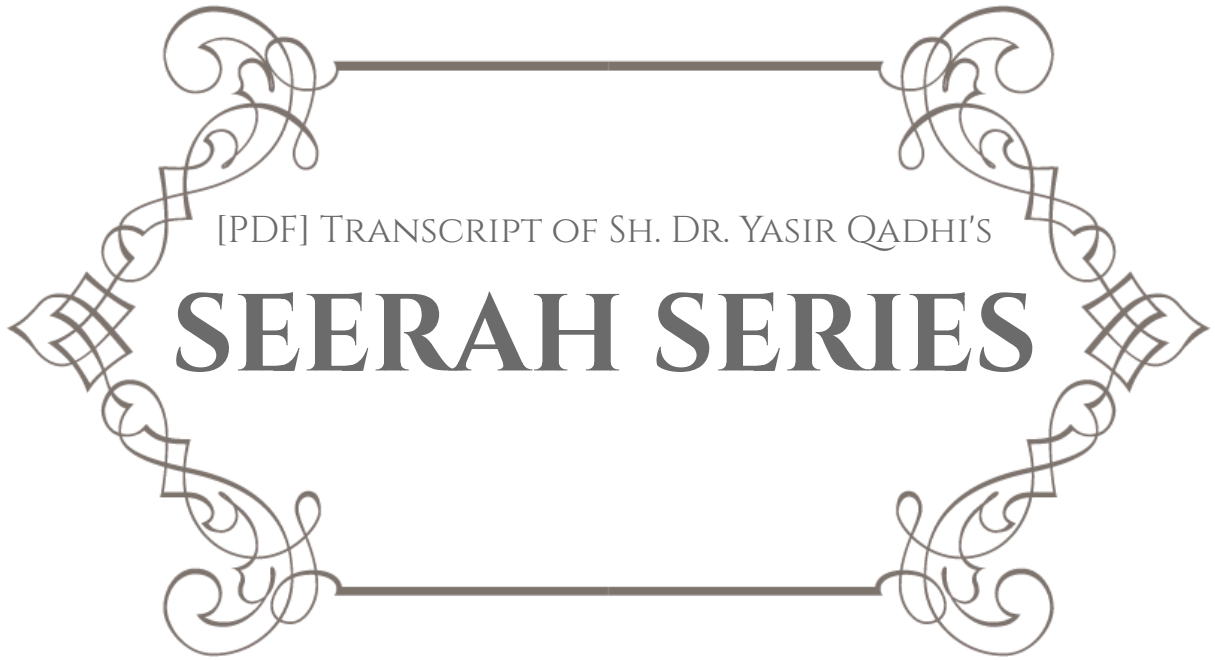


بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH — THE MOST COMPASSIONATE, MOST MERCIFUL. INSHA'ALLAH, THE INTENTION IS TO CREATE A PDF VERSION OF [THE TRANSCRIPT](#) OF SH. DR. YASIR QADHI'S [SEERAH SERIES](#). THE MOST DIFFICULT PARTS OF RECORDING THE VIDEOS AND TRANSCRIBING HAVE BEEN COMPLETED, AND WE MAKE DU'A THAT ALLAH BLESSES EVERYONE INVOLVED. WE SIMPLY WANT TO MAKE AN ACCESSIBLE PDF VERSION OF THE TRANSCRIPT. IF YOU FIND THIS BENEFICIAL, PLEASE MAKE DU'A FOR US AND OUR FAMILIES.

001. Specialties of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

Insha'Allah^[1], before we embark on the journey of seerah, we will study the Prophet's shama'il^[3] to build up even greater eagerness and motivation to learn about the life and times, the lessons and morals, the incidents that occurred, in the life of our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Where do we begin when it comes to describing the one whom Allah^[4] has chosen above the entire creation. How can we do justice to him when Allah AWJ^[5] Himself says, "We have raised up your remembrance and mention" [see Quran 94:4]. And indeed, Ibn Abbas (ابن عباس) and other scholars of the sahaba^[6] said, "Allah has raised up his remembrance such that whenever Allah is mentioned, the Prophet ﷺ is mentioned right after." Allah SWT^[7] Himself called our Prophet ﷺ a "Rahma li al-Alamin^[8]" — he is the embodiment of rahma^[9]; he is the channel of Allah's mercy. Indeed, the Prophet ﷺ is mercy, his sending is mercy, his Message is mercy, his teachings are mercy, and believing and acting upon what he has come with is mercy. He is everything associated with mercy. So how then can we begin to do justice to the Prophet ﷺ when Allah has praised him so highly.

However, even if we cannot mention all of his blessings and characteristics, let us at least mention some.

The Names of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

We begin by mentioning some of the names that Allah AWJ gave our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. He had many names. Many of his names were given by later people (i.e., the sahaba, tabi'un^[10], and the early scholars), and one of the famous scholars of the seerah has derived over 250 names for the Prophet ﷺ. But we will only mention some of the names that Allah has given him, because those are the primary names that have the deepest meaning.

From Jubayr ibn Mut'im (جبير بن مطعم), in Sahih Muslim, he said the Prophet ﷺ said: "I have a number of names. I am Muhammad, and I am Ahmad, and I am al-Mahi —the one through whom Allah erases kufr^[11]—, and I am al-Hashir —people will be resurrected after me—, and I am al-Aqib —the one who has no prophet after—."

¹ Insha'Allah (إن شاء الله) - God willing.

² ﷺ (Salla-llahu alayhi wa sallam) - peace be upon him / may Allah send blessings and peace upon him.

³ Shama'il (شمائل) - characteristics.

⁴ Allah (الله) - God.

⁵ AWJ (Azza wa Jal / عز وجل) - Mighty and the Majestic.

⁶ Sahaba (صحابية) - Companions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

⁷ SWT (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala / سبحانه وتعالى) - Glorified and Exalted be He.

⁸ Rahma li al-Alamin (رحمة للعالمين) - Mercy to the World.

⁹ Rahma (رحمة) - mercy.

¹⁰ Tabi'un (تابعون) - generation of Muslims who followed the sahaba.

¹¹ Kufr (كفر) - disbelief.

And in another narration: "And I am Nabi al-Rahma, and Nabi al-Tawba, and al-Muqaffa, and Nabi al-Malahim."

The two nouns that the Quran (قرآن) explicitly mentions are **Muhammad** (محمد) and **Ahmad** (أحمد).

The name Muhammad is mentioned 4 times in the Quran^[12], and the name Ahmad is mentioned 1 time from the tongue of Isa^[13] AS^[14] in the Quran, "A messenger after me whose name will be Ahmad" [Quran 61:6]. Both names come from the root ح م د (h-m-d); and "hamd" means "to praise," but not any type of praise, it means to praise not in return for some favor given to you; a praise that is given simply because of the inherent characteristics in the one that you are praising; that is, he deserves to be praised for who he is. An object of perfection. He is worthy of being praised regardless of what he has done or has not done. And both of the Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم names —Muhammad and Ahmad— come from "hamd." Why? Because Allah has praised him, the angels have praised him, all the prophets have praised him, and every single one of mankind praises him directly or indirectly. As for praising him directly, these are the Muslims — we praise him directly; and as for praising him indirectly, these are the non-Muslims — even those who reject the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم by the tongue, they must praise his character and qualities. So he is praised in the heavens and the earth, in the previous umam^[15] and the present umam, in this dunya^[16] and the akhira^[17]. This is the ultimate praise. There is no human before, now, or after, who is praised more than the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم.

In a long sahih^[18] hadith^[19], it is narrated that on the Day of Judgment, everyone will know that Islam (إسلام) is the Truth (including the nonbelievers, even though of course it is too late to believe), so the people will all go to Adam^[20] AS and say to him, "O Adam, you are our father, and Allah created you with His Hands, and Allah blew His ruh into you! Do you not see the situation your children are in?" They will ask him to go to Allah and beg Him to start the Reckoning and ask for forgiveness, but he will say, "I committed a sin I should not have done, and I am worried about myself"—and so he will say, "Nafsi^[21], nafsi. Go to another person. Go to Nuh^[22]." Humanity at large will then go to Nuh AS and make the same request. But he will also make an excuse, "I made a mistake which I should not have done. Allah told me not to ask anybody to be saved, but I asked Him to save my son and I disobeyed Him." So Nuh AS is also worried about himself and will say, "Nafsi, nafsi." Then they will go to Ibrahim^[23] AS. And he will also make an excuse, "I made 3 lies" (even though technically they were not lies). Then they will go to Musa^[24] AS who will also make an excuse, "I killed

¹² See Quran [3:144], [33:40], [47:2], and [48:29].

¹³ Isa (عيسى) - Jesus.

¹⁴ AS (Alayhi al-Salam / عليه السلام) - peace be upon him.

¹⁵ Umam (أمم) - nations.

¹⁶ Dunya (دنيا) - [this temporal] world.

¹⁷ Akhira (آخرة) - Hereafter.

¹⁸ Sahih (صحيح) - authentic.

¹⁹ Hadith (حديث) - Prophetic tradition.

²⁰ Adam (آدم) - Adam.

²¹ Nafsi (نفسي) - myself.

²² Nuh (نوح) - Noah.

²³ Ibrahim (إبراهيم) - Abraham.

²⁴ Musa (موسى) - Moses.

someone in anger" (even though it was an accident). Then they will go to Isa^[25] AS who will also say he is not worthy. And so they will go to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and beg him to be an intercessor and representative to go in front of Allah for all of humanity. To do what? To begin the Reckoning. Just to begin it. Because the Day of Judgment is so hard they will say, "Whatever comes let it come! Let us just move on to whatever it is! The tension is too much!" So they will beg the Prophet ﷺ, and he will say, "Ana laha (أنا لها), ana laha — this is my job, this is my job." And because of this, all of humanity will praise him. And he will be given the Praiseworthy Station which in Arabic is called al-Maqam al-Mahmud (المقام المحمود). And because it is the Praiseworthy Station, who better than it be given to than the one who is Muhammad and Ahmad.

Both Muhammad and Ahmad mean "the one who is ultimately praised," but what is the difference? Muhammad means he is being given continuous praise, time after time, praise after praise — from the beginning of time, up until our time, until the Day of Judgment, on the Day of Judgment, and after the Day of Judgment. So Muhammad is for the **quantity** of the praise. As for Ahmad, it means he is being given the best type of praise. So Ahmad is for the **quality** of the praise. And both Muhammad and Ahmad are combined in our Prophet ﷺ who will be given the Praiseworthy Station.

Why is it that Prophet Musa AS predicted our Rasul^[26] with the name of "Muhammad," and Prophet Isa AS predicted our Rasul with the name of "Ahmad"? The famous scholar Ibn al-Qayyim (ابن القيم) said the wisdom behind this is that the largest ummah^[27] of true believers after our ummah is that of the Bani Israel^[28]; therefore they were told the name that is fitting with them — because they were large in **quantity**. As for Prophet Isa AS, his followers were few, but they were very pious and great in **quality** — they were tortured and persecuted; the pagan Romans killed them, combed their skin with combs of iron, etc., but they persevered and they were truly devoted; so for them, the name Ahmad was mentioned.

As for his third name, the Prophet ﷺ explained it himself: **Al-Mahi** (الماحي) means the one through whom Allah wipes out kufr. "Through me, Allah SWT will wipe out kufr." Indeed the Arabian Peninsula was immersed in kufr, but in his own lifetime the entire peninsula converted to Islam. And within 20-30 years, major bastions of kufr were converted to Islam and remained in Islam ever since; within 60-70 years, Islam reached the borders of China and Andalus where it remains to this day. Al-Mahi — the one who erases and effaces kufr.

Al-Hashir (الهاشر) — mankind will be resurrected at the feet of the Prophet ﷺ (i.e., right after him). What does this mean? One interpretation is that the coming of the Prophet ﷺ is the first sign of the DoJ (Day of Judgment), and therefore the Prophet ﷺ is al-Hashir. Another interpretation is that the Prophet ﷺ will be the first person to be resurrected on the DoJ and then everyone else thereafter. Indeed the prophets will be resurrected first and foremost, then the salihun^[29] and the shuhada^[30], and then the rest of the ummah. So al-Hashir is the one that will signal the Hashar (Day of Judgment).

²⁵ Isa (عيسى) - Jesus.

²⁶ Rasul (رسول) - Messenger.

²⁷ Ummah (أمة) - nation.

²⁸ Bani Israel (بني إسرائيل) - Children of Israel, i.e., the Jews.

²⁹ Salihun (صالحون) - the righteous.

³⁰ Shuhada (شهداء) - martyrs.

Al-Aqib (العاقب) — the successor; the one who cuts off; the one who is at the end. And by this it means he is the last prophet.

Nabi al-Rahma (نبي الرحمة) — the prophet of rahma (mercy).

Nabi al-Tawba (نبي التوبة) — the prophet of tawba (repentance). Meaning by believing in him and following his teachings, people can be forgiven.

Al-Muqaffa (المقفى) — the one who comes at the end and makes the Message of the previous prophets complete; or the one who makes the Message of the previous prophets not needed anymore because he comes with the complete Message.

Nabi al-Malahim (نبي الملاحم) — the prophet that will signal lots of trials. And indeed the biggest trials the world will ever see (the Dajjal^[31], the three major earthquakes, etc.) will occur in this ummah.

The Specialties of Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم

As for the Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم khasa'is^[32] (something that only he was given and no other human being was given), some scholars have listed up to 50 unique and specific characteristics / blessings. Some of these include:

1. (Obviously) He is the final prophet of Allah. No prophet has been the final; and Allah chose him to be the final. The Quran says:

مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِّن رِّجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِن رَّسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Messenger of Allah, and the seal of the prophets" [33:40].

2. The prophethood of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had been decreed by Allah even before Adam AS existed; even before the ruh^[33] was blown into Adam.

One sahabi^[34] asked the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, "When were you decreed to be a prophet, ya Rasulallah^[35]?" The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, "When Adam was between the tin^[36] and the ruh." In other words, when the ruh and tin of Adam were still not yet combined — were still two separate entities. Before the ruh was blown in, Allah had already decreed.

³¹ Dajjal (دجال) - False Messiah / Antichrist.

³² Khasa'is (خصائص) - specialties.

³³ Ruh (روح) - soul.

³⁴ Sahabi (صحابي) - male Companion.

³⁵ Ya Rasulallah (يا رسول الله) - O Messenger of Allah.

³⁶ Tin (طين) - mud.

3. The only prophet to have been sent for all of humanity — in fact the only prophet to have been sent even to the jinn (جن)^[37]. (And insha'Allah, in the course of our lectures, we will mention the incident of the Night of the Jinn — the night in which the jinn came to Makkah^[38] to learn about Islam [see [episode 20](#)].)

4. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Allah has helped me with ru'b^[39] — Allah will inflict into my enemies fear even one month journey away before I reach them." This is unique to the Prophet ﷺ only. When he went into battle, people became terrified of him even before he reached them.

5. He has been given the largest ummah out of all of the prophets. In a hadith in Sahih al-Bukhari (صحيح البخاري), he said Allah showed him the ummah, and he saw an ummah as large as the eye could see, and he said, "Maybe this is my ummah," but he was told, "No, this is the ummah of Musa," and then he saw an ummah even larger that blocked his vision, and he was told, "This is your ummah."

And in another hadith, he said to the sahaba, "Do you wish your ummah should be $\frac{1}{3}$ of the people of Jannah^[40]?" They said, "Allahu'akbar^[41]!" Then he was silent. Then he said, "Would you be happy if I told you if your ummah is $\frac{1}{2}$ of the people of Jannah?" They said, "Allahu'akbar!" Then he was silent. Then he said, "By Allah, my hope is that my ummah shall be $\frac{2}{3}$ of the people of Jannah!" Subhan'Allah!^{[42][43]}

6. He has been given the most powerful miracle, i.e., the miracle of the Quran. There is no miracle that compares to the Quran. One thing demonstrates this: Look at any other miracle, e.g., the splitting of the Red Sea, or when Isa resurrected the dead — we cannot see and experience those miracles ourselves except that we just believe they happened. But the Quran is a living miracle — it is a miracle that all of humanity has access to. It is a miracle that we can recite and the people can hear.

7. The Night Journey of al-Isra' wal-Mi'raj (الإسراء والمعراج) — no other prophet has had the privilege of undertaking this journey. Even when Allah AWJ spoke with Musa, it was the Divine Speech given while Musa was on earth, on Tur Saina^[44]. The Prophet ﷺ was the only human to have been called up to the presence of Allah AWJ. He undertook a journey no

³⁷ Note: Somebody can say Adam and Nuh were also sent for all of humanity. But Adam and Nuh were both exceptions that simply happened by a coincidence of early history; in that, Adam was the first human, and naturally, the only human beings in his time were his descendants. The same goes for Nuh: there was only one city, nation, group, community of people in the whole world in his time, so it was just a coincidence. It is not as if Adam & Nuh were intended to be sent for all of humanity.

³⁸ Makkah (مكة) - Mecca.

³⁹ Ru'b (رعب) - a type of fear.

⁴⁰ Jannah (جنة) - Paradise.

⁴¹ Allahu'akbar (الله أكبر) - Allah is the greatest.

⁴² Subhan'Allah (سبحان الله) - Glory be to Allah.

⁴³ Note: Modern estimates say there are close to 2 billion Muslims on this earth today; so do the math — from the time of the Prophet ﷺ until the Day of Judgment; and then compare this to the real followers of the prophets who came before, i.e., the Bani Israel, the actual followers of Isa AS; how few must they be?!

⁴⁴ Tur Saina (طور سيناء) - Mount Sinai.

other makhluq^[45], as far as we know, ever undertook: he went up to a maqam^[46] that even Jibril^[47] said, "My permission stops here; you must go alone." "This is where it ends for me; I cannot go any further."

8. He is the leader of all of humanity. He himself told us this in the hadith in Bukhari (بخاري) and Muslim (مسلم), "I am the Sayyid^[48] of the children of Adam." Sayyid here means he is the master, the perfection of humanity. And he deserves to be the leader of humanity. And indeed he will be the leader of humanity on the DoJ.

9. The Prophet ﷺ will be the first to be resurrected on the DoJ [Sahih Bukhari] — the first grave to open up when the second trumpet is blown will be the Prophet's ﷺ grave. This explains his name al-Hashir. And he will be the first to be clothed on the DoJ.

10. He will be given the largest hawd (حوض) — a pool that is square in shape; it is so large that one side of it is as if it is from Makkah to Sana'a (صنعاء), which is half of the Arabian Peninsula.

11. He will be given the Kawthar (الكوثر) — the main river of Jannah; and all rivers of Jannah split from it. It is as if the people of Jannah will drink water from the gift of the Prophet ﷺ.

12. He will be the first to cross over the Sirat^[49] — the one to guide his ummah to Jannah; first to knock on the Doors of Jannah; he will be the first human to ever enter Jannah after Adam left it; and he will be the one in whose name the Gates of Jannah will be opened. The angel will ask, "Who is it?!" ... "To you I have been commanded to open." So it is his name that will be the permission to open up the Gates of Jannah. So the very first step to enter into Jannah is the right step of our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, followed by his ummah (even though we are the last ummah chronologically).

13. Allah has blessed him with the highest level of Jannah: the pinnacle of al-Firdaws al-A'la (الفرديوس الأعلى). It is an entire level. Some scholars have said Jannah is kind of like a pyramid, in that, the higher up you go, the fewer the people; there will come a point where the whole plain of Jannah is meant for only one person; it will be the pinnacle of al-Firdaws al-A'la; and it will be immediately underneath the Throne of Allah SWT; and it is called al-Fadila (الفضيلة). The Prophet ﷺ said, "This Fadila is a level of Jannah that Allah has chosen for only one of His servants." And then he said modestly, "I hope that I am that person" (even though obviously there is no other human than him that is qualified for this position). And he ﷺ wanted us to pray that Allah gives him the Wasila (الوسيلة) and Fadila (الفضيلة). And that's why every time the adhan^[50] is called, we say this du'a^[51]:

⁴⁵ Makhluq (مخلوق) - creation.

⁴⁶ Maqam (مقام) - place.

⁴⁷ Jibril (جبريل) - Gabriel.

⁴⁸ Sayyid (سيد) - the one who is in charge of, i.e., the leader.

⁴⁹ The Sirat (صراط) - the Bridge.

⁵⁰ Adhan (أذان) - prayer call.

⁵¹ Du'a (دعاء) - supplication.

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ هَذِهِ الدَّعْوَةِ التَّامَّةِ، وَالصَّلَاةِ الْقَائِمَةِ، آتِ مُحَمَّدًا الْوَسِيلَةَ وَالْفَضِيلَةَ، وَابْعَثْهُ مَقَامًا مَحْمُودًا الَّذِي وَعَدْتَهُ

"O Allah! Lord of this perfect call (perfect by not ascribing partners to You) and of the regular prayer which is going to be established — give Muhammad the Wasila and Fadila, and resurrect him on the Praiseworthy Station that You promised him (of)" [Sahih Bukhari].

Even those who mocked him, ridiculed him, drew diagrams against him in this dunya, will be praising him on the DoJ. And in the akhira, he صلى الله عليه وسلم will be given al-Wasila and al-Fadila.

002. Specialties of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Part 2)

In our last halaqa (حلقة), we mentioned only around 15 khasa'is; but realize there are close to 50 special qualities that only the Prophet ﷺ was given.

Today, insha'Allah, we will begin by talking about his physical appearance ﷺ.

The Physical Appearance of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

It is the sunnah of Allah^[52] that He sends prophets with the most perfect characteristics, inner and outer, so that mankind has no reason to reject the messenger. As we know, Prophet Yusuf^[53] was given half of all beauty. Some scholars say this means half of all beauty of mankind^[54]; but some scholars say it means half of the beauty of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ because —according to this opinion— the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is the most handsome and beautiful of the entire creation.

We have many narrations that describe the physical features of our Prophet ﷺ. It is reported in al-Tabarani's (الطبراني) al-Mu'jam al-Kabir (المعجم الكبير) and Bukhari's Kitab al-Manaqib (كتاب المناقب) that once, a son of an old sahabiyya^[55] asked his mother al-Rubayyi' bint Muawwidh (الربيع بنت معوذ) after the Prophet ﷺ had passed away, "What was the Prophet ﷺ like?" She said, "O my dear son, if you were to have seen him, you would have thought that the sun had risen up." It is amazing that she described him as a sun, and another sahabi Ka'b ibn Malik (كعب بن مالك) described him as a moon. Ka'b said, "Whenever the Prophet ﷺ was happy, his face would light up as if it was the full moon." It is beautiful that the sahaba are describing the Prophet ﷺ with what they know to be the most beautiful.

There is a tradition that almost makes you want to cry: the tradition of Amr ibn al-As (عمرو بن العاص). He used to be of the leaders of the Quraysh (قريش) who were against Islam, and he only had the opportunity to be a sahabi for a few years. Later on in his life, he would say, "There was nothing sweeter or more beloved to me than to stare at the face of the Prophet ﷺ." The beauty and nur^[56] of the Prophet ﷺ was so great that Amr is saying there is nothing sweeter than to simply look at his face ﷺ. "I could never get enough of looking at him. And yet were you to ask me how he looked, I couldn't describe him. Because along with this desire to stare at him, there was also this awe I had that couldn't allow me to stare directly at him, and I had to look down." So there were two types of powers emanating from the Prophet ﷺ: the first of them was attracting Amr's vision to him, and the second was making him look away. "Even though I loved to stare, I couldn't." This is coming from a nobleman of the Quraysh, and this is how humbled he was just by the appearance of the Prophet ﷺ.

⁵² Sunnah of Allah (سنة الله) - custom of Allah.

⁵³ Yusuf (يوسف) - Joseph.

⁵⁴ This is the majority opinion.

⁵⁵ Sahabiyya (صحابية) - female Companion.

⁵⁶ Nur (نور) - light.

Most of the descriptions of the Prophet ﷺ come from the younger sahaba. Indeed, they didn't have the same type of emotions as the older sahaba. Anas ibn Malik (أنس بن مالك) was introduced to the Prophet ﷺ at 7 years old, and he would serve him all day. In the Shama'il (شمانل) of al-Tirmidhi (الترمذي), Anas said, "The Prophet ﷺ was neither very tall such that he stood above the crowd, nor was he short such that he would be ignored. And he was neither extremely white nor was he ruddy brown^[57]. The Prophet's ﷺ hair was not in curls nor was it straight. And I never felt any velvet or silk softer than the hand of the Prophet ﷺ, nor did I smell any musk or perfume more fragrant than the smell of the sweat of the Prophet ﷺ." Indeed, Ummi Salama (أم سلمة) used to collect his sweat in a jar to use it as perfume and medicine.

Al-Bara' ibn Azib (البراء بن عازب) described the Prophet ﷺ: "The Prophet ﷺ was of medium stature and he had broad shoulders; and his hair was thick^[58]. Once, I saw him wearing a red hulla^[59], and I never saw anything more beautiful than him on that night."

The Prophet's ﷺ cousin Ali ibn Abi Talib (علي بن أبي طالب) said, "The Prophet ﷺ did not have a very fleshy face nor was it completely round, it was slightly ovalish. He had whitish skin (lightish brown). His eyes were large with jet-black pupils, and his lashes were long. His joints were large as was his upper back (broad shoulders). And he did not have hair all over his body, but he did have a fine line of hair extending from the chest to the navel. When he walked, he would walk briskly (fast) as if he was descending down a slope"—and some scholars say it was as if Allah made the earth humbled to him. "And when he turned, he would turn to face with his whole body. And between his two shoulders was the Seal of the Prophethood^[60] — and he was the seal of the prophets. And whoever unexpectedly saw him would stand in awe of him. And whoever accompanied him and got to know him would love him. And those who described him would always say, 'I have never seen anyone before him or after him who was like him.'"

Jabir ibn Samura (جابر بن سمرة) was going home one night when there was a full moon. And he just happened to pass by the Prophet ﷺ and he ﷺ was wearing a red hulla. Jabir narrated, "I looked at the face of the Prophet ﷺ and the full moon; and wallahi^[61], the Prophet ﷺ was more beautiful in my eyes than the full moon."

And many people accepted Islam just by seeing his face ﷺ. The most famous was the chief rabbi of the Jews of Madinah^[62], Abdullah ibn Salam (عبد الله بن سلام). He had heard of

⁵⁷ Generally speaking, when the Arabs used the word "white," they meant a lightish brown; and what we call "white," they called it "yellow."

⁵⁸ The thickness of his hair ﷺ had been narrated by at least five different sahaba. "His beard was very bushy," "His hair is very full," etc. And the Prophet ﷺ would grow his hair until it went down to his earlobes.

⁵⁹ Hulla (حلة) - cloak / outer garment / a coordinated two-piece garment, typically worn as formal attire, somewhat like a jacket or suit.

⁶⁰ The Prophet ﷺ had a physical Seal on his body that Allah gave him. And this was to be a sign by which he would be recognized by the People of the Book (Jews and Christians) as a true prophet. It was a small growth of hair of a different color than the usual color of his body hair in between his shoulder blades (more on this later). And most famously, [Salman al-Farisi accepted Islam because of this Seal](#).

⁶¹ Wallahi (والله) - [I swear] by Allah.

⁶² Madinah (مدينة) - Medina.

a man coming and claiming to be a prophet^[63], so he wanted to go and see the Message. This hadith is in Bukhari: Abdullah ibn Salam said, "As soon as I saw him صلى الله عليه وسلم, I knew this face cannot be the face of a liar." So one conversation and he accepted Islam right then and there just by looking at his face صلى الله عليه وسلم.

The Internal Qualities of Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم

Along with the external beauty, of course our Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was blessed with internal beauty: humility, modesty, simple lifestyle, etc.

1. Simple Lifestyle

i) Sahih Muslim: Once, Umar ibn al-Khattab (عمر بن الخطاب) entered upon the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم when he was lying in his small compartment in the masjid^[64], and there was nothing but a jug of water and a small bed made out of the branches of a date palm tree^[65]. When Umar comes in, he صلى الله عليه وسلم sits up to greet him. And because of the date palm branches, there was a red mark dented into the side of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. That was when Umar started crying, "O Messenger of Allah! How can we allow you to live like this. Look at the kings of Rome and Persia and how they live! Surely you deserve better!" And to this, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم simply said, "O Umar, are you not happy that they have the dunya, and we have the akhira?"

ii) In Tirmidhi, Aisha bint Abi Bakr (عائشة بنت أبي بكر) described, "The bed the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم used to sleep on was a leather skin that sometimes we would stuff with date palm leaves (to make it softer)." And it is narrated that once, one of the wives of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم folded up her own half of the bed to give the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم extra (to make it more comfortable for him). And because of this, he صلى الله عليه وسلم slept longer than usual. And so when he woke up and realized what had happened, he told her to change it back, as he didn't want this comfort, as it prevented him from waking up for tahajjud (تهجد).

iii) Aisha RA^[66], the wife of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, said, sometimes the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم would not taste meat for 6 weeks. So her nephew Urwah ibn al-Zubayr (عروة بن الزبير), forty years down the line, asked her, "O my Mother^[67], how did you live?" She said, "We lived by eating the two dark things: dates and dirty water."

iv) In a narration, it is said that when good food was brought to Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf (عبد الرحمن بن عوف), he began to cry and said, "Till the day the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم died, he never ate wheat bread to his fill! And not even his family!" And then Abd al-Rahman added, "I worry that Allah SWT has allowed us to remain for such a long time that we are seeing all of these blessings come and the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has gone on to something that is better." That is, he is

⁶³ The first day the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم arrived in Madinah.

⁶⁴ Masjid (مسجد) - mosque.

⁶⁵ This is the 7th or 8th year of the Hijrah when the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم is the undisputed leader of a large chunk of Arabia.

⁶⁶ RA (radiyAllahu anha / رضي الله عنها) - may Allah be pleased with her.

⁶⁷ Mother of the Believers.

worried that he is getting all of his ajr^[68] in this dunya when everyone else has gone on to enjoy their ajr in the Hereafter.

v) In many narrations, it is said that Aisha RA would also begin to cry when good food was given to her. Indeed, she lived 40 years after the death of the Prophet ﷺ when the money started flowing in, and sometimes people would gift her items and good food. And she would say the same thing as Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf: "The Prophet ﷺ never ate [even] crusty or hard bread to his fill in his life."

vi) Before the money came in and Islam came to power, the sahaba lived tough times in the early phase of Madinah. In Sahih Muslim^[69], [Abu Hurairah](#) (أبو هريرة) reported that one day or one night, the Prophet ﷺ went out (of his house), and there he found Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (أبو بكر الصديق) RA^[70] and Umar RA. He ﷺ said: "What has brought you out of your houses at this hour?" They said: "Ya Rasulallah, it is hunger." Thereupon, he ﷺ said: "By Him in Whose Hand is my life, what has brought you out has brought me out too. Get up." So they got up along with him, and (all of them) came to the house of an Ansari (Abu al-Haytham ibn al-Tayhan [أبو الهيثم بن التيهان]^[71]). But the Ansari was not at home. And when his wife saw the Prophet ﷺ, she said: "Most welcome." And the Prophet ﷺ said to her: "Where is so-and-so (Abu al-Haytham)?" She said: "He has gone to get some fresh water for us." And when the Ansari came and he saw the Prophet ﷺ and his two Companions, he said: "Alhamdulillah! No one has more honorable guests today than I [have]!" He then went out and brought them a bunch of ripe dates, dry dates, and fresh dates, and said, "Eat some of them." He then took hold of his long knife (for slaughtering a goat or a sheep). And the Prophet ﷺ said to him: "Beware of killing a milch animal." And he slaughtered a sheep for them. And after they had eaten of it and of the bunch and drank, and when they had taken their fill and had been fully satisfied with the drink, the Prophet ﷺ said to Abu Bakr and Umar: "By Him in Whose Hand is my life, you will certainly be questioned about this bounty on the Day of Judgment [see Quran, 102:8]. Hunger brought you out of your house, then you did not return until this bounty came to you."

2. Humility

i) The Prophet ﷺ frequently rode donkeys even though he had a camel named al-Qaswa' (القصواء).

ii) During the Battle of Badr (غزوة بدر), the Prophet ﷺ distributed the camels amongst the people. (And there were ~313 people and ~75 camels, so roughly 3 or 4 people per camel. — And some people had horses, etc.) And the Prophet ﷺ assigned Ali and Abu Lubaba (أبو لبابة) as his own companions. (And put yourself in their shoes: if you had to share a camel with the Prophet ﷺ, of course you would say, "Take it, ya Rasulallah! It's yours!") And so they said to him ﷺ, "We are young men in our 20s, we can walk. You take the camel, ya Rasulallah!" (Note: Indeed the leader and commander deserves extra respect and

⁶⁸ Ajr (أجر) - reward.

⁶⁹ <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2038a>

⁷⁰ RA (radiyAllahu anhu / رضي الله عنه) - may Allah be pleased with him.

⁷¹ We learn from other sources that this Ansari was Abu al-Haytham ibn al-Tayhan.

extra protection; the commander is someone who is not treated like the private, so the Prophet ﷺ could have said, "Okay, fine." Or he ﷺ even could have said, "No. Let us all share the camel.") [But] he ﷺ didn't want to make them feel that he was doing them a favor by turning down their generous offer, so he ﷺ smiled and said, "Neither are the two of you any stronger than me, and nor am I in any lesser need of the ajr than you two. So we are going to share [the camel]." Subhan'Allah.

3. Manners

i) Anas ibn Malik^[72] said, "I served the Prophet ﷺ for 10 years, but not once did he rebuke me. Not once did the word uff^[73] come from his mouth. And not once did he say, 'Why did (or didn't) you do this (or that)?'" This is of the perfection of the manners of the Prophet ﷺ. Subhan'Allah.

ii) There is another beautiful narration as well: Anas ibn Malik said, "Once, the Prophet ﷺ sent me on a chore. But on the way, I saw some kids playing. So I started playing with them and completely forgot about the chore"—Anas is a kid at the end of the day. Then the Prophet ﷺ came out in search, and he found him playing with the street children. And Anas narrates: "[Suddenly,] somebody held on to my ears and picked me up. And so I turned around. And it was the Prophet ﷺ smiling at me"—the Prophet ﷺ was playing with Anas, not even getting irritated.

iii) Even when people showed him the utmost contempt and disrespect, he ﷺ maintained his dignity. In Sahih Muslim^[74], Aisha RA reported that once, a group of Jews came to the Prophet ﷺ and sought his audience. And when it was granted, they said to him ﷺ, "As-sam-u-alaykum^[75]"—in mockery of the greeting of the Muslims^[76]. Aisha RA heard this, so she said in response, "Rather, may death be upon you, and also curse!" At this, the Prophet ﷺ said to her, "O Aisha, verily, Allah loves kindness in every matter [i.e., You don't have to stoop to their level]." When the Jews left, she said to the Prophet ﷺ, "Didn't you hear what they said? [i.e., They said 'sam,' not 'salam!']" The Prophet ﷺ said, "Did you not hear that I said (to them): 'Wa alaykum^[77]'?"—he ﷺ maintained his dignity and composure, and he didn't curse back at them.

⁷² Anas ibn Malik was a Companion of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ who lived for over 110 years, which was an exceptional lifespan during a time when the typical age of death was around 30 years. According to historical accounts, Anas's mother gave him to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ in servitude, hoping that he would pray for her son's well-being. The Prophet ﷺ fulfilled this request by making a supplication to Allah, asking for blessings in Anas's life, wealth, and progeny. And this prayer had a profound impact on Anas's life, as he went on to become a successful businessman with a great deal of wealth, and he lived long enough to see his grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and even great-great-grandchildren. This remarkable lifespan and success are all due to the blessings of the Prophet's ﷺ prayer for him.

⁷³ Uff (أف) is the least word to express irritation; "tsk" would be the equivalent in English.

⁷⁴ <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2165a>

⁷⁵ As-sam-u-alaykum (السام عليكم) - death be upon you.

⁷⁶ As-salam-u-alaykum (السلام عليكم) - peace be upon you.

⁷⁷ Wa alaykum (و عليكم) - and upon you.

4. Bravery

i) Ali ibn Abi Talib said in reference to the Battle of Badr, "When the fighting would become severe, we would seek refuge around the Prophet ﷺ."

ii) Anas ibn Malik said, "Once in Madinah in the middle of the night, people heard a loud commotion outside and they did not know what it was, so they timidly came outside wondering what the noise was. But they found the Prophet ﷺ had already gone in the direction of the commotion alone, and he found the horse of Abu Talha (أبو طلحة); and he simply rode the horse back without a saddle; and he had his sword around his neck; and he was galloping / coming back to the people of Madinah saying, 'You have nothing to fear, I have checked it out.'"

5. Generosity

i) He ﷺ would never refuse any request / asking of him. Ever. This is why a sahabiyya said, "It was possible for any little girl to go to the hand of the Prophet ﷺ for help."

ii) It is narrated that once, the Prophet ﷺ was wearing a garment that had holes in it. So one of the sahaba gifted him a very beautiful garment. And he wore this garment. Then another sahabi asked him, "Ya Rasulallah, can you give me this garment as a gift?" This is the very garment he just got as a gift! But immediately, the Prophet ﷺ said yes. And then he ﷺ went back home and came back wearing the tattered garment. And so all of the sahaba jumped on this sahabi and said, "How could have you asked the Prophet ﷺ this! You knew he would never turn down a request!" But the sahabi said, "Before you get angry at me... I am not doing this to wear! I want to use this as my kafan^[78]! To show the generosity of the Prophet ﷺ in front of Allah!"

6. Humor

The Prophet ﷺ was blessed with a great sense of humor. Having humor shows your humanity and down-to-earthness. And there are so many instances of the jokes of the Prophet ﷺ. And all of his jokes are pure, clean, and truthful. Even his jokes are true. Even when he caused people to laugh, it was something that was true.

i) Once, an old lady came to the Prophet ﷺ and said, "O Messenger of Allah! Make du'a that Allah causes this old lady (herself) to enter Jannah." The Prophet ﷺ looked at her and said, "O my aunt, have you not been informed that old ladies do not enter Jannah?" At this she began to wail and cry. Then he ﷺ told her, "Do not cry, for wallahi, old ladies do not enter Jannah; but Allah SWT will first make her into a young, fair maiden, and then she will enter Jannah." That is, you are going to be young and beautiful when you enter Jannah. And then he ﷺ recited the verse:

⁷⁸ Kafan (كفن) - shroud.

"We bring them forth with a new beginning" [see Quran, 56:35].

ii) And the story of Aisha RA when the Prophet ﷺ was on his deathbed^[79]. It so happened that Aisha herself felt a little sick on one of the days and she had a severe headache, so she was crying, "Oh, my head! Oh, my head!" To this, the Prophet ﷺ said, "Rather, oh, *my* head! (I have a worse headache than you)." And to calm her down, he cracked some jokes, "O Aisha, what would you lose if you died right now? The one to do ghusl^[80] for you, and to pray your janazah^[81], and to bury you, would be me." Aisha RA says, "I am sure you would like that to happen, because then you would be free to go to your other wives." Subhan'Allah, he is joking on his deathbed. And from this joke, scholars have derived fiqh^[82]: the permissibility of a spouse doing ghusl for [the janazah (dead body) of] his / her spouse — because the Prophet ﷺ never spoke except the truth. Al-Shawkani (الشوكاني) has a chapter in his book pertaining to this, and he mentions this hadith.

iii) It is reported in Tirmidhi that there was a young man by the name of Zahir ibn Haram (زاهر بن حرام) whom the Prophet ﷺ used to love a lot. We don't know much about him, but there was something about him that the Prophet ﷺ loved. He was a simple sincere believer. Once, the Prophet ﷺ saw him in the souq^[83] selling some things: "Who is going to buy this from me? Who is going to buy this from me?" etc. So the Prophet came from behind quietly, grabbed him, and gave him a body-lock / bear-hug. At this, Zahir asked, "Who is this?!" And when he saw it was the Prophet ﷺ, he leaned back to the chest of the Prophet ﷺ to get as much barakah. Then as a joke, the Prophet ﷺ shouted out, "Who is going to buy this abd^[84] from me?"^[85] At this, Zahir said, "O Messenger of Allah. In that case, you are going to get a very bad bargain. I am not going to sell very expensive"—Zahir had very low self-esteem. And to this, the Prophet ﷺ said, "You are very expensive in the Eyes of Allah SWT." This is a beautiful story that shows the humanity of the Prophet ﷺ.

Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ Love For His Ummah

i) The Prophet ﷺ had an immense amount of love for his ummah. Allah AWJ says:

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ

"There has come to you a messenger from amongst you, he finds it difficult to bear your hardships, he is ever eager for you, to the believers he is full of compassion and mercy" [Quran, 9:128].

⁷⁹ He ﷺ literally had 4-5 days left to live; and of course, nobody knew this at the time, except him.

⁸⁰ Ghusl (غسل) - [ritual] washing / bath.

⁸¹ Janazah (جنازة) - funeral prayer / dead body.

⁸² Fiqh (فقه) - Islamic ruling.

⁸³ Souq (سوق) - marketplace.

⁸⁴ Abd (عبد) - slave.

⁸⁵ And in those days, if you said who is going to buy an "abd" in a marketplace, of course it meant a real slave. But here the Prophet ﷺ meant abd = slave of Allah. Again, even in his joke, he ﷺ is not lying.

ii) It is narrated in Sahih Muslim that: Once, the Prophet ﷺ was reciting the Quran, and he came across a number of verses. Of them is the famous verse when Ibrahim AS said, "My Lord [...] whoever follows me is with me, and whoever disobeys me—then surely You are [still] All-Forgiving, Most Merciful" [see Quran, 14:36]. And then he ﷺ came across the verse of Isa AS in Surah al-Ma'idah (سورة المائدة) saying, "[O Allah,] If You punish them, they belong to You after all. But if You forgive them, You are surely the Almighty, All-Wise" [see Quran, 5:118]. (In other words, Isa AS wanted Allah to forgive his ummah.) So the Prophet ﷺ recites these two verses both of them regarding prophets making du'a for their ummah. And then he starts thinking of his own ummah, so he raises his hands to Allah and says, "O Allah, my ummah! O Allah, my ummah!" and he began to cry. Thereupon, Allah told Jibril, "Go to Muhammad and ask him why he is crying."^[86] So Jibril came to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and asked him, "Why are you crying?" The Prophet ﷺ said, "I am crying thinking of my ummah and thinking of what will be their fate." Then Jibril went back to Allah. And then Allah said, "O Jibril! Go back to Muhammad and tell him We shall please you, and not displease you regarding your ummah." In other words, Allah is going to bless the ummah of the Prophet ﷺ because He SWT wants to please the Prophet ﷺ! Subhan'Allah.

iii) The greatest indication of the love that the Prophet ﷺ had for his ummah:

Allah SWT has given every single prophet one wish that He will never reject — and some of the prophets used it against their people who disobeyed. E.g. Nuh AS after making dawah (دعوة) for 950 years, he said, "My Lord! Do not leave a single disbeliever on earth" [Quran, 71:26] — so Allah destroyed all humanity except the Mu'minin^[87], that is Nuh AS, some of his children, and their spouse. As for Ibrahim AS, he made that famous du'a for the Prophet ﷺ, "Our Lord, send from amongst them a messenger" [see Quran, 2:129]^[88]. And Musa AS made du'a against Fir'awn^[89] [see Quran, 10:88], and it was answered. And Sulayman^[90] AS made the du'a, "My Lord! Forgive me, and grant me an authority that will never be matched by anyone after me. You are indeed the Giver [of all bounties]" [Quran, 38:35], so Allah gave him powers no one had, e.g., given the control over wind & jinn [see Quran, 38:36-38] — jinn were building and diving and bringing treasures etc. for Sulayman. And he could speak to animals [see Quran, 27:16] and even to ants! All the animals became his servants [see Quran, 27:17]. This is the du'a of Sulayman.

So you see now what this du'a can give the prophets.

And our Prophet ﷺ had the biggest and greatest du'a — and what did he use it for? He used it for us. He said in a hadith, "Every single rasul^[91] and nabi^[92], Allah has given him one du'a that He never rejects. And every single nabi has used it up in this world, except for me. I have saved it for my ummah, and I will use it for them on the Day of Judgment." And the du'a will be: "O Allah, forgive my entire ummah!" And Allah will accept this du'a, in that,

⁸⁶ And of course Allah knew why he was crying.

⁸⁷ Mu'minin (مؤمنون) - Believers.

⁸⁸ And this verse is why the Prophet ﷺ said in a hadith: "I am the du'a of my father Ibrahim."

⁸⁹ Fir'awn (فرعون) - Pharaoh.

⁹⁰ Sulayman (سليمان) - Solomon.

⁹¹ Rasul (رسول) - messenger.

⁹² Nabi (نبي) - prophet.

every single Muslim who believes and acts upon even a little bit of his teachings صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم will eventually be forgiven and enter Jannah. All because the Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم saved that one du'a for us. Subhan'Allah. There can be no greater sacrifice than this. This shows us the love that he صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم had for us.

Conclusion

We conclude by mentioning a beautiful hadith reported in Bukhari: Anas ibn Malik narrates: A man came to the Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم and said, "O Messenger of Allah, when is the Day of Judgment?" The Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم asked him back, "What have you prepared for it when it comes?" The man was silent for a while, and then he said, "I really do not have that much salah^[93], siyam^[94], or sadaqa^[95], but I have a genuine love for Allah and His Messenger." Thereupon, the Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم said, "A man shall be with he whom he loves [in Jannah]." And Anas commented as he was narrating the hadith, "Wallahi, we were never as happy and overjoyed as we were on that day when we heard that a man shall be with he whom he loves. Because we love the Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم and we want to be with him [in Jannah], but we thought our levels would be so different that we would never get to see him."

So let us have a genuine love for the Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم. Let us understand the sacrifices he made for us. Let us understand what a great personality he was. And most importantly, let us study his life and times so that we can implement and follow his teachings and come closer to Allah SWT. Allah says in the Quran:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ

"Say, 'If you truly love Allah, then follow me. Allah will love you and forgive your sins'" [see Quran, 3:31].

May Allah SWT make us amongst those who truly follow the Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم, and may He forgive our sins.

⁹³ Salah (صلاة) - prayer.

⁹⁴ Siyam (صيام) - fasting.

⁹⁵ Sadaqa (صدقة) - charity.

003. Why Study the Seerah and Pre-Islamic Arabia

Before we discuss the life of the Prophet ﷺ, we must discuss pre-Islamic Arabia. In order to understand the seerah, we need to understand the world at his time. This is why every single book of seerah has a number of introductory sections.

What does the word seerah (سيرة) mean? It means to traverse or to journey. It is derived from the root س ي ر (s-y-r) which means to travel — and the reason why seerah (the biography of a person) is called seerah is because you are traveling his journey, following his footsteps. Even though its use can be for the biography of anybody, Muslim scholars have now kept it only for the biography of the Prophet ﷺ.

Benefits of Studying the Seerah

Why should we study the seerah?

1. Allah has commanded us to know this man. This is an obligation that Allah has put upon us. And there are over 50 verses in the Quran that command us to take the Prophet ﷺ as an example. Of them:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ

"Indeed there is for you, in the messenger of Allah, an exemplary manner, a perfect conduct" [see Quran, 33:21]. We have the perfect example to follow. And therefore, the study of the life & times of our Prophet ﷺ is the study of someone we must follow. And amazingly, no matter which angle we look at the seerah, we will benefit from it:

- (i) In terms of religion: how the Prophet ﷺ worshipped Allah
- (ii) In terms of manners and morals: his mercy and tenderness
- (iii) In terms of leadership: how he led the Muslims to success
- (iv) In terms of how he was as a father and a husband

The purpose of Allah sending prophets is so that we have a living example to follow. Allah tells us in the Quran that if He had wanted, He could have sent angels [see Quran, 17:95]. But what would the nonbelievers have done if Allah sent angels? They would have rejected them [see Quran, 6:8-9].

Indeed, of the perfection of Allah's wisdom is that He sent down human beings —people like us, flesh and blood— so that we don't say, "But we can't be like them." They are born of women, they marry and have children just like us. The only difference is they are chosen by Allah and are made role models.

2. The seerah is the number one way to increase our love for the Prophet ﷺ. There is no other way as effective and as powerful. So isn't it sad that our ummah has neglected this study? Most of our children are completely ignorant of the seerah. It's embarrassing that we know so much more about movie stars and athletes, and have no clue as to the real

person whom we should know about. By studying the seerah, our love for the Prophet ﷺ increases, and conversely, it demonstrates our love. So it's a two-way street: When you study, your love increases; and when you love, you want to study more. Indeed, when you love someone, you want to know everything about him, and you want to imitate him in every way possible. It's a circle: The more we study the more we love, and the more we love the more we study. Anyone who claims to love the Prophet ﷺ but doesn't study the seerah, wallahi, the fact that he doesn't study is a sign that he doesn't love him.

3. It also helps us to understand the Quran. The Quran is a very profound book that you cannot understand without context. For example, Surah al-Duha (سورة الضحى), "Your Lord has not abandoned you, nor is He displeased" [Quran, 93:3] — we cannot understand this verse until we understand the seerah and see when and why this verse was revealed. The context is that the Prophet ﷺ was worried and concerned that for weeks wahy^[96] hadn't come down, so he began thinking, "Maybe Allah has abandoned me." This is the first year of revelation, and shaytan^[97] is giving him bad thoughts; so Allah SWT revealed Surah al-Duha to comfort him ﷺ. Until we understand this, the surah doesn't make much sense. So the Quran gains meaning by studying the seerah.

4. It raises our hopes, lifts our spirits, and blesses us with optimism. This is especially true in our times when we face Islamophobia. Even though in comparison to what the sahaba went through, it is embarrassing to even call what we go through a "persecution," nonetheless we are facing a little bit of the heat. So by studying the seerah, we can understand that the people before us suffered even more, and we compare our trials and tribulations to theirs, and realize that actually we are having it easy. And in fact, the Quran tells us the reason why Allah is telling the Prophet ﷺ the stories of the earlier prophets (i.e., earlier seerahs):

وَكُلًّا نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الرُّسُلِ مَا نُنبِئُ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ

"We are going to recite to you the stories of the previous prophets in order that your heart attain affirmation" [see Quran, 11:120]. That is, to increase the Prophet's ﷺ optimism and Iman^[98]. So how about us then? Don't we deserve even more so that our Iman goes up when we study the life and times of the Prophet ﷺ?

5. Yet another benefit of studying the seerah is that the seerah itself is a miracle of the Prophet ﷺ [i.e., the study of the seerah is the study of the Proofs of his prophethood]. When somebody [e.g., a Jew or a Christian] asks us what are the miracles of our Prophet Muhammad [i.e., what are the Signs of his prophethood], we immediately start thinking of the splitting of the moon, the talking of the tree, etc., without realizing that in fact the whole life of the Prophet ﷺ is an even greater miracle; an indication that he was a true prophet of Allah. Coming from where he came and bringing forth the profundity & eloquence of the Quran, his leadership, his patience, his success; coming from the middle of a pagan ancient civilization that didn't even have a library or script; and yet within 50 years Islam spread, and within 100 years it ruled the world — this is a miracle. The seerah is an affirmation of this miracle. The power he wielded and yet the simplicity with which he lived his life; it is

⁹⁶ Wahy (وحي) - revelation.

⁹⁷ Shaytan (شيطان) - devil / satan.

⁹⁸ Iman (إيمان) - faith / belief / confidence.

impossible for a human not to be affected by the power or luxury unless there is pure, divine sincerity. Ibn Hazm (ابن حزم), a famous Andalusian scholar, said, "Wallahi, if the Prophet ﷺ had not been given any miracle other than his life and times, it would have been sufficient to prove that he is a prophet of Allah." How he revolutionized Arabia and changed the entire world — this is truly a miracle. Within 20 years — nobody could have *ever* predicted that a group coming from Arabia would destroy the Persian Empire and start knocking on the doors of the Roman Empire. A group with a new religion, new theology, a force that cannot be equaled with the mighty empires of Rome and Persia; and yet Allah SWT allowed these people that were less educated and less civilized with nowhere near the army or weaponry of the mighty empires to be victorious — because of the religion they held firm to, that is Islam.

6. The seerah lays out a precise methodology to revive the ummah. There are many Islamist groups in our times with their own methodologies to do so. But if you want to bring about izzah⁹⁹ back, then why don't you look at the seerah? The Prophet ﷺ began literally from zero and look where he reached. We look at the ummah today and our hearts bleed, and wonder, "Why, oh Allah?!" "How can we revive the state of the ummah?!" — And the response is: by studying the seerah.

7. By studying the seerah, we also see the life and times of the best generation who ever lived: the generation of the sahaba RA. Allah says, "Allah is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Allah" [Quran, 9:100]. And the Prophet ﷺ said, "The best generation is my generation." Ibn Mas'ud (ابن مسعود) RA said, "Allah looked at the hearts of His servants and He chose the brightest and the purest heart to be that of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. And then He chose the purest next and made them the sahaba of the Prophet ﷺ." So by studying the seerah, we also study the stories of Abu Bakr, Umar, Anas, Jabir (جابر), Sa'd ibn Mu'adh (سعد بن معاذ), Talha (طلحة), Zubayr (زبير), et al., and our Iman goes up by listening to the lives of these legendary people, their sacrifices, struggles, perseverance, and patience. They are all role models for us. According to a weak athar¹⁰⁰, the Prophet ﷺ said, "My sahaba are like the stars. Whichever one you follow, you are going to be guided."

8. The seerah brings about knowledge with which we can defend the honor of our Prophet ﷺ. The honor of our Prophet ﷺ has always been attacked from day one. The Quraysh fabricated things against him, they said he was a madman [see Quran, 68:51], magician [38:4], poet [37:36], etc., because none of them could explain how the Quran came, and where did this 'unlettered shepherd' get the Quran from. So they invented all these preposterous claims. And it continues to this day. In our times, how many people say our Prophet ﷺ was a bloodthirsty terrorist, a womanizer, etc.? If we want to defend the honor of our Prophet ﷺ, how can we do so if we don't know his life and times, if we don't even know whether the accusations are true? And if they are partially true, how do we understand them properly? There is no way other than by studying the seerah. And this is why the early scholars of Islam (the sahaba, tabi'un, tabi' al-tabi'in) used to teach the seerah just like they would teach all of the other sciences. Ali ibn al-Husayn (علي بن الحسين), the great-grandson of the Prophet ﷺ, said, "We would teach our children maghazi (مغازي) (i.e.,

⁹⁹ Izzah (عزة) - honor / glory.

¹⁰⁰ Athar (أثر) - narration / tradition / report of the Companions.

the seerah) just like we would teach them the Quran." So the curriculum in early Islam was Quran + seerah. And we must all do the same with our children.

To summarize: The study of the seerah is the study of (i) the best, and (ii) the best, and (iii) the best, and (iv) the best:

1. It is the study of the life and times of the single **best** human to ever live. The Prophet ﷺ said, "I am the leader & the paragon of virtue of the children of Adam, and I am not saying this out of arrogance."
2. And the **best** time — the time of the sahaba.
3. And the **best** generation — the generation of the sahaba.
4. And the **best** place — Makkah and Madinah^[101].

So in every angle, it is the best of the best of the best of the best.

Therefore, studying the Prophet's ﷺ life and times is studying our religion. It is studying the rise of the phenomenon of our religion – how Allah brought about the revolution of Islam – how He brought about an entire change of mind – how Islam changed the world. By studying these 23 years of the life of the Prophet ﷺ (and yes, it is *only* 23 years from the beginning of his risala^[102] until his death), the miracle of the seerah will benefit us in each and every aspect.

Primary Sources Used for the Series

How do we know what happened 1400 years ago? Where do we get our stuff from? What are our sources?

1. The Quran. The number one source is the Quran. This is a source that is overlooked by many. But it was revealed during the seerah, so it caters to situations that arose during his life, and it references almost every single major event that happened during the life and even before the time of the Prophet ﷺ. It is the best source for many reasons:

(i) It is the Speech of Allah, so we cannot doubt it.

(ii) The eloquence is unparalleled, e.g., how beautifully Allah describes the Incidents of Badr (بدر) and Uhud (أحد).

(iii) It explains the ghayb^[103] — any historian will record the outward, but the Quran records the outward and inward, e.g., Quran [47:29], [3:153]; and also the ghayb, e.g., Quran [3:124], [48:1].

¹⁰¹ Makkah and Madinah are the holiest cities on earth. But who knew this and really cared about them until the Prophet ﷺ lived there? As for Madinah, it *became* holy in the life of the Prophet ﷺ, as he said, "I am making Madinah holy like Ibrahim made Makkah holy (by the permission of Allah)."

¹⁰² Risala (رسالة) - Message, i.e., prophethood.

¹⁰³ Ghayb (غيب) - [the] unseen.

However, of the 'issues' of the Quran is that (i) it is not chronological, and (ii) it does not mention reference. For example, Allah does not mention the word "Uhud" in the Quran, so we need to know that a portion of Surah Ali-Imran (سورة آل عمران) was revealed for Uhud. So the seerah and the Quran go hand in hand: You need the seerah to understand the Quran, and you need the Quran to understand the seerah.

2. The hadith. Every hadith is one snapshot of the seerah. There are lots of books of hadith, but the most famous ones are 6 of them, called Kutub al-Sittah (كتب السنة):

- (i) Sahih al-Bukhari (صحيح البخاري),
- (ii) Sahih Muslim (صحيح مسلم),
- (iii) Sunan Abi Dawud (سنن أبي داود),
- (iv) Jami' al-Tirmidhi (جامع الترمذي),
- (v) Sunan al-Nasa'i (سنن النسائي), and
- (vi) Sunan Ibn Majah (سنن ابن ماجه).

3. Books written specifically for seerah. The first people to begin writing books of seerah were the sons of the sahaba. So many stories were told from their fathers. Urwah ibn Zubayr ibn al-Awwam^[104] wrote one of the greatest accounts. Also the son of Uthman ibn Affan (عثمان بن عفان) whose name was Aban (أبان) (died in the year 105 of the Year of the Hijrah) — he also wrote a booklet on seerah. Then a great scholar came by the name of Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri (ابن شهاب الزهري) (d. 124 AH), and he wrote one of the earliest treatises of seerah. But unfortunately, none of these books is existent anymore. The reason is simply: when later books came, they absorbed the earlier treatises. Realize in those days there were no printing presses. If you wanted a book, you had to sit there and write it yourself cover to cover. So if you had to choose one book, you would choose the ones that are better compiled (i.e., the later ones).

We wish we had these early books, but unfortunately, we don't. But we do have books that were written in the very next generation which shows us that seerah was compiled even before hadith because of its importance.

And of course the greatest scholar of seerah is Ibn Ishaq (ابن إسحاق) (d. 150 AH) who authored the Seeratu Rasulillah^[105], a.k.a., Seerat Ibn Ishaq^[106]. His name is Muhammad ibn Ishaq (محمد بن إسحاق) and he was born in 85 AH. He lived in Madinah where the Prophet ﷺ lived and died. He grew up around the sahaba, their children and grandchildren, and he wrote everything he heard from them. He had a huge passion for seerah and began to compile events in chronological order unlike the earlier treatises. He compiled a very large book (around 10-15 volumes), and just to be on the safe side, he even traveled to other cities, e.g., Basra (الْبصرة) and Kufa (الكوفة), to discover the stories of Ibn Mas'ud and others.

¹⁰⁴ Urwah was one of the greatest tabi'un (تابعون) — his father, mother, grandmother, and brother, were all sahabi. But he was born after the death of the Prophet ﷺ, so he wasn't a sahabi. And his aunt was none other than Aisha RA. So he was one of the primary narrators of fiqh, hadith, tafsir (تفسير - exegesis), and seerah — because he had access to Aisha RA. He was her mahram (محرم).

¹⁰⁵ Seeratu Rasulillah (سيرة رسول الله) - Life of the Messenger of Allah.

¹⁰⁶ Seerat Ibn Ishaq (سيرة ابن إسحاق) - Seerah by Ibn Ishaq.

One of the best things about Ibn Ishaq is he compiled everything with isnad^[107]. Isnad is a uniquely Islamic phenomenon, it does not exist in any other religion or culture. Isnad tells us where the story comes from. In Islam, we always verify authenticity. We know every person in the chain: when he was born, when he died, how good was he of a Muslim, did he have a good memory, etc. And thus we can judge the isnad.

Then another student (or to be more precise, student of a student) called Ibn Hisham (عبد الملك بن هشام) (d. 218 AH) came along. His name was Abd al-Malik ibn Hisham (عبد الملك بن هشام), and he authored al-Seerat al-Nabawiyah^[108], a.k.a., Seerat Ibn Hisham^[109]. The average Muslim should be aware of these two sourcebooks of the seerah: Seerat Ibn Ishaq (primary) & Seerat Ibn Hisham (secondary). The difference between these two books is: Ibn Hisham realized Ibn Ishaq's volumes were too big, so he decided to summarize Seerat Ibn Ishaq. He did not add anything but rather subtracted. He deleted and made it into a book that is much more manageable, and now it is available in 4 volumes. Again, in those days, there was no printing press, so if you wanted a book, you had to write it cover to cover — this is one of the reasons why he reduced. Also, Ibn Ishaq was one of the first people to write a history of humanity — from Adam AS to Nuh to Ibrahim to Musa all the way to the Prophet ﷺ; so Ibn Hisham deleted this entire section of earlier history and other information about the life of the Prophet ﷺ, he deemed unnecessary. Over time, people began copying Ibn Hisham; and today, if you want to buy a copy of the book, you have to buy Seerat Ibn Hisham (سيرة ابن هشام), you won't find Seerat Ibn Ishaq anymore.

However, there was a very famous scholar by the name of Dr. Hamidullah (حميد الله) (d. 2002 CE) came along, he became one of the greatest scholars / researchers in Orientalism, and he discovered many manuscripts of Islam in various lands of Europe; and one of them was a partial copy of [Seerat] Ibn Ishaq — around ¼ of the entire book. He edited and published it, and when now we compare Ibn Ishaq to Ibn Hisham, we find that it is exactly as Ibn Hisham said — he simply cut off around half of the work of Ibn Ishaq. What did he cut off? Long poetry, the lineage of the Arabs, etc. So now when we read Ibn Hisham, we know for sure that we are reading something written just around 100 years after the death of the Prophet ﷺ, and this is amazing.

4. Books written about the characteristics of the Prophet ﷺ. In Arabic, this is called shama'il (شمائل). And the most famous is Shama'il of al-Tirmidhi. Shama'il is a genre of books that deals with the looks, the characteristics, the manners, the possessions, the houses, etc., of the Prophet ﷺ.

5. Books written about the miracles of the Prophet ﷺ. In Arabic, this is called dala'il (دلائل). The most famous is Dala'il al-Nubuwwah^[110] by al-Bayhaqi (البيهقي) — a massive encyclopedia with ~12 volumes.

6. Histories of the sahaba — by reading their histories we extract seerah.

¹⁰⁷ Isnad (إسناد) - chain of narrators.

¹⁰⁸ Al-Seerat al-Nabawiyah (السيرة النبوية) - the Life of the Prophet.

¹⁰⁹ Seerat Ibn Hisham (سيرة ابن هشام) - Seerah by Ibn Hisham.

¹¹⁰ Dala'il al-Nubuwwah (دلائل النبوة) - The Signs of Prophethood.

7. Histories of Makkah and Madinah — by reading the tarikhs we extract seerah.

So these are the primary sources of seerah.

(8) And to this, modern people have added sources that are not found in Muslim lands: a new genre of research in academia, Islamic studies in America and the Western world which deals with what the Romans and Persians say about the Prophet ﷺ and the Arabs / Muslims at the time.

Pre-Islamic Arabia: Early Arab's Genealogy

Now we begin talking about pre-Islamic Arabia. We begin by discussing who the Arabs were. This is a topic of genealogy, of ethnicity. Who are the Arabs the Prophet ﷺ appeared amongst? This is the topic that Ibn Ishaq himself begins with.

The scholars have divided Arabs into two broad categories:

1. **The Extinct Arabs** (al-Arab al-Ba'ida / العرب البائدة) — the earliest civilizations that lived in Arabia, pre-Islam by thousands of years. The Quran mentions some of their stories, e.g., Ad (عاد) [e.g., Quran, 89:6-14] and Thamud (ثمود) [e.g., Quran, 11:61-68]. They have nothing to do with the later Arabs. They are called Arabs simply because they lived in the lands that later became Arabia. And as far as we know, Thamud is the earliest humanity that flourished in the Arabian Peninsula around 3000 BCE — so around 5000 years ago. We have documented evidence of the Thamud flourishing 5000 years ago. And to this day, we have the remains of the palaces of the people of Saleh (صالح), which came after Thamud, in an area called al-Ula (العلان) in Saudi Arabia. Ibn Khaldun (ابن خلدون) mentions, "These people fled from the ancient city of Babel (بابل) and they made their way to Arabia." Then what happened to them? Each one of them has its own story: Some Allah destroyed, some civil war, some flood, migration, etc. — and eventually they all became extinct.

2. **The Remaining Arabs** (al-Arab al-Baqiya / العرب الباقية) — they are composed of two categories:

2a) **Qahtan** (قحطان) — he is considered to be the father of the Arabs. His son was named Ya'rab / Ya'rib (يعرب); and Ya'rab is where the term Arab (عرب) comes from. And it is said that Ya'rab ibn Qahtan (يعرب بن قحطان) was the first to speak Arabic — the Arabic language is traced back to him. Now who is Ya'rab and who is Qahtan? Amazingly, we do not know. Where did Qahtan descend from? The majority opinion says he descended from the son of Nuh AS called Sam. (Tangent: Legend has it Nuh AS had 3 sons: [i] Sam [سام] is one of the three, and he is the father of the Semites including the Jew race, the people who spoke Aramaic, Ibrahim AS, etc. And [ii] his brother Yafith [يافث] is the father of the Roman race, the Caucasians. And [iii] his brother Ham [حام] is the father of the Africans. The Bible says this; and there is a

da'if^[111] hadith in al-Tirmidhi that supports this, so Allahu a'lam^[112]). So this opinion says Qahtan and Ibrahim AS both come from Sam but there is no direct connection between them. Another opinion is that Qahtan is in fact the descendant of Ibrahim AS — this is a minority opinion. A third opinion is that Qahtan is in fact the descendant of Hud (هود) AS — but this is a very weak opinion. Allah knows best, but the majority position seems to be that Qahtan is *not* linked to Ibrahim AS except that they were both descendants of Sam. When did Qahtan live? Once again, we have no idea, but he lived *way* before the second category of the Remaining Arabs which is Adnan [see below] — we have to make this a point. Where did the Qahtanis live? They lived in the southern portion of Arabia; and they had a number of dynasties and kingdoms, e.g., the Kingdom of Saba' (مملكة سبأ), Himyarites (مملكة حمير), and Ghassanids (غساسنة). The Aws (الأوس) and the Khazraj (الخزرج) in Madinah were also Qahtanis. These are called the Original Arabs (al-Arab al-Ariba / العرب العاربة) because they invented / spoke Arabic.

2b) **Adnan** (عدنان) — he is the ancestor of the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ is Adnani, so we know a lot about Adnan. Who is Adnan? One of the descendants of Ismail^[113] AS. Now as we know, Ibrahim AS is originally from Ur (أور)^[114], then his son Ismail AS is left as a baby with his mother Hajar^[115] in Makkah in an area where Qahtanis don't normally inhabit — a barren land; and one of the tribes of Qahtan, Jurhum (جرهم), passes by, and Ismail AS marries into them^[116], and they begin speaking the language of the Qahtanis that is Arabic, and a few generations down, a luminary appears by the name of Adnan. So as we said, Adnan is one of the descendants of Ismail AS. Al-Tabari (الطبري) mentions 7 opinions^[117] about the lineage between Ismail and Adnan: one opinion says there are 7 generations between them; another opinion says 8, another says 9, another 10, and another 41; but at the end of the day, we do not know. And then from Adnan, the Arab tribes spring forth. All of the Adnani tribes, most famously Quraysh, go back to Adnan, who goes back to Ismail AS. The Adnani Arabs are called the Arabs Who Learned Arabic (al-Arab al-Musta'riba / العرب المستعربة). Why? Because Arabic was not their language — they learned it from al-Arab al-Ariba. There is no difference of opinion that the Prophet ﷺ is the 20th offspring of Adnan. Now, the Adnanis actually spoke better Arabic than the Original Arabs. Why? Because they settled in central Arabia — because it was geographically central, all of the other tribes, including the Original Arabs, went through and interacted with them, so they began to take the best of all the Arab cultures, and eventually, they became more eloquent and prestigious than the Original Arabs. And our Prophet ﷺ came from them.

We need to understand the tribes and lineage of the Arabs to fully understand the seerah of the Prophet ﷺ.

¹¹¹ Da'if (ضعيف) - weak.

¹¹² Allahu a'lam (الله أعلم) - God knows best.

¹¹³ Ismail (إسماعيل) - Ishmael.

¹¹⁴ An ancient city in Iraq.

¹¹⁵ Hajar (هاجر) - Hagar.

¹¹⁶ So his children are a mixture of Ibrahim's AS and the Qahtanis' blood.

¹¹⁷ See [episode 5](#).

004. Religious Status of the World Before Islam

Today, we will shed some light upon the religious status of the Arabs and the world before the coming of the Prophet ﷺ. We talk about this to appreciate the blessings the Prophet ﷺ came with. When we understand pre-Islam, we will appreciate Islam. When we understand Jahiliyyah^[118] and their idolatry, we will appreciate the blessing of the sending of the Prophet ﷺ.

Pre-Islamic Arabia: The Monotheism of Ibrahim & Ismail

We know every nation had a prophet. And one of the prophets of the Arabs was Ibrahim AS. And Ibrahim AS sanctioned many practices which remained for thousands of years until the coming of the Prophet ﷺ^[119]. These include:

1. To consider Makkah sacred — And as we know, we Muslims call Makkah "al-Haram (الحرام - the Sacred)," which comes from the same word as "haram (حرام - forbidden)." Makkah is called al-Haram because many things that are halal (permissible)^[120] outside the Haram are haram (forbidden)^[121] inside the Haram. For example, you are not allowed to hunt animals and you are not allowed to pull a leaf of a tree inside the Haram — you cannot 'touch' natural things. Allah says in the Quran:

وَمَنْ دَخَلَهُ كَانَ آمِنًا

"Whoever enters the Haram is safe" [3:97]. And this is a ruling we still apply in our shariah^[122]. Ibn Abbas said, "A person would see the murderer of his father doing tawaf (طواف), and he would not touch a hair on his head"—because Makkah is sacred.

2. Showing respect to the Ka'bah (كعبة).

3. Instituting the four Sacred Months (Dhu al-Qa'dah [ذو القعدة], Dhu al-Hijjah [ذو الحجة], Muharram [محرم], and Rajab [رجب]) — In these months, all hostility has to cease, and you are not allowed to engage in any warfare. Everybody must be at peace.

4. Hajj (حج) with all of its rites and rituals — doing tawaf, doing sa'i (سعي), the aspect of sacrificing animals around the Haram, the aspect of decorating animals that are assigned to be sacrificed, etc.

¹¹⁸ Jahiliyyah (جاهلية) - the Age of [Pre-Islamic] Ignorance.

¹¹⁹ Many non-Muslim researchers say these practices of Islam are taken from pagan culture. But this is all a matter of perspective. For the non-Muslims, they are not looking at the fact that these practices are coming from Ibrahim AS. So according to their perspective, they say the Prophet ﷺ adopted certain practices from paganism and then added his own two cents. But we say no, he ﷺ adhered to the original monotheism of Ibrahim AS, and he cleansed away the paganism.

¹²⁰ Halal (حلال) - permissible.

¹²¹ Haram (حرام) - forbidden / sacred.

¹²² Shariah (شريعة) - Islamic law.

Pre-Islamic Arabia: History of the Introduction of Paganism

Now if the Arabs had a prophet who was Ibrahim AS and he taught tawhid^[123], then where did paganism come from? The Prophet ﷺ told us when and where and how it began. Sahih Muslim: The Prophet ﷺ said, "I saw Amr ibn Luhay al-Khuza'i (عمرو بن لحي الخزاعي) wandering around in the Fire of Hell with his entrails cut open behind him"—being punished in a humiliating manner. Why? Because he was the first to change the religion of Ismail. He was the first to introduce superstitions. Allah says in the Quran:

مَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ بَحِيرَةٍ وَلَا سَائِبَةٍ وَلَا وَصِيلَةٍ وَلَا حَامٍ

"It was not Allah who instituted (superstitions like those of) a slit-ear she-camel or a she-camel let loose for free pasture or idol sacrifices for twin-births in animals or stallion-camels freed from work" [5:103].

Amr ibn Luhay is the one who began these superstitions.

It is narrated that Amr ibn Luhay traveled to Syria where the Amaliq^[124] reside — a tribe of tall people. He found them to be a powerful civilization that worships idols. He asked them, "What are these idols you worship?" They told him, "These are our sources of power — when we are in a drought, when we are in hunger, when enemy attacks, we pray to these idols and miracles happen." Amr said, "Can you gift me one of these?" And they gave him an idol by the name of Hubal (هبل). So this became the first idol of the Arabian Peninsula and also became the main idol of the Quraysh^[125]. Amr was the one who brought this idol back and put it in front of the Ka'bah, and this was how paganism started in Arabia.

Amr ibn Luhay also changed the talbiyah (تلبية) for hajj. The original talbiyah is, "Labbayk'Allahumma labbayk! Labbayka laa shareeka laka labbayk! (لبيك اللهم لبيك، لبيك لا شريك) - Here I am, O Allah, Here I am! Here I am, You have no partner, Here I am!" But Amr ibn Luhay changed it to, "Labbayk'Allahumma labbayk. Labbayka laa shareeka lak illaa shareekan huwa lak tamlikuhu wa maa malak (لبيك اللهم لبيك، لبيك لا شريك لك إلا شريكاً هو لك، تملكه وما ملك) - Here I am, O Allah, Here I am. Here I am, You have no partner except for a partner who belongs to You, and You control the partner and all that he controls)," which basically says, "You have partners, O Allah. But You are the big boss"—just like ancient Greek that has a main god and minor gods. Amr ibn Luhay invented this new talbiyah^[126] and thus new religion.

¹²³ Tawhid (توحيد) - monotheism.

¹²⁴ Amaliq (عماليق) - Amalekites.

¹²⁵ Tangent: This is why hundreds of years later, in the Battle of Uhud (غزوة أحد), when Abu Sufyan (أبو سفيان) thought his pagan army had won against the Muslims, he shouted, "Ulu Hubal (أعل هبل - Hubal has won)!" He mentions the very idol Amr first brought. [See [episode 49](#).] And the Prophet ﷺ said to Umar RA, "Respond back to him (Abu Sufyan)." Umar asked, "How do I respond back?" The Prophet ﷺ: "[Say to him] Allah is our Protector and you have no protector!"

¹²⁶ However, it's worth noting that according to some, it wasn't him who invented this new talbiyah, but rather, some people a few generations after.

When did Amr ibn Luhay live? Unfortunately, we can never know precisely, because the Arabs had no real measure of dates. They did not record in dates, but rather, in occasion, e.g., Am al-Fil^[127]. They did not have a calendar (nor did they import the Roman / Persian / Jewish calendars) until Umar RA began the Islamic calendar, so they used to demarcate dates by marking big events, e.g., "the Year of the Elephant," "2 Years Before the Big Battle," "3 Years After the Elephant Attack." So obviously, when it comes to translating when Amr ibn Luhay al-Khuza'i lived, it is impossible for us to fully comprehend. But we know Amr belonged to the generation around the same time as Fihir (فهر) —the founder of Quraysh— so we can roughly estimate he must have lived around the 1st century of the Christian Era, so ~500 years before the coming of the Prophet ﷺ. So over 500 years paganism spread.

The question now is how can one man single-handedly change the entire religion of their forefathers Ibrahim AS and Ismail AS?

Three factors:

1. Inferiority complex Amr had towards the advanced Amalekites — these people were a powerful civilization who had history, writing, architecture, large buildings, and were known to be undefeated. So Amr ibn Luhay felt a complex and assumed that Amalekites must be correct in everything. He was so astounded he assumed surely the Amalekites must be upon guidance. So he took from them their theology.^[128]

2. Amr ibn Luhay was very influential among his people — he was the chieftain of Khuza'a (خزاعة). He was one of the most respected: he had a lot of power, was a generous man, won lots of different battles — so the people followed him as he was prestigious and had high credentials. And the Khuza'a was in charge of Makkah for a certain period of time, so that's when the idolatry spread.

3. There must have been at least 2000 years between Amr ibn Luhay and Ibrahim AS — so there was a long time when there was no guidance. Thus ignorance prevailed.

And there are even narrations that say shaytan inspired Amr ibn Luhay through a dream with the names of the very first idols — the name of the five idols from the time of Nuh AS as mentioned in the Quran: Wadd (ودد), Suwa' (سواع), Yaghuth (يغوث), Ya'uq (يعوق), and Nasr (نسر) [see Quran, 71:23]. And in a hadith, Ibn Abbas mentions the story of these five righteous men before the time of Nuh AS, who when they died, people built their statues to remind them of their piety. But as generations passed, instead of just looking at the statues, people began venerating and worshiping them. Shaytan used the righteousness of these five men as the stepping stone to idolatry. And it is said that thousands of years later, shaytan then inspired Amr ibn Luhay to resurrect these five idols — and so Amr resurrected them. And indeed, they were worshiped in pre-Islamic Arabia even though their names were forgotten for millennia. One tribe had the Wadd statue, another had Suwa', and so on.

¹²⁷ Am al-Fil (عام الفيل) - Year of the Elephant.

¹²⁸ So we should take from this a lesson: simply because a nation is powerful and has technology, it does not mean they have the correct morality or the correct ethics or the correct theology.

Pre-Islamic Arabia: Various Paganistic Practices

1. We learn that in jahili^[129] times, whenever a caravan left Makkah, they would chip away a rock from the Ka'bah and take it as the equivalent of an idol, and they would worship it.^[130]

2. A sahabi mentioned, "Before Islam came, we worshiped rocks and stones, and if we found a rock that looked more beautiful than the one we were worshiping, we would throw the old one away and put the new one in its place. And if we were traveling in the desert and we couldn't find a rock, we would gather sand, put it into a pile, bring a goat, squeeze some milk out of it to make the sand firm, and then we do tawaf around that sand."^[131]

3. One of the most disgusting stories is that of Na'ila (نائلة) and Isaf (إساف). They were two idols — Na'ila was put on Safa (صفا) and Isaf on Marwa (مروة). And before Islam, the Quraysh would touch Na'ila and Isaf when they went back and forth doing sa'i. So when Islam came, the Muslims felt hesitant, "How can we do sa'i when it is meant to commemorate Na'ila and Isaf?" So Allah revealed in the Quran, "Safa and Marwa are from the signs of Allah" [see Quran, 2:158] even before Na'ila and Isaf ever came — meaning don't feel guilty, as Na'ila and Isaf have nothing to do with the holiness of Safa and Marwa. And Aisha RA says, "Since we were children, we were hearing the story of Na'ila and Isaf." The books of history say they were two lovers, and they could not find a place to be intimate except the interior of the Ka'bah, so they consummated their romance inside the Ka'bah. And as a punishment, Allah petrified them right then and there. But when the Quraysh found them, they took them as a miracle, and they put them on Safa and Marwa.

4. When the Prophet ﷺ conquered Makkah^[132], there were around 360 idols of various shapes and sizes around the Ka'bah. Some in the shape of full humans, some in the shape of animals, and most in the shape of half-human half-animal just like in children's fairy tales, i.e., humanoids.

5. The Quraysh had the theology that Allah had daughters who were His angels. So they worshiped the angels thinking they were the daughters of Allah.

¹²⁹ Jahili (جاهلي) - of or relating to Jahiliyyah. Pre-Islamic.

¹³⁰ Note: As Muslims, we do not consider the bricks of Ka'bah to be sacred and holy. The location is holy, but not the bricks of the Ka'bah itself, not the building itself. A lot of people don't know this, but Ka'bah is rebuilt every few decades just like any structure. The current Ka'bah is only 10 years old. There is nothing holy about the Ka'bah. It is the area and the land of Makkah that is sacred. But the people before the time of the Prophet ﷺ did not realize this, so they let paganism seep in.

¹³¹ It is mind-boggling that intelligent people would do this. But sadly, even to this day, in some Muslim countries, we see people bow to graves and do tawaf around it — and some do the same with saints & mausoleums.

¹³² See [episode 79](#).

6. The Arabs did not have a creed — paganistic societies don't have creeds, unlike us Muslims that have Arkan al-Iman^[133]. (Side note: Hindus are the clearest example of the idolatrous religion; they don't have a unified creed, no aqida^[134]. One Hindu can worship one god and another worship another god, and you can have 6 million Hindus worshipping 6 million different gods, and each one has a different perception of what his god can or cannot do.) The same goes for the Arabs; there was no unified creed — many believed some things that others didn't. But they all agreed upon the fact that they needed to worship idols to come closer to Allah.

Pre-Islamic Arabia: The Hunafa'

History records that there are some exceptions to this paganism. The books of seerah mention there were a handful of people that were hanif (حنيف) (plural: hunafa' [حنفاء]) which means "turning away from." They are called the hunafa' because they turned away from shirk^[135] to Allah. One hunafa' was Quss ibn Sa'ida (قس بن ساعدة) from Banu Iyad (إياد), an old man around the age of 80-90 when the Prophet ﷺ saw him as a young man in his 20s. Quss would come to Makkah for the hajj and he was preaching against idolatry. And he was one of the most eloquent of poets — it is said that his language resembled the language of the Quran. E.g.:

يا أيها الناس، اسمعوا وعوا، وإذا سمعتم شيئاً فانفجوا، إنه من عاش مات، ومن مات فات، وكل ما هو آت

"O people! Listen to me and understand! And when you hear, then benefit! Because whoever lives, of a surety will die! And whoever dies, has finished! And everything that Allah has decreed, will indeed come about!"

And he has:

يا معشر إياد، أين ثمود وعاد، وأين الأبياء والأجداد، أين المعروف الذي لم يشكر، والظلم الذي لم ينكر، أقسم قس بالله إن لله
لدينا أرضى من دينكم هذا

"O people of Iyad! Where is Thamud, and where is Ad? Where are your fathers, and where are your grandfathers? And who will reward the one who does good but is never rewarded? And who will punish the one who does injustice but is never punished? I swear by Allah that there must be a religion better than the religion you are upon!"

It is said that 40 years later, in the 9th year of Hijrah, when Banu Iyad came to accept Islam, the Prophet ﷺ asked the tribesmen, "Where is Quss ibn Sa'ida?" But they said he died a long time ago. The Prophet ﷺ said, "I remember him on a red camel and he had a mesmerizing speech. Can anybody amongst you remind me of it?" So they related what we know (above), and the Prophet ﷺ liked what Quss had said. This shows there were some remnants of tawhid even in pre-Islamic Arabia.

¹³³ Arkan al-Iman (أركان الإيمان) - Pillars of Faith.

¹³⁴ Aqida (عقيدة) - creed.

¹³⁵ Shirk (شرك) - polytheism / idolatry.

The most important hunafa' were the following four. Ibn Hisham narrates a very beautiful story: Before the coming of the Prophet ﷺ, the Quraysh held a huge festival outside of Makkah and they exalted the idols, did tawaf around them, etc. When the entire city of Makkah left for the festival, four people found themselves remaining behind. And they realized they were on the same wavelength — upon tawhid. So they befriended each other. They were:

1. Waraqa ibn Nawfal ibn Asad (ورقة بن نوفل بن أسد)

- We know that Khuwaylid (خويلد) the father of Khadija (خديجة) was also ibn Asad. So Waraqa and Khadija were cousins. But Waraqa was ~40 years older.

2. Ubaydillah ibn Jahsh (عبيد الله بن جحش)

- This is the cousin of the Prophet ﷺ through his father. Ubaydillah's mother is the Prophet's ﷺ aunt. Aunt meaning Abdul Muttalib's (عبد المطلب) daughter.

3. Uthman ibn al-Huwayrith (عثمان بن الحويرث)

4. Zayd ibn Amr ibn Nufayl (زيد بن عمرو بن نفيل)

- The first cousin of Umar ibn al-Khattab ibn Nufayl (but again, Zayd is ~40 years older)

So they befriended each other and said, "We all know that our people are upon misguidance; they had left the pure religion of Ibrahim AS. Are we going to do tawaf around a stone that can neither benefit us nor harm us? Let us search for the original religion of Ibrahim AS: The hanifiyah (حنيفية)^[136]." Then they all split up and left Makkah in search of the Truth.

As for **Waraqa ibn Nawfal**, he eventually chose Christianity and rejected the religion of the Quraysh. He was an old blind man in his 80s when the Prophet ﷺ heard Iqra (اقرأ) (i.e., when the Prophet ﷺ received the first revelation). Everyone knew he was a learned scholar who reads and writes, and he spoke Hebrew and Aramaic. So when Iqra came, Khadija RA (the wife of the Prophet ﷺ) said to the Prophet ﷺ, "Let us go to Waraqa." And Waraqa recognized the revelation that the Prophet ﷺ had received (Islam) to be the religion that the Christians were waiting for. And indeed, Waraqa was the first male convert to Islam. Even before the Prophet ﷺ realized he was a prophet and was wondering what was that entity that came to him, Waraqa knew straight away and said, "This is the same entity who came to Musa and Isa. This is the Namus^[137], Jibril!" And he said, "How I wish I were a young man now so that I can support you when your people persecute you and expel you!" The Prophet ﷺ was shocked, "My people will expel me?" Waraqa said, "Yes! Never has any prophet come with the Truth except that his own people opposed him." And just a little while after this event, Waraqa passed away.

¹³⁶ The Arabs knew that Ibrahim AS was a hanif.

¹³⁷ Namus (ناموس) - the Secret Companion.

Ubaydillah ibn Jahsh has the saddest story. He initially converted to Christianity, and when the Prophet ﷺ preached Islam, he converted to Islam, he married Ummi Habiba (أم حبيبة) and migrated to Abyssinia, but when in Abyssinia, he became a *murtad*^[138] — he reverted back to Christianity, and that's when Ummi Habiba left him. He died shortly after; and then as we know, Ummi Habiba married the Prophet ﷺ.

Uthman ibn al-Huwayrith too accepted Christianity, and he remained this until he died. We don't know if he heard the Message of the Prophet ﷺ, because he left Makkah before the birth of the Prophet ﷺ (or when the Prophet ﷺ was a little child), never to return. He traveled to Rome and became an interpreter for Rome.

Zayd ibn Amr ibn Nufayl did not convert to Christianity or Judaism. It is narrated that he told both the rabbis and priests, "This is not the religion of Ibrahim and you know it." So he returned back to Makkah and told his people once he had become mature and respected, "O people of Quraysh! There is no one left upon the religion of Ibrahim in this whole city other than me!" Asma bint Abi Bakr (أسماء بنت أبي بكر)^[139] said she remembers as a young child seeing Zayd ibn Amr rebuking the Quraysh for worshiping idols, for giving meat to the idols, and for trying to bury their daughters alive. In fact, when any Qureshi wanted to kill their daughter, Zayd ibn Amr would say, "Give her over to me, I will take care of her and I will bring her up. She will become my daughter"—so he would adopt all of the daughters that the Quraysh wanted to kill. This shows us his generosity and kind heart. And he refused to participate in any of their idolatry. It is authentically mentioned that the Prophet ﷺ met Zayd ibn Amr when the Prophet ﷺ was young, and he asked, "What is the matter between you and your people? Why is there animosity?"^[140] Zayd ibn Amr said, "I cannot worship idols." And the Prophet ﷺ himself never worshiped an idol ever, so he found a kindred spirit with Zayd ibn Amr. Zayd ibn Amr continued upon his tawhid religion and died five years before the Prophet ﷺ began preaching Islam. Once, his son, Sa'id ibn Zayd (سعيد بن زيد), who was a *sahabi* and one of the *Ashara Mubasharun*^[141], asked the Prophet ﷺ, "O Messenger of Allah, you know my father, and you remember what he was upon. What will be his fate in the *akhira*?" The Prophet ﷺ said, "He will be resurrected on the Day of Judgment as his own *ummah*"—he was a one-man *ummah*. And when the Prophet ﷺ went back from *al-Isra' wal-Mi'raj*^[142], he said to Sa'id, "I saw your father in *Jannah*. And Allah had blessed him with not one, but two *Gardens*!" So this shows that even before the coming of Islam, people managed to enter *Jannah*, because their *fitrah*^[143] rejected paganism and idolatry. And Zayd ibn Amr ibn Nufayl is a one-man *ummah*; the only *ummah* without any prophet.

¹³⁸ *Murtad* (مرتد) - apostate.

¹³⁹ The older sister of Aisha RA.

¹⁴⁰ This shows us that our Prophet ﷺ even as a young man had an inquisitive mind.

¹⁴¹ *Ashara Mubasharun* (العشرة المبشرون) - The Ten Who Received the Glad Tidings [of *Jannah*] / The Ten Who Were Promised [*Jannah*].

¹⁴² See episodes 21-23.

¹⁴³ *Fitrah* (فطرة) - natural disposition.

Religious Status of the Romans and the Sassanids

The Romans were upon Christianity, and the Persians / Sassanids were upon Zoroastrianism (Ahura Mazda, Ahriman, etc. — a type of pagan religion).

Christianity — To make a long story short, after Allah raised Isa AS, there were three major strands of Christianity:

1. Gnosticism — a mystical understanding of the religion.

2. Jewish Christians — they believe that they are Jews and they have to follow the law of Musa AS. They have a halakha (i.e., the equivalent of "shariah" in Islam): they eat kosher, they circumcise, etc. And they believe that Jesus was sent to the Jews, and that he was the Promised Messiah, i.e., exactly as we Muslims believe.

3. Pauline Christians — Paul, who was not even a disciple but claimed to see Jesus AS in his vision, began a whole new theology. He taught that Jesus has elements of divinity, that he is not just a man, and that he came to replace the law of Musa AS, that if you believe in Jesus, you don't have to follow any "shariah." And he began some elements of Trinity.

For 300 years, Christians debated over what is the meaning of Christianity — who is Jesus: is he a God, is he a son of God, is he a prophet, etc.

Before Christianity, the Romans were pagans, and they were the worst enemies of the Christians. Stories have it they would find Christians and throw them to the lion pits, Emperor Nero would burn Christians alive, making the whole city of Rome burn alight by Christians' bodies, etc. So for 200-300 years, Christians were martyrs, until a miracle happened, that is the Emperor of Rome converted to Christianity — and this was quite a shock^[144]. Constantine was the first Roman emperor to convert to Christianity. Then he convened a whole council with the Christians to figure out what Christianity is — and he was a pagan from before, so he wanted some paganistic elements in Christianity, so he invented 25th December, halos, Trinity, son of God, etc., and in 325 CE, he decreed that official Christianity is Pauline Trinitarian Christianity; and all the Unitarians / Jewish Christians were persecuted and killed. So Pauline Christianity became the standard, and from it we get the Orthodox, the Catholic, the Protestant, etc., i.e., 99.9% of the Christians today.

By the time the Prophet ﷺ was born (570 CE), there were only a handful of remnants of the Jewish Christians left, e.g., the teachers of Salman al-Farisi:

¹⁴⁴ The equivalent in our time would be: "The President of the US converted to Islam!"

Remnants of the Real Christians: The Story of Salman al-Farisi

Salman al-Farisi (سلمان الفارسي) was the son of a priest in Persia. His father was the one who kept the fire lit^[145], and he taught him how to keep the fire going.

Salman al-Farisi told us his story from his own lips^[146]. He said: "I come from Isfahan (أصفهان), from a place called Jai (جي), and I was the most beloved son of my father, who was a figure of high esteem among his people. We used to worship fire. I devoted myself to fire worship until I became custodian of the fire which we lit and never allowed to be extinguished. My father had an estate. And one day, he sent me there. I passed by a church and heard Christians praying. And I went in and saw what they were doing. And I was impressed by what I saw in their prayers. I said, 'This is better than our religion.' And I did not leave them until sunset, and I completely forgot about my father's estate, nor did I return to my father until he sent people to search for me. I asked the Christians about their affair and prayers which impressed me, and about the origin of their religion. They answered, 'In Syria.' I said to my father when I returned to him, 'I passed by people praying in a church, and I was impressed by their prayer, and I could see that their religion is better than ours.' And my father questioned me and I questioned him, and then he put fetters on my feet and locked me up. Then I sent word to the Christians saying I had entered their religion, and I requested that whenever a caravan came from Syria, they should tell me before its return in order for me to travel with the caravan, and so they did. I broke loose from the iron fetters and went away. I set out with the caravan for Syria. And when I reached Syria, I asked the people there, 'Who is the best person in your religion?' They said, 'The bishop in the church.' So I went to him and told him my story. And I lived with him, serving, praying, and learning. But this bishop was a bad man — he would collect money from people claiming he would distribute it in charity, but he would keep it for himself and did not give it to the poor. When he died, I told his people the truth. And they asked, 'How do you know that? Show us where his treasure is.' So I showed them where it was and brought out seven chests filled with gold and silver. When they saw that, they said, 'By God, we will never bury him.' Then they crucified him and pelted him with stones. Then they brought another man and appointed a new bishop in his place. I have never seen a man better than him; he shunned this world and sought the hereafter and no one strove harder than him night and day in worship. I loved him as I had never loved anyone before, and I stayed with him for a while. Then when he was about to die, I said, 'O So-and-so, I was with you and I loved you as I had never loved anyone before, and now the decree of God is upon you. To whom would you recommend me? And to whom would you leave me?' He said, 'O my son, I do not know anyone who is on the path I am and who leads the kind of life I lead, except a certain man in Mawsil^[147].' When he died, I went to that man in Mawsil, and told him the story, and I stayed with him as long as God wished me to stay. Then death approached him. So I asked him, 'To whom would you advise me to go?' He directed me to a pious man in Nisibin^[148]. So I went to him

¹⁴⁵ Zoroastrians have to keep the fire lit 24/7, they are not allowed to cut it off — they believe the fire is eternal. E.g., even when they build a new temple, they have to import an ever-lit fire from another temple where the fire is already lit.

¹⁴⁶ See Musnad Imam Ahmad, [[Hadith 23.225](#)].

¹⁴⁷ Mawsil (موصل) - Mosul.

¹⁴⁸ Nisibin (نصيبين) - Nusaybin.

and told him my story. I stayed with him as long as God wished me to stay. When death overtook him, I asked him as before. And he told me to meet a person at Amuriah^[149] in Byzantium. So, to Byzantium I went and stayed with that man, earning my living there by rearing cattle and sheep. Then death approached him, and I asked him, 'To whom should I go?' He said, 'O my son, I do not know of anyone who follows our way to whom I can advise you to go. But there has come the time of a prophet, who will be sent with the pure religion of Ibrahim (Abraham). He will Migrate to the place of palm trees. If you can be sincere to him, then do so. He has three signs with which you will recognize: **(1) he does not eat of charity, (2) yet he accepts gifts, and (3) between his shoulders he has the Seal of the Prophethood.**' A caravan passed by me on that day. So I asked them where they had come from, and learned that they were from the Arabian Peninsula. So I told them, 'I give you these cattle and sheep of mine in return for your taking me to your land.' And they agreed. So they took me in their company until they brought me to Wadi al-Qura (وادي القرى), but there they wronged me — they sold me to a Jew as a slave. But I saw many palm trees and cherished the hope that it was the land that had been described to me which would be the future place of the advent of the prophet. But it was not. And I stayed with this Jew who bought me until another from Bani Qurayza (بنو قريظة) came to him one day and bought me from him. And I stayed with him until we came to Yathrib (يثرب) (later to be Madinah). By God, I had hardly seen it when I knew that it was the land described to me. And I stayed with the Jew, working for him on his plantation in Bani Qurayza until God sent His Prophet [صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم], who later Emigrated to Yathrib and dismounted at Quba (قباہ)^[150] among the Bani Amr ibn Awf (بنی عمرو بن عوف). Indeed, one day, I was at the top of a palm tree with my master sitting below it when a Jewish man came. He was a cousin of his and said to him, 'May God destroy Bani Qayla (بنی قیلہ)! They are spreading a rumor about a man at Quba who came from Makkah claiming to be a prophet.' By God, he had hardly said it when I was seized by a tremor, and the palm tree shook until I almost fell on my master. And I climbed down quickly saying, 'What are you saying? What news?' But my master gave me a nasty slap and said, 'What have you got to do with this? Return to your work!' So I returned to work. At nightfall, I gathered what I had and went out until I came to the Prophet [صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم] at Quba. I entered and found him sitting with some of his Companions. Then I said, 'I have heard that you are a righteous man and that you have Companions who are strangers and are in need. So this is something that I have to give in charity, and I see that you are more in need of it than anyone else.' And I put the food down. And the Prophet [صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم] said to his Companions, 'Eat,' but he refrained from eating. So I said to myself, 'This, by God, is one sign. He does not eat of charity!' Then I returned to meet the Prophet [صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم] again the next day, carrying some food, and said to him, 'I see that you do not partake of charity. So I have something which I want to give to you as a gift.' And I placed it before him. And he said to his Companions, 'Eat,' and he ate with them. So I said to myself, 'This indeed is the second sign. He eats of gifts.' Then I returned and stayed away for a while. Then I came to him, and I saw him sitting, having returned from a burial in Baqi' al-Gharqad (بقيع الغرقد), and surrounded by his Companions. And he had two garments, carrying one on his shoulder, and wearing the other. I greeted him, then bent to see the upper part of his back. And he knew what I was looking for, so he threw aside his garment off his shoulder and, behold, the sign between his shoulders, the Seal of the Prophethood, was clear just as the Christian monk had described. So at once, I staggered towards him, kissing him and weeping. And he called to me to come forward and I

¹⁴⁹ Amuriah (عمورية) - Amorium.

¹⁵⁰ See [episode 30](#).

sat before him. And I told him my story as you have heard me describe the events. And I became a Muslim. But slavery prevented me from taking part in the Battles of Badr and Uhud. Therefore, the Prophet ﷺ advised me, 'Go to terms with your master for him to free you,' and so I did^[151]. And the Prophet ﷺ told the Companions to assist me. And God freed me from bondage. And I became a free Muslim, taking part with the Prophet ﷺ in the Battle of al-Khandaq (غزوة الخندق) and others. And after that, I did not miss any major event with him."

Salman's story shows how few real Christians were left. The monk in Byzantium said, "I do not know of anyone who follows our way to whom I can advise you to go." This shows that the teachers of Salman were upon the version of Christianity that was not Pauline — as they had knowledge that's not found in the New Testament, i.e., the knowledge that's lost after Constantine burned all Christian books other than 4 that affirmed his belief.

Remnants of the Real Christians: Heraclius the Emperor of Byzantium

Another story in Bukhari shows how few real Christians were left, in the story of Emperor Heraclius. Unlike most politicians in the world, he was an intelligent and educated man. And he was trained in Christianity. When the Prophet ﷺ wrote a letter to the emperors (in the 8th and 9th year of the Hijrah), he wrote one to Heraclius as well^[152]. And the letter says:

من محمد بن عبد الله إلى هرقل عظيم الروم: سلام على من اتبع الهدى، أما بعد فإني أدعوك بدعوة الإسلام . أسلم تسلم
 .ويؤتلك الله أجره مرتين ، فإن توليت فإن عليك إثم الأريسيين
 قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ
 اللَّهِ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ

In the name of God, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

From Muhammad son of Abdullah to Heraclius the Leader of the Romans:

Peace be upon he who follows the guidance.

As to what follows: I invite you with the invitation of Islam. If you submit, then you will find safety, and God will double your reward. If you turn away, you will bear the Arians' sins.

"Say, [O Prophet,] 'O People of the Book! Let us come to common terms: that we will worship none but God, associate none with Him, nor take one another as lords instead of God.' But if they turn away, then say, 'Bear witness that we have submitted [to God alone]'" [Quran, 3:64].

Heraclius read the letter, and then he inquired of his advisors, "Are there any Arabs in town?" They said, "Yes, it just so happens a trading caravan from Makkah is in Jerusalem." So Heraclius ordered these Arabs to be brought to his palace. And lo and behold, it was none other than Abu Sufyan (who at the time was not a Muslim). And after a long

¹⁵¹ See [episode 57](#).

¹⁵² Or to be more precise, he wrote one to the governor of Bosra so that he would send it to Heraclius. But it so happened that Heraclius was visiting Jerusalem at the time, so he got the letter earlier (see [episode 71](#)).

conversation between them, Heraclius told Abu Sufyan at the end, "If what you tell me is true, then this is indeed the prophet that our scriptures have predicted." Pause here. There is no clear prediction in the current New Testament. So clearly, Heraclius must have had access to the hidden scriptures (much like the Vatican) and realized that, "This is indeed a true prophet of God." He said, "I knew he was coming, but it never occurred to me that he would be from the Arabs." Heraclius then wrote to his confidant who was a bishop who was on the same wavelength as him, and the bishop confirmed, "Yes, he (the Prophet ﷺ) meets all the signs."

Yet Heraclius did not accept Islam as he could not give up being the emperor of Byzantium. So he died upon his faith.

Conclusion

So in this dismal darkness, the Prophet ﷺ was sent. This is exactly what the Prophet ﷺ said:

ألا إن ربي أمرني أن أعلمكم ما جهلتم مما علمني يومي هذا
وإن الله تعالى نظر إلى أهل الأرض فمقتهم عربهم وعجمهم إلا بقايا من أهل الكتاب

"My Lord has commanded me to teach you that which you were ignorant of. And Allah looked at the whole world and He despised everyone, except for some remnants of the People of the Book" [Sahih Muslim].

We conclude by mentioning a few benefits from today's halaqa:

1. Guidance comes only from Allah. Not from our intellect or philosophy. The world did not have a prophet for hundreds of years until the coming of the Prophet ﷺ, and no intellectual / theologian could conceive of the Truth or guide mankind. Allah revealed the Quran and only then hidayah^[153] came — without Allah's guidance, there is no guidance. Why is this important? Because people of our time believe that guidance is the cumulative experience of what mankind has done, i.e., they say we have to keep modifying, keep adopting, and keep changing. But this is wrong. Our guidance is the Quran and sunnah^[154] — this is the ultimate guidance. We are not going to change the Quran and sunnah according to the whims of society. Even the Prophet ﷺ didn't know the Truth until it was revealed to him [see episode 10]; thus *no one* can know the Truth without Allah's guidance.

2. We really understand that most of mankind are like sheep — they follow whatever the leaders say. The Quraysh knew the religion they were upon was not the one of Ibrahim, but everyone was upon it so they just followed. Allah says in the Quran, "And most people will not believe—no matter how keen you are—" [Quran, 12:103]. And Allah says if you follow the majority of mankind, they will lead you astray. Indeed, the majority just want to follow their desires.

¹⁵³ Hidayah (هداية) - guidance.

¹⁵⁴ Sunnah (سنة) - Prophetic tradition.

3. The story of Salman al-Farisi and Zayd ibn Amr ibn Nufayl tells us: whoever is sincere will be guided. If there is sincerity, it doesn't matter if you are living in a pagan society; if your heart is pure, Allah will guide you to the Truth. Allah took Salman out of the depths of Jahiliyyah and brought him to the feet of the Prophet ﷺ.

005. Genealogy & Year of the Elephant

Insha'Allah ta'ala, today will be, as we said, a rehash of one of the first episodes of the seerah. And that is the genealogy of the Prophet ﷺ.

And we begin by talking about, really, the entire Arab race. Because this is how the books of seerah begin. Who exactly are the Arabs.

And there are many theories. And the fact of the matter is that there is nothing that is, quote-unquote, scientific. These are all legends that the Arabs have basically transferred down, generation to generation. And this is the standard narrative.

Genealogy of the Arabs

The standard narrative goes that: the Arabs can be divided into two broad categories.

1. The first of them are the **Extinct Arabs** (al-Arab al-Ba'ida / العرب البائدة). They are gone. The Extinct Arabs. And these are also called the Ancient Arabs. And these are the earliest civilizations known in the land of Arabia. The earliest human civilizations known. And the Quran mentioned some of them, such as Thamud and Ad. And there were other tribes as well.

And so these civilizations, they no longer exist, obviously. And their progeny, according to the majority and dominant opinion (and we will come to another opinion), has been completely exterminated; that Allah SWT basically exterminated all of them. And these civilizations flourished five to six thousand years ago, i.e., from the earliest dawn of the recorded civilization. And some of them were destroyed by Allah SWT, such as Ad and Thamud. And others were forced to evacuate or wiped out by war. So the point is these are called the Ancient Arabs, and they are simply in the textbooks of history.

2. The second group of Arabs are called the **Remaining Arabs** (al-Arab al-Baqiya / العرب الباقية); Those who remained. So we have the Extinct Arabs (the Ancient), then we have the Remaining Arabs (al-Arab al-Baqiya). And these Arabs are divided into two categories, okay? So these Arabs are divided into two categories:

2a) The first of these are: al-Arab al-Ariba (العرب العاربة), or if you want to be in English: the **Pure Arabs**. The Arabs who were pure Arabs.

2b) And the second: al-Arab al-Musta'riba (العرب المستعربة). The **Arabs Who Became Arab**; the Arabs who learned the Arabic language.

So far so clear?

So you have the Original Arab (al-Arab al-Ariba); then you have the Arabs Who Became Arab; the Arabs who took the Arabic language (al-Arab al-Musta'riba). And there are two figures that the legend says are the founders of each of these. These two figures are not brothers, obviously. They are two separate categories.

The first of them, al-Arab al-Ariba. They say they are (primarily they say), this is Qahtan. Or some say his son Ya'rub (يعرب). And from that, they say we get "Arab (عرب)." Ya'rub — those who were the descendants of Ya'rub, they became Arab. And they say Ya'rub was the first who spoke the beginning of Arabic. So they say Ya'rub spoke a language — they called it Ya'rab. And his, basically, people were called Arabi, from this person Ya'rub, the son of Qahtan.

And they are also called Qahtani Arabs (العرب القحطانية). So his father is Qahtan. So they say this is Qahtani Arabs.

And these Arabs primarily were found in southern parts of Arabia, such as the ancient Yemeni civilizations. The ancient civilizations of Yemen. Who was Qahtan? Qahtan was one of the descendants of Sam. Who is Sam? Sam is the son of Nuh. And from Sam, we get the English term Semite. Semite. So from Sam we get, "These people are Semites."

Now common legend. Biblical and even hadith^[155]. There is a hadith in Tirmidhi: Our Prophet ﷺ said, "Sam is the father of the Arabs. And Yafith is the father of the Romans. And Ham is the father of the Africans"—this hadith is in Tirmidhi.

And legend. Even the Bible has the exact same thing, that Nuh had basically... eventually there were three sons. And these three sons, from them all of the races came. Sam, Yafith, and Ham. And Sam is the father of the Semite people, Yafith is the father of the Romans, and Ham is the father of the Africans. And this is the standard Biblical narrative. And it is also the standard Islamic narrative as well. Of course modern science does not accept any of this because they have their own theories.

Having said that by the way, modern science does say that the Semite people have a certain gene — so there is some evidence. But obviously, modern science does not hold this to be true.

So Qahtan is one of the Semites. And of course, Ibrahim is also one of the Semites eventually. Ibrahim and Qahtan are both descendants of Sam. Qahtan and Ibrahim are not brothers or contemporaries — we don't know when Qahtan lived, but Qahtan's ancestor, Ibrahim's ancestor, are both Sam. And therefore both Ibrahim and Qahtan are Semites.

However of course, the lineage of Ibrahim, we consider more pure — our Prophet ﷺ came from that; in that sense, meaning the sense of Ibrahim AS.

Now some people say that this man, Qahtan, was actually one of the descendants of the Ancient Arabs (al-Arab al-Ba'ida). So he was not just a total stranger wandering in, but rather that some Ancient Arabs remained, and one of these people was Qahtan, and he

¹⁵⁵ There is a hadith that some scholars have said is authentic, some said is not authentic.

flourished at a time and a place we have no idea, anything really, about him other than southern Yemen basically, and that his children were called the Pure Arabs because his son is the founder, let's say, of the Arabic language, Ya'rub. So Ya'rub is the founder of the Arabic language.

Now as I said, we do not know when Qahtan flourished. By the way, Imam al-Tabari said that Sam has two different branches. One of them goes to Ibrahim, and another goes to Qahtan.

And other people say (other scholars say) that Qahtan is of the descendants of Hud AS. Hud. And of course Hud also is one of the ancient Arab al-Ariba. But the point is we do not know when he lived, and most likely Qahtan was predating Adnan by many centuries. Who is Adnan? That is the second category of Arabs — and these are the Arab al-Musta'riba (the Arabs Who Became Arab). Okay?

So once again, two large groups: the **Qahtani Arabs** (العرب القحطانية) and the **Adnani Arabs** (العرب العدنانية).

And all the Arabs are familiar with these two big branches. These are the two mother branches. The Qahtanis are those who lived in Arabia from the ancient times after the destruction of the first Arabs. Clear? Very ancient times. But not from the earliest of times — that is al-Arab al-Ba'ida.

So then who are the Arabasized Arabs (the Adnani Arabs)? These Arabs are of the descendants of Ismail. One of the descendants of Ismail (Allah knows how many generations down), his name was Adnan. And Adnan obviously... where does his lineage come from? It goes back to Ismail, the son of Ibrahim; and where was Ibrahim living? In Arabia? No. Where was Ibrahim living? Iraq and Sham. Iraq and Sham and Filastin now. Right? Ibrahim is from up there. So they say therefore, that these Arabs (Adnan basically) are Musta'riba — they acquired the Arabic language, because Ibrahim was not speaking Arabic, he was speaking ancient Semitic language which is the mother of Hebrew and Arabic — some language that is neither Arabic nor Hebrew, it is some ancient Semitic language. However, most likely it is closer to Hebrew than it is to Arabic. Most likely, this language that Ibrahim spoke is closer to ancient Hebrew than it is to Arabic.

So where did Arabic come from? The Qahtani Arabs. Okay? And so when the descendants of Ismail, basically, lived in the Arabian Peninsula, they obviously have to adopt and take in the Arabic language. Now obviously, human linguistics and knowledge tells us that they must have added to the language as well — every time a civilization comes, you also add to the language. So the Adnani Arabs — and who is Adnan? One descendant of Ismail. How many people between Adnan and Ismail? We will come to that, but very simplistically: we do not know. And Adnan is a direct ascendant of our Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم. So our Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم is an Adnani Arab. Not a Qahtani. He is an Adnani. He has to be Adnani because Adnan is of the sons of Ismail AS. And our Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم is the 20th grandchild of Adnan. So between our Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and Adnan is exactly 20 generations.

By the way, for the Arabs here: So Adnan, one of his great-great-great-great-grandchildren was Mudar (مضر). And his brother was Rabi'a (ربيعة). So Mudar and Rabi'a are the two main branches of Adnan.

Footnote here: There is an entire science of classical Islam, which is one of the rarest sciences alive to this day, and that is the science of ilm al-ansab (علم الأنساب). The science of lineage. That people literally memorize every one of these branches and trees and whatnot. And that is a science that the Arabs prided themselves on. And anybody who was knowledgeable of ansab was considered to be what we would consider a well-educated man — "He has read all the classics." In those days what are the classics? It's the ansab; it's the lineage and genealogy.

So our Prophet ﷺ is of the descendants of Adnan.

When did Adnan live? I did as much research that I could find here — there is a report from Ibn al-Kalbi (ابن الكلبي). And Ibn al-Kalbi is one of the greatest ulama of ansab (d. 240 AH). Very early scholar, and one of the founders of the history of writing genealogy. Classical alim like Ibn al-Hisham and Ishaq, there is also Ibn al-Kalbi. Ibn al-Kalbi said that Ma'ad (معد), the son of Adnan lived contemporaneously with Jesus Christ. So Adnan is one generation before Jesus Christ.

Now I calculated this out. Actually, it is very accurate. This seems very accurate. Why? Because typically 100 years exactly... 100 years exactly is how many generations typically? 2? 5? 3 years. Exactly. The year is 2015. Go back to 1915 in your own family. And who was flourishing at that time? Great-grandfather. Not grandfather. Great-grandfather. Think about it. Flourishing and being at the prime... where you are right now of your life. Where you are right now at your life, this is your great-grandfather... right? My own great-grandfather died 1918 by the way. Pretty much exact 1918 he passed away, and relatively young. He was in his 40s — and basically is exactly what I'm going to be in a few years as well. But insha'Allah I hope I don't die in a few years. But the age is pretty much the same insha'Allah ta'ala.

The point being that if you do the math, if you do the math, what was the time difference between Isa and our Prophet ﷺ? Quickly. Everybody should know. Five hundred and? Five hundred seventy. Because our Prophet ﷺ was born when? 570. So we have exactly 570. Divide 570 by 20 and you get around 31, 32... which is basically exactly right. How old are you when you have your son or daughter? In your early 30s typically, right? That is the time zone typically. The average, right? And therefore if you do the math, we can pretty accurately date when did Adnan lived — he lived 30 BC. Because his son, Ma'ad, was contemporaneous to Isa ibn Maryam (عيسى بن مريم). Clear?

So Adnan, the founder of the Adnani Arabs is roughly contemporaneous to... or pre Jesus Christ. And Qahtan, we have no idea. But probably a few hundred years before him — because Qahtan predates Adnan. How do we know this? Because Ismail marries into the Jurhumites (قبيلة جرهم) that is one of the branches of Qahtan. Clear? So the Qahtan has to predate Adnan.

Lineage of the Prophet ﷺ

So with this background, the lineage of our Prophet ﷺ is divided into 3 categories.

1. The first category, we know for sure, without a shadow of a doubt, without any difference of opinion, between him and Adnan. This is set in stone, everybody agrees. How many generations? 20. Set in stone, everybody knows, everybody agrees, memorized.

2. The second category is that: we can try to glean some knowledge from pre-Islamic sources, but we do not have anything concrete. And this is from Adnan to Ismail. From Adnan to Ismail. Now we cannot have any information from the Jewish and Christian sources about this period. Why? (From Adnan to Ismail.) Why?

Brother answers

Jesus... okay. How about the Biblical sources?

Brother answers

Wa inka... No. They... What?

Brother answers

It is not mentioned. Why is it not mentioned?

Brother answers

Exactly. They don't care about Ismail's lineage. The Bible does not mention at all Ismail's lineage.

By the way, the Bible mentions that there is going to be the sons of Kedar (Qedar). Kedar. And one of the descendants of Ismail, he is Kedar (Qaidar / قيدار). Right? The Bible mentions — go look it up... if I am not mistaken, it is in Genesis. Ismail is mentioned, and Allah says, 'I shall make a great nation out of him.' And it also mentioned the sons of Kedar (k. e. d. a. r.); and Qaidar is one of the sons of Ismail, and one of the ancestors of Adnan. So Qaidar is mentioned in the Bible. But that's about it.

So where do we get this information from? From Arabic folklore. And Arabic folklore has not been preserved that well. So al-Tabari for example, mentions 7 opinions about the lineage between Adnan and Ismail. And in one opinion, there is 7 people; in another, 8; in another, 9; in another, 10; in another, 41 people... between Adnan and Ismail. In the end of the day, we have no idea. It is a big question mark.

What are the names of the ancestors and how many ancestors between Adnan and Ismail? We have no idea whatsoever. Even though to be frank, 7 does not seem enough, because if you do the math, Ismail is not living just 200 years before Jesus Christ. 7

generations would be 300 years. That is not enough. And probably the 40, 41 seems closer to the truth. In any case, we do not know. So that's the case we have no knowledge about.

3. Then from Ismail to Adam, we have one source. What is that source? The lineage of Ismail to Adam. We have a source. What is our source? Where do we look up a lineage from Ismail to Adam? The Tawrah^[156]. The Old Testament. Can we rely on the Old Testament? No. So that's our only source of information.

And if you look at some of the charts printed in the Muslim world (and we find them in our houses), you find the lineage of Prophet ﷺ all the way to Adam. You must have seen this. It is also online and whatnot, right? This chart is half fact, half myth, and half fiction. Nah, that doesn't make sense. $\frac{1}{3}$, $\frac{1}{3}$, $\frac{1}{3}$, okay?

1. As for the fact, it is between Prophet ﷺ and Adnan — that's a fact.
2. From Adnan to Ismail — somewhat of a myth.
3. Then from Ismail to Adam — this, complete, we take it from the Jewish Christian sources. We don't have anything in our tradition about the lineage from Ismail and Ibrahim all the way back to the Prophet Adam AS.

And if you look at this chart and count the numbers, you will find exactly 55 generations between Adam and the Prophet ﷺ. And this fits in perfectly with the Jewish calendar of around 6,000 years, because the Orthodox Jews and the Fundamentalist Christians believe that we have been around for... how many years? 6,000 years. And this genealogy kinda sorta fits in perfectly to that narrative.

Of course this is highly problematic in light of modern science, in light of archaeology, in light of human remains, in light of cave paintings. I have gone into this tangent multiple times right here from this platform, I am not going to go into them again. But the fact of the matter is that we can carbon-14 date humanity pretty clearly for tens of thousands of years. We have paintings in France. We have aborigine structures going back thirty thousand years in the minimal. Thirty thousand years. This is like literally set in stone. Carved in stone. It's not a pun. We have carved-in stone images, we have a handprint of a famous cave that was uncovered in France — the artist left his handprint on there, and it was a cave that was basically blocked off and it was discovered a few years ago. Famous incident. There is a National Geographic documentary about this. He left his handprint over there. You can carbon-14 date... the cave was cut-off because there was an avalanche and it was sealed completely. Then it was discovered a few years ago. You go back, you see the remains of the fire, you see the remains of the painting, the carvings, the animal shown no longer exist in the world, right? So it's bizarre, amazing. This goes back 30,000 years. These are Homo sapiens, these are not some Neanderthals or some Cro-Magnon. These are Homo sapiens. Our. Us. Even the guy who was there literally put his hand there and he showed this is the same size as us. Everything.

The point being that: clearly, 6,000 years does not make sense from a scientific perspective. And I have said this before, I'm not going to go into it now in a lot of detail, but we as Muslims do not have to believe the 6,000-year timeline. Our tradition does not tell us

¹⁵⁶ Tawrah (توراة) - Torah.

to believe in 6,000-year timeline. We have no problem extrapolating back twenty, thirty thousand years, as long as science tells us. And if we were to do this, then we have to say that this lineage that is shown between Adnan and Ismail, and between Ismail and Adam, has to be wrong. Because there must be more people. Cannot just be this small lineage.

And there are evidences to this as well: Imam Malik ibn Anas (مالك بن أنس) was told about a human being in his time who could trace his lineage back to Adam AS. And Imam Malik said, "And how does he know? Who told him this lineage?"—he denied this. And he said that, "How about to Ismail?" And Imam Malik said, "Even this, I doubt." — How would somebody know his lineage back to Ismail AS? And there's also a hadith in it. Hadith regarding this in Mu'jam al-Kabir of al-Tabarani, which has some slightness in the chain, that the Prophet ﷺ heard somebody saying his lineage back to the Prophet Nuh. In which the Prophet ﷺ when he heard this lineage, he said, "Kadhaban nassabun" ("These people who are putting this lineage have lied" / "The genealogists have lied.") Then he recited the verse in the Quran. Surah al-Furqan [25:38] I believe:

وَقُرُونًا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ كَثِيرًا

And there were KATHIR, MANY generations between them. So it is as if... (now, the hadith is slightly weak. If we say it is authentic, for historical reasons, meaning when it comes to history, we can be a little bit lax and accept incidents. But it is not authentic as a saying of the Prophet ﷺ. But it makes sense to be honest.) Allah says in the Quran:

وَقُرُونًا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ كَثِيرًا

There were MANY generations between. And Allah is mentioning past generations, past nations. And Allah says there were many generations between them. If Allah is saying "many," in my humble opinion, this is not 10, 15, 20. For Allah to use the word "kathir," in my opinion, it does not make sense that this is just 7 people between Adnan and Ismail, or 10 people between. It seems to be a little bit more than this, right?

And this would fit in perfectly with modern science as well — that there were many many generations. And there are other evidences as well that indicate that 6,000 years does not make any sense whatsoever. Of them is the Prophet ﷺ saying:

بعثت انا والساعة كهاتين

That, "I and the Day of Judgment have been sent like these two fingers [index and middle fingers]"—meaning the difference between these two fingers is... how little? How little is the difference? "I and the Day of Judgment have been sent like these two fingers"—meaning, "The Day of Judgment is right after me," okay? So since the beginning of man until the Prophet ﷺ is this finger [index finger]; and then the beginning of man until the Day of Judgment is this finger [middle finger]. So how much is the difference? This little.

Okay. We are now in what year of the Hijrah, who can tell me?

People say something

People have opinions about which year we are in the Hijrah? 1437 now. 1437 now. Masha'Allah, our young brother is right — 1437. So one thousand four hundred thirty seven years have gone by and we are still not here (and we don't want to be alive when this year comes), right? So if this little amount is one thousand years, how about then the rest of the finger? Doesn't it kind of makes sense to stretch it back to more than just 6,000 years?

And there are other evidences as well. Of them is the hadith in the Sahih Muslim where Allah SWT created the children of Adam, and Adam was there and he saw a bright light amongst his children, and he was amazed by this light. And he said, "Who is this, O Allah?" And Allah said, "This is your son, Dawud^[157]." "This is your son, Dawud who shall live towards the End of Times." "Akhir al-Zaman^[158]." Now hold on a sec. Dawud is Akhir al-Zaman? What does that mean about us then? If Dawud who lived (maybe three four thousand years before us, right? Allah knows how many year. Or sorry, not 3, 4 thousand, but less than it. But still...) If Dawud is Akhir al-Zaman... where does that leave between him, Adam and Dawud? How many generations? If we were to go according to Biblical, or the 6,000-year period, Dawud would not be "akhir." Dawud would be a little bit after half, right? So for Allah to say, "This is your son, Dawud who will be fi Akhir al-Zaman"... ... So why am I saying this by the way? Because in my humble opinion, the evidences are very clear for me — but these are not Certain Evidences — they are not Qat'i^[159], they are Zanni^[160] — that the 6,000-year timeline is not Islamic. And this is one of those things that people bring doubts about Islam: "Look at your 6,000-year." You know. "You don't believe in evolution," for example whatnot. And I have given entire lectures about that. Not the time here to get into it, [but] we are not restricted to 6,000 years. We can extrapolate masha'Allah, tabarak'Allah, as long as science tells us to — because we don't have any time frame. And perhaps these evidences seem to suggest that there were plenty of generations between our Prophet ﷺ and Adam.

Tayyib^[161].

Lineage Between the Prophet ﷺ and Adnan

With that now let us get to the actual lineage of the Prophet ﷺ.

That our Prophet ﷺ is Muhammad ibn Abdilllah ibn Abdul Muttalib ibn Hashim ibn Abd Manaf ibn Qusayy ibn Kilab ibn Murrah ibn Ka'b ibn Lu'ayy ibn Ghalib ibn Fihri ibn Malik ibn al-Nadr ibn Kinana ibn Khuzaymah ibn Mudrikah ibn Ilyas ibn Mudar ibn Nizar ibn Ma'ad ibn Adnan.

¹⁵⁷ Dawud (داود) - David.

¹⁵⁸ Akhir al-Zaman (آخر الزمان) - End of Times.

¹⁵⁹ Qat'i (قطعي) - Certain / Definitive.

¹⁶⁰ Zanni (ظني) - Conjectural / Probable.

¹⁶¹ Tayyib (طيب) - alright / okay.

محمد بن عبد الله بن عبد المطلب بن هاشم بن عبد مناف بن قصي بن كلاب بن مرة بن كعب بن لؤي بن غالب بن فهر بن مالك بن النضر بن كنانة بن خزيمة بن مدركة بن إلياس بن مضر بن نزار بن معد بن عدنان

This is the exact 20, okay? That is his lineage as has been agreed upon — these are exact 20. And we do not have much information about all of these 20. However, we do have a little tidbits here and there about some of them, and in particular, our Prophet ﷺ mentioned some of them in his ancestry — this hadith is in Sahih Muslim. And so let's look at this hadith and then we definitely have to analyze the people that he mentioned; that our Prophet ﷺ said:

إن الله اصطفى كنانة من ولد إسماعيل

Allah chose Kinana from all of the descendants of Ismail.

واصطفى قريشا من كنانة

And He chose Quraysh from Kinana.

واصطفى من قريش بني هاشم

And He chose the Banu Hashim from Quraysh.

واصطفاني من بني هاشم

And He chose me from the Banu Hashim.

So believe that the lineage of our Prophet ﷺ is the best and the most noble lineage ever that nobody had a more noble lineage. And this was very important especially for the Arabs of his time. Because for them, everything depended upon? Lineage. Everything! His status, his nobility, any cause he was fighting for. Everything depended upon his lineage. So our Prophet ﷺ was chosen to be of the best lineage. And this is narrated by the sahaba themselves. When Ja'far ibn Abi Talib (جعفر بن أبي طالب) was speaking to the Najashi^[162], so what did he tell the Najashi? (And I have gone over this story before as well.) So, "Allah sent a Messenger to us. We knew his lineage (عرفنا نسبه)."

And when al-Mughira ibn Shu'ba (المغيرة بن شعبة) stood in front of Yazdegerd (the last emperor of Persia), what did he tell Yazdegerd, the last emperor? He told him:

فبعث الله إلينا رجلا معروفا نعرف نسبه ونعرف وجهه ومولده ، فأرضه خير أرضنا ، وحسبه خير أحسابنا ، وبيته خير بيوتنا ، وقبيلته خير قبائلنا ، وهو نفسه كان خيرنا

So in this hadith, he is basically saying, "Allah sent us a man. We know his lineage, and we know where he came from, and his land is the best of land, and his lineage is the best of lineage, and his house (meaning his immediate qabila^[163]) is the best house, and his tribe is the best tribe, and he himself is the best of us."

So our Prophet ﷺ has the best and the highest lineage.

¹⁶² Najashi (نجاشي) - Negus.

¹⁶³ Qabila (قبيلة) - tribe.

Concept of Sharaf: Nobility of Lineage

Now pause here for a quick second. One of my quick tangents here. There is a lot of misconception amongst our Muslim ummah about the concept of sharaf (شرف), of lineage, of nobility of lineage. And people really get confused and messed up because... I guess we have not done the job of explaining properly. "We" = the scholars and students of knowledge, have not done the job of explaining this properly enough.

Listen. Doesn't matter who your father was, Allah AWJ will not cause you to enter Jannah or Jahannam^[164] based upon your father. That's clear. Your lineage is irrelevant when you stand in front of Allah on the Day of Judgment. That much is clear.

لا فضل لعربي على عجمي ، ولا لعجمي على عربي ، ولا لأبيض على أسود ، ولا لأسود على أبيض - : إلا بالتقوى

There is no problem about this. But this does not mean that nasab^[165] and sharaf^[166] and hasab^[167] is irrelevant to a person stature in this world. Rather, the world universally acknowledges lineage as something to be acceptably proud of, if it is done within a reasonable amount. If it is taken to an extreme, then it becomes fakhar^[168] and it becomes haram. But there is nothing wrong with taking some amount of happiness in nobility, and status confers this nobility upon people. So even in America, which is one of the places where lineage has almost completely been destroyed. (Because America by and large is a land of immigrants, even unlike Europe where lineage still carry some weight.) Even in America, if your last name happens to be Kennedy or Rockefeller, you're going to go places. And doors will open up for you. Whether you like it or not, this is the reality of the world that we live in, right? It doesn't matter if you are the most ignorant uneducated person, if your last name is... The point being that it doesn't matter, you know. This is the reality of the world we live in — that parents, grandparents, tribes, they do establish some type of respectability and president. And there is nothing wrong with accepting this, as long as it doesn't become a racism or a mark of pride. And what did we expect Allah AWJ to choose our Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم EXCEPT the best lineage in the history of mankind; the best lineage in the history of mankind. And this goes back to the sharaf or the honor given to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم.

And that is why... (and this is a very controversial point that many Muslims balk at when they hear, but this is something that is very clear in the Sunni tradition at least)... that the tribe of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, Quraysh, has certain blessings. And the Ahl al-Bayt^[169] have certain privileges. We believe this as Sunnis, even though we say the Shia have gone to an extreme, we as Sunnis, confer privilege on the Ahl al-Bayt. Is that not the case? Even though we say, "The Ahl al-Bayt will not enter Jannah if they are not righteous"—a person who is not righteous of the children of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, that's not going to cause them to enter Jannah — but in THIS world, do we not respect them more? Do we not prevent zakat

¹⁶⁴ Jahannam (جهنم) - Hell.

¹⁶⁵ Nasab (نسب) - lineage / ancestry.

¹⁶⁶ Sharaf (شرف) - honor / nobility.

¹⁶⁷ Hasab (حسب) - status / rank / reputation / social standing.

¹⁶⁸ Fakhar (فخر) - [excessive] pride.

¹⁶⁹ Ahl al-Bayt (أهل البيت) - People of the House.

(زكاة)? (Because zakat is not appropriate for them. We don't give them zakat because zakat is not given to... it's... 'demeaning' to give zakat to the Ahl al-Bayt of the Prophet ﷺ, right?) And we have other ahkam^[170] as well.

So the righteous amongst them have a double reward, and a double respect. And the unrighteous amongst them, their lineage is not going to cause them to enter Jannah. So the Ahl al-Bayt... And the Quraysh as well, our Prophet ﷺ said:

الأئمة من قريش

"The leaders of my ummah should always be from the Quraysh." This is a hadith. And that is why for the bulk of this ummah, the Abbasid and the Umayyad and the bulk of the ummah, up until the 1500 CE, basically for, you know, one thousand something years, our khulafa were from the Quraysh.

Ya'ni (يعني) there are Khulafa al-Rashidun^[171], and Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr (عبد الله بن الزبير), and then the Umayyad, and then the Abbasid — they are all from the Quraysh. And majority of the Sunni world basically accepted this reality.

The point being that our Prophet ﷺ was from the best of all lineages.

Kinana

So he said that from the children of Ismail, Allah chose... who? Who? From the children of Ismail, Allah chose? Kinana.

Okay. Before we jump to Kinana, let us talk one sentence about Mudar. Mudar is one of the ancestors as well of the Prophet ﷺ. It is said that Mudar was the first of the Arabs to train camels, and to use them in a way that they can basically travel in caravans. And he would also have camel poetry. What is camel poetry? So it's like what you say to the camel to get it to go. So to train the camel to go faster and slower and to do... So it is said that Mudar was the first person to do that.

As for Kinana. Kinana — the name means that "the pouch that you put the arrows in" — this is what Kinana means. And that's not his actual name. He is called Kinana. Why was he called Kinana? Because he was known for his bravery, he was known as being a repository of ilm^[172], of wisdom, of knowledge. It is said in the books of history that people would do hajj in order to meet with Kinana. (Now, hajj is of course since the time of Ismail.) So Kinana. To meet Kinana became an honor. And people would have a double niyyah^[173] when doing hajj — that not just to come for the Makkah and the hajj, but to also meet Kinana — people would literally travel. Kinana lived a very long life and he was a repository of knowledge, of wisdom. And he has a certain sayings still recorded in classical Arabic, about

¹⁷⁰ Ahkam (أحكام) - rulings.

¹⁷¹ Khulafa al-Rashidun (الخلفاء الراشدون) - Rightly Guided Caliphs.

¹⁷² Ilm (علم) - knowledge.

¹⁷³ Niyyah (نية) - intention.

wisdoms and mathal (مثل - parables / statements of concise wisdom) — these are recorded from Kinana. So Kinana was a legendary Arab up until the time of the Prophet ﷺ .

Quraysh (قريش)

Then he said, "And from Kinana, He chose Quraysh."

From Kinana He chose Quraysh. Okay. I just quoted you the lineage of the Prophet ﷺ, there is no man called Quraysh in there. There is no man called Quraysh. Who is Quraysh? Lots of opinions. And it appears that there are 3 people who can be called Quraysh; and some scholars have said there is the Big Quraysh, the Middle Quraysh, and the Small Quraysh. Al-Quraysh al-Akbar (القريش الأكبر), al-Quraysh al-Awsat (القريش الأوسط), and al-Quraysh al-Asghar (القريش الأصغر).

So 3 people have this title. But 2 of them are the real contenders, and that is: #1 is Fihr. And #2 is al-Nadr. Fihr and al-Nadr. Going back to the lineage:

Muhammad ibn Abdillah ibn Abdul Muttalib ibn Hashim ibn Abd Manaf ibn Qusayy ibn Kilab ibn Murrah ibn Ka'b ibn Lu'ayy ibn Ghalib ibn FIHR

محمد بن عبد الله بن عبد المطلب بن هاشم بن عبد مناف بن قصي بن كلاب بن مرة بن كعب بن لؤي بن غالب بن فهر

So number? Number? 12.

Ibn Malik ibn AL-NADR

بن مالك بن النضر

Or number? 14.

So either 12 or 14. One of these two is Quraysh. One of these two is Quraysh. And they say that al-Nadr is the Big Quraysh, and Fihr is the Middle Quraysh. And Qusayy, who is 5 generations, is the Minor Quraysh. So 3 people had a founding role in the tribe of Quraysh. But the actual tribes of Quraysh, all of them combined at Fihr. And Fihr is the? 12th. 12th.

So the stronger opinion: The one person who combines all the tribes of Quraysh... and one simple fact here: The Ten Who Were Promised Jannah were all Qureshi. They were all Qureshi. Who is the one ancestor, the closest ancestor? It's Fihr. The 10 people who were promised Jannah, Ashara Mubasharun, if you go back to their lineage, you keep on going going going, it's actually Fihr where they all combine. So the 10 people combined at Fihr. So therefore it seems to be Fihr is the person who is Quraysh. And all of the tribes of Quraysh, how many tribes of Quraysh were there at the time of the Prophet ﷺ? Probably around 12 or 13 subtribes. So you have the Banu Hashim (بنو هاشم), the Banu Zuhrah (بنو زهرة), the Banu Makhzum (بنو مخزوم) — all of these tribes, we kinda talked about here and there... the Banu

Umayya (بنو أمية), the Banu Abd Shams (بنو عبد شمس) — these types — they are basically around 12 or so tribes, and they all go back to Fihir.

So "quraysh," what does it mean therefore? This is a laqab^[174]. A title. Not a name. What does quraysh mean? A number of opinions once again:

1. One opinion is that quraysh comes from the term "to trade." Because the Quraysh were involved in trading.

2. Another opinion is that quraysh, yaqrishu comes from "gathering together." Because the Quraysh were in different areas and one of their ancestors combined them in Makkah (we will come to the story very briefly).

3. And the third opinion, which is narrated in al-Tabari, is that quraysh comes from "conquering." Because there is a story, a long story, where one of the Quraysh basically "conquered"... or... you know, long story. And then they say this is why he is called Quraysh — that Quraysh will conquer other tribes.

Whatever the meaning is, this was the laqab that stuck with Fihir. And so the descendants of Fihir are called Qureshi. And therefore all of the tribes of Quraysh go back to Fihir who is a 12th ancestors back from the Prophet ﷺ.

The Immediate Ancestors of the Prophet ﷺ

So now let us begin very quickly about the immediate ancestors of the Prophet ﷺ, whom we know a little bit more about. Beginning with Qusayy, and then Abd Manaf, and then Hashim, and then Abdul Muttalib. That will be our rest of the halaqa (حلقة) for today. What we know about these people.

Qusayy. How many generations? I want everybody to memorize at least up to Qusayy. At least up to Qusayy. So come with me. Come with me.

#1? Muhammad ibn?
Abdillah, ibn?
Abdul Muttalib, ibn?
Hashim, ibn?
Abd Manaf, ibn?
Qusayy.

Okay? Memorize this. At least this much. Everybody should know, okay?

¹⁷⁴ Laqab (لقب) - title / nickname.

Qusayy

So Qusayy is the STAR of the Quraysh. That's why he is called the Minor Quraysh. He really started the immediate ascent of the Quraysh, so that when the Prophet ﷺ came, the Quraysh are at the pinnacle of their power, okay? So Qusayy is the one who BEGAN. And then 5 generations later, the Prophet ﷺ comes and of course he then takes it to an international level.

So what did Qusayy do? And when did he live? Qusayy lived around 400 CE. Around 400 CE., i.e., 170 years before the birth of the Prophet ﷺ. So what did Qusayy do?

Many things.

The most important thing he did: He wrestled back the power of the political city of Makkah into the descendants of the Quraysh. Well who was in Makkah at the time? There was another tribe of the descendants of Adnan, but not of the descendants of Fihir, i.e., not a Qureshi. And this was the tribe of Khuza'a.

So who are the Khuza'a? They are another Ismaili... hhh... when I say Ismaili, I don't mean THAT Isma'ili. Ismaili meaning of the descendants of Ismail, right? Another branch — not the descendants of Fihir / Quraysh. The Khuza'a are another branch of the descendants of Ismail. And the Khuza'a had taken over the city of Makkah. Who did they take it over from? From the ancient Arabs that Ismail had married into and that is? Who did Ismail marry into? Jurhum. Jurhum. So Ismail had married into Jurhum, Jurhum stayed for awhile, they began doing bad things, overtaxing the people — so the Khuza'a overthrew them and kicked out everybody, including Fihir's descendants, i.e., the original Quraysh. So where were they living? They were living in a small encampments, in small dwellings outside of Makkah, i.e., not in the city of Makkah, but traveling distance from Makkah.

So Qusayy, in a long story mentioned by Ibn Ishaq, managed to win over the tribe of Khuza'a, the chieftain of the tribe. How did he do so? By a very smart tactical move. He married his daughter. So the chieftain of Khuza'a, he had sons, he had daughters — Qusayy managed to marry one of his daughters. And he then demonstrated his skills over and above the sons even of the chieftain of Khuza'a. And therefore when the father died, now he is in the family — he is a son-in-law — the people wanted Qusayy over the sons. And because of this, he managed to actually go to war with the other tribes, and he called in the descendants of Fihir, i.e., the other Qureshi tribes, and this is now the "Gathering" (some people say this is why Qureshi is called "Quraysh" — some people say this). He gathered together the tribes of Banu Fihir (بنو فهر). And he fought the tribes of Khuza'a. And of course they are very distant cousins, obviously. VERY distant cousins. But he fought them and he expelled them, so he took over Makkah.

So the great-great-grandfather, 6 generations back, of course the great-great-great-grandfather of the Prophet ﷺ reclaimed Makkah for the Quraysh. Or I should say claimed it, because before that time until the time of Ismail, there was no... So Quraysh, when did they start their rise to power? In the time of Qusayy.

Now what else did Qusayy do? Qusayy was the one who built the Dar al-Nadwa^[175], which was the parliament. He was the one who instituted this concept of "everybody come and voice your opinion." Then he built the structure that the Prophet ﷺ himself... EXACT same area (I'm sure it was not the same building; but the same area) of Dar al-Nadwa. We have mentioned the Dar al-Nadwa so many times. Who was the one who built it? It was Qusayy.

He also took custody of the Ka'bah and he assigned responsibilities that trickle down — the responsibility of water, the responsibility of hospitality, the responsibility of diyaf / ضيف (of guests), the responsibility of the keys of the Ka'bah — HE was the one who made a list of responsibilities. And when he was alive, he had it all. Then amongst his sons, it was distributed, until the days of Banu Hashim where each tribe had a certain responsibility. And as we know, even in the time of the Prophet ﷺ, one of the tribes, the Banu Abd al-Dar (بنو عبد الدار), had the key. One had this, one had that. So this... all of these responsibilities, Qusayy was the one who began it. AND this also indicates that Qusayy was the one who began the institution of taking care of the hujjaj^[176]. So the hujjaj would get free food and water. That wasn't there before. Now this is frankly... he is probably a good guy and nobody is denying that, and he is also a good politician. Because to be a good politician, what must you do? Make the people happy. There's nothing wrong with being a good guy and a good politician. I know it's rare, but that's...

So Qusayy was one of those people that he wants to please the people, and he is a good person, hospitable person — and therefore he instituted the entire concept of free hospitality for the hujjaj. "When they come, they are our guests." And every hajj, he would stand and do a fundraiser, and he would say, "O people of Quraysh, Allah has given you the blessings of taking care of His House, and the people are coming, and these pilgrims are guests of Allah, and they deserve our hospitality." So they would donate money and food and water, and he would then provide for the hujjaj.

And also, Qusayy would facilitate the actual hajj rites as well. He would light a fire for the hujjaj in Muzdalifah (مزدلفة). They could then use that fire to take their own, you know, to the local tents. He dug a well to provide water for the hujjaj. And this water was needed because, (we have all done this before, but I will just reiterate), there was no zamzam (زمزم) in the time of Qusayy. Why was there no zamzam in the time of Qusayy? Go back thousand years, or however many years that we talked about Khuza'a taking over from Jurhum. So when Khuza'a attacked Makkah... (Allah knows how many centuries ago — we don't know when this happened. Probably we are going back a little bit after the time of Jesus Christ. I mean this is like 400 years before the Prophet ﷺ. We don't know roughly when.) When Khuza'a attacked Jurhum, and Jurhum realized they are going to lose, they did a very dastardly deed — they buried the well of zamzam. They destroyed it and they buried it. And no matter how much Khuza'a tried and they tried and tried and tried and tried, they couldn't find the well. They are just keep on digging and nothing is happening. They could not find the well. Of course Allah willed they wouldn't find it.

¹⁷⁵ Dar al-Nadwa (دار الندوة) - Place of Gathering.

¹⁷⁶ Hujjaj (حجاج) - pilgrims.

So for over 300 years at least, the people of Makkah were forced to get water from other sources.

Now they cannot leave — this is the House of Allah. They are also accustomed to living there. Once you become accustomed to living, then you bear with it, right? So they cannot leave. So they had to dig wells far away and bring the water in. They would have a mountain collecting, what ways to do that. So they had a very tough time.

And Qusayy, also of the things that he did: He was buried at Hujun (الحجون); and Hujun is the famous graveyard of Makkah. He was the first person to be buried over there. And to this day Hujun is really one of the most famous graveyards of Makkah — he was the first person, and he is still buried there to this day.

Abd Manaf

His son Abd Manaf, his actual name was Mughira (المغيرة). And Manaf means "that which is raised." So they would give other names to Allah SWT. And Abd Manaf was known for his handsomeness and his leadership skills. He became famous even in the lifetime of Qusayy. Abd Manaf was handed many responsibilities. And he was beloved to the people.

Hashim: Rihlat al-Shita'i wa al-Sayf

His son Hashim is of course where we get "Banu Hashim" from. And Hashim is not his name — it is his title. His actual name is Amr (عمرو). His name is Amr. And Hashim comes from ه ش م (h-sh-m) which means "to grind" — because he would grind the barley and present food to the pilgrims. So his name was Amr, and he was called Hashim because of his generosity. And it is said that Hashim never ever ate food alone — that if he was ever eating food, he would just call anybody to eat with him, to show his generosity. He was never a person to eat alone.

And Hashim did, perhaps, the most important thing to raise the economic level of the Quraysh.

So his grandfather, Qusayy raised the political level of Quraysh by capturing Makkah.

Hashim was the one who began the economic, if you like, raising of the Quraysh. And that is: He instituted Rihlat al-Shita'i wa al-Sayf¹⁷⁷. He was the one who thought of the idea. One particular year, there was a very severe drought, and people were dying, and quite literally, a man would take his family and build a grave in the middle of... just because nobody else is going to build a grave and just wait for death to come because there was no food. And Hashim thought this is just too much, something has to be done. And he came across the idea that, "Why don't we institute 2 journeys? One in the summer, and one in the

¹⁷⁷ Rihlat al-Shita'i wa al-Sayf (رحلة الشتاء والصيف) - Winter and Summer Trip.

winter. So in the summer, we go up to Rome, and in the winter, we go down to Yemen?" — Rihlat al-Shita'i wa al-Sayf.

And they would go to the city of Bosra (Busra / بصرى, we talked about this. And the remnants of that city are still to this day visible. The very city of Bosra, which is outside of Damascus by 80 km or so). That Hashim began going up there, and down to Yemen. And this really was a stroke of genius that of course Allah blessed him with. And there have been entire books and articles written in English literature by non-Muslims, about this reality. Because it truly is... I mean all of us who are knowing business here: Business is all about location, location, location, right? Where is your business, and what is it catering to — location. And he came across the very simple idea that, "Everybody's coming to us in hajj. Why don't we give them stuff that's... We have the market. It's all here in front of us. The people are there. Why don't we sell them the merchandise they will need? Where we get the merchandise from? Well, we gotta get connected to the world trade routes." What are the world trade routes? Well, you want Indian stuff, and an African stuff, well then you go to Yemen. And in Yemen you will have the ships from India coming — Indian spice, Indian this — you will have African stuff coming in to Yemen — "So we will go to Yemen to get the Indian and African stuff. And we will go up north to get the Roman and Persian goods." — Because there is the Silk Route, right? The Silk Road went through Damascus and Bosra. So Bosra was on the Silk Road. So the Silk Road, as we all know, is the most famous road of caravans. So he just hooked up to the Silk Road, right?

And he made a lifeline all the way down to Yemen. And smack in the middle is Makkah, right?

So Makkah became on the grid. Is connected now to the lifeline. And so Hashim became extremely wealthy. That's why he could feed the people. That's why he could known as Hashim. He became extremely wealthy. Because he fed all of the pilgrims. Because he was the one who instituted Rihlat al-Shita'i wa al-Sayf.

And Allah mentions to the Quraysh, 'I blessed you with this.'

The whole surah^[178] is revealed:

لِإِيلَافِ قُرَيْشٍ
إِيلَافِهِمْ رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ
فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ
الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ وَآمَنَهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ

'I am the One who gave you the money, so that you are no longer hungry; so that you are no longer fearful. I gave you the protection of the Ka'bah' [see Quran 106:1-4].

It is also said that Hashim understood that because he is from the Quraysh, and because they are the neighbors of Makkah, nobody would harm them. And so he took advantage of the fact that in a lawless society, him being from Quraysh and Makkah actually gave him protection. Nobody robbed the caravan. Because you can't possibly rob the

¹⁷⁸ Surah (سورة) - ~chapter.

caravan going to Makkah, can you? Right? Even the pagans felt a little bit of like, "These people are too holy for us."

So Allah says:

لِإِيلَافِ قُرَيْشٍ

This honor, this sanctity, this custom — who gave it to you? And it is also said that he (Hashim) struck a deal with the kings of Rome and Yemen, that to basically, you know, protect them when they are in their lands, and to give good deals. So basically he is a businessman, and he struck gold. And of course Allah blessed him with this — because again, look... Qusayy did the politics, Hashim did the wealth, and then Abdul Muttalib did the prestige and the zamzam. All of these, every one of the ancestors of the Prophet ﷺ changed the course of the Quraysh history. And of course it's building up — because what is prestige of lineage other than what your ancestors have done, right? Why are Rockefeller and Kennedy famous? Because of what people have done one generation after the other. If they didn't do it, they wouldn't be Rockefellers and Kennedys, right? They just be like Tom, Dick, and Harry after that, right?

So how is the prestige or the lineage built? It's what the ancestors do. And in the case of our Prophet ﷺ, each and every ancestor is doing something that is absolutely amazing. And Hashim was extremely wealthy, and he was also very generous.

And of course, this wealth, it created jealousy, especially amongst his brother, Abd Shams, and his nephew, Umayya (Umayya ibn Abd Shams). And this rivalry between the Banu Umayya and the Banu Hashim would continue up until Islam and post-Islam with the Abbasids and the Umayyads as well. That rivalry was established in his time.

And Hashim married a number of women. Actually, almost all of these... Of course, to marry multiple women was the norm. And in fact, almost all of the ancestors of the Prophet ﷺ had multiple wives. Hashim also married multiple women. One of his wives, and the great-grandmother of the Prophet ﷺ, was from Yathrib (يثرب). And this was, without a doubt, something that Allah AWJ, of course, had planned — why would a person from Makkah marry somebody from Yathrib? So that 3 generations from them, the Prophet ﷺ would have distant third cousins amongst the Ansar^[179]. Abu Ayyub al-Ansari is one of them, right? So he would have distant cousins from the Ansar. So Hashim married from Yathrib. And he died on a trading trip to Ghazza (غزة) — our Filastin brothers know this very well. And there is a masjid to this day called Masjid al-Sayed Hashim (مسجد السيد هاشم) obviously. And that is why Ghazza is sometimes also called Ghazzatu Hashim. To this day, the Ghazza, the famous Ghazza, the famous Gaza — Hashim is buried there. And the city is called the Ghazza of Hashim to this day. Ghazzatu Hashim. And his masjid is over there. So he died far far away.

¹⁷⁹ The Ansar (الأنصار) - the Helpers.

Abdul Muttalib

And his son then, because his father had died, his mother took his most important son to her hometown of Yathrib. And so the Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم grandfather was raised in the very city he would Migrate to. And this is of course without a doubt, Allah's qadr — Allah's plan. Otherwise, really, Yathrib and Makkah don't have those strong ties.

And of course, the Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم grandfather, what is his name? Abdul Muttalib. But that's not his name. His name is Shaybat al-Hamd (شبيبة الحمد). Shaybat al-Hamd. Shayba is whitish hair that old people have. (I'm getting it right now, masha'Allah, tabarak'Allah, okay? I'm beginning my shayba right now.) Shayba is the whitish hair. (Some of you, masha'Allah, tabarak'Allah, right? I'm not at that level yet. Others of you are hiding it, masha'Allah, tabarak'Allah as well... hhhh... okay. And others of you don't have to worry about anything okay. Hahahaha, masha'Allah, you're the smartest one, masha'Allah.)

So Shayba is the whitish hair that you have when you are old. And of course some people, some kids, are born; there are some kids, they are just born; so he was born with the whitish streak. So they said, "This is the Shayba of Praise (Shaybat al-Hamd)." So they called him Shaybat al-Hamd. And this was his name, Shaybat al-Hamd. He grew up in Yathrib because his father had passed away.

And his mother actually didn't even tell his uncles that she was pregnant. Because she was worried that the child will be taken away. So when she was pregnant, her husband died. She went back to Yathrib. And then the child is born there. Now she is happy that it's safe. Because you know, in those days, child custody goes to the stronger. And Quraysh is the stronger. So she went back, she lived a quiet life.

One day, it is said that the uncle of Shaybat al-Hamd, and his name is Muttalib, the uncle, was visiting Yathrib. And he saw Shaybat al-Hamd and he said, "This is my blood."

Now it's very true actually that in those days (and even now) they had this gift of recognizing "this is not a Yathribite," "this is not an Ansari," "this is a Qureshi." He found out, turns out, "Oh, this is the woman that my brother married." So he realize, "This is my nephew."

And so he concocted a plot. Long story. And he basically, literally, abducted the child. Like, the relatives would not have let him go. And he coaxed the child that, "Your ancestors are so-and-so. You have a great lineage. You will reclaim your honor." Some say that even the mother was convinced. Others say even the mother did not know. But definitely the uncles did not know — meaning the uncles in Yathrib.

And he took the child and dashed away on the camel, and he rushed back to Makkah. And when the people saw him with a young lad, they assumed the young lad was a new slave he had purchased. So that is why they called him, "Oh! Muttalib has an 'abd!" — "Abdul Muttalib." Muttalib is his uncle. Muttalib is his uncle. And the name stuck. And therefore he is called Abdul Muttalib.

And Abdul Muttalib initially had a bit of a struggle with some of his uncles and cousins — because his father had died. And his uncles had taken the lion's share of the wealth. But Abdul Muttalib proved himself with his own uncles, and inherited his father's share of the grandfather's wealth, and managed to carve out for himself an entire legacy. And we are going to just quickly gloss over the story out of Abdul Muttalib, even though it is very important. But this is a story that has been told and retold so many times, I will just quickly mention the 3 main things that happened in his lifetime. And the details, unfortunately, I will have to just gloss over for this lecture, because we do not have time. (Actually, I'm condensing 2 lectures into 1. Because we did 2 different lectures and they were not recorded.)

The 3 main things that happened in the lifetime of Abdul Muttalib is:

1. The rediscovery of zamzam.
2. His vow to sacrifice Abdallah.
3. The incident of Abraha and the elephant(s). And these are stories well known to every Muslim, right? But I will just quickly gloss over them, especially details we do not know.

Abdul Muttalib: Rediscovery of Zamzam (زمزم)

So we understand why zamzam was covered up. And how therefore did Abdul Muttalib discover zamzam — that he saw it in a dream. Allah showed him in a dream that, 'If you go to such-and-such a place next to this idol, between that stone and marker (because there was idols around the Ka'bah), if you go to this place and you dig, you will find zamzam.' Initially, he ignored the dream. But he kept on seeing it, seeing it, seeing it, until finally he realize, "This is from Allah."

And so at the time, he only had one son, Harith. And Harith is his oldest son. And so his kunya is Abu al-Harith. Abdul Muttalib's kunya is Abu al-Harith.

And so he took his one son and himself, and he took a shovel than an ax, and began digging. And the Quraysh, of course, are mocking him, "You think you are going to discover zamzam after we haven't found it for three four hundred years?" And he kept on digging, digging, digging. Until he struck something far more precious than gold, far more precious than oil, he struck water. And as we all know the story, when the water began bubbling up, the Quraysh surrounded him. His own relatives. And they said, "This is our property now." And he refused and he said, "No. I discovered it. I have the rights." Now again, it's not as if he is not going to give them water, but there comes power, and there comes prestige by claiming this. Both power and prestige. And he knows this.

And they surround him. And war is about to break out. This is a civil... not of war, but I mean, you know, scuffle that might lead to death. And that's when he makes a vow to Allah that, "O Allah, if you ever give me 10 sons to defend me, then I promise I will sacrifice one for You." That's when he does this.

But they don't want to fight him. And so they agree to go to a fortune-teller who is their priestess. (Of course their religion is paganism [so] who is their sheikh? Who is their elder? It is a priestess. Far far away, that's the seniormost pagan, you know, whatever, like, you know, the Hindus have their pundits, whatever... so they have their hierarchy.) So they agreed they will go to such-and-such a lady.

And on the way there, they get lost actually. And they are about to die. On the way there, all of them, they are all cousins and relatives, they are all about to die, so much so that Abdul Muttalib says, "Each one of you should dig his own grave because we are too weak to bury each other." So they dig their own graves. And as Abdul Muttalib is digging his own grave, he strikes water again. And so his cousins and distant Quraysh said, "This is a sign from Allah that the water is yours. Because this water saved us." So without going to the priestess, they then come back, and they voluntarily gave the rights of zamzam to Abdul Muttalib.

Abdul Muttalib: Children of Abdul Muttalib

And then of course, as we all know, eventually, Abdul Muttalib has... how many children? How many children does Abdul Muttalib have?

Brother answers

15? 16? 18?

18. 18. 18. He has 18 children eventually, with, masha'Allah, 5 or 6 women.

And so he has 12 sons and 6 daughters. 12 sons and 6 daughters. (And to be honest, he probably had more than 12 sons and 6 daughters — because in those days, kids died in their youth.) But 12 sons who lived to become adults, and 6 daughters who lived to become adults.

And the ones that we are most familiar with... We don't really know much about most of them to be honest. They died even before the coming of the Prophet ﷺ. Because remember, Abdallah was one of his youngest... not THE youngest, but one of his youngest sons, right? So Harith actually died in the life of Abdul Muttalib. And the majority of his sons died, because Abdul Muttalib lived almost to the age of 100, almost to the age of 100 he lived, that's a very old age, especially for that time when the average age is probably 30, 40, 50 years old. So he lived almost to the age of 100.

So (i) **Harith** (الحارث) was his eldest.

And then (ii) **Zubayr** (الزبير), (iii) **Abdallah** (عبد الله), and (iv) **Abu Talib** (أبو طالب) were from the same mother. Zubayr, Abdallah and Abu Talib were from the same mother.

Then (v) **Abbas** (العباس) and (vi) **Dirar** (ضرار) from another mother.

Then (vii) **Hamzah** (حمزة), and (viii) **Muqawwam** (المقوم), and (ix) **Hajl** (حجل) from another mother.

And then (x) **Abu Lahab** (أبو لهب) all by himself from one mother. Abu Lahab is by himself.

And he (Abdul Muttalib) has 6 daughters:

(i) **Safiyyah** (صفية). And of course Safiyyah is the only one of his [the Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم] aunts who accepted Islam. As for the other aunts, we only know of (ii) **Atikah** (عاتكة), who was alive when the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم began preaching, and then she simply disappears from the seerah. We don't know whether she accepted Islam. To be frank, most likely she didn't. That's what seems to be the case.

And then we have (iii) **Ummi Hakim** (أم حكيم).

And then we have (iv) **Umayma** (أميمة). And Umayma is the mother of Zaynab bint Jahsh — the cousin that he (the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم) married. (Zaynab bint Jahsh, how was she a cousin? Through Umayma. So she was his father's sister's daughter, okay?)

And then we have (v) **Arwa** (أروى) and (vi) **Barrah** (برة).

These are the 6 daughters of Abdul Muttalib.

Abdul Muttalib: Vow to Sacrifice Abdullah

So we all know the story. I will quickly gloss over it that when all of these sons reach adulthood, he tells them to vow and he says, "Look, I am a man of my word. Allah blessed me. And I have to give one of you up to Allah, to sacrifice you." And that's when, as you know, he took Abdullah in front of the Ka'bah, and the Quraysh said, "You cannot do this. He is the most beloved." Abdullah was probably 17 at the time (16 or 17). And so they said, "You know, why don't you go to such-and-such priestess (another of their elite priestesses), and see if there is a way out." And that is when the 100 camels was instituted. (As you all know the story. I will quickly gloss over that one.) And this is when the life of a person became equivalent to 100 camels. (Which is still the shariah to this day. That if you do a manslaughter or accidental murder or accidental manslaughter or intentional murder, you have to pay 100 camels as blood money. To this day. And if you want to do the modern equivalent, you literally calculate the cost of a camel in US dollars. That's what the shariah would say. And then you just put that price and say, "That's the cost of a person's life" — if you accidentally kill somebody or whatnot. Where did this 100 camels come from? It comes from this incident, that the shariah came and then confirmed it, that this is the price of one man: 100 camels.)

Abdul Muttalib: Incident of the Attack of the Elephant(s)

And then the third and final story, which is the story of Abraha (أبرهة). Abraha was the governor of Yemen, under Najashi. So Najashi... (Not the same Najashi as the one that the Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم sahaba emigrated to^[180], but his father.) Najashi had conquered some areas of Yemen. And he had sent his governor. And his governor's name was Abraha. So Abraha was the governor of the Najashi in Yemen.

And he saw his people, every year, go north. So he said, "Where are you guys going?" So they said, "We have to go do hajj." He said, "Why? What is there?" They said, "There is a House of Allah." So he said, "I will build you a house that is far better than any of your houses, and you will come for hajj under here."

So he built a massive cathedral (because they were Christians), and it was out of glass, and out of... Can you imagine, in Arabia, to bring stained glass? Because they had access to these architects and whatnot. And he built a cathedral in Yemen the likes of which he thought would become the biggest temple of Christianity in the entire Arabian Peninsula.

And he then said, "All of you have to come over here rather than going up north to the Ka'bah."

And when one of the Bedouins heard this, he went there — but he went there to relieve himself. Number 1 and number 2, right? And he went there and he did that. And he (Abraha) became so angry, that he said, "As revenge, I will destroy this House (Ka'bah in Makkah), so people must come to my House." And that is why he gather together his army. And of course because they were from Abyssinia, so they had elephants. Otherwise, elephants did not live in the Arabian Peninsula as natural beasts over there. But because he was from Africa, so he had a group of African elephants. And of course the people of Africa had trained the elephants to be instruments of war.

And this was when he marched to the Ka'bah. And he went with his army of around, some say 8, and some say 20 elephants, and the chief elephant... By the way, his name was Mahmud (محمود). Mahmud was the name of the chief elephant. And it is also said that he hired an Arab guide to take him to the Ka'bah. And this guide, his name was Abu Rughal (أبو رغال). Abu Rughal. And Abu Rughal became infamous for treachery — because to trade your honor for money, and to lead Abraha through the ways to get to the Ka'bah... And so there is an expression in Arabic (which I don't think the Arabs still use), they say, "More treacherous than Abu Rughal." I don't think you have this anymore, right? Okay. So this was common at the time of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. And later on, this was a classical Arabic saying, "More treacherous than Abu Rughal." Abu Rughal is this person from that example.

And Abraha came with the entire army. As you know, when he got to Makkah, he captured the livestock of Abdul Muttalib, over 200 camels and sheep, which by the way

¹⁸⁰ See [episode 15](#).

shows you Abdul Muttalib is a rich man now. Times have changed for the Quraysh, masha'Allah, money is flowing in.

And you all know the story that Abdul Muttalib came. And this is where we read the description of Abdul Muttalib that he was a tall man (6-foot tall maybe, huge, far taller than any of the other Arabs), and he was handsome and admirable. And there is no denying, and this is scientifically proven as well, that those people who are handsome, or women who are beautiful, they actually get leadership positions. This is a scientific study. Qadr of Allah AWJ. You just automatically give a respect or whatnot to people who are looking better. Abdul Muttalib was one such person. Very handsome, very strong, very tall. He looked like a leader. So much so it is said when he entered into the tent, Abraha was in awe of this man — so tall and handsome; he actually stood up from his chair and sat down on the floor with Abdul Muttalib as a manner of respect that, "Abdul Muttalib, the chieftain of Makkah has come."

And he said, as you all know, the famous story, I will go very quickly over it that: He said to Abdul Muttalib, "I have no problem with you. You just get out of the city, and I'll destroy your House. And I have no problem with you guys." "There's nothing personal, I just wanna destroy your House of Worship. There's nothing against you." And that's when Abdul Muttalib said, "I didn't come to you to talk about the House. I didn't come to you to talk about the Ka'bah. I came to you to talk about my camels." And this is when Abraha lost all respect for Abdul Muttalib and he said, "I have come to destroy your Holy House, and you are coming to talk to me about your camels." And by the way, this shows us, subhan'Allah, that even though Abdul Muttalib didn't come back with the right punch, he didn't come back with the one-liner yet, but what does it show? When you stand up for your principles, people will respect you. Even though both of them are different religions and pagans, but still, Abraha thought Abdul Muttalib is going to argue about his House. And so he is honoring him. Then when he say "I want my camels," he said, "I lost all respect for you." That is when Abdul Muttalib gives the one-liner punch, the right uppercut and he says, "It is not my business. The House has a Lord who will protect it. And the camels have a lord, and it is my job to protect the camels." Right?

So because of this one-liner, Abraha gave the camels back. And that was when the Quraysh left the city, after making lots of du'a — Abdul Muttalib is pleading in front of the Ka'bah, "O Allah, we cannot fight this army. They are too strong for us. They have these elephant(s). They have these thousand men. You take care of it." And they then left to the mountains, and this is when they (the army of Abraha) faced Mahmud to the Ka'bah, and they are telling him (Mahmud) to go and go and go, and he would not go even if they whipped him, they beat him, they bled him, the elephant would not move. But whenever they turned him in any other direction, he would move in that direction. And that is why in the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah¹⁸¹, when the Prophet's ﷺ camel stopped, what did he say? "Don't get angry at my camel. The Same One who stopped the elephant from entering Makkah has stopped my camel as well." "There is a wisdom," right?

حبسها حابس الفيل

¹⁸¹ See [episode 63](#).

So Allah stopped the elephant from entering. And as they're debating what to do, that is when large Birds came:

وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ
تَرْمِيهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِنْ سِجِّيلٍ

So stones from Jahannam —imagine stones from Jahannam in this world— they are coming. And in front of their eyes, every stone hits an animal, and a person, and he literally dissolves — his skin dissolves, and he becomes a pile of broken and molten flesh in front of the eyes of the people of Quraysh. And it is said that Abraha himself suffered the worst fate, and they carried him back, and his skin is dissolving the entire way. And he dies right before reaching his home in Yemen, so that he suffers the worst punishment that: he is just about there, and then he dies. And he is buried over there.

And it is mentioned that the traces of the elephant still were there when the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was born. And one of the sahaba —his name is Qubath ibn Ashyam (قُبَاثُ بْنُ أَشِيْمٍ)— Qubath ibn Ashyam has a very famous narration in Sunan al-Tirmidhi, where one of the early Umayyad caliphs asks him that, "Are you bigger, or the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم is bigger?" — meaning in age.

أأنت أكبر أم رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم؟

And he means, in age. So Qubath says:

هو(الرسول ص) أكبر مني ، وأنا ولدت قبله

"The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم is bigger than me. But I was born before him."

Meaning don't say are you bigger or not.

"The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم is BIGGER than me. But I was born before him."

Why? Because, "I remember my mother taking me and showing me the defecations of the elephant(s) that had withered and become yellow. I saw the elephant(s) and their defecations when I was a young boy." — So he is showing... And of course, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was born in the Year of the Elephant. The fact that Qubath remembers this, he is saying, "I'm older than him." How did he prove he is older? "I remember my mother showing me the remnants of the elephant(s)."

And Aisha mentions and recalls that when she was a young child in Makkah, she remembered seeing one of the guides of the elephant that had come from Yemen who had been blinded and was living as a beggar (cursed obviously, to the end of his days), and begging the people for any morsel of food. So she says, "I remember one of the guys —he must have been a young man at the time; now he is an old man about to die— and he is still begging for food" — this is punishment. Obviously, this is the worst punishment that you are now blinded and you have no other means. So Aisha remembers seeing that.

Conclusion

To conclude: So the story, especially of our lineage of the Prophet ﷺ, proves very clearly that something momentous is about to happen.

Every single person in the lineage of the Prophet ﷺ establishes something of momentous value. Whether it's economic, whether it's political, whether it's just a discovery of water. And clearly therefore, when we now understand why the Prophet ﷺ was chosen by Allah, and Allah chose his lineage in this manner, that nobody in the world has a more noble and prestigious lineage. And that is why in the Battle of Hunayn^[182], what did our Prophet ﷺ say?

أنا النبي لا كذب ، أنا ابن عبد المطلب

"I am the Prophet, there is no doubt! I am the son (grandson) of Abdul Muttalib!" So he is invoking his lineage here — because the Quraysh were still new in Islam. And he is telling them, "I AM that grandson of the person you are so proud of."

And can you imagine the prestige of Abdul Muttalib? That it is under his leadership he makes du'a to Allah, and Allah sends the Birds of Ababil (الطير الأبابيل), and he discovers zamzam — and so these prestige of Abdul Muttalib... there was no chieftain in all of Arabia as prestigious as Abdul Muttalib. Not just because of him, but because of his father, and grandfather, and great-grandfather. And so to be born to the most beloved son of Abdul Muttalib (that is Abdullah), to be born to the most beloved son and to be raised by him (Abdul Muttalib) for 8 years... So all of this is of course a preparing for the Prophet ﷺ.

And also, we have over here as well the fact that 2 of the ancestors of the Prophet ﷺ were ransomed off and saved. The first is the beginning of the chain: Ismail. And the second is the end of the chain: Abdullah. So both the beginning and the end were ransomed off by Allah SWT. And this is clearly an indication that Allah AWJ is blessing this ancestry.

And the fact that there is also some hidden wisdom here (some semi-mystical wisdom here) that: We have a Christian attacking a pagan —Abraha attacking Abdul Muttalib— and the Ka'bah is the subject of attack — and neither of them is able to defend (in fact the one is attacking, and the other cannot defend) — and Allah defends the Haram. And who was living in the Haram at the time? Aminah (آمنة). And she must have been pregnant with our Prophet ﷺ. So quite literally (because he is born in the same year, a few months later), so this means Aminah, when the Incident of Fil^[183] takes place, our Prophet ﷺ is literally in the womb of Aminah. So there is a huge symbolism here that Allah Himself protects, not just the Ka'bah, but what else? Our Prophet ﷺ. And this is as if to indicate that the mushrikun^[184] could not protect the Ka'bah — they are not worthy of the Ka'bah. So Allah SWT destroyed those who attempted to harm it, because there will come now somebody who will be worthy of the Ka'bah. The Quraysh have not been worthy to the level they deserve. So somebody

¹⁸² See [episode 82](#).

¹⁸³ Fil (فيل) - elephant.

¹⁸⁴ Mushrikun (مشركون) - pagans.

will now come — and that is our Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, who purified it of its idols, who made it the qibla, and who returned it to the glory that it was — and that is the initial House that Ibrahim AS built.

And with that, we come to the conclusion of our quick summary of 2 halaqas, insha'Allah ta'ala.

006. The Birth of Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم & Why Arabia

Pre-Islamic Arabia: Jahili Arabs' Unique Idolatry / Polytheism

The interesting thing about the jahili Arabs was that they believed in the same God that we Muslims believe in, by the same name and attributes, and that is Allah. They never depicted Allah as an idol. They made idols of al-Lat (اللات), Hubal (هبل), al-Uzza (العزى), Manat (مناة), etc., but they never made an idol of Allah because they knew Allah could not be represented by an idol. They knew Allah was their Creator, Originator, and Sustainer. Allah says in the Quran:

وَلَئِن سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللهُ

"If you were to ask them who created them, they would say, 'Allah.'" [Quran, 43:87]

وَلَئِن سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللهُ

"If you were to ask them who created the heavens and the earth, they would say, 'Allah.'" [Quran, 39:38]

وَلَئِن سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ نَزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا لَيَقُولُنَّ اللهُ

"If you were to ask them who sends the water (rain) from the heaven and gives life therewith to the earth after its death, they would say, 'Allah.'" [Quran, 29:63]

قُلْ مَنْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَمَّنْ يَمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَمَنْ يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَمَنْ يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ فَسَيَقُولُونَ اللهُ

"Say, 'Who provides you with sustenance out of the heaven and the earth? Who holds mastery over your hearing and sight? Who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living? Who governs all affairs of the universe?' They will surely say, 'Allah.'" [Quran, 10:31]

So when the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم comes to them, it is not with a new god. Their paganism is not the paganism of the modern day. They know Allah is their Lord. But they are not Muslims, and we don't consider them to be Muslims. Why? Because they worship idols. Why do they worship idols when they know Allah created them? The Quran tells us — they say:

مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَىٰ

"We are only worshiping these beings so that they can bring us closer to Allah." [Quran, 39:3]

So their ultimate goal is Allah — the idols were only intermediaries.

Allah says:

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ هَؤُلَاءِ شَفَعَاؤُنَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ

"They worship besides Allah things that do not harm them nor benefit them, and they say: 'These are our intercessors between us and Allah.'" [Quran, 10:18]

"We are too sinful to worship Allah directly, and these idols are holy beings, so we 'go through' them to get to the Holiest of holy that is Allah"—this is their mentality. So notice their shirk^[185] was not in rejecting Allah; they firmly believed Allah is their Creator and Sustainer, but they were worshipping other than Allah — so we don't consider them to be Muslims.

This is important to note because in our times, some Muslims fall prey to this *exact* same mentality. They claim Allah is their Lord, but they feel they are too sinful to worship Allah directly, so they invent intercessors / intermediaries. Change al-Lat to pir, Manat to sheikh, al-Uzza to wali, and you get the exact same concept, word for word. They think they have to 'go through' the saint or the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. "We worship this being, sacrifice to this being, invoke the blessings of this being, because this being has a higher status with Allah, and they will plead our case to Allah"—this is exactly the mentality of the jahili Arabs. They might say, "How dare you compare a pir to al-Lat! How dare you compare my sheikh to al-Lat!" Our response is: "What is al-Lat except a saint?"

Do you know the origin of al-Lat? Al-Lat^[186] was a generous man who used to feed the pilgrims a type of soup. "Al-Lat" means "the one who grinds." He would stand on the road towards Makkah and feed the people on the road. So they called him "al-Lat," the one who grinds the barley for the soup. When he died, they said, "Let us commemorate him. He was a good man"—so they built a monument. And then people came, rubbed their bodies on it, put their hands on it to get blessings, and slowly but surely, it became an idol that they worshiped besides Allah. So what is al-Lat except a saint? (Note: In our religion, we are not supposed to build a monument on a grave *exactly* because of this reason.)

And the most common being who is invoked and worshiped on earth besides Allah is Jesus Christ. Is Jesus a good or evil being? He is a good being. He is one of the greatest of all prophets. You see, the slippery slope doesn't occur with evil people — look at how few people worship shaytan (the Satanists), and yet billions of people worship Jesus Christ, because it is easy to slip with a good man — you put him above his place, you take him to a status above what he deserves. And this is what our religion came to prohibit. You don't worship anybody besides Allah, including the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. You don't 'go through' anybody to get to Allah. Take the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم as a role model, not as another god or demigod.

So the shirk of the jahili Arabs was a very unique type of shirk, unlike the Hindus or the Zoroastrians — because these groups believe in another god besides Allah; but the god of the Arabs was the God of Ibrahim and Ismail and Ishaq, and that is Allah, the God that we Muslims believe in. Their shirk was not in rejecting Him, but ironically, in affirming Him as being too Holy.

¹⁸⁵ Shirk (شرك) - idolatry / polytheism.

¹⁸⁶ Note: Al-Lat is his title, not his name.

Wisdoms of Sending the Prophet ﷺ in Arabia

If Arabia was so bad and evil, why did Allah choose it for the Prophet ﷺ to come in? Why not the Romans who were the mightiest civilization, or the Persians who had an ancient civilization? Why choose a desert that didn't have anything, not even a government? Why this society?

There are many wisdoms we can glean:

1. The Arabs and Arabia was in between the two major superpowers — the Romans and the Persians. More correctly the Byzantines and the Sassanids. Arabia is smack in the middle. So it is geographically very strategic: connected to the superpowers, yet distinct to the south. Indeed, in 20-40 years, the Arabs conquered both superpowers. Allah willed these two mighty nations to be conquered by the Muslims.

2. The Arabs never had a colonialist influence, and they were never aggressive to the superpowers — they were busy fighting amongst themselves, so they never challenged Rome or Persia. Thus any attack Islam launches on these superpowers will come as a complete surprise. Indeed, when the Arab army first marched towards Rome and Persia after Islam, these superpowers laughed at them, "Who are these Bedouins wanting to attack us?" And it is said the Sassanids treated the Muslim leaders like children, "Go back and we will give you some gold coins if you want"—because they could not believe a group was coming from Arabia to attack them. It was a complete surprise, and this worked out to the advantage of the Muslims.

3. The Arabs didn't have their own unique civilization^[187]. Allah says:

لَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ كِتَابًا فِيهِ ذِكْرُكُمْ

"We have given you a book, in it is your legacy" [see Quran, 21:10]—meaning the Arabs didn't have a legacy before the Quran came; and the Quran gave them a legacy that people will look up to them by. So the fact that they didn't have a civilization, when Islam came, it made it easier for them to develop a unique and comprehensive culture. If Islam came to the Romans for example, it would have been very difficult — the Prophet ﷺ would have had to fight the status quo, the current structure in place. But Arabia was like a vacuum waiting to be filled. And indeed, the first time the Arabs were ever united was under the Prophet ﷺ. So a lack of civilization was a blessing in disguise.

4. There was constant internal warfare in Arabia, and the state was seen as relatively backward — thus the rise of a political power coming from Arabia was completely

¹⁸⁷ By civilization we mean the Arabs didn't have a unified government — no law and order in society. And they didn't have literature, art, or architecture. They didn't have written literature per se even though they had poetry, which is one step less. And they didn't have buildings of lasting significance — whereas the Romans and Persians had huge buildings and palaces that are still around to this day.

unexpected. The Romans and Persians were completely unprepared for the Muslim conquests.

5. Makkah was the site of the first House built for the worship of Allah, by Ibrahim and Ismail AS — therefore, it was most appropriate that it becomes the place of the first universal religion. Any other religion was sent to specific nations, e.g., Moses to the Jews, Jesus to the Children of Israel. Allah says in the Quran that the first House of worship ever established for humanity was the one at Bakkah (later became Makkah) [see Quran, 3:96]. So it is befitting that the first universal call comes from Makkah.

6. The Arabs had certain qualities that made them very good to be receptive to the Message of Islam. Of them:

a) Purity of spirit — they were simple people not polluted by philosophical indoctrinations. Of the positives of being simple is when the Truth comes, you accept it more easily. (And generally speaking, even in our times, the first converts are usually sincere innocent people.)

b) The Arabs were so used to hardship, e.g., lack of water and food — this helped the Islamic armies in the early conquests. The troops of the Romans and the Persians were spoiled — they needed supply lines and had lots of baggage; but the Arabs were used to traveling in the desert for long distances with little water and little food, and early Islamic conquests needed this stamina that neither the Romans nor the Persians had.

c) Bravery — they were not cowards.

d) Honesty — the Arabs hated lying and they were very honest people. E.g., Abu Sufyan's story with Heraclius^[188] shows this: Abu Sufyan was brought in front of Heraclius, and Heraclius knew Abu Sufyan was an enemy to the Prophet ﷺ [at this time], so to make sure Abu Sufyan is speaking the truth, Heraclius puts the other Qureshis at the back of Abu Sufyan and told them that if Abu Sufyan lies, make a motion that he is lying (i.e., "Tell me he is lying"). And Abu Sufyan remarked later as he was narrating this story, "Were it not for the fact that my people would have accused me of being a liar, I would have invented lies against Muhammad"—even though he is a pagan, he did not want to be called a liar. Honesty was something that was prized amongst the Arabs.

e) They were sincere in their oaths — if they gave a promise, they would uphold it, e.g., Abdul Muttalib and his promise to Allah^[189]. The Arabs were people of their word, and they abided by their word. There was no need for witnesses or written documents.

f) The Arabs were the best horsemen — there was no denying this. The Romans and the Persians could not compete neither with the horses, nor with the riders, of Arabia. And indeed, there are authentic ahadith^[190] about Arabian horses — the Prophet ﷺ praised the horses of Arabia, so the blessings remained in them, and to this day the world knows that

¹⁸⁸ See [episode 71](#).

¹⁸⁹ See [episode 5](#).

¹⁹⁰ Ahadith (أحاديث) - plural of hadith.

the most prized horses are Arabian horses. And the riders were the most accustomed to brutal wars and conditions, which the Romans and the Persians were not going to be accustomed to.

7. The Arabic language is a Semitic language — and the Semitic languages are far more eloquent and powerful than languages based in Latin or any other language. E.g., from one verb you can derive over 200 words. And indeed, generally speaking, people agree that the Semitic languages are the most eloquent.

8. The Prophet Ibrahim AS made a du'a as he was building the Ka'bah — he said:

رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ

"O our Lord! Send amongst them (Ismail's progeny) a prophet (messenger) of their own, who shall recite to them Your signs, and teach them the Book and wisdom, and purify them" [see Quran, 2:129]. So Ibrahim AS made a du'a that let there be a prophet from Ismail's AS progeny, i.e., the Arabs. (Side note: He knew there would be prophets from Ishaq's¹⁹¹ AS progeny, as Allah said even before Ishaq was born:

فَبَشِّرْنَاهَا بِإِسْحَاقَ وَمِنْ وَرَاءِ إِسْحَاقَ يَعْقُوبَ

"We gave her [Sarah] good tidings of Ishaq, and after Ishaq, Ya'qub" [see Quran, 11:71].

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي ذُرِّيَّتِهِ النَّبُوَّةَ وَالْكِتَابَ

"We blessed him with Ishaq and [later] Ya'qub, and reserved prophethood and revelation for his descendants" [see Quran, 29:27]. And indeed, we Muslims believe that every single prophet that came after Ibrahim AS was from the descendants of Ishaq AS. We affirm this. But we say there is only one exception, and that is the final prophet, Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم — he was from the descendants of Ismail AS.) So the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم is the result of the du'a of Ibrahim AS, and this is thus the main reason Allah chose the Arabs. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said in an authentic hadith, "I am the response of the supplication of my father Abraham, and I am the glad tiding predicted by Jesus."

Parents of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم

We have already pointed out that the lineage of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was the purest and the noblest, as the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم himself said in a hadith (Sahih Muslim).

Let us now move on to the issue of the birth of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. His parents are Abdullah ibn Abdul Muttalib (عبد الله بن عبد المطلب) and Aminah bint Wahab (أمنة بنت وهب). We have but a few lines about their life and times. We know very little about them for a number of reasons:

1. They both lived very short lives — died in their early 20s or even before.

¹⁹¹ Ishaq (إسحاق) - Isaac.

2. They both died before it was known that the Prophet ﷺ was a prophet, i.e., they were just regular people of Quraysh, so nobody recorded their stories.

3. When the Prophet ﷺ becomes a prophet, it has already been 40 years since his parents have died; by the time he reaches Madinah, 53 years; by the time he dies, 63 years; so who is alive to remember what happened 63 years ago? When Islam finally became stable, no one was there to remember them. (Note: We know that the Makkan seerah lasted for 53 years, and the Madinan, 10 years. Yet the volume of the chronicles of the Madinan seerah is 3x larger than the size of the Makkan's. Why? Because when Islam is powerful and stable, that's when it becomes easier for people to narrate and record; not when the Muslims were persecuted in the streets of Makkah. So if this is the case with the life of the Prophet ﷺ, what do you think of the life and times of his parents?)

So sadly, we have very little information. But what we do know, insha'Allah we will try to narrate:

Recall the story of Abdul Muttalib's vow to sacrifice his son Abdullah^[192]. Immediately after the incident, when Abdullah was "saved," Abdul Muttalib decided he needed to choose a bride for his son. So he chose for him the daughter of the chief of the Banu Zuhrah (بنو زهرة), Aminah. (Note: Quraysh is a large tribe and within it are many small tribes — the Banu Hashim is one, the Banu Zuhrah is another.) Shortly before the caravan season, Abdul Muttalib proposed to Aminah bint Wahab on behalf of his son; and her father Wahab, as the chieftain of another Qureshi tribe, agreed. So Abdullah got married to Aminah, and they barely spent 3-5 days together before Abdullah had to go with the caravan to Syria, as we all know, never to be seen again. He was 18-25 years old at this time.

There are some stories / legends that are not authentically narrated, but in this particular case, we will mention one of them since there is no harm in narrating it^{[193][194]}. It is said that Abdullah had a type of brightness (nadarah / نضارة) on his face, and he was a very handsome young man. So the young damsels of Quraysh were all eager to get him to marry them. But after he married Aminah, this brightness left his face, so they stopped taking an interest in him completely, saying, "You had a brightness in your face that no longer is there." So the brightness left him, meaning it went to his progeny, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Allah knows best, this story is not authentic, but there is no harm in narrating something like this.

Nonetheless, so less than a week after marriage, he left to catch the caravan, and he went all the way to Syria. However, he fell seriously ill on the return journey, so when the caravan arrived in Yathrib (يثرب) (which later became Madinah), he chose to stay with his relatives there to avoid delaying the rest of the group. So he remained in Yathrib. (Note: In Yathrib was Abdul Muttalib's mother, i.e., Abdullah's grandmother. Notice how Allah prepared some relationship between the Prophet ﷺ and the city he would Migrate to. The Arabs married among themselves so it was very rare for them to have relatives outside the city they lived in. On top of this, Yathrib was not a common city the Quraysh would travel to. Yet

¹⁹² See [episode 5](#).

¹⁹³ This is one of the few exceptions we make.

¹⁹⁴ Sometimes it's okay to mention stories even though it's best to stick to the facts through the science of hadith.

Allah prepared this relationship.) So Abdullah stayed in Yathrib, and when the caravan got back to Makkah, they told Aminah that Abdullah had fallen severely sick, and he is resting in Yathrib. But the next news came, they told her that in fact he had passed away. So Aminah became a young widow at 18-19 years old, carrying the offspring of Abdullah. And nobody knows where Abdullah is buried.

Date & Time of the Birth of the Prophet ﷺ

The Prophet ﷺ was born in the famous Year of the Elephant. But what was the exact date? It is commonly known that it was the 12th of Rabi' al-Awwal (ربيع الأول) — but the fact of the matter is there is no unanimously agreed upon opinion. However, the Prophet ﷺ told us certain things that we know for sure — of them, in the famous hadith of Sahih Muslim, a man asked the Prophet ﷺ, "Why do you fast on Mondays?" He ﷺ said, "This was the day I was born on, and this was the day revelation began to me." So we know for a fact that he was born on a Monday. As for the year, there is a narration in which Uthman ibn Affan asks an old sahabi, Qubath ibn Ashyam (قباث بن أشيم), after the death of the Prophet ﷺ, "Are you akbar (أكبر - older / grander) than the Prophet ﷺ?" He said, "The Prophet ﷺ is grander than me, but I am older than him." Then he said, "The Prophet ﷺ was born in the Year of the Elephant. As for me, I remember my mother taking me outside of Makkah as a child, and I saw the dried-up green dung that the elephant had left." So Qubath puts a year on the Prophet's ﷺ birth. Another sahabi, Suwayd ibn Ghafla (سويد بن غفلة), said, "The Prophet ﷺ and I were both born in the same year, the Year of the Elephant." So we agree that he ﷺ was born in the Year of the Elephant. And remember, the Arabs did not have an established calendar and only had a calendar based on events (e.g., the Year of the Drought, the Year of the Invasion) until Umar RA made the Islamic calendar; so when exactly is the Year of the Elephant? Difficult to date because we don't have any chronicles of the Abyssinians. But by and large, the majority of historians say it corresponds to 570 CE.

What about the month and the day of the month? Looking at two of the earliest books ever written about the seerah, we find different accounts: (1) Ibn Ishaq (d. 150 AH) says without any chain of narrators, "The Prophet ﷺ was born on a Monday, the 12th of Rabi' al-Awwal in the Year of the Elephant." This explains why this opinion is present. However, between Ibn Ishaq and the Prophet ﷺ is almost 150 years — and he doesn't tell us where he gets the date from, who is narrating this to him, and what is the chain of narrators. (2) When we look at the second earliest book, the Tabaqat (الطبقات) of Ibn Sa'd (ابن سعد) (d. 230 AH), it says, "The Prophet ﷺ was born on a Monday. Some people say he was born on the 10th of Rabi' al-Awwal, and others say the 2nd of Rabi' al-Awwal"—two opinions, neither of which conforms to the 12th of Rabi' al-Awwal. And it is said that Ibn Abbas (d. 68 AH) also said that the Prophet ﷺ was born on the 10th of Rabi' al-Awwal.

Ibn Kathir (ابن كثير) (d. 774 AH) in his al-Bidaya wa al-Nihaya (البداية والنهاية) said, "The majority opinion is that the Prophet ﷺ was born in Rabi' al-Awwal. But others have other months as well. The scholars differed with regards to the date of his birth. One group said he was born on the 2nd of Rabi' al-Awwal — this is the opinion of Abu Ma'shar al-Sindhi (أبو معشر السندي) (d. 171 AH), Ibn Abd al-Barr (ابن عبد البر) (d. 463 AH), and al-Waqidi (الواقدي) (d. 207 AH) [three very early authorities]. Another opinion is that he was born on the 8th of Rabi'

al-Awwal — this is the opinion of Ibn Hazm (ابن حزم) (d. 456 AH), Imam Malik ibn Anas (مالك بن أنس) (d. 179 AH), Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri (ابن شهاب الزهري) (d. 128 AH), and Muhammad ibn Jubayr ibn Mut'im (محمد بن جبير بن مطعم) (d. ~100 AH). A third opinion is the 10th of Rabi' al-Awwal — this is the opinion of Ibn Asakir (ابن عساكر) (d. 571 AH) and Ja'far al-Sadiq (جعفر الصادق) [the descendant of the Prophet ﷺ] (d. 148 AH). The fourth opinion is the 12th of Rabi' al-Awwal — this is the opinion of Ibn Ishaq, but there is no isnad on this matter^[195]. The fifth opinion is the 17th of Rabi' al-Awwal. The sixth opinion is the 22nd of Rabi' al-Awwal. The seventh opinion is not even in Rabi' al-Awwal but in Ramadan (رمضان) — this is the opinion of al-Zubayr ibn Bakkar (الزبير بن بكار) (d. 256 AH). [And there are other opinions as well.]"

To summarize: There are over 10 opinions in the earliest books of Islam about the exact day that the Prophet ﷺ was born — none of them are clear-cut with solid evidence. All of them are the opinions of early authors and narrators. And to be academic, the opinion of the 12th of Rabi' al-Awwal seems to have much less weight than the 2nd, the 8th, and the 10th — because these three have tabi'un, tabi' al-tabi'un, and even the descendant of the Prophet ﷺ narrating; whereas the opinion of the 12th is by Ibn Ishaq who came ~150 years after the birth of the Prophet ﷺ, and he is narrating without any isnad.

So if this is the case, why then is the opinion of the 12th of Rabi' al-Awwal the most popular? Two reasons: (1) Because it is Ibn Ishaq's opinion — and 90% of seerah writers only rely on Ibn Ishaq. (2) The first time the Prophet's ﷺ birthday was celebrated as a public event (i.e., the Mawlid al-Nabi^[196]), the authorities who celebrated it chose the 12th of Rabi' al-Awwal to celebrate it on — thus it spread like wildfire.

The Mawlid al-Nabi — the first recorded instance that we have of people celebrating the birthday of the Prophet ﷺ is around 517 AH, i.e., the 6th century of Islam. So for 500 years, the concept of celebrating the birthday of the Prophet ﷺ was simply unknown to the Muslims. Celebrating birthdays was not the custom of the Arabs — they didn't even record dates^[197]. The first group that celebrated the Mawlid was the Fatimids of Egypt^[198]. They instituted over 30-40 festivals, and of them was the Mawlid. When it was done, 150 years later, some Sunni governors in Mosul thought this was a good idea, so they imported the festival, and they copied it and did it on the 12th of Rabi' al-Awwal in around 670 AH, and it became a very luxurious festival — various governors and rulers competed who could have the grander festival. Free meat, free bread, gifts, etc.^[199] Thus slowly but surely, the Mawlid began to spread in Sunni lands. Initially, some scholars opposed it (and some scholars said it is allowed with certain conditions) — but after a while, under public pressure, the floodgates opened, and it became a very common festival. And therefore, the 12th of Rabi'

¹⁹⁵ And Ibn Kathir does say this is the most popular opinion in his time.

¹⁹⁶ Mawlid al-Nabi (مولد النبي) - Observance of the Birthday of the Prophet ﷺ.

¹⁹⁷ Celebrating birthdays is a Western concept that later spread to the world.

¹⁹⁸ The Fatimids are not of Sunni theology; they are of extreme Shia groups — the ancestors of today's Aga Khanis and Bohras, i.e., the Isma'ilis.

¹⁹⁹ And of course, there are reasons why rulers want to have festivals — to attract trade and stimulate the economy, i.e., the same reason why governments in our time want the Olympics / World Cup to happen in their country.

al-Awwal became commonly known to the public as the birthday of the Prophet ﷺ, even though, as we have seen, the 2nd, the 8th, and the 10th are more authentic historically.^[200]

Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib (سعيد بن المسيب) (d. 95 AH) said, "It has been narrated to me that the Prophet ﷺ was born at high noon." And this is the only narration we have about the timing of the birth of the Prophet ﷺ. He was born at high noon when the sun was at its pinnacle and peak. And of course, there is a clear symbolism here that is not lost on anybody: When the sun is brightest, this is when he is coming out with his own Truth — just like the bright sun illuminates everything, so too this prophet will illuminate everything and nothing will remain dark around him.

The Birth of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

When it comes to the actual birth of the Prophet ﷺ, we only have one academically sound report in Musnad Imam Ahmad (مسند الإمام أحمد); and all the rest are just legends, so we will skip over — because frankly, we don't need these fairy tales and lies to praise the Prophet ﷺ. The facts are enough. What is really amazing is that the earliest books you go to have the least information; yet as you go on and on in history, the books get bigger and bigger, and the details get more and more — makes you wonder, where did these details come from? Ibn Ishaq is the author of the first comprehensive book of seerah, and he says he will write everything he comes across, yet the size of his book was barely 10-15 volumes. And then you have a book written 700 years later, 5x the size! And this book is full of "...and it is said to me" — where is it coming from? Legends. E.g.: (1) In one report, it is said the Prophet ﷺ was born already circumcised. (2) In another, it is said he was born and fell into sajdah^[201]. (3) In another, it is said he was born and he lifted his finger to the sky to say the shahada^[202]. We don't need to invent these legends. He is the best human, and the facts are enough to show us this. When we resort to these tales, it makes our religion not look as dignified. Ibn Ishaq mentions none of these things.

However, there is one authentic hadith pertaining to the birth of the Prophet ﷺ, mentioned by the Prophet ﷺ himself, as recorded in Musnad Imam Ahmad: "When my mother gave birth to me [or in another version: when my mother was carrying me], she saw a light emanate from her that reached all the way to the palaces of the city of Busra^[203] in al-Sham^[204]." Scholars have tried to understand why al-Sham. Allah knows best, but we could surmise that al-Sham was mentioned because:

1. It is a blessed, holy land, as Allah says in the Quran, "Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed" [see Quran, 17:1].

²⁰⁰ Further reading: [The Birth-Date of the Prophet and the History of the Mawlid by Dr. Yasir Qadhi](#).

²⁰¹ Sajdah (سجدة) - prostration.

²⁰² Shahada (الشهادة) - the Testimony of Faith.

²⁰³ [Busra](#) (بصرى) - Bosra.

²⁰⁴ Al-Sham (الشام) - Greater Syria.

2. Later in his life, the Prophet ﷺ prophesied that al-Sham would remain a fortress of Islam^[205].

So the light emanating toward al-Sham is an indication that the Prophet ﷺ is going to challenge the status quo. Realize before the coming of Islam, Damascus was the right hand, the jewel, of the Byzantine Empire where everything happened — commerce, trade, culture, civilization, etc. So it was impossible for the Arabs to think that Damascus would one day become the core of their civilizations.

As Muslims, we also believe that Isa ibn Maryam will descend in al-Sham where he will meet the Mahdi.

Now, there are a few incidents that are alleged to have occurred that are not found in the authentic books:

1. The temples of the pagans fell down upon the birth of the Prophet ﷺ^[206].

2. A lot of scholars say when the Prophet ﷺ was born, this was when the jinn were stopped entry into the heavens. Before this, they were allowed, and they would listen to [the conversations of] the angels in the heavens. Allah references this in the Quran in Surah al-Jinn (سورة الجن):

وَأَنَّا كُنَّا نَقْعُدُ مِنْهَا مَقَاعِدَ لِلسَّمْعِ فَمَنْ يَسْتَمِعِ الْآنَ يَجِدْ لَهُ شِيبًا رَصَدًا

"Indeed, we used to sit there in (hidden) stations, to (steal) a hearing; but any who listen now will find a flaming fire watching him in ambush" [Quran, 72:9]. So one group of scholars says this happened at the birth of the Prophet ﷺ. But the correct opinion is that this occurred not at his birth, but when his prophethood began, i.e., 40 years later. And other ahadith reference this as well.

Getting back to Ibn Ishaq's narration: Ibn Ishaq says the Prophet ﷺ was circumcised on the 7th day, and his grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, held a feast for him, and he chose the name Muhammad which was a very uncommon name — there was nobody in Makkah by this name. People asked him, "Why are you calling him by a name that nobody has heard of?" He said, "I want him to be praised by the people of the earth as I want him to be praised by the people of the heavens^[207]."

When the news of the birth of the Prophet ﷺ spread amongst the Quraysh, his uncle Abu Lahab (أبو لهب) [whom as we all know would later become one of the main enemies of the Prophet ﷺ when his prophethood begins] set a slave girl free just because she came with this good news of the birth of his nephew. This shows how happy he was. And there is a hadith in Musnad Imam Ahmad that al-Abbas (العباس) saw Abu Lahab in his dream (after Abu Lahab had died) being punished with the utmost severe punishment. Al-Abbas asked him, "Didn't your relationship with the Prophet ﷺ [as his uncle] benefit you?" He said, "No,

²⁰⁵ Amazingly, indeed, al-Sham was the first province the Muslims conquered outside the Arabian Peninsula, and Damascus remained the capital of the Umayyads for centuries.

²⁰⁶ Sh. YQ himself doesn't believe this to be true.

²⁰⁷ "Muhammad" means the one who is praised.

except for the one thing that I did: when the good news came that he was born, I freed Thuwaybah (ثويبة) (the slave girl); and because of this, I am allowed a few drops of water."

007. The Early Childhood of Prophet Muhammad

صلى الله
عليه وسلم

We now move on to the period of the Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم life that is his early childhood — him growing up as a young child.

From Aminah to Halimah

The first thing we know of his life after his birth is that his mother gave him to be raised away from the house in the desert. This seems strange to us, but it was a custom of the nobility of the Quraysh. It was a status symbol that was done for a number of reasons:

1. They wanted the child to be raised in a pure and healthy environment. Infant mortality during this phase of humanity (in fact even up until 100 years ago) was very high. So to protect the child from plagues and disease, they remove them from congregations and civilization such that there are only a few people (i.e., one family) interacting with them. This increases the chances of their survival.

2. They wanted to build stamina in the child and make them adjust to a rough life. Even though life in Makkah was very tough, they wanted to raise their child in a harder environment so that they could then adapt easily to the hardships of Makkah. Indeed, children adapt to their circumstances much easier than adults, and that's why a child who was born in a very impoverished household is just as content and as happy as a child born in a rich and luxurious family. Allah has made us in a beautiful way. Children know how to have fun regardless of the circumstances, unlike us adults — if we were to, *la qaddar'Allah*^[208], be diminished in the standard that we are used to, life would become almost impossible to bear, even though many other people in the world would love that standard we have been diminished to. It is human nature that children adapt to their circumstances. And this shows the Quraysh had clever long-term planning. They wanted their children to live under difficulty at a young age so that the hardships of Makkah then appear like a luxury.

3. Growing up in a desert away from the family will avoid the pampering that relatives do. Every parent knows that no matter how strict you are with your children, uncles aunts and grandparents will pamper your child. So they sent their child away to raise them in a disciplined environment.

4. The tribes that raise the children are known for fluency in Arabic. The city language was viewed as corrupted and changed — it gets word loans from other cultures. So the Quraysh are thinking long term — they send their children to the tribes known for speaking the original, ancient Arabic. The most famous tribe known for this was the Bani Sa'd ibn Bakr (بنى سعد بن بكر), and it was this tribe that took care of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. In one authentic hadith, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was asked, "Tell us about yourself." He صلى الله عليه وسلم said, "I am the du'a of my

²⁰⁸ *La qaddar'Allah* (لا قدر الله) - God forbid.

father Ibrahim, and I am the glad news of my brother Isa, and I was foster cared by the Bani Sa'd ibn Bakr."

We know the story of Halimah al-Sa'diyah (حليمة السعدية), the famous foster mother of the Prophet ﷺ. She narrates this story in the first person, and it is recorded in a number of books of hadith and of seerah. She explains why she took the Prophet ﷺ: She and her husband were suffering greatly from poverty — desert dwellers do not get much income, so one of the reasons why they would walk into Makkah to foster children from the rich people of the Quraysh was for money. This was an annual event. Everybody knew there was a period — for one week the women of the Bani Sa'd ibn Bakr would come to Makkah to find babies to foster. Halimah herself just had a newborn son^[209], and the newborn caused her milk to flow, i.e., she is able to foster care another child, so that year, she convinced her husband that she would obtain a newborn from the Quraysh who was willing to be foster-fed for 2-3 years. Her husband agrees, so she goes to Makkah with a group of women from her clan. There was a child known as "the orphan child," and some of the women didn't even visit this child's house. Others, including Halimah, did visit, but they moved on to find another child, as they felt they wouldn't get as much money from the parent of this child, as his father was dead. When the week finished, every one of Halimah's friends had acquired one of the newborns, except for her. And the only child remaining was the orphan child, the Prophet ﷺ. She told her husband, "I feel embarrassed. It's shameful that my friends are going back with a child and I don't have one." So her husband said, "Why don't you take the orphan child? Perhaps Allah will bless us through him^[210]." So Halimah agreed to take care of the Prophet ﷺ.

All the narrations say as soon as they took the Prophet ﷺ, the miracles began right then and there: (i) They had one old goat that stopped producing milk for a long time, but as soon as the Prophet ﷺ came into the tent, it started producing milk again; and (ii) they had an old mount, when they put the Prophet ﷺ on it, it became the fastest animal of all.

Generally speaking, this foster care lasted only two years. But during these two years, the blessings that Halimah witnessed in her household were so many that she was scared of losing the Prophet ﷺ, so she invented 1001 excuses in front of Aminah to extend the contract — and Aminah agreed, even though for sure she couldn't have given the amount of money that Halimah's other friends would be getting. But it was not the money, it was the blessings that came with taking care of the Prophet ﷺ that Halimah wanted.

It was during this second phase of foster care that the famous incident of the Opening of the Heart of the Prophet ﷺ happened:

The Incident of the Opening of the Heart of the Prophet ﷺ

This is an incident that we have no doubt has happened because the Quran references it, there are authentic ahadith about it, and the sahaba saw the line on the chest

²⁰⁹ Side note: Halimah also had a daughter around 7-8 years old named Shayma (الشيماء).

²¹⁰ This shows the couple had good hearts.

of the Prophet ﷺ that showed it had been opened up. So this is clearly something we believe in:

In Sahih Muslim, Anas ibn Malik related: "When the Prophet ﷺ was 4 years old, Jibril came to him when he was playing with the other children. The other children got scared and ran away, but the Prophet ﷺ stood his ground. And Jibril came and overpowered him^[211] — he forced him on the ground and opened his chest, he took his heart out, and he took out a black portion from the heart and threw it away, and said, 'That was shaytan's portion that he had in you.'"

(Note: Indeed, we know that shaytan pricks any newborn baby out of hatred, anger, and jealousy. And the Prophet ﷺ said, "This is why babies cry when they come out of the womb." This shows how much of an enemy shaytan is to us. From the cradle up until the grave. Allah creates the child pure, but shaytan begins the corruption process from, not day one, but minute one. The prick causes the black spot in our hearts, and perhaps this is where the waswasa^[212] comes from. But remember, shaytan can never control us or force us, all he can do is whisper. Indeed, we learn from the Quran that on the Day of Judgment, shaytan will say to his followers from mankind, "I did not have any authority over you. I only called you, and you responded to me. So do not blame me; blame yourselves" [Quran, 14:22]. When we get a very evil and blasphemous thought, know that it is from shaytan. And our job is to fight it. This is part of the tests in this life.)

So this was cut off from the Prophet ﷺ at 4 years old. And this is proven in a hadith where the Prophet ﷺ said, "Every child that is born, shaytan (Iblis / إبليس) assigns a qareen (قرين) to the person^[213]." The sahaba asked, "Even you [have a qareen], O Messenger of Allah?" The Prophet ﷺ replied, "Even me. Except that Allah helped me against him, and now he has accepted Islam and only whispers good things to me." This shows us the relationship the Prophet ﷺ had with shaytan had been severed.

Jibril then washed the heart in a golden cup of zamzam and then put it back, and he sealed it up^[214].

The foster-brother and foster-sister Shayma (الشيماء) ran away screaming, "Our brother has been killed!" So Halimah runs outside, and she finds the Prophet ﷺ sitting with a pale face. Subhan'Allah, notice he isn't screaming, crying, or wailing — this shows how brave he

²¹¹ This means the Prophet ﷺ was struggling — a 4-year-old kid is fighting an angel, subhan'Allah. This shows his bravery and determination ﷺ.

²¹² Waswasa (وسوسة) - devil's whisper.

²¹³ So every one of us has a qareen. They are with us 24/7 and they know us better than anyone. And his job is to whisper bad things — they spend their whole lives just to misguide us out of jealousy and anger. This shows shaytan's hatred for us, in that, he hated the fact that Allah chose us over him.

²¹⁴ So we believe that the first open-heart surgery was performed by Jibril upon the Prophet ﷺ. Because it was a physical taking out of the heart.

was even at a young age. He is sitting there with fear and terror, but not screaming. And when they saw him, they saw the lines on his chest^{[215][216][217]}.

This incident concerned Halimah, so then and there she decided, "Let me return this child to Aminah." So she returns the Prophet ﷺ to Aminah.

The spiritual benefit we derive from this incident is that the Prophet ﷺ is being prepared to live the most respected and pure life. And this is because it's the sunnah of Allah that the characters of the prophets are impeccable — they cannot commit major sins. In Arabic, we call this ma'sum^[218] or ismah^[219]. They can commit minor infractions and get angry like Musa AS did, do hasty things like Yunus^[220] AS did, but they cannot commit major sins. So even though it was a physical opening up of the heart, it was a spiritual cleansing. And Allah mentions in the Quran, "Haven't we opened up your chest?" [94:1] — and the majority opinion is that this is a reference to the Incident of the Opening of the Heart; but it's worth noting that some scholars posit that based on verse [39:22], this refers to the guiding of the Prophet ﷺ to Islam: "Can [the misguided be like] those whose hearts Allah has opened to Islam, so they are enlightened by their Lord?" [39:22].

The Foster Family After Islam

It's narrated that 57 years later, during the Battle of Hunayn^[221] (غزوة حنين) —when all of the tribes entered into Islam— the tribe of Banu Sa'd ibn Bakr was also fought and conquered. And it's narrated that one of the women of this tribe stood up and made a commotion, claiming to be the sister of the Prophet ﷺ. The sahaba didn't know what to do, so they brought her to the Prophet ﷺ. And he ﷺ said to her, "How do I know this is you (Shayma)?" She said, "I still have the marks of the bite that you bit me (when I was carrying you as a baby) on my back." So the Prophet ﷺ realized this is indeed Shayma, as she said a story nobody would know, so he freed her and gave her many gifts.

It appears Halimah and her husband were not at this occasion. Only later on after this battle they came to visit. And when the Prophet ﷺ saw Halimah, he recognized her instantly, he stood up to greet her, took off his shawl, and he placed it on the ground for her

²¹⁵ It's reported that Anas ibn Malik related when the Prophet ﷺ was around 60, "I could (still) see the traces on his chest."

²¹⁶ If Allah willed, it could have easily been a clean cut. He didn't need to leave a line. But He wants to demonstrate that something physical has happened. So there was a physical line left on the chest of the Prophet ﷺ.

²¹⁷ This incident of taking out of the heart occurred one more time almost 45 years later when the Prophet ﷺ went to the Night Journey of al-Isra' wal-Mi'raj [see [episode 21](#)]. Jibril opened up the chest of the Prophet ﷺ, took the heart out, washed it in zamzam, and put it back, but there was one difference — there was no black clot the second time, as it had already been removed when he was 4 years old.

²¹⁸ Ma'sum (معصوم) - impeccable.

²¹⁹ Ismah (عصمة) - infallibility.

²²⁰ Yunus (يونس) - Jonah.

²²¹ See [episode 83](#).

to sit on —and some of the books say Halimah accepted Islam— then the Prophet ﷺ gifted her immensely, and she went her way^[222].

The Death of Aminah

So the Prophet ﷺ was returned to Aminah; and sadly, we only have one incident recorded during this time frame. What else did Aminah do, what were the moments, what was her tarbiyyah (تربية), we don't know anything. There is only one thing narrated and that is that Aminah decided to take the Prophet ﷺ, who was around 6 years old at the time, to Yathrib (which was to be called Madinah); and she had one servant with her, Ummi Ayman (أم أيمن)^{[223][224][225][226][227]}. And Aminah, the Prophet ﷺ, and Ummi Ayman stayed in Yathrib for a few months. And on the way back, in a small settlement called al-Abwa' (الأبواء), Aminah became ill and she passed away right then and there, so Ummi Ayman had her buried by the people of the village^[228].

It is reported in Sahih Muslim that one time [during Madinan seerah], when the Prophet ﷺ was returning home from a journey, he diverted away into the wilderness. And all the sahaba just walked with him, not even asking a question — whatever the Prophet ﷺ does, they-hear-and-they-obey. And the sahabi who narrated this says, "The Prophet ﷺ found a grave over there, and he sat down and cried like we had never seen him cry before, until his beard was wet^[229]." And subhan'Allah, the sahaba didn't ask one question — but when they saw the Prophet ﷺ cry, the whole congregation cried with him — this is the love they had for him ﷺ. And then the Prophet ﷺ said, "I had used to forbid you from visiting

²²² Note: In some narrations, it's said her husband was with her.

²²³ Recall in the previous halaqa, we mentioned that the Prophet's ﷺ great-grandmother was from Yathrib. Now surely we see the wisdom in Allah's divine plan that out of all the cities, it just so happens Abdul Muttalib's father falls in love with a girl in Yathrib, and thus there was a connection between the Prophet ﷺ and Yathrib before [the Emigration](#). Indeed, this was the only city the Prophet ﷺ traveled to as a child, and the only city he had other relatives in.

²²⁴ And of course, it was a custom of the Arabs that they preserved their lineage — they would know their generations back to Adnan. They would keep the ties of kinship. Why? Because this was jahili society, i.e., you are protected by your relatives — you are honored by the relatives you have.

²²⁵ Ummi Ayman lived a long life after Islam and became a Muslim. So it is sad — because IF only someone had sat down with Ummi Ayman [after the death of the Prophet ﷺ] and recorded stories from her about the Prophet's childhood, we would have had a whole chronicle. But Allah has His wisdom that we do not understand / know.

²²⁶ This story of visiting Yathrib is one of the stories that Ummi Ayman is telling, because she was the only witness.

²²⁷ Some books of seerah mention that the Prophet ﷺ recognized some of the buildings of Madinah when he returned ±50 years later.

²²⁸ And to this day, Aminah's grave is still there in al-Abwa'.

²²⁹ Many of the sahaba had never seen the Prophet ﷺ cry before. And it's narrated that he ﷺ only cried publicly a number of times.

graves^[230]. But I asked Allah permission^[231] to visit my mother's grave, and He allowed me. So now I am allowing you." Thus from this, we see that the permissibility to visit graves came from the Prophet ﷺ wanting to see his mother's grave, Aminah.

And the Prophet ﷺ encouraged us to visit graves because it reminds us of death.

Living With Abdul Muttalib

The Prophet's ﷺ father passed away when his mother was pregnant with him, and when he was 6 years old, he lost his mother, so he was then entrusted to his grandfather Abdul Muttalib^[232], the chieftain of the Quraysh. Once again, we hardly have anything about Abdul Muttalib's relationship with the Prophet ﷺ other than one or two tidbits from Ibn Ishaq, Ibn Sa'd, and other classical books. Ibn Ishaq narrates this from the tabi'un, so insha'Allah it is permissible to narrate: It's said that Abdul Muttalib would have a raised platform in front of, and connected to, the Ka'bah. And around Asr (عصر) time when the shadow of the Ka'bah shaded the platform, he would sit there and discuss the affairs of the Quraysh. This is the platform equal to the king's throne, so no one sits on it, not even his sons or grandsons — it is exclusively for Abdul Muttalib. But once, the Prophet ﷺ as a young boy, came running and jumped onto the platform to be next to Abdul Muttalib. His uncles, al-Zubayr and others, pulled him back down. But Abdul Muttalib stopped them and said, "Leave him. This is my child, and he can remain on the platform." So out of all his grandchildren, the only one that he allowed to be on the platform was Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

There is one more incident narrated: On one occasion, the uncles of the Prophet ﷺ sent him to find some lost camels. Ibn Sa'd mentions that the reason why his uncles sent the Prophet ﷺ, a little 7 or 8 year-old, was because he never did anything except that it was successful. So now that the uncles are getting desperate that they can't find the camels, they decide to send this young boy out alone in the desert to find them. But the Prophet ﷺ was delayed in coming back. And when Abdul Muttalib found out what the uncles did, he was furious at them. He was pacing and walking around, waiting for the Prophet ﷺ to return. And when he did, he hugged him and said, "From now on, I will never let you out of my sight"—this shows that Abdul Muttalib had special care and concern for the Prophet ﷺ.

And then at the age of 8, for the third time, the Prophet ﷺ became an orphan, as his grandfather Abdul Muttalib passed away.

Ibn Sa'd mentions a narration in which a sahabi asked the Prophet ﷺ, "Do you remember Abdul Muttalib, ya Rasulallah?"—Abdul Muttalib was the legend among the Arabs, so the sahaba were curious and wanted to know. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Yes, I

²³⁰ This was the initial ruling in Islam: you were not allowed to visit a graveyard except with a dead body, i.e., to bury the dead.

²³¹ As a rasul, the Prophet ﷺ does not take one step without Allah's permission, even to visit his mother's grave.

²³² He lived a long life over 80, and is already blind.

remember him. And I was 8 years old when he died." Even though this hadith is slightly weak, it clearly shows that the Prophet ﷺ was 8 years old when Abdul Muttalib passed away.

And one of the things Abdul Muttalib did on his deathbed was to entrust the Prophet ﷺ to his son, Abu Talib, as Abu Talib was the full brother of Abdullah, the father of the Prophet ﷺ [233]. So Abu Talib took charge of the Prophet ﷺ, and he lived a long life, and passed away when the Prophet ﷺ was over 50 years old [see [episode 19](#)].

Wisdoms Gleaned From the Orphanhood

Question: Why did Allah put so many trials on the young child? Three orphanhoods, one after the other, upon Prophet Muhammad ﷺ? If Allah had willed, he could have had loving parents and been born in the lap of luxury?

As our scholars mentioned, there are many reasons for doing so:

1. Like Allah says about Musa AS:

وَاصْطَنَعْتُكَ لِنَفْسِي

"And I chose you for Myself" [Quran, 20:41].

وَلِيُصْنَعَ عَلَيَّ عَيْنِي

"So that you may be raised under My care" [Quran, 20:39].
And this applies to our Prophet ﷺ as well.

2. No doubt, it is tough and difficult to be an orphan — but at the same time, it gives him many qualities that he will need later on in life. Being pampered would not have prepared him for a life of sacrifice and a mission of calling to Allah; rather, being born in a harsh environment and not having parents to love you — this automatically makes the child stronger, more independent, more mature, and gives him wisdom. This is something we notice in every orphan child and a child born in difficult circumstances. Compared to children born in luxury, they are much more mature. This is reality. (Not to be stereotypical, but compare children born in first world countries and children born in third world countries.) So by putting the Prophet ﷺ through this difficulty, it made him who he was.

3. Going through difficult times makes you understand and experience first-hand poverty, ruthlessness, living in hardship, etc.; and this makes you more sensitive, compassionate, and merciful.

That is why there are so many ahadith about taking care of orphans: (i) He ﷺ says, "I and the one who takes care of orphans will be 'like this' in Jannah" [as he gestures with his

²³³ Abdul Muttalib had married 5 wives one after the other, and from one of them he had several daughters and two [or three] sons, that is Abdullah and Abu Talib [and al-Zubayr]. So they were full brothers unlike Abu Lahab or Hamzah.

forefinger and middle finger, holding them close together]^[234]. (ii) He says, "When you see an orphan, say good words to him and put your hand across his head" [that is, treat orphans with love]. Surely, the Prophet ﷺ is remembering his own childhood as an orphan when he says these ahadith.

By going through traumatic times, our Prophet ﷺ developed that fondness, softness, mercy, and tenderness for the weak — a necessary requirement for being a prophet.

4. This facilitated the Prophet ﷺ being raised by the Banu Sa'd so that he could become the most eloquent of the Arabs. And it's known that the Prophet ﷺ spoke the best Arabic. In fact, there is a hadith that the Prophet ﷺ said:

أوتيت جوامع الكلم

"I have been given (by Allah) the most succinct / precise / concise of all speech." Jawami' al-kalim (جوامع الكلم) means a small phrase that can be explained and understood in hundreds of hours, as it has many deep meanings and profundity in it.

The Prophet's Journey to Syria as a Child: Did It Really Happen?

The final story that we will mention today is the story of the Prophet's ﷺ journey to [Greater] Syria. This story is mentioned in Sunan al-Tirmidhi (سنن الترمذي). And realize most of the seerah is not mentioned in the books of hadith, but rather, in Ibn Ishaq, Ibn Sa'd, etc. — and the standards of the authenticity of these books are one degree less than the books of hadith which are the most strict: Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi, Nasa'i, Ibn Majah, Muwatta Imam Malik (موطأ الإمام مالك), Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal, and Sunan al-Darimi (سنن الدارمي) — our fiqh, theology, legal, ethics is based upon these books of hadith. The books of seerah however are a level beneath them in terms of authenticity. Thus a lot of the incidents of the seerah are not as authentic as our hadith and theology. Most of the time, we have no problems narrating them; but sometimes, we get into problems. And this is one of those times; so we have to go into a little bit of academic detail. What is the story?

The story is that when the Prophet ﷺ was still young and had not yet reached puberty (11-12 years old), his uncle Abu Talib took him on a journey to Syria along with Abu Bakr and Bilal ibn Rabah (بلال بن رباح). And on the way there, they passed by a monastery where a monk called Buhayra^[235] used to live, who would never give them the time of day, but this time when they were with the Prophet ﷺ, Buhayra came out searching for them and greeted them and invited them all back to his house for a feast. When they asked him why, he said, "You have in your midst a boy who will become a prophet. I saw the clouds shelter him, I saw the trees shelter him, and the stones prostrate to him." So Buhayra told Abu Talib to take care of the boy. And while they were eating, they saw seven Roman

²³⁴ As a personal advice to all of you: Wallahi, the least we can do is to find an orphan and sponsor that orphan. Allah has blessed us with so much wealth. Quran as well mentions the virtues of taking care of the yatim (يتيم - orphan) and preferring the yatim over ourselves. All you need is \$30-\$50 a month. Make this a part of our life. (Wallahi we spend more on coffee and TV sets than we do on this.)

²³⁵ Buhayra (بحيرى) - Bahira.

soldiers appear, who allegedly were trying to find the prophet to come, to capture and kill him. So Buhayra hid them and told them to immediately go back to Makkah.

This story is narrated in some basic form in Tirmidhi, and of course in Ibn Ishaq and others. Most of the scholars of our tradition have accepted it at face value, including Tirmidhi (d. 279 AH), Ibn Hajar (ابن حجر) (d. 852 AH), al-Hakim (الحاكم) (d. 405 AH), et al. However, some of our more critical-minded scholars such as Imam al-Dhahabi (الذهبي) (d. 748 AH), Ibn Kathir (d. 774 AH), and Ibn Sayyid al-Nas (ابن سيد الناس) (d. 734 AH) said something is wrong about this story. Imam al-Dhahabi is one of the greatest chroniclers and historians of the 7th century who had a very critical mind and didn't accept everything at face value^{[236][237]}. And he said, "How can this story be true — Abu Bakr was just a kid at the time, why would he go on a caravan with Abu Talib when there is no relation? As for Bilal, he hasn't even been born yet. And he was not acquired by Abu Bakr until after Islam. How did Bilal come into the picture? Why would the trees shelter the Prophet ﷺ when according to the same report, the clouds are already sheltering him? And why don't we find the Prophet ﷺ reminding Abu Talib of this incident [later] when he became a prophet? [E.g., 'Didn't Buhayra tell us that I will become a prophet?'] Why did the Quraysh find it problematic that he became a prophet when apparently Buhayra announced he would become a prophet? In fact, why did the Prophet ﷺ himself not understand what was happening when Jibril came to him in Ghari Hira^[238]? Why was he confused, scared, and terrified? Why did he come to Khadija saying, 'What happened? I don't understand,' and she had to take him to Waraqa, and Waraqa had to explain?^[239]" Why, why, why...

And some scholars have said: "Okay, Bilal and Abu Bakr are incorrect details; but let's accept the rest of the story as truth."

But we say:

1. The same story that says Bilal and Abu Bakr also says the rest, so why are you picking and choosing what to take and leave?

2. The problem that comes with this story is that it makes most of the non-Muslim historians and researchers (i.e., the orientalists) think that they have found the 'missing link' that they were looking for. Explanation: As we know, the jahili Arabs did not record the histories of the Jews and Christians, so there was no information about Judaism or Christianity in Makkah, as there were no Jews or Christians living in Makkah, there were no libraries or books, no Old Testament or New Testament in Makkah. The Quraysh did not have any knowledge about Isaac, Joseph, Moses, Jesus, et al., as the Arabs had nothing to do with that branch of the descendants of Abraham. So to this day, the orientalists don't have a good answer as to how the Prophet ﷺ, an unlettered prophet, comes along in the middle of an uneducated environment and recites the histories of the Bani Israel. "Where did he get

²³⁶ And this shows his intellectual prowess.

²³⁷ Side note: In academia, there is a whole methodology of modern study called "historical criticism," and it means you cannot just take books of history and take them at face value — you have to read through, dissect, compare, and think is it possible or not. Don't just accept everything. And this applies to our tradition as well.

²³⁸ Ghari Hira (غار حراء) - the Cave of Hira'.

²³⁹ See [episode 10](#).

all this information from?" But when they come across the story of Buhayra, they say, "Aha, look! This is where Muhammad acquired all of his information about Jews and Christians!" [i.e., they say this in an attempt to discredit the prophethood of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.]

But we say: Firstly, as some of our early scholars have pointed out, the story of Buhayra does not make sense (and Imam al-Dhahabi went as far as saying it is fabricated^[240]); and secondly, even *if* it is authentic, the orientalist's claims are still ludicrous — how could an 11-year-old kid memorize all the encyclopedic information in barely half an hour and then relate it 30 years later? Impossible. Allah mentions in the Quran:

تِلْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهَا إِلَيْكَ مَا كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُهَا أَنْتَ وَلَا قَوْمُكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ هَذَا

"This is one of the stories of the unseen which We reveal to you [O Prophet]. Neither you nor your people knew it before this" [11:49].

ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهِ إِلَيْكَ

"That is from the stories of the unseen which We reveal to you [O Prophet]" [12:102].

Allah further says:

وَمَا كُنْتَ تَتْلُو مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَلَا تَخُطُّهُ بِيَمِينِكَ

"You [O Prophet] could not read any writing [even] before this [revelation], nor could you write at all" [29:48].

[So we Muslims say: These stories of the unseen (i.e., the histories of the Jews and Christians in this context) were revealed to him ﷺ directly from Allah SWT (through Jibril), which is one of the proofs that he was a true prophet.]

To conclude: In our opinion, the story of Buhayra does not make sense. Allah knows best, but the story does appear to be weak.

²⁴⁰ And indeed, unfortunately, throughout our history, many people have fabricated ahadith — some with good intentions and some with evil intentions. (But obviously, the ends don't justify the means.) There is a commonly known fabricated hadith about the blessings of every single surah of the Quran; and when Imam Ahmad captured the fabricator, he [the fabricator] said, "I found the people getting busy in fiqh and history, so I wanted them to go back to the Quran. So I fabricated something, perhaps they will read the Quran because of it." So there are some good intentions. But certainly, fabricating hadith is not allowed. This is why there is a whole study called "the science of hadith" to help scholars sift through inauthentic narrations. We must understand that when it comes to the seerah, a lot of people, because of emotionalism, they wish to add things that are not found in the earliest books, to make things seem better than they were. We mentioned some examples in the last halaqa, and you have stories that the Prophet ﷺ didn't have a shadow, etc. But these stories are not found in Ibn Ishaq or Ibn Sa'd; they are only found in books written hundreds of years later. Some people want to exaggerate. But frankly, we don't need to, as our Prophet ﷺ is the best human being without these exaggerations. When we put these stories in, wallahi, we give our religion a bad name. People look at us and think, "What type of religion is this?" Allah has told us what we need to know; and in the authentic blessings of our Prophet ﷺ, there is plenty that we can stick to. We don't need to resort to fables — it is a disservice to us.

008. The Early Manhood of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

The next phase in the Prophet's ﷺ life is when he was a young man, around 14-15. As we mentioned many times, we have very little about the Prophet's ﷺ life at this age. The early life of the Prophet ﷺ is the most undocumented. We have nothing from the time he was 9-15 except for one story here, one story there. And we explained why:

1. Nobody was witnessing and recording the incidents.
2. Nobody knew that he was going to become a prophet of Allah.
3. There was no writing in Makkah.
4. Those who lived long enough to narrate the story were few.

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as a Shepherd

We do however know the first job of the Prophet ﷺ — and this hadith is in Bukhari so it is authentic: the Prophet ﷺ said, "Allah never sent a prophet except that he was a shepherd." The sahaba asked, "Not even you, O Messenger of Allah?"^[241] They thought the Prophet ﷺ would be an exception — but the Prophet ﷺ replied, "I was. And I used to tend to the flock of the people of Makkah in return for some qararit^[242]." In another hadith, it's said the Prophet ﷺ saw some of the shepherds taking care of the sheep they had and said, "I advise you to find the tree of arak^[243] and find the darker branches as this will be better for your flock." So they were shocked and asked, "How do you know this, O Messenger of Allah?" He said, "I used to be a shepherd, and every prophet of Allah used to be a shepherd." In another narration, in Musnad Imam Ahmad, the Prophet ﷺ is recorded to have said, "Musa was sent (to become a prophet) when he was a shepherd. Dawud was sent when he was a shepherd. And I too was a shepherd in [the valley of] [Aiyad](#) (أجيداد)."

If Allah had willed, the Prophet ﷺ could have been born rich, and money would have been poured upon him as a child, teenager, and adult. Why would Allah let the Prophet ﷺ start his life with the most menial, lowest-paid, most difficult job in all of Makkah? There are a lot of wisdoms:

1. As a shepherd, you have the opportunity to spend time alone with your thoughts. Taking your flock away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life allows you to contemplate the purpose of existence. It's no coincidence that those who are absorbed in their work and worldly pursuits tend to be less spiritual, with atheism being more prevalent in wealthy countries with high-paying jobs. On the other hand, farmers, who spend their days tending to the land and observing nature, are generally more contemplative and religious. When you are involved with nature — the creation of Allah SWT — it has an impact on your soul. You cannot really be an atheist if you are involved with nature. Conversely, when you are cut off from the

²⁴¹ Note: This shows that most sahaba didn't even know that the Prophet ﷺ had a job as a shepherd — let alone the other details.

²⁴² Qararit (قراريط) - pennies / insignificant amount of money.

²⁴³ Arak (أراك) - *Salvadora persica* / toothbrush tree.

creation of Allah and immersed in the dunya, your heart becomes hard, and you can even be so arrogant as to say there is no God.

2. Sheep are similar to men. They need to be taken care of or else they will go astray. This is why they need a shepherd to guide and protect them. And each animal has its own unique personality — and a good shepherd understands this. He knows how to treat each animal according to its individual needs. Some sheep are stubborn and require a firmer hand, while others are more sensitive and require a gentler approach. Some know where they are going, while others just follow the pack. A good shepherd knows each animal individually and deals with them accordingly. And this is what a leader needs to do. And thus the prophets of Allah needed this experience.
3. Being a shepherd makes you soft and tender on the one hand, and brave and courageous on the other. You must be gentle and compassionate towards your flock while also being brave and courageous when defending them against predators like wolves and other beasts^[244]. Our Prophet ﷺ said in a hadith, "The people who own horses will be the ones full of pride, the people who own camels will be the ones full of arrogance, and the people who own sheep will be the ones full of humility and humbleness." So we can surmise this is why Allah made every prophet a shepherd.
4. It shows that the Prophet ﷺ understands that he needs to earn money. Not just be a freeloader, but rather, be independent and help his uncle out.
5. To show the simple lifestyle of the Prophet ﷺ. He engaged in the most basic, difficult, and low-paying manual labor, which teaches us that there is no shame in working hard for your own income. In a hadith, the Prophet ﷺ said, "The purest money you can earn is that which you earn with your own hands. And even the Prophet Dawud (AS) would earn his money from the labors of his hands^[245]."
6. To teach us the value of starting from the bottom and working our way up — by starting from the bottom, we will be better equipped to do justice to and appreciate the blessings and success that Allah blesses us with. And additionally, if you start at the top^[246], you are not ever going to be as successful as those who started from the bottom and worked their way up. This is the reality of business as it is of religion. Look at the most successful entrepreneurs on the surface of this earth —Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, et al.— they all started from the bottom and they are the ones who then built the largest empires. The same applies to the Prophet ﷺ — he started right

²⁴⁴ So it's not a coincidence, by the way, that the Prophet ﷺ was very tender towards other animals as well: in a hadith, it's narrated that a camel approached the Prophet ﷺ, making distressing noises and tears coming out of its eyes. So he ﷺ comforted the camel until it calmed down and then found the owner and told him, "This animal has complained against you, that you overwork it, underfeed it, and you beat it. Fear Allah with regards to these animals that Allah has blessed you with." Subhan'Allah, this demonstrates the tenderness of the Prophet ﷺ.

²⁴⁵ Prophet Dawud AS was an ironsmith and a carpenter.

²⁴⁶ If somehow it happens by a fluke of coincidence, or birthright, etc.

from the bottom and worked his way to the highest pinnacle. And look how true is this statement of Allah SWT when He says in Surah al-Duha (سورة الضحى):

مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلَىٰ
وَلَلْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لَّكَ مِنَ الْأُولَىٰ
وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَىٰ
أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَىٰ
وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَىٰ
وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنَىٰ
فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ
وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ
وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ

"Your Lord has not abandoned you, nor has He become hateful [of you]. And the next life is certainly far better for you than this one. And [surely] your Lord will give so much to you that you will be pleased. Did He not find you as an orphan then sheltered you? Did He not find you unguided then guided you? And did He not find you needy then satisfied your needs? So do not oppress the orphan, nor repulse the beggar. And proclaim the blessings of your Lord" [Quran, 93:3-11].

The Fijar Wars (the Evil Wars)

After the incident of being a shepherd, only two or three things are recorded before the prophethood begins.

When the Prophet ﷺ was a teenager, between 15 and 18^[247], the Quraysh fought in the Harb al-Fijar^[248]. The Fijar Wars is a series of small battles that broke out between two large tribes of Arabia: Kinana (كنانة) and Qays Aylan (قيس عيلان).

1. The tribe of Quraysh belongs to a much larger branch called Kinana.
2. Another large branch was called Qays Aylan which was composed of tribes such as Ghatafan (غطفان) and Hawazin (هوازن).

To make a long story short: A person from Kinana killed somebody from the Hawazin. When they found out, the Hawazin attacked the Kinanite tribes. So the Kinanite tribes, including the Quraysh, rushed back to Makkah — they did this because the rule of law was "whoever enters the Haram is safe." But the Hawazin followed them, and because they were so angry, they didn't care about the sanctity of the Haram, and they attacked the Kinana.

Now, this is interesting: the initial fault was that of the Kinanite tribes, as indeed, killing a person is a crime — however, attacking the sanctity of the Haram is a much bigger crime

²⁴⁷ Most likely closer to 15, as he didn't physically fight in the battle, which shows that he was not of the age to carry a sword, when in those days, around 15 was when you were regarded as a full adult and allowed to carry a sword.

²⁴⁸ Harb al-Fijar (حرب الفجار) - the Evil Wars.

— and therefore, the Quraysh declared all-out war against the Hawazin and Qays Aylan tribes. And this war is called the Wars of Fijar^[249].

And the Prophet's ﷺ job was to find and look for the arrows that missed the target, and return them to his uncles.

Initially, the Quraysh was losing. But eventually, they won over. Whenever the Prophet ﷺ would appear on the day with the Quraysh, they would win over. But whenever he would not be at home, they would lose ground. And Abu Talib saw this, so he said, "By Allah, you are going to stay with us." And eventually, a peace treaty was enacted — the Quraysh agreed to pay the blood money, so the fighting stopped.

And it is recorded that after Islam, when the Prophet ﷺ was much older, he said, "I remember participating in the Fijar Wars, and I would collect arrows for my uncles and hand them back to them. And I do not regret participating in that war."

The Hilf al-Fudul

In another few years, a more famous incident occurred, called the Hilf al-Fudul (حلف الفضول), also called Hilf al-Mutayyabin (حلف المطيبين) — the Treaty / Pact of Fudul or Mutayyabin. At this stage, the Prophet ﷺ is probably in his early 20s. This pact occurred in Dhu al-Qa'dah, one of the Sacred Months, and took place in Makkah.

A person from the tribe of Zubayd (زبيد)^[250] —which in Makkah was not considered to be as elite— sold a number of items to al-As ibn Wa'il (العاص بن وائل), the father of Amr ibn al-As, before hajj, as a merchant. And al-As ibn Wa'il is a chieftain, a politician, a career statesman in the Quraysh, and also a rich businessman — and he told the man, "I'll give you the money after hajj before you go back to Yemen."

So this man performs the hajj, and then he goes to al-As and asks for his money. But al-As says, "Come back tomorrow." So he does so. But then al-As says again, "Come back tomorrow." And this continued until this man realizes that he won't get his money back. So this person goes to the other subtribes in the Quraysh, e.g., Banu Hashim, Banu Abd al-Dar, etc., asking for help — but everyone makes an excuse, as al-As is a rich politician. And the tribesmen of Zubayd are all far away in Yemen, so there aren't any people ready to fight for him. Feeling completely trapped, he decided to make this a public issue.

And in those days, to make things public, they would compose poems and announce them. So the man said a poem out loud one day when everybody was gathered around the Ka'bah:

²⁴⁹ It's called this because both sides committed evil, and especially because the sanctity of the Haram was broken, which is the height of evil.

²⁵⁰ A tribe from Yemen.

يَا آلَ فِهْرٍ لِمَظْلُومٍ بِضَاعَتُهُ *** بِيْطْنِ مَكَّةَ نَائِي الدَّارِ وَالنَّفْرِ
وَمُحْرِمٍ أَشْعَتْ لَمْ يَقْضِ عُمْرَتَهُ *** يَا لَلرَّجَالِ وَبَيْنَ الْجَبْرِ وَالْحَجْرِ
إِنَّ الْحَرَامَ لِمَنْ مَاتَتْ كَرَامَتُهُ *** وَلَا حَرَامَ لثَوْبِ الْفَاجِرِ الْغُدْرِ

"O family of Fihr (Quraysh)! I am one who has been unjustly treated because of my merchandise! I am in the valley of Makkata, far away from my home and away from people to protect me! I am still in my ihram (إحرام)! My hair is not combed nor have I finished my Umrah (عمرة)! Where are my men to help me? Between the Hijr^[251] and the Hajar^[252] you are doing this to me! The true Haram belongs to those who are noble! There is no sanctity to the one who wears a thobe while he is a traitor!"

And the news spread like wildfire. Al-Zubayr ibn Abdul Muttalib, the uncle of the Prophet ﷺ, heard of this, and he decided something had to be done. So he convened a gathering of all of the senior members of the Quraysh in the house of Abdullah ibn Jud'an (عبد الله بن جدعان)^[253]. And here is where they agreed to a treaty, that they would side with the oppressed against the oppressor regardless of their tribe — even if the one who is shown injustice is from a faraway tribe, and the oppressor is from the Quraysh.

And they all went in front of the Ka'bah and 'signed their names on a document.' Now of course they are all unlettered — they can't read or write. So what they would do instead is dip their hand in perfume and put that perfume on the Ka'bah on the same place. And this is why it's called Hilf al-Mutayyabin, the Treaty of Those Who Have Perfumed Themselves. It is also called Hilf al-Fudul because when al-As heard of this, he said, "Why did they have to get involved in a matter that is fuduli (none of their business)?"

When the Prophet ﷺ was much older, he said, as recorded in Sahih Bukhari: "I witnessed in the house of Abdullah ibn Jud'an a treaty that, were I asked to uphold it even in Islam, I would do so. And I would not be willing to give up my place for a lot of red camels"—meaning the Prophet ﷺ was very proud to be a part of this treaty and would not give up his place in it even for a lot of money. And he ﷺ said, "In that treaty, they all agreed that the rights would be given back to the one who deserves them, and that no oppressor would have an upper hand over the one who is oppressed."

Lessons From Fijar Wars and Hilf al-Fudul

We can derive many benefits from these two stories:

1. The Prophet ﷺ did not regret participating in the Wars of Fijar — showing what he did was correct. Thus some scholars derived from this that it's permissible to fight in wars that are not necessarily religious. Indeed, both sides were pagan; and it was not a clear-cut good vs. evil, as both sides had done evil — one side more than the other. But it's a war to

²⁵¹ Hijr (حجر) - Hijr Ismail.

²⁵² Hajar (حجر) - the Stone.

²⁵³ A distinct uncle of Aisha RA who was considered to be the noblest of the people of Makkah in terms of hospitality and genuine sincerity.

defend the Haram and the sanctity of the Haram — so the Prophet ﷺ participated. Though one may say the Prophet ﷺ didn't physically fight, there is no denying that he ﷺ aided. So even though the minutiae of the extent of the participation is debatable, the bottom line is that even in wars that are not purely religious, the Muslim has some leeway to get involved. So this is something to think about in the world that we live in. Indeed, many wars are not religious, especially the ones that don't involve Muslim lands. But the fiqh of whether we can help or not is something that can be discussed based on this incident.

2. The incident of Hilf al-Fudul shows that the Prophet ﷺ was actively involved with the society of his time, even though the society was not Muslim. And the causes he got involved with were not purely religious. But as it involved justice, truth, and helping the oppressed, the Prophet ﷺ was proud to have been there. He said, "Were I called to uphold that treaty [even now as a Muslim and as a prophet], I would do so." This clearly shows us that getting involved in public causes is a part of being a good Muslim. And this is a big issue in our time, in that, as an ummah, some of us think we should only get involved in purely Islamic causes^[254] — and so they don't get involved in causes against racism, oppression, poverty, child abuse, etc. And they only care about Syria, Palestine, etc. —and no doubt, these are all good causes— but at the same time, we learn that the Prophet ﷺ was an active member of HIS society, who supported justice regardless of religion. So we should do the same in our time, especially as Muslims living in a non-Muslim land. Imagine the effect of our dawah if a representative of the Red Cross society asking for blood donation on TV was a bearded Muslim with a skullcap — nothing to do with Islam — but that is the best dawah. Imagine if a muhajjibah sister (hijabi) talks against racism, oppression, etc. — nothing about Islam — but her message in and of itself is dawah. Involvement with society is the best dawah that we can do. Because oppression is oppression regardless of [the religion of] who does it and who it's done against. Racism is racism. Child abuse is child abuse. Poverty is poverty. It affects all of us. When we become involved with the problems of society, people see us as sincere. *Then* when you come forth and say, "I am a Muslim," your Islam is shown to be a sincere faith. And this is what the Prophet ﷺ did. He was involved with the problems of his society and solving them — *then* when he became a prophet, he was known, he was loved, he was respected, his Message then became acceptable; and none of the Quraysh could come and say, "Where were you when we needed you?", "Who are you to preach to us?" The bottom line is that there are common human values: justice, security, etc. — and the Muslim needs to be at the forefront of these issues. When we support justice and have the proper theology, it will come as a total package.

3. It clearly demonstrates the status of the Prophet ﷺ, in that, he is called to witness the treaty and he is the youngest participant at 20 years old. This shows that they saw in him a future leader — one who is truthful and honest and well-respected.

4. Despite all the differences and problems of the Quraysh, they still had characteristics of nobility and virtue. They agreed to come together to help the wronged and the oppressed. Even though it was a time of Jahiliyyah, there was still an element of good. And because of this, Allah sent the Prophet ﷺ in their midst to revive those very virtues.

²⁵⁴ Unfortunately, some Muslims think that dawah is only talk, preaching through theology, debate, etc. No doubt, this is one aspect. But it's not bulk of the dawah.

009. Marriage to Khadija & Re-building Ka'aba

As previously mentioned, there is very limited information available on the first 40 years of the life of the Prophet ﷺ. Only two more incidents have been recorded from the pre-prophethood period, and the first of these is his marriage to Khadija RA:

How the Prophet ﷺ Met Khadija RA

Now, how did the Prophet ﷺ meet Khadija bint Khuwaylid (خديجة بنت خويلد) RA? As we said before, the Prophet ﷺ was a shepherd. He would find people who owned a flock, tended them, and would get some wages. And it so happened Khadija's older sister had a flock —a herd of camels— and she was looking for someone to graze and take care of them outside of Makkah. So she hired two people — the Prophet ﷺ and another young man.

After the Prophet ﷺ had finished the grazing, they had to go back into town to collect the wages. The young man with the Prophet ﷺ said, "Now that we are done, let's go and ask for our wages." But the Prophet ﷺ said, "Why don't you go on my behalf — because I am too shy to go." So the person came to Khadija's sister —and it so happened Khadija was in the house at the time— Khadija asked, "Where is Muhammad?" The young man said, "He was too shy to come and ask it from you." So at this, Khadija's older sister remarked, "I have not seen any man who is more shy, honorable, noble, and chaste in his interactions, than Muhammad." And it's narrated that this is the first time Khadija heard of the Prophet ﷺ — and it was in such a manner — so something entered her heart.

And note, Khadija RA was single at the time even though it was generally rare for an adult to remain single in their society. A lot of men did try to marry her because of her noble, pure Qureshi lineage, her substantial wealth, and the fact that jahili law dictates the wealth would be transferred to the husband — but she turned all of them down.

Later that year, Khadija had to send her caravan to Syria for commerce and trade. And as we know, she owned a lot of wealth: she had been married twice, and her second husband was a wealthy merchant, and the two of them did not have any children^[255], nor did the husband have any siblings — so she inherited his small fortune when he passed away, even though it was not common in the time of Jahiliyyah for women to inherit. And over the course of the next few years, she kept on investing: she would order some goods to be purchased in the time of hajj, and she would sell them in Syria — and then purchase other goods from Syria, and sell them in Yemen — then purchase other goods from Yemen, and sell them in Makkah — so on and so forth. But because she was a woman, she could not go herself. So every single time, she had to hire a businessman. And note, in those days, you wouldn't hire such a person by a wage. You would make it a percentage profit, i.e., mudarabah (مضاربة). For example, "30% of all the profit will be yours, and 70% will be mine." (And note, this is legitimate even in Islam.) But because Khadija is sending a man who is not

²⁵⁵ Khadija did have sons from the first marriage, but not the second.

related to her & not looking after her best interest, usually, the person would steal, lie, and cheat. Thus she never managed to get the type of wealth that she deserved.

So when she heard the praise of the Prophet ﷺ, she decided to choose him for the mudarabah, even though he was inexperienced when it came to business — he had never ever gone on a business trip himself — but because of his honesty, she decided to overlook this lack of experience and the lack of age^[256]. And indeed, it's human nature that when a man is decent and elegant in his interaction with a woman, the rest of his nature is also good.

So Khadija, who was well known as the richest lady in Makkah, sent a message to the Prophet ﷺ through her servant, asking him to take care of her caravan. So the Prophet ﷺ went to Abu Talib and said, "O my uncle, Khadija has sent me such-and-such an offer — what do you think?" (And this shows us that the Prophet ﷺ was a very respectful young man — he didn't just impetuously say yes, but asked his uncle for advice and permission.) And Abu Talib basically said, "O my nephew, she is well known to be the richest woman. Allah has blessed you with this opportunity. Do not say no to her." So the Prophet ﷺ said yes, and Khadija agreed to give him 50% of the profits —as she felt a good incentive would lead to him doing a better job— so he ﷺ accepted, and she sent one of her servants along, and the Prophet ﷺ took the caravan to the city of Bosra^[257].

Bosra is a small town outside of Damascus by ~100 km and was the typical and most convenient location for the Arabs to do all the buying and selling^[258]. It had a huge marketplace — so many different people from all around used to go there for trade. Yemenites, Egyptians, etc. It is well known to be a town of economic transactions. And to this day, there are ruins of the marketplace.

So Khadija sent her servant Maysara (ميسرة) with the Prophet ﷺ, and when they returned, Maysara told Khadija of the care and concern that the Prophet ﷺ had shown, and of the honesty in his dealings and transactions. And it's also been narrated that she told her of the miracle of the cloud that always provided shelter for the Prophet ﷺ^[259].

In any case, the Prophet ﷺ made double or triple the profit anyone else made before — and this is of course for two reasons: (i) he is being honest, and (ii) because whatever he does has barakah — Allah blesses it. Indeed, as we have seen, even when the Prophet ﷺ was with Halimah as a baby, everything got barakah. So there is no question that whatever the Prophet ﷺ is doing, it will have extra blessings.

So the caravan came back with double, triple profits. This thus increased the emotions Khadija RA had for the Prophet ﷺ. And note, there is nothing wrong with feeling such emotions — she is a single lady, and the Prophet ﷺ is an eligible bachelor. Falling in love

²⁵⁶ The Prophet ﷺ was just around 24-25.

²⁵⁷ Not to be confused with [Basra](#) (البصرة) of Iraq or [Bursa](#) (بورصة) of Türkiye.

²⁵⁸ During Umar's RA caliphate, he conquered Bosra, and he built one of the first masjids ever built in what is now Syria.

²⁵⁹ No doubt, this can happen by the will of Allah. However, as we mentioned during our discussion about the story of Buhayra, it's important to exercise caution when narrating pre-prophethood miracles in the absence of authentic reports.

is not haram; it's what you do with that love that can make it halal or haram. Falling in love is a natural emotion. First Khadija RA heard the Prophet ﷺ being praised so highly by her own sister, then she saw his honesty, then she saw the barakah, etc., so it's only natural. And thus, there is nothing wrong with her desire now to marry the Prophet ﷺ. In fact, what lady would not have desired to marry the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Marriage to Khadija RA

The precise details regarding how the marriage proposal came about vary, but it is widely agreed among scholars that Khadija RA was the one who instigated it and arranged for the Prophet ﷺ to propose. Normally, the man proposes; however, if the woman expresses an interest, this is permissible even in Islam under certain guidelines.

In one version, it's said Khadija RA confided in an elderly servant named Nafisa (نفيسة) about her desire to marry the Prophet ﷺ. And Nafisa took it upon herself and said, "Leave this to me. I will arrange it," so she approached the Prophet ﷺ with the question, "O Muhammad, why don't you get married?" The Prophet ﷺ simply smiled and said, "Who would marry me? I am an orphan and I am poor." Nafisa then posed the question, "What if Khadija wanted to marry you?" The Prophet ﷺ fell silent, and then said, "Why would she want me?"—notice the Prophet ﷺ didn't say no, but he was simply wondering why Khadija RA wanted him — so the implied message was that he was interested. So Nafisa went back and told Khadija RA of this, and the matter went to the next stage.

Ibn Ishaq said this marriage took place 3 months after he returned from Bosra, in the month of Safar. So for 3 months, there was this back-and-forth.

There are a number of versions as to how the marriage took place as well.

In one version, it is narrated with a very weak chain that Khadija's father opposed the marriage, so he was caused to become drunk, and it was made to appear to him that the marriage had taken place, so when he became sober, it was too late to say no. But this narration contradicts other known fact, as Ibn Hajar and others have pointed out: Khadija's father had died long ago — which makes sense, as had he been alive, he would have taken the money — therefore, it is clear that this version is not true.

The more authentic version is that her uncle Amr ibn Asad (عمرو بن أسد) became the wali^[260], and the Prophet ﷺ came with Abu Talib who delivered the khutbah^[261], as recorded in the early books: he began by praising Allah and extolling the lineage and the blessings of the Quraysh — that they are the caretakers of the Ka'bah, the blessed people of Makkah, etc.; and then said: "My nephew is the one who is no comparison with any other young man in all of Makkah, in his manners, nobility, and lineage. And he has proposed to

²⁶⁰ Wali (ولي) - legal guardian.

²⁶¹ Khutbah (خطبة) - sermon.

your noble lady with a mahr^[262] of 12 uqiyah (أوقية) and a nash (نش) (of silver)^[263] (which amount to a modest and respectful sum of about \$400)." And Khadija's uncle stood up and said, "This is a young man who cannot be refused — we accept the proposal."

And as we mentioned, Khadija had been married twice before. And her first marriage gave her a son named Hala ibn Abi Hala (هالة بن أبي هالة)^[264].

Now, the question of Khadija RA's age at the time of her marriage to the Prophet ﷺ has been a topic of much discussion among scholars. While the popular view holds that she was 40 years old and died at the age of 65, as reported by the classical scholar al-Waqidi, other reports suggest a different age. Scholars unanimously agree that the couple was married for 25 years and that the Prophet ﷺ was 25 years old at the time of the marriage. However, the age of Khadija RA at the time of marriage is subject to debate. From an academic standpoint, the widely accepted age of 40 presents two issues:

1. Al-Waqidi, who reports this age, is not to the caliber of other scholars who have reported a different age. Other scholars, such as al-Bayhaqi and Ibn Kathir, report that Khadija RA died at around 50 years of age, suggesting that she was likely between 25 and 35 years old at the time of marriage. Another early authority, Hisham ibn al-Kalbi, says: Khadija married the Prophet ﷺ when she was 28 years old. And we have from al-Hakim, that Ibn Ishaq, the preeminent authority on seerah, also reports that she was 28 years old. So the people reporting she was 28 are more in quantity and in quality in terms of knowledge.
2. The Prophet ﷺ and Khadija RA had at least 6 children (or maybe more). And a woman in her 40s, it is very difficult to imagine her having 6 children. Whereas a woman at 28, this is very reasonable and makes a lot more sense.

Therefore, based on the weight of evidence from multiple authoritative sources, it appears more academically sound to conclude that Khadija RA was likely 28 years old at the time of her marriage to the Prophet ﷺ.

What We Can Learn From the Prophet's ﷺ Marriage to Khadija RA

1. It shows the importance of honesty and good akhlaq^[265] — it's appreciated by all of humanity. The noble conduct of the Prophet ﷺ as a shepherd upgraded his position and pay grade. Because he was honest, trustworthy, modest, and humble, opportunities were created that gave him higher positions. This is the reality of the dunya. Character counts even much more than experience. Indeed, Khadija RA overlooked the Prophet's ﷺ lack of experience.

²⁶² Mahr (مهر) - dower.

²⁶³ <https://sunnah.com/ibnmajah:1886>

²⁶⁴ When the risala of the Prophet ﷺ began, Hala eventually accepted Islam, and he lived a noble life alongside the Prophet ﷺ.

²⁶⁵ Akhlaq (أخلاق) - manners / character.

2. It shows the intelligence and status of Khadija RA — she saw the Prophet ﷺ as being an ideal and perfect husband. And this also shows the permissibility of, not just natural feelings of desire / attraction, but pursuing it in a permissible manner. It's not haram to be in love — it's what you do with it that makes it halal or haram.

3. Also, the Prophet ﷺ needed support and comfort for his future mission, so Allah chose for him a woman who would give him this. Behind every successful man, there is a good woman. This is the fact of life — men need a loving and supporting woman in their lives. In public, they can put on a macho and strong persona — but in private, they need the comfort and the support of a loving wife. And Allah chose Khadija RA for the Prophet ﷺ to be that loving and comforting wife.

4. The blessings of Khadija RA are just too numerous to mention. Of them:

- She was the first to believe in the Prophet ﷺ and comforted him when the revelation began [see [episode 10](#)].
- She was the one who took him to see Waraqa ibn Nawfal [see [episode 10](#)].
- She was the only one in which Jibril would come in the household (Jibril did not enter the house of any other wives of the Prophet ﷺ). Once, the Prophet ﷺ told Khadija, "O Khadija, here is Jibril, and he is sending Allah's salam upon you, and he is giving you his salam, and is giving you the glad tidings of a house in Jannah where there will be no noise or any struggling." And Khadija RA responded in such an intelligent way — she didn't say "Wa'alaykassalam, ya Allah^[266]," but rather, "Allah is al-Salam^[267], and may salam be upon Jibril, and may salam be upon you, ya Rasulullah." (Side note: Likewise, when something good happens to us, we're not supposed to say "Jazak'Allah, ya Allah^[268]"—because **Allah's** jaza^[269] comes to us, and we are nobody to give jaza back to Allah. [So say "alhamdulillah^[270]" instead.])

(A few months after Khadija's passing, one of the sahaba commented, "We did not see the Prophet ﷺ smile for months" [see [episode 19](#)].)

- Aisha RA, who was the favorite wife of the Prophet ﷺ in the Madinan phase, once said, "I was never more jealous of any woman than I was of Khadija, even though I never saw her, because I knew how much the Prophet ﷺ loved her." And once, when the Prophet ﷺ was talking about Khadija RA, Aisha RA had enough, so she uttered some things she shouldn't have uttered: "Ya Rasulullah, for how long are you going to mention an old [...] when Allah has given you a young fertile ground instead?" This remark left the Prophet ﷺ displeased, and he replied, "No, by Allah. Allah has not given me anyone better than her. She was the first to believe

²⁶⁶ Wa'alaykassalam, ya Allah (و عليكم السلام يا الله) - peace be upon you, O Allah.

²⁶⁷ Al-Salam (السلام) - the Peace / the Source of Peace.

²⁶⁸ Jazak'Allah, ya Allah (جزاك الله يا الله) - may Allah reward You, O Allah.

²⁶⁹ Jaza (جزاء) - reward.

²⁷⁰ Alhamdulillah (الحمد لله) - praise be to Allah.

in me when everyone rejected me. And she gave me of her money when everyone had abandoned me. And she supported me when the community gave me the cold shoulder. And Allah blessed me with children only through her." After this, Aisha RA learned her lesson and never mentioned Khadija RA again. One of the reasons why Aisha RA was so jealous of her was that whenever the Prophet ﷺ received gifts, money, or meat, he would send part of it to Khadija's RA friends — showing how much he thought of her. Another time, Khadija's older sister came to visit the Prophet ﷺ in Madinah —and Aisha was present— and when the sister was walking outside the door, the Prophet's ﷺ demeanor changed, because her footsteps reminded him of Khadija's. And when the sister asked permission to enter, Aisha could see the paleness on the Prophet's ﷺ face as all his memories of Khadija came flooding back. Of course the Prophet ﷺ knew it wasn't Khadija, but his memories of her were so strong that even after so many years, he was almost moved to tears.

And we can go on and on with regards to her blessings.

5. This also shows that the Prophet ﷺ was not a lustful man. If he wanted to, he could have married a younger lady who was a virgin. But rather, he married someone of nobility, even though she was twice widowed with children. And he remained faithful to her until she passed away.

6. All of the children of the Prophet ﷺ were through Khadija. There were at least 6. The first child was al-Qasim (القاسم) — hence the Prophet's ﷺ kunya^[271] was Abu al-Qasim (أبو القاسم). And it was said that al-Qasim was born in the days of Jahiliyyah, and he had reached the age where the boys could ride on the camel, i.e., 7-8 years old, and then he passed away. That's all we know. And then the Prophet ﷺ had Zaynab (زينب), Ruqayyah (رقية), Ummi Kulthum (أم كلثوم), and Fatima (فاطمة). And then his final son with Khadija, Abdullah (عبد الله). Some people add two more, but the stronger position is that Abdullah had two nicknames: al-Tahir (الطاهر) and al-Tayyib (الطيب)^[272], i.e., the names of the supposed two extra children. Abdullah was born after the revelation began, and he died in infancy. And the four daughters all lived to maturity and married; and three of them died in the Prophet's ﷺ own lifetime [see episodes [41](#) & [84](#)]. Only Fatima outlived him by a few months [see [episode 101](#)].

Tangent: Wisdoms Behind the Prophet ﷺ Losing His Children

It's interesting to comment that, subhan'Allah, the Prophet ﷺ is facing the most traumatic problems after problems. Indeed, there is no greater difficulty than losing parents or children. And the Prophet ﷺ had to go through both. Our Prophet ﷺ is multiple times orphaned. And then he is multiple times losing his children — first al-Qasim, then Abdullah, and then Ibrahim (إبراهيم) who was born of his maidservant [see [episode 97](#)]. It's as if Allah

²⁷¹ Kunya (كنية) - teknonym.

²⁷² Al-Tahir and al-Tayyib both mean "the Pure One."

SWT is giving him the most difficult tragedies imaginable. Why? There are a number of wisdoms we can glean:

1. Allah SWT is telling him that your purpose in life is to be tested and afflicted — because it is through these trials that one's relationship with Allah is established.
2. Living through these trials, true servitude is reached — you understand who you are and who is Allah SWT.
3. Living through these trials develops the utmost patience — and the Prophet ﷺ needed this to fulfill his mission.
4. Allah SWT tested him through these hardships so that his heart becomes soft.

And note, even though Allah SWT tested him, He did not test him beyond his capacity — He blessed him with both sons and daughters to give him a taste of fatherhood, and to silence those who tried to mock him. Indeed, if the Prophet ﷺ didn't have any children, people could have said many things. And subhan'Allah, when the Prophet ﷺ lost his son Abdullah, al-As ibn Wa'il (العاص بن وائل) was so crude and callous that he cheered for joy, happy that the Prophet's ﷺ progeny 'has been cut off.' Can you imagine the pain of losing a son, and on top of that your worst enemy is running through the streets of Makkah cheering for joy? So to this, Allah revealed Surah al-Kawthar (سورة الكوثر) —and the three short ayahs in the surah were so beloved to the Prophet ﷺ —: "Indeed, We have granted you, [O Muhammad], al-Kawthar. So pray to your Lord and sacrifice [to Him alone]. Indeed, your enemy is the one cut off" [Quran, 108:1-3]. Allah SWT is saying, 'We have given you plenty, so do not worry, We have taken away one thing, but given you al-Kawthar (and al-Kawthar means many things: the Paradise, everything in Paradise, and the river of Paradise). Pray to Allah, and those who oppose you will be the ones who are cut off from everything.' And Allah has kept His promise — look at their legacy: the only people who mention the names of al-As ibn Wa'il and the like are those who hate and despise them. Look at how Allah has disgraced the enemies of the Prophet ﷺ. What legacy have they left?

There are also theological wisdoms as to why the Prophet ﷺ was not allowed to have sons: As we know, he ﷺ was blessed with Ibrahim when he was 59 or 60, and the child lived for only around 18 months — and in Ibn Majah, the Prophet ﷺ is recorded as having said, "Had Ibrahim lived, he would have been a prophet"—that is, it's not possible that the son of Rasulullah ﷺ to not be a prophet — but because the Prophet ﷺ was the last prophet, theologically, Allah had to seal the prophethood. So it's clear why the Prophet ﷺ had no sons. And the Prophet ﷺ knew this. (And subhan'Allah, look at what the ummah has done with the sons of the Prophet's ﷺ *daughter*. What groups were formed exaggerating their status. Imagine if there was a direct *male* progeny — the ummah would have made them into prophets / gods walking on the earth. So it was actually a mercy and blessing from Allah that the sons of the Prophet ﷺ did not live long.)

Rebuilding of the Ka'bah

The incident of the rebuilding of the Ka'bah took place when the Prophet ﷺ was around 35 years old — so 10 years after the marriage with Khadija RA.

The Ka'bah was damaged by a fire and a flood: a woman was cooking outside of her house close to the Ka'bah —and in those days, the houses were 5-10 feet away from the Ka'bah— and one of the embers sparked, and it set the cloth of the Ka'bah ablaze. So the Ka'bah was damaged — and at this stage, it was weakened, but not destroyed. But later on, a massive flood came into Makkah, and it destroyed the roof and some of the walls of the Ka'bah. So the Quraysh decided they needed to rebuild the entire Ka'bah, as the structure is now more or less gone.

And around the same time the Ka'bah was destroyed, there was news of a sale going on in the city of Juddah (جُدَّة) (now Jeddah):

The Caesar of Rome had sent supplies to one of the cities of Yemen to rebuild a church that was destroyed by the Persians. Caesar got the best wood, marble, craftsmen, etc., and sent them all to Yemen on a ship. But Allah had another plan — the books of seerah mention Allah sent a wind off the coast of Juddah causing the ship to crash. The ship was damaged, but it made it to Juddah. So all of the cargo —the most expensive marble, wood, etc.— is now in Juddah. Subhan'Allah, it's amazing when you think about it. And the people of the ship decided to sell the material, as they had to raise enough money to go back to Rome. So when the Quraysh heard about this, they gathered all of their wealth, went to Juddah, and they purchased all of this merchandise along with hiring the craftsmen who had been educated in the palaces of Caesar. They bring all of the goods back to Makkah.

Now they are wondering, "Should we destroy the House of Allah?" i.e., to rebuild a whole new structure. And according to one report in Ibn Ishaq, when they were debating what to do, a large snake came out of the Well of Zamzam, and whenever they approached, it hissed at them. But then Allah sent a big bird to pick up the snake and remove it. So they took this as a sign that they should approach the Ka'bah. But of course, the thought of destroying the House of Allah was still considered sacrilegious to them, so they were hesitant to take action, and were nudging each other, "Why don't you go first." Until finally, al-Walid ibn al-Mughira (الوليد بن المغيرة)^[273] said, "I will do it," and he took an ax, went in front of the Ka'bah, and said, "O Allah, don't get alarmed or angry — we are just trying to help rebuild the Ka'bah," and he began breaking down one of the walls. And everybody just watched and nobody lifted a finger to help. They then started talking among themselves, "Why don't we use al-Walid as the 'litmus test.' If he survives the night, we will join him the next day." So they basically didn't help him until the next morning al-Walid ibn al-Mughira woke up just fine.

²⁷³ The nobleman of the Quraysh mentioned in the Quran, who will become one of the enemies of the Prophet ﷺ later on.

So the next day, everyone helped him tear the Ka'bah down and rebuild it. The task was divided among the subtribes of the Quraysh: they divided the subtribes into four groups, and each group took responsibility for one of the four walls. The Banu Abd Manaf (بنو عبد مناف), the prominent subtribe of the Quraysh which included the Banu Hashim, the tribe of Abdul Muttalib who was the legend among the Arabs, was assigned the most prestigious wall. And the second most prestigious was given to the Banu Makhzum which had al-Walid ibn al-Mughira, Abu Jahal (أبو جهل), et al.

And as we know, the Black Stone is situated at the corner of the Ka'bah, so it's connected to not one, but two walls — and these two walls are now under the responsibility of the two rivaling tribes, the Banu Abd Manaf and the Banu Makhzum. So when they got to the corner, trouble occurred — they both said, "The Black Stone belongs to our side. Not yours." And then the other tribes got involved as well and said, "Why should you get the privilege [of putting the Black Stone back in its place]?" So they all began to dispute until the fighting / anger between them reached such a level that the construction of the Ka'bah was stopped for five days.

On one of these days, the Banu Makhzum secretly put together an agreement with some other subtribes that they would fight to the death to put the Black Stone in — and they dipped their hands in camel blood as a promise / signature to make a pact. Subhan'Allah. Look at this Jahiliyyah — are you going to kill yourself and leave your wife widow and children orphan just for the pride and honor of putting the Black Stone in?!

They were almost about to reach into a big fight, until on the fifth day, Abu Umayya ibn al-Mughira (أبو أمية بن المغيرة), the oldest person alive in Makkah, said, "There will be no bloodshed. We are not going to fight over this. Let us just give it over to the next person who enters from the 'major area.'" Now this means it's going to be the luck of the draw — because whoever walks in will obviously choose his own tribe. But, as we know, the next person to enter turned out to be the Prophet ﷺ. And what is amazing is when the Prophet ﷺ walked in, each tribe was delighted, thinking the Prophet ﷺ liked them the most and would choose their side. Subhan'Allah. This shows the beautiful character of the Prophet ﷺ. [274]

And when the Prophet ﷺ walked in, as we know, he said, "Bring me a sheet / garment"—and when it was brought, he himself put the Black Stone on the garment, and said, "Let every subtribe send its representative, and we will all put the Black Stone together." So they all lifted it, including the Banu Makhzum (so they fulfilled their promise) — and then the Prophet ﷺ himself was the one who put the Black Stone into that particular location.

²⁷⁴ Fast forward a few decades later: In a hadith, it's narrated that Amr ibn al-As said, "The Prophet ﷺ was so gentle and nice to me that I knew he loved me the most out of everybody (or so I believed), so one day, I asked him ﷺ, 'Who do you love the most?' And the Prophet ﷺ said instantly, 'Aisha.'" Amr said, "No. I meant amongst the men." The Prophet ﷺ said, "Her father." Then Amr said, "After him?" The Prophet ﷺ said, "Umar." And Amr kept on asking until he got the point —his name never came up— and so he stopped asking. This hadith shows that the way the Prophet ﷺ dealt with everybody was so kind and gentle that they all felt the Prophet ﷺ loved them the most. And this is wallahi amazing.

Now, it's important to note that the Quraysh didn't build the Ka'bah in the original structure before it was destroyed — they changed a few things. And Allah had willed this change would become permanent:

1. Either the marble or the wood (we don't know which), they didn't have enough supply to rebuild the original rectangular Ka'bah as it was built by Ibrahim AS —because they were using expensive materials for the foundations— so they built a square instead; and to mark the other two corners, they used two posts. It was not their intention to make it permanent, but of course Allah willed it would be.
2. According to one report, the Ka'bah at the time of the Prophet's ﷺ early life was just around 10 feet high (the height of when you sit on a camel) — but upon rebuilding, the Quraysh doubled this height. And this began the concept of making the Ka'bah taller and taller, so in our time, it's much much higher.
3. Banu Abd Manaf made the door of the Ka'bah in the middle of the wall, not on the ground where people could go in, because they wanted to gain exclusivity and have access to who could go in and who couldn't. They had the keys and the ladder, so only those whom the Banu Abd Manaf approved could go into the Ka'bah. And to this day, the door is high in the center.
4. They built a water spout — logically, this was a necessity. And to this day, we have a water spout.

It's also worth mentioning that when the Prophet ﷺ conquered Makkah 25 years later^[275], he said to Aisha RA, "Were it not for the fact that your people are still new to Islam, I would have rebuilt the Ka'bah in its original structure of Ibrahim AS, and made the door accessible to everybody." But the Prophet ﷺ didn't, as there were many new converts at the time of the Conquest, and it would have been too big a fitna for them to see the Ka'bah being destroyed and then rebuilt. However, a few decades later, after the Prophet ﷺ had passed away, in the time of the early Umayyad dynasty, one group led by a pious sahabi, Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr RA, broke away from the Umayyad empire, and they founded their own mini-caliphate in Makkah. And when the aforementioned hadith reached Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr, he destroyed the Ka'bah, made it into a rectangle shape, and he lowered the door down to the earth — just like the Prophet ﷺ wanted. And this was happening in the time of the infamous Hajjaj ibn Yusuf (الحجاج بن يوسف), the most tyrant ruler ever seen in the ummah. And when Hajjaj overtook Makkah again from Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr by throwing catapults, it destroyed the Ka'bah. And as we know, he crucified Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr RA —a Companion, the son of a Companion, the brother of a Companion— in front of the Ka'bah. Subhan'Allah. Look at how evil this Hajjaj was. And Hajjaj then rebuilt the Ka'bah as it was before, i.e., square-shaped, with a raised door, etc. Then, it is reported that in the time of Imam Malik, the khalifa^[276] at the time asked Imam Malik, "Shall we rebuild the Ka'bah as it was built by Ibrahim AS?" But Imam Malik told him, "No. I don't want the Ka'bah to become a toy that kings come along and do what they want with it"—and this is what you call true

²⁷⁵ See [episode 83](#).

²⁷⁶ Khalifa (خليفة) - caliph.

fiqh^[277]. So from the time of Hajjaj ibn Yusuf, the Ka'bah has remained upon the foundations of the pre-Islamic structure, square-shaped with a raised door.

Conclusion

Notice how everything is planned by Allah — the Arabs in the desert had no fancy wood or marble, yet Allah sent them the choicest materials from the palace of Caesar (so we could say Caesar himself is 'financing' the building of the Ka'bah), subhan'Allah. Indeed, Allah is the best of planners.

²⁷⁷ Fiqh (فقه) - understanding.

010. Zayd b. Harithah & Beginning of Revelation

Last week, right at the end, we discussed the story of the rebuilding of the Ka'bah. And there are some profound symbolisms in it that we were not able to finish. So we do need to start from where we left off. And that is, we have just mentioned the tangent (off-camera) about the story of the Black Stone, that it had become fragmented, and the Abbasids had to put it back in molten metal, and the actual Black Stone is in pieces now — it's not the original stone.

Symbolisms We Learn From the Rebuilding of the Ka'bah

1. There is clearly the metaphor being given that the Ka'bah has been destroyed before the coming^[278] of the Prophet ﷺ and is being rebuilt right at his time: the symbolism is that the religion of Ibrahim AS had been destroyed and now the Prophet ﷺ is going to rebuild it. So the Ka'bah represents the religion of Ibrahim AS and the first House ever built for the worship of Allah. Allah says:

أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ

"The first House [of worship] established for mankind was that at Makkah" [Quran, 3:96]. Thus, this House represents the worship of Allah. And the symbolism of it being destroyed shows that the religion of Ibrahim has not been preserved by humanity, and the fact that it's being renewed at the time of the Prophet ﷺ is a sign that the religion of Ibrahim is going to be rebuilt.

2. The fact that the Ka'bah was rebuilt upon the foundations of Ibrahim but the building was renewed, shows that the foundation of the theology that the Prophet ﷺ comes with is the same "La ilaha illaLlah," but the shariah will be renewed.

3. Just like the Prophet ﷺ saved his people from civil war and bloodshed and exalted their honor, so too he will save them as the Last and Final Messenger and once again exalt their honor.

4. The fact that the Prophet ﷺ united all of the tribes by holding the cloth, is a symbol that he will unite them all under the banner of Islam.

5. Also, when the Prophet ﷺ entered the Ka'bah, all of the tribes were happy — the Prophet ﷺ was such an immense character, his nobility was so recognized that it didn't matter which subtribe he belonged to — everybody loved him as one of their own. This shows the status of the Prophet ﷺ.

There are one or two interesting bits here as well:

²⁷⁸ i.e., before the prophethood.

1. It's narrated that when Abu Jahal stood up to gather funds for the rebuilding of the Ka'bah, he said, "We are rebuilding the House of Allah, so make sure that the money you use is from your pure earnings — no cheating and no interest, no gambling or prostitution." This is amazing that someone as filthy as Abu Jahal understood this — that you should not spend in the Path of Allah with filthy money.

2. Also, for the first time in the history of the building of the Ka'bah, it was built slightly short of the foundations of Ibrahim — as we said, the jahili Arabs built it in a square shape. And there is a divine wisdom in this: We know that praying inside the Ka'bah is a very great blessing — but if it had been built according to the foundations of Ibrahim AS in a rectangle, it would have been impossible for common people like us to pray inside it. So it's a huge blessing from Allah that one portion of the foundations of Ibrahim is left open — as now everyone can get the blessing of praying inside the Ka'bah without actually entering the Ka'bah. How? By praying in the Hijr Ismail (حجر إسماعيل) — it's open for all to pray in. Thus there is great wisdom in this. Allah's plans always work out for the best.

There is another story before the advent of the wahy, which clearly shows the character of the Prophet ﷺ, and that is the story of Zayd ibn Harithah:

Adopting Zayd ibn Harithah

Zayd ibn Harithah (زيد بن حارثة) was a boy from the Qahtani branch of the Arabs, not the Adnani branch, and he was from a tribe of Yemen.

Zayd's mother and father were from two different tribes that had a love-hate relationship: One day, Zayd's mother, Su'da bint Tha'laba (سعدى بنت ثعلبة), took Zayd, who at the time was 7 or 8 years old, to her own tribe; and right at that time, it so happened that a small fight broke out between Zayd's father's and mother's tribes — and Zayd's distant relatives from his mother's side got so angry, they took Zayd, kidnapped him from his own mother, and sold him into slavery to get revenge at his father's tribe — because in Jahiliyyah, the son belongs to, and takes the lineage of, the father. And so, Zayd was sold in the grand fairs of Ukkadh^[279] —the largest marketplace which took place after the hajj season— and they sold him to Hakim ibn Hizam (حكيم بن حزام), Khadija's nephew, for 400 dirhams — Khadija had given Hakim money to find a young slave. And so Zayd becomes Khadija's servant. And when Khadija married the Prophet ﷺ, she gifted Zayd to the Prophet ﷺ. And this is of course way before Islam.

Zayd's father, Harithah, is frantically looking for his son. He is spreading the news, "There is a boy from our tribe — these are his features! If anybody hears of him, please come and tell me!" And it so happened that during the hajj season, someone saw Zayd, and realized this is the boy Harithah is looking for. So they told Harithah, "We found your son — he is a slave to one of the grandsons of Abdul Muttalib, and his name is Muhammad." So his

²⁷⁹ Ukkadh (عكاظ) - Okaz.

father and his father's brother travel to Makkah and ask where is Muhammad ﷺ. And they are told he is in the Haram area — so they approach the Prophet ﷺ and say, "Ya Muhammad ibn Abdul Muttalib, you are of the most noble lineage, and you are people of trustworthiness, and Allah has given you so much blessings. Ya Muhammad, we want to take our son back who was unjustly stolen and kidnapped and sold into slavery. Zayd is our son, and we will give you any ransom you want. But please be generous with us, because we can only afford so much."

Note this happened in the days of Jahiliyyah, so there was no law and order — and power belonged to the strongest. No court or anything of the sort for them to plead their case. The law of Jahiliyyah is that they have to deal with it — and thus, they are now willing to buy their son back. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Is this what you want? That I send Zayd back with you?" They said, "Yes." The Prophet ﷺ said, "It is up to him (Zayd). I will leave the matter to him. If he chooses you, I will send him back with no ransom. But if he chooses me, I can never turn away from somebody who has turned to me." So the father and uncle were overjoyed — they said, "O Muhammad! You have done marvelous, and you have done much more than we could have asked for!"

So the Prophet ﷺ called Zayd, who is now around 25 years old, and the Prophet ﷺ asked him, "Do you recognize these men?" Zayd said, "Yes, this is my father, and this is my uncle." Then the Prophet ﷺ said, "They have come requesting that you go back with them. And I have left the matter to you — if you want, you may go with them, or if you want, you may remain with me."

Subhan'Allah, even in this, we find that the Prophet ﷺ had a fondness for Zayd — he doesn't want to let go of him, but he cannot say no to Zayd's father and uncle, because morally, they have a point, "Our son is not a slave." So the Prophet ﷺ does the morally correct thing — but he doesn't want to hand over Zayd as he has genuine feelings of paternal love.

But to his father's and uncle's surprise, Zayd instantaneously said to the Prophet ﷺ, "I can never choose anyone over you, for you are to me more than a father and an uncle combined." This is unnatural for a man to say to a person who is not his blood relative. Biologically, the love you have for your father is there — it's in the fitrah. And yet, instantaneously, he said, "How can I choose anyone over you?" Wallahi, this is unnatural except if this man is a prophet of Allah — the love of a prophet trumps the bond of fatherhood.

At this, Zayd's father said, "O Zayd, have you gone crazy? You will choose to be a slave in a strange land, and refuse to come with your own father to your own tribe?"—because as a slave, you have no honor, rights, or protection. So his father said, "Have you gone crazy?" And to this, Zayd said, "I know what I have said. I have seen from this man that which no other man has done."

And right then, the Prophet ﷺ stood up, took Zayd by the hand, went to the Hijr Ismail, and announced, "O people of Makkah, I want you all to testify that from now on, Zayd is a free man, and I have adopted him as my son. So he is now my son, and he will inherit

from me, and I from him." The Prophet ﷺ did this in front of the father to bring peace to his heart, that his son is now a free man, adopted by the Quraysh.

Thus, the Prophet ﷺ adopted Zayd, and Zayd became known as Zayd ibn Muhammad (زيد بن محمد).

Subhan'Allah, this is an amazing story, and it tells us about the mannerisms of the Prophet ﷺ — it speaks volumes about who he is.

A few decades later, Abdullah ibn Umar (عبد الله بن عمر) RA remarked, "We never knew of Zayd by any other name except Zayd ibn Muhammad, until Allah revealed Surah al-Ahzab (سورة الأحزاب) 'Verse 5.'" This is where Allah says, "Call children by their fathers. That is more just in the Sight of Allah"—so this is when the Prophet ﷺ re-changed the name of Zayd back to Zayd ibn Harithah.

More About Zayd ibn Harithah RA

1. According to Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri, Zayd was the first person to accept Islam (after the revelation began, obviously). But note narrations differ over who the actual first convert was — and to reconcile between all different narrations, we simply say that: the first Qureshi to accept Islam of the adult males was Abu Bakr, the first female was Khadija, the first mawla^[280] was Zayd, and the first child was Ali. The point being Zayd was among the first.

2. In the days of Jahiliyyah, when Zayd was still a slave, he married Ummi Ayman, who as we said, was the servant of Aminah, the Prophet's ﷺ mother [see [episode 7](#)]. And after the passing of Aminah, Ummi Ayman was inherited by the Prophet ﷺ (she didn't suckle him, but took care of him). And Ummi Ayman was a young lady, maybe 10-15 years older than the Prophet ﷺ —so at least 20 years older than Zayd— and Zayd married her. And they had a child who was born literally in the house of the Prophet ﷺ, Usama ibn Zayd (أسامة بن زيد), the Hibbu Rasulillah^[281] — the one whom when the sahaba wanted something, they went to Usama and said, "Why don't you go to the Prophet ﷺ and ask him, because he loves you so much he will never say no." Usama was a baby raised in the house of the Prophet ﷺ, and he had a special status, as the Prophet ﷺ loved both him and his father so much.

3. When the Prophet ﷺ adopted and freed Zayd, this meant that Zayd would have the same status as the Quraysh. So the Prophet ﷺ encouraged him to marry his ﷺ own cousin, Zaynab bint Jahsh (زينب بنت جحش), to remove all 'elements of slavery' (stigma) from him.^[282]

²⁸⁰ Mawla (مولى) - freed slave.

²⁸¹ Hibbu Rasulillah (حُبُّ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ) - the Beloved of the Messenger of Allah.

²⁸² But as we know, the marriage didn't work out, so after a few years, they got divorced, and the Prophet ﷺ married Zaynab, as instructed by Allah directly in the Quran [33:37] [see [episode 69](#)].

4. Whenever the Prophet ﷺ sent Zayd for an expedition, he was put in charge. He was always the commander — and this shows the status that the Prophet ﷺ gave him. And eventually, as we know, Zayd met his martyrdom in the Battle of Mu'tah (سرية مؤتة) against the Romans [see [episode 73](#)] — and this was the only battle where the Prophet ﷺ put three people in charge, because it was such a fierce battle. He said, "Zayd is in charge of you (Muslims). And if something happens to him, then my cousin Ja'far ibn Abi Talib (جعفر بن أبي طالب). And if something happens to him, then Abdullah ibn Rawahah (عبد الله بن رواحة)." He puts three people in charge, one after the other. And all three leaders were killed, and then Khalid ibn al-Walid (خالد بن الوليد) took charge, and this was when Khalid became who he became [see [episode 74](#)].

The three commanders who died in the Battle of Mu'tah were all extremely beloved to the Prophet ﷺ. As such, this was a very painful time for the Prophet ﷺ. When the news of this came, it was very painful. Then a few years later, the Prophet ﷺ appointed Zayd's son Usama, who was a young lad of around 16 years old, to go and fight the next battle against the Romans. And as we know, the Prophet ﷺ passed away during this, and this is when the small crisis between Abu Bakr and Umar happened when Umar said, "Take Usama out of the battlefield, he is too young" — but Abu Bakr said, "I cannot undo a command that the Prophet ﷺ did" [see [episode 101](#)].

5. Zayd is the only sahabi who has the blessing of being mentioned by Allah, by name, in the Quran [33:37]. Not even Abu Bakr has this blessing.

6. Some of the sahaba said, "Had Zayd been alive when the Prophet ﷺ passed away, he would have been the khalifa"—as he was *that* beloved to the Prophet ﷺ.

7. Abdullah ibn Umar RA once complained to his father, Umar al-Khattab, who was the khalifa at the time, "My dear father, how can you give the salary of Usama ibn Zayd more than my salary?" Umar RA said, "Because he was more beloved to the Prophet ﷺ than you, and because his father was more beloved to the Prophet ﷺ than your father."

These are pretty much the only incidents we know about before the revelation begins.

And it's now as if the stage has been set, the character of the Prophet ﷺ has been established, there are many signs and hints that there is a prophet coming — there are clear indications that something is about to change.

The Beginning of Revelation

Aisha RA is the main narrator of the hadith of how wahy (revelation) began. It's a very long hadith —two pages— and it's very detailed. And in this, by the way, there is a beautiful wisdom — she couldn't have witnessed this herself but is narrating in vivid detail — which shows that the Prophet ﷺ had many conversations with her just like any loving husband does.

This is the hadith narrated in Bukhari^[283]:

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Aisha RA narrated: The commencement of the Divine Inspiration to the Prophet ﷺ was in the form of good dreams which came true like bright daylight, and then the love of seclusion was bestowed upon him. He used to go in seclusion in Ghari Hira^[284] where he used to worship (Allah alone) continuously for many days before his desire to see his family. He used to take with him the journey food for the stay and then come back to (his wife) Khadija to take his food like-wise again until suddenly the Truth descended upon him while he was in Ghari Hira. The angel came to him and asked him to read. The Prophet ﷺ replied, "I do not know how to read." (The Prophet ﷺ added): "The angel caught me (forcefully) and pressed me so hard that I could not bear it anymore. He then released me and again asked me to read and I replied, 'I do not know how to read.' Thereupon, he caught me again and pressed me a second time until I could not bear it anymore. He then released me and again asked me to read but again I replied, 'I do not know how to read (or what shall I read)?' Thereupon, he caught me for the third time and pressed me, and then released me and said, 'Read, [O Prophet,] in the Name of your Lord who created — created humans from a clinging clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous, who taught by the pen — taught humanity what they knew not' [Quran, 96:1-5]." Then the Prophet ﷺ returned with the revelation and with his heart beating severely. Then he went to Khadija bint Khuwaylid and said, "Cover me, cover me." She covered him until his fear was over and after that, he told her everything that had happened and said, "I fear that something may happen to me." Khadija replied, "Never! By Allah, Allah will never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your kith and kin, help the poor and the destitute, serve your guests generously, and assist the deserving calamity-afflicted ones." Khadija then accompanied him to her cousin Waraqa ibn Nawfal ibn Asad ibn Abd al-Uzza, who during the pre-Islamic period became a Christian and used to write the writing with Hebrew letters. He would write from the Gospel in Hebrew as much as Allah wished him to write. He was an old man and had lost his eyesight. Khadija said to Waraqa, "Listen to the story of your nephew, O my cousin!" Waraqa asked, "O my nephew! What have you seen?" The Prophet ﷺ described whatever he had seen. Waraqa said, "This is the same One Who Keeps the Secrets (angel Gabriel) whom Allah had sent to Moses. I wish I were young and could live up to the time when your people would turn you out." The Prophet ﷺ asked, "Will they drive me out?" Waraqa replied in the affirmative and said, "Anyone (man) who came with something similar to what you have brought was treated with hostility; and if I should remain alive until the day when you will be turned out, then I would support you strongly." But after a few days, Waraqa died and the Divine Inspiration was also paused for a while.

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²⁸³ <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:6982>

²⁸⁴ Ghari Hira (غار حراء) - the Cave of Hira'.

Aisha RA says, before the revelation began, the Prophet ﷺ used to seclude himself in the Cave of Hira^[285] on the top of the mountain that is now called Jabal al-Nour^[286]. The Prophet ﷺ would go with some food and water to just sit there and meditate for a number of nights. And when he ran out of food and water, he would go back to replenish and take care of some of the family affairs for a few days, and then go back up again.

In one narration in Sahih Muslim, the Prophet ﷺ is recorded as having said about during this time: "Before the revelation came to me, I began to hear rocks and stones greet me in my path. And there was a particular rock that always gave salam to me — and I recognize that rock even to this day."

Also around this time, every single night, the Prophet ﷺ began having a dream about what would happen the next day — as the narration in Bukhari says, "The Prophet ﷺ would dream as true as the sun rose (as certain as you know the sun will rise tomorrow)"—that is, his dreams would all come true. He mentioned this to Khadija, and she said this is a good sign from Allah.

And it's mentioned in another narration in Bukhari that this period of dreams lasted for 6 full months. So let's pause here for a while to talk about dreams.

Firstly, we know for a fact that the revelation of the Quran began in Ramadan [see Quran, 97:1].

Secondly, in a hadith in al-Tirmidhi, the Prophet ﷺ said, "Nothing is left of prophethood except good dreams. And good dreams are 1/46 of prophethood." Some scholars tried to explain this particular ratio, and one of the explanations is:

- 6 months before Ramadan —from Rabi' al-Awwal to Ramadan— the Prophet ﷺ saw his dreams come true the next day.
- And his prophethood lasted for 23 years.
- As a fraction, this is [6 months/23 years] = 1/46. This exact fraction.

[But of course, we have no way of discerning whether this is correct, as there is no evidence from hadith to support this interpretation.]

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Why are all these things happening to the Prophet ﷺ ?

1. To indicate to him that something momentous is about to happen. A sign that he needs to prepare.

²⁸⁵ This cave is amazing in many ways. It's not as much of a cave as it is a crevice (a type of hole). And when you sit in the cave, there is only space for one person, and you are forced to face the direction of the Ka'bah. And to this day, you can clearly see the Ka'bah from the cave. And it's said in Ibn Ishaq that Abdul Muttalib was the one who discovered it and he also sat there to meditate.

²⁸⁶ Jabal al-Nour (جبل النور) - Mountain of Light.

2. Some scholars have said being a prophet requires spiritual and psychological training. And so the Prophet ﷺ is being upgraded and transformed into the Messenger of God. For 6 months he is seeing dreams, hearing stones saying salam, etc. It's as if the Prophet ﷺ is being spiritually, mentally, and psychologically trained for the big revelation.

Tangent: Three Types of Dreams

There are three types of dreams [that we non-prophets see, believers and non-believers]:

1. Dreams from Allah — these dreams are: (1) generally good and positive; (2) they come true; (3) could be visions of the future (could be of tomorrow, next year, or 10 years down the line); (4) sometimes it happens as it is & doesn't require interpretation, but sometimes it's symbolic & requires interpretation; and (5) they never terrify you.

2. Dreams from shaytan — these dreams: (1) terrify you (i.e., nightmares); (2) they are never true (so don't act upon them); and (3) we should turn away from shaytan (i.e., by reciting ta'awwudh^[287]), and we should not tell anybody about the dream.

3. Dreams from our own imagination — for example, if during the day we're thinking about a fancy car, we'll dream about driving that car. The sign of this dream is that it vanishes from our memory after a short while (a few minutes or hours or days).

(Cont.) The Beginning of Revelation

In these 6 months, the Prophet ﷺ cut himself off from society to worship Allah SWT more and more.

In some narrations, it's mentioned that on one of the Saturdays of Ramadan, the Prophet ﷺ saw a light and heard a sound, so he looked around — but he couldn't find anything. And on Sunday, the same thing happened. And then on Monday, Jibril AS came to him. Indeed, as we have discussed before^[288], the Prophet ﷺ said in a hadith in Sahih Muslim, "On a Monday I was born, and on a Monday the revelation began."

So the revelation began in the last 10 days of Ramadan on a Monday —which, by the way, marks Laylat al-Qadr^[289]—: The angel Jibril came to the Prophet ﷺ and told him, "Iqra^[290]." And the Prophet ﷺ said, "I cannot read." Then Jibril squeezed him so tight that the Prophet ﷺ said he lost all energy, then Jibril let him go. And Jibril said again, "Iqra."

²⁸⁷ Ta'awwudh (تعوذ): "A'uudhu-bi-Llaahi-min-ash-shaytaan-ir-rajeem (أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ) - I seek refuge in Allah from shaytan, the accursed one."

²⁸⁸ See [episode 6](#).

²⁸⁹ Laylat al-Qadr (ليلة القدر) - the Night of Glory / Decree / Power.

²⁹⁰ Iqra (اقرأ) - read.

And the Prophet ﷺ said again, "I cannot read." And Jibril squeezed him again. And this repeated until Jibril said the first 5 verses of Surah al-Alaq (سورة العلق).

Wisdom of Jibril's Squeeze

Why is Jibril squeezing the Prophet ﷺ? There is really no authoritative answer — but we can venture a few guesses:

1. Some scholars say: to indicate he is not dreaming — this is real.
2. Others say: Jibril is indicating to him that you are about to be inspired with a heavy Message. And indeed, Allah SWT said in the Quran, "We will soon send upon you a weighty revelation" [see Quran, 73:5]. Revelations were physically painful for the Prophet ﷺ to receive [see [episode 11](#)].
3. Some scholars say: it indicates that he will face three significant trials:
 - A. The boycott that lasted for 2½ years where the Muslims had nothing to eat [see [episode 18](#)].
 - B. The assassination attempt & the Hijrah [see [episode 27](#)].
 - C. The Battle of Uhud where he was bleeding from three places of his head [see [episode 49](#)].

But of course, every time, Allah opened the way out.

And only Allah knows why the squeeze occurred.

Brief Tafsir of the First Few Verses of Surat al-Alaq

Now, as for the revelation itself: "iqra" has two meanings — to "read" (from a paper, etc.), and to "recite" (from memory). The verb encompasses both meanings. When Jibril said, "Iqra," the Prophet ﷺ thought he meant in the "read from a parchment" sense. However, Jibril meant iqra in the sense recite from his memory. And at the third time of asking, Jibril said, "Recite in the Name of your Lord who created" [96:1]. That is, "Your recitation will come from Allah, in His Name, with His blessings"—the qira'ah^[291] will be in Allah's Name. And it's very profound that this is the first verse revealed — the Prophet ﷺ is being told that when you recite, recite in the Name of your Lord.^[292]

Next, Jibril said, "[The Lord who] created man from alaq (علق - that which clings)" [96:2]. And most scholars say "alaq" is a reference to the human embryo that is clinging in the womb of the mother. So Allah is saying the One who created man in all the stages —embryo, fetus, newborn— He is the One who is speaking to you.

²⁹¹ Qira'ah (قراءة) - recitation.

²⁹² Side notes: The ba (ب) in the verse could also mean: (1) you will recite *by* Allah — and in Arabic, this is called ba' al-sababiyyah (بَاء السببية) — meaning the recitation will come directly from Allah — not from yourself. And (2) it could also mean Allah will help you in this recitation — and in Arabic, this is called ba' al-ma'iyah (بَاء المعية).

And then in the third verse, "iqra" is mentioned for the second time: "Iqra! And your Lord is the Most Generous" [96:3]. And the reason for this duality / repetition is many: (1) Firstly, the repetition signifies that your job is to recite and keep on reciting, recite and keep on reciting, and recite and keep on reciting. (2) Secondly, some scholars have said the first iqra is a commandment to seek religious knowledge; and the second is a commandment to seek the knowledge of this world — as the first iqra says, "Iqra in the Name of your Lord" [96:1], and the second says, "Iqra! And your Lord is the Most Generous, who taught by the PEN — taught man what he didn't know" [96:3-5]. So it is as if the seeking of knowledge is being encouraged, both religious and of this dunya. Allah is telling us Muslims to learn the knowledge of religion that comes from Him, and then learn the knowledge of man that comes from the pens. But realize, even the knowledge of this dunya, Allah is the One who taught them; "Your Lord is the Most Generous who taught by the pen — taught man what he didn't know" [96:3-5].

And note these verses came down to an unlettered nation, a group of people who didn't know how to read and write. Allah is telling them to read what others have written and study them. It's not a coincidence that a hundred years later, the Muslims are already becoming the greatest superpower on earth. A few more centuries and they become the bastion of human civilization. They reach the pinnacles of their period — there are people coming to study medicine, science, math, chemistry, law, engineering, in Islamic lands. There are documented cases of people from [lands later became known as] France, Italy, England, coming to Andalus (Spain) to study medicine and then going back to teach their people.

Why did this happen? Because Allah encouraged the seeking of knowledge from the first revelation. Go ahead and study. Go ahead and learn. Go ahead and broaden your horizons. But as we do this, remember, all of the knowledge comes from Allah. If Allah hadn't given it to us, we wouldn't have it. Even the knowledge we take for granted, such as writing; the whole concept is really a miracle — the sounds that come out as speech can be recorded through scribbles? And you can then pass it down to anybody who was not present to hear it? Wallahi, it's a miracle. If Allah had not taught it to us, we would never know it. Our Prophet ﷺ said in a hadith, "The first person to ever write with the pen was Idris^[293]"—Allah taught the Prophet Idris how to write; and if He did not teach him, we would never have learned how to write. All knowledge of this world goes back to Allah. Subhan'Allah. Allah taught Adam how to speak; and if He did not teach him how to speak, we would be grunting and groaning like animals and would never have learned speech. And the Prophet ﷺ said Allah taught Nuh AS how to build a ship, and He SWT taught Dawud AS how to make the armor malleable. Allah taught so many prophets so many different things — and from these, all other human knowledge comes forth. This is why we say whatever discovery we come across, Allah is the One who gave us the qudrah^[294] & intelligence to find it.

Now, the significance of beginning the revelation with "iqra" is that Allah SWT is telling that what is about to happen is, from now on, man will have a direct communication (a Book) coming from Allah. So the first command is to read and recite the Quran. Also, it's worth

²⁹³ Idris (إدريس) - Enoch.

²⁹⁴ Qudrah (قدرة) - capacity.

noting that from the word "iqra," we get the word "Quran." And as iqra both means "recite" and "read," the Quran has been preserved in both memory and writing — in the hearts of the Huffaz^[295] and in the form of al-Kitab^[296]. And this is the only book preserved in both.

After the First Revelation

Getting back to the story, Aisha RA narrates that the Prophet ﷺ ran back to Khadija, and his heart was palpitating. He entered in upon Khadija, and said, "Cover me up, cover me up." This shows how unexpected the occurrence was for the Prophet ﷺ. And this, by the way, wallahi, also shows the humanity of the Prophet ﷺ, and that his Message was not premeditated — he didn't think, "Let me see how I can trick mankind into believing that I'm a prophet," unlike some false prophets who have magnificent stories of themselves which sound so grandiose, our Prophet ﷺ goes running home to his wife Khadija. Wallahi, this shows that our Prophet ﷺ is telling the truth and that he is a true prophet.

So Khadija covers him up — until finally, he calmed down. And then he told her all that had happened —which shows how close he was to her; he could have gone to Abu Talib, but he went to his wife— and said, "I am scared / worried for myself." And this phrase has led to some discord among scholars — what exactly did he mean by he is scared / worried for himself? There are over 12 opinions as to what this means, but the bottom line is clear: (1) Either he was scared of dying from the squeezing of Jibril; or (2) he was scared that he was seeing visions that normal people don't see — he was scared of losing his sanity.

And Khadija RA said:

كَلَّا! والله ما يخزيك الله أبداً، إنك لتصل الرحم، وتصدق الحديث، وتحمل الكَلَّ، وتكسب المعدوم، وتقري الضيف، وتعين على نوائب الحق

"No, by Allah! Allah will never humiliate you or cause you harm. You are good to your kin, you are truthful in speech, you take on the burden of others, you give money to those who have little, you are hospitable to your guests, and you do all kinds of good!" — She gives us a beautiful rule from her pure fitrah, without knowing any Quran or hadith, that if you do good, Allah will do good to you. And she is certain — she swears by Allah, that it's not possible that Allah will cause harm to the Prophet ﷺ. This shows why Allah chose Khadija RA for our Prophet ﷺ.

According to one book, she first went to Addas (عداس)^[297], a Christian who was a slave in Makkah, and asked him if he was familiar with what was going on. Addas said, "What? The angel of Allah (God) in this heathen place of idols of Makkah? How is this possible?" So when Khadija gets the sense that this is something that is related to Judaism or Christianity, *then* she goes to Waraqa ibn Nawfal — Khadija's older cousin. (And recall, Waraqa is one of the four hunafa' —[the four who rejected idolatry](#)— and he is the eldest of the four, and he had traveled through the lands and adopted some type of religion. The version in Bukhari

²⁹⁵ Huffaz (حفاظ) - Memorizers [of the Quran].

²⁹⁶ Al-Kitab (الكتاب) - the Book, i.e., the Quran.

²⁹⁷ See also: [episode 20](#).

says Waraqa learned to write the books in Hebrew and became a Christian — so most likely, he is a Jewish Christian, not a 'pure Christian' or a 'pure Jew' — as he didn't write in Syriac or Greek.)

And Khadija asks Waraqa, and he becomes enthusiastic and eager, and says, "By God! This is the same Keeper of Secrets (al-Namus) that came to Moses!" Notice Waraqa mentioned "Moses" and not "Jesus" — and this most likely is because he understood that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ would be resembling Moses AS more than Jesus AS, especially in terms of becoming political figures along with religious figures. He then said, "How I wish I were a young man so that I could help you when your nation ridicules you, persecutes you, and expels you!" When Waraqa said, "Expels," the Prophet ﷺ asked, "My nation will expel me?" Of course the first two are bad enough — but the third one, the Prophet ﷺ couldn't keep quiet and said, "My people will kick me out?" Waraqa said, "Yes, never has any prophet been sent except that his people ridiculed him, persecuted him, and expelled him."

And Aisha RA mentioned that Waraqa only lived a short time after the first revelation.

(Side note: Aisha RA narrated that once, Khadija RA asked the Prophet ﷺ about the fate of Waraqa^{[298][299]}: "He believed in you, but he died before your advent." And the Prophet ﷺ said, "I saw him in a dream, and upon him were white garments. If he were among the inhabitants of the Fire, then he would have been wearing other than that." So from this, we deduce that Waraqa was surely one of the earliest converts to Islam — he was the first sahabi, and the first to die as a Muslim in Islam.)

The Second Revelation

The Prophet ﷺ then continued to narrate his story, "The revelation stopped for a while [after the first revelation]" — some scholars say up to 6 months, some say 3 months. And so the Prophet's ﷺ life resumed back to normal. But then, "When I was walking, I heard a sound, so looked up, and there I saw the same angel that had come to me in Hira, sitting on a throne that was in the heavens and the earth, and once again I trembled — and I rushed back to Khadija again saying, 'Daththiruni^[300],' and that was when Jibril came and revealed the second revelation:

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ
قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ...

'O you who is wrapped up [in a cloak]! Stand up and warn (be active and spread the Message)!' [Quran, 74:1-2]."

(So scholars say: with "iqra [read]," the Prophet ﷺ became a nabi [prophet], and then with "qum fa andhir [stand up and warn]," he became a rasul [messenger].)

²⁹⁸ <https://youtu.be/WnQsjVWuiG0?t=185>

²⁹⁹ <https://sunnah.com/tirmidhi:2288>

³⁰⁰ Daththiruni (دثثروني) - wrap me up.

وَرَبِّكَ فَكَبِّرُ
وَتِيَابِكَ فَطَهِّرُ
وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرُ
وَلَا تَمُنُّنَّ نَسْتَكْتِرُ

"And your Lord, glorify. And your clothing, purify. And uncleanness, avoid. And do not confer favor to acquire more" [Quran, 74:3-6].

You can understand these verses literally and metaphorically. The symbolisms are, "Worship and pray to your Lord, and have strength from Him throughout! And be pure physically and spiritually — cleanse yourself from sins! And abandon all idols! And don't be greedy for what is in the hands of man — do things for the sake of Allah and expect your reward from Him!"