

# The secret of the Night of Power

By: [Muhammad Zuhri](#) Source: [IslamiCity](#)

As creatures aware of our own existence, we human beings have a direct responsibility for our survival on earth. For this reason, each individual needs to know where to obtain whatever is necessary to ensure this survival. The name of the process of becoming acquainted with the environment containing the natural resources we need is reading, and in order to survive, even the animals do it. When hungry or thirsty they neither eat rocks nor drink sand. This shows that reading requires no verbal indications from the Lord of the Worlds, for early on He revealed the text implicitly in the laws of nature which apply to the 'dabbah', or corporeal living creatures.

## **The Revelation "Read!"**

The revelation "Read in the name of your Lord" (Quran 96:1) was sent down only to human beings, in as much as human beings are the only creatures capable of acting as subjects in a personal universe. Only we human beings can distance ourselves from ourselves and objectify ourselves properly in terms of whatever pattern of truth we happen to live by. And by doing this a human being can obtain still another delight-the pleasure of having an existence, a pleasure far higher than that which comes from exploiting any kind of means, and a pleasure all the more lasting for the way it takes the form of an existential value.

When human beings fail to discover themselves in values, they suffer shame, a feeling animals never experience, proving that this dimension was never meant for them.

Shame. That is what the Prophet ﷺ put forward as a phenomenon revealing that faith exists within the self. It is a means through which the Lord of the Worlds is willing to open the possibility of dialog with His creatures.

So, then, what exactly is shame? Why does its presence reveal the presence of faith? And what is faith? How is it able to bridge the absoluteness of God and the relativity of the human world?

## **Shame and Faith**

Shame is a feeling that arises in the deepest human feelings when an individual finds himself in a crisis of values at a time when his consciousness is still oriented in that direction.

Allah's Messenger ﷺ identified it with faith because its presence in the self presupposes the existence of a properly functioning mind oriented toward the future. That kind of mind will never despair in the face of disappointing realities, no matter how bitter they may be.

*"Surely none despairs of Allah's mercy except the unbelievers" (Quran 12:87).*

As for the word "faith," it implies that a person is correctly oriented to the future or, in other words, that he has the right goal, which is none other than Allah Himself, the Most Holy and

Most High. So it is clear that the qiblat (the direction in which the worshipper prays) of shame is the same as that of faith. That is the way it is when a person's conscious awareness has the right purpose, even though in reality it may be no more than a potentiality or a possibility awaiting an opportunity for self-actualization. Even so, it is desirable and will have a positive influence.

### **The Throne of Lordship**

In verse 7 of Quranic Surah XI, "Hud," there are three clauses that together make up a sentence explaining this matter:

- *And He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six days*
- *and His dominion (extends) on the water*
- *that He might manifest to you which of you is best in action.*

The first two parts enable us to understand that when the Lord of the Worlds deals with the physical realm of the heavens and earth, His Throne of Lordship is above the water, with its hydrogen atoms. This is why our orientation toward Him in this realm has resulted in the discovery of a devastating power capable of destroying the physical universe. The human consciousness able to penetrate into that dimension is called the Hisness of God. It is a state similar to that of Moses ~~ﷺ~~ when he was given the divine gift of his miracle-working rod.

Once we connect the first two clauses with the third, we receive the indication that His Throne of Lordship in the spiritual realm is located over the believer's integrative heart, or 'qalb', the heart resembling the water that always flows downward in achieving its existential wholeness. This is why, as explained in a divine tradition (hadith qudsi) abusing or harming a true believer is the same as declaring war against God. If our awareness becomes able to enter this dimension, we shall have become true believers (mukmin), or whole human beings.

### **The Descent of the Qur'an**

The foregoing makes it understandable that the Descent of the Qur'an was the descent of Allah's Throne of Lordship upon the heart of the Prophet Muhammad ~~ﷺ~~ in order to make it possible for him to carry out God's management on the face of the earth.

This was something that had to happen, because the human race needs correct guidance enabling God's great idea to be made a reality: 'Baldataun thoyyibatun wa robbun ghafur' (a beautiful and prosperous land whose people have been forgiven by Allah). If this fails to happen, this world, instead of a place filled with Allah's mercy, must instead be only a place filled with vicious struggle for scarce facilities ending in mass destruction as a result of the stupidity and abuses of this world's own inhabitants, of those on whom wrath has been brought down ('dlollun') and those who have gone astray ('maghdlub').

The Descent of the Throne of Allah's Lordship upon the hearts of His elected servants is the choice made by the Lord of the Worlds instead of descending in person to this created world of His. That is why he created the Barzakh (isthmus) between Allah's Sea of Absolutism and the world's Sea of Relativism to ensure that they do not become mixed up.

*“Between them is a barrier which they cannot pass.” (Quran 55:20)*

His words alone, sent down upon a hill, would have resulted in its destruction as a result of the hill's inability to support them.

*“Had We sent down this Qur'an on a mountain, thou wouldst certainly have seen it fall down, splitting asunder because of the fear of Allah.” (Quran 59:21)*

### **The Technique of Acquiring Existential Wholeness**

In the verse *“Read in the name of thy Lord Who creates,” (Quran 96:1)* there is the implication that we have the obligation, in reading any object we may be facing, not to get between it and its originator: the “Lord Who creates.” In this way we can arrive at a holistic understanding of that object while protecting ourselves against an undesirable prejudice either against it or in its favor. Treating it as something to be worshipped would not only cause us to fall into the sin of polytheism but also lower it itself into an object unfit to be touched, thus causing us to have the attitudes of a monasticism or priesthood that cannot represent God's management of this world.

The next verse, *“Creates man from a clot of blood” (Quran 96:2)*, leads our awareness to the meeting point where we touch our selfhood as both subject and object. The Allah Who makes a thing into an object is the Allah Who created us all from something objective in nature – a clot of blood.

What will bring a new coloration to the lives of believers is awareness of the meeting point between the cultural subject and object in their existence as creations.

Further, no object we encounter in the process of living is as simple as it appears. We can encounter such objects in their perfection only with the support of the millions of causes in the history of their coming into being, this history being a process of natural evolution and of cultural good offices involving a variety of scientific disciplines, skills, and the personae of their creators. This is symbolized in the Qur'an as a “pen” in *“Who taught by the pen” (Quran 96:4)*.

The understanding that ‘the pen’ is the chain of causes leading to the birth of each object will make us aware of the existence of the universe's services to cultural reality. As a consequence, an awareness will grow that we must respond in the most satisfactory way possible to each object by expressing its positive possibilities and ignoring its negative potentialities. This moral attitude will give rise to the high sense of responsibility we know as “Amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar” (enjoining good and forbidding evil). The effect of this will make an individual into a believer who is wholly united with the universe in an unending flow of creativity. This is not the same as merely feeling at one with the universe in a state of ecstasy or static meditation.

Such a condition is a proof of ability to comprehend the Divine Command behind each object we meet. *“Surely His is the creation and the command.” (Quran 7:54)*

This is not known to all who open their eyes wide before an object, but only to those graced by Allah with the method for reading. *“Taught man what he knew not” (Quran :96:5)*.

The reading method taught by the Lord of the Worlds will lead us into the Presence of our true Dialog Partner. Only the awareness that His Command is behind each object will make it possible for our dialog to charm the Power of God into descending upon His field of creativity, not, of course upon the self of the Subject of History nor its Object, but upon its process of development, which takes place while the dialog goes on.

*“Surely my Lord is on the straight path” (Quran 11:56).*

This is the reason that according to the Qur’an good deeds are not the property of their doer, but of Allah alone. *“Whatever good befalls thee, it is from Allah” (Quran 4: 79).* This is because no one will do good without a dialog partner to set the good intention in motion.

The willingness to express oneself well and rightly is what ‘Hidayah’ (guidance) means, and the dialog partner capable of inspiring the expression of goodness and truth is the meaning of ‘Taufiq’ (success), while the means enabling the two to bring it about is called ‘Rahmat’ (mercy). As for the development process obtained by means of such a dialog relationship, it is called the Moment of Tauhid (the profession of Unity) or Wholeness in Allah.

### **Wisdom or Contextual Truth**

The descent of the first revelation upon the Prophet ﷺ is called the Night of Power, because that is when the personal power of a servant transcended itself and was able to reach prophetic universality.

In Muhammad ﷺ this took the form of an ability to actualize divine revelation in authentic behavior called *uswatun hasanah* (an excellent example).

If this also happens to one of his followers, it will take the form of an ability to understand divine revelation within the context of the development needs of the faithful of one’s time and of the authentic behavior called Wisdom or contextual truth.

The signs Allah gives through the self-actualization of a knower taught by Him, which is what is meant by ‘Arif-Billah’ (a true believer), are the reality of contextual truth or Wisdom in the taking over of God’s management at a time of chaos or dilemma. Although it is unique, Wisdom always projects the light of divinity and is a highly important aid to the process of self-identification in interpersonal relations.

The presence of ‘Ahli Hikmah’ (the Wise) among the faithful is an unavoidable necessity in the historical process. The expression “a messenger for each people” is not limited to the Messengers who brought a Book, but refers as well to the servants of Allah who are given, for the sake of the human race’s development, the ability to bring a Book that has already been revealed.

After the Messenger of Allah ﷺ came down, the human race was considered mature enough not to need to be spoon-fed with values from God Himself. What had already been received was considered a sufficient legal reference for dealing with all new developments. It is just like that

father who is happy to release his grown children to go on developing the values he has implanted in them.

The People of Wisdom will always be present in every epoch, because no warehouse full of reference works unable to respond personally to a problem will be able to replace them in their role. They are the subjects of history, present always, and always necessary to help the faithful reform personalities which have strayed from 'shirath' (the Straight Way). They are also called the mother of contextual truth who live in the future while still standing upon the earth of the present moment.

Of course this cannot be achieved only through contemplation and praying all night on the even days throughout the final third of the fasting month of Ramadan. It can be achieved only by means of a certain process and by a Lover (Asyik) in touch with his Beloved (Ma'syuk) in the limitless Sea of Life. But without the guidance of the Lord of the Worlds by means of the technique of reading perfectly, a thousand months would not suffice to lead us into the Presence of the True Dialog Partner.

*“(Receive) the baptism of Allah, and who is better than Allah in baptizing?” (Quran 2:138)*

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