

“And know that the Messenger of God is among you”¹

Shaykh Dr Muḥammad Saʿīd Ramaḍān al-Būṭī²

Praised be God. Praised be God. Praised be God; a praise commensurate to His bounties and equivalent to His plentiful blessings. O our Lord, for you is praise befitting Your sublime essence and Your majestic Dominion. Transcendent are You; O God I am unable to enumerate Your exaltations, for You are as You exalt Yourself. I testify that there is no deity except God alone, who has no partner, and I testify that Muhammad is His slave, His Messenger, and His pure and intimate friend; the best Prophet God sent. God sent him to the whole world as a bearer of glad tidings and as a warner. O God send your mercy, peace, and blessings upon our master Muhammad and upon the family of our master Muhammad³; continuous peace and blessings that last until the Day of Judgment.

I exhort you, O Muslims, and my wrongful self, to fear⁴ God, the Exalted.

O Slaves of God!

In this month of the ‘radiant spring’, breezes of the most sacred memory blow; the memory of the birth of the most Beloved, the seal of the Messengers and Prophets, Muhammad, may God bless him and his family and grant them peace. During this blessed month, feelings are awakened in the depths of everyone who knows the Messenger of God. Feelings of love move their hearts. Feelings of yearning and longing compel everyone from his community⁵ to graze in the meadows of his Prophetic biography and gaze at the scenes of his sanctified life. Love is aroused in everyone whose heart confirms their tongue in saying, “I testify that there is no deity except God and that Muhammad is His slave and His messenger.”

¹ A translation of the meaning of a verse from the Qurʾān: chapter number 49: verse number 7: i.e. Q (49:7).

² The Friday sermon delivered by Shaykh Dr Muḥammad Saʿīd Ramaḍān al-Būṭī at the Umayyad mosque on the 6th of Rabiʿ al-Awwal 1431 (after Hejira) which corresponds to the 19th February 2010 (CE).

³ An invocation that is recited each time the name of the Prophet Muhammad is mentioned.

⁴ The arabic term “taqwa”, translated as fear of God, is a concept that may be defined as following the commands of God and avoiding His prohibitions with reverence and awe for the majesty of God. Taqwa gives rise to the protection of God.

⁵ arabic: ‘*ummah*’

Slaves of God, it gives me great pleasure to tell you that we are not cut off from the life of the Messenger of God. The passage of many years and centuries does not withhold his life from us, as is often imagined or portrayed to many of us. Muhammad remains in our midst. He is not just with us, on the contrary, he is alive in our feelings. The Prophet, may God bless him and his family, is alive in our hearts. I am not deluded nor is this my concoction and fabrication. This is the speech of God, the Mighty and Majestic. Did our Lord, the Transcendent and Sublime, not address us all by saying, **“And know that the Messenger of God is among you”**?⁶

Perhaps you know that the revealed Qur'an addresses the whole community of Muhammad, in all circumstances, in all times and in all places. The Qur'an is not an oration just for the companions of the Messenger. Nor is it a discourse for those who lived in the century or two that followed, a period described as the 'age of the early Muslims.' Indeed, the Qur'an is an address directed towards everyone who comes after the mission of the Messenger of God; those who believe in him, follow his example and pledge to travel his way. **“And know that the Messenger of God is among you. If he were to obey you in many matters, you would surely fall into distress. But God has endeared faith to you and beautified it in your hearts, making unbelief, corruption, and disobedience abhorrent to you. Such are they who are rightly guided.”**⁷

Today I want to concentrate on the sentence at the beginning of the verse, **“And know that the Messenger of God is among you.”** The Messenger of God was amongst the virtuous and righteous companions in body and soul. They sat with him, they listened to him, their eyes were adorned by the sight of him. He was in their midst, corporeally and spiritually, as an elucidation (of the Qur'an), speaker and advisor. Now consider those people who follow the period of his companions, what does it mean to say Muhammad remains amongst them? What is the signification of the Messenger continuing to be alive in our midst and not just with us? It is the presence of his love; the love of the Chosen One for his community. Love for everyone who believes in him and adheres to his commands, until the end of time. It is the presence of his yearning; he yearns towards all those who believe in him despite having neither seen them nor they him. It is the presence of his desire for those whom his yearning is solely for. Furthermore, it is the presence of his prayers; his self-effacing prayers, for us, directed to God, the Transcendent and Sublime.

Rejoice in this presence and deliberate over the following authentic narration:

It is related that the Messenger of God recited the speech of God, the Mighty and Majestic, that was spoken by Jesus the son of Mary, upon our Prophet and him be peace and blessings; **“If you punish them, they are Your slaves, and if You**

⁶ Q (49:7)

⁷ Q (49:7)

forgive them, You, only You, are the August, the Wise.”⁸ He then recited the speech of God as it appeared on the tongue of Abraham, the intimate friend, **“My Lord! They have misguided many of the people. He who follows me, he is of me, while he who disobeys me, You are Forgiving, the Compassionate.”**⁹ He was then overcome by yearning for his community; for those people he will never see and will come after him. He shed tears over them saying, “O God my community! O God my community!”

Gabriel came to him and asked, “What makes you cry, O Muhammad?”

He replied, “My community.”

Then God, the Mighty and Majestic, revealed to him by way of Gabriel, “We will not upset you through your community.”

Furthermore, has the following authentic report reached you? It has been related by Malik, in his Muwatta¹⁰, amongst others:

The Prophet visited al-Baqi¹¹ close to the time of his death. He gave greetings to the inhabitants of al-Baqi’ and then said, “I wish that I could have seen my brothers.”

One of the companions who was around him asked, “Are we not your brothers, O Messenger of God?”

He replied, “No, you are my companions. My brothers are those who have not yet come and I shall precede them to the pool¹². I shall receive them at the pool.”

They asked, “Will you know them O Messenger of God? How will you know them when you have not seen them?”

He said, “Have you not seen the man who owns white-footed and blazed horses in the midst of the blackest jet black horses? Does he know his horses?”

“Yes” came the reply.

“I will know them by the brightness due to the effects of ablution.”

Is this not his presence O slaves of God? Does this report not corroborate the speech of God, the Mighty and Majestic, **“And know that the Messenger of God is among you”**? Rejoice in the presence of his yearning towards us; those of us honored by belief in him despite our eyes never having being adorned by his sight. Take delight in the presence that makes the Chosen One crave for us. Wonder in the presence, by virtue of which the Chosen One promises us that he will receive us at the pool and make us drink from his noble hand; a drink after which there is no thirst. Undoubtedly this is an indication of something greater and more majestic, the intercession that God honours us with by way of His Messenger, the Chosen One.

⁹ Q (14:37)

¹⁰ The collection of hadith collated by Malik ibn Anas al-Asbahi (May God be pleased with him) who died in 179 A.H.

¹¹ The famous cemetery in Medina, the illuminated.

¹² The pool of Paradise.

This is the presence that the Maker, the Transcendent and Sublime, has made clear to us and his whole community in His divine address, **“And know that the Messenger of God is among you”**. It emanates from the Messenger of God and is directed to us as yearning, desire and love. Yet, where is the presence that rises from us to the Messenger of God? Where is the exclusive yearning for the beloved in our hearts? Where is the longing that dominates our hearts; hearts that must be inflamed with desire towards the Messenger of God? If we say, “Yes, we feel yearning for him”, what is the proof of our yearning? The proof of yearning lies in treading the path of the Messenger of God and adhering to the commandments and the legacy of his counsel that he left behind for us. The truth of our yearning and desire for him is demonstrated by abiding by the exhortations that he directed towards us, and his whole community, the day he performed the farewell pilgrimage. On this day he addressed generations of Muslims, all those that were to come after him, with a sermon full of counsel, advice and commandments. Where is the adherence to the council that he bequeathed to us and left as a legacy to be handed down generation by generation? Where?

O Slaves of God, know that the Chosen One did not merely possess one facet to his personality. Today, many people depict him only to as being a messenger of God; sent to convey to people that which God, the Mighty and Magnificent, revealed unto him. And that is all. No, that was solely the mantle of his prophethood. It is a reality. But, the Chosen One had another dimension to his character, which came into being, in fact was born, when he migrated to Medina and established the first Islamic state. The first Islamic state witnessed by the community of the Chosen One, after his noble mission. The second quality of the Chosen One was being the leader of the Muslims and the head of state. Assuming responsibility of this position, he deployed troops, declared war when it was necessary, signed agreements of peace and presided over the spoils and prisoners of war. As the leader of the Muslims and head of state, he would allocate and entrust property. This is the role of the leader of the Muslims, the head of state.

When Muhammad passed away to meet God, the Sublime Friend, his prophetic mission ended. He was the seal of the Messengers and Prophets. However, the reality of this second dimension to his character did not end; the leadership of the state continues to exist uninterrupted to this day and will continue to exist until the last moment. What is the meaning of Abu Bakr being the successor of the Messenger of God? The prophethood had ended, and God forbid the appearance of a prophet after the Chosen One. The succession of Abu Bakr is the succession of the leadership of the state from the Prophet to Abu Bakr which continued uninterruptedly to Umar, then Uthman and then to Ali.

From here, we must know that Islam is a religion and a state. The religion of Islam embodies the revelation that God sent down to his messenger Muhammad as guidance and legislation. Furthermore, Islam is a state manifested in the leadership entrusted by the Lord of the worlds to the personage Muhammad, may God bless him and his family and grant them peace. After him, the leadership transferred on to those who must be custodians of the religion of God, watchful of the homelands of the Muslims and

vigilant that rights are not violated. They must be vigilant that the essence of the Islamic community is embodied by the Islamic state such that all efforts are expended in repelling and opposing enemies that harm her. They must also embody the two dimensions of the life of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family and grant them peace. As for the rest of the verse and the many concepts contained in the following sentences, I hope that God, the Transcendent and Sublime, grants us another opportunity to return to them.

I deliver this sermon and seek the forgiveness of God, the Majestic.
Seek his forgiveness and He will forgive you.