

The Book Begins

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In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

First, the book begins by giving thanks to God.

Then, the author implores divine blessings.

The Prophet [Muhammad] and his grace here and in the hereafter,

is the one who is our guide here and in the hereafter.

He is the very generous one who gives without being asked.

He has no equal among human beings, Ahmadaa.¹

God Himself did not create anybody like him.

It was God who perfected him when he was created.

The misguided Satan can never approach him.

If he is angry at you, if you don't run away, ask him for forgiveness!

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He spent sixty nights in the cave of Hira worshipping God.²

The Prophet is one who has submitted and devoted himself to worshipping God.

The Angel Gabriel came down to see him and this was the day he came out [of the cave].

He told him: "Peace be upon you, member of the Hashim."³ And he kneeled.

God told him, "I will give you whatever you ask from me!"

Prophet Mustafaa is privileged with an immense greatness.

Musilimatu who challenged him with words got nothing out of it.⁴

¹ Prophet Muhammad.

² The *cave of Hira* is in the mountain called *Jabal al-Nūr* (Mount of Light) in the northwestern part of Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

³ This refers to the *Banū Hashim* clan of the Prophet Muhammad which is part of the *Quraysh* group.

⁴ This refers to *Musaylama al-Kadhdhab* (*Musaylama the Liar*), called in this Mandinka text *Musilmatu Kajaabi*. According to the Islamic tradition, he was a false prophet.

Anyone who is struck by the spear of the Prophet is doomed to die.

He has granted privileges to believers that are useful to them.

The Prophet can know something about someone without the person telling him.

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The moon of moons, the new moon in the middle of all moons,
the privileges of the Prophet [Muhammad], no other prophet has obtained them.

From knowledge, to wisdom, to prominence, he is unmatched.

The hyena once said to the Prophet: "If I were a human, you would marry me!"

The Prophet has the ability to see what is in front of and behind him.

It is the Prophet who holds the great secrets of God.

This is why he was able to gather all the non-believers,
those of the East and West as well as those of the North and South.

He compelled some and negotiated with others and put them all under his guardianship.

No human being nor any jinn⁵ can challenge him!

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May he be the great provider and intercessor of humanity

on that day when we creatures will face painful trials.⁶

We rely on the Prophet on the day of the gathering [in the hereafter],

and ask him to appeal to God to grant us privileges.

The hidden privileges of the Prophet will be revealed [on that day].

The Prophet never does anything out of pretension!

The Angel Gabriel will come down and say to him: "My dear friend Muhammad,

⁵ In Islam, *jinn* are supernatural beings created by God (just as he created human beings) in order to worship Him.

⁶ This refers to the trials on Judgment Day.

it is Our Creator who sent me to you and asked me to come tell you to prepare,
because important events are going to happen, and that is inevitable.”

The Prophet will go among the crowd to reveal the message to them.

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Many things happened on the day of the revelation of the Prophet.

Laariisi's⁷ light, which was shining, dimmed.

Those whose worldly desires were excessive abandoned them.

Satan whimpered and ended up screaming.

He said: “The hardship [resulting from Muhammad's coming] displeases me!”

No parent ever had an offspring like the Prophet.

From the dawn of time until today, no one has had such a child!

All the kings had accepted his authority when he was chosen [as Prophet].

Those who refused his privileges are disrespectful.

Musilmatu Kajaabi and Abu Jahl are idiots!

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The miracles he has done, no one can enumerate them!

A monitor lizard spoke to him when he appeared [as a prophet].

The suns rose to move to their places.

Tall trees had celebrated and miraculously followed him. Cooked meat
said to him: “Do not touch me, for I am poisoned!”

Large drums visibly accompanied him to the gathering place.

A piece of a dry tree trunk also visibly spoke to him.

⁷ This refers to *Al-Harith*, who was one of the enemies of Muhammad. He was the brother of *Abu Jahl*, one of Muhammad's greatest opponents. Here the poet uses a metaphor to suggest that *Al-Harith* (Laariisi) lost part of his power during this period.

A small pebble he held in his hand had [once] pronounced the name of God.

It recited the names [of the Prophet] that God transmitted to it,
names taken from the holy book, the Quran which came down from heaven.

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When people refused to recognize the Prophet throughout the world, and a great
darkness appeared, he lit a big wood fire [to enlighten them].

Even all the stars humbled themselves by coming down
for a day, and the moon was shining when he was elected [by God].

The mausoleum of the great chief of chiefs is in Medina.

The Angel Gabriel came to tell him: "God is asking you to come."

The comings and goings he did until late at night hardly exhausted him.

It was on that day that all creatures submitted to him.

The hidden miracles of the Prophet were revealed on that day.

No other prophet will appear after the Prophet [Muhammad].

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On the day the friend of Angel Gabriel [Muhammad] appeared, he guided people.

He found them in the way of the nonbelievers and showed them [the right way].

He established order and cleared up all confusions.

This is why all those endowed with intelligence have followed
the Prophet so that he may save them from the trials of Judgment Day.

The sea of seas, the scholar in all fields,
there is no scholar like the Prophet.

He is the one who would spend the whole night making supererogatory prayers,
the one who established the great pillars of faith and made them strong,

and the one who established the true precepts of God as well as the sunnah.⁸

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No one else can have the divine favors attributed to the Prophet.

The great drums celebrated him as he manifested [his powers].

He brings solutions to any problem, if he decides to do so.

The refuge of humanity when you implore him.

He grants your wishes without blackmailing you!

Do you really want to count the miracles of the Prophet?

Do you think it is possible to count the number of stars in the sky?

Something that exceeds two thousand times the number of grains of sand!

Isn't it obvious that there is no creature like the Prophet?

Nowhere on earth does anyone of similar greatness exist!

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Remember the four people who were saved.

We have been told what happened on the Wednesday of the Prophet.

It was the day when huge stars spoke!

They had become people of good faith when they spoke.

[The Prophet] established the different pillars of faith.

The one on whom the flag of truth had come down to earth is Abu Bakr.⁹

Satan, the traitor, had resigned himself, and he could not deny it.

On the day [the Prophet] was born in the West [of Arabia], he became a reference.

The moonlight illuminated the place, and [Satan] could not deny it.

⁸ *Sunnah* means the teachings and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad.

⁹ In these verses, the author speaks of the four close companions of the Prophet Muhammad: *Abu Bakr*, *Umar*, *Uthman*, and *Ali*. They succeeded the Prophet after his death. They are called *Khulafā' u l-Rāshidūn* (Rightly Guided Caliphs).

God humiliated him, but all that was not enough.

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Uthman, The Man with Two Lights, the merchant close to the Prophet,

was surrounded during the Hunayni war by the nonbelievers.¹⁰

But God blinded them all when they surrounded him.

One of them called him and said: "Uthman come to answer"!

He went and saw them all fallen like sticks. But he didn't brag.¹¹

The Most Just [God], in the middle of all men, protected him.

God protected him from the webs of lies sewn against him, and tore them apart.

Everything that was confused, He unraveled it without difficulty.

Al-Faruq,¹² no believer can reward you. Only God can!

May God bless the great defenders of the faith.

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Aliyu Badara, the Brave,¹³ on the day of the battle of Khaybar,

struck Mirhabu¹⁴ with his sword and smashed his head.

Among men, this brave man has accomplished much in Khaybar.

It was on that day that he tore Yahya's garment with gold trimmings.

However, the strength God gave him did not lead him to boast.

¹⁰ This refers to *Uthman ibn Affan*, the third Rightly Guided Caliph, who was also called *Dbū a-Nūrayni* in Arabic (The One with Two Lights) because he had married two daughters of the Prophet Muhammad successively. After *Ruqayyah's* death, he married *Umm Kulthum*. The Battle of Hunayn pitted Muhammad and his companions against the *Hawazin* and *Thaqif* groups.

¹¹ Here the author wants to show that Uthman recognized that his victory was due to God's intervention.

¹² This refers to *Umar ibn al-Khattab*, one of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. He is called by Sunnis *Al-Faruq* (He who separates truth from falsehood).

¹³ This is *Ali ibn Abi Talib*, the cousin, son-in-law, and companion of the Prophet Muhammad, who is called the fourth rightly guided Caliph.

¹⁴ This is *Marhab ibn Abi Zaynab*, also called *Marhab ibn Al-Harith*. He was a formidable warrior also called the *Knight of Khaybar*.

The benevolence and mercy of the Creator never ends.

Despite all that He has offered to people, this does not diminish His mercy.

And the number of favors He grants to these good servants is constantly increasing.

What a privilege for them and those who follow them like drummers!

Next Friday, do your best so that no one precedes you at the mosque!

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If we assume that all the trees [on earth] represent stars, for example,

then know that the lights of the stars combined with that of the moon cannot be estimated!

If the moon appears, the great stars do not shine.

The moon in darkness, the savior of mankind,

the Prophet is incomparable. And that shouldn't bother anyone.

It was the Prophet alone who made the Night Journey¹⁵ to heaven,

and [continued on] from the Throne of God until reaching Sidratu.¹⁶

Despite the things he saw in heaven, this did not lead him to boast.

He was given fifty [prayers], and he only came back with five.¹⁷

All the benevolence and mercy of God is with the Prophet.

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One day the Great Prophet predicted the coming of many visitors.

Some believed it and these became believers.

¹⁵ Here the poet refers to *Isra'* and *Mi'raj*, the two parts of the Night Journey that Muslims believe Muhammad made to meet other prophets in his ascent to heaven to address God.

¹⁶ This refers to *Sidrat al-Muntabā*, a tree that is at the limit of the seventh heaven. According to the Islamic tradition, no one can go beyond this point and the knowledge of angels stops there. According to Muslim scholars, during Muhammad's Night Journey, the Angel Gabriel traveled with him up to the tree.

¹⁷ This refers to the instructions regarding the five obligatory prayers that Muhammad received from God during his Night Journey. According to the author, God had first instructed him fifty obligatory prayers for believers. However, the Prophet implored Him to reduce the number to five obligatory prayers.

Misfortune befell the nonbelievers who had said the visitors would not come.

The visitors arrived, and the first group arrived in the early afternoon.¹⁸

The Prophet's prophecies are infallible!

End of the poem. Property of Ibrahim Bayo, son of Alhusayni Bayo, son of Muhammadu Lamin

Bayo-Jañ-Bayo, son of Usman, son of Alhusayn. May Allah forgive me and forgive my parents and

all Muslims.

¹⁸ This is the time of the second obligatory prayer of the day called *Salat al-dhuhr* in Arabic.