack them in Madinah and show all the tribes and Quraysh that the Muslims are still strong and were not defeated. He was just taking the initiative to frighten Quraysh because whoever takes the initiative always wins, even if he was weak. We need to learn that lesson by heart in order to be the ones moving events, not being moved by them.

Abu-Sufyan was frightened and so he sent a man to the Muslims to frighten them and tell them that Quraysh was preparing to re-attack them. On hearing this, the Prophet (SAW) ordered the Muslims to scream out loud saying the ayah where Allah (SWT) says , **“Allah (SWT) is The Reckoner enough for us, and how excellent is The Ever-Trusted Trustee!” (3:173)**. Moreover, the Prophet (SAW) asked a man, called Ma’bad Ibn-AbU-Ma’bad - who was a Muslim but hiding his Islam, to go frighten Quraysh. Ma’bad went to Abu-Sufyan and told him that the Muslims were dying to fight them and that they were to come in double the number of Uhud. Abu-Sufyan was frightened and fled to Quraysh. This somehow raised the spirit of the companions after Uhud.

However, conspiracies were still planned against Muslims everywhere. A man called Khaled Ibn-Sufyan started to gather armies in order to attack Madinah in order to conquer it. Since that the Prophet (SAW) did not want to divert to side fights, he asked one of the companions, Abdullah Ibn-Onais to go join that army, reach for Khaled and kill him. Abdullah asked the Prophet (SAW) to describe Khaled, so the Prophet (SAW) said, “When you see his face, you will remember the devil and your body will shiver”. Abdullah joined the army and started saying bad words about the Prophet (SAW) that Khaled liked him very much and asked him, “Who are you?”. Abdullah did not tell his name as then Khaled will know him immediately so he replied, “I am a man who hates Muhammad more than you do”. Khaled appointed him his bodyguard and when he was in his tent Abdullah killed him and fled to the desert. He spent three days eating leaves until he went to Madinah and told the Prophet (SAW) that the mission was accomplished.

You are not asked here to offer a great sacrifice like this one; you are only asked to adhere to performing Salat-ul-Fajr on time, to pass your exams or to come up with a new invention benefiting Muslims.

Anyway, the Prophet (SAW) was very happy. Abdullah's courage and obedience were rewarded; he will be one of Paradise Dwellers, just as the Prophet (SAW) told him. This high and noble rank cannot be reached unless through hard work, good efforts and great sacrifice for our religion, not only through performing prayers and fasting.

The 4th year of Hijrah was particularly characterized with severe crises for the Prophet (SAW) . The disbelievers were lurking to harm Muslims. One of the tribes dwelling around Madinah, which was supposed to be the Muslims' ally, asked the Prophet (SAW) to send with them some of the companions to teach them Islam and the Qura'n; so the Prophet (SAW) sent six companions headed by Marthed Ibn-Abu-Marthed, who was playing a very important role in helping weak Muslims who could not migrate to join their fellows in Madinah. This man was known for his powerful body, chivalry and strong faith. One night while performing his daily routine of carrying weak Muslims to Madinah, a prostitute saw him; she liked him and asked him to have an affair with her or she will disclose his secret. He refused and returned to the Prophet (SAW) and asked him if he can marry this woman. Hence, Allah (SWT) said , **“ and the female fornicator,**

none shall marry her except a fornicator or a (male) associator; (i.e., one who associates other with Allah (SWT))” (24:3).

We notice here that the Prophet (SAW) did not rebuke Marthed, but rather advised him quietly to let her repent and become a believer then to wait for a while to make sure that her repentance was completely sincere before marrying her; finally, Marthed obeyed the Prophet (SAW) and the Qur'an and refrained from marrying her. The Prophet (SAW)'s advice is a very valuable one for young men who experience the same situation.

Now, the group of companions went with the tribe to mark the first betrayal incident against Muslims committed by the disbelievers. The tribe tied them up to sell them to Quraysh, who wanted to avenge from the Prophet (SAW) by killing his six companions. This was one of the consequences of the battle of Uhud; the tribes had no more respect for their covenant with the Prophet (SAW), and thus the traitorous tribe killed four of the six Muslims and captured the other two. Afterwards, they remembered that Assim Ibn-Thabet was among the martyrs and that the disbeliever Sulafa Bint-Saad vowed to award the one who kills Assim Ibn-Thabet to avenge from him for killing her sons in the battle of Uhud. Therefore, they decided to cut off his head and hand it over to her. When they started to do this, Allah (SWT) sent the wasps and the bees to surround Assim's head to prevent them from accomplishing their hideous task; this was an evident proof for His saying that can be translated as, **“and in no way does anyone know the hosts of your Lord except He” (74:31).**

You might wonder here! If miracles were obtainable, then why did Allah (SWT) let them be killed? It is to show us that the message is precious and that it requires sacrifices and shedding blood. This nation did not emerge except by the martyrs' blood; this is an extremely obvious lesson for us. Allah (SWT) says, **“Surely Allah (SWT) defends the ones who have believed” (22:38).**

Allah (SWT) sent the heavy rain on them to carry Assim's body along to the valley and conceal it for good. This story teaches us that if we really rely on Allah (SWT) and trust Him, He will surely protect us in life and after death in the hereafter.

Anyway, they took their two captives to Makkah, where they killed the first as soon as they reached there, but the second had to wait till the prohibited months ended. Therefore, they locked him up in the house of one of them under the custody of a bondmaid, who had a little son living with her. The bondmaid, who converted to Islam later on, swore that she used to see the captive eating grapes when there were no grapes in the entire peninsula; besides, the man was already tied up. Again comes this principle: **“Surely Allah (SWT) defends the ones who have believed”**. Allah (SWT) always sends a glimpse of His mercy amidst the tragedy.

The prohibited months were about to end, so the captive asked the woman to give him a razor to clean up before meeting his Lord. While doing so, the woman's little son came to sit on his lap, and when the woman entered and saw the razor in his hand and her son on his lap, she got terrified and thought that he was going to kill the boy with the razor. The great Muslim, who realized her fear, assured her that he would not do such a thing because he is one of Muhammad's companions (RA).

Learn from this great companion! He could have simply threatened to kill the boy to force them let him go, but he did not because he believed that innocents should not be terrified and should not be an object of revenge. This is the teachings of our religion; this is our Islam.

Finally, they took their captive outside Makkah to Tane'em to kill him there; they tied him to a palm tree and started to torture him. At this critical moment, this companion (RA) set a great example for bravery and love for his Prophet (SAW) when Abu-Sufyan asked him if he would rather had Muhammad tortured in his place while he (RA) rested assured in his own house. He (RA) answered him that he would rather get tortured this way and not having the Prophet (SAW) even pricked with a thorn. Abu-Sufyan admired his bravery and agreed to let him pray two raka'a (two units of prayer) before he died; hence, he (RA) was the first to introduce this concept in Islam. Before he died, he called out, "O Allah (SWT), I have proclaimed the message of Your messenger, convey to him my salutation because I would love to salute him before I die". Again, the message of Islam is the issue here. So, Jibril (AS) descended to convey the companion's salutation to the Prophet (SAW), who got enraged against the tribe that betrayed Muslims, but still did not fight them because he preferred to focus on his main battle instead of dispersing the Muslims' power on side battles. He knew how to arrange his priorities.

The same year witnessed another betrayal scheme against Muslims. Another tribe asked the Prophet (SAW) to send a delegation of his companions to the tribes of Najd to teach them Islam, so the Prophet (SAW) sent 70 companions; the same tragic scenario was repeated once more, as if Allah (SWT) wants us to realize that Muslims can be betrayed even during the Prophet (SAW)'s life because it was a human experience where betrayal can happen and will still happen against Muslims throughout the ages, or else how can we learn how to deal with such betrayal the way our Prophet (SAW) did?! and how can we benefit from his experience?!

This betrayal came as a consequence of Uhud's defeat. The entire peninsula was plotting against Muslims. Hiram Ibn-Melhan, the leader of the Muslim delegation, went to meet the tribe's king. While he was telling him about Islam, the king gave Jabbar, a skillful javelin thrower, a gesture to kill Hiram. He shouted when he was dying, "I swear to the Lord of Ka'bah that I won"; it was true that he won a place in Paradise and martyrdom. His murderer, Jabbar, was astonished to hear him saying this, so he went later on to ask the Prophet (SAW) what that man won. The Prophet (SAW) answered him that he won a place in Paradise and started to tell him about it till the man

converted to Islam.

As for the rest of the 70 companions, they were killed by the other tribes of Najd. This incident aroused the Prophet (SAW)'s anger against them to the extent that he kept invoking Allah (SWT) against them after each of the five prayers for a whole month. On this occasion Allah (SWT) said , **“You have nothing to do concerning the Command, (i.e. My Command) whether He relents towards them or torments them, as surely they are unjust” (2:128)**. Therefore, the Prophet (SAW) stopped. Some people assume the authority of passing judgments on others while they should not because it is Allah (SWT)'s concern and none else's.

Turning back to the situation in Madinah , we find that Jews of Bani An-Nadeer – who had all their rights in full as citizens in Madinah, were exchanging letters with Quraysh informing them about the Muslims' strength. At that time, the Muslims had to pay the blood money for two murders. Since the Muslims did not have enough money to pay it, the Prophet (SAW) went to their supposedly allies – i.e. the Jews of Bani An-Nadir - asking them for help for he always considered them citizens having all the rights of citizenship and abiding by all its duties. They agreed and asked one of them to try to kill the Prophet (SAW) by throwing a heavy rock on him , but Jibril (AS) descended to warn him against their scheme. We notice that Jibril (AS) warned the Prophet (SAW) this time to save Da'wa (the missionary activity) because killing the Prophet (SAW) would bring an end to his Da'wa. When he returned back to Madinah, he informed his two companions Abu-Bakr (RA) and Omar (RA) of what happened.

Following this incident, the Prophet (SAW) found out that the Jews of Bani An-Nadeer were exchanging correspondences with Quraysh too, so he sent for them asking them to leave Madinah within no more than a month as a result of their betrayal and allowed them to take their money with them. They agreed and started to prepare themselves to leave and head for the place of the Jews of Khaibar. Now, compare the Prophet (SAW)'s attitude towards those people, who betrayed him but he was compassionate enough to let them take their money and left them a safe place they could resort to, to the 18th century-Europe when it mercilessly expelled the Jews when they had no where else to go to; consequently, they came to our countries and the Palestinian problem came to existence!

While they were preparing to leave, Abdullah Ibn-Saloul told them not to leave and that he would protect them. So, they resorted to their forts and refused to leave. Therefore, the Prophet (SAW) and his companions (RA) laid a siege around their forts for 15 days and ordered them to leave without their armaments. During the siege, an amazing event took place; the ayahs that prohibited drinking liquors were descended, as if Allah (SWT) meant to test their obedience to Him and His Messenger after their defeat in the battle of Uhud as a result of their disobedience. When all companions (RA) obeyed Allah (SWT)'s command, the next day Allah (SWT) said , **“and hurled horror in their hearts” (33:26)**, as if Allah (SWT) wants to say that when you obeyed Him, He supported you

with a new weapon namely terrifying the Jews of Bani An-Nadeer.

The same year also witnessed one last event, i.e. the battle of Dhat Ar-Rika'a. The Prophet (SAW) decided to confront one of the weak tribes, which was planning to attack Muslims, in order to prove to the Arabs that the Muslims were still strong. Therefore, he headed for them with 700 of his companions; yet, as soon as they reached the tribe's camp, they ran away. That was why this battle was called "Dhat Ar-Rika'a" (i.e. patches) because Muslims did not have enough camels to ride, so they had to walk long distances in the desert. Consequently, their feet were severely injured, so they were cutting off patches from their clothes to bandage their feet.

On their way back to Madinah, the Prophet (SAW) feared that the enemy's troops might gather again against him, so he prayed the Fear Prayer. He divided his army into two groups. The first group was to face the enemy while the other group prayed behind him in the direction of the Kiblah (the direction to which Muslims turn when praying; i.e. in the direction of Ka'ba). When the first group finished, they exchanged places with the second group while the Prophet (SAW) continued his prayer with the second group. Each group was to pray two raka'a, but the Prophet (SAW) prayed four raka'a. The Qur'an describes this prayer saying, **"And when you are among them, (and) so keep up the prayer for them, then let a section of them be upright with you, and let them take their weapons (i.e., to defend those who pray and to face the enemy) So, when they have prostrated themselves, (i.e., finished their prayer) then let them be in your rear-guard; and let another section who have not prayed come up (and) so let them pray with you" (4:102).**

The rest of their journey back to Madinah shows us examples of the great traits that characterized the Prophet (SAW) and his companions (RA).

One time when the army was resting and the Prophet (SAW) was sleeping under the shadow of a tree, one of the disbelievers snatched his sword and asked him, "Who can protect you now?". The Prophet (SAW) confidently answered, "Allah (SWT)". His answer was so confident and strong that the man dropped the sword, thus the Prophet (SAW) picked it up and asked him the same question. He asked him to join Islam, but the man refused. The Prophet (SAW) released him on the condition that he will not join a scheme against him. Even here the Prophet (SAW) could reach a compromise with the man.

Another time while the Muslim army was moving, the Prophet (SAW) noticed that one of the companions (RA) was lagging behind, so he went back to check on him. He found that the companion's camel was weak, which indicated that he (RA) was too poor. The Prophet (SAW) asked him if he was married; the man said that he married a woman to take care of his nine orphan sisters. Therefore, the Prophet (SAW) ordered the army to stay at the entrance of Madinah for a while so as to give the companion's wife a chance to prepare herself for meeting her husband. Furthermore, he wanted to

financially help the companion (RA), so he offered to buy his weak camel so as to avoid hurting his feelings. When the companion (RA) agreed and left the camel for the Prophet (SAW) , the Prophet (SAW) gave it back to him (RA) along with a sum of money.

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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.