

In Defense of the Messenger

Research on and Responses to the Misconceptions
about the Messenger of God, Muhammad^ﷺ

By

Dr. Alaa Alsalem

Introduction

In the name of God, the Abundantly Merciful, the Intensely Merciful. All praise is due to God.

Muhammad^P, son of Abdullah, is the servant and Messenger of God to all of creation, embodying God's perfect vicegerency with divine attributes most magnificently reflected in him. The Messenger's qualities, mirroring the absolute perfection of God, granted him the highest rank among creation. Just as God Almighty is unique and without equal, of the created beings, Muhammad too is unparalleled in all of creation. As such, capturing the full essence of this extraordinary personality in a single study is nearly impossible.

This book, *In Defense of the Messenger*, is a work of research and analysis that addresses the issues and misconceptions raised about the Messenger's character. It does not aim to define his status and attributes according to definitive religious texts, nor does it seek to emphasize his exceptional humanitarian and civilizational contributions.

No fair-minded person doubts the greatness of the Messenger's personality, both in his prophetic and human dimensions. Yet, as with any clear truth, he has been subject to slander and skepticism in this worldly realm. The Noble Messenger, both personally and in his mission, has faced campaigns of doubt and slander led by hypocrites, agitators, atheists, and skeptics, including followers of some religions that came before [Islam] No prophet, messenger, or revered leader has been immune to such attacks. Even God Almighty has not been exempt. When browsing books and articles, one will encounter numerous misconceptions and objections about the attributes and actions of God—even His very existence is questioned. If this is the case with God, then what about Muhammad^P, His servant? It is the nature of the world we live in—a place of trial and testing.

However, intellectual integrity requires us to consider several important points:

First: A sound scientific and intellectual approach requires that evidence be met with evidence. It is unscientific to counter knowledge with doubt or to respond to evidence

with mere suspicion. No matter how significant a suspicion might seem to its proponent, it remains just that—a suspicion or doubt, and it cannot be equated with scientific evidence. In our case, the truth and legitimacy of the Messenger Muhammad^P have been established by the same evidence through which all of God's vicegerents are known:

- 1) Explicit texts and God's testimony
- 2) Knowledge and wisdom
- 3) Calling to the Sovereignty of God

For example, the aspect of knowledge and wisdom was clearly evident in the Messenger's character through the teachings he spread among people and his responses to their questions. No rational person with even a minimal amount of understanding would consider these teachings devoid of knowledge and wisdom. Therefore, it is unreasonable for anyone to deny that he possessed these attributes based upon mere suspicion. It is logically incumbent upon anyone who denies the truth of the Messenger's divine message and mission to provide conclusive evidence that his teachings, commandments, and values are completely devoid of knowledge and wisdom—a task that is impossible for them.

Second: There is no doubt that the Messenger Muhammad^P is a significant figure—not only as a divine messenger connected to the unseen and sent by God but also as the leader of a major reformist movement and an intellectual, social, and moral renaissance. This movement brought about profound changes in religious, intellectual, social, moral, and political spheres, as well as other aspects of human life, all achieved with the means available during his lifetime. These transformative changes occurred in a remarkably short period in the environment where he was sent, a fact acknowledged by even his fiercest critics.

Certainly, a figure of such stature requires an official representative [after him] to convey his message, communicate his divine mission, speak on his behalf, interpret his teachings—especially the general ones—and clarify his stance on various events. This representative would be tasked with explaining specific issues, verifying their authenticity, and clearing up any confusion, much like the role required for any important figure or entity. Such authority cannot be assumed by just anyone.

Regarding the Messenger Muhammad^P, it is crucial to understand that the authority to present him and his prophetic mission lies exclusively with specific representatives: God Almighty, the Messenger himself, and his infallible successors—the twelve Imams and twelve Mahdis. Anyone other than these representatives does not represent the Messenger, nor are they associated with him in any way, and the Messenger cannot be held accountable for their claims.

Based on the above arguments, it is evident that:

1. Criticism of the Messenger Muhammad based solely on certain traditions or narrations found in Muslim books that may not align with his infallibility, honor, chastity, modesty, mercy, justice, and other virtuous qualities, should not be regarded as definitively authentic or unquestionably attributed to him. It is inconceivable that anything contrary to noble morals could come from someone whom God has described as having “great moral character,” as stated in the Quran: “Indeed, you are of a great moral character.”¹

This definitive Quranic text—both in its origin and meaning—provides a sufficient standard for judging any historical or narrative report suggesting that the Messenger acted against noble morals. Whether such a report comes from an enemy, a companion, or even one of his wives, it is essential to prioritize the Quran over any narration and accept the latter only if it aligns with the Quran. Furthermore, various motivations, such as religious and political agendas, have led to the distortion, fabrication, and forgery of many narrative and historical texts. This is particularly true of people who resented Islam for exposing their corruption and stripping them of their social status. They sought revenge by inserting spiteful and malicious fabrications into religious accounts, leading to misconceptions and criticism of the Messenger—who is entirely innocent of these accusations.

2. The principle of using a definitive text as the standard applies whenever a transmitted religious account contradicts a clear and definitive text. However, when the contradiction is less apparent, it is inappropriate to judge these accounts without consulting the official representative of the Messenger. This means seeking guidance from one of his infallible successors to understand the context and meaning of the Messenger's actions before making judgments based on personal interpretations.
3. Some of the doubts raised about the Messenger and his successors arise from the statements of those who have appointed themselves as unsolicited, meddlesome spokespeople for religion, and claimed the right to represent the Messenger and his successors. These individuals have taken it upon themselves to interpret ideology, matters of religion, and the meanings of the Quran and religious accounts, as well as the broader concepts of Islam conveyed by God's vicegerents in their texts and narrations. Many of these teachings may be

¹ Quran 68:4.

ambiguous and require clarification by an infallible successor. However, these self-appointed representatives have often misunderstood or misrepresented these teachings, leading to interpretations that sometimes contradict each other or even conflict with established scientific facts. As later became apparent, their explanations were merely personal opinions that do not reflect the true perspective of the Messenger and his successors, nor do they reflect the true understanding that God Almighty intended through His Messenger and His vicegerents. Moreover, their opinions have led to the division of Muslims into various sects and conflicting legal and doctrinal schools. It is unjust to hold God's vicegerents accountable for the statements of others and use these statements as a reason to doubt the vicegerents and their message. Such doubts reveal that the individual is more interested in creating discord than in genuinely seeking the truth.

4. What has been discussed does not imply that only the infallible successors are permitted to convey the life story of the Messenger and his successors, or to explain the Messenger and his successors' teachings, commandments, and actions in an absolute sense. Rather, it means that people should not make judgments about narrations, determine their authenticity, or form ideological beliefs based on these narrations—especially when there is doubt or ambiguity—without first consulting the rightful successor of the Messenger, the legitimate vicegerent, to confirm whether the conveyed narration is valid, and to understand its context if it is indeed valid.

When examining the statements of skeptics, one finds that their misconceptions and objections regarding the Messenger and Islam generally arise from the following:

1. Certain narrations and events, reportedly involving the Messenger and conveyed by individuals considered to be among his companions or possibly one of his wives. However, they are false and never occurred.
2. A lack of understanding regarding the wisdom and reasons behind the Messenger's intended actions under certain circumstances.
3. Ignorance of certain texts leads skeptics to believe they contain a condemnation of the Messenger. However, nothing could be further from the truth. This becomes evident when we examine the Quranic verses that reference the Messenger, which skeptics claim contradict his infallibility. As we will demonstrate, this assumption is entirely unfounded.

Another significant reason skeptics criticize the Messenger stems from hatred and animosity. As Imam Ali^P said, "People are enemies of what they do not know." I mention this because it is evident—and perhaps others who read this book will agree—that

many skeptics deliberately distort or falsify facts, sometimes with the sole aim of reinforcing their preconceived judgment against the Messenger of God^E and undermining his character.

In this book, I categorized the skeptics' misconceptions about the Messenger of God, structuring its content into the following topics and chapters:

1 The Messenger's Early Life Before He Was Dispatched

2 Prophethood and Revelation

3 Infallibility of the Messenger

4 The Morality of the Messenger

5 The Messenger's Wars

6 The Messenger's Wives

7 The Traditions (*Sunnah*) of the Messenger

8 The Messenger's Teachings on Acts of Worship

9 Interactions with the People of the Scriptures

10 Treatment of Women

I have tried to address the most important misconceptions to the best of my ability without an exhaustive analysis, since that would be a never-ending task. Nevertheless, the answers in this book should help clarify other misconceptions, as some responses serve as general principles applicable to any misconceptions raised against the Noble Messenger.

I pray that God makes this work beneficial for everyone, including those who follow His Messenger and his pure family, and that He accepts it by His grace and generosity. Indeed, He is the Most Generous and Kind. Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds.

Alaa Alsalem

July 17, 2022
Najaf, Iraq

Foreword

Before delving into the misconceptions raised by skeptics about the greatest Messenger², it is fitting to consider two crucial matters:

1. A Brief Account of the Messenger's Life and Character

The Messenger of God, Muhammad, the son of Abdullah, grandson of Abdul Muttalib, great-grandson of Hashim, and descendant of Abd Manaf, was born in Mecca on the seventeenth of Rabi al-Awwal² in the late sixth century AD. His father, Abdullah, the youngest and most beloved of Abdul Muttalib's ten sons, shared the same mother with two brothers, Abu Talib and Zubair ibn Abdul Muttalib.³ Muhammad's mother was the pure and noble lady Amina, daughter of Wahb.

Imam Ali^P said, "By God, neither my father, my grandfather Abdul Muttalib, Hashim, or Abd Manaf ever worshiped an idol." When asked, "What did they worship?" he replied, "They used to pray toward the Kaaba following the religion of Abraham, peace be upon him, firmly adhering to it."⁴

Imam al-Sadiq^P said:

Gabriel^P descended upon the Prophet² and said: "O Muhammad, your Lord sends His greetings and says: 'I have forbidden hellfire upon the loins that bore you, the womb that carried you, and the lap that nurtured you. The loins belong to your father, Abdullah ibn Abdul Muttalib; the womb that carried you belongs to Amina, daughter of Wahb; and the lap that nurtured you belongs to Abu Talib.'"⁵

The Messenger's father passed away while he was still in his mother's womb, and his mother died when he was just six years old leaving him an orphan. The wisdom behind

² TN: The third month of the Islamic calendar.

³ TN: "Ibn" means "son of."

⁴ Al-Sadooq, *Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Nima* [The Perfection of Religion and the Completion of Blessings], 174-75.

⁵ Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi* [The Sufficient] vol.1, 446.

this, as explained by his grandson Imam al-Sadiq^P, is that "God Almighty made His Prophet^E an orphan so that no one would have authority over him."⁶

His grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, took him in, giving him special care and attention. Abdul Muttalib looked after Muhammad until his death, which occurred when Muhammad was eight years old. On his deathbed, Abdul Muttalib called his son Abu Talib while the Messenger Muhammad was a child playing on his chest. With tears in his eyes, he turned to Abu Talib and said,

O Abu Talib, make sure that you protect this solitary soul who never got to smell the scent of his father or experience the compassion of his mother. Hold him as dear as your own heart, for I have entrusted him to you above all my other children because you share the same mother as his father. O Abu Talib, if you live to see his days, you will realize that I was the most insightful and knowledgeable regarding him. If you have the chance to follow him, then do so, and support him with your words, deeds, and wealth. By God, he will become a leader over you all and will possess what no one from our ancestors ever did. O Abu Talib, I know of no one who lost both their father and mother as he did, so guard him in his loneliness. Do you accept my will? Abu Talib replied, "Yes, I accept, and God is my witness." Abdul Muttalib then said, "Extend your hand to me." Abu Talib extended his hand, and Abdul Muttalib clasped it, saying, "Now, death is easier for me." He continued to kiss the young Muhammad and said, "I testify that I have never kissed any of my children who had a sweeter fragrance or a more beautiful face than yours."⁷

After the passing of his grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, the Messenger came under the guardianship of his uncle, Abu Talib, the respected Chief of Mecca, renowned for his wisdom and leadership. When Aktham ibn Saifi was asked, "From whom did you learn wisdom, leadership, patience, and authority?" he responded, "From the ally of patience and integrity, the master of both Arabs and non-Arabs, Abu Talib, son of Abdul Muttalib."⁸

Abu Talib embraced the responsibility of caring for and protecting the Messenger Muhammad^E with unwavering dedication, becoming his steadfast guardian, willing to sacrifice anything for him. Notably, as long as Abu Talib lived, the Quraysh were unable to harm the Messenger of God after his mission began.

⁶ Al-Sadooq, *Ilal al-Sharai* [Reasons for the Rulings] vol. 1, 131.

⁷ Sheikh Abbas al-Qummi, *Kuhl Al-Basr fi Sirat Sayyed Al-Bashar* [The Essence of Insight in the Life of the Master of Humanity], 36-37.

⁸ Sheikh Abbas al-Qummi, *Kuhl Al-Basr fi Sirat Sayyed Al-Bashar* [The Essence of Insight in the Life of the Master of Humanity], 77.

The Messenger grew up and matured under the care of his noble and generous grandfather and uncle, who were devout monotheists, dedicated solely to God Almighty and following the traditions of their ancestor, Abraham^P. He adorned himself with noble morals and became known as "the truthful and trustworthy."

The Messenger was disciplined with the finest manners, embodying the highest standards of justice, honesty, and truthfulness. Historians note in his biography that even before Islam, the Arabs would seek his judgment and entrust him with their valuables due to his integrity and trustworthiness. When he migrated from Mecca to Medina, he left Ali^P behind to settle his debts and return the valuables he had been entrusted with. A well-known incident that highlights his fairness is his arbitration in the matter of placing the Black Stone⁹ in its position, which occurred five years before his prophethood. The Quraysh had disputed over who should place the Black Stone when they rebuilt the Kaaba, and the disagreement escalated to the brink of conflict. They agreed to let the first person to enter decide, and when they saw it was him, they said, "This is Muhammad, the trustworthy one. We are satisfied with him as an arbitrator."¹⁰

How could it be otherwise when he himself said, "I am disciplined by God, and Ali is disciplined by me."¹¹

Imam Ali^P said:

He was the most generous of people in giving, the most courageous at heart, the most truthful in speech, the most faithful in keeping promises, the gentlest in nature, and the most noble in companionship. Whoever saw him was instantly in awe of him, and whoever associated with him loved him. I have never seen anyone like him in my life.¹²

His Humility

He demonstrated extraordinary humility. When given the choice to be either a servant-messenger or a king-messenger without any reduction in his rank, he chose the path of servitude. The Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali^P, said:

⁹ TN: The Black Stone is located in the eastern corner of the Kaaba in the city of Mecca.

¹⁰ Al-Qadi Ayad, *Al-Shifa bi-Tarif Huquq Al-Mustafa* [The Remedy by the Recognition of the Rights of the Chosen One [Muhammad] vol. 1, 134.

¹¹ Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq* [Nobilities of Character], 17.

¹² Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq* [Nobilities of Character], 18.

The Messenger of God^P said: “An angel came to me and said: ‘O Muhammad, your Lord sends you His greetings and says: ‘If you wish, I will turn the valley of Mecca into gold for you.’” He replied, “I lifted my head to the sky and said: ‘O Lord, let me be full one day so I can praise You, and let me be hungry one day so I can ask You.’”¹³

His grandson, Imam al-Baqir^P (grandson of God’s Messenger) said:

An angel came to the Messenger of God^P and said: “God Almighty gives you the choice to be either a humble servant and messenger or a king and messenger.” The Prophet looked at Gabriel, who gestured with his hand to choose humility. So, the Prophet replied, “I choose to be a humble servant and messenger.” The angel then said: “This [your choice] will not diminish anything of what your Lord has prepared for you.” Along with this choice, the keys to the treasures of the earth were offered to him.¹⁴

The Messenger of God would sit on the ground, sew and mend his own clothes, repair his own shoes, and tend to his sheep. He would milk the animals and travel on a donkey, a simple mode of transportation. He would eat on a mat and sleep on it as well. He loved the poor and the needy, sat with them, and accepted their invitations, even the invitations of slaves. When a child was brought to him for blessing or naming, he would seat the child on his lap as a gesture of honor to the family. If the child happened to urinate, the family would become embarrassed and rush to take the child away and rebuke him, but the Messenger would stop them and let the child be. After they left, he would wash his clothes by hand.

He strongly disliked it when people stood up for him in gatherings. His companions stopped doing so because they knew how much it bothered him. He would sit wherever there was a space and instructed the believers to do the same. He was always the first to greet others, whether they were young or old, rich or poor, or even just children. When someone shook his hand, he would not withdraw it until the other person did so first. He would sit with his knees drawn up and never stretched his legs out in front of those sitting with him. He never left a gathering until the person he was with left first. He blended in so seamlessly with those around him that when a stranger arrived, they often could not identify him as the Messenger without inquiring. He would walk behind his companions and would not allow anyone to walk beside him while he rode, insisting that they join him.

¹³ Al-Mufid, *Al-Amali* [The Dictations], 124.

¹⁴ Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi* [The Sufficient] vol. 2, 122.

One day, while he was eating, a rude woman said to him, "Muhammad, you eat like a servant and sit like one." He responded, "Woe to you! Who could be more of a servant than me?"¹⁵

His Simplicity

The Messenger was known for his simplicity and generosity, with a noble character so encompassing that he became like a father to the people. He responded to those who called upon Him, accepted gifts from others, and reciprocated. He was cheerful, easygoing and gentle, never harsh or rude, and he never insulted or cursed anyone. He did not indulge in excessive praise, always accepted apologies, and never treated anyone in a way they disliked. He would become angry for the sake of God pleased for His sake.

Anas said, "I served the Prophet^P for nine years. Not once did he say to me, 'Why did you not do this or that?' nor did he ever criticize me for anything."¹⁶

The Messenger worked with his own hands and carried stones on his shoulders. He was never a burden on anyone else. His successors, the Imams, followed his example. Ali ibn Abu Hamza once saw Imam al-Kadhem^P working in a field, his feet soaked with sweat. He said,

"May I be at your service, where are the men?" Imam al-Khadem^P replied, "O Ali, those better than me and my father worked with their hands in their fields." When asked who they were, the Imam said, "The Messenger of God^P and the Commander of the Faithful^P. They used to work with their hands; this is the way of the prophets, messengers, successors, and righteous people."¹⁷

He ate the food that God made lawful, whether with his family or with anyone who invited him, regardless of their social status, and he never criticized it. His favorite meals were those shared with others, not eaten alone. He used to say, "I am a servant; I eat as a servant eats, and I sit as a servant sits."¹⁸

He was never seen sitting cross-legged or reclining while eating. He ate with three fingers, taking only what was in front of him, and he never filled his stomach to the point of belching. Imam al-Sadiq^P said, "The Messenger of God never ate fine bread. He ate

¹⁵ Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq* [Nobilities of Character], 16.

¹⁶ Al-Majlisi, *Bihar Al-Anwar* [Seas of Lights] vol. 16, 230.

¹⁷ Al-Bahrani, *Hilyat Al-Awliya* [Adornment of the Righteous] vol.1, 330.

¹⁸ Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq* [Nobilities of Character], 27.

only barley bread and never filled his stomach."¹⁹ At times, he would tie a stone to his stomach to ease his hunger, yet, if he had wished, he could have turned the mountains into gold.

He slept on a simple mat with nothing underneath it, sometimes using his cloak as a bed. His pillow was a leather cushion filled with palm fibers. One night, the mat was doubled for extra comfort, but when he awoke, he chastised himself, saying, "The mat kept me from praying last night." He then asked for it to be returned to a single layer."²⁰

Upon waking, he would immediately prostrate himself to God.

His Modesty

The Messenger was profoundly modest, always willing to give whatever was asked of him. His modesty was so extreme that it surpassed everyone. If he disliked something, it would be evident on his face, and out of respect, he would avoid making direct eye contact.

His Love for the Believers

He had a deep love for the believers and preferred not to hear anything that might negatively affect his feelings toward them. He would often say, "Do not bring me [bad] news about my companions, for I wish to approach you all with a clear heart."²¹

No more than three days would pass without him inquiring about someone who was missing. If they were traveling, he would pray for them; if they were present, he would visit them; and if they were ill, he would go to see them. He would pay off the debts of the poor, console them, and weep for those who had passed away.

His Compassion, Mercy, and Tenderness

He was merciful to everyone, both young and old. Imam al-Sadiq^P said: The Prophet^E once led the noon prayer and shortened the last two units. When the people asked him afterward, "Has something happened among the people?" he replied, "What do you mean?" They said, "You shortened the last two units." He responded, "Did you not hear the child crying?"²²

If someone approached him during prayer asking for help, he would shorten his prayer to attend to their needs. His compassion and care for the believers were unwavering.

¹⁹ Al-Sadooq, *Al-Amali* [The Dictations], 398.

²⁰ Al-Sadooq, *Al-Amali*, [The Dictations], 552.

²¹ Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq* [Nobilities of Character], 17.

²² Al-Bahrani, *Hilyat Al-Abrar* [Adornment of the Righteous] vol. 1, 326.

One day, a Bedouin asked him for something, and the Messenger²³ gave it to him. The Messenger then asked him, "Have I treated you well?" The Bedouin responded, "No, and you haven't honored me either." This angered the Muslims, but the Messenger gave him even more and asked again, "Have I treated you well?" The Bedouin then replied, "Yes, may God reward you from among your people and tribe with goodness." The Messenger then said to him, "You spoke as you did and affected my companions with your words. If you wish, you may repeat what you [just] said in front of them so that any hard feelings they have can be resolved." He then addressed his companions, saying, "My situation with this man is like a man with a runaway camel. When people chase after it, they only frighten it more. But the owner says, 'Leave my camel to me, for I am gentler with it and know it better.' He then walks ahead of it, takes hold of its reins, and gently leads it back until it kneels down, allowing him to secure its saddle and mount it. If I had allowed you to do as you intended when this man spoke, you would have killed him, and he would have entered the hellfire."²³

His Generosity and Kindness

Throughout his life, his generosity was boundless, and he never turned anyone away who asked for help. He held his guests in such high esteem that, even if reclining on a cushion, he would immediately offer it to them as a gesture of respect. He divided his attention and glances equally among his companions, ensuring that everyone felt included. When his home was full and there were no seats left, he would spread his garment on the ground for his guest to sit on. Whenever anyone from his household or companions called him, he would promptly respond, "At your service!"

Once, a woman named Sufana, the daughter of Hatim al-Tai, was brought to him among the captives of the Tai tribe. She said to him, "O Muhammad, my father has passed away, and my protector is absent. If you see fit, release me so that I do not become a source of ridicule for the enemies or a cause for the Arabs to talk about me. I am the daughter of a noble leader who loved noble morals, fed the hungry, freed captives, clothed the naked, and never turned away anyone in need."

The Prophet replied, "O young woman, these are indeed the traits of true believers. If your father had been a Muslim, we would have prayed for

²³ Sheikh Abbas al-Qummi, *Kohl Al-Basar fi Seerat Sayyid Al-Bashar* [The Essence of Insight in the Life of the Master of Humanity], 101.

him." Then he ordered her release, saying, "Release her out of respect for her father." Sufana then asked, "And those with me?" The Prophet responded, "Release them all for her sake."

The Prophet then said, "Show mercy to three kinds of people: someone who was once noble but has been humiliated, someone who was wealthy but has become poor, and a knowledgeable person whose knowledge is wasted among the ignorant." Sufana then asked, "O Messenger of God, may I pray for you?" The Prophet replied, "Yes." She prayed, "May God bless you abundantly, may you never be in need of a vile person, and may God never take a blessing away from a people without making you the means of its return." The Prophet responded, "Amen."

He then ordered camels and sheep to be given to her, filling the space between two mountains. Astonished by such generosity, she exclaimed, "O Messenger of God, this is the generosity of one who has no fear of poverty." The Prophet replied, "This is how my Lord has taught me." When she asked for permission to return to her homeland, the Prophet said, "No, you are my guest until someone you trust from your tribe comes for you." She remained as his guest until one day she informed him, "O Messenger of God, someone I trust from my tribe has arrived." The Prophet then had a carriage prepared for her, lined with luxurious fabric, and sent her on her way with her tribesmen. Throughout the journey, whenever she raised her head, she saw swords drawn in her protection.²⁴

His Loyalty and Ties of Kinship

The Messenger was deeply loyal and maintained strong ties of kinship. On one occasion, he received a gift and said, "Take it to the house of so-and-so, for she was a friend of Khadijah, and Khadijah loved her."²⁵ On another occasion, when he learned that his foster sister, al-Shaymaa, was among the captives of Hawazin, he rushed to her, spread his cloak for her, and offered her the choice to stay with him, honored and loved, or to return to her people with the same honor and respect. He also continued to care for his wet nurse, Thuwaybah, who had nursed him after his birth in Mecca, by providing her with gifts and clothing, even though she was a slave of Abu Lahab.²⁶

²⁴ Al-Majlisi, *Bihar Al-Anwar* [Seas of Lights] vol. 2, 400.

²⁵ Al-Qadi Ayad, *Al-Shifa bi-Taarif Huquq Al-Mustafa* [The Remedy by the Recognition of the Rights of the Chosen One [Muhammad]] vol. 1, 127.

²⁶ Sheikh Abbas al-Qummi, *Kuhl Al-Basr fi Sirat Sayyed Al-Bashar* [The Essence of Insight in the Life of the Master of Humanity], 102-03.

Khadijah^P described the Messenger^P, saying, "Rejoice, for by God, He will never disgrace you. You maintain ties of kinship, bear the burdens of others, provide for those in need, honor your guests, and assist those afflicted by calamities."²⁷

His Courage and Boldness

The Messenger^P was courageous and bold. Ali^P said, "On the day of Badr, I found myself seeking refuge with the Messenger^P, who was the closest of us to the enemy and the fiercest in battle that day." He also said, "When the battle was at its most intense and the two sides clashed, we sought refuge with the Messenger of God, and no one was closer to the enemy than him."²⁸

His Patience, Forbearance, and Forgiveness

The Messenger^P was immensely patient, forbearing, and forgiving when he had the power to retaliate. When his front teeth were broken and his face was wounded on the day of Uhud, his companions were deeply distressed and said to him, "Why don't you invoke a curse upon them?" He replied, "I was not sent as one who curses but as a caller and a mercy. O God, guide my people, for they do not know." He also said, "O God, forgive my people, for they do not know."²⁹

Al-Fudayl ibn Iyad narrated that when the Quraysh caused harm to the Messenger of God^P, an angel came to him and said, "O Muhammad, I am the angel in charge of the mountains. God has sent me to you. If you wish, I will crush them between the Akhshabayn mountains (two mountains of Mecca)." The Prophet^P replied, "No, for my people do not know."³⁰

He endured all the harm inflicted by the tyrants of Quraysh, and when God granted him victory over them, they feared he would seek revenge and destroy them. However, he said, "No blame will be upon you today; go, for you are free."³¹ His forgiveness extended even to those who were most hostile to him, including Ikrimah ibn Abu Jahl, Safwan ibn Umayyah, and Abu Sufyan ibn Harb. He even forgave Wahshi, who killed

²⁷ Sheikh Abbas al-Qummi, *Kuhl Al-Basr fi Sirat Sayyid Al-Bashar* [The Essence of Insight in the Life of the Master of Humanity], 102-103.

²⁸ Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq* [Nobilities of Character], 18.

²⁹ Al-Qadi Ayad, *Al-Shifa bi-Taarif Huquq Al-Mustafa* [The Remedy by the Recognition of the Rights of the Chosen One [Muhammad]] vol. 1, 105-106.

³⁰ Al-Bahrani, *Hilyat Al-Abrar* [Adornment of the Righteous] vol. 1, 343.

³¹ Al-Manawi, *Fayd Al-Qadir bi Sharh Al-Jami Al-Saghir* [The Outpouring of the Powerful, an Explanation of the Small Collection] vol. 5, 218.

his uncle Hamza, and others, such as the Jewish woman who attempted to kill him with poison.

Imam al-Baqir^P said,

When the Jewish woman who poisoned the sheep meat was brought to the Messenger of God^P, he asked her, "What made you do it?" She replied, "I thought to myself, if he is a prophet, the poison will not harm him, and if he is a king, I will have rid the people of him." The Messenger of God^P forgave her.³²

On the day of Hunayn, the Messenger captured Zuhayr ibn Surad al-Jushami and his people.³³ Zuhayr began reciting:

Grant us your favor, O Messenger of God, with your generosity

For you are the one we hope for and look to

We hope for a pardon from you that you bestow

Upon this world as you forgive and prevail

A pardon—may God forgive what you grant

On the Day of Judgment, when victory is gifted to you.

When the Messenger heard him, he said to him and his people: "What belongs to me and the sons of Abdul Muttalib belongs to you." The Quraysh and the Ansar then said: "What belongs to us belongs to God Almighty and His Messenger."³⁴

Anas narrated,

I was with the Prophet, who was wearing a cloak with a thick border. A Bedouin approached, grabbed the cloak roughly, and left a mark on the Prophet's neck. The Bedouin then demanded, "O Muhammad, load my two camels with the wealth of God that you have, for you are not giving me from your wealth or your father's wealth." The Prophet remained silent for a moment and then replied, "The wealth belongs to God, and I am His servant." Then he asked, "Should you, O Bedouin, face retribution for what you have done to me?" The Bedouin responded, "No." The Prophet asked,

³² Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi* [The Sufficient] vol. 2, 108.

³³ TN: The Day of Hunayn is the name of a battle and Hunayn is the valley where it took place.

³⁴ Al-Bahrani, *Hilyat Al-Abrar* [Adornment of the Righteous] vol. 1, 305.

"Why not?" The Bedouin answered, "Because you do not repay evil with evil." The Prophet^ﷺ smiled and then ordered that one of the camels be loaded with barley and the other with dates.³⁵

His Remembrance of God

The Messenger was constantly in remembrance of God. He would often prolong his prayers to the point of standing on the tips of his toes causing himself pain, until his noble Lord revealed to him: "Ta-Ha. We have not sent down the Quran to you to cause you distress."³⁶ He would pray until his feet became swollen. When asked, "Why do you exert yourself so much when God has already forgiven your past and future sins?" he replied, "Should I not be a grateful servant?"³⁷

Imam Ali[ؑ] said, "When the Messenger of God^ﷺ stood for prayer, you could hear a sound from his chest like the boiling of a pot on a stove, due to the intensity of his weeping. Though God had secured him from His punishment, he still wished to humble himself before his Lord with his tears and to be a leader (*Imam*) for those who followed him."³⁸

His Detachment from the World:

The Messenger was unmatched in his detachment from the world and its pleasures. He had no desire to see adornments of this world, even on those dearest to him. This was not only because he understood the true nature of this world and its insignificance in God's eyes, but also because he sought to be a role model for the believers, many of whom lived in poverty. He wanted to be a source of strength for them, along with his family.

It is narrated by Muhammad ibn Qays that when the Prophet^ﷺ returned from a journey, he would begin by visiting Fatimah and staying with her for a long time. Once, after returning from a journey, Fatimah made two silver bracelets, a necklace, two earrings, and a curtain for the door of her house in preparation for the arrival of her father and her husband[ؑ]. When the Messenger of God entered her house, his companions stood by the door, unsure whether to wait or leave because of his prolonged stay with her. When the Prophet finally came out, they could see the anger on his face until he sat down by the pulpit. Fatimah realized that the Prophet's reaction was due to the jewelry and the curtain [at the door]. So, she removed the jewelry and the curtain. She sent the curtain

³⁵ Al-Qadi Ayad, *Al-Shifa bi-Taarif Huquq Al-Mustafa* [The Remedy by the Recognition of the Rights of the Chosen One [Muhammad]] vol. 1, 108.

³⁶ Quran 20:1-2.

³⁷ Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi* [The Sufficient] vol. 2, 95.

³⁸ Al-Bahrani, *Hilyat Al-Abrar* [Adornment of the Righteous] vol. 1, 264.

with a messenger and told him to say to the Prophet: "Your daughter sends you greetings and says: 'Use this for the sake of God.'"

When the Messenger received it [the curtain], he said three times, "She has done so; may her father be sacrificed for her." Then he continued. "Muhammad and the family of Muhammad are not of this world. If the world were worth even the wing of a mosquito in the sight of God, He would not give a disbeliever even a sip of water from it." Then he [the Messenger] returned to her.³⁹

Imam al-Sadiq^P said: "A man once approached the Prophet^P while he was lying on a mat and a pillow made of palm fibers. The mat left marks on his body, and the pillow left an impression on his cheek. The man began to wipe the marks away, saying, 'Neither Khosrow nor Caesar would be content with this. They sleep on silk and damask, while you rest on this mat?' The Messenger of God^P replied, 'By God, I am better and more honorable than both of them. What importance does this world have where I am concerned? The example of this world is like a rider who passes by a tree with some shade. He rests beneath it and leaves when the shade passes, continuing his journey, and abandons the tree.'"⁴⁰

His Characteristics and Demeanor

The Messenger^P was often sorrowful, always reflective, and never at ease. He spoke only when necessary, preferring silence, and would begin and end his speech eloquently. His words were concise and clear, without excess or deficiency. He was gentle and never harsh or demeaning. He appreciated even the smallest blessing and never disparaged anything. He neither criticized nor praised food or drink. The world and its matters did not anger him, but when it came to upholding the truth, no one could withstand his anger, which subsided only when justice was served.

When he gestured, he used his whole hand; when amazed, he would turn his hand over. While speaking, he would bring his hands together, placing the inside of his left thumb on his right palm. When angry, he would turn away and avert his gaze and when joyful, he would lower his gaze. His laughter never went beyond a smile, revealing teeth that were as white as hailstones.⁴¹

Al-Hussain son of Ali once asked his father to describe the Messenger^P, and Ali replied:

The Messenger of God^P guarded his tongue, speaking only when it concerned him. He united people rather than dividing them or driving them

³⁹ Al-Bahrani, *Hilyat Al-Abrar* [Adornment of the Righteous] vol. 1, 208.

⁴⁰ Al-Bahrani, *Hilyat Al-Abrar* [Adornment of the Righteous] vol. 1, 209.

⁴¹ Al-Sadooq, *Maani Al-Akhbar* [Meanings of the Reports], 81.

away. He honored the noble individuals of each tribe and appointed them as leaders over their people. He warned people of trials and was cautious of them without withholding his kindness or good character from anyone. He regularly checked on his companions and inquired about others' affairs, supporting good deeds and encouraging them, while discouraging what was wrong and weakening its influence. He was consistently balanced in his approach. He remained vigilant, concerned that others might become negligent or lose interest. He was always prepared for any situation, never falling short in matters of truth or going beyond them. Those closest to him were the best of people, and those he esteemed most were the ones who offered the most sincere advice and support."

He was asked about his gatherings, and he said:

"The Messenger of God^P would neither sit nor stand without being in remembrance of God, whose name is glorified. He did not designate specific places for himself, and discouraged others from doing so. When he joined a gathering, he would sit wherever space was available and instructed others to do the same. He gave each of his companions the attention they deserved, so no one would feel that anyone else was more honored by him. If he was sitting with someone or tending to their needs, he would wait patiently until the other person departed. If someone asked him for something, he never sent them away empty-handed; he either fulfilled their request or spoke kindly to them. His generosity and nobility were such that he was like a father to the people, and in his presence, all were equal in their rights. His gatherings were filled with forbearance, modesty, patience, and trustworthiness. Voices were never raised, no one's dignity was violated, and no one was humiliated. In his gatherings, everyone was equal, distinguished only by their piety, humble, respectful of the elderly, compassionate to the young, and prioritized those in need, always looking after strangers."

I asked, "What was his conduct like with those in his company?" He replied:

"The Messenger of God^P was always cheerful, easy-going, and gentle. He was never harsh, coarse, loud, vulgar, fault-finding, or overly praising. He overlooked things he did not like, so no one ever felt despondent or hopeless around him. He avoided three matters: arguing, excessive talking, and matters that did not concern him. He avoided three things when dealing with others: he never criticized or insulted anyone, never

sought to expose their secrets, and he spoke only on matters of which he hoped for God's reward. When he spoke, his companions listened very attentively, hanging on his every word, and only spoke when he was silent. There was no arguing in his presence. When someone introduced a topic in a gathering, the Prophet began his discussion from there, proceeding in order. He shared in the conversations of his companions, laughing at what amused them and marveling at what amazed them.

He would patiently tolerate the rough speech and requests of strangers, to the point where his companions would try to keep them away to avoid troubling him. Despite that, he would say, 'If you see someone in need, help them.' He would not accept praise unless it was in gratitude for a favor or an act of kindness, and he never interrupted anyone's speech until they had finished or stood up to leave.

I asked, 'What was his silence like?'

He replied: "The silence of the Messenger of God^P was based on four qualities: forbearance, caution, consideration, and reflection. His consideration involved giving balanced attention and listening to everyone around him. His reflection focused on matters that endure and those that fade. He possessed both forbearance and patience, so nothing angered or provoked him. He was cautious when it came to four matters: adopting what was good so people would follow it, abandoning what was wrong so they would avoid it, striving for what was best for his nation, and upholding what would benefit them both in this world and the hereafter."⁴²

He also said: "Whenever the Messenger of God^P shook someone's hand, he would always wait for the other to withdraw their hand first. If someone came to him with a need or to discuss something, he would remain until they chose to leave. If anyone interrupted him [to make a point] while he was speaking, he would remain silent until the other person finished. He never stretched his legs out in front of anyone he sat with. When he was given a choice between two matters, he would always choose the more difficult of the two. He never sought personal revenge for any wrong done to him unless God's boundaries were violated, in which case his anger would be purely for God's sake. Throughout his life, he never ate while reclining. He never refused a request and would always respond to someone in need, either by fulfilling it or offering kind words. The Messenger's prayer was light, yet he performed it perfectly. His speeches

⁴² At-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq* [Nobilities of Character], 13-15.

were brief and to the point, and he was always recognized by the sweet fragrance that preceded his arrival.

When eating with others, he was the first to start and the last to finish. He used to eat from what was in front of him, but when it came to dates, regular or fresh, he would eat from either side. He drank water in three sips and did not gulp it. He used his right hand for eating and drinking, and he would only take and give with his right hand, while his left hand was used for other personal tasks. He preferred using his right side in all matters: his dress, his footwear, and his grooming. When he made a supplication, he would do so three times. When he spoke, he would speak about only one topic. When he sought permission, he would do so three times. His speech was clear and understandable to everyone who heard him, and when he spoke, it was as if light was coming from between his teeth. When you looked at him, you would notice his facial features were very pleasant. When he looked at someone, his glance was quick yet subtle. He would not speak to anyone in a disagreeable way, and he walked with swiftness and strength. He would say: "The best among you are those with the best manners."

He neither criticized nor praised food or drink, and his companions did not argue in his presence. Those who spoke of him would say: 'I have never seen anyone like him before or after.'"⁴³

.....

He also said to his son:

"Indeed, in the Messenger of God^P, you have a perfect example and guidance in denouncing the world and its flaws, with its many disgraces and defects. The world withheld its riches from him, offering its comforts to others, and he^P distanced himself from its pleasures and adornments. If you wish, I will give you a second example. Moses, the one to whom God spoke, who said: 'O my Lord, I am in need of whatever good You send down to me.' By God, he asked for nothing but bread to eat, as he used to subsist on the vegetation of the earth. The greenness of the plants was visible through the thinness of his belly due to his leanness and the scantiness of flesh.

⁴³ At-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq* [Nobilities of Character], 23.

If you would like a third example, consider David, the owner of the Psalms, the reciter of the people of paradise. David used to make baskets from palm leaves with his own hands and would ask his companions, 'Who among you could sell them for me and eat a barley loaf with its proceeds?' Also, if you like, I will tell you about Jesus, the son of Mary, whose pillow was a stone and whose clothing was coarse. Hunger was often his food. His lamp at night was the moon, his shade in winter was the east and west of the earth, and his fruits and herbs were from what was produced by the earth for animals. He had no wife to tempt him, no child to grieve him, no wealth to distract him, and no greed to humiliate him. His mode of transportation was his feet, and his hands were his servants.

So, follow the example of your pure and upright Prophet^P, as he is a perfect model for those who seek to follow and a source of comfort for those who need solace. The most beloved of God's servants are those who emulate His Prophet and follow in his footsteps. He took only what little he needed from this world without giving it a second glance. He was the least indulgent in worldly comforts and the most modest in worldly possessions. Though the world was offered to him, he rejected it. He knew what God despised, so he also despised it. What God deemed insignificant, he deemed insignificant. If we love only what God despises and we revere what He deems insignificant, that alone separates us from God and opposes His command.

The Prophet^P used to eat while seated on the ground. He sat like a servant, mended his shoes with his own hands, and patched his clothes himself. He rode a donkey without a saddle, often allowing someone to ride behind him. Once, there was a curtain with images on it at the door of his house. He said to one of his wives, "Remove it from my sight, for it reminds me of the world and its adornments." He turned away from the world with his heart, erased its memory from his soul, and preferred that its allure be hidden from his eyes so he would neither desire it, view it as a place of permanence, or seek any lasting abode within it. He removed the world from his soul, displaced it from his heart, and avoided looking at it. Just as a person despises something they hate to see or mention, so too did he despise the world.

Indeed, in the life of the Messenger of God^P, we find proof of the world's deficiencies and shortcomings. He and his closest companions experienced hunger in this world, and its luxuries were withheld from him despite his great closeness to God. So, let the discerning person ask: Did

God honor Muhammad^P through this or disgrace him? If they say He disgraced him, then by Almighty God, they are lying and committing slander. But if they say He honored him, then they must understand that God disgraces others by giving them the world, while withholding it from those closest to Him.

Whoever follows in the footsteps of the Prophet^P and emulates his path will be safe from destruction; otherwise, they will not escape ruin. God made Muhammad^P a sign of the Hour, a bringer of glad tidings of paradise, and a warner of punishment. He left this world with nothing and entered the Hereafter safely. He never built a foundation for himself in this world. How great is God's favor upon us for blessing us with him as our leader, whose footsteps we follow.

By God, I have patched this garment of mine so often that I have become ashamed of its patcher. Someone said to me, 'Why don't you discard it?' I replied, 'Leave me be, for come morning, people will appreciate the efforts made through the night.'"⁴⁴

These noble and pure figures—foremost among them, the Messenger of God, Muhammad—were the true embodiment of God's plan to overcome selfishness and the animal instincts that drive human behavior. They are God's most precious example and the finest example for all humanity to follow. They serve as a guide for people throughout time, drawing seekers from afar and inspiring those committed to reaching the highest levels of excellence and perfection.

What has been shared here is just a brief glimpse into the biography of the Messenger Muhammad^P and some examples of his noble character. For those seeking more information, detailed encyclopedias of history and his biography will reveal more about his teachings, commands, prohibitions, and advice. He called for the pursuit of good deeds, moral virtues, wisdom, mercy, justice, trust, chastity, faith, honesty, support of the truth, loyalty, consolation, altruism, kinship, parental respect, love of good for people, good neighborliness, care for the rights of the wife, family and children, care for the orphan, the poor, the needy, the widow, the pursuit of knowledge, acting upon it, consuming the lawful, and other such noble virtues and standards of perfection. Likewise, he forbade all forms of evil and wrongdoing—such as bad manners, injustice, doubt, polytheism, supporting falsehood, selfishness, cruelty, betrayal, lying, severing ties, gossip, slander, debauchery, immodesty, usury, and bribery, among other such

⁴⁴ Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq* [Nobilities of Character], 9-10.

vices and wrongdoings. He was the living embodiment of virtue, walking among people as a perfect example.

2. Proof of Muhammad's^P Prophethood

The prophethood and message of any divine prophet or messenger—including the Messenger of God, Muhammad^P—are established by examining his biography and character, as well as by applying the divine law to him, which is how all prophets and messengers are recognized. This law is established by both reason and a [religious] textual source.

The Messenger Muhammad^P was sent to a society that can be categorized into three groups:

1. The People of the Scriptures.
2. The Hunafaa,⁴⁵ who followed the religion of Abraham^P.
3. People who do not adhere to any religion.

The People of the Scriptures

The Messenger's argument with the People of the Scriptures was based on the law of recognizing God's Proofs (prophets, messengers, and Imams) with all its provisions. As I said previously, this law is established by both reason and religious texts.

To clarify further, consider an owner, such as the owner of a factory. If this owner wishes to be absent while ensuring the factory remains operational, he must choose and appoint a manager to oversee the factory's operations. This appointed manager would naturally be the most competent, knowledgeable, and capable person among those available. The owner would then issue a decree naming this manager, confirming the appointment, and commanding others to obey him. Thus, reason dictates that three elements are required to manage the factory in the owners absence: appointing a manager; ensuring that the manager is the most knowledgeable and competent; and making obedience to this manager obligatory for everyone.

Since God Almighty is the Owner of all dominions and the Creator and Owner of this world, we must use these same three self-evident elements to recognize the messenger He sends. This is what is referred to as the "Law of Recognizing the Divine Proof

⁴⁵ TN: Hunafaa refers to the pre-Islamic Arabians who were Abrahamic monotheists.

(vicegerent)." Both reason and decisive religious texts necessitate that the recognition of the Divine Proof—whether a prophet, messenger, or Imam—involves three elements: he must be explicitly appointed through a divine text mentioning his name; he must be the most knowledgeable one of his time; and he must call to God and His sovereignty.

Regarding the Messenger Muhammad^P, the law of recognizing the Divine Proof is fully embodied in him and certainly applies.

From the perspective of divine appointment through religious texts, a collection of various passages from both the Old and New Testaments mention Muhammad and the family of Muhammad. As for the second form of divine appointment—God's testimony to the people regarding His Messenger's legitimacy—God Almighty testifies to those who seek His testimony, as stated in the verse: "Say, 'Sufficient is Allah as Witness between me and you. Indeed, He is ever, concerning His servants, Acquainted and Seeing.'"⁴⁶

Sayyed Ahmed Alhasan says:

For those who seek God's testimony for Muhammad^P: Throughout time—past, present, and future—God bears witness to the prophethood of Muhammad^P. One only needs sincerity in their request to God to know the truth, and God will speak with them through visions and spiritual means that come from the heavens, revealing the truth and confirming that it lies with Muhammad and the family of Muhammad^P.

During the time of the Messenger of God, Muhammad^P, many people sought God's testimony through visions. God testified to them, and they believed as a result of the decisive visions they witnessed, in which God made clear the truth of Muhammad and the family of Muhammad^P.... In addition to divine appointment through a religious text, there are the miracles with which God supported the mission of Muhammad^P.⁴⁷

Moreover, the Messenger has introduced both knowledge and wisdom. Here are some Quranic texts he has conveyed:

- Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in the best way. Indeed, your Lord knows best who has strayed from His way, and He knows best who is guided.⁴⁸
- Worship God and associate nothing with Him. Be good to your parents, relatives, orphans, the needy, the neighbor who is near, the neighbor who

⁴⁶ Quran 17:96.

⁴⁷ Sayyed Ahmed Alhasan, *Aqaa-id Al-Islam* [Ideologies (Belief Systems) of Islam]: Research on the Vicegerency of Muhammad^P

⁴⁸ Quran 16:125.

is far, the companion at your side, the traveler, and those whom your right hands possess. Indeed, God does not love the arrogant and boastful.⁴⁹

- Do not turn your cheek away from people in contempt or walk through the earth proudly. Indeed, God does not like anyone who is arrogant and boastful.⁵⁰
- So that you do not despair over what you have lost, nor boast of what He has given you. Indeed, God does not love the arrogant and boastful.⁵¹
- Do not set up another god alongside God, or you will become disgraced and forsaken. Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you be good to your parents. If one or both of them reach old age with you, do not scoff at them or scold them, but speak to them with kindness. Lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy and say, "My Lord, have mercy on them, as they raised me when I was small." Your Lord knows best what is within yourselves. If you choose to be righteous, He forgives those who turn to Him.

Give the relatives their due right, as well as the poor and the traveler, and do not spend wastefully. Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils, and Satan has always been ungrateful to his Lord. And if you [must] turn away from them, anticipating mercy from your Lord, then speak to them kindly. Do not make your hand as if chained to your neck [stingy], nor stretch it out completely [overgenerous], or you will become blameworthy and destitute. Your Lord extends and restricts provision for whom He wills. He is ever Acquainted and Seeing concerning His servants.

Do not kill your children out of fear of poverty. We provide for them and for you. Indeed, killing them is a great sin. Do not approach unlawful sexual relations; indeed, it is an immorality and evil as a way. Do not kill the soul that God has forbidden, except in the course of justice: And whoever is killed unjustly, We have given his heir authority, but let him not exceed limits in [the matter of] taking life. Indeed, he has been supported. Do not come near the property of the orphan, except to improve it until they reach maturity. Fulfill every covenant, for the covenant will be questioned. Give full measure when you measure, and weigh with an even balance. That is the best way and will lead to the best outcome. Do not pursue what you have no knowledge of. Indeed, a person will be questioned about their hearing, sight, and heart. And do not walk upon the earth arrogantly, for you will never tear the earth apart or reach the heights of the mountains.

⁴⁹ Quran 4:36.

⁵⁰ Quran 31:18.

⁵¹ Quran 57:23.

All these things are evil and detestable in the sight of your Lord. That is wisdom from your Lord revealed to you. Do not set up another god alongside God, or you will be thrown into Hell, blameworthy and forsaken.⁵²

Sayyed Ahmed Alhasan says:

Let them read these verses from the Quran chapter “The Night Journey” and ask themselves: Does Satan call for the worship of God alone? Does Satan call for noble morals, good treatment of parents and the poor, spending money and helping those in need, and prohibiting murder, adultery, and the exploitation of orphans’ wealth? Does he command the fulfilling of promises and being fair with measurements? If Satan commands these good morals, then what does God command, according to them? Are these not the commandments and wisdom that all the prophets brought from God?

.....

Jesus^P said: “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and a house divided against itself falls. And if Satan also has been divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand?”⁵³

Should Christians not use this statement as a standard to measure what is in the Quran to know that it is from God? Isn't this the measure that Jesus^P set? Why then turn away from it unless they believe in some parts of the Book and disbelieve in others?"

The Quran is filled with wisdom, calling people to goodness and the adoption of noble and honorable morals. How, then, could it be from the foolish Satan who calls to evil and reprehensible morals? Is Satan divided against himself? Is his kingdom divided? Is Satan not known for calling to establish his own dominion, not to destroy it?

I believe that people—if they so choose—are fully capable of distinguishing between wisdom and foolishness, good and evil, and noble morals and reprehensible ones. The kingdom of Satan is not divided against itself, so it does not call for goodness but for evil and does not promote honorable morals but rather, reprehensible ones.

⁵² Quran 17:22-39

⁵³ Luke 11:17-18 NASB.

"Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and a house divided against itself falls. And if Satan also has been divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand?"

Now let us consider the ideological correction brought by Muhammad^P and his successors, which called for a return to pure monotheism and refuted the ideology of the Trinity. I have demonstrated how this ideology is false and incorrect from the Gospel itself. Whoever brings the truth is more deserving of being followed, so the one who refutes the Church's ideology, using the holy book itself in an unambiguous way, is the one more deserving of being followed.⁵⁴

Any fair-minded person who reads the Quran objectively will find that the knowledge and wisdom brought by Muhammad^P is profound and could only come from God, the Exalted.⁵⁵

As for the call to God's sovereignty, the Messenger^P advocated for it. As soon as circumstances allowed, he implemented it practically, establishing a believing community that adhered to God's sovereignty. The foundations of his state in Medina were built upon this principle, and the narration of the Saved Sect serves as clear witness to this.

Abdullah ibn Umar said: The Messenger of God^P said: "What befell the Children of Israel will befall my nation, mirroring it exactly. They split into seventy-two sects, and my nation will split into seventy-three, one more than theirs. All of them will be in hellfire except one." It was asked, "O

⁵⁴ Sayyed Ahmed Alhasan says: "I have demonstrated the falsehood of the ideology of Jesus' absolute divinity using reason and the texts of the Gospel in *The Book of Monotheism* in the section, *A Decisive Statement from the Gospel: Jesus^P is Unaware of the Hour of the Minor Resurrection*. Jesus says that he does not know when this will happen: "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone" [Mark 13:32 NASB]. Ignorance indicates deficiency, while absolute divinity is wholly perfect, free from any deficiency or ignorance, because the Absolute Divinity is pure light without any darkness. Ignorance belongs to creatures because their existence contains both light and darkness. Therefore, Jesus^P is composed of both light and darkness, which demonstrates that he is not an absolute divinity. Rather, he is a servant, created from both light and darkness, not pure light without darkness. God is far above such characteristics. This provides the decisive clarification and admonition for those who possess understanding.

This is the text of Jesus' words according to the Gospel of Mark: 'But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. Watch out, stay alert; for you do not know when the appointed time is. It is like a man away on a journey, who upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, assigning to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay alert. Therefore, stay alert—for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning—so that he does not come suddenly and find you asleep. What I say to you I say to all: 'Stay alert!'" [Mark 13:32-37 NASB]. This is quoted from the Book of Monotheism, and those who seek further details can refer to it.

⁵⁵ Sayyed Ahmed Alhasan, *Aqaa-id Al-Islam* [Ideologies (Belief Systems) of Islam]: Research on the Vicegerency of Muhammad^P.

Messenger of God, which one is that?" He replied, "It is the one that mirrors what I and my companions are upon today."⁵⁶

Sayyed Ahmed Alhasan says: Thus, the defining characteristic of the saved sect is that it mirrors the relationship between the Messenger of God, Muhammad^P, and his companions. It is a clear relationship, where the Messenger was a divinely appointed leader, and his companions believed in this divine leadership."⁵⁷

Therefore, the law for recognizing the true Proof (divine appointment through a religious text, knowledge and wisdom, and the call to God's sovereignty) applies perfectly to the Messenger^P and any objections or doubts raised no longer hold weight. No matter how significant a doubt may seem to the skeptic, it remains a doubt and does not invalidate the proof. Proof can only be invalidated by an equal or greater proof.

For a more detailed understanding of how the Messenger fits the divine law that defines the vicegerents of God, one can refer to the book *Aqaa-id Al-Islam* [Ideologies (Belief Systems) of Islam] by Sayyed Ahmed Alhasan.⁵⁸

The Hunafaa

As for the second group, the Hunafaa, it refers to the religion of Abraham^P that many people in Mecca followed during the Messenger's time, albeit in a distorted form, which is the case with any divine religion affected by the passage of time. Some may argue that the texts of the Old and New Testament do not concern the Hunafaa, and the Messenger's use of them as evidence (of his vicegerency) does not obligate them in any way. However, the fact is that the Messenger's argument regarding these texts still applies to them since they had no real excuse for disbelieving in the two [Old and New] Testaments which mentioned the coming of the messenger Muhammad. Moreover, they were also obligated to believe in the Messenger because the divine appointment (God's testimony through visions) testifies to his truthfulness.

⁵⁶ Al-Sadooq, *Ma'ani Al-Akhbar* [Meanings of the Reports], 323.

⁵⁷ Sayyed Ahmed Alhasan, *Aqaa-id Al-Islam* [Ideologies (Belief Systems) of Islam]: Research on the Vicegerency of Muhammad^P.

⁵⁸ The book *Aqaa-id Al-Islam* [Ideologies (Belief Systems) of Islam] can be viewed in Arabic at the following link: <https://almahdyoon.com/main/204-3aqaed-islam/#gsc.tab=0>

TN: A complete translation to English is not yet available.

The law of recognizing the Proof of God is divine appointment (through religious text or God's testimony) and knowledge. To the Hunafaa, only the first element of divine appointment (religious text) was missing since they did not adhere to the Old and New Testaments, which mention the coming of Muhammad. As for the second element, which is God's testimony through visions, it remains intact and played a crucial role in leading many to believe in Muhammad. One example is the story of Saeed ibn al-Aas al-Umawi:

Ibn Sa'd and al-Hakim narrated:

Khalid ibn Sa'id embraced Islam at an early stage and was one of the first among his brothers to do so. His journey to Islam began with a vision in his sleep in which he saw himself standing on the edge of a vast fire, the size of which only God knows. In the vision, he saw his father pushing him into the fire, while the Messenger of God held him by the waist, preventing him from falling in. Khalid woke up terrified and said, "By God, this is indeed a true vision..." He then met the Messenger of God⁵⁹ at Ajyad and asked, "O Muhammad, what do you call people to?" The Messenger replied, "I call people to God alone, without any partner, to believe that Muhammad is His servant and messenger, and to abandon the worship of a stone that neither hears, sees, harms, nor benefits, not knowing who worships it and who does not." Khalid then declared, "I bear witness that there is no deity but God, and I bear witness that you are the Messenger of God." The Messenger was pleased with his acceptance of Islam.⁵⁹

Additionally, the proof was established against the Hunafaa through their complete knowledge of the Messenger's life and his noble character, to the extent that they described him as "the truthful and trustworthy" and accepted him as a judge in their disputes, and entrusted their valuables to him.

People Who Do not Adhere to Any Religion

As for the third group—those without any religion—the Messenger's argument against them is based on rational and intuitive established principles, primarily the necessity of following the most knowledgeable. For the atheists among them, the argument begins with proving the existence of God, then gradually moves to the necessity of sending messengers based on reason, and finally, proving the legitimacy of the divinely appointed messenger for each era. This logical approach is evident in the arguments presented by the Messenger's successors in particular, as recorded in the numerous narrations in which some atheists acknowledge their (successors) legitimacy after being presented with scientific evidence in a logical manner.

⁵⁹ Ibn Saad, *Al-Tabaqat Al-Kubra* [The Great Book of Ranks] vol. 4, 94; Al-Hakim al-Nisaburi, *Al-Mustadrak* [The Supplement] vol. 3, 248.

For non-atheists—including those who believe in God but deny some or all of the messengers—the argument of the messengers is valid against them, not only through knowledge but also the second element of divine appointment (God's testimony through visions). This path—the testimony of God—is open to all creation without exception. Moreover, the biography and good morals of the Messenger will undoubtedly benefit the truth-seeker among them.

This is the correct approach that confirms the divine vicegerency of the Messenger of God, Muhammad^P, proving that he is a prophet and messenger from God, the Exalted. It is evident that this argument is binding on all people without exception.

Misconceptions Surrounding the Messenger's Early Life Before his Dispatch

Some skeptics—among them Christians—have raised certain doubts about the Messenger Muhammad's^P lineage and upbringing during his youth and before his prophethood in general. These are their main objections.

Misconception 1: The Obscurity of the Messenger's Upbringing

Some skeptics argue that the specifics of the Messenger's early life before his dispatch are obscure, asserting that we could not precisely know of his lineage or his belief in God and monotheism. Their primary misconceptions will be discussed throughout this chapter."

Response:

First: The assumption that the Prophet's origins and life before prophethood are shrouded in secrecy, casting doubt on his lineage or faith, is incorrect for two reasons.

1. The Messenger belongs to a distinguished and prominent Arab family, and he descended from the most honorable of all subclans. They lived in Mecca, a renowned city that welcomes pilgrims from every direction. The lineage of the Messenger Muhammad^P's father and mother is well-known. He was widely recognized for his honesty and trustworthiness, qualities that stood out even before his prophethood. A remarkable demonstration of his trustworthiness occurred when the Quraysh undertook the task of demolishing and rebuilding the Kaaba. They divided the construction among the tribes, but when the time came to place the Black Stone in its position, a dispute arose:

Each tribe wanted the honor of lifting the Black Stone, which led to disputes and conflicts, and they prepared for battle. They remained in this state for four or five nights until Abu Umayya al-Makhzumi said, “O Quraysh, let the first person who enters through the gate of the mosque be the one to arbitrate between you.” When they agreed to this and accepted, the Messenger of God^P entered. They said, “This is the Trustworthy One; we are satisfied with him.” When he reached them, they informed him of the situation, and he said, “Bring me a cloth.” They brought it to him, and the Messenger of God^P placed the Black Stone in it with his own hands. He then said, “Let each tribe grasp a corner of the cloth and lift together.” They lifted it until they reached its designated location. Then, the Messenger of God placed the Black Stone in its position with his own hands and they continued building upon it. The Messenger of God was called “The Trustworthy One” in the pre-Islamic period—before revelation was sent to him.⁶⁰

Thus, when the Messenger gathered them at the beginning of his mission and appealed to them to bear witness to his truthfulness and trustworthiness among his people, they all testified to it.

Ibn Abbas (may God be pleased with them)⁶¹ narrated: When the verse “And warn your closest kindred”⁶² was revealed, the Prophet^P ascended Mount Safa and began to call out, “O tribe of Fihri, O tribe of Adi,” calling the various subdivisions of Quraysh until they all gathered. If a man could not come, he would send a messenger to see what it [the summoning] was about. Abu Lahab and the Quraysh came, and the Messenger said, “If I told you that an army was approaching from the valley intending to attack you, would you believe me?” They said, “Yes. We have never experienced anything from you but truthfulness.” He said, “Then I am a warner to you before a severe punishment [comes].”⁶³

The truthfulness and trustworthiness of the Messenger were certainly evident to them. His embodiment of noble character compelled even his fiercest enemies to acknowledge and admit this:

Ubaydullah ibn Abdullah ibn Utbah narrated from Abdullah ibn Abbas (may God be pleased with them) that the Messenger of God^P wrote a letter to Caesar inviting him to Islam and sent it with Dihyah al-Kalbi,

⁶⁰ Ibn al-Atheer, *Asad Al-Ghabah* [The Lion of the Forest] vol. 1, 17.

⁶¹ TN: “Them” refers to Ibn Abbas and his father.

⁶² Quran 26:214.

⁶³ Al-Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari* [Authentic Collection of Bukhari] vol. 6, 16.

instructing him to deliver it to the governor of Bosra⁶⁴ so that it could be passed on to Caesar....

When Caesar received the letter from the Messenger of God^P, he said after reading it, "Find me someone from his people so that I can ask them about the Messenger of God^P." Ibn Abbas reported that Abu Sufyan ibn Harb told him that he was in the Levant at the time along with some men from Quraysh, who had come for trade during the truce that was in place between the Messenger of God^P and the Quraysh disbelievers. Abu Sufyan then said, "We came across Caesar's envoy in a region of the Levant, and he took me and my companions with him until we arrived at Jerusalem (*Aelia*). We were brought before Caesar while he was sitting on his throne, wearing a crown, surrounded by the nobles of Rome. He said to his interpreter, 'Ask them which among them is closest in kinship to the man claiming to be a prophet.'" Abu Sufyan replied and said, "I am the closest in kinship to him." Caesar asked, "What is the relationship between the two of you?" Abu Sufyan responded, "He is my cousin, and there is no one else from the tribe of Abd Manaf in this group except for me." Caesar said, "Bring him closer," and he ordered that my companions be placed behind me, near my shoulders. Then he said to his translator, "Tell his companions that I am going to ask this man about the one who claims to be a prophet. If he lies, then you should contradict him." Abu Sufyan said, "By God, if it were not for the shame that my companions would report that I had lied, I would have lied about him, but I would have been ashamed if they said I lied, so I spoke the truth." Caesar then said to his translator, "Ask him, how this man's lineage is viewed among you." Abu Sufyan responded, "He is of noble lineage among us." Caesar asked, "Has anyone among you previously made this claim [of being a prophet]?" Abu Sufyan replied, "No." Caesar asked, "Had he ever been accused of lying before he made this claim?" Abu Sufyan replied, "No...."

Caesar asked, "Does he betray others?" Abu Sufyan replied, "No...."

Caesar asked, "What does he command you to do?" Abu Sufyan replied, "He commands us to worship God alone, without associating anything with Him, and he forbids us from what our forefathers worshiped. He commands us to pray, give charity, be chaste, fulfill promises, and be trustworthy."

⁶⁴ TN: Bosra is an ancient city in the Levant (modern-day southern Syria), not to be confused with Basra, Iraq.

When Abu Sufyan said that, Caesar turned to his translator and said, “Tell him I asked you about his lineage and you said he is of noble lineage. Indeed, this is how messengers are sent—from the noble lineage of their people. I asked you if anyone among you had previously made this claim, and you said no. Had anyone made this claim before him, I would have said that he is merely following a precedent. I asked you if he has ever been accused of lying before he made this claim and you said no, so I knew that he would not refrain from lying to people and then lie about God....”⁶⁵

2. If the skeptics aim to cast doubt on the Messenger’s lineage through these misconceptions, their claims are utterly unfounded. As demonstrated, his noble lineage has been well-known and widely recognized across generations. Furthermore, among God’s vicegerents on Earth, we find a “Possessor of Firm Resolve,”⁶⁶ Moses^P, who was raised in Pharaoh’s palace, with most people unaware of his true lineage. Yet, this did not diminish the truth of his message or divine mission. In comparison to Moses^P, the Messenger’s situation was far more favorable regarding his lineage, as he was known from the outset as Muhammad, son of Abdullah, who was the son of Abdul Muttalib. His grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, was a respected leader, known throughout the Arabian Peninsula, not just in Mecca, and he showed Muhammad particular love and care.

Ibn Abbas narrated:

Beneath the shade of the Kaaba, bedding was placed for Abdul Muttalib. Out of respect, no one would sit on it but him. His sons would gather around until he arrived. The young Messenger of God^P, still a child, would approach and sit on the bedding. This would greatly concern his uncles, who would attempt to move him away. However, whenever Abdul Muttalib noticed, he would say, “Leave my [grand]son alone, for by God, he holds great significance. I foresee a day when he will lead you all. I see a light in his face that will prevail over all others.” Then he would lift the child, seat him beside him, gently pat his back, kiss him, and say, “I have never encountered anyone more agreeable, purer, or with such a graceful form

⁶⁵ Al-Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari* [Authentic Collection of Bukhari] vol. 4 , 2-4.

⁶⁶ TN: Regarding the Possessors of Firm Resolve, Jabir narrated that Abu Jafar (Imam al-Baqir^P) said: “The Possessors of Firm Resolve (*ulū al-‘azm*) were given this name because they were entrusted with allegiance to Muhammad, the successors after him, and the Mahdi and his path. Thus, their resolve was firmly established in acknowledging and affirming this truth regarding their status and authority” (Al-Saffar, *Basa-ir Al-Darajat* [Degrees of Insights], 90).

and a more pleasant fragrance than him.” He would then turn to Abu Talib [the Messenger’s uncle]—since Abdullah and Abu Talib shared the same mother—and say, “O Abu Talib, this boy is destined for greatness. Take care of him and protect him as he has no one and is alone. Be like a mother to him. Ensure that nothing reaches him that he would dislike.” He would then carry him on his shoulders and circle the Kaaba with him seven times.”⁶⁷

3. There is no doubt that the Messenger^P was a believer in God and a monotheist since his childhood, as confirmed by the narrations of the successors from his family.

Imam al-Sadiq^P said:

The Messenger of God was raised in the care of Abu Talib. One day, while he was a young boy, walking between Safa and Marwa,⁶⁸ a man from the People of the Scripture saw him and asked, “What is your name?” He said, “My name is Muhammad.” The man asked, “Son of whom?” He replied, “Son of Abdullah.” The man asked, “[And he is] Son of whom?” He replied, “Son of Abdul Muttalib.” The man then pointed at the sky and asked, “What is that called?” He replied, “The sky.” The man then pointed at the earth and asked, “What is this called?” He replied, “The earth.” The man asked, “Who is their Lord?” He replied, “God.” The man asked, “Do they have a Lord other than God?” He replied, “No.”⁶⁹

Second: If, for argument's sake, we assume that the historical records preserved in books of history and biography are insufficient to fully understand the Messenger’s character and upbringing, this would still not diminish the truth of his message. God Almighty has not required anyone to have exhaustive knowledge of the lives of His vicegerents (prophets, messengers, and Imams). Instead, He has called upon people to believe in them and obey them once they are sent, deliver their message, and provide clear evidence of their legitimacy. Therefore, even if we were to assume that the early life of any divine messenger was unknown, this would in no way detract from their legitimacy or hinder people’s ability to recognize the truth of their mission through the evidence by which the authenticity of their call is identified.

Misconception 2: The Splitting of the Chest Incident

⁶⁷ Al-Sadooq, *Kamal al-Din wa Tamam Al-Nima* [The Perfection of Religion and the Completion of Blessings], 171.

⁶⁸ TN: Safa and Marwa are two small hills situated within the Sacred Mosque in Mecca, and they hold significant importance for Muslims in the pilgrimage to Mecca and in Islamic history.

⁶⁹ Al-Rawandi, *Al-Kharaij wa Al-Jaraih* [The Miracles and Extraordinary Actions] vol. 1, 71.

According to some Muslim narrations, the Messenger's chest was physically split open during his childhood. Christian skeptics argue (assuming this event even occurred) that its purpose would have been to remove a "black clot" from his heart, symbolizing the sin of Adam—a sin they believe only Jesus and his virgin mother were exempt from.

Response:

The incident of the Messenger's chest being physically split open during his youth was narrated by some historians and mentioned in the Sunni narration books. Here is one example from *Sahih Muslim*:

Anas ibn Malik said:

While the Messenger of God [during his youth] was playing with other children, Gabriel^P came to him, laid him down, and opened his chest. He removed his heart, extracted a clot from it, and said: "This is the portion of Satan in you." Then he washed it in a basin of gold with Zamzam water,⁷⁰ stitched it up, and restored it to its place. The boys ran to his wet nurse and said, "Muhammad has been killed!" They rushed to him and found him with a changed complexion. Anas then said, "I saw the marks from the stitches on his chest."⁷¹

When examining the narrations about the splitting of the chest, we find discrepancies regarding the timing and location of this event. Some accounts suggest it took place during the Messenger's childhood, while others indicate it happened after he was appointed as a prophet, specifically on the Night Journey (*Isra and Miraj*).⁷² The location also varies, with some narrations placing it in Mecca and others in the desert.

As for "the portion of Satan" within a person, it is referring to the corruption of one's soul and innate nature, so the 'black spot' is a spiritual concept, not a physical mark on the heart. Therefore, the idea that its removal would involve a surgical procedure leaving a mark, as Anas claimed, does not align with this fact.

Strangely, some Muslim scholars⁷³ reference this incident when interpreting the verse, "Did We not expand for you your chest?" However, the intended meaning of "expansion"

⁷⁰ TN: The well of Zamzam is located within the Sacred Mosque (*Masjid Al-Haram*) in Saudi Arabia.

⁷¹ Al-Naysaburi, *Sahih Muslim* [Authentic Collection of Muslim] vol. 1, 101.

⁷² TN: *Isra and Miraj* are two parts of a journey undertaken by the Prophet Muhammad^P, mentioned in the Quran. In the *Isra*, he traveled from Al Kaaba to the Holy sanctuary in Jerusalem. In the *Miraj*, he^P ascended through the heavens.

⁷³ See: Al-Mubarakfuri, *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhi*, [A Gift to the Skillful] vol. 9, 193; Al-Samani, *Tafsir Al-Samani*, [Interpretation (of Quran) of Al-Samani] vol. 6, 248; Al-Razi, *Tafsir Al-Razi*, [Interpretation (of Quran) of Al-Razi] vol. 2, 23; Al-Qurtubi, *Tafsir Al-Qurtubi* [Interpretation (of Quran) of Al-Qurtubi] vol.20, 104; and Abu Hayyan Al-Andalusi, *Tafsir Al-Bahr al-Muheet*, [The Vast Sea] vol. 8, 483.

here is clear—it refers to the expansion of the heart, in contrast to constriction and sorrow. This is similar to what Moses^P prayed for in the Quran: “O my Lord, expand for me my chest.”⁷⁴

When the verse was revealed: “So whoever God wants to guide, He ‘expands his chest’ [to accept] Islam,”⁷⁵ the Messenger of God^E was asked about the meaning of the expansion of the chest. He said: “It is a light that God casts into the heart of the believer, so his chest expands and opens up.”⁷⁶

As for how God expanded His Messenger’s chest, the Prophet’s successors have explained that this occurred through the appointment of the Commander of the Faithful, Ali^P, as his successor. This interpretation is mentioned in many narrations from them^P, such as:

- “Did We not expand your chest for you?” He said: “[This was] through Ali. We made him your successor.” He also said: “When Mecca was conquered and the Quraysh entered Islam, God expanded and eased his chest.”⁷⁷
- Imam al-Baqir^P and Imam al-Sadiq^P commented on the verse “Did We not expand your chest for you?” by saying: “Did We not inform you of your successor, make him your supporter, and the one who would subdue your enemy who weighed heavily on your back, and from him, We brought forth the lineage of the prophets, the guided [successors]? Also, We raised your mention, so that you are mentioned whenever I am mentioned. When you finish your mission in this world, appoint Ali for the guardianship, so that the people who are divided may be guided by him.”
- Abd al-Salam ibn Salih narrated from Imam al-Ridha^P: “Did We not expand your chest for you, O Muhammad? Did We not make Ali your successor? And did We not lighten your burden by means of Ali through the killing of the disbelieving combatants and those who distort the truth?”⁷⁸

Overall, the incident of the Messenger’s chest being physically split lacks validity and was not mentioned by the successors of the Messenger Muhammad^E, who are the rightful authorities representing him, speaking on his behalf, and clarifying the authentic aspects of his biography. Therefore, the arguments of skeptics—whether used to mock and ridicule or misinterpret this event, as seen in this misconception—hold no merit.

⁷⁴ Quran 20:25; Al-Qummi, *Tafsir Al-Qummi* [Interpretation (of Quran) of Al-Qummi], vol. 2, 428.

⁷⁵ Quran 6:125.

⁷⁶ Al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar* [Seas of Lights] vol. 65, 236.

⁷⁷ Al-Qummi, *Tafsir Al-Qummi* [Interpretation (of Quran) of Al-Qummi] vol. 2, 428.

⁷⁸ Ibn Shahrashub, *Manaqib Aal Abi Talib* [The Virtues of the Family of Abu Talib] vol. 2, 226.

Misconception 3: The Messenger's Lineage

Some skeptics and atheists have cast doubt upon Messenger's lineage, questioning his descent from his father Abdullah ibn Abd al-Muttalib or his descent from the Prophet Ishmael. In their view, this would contradict the idea of him being a divinely sent, infallible messenger.

Their reason for questioning his descent from his father, Abdullah, stems from certain historical reports suggesting that Abdul Muttalib and his son Abdullah married on the same day—Abdul Muttalib to Hala, daughter of Wuhayb, and Abdullah to her cousin, Amina, the daughter of Wahb. Consequently, Abdul Muttalib fathered Hamza, who, based on this account, should have been the same age as the Messenger, considering that Abdullah, as is historically known, passed away while the Messenger was still in his mother's womb. However, some historians claim that Hamza was four years older than the Messenger. How could this be? How could Amina have given birth to her son four years after his father's death?

As for the questioning of the Messenger's descent from Ishmael, it arises from numerous disagreements among historians, biographers, and genealogists regarding how the lineage is traced and connected to him [Ishmael].

Response:

First, the Messenger's^P name and lineage from his father, Abdullah, are not known to us solely through the accounts of historians or their narrations in books. Rather, this knowledge has been preserved and passed down through generations by both his followers and opponents, reaching us as an undeniable truth—one even more certain than what is established through mass transmission or the accumulation of evidence.

Additionally, the successors from the family of Muhammad^P—whose truthfulness and legitimacy are firmly established through the law for recognizing God's Proofs and definitive rational and textual evidence, assert that the earth must always have a successor present providing the knowledge to clarify any truth a person seeks to understand. These successors are the ones who restore the true course of religion and settle disputes about facts that people have contested, such as the name and lineage of their forefather, the chosen Muhammad, son of Abdullah^P.

On the other hand, anyone who accuses another person of the illegitimacy of his lineage or accuses his mother of bearing them by someone other than their known father must provide conclusive evidence to substantiate this accusation. Otherwise, they

lack honor, morality, and human conscience, and should seek the nearest psychiatric facility to address the psychological issues that have caused them to harbor such hatred, malice, and hostility.

No one ever questioned the Messenger's lineage from his father from the beginning of his divine mission until his death. All the Arabs and neighboring nations fully accepted it despite the enmity many held towards him and his divine mission.

The same applies to his maternal lineage—not only to his immediate mother, Lady Amina^P, but to all his maternal ancestors. As he said, "I am the son of the Fatimas and the Atikas,"⁷⁹ who were renowned for their honor, chastity, and purity.⁸⁰ This was known to everyone, and even his fiercest enemies, such as the Umayyads, could not defame any of his pure forefathers or mothers, who were virtuous and chaste women.

Moreover, Islamic history was not written by the Messenger or his pure family. Rather, his enemies, such as the Umayyads, had a significant role in its documentation. Despite this, not a single historian or biographer was able to find any flaw in his forefathers or mothers. The only thing some could do was to falsely accuse the Messenger's parents of dying as disbelievers, which is also an invalid claim, a fabrication aimed at demeaning the Messenger and glorifying their own leaders, who never abandoned idol worship, drunkenness, and debauchery.

In general, it is clear that the skeptics have no evidence to support their slanderous accusations, and they present nothing but a selective and malicious interpretation of certain historical accounts that fail to substantiate their accusations, as we will now examine.

Second: We observe that the skeptics' statements are based on two things:

1. The claim that the marriages of Abdul Muttalib and his son Abdullah^P took place on the same day. This is not a matter of consensus among historians but rather a narrative mentioned by Muhammad ibn Sad in his book *Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra* [The Great Book of Ranks].⁸¹ Those who came after him cited it as a statement prefaced with the phrase, "It is said..."⁸²

Clearly, historians record all information that reaches them regardless of accuracy. The prevailing opinion among historians is that Abdullah's marriage took place

⁷⁹ Al-Baladhuri, *Ansab Al-Ashraf* [The Lineages of the Nobles] vol. 1, 532; TN: Many women from the Messenger's^P lineage had one of these two names.

⁸⁰ Al-Baladhuri, *Ansab* [The Lineages] vol. 1, 532.

⁸¹ Muhammad ibn Sad, *Al-Tabaqat Al-Kubra* [The Great Book of Ranks] vol. 1, 95.

⁸² Ibn al-Athir, *Asad Al-Ghabah* [The Lion of the Forest] vol. 1, 13.

independently after the incident where his father, Abdul Muttalib, ransomed him from being sacrificed with a hundred camels.⁸³

Ibn al-Athir narrated:

Regarding the marriage of Abdullah, son of Abdul Muttalib, to Amina, daughter of Wahb, the mother of the Messenger of God, it is said that after Abdul Muttalib completed the sacrifice of the camels, he took Abdullah by the hand and passed by Qutaila, the daughter of Nawfal and sister of Waraqah ibn Nawfal, near the Kaaba. When she looked at his face, she asked, "Where are you going, Abdullah?" He replied, "With my father." She said, "I am offering you the same as what your father sacrificed in camels to marry me now." Abdullah responded, "I am with my father and cannot go against his wishes or leave him." Abdul Muttalib then led him to Wahb ibn Abd Manaf, son of Zuhra, the chief of the subclan of Zuhra, who married Abdullah to his daughter (Amina bint Wahb).⁸⁴

As for the incident of the vow and ransom mentioned above, historians have stated that when Abdul Muttalib wanted to dig the Zamzam well, he vowed that when he succeeded and was blessed with ten sons, he would sacrifice one of them to God.⁸⁵ Blessed with ten sons—Al-Harith, Abdullah, Abu Talib, Al-Zubair, Al-Abbas, Dhirar, Abu Lahab, Al-Ghaydaq, Hamza, and Al-Muqawwam—Abdul Muttalib cast lots among his sons, and the lot fell on Abdullah. Some advised against sacrificing Abdullah and proposed ransoming him with ten camels, increasing the number by ten if the lot fell on Abdullah again, and so forth. This process continued until the number of camels reached one hundred. At that point, the lot fell on the camels instead of Abdullah, thereby ransoming him. Consequently, Abdullah was referred to as "the sacrificed one."

Ibn Hisham, after mentioning the vow of Abdul Muttalib and the ransom of his son Abdullah, said: "Abdul Muttalib took him to Wahb ibn Abd Manaf ibn Zuhra ibn Kilab ibn Murrah ibn Kab ibn Luayy ibn Ghalib ibn Fihr, who was at that time the leader of the Zuhra sub-clan in lineage and honor. He married him to his daughter Amina, who was at that time the most esteemed woman in Quraysh in terms of lineage and position."⁸⁶

⁸³ Al-Yaqubi, *Tarikh Al-Yaqubi* [The History of al-Ya'qubi] vol. 1, 252-251; Ibn al-Athir, *Asad Al-Ghabah* [The Lion of the Forest] vol. 1, 13.

⁸⁴ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamil fi Al-Tarikh* [The Complete History] vol. 2, 7-8.

⁸⁵ For instance, see Ibn Hisham, *Al-Sirah Al-Nabawiyyah* [The Prophetic Biography] vol. 1, 98. See also: Al-Tabari, *Tarikh Al-Tabari* [The History of Al-Tabari] vol. 2, 2.

⁸⁶ Ibn Hisham, *Al-Sirah Al-Nabawiyyah* [The Prophetic Biography] vol. 1, 101-02.

Al-Azraqi said: “When Abdul Muttalib returned home that day, he passed by Wahb ibn Abd Manaf ibn Zuhra ibn Kilab, who was sitting in the mosque and was one of the nobles of Mecca. He married his daughter Amina to Abdullah.”⁸⁷

In conclusion, there is no issue with the Messenger being younger than Hamza, as the marriage of his father, Abdullah, to Amina occurred after Abdul Muttalib’s marriage to Hala, the daughter of Wuhayb.

2. The view that Abdullah passed away while the Messenger was still in his mother’s womb is predominant among historians and narrators. However, there are other opinions as well. Some have reported that he lived with his son for two years and four months before passing away.⁸⁸ Therefore, even if we assume that Abdul Muttalib’s marriage to Hala coincided with Abdullah’s marriage to Amina, there would be no problem with the Messenger being younger than Hamza if his father remained alive for the mentioned period. The idea that Hamza was two years older than the Messenger is also historically noted.⁸⁹

3. The view that Hamza was four years older than the Messenger is a narrative mentioned by al-Waqidi.⁹⁰ However, this is not the only opinion on the matter. Some have said that he was only two years older, as mentioned earlier. Others noted that both Hamza and the Messenger were nursed by Thuwaybah before Haleema al-Sadiyah nursed the Messenger, and that the Messenger referred to Hamza as his foster brother.⁹¹ This could indicate that they were close in age, or it could mean that the Messenger was nursed by the same woman who nursed Hamza before him, making them brothers through breastfeeding.

In contrast, some historians and biographers hold the view that Abdullah was “the youngest of his father’s ten children.”⁹² This would mean that Hamza was older than the Messenger’s father, not just older than the Messenger by two or four years.

Regardless of historical opinions on how much older Hamza was than the Messenger^P, it does not impact his lineage to his father Abdullah^P, nor does it present any issue, as we have clarified.

⁸⁷ Al-Azraqi, *Akhbar Makkah wa Ma Jaa Fiha Min Al-Athar* [News of Mecca and the Accounts Related to It] vol. 2, 47.

⁸⁸ Ibn al-Athir, *Asad Al-Ghabah* [The Lion of the Forest] vol. 1, 13; *Al-Masudi*, *Al-Tanbih Wa Al-Ishraf* [The Book of Notification and Verification], 196; Al-Tabarsi, *Taj Al-Mawalid* [The Crown of Births], 5.

⁸⁹ Al-Safadi, *Al-Wafi bi Al-Wafayat* [The Sufficient Record of Deaths] vol. 13, 104.

⁹⁰ Al-Waqidi, *Al-Maghazi* [The Campaigns] vol. 1, 170.

⁹¹ Al-Kulaini, *Al-Kafi* [The Sufficient] vol. 5, 437; TN: In Islam, foster brothers and sisters are related because they suckled from the same woman.

⁹² Al-Qadi al-Maghribi, *Sharh al-Akhbar* [The Explanation of the Reports] vol. 3, 219; Al-Tabari, *Tareekh Al-Tabari* [The History of al-Tabari] vol. 2, 4; Al-Yaqubi, *Tareekh Al-Yaqubi* [The History of Al-Yaqubi] vol. 1, 251; Al-Zarkali, *Al-Alam* [The Notables] vol. 4, 100.

As for the claim that the Messenger was sent to Lady Haleema for nursing as an infant—an argument some skeptics use to cast doubt on the purity of his mother, Lady Amina^P, suggesting he was sent to the desert to avoid potential rumors from the Quraysh or others—such reasoning is both immature and spiteful, lacking any scientific or credible historical foundation. It only exposes the moral depravity of those who make such accusations. The Messenger^E was the descendant of virtuous and chaste female ancestors, whose chastity and honor were unquestionable—both from his paternal and maternal lineage, especially his direct mother, the pure Lady Amina, a noblewoman of Mecca and the daughter of its most honorable family.

The reasons for sending him to the desert for nursing were twofold:

First: It was customary among Meccan nobility to send their children to be nursed by women in the desert to ensure they were raised in a healthy and proper manner. Lady Haleema herself recounted during her search for a child to nurse, “The deserts had become barren, and hardship drove us to enter the city. I came to Mecca, and the women of the clan of Sad had already found children to nurse. I asked for a child and was directed to Abdul Muttalib, who mentioned a newborn needing a wet nurse...”⁹³

This practice was not only an ancient custom, but it persisted into later periods, as noted by the traveler and geographer John Lewis Burckhardt during his journey to Hijaz in 1814. He observed that some tribes of Mecca, especially the noble ones, still adhered to the custom of Quraysh and the ancient Arab nobility by sending their children to be nursed by Bedouin women in the desert so that the children would grow up brave, eloquent in speech, and physically healthy.⁹⁴

Second: The cessation of his mother's breast milk led to the Messenger being initially nursed by Thuwaybah in Mecca, as noted by some historians, before he was entrusted to Lady Haleema.

Ibn al-Athir said: “Thuwaybah, the slave of Abu Lahab, nursed the Prophet for a few days before Haleema, with the milk she was feeding her own son, Masrooh. She had previously nursed his uncle, Hamzah, and later nursed Abu Salamah ibn Abd al-Asad.”⁹⁵

Third: Regarding the matter of the Messenger's^E lineage connecting to Prophet Ishmael^P, this has no bearing on his infallibility or his being a divine messenger at all. Infallibility—as will be explained—is known through divine text, and the divine text is the

⁹³ Ibn Shahrashub, *Manaqib Aal Abi Talib* [The Virtues of the Family of Abu Talib] vol. 1, 32.

⁹⁴ An article published in Al-Riyadh newspaper, available at this link: <https://www.alriyadh.com/1109894>

⁹⁵ Ibn Al-Athir, *Asad Al-Ghabah* [The Lion of the Forest] vol. 1, 14-15.

primary source that reveals an individual's infallibility. The infallible person holds fast to God, avoiding His prohibitions so he does not take people out of guidance or lead them into misguidance. Neither the infallible's family lineage nor aspects of his lineage related to one of his ancestors have any relevance to his infallibility or mission.

This matter is clear when examining the texts and history of divine religions and God's messengers in general. For instance, Moses^P, who was raised in Pharaoh's household, did not announce his lineage when God sent him as a messenger. In fact, no one knew his father's name or his family, yet he proceeded with his divine mission. The Quran recounts Pharaoh's words to Moses: "Did we not raise you among us when you were a child, and you spent many years of your life with us?"⁹⁶

The same is true for Joseph^P. He began his divine mission from prison before anyone knew who his father or family were, let alone his lineage that leads back to his grandfather Abraham or any of his noble ancestors. Everyone knew him as a slave who was found and sold until he was taken in by Potiphar [the Aziz] of Egypt,⁹⁷ who raised him in his house, and he did not announce his lineage to prove his truthfulness.

The issue of lineage has no connection to the infallibility of the infallible or proving the truth of his divine mission. The Messenger's legitimacy and truthfulness is affirmed by the law of recognizing God's Divine Proof, which is established through reason and religious texts. The Messenger Muhammad^P, being one of God's vicegerents on Earth, proved his legitimacy and truthfulness by fulfilling the law of recognizing the divine Proofs, which consists of three elements: (1) the religious text, (2) knowledge, and (3) the call to the sovereignty of God. This law applied to him in its entirety, as we have previously observed. By establishing his truthfulness, his claim of being from Ishmael's lineage as well as "the son of the two sacrificed ones" is also proven.⁹⁸

Al-Sadooq narrates this account: "Ali ibn al-Hassan ibn Ali ibn Faddal narrated that his father said: 'I asked Abu al-Hassan Ali ibn Musa al-Ridha^P about the meaning of the Prophet's^P saying: 'I am the son of the two sacrificed ones.' He replied: He means Ishmael, son of Abraham^P (the Friend of God)⁹⁹ and Abdullah, the son of Abdul Muttalib.'"¹⁰⁰

Al-Hakim narrated with his chain of transmission:

⁹⁶ Quran 26:18.

⁹⁷ TN: Potiphar was the captain of Pharaoh's guard during the time of Jacob and his twelve sons.

⁹⁸ Al-Sadooq, *Man La Yahduruhu Al-Faqih* [For Him Who Has No Access to a Jurist] vol. 4, 368; Al-Toosi, *Al-Amali* [The Dictation], 457; Al-Mufid, *Al-Fusul Al-Mukhtarah* [The Chosen Chapters], 60; Al-Qummi, *Tafsir Al-Qummi* [Interpretation (of Quran) of Al-Qummi] vol. 2, 226.

⁹⁹ TN: In the Quran, Abraham is given the title, "Friend of God" (See Quran 4:125).

¹⁰⁰ Al-Sadooq, *Al-Khisal* [The Traits], 55.

Abdullah ibn Said al-Sunabihi said: “We were present in the gathering of Muawiyah ibn Abu Sufyan, and the people began to discuss Ishmael and Isaac, the sons of Abraham. Some of them said that Isaac was the sacrificed one. Muawiyah said, ‘You have fallen upon the one who knows. We were with the Messenger of God^P when a Bedouin came to him and said, ‘O Messenger of God, I left the land dry, the water dry, the wealth has perished, and the children are lost. So, help me with what God has given you, O son of the two sacrificed ones.’ The Messenger of God^P smiled and did not deny it. We asked, ‘O Prince of the Believers [referring to Muawiyah], who are the two sacrificed ones?’ He said, ‘When Abdul Muttalib was commanded to dig the well of Zamzam, he made a vow to God that if God made the task easy for him, he would offer one of his children as a sacrifice. He cast lots among his sons, and the lot fell on Abdullah. Abdul Muttalib intended to sacrifice him, but his uncles from the Makhzum tribe intervened, advising him, ‘Please your Lord and ransom your son.’¹⁰¹ He then ransomed Abdullah for a hundred camels. Thus, Abdullah became known as the ‘sacrificed one,’ and Ismail is the second sacrificed one.’”¹⁰²

Moreover, Abu Talib^P confirms in one of his statements that he [Abu Talib and his family] are descendants of Abraham and Ishmael, and that no one among men can compare to the Messenger in intellect, character, or religion:

Imam al-Sadiq^P said:

When the Messenger of God^P wanted to marry Khadijah daughter of Khuwaylid, Abu Talib set out with his family members and a group from the Quraysh until they reached Waraqah ibn Nawfal, Khadijah’s uncle. Abu Talib began by saying: “Praise be to the Lord of this House, who made us from the offspring of Abraham and the descendants of Ishmael, who granted us a secure sanctuary, made us the rulers over people, and blessed us in the land in which we reside. This nephew of mine—the Messenger of God^P—is someone who, when compared to any man of Quraysh, outweighs him, and when measured against anyone, he surpasses him in greatness. There is none equal to him in all of creation. Even if he has little wealth, wealth is but a passing support and a fleeting shadow. He is interested in Khadijah, and she is interested in him. We have come to you to ask for her hand in marriage with her consent, and

¹⁰¹ TN: “Ransom your son” means to sacrifice something else (camels, for example) in his place.

¹⁰² Al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, *Al-Mustadrak ala Al-Sahihayn* [The Supplement to the Two Authentic Collections] vol. 2, 554.

the dowry will be from my wealth, both the immediate and deferred amounts. By the Lord of this House, he has a great destiny, a religion [that will become] widespread, and complete wisdom.” Then Abu Talib fell silent. Khadijah’s uncle spoke, his words stumbling as he struggled to match Abu Talib’s response, overcome by hesitation and breathlessness, despite being a priest. Khadijah then said: “O uncle, although you have more right over me in matters of witness, you do not have more right over me than myself. I give myself in marriage to you, O Muhammad, and the dowry is upon me from my wealth. Command your uncle to slaughter a camel and prepare a feast, and then [O Muhammad], go to your wife.” Abu Talib said: “Bear witness that she has accepted Muhammad and has taken responsibility for the dowry from her wealth.” Some of the Quraysh said: “How strange that a dowry is paid to the men by women!” Abu Talib became very angry, stood on his feet—he was a man whom men feared and disliked his anger—and said: “When men are like my nephew, women will seek them with the highest prices and the greatest dowries. But men like you cannot find marriage unless they pay costly dowries.” Abu Talib slaughtered a camel, and then the Messenger of God¹⁰³ went to his wife. A man from Quraysh, known as Abdullah ibn Ghanm, said:

“Congratulations, O Khadijah, for fortune has flowed to you in the most joyful of ways.

You married the best of creation, and who among all people is like Muhammad?

The righteous ones, Jesus son of Mary and Moses son of Imran (*Amram*)¹⁰³ brought glad tidings about him, how near is the appointed time.

The scriptures have long confirmed that he is a messenger from Mecca, guiding and enlightened.”¹⁰⁴

Misconception 4: Were the Messenger’s Parents and Guardians Believers?

Skeptics argue that the Messenger’s parents, his grandfather Abdul Muttalib (who raised him after his father’s passing), and his uncle Abu Talib, who cared for him during

¹⁰³ TN: Amram" and "Imran" are essentially different transliterations or variations of the same name, originating from the Hebrew name עמרם ('Amram),

¹⁰⁴ Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi* [The Sufficient] vol. 5, 374-375.

his early life, did not believe in God. They claim that this conflicts with the idea of him being a messenger of God.

Response:

The skeptics base their doubts on what has been mentioned in some Sunni books. Muslim narrated in his book *Sahih*: Anas reported that a man said, “O Messenger of God, where is my father?” He said, “In Hell.” When the man turned away, the Messenger called him back and said, “My father and your father are in Hell.”¹⁰⁵

Muslim also narrated: “Abu Hurayrah reported that the Messenger of God^P said, ‘I asked my Lord for permission to seek forgiveness for my mother, but He did not grant it. I asked for permission to visit her grave, and He granted it.’”¹⁰⁶

As a result, some Sunni scholars, including al-Nawawi and al-Azimabadi, concluded that the Messenger’s parents died as disbelievers (God forbid).¹⁰⁷

However, another group of Sunni scholars, which includes al-Manawi and al-Aabi, believed that the Messenger’s parents were among the saved ones because they died during a period with no messengers, which was before the Messenger’s mission.¹⁰⁸

A third group believed that the Messenger’s parents died as Hunafaa (the religion of Abraham). Among them were al-Razi and al-Suyooti, who ruled that all the Messenger’s ancestors going back to Adam were monotheists.¹⁰⁹

Al-Suyooti said: “The second perspective is that they did not engage in polytheism but were instead Hunafaa, followers of their grandfather Abraham’s religion. This perspective was adopted by a group of scholars, including Imam Fakhr al-Din al-Razi.”¹¹⁰

A fourth group believed that God brought the Messenger’s parents back to life for him, and they died as believers in him. This view was adopted by several narration (*hadith*) scholars and narrators, including Al-Qurtubi and Ibn Hajar.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁵ Al-Naysaburi, *Sahih Muslim* [Authentic Collection of Muslim] vol.1, 133.

¹⁰⁶ Al-Naysaburi, *Sahih Muslim* [Authentic Collection of Muslim] vol. 3, 65.

¹⁰⁷ Al-Nawawi, *Sharh Sahih Muslim* [Commentary on Sahih Muslim] vol. 7, 64; Al-Azim Abadi, *Awn Al-Mabud* [Assistance of the Worshipper] vol. 9, 41.

¹⁰⁸ Al-Salihi al-Shami, *Sabil Al-Huda wal-Rashad* [The Path of Guidance and Right Guidance] vol. 1, 250-251.

¹⁰⁹ Al-Shami, *Sabil Al-Huda* [The Path of Guidance] vol. 1, 255.

¹¹⁰ Al-Suyuti, *Masalik Al-Hunafa fi Walid al-Mustafa* [The Paths of the Monotheists on the Father of the Chosen One], 39.

¹¹¹ Al-Shami, *Sabil Al-Huda* [The Path of Guidance] vol. 1, 258.

A fifth group chose to refrain from judgment, leaving the matter to God's knowledge.¹¹²

Thus, it becomes clear that the issue regarding the Messenger's parents is not settled among the Sunnis, making it inappropriate for skeptics to rely on the opinions of some Sunni scholars as a basis for attacking the Messenger.

As for the Messenger's grandfather Abdul Muttalib, it is surprising that there is also disagreement among the Sunnis about him,¹¹³ despite them narrating his management of the affairs of the Kaaba, his faith-filled poetry, his prior knowledge of the Messenger, his excavation of the well of Zamzam, and the Messenger's pride in him during the Battle of Hunayn, a time of great hardship when he said, "I am the Prophet, and there is no falsehood in this. I am the son of Abdul Muttalib."¹¹⁴ Could the Messenger have taken pride in him if he had died without embracing monotheism?

As for Abu Talib^P [the Messenger's uncle], neither his poetry—which everyone extensively recorded in his biography and clearly demonstrates his faith in God and the Messenger—nor his steadfast support, without which the Prophet and Islam might not have survived, were considered a defense for him. Despite all this evidence, the claim that he was a disbeliever has become widespread among Sunnis.

However, according to the religious statements from the Messenger and his successors^P, the correct view is that the Messenger's parents, grandfather, and uncle^P were all monotheists, believers in God, and did not associate anything with Him, not even for a moment.

God, the Exalted, says: "Your movement among those who prostrate themselves."¹¹⁵

The Messenger of God^P said: "God continually transferred me from the loins of the pure to the wombs of the purified, until He brought me forth into this world. He did not defile me with the impurities of the Age of Ignorance."¹¹⁶

Imam al-Baqir^P said:

Then He placed us in the loins of Adam^P, and that light continued to be transferred through loins and wombs, from one generation to the next. It never settled in loins without revealing its lineage and honoring its bearer, ultimately reaching Abdul Muttalib. From there, it was transferred to Fatimah, the mother of Abdullah, and the light was divided into two parts:

¹¹² Al-Shami, *Sabil Al-Huda* [The Path of Guidance] vol. 1, 326.

¹¹³ Al-Masudi, *Muruj Al-Dhahab* [The Meadows of Gold] vol. 2, 109.

¹¹⁴ Al-Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari* [Authentic Collection of Bukhari] vol. 5, 99.

¹¹⁵ Quran 26:219.

¹¹⁶ Al-Majlisi, *Bihar Al-Anwar* [Seas of Lights] vol. 15, 117.

one part in Abdullah and the other in Abu Talib^P. This is the meaning of the verse: “Your movement among those who prostrate themselves,” referring to our passage through the loins of the prophets and the wombs of their women. Thus, God carried us through loins and wombs until He brought us forth in our appointed time and era. Anyone who claims that we, the Prophet’s Household, are unlike other people—carried in loins and wombs, born of fathers and mothers—has spoken falsely.¹¹⁷

Imam al-Sadiq^P narrated from his forefathers^P:

The Prophet^P was asked: “Where were you when Adam was in Paradise?” He replied: “I was in his loins, and then I was brought down to earth in his loins. I boarded the Ark in the loins of Noah, and I was cast into the fire in the loins of Abraham. None of my forebears ever came together in an illicit union. God continuously transferred me from pure loins to purified wombs as a guided and guiding entity until He took a covenant with me through prophethood and made a pledge with me through Islam. He made every creature recognize my characteristics, mentioned me in the Torah and the Gospel, and elevated me to the heavens. He derived a name from His names for me: ‘My nation is a nation of praising individuals, and the Lord of the Throne is the Praised One, and I am Muhammad.’”¹¹⁸

Imam al-Sadiq^P also said:

The Prophet^P said in his will to Ali:

"O Ali, Abdul Muttalib established five practices during the pre-Islamic era, which God preserved for him in Islam: He prohibited the marriage of a son to his father’s wives, so God revealed: ‘And do not marry those women who your fathers married.’ He found a treasure and extracted a fifth from it and gave it in charity, and God revealed: ‘And know that whatever you gain, indeed, one-fifth of it is for God....’ When he dug the well of Zamzam, he named it the water source for the pilgrims, and God revealed: ‘Have you made the providing of water for the pilgrim and the maintenance of the Sacred Mosque¹¹⁹ equal to [the deeds of] one who believes in God and the Last Day....’¹²⁰ He established the blood money for killing as one hundred camels, and God enacted it in Islam. The

¹¹⁷ Al-Bahrani, *Hilyat al-Abrar* [The Ornament of the Righteous] vol. 1, 17.

¹¹⁸ Al-Sadooq, *Al-Amali* [The Dictation], 723; TN: Muhammad means “One who is much praised.”

¹¹⁹ TN: The Sacred Mosque (*Masjid Al-Haram*) encloses the vicinity of the Kaaba and is the place for pilgrimage for millions of Muslims every year.

¹²⁰ TN: In other words, provision of water and maintenance is not equivalent to belief in God and the last day.

Quraysh had no specific number of circumambulations around the Kaaba, so Abdul Muttalib set the number at seven, and God enacted it in Islam. O Ali, Abdul Muttalib never sought guidance through divination arrows, nor did he worship idols or eat what was sacrificed on altars, and he used to say: 'I follow the religion of my father Abraham^P.'"¹²¹

Imam al-Sadiq^P also stated the following:

Gabriel descended upon the Prophet^P and said: "O Muhammad, your Lord sends His greetings and says: 'I have forbidden hellfire upon the loins that bore you, the womb that carried you, and the lap that nurtured you. The loins belong to your father, Abdullah, son of Abdul Muttalib; the womb that carried you belongs to Amina, daughter of Wahb; and the lap that nurtured you belongs to Abu Talib.'"¹²²

Abdul Muttalib will be resurrected on the Day of Judgment as a single nation, with the semblance of prophets and the dignity of kings.

The example of my uncle Abu Talib is like that of the People of the Cave; they concealed their faith and feigned polytheism, so God gave them their reward twice.

Ishaq ibn Jafar narrated: "My father was told, 'They claim that Abu Talib was a disbeliever.' He replied: 'They have lied. How could he be a disbeliever when he stated, "Do you not know that we have found Muhammad^P to be a prophet like Moses, written about in the earliest scriptures?"'¹²³

Moreover, Abu Talib's^P words, as previously mentioned in the sermon during the marriage of the Messenger of God to Lady Khadijah are filled with strong faith in God, Abraham, and Ishmael^P. Imam al-Sadiq^P said: "When the Messenger of God^P wanted to marry Khadijah, daughter of Khuwaylid, Abu Talib set out with his family members and a group from the Quraysh until they reached Waraqah ibn Nawfal, Khadijah's uncle. Abu Talib began by saying: 'Praise be to the Lord of this House, who made us from the offspring of Abraham and the descendants of Ishmael, who granted us a secure sanctuary, made us rulers over the people, and blessed us in the land in which we reside.'"¹²⁴

¹²¹ Al-Sadooq, *Al-Khisal* [The Traits], 313.

¹²² Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi* [The Sufficient] vol. 1, 446.

¹²³ Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi* [The Sufficient] vol. 1, 447-48.

¹²⁴ Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi* [The Sufficient] vol. 5, 374.

Abu Talib's^P famous poem in praise of the Messenger of God^P also affirms his faith in God and the Messenger when he addresses the Quraysh: "No one compares to him, a master at the time of reckoning. The Lord of the servants bestowed upon him His light, and revealed a true religion that will never fade."

He also says: "By the Lord of the Kaaba, you have lied [to say] that we will leave Mecca. Indeed, you are confused. By the Lord of the Kaaba, you have lied [to say] that we will abandon Muhammad, while we have not yet fought and struggled for him."

Moreover, he says:

A fair-skinned one by whose face rain is sought,

A refuge for orphans, a protector for widows.

The noble ones of the tribe of Hashem surround him.

They are with him in bounty and generosity.

A scale of truth that does not err by a grain.

A scale of justice that does not tip.¹²⁵

When Mecca and the surrounding areas suffered from drought due to the absence of rain, Umar ibn al-Khattab said:

The Quraysh gathered in al-Abtah, a well-known valley in Mecca, and their voices rose in discussion. Some of them said, "Worship al-Lat and al-Uzza," and others said, "Worship Manat, the third one."¹²⁶ Then a man from the People of the Scripture, Waraqah ibn Nawfal, addressed them and said: "O people of Quraysh, what are you doing? How are you being misled? Among you is the remnant of Abraham^P and the descendants of Ishmael." They asked, "Do you mean Abu Talib?" He replied, "Yes." Soon after, Abu Talib came out of his family's living quarters. He was wearing a green garment, his head dripping from the oil he had applied. They all approached him, and I was among them, saying, "O Abu Talib, the land

¹²⁵ Al-Sadooq, *Al-Tawhid* [The Book of Divine Unity], 159; Al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari* [Authentic Collection of Bukhari] vol. 2, 15; Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidaya wa Al-Nihaya* [The Beginning and the End] vol. 3, 70-74.

¹²⁶ TN: In pre-Islamic Arabia, the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula predominantly practiced polytheism, worshipping a pantheon of deities. Among the most revered were the goddesses al-Lat, al-Uzza, and Manat, often referred to collectively as the three chief goddesses. These deities were central to the religious and cultural life in Mecca and surrounding areas until the rise of Islam, which emphasized monotheism and the worship of the one true God.

has dried up, and the people are suffering. Come and seek rain for us.” He said, “Yes, your appointment is when the sun is at its zenith and when the wind blows,” referring to midday (noon).¹²⁷ When the Sun reached its zenith, Abu Talib approached the Kaaba, surrounded by the young boys of Abdul Muttalib’s offspring. In their midst, there was a boy who shone like the mid-winter sun dispersing a dark cloud (referring to the Messenger of God^P). Abu Talib approached until he leaned his back against the Kaaba at its sheltered side,¹²⁸ then he looked up at the sky, pointed with his finger, moved his lips [in supplication], and the young boys around him did the same. At that moment, there was not a single cloud in the sky. Suddenly, clouds began to gather from all directions, growing thicker and closer. They became dense and poured down rain, gushing abundantly and darkening the sky. The rain continued to pour heavily, accompanied by lightning. It descended fiercely and poured down profusely, filling the valley and bringing prosperity to the barren land.¹²⁹

Here is a case of Abu Talib^P supporting the Messenger at the beginning of his mission:

One day, the Prophet^P was in the Sacred Mosque wearing new clothes when the polytheists threw the afterbirth of a camel on him, covering his clothes with it. He was deeply affected and went to Abu Talib, saying, “O uncle, how do you see my standing among you?” Abu Talib asked, “What is the matter, my nephew?” The Prophet then told him what had happened. Abu Talib called Hamza and took a sword, saying to Hamza, “Take the afterbirth.” Then they went to the Quraysh with the Prophet accompanying them. When they arrived at the Kaaba, the Quraysh saw the anger on Abu Talib’s face. Abu Talib then instructed Hamza, “Smear it on their mustaches and beards,” and he proceeded to do this to each of them in turn until he had finished with the last one. Then Abu Talib turned to the Prophet^P and said, “My nephew, this is your standing among us.”¹³⁰

The parents, grandfather, and uncle of the Messenger^P were believers in God, monotheists, and pure in faith. Their religion was the faith of their ancestor Abraham^P,

¹²⁷ TN: *Waqt al-Zawal* refers to the time when the sun reaches its highest point in the sky, directly overhead, and begins to decline toward the west.

¹²⁸ TN: The sheltered side of the Kaaba refers to the area behind the cloth covering the Kaaba (*Kiswah*) on the wall opposite the Black Stone, specifically near the corner known as the Yemeni Corner. It is a place where people traditionally seek shelter from the sun and perform supplication.”

¹²⁹ Al-Nuri, *Mustadrak Al-Wasail* [Supplement to the Means] vol. 6, 208.

¹³⁰ Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi* [The Sufficient] vol. 1, 449.

which is a source of pride for the Messenger, not a point of criticism as some skeptics claim.

Misconception 5: The Presence of the Messenger at the Battle of Fijar

According to historians, the Fijar War¹³¹ was well-known among the Arabs. It was a fierce war between the tribes of Kinanah and Qays Aylan during the sacred months,¹³² before the Messenger's mission. The war began when the King of Al-Hirah, Al-Numan ibn Munthir, sent a caravan with Urwah ibn Utaibah the traveler from the Qays tribe to the Ukaz market for trade. However, Al-Baraadh ibn Qays from the Kinanah tribe followed them and killed Urwah near the market, leading to a severe battle at Ukaz.¹³³ [The Quraysh, being one of the most powerful and respected tribes in Arabia, were drawn into the conflict due to their alliance with the Kinana tribe].

Since this war was unjust and resulted in the loss of innocent lives, skeptics argue that the Messenger's participation with his uncles in this war is incompatible with his role as a divine messenger.

Response:

The criticism presented by the skeptics against the Messenger is invalid for two reasons:

1. The historians who mentioned the Messenger's participation in the war alongside his uncles stated that he was no more than fifteen or twenty years old at the time. This places the event over twenty years before his prophetic mission. Certainly, at that time, the Prophet^ﷺ was not yet able to carry out his reformatory role or establish justice and righteousness among the people.¹³⁴
2. The Messenger did not actually engage in the battle or kill anyone. Rather, he merely defended his uncles from the arrows of the opposing side.

¹³¹ TN: The Fijar (Sacrilegious) wars refers to a series of conflicts that occurred during the pre-Islamic era in Arabia (late 6th century). They were given the name "sacrilegious" because they violated the sacred months, in which fighting was traditionally forbidden. These wars were fought among the Arab tribes of the Quraysh and others in the region.

¹³² TN: The sacred months are four specific months during which acts of war and fighting are prohibited, unless initiated in defense. These months are Muharram, Rajab, Dhul-Qadah and Dhul-Hijjah. The sacred months were recognized as sacred even before the advent of Islam. The Arabs considered these months sacred as part of the Abrahamic tradition.

¹³³ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamil fi Al-Tarikh* [The Complete History] vol. 1, 589-95.

¹³⁴ Ibn Hisham, *Al-Sirah Al-Nabawiyah* [The Prophetic Biography] vol. 1, 119; Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamil fi Al-Tarikh* [The Complete History] vol. 1, 592; Al-Dhahabi, *Tarikh Al-Islam* [The History of Islam] vol. 1, 61.

Ibn Hisham said: “The Messenger of God^P was present and witnessed certain days of that war; his uncles took him with them.” The Messenger^P said, “I would shield my uncles from the arrows of their enemies when they were shot at them.”¹³⁵

Thus, even if we assume that the Messenger was present during certain days of the war alongside his uncles, and if we accept the historians' accounts, this in no way diminishes his infallibility or his prophetic mission, as we have explained.

Surprisingly, another group of skeptics adopted a different perspective, arguing that the Messenger's lack of participation in the Fijar War, combined with his forgiving and gentle nature, indicates an inability to engage in physical struggle¹³⁶ or warfare. They further claim that he lacked sufficient knowledge of warfare—an attribute they consider essential, and many messengers may be compelled to resort to it during a certain phase of their mission, just like any advocate of a major reformative cause

This claim is made despite their own acknowledgment, as well as that of others, that the Messenger began his mission by enduring the most severe trials in guiding humanity. After his migration to Medina, he was compelled to engage in numerous defensive battles against the enemies of God. In these battles, the Messenger demonstrated unparalleled courage, wisdom, and military acumen, astonishing Quraysh and their allies among the Arab tribes and Jews, who were renowned for their skilled warriors and military leaders. Yet the Messenger^P subdued the leaders of polytheism and hypocrisy, dismantled their power, and emerged victorious. The baseless doubts of these skeptics, driven by their ill intentions, were swept away like chaff in the wind, leaving them to lament their shattered hopes.

Misconception 6: The Prophet's Work in Shepherding and Trade

There is no doubt that the Messenger^P tended sheep from his childhood and also did so for the people of Mecca. He also worked in trade during his youth.

Some skeptics have considered shepherding and working in trade to be professions that do not align with the prophetic mission and divine calling.

Response:

I honestly do not understand the reasoning behind the claim that working as a shepherd or in trade is incompatible with a divine mission. Is there something inherently flawed or dishonorable about these professions that would undermine a

¹³⁵ Ibn Hisham, *Al-Sirah Al-Nabawiyyah* [The Prophetic Biography] vol. 1, 120.

¹³⁶ *Jihad* means striving or exerting toward a noble or difficult goal. In Islam, it refers to striving in the way of God to uphold His guidance and ensure justice, which can be achieved through various means, including personal improvement, spreading knowledge, or physical struggle.

person's dignity or status to the extent of disqualifying them from being chosen by God for a mission later on? What exactly is this supposed flaw?

In any case, their criticism and skepticism regarding the Messenger's^ﷺ work as a shepherd or in trade are entirely unfounded.

1. Shepherding

Moses^ﷺ, who spoke to God and was one of the Messengers of Strong Will, was in no way diminished by being a shepherd. God says in the Quran, "He [Moses] said, 'It is my staff; I lean upon it, and with it, I bring down leaves for my sheep, and I have other uses for it.'"¹³⁷

The Messenger of God^ﷺ also said, "David was sent as a prophet while he was a shepherd, Moses was sent as a prophet while he was a shepherd, and I was sent as a prophet while I was shepherding sheep for my family in Ajyad."¹³⁸

Moreover, shepherding was the profession of all the prophets. There was no prophet of God who did not tend to sheep. Imam al-Baqir^ﷺ said:

The Prophet^ﷺ said:

"I would watch over camels and sheep while tending to them, as every prophet tended sheep. Before prophethood, I often observed that they were calm and undisturbed without anything around them before suddenly becoming frightened and scattering. This behavior made me wonder, 'What happened?'

I was astonished until Gabriel^ﷺ told me that when a disbeliever is struck, nothing created by God fails to hear it, and all of creation trembles except for humans and jinn. So, I said, 'That is due to the strike on the disbeliever; we seek refuge in God from the torment of the grave.'"¹³⁹

It is also well known that the Messenger^ﷺ grew up as an orphan, having lost both of his parents. His grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, cared for him, and after his passing, his uncle, Abu Talib, took responsibility for him. Given that Abu Talib had many children and limited means, it is certain that the Messenger sought to earn his living to avoid placing a burden on his uncle.

¹³⁷ Quran 20:18.

¹³⁸ Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, *Kunuz Al-Ummal* [The Treasures of the Good-Doers] vol. 11, 494; TN: Ajyad is a historic neighborhood adjacent to the Sacred Mosque (*Masjid Al-Haram*) in Mecca.

¹³⁹ Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi* [The Sufficient] vol. 3, 233.

The Prophet^P said: “There was never a prophet whom God sent who did not tend to sheep.” They asked, “Even you, O Messenger of God?” He replied, “Yes. I tended them for the people of Mecca for a few small coins (qirats).”¹⁴⁰

One of the wisdoms behind prophets tending sheep is that God teaches His prophets how to care for people, develop the ability to bear with them, be patient in reforming them, and manage their affairs. Imam al-Sadiq^P said: “God never sent a prophet without first making him tend sheep to teach him how to care for and guide the people.”¹⁴¹

2. Trade

We know that the prophets of God used to work as shepherds, and some of them had other professions and jobs. For example, Adam worked in farming and agriculture, Enoch was a tailor, Noah was a shepherd and a carpenter, Abraham was a shepherd and livestock breeder, David was a blacksmith, and Zachariah and Jesus were carpenters. Some of them, like Hud,¹⁴² engaged in trade.¹⁴³

The prophets and messengers of God did not live off the wealth of others, nor did they accept being dependent on anyone else or seek servants to serve them or spend on them. Instead, they lived by the work of their own hands, which is the way of the great ones.

Al-Tabarsi mentioned about the disciples who followed Jesus^P:

It is narrated that they followed Jesus. When they were hungry, they said: “O Spirit of God! We are hungry.” So, he would strike the ground with his hand, whether a plain or mountain, and two loaves [of bread] would come out for each one of them to eat. When they were thirsty, they said: “O Spirit of God! We are thirsty.” So, he would strike the ground with his hand, whether a plain or mountain, and water would come out for them to drink. They said: “O Spirit of God, who is better than us? When we wish, you feed us, and when we wish, you quench our thirst, and we have believed in you and followed you.” He said: “Better than you are those who work with their hands and eat from their earnings.” So, they began to wash clothes for wages.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰ Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, *Kanz al-Ummal*, [The Treasures of the Good-Doers] vol. 4, 11.

¹⁴¹ Al-Sadooq, *Ilal al-Sharai* [The Reasons Behind the Laws] vol. 1, 33.

¹⁴² TN: Hūd, sometimes called Eber, is believed in Islam to have been a messenger sent to pre-Islamic Arabia.

¹⁴³ Refer to: Al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar* [Seas of Lights] vol. 100, 56.

¹⁴⁴ Al-Tabrisi, *Majma Al-Bayan* [The Assembly of Elucidation] vol. 2, 304.

On this basis, the Messenger—like other Prophets of God—worked as a shepherd and in trade before his mission. In trade, his honesty, trustworthiness, and the [divinely bestowed] blessings of his character led Lady Khadijah^P to entrust him with managing her wealth and commercial enterprises. The Messenger traveled to Syria on her behalf, and his efforts resulted in significant profits in her trade and an increase in her wealth, as recorded in the books of biography and history.

I find it astonishing that some skeptics have attempted to exploit this economic journey to slander the Messenger by accusing him of learning Christianity and Judaism during his travels. They incorrectly claim that those he encountered on his journey to Syria were primarily Jewish and Christian priests and monks, as if he spent his traveling days in their monasteries and hermitages. However, it should be noted that the Messenger's meeting with the monk Bahira in Syria occurred during an earlier journey with his uncle Abu Talib^P when the Messenger was only nine years old, a matter that will be discussed later.

I believe that blind hatred and prejudice in attacking the Messenger's character have led these individuals to lose their footing and analyze matters in a way that deviates significantly from the course of events and historical facts, resulting in an illogical and intellectually unacceptable approach.

In conclusion: The Messenger's work as a shepherd or in trade later on does not, in any way, affect his honesty, trustworthiness, noble character, and sincerity, which qualified him for divine selection and to be sent by God as a Messenger and mercy to all the worlds.