

The Revelation of Muhammad

(Eid al Mab'ath)¹

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In the name of Allah, the most Compassionate, the most Merciful

I wish all the Muslims of the world, the Shiites and fakirs, especially those who are present here now and those who can hear these words, a nice Eid al Mab'ath (The Revelation).

This Eid is the one God has asked us to be grateful for creating it. Whereas, He has not asked us to be appreciative of all the blessings that He has given us, that He has created us and that He has granted existence to us. Even though God possesses everything, when He wants to encourage the believers, He says: “**Surely Allah buys the believers’ souls and properties so that they shall have the Heaven**”². When He wants us to make a donation, He asks: “**Who is it that will offer Allah a goodly gift?**”³. However, with all this generosity, He wants us to be appreciative for a couple of things of which are the “**Faith and Guidance**”⁴, and: “**Allah has surely been gracious to the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from themselves to recite to them His verses, to purify them, and to teach them the Book and the Wisdom**”⁵.

That He assigns is the Revelation. So we care about this assigning, and we should do, as God has imposed an obligation on us. We realize that it must be a very valuable asset when He puts us under obligation, even if we are not aware of its value. It would be our fault if we were not aware. Here again, I wish you a happy Eid which is the Prophet's Mab'ath.

Terminologically, derivations of Mab'ath (in Arabic) have been used in a variety of contexts. In cases, it means to wake up: **Praise be upon You who woke me up out of my grave and if You had wished, You could have made my asleep permanent**⁶. This pray obviously conforms to the Resurrection Day, but it is also true when we wake up in the morning in bed, figuratively He wakes us up from our graves. It also has been used when someone is assigned a duty, as we use it like the revelation of the prophet. This Revelation (in Arabic) has several spiritual connotations

¹ A transcript of a speech made by his honorable Haj Dr. Nour Ali Tabandeh (Majzoob Ali Shah) in the public Sufi gathering (the Hussainiya of Amir Sulaymani) on Oct 15, 2001 attributed to the Eid al Mab'ath.

² The Quran, Al-Tawba, Bara'ah, (The Repentance), 111: إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنَّ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ

³ The Quran, Al-Baqara (The Cow), 245: مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا

⁴ The Quran, Al-Hujraat (The Private Apartments), 17: اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنَّ هَدَائِكُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ

⁵ The Quran, Ai-e-Imran (The Family of Imran), 164:

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ يَتَّلَوُ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَبَرَّكَهُمْ وَبَعَلَّمَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَةَ

لَكَ الْحَمْدُ أَنْ بَعَثْتَنِي مِنْ مَرْقَدِي وَلَوْ شِئْتَ جَعَلْتَنِي سَرَمَدًا

and most probably God has meant all of them.

One of the connotations of Mab'ath is to be resurrected on the Judgment Day. God revives the dead. Therefore, reviving the dead is a sort of Mab'ath. God revealed the Prophet. Who for? For us. Why? To wake us up from the ignorance asleep, to stop what causes the humanity to die, to blow humanity spirit; the Divine Spirit, into our hearts. "**O believers! Respond to (the call of) Allah and His Prophet when he calls you to that which revives you; and know that Allah intervenes between man and his heart**"⁷. All the messengers' teachings, all the Islamic instructions revive us and save lives. Therefore, revealing anybody who restores us to life and saves us from death can be a Mab'ath. This Mab'ath hopefully will be our revelation, meaning, may God save us from death and revive us.

Those days in Arabia there was no flash of science, culture and civilization like what we see today. However, the Prophet who appeared in that environment dominated throughout the world; shaded a dry and arid land like an umbrella. The difference between philosophers or scholars and prophets is that philosophers and educated people are raised in an environment where pedagogy and teachings are abundant. Take Greece or Iran for instance in the old days when they were famous for civilization, philosophy and art. The rest of the countries were inundated with nescience and ignorance. Apparently, the places where prophets were revealed were not commensurate with where their hometowns were. And it has been like that from the very beginning (it has been the same for all the prophets). Noah (AS) was raised where he was humiliated. He was assaulted many times and He almost died but He had been preordained by God to stay alive. Moses (AS) emerged in the land of Sons of Israel at that time. Although he spent a while in a royal residence, he left it later on. When He entered the simplicity of a shepherd's life, then God revealed Him. Jesus Christ (AS), the same. About our Prophet, too, there was absolutely no logic behind the relationship between Islamic instructions and the place and time He emerged. That is, the countries all around Arabia like Iran at that time were filled with immorality.

The ruling system in Iran by the time was the royal Sassanids whose kings considered themselves God or at least a child of God. There were separate classes in society. There were four classes none of which could interfere in another. Education belonged to the clergy class and the higher ones, they could teach others only if they wished to teach. In Arabia everybody was illiterate. It is said that in Mecca there were only about seven or seventeen people who could read and write. Where people could not consider themselves the right of education, as they admit, where Arabs were just nomads and wanderers in the desert, there came a commandment: **Every Muslim is obliged to acquire education.**⁸ How big is the difference? In some place, one considered themselves as God, whereas here someone said: "**There is no god but Allah**".⁹ When He wanted to care a lot about Himself, He would humble Himself to say: "**I am nothing**

⁷ The Quran, Al-Anfal (Spoils of War), 24:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِبُو لِلَّهِ وَلِرَسُولِهِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحِبِّكُمْ وَأَغْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمُرْءَ وَقَنْبِهِ

⁸ طلب العلم فريضة على كل مسلم

⁹ لا إله إلا الله

but a person like others¹⁰.

The ruling system in the Roman Empire by the time was somehow the same. Bishops and priests considered themselves in control of people's own destiny. Whereas Muslims elected their caliph in Arabia, although the Prophet's successor was supposed to be Ali (AS), but perhaps it had been made expedient by God. In addition, tribes in Arabia were at war against one another. A tribe was a unit of society which had a higher priority than individuals. In other words, if a tribe member fell victim, all the tribe raged to avenge their casualty. They would not care about finding the real guilty to punish only him in retaliation, as many members of that tribe as they could find would be avenged. But the Prophet said to these people: "**And there is life for you in (the law of) retaliation**"¹¹, and added: "**Retaliation is decreed for you in order to take revenge on the murderer for (the killed) man (only)**"¹², and finally He says: "**If the victim's family forgives the guilty one like how real brothers are, and ignores the right of retaliation, then it is a blessing and mercy from God**"¹³. Arabs' spirit could not conform to these words. And these are of the differences between prophetic words and ordinary human's genius and sciences.

In the first place, there had been no constitutional laws in Arabia with which we can now compare the Islamic laws, no matter individualistic or social. We will see how great Islamic laws are when we compare them with the ethical individualistic or social laws written by ethics scholars. With all the attacks on Islam in the recent millennium or so and they will definitely do again and again, Islam is developing and making progress day by day. What They want is to harm and hurt Islam and Muslims, these attacks are like a hammer blacksmithing the iron of Islam, the result will be the iron becoming more resistant until it breaks the hammer handle.

The Prophet was born and raised in such a place. His upbringing was destined by God to be first raised by his grandfather; Abdul-Muttalib, who was pious and God-fearing. After Abdul-Muttalib passed away (when Muhammad was 8), He was raised by His uncle Abu Talib who was also a pious and God-fearing person and according to what many masters of Sufism who believe that the Perfect Man must exist at every time, Abu Talib had been the preceding Guide for salvation just before Muhammad became the Prophet. He assigned the Prophet and admitted Him as a follower. After a while, however, the Prophet reached a position in which Abu Talib became His follower.

Before His Revelation became known to people, they knew Him as Muhammad the Trustworthy (Muhammad al-Amin); the one who was trusted and a solution to every dispute. When the four chieftains of The Quraysh who owned four main positions in the Kaaba to maintain it finished restoring the building of Kaaba and finally wanted to install the Black Stone (al-Hajar al-Aswad), each claimed that he was expected to do it on his own. They could not come to an agreement but they agreed to whatever Muhammad the Trustworthy decided. The Prophet entered the mosque and they asked him what to do. He threw his own cloak on the ground, put

¹⁰ The Quran, Al-Kahf (The Cave), 110: أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ

¹¹ The Quran, Al-Baqara (The Cow), 179: وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ حَيَاةٌ

¹² The Quran, Al-Baqara (The Cow), 178: كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِصَاصُ فِي الْقَتْلَى اخْرُجُوا

¹³ The Quran, Al-Baqara (The Cow), 178: فَمَنْ عَفَى لَهُ مِنْ أَخْيَهُ شَيْءٌ فَأَتَبِعُوا مِاْلَمْعُورُوفِ وَأَدَاءُ إِلَيْهِ بِإِحْسَانٍ ذَلِكَ تَخْيِيفٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ

the stone in the middle of it, and asked the four chieftains to lift the four corners and carry it together. When it was there, He picked it up and installed it by Himself.

That was how they trusted the Prophet's impartiality and courteousness even before His Revelation. Take Hilaf al-Fudul (League of the Virtuous) for instance which was a sincere measure taken in favor of people on those days of ignorance; the alliance of some people who had perhaps a way from their hearts to God. They pledged to protect the oppressed. They called this pledge Hilaf al-Fudul and the Prophet joined this alliance and praised it all the time.

Those days, it was obvious that the Prophet was connected to some transcendental principles. Most of the time, He went to Hira to fast and pray, no matter it was Ramadan or other months. Khadija, Her Holiness, served Him generously, supported and encouraged Him, and never intended to warp His mind. Whenever the Quraysh troubled Him, He sought consolation in Khadija and Abu Talib. Since Abu Talib was greatly respected as he was Abdul-Muttalib's successor and Khadija was born to an honorable family and she had a good reputation among people, enemies could not bother the Prophet a lot.

But how did this Revelation take place? The Revelation happened when the Prophet was assigned to tell the truth inside his heart. All prophets were monotheists and godly from the very beginning of their lives. The Prophet was also as godly as others and once He was going down the Hira, He said: I met Gabriel the archangel and He told me: "**Read**". I said: "I cannot read". Again He grabbed hold of my neck and insisted: "**Read**". I gave the same answer. The third time, He squeezed my neck more firmly and said: "**Read in the name of your Lord Who created, Who created man from a clot. Read and your Lord is the most Honorable, the Lord Who taught with the pen, taught man what he knew not.**"¹⁴ Pen here means education, that is, one has to learn and then teach.

Our Prophet started his duty based on this motto; (education), just like Moses (AS) whose motto was based on the first revelation in which God ordered Him: "**And I have chosen you, so listen to what is revealed: Surely I am Allah, there is no god but I, therefore serve Me and keep up prayer for My remembrance**"¹⁵. Perhaps, this commandment was for the Sons of Israel to make them understand not to say prayers just for the worldly issues; say the prayers to remember **Me** only. The order to our Prophet was to go on with the praying and you will understand that you should say them to remember **Me**. "**the Lord Who taught with the pen**", God gave us education, meaning we will gradually understand. At that time (Moses' time), those people and that kind of Islam were like some small children to whom had to be told do's and don'ts. But this time (the Prophet's time), He was told to go on and then He would realize it later. Then the Prophet continued: "As I was going down the hill, again I saw the archangel. I looked at him and I saw him like an enormously massive human whose feet were at both ends of the horizon. Everywhere I looked, I could see him."

¹⁴ The Quran, Al-Alaq (The Clot), 1~5:

عَلَمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ الَّذِي عَلَمَ بِالْقَلْمَ اقْرَأْ وَرَثَكَ الْأَكْرُمُ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ

¹⁵ The Quran, Ta-Ha, 13 & 14: وَأَنَا اخْتَرْتُكَ فَاسْتَمْعْ لِمَا يُوحَى إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي

Wherever I look at; the mountains or the plains
Signs of your towering height can be seen¹⁶

Everywhere I looked I saw him. It was the Prophet's completion of His mystical journey; He was enshrouded by nothing but Gabriel's Lord. (Gabriel appeared to the Prophet once again to remind Him of the Holy Virgin Mary's story.) He said: "I was afraid and worried." He went home, sweating, covered Himself with a blanket or something and there came another ayah (verse): "**O you who are clothed! Arise and warn**"¹⁷.

There is a disagreement whether it was Al-Muzzammil (The Enshrouded One), Al-Muddaththir (The Cloaked One) or Al-Faatehah (The Key), but it does not matter here. It happened on April 25 (Rajab 27); today, which is the Revelation Day. Some believe that according to: "**Surely, We revealed it on the Grand Night**"¹⁸, and "**The month of Ramadan is that in which the Quran was revealed**"¹⁹, therefore all the Quran was revealed on the same night. These differences do not matter, as based on mysticism interpretation, the Quran was revealed onto the Prophet's heart all at once and it happened in Ramadan. "**In which the Quran was revealed**" is the reason it happened all at once. Later on, verses were revealed gradually according to certain occasions. And it is like there is an effort to establish an organization, a government, or a company. To do so, there should be an idea on the mind as a whole. And then someone is assigned to draft the statute. The principle on which everyone agrees is what they have in common and is revealed at once. The Quran, likewise, was revealed all at once onto the Prophet's heart in Ramadan and its principle is "**There is no god but Allah**". Obviously, when one says this phrase, it means they believe in the prophecy of the Prophet and then when they say "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah", it means they believe in the Resurrection Day and in the returning to God one day.

These are the essential principles of Islam to which all the Quran commandments conform. This is the genuine spirit of the Quran. Effects of the Revelation are still apparent. The effects which have influenced the humanity will last until the Last Judgment Day.

At first, only some relatives and the Prophet Himself knew that He was the Prophet. For a while, saying prayers were only two rikats (a unit in Islamic daily prayers). When He said prayers, there were just Khadija and Ali behind Him. They went to Masjid al-Harām (Great Mosque of Mecca) and said prayers in front of Kaaba. It had been the same for a long time until God granted the Prophet some power. And "**Allah does not want to get things done via intermediaries other than those He has provided us with**"²⁰. However, occasionally it may be the opposite, as the stick worked for Moses like a serpent or split the Nile. But it is not very frequent and God does whatever He wishes by the causes He creates.

In the first place, the Prophet was upset about His nation's condition in Mecca. Single-handedly, He had to tell the people about the nature of those idols and that they should not have worshiped them. They were nothing but stones. Abraham did the same thing and people threw him at fire.

¹⁶ Baba Tahir; an 11th-century Persian poet.

¹⁷ The Quran, Al-Muddaththir (The Cloaked One), 1 & 2: يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَدْتَّرُ قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ:

¹⁸ The Quran, Al-Qadr (The Power), 1: إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقُدرِ

¹⁹ The Quran, Al-Baqara (The Cow), 185: شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ

²⁰ أَبِي الله أَنْ يُجْرِي الْأَمْوَالَ إِلَّا بِإِسْبَابِهِ

God slowly granted power to the Prophet. In some verse, people address the Prophet and ask Him: “**Why has not the Quran been revealed to you all at once?**” and God replies: “**We strengthened your heart and We have arranged it well, a flawless arrangement.**”²¹ It means God gradually imposed this heavy duty on Him, until He reached a position God ordered: “**And warn your nearest relatives.**”²²

These are all stages of the Revelation. As a personal experience, the Revelation is when the Prophet was first designated. But to us; in public opinion, these are the stages of the Revelation. This time, the Prophet disclosed Himself to His nearest relatives. So He invited His relatives to a meal which was obviously inadequate for the guests who were about forty, but after they finished the meal, there was a lot of food remaining. He did not find the chance to talk on the first day. But on the second and third days, He announced: “The first one of you who believes in me and converts to Islam will be my successor.” Anytime He said that, only Ali (AS) stood up and said: “I do”. That was the manifestation of the Prophet’s invitation. He asked them: “Do you believe that I am honest?” “We do” they answered. He went on: “Do you believe me if I say that behind the mountains around Mecca, there is an army now who want to invade and kill all of you?” “We do” they replied. “So, I am warning you that a Judgment Day awaits you. Be careful of that day and believe in God”. They made fun at first but then a couple of them obeyed Him. Among them were Abu Bakr, Uthman and some more. But again people bothered Him a lot. He moved to Ta’if. These three cities; Medina, Mecca and Ta’if were important in Arabia. In other places, there were only tribes. So He went to Ta’if and publicized His Invitation. The people there, too, repelled Him and made kids throw stones at Him and His leg was injured. There was only one slave who was Christian, he followed the Prophet and converted to Islam.

By the time, the invitation was limited to Mecca until God announced again: “**And, We have not sent you but to all the mankind as a bearer of good news and as a warner**”²³. Here, the Prophet manifested the Revelation by writing letters to the kings of that time; to Axum (Ethiopia), to Rome, and to Persia. He invited them to Islam and warned them that if they converted to Islam and followed the instructions of Islam, then no harm would be done. All was wanted was conversion to Islam. At this point, Islam became known.

From the Prophet’s angle, the Revelation was the moment He was enlightened by Gabriel. From our viewpoint, if we define revelation as the moment a dead person is revived, the Revelation is when we revive after our humanity is dead. That is our revelation. Benefiting from this holy day which is the primary revelation of the Prophet; His personal revelation, and might hopefully be our spiritual birthday, we ask God to reveal us too and save us from death; the metaphorical death. “*In sha Allah*”.

²¹ The Quran, Al-Furqan (The Criterion), 32: وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَنَا لُزْلَ عَلَيْهِ الْقُرْآنُ جُحْلَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ كَذِيلَكَ لِنُقْبَتِ بِهِ فُؤَادُكَ وَرَتَّلْنَاهُ تَرْبِيلًا

²² The Quran, Al-Shuara (The Poets), 214: وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ

²³ The Quran, Saba, 28: وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَافَةً لِلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا