

World Peace and the Light of Muhammad (pbuh)

by David (Daud) Sander, Ph.D.

Bismillah Al Rahman Al Rahim [In the name of Allah, The One Who Acts with Mercy, The Source of Mercy]. All praise belongs to Allah. Allah owns everything. All power belongs to Allah and not to us. May Allah's peace and blessings be on Prophet Muhammad and his family and on all the other prophets and their families.

Raby al-Awal 12, 1437 / December 23, 2015 — *Mawlid an Nabi*, Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) birthday and AQR's Annual Peace, Love, and Togetherness Day. On Peace, Love, and Togetherness Day we declare our love to all of you and tell you that we have no hard feelings toward anyone. Let's forgive and forget on this day. Let love win for a day. *Ya Salaam, Ya Wadud, Ya Jami*.

We are celebrating the annual Peace, Love and Togetherness Day in our *Tariqa*, which coincides with the birthday [*mawlid*] of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and Hz. Khadija (may Allah be pleased with her-[*radia Allahu 'anha*]).

Our Shaykh and the Sufi tradition at large encourage us to learn to know the Prophet (peace be upon him) and other spiritual ancestors from the inside out. Books and *hadith* [tradition; saying attributed to, or anecdote regarding Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), according to traditional eyewitness accounts] scholarship can help, but texts alone can also obstruct this kind of understanding. Celebration, *zikr* [the Sufi practice of repeating the Names of Allah], contemplation, poetry, song, sweets, etc., can help increase and deepen our awareness through *rabita* [spiritual connection], so we can read between the lines. That's why people historically celebrated the *mawlids* of spiritual ancestors even though some object to these practices. These days especially, spiritual understanding and celebration of these luminous personalities are essential for their message to survive.

There is no end to what has been and could be said about Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his beloved companion Hz. Khadija (*rAa*). Nevertheless, we are given minds and tongues and keyboards for a reason—to say what we can, when that is our task. To me, it is important to contemplate the meaning of the *Nur Muhammadi*, the Light of Muhammad (pbuh) which is also referred to as the Pen, and the Intellect [*'aql*]. This light is said in the *hadith* to be the first thing created.ⁱ

In contemplating this light, I think we need to remember a couple of things. One is that our strictly linear sense of time is based on limited perceptions, and so it may need to be suspended occasionally. Of course, by ordinary logic, the life of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) came after the creation of the universe, the earth, and humanity. So how could the Light of Muhammad have existed before his lifetime as a historical human being? The way I see it, Allah is not bound in any way by our chronology. Something precious and beloved to Him came about in the being and essence of Muhammad (pbuh), and that love and light existed with Allah before the universe was created.

But consider: this Light is not separate from the historical life-in-time of Muhammad (pbuh), because one thing for sure about him is that he was fully human, and in fact the Complete Human. To the best of my understanding, all humans are made of earth, have Allah's spirit breathed into us, and are a product of all our relationships with the people in our lives, especially those we love and who love us. We come into full manifestation of our potential in this life,

through all the tests, moments, and experiences of our time here. As our Shaykh says, this world is the only place for you to become who you are going to be forever. So these humble human factors are part of the mystery of the *Nur Muhammadi*. Allah has unlimited angels to express His light, but the Light of Muhammad (pbuh), in his humanness, was beyond that. As the Qur'an says, the angels questioned Allah's wisdom in putting His representative on the earth. Muhammad's (pbuh) belovedness and the purity of his light is not superhuman, and so in his humanness and createdness is a channel for Allah's love and mercy to come into the world of forms, creatures, and imperfect humans: a mercy to all the worlds.

Because he was a human, like us, he needed love and other essentials in order to live. This is where his wife Hz. Khadija (*rAa*) comes in. Her love and tenderness and support for him were essential for him to live and flourish and fulfill his role. The *Ahl al-Bayt*, the People of the Household, descended from Khadija, carried this light, nourished and protected it. In the realm of human choice, there are those who supported the message with love and those who fought it and those who tried to coopt it for their own purposes. The message for me is, love is power: the glue that holds everything together. He is called a Mercy for all the Worlds, because the intelligence of the universe is based on that love, and whatever blessing he experienced, he prayed for his *ummah* [community; nation] to have also. The intellect nourished by love called for a society based on fairness, togetherness, tolerance and trust. Love that appears spontaneously between parents and children, close family members, and lovers/partners/spouses is not controllable from the outside. It is a human bond, but paradoxically it is independent of worldly conditions. *Ya Wadud*. We recognize it as a divine quality.

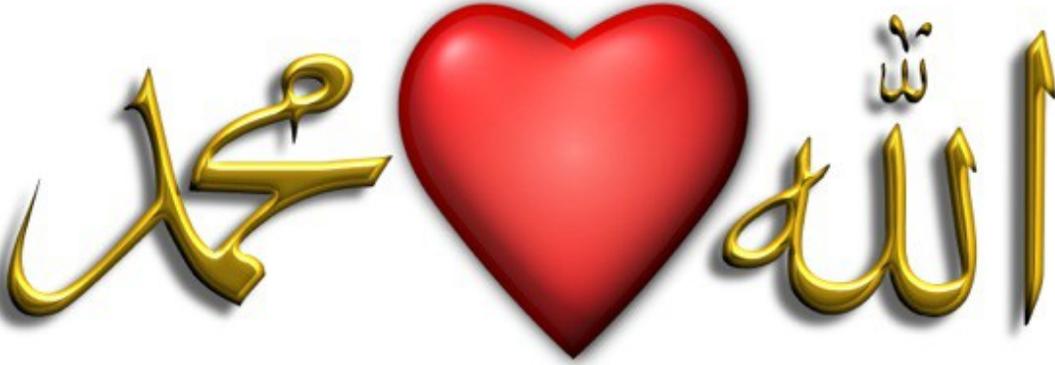
Allah can distribute His light and power or keep them to Himself as He wills. He needs no partner. But for us creatures, we require others, especially beloved others, to awaken, recognize, confirm and develop the power of the heart. We in the world need our human beloveds for that. People might assume that Hz. Khadija (*rAa*) helped him by a few words of support and mending his clothes and cooking his food. Actually, he did his share of household tasks throughout his life. In reality, her help to him was much deeper. The humble power of the heart is what she nourished with unconditional love. It is a hidden power that resides in the smallest moments and gestures. The heart is the medium and mediator of all these influences: divine, human, and more. The Qur'an itself was sent down upon his heart. (Qur'an 26:192-194). Lovers and beloveds build, nourish, strengthen each other's hearts. We need strong hearts to live in this world and in these times.

Nur Muhammadi, the first created thing, is the highest potential of the human intellect [*'aql*], which is humble and recognizes that it is made for love. Love is needed for the intellect to work, and the intellect needs to be "unlimited" for peace to come, and peace coming from inside is the only way we can live together. *Ya Wadud* [O Love], *Ya Salam* [O Peace], *Ya Jami* [O Togetherness].

The intimacy with Allah, the love of Allah, the mercy of Allah bringing together all of creation: *Rasul Allah* [Messenger of Allah], *Habib Allah* [Lover of Allah], *Khalil Allah* [Friend of Allah], *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin* [Mercy to all the worlds], blessing and peace of Allah be upon him, and his family and companions. Amin.

N.B.: I'm grateful for Shaykh Anjum's ideas, input and editing help.

The Annual World Peace, Love, and Togetherness Day



Celebrated each year on the birthday
of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him

¹For more on this subject, see Es-Seyyid Es-Shaykh Taner Ansari (translator), *Grand Masters of Sufism: Abdul Qadir Geylani, Secret of Secrets and Ahmed er Rifai, Guidance to Mysticism*, (Nassau, NY: Ansari Publications, 2008).

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