THE PROPHET'S SIRAH — COMPLETE COLLECTION

VOLUME 1

The Makkan Period

Series 1–6



HJ CHE ALIM HJ CHE HARON

AK (KELANTAN)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

THE PROPHET'S SIRAH — COMPLETE COLLECTION

VOLUME 1

THE MAKKAN PERIOD

Series 1–6: From the Lineage and Birth of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to the Night Journey and the Pledge of al-'Aqabah, According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith

لَقَدْ جَآءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُم بِٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ

"There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you and to the believers is kind and merciful."

SURAH AT-TAWBAH 9:128

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, who sent us a Messenger from among ourselves, to whom our hardship is grievous and who is deeply concerned for our good. Blessings and peace be upon our master, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, and upon his family and Companions, who witnessed his life and then preserved it and passed it on to us with complete trustworthiness.

This eBook is specially dedicated to my beloved wife,

ZAHARAH MOHD LATIF;

my dear children,

MUHAMMAD HAFIZ, NOOR HAZWANI, ABDUL HAKIM, NOOR HIDAYAH, NOR AQILA and **NOR ATIQAH**;

and my sons- and daughters-in-law,

FAZILAH, MALEK, HANIN, FAIRIZAL and **FIRWAN**.

This book gathers Series 1 to 6 of The Prophet's Sirah, including the Special Edition of Series 6, into one volume: from the lineage and birth of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, his youth, the coming of revelation, the open call and the Year of Sorrow, to the Night Journey and the Pledge of al-'Aqabah. The references of every series are kept. May this book bring us closer to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and be a continuing charity for all who help, read and share it.

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ABOUT THE COVER OF THIS BOOK

This book's cover does not depict any human being or animal. It shows the valley of Makkah at sunrise: the barren, rocky mountains that surround the city, the Sacred Mosque in the valley below, and golden light rising from behind a mountain peak.

The light of dawn symbolises the beginning of the message in this valley without cultivation. Here the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was born and grew up, in its mountains he received the first revelation, and in its valley he called people to Allah with great patience for thirteen years, before migrating to Madinah.

The dark blue band at the bottom, framed by fine gold lines, is where the author's name appears. The titles on all five volumes of this collection share the same style, size and gold colour, so that the five books look like one set when placed together.

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Colour guide: green box = verses of the Qur'an; gold box = Hadith; brown box = note (weak report or further explanation); blue table = comparison. Underlined blue narrator names can be clicked to open the narrator's page on sunnah.com.

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PART ONE

A Light in the Valley of Makkah

The Prophet's Sirah — Series 1

The Lineage, Birth and Childhood of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith

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A LIGHT IN THE VALLEY OF MAKKAH

The series Stories from the Qur'an closed with the story of ***the Year of the Elephant***, the year Allah protected His House from the army of Abrahah. In that very year, in the barren valley of Makkah, an orphan was born who would become ***a mercy to all the worlds*** — Muhammad ibn 'Abdillah ﷺ.

This first eBook of the series **The Prophet's Sirah** gathers what is authentic about the ***lineage, birth and childhood*** of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: the supplication of Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, the chosen lineage, the day of his birth, his wet-nurses, the opening of his chest, the passing of his mother, and the care of his grandfather and uncle.

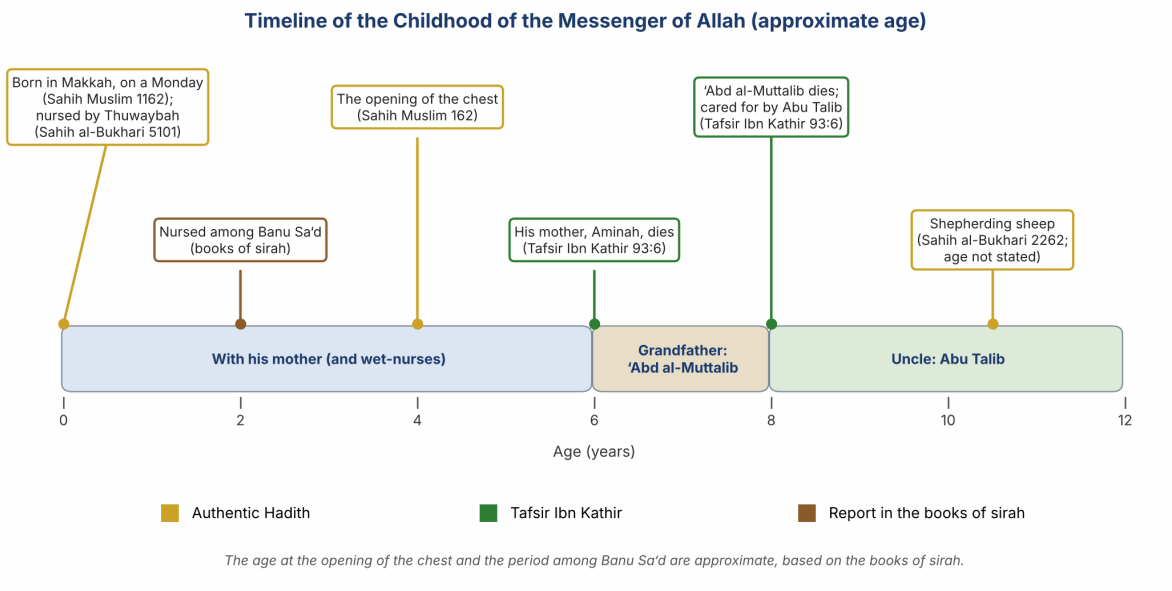


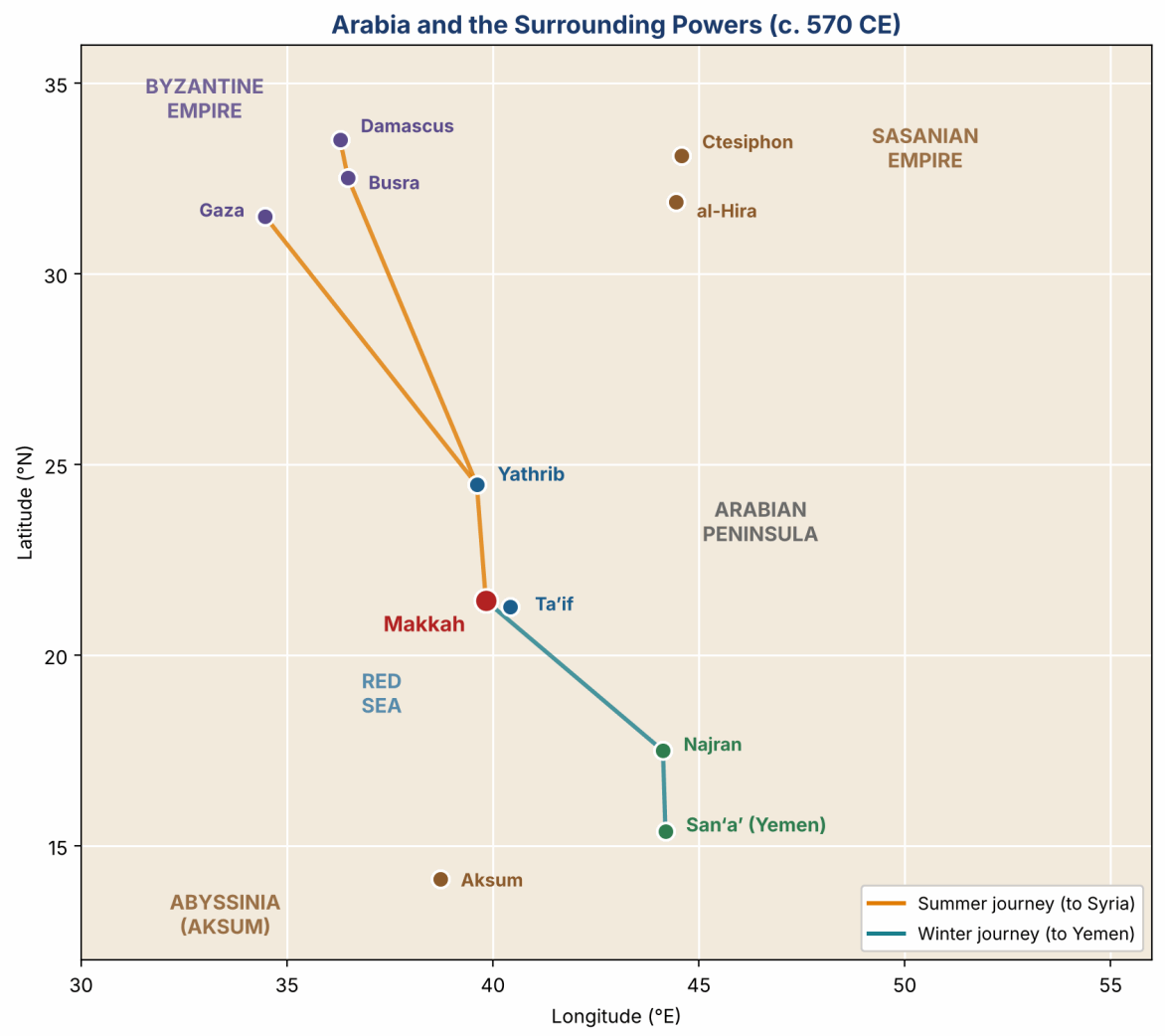
Figure 1: Timeline of the childhood of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, with the source of each event.

Note: The translation of the Qur'anic verses in this eBook is Sahih International. The main sources are the Qur'an, the exegesis of Ibn Kathir and authentic Hadith, and the grading of each Hadith is stated in the Hadith box. Information from the books of sirah, such as the Sirah of Ibn Ishaq (as transmitted by Ibn Hisham), is placed in a brown "Sirah Note" box, so that the reader can distinguish it from authentic Hadith.

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ARABIA BEFORE HIS BIRTH

To understand the birth of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, we need to look at the world he was born into. In the mid-sixth century CE, ***Arabia*** was surrounded by great powers, yet its interior — including Makkah — ***was never ruled*** by any empire.



Schematic map; approximate positions. Sources: Wikipedia, "Pre-Islamic Arabia", "Quraysh".

Figure 2: Arabia and the surrounding powers at the time of the birth of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ (schematic map).

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THE GREAT POWERS AROUND IT

POWER	POSITION AND INFLUENCE
Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium)	To the north-west: Syria, Palestine and Egypt. Allied with the Arab Ghassanids.
Persian (Sasanian) Empire	To the north-east: Iraq and Persia. Allied with the Lakhmids of al-Hira.
Kingdom of Aksum (Abyssinia)	Across the Red Sea; ruled Yemen in the early sixth century — the land Abraha came from.

Source: Wikipedia, "Pre-Islamic Arabia".

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RELIGION AND SOCIETY

Most Arabs at the time ***worshipped idols***. Among the well-known idols were ***al-Lat, al-'Uzza and Manat*** — named in Surah An-Najm 53:19–20 — as well as ***Hubal*** at the Ka'bah. There were Christians in Yemen and Najran, while Jewish tribes lived in some areas such as Yathrib.

Arab society was organised by ***tribe***. Loyalty to the tribe was very strong: the tribe protected its members, and wars between tribes could last for years. They were also famous for ***poetry***, generosity to guests and courage — qualities that Islam later refined.

> **SIRAH NOTE: WHY ARABIA?**
>
> The sirah scholars mention several wisdoms behind the final message being revealed in Arabia: its position ***at the centre*** between Asia, Africa and Europe; its people being ***free*** from the rule of the great empires; and ***Arabic***, rich and eloquent, becoming the language of the Qur'an. These are views of scholars, not definitive texts.

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MAKKAH: A VALLEY WITHOUT CULTIVATION

Makkah lies in a ***narrow valley*** in the Hijaz region, surrounded by barren rocky hills. There is no river and almost no cultivation. When the Prophet Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ left his wife Hajar and his son Isma'il عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ there, he prayed:

SURAH IBRAHIM 14:37

رَّبَّنَآ إِنِّيٓ أَسۡكَنتُ مِن ذُرِّيَّتِي بِوَادٍ غَيۡرِ ذِي زَرۡعٍ عِندَ بَيۡتِكَ ٱلۡمُحَرَّمِ رَبَّنَا لِيُقِيمُواْ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ فَٱجۡعَلۡ أَفۡـِٔدَةٗ مِّنَ ٱلنَّاسِ تَهۡوِيٓ إِلَيۡهِمۡ وَٱرۡزُقۡهُم مِّنَ ٱلثَّمَرَٰتِ لَعَلَّهُمۡ يَشۡكُرُونَ ٣٧

Our Lord, I have settled some of my descendants in an uncultivated valley near Your sacred House, our Lord, that they may establish prayer. So make hearts among the people incline toward them and provide for them from the fruits that they might be grateful.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/14:37

Allah relates the prayer of Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: ***"in an uncultivated valley near Your sacred House"***.

This prayer was answered: people's hearts ***were drawn*** to that valley, and provision came to its inhabitants from outside. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 14:37

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MAKKAH IN NUMBERS

FEATURE	DETAILS
Elevation	About 277 m above sea level, in a narrow valley.
Highest hill	Jabal an-Nur, 642 m — the Cave of Hira' is at its top.
Climate	Hot desert; summer afternoons usually exceed 40 °C.
Rainfall	An average of about 105 mm a year.
Water	The Zamzam well and small wells; rainwater stored in cisterns.
Population	Estimates differ: one study suggests about 550; traditional sources up to 10,000.

Source: Wikipedia, "Mecca".

THE KA'BAH: HEART OF THE VALLEY

In the middle of the valley stood ***the Ka'bah***, the house of worship built by the Prophets Ibrahim and Isma'il عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. Although the Arabs later placed idols around it, they still ***revered the Ka'bah*** and came on pilgrimage every year. The pilgrimage season brought truces, trade and meetings between tribes — and that is why Makkah, though without crops, became an important town.

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QURAYSH: GUARDIANS OF THE KA'BAH AND TRADERS

The tribe that controlled Makkah was ***Quraysh***. According to Wikipedia, his ancestor ***Qusayy ibn Kilab*** gathered the scattered descendants of Fihr and took control of the Ka'bah. He settled some of them around the Ka'bah (***Quraysh al-Bitah***) and others on the edges of the sanctuary (***Quraysh al-Zawahir***).

TWO JOURNEYS A YEAR

Because Makkah's land was barren, Quraysh lived by ***trade***. According to Wikipedia, ***Hashim***, his great-grandfather, began two trade journeys: ***in winter to Yemen*** and ***in summer to Syria*** (Gaza, Bosra and Damascus). Hashim himself died in Gaza on one of these journeys, around 497 CE. The Qur'an mentions this blessing:

SURAH QURAYSH 106:1–4

لِإِيلَٰفِ قُرَيْشٍ ﴿١﴾

For the accustomed security of the Quraysh.

إِۦلَٰفِهِمْ رِحْلَةَ ٱلشِّتَآءِ وَٱلصَّيْفِ ﴿٢﴾

Their accustomed security [in] the caravan of winter and summer.

فَلْيَعْبُدُوا۟ رَبَّ هَٰذَا ٱلْبَيْتِ ﴿٣﴾

Let them worship the Lord of this House.

ٱلَّذِىٓ أَطْعَمَهُم مِّن جُوعٍ وَءَامَنَهُم مِّنْ خَوْفٍۭ ﴿٤﴾

Who has fed them, [saving them] from hunger and made them safe, [saving them] from fear?

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/106:1-4

Allah says: ***"Let them worship the Lord of this House"***. The security and provision of Quraysh came from Allah, because they were the keepers of His House — so they ought to worship Him, not idols. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 106:1.

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THE CLANS OF QURAYSH

CLAN	LINK TO THE SIRAH
Banu Hashim	The clan of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; served the pilgrims.
Banu al-Muttalib	Close allies of Banu Hashim.
Banu Zuhrah	The clan of his mother, Aminah bint Wahb.
Banu Umayyah (‘Abd Shams)	The strongest and wealthiest clan; the clan of ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan.
Banu Taym	The clan of Abu Bakr as-Siddiq.
Banu ‘Adi	The clan of ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab.
Banu Asad	The clan of Khadijah bint Khuwaylid.
Banu Makhzum	The clan of Khalid ibn al-Walid.

Sources: Wikipedia, “Quraysh”; Wikipedia, “Hashim ibn Abd Manaf”.

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THE SUPPLICATION OF IBRAHIM AND THE CHOSEN LINEAGE

SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:129

رَبَّنَا وَٱبۡعَثۡ فِيهِمۡ رَسُولٗا مِّنۡهُمۡ يَتۡلُواْ عَلَيۡهِمۡ ءَايَٰتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ وَٱلۡحِكۡمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمۡۚ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ ٱلۡعَزِيزُ ٱلۡحَكِيمُ ١٢٩

Our Lord, and send among them a messenger from themselves who will recite to them Your verses and teach them the Book and wisdom and purify them. Indeed, You are the Exalted in Might, the Wise.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:129

COMMENTARY ON 2:129

While raising the foundations of the Ka'bah with his son Isma'il عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ prayed that Allah would send a Messenger from among the people of the Sacred Precinct. Imam Ibn Kathir explains that this answered supplication ***matched Allah's prior decree***: the appointment of Muhammad ﷺ as a Messenger from the offspring of Ibrahim, to the unlettered people and to all of mankind and jinn. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 2:129

Allah also says in Surah At-Tawbah: ***"There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves"*** (9:128). Ibn Kathir says: ***from among you and in your own language***. He quotes the words of Ja'far ibn Abi Talib رضى الله عنه to the Negus: "Allah has sent us a Messenger from among us, whose lineage, character, comings and goings, truthfulness and trustworthiness we know." Tafsir Ibn Kathir 9:128

THE LINEAGE OF THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ

Imam al-Bukhari states his lineage in the chapter heading on the sending of the Prophet ﷺ: ***Muhammad ibn 'Abdillah ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib ibn Hashim ibn 'Abd Manaf ibn Qusayy ibn Kilab ibn Murrah ibn Ka'b ibn Lu'ayy ibn Ghalib ibn Fihr ibn Malik ibn an-Nadr ibn Kinanah ibn Khuzaymah ibn Mudrikah ibn Ilyas ibn Mudar ibn Nizar ibn Ma'add ibn 'Adnan***. Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Merits of the Ansar, chapter on the sending of the Prophet ﷺ

It is this lineage up to ***'Adnan*** that the scholars rely on; 'Adnan himself was a descendant of Isma'il ibn Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. His mother was ***Aminah bint Wahb***, as Ibn Kathir mentions in his exegesis of Surah Ad-Duha. The following Hadith shows that this lineage was Allah's choice:

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HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2276

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ مِهْرَانَ الرَّازِيُّ، وَمُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ سَهْمٍ، جَمِيعًا عَنِ الْوَلِيدِ، - قَالَ ابْنُ مِهْرَانَ حَدَّثَنَا الْوَلِيدُ بْنُ مُسْلِمٍ، - حَدَّثَنَا الأَوْزَاعِيُّ، عَنْ أَبِي عَمَّارٍ شَدَّادٍ، أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ وَاثِلَةَ بْنَ الأَسْقَعِ، يَقُولُ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ « إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَى كِنَانَةَ مِنْ وَلَدِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ وَاصْطَفَى قُرَيْشًا مِنْ كِنَانَةَ وَاصْطَفَى مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ بَنِي هَاشِمٍ وَاصْطَفَانِي مِنْ بَنِي هَاشِمٍ ».

TRANSLATION:

Wathilah ibn al-Asqa' رضى الله عنه said: I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: **"Indeed, Allah chose Kinanah from the descendants of Isma'il, chose Quraysh from Kinanah, chose Banu Hashim from Quraysh, and chose me from Banu Hashim."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Muhammad ibn Mihran ar-Razi and Muhammad ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Sahm, from al-Walid ibn Muslim, from al-Awza'i, from Abu 'Ammar Shaddad ibn 'Abdillah, from Wathilah ibn al-Asqa' رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtues, chapter on the excellence of the Prophet's lineage ﷺ, Hadith No. 2276.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2276

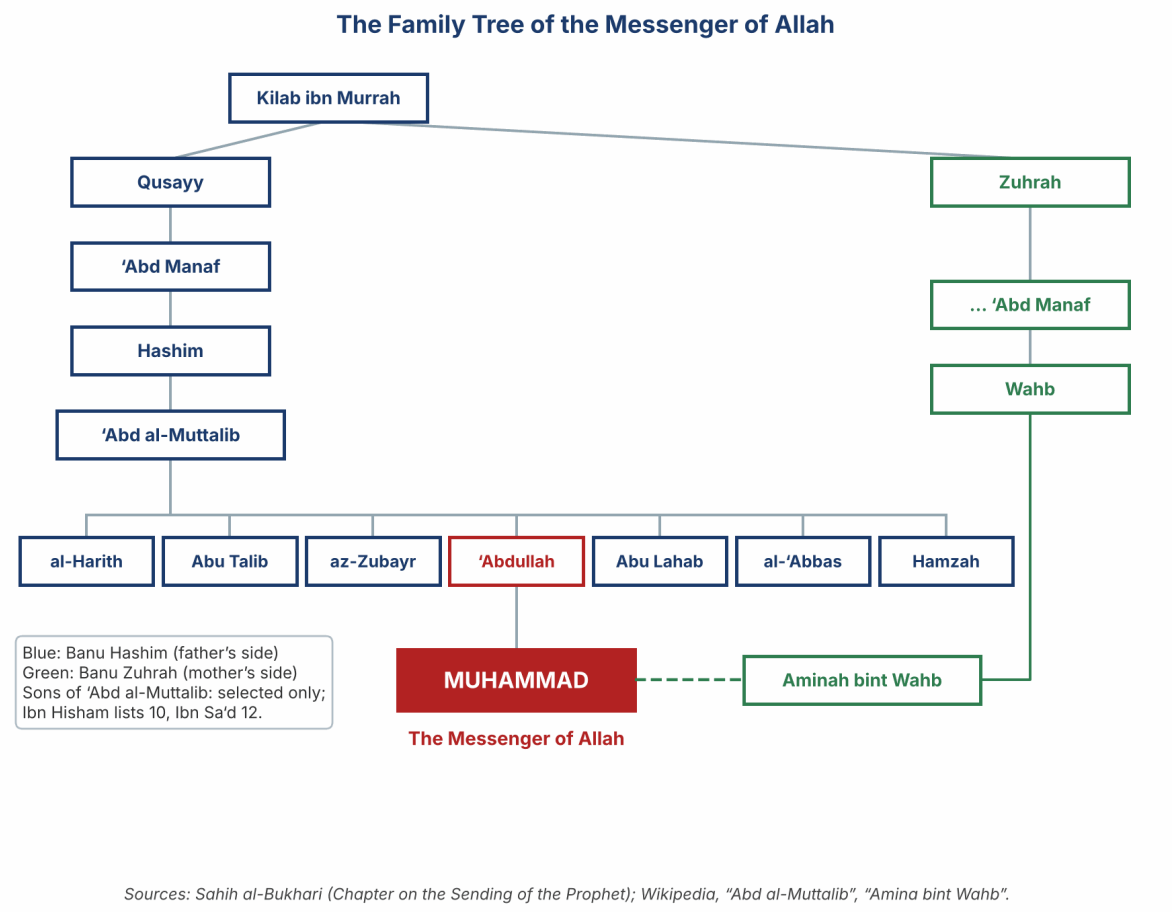
LESSON

The nobility of lineage is not something to boast about, but ***a sign of Allah's choice*** for His Messenger, so that his people would know him and could not fault his descent. Our own nobility is measured by taqwa.

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THE FAMILY OF THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ

The figure below shows his family on ***both sides***: his father's side from ***Banu Hashim***, and his mother's side from ***Banu Zuhrah***. Both meet in ***Kilab ibn Murrah***, since Zuhrah was a brother of Qusayy.



Sources: Sahih al-Bukhari (Chapter on the Sending of the Prophet); Wikipedia, "Abd al-Muttalib", "Amina bint Wahb".

Figure 3: The family tree of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ on his father's and mother's sides.

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HIS PATERNAL UNCLES

'Abd al-Muttalib had many sons; the books of sirah differ on their number. Four of them have important places in the sirah:

UNCLE	HIS PLACE
Abu Talib	Raised and protected him from the age of eight.
Hamzah رضى الله عنه	Embraced Islam in Makkah; called the Lion of Allah.
al-'Abbas رضى الله عنه	Embraced Islam; ancestor of the 'Abbasid caliphs.
Abu Lahab	Opposed him; mentioned in Surah Al-Masad.

The lesson: ***blood ties do not guarantee guidance***. Two uncles embraced Islam, one protected him, and another opposed him. Guidance is a gift from Allah.

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'ABD AL-MUTTALIB AND THE WELL OF ZAMZAM

SIRAH NOTE: SHAYBAH, CALLED "THE SERVANT OF AL-MUTTALIB"

According to Wikipedia, his grandfather was born in ***Yathrib*** around 496 CE with the name ***Shaybah***. His mother, ***Salma bint 'Amr***, was from Banu an-Najjar in Yathrib. After Hashim died, his uncle ***al-Muttalib*** brought him to Makkah. The people of Makkah took the boy for al-Muttalib's servant and called him ***'Abd al-Muttalib***, and the name stayed.

RE-DIGGING ZAMZAM

'Abd al-Muttalib became head of Banu Hashim and was responsible for giving food and drink to the pilgrims. According to the books of sirah, he dreamt that he was told to dig at a place near the Ka'bah. After digging for ***three days***, he rediscovered ***the well of Zamzam***, which had long been buried. From then on, Zamzam water was again supplied to the pilgrims.

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SIRAH NOTE: THE VOW AND THE RANSOM OF A HUNDRED CAMELS

The books of sirah relate that ‘Abd al-Muttalib vowed: if he were granted ten grown sons, he would sacrifice one of them at the Ka‘bah. The lot fell on ***‘Abdullah***, his most beloved son. On his people's advice, lots were cast between ‘Abdullah and camels, with more camels added each time, until the lot fell on the camels when they reached ***one hundred***. ‘Abdullah was spared.

This story is ***a report from the books of sirah***, not an authentic Hadith. It shows how a practice of the Jahiliyyah — vowing to sacrifice a child — was later abolished by Islam.

‘ABD AL-MUTTALIB AND ABRAHA

In ***the Year of the Elephant***, ‘Abd al-Muttalib was the leader of Makkah who faced Abraha. The story was told in Book 39 of Stories From the Qur'an: the Ka‘bah has an Owner who will protect it. Only weeks later, his grandson — Muhammad ﷺ — was born.

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'ABDULLAH AND AMINAH

'Abdullah, the son of 'Abd al-Muttalib spared from the vow, was married to ***Aminah bint Wahb*** of Banu Zuhrah. According to Wikipedia, Aminah's mother was ***Barrah bint 'Abd al-'Uzza***, and her ancestor Zuhrah was ***a brother of Qusayy ibn Kilab***. So both his parents came from noble Quraysh lineages.

> **SIRAH NOTE: THE DEATH OF 'ABDULLAH IN YATHRIB**
>
> According to Wikipedia and the books of sirah, 'Abdullah set out with ***a trade caravan*** while Aminah was pregnant. On the way back, he fell ill and ***died in Yathrib***, among the relatives of 'Abd al-Muttalib's mother, before his son was born.
>
> This is what Ibn Kathir means in his tafsir of Surah Ad-Duha: he was ***an orphan from the womb*** (see the chapter "The Orphan Who Was Given Refuge").

THE YEAR OF BIRTH IN THE COMMON ERA

Modern historians estimate ***the Year of the Elephant*** at around ***570 CE***, and his birth is usually given as ***570 CE***. Some researchers estimate up to 571 CE. What is authentic in the Hadith is the ***day*** of his birth, a Monday. Source: Wikipedia, "Mecca".

EVENT	APPROXIMATE YEAR (CE)
Hashim dies in Gaza	c. 497
'Abd al-Muttalib born in Yathrib	c. 496
Year of the Elephant; birth of the Messenger ﷺ	c. 570
Aminah dies at al-Abwa'	c. 576–577
'Abd al-Muttalib dies	c. 578

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THE YEAR OF THE ELEPHANT: PRELUDE TO HIS BIRTH

The birth of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was preceded by a great event witnessed by all of Makkah: the march of ***Abraha's*** army with elephants to destroy the Ka'bah. The full story was told in Book 39 of Stories From the Qur'an; here we summarise what relates to his birth.

ITEM	DETAILS
Who was Abraha?	A Christian leader who ruled Yemen on behalf of the Kingdom of Aksum (Abyssinia).
His aim	To destroy the Ka'bah so that the Arabs would make pilgrimage to his church in Yemen.
What happened	The lead elephant stopped at the boundary of Makkah; the army was destroyed by Allah (Surah Al-Fil).
Approximate year	Around 570–572 CE according to modern historians.

Sources: Wikipedia, "Mecca"; Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Surah Al-Fil.

WHY IS THIS EVENT IMPORTANT?

First: The House of Allah was protected. The Ka'bah, which would become the qiblah of his Ummah, was saved weeks before his birth.

Second: The standing of Quraysh rose. The Arabs regarded Quraysh as ***"the people of Allah"*** because Allah defended their House — according to the books of sirah — which added to Makkah's prestige.

Third: A marker of time. The Arabs had no fixed calendar, so they named that year ***the Year of the Elephant*** and dated other events from it — including the birth of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

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BORN ON A MONDAY

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself told of the day of his birth when he was asked about fasting on Mondays:

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1162

وَحَدَّثَنِي زُهَيْرُ بْنُ حَرْبٍ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ مَهْدِيٍّ، حَدَّثَنَا مَهْدِيُّ بْنُ مَيْمُونٍ، عَنْ غَيْلاَنَ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَعْبَدٍ الزِّمَّانِيِّ، عَنْ أَبِي قَتَادَةَ الأَنْصَارِيِّ، رضى الله عنه أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم سُئِلَ عَنْ صَوْمِ الاِثْنَيْنِ فَقَالَ « فِيهِ وُلِدْتُ وَفِيهِ أُنْزِلَ عَلَىَّ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Qatadah al-Ansari رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was asked about fasting on Monday, and he said: **"On it I was born, and on it (revelation) was sent down to me."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Zuhair ibn Harb, from 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Mahdi, from Mahdi ibn Maimun, from Ghailan ibn Jarir, from 'Abdullah ibn Ma'bad az-Zimmani, from Abu Qatadah al-Ansari رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Fasting, chapter on fasting three days of every month, the day of 'Arafah, 'Ashura', Mondays and Thursdays, Hadith No. 1162.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:1162e

THE YEAR AND DATE OF HIS BIRTH

Authentic Hadith establishes the ***day*** of his birth: Monday. As for the ***year***, the well-known view among the sirah writers is ***the Year of the Elephant***, the year Allah destroyed the army of Abrahah (see Series 39 of Stories from the Qur'an). The place was Makkah.

SIRAH NOTE: THE DATE OF HIS BIRTH

The scholars differ about the ***date*** of his birth in the month of Rabi' al-Awwal. The best-known view is ***12 Rabi' al-Awwal***, the view of Ibn Ishaq. Other scholars preferred different dates, such as 8 or 9 Rabi' al-Awwal.

This difference changes nothing essential: what is authentic is that he was born on ***a Monday***, and what matters more is following his Sunnah — including fasting on Mondays, as he did.

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A PRAISED NAME

SIRAH NOTE: WHO NAMED HIM?

The books of sirah relate that his grandfather, ***'Abd al-Muttalib***, named his grandson ***Muhammad***. The name was not commonly used by the Arabs at that time.

Linguistically, ***Muhammad*** means ***"the one who is much praised"***, and ***Ahmad*** means ***"the one who praises most"*** or ***"the most praised"***.

HIS NAMES IN THE HADITH

In Sahih al-Bukhari, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ mentions several of his names: ***Muhammad, Ahmad, al-Mahi*** (by whom Allah erases disbelief), ***al-Hashir*** (after whom people are gathered) and ***al-'Aqib*** (the last). Sahih al-Bukhari 3532

The name ***Ahmad*** is also mentioned in the Qur'an as glad tidings brought by the Prophet 'Isa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ (Surah As-Saff 61:6).

NAME	MEANING
Muhammad	The much praised
Ahmad	The most praised / who praises most
al-Mahi	By whom disbelief is erased
al-Hashir	After whom people are gathered
al-'Aqib	The last prophet

The lesson: ***a good name*** is a prayer. Give our children meaningful names, and follow the character of the owner of this most praised name.

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THE ORPHAN WHO WAS GIVEN REFUGE

SURAH AD-DUHA 93:6–8

أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَـَٔاوَىٰ ٦

Did He not find you an orphan and give [you] refuge?

وَوَجَدَكَ ضَآلًّا فَهَدَىٰ ٧

And He found you lost and guided [you].

وَوَجَدَكَ عَآئِلًا فَأَغْنَىٰ ٨

And He found you poor and made [you] self-sufficient.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/93:6-8

COMMENTARY ON 93:6–8

First: An orphan before birth. Imam Ibn Kathir explains ***"Did He not find you an orphan"***: ***his father, 'Abdullah, died while he was still in his mother's womb*** — and it is also said, after he was born. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 93:6

Second: Refuge after refuge. Ibn Kathir continues: then his mother, ***Aminah bint Wahb, died when he was six years old***; then he was in the care of his grandfather ***'Abd al-Muttalib until his grandfather died when he was eight***; then his uncle ***Abu Talib*** took care of him, and continued to protect and defend him. "All of that," says Ibn Kathir, "was by the decree of Allah and His excellent arrangement."

REFLECTION — WHEN ALLAH IS THE PROTECTOR

He lost his father, his mother, then his grandfather — yet he was ***never left without a protector***: ***"and give [you] refuge"***. For everyone who has suffered loss, this verse is a balm.

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THE WET-NURSES

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 5101

حَدَّثَنَا الْحَكَمُ بْنُ نَافِعٍ، أَخْبَرَنَا شُعَيْبٌ، عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي عُرْوَةُ بْنُ الزُّبَيْرِ، أَنَّ زَيْنَبَ ابْنَةَ أَبِي سَلَمَةَ، أَخْبَرَتْهُ أَنَّ أُمَّ حَبِيبَةَ بِنْتَ أَبِي سُفْيَانَ أَخْبَرَتْهَا أَنَّهَا، قَالَتْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ انْكِحْ أُخْتِي بِنْتَ أَبِي سُفْيَانَ فَقَالَ «أَوَتُحِبِّينَ ذَلِكَ». فَقُلْتُ نَعَمْ، لَسْتُ لَكَ بِمُخْلِيَةٍ، وَأَحَبُّ مَنْ شَارَكَنِي فِي خَيْرٍ أُخْتِي. فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم «إِنَّ ذَلِكَ لاَ يَحِلُّ لِي». قُلْتُ فَإِنَّا نُحَدَّثُ أَنَّكَ تُرِيدُ أَنْ تَنْكِحَ بِنْتَ أَبِي سَلَمَةَ. قَالَ «بِنْتَ أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ». قُلْتُ نَعَمْ. فَقَالَ «لَوْ أَنَّهَا لَمْ تَكُنْ رَبِيبَتِي فِي حَجْرِي مَا حَلَّتْ لِي إِنَّهَا لاَبْنَةُ أَخِي مِنَ الرَّضَاعَةِ، أَرْضَعَتْنِي وَأَبَا سَلَمَةَ ثُوَيْبَةُ فَلاَ تَعْرِضْنَ عَلَيَّ بَنَاتِكُنَّ وَلاَ أَخَوَاتِكُنَّ». قَالَ عُرْوَةُ وَثُوَيْبَةُ مَوْلاَةٌ لأَبِي لَهَبٍ كَانَ أَبُو لَهَبٍ أَعْتَقَهَا فَأَرْضَعَتِ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَلَمَّا مَاتَ أَبُو لَهَبٍ أُرِيَهُ بَعْضُ أَهْلِهِ بِشَرِّ حِيبَةٍ قَالَ لَهُ مَاذَا لَقِيتَ قَالَ أَبُو لَهَبٍ لَمْ أَلْقَ بَعْدَكُمْ غَيْرَ أَنِّي سُقِيتُ فِي هَذِهِ بِعَتَاقَتِي ثُوَيْبَةَ.

TRANSLATION:

Umm Habibah bint Abi Sufyan رضى الله عنها said: "O Messenger of Allah, marry my sister, the daughter of Abu Sufyan." … He said: **"Even if she (the daughter of Umm Salamah) were not my stepdaughter in my care, she would still not be lawful for me, for she is the daughter of my foster-brother. Thuwaybah nursed me and Abu Salamah. So do not offer me your daughters or your sisters."** 'Urwah said: Thuwaybah was a freed slave of Abu Lahab, who had set her free, and she nursed the Prophet ﷺ.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from al-Hakam ibn Nafi', from Shu'ayb, from az-Zuhri, from 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, from Zaynab bint Abi Salamah, from Umm Habibah bint Abi Sufyan رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Marriage, Hadith No. 5101. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 1449).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:5101

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Among those who nursed the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was ***Thuwaybah***, a slave of Abu Lahab who had been set free. This Hadith is also a proof of the ruling of ***mahram status through nursing***: the daughter

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of a foster-brother may not be married. The Prophet ﷺ himself observed this ruling carefully. The final part of this narration — about Abu Lahab in a dream — is the statement of 'Urwah, not a saying of the Prophet ﷺ.

SIRAH NOTE: HALIMAH AS-SA'DIYYAH AND BANU SA'D

According to the books of sirah — among them the Sirah of Ibn Ishaq as transmitted by Ibn Hisham — it was the custom of the nobles of Makkah to send their infants to be nursed in the desert villages, where the air was clean and the Arabic eloquent. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was nursed by ***Halimah bint Abi Dhu'ayb as-Sa'diyyah*** of the tribe of ***Banu Sa'd ibn Bakr***.

The books of sirah also report the blessings that Halimah's family experienced after taking him — their sheep and mount became fertile. This story is well known in the books of sirah, but it is ***not found in Sahih al-Bukhari or Sahih Muslim***, and the Hadith scholars differ about the strength of its chain.

What authentic Hadith supports is that he ***had a wet-nurse***, as mentioned in the Hadith of the opening of the chest (Sahih Muslim 162) in the next chapter.

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LIFE IN THE DESERT OF BANU SA'D

According to Wikipedia, Halimah and her husband, ***al-Harith ibn 'Abd al-'Uzza***, were from ***Banu Sa'd ibn Bakr***, a branch of the great tribe of ***Hawazin***. They lived as ***Bedouin*** in the Hijaz desert, far from the crowds of Makkah.

WHY WERE MAKKAN BABIES SENT TO THE DESERT?

BENEFIT OF THE DESERT	EXPLANATION
Clean air	Far from the crowded town and easily spread diseases.
Eloquent speech	Bedouin Arabic was considered the purest and most eloquent.
A strong body	Life close to nature built physical endurance.
Tribal ties	Ties of nursing strengthened links between Quraysh and the Bedouin tribes.

These benefits are mentioned by the sirah writers as ***the custom*** of the Makkan nobility; they are not religious texts.

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SIRAH NOTE: A YEAR OF DROUGHT AND BLESSING

The books of sirah relate that Halimah came to Makkah in ***a year of drought***, with a weak mount and little milk. The orphan baby was not taken by the other wet-nurses because there was no father to pay them. Halimah took him, and her family's life became blessed.

Wikipedia also says that her family's flock stayed healthy and gave milk while others died. This story of blessing is ***well known in the books of sirah*** but ***not found in the two Sahihs***, as explained in the chapter "The Wet-Nurses".

Reports ***differ*** on how long he stayed with Banu Sa'd: some mention about four to five years.

REFLECTION

Allah raised His Messenger not in a palace but in ***a simple Bedouin tent***, in the care of a poor family. Simplicity, open nature and eloquent speech became part of his upbringing.

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THE OPENING OF THE CHEST

While still a child playing with his friends, an extraordinary event took place:

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 162

حَدَّثَنَا شَيْبَانُ بْنُ فَرُّوخَ، حَدَّثَنَا حَمَّادُ بْنُ سَلَمَةَ، حَدَّثَنَا ثَابِتٌ الْبُنَانِيُّ، عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم أَتَاهُ جِبْرِيلُ صلى الله عليه وسلم وَهُوَ يَلْعَبُ مَعَ الْغِلْمَانِ فَأَخَذَهُ فَصَرَعَهُ فَشَقَّ عَنْ قَلْبِهِ فَاسْتَخْرَجَ الْقَلْبَ فَاسْتَخْرَجَ مِنْهُ عَلَقَةً فَقَالَ هَذَا حَظُّ الشَّيْطَانِ مِنْكَ. ثُمَّ غَسَلَهُ فِي طَسْتٍ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ بِمَاءِ زَمْزَمَ ثُمَّ لأَمَهُ ثُمَّ أَعَادَهُ فِي مَكَانِهِ وَجَاءَ الْغِلْمَانُ يَسْعَوْنَ إِلَى أُمِّهِ - يَعْنِي ظِئْرَهُ - فَقَالُوا إِنَّ مُحَمَّدًا قَدْ قُتِلَ. فَاسْتَقْبَلُوهُ وَهُوَ مُنْتَقِعُ اللَّوْنِ. قَالَ أَنَسٌ وَقَدْ كُنْتُ أَرَى أَثَرَ ذَلِكَ الْمِخْيَطِ فِي صَدْرِهِ.

TRANSLATION:

Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه reported that Jibril عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ while he was playing with the other children. He took hold of him, laid him down, split open his chest and took out his heart. From it he removed a clot, and said: **"This is the share of Shaytan in you."** Then he washed it in a basin of gold with the water of Zamzam, joined it together and returned it to its place. The children ran to his mother — meaning his wet-nurse — saying: "Muhammad has been killed!" They went to him and found that his colour had changed. Anas said: **"I used to see the mark of that stitching on his chest."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Shayban ibn Farrukh, from Hammad ibn Salamah, from Thabit al-Bunani, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Faith, chapter on the Night Journey of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, Hadith No. 162.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:162c

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

First: Protection from childhood. Allah ***purified the heart of His Messenger*** from childhood, and removed "the share of Shaytan" from it — a preparation for the great message.

Second: Witnessed by others. Other children saw it, and Anas رضى الله عنه himself used to see ***the mark of the stitching*** on his chest. This event was not imagination; it truly happened.

Third: Proof of a wet-nurse. This Hadith mentions the children running to ***his mother — meaning his wet-nurse*** — which supports the sirah report of his time in the village of his wet-nurse.

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SURAH ASH-SHARH 94:1

أَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ ﴿١﴾

Did We not expand for you, [O Muhammad], your breast?

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/94:1

COMMENTARY ON 94:1

Imam Ibn Kathir explains ***"Did We not expand for you, [O Muhammad], your breast?"*** as: ***We illuminated your breast and made it spacious and wide***. He also mentions the view that it refers to the opening of the chest on the night of the Isra', and says: ***there is no contradiction***, for the physical opening of the chest is part of the expansion of the breast, together with the inner expansion that came from it. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 94:1

REFLECTION — A PURIFIED HEART

If the heart of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was purified by Jibril عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, our hearts need to be purified by ***repentance, remembrance and knowledge***. This Hadith teaches that the centre of human good and evil is the heart.

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BACK IN HIS MOTHER'S ARMS

SIRAH NOTE: HALIMAH RETURNS HER FOSTER CHILD

According to the books of sirah, after the opening of the chest, Halimah and her husband ***feared*** for the child's safety, and took him back to his mother, Aminah, in Makkah. Wikipedia says he was returned to his mother and grandfather at around ***five years*** of age.

The opening of the chest itself is ***authentic*** (Sahih Muslim 162). Halimah's fear and the details of the journey home are ***reports from the books of sirah***.

HALIMAH'S LASTING LOVE

The bond with his foster family was never broken. According to Wikipedia, after he married Khadijah رضى الله عنها, Halimah once came to Makkah complaining of hard times, and Khadijah gave her ***sheep and camels***. He always ***honoured*** his foster mother and family.

The lesson: ***be good to those who once did us good***, even after many years. Foster mothers, teachers and carers all deserve to be remembered and prayed for.

YEARS WITH HIS MOTHER

The child now lived with his mother in Makkah, under the shelter of his grandfather 'Abd al-Muttalib. This period was ***short*** — only about a year — before the journey to Yathrib that changed his life, as the next chapter describes.

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THE PASSING OF A MOTHER

According to Ibn Kathir, his mother, Aminah bint Wahb, died when he was ***six years old***. Many years later, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ visited his mother's grave:

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 976

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، وَزُهَيْرُ بْنُ حَرْبٍ، قَالاَ حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عُبَيْدٍ، عَنْ يَزِيدَ بْنِ كَيْسَانَ، عَنْ أَبِي حَازِمٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ زَارَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَبْرَ أُمِّهِ فَبَكَى وَأَبْكَى مَنْ حَوْلَهُ فَقَالَ «اسْتَأْذَنْتُ رَبِّي فِي أَنْ أَسْتَغْفِرَ لَهَا فَلَمْ يُؤْذَنْ لِي وَاسْتَأْذَنْتُهُ فِي أَنْ أَزُورَ قَبْرَهَا فَأُذِنَ لِي فَزُورُوا الْقُبُورَ فَإِنَّهَا تُذَكِّرُ الْمَوْتَ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said: The Prophet ﷺ visited the grave of his mother, and he wept and made those around him weep. He said: **"I asked my Lord for permission to seek forgiveness for her, and I was not given permission. And I asked Him for permission to visit her grave, and I was given permission. So visit the graves, for they remind you of death."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah and Zuhayr ibn Harb, from Muhammad ibn 'Ubayd, from Yazid ibn Kaysan, from Abu Hazim, from Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Funerals, chapter on the Prophet ﷺ asking his Lord's permission to visit his mother's grave, Hadith No. 976.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:976b

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

First: A son's love. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ ***wept*** at his mother's grave until those around him wept too — love for a mother does not fade with time.

Second: Visiting graves. He made this event a lesson for his Ummah: ***visit the graves, for they remind you of death***.

Third: Obedience to Allah. He submitted to Allah's decision in what Allah did not permit, even concerning the one he loved most.

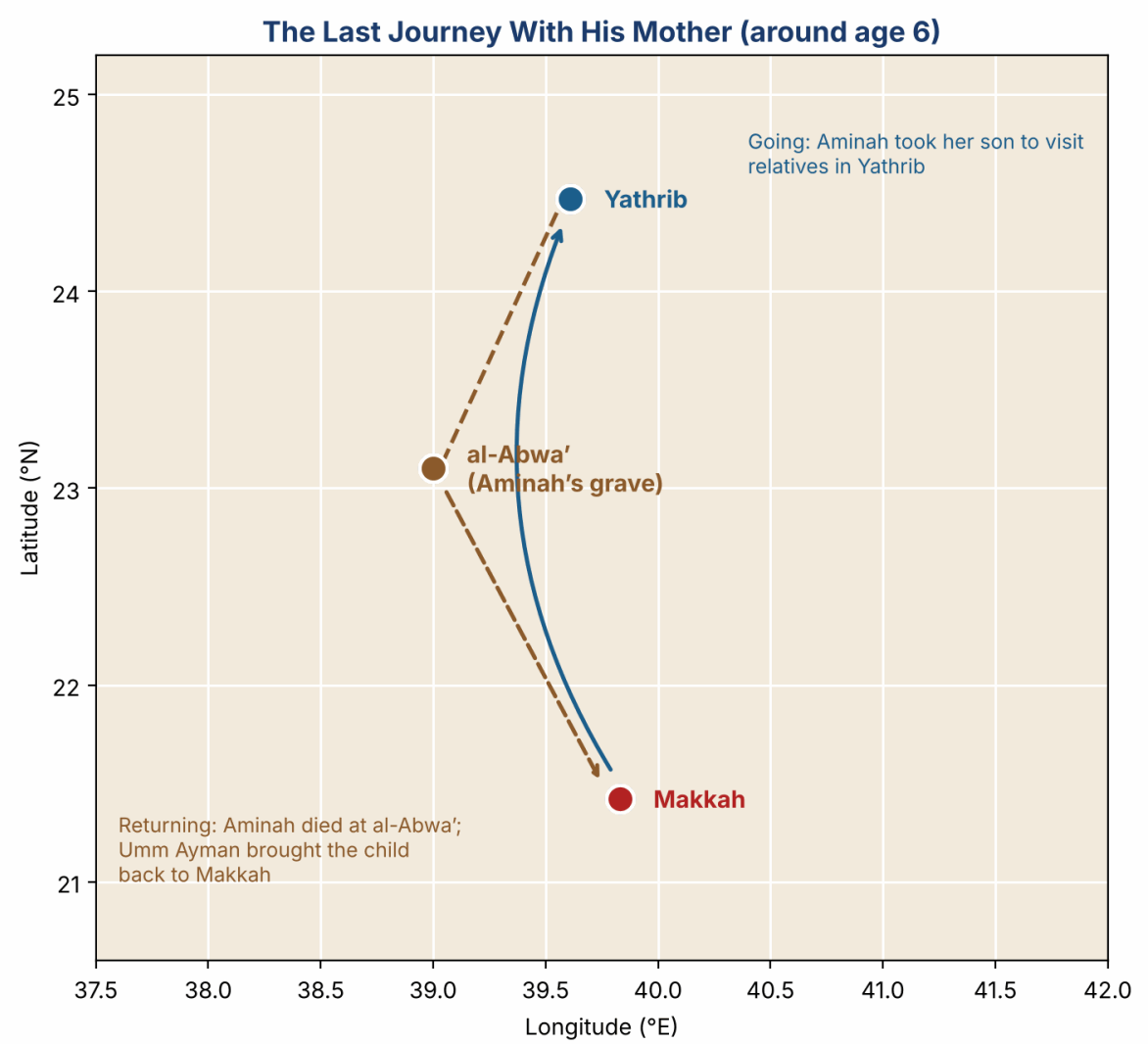
SIRAH NOTE: AL-ABWA'

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According to the books of sirah, Aminah took him to visit relatives in Madinah (Yathrib), and died on the way back at ***al-Abwa'***, a place between Makkah and Madinah, where she was buried.

UMM AYMAN: THE FAITHFUL NURSE

On the way back from Yathrib, when Aminah died at al-Abwa', one woman was beside the orphan child: ***Barakah bint Tha'labah***, known as ***Umm Ayman***.



Schematic map; the position of al-Abwa' is approximate. Sources: Wikipedia, "Amina bint Wahb", "Umm Ayman".

Figure 4: The last journey of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ with his mother (schematic map).

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SIRAH NOTE: WHO WAS UMM AYMAN?

According to Wikipedia, Umm Ayman was from ***Abyssinia***. She was a servant in the household of 'Abdullah and Aminah. After Aminah died, she ***cared for the child*** and brought him to his grandfather's house in Makkah.

He ***freed*** Umm Ayman when he married Khadijah رضى الله عنها. Umm Ayman married 'Ubayd ibn Zayd and had a son named ***Ayman***; then ***Zayd ibn Harithah***, and gave birth to ***Usamah***, who later became an army commander. She was among the early Muslims, migrated to Madinah, and gave water and treated the wounded at Uhud.

LESSONS

First: Honour is not in skin colour. An Abyssinian woman became the nurse of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and was honoured all his life.

Second: Loyalty is repaid with loyalty. He freed her, married her to someone he loved, and respected her.

Third: A guardian for the orphan. After the loss of his mother, Allah gave him a loving nurse — another sign of the refuge in 93:6.

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IN THE CARE OF HIS GRANDFATHER AND UNCLE

After his mother died, he was cared for by his grandfather ***'Abd al-Muttalib***, the leader of Quraysh, until his grandfather died when he was eight. Then his uncle ***Abu Talib***, the full brother of 'Abdullah, took care of him — as Ibn Kathir explains in his exegesis of Ad-Duha 93:6.

HERDING SHEEP

Like the prophets before him, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ ***herded sheep*** for the people of Makkah for a small wage:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 2262

حَدَّثَنَا أَحْمَدُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ الْمَكِّيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا عَمْرُو بْنُ يَحْيَى، عَنْ جَدِّهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «مَا بَعَثَ اللَّهُ نَبِيًّا إِلاَّ رَعَى الْغَنَمَ». فَقَالَ أَصْحَابُهُ وَأَنْتَ فَقَالَ «نَعَمْ كُنْتُ أَرْعَاهَا عَلَى قَرَارِيطَ لأَهْلِ مَكَّةَ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"Allah did not send any prophet except that he herded sheep."** His Companions asked: "And you too?" He said: **"Yes, I used to herd them for the people of Makkah for a few qirats."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Makki, from 'Amr ibn Yahya, from his grandfather, Sa'id ibn 'Amr, from Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Hiring, chapter on herding sheep for a few qirats, Hadith No. 2262.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:2262

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

First: Working with one's own hands. He did not depend on others, but ***worked to earn his provision***, even for a small wage.

Second: Training for leadership. The scholars mention that herding sheep trains ***patience, gentleness and responsibility*** — qualities needed to lead people.

Third: No shame in humble beginnings. He himself told his Companions about it, without any shame about such simple work.

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ABU TALIB: A POOR BUT NOBLE UNCLE

According to Wikipedia, Abu Talib — whose real name was ***'Imran*** or ***'Abd Manaf*** according to different sources — was ***a full brother*** of 'Abdullah, since they had the same mother, ***Fatimah bint 'Amr***. After 'Abd al-Muttalib died, Abu Talib took in his nephew despite ***his limited means***.

> **SIRAH NOTE: A NARROW HOUSE, A WIDE HEART**
>
> Wikipedia says Abu Talib was ***poor*** and had many children, including ***'Ali, Ja'far, 'Aqil, Talib and Umm Hani' (Fakhitah)***. He once borrowed money from his brother ***al-'Abbas*** to fulfil his duty of serving the pilgrims.
>
> Yet he protected his nephew with great love. Later, when the Prophet was sent, Abu Talib ***shielded him*** from the Quraysh leaders, until Banu Hashim were boycotted. Abu Talib died around ***619 CE***, a year called ***the Year of Sorrow***, because Khadijah رضى الله عنها also died around the same time.

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A CHILD IN A CROWDED HOUSE

In Abu Talib's house, he grew up with his cousins. Among them were ***'Ali ibn Abi Talib*** رضى الله عنه, who would become one of the first to embrace Islam, and ***Ja'far*** رضى الله عنه, who would migrate to Abyssinia. This simple life explains why he ***herded sheep*** from a young age.

LESSONS

Poverty does not prevent ***noble character***. Abu Talib gave what he had — a home, love and protection. Each of us can be a protector of an orphan in our family, even with limited means.

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MAKKAN SOCIETY IN HIS CHILDHOOD

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ grew up in a society with ***two faces***: praiseworthy qualities inherited from the religion of Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ and Arab culture, and ***customs of the Jahiliyyah*** that Islam would later correct.

PRAISEWORTHY QUALITIES	CUSTOMS OF THE JAHILIYYAH
Honouring guests and pilgrims	Worshipping idols around the Ka'bah
Keeping promises and protecting those who seek refuge	Wars between tribes over small matters
Courage and eloquence	Burying daughters alive (see 81:8–9)
Respecting the sacred months	Usury and oppression of the weak

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SIRAH NOTE: THE MARKET OF 'UKAZ

According to Wikipedia, ***the Market of 'Ukaz*** lay between Nakhlah and Ta'if. It was held for ***21 days*** each year in ***Dhu al-Qa'dah***, before the pilgrimage. Besides trading, the Arab tribes settled disputes, made agreements, raced, and held ***poetry contests*** that helped shape Arabic grammar.

Markets like this show that Arabic was at ***the height of its eloquence*** at that time — and it was to a people who prized eloquence that the Qur'an was revealed as a miracle of language.

HUBAL AND THE IDOLS OF THE KA'BAH

According to Wikipedia, the most important idol at the Ka'bah was ***Hubal***, placed there by Quraysh, and it stayed ***until the conquest of Makkah***. The orphan who grew up around these idols would become the Messenger who ***cleansed the Ka'bah*** of them.

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THE SACRED MONTHS

Although wars between tribes were frequent, the Arabs respected ***four sacred months***, a legacy of the religion of Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. Islam kept this respect (Surah At-Tawbah 9:36), and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ named them in the Farewell Pilgrimage sermon (Sahih al-Bukhari 4662).

SACRED MONTH	PLACE IN THE CALENDAR
Dhu al-Qa'dah	11th month; season of the 'Ukaz market
Dhu al-Hijjah	12th month; pilgrimage season
Muharram	1st month
Rajab	7th month; separate from the other three

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LESSONS FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

The childhood of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is not merely history; it is ***a guide to upbringing*** for every parent, grandparent and guardian of an orphan. This chapter gathers practical lessons from the previous chapters.

FROM THE SIRAH	PRACTICE FOR US
'Abd al-Muttalib chose a good name.	Give children good and meaningful names.
The baby was sent to the clean desert air.	Choose a healthy, good environment for children to grow up in.
The eloquent Bedouin speech.	Teach children good language and Qur'an reading from a young age.
The loving care of Umm Ayman and Halimah.	Choose carers who are trustworthy and of good character.
Abu Talib protected him though poor.	Never leave an orphan in the family without a protector.
Herding sheep from childhood.	Train children with responsibilities suited to their age.

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ORPHANS IN OUR SOCIETY

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was himself an orphan. So honouring orphans is ***reviving his sunnah*** and remembering his life. He promised a place close to him in Paradise to the guardian of an orphan (Sahih al-Bukhari 5304).

Some simple ways: ***sponsor*** an orphan's school needs, ***visit*** an orphanage with the family, ***teach*** them to read the Qur'an, or simply ***be a listener*** who encourages. Every small effort is part of the "refuge" mentioned in 93:6.

REFLECTION

Allah raised His Messenger through ***human hands***: a mother, wet-nurses, a nurse, a grandfather and an uncle. Perhaps Allah also wants to make us one of those "hands" for a child in need.

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BETWEEN AUTHENTIC REPORTS AND POPULAR STORIES

Many stories about the birth and childhood of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ circulate among people. Some are authentic, some come from the books of sirah, and some are weak. The table below summarises them.

STORIES AND THEIR STATUS

POPULAR STORY	STATUS
He was born on a Monday.	Authentic (Sahih Muslim 1162).
He was born in the Year of the Elephant, on 12 Rabi' al-Awwal.	The Year of the Elephant is the well-known view of the sirah writers; 12 Rabi' al-Awwal is the view of Ibn Ishaq, and the scholars differ.
He was nursed by Thuwaybah.	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 5101).
He was nursed by Halimah, and her sheep became fertile.	A report in the books of sirah (Ibn Ishaq); not found in the two Sahihs.
His chest was opened by Jibril when he was a child.	Authentic (Sahih Muslim 162).
The palace of Khosrau shook and the fire of the Magians went out on the night of his birth.	Weak according to the Hadith scholars; not included in the explanation.
He was born already circumcised.	Weak according to the Hadith scholars; not included in the explanation.
'Abd al-Muttalib re-dug Zamzam after a dream.	A report in the books of sirah; generally accepted by historians.
'Abdullah was ransomed with a hundred camels.	A report in the books of sirah; not an authentic Hadith.
'Abdullah died in Yathrib before his son was born.	A report in the books of sirah; supported by Ibn Kathir on 93:6 (an orphan from the womb).
Umm Ayman brought him home from al-Abwa'.	A report in the books of sirah and biographies of the Companions.
The monk Bahira recognised him on the journey to Syria.	Narrated by at-Tirmidhi; parts of its content are disputed by the scholars. To be discussed in the next series.

REFLECTION — WHY WE CHOOSE THE AUTHENTIC

The story of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ ***needs no additions*** to be beautiful. The authentic reports are enough to increase love and faith. By choosing what is authentic, we preserve the trust of knowledge and avoid attributing to him what never happened.

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THE WORLD IN THE SIXTH CENTURY CE

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was born in Makkah, but Makkah was not an isolated island. The valley was surrounded by a world in turmoil: two great empires fought each other again and again, small kingdoms competed for trade routes, and a plague had once taken millions of lives. Understanding this world helps us see how great a change was brought by an orphan child from a barren valley.

TWO EMPIRES AT WAR

To the north lay the ***Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire***, centred on Constantinople. Its famous emperor, Justinian I, ruled from 527 to 565 CE — only a few years before his birth. To the east lay the ***Persian (Sasanian) Empire***, centred on Ctesiphon, near today's Baghdad. Its king, Khusrau I, known as Anushirwan, ruled from 531 to 579 CE; in other words, he ﷺ was born during the reign of this Persian king.

The two empires fought repeatedly for control of Syria, Iraq, Armenia and the trade routes. In 572 CE, while he was still an infant, another great war broke out between them and dragged on for almost twenty years. The Arab tribes on the frontiers were drawn in as well: Ghassan allied with Rome, while Lakhm of al-Hirah allied with Persia.

> **HISTORICAL NOTE: THE PLAGUE OF JUSTINIAN**
>
> Between 541 and 549 CE, a terrible plague — known to historians as the ***Plague of Justinian*** — struck the Roman lands and their surroundings. Modern historians estimate that millions died. The plague weakened the great empires only a few decades before the birth of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The true number of victims is still debated by researchers.

Sources: Wikipedia, "Justinian I"; Wikipedia, "Khosrow I"; Wikipedia, "Plague of Justinian".

ABYSSINIA, YEMEN AND ABRAHA

Across the Red Sea lay the ***Kingdom of Aksum (Abyssinia)***. Around 525 CE, Aksum crossed the sea and conquered the Himyarite kingdom of Yemen. From this army rose Abraha, who later ruled Yemen and eventually led the army with the elephant towards Makkah. After the death of Abraha and the fall of his sons in the early 570s, Yemen fell to Persia.

The story of the Year of the Elephant in Surah Al-Fil took place in the middle of this contest for power. Yet Allah protected His House not with the armies of Rome or Persia, but with the birds that He sent.

THE MALAY WORLD AT THAT TIME

When he ﷺ was born, the Malay world already had active trading ports. In Kedah, the ancient sites of the ***Bujang Valley*** show centuries of trade and craftsmanship, and the ports of the Straits of Melaka were

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stopping points for ships between India and China. The kingdom of Srivijaya had not yet appeared; it is recorded in history only about a century later. Islam reached our region much later, through traders and preachers — but it all began with the birth in this valley of Makkah.

Sources: Wikipedia, "Bujang Valley"; Wikipedia, "Srivijaya".

LESSON

Allah chose to bring the final Messenger into the world not in a magnificent imperial capital, but in a valley ignored by Rome and Persia. Honour is not measured by worldly power. When we feel small before the great powers of today, let us remember that the greatest change in human history began in the humblest of places.

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IMPORTANT PLACES IN THIS SERIES

The table below gathers the places mentioned in this eBook, their connection to the sirah, and their approximate distance from Makkah. The distances given are ***straight-line distances*** (as the crow flies) calculated from modern map coordinates; the actual journey along the caravan routes was longer.

PLACE	CONNECTION TO THIS SERIES	DISTANCE FROM MAKKAH
Makkah	Birthplace of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; the valley of the Ka'bah and Zamzam.	—
Jabal al-Nur (Cave of Hira')	The highest hill around Makkah; later the place of the first revelation.	About 5 km
Ta'if	Mountain town near the lands of Banu Sa'd and the market of 'Ukaz.	About 60 km
The desert of Banu Sa'd	Where Halimah nursed him; in the area between Makkah and Ta'if (exact location cannot be determined).	Estimate
Yathrib (Madinah)	Where 'Abdullah died and was buried; home of his grandfather's maternal family (Banu al-Najjar).	About 340 km
Al-Abwa'	Where Aminah died on the way back from Yathrib; between Makkah and Madinah.	Estimate
Gaza	Where Hashim, his great-grandfather, died while trading.	About 1,240 km
Busra (Syria)	Trading town in southern Syria; destination of the Quraysh summer caravan.	About 1,280 km
San'a' (Yemen)	Seat of Abraha's rule; destination of the winter caravan.	About 820 km
Ma'rib (Yemen)	Site of the ancient dam repaired by Abraha (see the next chapter).	About 880 km
Aksum (Abyssinia)	Centre of the Abyssinian kingdom that ruled Yemen in Abraha's time.	About 820 km
Ctesiphon (Iraq)	Capital of the Sasanian Persian Empire.	About 1,380 km
Constantinople	Capital of the Eastern Roman Empire (today's Istanbul).	About 2,410 km

Distances are calculated from modern coordinates and rounded; they are only approximate, for illustration.

THE TWO TRADE ROUTES OF QURAYSH

Surah Quraysh mentions ***the journey of winter and summer***. The commentators explain that in winter the Quraysh caravans went south to Yemen, and in summer north to Syria. As the table above shows, each one-way journey crossed more than a thousand kilometres of desert — a journey of many weeks by camel. On these very routes the Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself would later trade as an adult.

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LESSON

Makkah had no river and no farmland, yet Allah made it a crossroads of trade routes linking Yemen, Syria, Abyssinia and Iraq. This position later helped the message of Islam to spread. Provision and opportunity do not necessarily come from fertile land; they come from Allah, and Allah opens their way in ways we do not expect.

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TRACES OF HISTORY: INSCRIPTIONS AND ANCIENT SITES

The truth of the Qur'an does not depend on archaeological discoveries. But there are some solid findings, recognised by researchers, that help us understand the background of the time of the birth of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. In this chapter we include only findings with clear references; unverified claims are left out.

ABRAHA'S INSCRIPTION AT THE MA'RIB DAM (548 CE)

At Ma'rib in Yemen there is an inscribed stone known to researchers as ***CIH 541***, dated ***548 CE***. It was made on the orders of Abraha himself. It records the repair of the great dam of Ma'rib, and mentions a conference attended by envoys from Abyssinia, Rome, Persia and the Ghassan tribe. This shows that Abraha was a powerful ruler in contact with the great powers of the world.

The ancient sites of the Kingdom of Saba' at Ma'rib, including the ruins of its dam, were inscribed as a ***UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2023***.

Sources: Wikipedia, "CIH 541"; UNESCO, "Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba, Marib".

ABRAHA'S INSCRIPTION AT MURAYGHAN (552 CE)

Another inscription of Abraha, dated ***552 CE***, was found in the Murayghan area in the interior of Arabia. It records Abraha's military campaign into central Arabia to subdue the Ma'add tribes. This inscription proves that Abraha did lead an army far to the north of Yemen.

HISTORICAL NOTE: WHAT THE INSCRIPTIONS DO NOT SAY

The inscriptions of Abraha found so far ***do not mention Makkah***. Some Western researchers suggest that the elephant campaign took place earlier, around 552 CE, while the well-known view in the Islamic tradition is around 570 CE. In 2025, researchers published a fragment of an Abraha inscription that may mention elephants, but its reading is still only a proposal.

For a Muslim, the event of the Year of the Elephant is certain because Allah Himself relates it in Surah Al-Fil, and it was recited to the Quraysh, many of whom had witnessed it — not one of them denied it. Researchers differ only about the year, not about whether the event happened.

Source: Wikipedia, "Abraha".

QARYAT AL-FAW: A CARAVAN CITY IN THE DESERT

In what is today southern Saudi Arabia lies the ancient site of ***Qaryat al-Faw***, a trading town on the old caravan routes of Arabia. Excavations have uncovered houses, a market, places of worship, writings and goods from many lands. The town was abandoned around the fifth century CE. In 2024, UNESCO inscribed the site as a World Heritage Site.

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Sites like al-Faw help us picture the world of caravans that was the lifeblood of Quraysh: long journeys across the desert, stops in trading towns, and the exchange of goods and news between peoples.

Source: UNESCO, "Al-Faw Archaeological Area".

LESSON

A Muslim's attitude to archaeology is a fair one: to accept solid findings, to reject baseless claims, and not to make revelation depend on stones and soil. The Qur'an told the story of the Year of the Elephant long before any modern researcher dug in Arabia.

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PEOPLE IN THIS SERIES

The table below gathers the people who appear in the story of the lineage, birth and childhood of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, so that readers can easily remember the place of each one.

PERSON	RELATIONSHIP TO THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ	NOTES
Hashim ibn ʻAbd Manaf	Great-grandfather (father's grandfather)	Leader of Quraysh; linked with the two trading journeys; died in Gaza.
ʻAbd al-Muttalib (Shaybah)	Grandfather	Leader of Makkah in the Year of the Elephant; re-dug Zamzam; cared for him until the age of eight.
ʻAbdullah ibn ʻAbd al-Muttalib	Father	Died in Yathrib before he was born.
Aminah bint Wahb	Mother	From Banu Zuhrah; died at al-Abwa' when he was about six years old.
Thuwaybah	First wet-nurse	A slave of Abu Lahab; also nursed Abu Salamah (Sahih al-Bukhari 5101).
Halimah as-Saʻdiyyah	Wet-nurse	From Banu Saʻd ibn Bakr; cared for him in the desert.
Al-Harith ibn ʻAbd al-ʻUzza	Foster father	Husband of Halimah.
Ash-Shayma' bint al-Harith	Foster sister	Daughter of Halimah; according to the sirah books, she also looked after him as a child.
Umm Ayman (Barakah)	Nurse	Originally from Abyssinia; brought him home from al-Abwa'; later embraced Islam.
Abu Talib	Uncle	Cared for him after ʻAbd al-Muttalib died; protected him all his life.
Fatimah bint Asad	Wife of Abu Talib	According to the sirah books, looked after him in Abu Talib's house; later embraced Islam; mother of ʻAli.
Hamzah and al-ʻAbbas	Uncles	Close to him in age; both later embraced Islam.
Abu Lahab	Uncle	Later became his enemy; mentioned in Surah Al-Masad.
Abraha	Not family	Ruler of Yemen on behalf of Abyssinia; led the army with the elephant to Makkah.

Sources: Ibn Hisham, al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah; Sahih al-Bukhari 5101; Wikipedia (articles on the people above).

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LESSON

See how many people Allah moved to care for one orphan child: a grandfather, a mother, two wet-nurses, a nurse, an uncle and his wife. Each played a small part in a great history. So it is with us — perhaps our role in the life of a child, an orphan or a pupil is part of a greater plan of Allah.

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TIMELINE: SIRAH AND THE WORLD

This timeline places the events of the sirah in this eBook alongside the great events of the world in the same period. The CE years for the sirah events are the estimates of modern historians, as the Arabs of that time did not yet have a fixed calendar.

YEAR (APPROX.)	EVENT
About 496–497	'Abd al-Muttalib is born in Yathrib; his father, Hashim, dies in Gaza.
About 525	Abyssinia (Aksum) conquers the Himyarite kingdom of Yemen.
527–565	Reign of Justinian I in Eastern Rome.
531–579	Reign of Khusrau I (Anushirwan) in Persia.
541–549	The Plague of Justinian strikes the Roman lands and their surroundings.
548	Abraha's inscription at the Ma'rib dam (CIH 541).
552	Abraha's inscription at Murayghan on his campaign into central Arabia.
About 570	The Year of the Elephant; birth of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ on a Monday (Sahih Muslim 1162).
Early 570s	The rule of Abraha's sons collapses; Yemen falls to Persia.
572	A great Roman–Persian war begins (lasting until 591).
About 574	The opening of the chest in the desert of Banu Sa'd (Sahih Muslim 162).
About 576–577	Aminah dies at al-Abwa'.
About 578	'Abd al-Muttalib dies; he ﷺ is cared for by Abu Talib.
About 581	The Sui dynasty unifies China.

Sources: Wikipedia ("Justinian I", "Khosrow I", "Plague of Justinian", "Abraha", "CIH 541", "Byzantine–Sasanian War of 572–591", "Sui dynasty"); tables of years in the earlier chapters of this eBook.

LESSON

While the world was busy with imperial wars and plague, Allah was preparing a child in a quiet valley to bring light to all mankind. History is not merely a list of dates; it shows how Allah governs the universe with a wisdom that people of the time often do not perceive.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Here are questions often asked about the birth and childhood of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, with short answers based on the sources discussed in this eBook.

1. WHEN EXACTLY WAS THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ BORN?

What is certain through authentic Hadith is that it was a ***Monday*** (Sahih Muslim 1162). The year was the Year of the Elephant according to the well-known view, around 570 CE. The date of 12 Rabi' al-Awwal is the well-known view of Ibn Ishaq, but scholars differ about the exact date.

2. DID HIS FATHER DIE BEFORE HE WAS BORN?

Yes, according to the well-known view in the sirah books, 'Abdullah died in Yathrib while he was still in the womb. Imam Ibn Kathir mentions this in his commentary on Surah Ad-Duha 93:6.

3. WHO FIRST NURSED HIM?

Thuwaybah, a slave of Abu Lahab, as mentioned in Sahih al-Bukhari 5101. After that he was nursed by Halimah as-Sa'diyyah in the desert of Banu Sa'd, according to the sirah books.

4. WHY WERE MAKKAN BABIES SENT TO THE DESERT?

It was a custom of the Makkan nobility: the desert had cleaner air, a hardier way of life and purer Arabic. It was a practice of the society of that time, not an act of worship.

5. DID THE OPENING OF THE CHEST REALLY HAPPEN?

Yes. It is narrated in Sahih Muslim 162 from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه, who said that he himself had seen the marks of the stitching on his chest.

6. IS IT TRUE THAT THE PALACE OF KISRA SHOOK ON THE NIGHT OF HIS BIRTH?

This story is well known, but its report is weak according to the scholars of Hadith. For that reason it is not included in the account of this eBook (see the chapter "Between Authentic Reports and Popular Stories").

7. HOW OLD WAS HE WHEN HIS MOTHER DIED?

About six years old, according to Ibn Kathir and the sirah books. Aminah died at al-Abwa' on the way back from Yathrib, and Umm Ayman brought him home to Makkah.

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8. MAY WE VISIT HIS MOTHER'S GRAVE?

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself visited his mother's grave and wept, and said: "Visit graves, for they remind you of death" (Sahih Muslim 976). Visiting graves to take a lesson is a sunnah, observing its proper manners and avoiding what is forbidden.

9. WHY DID HE HERD SHEEP?

He said that every prophet had herded sheep, and that he himself herded the sheep of the people of Makkah for a few qirats (Sahih al-Bukhari 2262). Scholars say it trains patience, gentleness and leadership.

10. DID ABU TALIB EMBRACE ISLAM?

According to authentic Hadith (Sahih al-Bukhari 3884; Sahih Muslim 24), Abu Talib died without saying the testimony of faith, even though he protected him all his life. This will be discussed further in a later part of the series, in sha' Allah.

11. DO THE INSCRIPTIONS OF ABRAHA PROVE THE EVENT OF THE YEAR OF THE ELEPHANT?

The inscriptions prove that Abraha ruled Yemen and led an army into central Arabia, but so far they do not mention Makkah. A Muslim believes in the event because the Qur'an relates it in Surah Al-Fil, not because of inscribed stones (see the chapter "Traces of History").

12. WHAT PRACTICES CAN WE TAKE FROM HIS CHILDHOOD?

Among them: giving good names, choosing a healthy environment for children, valuing nurses and teachers, honouring orphans, training children with responsibility, and fasting voluntarily on Mondays in gratitude for his birth (Sahih Muslim 1162).

LESSON

Asking is the key to knowledge. When we hear a story about the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, let us make it a habit to ask: "What is its source, and is it authentic?" In this way our love for him is built on truth, not on embellished stories.

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LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

LESSONS FROM THIS EBOOK

First: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is the answer to a supplication. Allah answered the prayer of Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ at the Ka'bah (2:129).

Second: A chosen lineage. Allah chose him from Banu Hashim, Quraysh, Kinanah and the descendants of Isma'il (Sahih Muslim 2276).

Third: A special Monday. The day of his birth and of the first revelation; fasting on it is recommended (Sahih Muslim 1162).

Fourth: Allah is the protector of the orphan. Loss after loss, yet Allah always gave refuge (93:6).

Fifth: A purified heart. The preparation for the message began in childhood (Sahih Muslim 162).

Sixth: The dignity of work. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ herded sheep for a small wage (Sahih al-Bukhari 2262).

Seventh: Allah answers prayers in a barren valley. Makkah had no crops, yet its provision came from every direction (14:37).

Eighth: Security and provision come from Allah. So worship the Lord of the Ka'bah (106:3–4).

Ninth: Honour those who did you good. Halimah and Umm Ayman were honoured throughout his life.

Tenth: Guidance is a gift from Allah. His uncles took different paths despite sharing his blood.

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TIMELINE SUMMARY

AGE (APPROX.)	EVENT AND SOURCE
Before birth	'Abdullah dies in Yathrib (sirah; Ibn Kathir 93:6)
0	Born in Makkah on a Monday, Year of the Elephant (Sahih Muslim 1162)
0–2	Nursed by Thuwaybah, then Halimah (Sahih al-Bukhari 5101; sirah)
About 4	Opening of the chest among Banu Sa'd (Sahih Muslim 162)
About 5	Returned to his mother in Makkah (sirah)
About 6	Aminah dies at al-Abwa'; Umm Ayman brings him home (Ibn Kathir 93:6; sirah)
About 8	'Abd al-Muttalib dies; raised by Abu Talib (Ibn Kathir 93:6)
Childhood	Herding sheep (Sahih al-Bukhari 2262)

CONCLUSION

In the barren valley of Makkah, an orphan was born and raised in the care of Allah — given refuge in his losses, his heart purified, and trained through work and patience. That was Allah's preparation for the Messenger who is ***"concerned over you"***. In sha Allah, the series **The Prophet's Sirah** will continue with his youth and adulthood: the journey to Syria, Hilf al-Fudul, his marriage to Khadijah رضى الله عنها, and the rebuilding of the Ka'bah. And Allah knows best.

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PART TWO

The Trustworthy Among His People

The Prophet's Sirah — Series 2

The Youth and Adulthood of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ Before Prophethood According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith

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THE TRUSTWORTHY AMONG HIS PEOPLE

The first book of The Prophet's Sirah ended with an orphan herding sheep in the care of his uncle, Abu Talib. This second eBook continues his story: from ***a working youth***, to ***a young man who defended the wronged***, ***an honest trader***, ***a husband and father***, to ***a man of forty*** in seclusion in the Cave of Hira'.

Throughout this period, his people gave him a title rarely given to anyone: ***al-Amin***, the Trustworthy. The Qur'anic verses and authentic Hadith in this eBook are chosen carefully — only those truly relevant — while stories from the books of sirah are placed in "Sirah Note" boxes and assessed.

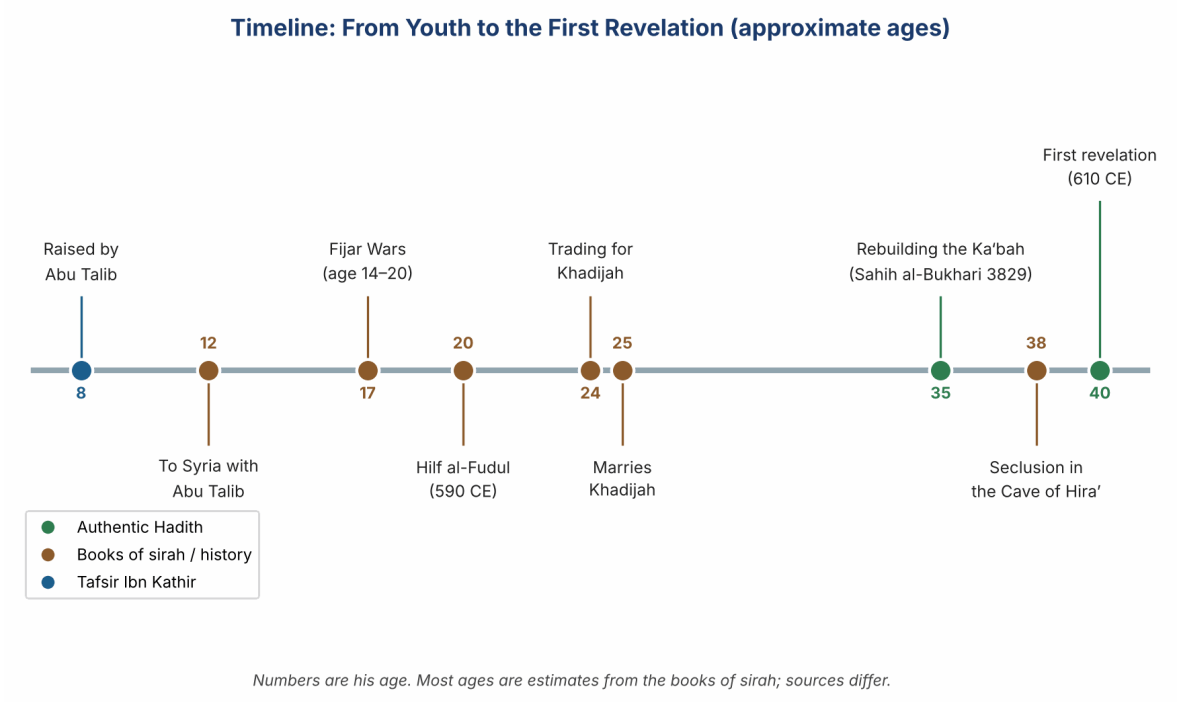


Figure 1: Timeline from his youth to the first revelation.

Note: The Qur'anic translation in this eBook is Sahih International. The grade of every Hadith is stated in its box. Information from the books of sirah is placed in brown "Sirah Note" boxes, and historical facts come with source links.

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LIVING AMONG HIS PEOPLE

SURAH YUNUS 10:16

قُل لَّوۡ شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ مَا تَلَوۡتُهُۥ عَلَيۡكُمۡ وَلَآ أَدۡرَىٰكُم بِهِۦۖ فَقَدۡ لَبِثۡتُ فِيكُمۡ عُمُرٗا مِّن قَبۡلِهِۦٓۚ أَفَلَا تَعۡقِلُونَ ١٦

Say, "If Allah had willed, I would not have recited it to you, nor would He have made it known to you, for I had remained among you a lifetime before it. Then will you not reason?"

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/10:16

EXPLANATION OF VERSE 10:16

Allah commands His Messenger to say: ***"I had remained among you a lifetime before it"***. Ibn Kathir explains: he lived among Quraysh ***for forty years*** before revelation, and they never found him lying. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 10:16.

This verse makes ***his life before prophethood*** a proof. How could someone who never lied about people suddenly lie about Allah? That is why these forty years are so important to study — they are ***evidence of the truth*** of his message.

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WHAT WE WILL LEARN

STAGE	MAIN EVENTS
Youth (age 8–20)	Abu Talib's house, the journey to Syria, the Fijar Wars, Hilf al-Fudul
Young adult (age 20–25)	Trading for Khadijah, marriage
Adult (age 25–35)	Household, Zayd ibn Harithah, 'Ali, rebuilding the Ka'bah
Eve of prophethood (age 35–40)	The title al-Amin, signs of prophethood, the Cave of Hira'

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A YOUTH IN ABU TALIB'S HOUSE

After his grandfather 'Abd al-Muttalib died, he lived with ***Abu Talib*** from about the age of eight. The house was small and simple: Abu Talib was poor and had many children (Book 1). In this setting he grew up as a youth who ***worked***, helping the family by herding the sheep of Makkah's people.

SIRAH NOTE: AN UNCLE'S LOVE

The books of sirah mention that Abu Talib loved his nephew dearly, ***taking him along*** on trade journeys, unable to part with him. This love lasted until Abu Talib died, around 619 CE.

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A YOUTH WITHOUT LUXURY

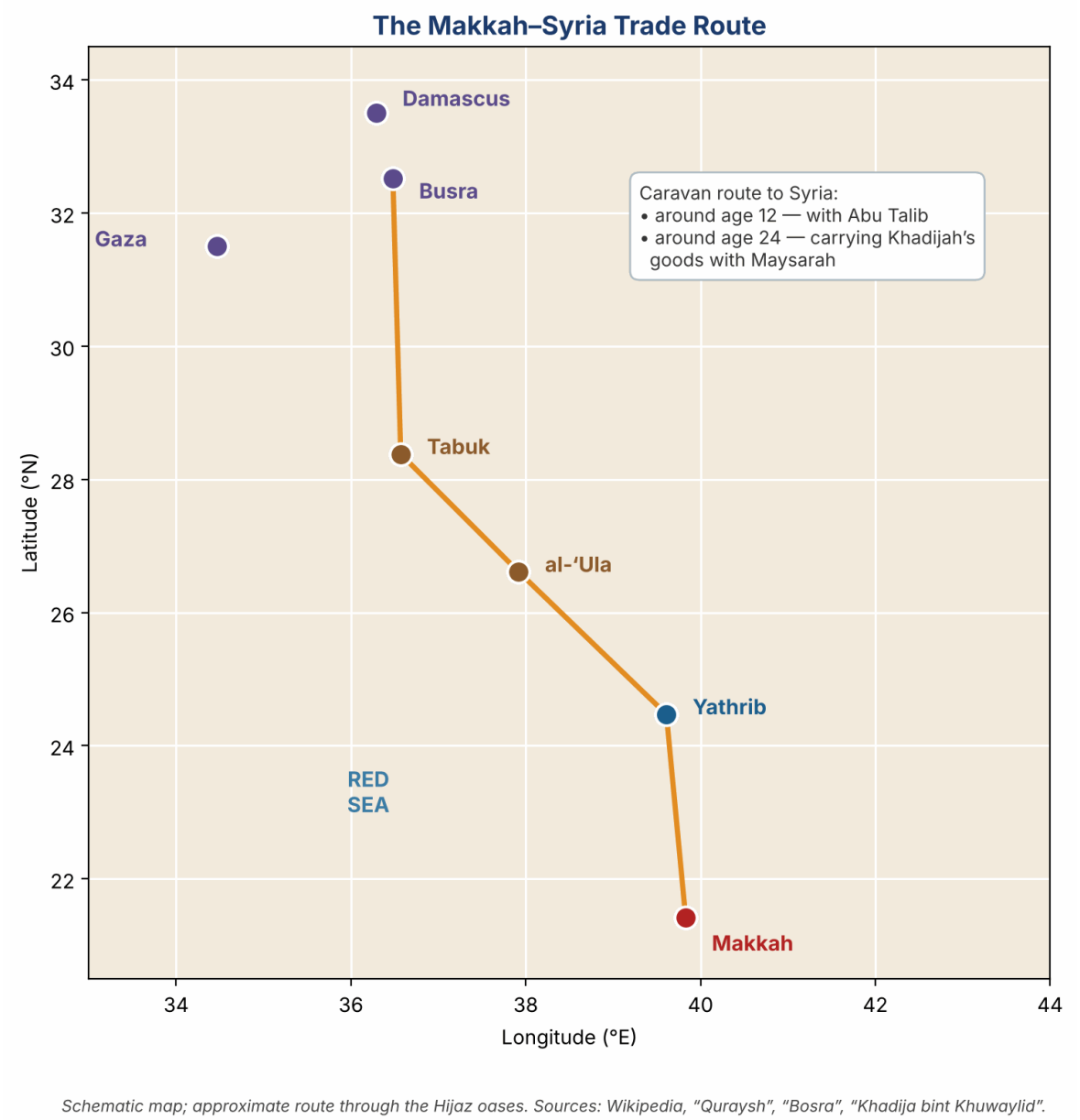
There was no school and no inheritance. His education came from ***work, nature and society***: the pastures around Makkah, the caravans coming and going, and the gatherings of his people. Yet Allah protected him from the deeds of the Jahiliyyah, as we will see in the rebuilding of the Ka'bah.

The lesson: ***hardship in youth*** is no barrier to greatness. It can be a school that shapes patience, simplicity and responsibility.

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THE FIRST JOURNEY TO SYRIA

Quraysh traded with Syria every summer (Book 1). According to the books of sirah, when he was about ***twelve***, Abu Talib took him along with the caravan to Syria. This was the first time he travelled far from Makkah.



Schematic map; approximate route through the Hijaz oases. Sources: Wikipedia, "Quraysh", "Bosra", "Khadija bint Khuwaylid".

Figure 2: The Makkah–Syria trade route (schematic map).

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BOSRA: A ROMAN CITY AT THE EDGE OF THE DESERT

The Quraysh caravans' destinations included ***Bosra***, in the Hauran region of today's southern Syria. According to Wikipedia, after the Romans conquered the Nabataean kingdom in ***106 CE***, Bosra became capital of the Roman province of ***Arabia Petraea***. In Byzantine times it was a bishopric with a ***large cathedral*** built in the sixth century.

HISTORIC REMAINS AT BOSRA	DETAILS
Roman theatre	Built in the second century CE; the only monument of its kind with its upper gallery fully preserved.
UNESCO World Heritage	"Ancient City of Bosra" inscribed in 1980.
Muslim conquest	Taken by Muslim forces under Khalid ibn al-Walid in 634 CE.

Source: Wikipedia, "Bosra".

Imagine a youth from the barren valley of Makkah seeing a Roman city of great stone buildings. This journey opened his eyes to ***the wider world***, its empires and their religions — a world that would later receive his letters of invitation.

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THE STORY OF THE MONK BAHIRA: AN ASSESSMENT

The journey to Syria is often linked to ***a monk named Bahira***. Because the story is so well known, we need to look honestly at its standing.

SIRAH NOTE: WHAT IS NARRATED

According to Ibn Ishaq's version, the monk Bahira at Bosra saw ***a cloud shading*** a boy in the Quraysh caravan, and saw ***the seal of prophethood*** on his back. He advised Abu Talib to take his nephew back to Makkah quickly. At-Tirmidhi also narrates a version of this story.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Bahira". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bahira

THE SCHOLARS' ASSESSMENT

ASPECT	ASSESSMENT
Source	Ibn Ishaq and at-Tirmidhi; not found in Sahih al-Bukhari or Sahih Muslim.
Al-Dhahabi's critique	At-Tirmidhi's version mentions Abu Bakr and Bilal, yet Abu Bakr was then a boy and Bilal not yet born.
Conclusion	Parts of the story are disputed; its details cannot be relied on.

Source: Wikipedia, "Bahira".

For this reason, this eBook ***builds no lessons*** on the details of the Bahira story. What is certain is that he went to Syria with trade caravans — common for young men of Quraysh — and the truth of his prophethood ***does not depend*** on the recognition of a monk.

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THE FIJAR WARS

SIRAH NOTE: WAR IN THE SACRED MONTHS

According to Wikipedia, ***the Fijar Wars*** took place in the late sixth century between ***Quraysh and Kinanah*** on one side and ***the Qays tribes***, including Hawazin and Thaqif, on the other. They began when a caravan leader was killed ***during the sacred months***, when fighting was forbidden — hence the name ***"Fijar"*** (sacrilege).

The battles took place around ***the market of 'Ukaz*** and the land between Makkah and Ta'if, over about four years. Eventually peace was restored.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Fijar Wars". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fijar_Wars

HIS ROLE

The sources say his uncles took him to the battlefield, and he ***shielded them from enemy arrows***, but ***did not fight***. His age is given as between ***14 and 20*** — the sources differ.

These wars show how ***readily the Arab tribes went to war***, even in months they themselves held sacred. Witnessing the effects of war forms the background to the famous peace pact in the next chapter.

The lesson: Islam later ***kept the sanctity of the sacred months*** (At-Tawbah 9:36), and taught that war is not for tribal pride, but only to uphold justice and repel oppression.

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HILF AL-FUDUL: A PACT TO DEFEND THE WRONGED

SIRAH NOTE: THE PACT AT THE HOUSE OF 'ABDULLAH IBN JUD'AN

According to Wikipedia, ***Hilf al-Fudul*** was sealed in ***590 CE***, a month after the Fijar Wars ended, in Dhu al-Qa'dah. The leaders gathered at ***the house of 'Abdullah ibn Jud'an*** and pledged to ***support anyone who was wronged***.

Its cause: ***a Yemeni merchant from Zabid*** sold goods to ***al-'As ibn Wa'il***, who refused to pay. The merchant had no powerful kin in Makkah, so he appealed for justice. The pact secured his rights and made good his loss.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Hilf al-Fudul". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hilf_al-Fudul

THE CLANS THAT JOINED

CLAN	NOTE
Banu Hashim	The clan of the Messenger ﷺ
Banu al-Muttalib	Allies of Banu Hashim
Banu Zuhrah	His mother's clan
Banu Asad	Khadijah's clan
Banu Taym	Abu Bakr's clan; 'Abdullah ibn Jud'an was also of this clan

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HIS ATTITUDE AFTER PROPHETHOOD

According to Wikipedia, after becoming the Messenger, he still ***recognised the value of this pact*** even though most of its members were not Muslim. The books of sirah report his words that if he were invited to such a pact in Islam, he would answer. This report is ***not found in the two Sahihs***.

The lesson: ***justice is a universal value***. Islam supports every effort to defend the weak and oppose oppression, even when begun by non-Muslims. Today, supporting bodies that defend victims of injustice continues the spirit of Hilf al-Fudul.

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WORKING AND TRADING

After his years of herding sheep (Book 1), he entered the world of ***trade***, the main occupation of Quraysh. Makkan trade depended on ***trust***: owners of capital handed goods to others to take to Syria or Yemen, and the profit was shared between them.

In such a system, ***a good name*** is the most valuable capital. An honest, trustworthy young man would be sought by owners of wealth, even if he owned nothing himself — and that is what happened to him.

THE ETHICS OF A TRADER

QUALITY	PRACTICE TODAY
Honesty	Describing goods truthfully, including their defects.
Trustworthiness	Guarding a client's or partner's property like one's own.
Keeping promises	Delivering goods and paying debts on time.
Fairness	Not short-changing weights and measures.
Leniency	Making things easy for a buyer in difficulty.

These qualities later became Islamic teaching on commercial dealings. He ***practised them*** before they were commanded.

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CARRYING KHADIJAH'S GOODS

SIRAH NOTE: THE JOURNEY WITH MAYSARAH

According to Wikipedia, ***Khadijah bint Khuwaylid*** was a successful merchant. She did not travel with her caravans, but ***hired others*** on commission. Her caravans were said to equal those of all other Quraysh traders combined.

She hired him, then in his ***early twenties***, to trade in Syria for ***double her usual commission***. With Abu Talib's permission, he went with ***Maysarah***, Khadijah's servant, and returned with ***twice the expected profit***.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Khadija bint Khuwaylid". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khadija_bint_Khuwaylid

MAYSARAH'S REPORT

The books of sirah relate that Maysarah told Khadijah about his ***honesty and character*** throughout the journey. Some reports add marvellous stories from the journey; these additions ***are not authentic*** and are not included here.

The lesson: ***success at work*** comes from trustworthiness and diligence, not trickery. A wise employer judges a worker by ***character***, not just skill.

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KHADIJAH AND A BLESSED MARRIAGE

Khadijah came from ***Banu Asad*** of Quraysh. Her father, ***Khuwaylid ibn Asad***, was a merchant and leader. According to Wikipedia, she had been married before, and the sources name two earlier husbands, ***'Atiq ibn 'A'idh*** and ***Malik ibn Nabbash***.

SIRAH NOTE: A PROPOSAL THROUGH NAFISAH

According to Wikipedia, Khadijah asked her friend ***Nafisah*** to find out whether he would consider marriage. Then both families agreed, and his uncles made the formal proposal; the sources differ on who attended.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Khadija bint Khuwaylid". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khadija_bint_Khuwaylid

THEIR AGES AT MARRIAGE

ITEM	WHAT THE SOURCES SAY
His age	About 25 (some sources: 22–25).
Khadijah's age	Well known: 40; some sources: about 28.
Year	Around 595 CE.
Length of marriage	About 25 years, until Khadijah died in 619 CE.

Source: Wikipedia, "Khadija bint Khuwaylid".

Whatever the differences about age, what is certain is that this marriage was built on ***character***, not wealth or looks. He married no other woman while Khadijah lived — a loyalty he remembered all his life.

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KHADIJAH'S STANDING IN ISLAM

Khadijah رضى الله عنها was ***the first*** to believe in him when revelation came, and she comforted and supported him with her wealth and herself. In Sahih al-Bukhari, Jibril عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ conveyed ***greetings of peace from her Lord*** to Khadijah and glad tidings of a house in Paradise (Sahih al-Bukhari 3820).

KHADIJAH'S QUALITY	AN EXAMPLE FOR US
A wise merchant	Women can succeed in business by lawful means.
Judging a man by character	Choose a spouse for faith and character.
A loyal supporter	A wife who comforts and supports her husband in his struggle.
Generous	Using wealth for good and for da'wah.

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THE HOUSEHOLD AND THE CHILDREN

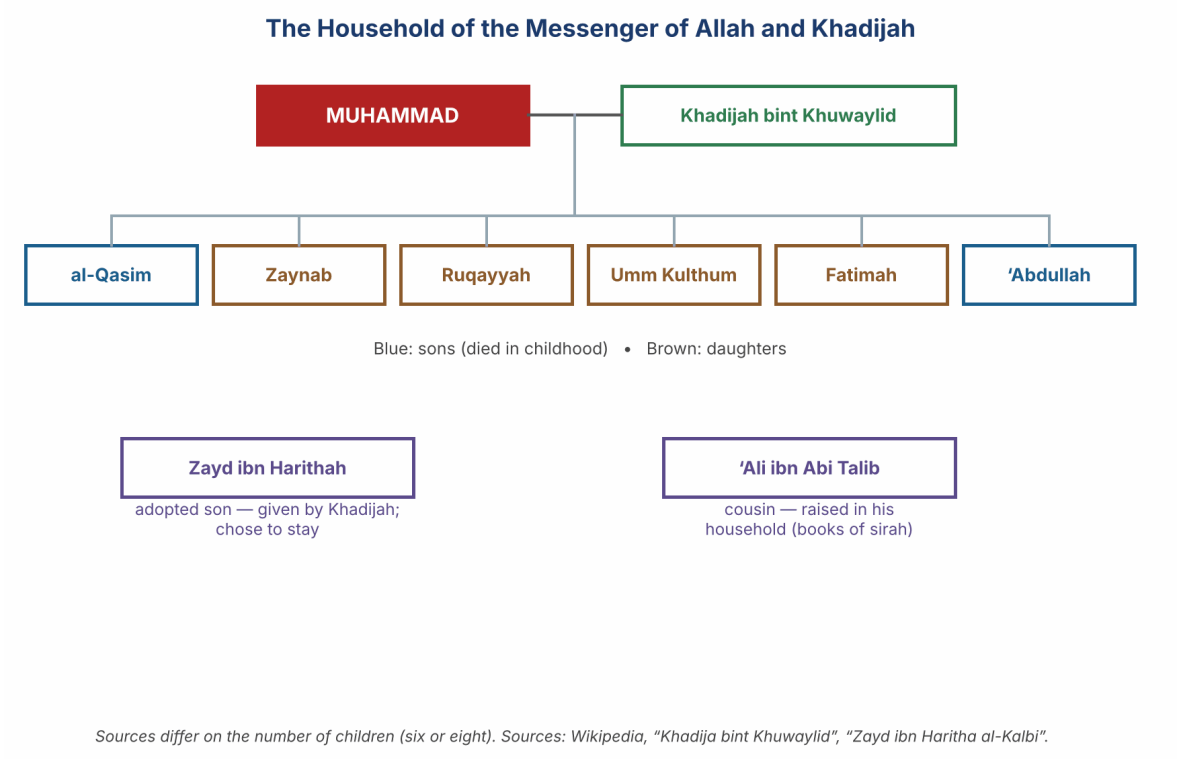


Figure 3: The household of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and Khadijah رضى الله عنها.

According to Wikipedia, his children with Khadijah were two sons — ***al-Qasim*** and ***'Abdullah***, both of whom died in childhood — and four daughters: ***Zaynab, Ruqayyah, Umm Kulthum and Fatimah***. His kunyah ***Abu al-Qasim*** came from the name of his eldest son.

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Years after Khadijah died, he still remembered her. 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها relates:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3818

حَدَّثَنِي عُمَرُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ حَسَنٍ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي، حَدَّثَنَا حَفْصٌ، عَنْ هِشَامٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ ـ رضى الله عنها ـ قَالَتْ مَا غِرْتُ عَلَى أَحَدٍ مِنْ نِسَاءِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم مَا غِرْتُ عَلَى خَدِيجَةَ، وَمَا رَأَيْتُهَا، وَلَكِنْ كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم يُكْثِرُ ذِكْرَهَا، وَرُبَّمَا ذَبَحَ الشَّاةَ، ثُمَّ يُقَطِّعُهَا أَعْضَاءً، ثُمَّ يَبْعَثُهَا فِي صَدَائِقِ خَدِيجَةَ، فَرُبَّمَا قُلْتُ لَهُ كَأَنَّهُ لَمْ يَكُنْ فِي الدُّنْيَا امْرَأَةٌ إِلاَّ خَدِيجَةُ. فَيَقُولُ إِنَّهَا كَانَتْ وَكَانَتْ، وَكَانَ لِي مِنْهَا وَلَدٌ.

TRANSLATION:

'A'ishah رضى الله عنها said: **"I was never as jealous of any of the wives of the Prophet ﷺ as I was of Khadijah, though I never saw her. But the Prophet ﷺ used to mention her often."** Sometimes he would slaughter a sheep, cut it into portions and send them to Khadijah's friends. Sometimes I said to him: "It is as if there were no woman in the world except Khadijah!" He would say: **"She was such and such, and from her I had children."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Umar ibn Muhammad ibn al-Hasan, from his father, Muhammad ibn al-Hasan, from Hafs ibn Ghiyath, from Hisham ibn 'Urwah, from his father, 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, from 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Merits of the Ansar, chapter on the Prophet's ﷺ marriage to Khadijah and her virtue, Hadith No. 3818. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 2435).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3818

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

First: A loyalty that never faded. He always mentioned Khadijah and ***honoured her friends*** with gifts.

Second: Valuing a spouse. A wife's goodness ***is not forgotten*** even after she is gone.

Third: Human nature. This hadith also shows 'A'ishah's honesty about her jealousy — and how gently he answered it.

ZAYD IBN HARITHAH: THE SON WHO CHOSE LOVE

SIRAH NOTE: THE KIDNAPPED BOY

According to Wikipedia, ***Zayd ibn Harithah*** came from the tribe of ***Kalb***. As a boy he was kidnapped and sold at ***the market of 'Ukaz***. ***Hakim ibn Hizam*** bought him for his aunt, Khadijah, who later gave him to the Prophet.

When his father and uncle came to ransom him, Zayd ***chose to stay*** with the Prophet. He then declared him his adopted son, and he became known as ***Zayd ibn Muhammad***.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Zayd ibn Haritha al-Kalbi". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zayd_ibn_Haritha_al-Kalbi

WHY DID ZAYD CHOOSE?

A boy chose not to return to his own father — this shows how ***lovingly he treated Zayd***, not as a slave. His good character was felt first by those closest to him.

THE LATER RULING ON ADOPTION

After Surah Al-Ahzab 33:5 was revealed, adopted children ***were named after their birth fathers***, and Zayd became known again as Zayd ibn Harithah. Zayd was among ***the earliest to embrace Islam***, and was martyred at ***the Battle of Mu'tah*** in 629 CE.

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THE ONLY COMPANION NAMED IN THE QUR'AN

Zayd ibn Harithah is ***the only Companion*** whose name is mentioned explicitly in the Qur'an, in Surah Al-Ahzab 33:37. This honour came to a man who had once been a slave sold in a market — a sign that ***honour with Allah*** lies not in lineage or wealth.

His son, ***Usamah ibn Zayd***, was later appointed by the Prophet as an army commander while still young. The Prophet's love for Zayd's family continued from one generation to the next.

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'ALI IN THE HOUSE OF THE MESSENGER ﷺ

SIRAH NOTE: REPAYING ABU TALIB'S KINDNESS

The books of sirah relate that in ***a year of drought***, Quraysh suffered hardship. Abu Talib had many children and little wealth. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ invited his uncle al-'Abbas to ***ease Abu Talib's burden***: he took ***'Ali***, and al-'Abbas took ***Ja'far***.

'Ali thus grew up in the house of the Prophet and Khadijah, and was among ***the very first*** to believe when revelation came.

LESSONS

First: Repaying kindness. Abu Talib raised him as a child; as an adult he ***eased Abu Talib's burden***.

Second: A home that educates. The home of the Prophet and Khadijah ***raised*** Zayd and 'Ali — two great figures of Islam.

Third: Family cooperation. In hardship, the extended family ***helped one another***. Today, helping relatives in need — including supporting their children's education — is a living sunnah.

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REBUILDING THE KA'BAH

When he was about ***thirty-five***, the Ka'bah was in a weak state. According to Wikipedia, ***a fire*** had weakened its structure, and ***a flood*** later damaged it. Quraysh decided to demolish and rebuild it.

SIRAH NOTE: TIMBER FROM A BYZANTINE SHIP

According to Wikipedia, the timber came from ***a Byzantine ship*** wrecked at ***Shu'aybah*** on the Red Sea coast. A Coptic carpenter from Egypt aboard the ship, named ***Baqum***, did the carpentry.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Kaaba". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaaba

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself ***carried stones*** with his uncle al-'Abbas. In this event something happened that shows how Allah ***protected*** him even before prophethood:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3829

حَدَّثَنِي مَحْمُودٌ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّزَّاقِ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي ابْنُ جُرَيْجٍ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي عَمْرُو بْنُ دِينَارٍ، سَمِعَ جَابِرَ بْنَ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ قَالَ لَمَّا بُنِيَتِ الْكَعْبَةُ ذَهَبَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم وَعَبَّاسٌ يَنْقُلاَنِ الْحِجَارَةَ، فَقَالَ عَبَّاسٌ لِلنَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم اجْعَلْ إِزَارَكَ عَلَى رَقَبَتِكَ يَقِيكَ مِنَ الْحِجَارَةِ، فَخَرَّ إِلَى الأَرْضِ، وَطَمَحَتْ عَيْنَاهُ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ ثُمَّ أَفَاقَ فَقَالَ «إِزَارِي إِزَارِي». فَشَدَّ عَلَيْهِ إِزَارَهُ.

TRANSLATION:

Jabir ibn 'Abdullah رضى الله عنهما said: When the Ka'bah was rebuilt, the Prophet ﷺ and al-'Abbas went to carry stones. Al-'Abbas said to the Prophet ﷺ: "Put your waist-wrapper over your neck to protect you from the stones." He fell to the ground, his eyes gazing up at the sky. Then he came to and said: **"My waist-wrapper! My waist-wrapper!"** And his waist-wrapper was tied back on him.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Mahmud ibn Ghaylan, from 'Abd ar-Razzaq, from Ibn Jurayj, from 'Amr ibn Dinar, from Jabir ibn 'Abdullah رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Merits of the Ansar, chapter on the building of the Ka'bah, Hadith No. 3829. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 340).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3829

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LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Uncovering oneself in public was common for labourers in the Jahiliyyah. But Allah ***protected the modesty*** of His Messenger: he fell unconscious as soon as his waist-wrapper was lifted, and came to asking for it. His modesty was guarded by Allah before the law prescribed it.

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WHY DID THE KA'BAH BECOME SMALLER?

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 1584

حَدَّثَنَا مُسَدَّدٌ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الأَحْوَصِ، حَدَّثَنَا أَشْعَثُ، عَنِ الأَسْوَدِ بْنِ يَزِيدَ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ ـ رضى الله عنها ـ قَالَتْ سَأَلْتُ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم عَنِ الْجَدْرِ أَمِنَ الْبَيْتِ هُوَ قَالَ «نَعَمْ». قُلْتُ فَمَا لَهُمْ لَمْ يُدْخِلُوهُ فِي الْبَيْتِ قَالَ «إِنَّ قَوْمَكِ قَصَّرَتْ بِهِمُ النَّفَقَةُ». قُلْتُ فَمَا شَأْنُ بَابِهِ مُرْتَفِعًا قَالَ «فَعَلَ ذَلِكِ قَوْمُكِ لِيُدْخِلُوا مَنْ شَاءُوا وَيَمْنَعُوا مَنْ شَاءُوا، وَلَوْلاَ أَنَّ قَوْمَكِ حَدِيثٌ عَهْدُهُمْ بِالْجَاهِلِيَّةِ فَأَخَافُ أَنْ تُنْكِرَ قُلُوبُهُمْ أَنْ أُدْخِلَ الْجَدْرَ فِي الْبَيْتِ وَأَنْ أُلْصِقَ بَابَهُ بِالأَرْضِ».

TRANSLATION:

'A'ishah رضى الله عنها said: I asked the Prophet ﷺ about the semicircular wall (al-Hijr): is it part of the House?

He said: **"Yes."** I said: "Why did they not include it in the House?" He said: **"Your people ran short of funds."** I said: "Why is its door raised?" He said: **"Your people did that so they could admit whom they wished and keep out whom they wished. Were it not that your people have only recently left the Jahiliyyah, and I fear their hearts would reject it, I would include the wall in the House and bring its door down to the level of the ground."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Musaddad, from Abu al-Ahwas, from Ash'ath ibn Abi ash-Sha'tha', from al-Aswad ibn Yazid, from 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Hajj, chapter on the virtue of Makkah and its buildings, Hadith No. 1584. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 1333).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:1584

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

First: Only lawful wealth. Quraysh ***ran short of funds***, so part of the Ka'bah was left outside the building — the area now known as ***Hijr Isma'il***.

Second: Wisdom in change. He wished to correct it, but ***postponed*** it, fearing his people, so recently out of the Jahiliyyah, would reject it. A wise leader weighs ***people's readiness***.

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THE BLACK STONE AND A CLOAK

When the building reached the place of ***the Black Stone***, the clans of Quraysh ***quarrelled***: each wanted the honour of setting the stone in place. The dispute nearly led to bloodshed.

SIRAH NOTE: A JUST SOLUTION

According to the books of sirah, they agreed to accept the judgement of ***the first person to enter*** the Sacred Mosque. That person was ***Muhammad***, and they said: "This is al-Amin; we accept him."

According to Wikipedia, he asked for a ***cloak***, placed the Black Stone on it, and had ***the leaders of every clan*** hold its edges and lift it together. Then he himself ***set the stone*** in its place with his own hands.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Kaaba". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaaba

LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP

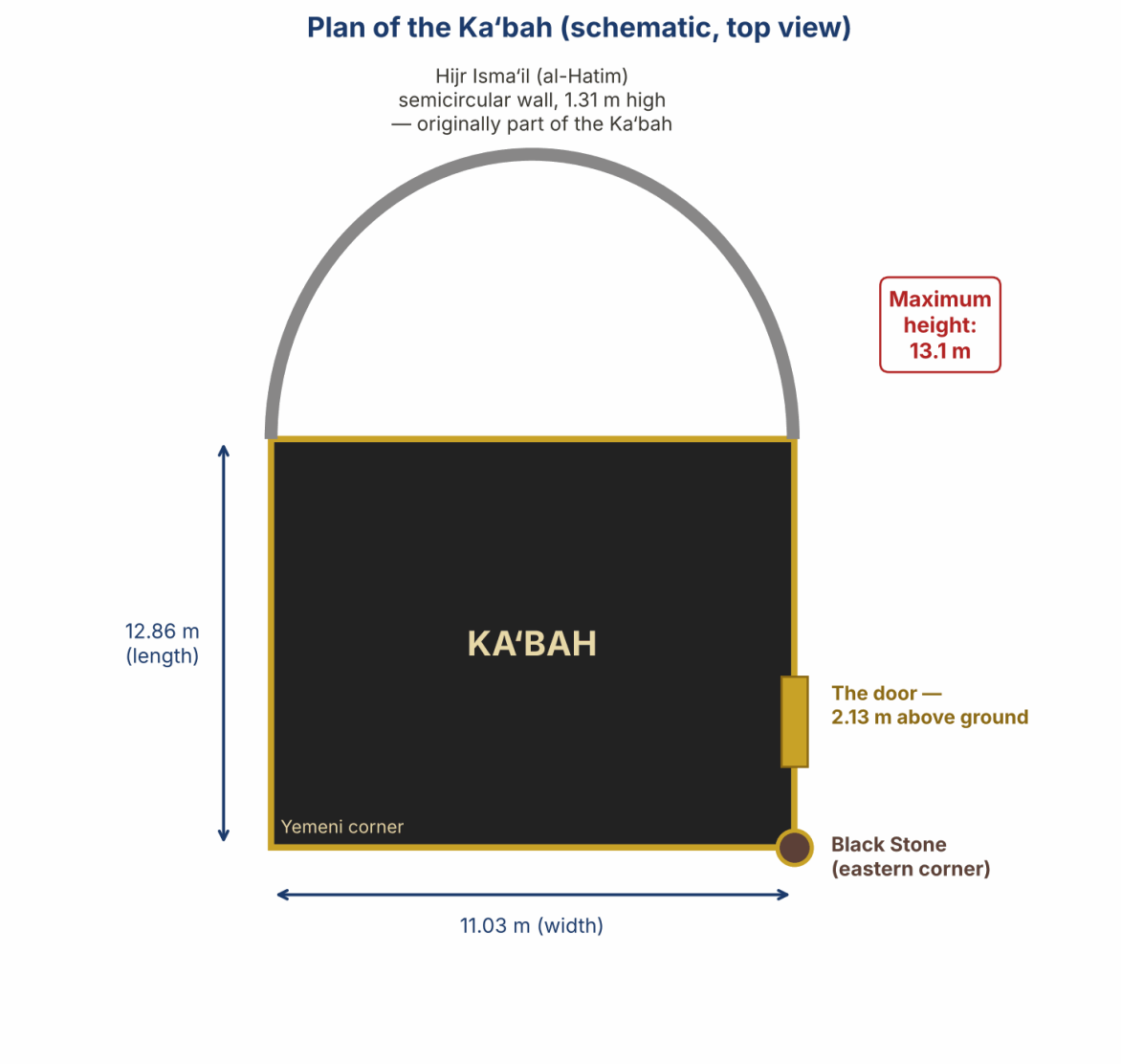
HIS STEP	LESSON
Asking for a cloak	Look for a creative, simple solution.
Every clan holds an edge	Involve everyone; let no one feel excluded.
He himself sets the stone	A leader acts, not merely directs.
Accepted because trustworthy	Trust is built for years before it is needed.

This story is well known in the books of sirah and is narrated through various chains outside the two Sahihs. Its essence — that he settled the dispute over the Black Stone — is widely accepted by historians.

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THE KA'BAH IN NUMBERS

The Ka'bah we see today still stands on ***the Quraysh foundations***. According to Wikipedia, after 'Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr's rebuilding in 683 CE, which included the Hijr, Caliph 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan in ***693 CE*** rebuilt it on the Quraysh foundations, and its basic shape has not changed since.



Measurements per Wikipedia, "Kaaba" (other sources give slightly different figures). Quraysh left out the Hijr area for lack of funds.

Figure 4: Plan of the Ka'bah and Hijr Isma'il (schematic).

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FEATURE	MEASUREMENT / DETAILS
Length	12.86 m
Width	11.03 m
Maximum height	13.1 m
Door	On the north-east wall, 2.13 m above ground
Hijr Isma'il	Semicircular marble wall, 1.31 m high, 1.5 m wide
Rebuildings	Quraysh (c. 600–605 CE), Ibn az-Zubayr (683 CE), 'Abd al-Malik (693 CE), Murad IV (1626–1627 CE)

Source: Wikipedia, "Kaaba". Wikipedia also gives other figures (about 15 m high, 12 m × 10.5 m); the difference depends on how it is measured.

When performing tawaf today, we walk outside Hijr Isma'il because it is ***part of the Ka'bah*** — a direct result of Quraysh's decision to use only lawful wealth, as in the hadith of 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها.

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THE TITLE AL-AMIN

The Black Stone episode shows that even before prophethood, Quraysh called him ***al-Amin***. The clearest testimony to his honesty came from his own people, when he began calling openly:

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HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 4770

حَدَّثَنَا عُمَرُ بْنُ حَفْصِ بْنِ غِيَاثٍ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي، حَدَّثَنَا الأَعْمَشُ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي عَمْرُو بْنُ مُرَّةَ، عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ جُبَيْرٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ قَالَ لَمَّا نَزَلَتْ {وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الأَقْرَبِينَ} صَعِدَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم عَلَى الصَّفَا فَجَعَلَ يُنَادِي «يَا بَنِي فِهْرٍ، يَا بَنِي عَدِيٍّ». لِبُطُونِ قُرَيْشٍ حَتَّى اجْتَمَعُوا، فَجَعَلَ الرَّجُلُ إِذَا لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ أَنْ يَخْرُجَ أَرْسَلَ رَسُولاً لِيَنْظُرَ مَا هُوَ، فَجَاءَ أَبُو لَهَبٍ وَقُرَيْشٌ فَقَالَ «أَرَأَيْتَكُمْ لَوْ أَخْبَرْتُكُمْ أَنَّ خَيْلاً بِالْوَادِي تُرِيدُ أَنْ تُغِيرَ عَلَيْكُمْ، أَكُنْتُمْ مُصَدِّقِيَّ». قَالُوا نَعَمْ، مَا جَرَّبْنَا عَلَيْكَ إِلاَّ صِدْقًا. قَالَ «فَإِنِّي نَذِيرٌ لَكُمْ بَيْنَ يَدَىْ عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ». فَقَالَ أَبُو لَهَبٍ تَبًّا لَكَ سَائِرَ الْيَوْمِ، أَلِهَذَا جَمَعْتَنَا فَنَزَلَتْ {تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ ، مَا أَغْنَى عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ}

TRANSLATION:

Ibn ‘Abbas رضى الله عنهما said: When the verse {And warn your closest kindred} was revealed, the Prophet ﷺ climbed Mount Safa and began calling: “O Banu Fihr! O Banu ‘Adi!” — the clans of Quraysh — until they gathered. Whoever could not come sent a messenger to see what was happening. Abu Lahab and Quraysh came. He said: **“What do you think — if I told you that there were horsemen in this valley about to attack you, would you believe me?”** They said: **“Yes; we have never found you to be anything but truthful.”** He said: **“Then I am a warner to you of a severe punishment ahead.”** Abu Lahab said: “May you perish for the rest of the day! Is this why you gathered us?” Then it was revealed: {Perish the hands of Abu Lahab, and perish he}.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from ‘Umar ibn Hafs ibn Ghiyath, from his father, Hafs ibn Ghiyath, from al-A‘mash, from ‘Amr ibn Murrah, from Sa‘id ibn Jubayr, from Ibn ‘Abbas رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Tafsir, Surah ash-Shu‘ara’, Hadith No. 4770. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 208).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:4770

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

First: The testimony of opponents. Quraysh — including Abu Lahab — admitted: ***“We have never found you to be anything but truthful.”*** This came from people who later opposed him.

Second: Capital for da‘wah. Forty years of honesty became ***the basis of trust*** when he conveyed the message. Callers to Allah today must likewise be known for their character before their words.

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Third: Truth and rejection. They admitted his honesty, yet rejected his call. ***Guidance is not mere argument***; it is a gift from Allah.

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THE HANIFS

In the Jahiliyyah, not all Arabs worshipped idols. A few were known as ***hanifs*** — those who rejected idol worship and sought the religion of Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.

SIRAH NOTE: ZAYD IBN 'AMR IBN NUFAYL

Among the best known was ***Zayd ibn 'Amr ibn Nufayl***, father of Sa'id ibn Zayd رضى الله عنه. Sahih al-Bukhari relates that he ***did not eat what was slaughtered for idols*** and criticised Quraysh for slaughtering in the name of other than Allah, and travelled to Syria seeking the true religion. He died before prophethood.

REFERENCES:
Sahih al-Bukhari 3826–3827. https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3826

The existence of the hanifs shows that human ***fitrah*** — even in an idol-worshipping society — still sought the One God. Makkan society was ***waiting for light***.

THE MESSENGER ﷺ AND THE IDOLS

Before prophethood, he ***did not worship idols***. Allah protected him from his people's shirk, just as Allah protected his modesty during the rebuilding of the Ka'bah. His love of solitude and worship later led him to the Cave of Hira'.

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SIGNS BEFORE PROPHETHOOD

As prophethood drew near, certain signs appeared that were fully understood only later. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself told of one:

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HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2277

وَحَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَبِي بُكَيْرٍ، عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ بْنِ طَهْمَانَ، حَدَّثَنِي سِمَاكُ بْنُ حَرْبٍ، عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ سَمُرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم «إِنِّي لأَعْرِفُ حَجَرًا بِمَكَّةَ كَانَ يُسَلِّمُ عَلَىَّ قَبْلَ أَنْ أُبْعَثَ إِنِّي لأَعْرِفُهُ الآنَ».

TRANSLATION:

Jabir ibn Samurah رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"I know a stone in Makkah that used to greet me with salam before I was sent. Indeed, I know it now."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah, from Yahya ibn Abi Bukayr, from Ibrahim ibn Tahman, from Simak ibn Harb, from Jabir ibn Samurah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtues, chapter on the virtue of the Prophet's ﷺ lineage and the stone greeting him before prophethood, Hadith No. 2277.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2277

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

First: Creation recognised its Messenger. A stone in Makkah ***greeted*** him before he was sent — a sign of Allah's honour.

Second: A lasting memory. He said ***"I know it now"***, showing the event was real and remembered.

TRUE DREAMS

In Sahih al-Bukhari, 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها relates that revelation began with ***true dreams***: every dream he saw came true like ***the light of dawn***. Then ***solitude was made beloved*** to him in the Cave of Hira'. The full account will be given in Book 3. Sahih al-Bukhari 3

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SECLUSION IN THE CAVE OF HIRA'

As he neared forty, he increasingly loved ***solitude*** in a small cave at the top of ***Jabal an-Nur***, near Makkah. There he worshipped (tahannuth) for days, taking provisions, then returning to Khadijah for more.

THE CAVE OF HIRA' IN NUMBERS

FEATURE	DETAILS
Height of Jabal an-Nur	About 640 m
Position of the cave	About 270 m (according to Wikipedia)
Size of the cave	About 3.7 m long and 1.6 m wide
The climb today	About 1,750 steps; one to two hours
Length of seclusion	One month each year according to historical sources
First revelation	Around August 610 CE, in Ramadan

Source: Wikipedia, "Mount Hira".

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WHY SOLITUDE?

Makkah was full of idols, commerce and tribal quarrels. In the Cave of Hira', he was ***far from the noise***, reflecting on Allah's greatness and the state of his people. From this cave, Makkah — and the Ka'bah — could be seen in the distance.

The lesson: each of us needs ***time alone with Allah*** — in the last third of the night, in i'tikaf, or simply a few minutes without a phone. A heart that is always busy struggles to receive light.

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VISITING JABAL AN-NUR TODAY

Many Hajj and 'Umrah pilgrims climb Jabal an-Nur to see the Cave of Hira'. Scholars explain that climbing it is ***not part of the rites of Hajj or 'Umrah***, and no text mentions a special merit in praying or supplicating inside the cave. It may be visited to ***reflect*** on the beginning of revelation.

ADVICE FOR CLIMBERS	REASON
Climb in the morning or evening	Makkah is very hot at midday.
Carry enough water	The climb takes one to two hours.
Keep it clean and be courteous	This historic place is visited by many.
Avoid practices without evidence	Worship must be based on the sunnah.

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A SUBLIME CHARACTER

SURAH AL-QALAM 68:4

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾

And indeed, you are of a great moral character.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/68:4

EXPLANATION OF VERSE 68:4

Allah says: ***"And indeed, you are of a great moral character"***. Ibn Kathir quotes 'A'ishah's رضى الله عنها explanation that his character was ***the Qur'an***: he carried out its commands and avoided its prohibitions. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 68:4.

Forty years before prophethood had shown this character in many situations. When the first revelation came, Khadijah رضى الله عنها comforted him by naming those very qualities: keeping ties of kinship, bearing the burdens of the weak, helping the destitute, honouring guests and helping in times of hardship (Sahih al-Bukhari 3).

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CHARACTER IN THIS EBOOK

QUALITY	EVENT
Hard work	Herding sheep and trading
Defending the wronged	Hilf al-Fudul
Trustworthiness	Khadijah's goods; the title al-Amin
Loyalty	Remembering Khadijah (Sahih al-Bukhari 3818)
Love and kindness	Zayd choosing to stay with him
Repaying kindness	Taking in 'Ali to ease Abu Talib's burden
Wisdom and justice	Settling the Black Stone dispute
Modesty	The waist-wrapper episode (Sahih al-Bukhari 3829)

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LESSONS FOR THE YOUNG

The youth and adulthood of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ are ***the best guide for young people*** today. He inherited no wealth, but built a respected name through character and hard work.

FROM THE SIRAH	PRACTICE FOR THE YOUNG
Working from a young age	Do not be ashamed of lawful work, however small.
Learning from travel	Get to know the wider world with open eyes and a guarded heart.
Hilf al-Fudul	Join efforts to defend the weak and wronged.
Trust in business	Build a good name before chasing profit.
Choosing a spouse for character	Make faith and character the main measure.
Guarding modesty and dignity	Keep modest even when others neglect it.
Time alone with Allah	Make time for self-reflection and worship.

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A REFLECTION FOR PARENTS

Abu Talib's poor home produced a trustworthy young man; the home of the Prophet and Khadijah produced Zayd and 'Ali. ***A home full of love and good example*** matters more than luxury. Raise children by example, not just advice.

Finally, remember verse 10:16: his life before prophethood became ***proof of the truth***. Our lives today will also be witnesses — either confirming or contradicting what we call others to.

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BETWEEN AUTHENTIC REPORTS AND POPULAR STORIES

Many stories about the youth and adulthood of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ circulate among people. The table below distinguishes the authentic, those from the books of sirah, and the disputed.

STORIES AND THEIR STATUS

POPULAR STORY	STATUS
He went to Syria with Abu Talib as a youth.	A report in the books of sirah; generally accepted.
The monk Bahira recognised the signs of his prophethood.	Narrated by Ibn Ishaq and at-Tirmidhi; parts disputed by scholars such as al-Dhahabi.
He took part in Hilf al-Fudul.	Reported in sirah and history books; accepted.
Khadijah was 40 at marriage.	The well-known view; some sources say about 28.
He remembered Khadijah and honoured her friends.	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 3818).
He carried stones when the Ka'bah was rebuilt.	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 3829).
The Hijr was left out for lack of funds.	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 1584).
He settled the Black Stone dispute with a cloak.	Reported in sirah with various chains; widely accepted.
A stone greeted him before he was sent.	Authentic (Sahih Muslim 2277).
Marvels during the journey with Maysarah.	Unauthentic additions; not included.

REFLECTION

His story needs no additions to be beautiful. The authentic reports are enough to ***increase love*** and serve as an example.

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THE WORLD ON THE EVE OF PROPHETHOOD

The first forty years of the life of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed while the world around the Arabian Peninsula was changing rapidly. The two great empires — Eastern Rome (Byzantium) and Persia (the Sasanians) — kept fighting each other, the Arab kingdoms allied to them collapsed, and the Arab tribes began to dare to stand up to the great powers. This chapter places the story of his youth and adulthood in the middle of these world events.

A PERSIAN KING HELPED BY ROME

In ***590 CE***, when he ﷺ was about twenty years old — around the time of Hilf al-Fudul — ***Khusrau II*** became king of Persia. At first he was overthrown by a rebel general and fled into Roman territory. The Roman emperor, Maurice, helped him with an army to recover his throne, in return for several frontier provinces and cities. Khusrau II ruled until 628 CE.

Source: World History Encyclopedia, "Khosrow II".

THE GREAT WAR BEGINS AGAIN (602 CE)

In ***602 CE***, when he ﷺ was about thirty-two years old, Maurice was overthrown and killed together with his family by Phocas. Khusrau II used this as a pretext to attack Rome, and a long war broke out between the two empires. The Persian armies captured many Roman cities. In ***610 CE*** — the year the first revelation came down in the Cave of Hira' — Heraclius became Roman emperor after Phocas was overthrown.

It is this war that the Qur'an later mentions at the beginning of Surah Ar-Rum: the Romans have been defeated, but they will be victorious again within a few years (Surah Ar-Rum 30:2–4). The full story will be told in later parts of this series, in sha' Allah.

Source: World History Encyclopedia, "Khosrow II".

THE FALL OF THE KINGDOM OF LAKHM AND THE BATTLE OF DHU QAR

On the Iraqi frontier, the Arab tribe of ***Lakhm*** at al-Hirah had long been an ally of Persia. In ***602 CE***, Persia abolished the kingdom of Lakhm; its king, al-Nu'man III, was arrested and imprisoned until his death. Without this Arab intermediary, relations between Persia and the Arab tribes grew tense.

A few years later came the ***Battle of Dhu Qar***. Modern researchers place it between ***604 and 611 CE***. A coalition of the Bakr ibn Wa'il tribes, especially Banu Shayban, defeated the Persian army and its Arab allies. Historians differ about how large this battle was — some regard it as only a minor clash — but the Arabs remembered it as their first victory over a Persian army.

Source: Wikipedia, "Battle of Dhu Qar".

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HISTORICAL NOTE: YEMEN UNDER PERSIA

After Abyssinian rule in Yemen ended in the early 570s (Part 1), Yemen was governed by governors appointed by Persia. This means that throughout his youth and adulthood, the Quraysh caravans traded south (Yemen) in the Persian sphere of influence, and north (Syria) in Roman territory. Makkah lay in between, ruled by neither empire.

LESSON

While the great empires were busy fighting and bringing each other down, Allah was preparing His Messenger in tranquillity in Makkah — a city ruled by neither Rome nor Persia. Worldly powers come and go; what remains is the truth. When today's world news makes us anxious, let us remember that Allah still governs history with His wisdom.

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TRADE ROUTES AND THE MARKETS OF ARABIA

His youth and adulthood were closely tied to trade: the caravan to Syria with Abu Talib, Khadijah's merchandise, the Fijar War that began on the way to the market of 'Ukaz, and Hilf al-Fudul, which was born of a business dispute. This chapter gathers those places together.

IMPORTANT PLACES

The distances in the table are ***straight-line distances*** from Makkah calculated from modern map coordinates; the actual caravan roads were longer. Where the exact location of a place is uncertain, the distance is marked as an estimate.

PLACE	CONNECTION TO THIS SERIES	DISTANCE FROM MAKKAH
Makkah	His city; the Ka'bah rebuilt by Quraysh.	—
Jabal al-Nur (Cave of Hira')	Where he secluded himself on the eve of prophethood.	About 5 km
The market of 'Ukaz	The greatest annual market of the Arabs, between Nakhlah and Ta'if; linked with the Fijar War.	About 70 km (estimate)
Ta'if	City of Thaqif, one of the sides in the Fijar War.	About 63 km
Al-Shu'aybah	The old port of Makkah on the Red Sea; where a Roman ship ran aground whose timber was used for the Ka'bah.	About 75 km (estimate)
The market of Hubashah	An ancient annual market in the Makkah region; its site was identified by researchers in 2023 (see below).	Estimate
Yathrib (Madinah)	A town on the caravan route to Syria.	About 340 km
Busra (Syria)	Destination of the Quraysh caravans; his first journey to Syria.	About 1,280 km
Damascus (Syria)	The great city of Syria under Rome.	About 1,390 km
San'a' (Yemen)	Destination of the winter caravan; then under Persian influence.	About 815 km

Distances are calculated from modern coordinates and rounded; they are only approximate, for illustration.

THE JOURNEYS OF WINTER AND SUMMER

Allah reminds Quraysh of the blessing of their "journey of winter and summer" (Surah Quraysh 106:1–4). In winter the caravans headed for Yemen, and in summer for Syria. A one-way journey to Busra took several weeks. He ﷺ travelled this road at least twice: as a youth with Abu Talib, and as an adult carrying Khadijah's merchandise.

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THE MARKET OF 'UKAZ: MARKET AND STAGE OF POETRY

According to Wikipedia, the ***market of 'Ukaz*** was the largest and most famous annual fair of the pre-Islamic era. It was held for twenty-one days in the month of Dhu al-Qa'dah, just before the season of Hajj. Besides buying and selling, the Arab tribes settled disputes, made agreements, raced and competed in poetry there. The market declined after the coming of Islam and was finally destroyed in 127 AH. Today a modern market has been rebuilt on its historic site near Ta'if and is held as an annual cultural festival.

Source: Wikipedia, "Souk Okaz".

HISTORICAL NOTE: THE SITE OF THE MARKET OF HUBASHAH

In 2023, a team of researchers working with the King Abdulaziz Foundation (Darah) and the Saudi Heritage Commission announced the discovery of the site of the ***market of Hubashah***, an ancient Arab market on the southern bank of Wadi Qanuna in the Makkah region. This market is said to have been held every year for eight days from the beginning of the month of Rajab.

Some sirah books mention that he ﷺ once took Khadijah's merchandise to this market. This report is not found in Sahih al-Bukhari or Sahih Muslim, and the report of the find itself does not mention any connection with him. For this reason it is mentioned here as historical information, not as established fact.

Source: The Media Line, "Ancient Souq Habasha Discovered in Mecca Region" (2023).

LESSON

The markets of Arabia were not merely places of buying and selling; they were also where news, language and culture changed hands. He ﷺ grew up in the middle of this world of trade, yet was not drawn into its deceit and injustice. So should we be: working and trading among people, while guarding honesty and trustworthiness.

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TRACES OF HISTORY: ARABIC WRITING BEFORE THE QUR'AN

The Qur'an was revealed "in a clear Arabic tongue". What was Arabic writing like before then? Several inscribed stones found in Syria show how Arabic script developed during the three centuries before the revelation came down. In this chapter we include only solid findings, with their sources.

INSCRIPTION	DATE	DESCRIPTION
Namara	328 CE	Tombstone of Imru' al-Qays ibn 'Amr, an Arab king of Lakhm, in southern Syria. Old Arabic in a Nabataean script changing towards the Arabic script. Now in the Louvre Museum, Paris.
Zabad	512 CE	On the doorway of a church in northern Syria; written in Greek, Syriac and Arabic. Now in the Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels.
Harran (Hauran)	567–568 CE	At a church near al-Suwayda', south of Damascus; in Greek and Arabic. The Arabic part dates its building to "one year after the event of Khaybar".

Sources: Wikipedia, "Namara inscription"; Wikipedia, "Zabad inscription"; Wikipedia, "Harran inscription".

The Harran inscription was written only a few years before his birth, in the Hauran region — the same area as Busra, the destination of the Quraysh caravans. It shows that Arabic writing was already in use along the trade routes in the days of his youth, even though most Arabs at that time could not read or write. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself was ***ummi*** (unlettered), as the Qur'an states (Surah Al-A'raf 7:157).

HIMA: A CARAVAN STOP IN NAJRAN

In Najran, in southern Saudi Arabia, lies the area of ***Hima***, inscribed as a ***UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2021***. It lies on one of the ancient caravan routes of the Arabian Peninsula, with thousands of rock drawings and carvings of hunting, animals and daily life, as well as writings left by travellers and soldiers. The wells of Bi'r Hima, estimated to be at least three thousand years old, still give water today.

Source: United Nations in Saudi Arabia, "Ḥimā Cultural Area in Najran added to UNESCO's World Heritage List" (2021).

LESSON

Allah prepared the Arabic language over centuries — from simple writing on tombstones — until it became the vessel for His final Book. Yet the Messenger who brought it was unlettered, so that it would be clear that the Qur'an is not the composition of a man. Learning Arabic, even a little, is a way to draw closer to the Qur'an.

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PEOPLE IN THIS SERIES

The table below gathers the people who appear in the story of the youth and adulthood of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, so that readers can easily remember the place of each one.

PERSON	RELATIONSHIP TO THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ	NOTES
Abu Talib	Uncle	Cared for him from the age of eight; took him to Syria.
Al-'Abbas ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib	Uncle	Carried stones with him when the Ka'bah was rebuilt (Sahih al-Bukhari 3829); took in Ja'far to lighten Abu Talib's burden.
Khadijah bint Khuwaylid	First wife	Merchant of Banu Asad; mother of all his children except Ibrahim; the first to believe.
Maysarah	Khadijah's servant	Accompanied him on the trading journey to Syria (sirah books).
Nafisah	Khadijah's friend	According to the sirah books, the go-between in Khadijah's proposal.
Hakim ibn Hizam	Khadijah's nephew	Bought Zayd at the market of 'Ukaz for his aunt.
Zayd ibn Harithah	Adopted son	Chose to stay with him; the only Companion named in the Qur'an (33:37).
'Ali ibn Abi Talib	Cousin	Grew up in the house of the Prophet and Khadijah.
Ja'far ibn Abi Talib	Cousin	Cared for by al-'Abbas in the year of drought.
'Abdullah ibn Jud'an	Leader of Banu Taym	Hilf al-Fudul was sealed in his house.
Al-'As ibn Wa'il	Leader of Quraysh	Refused to pay the merchant from Zabid; the cause of Hilf al-Fudul.
Zayd ibn 'Amr ibn Nufayl	One of the hanifs	Rejected idols; died before the prophethood (Sahih al-Bukhari 3826).
Baqum	Carpenter	A Coptic craftsman from the wrecked Roman ship; helped build the Ka'bah (history books).
Bahira	Monk in Busra	His story is in the sirah books; part of its content is disputed by scholars.

Sources: Ibn Hisham, al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah; Sahih al-Bukhari 3826, 3829; earlier chapters of this eBook.

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LESSON

The people in this part of the series came from many backgrounds: a poor uncle, a wealthy wife, a boy sold in the market, tribal leaders and a foreign carpenter. All of them witnessed his character. Every day, the people around us also witness our character — they are the most honest witnesses.

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TIMELINE: SIRAH AND THE WORLD

This timeline places the events of the sirah in this eBook alongside world events of the same period. The CE years for the sirah events are the estimates of modern historians.

YEAR (APPROX.)	EVENT
567–568	The Arabic–Greek inscription at Harran, Hauran.
About 578	'Abd al-Muttalib dies; he ﷺ is cared for by Abu Talib.
About 582	First journey to Syria with Abu Talib (sirah books).
Late 580s	The Fijar War around 'Ukaz and Ta'if.
590	Khusrau II becomes king of Persia; Hilf al-Fudul is sealed in Makkah.
About 595	Carries Khadijah's merchandise to Syria; marriage to Khadijah.
602	Maurice is killed by Phocas; the Roman–Persian war resumes. Persia abolishes the kingdom of Lakhm.
About 600–605	Quraysh rebuild the Ka'bah; he ﷺ places the Black Stone.
604–611	Battle of Dhu Qar: the Bakr tribes defeat a Persian army.
Before 610	True dreams; seclusion in the Cave of Hira' (Sahih al-Bukhari 3).
610	Heraclius becomes Roman emperor; the first revelation comes down in the Cave of Hira'.

Sources: World History Encyclopedia, "Khosrow II"; Wikipedia, "Battle of Dhu Qar"; Wikipedia, "Harran inscription"; tables of years in the earlier chapters of this eBook.

LESSON

In the same year that Heraclius ascended the Roman throne, a man without wealth received revelation in a small cave. The world recorded the emperor's name, but history later proved that the event in the Cave of Hira' had a far greater impact. The measure of success with Allah differs from the measure of men.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Here are questions often asked about the youth and adulthood of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, with short answers based on the sources discussed in this eBook.

1. HOW MANY TIMES DID HE GO TO SYRIA BEFORE THE PROPHETHOOD?

According to the sirah books, at least twice: as a youth with Abu Talib, and in his early twenties carrying Khadijah's merchandise together with Maysarah.

2. IS THE STORY OF THE MONK BAHIRA AUTHENTIC?

The story is narrated by Ibn Ishaq and al-Tirmidhi, but part of its content is disputed by scholars such as al-Dhahabi. What is certain is that he travelled to Syria with a caravan. See the chapter "The Story of the Monk Bahira: An Assessment".

3. DID HE FIGHT IN THE FIJAR WAR?

The sources say he was present with his uncles and shielded them from the enemy's arrows, but did not fight. His age at the time cannot be determined; the sources mention between 14 and 20 years.

4. WHY IS HILF AL-FUDUL PRAISED EVEN THOUGH IT WAS MADE BY IDOLATERS?

Because its purpose was to defend the wronged — a value in harmony with Islam. The sirah books narrate that he would answer a call to a pact like it in Islam; this report is not found in the two Sahihs.

5. HOW OLD WAS KHADIJAH WHEN SHE MARRIED HIM?

The well-known view is 40 years, while some sources mention about 28 years. What is certain is that the marriage was built on character and lasted about 25 years.

6. HOW MANY CHILDREN DID HE HAVE WITH KHADIJAH?

Six: al-Qasim and 'Abdullah (who died in infancy), and Zaynab, Ruqayyah, Umm Kulthum and Fatimah. Ibrahim was born later to Mariyah al-Qibtiyyah in Madinah.

7. WHY WAS ZAYD NO LONGER CALLED ZAYD IBN MUHAMMAD?

Because Allah revealed Surah Al-Ahzab 33:5, commanding that adopted children be named after their real fathers. From then on he was again known as Zayd ibn Harithah.

8. WHY IS THE HIJR OF ISMA'IL OUTSIDE THE BUILDING OF THE KA'BAH?

Because Quraysh lacked lawful funds when rebuilding the Ka'bah, as he ﷺ told 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها (Sahih al-Bukhari 1584). That is why, when performing tawaf, we walk outside the Hijr.

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9. DID HE WORSHIP IDOLS BEFORE THE PROPHETHOOD?

No. Allah protected him from the shirk of his people. The Qur'an makes his life of forty years before the revelation a proof of his truthfulness (Yunus 10:16).

10. WHO WERE THE HANIFS?

A small number of Arabs who rejected idol worship and sought the religion of Prophet Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, such as Zayd ibn 'Amr ibn Nufayl (Sahih al-Bukhari 3826). They show that human nature (fitrah) seeks the One God.

11. IS THERE A SPECIAL MERIT IN PRAYING IN THE CAVE OF HIRA'?

There is no text mentioning a special merit for praying or supplicating inside the Cave of Hira', and climbing it is not part of the rites of Hajj or Umrah. It may be visited to take a lesson about the beginning of the revelation.

12. WHAT DID HE DO IN THE CAVE OF HIRA'?

Sahih al-Bukhari 3 says that he would engage in tahannuth — worship — for a number of nights in the cave, taking provisions with him, then return to Khadijah to take more provisions. The details of that worship are not explained in authentic reports.

LESSON

Asking is the key to knowledge. When we hear a story about the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, let us make it a habit to ask: "What is its source, and is it authentic?" In this way our love for him is built on truth.

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LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

LESSONS FROM THIS EBOOK

First: His life before prophethood is a proof. He lived forty years among his people without lying (10:16).

Second: Hardship shapes character. A poor orphan grew into a trustworthy young man.

Third: Defend the wronged. He valued Hilf al-Fudul even after prophethood.

Fourth: Trust is capital. Honesty won Khadijah's trust and the title al-Amin (Sahih al-Bukhari 4770).

Fifth: Be loyal to your spouse. He remembered Khadijah all his life (Sahih al-Bukhari 3818).

Sixth: Allah protected His Messenger. His modesty was guarded while rebuilding the Ka'bah (Sahih al-Bukhari 3829).

Seventh: Only lawful wealth. Quraysh left out the Hijr for lack of lawful funds (Sahih al-Bukhari 1584).

Eighth: Leadership that unites. The Black Stone solution involved every clan.

Ninth: A sublime character. His character was the Qur'an (68:4).

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TIMELINE SUMMARY

AGE (APPROX.)	EVENT AND SOURCE
8	Raised by Abu Talib (Ibn Kathir 93:6)
About 12	To Syria with Abu Talib (sirah)
14–20	The Fijar Wars (history books)
About 20	Hilf al-Fudul, 590 CE (history books)
Early 20s	Carrying Khadijah's goods to Syria (sirah)
About 25	Marries Khadijah, c. 595 CE (sirah)
About 35	Rebuilding the Ka'bah (Sahih al-Bukhari 3829)
Before 40	True dreams and seclusion in Hira' (Sahih al-Bukhari 3)
40	First revelation, c. 610 CE

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CONCLUSION

From Abu Talib's small house, to the markets of Syria, to the house of 'Abdullah ibn Jud'an, to his home with Khadijah, to the summit of Jabal an-Nur — Allah prepared His Messenger for forty years. When he reached forty, in the quiet Cave of Hira', the first revelation came. In sha Allah, the series **The Prophet's Sirah** will continue with ***the beginning of revelation*** and the secret call in Makkah. And Allah knows best.

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PART THREE

When Revelation Came

The Prophet's Sirah — Series 3

The Beginning of Revelation and the Secret Call in Makkah According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith

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WHEN REVELATION CAME

The second book of The Prophet's Sirah ended with a man of forty in seclusion in the Cave of Hira' — a man his people called ***al-Amin***. This third eBook tells of the moment that changed human history: ***the first revelation***, the fear and the comfort that followed, the pause in revelation, the command to ***arise and warn***, and ***three years of secret da'wah*** that produced the first generation of Muslims.

These events are narrated in detail in ***authentic Hadith***, especially in the first book of Sahih al-Bukhari, "The Beginning of Revelation". The Qur'anic verses and Hadith in this eBook are chosen carefully — only those truly relevant — while stories from the books of sirah are placed in "Sirah Note" boxes and assessed.

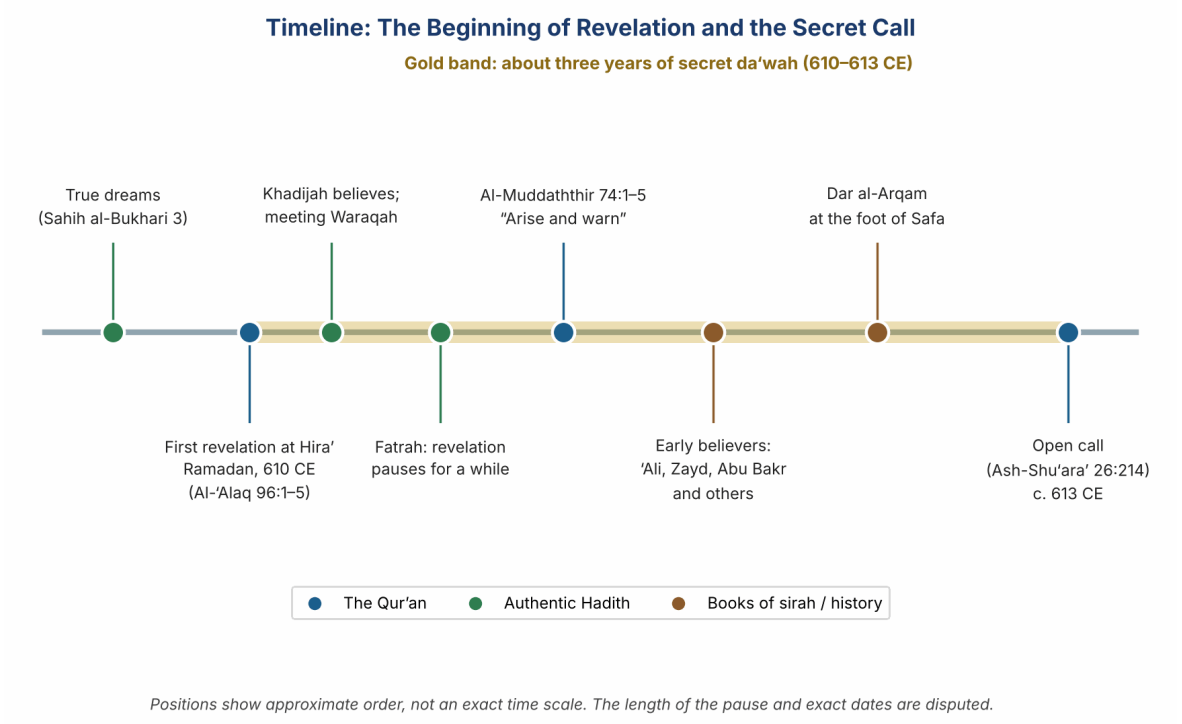


Figure 1: Timeline of the beginning of revelation and the secret call.

Note: The Qur'anic translation in this eBook is Sahih International. The grade of every Hadith is stated in its box. Information from the books of sirah is placed in brown "Sirah Note" boxes, and historical facts come with source links.

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APPROACHING THE AGE OF FORTY

According to the books of sirah, the first revelation came when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was ***forty years old***, around ***610 CE***. Forty is the age of full maturity. The Qur'an itself mentions this age as a mark of a person's full strength and understanding (Al-Ahqaf 46:15).

Those forty years had proved something important: his people knew him as ***honest, trustworthy and of noble character*** (Book 2). When he later conveyed the revelation, they could not accuse him of lying on the basis of their own experience.

THE WORLD IN 610 CE

The revelation came in a barren valley far from the world's centres of civilisation. To grasp how great this event was, consider the state of the world at the time:

POWER / REGION	SITUATION AROUND 610 CE
Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium)	Heraclius became emperor in 610; the empire was torn by civil war and the Persian threat.
Persian (Sasanian) Empire	Under Khosrow II; attacking Roman territories in Syria and Egypt.
The Arabian Peninsula	No united state; rival tribes, and idols filling the area around the Ka'bah.
Makkah	A centre of trade and pilgrimage; Quraysh ruled as guardians of the Ka'bah.

Source: Wikipedia, "Heraclius"; Wikipedia, "Khosrow II".

In less than thirty years after the first revelation, the message that began in the Cave of Hira' would reach the palaces of both these empires. It all began with one word: ***"Read!"***

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TRUE DREAMS

'A'ishah رضى الله عنها related that the revelation to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ began with ***true dreams*** (ar-ru'ya as-salihah) in sleep. He never saw a dream but that it came true ***like the bright light of daybreak*** — clear and exact (Sahih al-Bukhari 3).

These dreams were ***preparation***. His soul was accustomed little by little to matters of the unseen before the angel came openly. Allah did not surprise His Messenger with revelation without preparation.

> **SIRAH NOTE: SIX MONTHS OF TRUE DREAMS**
> Some scholars, based on a report cited by al-Bayhaqi, say that this period of true dreams lasted ***six months*** before the first revelation in the Cave of Hira'. This report is ***not found in the two Sahihs***, so it is mentioned as a scholarly view, not a certainty.

THE DREAM OF A BELIEVER

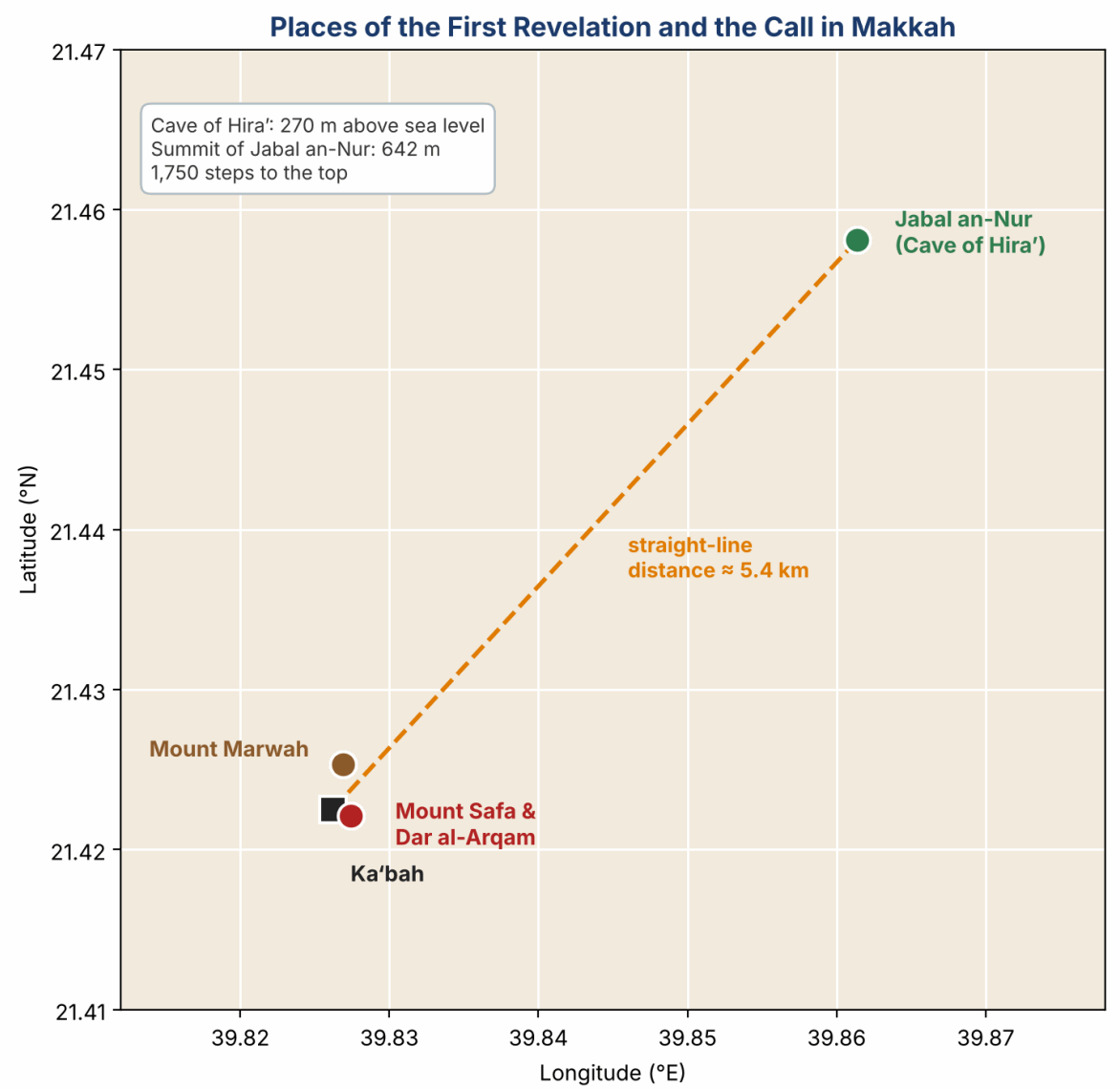
The dreams of prophets are revelation. As for believers, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ taught that a good dream comes from Allah while a bad dream comes from Satan, and he told us to seek refuge from it and not to tell others of it (Sahih al-Bukhari 6985).

The lesson: an ordinary person's dream is ***not a source of law*** and cannot override the Qur'an and Sunnah. True dreams are revelation only for prophets.

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NIGHTS IN THE CAVE OF HIRA'

The same hadith says: then ***seclusion was made dear to him***. He would go into seclusion in the Cave of Hira' and ***worship*** there (at-tahannuth) for a number of nights, taking provisions, then return to Khadijah to take provisions again (Sahih al-Bukhari 3).



Schematic map; approximate coordinates. Sources: Wikipedia, "Jabal al-Nour", "Al-Arqam ibn Abi al-Arqam".

Figure 2: The Cave of Hira', the Ka'bah and Mount Safa (schematic map).

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JABAL AN-NUR IN NUMBERS

FACT	DETAILS
Summit height	642 metres above sea level
Position of the cave	About 270 metres above sea level, on the mountainside
Size of the cave	About 3.7 m long and 1.6 m wide
Distance from the Ka'bah	About 5.4 km (straight line)
The climb	About 1,750 steps; one to two hours

Source: Wikipedia, "Jabal al-Nour". Distance calculated from coordinates.

Imagine that climb in a time without steps, carrying water and food for several nights. Imagine too ***Khadijah*** رضى الله عنها, who supported her husband and prepared those provisions. The solitude of Hira' was time to ***think, reflect and worship***, far from the idols and the noise of Makkah.

The lesson: everyone needs ***time alone with Allah*** — for self-reflection and worship. In the age of smartphones, our "cave of Hira'" may be just a few quiet minutes after prayer or in the last third of the night.

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IQRA': THE FIRST REVELATION

One night in ***the month of Ramadan***, while he was in the Cave of Hira', ***the truth*** came: the angel Jibril عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ appeared and said: "Read!" These are the first verses of the Qur'an ever revealed:

SURAH AL-'ALAQ 96:1–5

ٱقْرَأْ بِٱسْمِ رَبِّكَ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَ ﴿١﴾

Recite in the name of your Lord who created.

خَلَقَ ٱلْإِنسَـٰنَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ﴿٢﴾

Created man from a clinging substance.

ٱقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ ٱلْأَكْرَمُ ﴿٣﴾

Recite, and your Lord is the most Generous.

ٱلَّذِى عَلَّمَ بِٱلْقَلَمِ ﴿٤﴾

Who taught by the pen?

عَلَّمَ ٱلْإِنسَـٰنَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ﴿٥﴾

Taught man that which he knew not.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/96:1-5

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'A'ishah رضى الله عنها narrated the whole event — from the true dreams to the meeting with Waraqah — in the hadith that forms the basis of this chapter:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ بُكَيْرٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا اللَّيْثُ، عَنْ عُقَيْلٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ، عَنْ عُرْوَةَ بْنِ الزُّبَيْرِ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ أُمِّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ، أَنَّهَا قَالَتْ أَوَّلُ مَا بُدِئَ بِهِ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم مِنَ الْوَحْيِ الرُّؤْيَا الصَّالِحَةُ فِي النَّوْمِ، فَكَانَ لاَ يَرَى رُؤْيَا إِلاَّ جَاءَتْ مِثْلَ فَلَقِ الصُّبْحِ، ثُمَّ حُبِّبَ إِلَيْهِ الْخَلاَءُ، وَكَانَ يَخْلُو بِغَارِ حِرَاءٍ فَيَتَحَنَّثُ فِيهِ ـ وَهُوَ التَّعَبُّدُ ـ اللَّيَالِيَ ذَوَاتِ الْعَدَدِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَنْزِعَ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ، وَيَتَزَوَّدُ لِذَلِكَ، ثُمَّ يَرْجِعُ إِلَى خَدِيجَةَ، فَيَتَزَوَّدُ لِمِثْلِهَا، حَتَّى جَاءَهُ الْحَقُّ وَهُوَ فِي غَارِ حِرَاءٍ، فَجَاءَهُ الْمَلَكُ فَقَالَ اقْرَأْ. قَالَ «مَا أَنَا بِقَارِئٍ». قَالَ «فَأَخَذَنِي فَغَطَّنِي حَتَّى بَلَغَ مِنِّي الْجَهْدَ، ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي فَقَالَ اقْرَأْ. قُلْتُ مَا أَنَا بِقَارِئٍ. فَأَخَذَنِي فَغَطَّنِي الثَّانِيَةَ حَتَّى بَلَغَ مِنِّي الْجَهْدَ، ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي فَقَالَ اقْرَأْ. فَقُلْتُ مَا أَنَا بِقَارِئٍ. فَأَخَذَنِي فَغَطَّنِي الثَّالِثَةَ، ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي فَقَالَ {اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ، خَلَقَ الإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ، اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الأَكْرَمُ}». فَرَجَعَ بِهَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَرْجُفُ فُؤَادُهُ، فَدَخَلَ عَلَى خَدِيجَةَ بِنْتِ خُوَيْلِدٍ رضى الله عنها فَقَالَ «زَمِّلُونِي زَمِّلُونِي». فَزَمَّلُوهُ حَتَّى ذَهَبَ عَنْهُ الرَّوْعُ، فَقَالَ لِخَدِيجَةَ وَأَخْبَرَهَا الْخَبَرَ «لَقَدْ خَشِيتُ عَلَى نَفْسِي». فَقَالَتْ خَدِيجَةُ كَلاَّ وَاللَّهِ مَا يُخْزِيكَ اللَّهُ أَبَدًا، إِنَّكَ لَتَصِلُ الرَّحِمَ، وَتَحْمِلُ الْكَلَّ، وَتَكْسِبُ الْمَعْدُومَ، وَتَقْرِي الضَّيْفَ، وَتُعِينُ عَلَى نَوَائِبِ الْحَقِّ. فَانْطَلَقَتْ بِهِ خَدِيجَةُ حَتَّى أَتَتْ بِهِ وَرَقَةَ بْنَ نَوْفَلِ بْنِ أَسَدِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْعُزَّى ابْنَ عَمِّ خَدِيجَةَ ـ وَكَانَ امْرَأً تَنَصَّرَ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ، وَكَانَ يَكْتُبُ الْكِتَابَ الْعِبْرَانِيَّ، فَيَكْتُبُ مِنَ الإِنْجِيلِ بِالْعِبْرَانِيَّةِ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَكْتُبَ، وَكَانَ شَيْخًا كَبِيرًا قَدْ عَمِيَ ـ فَقَالَتْ لَهُ خَدِيجَةُ يَا ابْنَ عَمِّ اسْمَعْ مِنَ ابْنِ أَخِيكَ. فَقَالَ لَهُ وَرَقَةُ يَا ابْنَ أَخِي مَاذَا تَرَى فَأَخْبَرَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم خَبَرَ مَا رَأَى. فَقَالَ لَهُ وَرَقَةُ هَذَا النَّامُوسُ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ عَلَى مُوسَى صلى الله عليه وسلم يَا لَيْتَنِي فِيهَا جَذَعًا، لَيْتَنِي أَكُونُ حَيًّا إِذْ يُخْرِجُكَ قَوْمُكَ. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم «أَوَمُخْرِجِيَّ هُمْ». قَالَ نَعَمْ، لَمْ

يَأْتِ رَجُلٌ قَطُّ بِمِثْلِ مَا جِئْتَ بِهِ إِلاَّ عُودِيَ، وَإِنْ يُدْرِكْنِي يَوْمُكَ أَنْصُرْكَ نَصْرًا مُؤَزَّرًا. ثُمَّ لَمْ يَنْشَبْ وَرَقَةُ أَنْ تُوُفِّيَ وَفَتَرَ الْوَحْيُ.

TRANSLATION:

'A'ishah, Mother of the Believers رضى الله عنها, said: The revelation to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ began with true dreams in sleep. He never saw a dream but that it came true like the bright light of daybreak. Then seclusion was made dear to him. He used to go into seclusion in the Cave of Hira', worshipping there for a number of nights before returning to his family, taking provisions for that; then he would return to Khadijah and take provisions for the like of it — until the truth came to him while he was in the Cave of Hira'. The angel came and said: "Read!" He said: **"I am not a reader."** He said: **"He seized me and squeezed me until I could bear it no more, then released me and said: 'Read!' I said: 'I am not a reader.'** (This happened three times.) **Then he said: {Recite in the name of your Lord who created; created man from a clinging substance; recite, and your Lord is the most Generous}."** The Messenger of Allah ﷺ returned with these verses, his heart trembling, and went in to Khadijah bint Khuwaylid رضى الله عنها and said: **"Cover me! Cover me!"** They covered him until his fear left him. He told Khadijah what had happened and said: **"I feared for myself."** Khadijah said: **"Never! By Allah, Allah will never disgrace you. You keep ties of kinship, bear the burdens of the weak, give to the destitute, honour the guest and help those struck by misfortune."** Then Khadijah took him to Waraqah ibn Nawfal, her cousin, who had become a Christian in the Jahiliyyah, wrote the Hebrew script, and was old and blind. Having heard his account, Waraqah said: **"This is the Namus (Jibril) whom Allah sent down to Musa. If only I were young, and alive when your people drive you out."** He asked: **"Will they drive me out?"** Waraqah said: **"Yes. No one has ever come with the like of what you have brought without being met with hostility. If I live to see your day, I will support you with all my strength."** Before long Waraqah died, and the revelation paused for a while.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Yahya ibn Bukayr, from al-Layth ibn Sa'd, from 'Uqayl ibn Khalid, from Ibn Shihab az-Zuhri, from 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, from 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Beginning of Revelation, Hadith No. 3. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 160).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

This hadith is ***the main source*** for the story of the first revelation. It shows that revelation was not something he sought or expected. He was ***startled and trembling***, and went home seeking refuge and comfort beside his wife.

The hadith also refutes the claim that he composed the Qur'an. An author would not be frightened of his own work, nor ask others about what he had experienced.

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EXPLAINING THE FIRST FIVE VERSES

The first revelation begins with the command: ***"Recite in the name of your Lord who created"***. Ibn Kathir explains that these are ***the first verses of the Qur'an revealed***, and they are ***the first mercy*** of Allah to His servants and the first blessing granted to them. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 96:1.

Reading in this verse is not just any reading. It is ***"in the name of your Lord"*** — knowledge that begins with knowing the Creator and stays connected to Him.

The fourth verse describes Allah as the One ***"Who taught by the pen"***. According to Ibn Kathir, this verse declares ***the honour of knowledge***: by knowledge Allah honoured Adam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ above the angels, and by the pen knowledge is preserved and passed on. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 96:4.

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FIVE VERSES, FIVE THEMES

VERSE	THEME
96:1 — Recite in the name of your Lord	Knowledge begins with knowing Allah
96:2 — Man from a clinging substance	Humble human origins call for humility
96:3 — Your Lord, the most Generous	Knowledge is a gift, not a human possession
96:4 — Taught by the pen	The importance of writing and preserving knowledge
96:5 — What he knew not	Human knowledge keeps growing by Allah's leave

The second verse on ***'alaq*** — "a clinging substance", the early embryo that clings — has been explained from a scientific angle in the quranscience.my I'jaz 'Ilmi series. In the context of the sirah, it reminds man of his origins at the first moment Allah addressed this Ummah.

The lesson: this religion began with ***knowledge***. An Ummah whose first revelation was "Read!" ought to be the Ummah that most loves knowledge, reading and writing.

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"I AM NOT A READER"

When Jibril said "Read!", he replied: ***"I am not a reader"*** (ma ana bi-qari'). This answer was true: the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was ***ummi***, unlettered, neither reading nor writing. The Qur'an calls him ***"the unlettered Prophet"*** (Al-A'raf 7:157).

Jibril squeezed him hard ***three times*** before reciting the verses. Scholars explain that this embrace made him aware that the event was ***real***, not a dream, and prepared him to receive something very weighty.

THE WISDOM OF AN UNLETTERED PROPHET

The Qur'an explains the wisdom: before the Qur'an, he ***never read any scripture nor wrote*** with his hand; otherwise those who wished to reject the truth would have had cause to doubt (Al-'Ankabut 29:48). One who does not read could not have copied the stories of earlier prophets from the books of the Jews and Christians.

ASPECT	EXPLANATION
Proof of prophethood	A matchless Qur'an came from one who did not read.
Refuting accusations	He could not have copied earlier scriptures (29:48).
Not a call to illiteracy	Being unlettered was his special trait; his Ummah is commanded to read.
Scribes of revelation	He later appointed Companions to write down the revelation.

The lesson: the greatness of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ ***did not depend on titles or certificates***. His knowledge came directly from Allah. Yet for us, the command "Read!" still rests on every Muslim's shoulders.

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KHADIJAH: THE FIRST TO COMFORT HIM

He returned ***with a trembling heart***, and said to Khadijah رضى الله عنها: "Cover me! Cover me!" When the fear left him, he told her what had happened and said: ***"I feared for myself."***

Khadijah's answer is among the most beautiful words in history: ***"Never! By Allah, Allah will never disgrace you."*** Then she named ***five qualities*** of her husband as proof (Sahih al-Bukhari 3).

THE FIVE QUALITIES KHADIJAH NAMED

QUALITY	MEANING AND PRACTICE TODAY
Keeping ties of kinship	Maintaining relations with relatives, even when they cut them off.
Bearing the burdens of the weak	Carrying the burdens of orphans, the elderly and the helpless.
Giving to the destitute	Helping the poor obtain their needs and work.
Honouring the guest	Receiving guests with good hospitality.
Helping in misfortune	Helping victims of disasters and genuine hardship.

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KHADIJAH'S REASONING

Khadijah did not argue from emotion alone. She argued from ***Allah's way with His creation***: one who does good to people will not be disgraced by Allah. Fifteen years of life with him gave her ample proof.

Then she did not stop at comforting him. She ***took action***: she brought her husband to a man learned in the earlier scriptures, Waraqah ibn Nawfal.

The lesson: a good spouse is ***a shelter*** in a storm. Words that calm, reminders of a person's good deeds and efforts to find a solution are the way of Khadijah, which every husband and wife should follow.

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WARAQAH IBN NAWFAL

SIRAH NOTE: WHO WAS WARAQAH?

According to Wikipedia, ***Waraqah ibn Nawfal ibn Asad ibn 'Abd al-'Uzza*** was ***Khadijah's paternal cousin***, of the clan of ***Banu Asad***. He was among the few Makkans who abandoned idol worship and ***became a Christian*** in the Jahiliyyah.

The authentic hadith says he ***wrote the Hebrew script*** and copied from the Gospel, and that he was by then ***old and blind***. He died ***soon*** after the meeting.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Waraqah ibn Nawfal". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waraqah_ibn_Nawfal

THREE THINGS WARAQAH SAID

WARAQAH'S WORDS	MEANING
"This is the Namus that Allah sent down to Musa."	The angel who came was Jibril, bearer of revelation to the prophets.
"If only I were alive when your people drive you out."	A prediction that this call would be opposed and he would be driven out.
"No one has ever come with the like of what you have brought without being met with hostility."	Allah's way: every messenger is tested with opposition.

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He was astonished and asked: ***"Will they drive me out?"*** He could not imagine that the people who called him al-Amin would turn against him. Yet Waraqah's prediction came true: thirteen years later he emigrated to Madinah.

Scholars differ on whether Waraqah counts as a believing Companion. What is certain is that he ***affirmed*** him and resolved to help him. His testimony — from one who knew the earlier scriptures — was a great support to Khadijah and the Prophet at that critical moment.

The lesson: when facing something momentous, ***consult the knowledgeable***. Khadijah did not draw conclusions alone; she brought her husband to a man of knowledge.

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HOW REVELATION CAME

After the first revelation, the Companions later wished to know: how exactly did revelation come? One Companion, al-Harith ibn Hisham رضى الله عنه, asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ directly, and his answer was narrated by 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 2

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ يُوسُفَ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنَا مَالِكٌ، عَنْ هِشَامِ بْنِ عُرْوَةَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ أُمِّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ـ رضى الله عنها ـ أَنَّ الْحَارِثَ بْنَ هِشَامٍ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ سَأَلَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ كَيْفَ يَأْتِيكَ الْوَحْىُ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم «أَحْيَانًا يَأْتِينِي مِثْلَ صَلْصَلَةِ الْجَرَسِ ـ وَهُوَ أَشَدُّهُ عَلَىَّ ـ فَيُفْصَمُ عَنِّي وَقَدْ وَعَيْتُ عَنْهُ مَا قَالَ، وَأَحْيَانًا يَتَمَثَّلُ لِيَ الْمَلَكُ رَجُلاً فَيُكَلِّمُنِي فَأَعِي مَا يَقُولُ». قَالَتْ عَائِشَةُ رضى الله عنها وَلَقَدْ رَأَيْتُهُ يَنْزِلُ عَلَيْهِ الْوَحْىُ فِي الْيَوْمِ الشَّدِيدِ الْبَرْدِ، فَيَفْصِمُ عَنْهُ وَإِنَّ جَبِينَهُ لَيَتَفَصَّدُ عَرَقًا.

TRANSLATION:

'A'ishah, Mother of the Believers رضى الله عنها, narrated that al-Harith ibn Hisham رضى الله عنه asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: "O Messenger of Allah, how does the revelation come to you?" The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"Sometimes it comes to me like the ringing of a bell — and that is the hardest on me — then it leaves me, and I have grasped what was said. And sometimes the angel takes the form of a man and speaks to me, and I grasp what he says."** 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها said: "I saw the revelation come down on him on an extremely cold day; then it left him, and his forehead was streaming with sweat."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Abdullah ibn Yusuf, from Malik ibn Anas, from Hisham ibn 'Urwah, from his father, 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, from 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Beginning of Revelation, Hadith No. 2. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 2333).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:2

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LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

This hadith shows that revelation was ***a heavy experience***, not light inspiration or imagination. Sweat ran from his forehead even on a very cold day. Allah Himself said He would send down to him ***"a heavy word"*** (Al-Muzzammil 73:5).

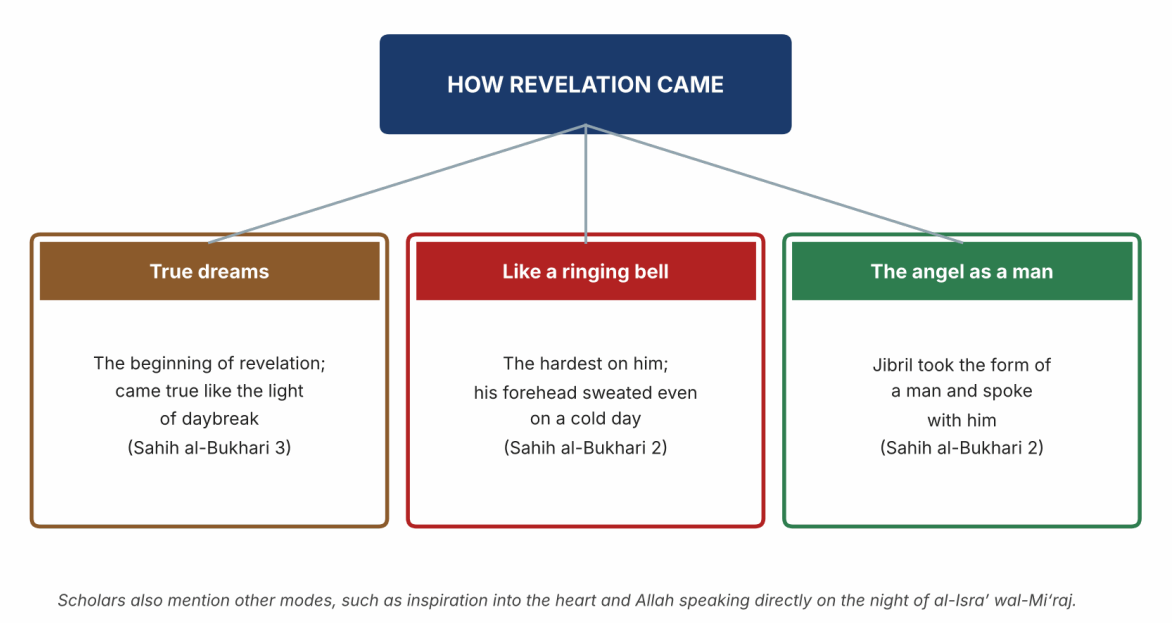


Figure 3: The ways revelation came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ according to authentic Hadith.

The second form — the angel appearing as a man — was witnessed by the Companions themselves, as in the famous ***Hadith of Jibril***, when a man in very white clothes came asking about Islam, iman and ihsan (Sahih Muslim 8).

The lesson: the Qur'an we recite with ease today was received by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ with ***great hardship***. Valuing it means reciting it, understanding it and acting on it.

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THE QUR'AN REVEALED IN STAGES

The Qur'an was not sent down all at once. It came ***little by little*** over about ***twenty-three years***, according to events and needs. Allah explains the wisdom:

Allah says of the Qur'an: ***"We have sent it down progressively"*** — so that he might recite it to people at a measured pace. Ibn Kathir explains that the Qur'an was revealed in stages ***according to events*** over about twenty-three years. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 17:106.

THE WISDOM OF GRADUAL REVELATION

WISDOM	EXPLANATION
Strengthening his heart	Each trial brought new verses to strengthen him (Al-Furqan 25:32).
Easy to memorise and understand	The Companions memorised and practised it little by little.
Gradual change	Rulings such as the ban on wine came in stages.
Responding to events	Verses came to answer questions and resolve current issues.

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Gradual revelation is also ***a miracle***. Verses revealed in all kinds of situations over twenty-three years — in peace and war, joy and sorrow — form a single book with ***no contradiction*** (An-Nisa' 4:82).

SIRAH NOTE: THE NIGHT OF AL-QADR AND THE FIRST REVELATION

The Qur'an states it was revealed in ***the month of Ramadan*** (Al-Baqarah 2:185) and on ***the Night of al-Qadr*** (Al-Qadr 97:1). Ibn Kathir quotes Ibn 'Abbas's view that the Qur'an was sent down all at once to the lowest heaven on the Night of al-Qadr, then revealed to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in stages.

For this reason, many scholars hold that the first revelation in the Cave of Hira' came in Ramadan. ***The exact date is disputed***: some say 17 Ramadan, others 21 or 24 Ramadan.

REFERENCES:

Tafsir Ibn Kathir 97:1 https://tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/97/1

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FATRAH: WHEN REVELATION PAUSED

'A'ishah's hadith ends with a short sentence: ***"Before long Waraqah died, and the revelation paused for a while"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3). This period is known as ***fatrah al-wahy***.

SIRAH NOTE: HOW LONG WAS THE PAUSE?

The authentic hadith ***does not state the length*** of the pause. Scholars differ: some say a few days, some a few months, and some sirah reports say up to ***two or three years***. Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani in Fath al-Bari inclines to a ***shorter*** period.

The three-year view is often confused with the period of ***secret da'wah***. According to Ibn Ishaq, three years passed before he was commanded to call openly — but during that time revelation was already coming continuously.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Muhammad's first revelation". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad%27s_first_revelation

THE WISDOM OF THE PAUSE

Scholars explain that the pause gave him time to ***recover from the awe*** of the first experience, and grew in him ***a longing*** for revelation. When revelation returned, he received it with a soul more prepared.

Many link ***Surah Ad-Duha*** ("Your Lord has not taken leave of you, nor has He detested you") with this pause. However, an authentic report shows that Surah Ad-Duha came after ***a different gap***: he was ill and did not rise for night prayer for two or three nights, and a pagan woman mocked him (Sahih al-Bukhari 4950).

The lesson: in a believer's life there are times when ***Allah seems silent***. Such times are not a sign of abandonment, but preparation for a greater task.

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AL-MUDDATHTHIR: THE COMMAND TO ARISE

The pause ended with an event the Messenger of Allah ﷺ described himself. He saw again the angel who had come at Hira', this time ***sitting on a chair between the sky and the earth***:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 4

قَالَ ابْنُ شِهَابٍ وَأَخْبَرَنِي أَبُو سَلَمَةَ بْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ، أَنَّ جَابِرَ بْنَ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الأَنْصَارِيَّ، قَالَ - وَهُوَ يُحَدِّثُ عَنْ فَتْرَةِ الْوَحْيِ، فَقَالَ - فِي حَدِيثِهِ «بَيْنَا أَنَا أَمْشِي، إِذْ سَمِعْتُ صَوْتًا، مِنَ السَّمَاءِ، فَرَفَعْتُ بَصَرِي فَإِذَا الْمَلَكُ الَّذِي جَاءَنِي بِحِرَاءٍ جَالِسٌ عَلَى كُرْسِيٍّ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالأَرْضِ، فَرُعِبْتُ مِنْهُ، فَرَجَعْتُ فَقُلْتُ زَمِّلُونِي. فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى {يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ ، قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ} إِلَى قَوْلِهِ {وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ} فَحَمِيَ الْوَحْيُ وَتَتَابَعَ». تَابَعَهُ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ يُوسُفَ وَأَبُو صَالِحٍ. وَتَابَعَهُ هِلاَلُ بْنُ رَدَّادٍ عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ. وَقَالَ يُونُسُ وَمَعْمَرٌ «بَوَادِرُهُ».

TRANSLATION:

Jabir ibn 'Abdullah al-Ansari رضى الله عنهما, speaking about the pause in revelation, reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"While I was walking, I suddenly heard a voice from the sky. I raised my eyes, and there was the angel who had come to me at Hira', sitting on a chair between the sky and the earth. I was struck with awe of him, so I returned and said: 'Cover me!' Then Allah the Exalted revealed {O you who covers himself; arise and warn} up to His words {and uncleanliness avoid}. After that the revelation became frequent and continuous."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari with the chain of the previous hadith (No. 3) up to Ibn Shihab az-Zuhri, from Abu Salamah ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman, from Jabir ibn 'Abdullah al-Ansari رضى الله عنهما. Corroborated (mutaba'ah) by the narrations of 'Abdullah ibn Yusuf, Abu Salih and Hilal ibn Raddad.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Beginning of Revelation, Hadith No. 4. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 161).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:4

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The verses revealed at that time were the opening of Surah Al-Muddaththir:

SURAH AL-MUDDATHTHIR 74:1–5

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلْمُدَّثِّرُ ﴿١﴾

O you who covers himself [with a garment].

قُمْ فَأَنذِرْ ﴿٢﴾

Arise and warn.

وَرَبَّكَ فَكَبِّرْ ﴿٣﴾

And your Lord glorify.

وَثِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرْ ﴿٤﴾

And your clothing purify.

وَٱلرُّجْزَ فَٱهْجُرْ ﴿٥﴾

And uncleanliness avoid.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/74:1-5

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

If ***Iqra'*** made Muhammad ﷺ ***a prophet***, then ***"Arise and warn"*** made him ***a messenger*** charged with conveying. Scholars say: he became a prophet with "Iqra'", and a messenger with "al-Muddaththir".

The words ***"O you who covers himself"*** are a call full of tenderness: Allah addressed him by his state at that moment. And after these verses, revelation ***came frequently and continuously*** — no more long pauses.

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FIVE FIRST COMMANDS TO THE CALLER

The first command given to him as a messenger was: ***"Arise and warn"***. Ibn Kathir explains its meaning: prepare yourself with determination and warn the people. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 74:2.

The first five verses of Al-Muddaththir are ***a short curriculum for a caller to Allah***. Each verse holds one command, and each command is still relevant today:

VERSE AND COMMAND	MEANING FOR US
74:2 — Arise and warn	Da'wah is a duty; leave your comfort zone.
74:3 — Glorify your Lord	Allah is greater than every challenge and threat.
74:4 — Purify your clothing	Outer and inner purity; scholars also read it as purifying one's deeds.
74:5 — Avoid uncleanliness (ar-rujz)	Ibn Kathir: abandon idols and sin.
74:6–7 — Seek no gain; be patient	Sincerity in giving, and patience in the face of opposition.

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A MEANINGFUL ORDER

Notice the order: ***arise*** (action), ***glorify Allah*** (belief), ***purify yourself*** (personal life), ***avoid sin*** (conduct), and ***be patient*** (endurance). Da'wah begins with a caller who builds himself before inviting others.

The last verse — ***"for your Lord be patient"*** — was an early warning. Waraqah had predicted opposition; now Allah Himself was preparing him to face it with patience.

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KHADIJAH: THE FIRST TO BELIEVE

SIRAH NOTE: THE FIRST WOMAN, THE FIRST PERSON

The books of sirah agree that ***Khadijah bint Khuwaylid*** was ***the first person to believe*** in the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, before any man or woman. She affirmed him from the first night of Hira'.

She spent her wealth for the da'wah and was his strongest support at home for about ***ten years*** after the first revelation, until she died around 619 CE.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Khadija bint Khuwaylid". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khadija_bint_Khuwaylid

Khadijah's status was recognised by heaven. Jibril عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ once came and asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to convey ***greetings of peace from Allah*** to her, and to give her glad tidings of ***a house in Paradise*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3820).

WHY DID KHADIJAH BELIEVE AT ONCE?

REASON	EXPLANATION
She knew her husband	Fifteen years together without seeing a single lie.
Wisdom	She judged by reason and experience, not emotion.
A pure nature	She was known as "at-Tahirah" (the pure one) in the Jahiliyyah.
Waraqah's testimony	Confirmation from one who knew the earlier scriptures.

The lesson: ***the first woman in Islam was the first person in Islam***. Islam began with the faith of a wise wife — an honour to women that must never be forgotten.

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'ALI AND ZAYD: FROM HIS OWN HOUSE

SIRAH NOTE: TWO FROM HIS OWN HOUSE

According to the books of sirah, after Khadijah, those who believed were ***'Ali ibn Abi Talib***, his cousin raised in his house (Book 2). 'Ali's age at the time is given as ***about ten*** — sources differ.

Then ***Zayd ibn Harithah***, the freed slave he had adopted as a son, who had once chosen to stay with him rather than return to his family (Book 2).

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Ali". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ali
Wikipedia, "Zayd ibn Haritha al-Kalbi". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zayd_ibn_Haritha_al-Kalbi

THE CLOSEST WITNESSES

Notice who believed first: ***his wife, his cousin and his adopted son*** — people who lived under the same roof. They saw him by day and by night, in joy and in anger, in public and in private.

A deceiver might fool the public, but ***it is hard to fool one's own household***. The faith of those closest to him is among the strongest proofs of his truthfulness.

The lesson: the most effective da'wah begins ***at home***. Before inviting society, make sure our conduct at home is a witness that confirms what we say.

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ABU BAKR AS-SIDDIQ

SIRAH NOTE: A FRIEND SINCE YOUTH

According to the books of sirah, ***Abu Bakr 'Abdullah ibn 'Uthman*** of the clan of ***Banu Taym*** was a close friend of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ from before prophethood. He was ***a respected merchant***, gentle in character and an expert in Arab genealogy.

He was ***the first free adult man*** to believe. The books of sirah say he accepted Islam ***without hesitation*** as soon as he was invited.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Abu Bakr". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Bakr

Authentic hadith confirms this standing. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ***"Allah sent me to you, and you said, 'You lie,' but Abu Bakr said, 'He has spoken the truth,' and he supported me with himself and his wealth"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3661).

FAITH THAT MOVES

Abu Bakr's faith did not stop with himself. He at once ***invited his friends***, drawing on the trust and good relations built over years of trade. As a result, several great figures of Islam embraced it through him — as we shall see in the next chapter.

He also used his wealth ***to free slaves*** tortured for their faith, including Bilal ibn Rabah. The title ***as-Siddiq*** (the great affirmer of truth) later became famous because he at once affirmed the Night Journey.

The lesson: ***a good friend is an asset to da'wah***. Relationships, trust and wealth can become bridges that bring others to good.

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THOSE WHO CAME THROUGH ABU BAKR

According to Ibn Ishaq, several young men of Quraysh embraced Islam through Abu Bakr's رضى الله عنه invitation. They would become among ***the greatest figures*** in Islamic history:

NAME	DETAILS
'Uthman ibn 'Affan	Of Banu Umayyah; later the third Caliph.
az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwam	Cousin of the Messenger ﷺ (son of his aunt Safiyyah).
'Abd ar-Rahman ibn 'Awf	Of Banu Zuhrah; later a famously generous merchant.
Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas	Of Banu Zuhrah; later commander of the conquest of Iraq.
Talhah ibn 'Ubaydillah	Of Banu Taym, Abu Bakr's clan.



Grouping follows the books of sirah (Ibn Ishaq); the exact order is disputed. See also Sahih al-Bukhari 3857 (the hadith of 'Ammar).

Figure 4: The first believers during the secret call.

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All five of these, together with Abu Bakr and ‘Ali, are among ***the ten Companions promised Paradise***. Seven of those ten embraced Islam during the secret call.

Sa‘d ibn Abi Waqqas رضى الله عنه himself described how few the Muslims were then: ***“No one embraced Islam except on the day I embraced Islam, and I remained for seven days as one third of Islam”*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3727).

Scholars explain that Sa‘d spoke ***according to his knowledge*** at the time, since the call was still secret and many hid their Islam.

The lesson: they were ***young***. Most of the early believers were in their teens to thirties. The young are the main force of every great change.

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"FIVE SLAVES, TWO WOMEN AND ABU BAKR"

What did the Muslim community look like in its first days? 'Ammar ibn Yasir رضى الله عنهما, himself one of the earliest, gave a short but very clear picture:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3857

حَدَّثَنِي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ حَمَّادٍ الآمُلِيُّ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي يَحْيَى بْنُ مَعِينٍ، حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ بْنُ مُجَالِدٍ، عَنْ بَيَانٍ، عَنْ وَبَرَةَ، عَنْ هَمَّامِ بْنِ الْحَارِثِ، قَالَ قَالَ عَمَّارُ بْنُ يَاسِرٍ رَأَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم وَمَا مَعَهُ إِلاَّ خَمْسَةُ أَعْبُدٍ وَامْرَأَتَانِ، وَأَبُو بَكْرٍ.

TRANSLATION:

Hammam ibn al-Harith said: 'Ammar ibn Yasir رضى الله عنهما said: **"I saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ when there was no one with him but five slaves, two women and Abu Bakr."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Abdullah ibn Hammad al-Amuli, from Yahya ibn Ma'in, from Isma'il ibn Mujalid, from Bayan ibn Bishr, from Wabarah ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman, from Hammam ibn al-Harith, from 'Ammar ibn Yasir رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Merits of the Ansar, chapter on the Islam of Abu Bakr as-Siddiq رضى الله عنه, Hadith No. 3857. Also narrated by al-Bukhari (No. 3660).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3857

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani in Fath al-Bari mentions their possible names: the five slaves were ***Bilal, Zayd ibn Harithah, 'Amir ibn Fuhayrah, Abu Fukayhah*** and one other; the two women were ***Khadijah*** and ***Umm Ayman*** or ***Sumayyah***. 'Ali is not mentioned because he was still a child.

This hadith shows the true face of Islam at its start: ***not a religion of the nobility***. It was embraced by slaves, women and a handful of free men — a mix unheard of in Makkah's tribal society, so obsessed with lineage.

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A NEW MEASURE OF HONOUR

In that small circle, an Abyssinian slave sat as an equal beside a Quraysh merchant. This was the seed of the teaching the Qur'an later declared: ***the most noble in Allah's sight is the most God-conscious*** (Al-Hujurat 49:13).

The lesson: do not judge a truth by ***the number or status of its followers***. Islam began with seven or eight weak people, yet its truth was not diminished in the least.

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THE WEAK WHO WERE STRONG IN FAITH

Slaves and those without tribal protection bore the heaviest trials once their Islam became known. Their stories will be told more fully in Book 4; here we meet them briefly.

SIRAH NOTE: BILAL IBN RABAH

According to the books of sirah, Bilal was ***a slave of Abyssinian descent*** owned by ***Umayyah ibn Khalaf***. When his Islam became known, he was tortured under the Makkan sun with a great rock on his chest, yet he kept repeating: ***"Ahad, Ahad"*** (Allah is One). Abu Bakr later bought him and set him free.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Bilal ibn Rabah". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bilal_ibn_Rabah

SIRAH NOTE: THE FAMILY OF YASIR

According to Wikipedia, ***Sumayyah*** was the wife of ***Yasir ibn 'Amir*** and mother of ***'Ammar***. Her family came from the Madhhij tribe of Yemen. Around ***615 CE***, at about sixty years of age, she was killed by ***Abu Jahl*** with a spear — making her ***the first martyr in Islam***. Her husband Yasir was also killed for his faith.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Sumayya". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumayya
Wikipedia, "Yasir ibn Amir". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yasir_ibn_Amir

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KHABBAB AND THE LESSON OF PATIENCE

Khabbab ibn al-Aratt رضى الله عنه, a blacksmith, once came to complain to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ as he lay with his cloak as a pillow in the shade of the Ka'bah: "Will you not pray for help for us?" He reminded him that believers before them had been tortured even more terribly yet stood firm, and that Allah would surely complete this religion — ***"but you are hasty"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3612).

The lesson: faith does not belong only to the strong and rich. Those whom society considered the weakest proved ***the strongest in faith***, and their names are honoured until the Day of Judgement.

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DAR AL-ARQAM: THE FIRST SCHOOL

SIRAH NOTE: THE HOUSE AT THE FOOT OF SAFA

According to Wikipedia, ***al-Arqam ibn Abi al-Arqam*** of the clan of ***Banu Makhzum*** (c. 597–675 CE) was among the earliest to embrace Islam, while still ***a youth***. His house stood ***on the east side of Mount Safa***, near the Ka'bah.

The house became ***the meeting place*** of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his Companions for learning and worship in secret. It was in this house that ***Hamzah*** and ***'Umar*** later announced their Islam. The house was later known as ***Dar al-Khayzuran***.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Al-Arqam". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Arqam

WHY THIS HOUSE?

FACTOR	EXPLANATION
A young owner	Al-Arqam was a youth; Quraysh did not suspect his house was a centre of da'wah.
The Makhzum clan	Makhzum was the clan of Abu Jahl, the chief opponent — the least suspected place.
Strategic location	Near the Ka'bah and the Safa route; easy to visit without drawing attention.
Safety	Meeting in a house was safer than in the lanes of Makkah.

Some of these reasons are ***the analysis of modern sirah scholars***, not reports. Yet they help us understand the wisdom of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in planning.

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THE FIRST SCHOOL OF ISLAM

At Dar al-Arqam, the Companions ***learned the newly revealed Qur'an***, listened to his guidance and built ***brotherhood*** with one another. It was the ***first school and training centre*** in Islamic history.

The lesson: every movement for good needs ***a place to gather, learn and grow***. Mosques, prayer rooms and study circles today carry on the spirit of Dar al-Arqam.

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WHY IN SECRET?

According to Ibn Ishaq, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ called people in secret for about ***three years*** before being commanded to call openly. This secret call was ***not out of fear***, but a wise strategy at the initial stage.

WISDOM	EXPLANATION
Building a core	Forming a small group strong in faith before facing society.
Protecting the weak	Slaves and those without protectors were exposed to torture.
Makkah, a centre of idolatry	The Ka'bah was ringed with idols and Quraysh lived off them.
In stages	Just as the Qur'an was revealed in stages.
Awaiting the command	The open call began when Allah commanded it (26:214).

Scholars explain that "secret" means ***the meetings and teaching*** were hidden; yet news of the new religion had spread in Makkah, and Quraysh did not yet see it as a serious threat.

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THE END OF THE SECRET STAGE

This stage ended when the command came: ***"And warn your closest kindred"*** (Ash-Shu'ara' 26:214). The Messenger of Allah ﷺ climbed Mount Safa and called the clans of Quraysh — the event we read in Book 2 (Sahih al-Bukhari 4770).

The lesson: da'wah requires ***wisdom and planning***. The right approach varies with time, place and circumstance, but the goal stays the same: inviting people to Allah.

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BETWEEN AUTHENTIC REPORTS AND POPULAR STORIES

Many stories about the beginning of revelation circulate among people. The table below distinguishes the authentic, those from the books of sirah, and the disputed.

STORIES AND THEIR STATUS

POPULAR STORY	STATUS
The first revelation was Al-'Alaq 96:1–5 in the Cave of Hira'.	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 3).
Jibril squeezed him three times.	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 3).
The first revelation came on 17 Ramadan.	Disputed; other views say 21 or 24 Ramadan.
The true dreams lasted six months.	A view of some scholars; not from the two Sahihs.
The pause lasted three years.	Disputed; the authentic hadith gives no length.
He nearly threw himself from a mountain during the pause.	An unconnected addition ("balaghat") by az-Zuhri in Sahih al-Bukhari 6982; not relied on.
Surah Ad-Duha came because of the pause.	An authentic report links it to a different gap (Sahih al-Bukhari 4950).
Khadijah was the first to believe.	Agreed upon by the books of sirah.
Five slaves, two women and Abu Bakr were with him.	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 3857).
There is special merit in praying or supplicating in the Cave of Hira'.	No evidence; it is not part of Hajj or 'Umrah.

REFLECTION

The authentic story of the first revelation is moving enough. We need no weak additions to ***love the Messenger of Allah*** ﷺ.

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IMPORTANT PLACES IN THIS SERIES

The story of the beginning of revelation took place in a small area: a cave near the top of a hill, his house with Khadijah, the Ka'bah, and a house at the foot of Mount Safa. This chapter brings these places together so that readers can picture the events more clearly.

TABLE OF PLACES

The distances in the table are approximate distances from Masjid al-Haram according to modern sources; the actual roads are longer. Where the original site now lies inside the area of Masjid al-Haram, this is stated.

PLACE	CONNECTION TO THIS SERIES	DISTANCE / CONDITION TODAY
The Ka'bah	He continued to pray and circle it; the place where some early Companions were later tortured.	At the centre of Masjid al-Haram.
Mount Safa	Dar al-Arqam stood at its foot; here he would later call his people openly (Part 4).	Now inside the Masjid al-Haram building (the Mas'a).
Dar al-Arqam	The centre for secret meetings and teaching.	Now inside the expansion area of Masjid al-Haram.
Khadijah's house	His home; where he returned in fear after the first revelation (Sahih al-Bukhari 3).	Its location now lies within the area around Masjid al-Haram.
Jabal al-Nur	The hill of the Cave of Hira'.	About 4 km north-east of Masjid al-Haram.
The Cave of Hira'	Where he worshipped in seclusion (tahannuth) and received the first revelation.	Near the top of Jabal al-Nur.

Sources: Discover Makkah, "Jabal al-Nour & Ghar Hira'"; WikiShia, "House of al-Arqam".

THE CAVE OF HIRA' BY MODERN MEASUREMENT

According to Wikipedia, the summit of ***Jabal al-Nur*** is about ***642 metres*** above sea level. The Cave of Hira' itself is very small — about ***3.7 metres*** long and about ***1.6 metres*** wide — and to reach it, visitors climb roughly ***1,750 steps***. The official Discover Makkah site notes that the mouth of the cave faces north, and that through a small gap inside it the direction of the Ka'bah can be seen.

Imagine: a man of forty climbing this steep hill again and again, carrying provisions for several nights, simply to be alone and to worship far from the idolatry of his people. It was in a space this small that the first revelation came down.

Sources: Wikipedia, "Jabal al-Nour"; Discover Makkah.

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HISTORICAL NOTE: WHAT BECAME OF DAR AL-ARQAM?

Al-Arqam رضى الله عنه made his house an endowment (waqf), and his children lived in it. In the 'Abbasid era, the Caliph al-Mansur forced al-Arqam's descendants to sell it and gave it to his son, al-Mahdi. Al-Mahdi later gave it to his wife, al-Khayzuran, who built a mosque inside it — which is why it was once known as ***Dar al-Khayzuran***.

In ***1375 AH*** (about 1955 CE), during the expansion of Masjid al-Haram under King Sa'ud ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, the site of the house was taken into the mosque. Today there is no specific building that can be visited as Dar al-Arqam.

Source: WikiShia, "House of al-Arqam".

LESSON

The greatest event in human history began in the simplest of places — a narrow cave and a house in a lane of Makkah. Allah does not need a palace to send down His guidance. Our own modest homes can become a "Dar al-Arqam" for our families when the Qur'an is read and knowledge is learned in them.

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THE QUR'AN WRITTEN AND PRESERVED

The first revelation commanded "Read", and spoke of Allah as the Lord "who taught by the pen" (Al-'Alaq 96:4). From the very beginning, the Qur'an was preserved in two ways that strengthened each other: memorised in the heart, and written on the materials available at the time.

MEMORISED IN THE HEART

He ﷺ recited every verse that came down to the Companions, and they memorised it and recited it in prayer. In a society with strong memories, used to memorising poetry, this was very effective. Allah also reassured him that He Himself would gather the Qur'an in his heart (Al-Qiyamah 75:16–19).

WRITTEN ON MANY MATERIALS

When revelation came down, he would call the scribes of revelation to record it. They used whatever was at hand: palm-leaf stalks, thin stone tablets, the shoulder-bones of camels and leather. Zayd ibn Thabit رضى الله عنه, one of the scribes of revelation, later described how he gathered the Qur'an "from palm stalks, thin stones and the hearts of men" (Sahih al-Bukhari 4986).

STAGES OF COMPILATION

STAGE	DESCRIPTION	SOURCE
The time of the Messenger ﷺ	Verses were memorised and written separately; the order of the surahs was taught by him.	Al-Qiyamah 75:16–19
The time of Abu Bakr رضى الله عنه	After many memorisers were martyred at the Battle of Yamamah, Zayd ibn Thabit was tasked with gathering the Qur'an into one compilation.	Sahih al-Bukhari 4986
The time of 'Uthman رضى الله عنه	Several copies of the mushaf were made from that compilation and sent to the Muslim provinces, so that the ummah would be united on one written reading.	Sahih al-Bukhari 4987

Allah says that it is He who sent down the Qur'an and He who preserves it (Al-Hijr 15:9). This preservation came about through the earnest efforts of people — memorisers, scribes and leaders — moved by Allah.

LESSON

The Qur'an we read today reached us through a chain of people who memorised, wrote and copied it faithfully for fourteen centuries. Every time we read, memorise or teach even one verse, we too continue that chain of preservation.

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TRACES OF HISTORY: THE EARLIEST QUR'AN MANUSCRIPTS

In recent years, several ancient Qur'an leaves kept in European libraries have been tested by ***radiocarbon dating***. The results drew worldwide attention. In this chapter we include only solid information, and explain honestly what can and cannot be concluded from it.

MANUSCRIPT	RADIOCARBON DATE	DESCRIPTION
Birmingham manuscript (Mingana 1572a), University of Birmingham	568–645 CE (95% probability)	Two leaves written on both sides: Surah Al-Kahf 18:17–31, Surah Maryam 19:91–98 and Surah Ta-Ha 20:1–40. Announced in July 2015. The leaves were found to belong to the same codex as leaves in the National Library of France (BnF Arabe 328c).
Tübingen fragment (Ma VI 165), Tübingen University Library	649–675 CE (95.4% probability)	Announced in November 2014 within the Coranica research project (German–French).

Sources: Wikipedia, "Birmingham Quran manuscript"; Al Jazeera, "One of the world's oldest Quran manuscripts found in UK" (2015); Medieval Histories, "Qur'an fragment Tübingen University Library Ma VI 165" (2014).

IMPORTANT NOTE: WHAT DOES RADIOCARBON MEASURE?

Radiocarbon dating measures when ***the animal whose skin was made into the leaf died***, not when the writing on it was written. Skins could be stored for some years before use. For this reason scholars differ: some think the leaves may have been written in the time of the Caliph 'Uthman رضى الله عنه or a little after, and some doubt the accuracy of the dates.

We therefore do not claim that the Birmingham leaves were written in the lifetime of the Messenger ﷺ. What can safely be concluded is that these leaves are among the earliest written witnesses of the Qur'an, and that their text is essentially the same as the text of the Qur'an that Muslims recite today.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

A Muslim's belief in the preservation of the Qur'an rests on Allah's promise and on mass-transmitted (mutawatir) reports, not on laboratory tests. Yet discoveries like these add historical evidence that the Qur'an was written in mushaf form from the first century of the Hijrah — in line with what is narrated in Sahih al-Bukhari about the compilation of the Qur'an in the time of Abu Bakr and 'Uthman.

LESSON

Being honest about evidence is part of the etiquette of knowledge. We do not need to exaggerate a discovery to strengthen faith, nor fear careful research. The truth does not need exaggerated claims.

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PEOPLE IN THIS SERIES: AS-SABIQUN AL-AWWALUN

Allah praises "the first forerunners" to embrace Islam (At-Tawbah 9:100). The following table gathers some of those who believed during the years of secret da'wah, together with other people in this series.

PERSON	POSITION	NOTE
Khadijah bint Khuwaylid	His wife	The first to believe; comforted him after the first revelation (Sahih al-Bukhari 3).
Waraqah ibn Nawfal	Khadijah's cousin	Confirmed that what had come was the Namus (Jibril); died soon after (Sahih al-Bukhari 3).
'Ali ibn Abi Talib	His cousin	The first child to embrace Islam; lived in his house.
Zayd ibn Harithah	His adopted son	A freed slave; among the first to believe.
Abu Bakr as-Siddiq	Close friend	The first free adult man to believe; many Companions embraced Islam through his invitation.
'Uthman ibn 'Affan	Banu Umayyah	Embraced Islam through Abu Bakr; later the third Caliph.
Az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwam	His cousin	Embraced Islam while still young.
'Abd ar-Rahman ibn 'Awf	Banu Zuhrah	Embraced Islam through Abu Bakr; a generous merchant.
Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas	Banu Zuhrah	"I remained for seven days as a third of Islam" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3727).
Talhah ibn 'Ubaydillah	Banu Taym	Embraced Islam through Abu Bakr.
Abu 'Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah	Banu al-Harith ibn Fihr	According to Ibn Ishaq, embraced Islam through Abu Bakr; later called "the Trustworthy One of this ummah".
Sa'id ibn Zayd	Banu 'Adi	Son of Zayd ibn 'Amr (one of the hanifs); husband of Fatimah bint al-Khattab.
Al-Arqam ibn Abi al-Arqam	Banu Makhzum	His house became the centre of secret da'wah.
Bilal ibn Rabah	Abyssinian slave	Tortured for his faith; later the mu'adhdhin of the Messenger ﷺ.
'Ammar ibn Yasir	Family of Yasir	Narrated "five slaves, two women and Abu Bakr" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3857).
Khabbab ibn al-Aratt	Blacksmith	Tortured for his faith; reminded by him of the patience of earlier nations.
'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud	Shepherd	According to Ibn Ishaq, among the early believers; later a leading master of the Qur'an.

Sources: Ibn Hisham, al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah; Sahih al-Bukhari 3, 3727, 3857; earlier chapters of this eBook.

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LESSON

These first believers came from every walk of life: nobles, merchants, young men, slaves and women. What united them was not lineage or wealth, but the courage to accept the truth when it was not yet popular. We too are tested: do we choose the truth only when many others choose it?

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TIMELINE: SIRAH AND THE WORLD

This timeline places the events in this eBook alongside world events of the same period. The Common Era years for sirah events are estimates by modern historians.

YEAR (ESTIMATE)	EVENT
Before 610	True dreams; he secludes himself and worships in the Cave of Hira' (Sahih al-Bukhari 3).
610 (Ramadan)	The first revelation, Al-'Alaq 96:1–5, comes down in the Cave of Hira'; he is forty years old.
5 October 610	Heraclius is crowned Roman emperor.
After the first revelation	Fatrah — revelation pauses for a time; its length is disputed by scholars.
After the fatrah	Al-Muddaththir 74:1–5 comes down: the command to arise and warn (Sahih al-Bukhari 4).
About 610–613	Secret da'wah; Dar al-Arqam becomes the meeting centre.
613	Persia captures Damascus.
About 613	The command to call openly (Ash-Shu'ara' 26:214) — Part 4.
614	Persia captures Jerusalem; the background to the opening verses of Surah Ar-Rum.
About 615	Persecution of the weak reaches its height; the first migration to Abyssinia — later parts of this series.

Sources: Wikipedia, "Heraclius"; Sahih al-Bukhari 3 and 4; the years in this series follow historians' estimates.

LESSON

While the great cities of Rome fell one after another to Persia, a small group of believers in Makkah was quietly learning in a house. The world paid them no attention. Yet within less than twenty years, this small group changed the map of the world. Never underestimate a small, sincere effort.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Below are questions often asked about the beginning of revelation and the secret da'wah, with brief answers based on the sources discussed in this eBook.

1. WHEN DID THE FIRST REVELATION COME DOWN?

In the month of Ramadan, when he was forty years old. The Qur'an states that it was sent down in Ramadan, on the Night of al-Qadr (Al-Baqarah 2:185; Al-Qadr 97:1). The exact date is disputed by scholars.

2. WHAT WERE THE FIRST VERSES REVEALED?

The first five verses of Surah Al-'Alaq (96:1–5), as narrated by 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها in Sahih al-Bukhari 3. After the period of fatrah, the opening of Surah Al-Muddaththir came down (Sahih al-Bukhari 4).

3. WHO WAS THE FIRST TO BELIEVE?

Scholars reconcile the reports in this way: among women (and overall) it was Khadijah; among free adult men, Abu Bakr; among children, 'Ali; and among freed slaves, Zayd ibn Harithah.

4. HOW LONG WAS THE FATRAH?

Scholars differ. None of the reports about its length is certain in the two Sahihs. What is authentic is that revelation paused for a while, then resumed with Surah Al-Muddaththir.

5. HOW LONG WAS THE SECRET DA'WAH?

According to the sirah scholars, about three years, until the command came to warn his close relatives openly (Ash-Shu'ara' 26:214).

6. WAS WARAQAH IBN NAWFAL A MUSLIM?

He affirmed his prophethood and hoped to support him, but died soon afterwards (Sahih al-Bukhari 3). Many scholars hold that he was among the believers, although some differ about his status as a Companion.

7. WHY COULD THE PROPHET ﷺ NOT READ OR WRITE?

So that no one could claim he copied or composed the Qur'an from earlier scriptures (Al-'Ankabut 29:48). Being unlettered (ummi) was a proof of his prophethood, not a shortcoming.

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8. HOW WAS THE QUR'AN WRITTEN IN HIS TIME?

The scribes of revelation recorded it on palm stalks, thin stones, bones and leather, while the Companions memorised it. It was later compiled in the time of Abu Bakr and copied into several codices in the time of 'Uthman (Sahih al-Bukhari 4986, 4987).

9. WAS THE BIRMINGHAM MANUSCRIPT WRITTEN IN THE TIME OF THE PROPHET ﷺ?

This cannot be established. Radiocarbon testing shows the skin dates from between 568 and 645 CE, but it measures the age of the skin, not the time of writing. Many researchers think it was probably written in the time of 'Uthman or a little after.

10. WHERE IS DAR AL-ARQAM TODAY?

The house stood at the foot of Mount Safa. In 1375 AH its site was taken into the expansion of Masjid al-Haram, so there is no specific building to visit today.

11. WHY DID THE DA'WAH BEGIN IN SECRET?

It was part of the wisdom of the Messenger ﷺ in building a firm foundation before facing open opposition.

The chapter «Why in Secret?» in this eBook explains the reasons.

12. SHOULD ONE CLIMB TO THE CAVE OF HIRA' DURING UMRAH OR HAJJ?

No. Climbing to the Cave of Hira' is not part of the rites of hajj or umrah, and there is no text about any special merit in praying inside it. It may be visited to reflect and take lessons, while staying safe and not writing on its rocks.

LESSON

Every question answered from authentic sources adds to our certainty and keeps us away from baseless stories. Keep asking, keep reading — for this religion began with the command "Read".

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LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

LESSONS FROM THIS EBOOK

First: Islam began with knowledge. The first revelation was "Read!" and praise of the pen (96:1–5).

Second: Preparation before a great task. True dreams and solitude in Hira' prepared him (Sahih al-Bukhari 3).

Third: Revelation is weighty. His forehead sweated even on a cold day (Sahih al-Bukhari 2).

Fourth: The strength of a wife. Khadijah comforted with the proof of character and acted to find answers.

Fifth: Consult the knowledgeable. Waraqah confirmed the Namus and foretold the opposition.

Sixth: Arise and warn. The five verses of Al-Muddaththir are a caller's curriculum (74:1–5; Sahih al-Bukhari 4).

Seventh: Da'wah begins at home. His wife, cousin and adopted son were the first to believe.

Eighth: Truth is not measured by numbers. Five slaves, two women and Abu Bakr (Sahih al-Bukhari 3857).

Ninth: Wisdom in planning. Dar al-Arqam and three years of secret da'wah built the core generation.

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TIMELINE SUMMARY

TIME (APPROX.)	EVENT AND SOURCE
Before 610 CE	True dreams; seclusion in Hira' (Sahih al-Bukhari 3)
Ramadan 610 CE	First revelation, Al-'Alaq 96:1–5 (Sahih al-Bukhari 3)
After the first revelation	Khadijah believes; meeting Waraqah (Sahih al-Bukhari 3)
Soon after	Waraqah dies; the pause (Sahih al-Bukhari 3)
After the pause	Al-Muddaththir 74:1–5 (Sahih al-Bukhari 4)
610–613 CE	'Ali, Zayd, Abu Bakr and five through Abu Bakr (sirah)
610–613 CE	Meetings at Dar al-Arqam (sirah)
Around 613 CE	The open call at Mount Safa (26:214; Sahih al-Bukhari 4770)

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CONCLUSION

From the silent Cave of Hira', to the comforting home of Khadijah, to the house of old, blind Waraqah, to the house of al-Arqam at the foot of Mount Safa — the message that began with one word, "Read!", quietly built the first generation of Muslims. In sha Allah, the series **The Prophet's Sirah** will continue with ***the open call***, the opposition of Quraysh and the trials that befell the Companions. And Allah knows best.

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PART FOUR

The Call From Mount Safa

The Prophet's Sirah — Series 4

The Open Call, the Opposition of Quraysh and the Hijrah to Abyssinia According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith

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THE CALL FROM MOUNT SAFA

The third book of The Prophet's Sirah ended with three years of secret da'wah and a small band of believers gathering at Dar al-Arqam. This fourth eBook tells what happened when that call ***went out into society***: the call on Mount Safa, mockery and accusations, offers of compromise, the torture of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the weak Companions, and finally ***the first hijrah in Islam*** — to the land of a just king in Abyssinia.

The Qur'anic verses and authentic Hadith in this eBook are chosen carefully — only those truly relevant — while stories from the books of sirah are placed in "Sirah Note" boxes and assessed. Several very popular stories with weak chains are clearly marked.

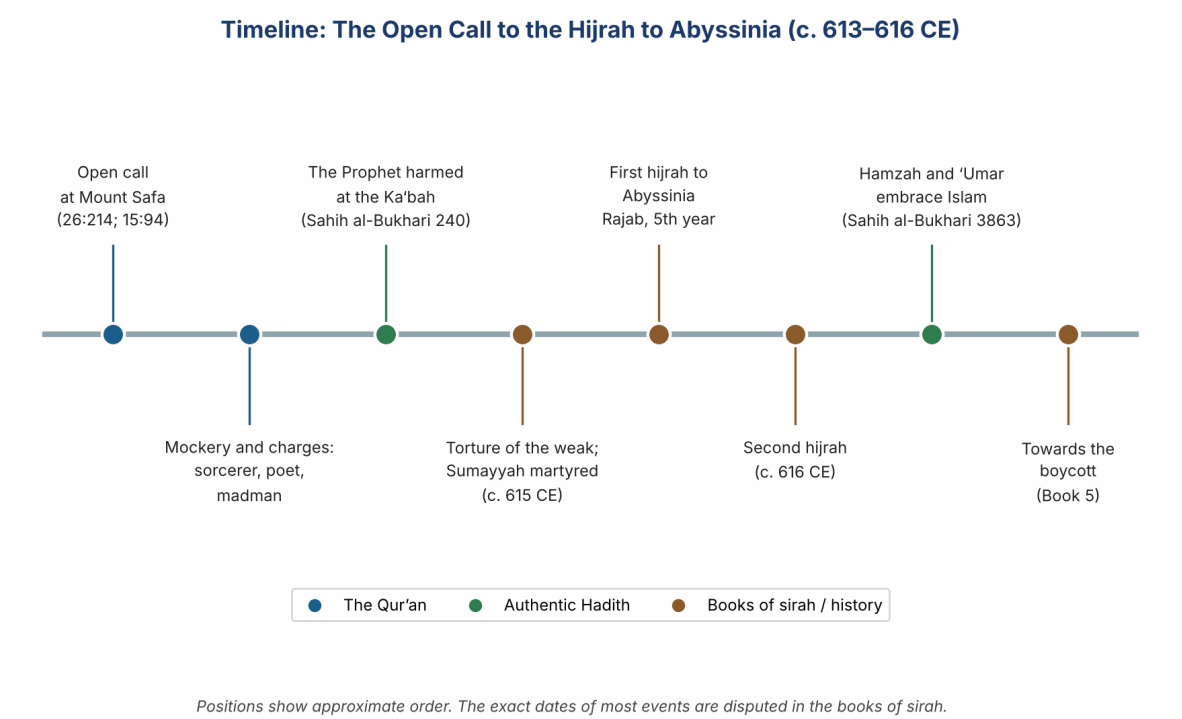


Figure 1: Timeline from the open call to the hijrah to Abyssinia.

Note: The Qur'anic translation in this eBook is Sahih International. The grade of every Hadith is stated in its box. Information from the books of sirah is placed in brown "Sirah Note" boxes, and historical facts come with source links.

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FROM SECRET TO OPEN

After about three years of secret da'wah, a command came that changed everything. Allah commanded His Messenger to convey the message ***openly***:

SURAH AL-HIJR 15:94–95

فَٱصۡدَعۡ بِمَا تُؤۡمَرُ وَأَعۡرِضۡ عَنِ ٱلۡمُشۡرِكِينَ ﴿٩٤﴾

Then declare what you are commanded and turn away from the polytheists.

إِنَّا كَفَيۡنَٰكَ ٱلۡمُسۡتَهۡزِءِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾

Indeed, We are sufficient for you against the mockers.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/15:94-95

EXPLANATION OF VERSES 15:94–95

Allah says: ***"declare what you are commanded"***. Ibn Kathir explains that this verse commanded him to convey the message ***openly*** to all people, paying no heed to the objections of the polytheists. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 15:94.

The next verse gives an assurance: ***"Indeed, We are sufficient for you against the mockers"***. Ibn Kathir names several Quraysh leaders known for mocking him, among them ***al-Walid ibn al-Mughirah*** and ***al-'As ibn Wa'il***, and how Allah sufficed him against their evil. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 15:95.

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Notice how the two verses are arranged: ***a command*** followed by ***a guarantee***. Allah did not command His Messenger to face Quraysh without protection. This is a principle that recurs in the sirah: a heavy task comes with Allah's help.

The command also came: ***"And warn your closest kindred"*** (Ash-Shu'ara' 26:214), followed by ***"And lower your wing to those who follow you of the believers"*** (26:215). The open call began with the closest family, and came with gentleness towards the believers.

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THE CALL TO HIS KINDRED

When verse 26:214 was revealed, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ acted on it at once. He called the clans of Quraysh one by one, then his own family — his uncle, his aunt, and even his beloved daughter:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 4771

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الْيَمَانِ، أَخْبَرَنَا شُعَيْبٌ، عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي سَعِيدُ بْنُ الْمُسَيَّبِ، وَأَبُو سَلَمَةَ بْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ أَنَّ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَامَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم حِينَ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ {وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الأَقْرَبِينَ} قَالَ «يَا مَعْشَرَ قُرَيْشٍ ـ أَوْ كَلِمَةً نَحْوَهَا ـ اشْتَرُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ، لاَ أُغْنِي عَنْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا، يَا بَنِي عَبْدِ مَنَافٍ، لاَ أُغْنِي عَنْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا، يَا عَبَّاسُ بْنَ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ، لاَ أُغْنِي عَنْكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا، وَيَا صَفِيَّةُ عَمَّةَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ، لاَ أُغْنِي عَنْكِ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَيَا فَاطِمَةُ بِنْتَ مُحَمَّدٍ سَلِينِي مَا شِئْتِ مِنْ مَالِي، لاَ أُغْنِي عَنْكِ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا». تَابَعَهُ أَصْبَغُ عَنِ ابْنِ وَهْبٍ عَنْ يُونُسَ عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ.

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ stood up when Allah revealed {And warn your closest kindred}, and said: **"O people of Quraysh — or a similar word — save yourselves! I cannot avail you anything against Allah. O Banu 'Abd Manaf, I cannot avail you anything against Allah. O 'Abbas ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib, I cannot avail you anything against Allah. O Safiyyah, aunt of the Messenger of Allah, I cannot avail you anything against Allah. O Fatimah daughter of Muhammad, ask me for whatever you wish of my wealth, but I cannot avail you anything against Allah."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Abu al-Yaman, from Shu'ayb ibn Abi Hamzah, from az-Zuhri, from Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib and Abu Salamah ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه. Corroborated (mutaba'ah) by the narration of Asbagh, from Ibn Wahb, from Yunus, from Ibn Shihab.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Tafsir, Surah ash-Shu'ara', Hadith No. 4771. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 206).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:4771

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

This hadith contains a basic principle of belief: ***each person is responsible for himself*** before Allah. Lineage, family ties to the Prophet, even being his own child, will not save anyone without faith and deeds.

In Quraysh's society, so proud of lineage, this declaration was astonishing. Banu 'Abd Manaf was the noblest clan; yet he made clear that tribal honour ***counts for nothing*** before Allah.

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The lesson: do not rely on family name, scholarly lineage or status. ***Faith and deeds*** are the only provision.

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ON MOUNT SAFA

The most famous event of the open call is ***the call on Mount Safa***, which we read in Book 2 because it shows the title al-Amin. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ climbed Safa and called the clans of Quraysh until they gathered (Sahih al-Bukhari 4770).

STEP	WISDOM
Climbing a high place	The Arab way of warning of danger; everyone paid attention.
Asking: "Would you believe me?"	Building trust before delivering the message.
They replied: "We have never found you lying"	Public testimony to his honesty.
"I am a warner of a severe punishment"	The core message delivered clearly and briefly.

His method was very wise: he began with ***what they themselves acknowledged*** — his honesty — before presenting what they had not yet accepted. Callers to Allah today can learn from this method.

Yet the first reply came from his own uncle, ***Abu Lahab***: "May you perish! Is this why you gathered us?" Then ***Surah Al-Masad*** was revealed: "May the hands of Abu Lahab be ruined, and ruined is he" (111:1).

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ABU LAHAB AND HIS WIFE

SIRAH NOTE: AN UNCLE WHO BECAME AN ENEMY

According to Wikipedia, ***Abu Lahab*** — real name 'Abd al-'Uzza ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib — was ***an uncle*** of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Two of his sons had been betrothed to two of the Prophet's daughters, Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum, but the engagements were broken after he began calling to Islam.

His wife, ***Umm Jamil*** bint Harb, sister of Abu Sufyan, also showed him hostility. The Qur'an calls her ***"the carrier of firewood"*** (Al-Masad 111:4). Abu Lahab died shortly after the Battle of Badr.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Abu Lahab". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Lahab

A MIRACLE IN SURAH AL-MASAD

This surah states that Abu Lahab ***would enter the Fire*** — meaning he would die in disbelief. It was revealed years before his death. Abu Lahab could simply have ***pretended*** to embrace Islam to "prove" the Qur'an wrong, yet he never did. It became ***an accurate prophecy of the Qur'an***.

The lesson: blood ties do not guarantee guidance. The closest uncle can become an enemy, while a stranger like Bilal of Abyssinia becomes the most loyal brother. ***Guidance belongs to Allah***.

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THE CHARGES OF QURAYSH

Quraysh could not deny his honesty, so they looked for ***labels*** to keep people away from him. The Qur'an records those charges and answers them one by one:

CHARGE OF QURAYSH	REPLY OF THE QUR'AN
"A madman" (Al-Hijr 15:6)	By the favour of your Lord you are not mad (Al-Qalam 68:2).
"A lying sorcerer" (Sad 38:4)	They wondered that a warner came from among themselves (38:4).
"A poet" (Al-Anbiya' 21:5)	It is not the word of a poet; little do you believe (Al-Haqqah 69:41).
"A soothsayer" (kahin)	It is not the word of a soothsayer; little do you reflect (69:42).
"Taught by a human"	The man they allude to speaks a foreign tongue, while the Qur'an is clear Arabic (An-Nahl 16:103).

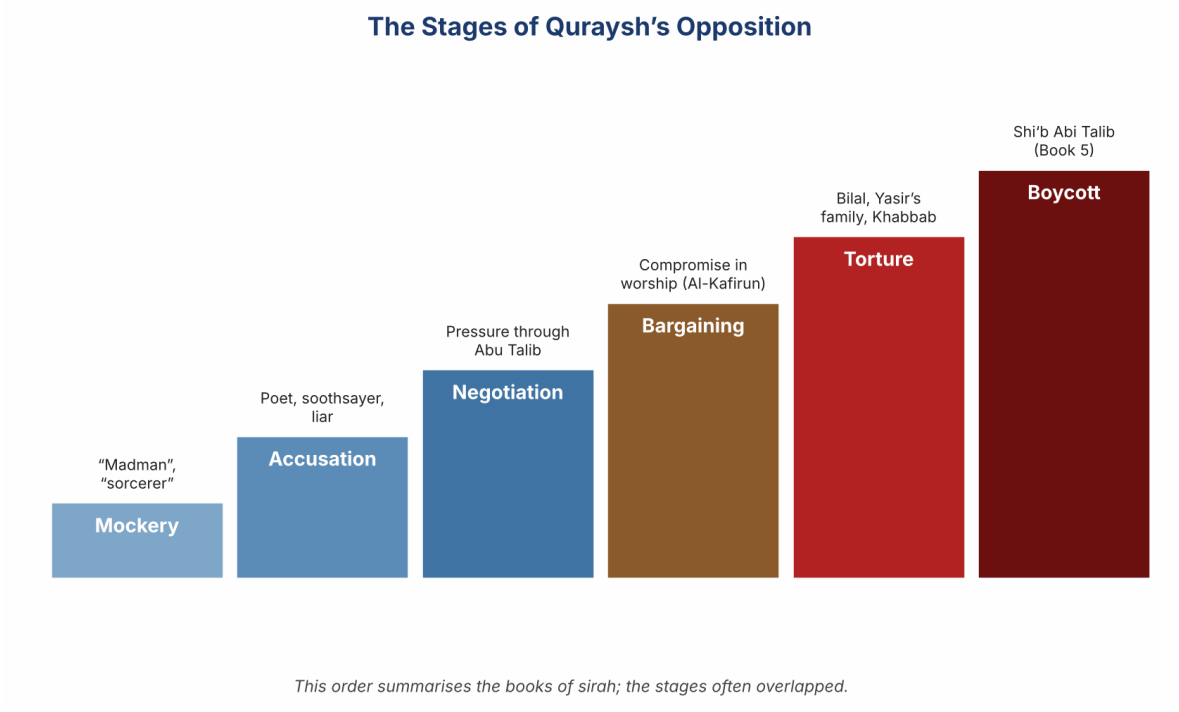


Figure 2: The stages of Quraysh's opposition.

CHARGES THAT CONTRADICT EACH OTHER

Notice that these charges ***contradict one another***. A madman does not compose beautiful words like a poet; a poet does not speak like a soothsayer; and a sorcerer does not call people to abandon sorcery. Their own confusion proves the charges ***baseless***.

The lesson: when arguments fail, opponents of the truth turn to ***labels and propaganda***. A Muslim should judge by argument and evidence, not by names thrown about.

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AL-WALID IBN AL-MUGHIRAH: AN ARGUMENT AT A DEAD END

SIRAH NOTE: A MEETING BEFORE THE PILGRIMAGE SEASON

According to Ibn Kathir in his tafsir of Surah Al-Muddaththir, ***al-Walid ibn al-Mughirah*** of Banu Makhzum, a wealthy and respected Quraysh leader, once heard the Qur'an and was moved. Quraysh grew worried and pressed him to make a statement against the Qur'an.

Before the pilgrimage season, when the Arab tribes would come to Makkah, Quraysh met to agree on a single charge. Al-Walid rejected the labels "madman", "poet" and "soothsayer" as unfitting. At last he thought long and said: ***"This is nothing but magic handed down."***

REFERENCES:

Tafsir Ibn Kathir 74:11–25 https://tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/74/11

The Qur'an describes the process precisely: ***"Indeed, he thought and deliberated"*** (Al-Muddaththir 74:18), then he looked, frowned, turned away in arrogance and said: "This is nothing but magic imitated" (74:21–24).

AN ARGUMENT AT A DEAD END

Al-Walid's story shows that Quraysh's opposition was ***not from a lack of understanding***. They grasped the power of the Qur'an, but ***arrogance, interests and status*** kept them from accepting it.

The lesson: knowledge without humility does not lead to faith. Many know the truth but are unwilling to pay ***the price of following it***.

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PRESSURE THROUGH ABU TALIB

SIRAH NOTE: THE QURAYSH DELEGATION TO ABU TALIB

The books of sirah (Ibn Ishaq) relate that the leaders of Quraysh came several times to ***Abu Talib***, asking him to stop his nephew or hand him over. Abu Talib refused gently and went on protecting him.

In a very famous report, he is said to have declared: ***"By Allah, if they placed the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left..."*** Ibn Ishaq mentions this ***without a connected chain***, and Hadith scholars such as al-Albani graded it ***weak (da'if)***. Its meaning is true, but its wording cannot be attributed to him with certainty.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Abu Talib ibn Abd al-Muttalib". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Talib_ibn_Abd_al-Muttalib

AN UNCLE'S PROTECTION

What is certain is that Abu Talib ***never handed him over*** to Quraysh, even though he himself did not embrace Islam. The Arab tribal system made a family head's protection vital: attacking the Prophet meant challenging all of Banu Hashim.

Allah used ***the existing social system*** to protect His Messenger. The lesson: a caller may make use of the laws and just systems of society to protect the da'wah, as long as they do not breach the Shari'ah.

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THE COMPROMISE OFFER AND SURAH AL-KAFIRUN

When threats failed, Quraysh tried another way: ***compromise***. Ibn Kathir mentions that they proposed he worship their gods for a year, and they would worship Allah for a year. The answer came in a short, firm surah:

SURAH AL-KAFIRUN 109:1–6

قُلْ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلْكَٰفِرُونَ ﴿١﴾

Say, "O disbelievers."

لَآ أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٢﴾

I do not worship what you worship.

وَلَآ أَنتُمْ عَٰبِدُونَ مَآ أَعْبُدُ ﴿٣﴾

Nor are you worshippers of what I worship.

وَلَآ أَنَا۠ عَابِدٌ مَّا عَبَدتُّمْ ﴿٤﴾

Nor will I be a worshipper of what you worship.

وَلَآ أَنتُمْ عَٰبِدُونَ مَآ أَعْبُدُ ﴿٥﴾

Nor will you be worshippers of what I worship.

لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِىَ دِينِ ﴿٦﴾

For you is your religion, and for me is my religion.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/109:1-6

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EXPLANATION OF SURAH AL-KAFIRUN

The surah ends with a very clear principle: ***"For you is your religion, and for me is my religion"***. Ibn Kathir explains that this surah is ***a declaration of disassociation*** from the practice of shirk, and commands sincerity of worship to Allah alone. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 109:6.

MATTER	POSITION
Belief and worship	No compromise: worship is for Allah alone.
Compulsion in religion	No compulsion; each is responsible for his choice (Al-Baqarah 2:256).
Dealings and kindness	One may be just and kind to non-Muslims who do not fight (Al-Mumtahanah 60:8).

The lesson: Islam distinguishes between ***tolerance in social life*** and ***compromise in belief***. We can live peacefully with followers of other religions, but we do not mix acts of worship.

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THE MESSENGER ﷺ HARMED AT THE KA'BAH

Quraysh's opposition did not stop at words. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself was physically harmed, even while ***prostrating to Allah*** at the Ka'bah. 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه witnessed an event he never forgot:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 240

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدَانُ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي أَبِي، عَنْ شُعْبَةَ، عَنْ أَبِي إِسْحَاقَ، عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ مَيْمُونٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، قَالَ بَيْنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم سَاجِدٌ ح قَالَ وَحَدَّثَنِي أَحْمَدُ بْنُ عُثْمَانَ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا شُرَيْحُ بْنُ مَسْلَمَةَ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بْنُ يُوسُفَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ أَبِي إِسْحَاقَ قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي عَمْرُو بْنُ مَيْمُونٍ أَنَّ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ مَسْعُودٍ حَدَّثَهُ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم كَانَ يُصَلِّي عِنْدَ الْبَيْتِ، وَأَبُو جَهْلٍ وَأَصْحَابٌ لَهُ جُلُوسٌ، إِذْ قَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ أَيُّكُمْ يَجِيءُ بِسَلَى جَزُورِ بَنِي فُلاَنٍ فَيَضَعُهُ عَلَى ظَهْرِ مُحَمَّدٍ إِذَا سَجَدَ فَانْبَعَثَ أَشْقَى الْقَوْمِ فَجَاءَ بِهِ، فَنَظَرَ حَتَّى إِذَا سَجَدَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم وَضَعَهُ عَلَى ظَهْرِهِ بَيْنَ كَتِفَيْهِ وَأَنَا أَنْظُرُ، لاَ أُغَيِّرُ شَيْئًا، لَوْ كَانَ لِي مَنَعَةٌ. قَالَ فَجَعَلُوا يَضْحَكُونَ وَيُحِيلُ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ، وَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم سَاجِدٌ لاَ يَرْفَعُ رَأْسَهُ، حَتَّى جَاءَتْهُ فَاطِمَةُ، فَطَرَحَتْ عَنْ ظَهْرِهِ، فَرَفَعَ رَأْسَهُ ثُمَّ قَالَ «اللَّهُمَّ عَلَيْكَ بِقُرَيْشٍ». ثَلاَثَ مَرَّاتٍ، فَشَقَّ عَلَيْهِمْ إِذْ دَعَا عَلَيْهِمْ ـ قَالَ وَكَانُوا يُرَوْنَ أَنَّ الدَّعْوَةَ فِي ذَلِكَ الْبَلَدِ مُسْتَجَابَةٌ ـ ثُمَّ سَمَّى «اللَّهُمَّ عَلَيْكَ بِأَبِي جَهْلٍ، وَعَلَيْكَ بِعُتْبَةَ بْنِ رَبِيعَةَ، وَشَيْبَةَ بْنِ رَبِيعَةَ، وَالْوَلِيدِ بْنِ عُتْبَةَ، وَأُمَيَّةَ بْنِ خَلَفٍ، وَعُقْبَةَ بْنِ أَبِي مُعَيْطٍ». وَعَدَّ السَّابِعَ فَلَمْ يَحْفَظْهُ قَالَ فَوَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ، لَقَدْ رَأَيْتُ الَّذِينَ عَدَّ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم صَرْعَى فِي الْقَلِيبِ قَلِيبِ بَدْرٍ.

TRANSLATION:

'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ was praying at the Ka'bah while Abu Jahl and his companions were sitting there. Some of them said to the others: "Which of you will bring the afterbirth of the slaughtered camel of Banu so-and-so and place it on Muhammad's back when he prostrates?" The most wretched of them rose and brought it. He waited, and when the Prophet ﷺ prostrated, he placed it on his back between his shoulders. 'Abdullah said: "I was watching but could do nothing. If only I had had protection!" They began laughing, leaning on one another, while the Messenger of Allah ﷺ remained in prostration

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without raising his head, until Fatimah came and threw it off his back. He raised his head and said three times: **"O Allah, I leave Quraysh to You."** That weighed on them, for they believed that prayers in that city were answered. Then he named them: **"O Allah, I leave to You Abu Jahl, 'Utbah ibn Rabi'ah, Shaybah ibn Rabi'ah, al-Walid ibn 'Utbah, Umayyah ibn Khalaf and 'Uqbah ibn Abi Mu'ayt"** — and he named a seventh whom the narrator did not remember. 'Abdullah said: "By the One in whose hand is my soul, I saw those whom the Messenger of Allah ﷺ named lying dead in the well of Badr."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari through two chains: (1) from 'Abdan, from his father, 'Uthman ibn Jabalah, from Shu'bah; and (2) from Ahmad ibn 'Uthman, from Shurayh ibn Maslamah, from Ibrahim ibn Yusuf, from his father, Yusuf ibn Ishaq — both from Abu Ishaq as-Sabi'i, from 'Amr ibn Maymun, from 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Ablution, Hadith No. 240. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 1794).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:240

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

This hadith shows three characters. ***The Messenger of Allah*** ﷺ remains in prostration with patience.

Ibn Mas'ud, a Companion without tribal protection, can only watch. And ***Fatimah*** — a young daughter — bravely comes to clean her father's back in front of the leaders of Quraysh.

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His prayer was not one of personal revenge, but because they blocked people from the path of Allah. Ibn Mas'ud swore that he saw ***all of them*** killed at Badr some years later — proof that the Messenger's prayer was answered.

The lesson: ***patience in worship*** even when harmed, and the courage to ***stand up for the truth*** even alone — like Fatimah رضى الله عنها.

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ABU BAKR DEFENDS HIM

'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr once asked 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr رضى الله عنهما about the worst thing the polytheists did to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He replied that he saw ***'Uqbah ibn Abi Mu'ayt*** come while the Prophet was praying, wrap his cloth around his neck and ***choke him hard*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3678).

Abu Bakr رضى الله عنه came, pushed 'Uqbah away and said: ***"Would you kill a man because he says, 'My Lord is Allah,' when he has brought you clear proofs from your Lord?"***

THE WORDS OF THE BELIEVER FROM PHARAOH'S FAMILY

Abu Bakr's words are ***a quotation from the Qur'an***: the speech of a believing man from Pharaoh's family who defended Prophet Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ (Ghafir 40:28). In a critical moment, Abu Bakr defended the Messenger of Allah ﷺ with the argument of revelation, not with violence.

The books of sirah mention that Abu Bakr himself was once beaten so badly for defending the Prophet and calling to Islam that he was hard to recognise. Yet he asked about the Messenger of Allah ﷺ before himself. This report is from ***the books of sirah***, not the two Sahihs.

The lesson: ***a true friend*** is one who is there in hardship. Abu Bakr did not merely believe; he was ready to take risks to protect the one he loved.

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THE TORTURE OF THE WEAK

If even the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, protected by Banu Hashim, was harmed, how much more ***slaves and those without protectors***. They suffered the harshest torture. Book 3 introduced them; here we see the trials they endured.

SIRAH NOTE: BILAL AND "AHAD, AHAD"

According to the books of sirah, his master ***Umayyah ibn Khalaf*** would lay Bilal on the hot sand of Makkah at midday and place a great rock on his chest, demanding he return to the idols. Bilal only repeated: ***"Ahad, Ahad"*** (One, One).

A report in Ibn Majah (No. 150, graded hasan) from Ibn Mas'ud names the first seven to show their Islam openly, and says that Bilal ***held himself cheap for the sake of Allah***, so they dragged him through the streets of Makkah while he kept saying "Ahad, Ahad".

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Bilal ibn Rabah". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bilal_ibn_Rabah

SIRAH NOTE: 'AMMAR AND THE VERSE ON COERCION

Ibn Kathir reports that ***verse 16:106*** was revealed concerning ***'Ammar ibn Yasir***. He was tortured until he was forced to utter words of disbelief, then came weeping to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The Prophet asked how his heart was; 'Ammar replied that it was at peace with faith. This report is in the books of tafsir and is ***not found in the two Sahihs***.

REFERENCES:

Tafsir Ibn Kathir 16:106 https://tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/16/106

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The verse gives a concession to ***"one who is forced [to renounce his religion] while his heart is secure in faith"***. From this verse, scholars derive the ruling that ***coercion that threatens life*** removes the sin of an utterance, as long as the heart remains in faith. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 16:106.

'Ammar's mother ***Sumayyah*** and father ***Yasir*** chose not to yield and were killed for their faith — Sumayyah became ***the first martyr in Islam*** (Book 3). Both choices are permitted: the concession (rukhsah) and steadfastness ('azimah).

The lesson: Islam is a ***realistic and merciful*** religion. It honours the steadfastness of the martyrs, and at the same time gives a concession to those who cannot bear it.

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"BUT YOU ARE HASTY"

Prolonged torture led some Companions to come and complain. ***Khabbab ibn al-Aratt*** رضى الله عنه, a blacksmith who had himself been tortured with hot iron, related:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3612

حَدَّثَنِي مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْمُثَنَّى، حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى، عَنْ إِسْمَاعِيلَ، حَدَّثَنَا قَيْسٌ، عَنْ خَبَّابِ بْنِ الأَرَتِّ، قَالَ شَكَوْنَا إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم وَهْوَ مُتَوَسِّدٌ بُرْدَةً لَهُ فِي ظِلِّ الْكَعْبَةِ، قُلْنَا لَهُ أَلاَ تَسْتَنْصِرُ لَنَا أَلاَ تَدْعُو اللَّهَ لَنَا قَالَ «كَانَ الرَّجُلُ فِيمَنْ قَبْلَكُمْ يُحْفَرُ لَهُ فِي الأَرْضِ فَيُجْعَلُ فِيهِ، فَيُجَاءُ بِالْمِنْشَارِ، فَيُوضَعُ عَلَى رَأْسِهِ فَيُشَقُّ بِاثْنَتَيْنِ، وَمَا يَصُدُّهُ ذَلِكَ عَنْ دِينِهِ، وَيُمْشَطُ بِأَمْشَاطِ الْحَدِيدِ، مَا دُونَ لَحْمِهِ مِنْ عَظْمٍ أَوْ عَصَبٍ، وَمَا يَصُدُّهُ ذَلِكَ عَنْ دِينِهِ، وَاللَّهِ لَيُتِمَّنَّ هَذَا الأَمْرَ حَتَّى يَسِيرَ الرَّاكِبُ مِنْ صَنْعَاءَ إِلَى حَضْرَمَوْتَ، لاَ يَخَافُ إِلاَّ اللَّهَ أَوِ الذِّئْبَ عَلَى غَنَمِهِ، وَلَكِنَّكُمْ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ».

TRANSLATION:

Khabbab ibn al-Aratt رضى الله عنه said: We complained to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ while he was resting his head on his cloak in the shade of the Ka'bah. We said: "Will you not ask for help for us? Will you not pray to Allah for us?" He said: **"Among those before you, a man would have a pit dug for him in the ground and be put in it. Then a saw would be brought, placed on his head and he would be split in two, yet that would not turn him from his religion. He would be combed with iron combs that tore the flesh from his bones and sinews, yet that would not turn him from his religion. By Allah, Allah will complete this matter until a rider travels from San'a' to Hadramawt fearing none but Allah, and the wolf for his sheep. But you are hasty."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Muhammad ibn al-Muthanna, from Yahya ibn Sa'id al-Qattan, from Isma'il ibn Abi Khalid, from Qays ibn Abi Hazim, from Khabbab ibn al-Aratt رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Virtues, chapter on the signs of prophethood in Islam, Hadith No. 3612.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3612

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not deny their pain, but he gave them ***three things***: historical perspective (earlier believers were tested more severely), certainty about the future (this religion will surely prevail), and a gentle rebuke (***"but you are hasty"***).

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This hadith also contains ***a miracle of prophecy***. When it was spoken, the Muslims were a small group being tortured in Makkah. In less than twenty years, the whole Arabian Peninsula — from San'a' to Hadramawt — was under the peace of Islam.

The lesson: victory ***will surely come***, but on Allah's schedule, not ours. Patience is part of faith.

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WEALTH TO SET FREE

SIRAH NOTE: ABU BAKR BUYS FREEDOM

According to the books of sirah, ***Abu Bakr*** رضى الله عنه used his wealth to buy and free slaves tortured for their faith, among them ***Bilal ibn Rabah***, ***'Amir ibn Fuhayrah***, and several slave women such as ***Zinnirah*** and ***Umm 'Ubays***.

His father, Abu Quhafah, once chided him: "Why don't you free strong men who could protect you?" Abu Bakr replied that he did it ***for the sake of Allah alone***. Ibn Kathir mentions that the closing verses of Surah Al-Layl (92:17–21) were revealed about Abu Bakr.

REFERENCES:
Tafsir Ibn Kathir 92:17–21 https://tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/92/17

Abu Bakr's standing in this was acknowledged by 'Umar رضى الله عنه himself, who said: ***"Abu Bakr is our master, and he freed our master"*** — meaning Bilal (Sahih al-Bukhari 3754).

WEALTH AS A TOOL OF DA'WAH

Abu Bakr did not fight or take revenge. He used ***wealth*** to solve the problem peacefully and lawfully: buying freedom under the laws of the society of the time. This saved lives and restored human dignity.

The lesson: wealth in a believer's hands can become ***a path to freedom***. Today, supporting orphans, paying the debts of the desperate and funding education carry on the way of Abu Bakr.

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WHY DID THEY STAND FIRM?

Why would weak slaves endure torture, when they could simply return to the old religion and live in peace? The sirah and the Qur'an give several answers:

REASON	EXPLANATION
The sweetness of faith	They tasted a meaning of life never found in idol worship.
Human dignity	Islam honoured them as equal human beings, not property.
The Prophet's example	He himself was harmed yet remained patient and firm.
The promise of the Hereafter	The Makkan Qur'an often describes Paradise and the Day of Judgement.
Brotherhood	They supported one another at Dar al-Arqam; no one was tested alone.
Stories of the prophets	The stories of Musa, Ibrahim and Nuh show that trials are the path of the messengers.

Most of the surahs revealed at this stage are ***short Makkan surahs*** full of ***belief, the Hereafter and stories of the prophets***. The Qur'an itself became their teacher and the strength of their souls.

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TRIALS AS ALLAH'S WAY

The Qur'an reminds us: ***"Do the people think that they will be left to say, 'We believe,' and they will not be tried?"*** (Al-'Ankabut 29:2). Trials are not a sign of Allah's displeasure, but His way of ***distinguishing*** the truthful from the false.

The lesson: strong faith is built through ***knowledge, example, brotherhood and hope in the Hereafter***. Every Muslim tested today still needs all four.

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PROSTRATING WITH SURAH AN-NAJM

An extraordinary event took place in these years. Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما narrated that the Prophet ﷺ recited ***Surah An-Najm*** and ***prostrated***, and with him prostrated the Muslims, ***the polytheists***, jinn and humans (Sahih al-Bukhari 1071).

Scholars explain that the polytheists prostrated because they were ***overwhelmed by the power of the recitation*** and the stirring close of the surah: "So prostrate to Allah and worship [Him]" (An-Najm 53:62). They prostrated on impulse, then returned to disbelief.

SIRAH NOTE: THE "GHARANIQ" STORY: A REJECTED REPORT

Some history books mention a story that Satan inserted words praising the idols of Quraysh while the Prophet recited Surah An-Najm, so the polytheists prostrated in delight. This is known as ***the story of al-Gharaniq***.

Ibn Kathir states that all its chains are ***mursal*** and not authentic. Many scholars reject it because it contradicts Allah's guarantee to preserve the revelation (Al-Hijr 15:9) and the authentic report above, which ***mentions nothing*** about praise of idols.

REFERENCES:

Tafsir Ibn Kathir 22:52 https://tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/22/52

The lesson: the authentic event is enough to show ***the power of the Qur'an***, which could make its own enemies prostrate. We do not need — and must reject — a story that taints the purity of revelation.

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THE FIRST HIJRAH TO ABYSSINIA

As the torture grew worse, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sought a way to protect the Companions. According to the books of sirah, he advised them to emigrate to ***Abyssinia***, because there was ***a king there who wronged no one***.

SIRAH NOTE: THE FIRST GROUP

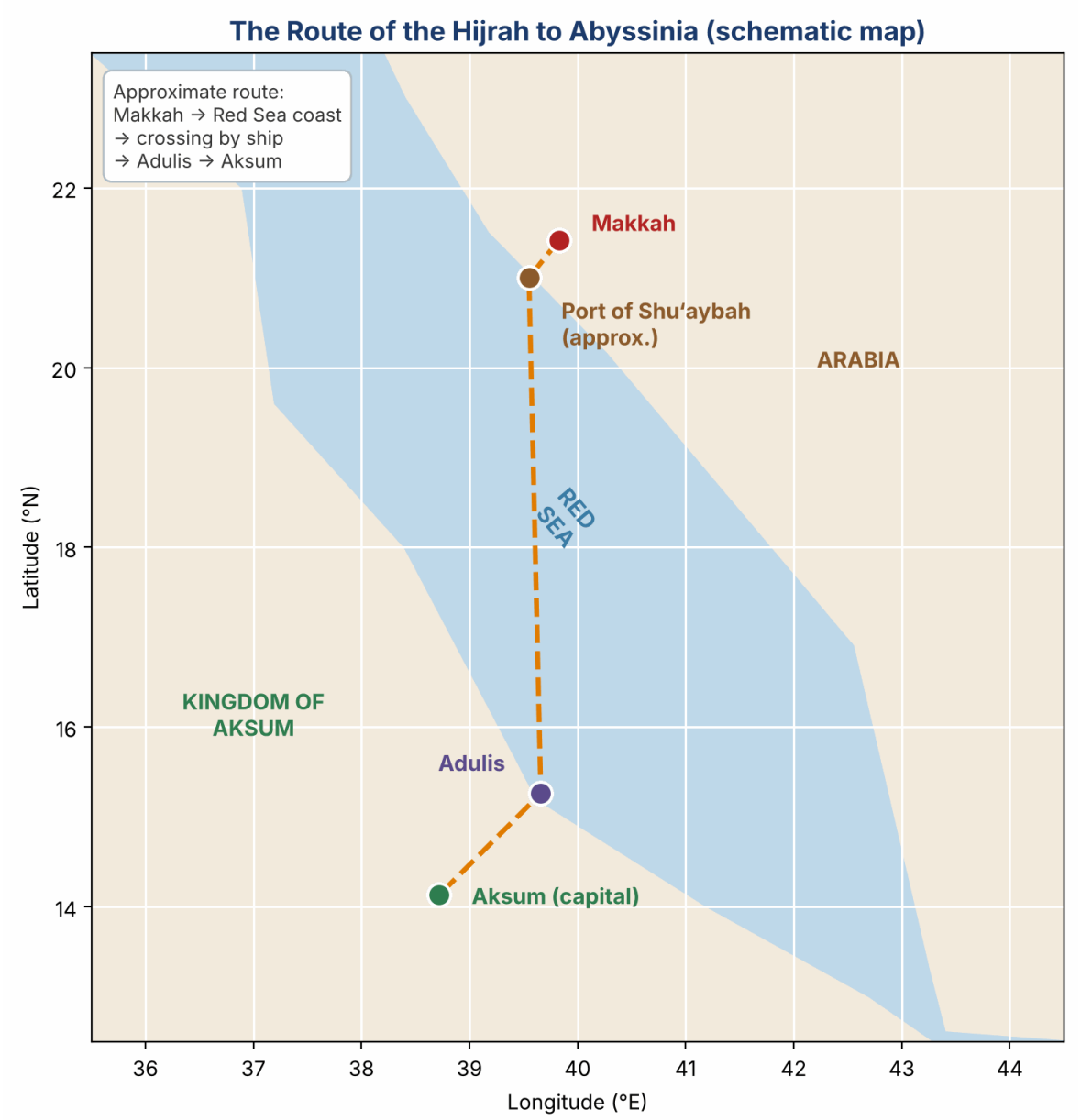
According to Wikipedia, the first hijrah took place in ***Rajab of the fifth year of prophethood*** (around ***615 CE***). The group consisted of ***eleven men and four women***, led by ***'Uthman ibn Maz'un***.

Among them were ***'Uthman ibn 'Affan*** and his wife ***Ruqayyah***, daughter of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. They left quietly for the Red Sea coast and crossed by ship to Abyssinia.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Migration to Abyssinia". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Migration_to_Abyssinia

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Approximate coordinates and coastline. Sources: Wikipedia, "Migration to Abyssinia", "Kingdom of Aksum", "Adulis".

Figure 3: The route of the hijrah to Abyssinia (schematic map).

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THE FIRST HIJRAH IN ISLAM

The hijrah to Abyssinia took place ***about seven years before*** the hijrah to Madinah. It shows that leaving one's homeland to save one's faith is ***the way of the prophets and Companions***, not a sign of defeat.

Notice too that the Prophet's own daughter emigrated. He ***did not exempt his family*** from the hardships of the da'wah — another example of leading by example.

The lesson: when one's home is no longer safe for practising religion, Islam permits — and even encourages — ***seeking a safer place***.

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THE KINGDOM OF AKSUM: LAND OF A JUST KING

SIRAH NOTE: THE KINGDOM OF AKSUM

According to Wikipedia, ***the Kingdom of Aksum*** was a great trading kingdom in today's Eritrea and northern Ethiopia, with its capital at ***Aksum***. Its main port, ***Adulis***, on the Red Sea coast, linked it with Rome, Persia, Arabia and India.

Aksum adopted ***Christianity*** in the fourth century CE. Its king bore the title ***an-Najashi*** (Negus). The king who received the Companions is known in authentic Hadith by the name ***Ashamah***.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Kingdom of Aksum". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Aksum
Wikipedia, "Adulis". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adulis

WHY ABYSSINIA?

FACTOR	EXPLANATION
A just king	The Prophet described him as a king who wronged no one (sirah).
Beyond Quraysh's reach	Quraysh had no political influence across the sea.
Trade ties	Makkans already knew Abyssinia through trade.
People of the Book	Christianity was closer to monotheism than idol worship.

This choice shows his wisdom in ***reading the international political situation***. He chose the safest land, not the nearest.

The lesson: Muslims may seek protection from and cooperate with ***just non-Muslim rulers***. Justice is valued wherever it is found.

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THE SECOND HIJRAH AND THE QURAYSH ENVOYS

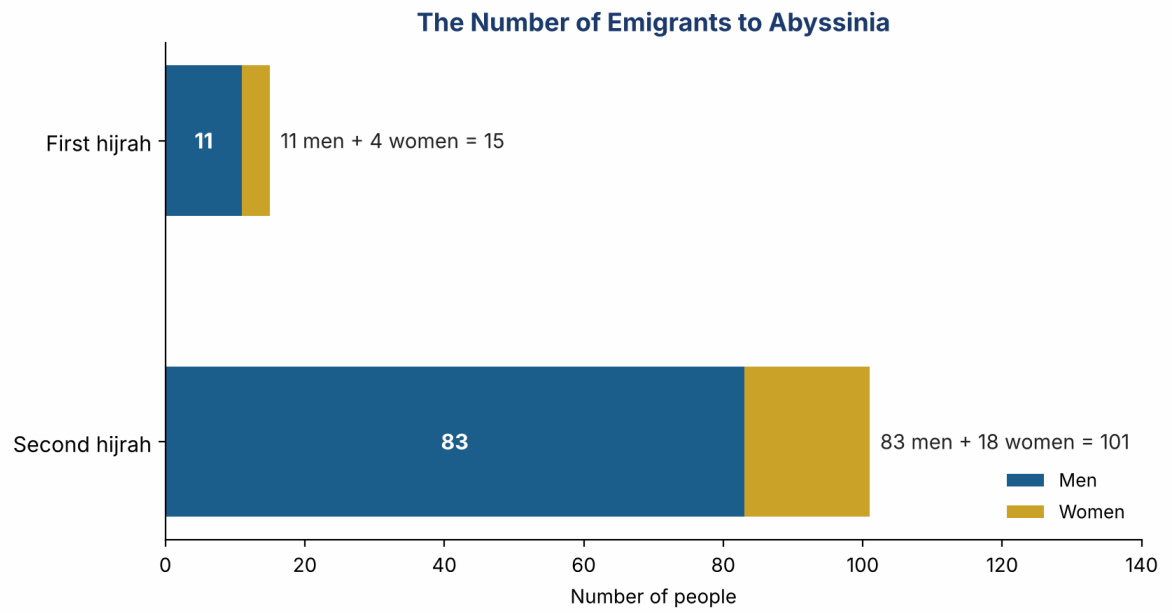
SIRAH NOTE: A FALSE RUMOUR AND THE SECOND GROUP

According to Wikipedia, while in Abyssinia the emigrants heard ***a report that the people of Makkah had embraced Islam***. Some returned to Makkah, found the report ***false***, and went back to Abyssinia with a larger group.

The second group (around ***616 CE***) was led by ***Ja'far ibn Abi Talib***, the Prophet's cousin. According to one report, it numbered ***83 men and 18 women***.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Migration to Abyssinia". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Migration_to_Abyssinia



Figures follow the well-known report (Ibn Ishaq) as cited by Wikipedia, "Migration to Abyssinia"; other sources differ slightly.

Figure 4: The number of emigrants in the two groups to Abyssinia.

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THE QURAYSH ENVOYS AT THE NEGUS'S COURT

Quraysh did not leave them in peace. According to Wikipedia and the books of sirah, Quraysh sent two envoys — ***'Amr ibn al-'As*** and ***'Abdullah ibn Abi Rabi'ah*** — with gifts for the Negus and his clergy, asking that the emigrants be handed back.

The Negus refused to hand them over ***before hearing an explanation*** from the emigrants themselves. This is the mark of a just king: not judging on one side's claims alone.

The lesson: ***hearing both sides*** is the foundation of justice. The Qur'an also commands us to verify news before acting on it (Al-Hujurat 49:6).

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JA'FAR'S SPEECH BEFORE THE NEGUS

SIRAH NOTE: A SPEECH THAT MOVED A KING

This story is narrated by ***Umm Salamah*** رضى الله عنها, who was among the emigrants, in ***Musnad Ahmad*** (No. 1740); its chain is graded ***hasan*** by Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut. Ja'far ibn Abi Talib stood before the Negus and said, in brief:

"O king, we were a people of ignorance: worshipping idols, eating carrion, committing indecencies, cutting ties of kinship and mistreating neighbours; the strong oppressed the weak. Then Allah sent us a messenger whose lineage, truthfulness, trustworthiness and chastity we knew. He called us to worship Allah alone, to speak the truth, fulfil trusts, keep ties of kinship and be good to neighbours."

Then Ja'far recited ***the opening of Surah Maryam***. The Negus wept until his beard was wet, and his clergy wept too.

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THE SECOND DAY'S TEST: ABOUT PROPHET 'ISA

The next day, 'Amr ibn al-'As tried to provoke the king by saying that the Muslims said something grave about ***Prophet 'Isa*** عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. Ja'far answered honestly, according to the Qur'an: 'Isa is ***the servant of Allah, His messenger, a spirit from Him and His word*** conveyed to the pure Maryam.

According to the same report, the Negus picked up a small stick and said that the difference between his belief and what Ja'far said was ***no more than this stick***. He returned Quraysh's gifts and gave the emigrants full protection.

FEATURE OF JA'FAR'S SPEECH	LESSON
Honest about the past	Admitting the evils of the Jahiliyyah without hiding them.
Focus on character	Highlighting universal values: honesty, trust, kinship.
Reciting the Qur'an	Letting revelation itself touch the heart.
Not altering belief	Answering about 'Isa honestly despite the risk.

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THE NEGUS: A KING PRAYED OVER

The Negus went on protecting the emigrants for years. Then, in ***the ninth year after the Hijrah*** (630 CE), moving news came from Madinah:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3877

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الرَّبِيعِ، حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ عُيَيْنَةَ، عَنِ ابْنِ جُرَيْجٍ، عَنْ عَطَاءٍ، عَنْ جَابِرٍ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم حِينَ مَاتَ النَّجَاشِيُّ «مَاتَ الْيَوْمَ رَجُلٌ صَالِحٌ، فَقُومُوا فَصَلُّوا عَلَى أَخِيكُمْ أَصْحَمَةَ».

TRANSLATION:

Jabir رضى الله عنه said: When the Negus died, the Prophet ﷺ said: **"Today a righteous man has died. So stand and pray over your brother, Ashamah."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Abu ar-Rabi' az-Zahrani, from Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah, from Ibn Jurayj, from 'Ata' ibn Abi Rabah, from Jabir ibn 'Abdullah رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Merits of the Ansar, chapter on the death of the Negus, Hadith No. 3877. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 952).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3877

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ called the king of Abyssinia ***"a righteous man"*** and ***"your brother"***, and led the Companions in Madinah in the funeral prayer in absentia over him. This shows that the Negus ***had embraced Islam***.

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The last of the emigrants returned from Abyssinia to Madinah in ***628 CE***, at the time of the conquest of Khaybar. For about thirteen years they had lived safely under the shelter of a just king.

The lesson: ***kindness is never forgotten***. A king who protected the believers in his land was honoured by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and his name is preserved in the most authentic book of Hadith.

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HAMZAH AND 'UMAR EMBRACE ISLAM

SIRAH NOTE: HAMZAH: THE LION WHO DEFENDED

According to Wikipedia, ***Hamzah ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib***, the Prophet's uncle and milk-brother, embraced Islam in ***late 616 CE***. Returning from a hunt, he learned that ***Abu Jahl*** had insulted his nephew. He went to the Ka'bah, struck Abu Jahl with his bow and declared his support for the Prophet, then embraced Islam at Dar al-Arqam.

He was later martyred at ***the Battle of Uhud*** (625 CE) and given the title ***Sayyid ash-Shuhada'*** (leader of the martyrs).

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Hamza ibn Abd al-Muttalib". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamza_ibn_Abd_al-Muttalib

Not long after, another Quraysh figure who had been very harsh towards Islam changed completely: ***'Umar ibn al-Khattab*** رضى الله عنه. The effect of his Islam was described by 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3863

حَدَّثَنِي مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ كَثِيرٍ، أَخْبَرَنَا سُفْيَانُ، عَنْ إِسْمَاعِيلَ بْنِ أَبِي خَالِدٍ، عَنْ قَيْسِ بْنِ أَبِي حَازِمٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ مَا زِلْنَا أَعِزَّةً مُنْذُ أَسْلَمَ عُمَرُ.

TRANSLATION:

'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه said: **"We have been strong ever since 'Umar embraced Islam."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Muhammad ibn Kathir, from Sufyan ath-Thawri, from Isma'il ibn Abi Khalid, from Qays ibn Abi Hazim, from 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Merits of the Ansar, chapter on the Islam of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab رضى الله عنه, Hadith No. 3863.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3863

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LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

The books of sirah relate that ‘Umar set out to kill the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, but stopped at the house of his sister, ***Fatimah bint al-Khattab***, heard the recitation of ***Surah Ta-Ha***, and his heart opened. The details come from ***the books of sirah*** and some reports are weak; what is certain is his Islam and its effect, as in the authentic hadith above.

The Islam of Hamzah and ‘Umar changed the balance in Makkah. The Muslims began to dare ***to pray openly at the Ka‘bah***. But it also deepened Quraysh’s alarm, and they responded more harshly — with ***a boycott*** of Banu Hashim.

The lesson: ***never despair*** of anyone. Islam’s fiercest enemy today may become its strongest defender tomorrow.

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BETWEEN AUTHENTIC REPORTS AND POPULAR STORIES

Many stories about the open call and the hijrah to Abyssinia circulate among people. The table below distinguishes the authentic, those from the books of sirah, and the weak or rejected.

STORIES AND THEIR STATUS

POPULAR STORY	STATUS
His call to his kin: "Save yourselves".	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 4771).
The call on Mount Safa and Abu Lahab's reply.	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 4770).
"The sun in my right hand and the moon in my left."	Weak; mentioned by Ibn Ishaq without a connected chain.
Camel afterbirth placed on his back in prostration.	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 240).
Abu Bakr pushing away 'Uqbah who choked him.	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 3678).
Bilal tortured, saying "Ahad, Ahad".	Hasan (Sunan Ibn Majah 150) and sirah.
The polytheists prostrated with Surah An-Najm.	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 1071).
The "Gharaniq" story (praise of idols).	Rejected; all chains are mursal (Ibn Kathir).
Ja'far's speech before the Negus.	Hasan (Musnad Ahmad 1740).
The funeral prayer in absentia for the Negus.	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 3877).
'Umar hearing Surah Ta-Ha at his sister's house.	Books of sirah; some reports weak.

REFLECTION

The authentic stories of the patience of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his Companions are enough to ***strengthen faith***. We need no weak reports to admire them.

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IMPORTANT PLACES IN THIS SERIES

This eBook moves from a small hill beside the Ka'bah to the capital of a kingdom across the Red Sea. This chapter gathers those places into one table, so that readers can picture the distances the Companions travelled to save their faith.

TABLE OF PLACES

The distances in the table are ***approximate straight-line distances*** from the Ka'bah, worked out from modern coordinates. The real land and sea routes are much longer. Places whose location is known only roughly are marked "approximate".

PLACE	CONNECTION TO THIS SERIES	DISTANCE / CONDITION TODAY
Mount Safa	Where he stood and called out to the clans of Quraysh (Sahih al-Bukhari 4770).	About 130 m from the Ka'bah; now inside the Masjid al-Haram building.
Mount Marwah	The companion hill of Safa; between them lies the place of sa'i.	About 450 m from Safa; now inside Masjid al-Haram.
Jabal Abu Qubays	The large mountain at whose foot Mount Safa lies.	Next to Masjid al-Haram on its eastern side.
The Ka'bah and Hijr Isma'il	Where he was harmed while prostrating (Sahih al-Bukhari 240) and choked (Sahih al-Bukhari 3678).	At the centre of Masjid al-Haram.
The port of al-Shu'aybah	The old port of Makkah where the emigrants boarded merchant ships.	On the Red Sea coast, south of present-day Jeddah (exact location: approximate).
Adulis	The main port of Aksum; most likely where the first group landed.	On the coast of present-day Eritrea; about 685 km from Makkah (approximate).
Aksum	The capital of the Negus's kingdom.	In northern Ethiopia; about 820 km from Makkah, and about 160 km from Adulis (approximate).
Negash	A village linked by local tradition to the tomb of the Negus.	In the Tigray region, Ethiopia; about 840 km from Makkah (approximate).

Sources: Wikipedia, "Safa and Marwa"; Wikipedia, "Migration to Abyssinia"; Wikipedia, "Kingdom of Aksum"; Wikipedia, "Negash".

MOUNT SAFA TODAY

According to Wikipedia, Mount Safa lies about ***130 metres*** south-east of the Ka'bah, at the foot of ***Jabal Abu Qubays***, while Marwah lies about 300 metres north-east of the Ka'bah. The distance between the two is about ***450 metres***, making the seven circuits of sa'i roughly 3.15 kilometres. Today both hills are

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inside the Masjid al-Haram building, and the sa'i corridor (al-Mas'a) is air-conditioned and supplied with Zamzam water.

Every pilgrim who begins sa'i at Safa is in fact standing where the Messenger ﷺ stood when he called his people: "If I told you that there were horsemen behind this valley…". The hill that once witnessed rejection now witnesses millions answering that call.

Source: Wikipedia, "Safa and Marwa".

LESSON

A place that once witnessed rejection can, by Allah's leave, witness acceptance. A caller to Allah does not judge the fruit of his work by that day alone; the seed planted at Safa bore fruit years — even centuries — later.

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CROSSING THE RED SEA

The hijrah to Abyssinia was not an overland journey like the later hijrah to Madinah. The Companions had to leave Makkah quietly, head for the coast and cross the sea — something unfamiliar to most people of Makkah, who were used to camel caravans.

THE RED SEA IN NUMBERS

According to Wikipedia, the Red Sea is about ***2,250 kilometres*** long and about ***355 kilometres*** wide at its widest point. At its southern end lies the strait of ***Bab al-Mandab***, about ***26 kilometres*** wide at its narrowest, separating the Arabian Peninsula from the African continent.

The Companions did not cross at Bab al-Mandab. Instead they sailed from the port of al-Shu'aybah near Makkah, straight across to the African coast on the other side.

Sources: Wikipedia, "Red Sea"; Wikipedia, "Bab-el-Mandeb".

> **SIRAH NOTE: MERCHANT SHIPS AND A FARE OF HALF A DINAR**
>
> According to Ibn Sa'd (as quoted by Wikipedia), the first group went out to the port of al-Shu'aybah and happened to find two merchant ships about to sail. They boarded them for a fare of ***half a dinar*** each. The men of Quraysh who pursued them reached the shore, but the ships had already sailed.
>
> Historians say the group most likely landed at ***Adulis***, the main port of Aksum, before travelling overland to the capital. These details come from the books of sirah and history, not from authentic Hadith.

Sources: Wikipedia, "Migration to Abyssinia"; Madain Project, "Migration to Abyssinia".

ARABS AND ABYSSINIANS: NEIGHBOURS WHO KNEW EACH OTHER

The people of Makkah were no strangers to Abyssinia. Quraysh merchants travelled back and forth, and the histories of the two peoples had long been intertwined. According to Wikipedia, King Kaleb of Aksum sent armies to Yemen between ***518 and 525 CE*** against Dhu Nuwas, who was persecuting Christians, and Aksum then ruled southern Arabia for a period.

It was from Abyssinian rule in Yemen that ***Abrahah*** emerged, who later tried to destroy the Ka'bah in the Year of the Elephant (see Part 1). Abyssinian power in Yemen ended when Persia took the country around the 570s. So, by the time the Companions emigrated, Aksum and Persia were rival powers — and Quraysh had no influence at the court of the Negus.

Source: Wikipedia, "Kingdom of Aksum".

How remarkable: the kingdom that once sent Abrahah to attack the Ka'bah became, two generations later, a refuge for those who worshipped the Lord of the Ka'bah. Allah turns circumstances about by His wisdom.

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LESSON

Hijrah required planning and courage: leaving quietly, paying the fare and crossing an unfamiliar sea. Trust in Allah (tawakkul) does not mean sitting and waiting; it means striving fully and then leaving the outcome to Allah.

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TRACES OF HISTORY: THE KINGDOM OF AKSUM IN THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD

The Kingdom of Aksum is not merely a name in the books of sirah. It left coins, inscriptions and stone monuments that can still be seen today. This chapter sets out some well-established facts, and clearly marks what is still disputed.

ONE OF THE FOUR GREAT POWERS OF THE WORLD

According to Wikipedia, at the end of the third century CE Mani (the founder of Manichaeism) listed Aksum as one of the ***four great powers of the world***, alongside Rome, Persia and China. Aksum began issuing its own coins under King Endybis (around 270–310 CE) — in gold, silver and bronze — and Aksumite coins have been found as far away as Caesarea in Palestine and southern India.

King Ezana embraced Christianity around 325–330 CE. His coins and inscriptions show a change from the crescent-and-disc symbol to the cross around 340 CE. This is why, in the Companions' time, Abyssinia was a Christian kingdom nearly three centuries old.

Source: Wikipedia, "Kingdom of Aksum".

THE STELAE OF AKSUM

The archaeological site of Aksum was inscribed as a ***UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1980***. It is famous for its huge carved stone monuments (stelae) and the underground tombs of its kings. The largest stela, had it remained standing, is estimated at about ***33 metres*** tall, but it has fallen and broken.

Sources: World Heritage Site, "Aksum"; Wikipedia, "Kingdom of Aksum".

HISTORICAL NOTE: WAS KING ARMAH THE NEGUS?

The last Aksumite coins were issued around the early seventh century, among them in the name of a king called ***Armah***. According to Wikipedia, since 1895 some scholars have suggested that Armah was the Negus who protected the Companions. However, this suggestion is ***not confirmed***: other scholars link Armah to a different king, and the dates of his reign are still debated.

Authentic Hadith gives the Negus's name as ***Ashamah*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3877). Arabic sources also record several spellings of this name. We do not identify him with any name on the coins, because the evidence is not yet sufficient.

Sources: Wikipedia, "Armah"; Wikipedia, "Najashi".

THE MOSQUE OF AL-NAJASHI AT NEGASH

In the village of ***Negash***, in the Tigray region of northern Ethiopia, there is an old mosque known as the ***Mosque of al-Najashi***. Wikipedia describes Negash as the earliest Muslim settlement in Africa. According to local tradition, the Negus is buried there along with several Companions; one report puts their number

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at twelve. The book *Futuh al-Habashah* records that Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi visited the tomb around 1537.

The mosque was restored by the Turkish agency TIKA between 2015 and 2018, but was badly damaged in the Tigray War, which began at the end of 2020, and plans to repair it again have been announced.

NOTE: BETWEEN TRADITION AND NARRATION

Authentic Hadith only states that the Messenger ﷺ announced the death of the Negus and performed the funeral prayer in absentia for him (Sahih al-Bukhari 3877). No authentic Hadith names the place of his tomb, and there is no solid report about the names of the Companions said to be buried at Negash.

The tomb at Negash is therefore a ***respected local tradition***, not an established fact. It remains a symbol of the early, warm relationship between the Muslims and the people of Abyssinia.

Sources: Wikipedia, "Negash"; Geeska, "Ethiopia's Najashi Mosque in the Shadow of the Tigray War".

LESSON

Archaeology shows that Aksum was a great power of its time — not a small country at the edge of the world. The Messenger ﷺ chose to send the Companions to a strong, orderly and just kingdom. At the same time, we learn to respect tradition without treating it as equal to authentic narration.

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PEOPLE IN THIS SERIES

The tables below list the main people in this eBook — those who opposed, those who were tortured, those who emigrated and those who protected. The source of each item is given; information from the books of sirah is marked "sirah books".

THE OPPONENTS

PERSON	ROLE IN THIS SERIES	SOURCE
Abu Lahab (‘Abd al-‘Uzza)	His uncle who rejected the call at Safa; Surah Al-Masad was revealed about him.	Sahih al-Bukhari 4770
Umm Jamil (Arwa bint Harb)	Abu Lahab's wife, sister of Abu Sufyan; described as the "carrier of firewood".	Al-Masad 111:4; sirah books
Al-Walid ibn al-Mughirah	Leader of Banu Makhzum who acknowledged the beauty of the Qur'an yet called it magic.	Al-Muddaththir 74:18–25; tafsir
Abu Jahl (‘Amr ibn Hisham)	The fiercest opponent from Banu Makhzum; killed at the Battle of Badr.	Sirah books
‘Uqbah ibn Abi Mu‘ayt	Choked him beside the Ka‘bah until Abu Bakr stopped him.	Sahih al-Bukhari 3678
Umayyah ibn Khalaf	Bilal's master, who tortured him under the scorching sun.	Sirah books
‘Amr ibn al-‘As and ‘Abdullah ibn Abi Rabi‘ah	The Quraysh envoys to the Negus's court who demanded the Companions be returned.	Musnad Ahmad 1740

THE COMPANIONS AND PROTECTORS

PERSON	ROLE IN THIS SERIES	SOURCE
Abu Bakr al-Siddiq	Defended him beside the Ka‘bah; freed Bilal and other tortured slaves.	Sahih al-Bukhari 3678, 3754
Bilal ibn Rabah	Tortured for tawhid, he kept saying "One, One".	Sunan Ibn Majah 150; sirah books
Yasir, Sumayyah and ‘Ammar	A family tortured together; Sumayyah is described as the first martyr in Islam.	Sirah books
Khabbab ibn al-Aratt	Complained of the torture; he ﷺ said, "But you are hasty."	Sahih al-Bukhari 3612
‘Uthman ibn Maz‘un	Leader of the first group to Abyssinia.	Sirah books
‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan and Ruqayyah	Among the emigrants in the first group; Ruqayyah was the daughter of the Messenger ﷺ.	Sirah books
Ja‘far ibn Abi Talib	Spokesman of the Muslims before the Negus.	Musnad Ahmad 1740

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PERSON	ROLE IN THIS SERIES	SOURCE
Umm Salamah	One of the emigrants; narrator of the story of the hijrah to Abyssinia.	Musnad Ahmad 1740
The Negus (Ashamah)	King of Abyssinia who protected the Companions; he ﷺ prayed the funeral prayer in absentia for him.	Sahih al-Bukhari 3877
Hamzah ibn ʻAbd al-Muttalib	His uncle, whose embracing Islam strengthened the believers.	Sirah books
ʻUmar ibn al-Khattab	His embracing Islam brought honour to the Muslims.	Sahih al-Bukhari 3863

LESSON

In this series we meet people from every walk of life: an uncle who opposed, a slave who stood firm, a merchant who set others free, and a just foreign king. The measure of honour is not lineage or rank, but a person's stance towards the truth.

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TIMELINE: SIRAH AND THE WORLD

The table below places the events in this eBook alongside major world events of the same period. The CE years are approximate; historians differ about the exact dates of some events.

YEAR (APPROX.)	IN MAKKAH AND ABYSSINIA	IN THE WIDER WORLD
518–525 CE	—	Aksum (King Kaleb) attacks Himyar in Yemen.
c. 570–575 CE	The Year of the Elephant; birth of the Messenger ﷺ (Part 1).	Persia ends Aksumite rule in Yemen.
c. 613 CE	The command to preach openly; the call on Mount Safa.	Persia captures Antioch and Damascus from Rome.
c. 614 CE	Mockery, accusations and torture intensify.	Persia captures Jerusalem and carries the "True Cross" to Ctesiphon.
Rajab, 5th year of prophethood (c. 615 CE)	First hijrah to Abyssinia: 11 men and 4 women (some reports say 12 men).	—
c. 616 CE	Second hijrah led by Ja'far; the Quraysh envoys rejected; Hamzah and 'Umar embrace Islam.	—
618–619 CE	Quraysh pressure continues (Part 5).	Persia captures Egypt and Alexandria.
7 AH / 628 CE	Ja'far and his group reach Madinah at the conquest of Khaybar (Sahih al-Bukhari 4230).	The Roman–Persian war ends; Rome regains its territories.
9 AH / 630 CE	The Negus dies; he ﷺ performs the funeral prayer in absentia (Sahih al-Bukhari 3877).	—

Sources: Wikipedia, "Byzantine–Sasanian War of 602–628"; Wikipedia, "Kingdom of Aksum"; Wikipedia, "Migration to Abyssinia".

While the Companions were being tortured in Makkah, the two great powers of the world — Rome and Persia — were locked in fierce war. Rome's defeats in these years form the background of Surah Ar-Rum 30:2–4, which promised Rome victory "within a few years". That promise was fulfilled when Rome regained its territories around 628 CE.

LESSON

The world then was dominated by great empires busy fighting one another. No one imagined that a small group tortured in Makkah, who emigrated on merchant ships, would change world history. Never underestimate a small group holding fast to the truth.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Below are questions often asked about the period of open da'wah and the hijrah to Abyssinia, with brief answers based on the sources in this eBook.

1. WHY DID THE OPEN CALL BEGIN ON MOUNT SAFA?

Mount Safa stands beside the Ka'bah, where Quraysh gathered. In Arab custom, someone wanting to warn of danger would climb a high place and call out. He used a method his people understood (Sahih al-Bukhari 4770).

2. WHY DID HE FIRST ASK, "WOULD YOU BELIEVE ME?"

He began with what they already accepted — his honesty — before delivering the warning. They replied that they had never known him to lie. This is a wise method of da'wah: build on common ground.

3. WHO WAS THE FIRST MARTYR IN ISLAM?

According to the books of sirah, Sumayyah bint Khayyat, the mother of 'Ammar ibn Yasir, was the first person martyred in Islam. She was killed by Abu Jahl for refusing to abandon her religion. This comes from the books of sirah, not from the two Sahihs.

4. DID 'AMMAR SIN BY UTTERING WORDS OF DISBELIEF UNDER TORTURE?

No. Allah excepts one who is forced while his heart remains at peace with faith (An-Nahl 16:106). According to reports in the books of tafsir, this verse relates to what happened to 'Ammar.

5. HOW MANY EMIGRATED TO ABYSSINIA?

The first group was about eleven men and four women (some reports say twelve men). In the second hijrah, Ibn Ishaq mentions more than eighty men, along with a number of women and children.

6. WHY NOT EMIGRATE TO MADINAH AT THAT TIME?

At that time the people of Yathrib (Madinah) had not yet embraced Islam, and Quraysh had influence across the Arabian Peninsula. Abyssinia lay beyond the reach of Quraysh, was ruled by a just king, and was already known through trade.

7. WAS THE NEGUS A MUSLIM?

Yes. The Messenger ﷺ announced his death, called him "a righteous man", and performed the funeral prayer in absentia for him with the Companions (Sahih al-Bukhari 3877).

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8. WHAT WAS THE NEGUS'S REAL NAME?

Al-Najashi (the Negus) was the title of the king of Abyssinia, not a personal name. Authentic Hadith gives this king's name as Ashamah (Sahih al-Bukhari 3877). Some scholars have tried to link him to a king's name on Aksumite coins, but this cannot yet be established.

9. WHERE IS THE TOMB OF THE NEGUS?

Local tradition in Ethiopia places his tomb at Negash, in the Tigray region. However, no authentic Hadith names the place of his tomb. See the chapter «Traces of History» in this eBook.

10. IS THE STORY OF "AL-GHARANIQ" TRUE?

No. The story that he praised idols while reciting Surah An-Najm is rejected by scholars, because all its chains are mursal and it contradicts the infallibility of the Messenger ﷺ. What is authentic is only that the idolaters also prostrated when he recited that surah (Sahih al-Bukhari 1071).

11. WHY WAS 'UMAR'S EMBRACING ISLAM SO IMPORTANT?

'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه said: "We have been honoured ever since 'Umar embraced Islam" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3863). The courage of 'Umar and Hamzah gave strength to the Muslims, who until then had been weak and oppressed.

12. WHEN DID THE EMIGRANTS TO ABYSSINIA RETURN?

Some of them returned to Makkah earlier and later emigrated to Madinah. Ja'far ibn Abi Talib's group reached Madinah when he ﷺ conquered Khaybar in the seventh year of the Hijrah (Sahih al-Bukhari 4230) — about fifteen years after they had left Makkah.

LESSON

Every answer grounded in authentic sources strengthens our certainty and keeps us away from baseless stories. Keep asking and reading — for the sirah of the Messenger ﷺ is a guide for life, not merely a historical tale.

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LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

LESSONS FROM THIS EBOOK

First: A command comes with a guarantee. "Declare… We are sufficient for you" (15:94–95).

Second: Each is responsible for himself. Lineage does not save (Sahih al-Bukhari 4771).

Third: Begin with what is acknowledged. He asked about his honesty before warning (Sahih al-Bukhari 4770).

Fourth: No compromise in belief. "For you is your religion, and for me is my religion" (109:6).

Fifth: Patience under harm. He stayed in prostration though humiliated (Sahih al-Bukhari 240).

Sixth: Victory comes on Allah's schedule. "But you are hasty" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3612).

Seventh: Wealth to free people. Abu Bakr freed Bilal and others (Sahih al-Bukhari 3754).

Eighth: Justice is valued anywhere. The Negus was honoured as "a righteous man" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3877).

Ninth: Never despair of anyone. 'Umar became the strength of the Ummah (Sahih al-Bukhari 3863).

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TIMELINE SUMMARY

TIME (APPROX.)	EVENT AND SOURCE
Around 613 CE	Command to call openly (15:94; 26:214); call at Safa (Sahih al-Bukhari 4770, 4771)
613–615 CE	Mockery, charges and offers of compromise (Al-Kafirun)
613–616 CE	The Prophet harmed (Sahih al-Bukhari 240, 3678); torture of the weak
Around 615 CE	Sumayyah martyred (Wikipedia)
Rajab, 5th year	First hijrah to Abyssinia: 11 men, 4 women
Around 616 CE	Second hijrah led by Ja'far; Quraysh envoys turned away
Late 616 CE	Hamzah and 'Umar embrace Islam (Sahih al-Bukhari 3863)
9 AH / 630 CE	Funeral prayer in absentia for the Negus (Sahih al-Bukhari 3877)

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CONCLUSION

From the call on Mount Safa, to the Ka'bah where he was harmed in prostration, to the hot sand where Bilal said "Ahad, Ahad", to the court of a just king across the Red Sea — the call of Islam was tested with ***patience and sacrifice***. In sha Allah, the series **The Prophet's Sirah** will continue with ***the boycott of Banu Hashim in Shi'b Abi Talib***, ***the Year of Sorrow***, and his journey to Ta'if. And Allah knows best.

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PART FIVE

The Year of Sorrow

The Prophet's Sirah — Series 5

The Boycott of Banu Hashim, the Passing of Abu Talib and Khadijah, and the Journey to Ta'if According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith

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THE YEAR OF SORROW

The fourth book of The Prophet's Sirah ended with the Islam of Hamzah and 'Umar, and the Companions safe under the shelter of the Negus. Yet for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his family in Makkah, the hardest trial was only beginning. This fifth eBook tells of ***a three-year boycott***, the passing of the two people who most protected and supported him — ***Abu Talib and Khadijah*** — and ***the journey to Ta'if***, which ended in stones and blood, but also in a prayer full of mercy.

The Qur'anic verses and authentic Hadith in this eBook are chosen carefully — only those truly relevant — while stories from the books of sirah are placed in "Sirah Note" boxes and assessed. Several very popular stories and supplications with weak chains are clearly marked.

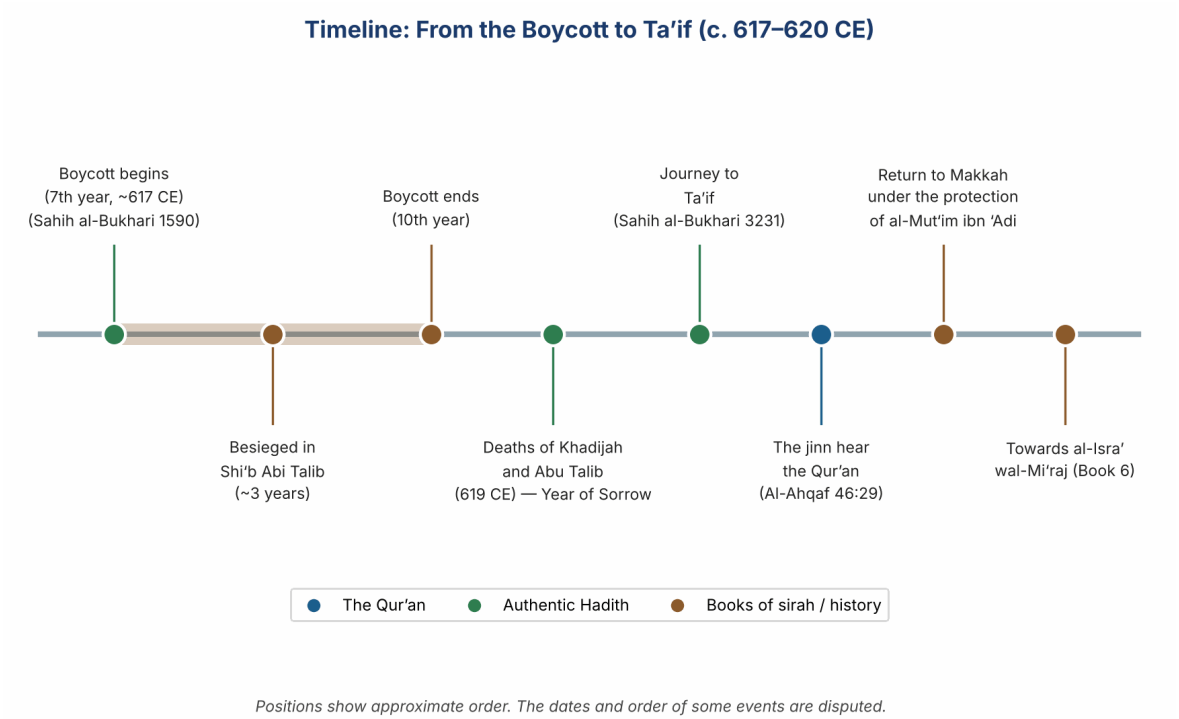


Figure 1: Timeline from the boycott to Ta'if.

Note: The Qur'anic translation in this eBook is Sahih International. The grade of every Hadith is stated in its box. Information from the books of sirah is placed in brown "Sirah Note" boxes, and historical facts come with source links.

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WHEN QURAYSH RAN OUT OF OPTIONS

By the seventh year of prophethood, Quraysh had tried almost everything: mockery, accusations, negotiation, offers of compromise and torture (Book 4). Yet Islam kept growing. Hamzah and 'Umar had embraced Islam, and the Companions in Abyssinia lived safely under a just king.

Quraysh's biggest problem was ***the protection of Banu Hashim***. As long as Abu Talib, chief of Banu Hashim, refused to hand over his nephew, they could not kill him without sparking a civil war among the clans of Quraysh.

QURAYSH'S OBSTACLE	REASON
Tribal protection	Abu Talib and Banu Hashim protected him, including those not yet Muslim.
The law of blood vengeance	Killing a member of one clan meant war with the whole clan.
Islam growing stronger	Influential figures such as Hamzah and 'Umar had believed.
Failed diplomacy	The envoys to Abyssinia returned empty-handed.

So Quraysh chose a new weapon that shed no blood but caused great suffering: ***a total boycott*** of all of Banu Hashim and Banu al-Muttalib — whether Muslim or not.

The lesson: when force fails, opponents of the truth often turn to ***economic and social pressure***. This weapon is still used today.

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THE PACT AT KHAYF BANU KINANAH

The boycott was sealed in a written pact. Years later, during the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ still remembered the place where that pact was made:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 1590

حَدَّثَنَا الْحُمَيْدِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا الْوَلِيدُ، حَدَّثَنَا الأَوْزَاعِيُّ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي الزُّهْرِيُّ، عَنْ أَبِي سَلَمَةَ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم مِنَ الْغَدِ يَوْمَ النَّحْرِ وَهُوَ بِمِنًى «نَحْنُ نَازِلُونَ غَدًا بِخَيْفِ بَنِي كِنَانَةَ حَيْثُ تَقَاسَمُوا عَلَى الْكُفْرِ». يَعْنِي ذَلِكَ الْمُحَصَّبَ، وَذَلِكَ أَنَّ قُرَيْشًا وَكِنَانَةَ تَحَالَفَتْ عَلَى بَنِي هَاشِمٍ وَبَنِي عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ، أَوْ بَنِي الْمُطَّلِبِ أَنْ لاَ يُنَاكِحُوهُمْ، وَلاَ يُبَايِعُوهُمْ حَتَّى يُسْلِمُوا إِلَيْهِمُ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم. وَقَالَ سَلاَمَةُ عَنْ عُقَيْلٍ وَيَحْيَى بْنُ الضَّحَّاكِ عَنِ الأَوْزَاعِيِّ أَخْبَرَنِي ابْنُ شِهَابٍ وَقَالاَ بَنِي هَاشِمٍ وَبَنِي الْمُطَّلِبِ. قَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بَنِي الْمُطَّلِبِ أَشْبَهُ.

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said: On the morning of the Day of Sacrifice, while at Mina, the Prophet ﷺ said:

"Tomorrow we shall stop at Khayf Banu Kinanah, where they swore an oath upon disbelief." He meant al-Muhassab. That was because Quraysh and Kinanah made a pact against Banu Hashim and Banu 'Abd al-Muttalib — or Banu al-Muttalib — that they would not intermarry with them or trade with them until they handed the Prophet ﷺ over to them.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from al-Humaydi, from al-Walid ibn Muslim, from al-Awza'i, from az-Zuhri, from Abu Salamah, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه. Also narrated by Salamah from 'Uqayl, and by Yahya ibn ad-Dahhak from al-Awza'i, from Ibn Shihab.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Hajj, chapter on where the Prophet ﷺ stayed in Makkah, Hadith No. 1590. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 1314).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:1590

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

This hadith is ***authentic proof*** of the boycott, and states its two main terms: ***no intermarriage*** and ***no trade***, until Banu Hashim handed over the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Its aim was clear: to force his family to give up their protection.

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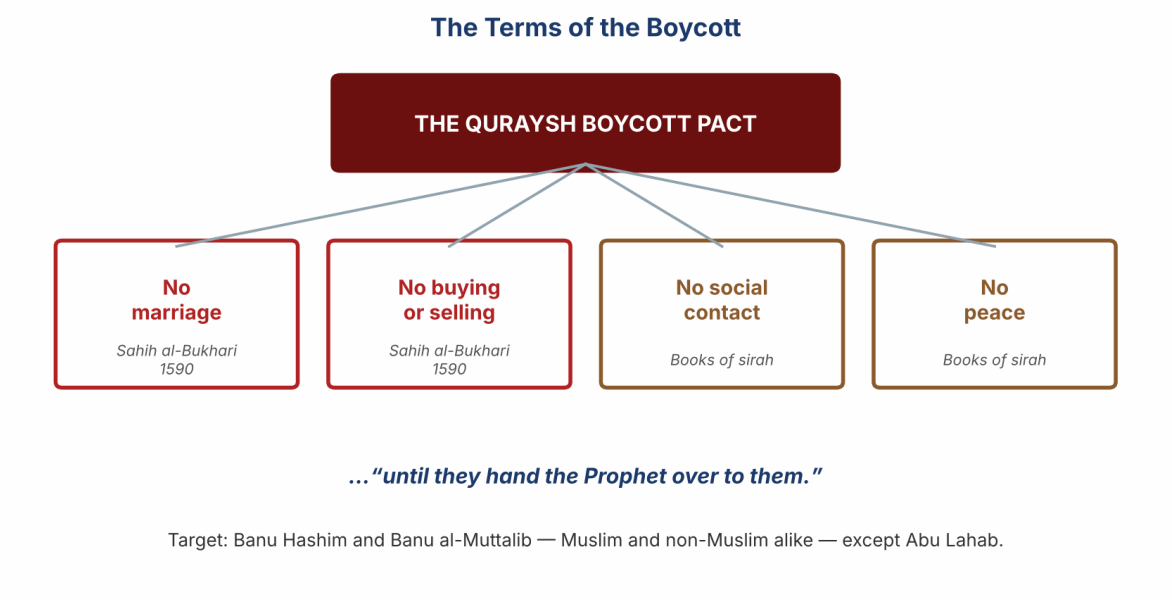


Figure 2: The terms of the Quraysh boycott.

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RETURNING TO THE SAME PLACE

Scholars explain the wisdom of his choosing to stop at ***al-Muhassab*** — where Quraysh swore upon disbelief — when he returned as a victorious leader: to ***give thanks for Allah's favour*** and display the triumph of Islam in the very place that had witnessed injustice against it.

AL-MUHASSAB IN THE HAJJ

Al-Muhassab (also called al-Abtah) is a valley between Mina and Makkah. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ stopped there after the days of Mina in the Farewell Pilgrimage. Yet 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها explained that stopping at al-Abtah is ***not a sunnah*** of the Hajj rites; he stopped there because it was easier for leaving Makkah (Sahih al-Bukhari 1765).

This shows the Companions' care in distinguishing between ***acts of worship*** to be followed and the Prophet's ***ordinary actions*** tied to circumstances — an important principle in understanding the sunnah.

The lesson: Allah ***reverses circumstances***. The place that once witnessed oppression finally witnessed victory.

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THREE YEARS IN SHI'B ABI TALIB

SIRAH NOTE: LIFE IN THE BESIEGED VALLEY

According to the books of sirah (Ibn Ishaq), the boycott began in ***Muharram of the seventh year of prophethood*** (around 617 CE). Banu Hashim and Banu al-Muttalib — Muslims and non-Muslims alike — moved into ***Shi'b Abi Talib***, a narrow valley on the edge of Makkah. Only ***Abu Lahab*** sided with Quraysh.

The pact document is said to have been hung inside the Ka'bah. The boycott lasted ***about three years***. Food was very hard to find; the books of sirah say the cries of hungry children could be heard from outside the valley, and some were forced to eat leaves.

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LOYALTY BEYOND RELIGION

One remarkable thing: many members of Banu Hashim who ***had not yet embraced Islam*** still chose to suffer with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, out of loyalty to family and to Abu Talib. They refused to hand him over even while starving.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ and Khadijah رضى الله عنها shared this hardship. Khadijah, once a wealthy merchant, spent what remained of her wealth to sustain the family and the Companions in that valley.

WHAT OF THE OTHER COMPANIONS?

Companions not from Banu Hashim, such as Abu Bakr رضى الله عنه, did not live in the valley, but they too faced heavy pressure. 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها narrated that Abu Bakr once set out to emigrate to Abyssinia, then met ***Ibn ad-Dughunnah***, chief of the al-Qarah tribe, who said: "A man like you should neither leave nor be driven out," and brought him back under his protection (Sahih al-Bukhari 3905).

Ibn ad-Dughunnah described Abu Bakr in words almost identical to Khadijah's words to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: helping the destitute, keeping ties of kinship, bearing the weak, honouring guests and helping in misfortune. Noble character is recognised even by those who have not yet believed.

The lesson: patience in hardship is ***a sign of faith***. Those three years of hardship built a resilience that would later be needed in the hijrah and in battle.

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HELP IN SECRET

SIRAH NOTE: HAKIM IBN HIZAM AND WHEAT FOR HIS AUNT

The books of sirah relate that ***Hakim ibn Hizam***, Khadijah's nephew, once secretly carried wheat to his aunt in the valley. Abu Jahl stopped him, but ***Abu al-Bakhtari ibn Hisham*** — a man of Quraysh who disapproved of the cruelty — intervened and let him pass.

There are also reports of ***Hisham ibn 'Amr*** sending camels laden with food to the mouth of the valley at night. These stories come from ***the books of sirah***, not the two Sahihs.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Hakim ibn Hizam". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hakim_ibn_Hizam

CONSCIENCE IN A JAHILIYYAH SOCIETY

These stories show that ***not all of Quraysh*** supported the injustice. Some still had a sense of humanity, though they had not yet believed. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ would later remember the good deeds of such people.

Hakim ibn Hizam himself later embraced Islam on the day Makkah was opened and became a Companion. His kindness in the Jahiliyyah paved the way to guidance.

The lesson: never belittle ***a small kindness*** — a parcel of food for the besieged can be a great deed. And value everyone who acts justly, even if not a Muslim.

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FIVE MEN WHO BROKE THE PACT

SIRAH NOTE: A PLAN TO OVERTURN THE BOYCOTT

According to Ibn Ishaq, after about three years, some men of Quraysh with a conscience plotted to overturn the pact. They were ***Hisham ibn 'Amr***, ***Zuhayr ibn Abi Umayyah***, ***al-Mut'im ibn 'Adi***, ***Abu al-Bakhtari ibn Hisham*** and ***Zam'ah ibn al-Aswad***.

They stood up in the assembly of Quraysh by the Ka'bah and voiced their objection openly. Abu Jahl protested, but their voice prevailed, and the boycott ended around ***the tenth year of prophethood***. Wikipedia names al-Mut'im ibn 'Adi as one of the five leaders who began this effort.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Muṭ'im ibn 'Adi". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mu%E1%B9%AD%CA%BDim_ibn_%CA%BDAdi

THE POWER OF A JUST VOICE

The boycott did not end by miracle alone, but also because ***a few people dared to speak out*** against injustice in their own society. They used the channels available — the assembly of Quraysh — to change things.

This recalls ***Hilf al-Fudul*** (Book 2): even in a Jahiliyyah society, there was room for justice. Islam values every such effort.

The lesson: ***silence*** in the face of injustice prolongs suffering. One brave voice can be the beginning of change.

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THE STORY OF THE TERMITE-EATEN DOCUMENT

SIRAH NOTE: THE STORY OF THE PACT DOCUMENT

The books of sirah relate that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ told Abu Talib that Allah had sent ***termites*** to eat the pact document, except for the words mentioning Allah's name ("Bismika Allahumma"). Abu Talib conveyed this to Quraysh, and when the document was taken down, it was found just as he had said.

This story is narrated by Ibn Ishaq and other sirah writers, but it is ***not found in the two Sahihs***, and its chain is ***not connected (mursal)***. It is well known in the books of sirah and accepted by many sirah writers, but it is not on the level of an authentic hadith.

HOW TO TREAT SUCH A STORY

MATTER	POSITION
The boycott and its terms	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 1590).
Its cancellation by five men	A report in the books of sirah; generally accepted.
The document eaten by termites	A mursal report in the books of sirah; may be mentioned with its status stated.

Hadith scholars distinguish between sirah stories that may be told as history and ***hadith used as proof*** in belief and law. This story belongs to the first category.

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LESSONS FROM THE BOYCOTT

The boycott in Shi'b Abi Talib left many lessons relevant to every generation:

LESSON	EXPLANATION
Patience together	The whole family and the Companions bore the trial together.
Economics as a weapon	Enemies of the truth used food and trade embargoes.
Family loyalty	Non-Muslim members of Banu Hashim still protected him.
The role of people of conscience	Five men of Quraysh overturned the injustice.
Sacrificing wealth	Khadijah spent her wealth for the family and Companions.
Victory after trial	The place of the oath of disbelief became the stop of the victorious Prophet.

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BOYCOTTS IN OUR TIME

Today, Muslims in some places still face ***economic sanctions*** and sieges. The sirah teaches us to be patient, to help one another, and to value anyone — Muslim or not — who dares to stand up for the oppressed.

The main lesson: ***no injustice lasts forever***. A boycott that seemed endless finally collapsed after three years.

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THE PASSING OF KHADIJAH

SIRAH NOTE: THE PASSING OF THE FIRST MOTHER OF THE BELIEVERS

According to Wikipedia, ***Khadijah bint Khuwaylid*** رضى الله عنها died in ***619 CE***, at about ***65 years*** of age, shortly after the boycott ended. She had been the wife of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ for ***25 years*** — his only wife throughout that time. He was then almost 50.

The hardship of the boycott is believed to have affected her health. She was buried at ***al-Hajun***, the Makkan cemetery now known as Jannat al-Mu'alla.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Year of Sorrow". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Year_of_Sorrow
Wikipedia, "Khadija bint Khuwaylid". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khadija_bint_Khuwaylid

Authentic hadith confirms the date in general terms: 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr said that Khadijah died ***three years before*** the Prophet ﷺ emigrated to Madinah (Sahih al-Bukhari 3896).

A MEMORY THAT NEVER FADED

Books 2 and 3 told of Khadijah's standing: the first to believe, the comforter on the night of the first revelation, and the woman who received greetings of peace from Allah through Jibril (Sahih al-Bukhari 3820). Years after her passing, he still mentioned her name and honoured her friends (Sahih al-Bukhari 3818).

KHADIJAH'S VIRTUES IN AUTHENTIC HADITH

'Ali رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ***"The best of women (of her time) is Maryam daughter of 'Imran, and the best of women (of her time) is Khadijah"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3432).

VIRTUE	SOURCE
The first to believe	Books of sirah (Book 3)
Comforting him on the night of the first revelation	Sahih al-Bukhari 3
Receiving greetings from Allah and news of a house in Paradise	Sahih al-Bukhari 3820
The best of women of her time	Sahih al-Bukhari 3432
Mother of all his children except Ibrahim	Books of sirah (Book 2)

The lesson: ***loyalty*** to a spouse does not end with death. Praying for them, remembering their goodness and honouring the family and friends of a departed spouse is the sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

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ABU TALIB'S FINAL MOMENTS

Not long after the boycott ended, ***Abu Talib*** — the uncle who had raised and protected him for over forty years — fell gravely ill. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ came to him with one last hope:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3884

حَدَّثَنَا مَحْمُودٌ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّزَّاقِ، أَخْبَرَنَا مَعْمَرٌ، عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ، عَنِ ابْنِ الْمُسَيَّبِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، أَنَّ أَبَا طَالِبٍ، لَمَّا حَضَرَتْهُ الْوَفَاةُ دَخَلَ عَلَيْهِ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم وَعِنْدَهُ أَبُو جَهْلٍ فَقَالَ «أَىْ عَمِّ، قُلْ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ. كَلِمَةً أُحَاجُّ لَكَ بِهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ». فَقَالَ أَبُو جَهْلٍ وَعَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ أَبِي أُمَيَّةَ يَا أَبَا طَالِبٍ، تَرْغَبُ عَنْ مِلَّةِ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ فَلَمْ يَزَالاَ يُكَلِّمَانِهِ حَتَّى قَالَ آخِرَ شَيْءٍ كَلَّمَهُمْ بِهِ عَلَى مِلَّةِ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ. فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم «لأَسْتَغْفِرَنَّ لَكَ مَا لَمْ أُنْهَ عَنْهُ». فَنَزَلَتْ {مَا كَانَ لِلنَّبِيِّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرُوا لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ وَلَوْ كَانُوا أُولِي قُرْبَى مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُمْ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ} وَنَزَلَتْ {إِنَّكَ لاَ تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ}

TRANSLATION:

Al-Musayyib ibn Hazn رضى الله عنه narrated that when Abu Talib was dying, the Prophet ﷺ went in to him while Abu Jahl was with him. He said: **"O my uncle, say Lā ilāha illallāh — a word by which I will plead for you before Allah."** Abu Jahl and 'Abdullah ibn Abi Umayyah said: "O Abu Talib, will you turn away from the religion of 'Abd al-Muttalib?" They kept speaking to him until the last thing he said to them was: "(I am) on the religion of 'Abd al-Muttalib." The Prophet ﷺ said: **"I will surely ask forgiveness for you as long as I am not forbidden."** Then it was revealed: {It is not for the Prophet and those who have believed to ask forgiveness for the polytheists, even if they were relatives, after it has become clear to them that they are companions of Hellfire}, and it was revealed: {Indeed, you do not guide whom you like}.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Mahmud ibn Ghaylan, from 'Abd ar-Razzaq, from Ma'mar, from az-Zuhri, from Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib, from his father, al-Musayyib ibn Hazn رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Merits of the Ansar, chapter on the story of Abu Talib, Hadith No. 3884. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 24).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3884

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LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

This hadith is deeply moving. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked for nothing heavy — just ***one word***. He promised to plead for his uncle with that word before Allah. Yet ***pressure from companions*** and ***pride in the religion of the forefathers*** kept Abu Talib from saying it.

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VISITING A NON-MUSLIM RELATIVE

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ ***visited*** his sick uncle though he had not believed, and strove until the very end. He also once visited a sick Jewish boy and invited him to Islam (Sahih al-Bukhari 1356).

This shows that ***keeping family ties*** and ***visiting the sick*** are not limited to fellow Muslims. A visit itself can be the gentlest door of da'wah.

Notice who was beside Abu Talib at the end: ***Abu Jahl***. A bad companion can keep a person from good even in his final moments.

The lesson: ***the word of tawhid*** is the key to salvation, and ***the influence of companions*** is immense. Choose friends who remind us of Allah, especially at the most important moments.

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"YOU DO NOT GUIDE WHOM YOU LIKE"

The grief of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ over his uncle's death in disbelief was profound. Allah revealed a verse that both consoled him and taught an important principle of belief:

SURAH AL-QASAS 28:56

إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَن يَشَآءُ ۚ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِٱلْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾

Indeed, [O Muhammad], you do not guide whom you like, but Allah guides whom He wills. And He is most knowing of the [rightly] guided.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/28:56

EXPLANATION OF VERSE 28:56

Allah says: ***"Indeed, [O Muhammad], you do not guide whom you like"***. Ibn Kathir states that this verse was revealed concerning ***Abu Talib***, as in the two Sahihs, and explains that the Messenger's task is ***to convey***, while guidance ***belongs to Allah alone***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 28:56.

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TWO KINDS OF GUIDANCE

KIND	EXPLANATION
Hidayat al-irshad (showing the way)	Pointing out the path; this is the task of the Messenger and callers (Ash-Shura 42:52).
Hidayat at-tawfiq (enabling)	Opening the heart to accept; this belongs to Allah alone (Al-Qasas 28:56).

This verse brings comfort to every parent, spouse and caller who has tried, yet sees a loved one not accept the truth. ***Our task is to strive***; the outcome is in Allah's hands.

Along with this verse came the prohibition of seeking forgiveness for polytheists after their state has become clear (At-Tawbah 9:113), as mentioned in the same hadith.

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THE STANDING OF ABU TALIB

Al-'Abbas ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib رضى الله عنه once asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: "Have you been of any benefit to your uncle? By Allah, he used to protect you and grow angry on your behalf." He said: ***"He is in a shallow part of the Fire; were it not for me, he would be in its lowest depth"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3883).

Another hadith states that Abu Talib will have ***the lightest punishment*** of the people of the Fire (Sahih Muslim 212). This shows that his service in protecting the Messenger of Allah ﷺ ***was valued***, yet without faith it did not bring full salvation.

PROPER MANNERS IN SPEAKING OF ABU TALIB

Abu Talib was a figure of ***great service*** to Islam. We mention his service with respect and do not revile him, while holding to the authentic Hadith about his standing. These two attitudes do not conflict.

The lesson: ***good deeds without faith*** are not enough for salvation in the Hereafter. Faith is the foundation that gives every good deed its full value before Allah.

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THE YEAR OF SORROW

In the same year — the tenth year of prophethood, around ***619 CE*** — the Messenger of Allah ﷺ lost both. ***The order*** of their deaths is disputed in the books of sirah: according to Wikipedia, Khadijah died first, then Abu Talib; some sources say the reverse.

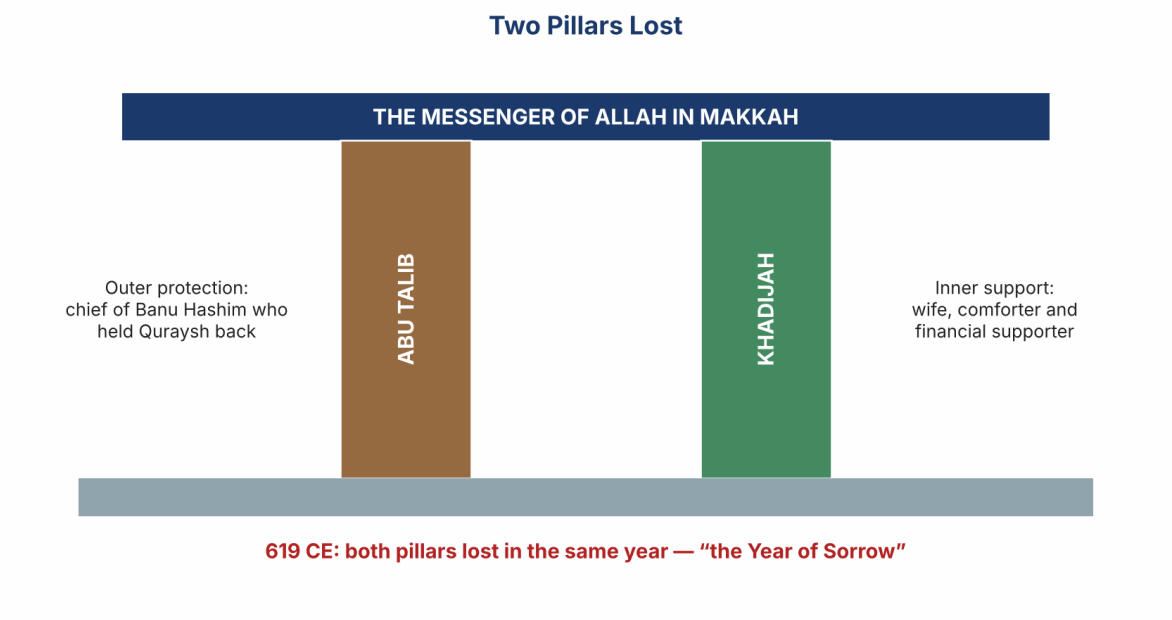


Figure 3: The two pillars lost in the Year of Sorrow.

This year later became known as ***'Am al-Huzn***, ***the Year of Sorrow***. Abu Talib was ***protection from outside***; Khadijah was ***support from within***. Losing both at once left him at his most exposed.

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THE EFFECT ON THE DA'WAH

The books of sirah say that after Abu Talib's death, Quraysh grew bolder in harming him — some even threw dirt on his head. Banu Hashim was now led by Abu Lahab, his own enemy.

It was in these circumstances that he decided to seek ***support outside Makkah*** — and his first choice was the city of Ta'if.

THE SUNNAH OF FACING GRIEF

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ taught a balanced way of grieving. When his son Ibrahim died years later, he wept and said: ***"The eye sheds tears and the heart grieves, but we say only what pleases our Lord"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 1303).

PERMITTED	FORBIDDEN
Weeping and grieving	Wailing and lamenting
Remembering the deceased's goodness	Words that blame divine decree
Praying and giving charity for them	Harming oneself or tearing clothes in grief

The lesson: grief is part of human nature; even the Messenger of Allah ﷺ grieved. But grief ***did not stop*** him from carrying on.

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SAWDAH BINT ZAM'AH

SIRAH NOTE: A WIFE AFTER KHADIJAH

According to the books of sirah and Wikipedia, after Khadijah's passing the Messenger of Allah ﷺ married ***Sawdah bint Zam'ah*** رضى الله عنها in Makkah. She was a widow: her husband, ***as-Sakran ibn 'Amr***, had emigrated with her to Abyssinia, then died.

Sawdah was among the early Muslims and had endured the hardships of emigration. This marriage gave ***care*** to a widowed emigrant, and ***someone to run the household*** for the Prophet's motherless daughters.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Sawda bint Zam'a". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sawda_bint_Zam'a

THE WISDOM OF THIS MARRIAGE

The Prophet's marriage to Sawdah shows that his marriages had ***humanitarian and da'wah purposes***: caring for the widows of Companions who had died, and looking after the family.

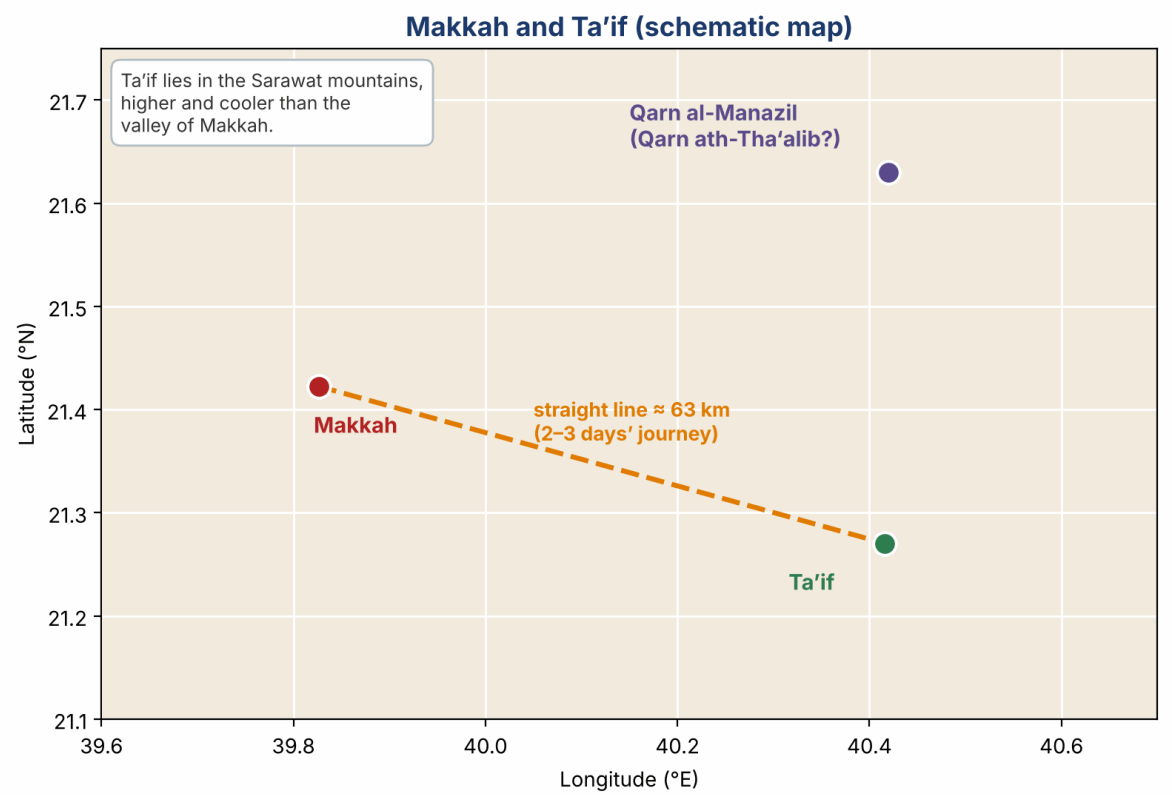
Authentic hadith praises Sawdah: 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها said there was no woman whose character she would rather have than Sawdah's, and Sawdah gave her turn to 'A'ishah (Sahih Muslim 1463).

The lesson: Islam honours ***widows and orphans***. Caring for them is the sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

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HEADING FOR TA'IF

Ta'if was the second most important town in the Hijaz, home of the ***Thaqif*** tribe. It lay in the mountains, cooler and more fertile than Makkah, and was known for its orchards. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ hoped its people would accept Islam and protect him.



Approximate coordinates. Some scholars identify Qarn ath-Tha'alib with Qarn al-Manazil. Source: Wikipedia, "Taif".

Figure 4: Makkah and Ta'if (schematic map).

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SIRAH NOTE: THE JOURNEY WITH ZAYD

According to Wikipedia, the journey to Ta'if took place in ***619 CE***, about ***two to three days' journey*** from Makkah. The books of sirah (Ibn Sa'd) say he was accompanied by ***Zayd ibn Harithah***, travelling on foot.

Al-Mubarakpuri in ar-Raheeq al-Makhtum says he stayed in Ta'if ***about ten days***, visiting one leader after another.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Muhammad's visit to Ta'if". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad%27s_visit_to_Ta%27if

WHY TA'IF?

FACTOR	EXPLANATION
The second most important town	After Makkah, Ta'if was the centre of power and wealth in the Hijaz.
A strong tribe	Thaqif could give protection as Banu Hashim once had.
Kinship ties	The books of sirah mention ties of nursing and kinship with tribes around Ta'if.
A rival of Quraysh	Thaqif competed with Quraysh in trade and influence.

Notice that he did not simply ***give up*** on Makkah, but ***sought another way***. This is an example in facing a dead end: do not stop; look for another door.

The lesson: da'wah requires ***initiative and courage***. Nearly fifty years old, he walked across the mountains to convey the message.

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THE REJECTION OF BANU THAQIF

SIRAH NOTE: THE THREE LEADERS OF THAQIF

According to Wikipedia, he went to three brothers who led ***Banu Thaqif***: ***'Abd Yalil***, ***Mas'ud*** and ***Habib***. They refused him rudely. The authentic hadith names ***Ibn 'Abd Yalil ibn 'Abd Kulal*** as the man to whom he presented himself (Sahih al-Bukhari 3231).

The people of Ta'if then incited their fools and slaves to ***drive him out and pelt him with stones***, wounding his feet and hands until they bled. The books of sirah say Zayd tried to shield him until his own head was injured.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Muhammad's visit to Ta'if". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad%27s_visit_to_Ta%27if

THE MOST PAINFUL REJECTION

In Makkah he was still respected for his lineage, though opposed. In Ta'if he was ***a stranger*** without protection. Thaqif's rejection was not only in words, but with ***humiliation and violence*** in public.

He also asked them to ***keep the meeting secret*** so that Quraysh would not grow bolder, but they refused (books of sirah). A journey begun with hope ended in wounds.

TA'IF TEN YEARS LATER

The books of sirah relate that in ***the ninth year after the Hijrah***, a delegation of Thaqif came to Madinah and embraced Islam. The town that once stoned him finally sent its representatives to pledge allegiance. After the death of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, when many tribes apostatised, history books say Thaqif ***stood firm*** in Islam.

The lesson: ***apparent failure*** does not mean the effort was wasted. As we shall see, Allah stored its fruit for another time — Ta'if finally embraced Islam about ten years later.

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IN THE GARDEN OF 'UTBAH AND SHAYBAH

SIRAH NOTE: 'ADDAS AND A BUNCH OF GRAPES

According to Wikipedia and the books of sirah, he took refuge in ***a garden owned by 'Utbah and Shaybah ibn Rabi'ah***, two Quraysh leaders who took pity on him. They had their Christian slave, ***'Addas*** of ***Nineveh***, bring him a bunch of grapes.

He began eating with ***"Bismillah"***. 'Addas was surprised, for the people of that land did not say these words. On learning that 'Addas was from Nineveh, he said that ***Prophet Yunus*** عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was his brother, a prophet like himself. 'Addas then kissed his head, hands and feet.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Muhammad's visit to Ta'if". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad%27s_visit_to_Ta%27if

The story of 'Addas is narrated by Ibn Ishaq without a connected chain; it is ***not found in the two Sahihs***. Yet its meaning agrees with his known character.

A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

On the darkest day, Allah sent ***a foreign slave*** who honoured him. Even while bleeding, he still ***called to Allah*** — connecting 'Addas with the earlier prophets. No moment was too hard for conveying good.

The lesson: ***the unity of the prophets' message*** is a bridge for da'wah to the People of the Book. Yunus, Musa and 'Isa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ are brothers of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ in the message of tawhid.

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THE SUPPLICATION AT TA'IF: AN ASSESSMENT

SIRAH NOTE: A VERY FAMOUS SUPPLICATION

Many know the supplication said to have been made by him in that garden: ***"O Allah, to You I complain of the weakness of my strength, my lack of resources and my lowliness before people..."*** up to ***"...as long as You are not angry with me, I do not care."***

This supplication is narrated by Ibn Ishaq without a chain, and by at-Tabarani with a chain graded ***weak (da'if)*** by Hadith scholars such as al-Albani, because it contains unknown narrators.

HOW SHOULD WE TREAT IT?

MATTER	POSITION
Attributing it to him with certainty	Not permitted; its chain is weak.
Its meaning	Good and in line with the Qur'an and sunnah: complaining only to Allah.
Praying with similar words	Permitted as a general prayer, without claiming it as the Prophet's words.
Authentic supplications	Give priority to supplications from the Qur'an and authentic Hadith.

What is certain and authentic is what he himself told 'A'ishah about that day — as in the next chapter. That authentic report is enough to show the depth of his grief and the breadth of his mercy.

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THE HARDEST DAY

Years later, after the Battle of Uhud — in which he was wounded and Hamzah was martyred — 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها asked whether there had been a day harder than Uhud. His answer pointed to ***Ta'if***:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3231

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ يُوسُفَ، أَخْبَرَنَا ابْنُ وَهْبٍ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي يُونُسُ، عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي عُرْوَةُ، أَنَّ عَائِشَةَ ـ رضى الله عنها ـ زَوْجَ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم حَدَّثَتْهُ أَنَّهَا قَالَتْ لِلنَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم هَلْ أَتَى عَلَيْكَ يَوْمٌ كَانَ أَشَدَّ مِنْ يَوْمِ أُحُدٍ قَالَ «لَقَدْ لَقِيتُ مِنْ قَوْمِكِ مَا لَقِيتُ، وَكَانَ أَشَدُّ مَا لَقِيتُ مِنْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْعَقَبَةِ، إِذْ عَرَضْتُ نَفْسِي عَلَى ابْنِ عَبْدِ يَالِيلَ بْنِ عَبْدِ كُلاَلٍ، فَلَمْ يُجِبْنِي إِلَى مَا أَرَدْتُ، فَانْطَلَقْتُ وَأَنَا مَهْمُومٌ عَلَى وَجْهِي، فَلَمْ أَسْتَفِقْ إِلاَّ وَأَنَا بِقَرْنِ الثَّعَالِبِ، فَرَفَعْتُ رَأْسِي، فَإِذَا أَنَا بِسَحَابَةٍ قَدْ أَظَلَّتْنِي، فَنَظَرْتُ فَإِذَا فِيهَا جِبْرِيلُ فَنَادَانِي فَقَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ سَمِعَ قَوْلَ قَوْمِكَ لَكَ وَمَا رَدُّوا عَلَيْكَ، وَقَدْ بَعَثَ إِلَيْكَ مَلَكَ الْجِبَالِ لِتَأْمُرَهُ بِمَا شِئْتَ فِيهِمْ، فَنَادَانِي مَلَكُ الْجِبَالِ، فَسَلَّمَ عَلَيَّ ثُمَّ قَالَ يَا مُحَمَّدُ، فَقَالَ ذَلِكَ فِيمَا شِئْتَ، إِنْ شِئْتَ أَنْ أُطْبِقَ عَلَيْهِمِ الأَخْشَبَيْنِ، فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم بَلْ أَرْجُو أَنْ يُخْرِجَ اللَّهُ مِنْ أَصْلاَبِهِمْ مَنْ يَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ وَحْدَهُ لاَ يُشْرِكُ بِهِ شَيْئًا».

TRANSLATION:

'A'ishah رضى الله عنها, wife of the Prophet ﷺ, narrated that she asked the Prophet ﷺ: "Have you ever faced a day harder than the day of Uhud?" He said: **"I have suffered from your people what I have suffered, and the hardest of it was on the day of al-'Aqabah, when I presented myself to Ibn 'Abd Yalil ibn 'Abd Kulal, and he did not respond to what I wanted. I left, overwhelmed with grief, not knowing where I was going, and did not come to myself until I was at Qarn ath-Tha'alib. I raised my head and there was a cloud shading me. I looked, and in it was Jibril. He called me and said: 'Allah has heard what your people said to you and how they answered you. Allah has sent you the Angel of the Mountains so that you may command him as you wish concerning them.' The Angel of the Mountains called me, greeted me with peace, then said: 'O Muhammad, it is as you wish. If you wish, I will bring the two mountains, al-Akhshabayn, down upon them.' The Prophet ﷺ said: 'Rather, I hope that Allah will bring forth from their descendants those who worship Allah alone, associating nothing with Him.'"**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Abdullah ibn Yusuf, from Ibn Wahb, from Yunus ibn Yazid, from Ibn Shihab az-Zuhri, from 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, from 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها.

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REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Beginning of Creation, Hadith No. 3231. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 1795).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3231

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LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Imagine: ***a man just stoned and humiliated***, offered the power to destroy the whole town. Yet he chose ***hope***: that from their descendants would come people who worship Allah.

THE OPTION OFFERED	HIS CHOICE
Revenge	Forgiveness
Destroying this generation	Hoping in the next generation
Displaying power	Displaying mercy

His hope was fulfilled. The people of Ta'if embraced Islam in ***the ninth year after the Hijrah***, and from Thaqif came figures of Islam. The al-Akhshabayn mentioned in the hadith are ***two great mountains*** around Makkah.

"FORGIVE MY PEOPLE"

Ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه said: It is as if I can still see the Messenger of Allah ﷺ telling of a prophet who was beaten by his people until he bled, and he wiped the blood from his face while praying: ***"O Allah, forgive my people, for they do not know"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3477).

Scholars explain that this character of the prophets was also the character of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself. The events of Ta'if show it clearly: he refused the offer of destruction and chose hope.

The lesson: this is the meaning of ***"a mercy to the worlds"*** (Al-Anbiya' 21:107). A caller to Allah does not pray for people's destruction, but for their guidance.

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THE JINN LISTEN TO THE QUR'AN

The books of sirah relate that on the way back from Ta'if, he stopped at ***the valley of Nakhlah*** and prayed at night. A group of jinn heard his recitation of the Qur'an. Allah records the jinn listening to the Qur'an in this passage:

SURAH AL-AHQAF 46:29–30

وَإِذْ صَرَفْنَآ إِلَيْكَ نَفَرًا مِّنَ ٱلْجِنِّ يَسْتَمِعُونَ ٱلْقُرْءَانَ فَلَمَّا حَضَرُوهُ قَالُوٓا۟
أَنصِتُوا۟ ۖ فَلَمَّا قُضِىَ وَلَّوْا۟ إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِم مُّنذِرِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

And [mention, O Muhammad], when We directed to you a few of the jinn, listening to the Qur'an. And when they attended it, they said, "Listen quietly." And when it was concluded, they went back to their people as warners.

قَالُوا۟ يَٰقَوْمَنَآ إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا كِتَٰبًا أُنزِلَ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مُوسَىٰ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ
يَهْدِىٓ إِلَى ٱلْحَقِّ وَإِلَىٰ طَرِيقٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

They said, "O our people, indeed we have heard a [recited] Book revealed after Moses confirming what was before it which guides to the truth and to a straight path."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/46:29-30

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EXPLANATION OF VERSES 46:29–30

Ibn Kathir cites Ibn Ishaq's report that this happened as he returned from Ta'if. He also mentions the authentic report from Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما that the jinn heard his recitation at Nakhlah while he led the Fajr prayer with his Companions on the way to the market of 'Ukaz (Sahih al-Bukhari 773). ***The exact timing*** of the event is disputed.

Whatever its timing, the passage carries a very comforting message: while the people of Ta'if rejected him, ***other beings*** listened, believed and went back to their people as warners. His message is for ***humankind and jinn***.

WHO ARE THE JINN?

MATTER	EVIDENCE
Created from a smokeless flame of fire	Ar-Rahman 55:15
Created to worship Allah	Adh-Dhariyat 51:56
Some believe and some disbelieve	Al-Jinn 72:11, 14
They heard the Qur'an and called their people	Al-Ahqaf 46:29–30; Al-Jinn 72:1–2
They do not know the unseen	Saba' 34:14

Belief in the jinn is part of faith in the unseen. Yet Islam rejects superstition and seeking help from the jinn, for help comes only from Allah (Al-Jinn 72:6).

The lesson: do not measure the success of da'wah by ***the reaction of a few people***. Allah opens the hearts He wills, sometimes from unexpected directions.

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RETURNING UNDER AL-MUT'IM'S PROTECTION

SIRAH NOTE: ENTERING MAKKAH UNDER PROTECTION

Without Abu Talib's protection, he could not enter Makkah safely. According to Wikipedia, he sent Zayd ibn Harithah to seek protection, and ***al-Mut'im ibn 'Adi***, chief of Banu Nawfal, agreed. Al-Mut'im armed himself and, with his sons and nephews, escorted him into Makkah.

Al-Mut'im was also one of the five men who ended the boycott. He died in 623 CE ***without having embraced Islam***.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Muṭ'im ibn 'Adi". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mu%E1%B9%AD%CA%BDim_ibn_%CA%BDAdi

JIWAR: PROTECTION IN ARAB SOCIETY

In Arab society, a person without a protector could request ***jiwar*** (protection) from a leader. Whoever harmed the protected person was deemed to have harmed the protector himself. Abu Bakr too once lived under the jiwar of Ibn ad-Dughunnah (Sahih al-Bukhari 3905).

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used this existing system wisely, without compromising belief. Islam later kept the good in this system: a polytheist who seeks protection to hear the word of Allah is to be protected and escorted to a place of safety (At-Tawbah 9:6).

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ never forgot al-Mut'im's kindness. After the Battle of Badr, he mentioned him in this saying:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3139

حَدَّثَنَا إِسْحَاقُ بْنُ مَنْصُورٍ، أَخْبَرَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّزَّاقِ، أَخْبَرَنَا مَعْمَرٌ، عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ جُبَيْرٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ فِي أُسَارَى بَدْرٍ «لَوْ كَانَ الْمُطْعِمُ بْنُ عَدِيٍّ حَيًّا، ثُمَّ كَلَّمَنِي فِي هَؤُلاَءِ النَّتْنَى، لَتَرَكْتُهُمْ لَهُ».

TRANSLATION:

Jubayr ibn Mut'im رضى الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said about the prisoners of Badr: **"Had al-Mut'im ibn 'Adi been alive and spoken to me about these wretched people, I would have released them for his sake."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Ishaq ibn Mansur, from 'Abd ar-Razzaq, from Ma'mar, from az-Zuhri, from Muhammad ibn Jubayr, from his father, Jubayr ibn Mut'im رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the One-Fifth, Hadith No. 3139.

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GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3139

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

This hadith shows ***the character of repaying kindness***. Although al-Mut'im died in disbelief, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ honoured his service publicly, even to the point of being willing to release prisoners of war for his sake.

The narrator of this hadith, ***Jubayr ibn Mut'im***, was al-Mut'im's own son, who later embraced Islam. His father's kindness became part of a story told by his son.

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WITH HARDSHIP COMES EASE

The years of boycott, grief and rejection were the darkest period of the Makkan sirah. Yet the Makkan Qur'an had taught a promise repeated twice:

Allah says: ***"For indeed, with hardship [will be] ease"***. The verse is repeated twice (94:5–6). Ibn Kathir cites the scholars' explanation that ***"hardship" is definite*** while ***"ease" is indefinite***, showing that one hardship will not overcome two eases. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 94:5.

HARDSHIP	THE EASE THAT FOLLOWED
A three-year boycott	Overturned by five people of conscience
Losing Abu Talib and Khadijah	Al-Isra' wal-Mi'raj and new support from Yathrib (Book 6)
Rejection and stones at Ta'if	The jinn heard the Qur'an; Ta'if finally embraced Islam
No protection in Makkah	The protection of al-Mut'im ibn 'Adi

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Ease does not always come at once, nor always in the form we expect. But Allah's promise is ***certain***. The sirah of these years is living proof of this verse.

A SUPPLICATION IN DISTRESS

Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما narrated that in times of distress the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would say: ***"Lā ilāha illallāh al-'Azīm al-Ḥalīm; lā ilāha illallāh Rabb al-'Arsh al-'Azīm; lā ilāha illallāh Rabb as-samāwāt wa Rabb al-arḍ wa Rabb al-'Arsh al-Karīm"*** — None has the right to be worshipped but Allah, the Magnificent, the Forbearing; none but Allah, Lord of the Mighty Throne; none but Allah, Lord of the heavens, Lord of the earth and Lord of the Noble Throne (Sahih al-Bukhari 6346).

This authentic supplication — unlike the Ta'if prayer with its weak chain — can be practised with confidence by every Muslim who is tested.

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THE PROPHETS BEFORE HIM WERE TESTED TOO

The Makkan Qur'an tells much of the trials of earlier prophets, as if consoling the Messenger of Allah ﷺ:

"And certainly were messengers denied before you, but they were patient" (Al-An'am 6:34).

PROPHET	TRIAL AND THE EASE THAT FOLLOWED
Nuh عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Denied by his people for ages; saved by the ark (Hud 11:40–48).
Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Thrown into the fire; the fire became cool and safe (Al-Anbiya' 21:68–69).
Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Cast into a well and imprisoned; finally a ruler of Egypt (Yusuf 12:56).
Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Pursued by Pharaoh to the sea; the sea parted (Ash-Shu'ara' 26:61–63).
Yunus عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Swallowed by the fish; saved by his glorification (Al-Anbiya' 21:87–88).
Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Tested with illness and loss; restored and recompensed (Al-Anbiya' 21:83–84).

The lesson: in every personal trial — loss, rejection or hardship — remember that ***hardship comes with ease***, not merely followed by it.

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BETWEEN AUTHENTIC REPORTS AND POPULAR STORIES

Many stories about the boycott, the Year of Sorrow and Ta'if circulate among people. The table below distinguishes the authentic, those from the books of sirah, and the weak.

STORIES AND THEIR STATUS

POPULAR STORY	STATUS
Quraysh swore to boycott Banu Hashim: no marriage or trade.	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 1590).
The boycott lasted about three years in Shi'b Abi Talib.	Books of sirah; generally accepted.
The pact document eaten by termites.	A mursal report in the books of sirah.
The Prophet ﷺ asked Abu Talib to say Lā ilāha illallāh.	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 3884).
Verse 28:56 was revealed about Abu Talib.	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 3884).
Khadijah died three years before the hijrah.	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 3896).
The story of 'Addas and the grapes.	Ibn Ishaq's report without a connected chain.
The prayer "O Allah, to You I complain of the weakness of my strength…".	Weak (da'if) according to al-Albani.
The Angel of the Mountains offered to crush them between two mountains.	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 3231).
The jinn heard the Qur'an at Nakhlah on the return from Ta'if.	The jinn at Nakhlah is authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 773); its link to Ta'if is from the books of sirah.
Al-Mut'im ibn 'Adi protected him.	Books of sirah; his service is acknowledged in Sahih al-Bukhari 3139.

REFLECTION

The authentic reports of these years are enough to portray the ***patience and mercy*** of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. We need no weak reports to weep for him and love him.

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IMPORTANT PLACES IN THIS SERIES

The events in this eBook took place in a few locations not far from one another: a narrow valley beside the Ka'bah, a cemetery on the edge of Makkah, and a mountain road leading to Ta'if. This chapter gathers those places into one table, so that readers can picture the journeys of the Messenger ﷺ in these hardest of years.

TABLE OF PLACES

The distances in the table are ***approximate***. Straight-line distances are worked out from modern coordinates; road distances are taken from the sources cited. The paths travelled in his time were far harder and more winding.

PLACE	CONNECTION TO THIS SERIES	LOCATION / CONDITION TODAY
Shi'b Abi Talib	The valley where Banu Hashim and Banu al-Muttalib were besieged for about three years (books of sirah).	East of the Ka'bah, behind Safa and Marwah, between Jabal Abu Qubays and Jabal Khandamah. Most of it is now inside the area of Masjid al-Haram.
Khayf Banu Kinanah (al-Muhassab / al-Abtah)	Where Quraysh swore to boycott Banu Hashim (Sahih al-Bukhari 1590).	A valley between Makkah and Mina.
Al-Hajun (Jannat al-Mu'alla)	The cemetery where Khadijah رضى الله عنها was buried, according to the books of sirah.	Not far from Masjid al-Haram, near Masjid al-Jinn.
Ta'if	The city of Banu Thaqif, which he visited with Zayd ibn Harithah.	About 63 km in a straight line south-east of Makkah; about 87 km by today's mountain highway.
Nakhlah	The valley where he prayed and the jinn listened to the Qur'an (books of sirah; Sahih al-Bukhari 773).	On the route between Makkah and Ta'if (exact location: approximate).
Qarn al-Tha'alib	Where he "came to himself" after leaving Ta'if in grief (Sahih al-Bukhari 3231).	According to Yaqut al-Hamawi, another name for Qarn al-Manazil, the miqat of the people of Najd; about 80 km north-east of Makkah.

Sources: WikiShia, "Shi'b Abi Talib"; Wikipedia, "Taif"; Saudipedia, "Qarn al-Manazil"; Medieval Middle East, "al-Qarn"; Madain Project, "Jannat ul-Mu'alla".

SHI'B ABI TALIB TODAY

The valley that witnessed three years of boycott lies very close to the Ka'bah — behind the hills of Safa and Marwah, at the foot of Jabal Abu Qubays. It was also known as Shi'b Banu Hashim. According to WikiShia, most of the houses and historic sites in this area have been absorbed into Masjid al-Haram through successive expansion projects, and only a small part is still known by the name ***Suq al-Layl***.

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Imagine: pilgrims today perform sa'i only a few hundred metres from where the children of Banu Hashim once cried from hunger. That closeness reminds us that the boycott did not happen in some remote place, but in the middle of a society that saw it and stayed silent.

THE ROAD TO TA'IF

Ta'if lies up in the Sarawat Mountains, much higher than Makkah. Today the car journey takes a little over an hour along a winding road. In his time the journey was made on foot, about two to three days of climbing and descending rocky valleys.

On the way back, an authentic Hadith says he walked in deep sorrow and did not come to himself until he reached ***Qarn al-Tha'alib*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3231). According to Yaqut al-Hamawi in *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, Qarn al-Tha'alib is another name for ***Qarn al-Manazil*** — the place he later appointed as the miqat for the people of Najd. Today's miqat mosque at al-Sayl al-Kabir lies about 80 km north-east of Makkah and 35 km north of Ta'if.

Sources: Saudipedia, "Qarn al-Manazil"; Medieval Middle East, "al-Qarn".

LESSON

Places that once witnessed the sorrow of the Messenger ﷺ have become places where millions of Muslims enter ihram and worship. Hardship borne with patience is never simply lost; Allah makes it part of a history remembered until the end of time.

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TA'IF AND BANU THAQIF

Why Ta'if? To understand the hope of the Messenger ﷺ and the pain of the rejection he met, we need to know this city and its people.

A CITY IN THE MOUNTAINS

According to Wikipedia, Ta'if stands at an elevation of about ***1,879 metres*** above sea level. Its climate is milder than that of most other cities in the Arabian Peninsula; the average maximum temperature in July is around 35.6 °C. The area has long been known for its produce — ***grapes, pomegranates, figs and honey*** — and today Ta'if is called the ***"City of Roses"*** for the roses grown there to make perfume.

For the people of Makkah, who lived in a valley "without cultivation" (Ibrahim 14:37), Ta'if was a garden on a mountain. Many Quraysh leaders owned orchards there — including 'Utbah and Shaybah ibn Rabi'ah, in whose garden he sheltered after being driven out (books of sirah).

Source: Wikipedia, "Taif".

BANU THAQIF AND THE CITY WALL

Ta'if was controlled by the tribe of ***Thaqif*** from the sixth century CE, and their descendants still live in the area today. According to Wikipedia, the city had a wall built by Thaqif — and it is this wall encircling the city that is linked to the name "Ta'if" (the one that encircles). This fortified position made Thaqif confident in their strength, and later made the siege of Ta'if in the eighth year of the Hijrah difficult (to be told in Part 22).

AL-LAT: THE IDOL OF TA'IF

Ta'if was the centre of the worship of ***al-Lat***, the idol called "the Lady of Ta'if". The Qur'an mentions al-Lat together with al-'Uzza and Manat, and refutes the idolaters' belief in them (An-Najm 53:19–23).

For Thaqif, accepting tawhid meant abandoning the idol that was the pride and a source of income for their city. This helps us understand why their rejection was so harsh. According to Wikipedia and the books of sirah, the idol of al-Lat was destroyed after Thaqif embraced Islam in the ninth year of the Hijrah.

Source: Wikipedia, "Taif".

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SIRAH NOTE: FROM REJECTION TO ACCEPTANCE

Ta'if appears three times in the sirah: in the tenth year of prophethood, he came alone with Zayd and was driven out; in the eighth year of the Hijrah (630 CE), after the Battle of Hunayn, the Muslim army besieged Ta'if but did not take it; and in the ninth year of the Hijrah, a delegation of Thaqif came to Madinah themselves to embrace Islam.

The history books mention that after the death of the Messenger ﷺ, when many Arab tribes apostatised,

Thaqif remained firm in Islam. The city that rejected most harshly finally became one of the firmest in defending its faith.

LESSON

Thaqif's rejection was not because they did not understand, but because they were bound by interests and pride. A caller to Allah needs to understand the background of those he calls — and stay patient, for even the hardest heart can change by Allah's leave.

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TRACES OF HISTORY: TA'IF AND MAKKAH IN THE HISTORICAL RECORD

Few physical traces remain from the years described in this eBook. Even so, the areas of Ta'if and Makkah hold some solid historical records. This chapter includes two of them, and clearly marks what rests only on tradition.

THE INSCRIPTION OF MU'AWIYAH'S DAM AT TA'IF (58 AH)

About ***9.6 km*** from Ta'if stands an old dam known as ***Mu'awiyah's Dam*** (also called Sadd Saysad). On a large granite rock at the foot of the mountain, to the right of the dam face, is carved a six-line inscription in dotted Kufic script, measuring about 130 × 70 cm.

The inscription states that the dam belongs to ***Mu'awiyah, Commander of the Believers***, built by Allah's leave in the year ***58 AH (678 CE)***, and ends with a prayer asking forgiveness and strength for him. It was published by G. C. Miles in the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* in 1948. According to Saudipedia, scholars regard it as ***the earliest dated Arabic inscription with dotted letters*** on a building of the Islamic era — an important witness to the development of Arabic writing.

Sources: Saudipedia, "The Inscription of the Dam of Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan" (Arabic); Islamic Awareness, "Inscription On The Dam Built By Caliph Mu'awiya, 58 AH".

> **HISTORY NOTE: WHAT DOES IT HAVE TO DO WITH THIS SERIES?**
>
> This inscription was made about ***sixty years*** after the Messenger ﷺ was driven out of Ta'if. It is ***not*** direct evidence of the events in this eBook, and we make no such claim.
>
> Yet it shows the great change that took place: the city that once pelted him with stones became, within two generations, part of a Muslim state that built public works for its people — and Arabic writing, once rarely used, was now neatly carved in the name of a Muslim ruler.

AL-HAJUN: THE CEMETERY OF JANNAT AL-MU'ALLA

Khadijah رضى الله عنها was buried at al-Hajun, the old cemetery of Makkah now known as ***Jannat al-Mu'alla***. According to Madain Project, tradition holds that Abu Talib and 'Abd al-Muttalib, his grandfather, are also buried there. The structures over the graves in this cemetery were demolished in 1925; today the area is enclosed by a long white wall, and its graves are marked only by unnamed stones.

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NOTE: BETWEEN TRADITION AND NARRATION

The books of sirah state that Khadijah was buried at al-Hajun. However, the ***exact position*** of her grave and of the other graves in Jannat al-Mu'alla cannot be determined today, since there are no names. Identifying particular graves rests only on local tradition.

The sunnah of visiting graves is to remember death and to pray for the Muslims buried there. An authentic Hadith also shows that he visited his mother's grave to take a lesson from it (Sahih Muslim 976), as mentioned in Part 1.

Source: Madain Project, "Jannat ul-Mu'alla".

LESSON

Solid history helps us appreciate the sirah more deeply, but we must be honest in distinguishing certain evidence from tradition that cannot yet be confirmed. What matters most is not knowing where a grave lies, but inheriting the faith and sacrifice of the person buried in it.

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PEOPLE IN THIS SERIES

The following tables list the main figures in this eBook — those who protected, those who dared to speak out, and those who rejected. The source of each item is given; information from the books of sirah is marked "books of sirah".

FAMILY AND PROTECTORS

PERSON	ROLE IN THIS SERIES	SOURCE
Abu Talib ibn ʻAbd al-Muttalib	His uncle and protector; died without saying the shahadah.	Sahih al-Bukhari 3884, 3883
Khadijah bint Khuwaylid	His wife, who bore the boycott with him; died three years before the Hijrah.	Sahih al-Bukhari 3896, 3818
Sawdah bint Zamʻah	A widowed emigrant whom he married after Khadijah.	Books of sirah
Zayd ibn Harithah	Accompanied him to Ta'if and tried to shield him.	Books of sirah
Hakim ibn Hizam	Quietly carried food to his aunt Khadijah; embraced Islam at the conquest of Makkah.	Books of sirah
Abu Bakr al-Siddiq	Pressured until he set out to emigrate, then returned under the protection of Ibn al-Dughunnah.	Sahih al-Bukhari 3905

THE FIVE WHO ANNULLED THE BOYCOTT

PERSON	ROLE IN THIS SERIES	SOURCE
Hisham ibn ʻAmr	Started the pact to annul the boycott; sent food by night.	Books of sirah
Zuhayr ibn Abi Umayyah	Stood up in the Quraysh assembly to oppose the boycott.	Books of sirah
Al-Mutʻim ibn ʻAdi	Helped annul the boycott; later protected him on his return from Ta'if.	Books of sirah; Sahih al-Bukhari 3139
Abu al-Bakhtari ibn Hisham	Defended Hakim ibn Hizam against Abu Jahl; helped annul the boycott.	Books of sirah
Zamʻah ibn al-Aswad	One of the five who annulled the boycott.	Books of sirah

THE OPPONENTS

PERSON	ROLE IN THIS SERIES	SOURCE
Abu Jahl (ʻAmr ibn Hisham)	Backed the boycott, blocked food from reaching them, and opposed its annulment.	Books of sirah

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PERSON	ROLE IN THIS SERIES	SOURCE
Abu Lahab	The only member of Banu Hashim who sided with Quraysh.	Books of sirah
Ibn ‘Abd Yalil ibn ‘Abd Kulal	The leader of Ta’if who rejected his offer.	Sahih al-Bukhari 3231
Mas‘ud and Habib (brothers of ‘Abd Yalil)	Thaqif leaders who also rejected him harshly.	Books of sirah
‘Utbah and Shaybah ibn Rabi‘ah	Owners of the garden where he sheltered; later killed at the Battle of Badr.	Books of sirah

LESSON

In this series we meet relatives who stayed loyal though they had not yet believed, outsiders who dared to stand for justice, and leaders who rejected out of arrogance. A person is measured not by blood ties or rank, but by his stance towards truth and justice.

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TIMELINE: SIRAH AND THE WORLD

The following table places the events of this eBook alongside major world events of the same period. The Common Era years are approximate; historians and sirah scholars differ over the exact dates of some events.

YEAR (APPROXIMATE)	IN MAKKAH AND TA'IF	IN THE WORLD AROUND
Muharram, 7th year of prophethood (around 617 CE)	The boycott pact at Khayf Banu Kinanah; Banu Hashim move into Shi'b Abi Talib (Sahih al-Bukhari 1590; books of sirah).	The Roman–Persian war continues; Persia has taken Syria and Jerusalem (Part 4).
618 CE	Banu Hashim still besieged.	The Tang dynasty is founded in China.
618–621 CE	—	Persia conquers Egypt; Alexandria falls around 619 CE.
10th year of prophethood (around 619 CE)	The boycott is annulled; Abu Talib and Khadijah die — three years before the Hijrah (Sahih al-Bukhari 3896, 3884).	—
After Khadijah	Marriage to Sawdah bint Zam'ah (books of sirah).	—
Shawwal, 10th year (around 619 CE)	The journey to Ta'if; the jinn at Nakhlah; return under al-Mut'im's protection (Sahih al-Bukhari 3231; books of sirah).	—
622 CE	The Hijrah to Madinah (Part 7).	Emperor Heraclius launches his counter-offensive against Persia.

Sources: Wikipedia, "Byzantine–Sasanian War of 602–628"; Wikipedia, "Tang dynasty"; Wikipedia, "Sasanian conquest of Egypt".

SIRAH NOTE: WHO DIED FIRST?

Authentic Hadith says only that Khadijah died three years before the Hijrah (Sahih al-Bukhari 3896), and that Abu Talib died while he was still in Makkah (Sahih al-Bukhari 3884). The books of sirah agree that both died in the same year, but differ over who died first and how long apart they were.

The same applies to the date of the journey to Ta'if: Ibn Sa'd places it in Shawwal of the tenth year of prophethood. Differences like these do not affect the essence of the story, and we need not settle what the authentic sources leave unsettled.

As the Messenger ﷺ lost his two main supporters and was driven out of Ta'if, the world was watching Persia advance, taking province after province from Rome, while in the far east a new dynasty was rising in China. No one imagined that the man walking home from Ta'if with bleeding feet would carry a message that would light up the world.

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LESSON

The personal sorrow of the Messenger ﷺ came at a time when the world was in turmoil. History teaches that real strength is not measured by empires and armies, but by firmness of faith when all worldly support seems to have vanished.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Here are questions often asked about the boycott, the Year of Sorrow and the journey to Ta'if, with short answers based on the sources in this eBook.

1. WHY WERE MEMBERS OF BANU HASHIM WHO HAD NOT EMBRACED ISLAM ALSO BOYCOTTED?

Because the boycott was aimed at the clan that protected him, not only at individual Muslims. An authentic Hadith says Quraysh swore against Banu Hashim and Banu al-Muttalib until they handed over the Messenger ﷺ (Sahih al-Bukhari 1590).

2. HOW LONG DID THE BOYCOTT LAST?

According to the books of sirah, about three years — from Muharram of the seventh year to the tenth year of prophethood.

3. WAS ABU LAHAB ALSO IN THE VALLEY?

No. According to the books of sirah, Abu Lahab was the only member of Banu Hashim who chose to side with Quraysh.

4. WHO DIED FIRST, ABU TALIB OR KHADIJAH?

Authentic Hadith does not settle it. What is certain is that Khadijah died three years before the Hijrah (Sahih al-Bukhari 3896), and both died in the same year according to the books of sirah. Sirah scholars differ over the order.

5. WHY IS THAT YEAR CALLED THE "YEAR OF SORROW"?

Because in that year he lost the two people who had most protected and supported him: Abu Talib outside the home, and Khadijah within it. The name is well known in the books of sirah.

6. MAY WE SEEK FORGIVENESS FOR RELATIVES WHO DIED IN DISBELIEF?

No. After he said he would keep seeking forgiveness for Abu Talib, Allah revealed the prohibition on seeking forgiveness for idolaters, even close relatives (At-Tawbah 9:113; Sahih al-Bukhari 3884). Yet we may remember and appreciate their good deeds, just as he remembered the kindness of al-Mut'im (Sahih al-Bukhari 3139).

7. HOW FAR IS TA'IF FROM MAKKAH, AND WHO WENT WITH HIM?

About 63 km in a straight line, or about 87 km by road today. In his time the journey took two to three days on foot. According to the books of sirah, he was accompanied by Zayd ibn Harithah رضى الله عنه.

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8. WHAT IS THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE IDOL AL-LAT AND TA'IF?

Al-Lat was the main idol of Ta'if, worshipped by Thaqif, and is mentioned in An-Najm 53:19. It was destroyed after Thaqif embraced Islam in the ninth year of the Hijrah.

9. WHERE IS QARN AL-THA'ALIB?

This place is mentioned in an authentic Hadith as where he came to himself after returning from Ta'if (Sahih al-Bukhari 3231). According to Yaqut al-Hamawi, it is another name for Qarn al-Manazil, the miqat for the people of Najd.

10. MAY THE SUPPLICATION "O ALLAH, TO YOU I COMPLAIN OF THE WEAKNESS OF MY STRENGTH…" BE USED?

This supplication is very well known, but its chain was graded weak by al-Albani (see the chapter «The Supplication at Ta'if: An Assessment»). One may complain to Allah in one's own words with a similar meaning, but should not attribute them to the Messenger ﷺ as an authentic narration.

11. IS THE EVENT OF THE JINN AT NAKHLAH THE SAME AS THE ONE IN SURAH AL-JINN?

An authentic Hadith says the jinn listened to his recitation at Nakhlah while he was leading the Companions in the Fajr prayer, and then Surah Al-Jinn 72:1 was revealed (Sahih al-Bukhari 773). The books of sirah, however, link Al-Ahqaf 46:29–30 with the journey back from Ta'if. Scholars differ over whether this was one event or several different ones.

12. WHY DID HE ACCEPT THE PROTECTION OF AL-MUT'IM, WHO HAD NOT EMBRACED ISLAM?

Because the system of jiwar (protection) was a respected custom in Arab society, and accepting it did not compromise belief. Abu Bakr too once lived under the jiwar of Ibn al-Dughunnah (Sahih al-Bukhari 3905). Islam itself preserved this good value (At-Tawbah 9:6).

LESSON

Every answer grounded in authentic sources strengthens our certainty and keeps us away from baseless stories. The sirah of the Messenger ﷺ in these years of sorrow is not merely history, but a guide for every Muslim tested with loss and rejection.

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LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

LESSONS FROM THIS EBOOK

First: No injustice lasts forever. The boycott sworn at Khayf Banu Kinanah finally collapsed (Sahih al-Bukhari 1590).

Second: Value people of conscience. Five men of Quraysh ended the boycott; al-Mut'im's service was remembered (Sahih al-Bukhari 3139).

Third: The word of tawhid is the key. He asked only one word of Abu Talib (Sahih al-Bukhari 3884).

Fourth: Guidance belongs to Allah. Our task is to convey and to pray (28:56).

Fifth: Loyalty to a spouse. Khadijah was remembered all his life (Sahih al-Bukhari 3818).

Sixth: Do not stop at a dead end. He sought support in Ta'if when Makkah was closed.

Seventh: Mercy over revenge. "I hope Allah will bring forth from their descendants…" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3231).

Eighth: Success in da'wah is not measured by a few people. The jinn listened when people refused (46:29–30).

Ninth: With hardship comes ease. A promise repeated twice (94:5–6).

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TIMELINE SUMMARY

TIME (APPROX.)	EVENT AND SOURCE
Muharram, 7th year (~617 CE)	The boycott pact (Sahih al-Bukhari 1590; sirah)
617–619 CE	Banu Hashim besieged in Shi'b Abi Talib (sirah)
10th year (~619 CE)	Boycott ended by five men of Quraysh (sirah)
619 CE	Deaths of Khadijah (Sahih al-Bukhari 3896) and Abu Talib (Sahih al-Bukhari 3884)
After Khadijah	Marriage to Sawdah bint Zam'ah (sirah)
619 CE	Journey to Ta'if (Sahih al-Bukhari 3231)
Returning from Ta'if	The jinn at Nakhlah (46:29; sirah)
Returning from Ta'if	Protection of al-Mut'im ibn 'Adi (sirah)

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CONCLUSION

From the besieged valley of Shi'b Abi Talib, to the home that lost Khadijah, to Abu Talib's side at his last moment, to the stony road from Ta'if — the Messenger of Allah ﷺ went through his hardest years with ***patience and mercy***. In sha Allah, the series **The Prophet's Sirah** will continue with ***al-Isra' wal-Mi'raj***, the meeting with the people of Yathrib and ***the Pledges of al-'Aqabah*** — the ease Allah prepared after this hardship. And Allah knows best.

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PART SIX

The Night Journey

The Prophet's Sirah — Series 6

The Journey to Jerusalem and the Seven Heavens, the Gift of Prayer, and the Pledges of al-'Aqabah
According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith

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THE NIGHT JOURNEY

The fifth book of The Prophet's Sirah ended with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ re-entering Makkah under the protection of a polytheist, after the boycott, the loss of Abu Talib and Khadijah, and the stoning at Ta'if. When the earth felt narrow, Allah opened ***the heavens***. This sixth eBook tells of ***the Isra'*** — the night journey from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa — and ***the Mi'raj*** — his ascent through the seven heavens to Sidrat al-Muntaha, where ***the five daily prayers*** were enjoined.

The second part of this eBook tells of the ease on earth that followed: the meeting with a few men from ***Yathrib***, the two ***Pledges of al-'Aqabah***, and the sending of ***Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr*** as Islam's first envoy — opening the way to the hijrah.

The story of the Isra' and Mi'raj is long and has many reports, some authentic and some weak or fabricated. This eBook ***holds to the Qur'an and authentic Hadith***, especially the hadith of Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah in Sahih al-Bukhari, and clearly marks unauthentic stories.

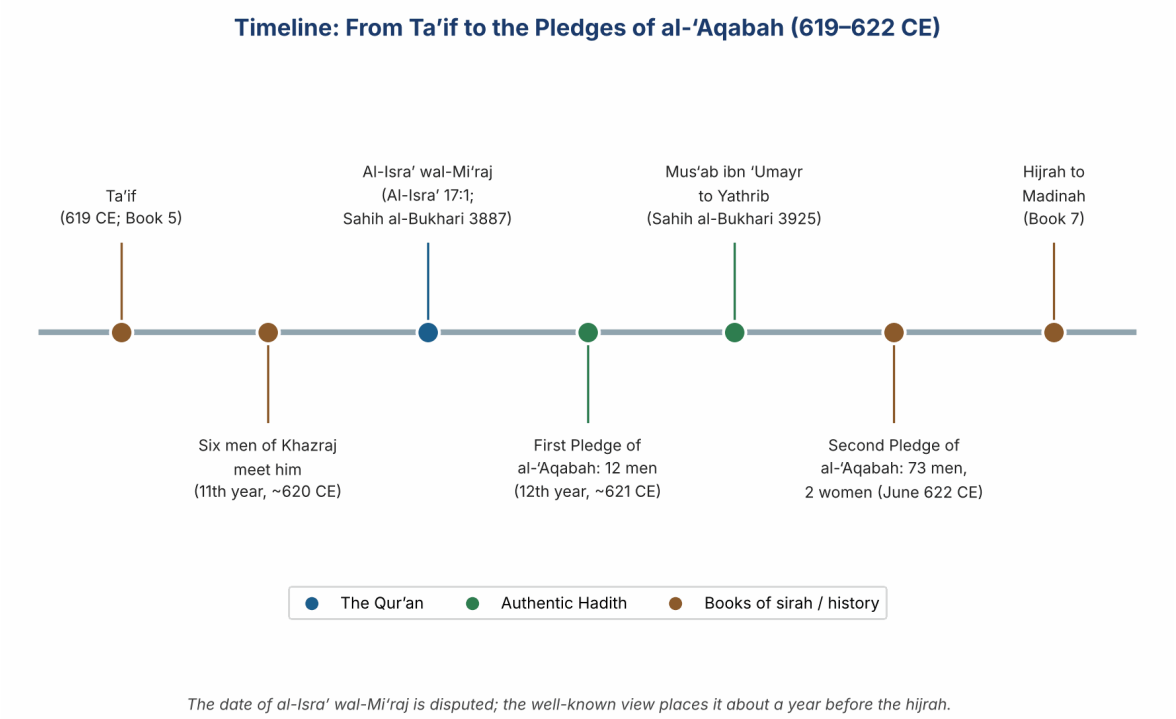


Figure 1: Timeline from Ta'if to the Pledges of al-'Aqabah.

Note: The Qur'anic translation in this eBook is Sahih International. The grade of every Hadith is stated in its box. Information from the books of sirah is placed in brown "Sirah Note" boxes, and historical facts come with source links.

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AFTER TA'IF: SEEKING HELPERS

After Ta'if, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not give up. In every pilgrimage season, when the Arab tribes came to Makkah and to markets such as 'Ukaz, Majannah and Dhu al-Majaz, he went from tent to tent, offering Islam and asking for protection to convey the message.

Jabir ibn 'Abdullah رضى الله عنهما narrated that he presented himself to people at the halting places and said: ***"Is there a man who will take me to his people? For Quraysh have prevented me from conveying the words of my Lord"*** (Sunan Abi Dawud 4734, authentic).

> **SIRAH NOTE: THE TRIBES THAT REFUSED**
>
> The books of sirah say he approached tribes such as ***Kindah, Kalb, Banu 'Amir ibn Sa'sa'ah and Banu Hanifah***. Most refused; some politely, some harshly. Banu 'Amir is said to have agreed on condition that leadership pass to them after him, but he replied that the matter belongs to Allah, who places it where He wills.
>
> Abu Lahab is said to have followed him, telling people not to believe him.

The lesson: da'wah does not turn into ***bargaining for power***. He refused conditional support, though he badly needed it.

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WHEN DID THE ISRA' AND MI'RAJ TAKE PLACE?

The Qur'an and authentic Hadith ***do not give a date*** for the Isra' and Mi'raj. For this reason, the sirah scholars differ widely:

VIEW	DETAILS
27 Rajab	The popular view, celebrated in many countries; not based on an authentic report.
About a year before the hijrah	The view of many sirah scholars; Wikipedia equates it with about 621 CE.
Rabi' al-Awwal or Ramadan	Mentioned by Ibn Sa'd and others.
Before Khadijah's death	Some scholars, since prayer was obligatory while Khadijah was alive.

Source: Wikipedia, "Isra' and Mi'raj".

More important than the date is ***its lessons***. Scholars remind us that there is no authentic special worship for the night of 27 Rajab. Remembering this event by studying the sirah and guarding the prayer is the best way to honour it.

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"EXALTED IS HE…"

The Qur'an records the Isra' in the first verse of the surah named after it:

SURAH AL-ISRA' 17:1

سُبۡحَٰنَ ٱلَّذِيٓ أَسۡرَىٰ بِعَبۡدِهِۦ لَيۡلٗا مِّنَ ٱلۡمَسۡجِدِ ٱلۡحَرَامِ إِلَى ٱلۡمَسۡجِدِ ٱلۡأَقۡصَا
ٱلَّذِي بَٰرَكۡنَا حَوۡلَهُۥ لِنُرِيَهُۥ مِنۡ ءَايَٰتِنَآۚ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلۡبَصِيرُ ١

Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/17:1

EXPLANATION OF VERSE 17:1

The verse begins with ***"Exalted is He who took His Servant by night"***. Ibn Kathir explains that Allah begins with ***tasbih*** — declaring His own perfection — because this event ***surpasses human ability***; only Allah could do it. The word ***"His servant"*** indicates the journey involved ***body and soul***, since "servant" refers to both. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 17:1.

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PHRASE IN THE VERSE	LESSON
"Exalted is He"	This event is a miracle; do not measure it by reason alone.
"His servant"	The noblest title of the Messenger ﷺ is 'servant of Allah'.
"by night"	It happened within part of a single night.
"from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa"	Linking two sacred mosques; Islam is heir to the message of the prophets.
"whose surroundings We have blessed"	The land of Sham and Palestine is blessed.
"to show him of Our signs"	The purpose: to strengthen the Messenger's certainty.

The lesson: true honour is ***being a servant of Allah***. On the most honoured night of his life, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is called by the title "servant".

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A CHEST OPENED AND FILLED WITH FAITH

The hadith of Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah رضى الله عنه begins with an astonishing event. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was lying in ***al-Hatim*** (al-Hijr), beside the Ka'bah, when the angel came and ***opened his chest***, took out his heart, washed it in a golden basin full of faith, and returned it (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887).

The same event had happened when he was a child among Banu Sa'd (Book 1; Sahih Muslim 162). Scholars explain that this second opening was ***preparation*** for the great journey: to witness the heavens and receive the command of prayer directly.

THE HEART AS THE SEAT OF FAITH

His heart was washed and filled with ***faith and wisdom***. This reminds us that the most important preparation for any great task is ***purifying the heart***. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said that in the body there is a lump of flesh; if it is sound, the whole body is sound — it is the heart (Sahih al-Bukhari 52).

This event is a matter of ***the unseen*** to be believed as reported, without forcing reason to explain it by the measures of ordinary medicine.

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AL-BURAQ

Authentic hadith describes al-Buraq as ***a white mount***, ***smaller than a mule and larger than a donkey***, that placed each step ***as far as its sight reached*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887). Scholars link the name "Buraq" to ***barq*** (lightning), for its speed.

DEPICTION	STATUS
White, between a mule and a donkey	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887)
Its stride as far as its sight	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887)
Tied to a ring in Jerusalem	Authentic (Sahih Muslim 162)
A winged horse with a woman's face	No basis in authentic hadith; a later artistic depiction

The widespread pictures of al-Buraq as a winged horse with a human head ***have no basis in authentic hadith***. They are later artistic creations. It is enough for us to believe in the description given by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself.

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IN JERUSALEM: LEADING THE PROPHETS

The hadith of Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه in Sahih Muslim adds details of the Isra': he rode al-Buraq until he reached ***Bayt al-Maqdis***, then ***tied it to the ring*** the prophets used to tie their mounts to. Then he entered the mosque and ***prayed two rak'ahs*** (Sahih Muslim 162).

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that he said: ***"I found myself among a group of prophets… Then the time of prayer came, and I led them in prayer"*** (Sahih Muslim 172).

THE MEANING OF LEADING THE PROPHETS

Scholars explain that his leading the prophets shows ***the leadership of his message*** over all earlier messages. The religion of the prophets is one — ***tawhid*** — and Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is their ***seal*** (Al-Ahzab 33:40).

The lesson: Muslims are ***heirs*** of all the prophets — Ibrahim, Musa, 'Isa and others عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. So love for Jerusalem and the prophets of the Children of Israel is part of a Muslim's faith.

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AL-MASJID AL-AQSA

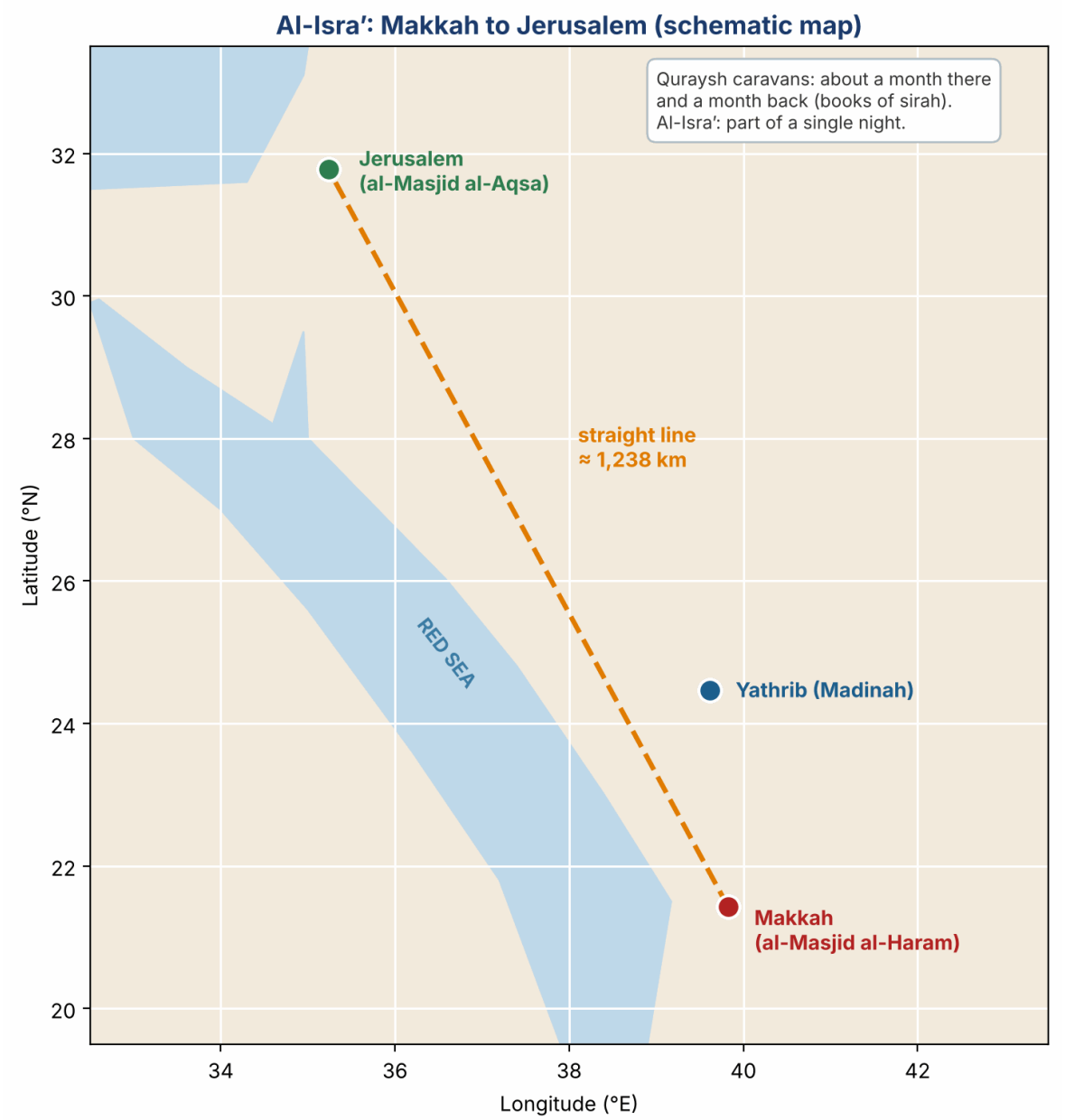


Figure 2: The Isra' from Makkah to Jerusalem (schematic map).

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FACTS ABOUT AL-MASJID AL-AQSA

MATTER	DETAILS
Area	"Al-Masjid al-Aqsa" refers to the whole walled compound (al-Haram ash-Sharif), about 14.4 hectares.
The al-Qibli Mosque	The mosque building on the south side; holds about 5,000 worshippers.
The Dome of the Rock	Built in the Umayyad era ('Abd al-Malik), decades after the Prophet's death ﷺ.
Standing	The third holiest place in Islam after Makkah and Madinah.
The first qiblah	Muslims prayed towards it for about 16 or 17 months after the hijrah (Sahih al-Bukhari 40).

Source: Wikipedia, "Al-Aqsa Mosque"; Sahih al-Bukhari 40.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also named al-Masjid al-Aqsa as one of ***three mosques*** to which travel for worship is encouraged, together with al-Masjid al-Haram and the Prophet's Mosque (Sahih al-Bukhari 1189).

The lesson: the Isra' bound the hearts of Muslims to ***Jerusalem*** forever. Defending al-Aqsa and praying for its wellbeing is part of the legacy of this event.

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THE MI'RAJ: THE HADITH OF MALIK IBN SA'SA'AH

The most complete hadith on the Mi'raj in Sahih al-Bukhari is the report of ***Anas ibn Malik*** from ***Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah*** رضى الله عنهما. It tells of the journey from the Ka'bah to the seventh heaven, Sidrat al-Muntaha and the enjoining of prayer:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3887

حَدَّثَنَا هُدْبَةُ بْنُ خَالِدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا هَمَّامُ بْنُ يَحْيَى، حَدَّثَنَا قَتَادَةُ، عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ، عَنْ مَالِكِ بْنِ صَعْصَعَةَ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ أَنَّ نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم حَدَّثَهُمْ عَنْ لَيْلَةِ أُسْرِيَ بِهِ «بَيْنَمَا أَنَا فِي الْحَطِيمِ ـ وَرُبَّمَا قَالَ فِي الْحِجْرِ ـ مُضْطَجِعًا، إِذْ أَتَانِي آتٍ فَقَدَّ ـ قَالَ وَسَمِعْتُهُ يَقُولُ فَشَقَّ ـ مَا بَيْنَ هَذِهِ إِلَى هَذِهِ ـ فَقُلْتُ لِلْجَارُودِ وَهْوَ إِلَى جَنْبِي مَا يَعْنِي بِهِ قَالَ مِنْ ثُغْرَةِ نَحْرِهِ إِلَى شِعْرَتِهِ، وَسَمِعْتُهُ يَقُولُ مِنْ قَصِّهِ إِلَى شِعْرَتِهِ ـ فَاسْتَخْرَجَ قَلْبِي، ثُمَّ أُتِيتُ بِطَسْتٍ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ مَمْلُوءَةٍ إِيمَانًا، فَغُسِلَ قَلْبِي ثُمَّ حُشِيَ، ثُمَّ أُوتِيتُ بِدَابَّةٍ دُونَ الْبَغْلِ وَفَوْقَ الْحِمَارِ أَبْيَضَ». ـ فَقَالَ لَهُ الْجَارُودُ هُوَ الْبُرَاقُ يَا أَبَا حَمْزَةَ قَالَ أَنَسٌ نَعَمْ، يَضَعُ خَطْوَهُ عِنْدَ أَقْصَى طَرْفِهِ ـ «فَحُمِلْتُ عَلَيْهِ، فَانْطَلَقَ بِي جِبْرِيلُ حَتَّى أَتَى السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا فَاسْتَفْتَحَ، فَقِيلَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ. قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ. قِيلَ وَقَدْ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ نَعَمْ. قِيلَ مَرْحَبًا بِهِ، فَنِعْمَ الْمَجِيءُ جَاءَ فَفَتَحَ، فَلَمَّا خَلَصْتُ، فَإِذَا فِيهَا آدَمُ، فَقَالَ هَذَا أَبُوكَ آدَمُ فَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِ. فَسَلَّمْتُ عَلَيْهِ فَرَدَّ السَّلاَمَ ثُمَّ قَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِالاِبْنِ الصَّالِحِ وَالنَّبِيِّ الصَّالِحِ. ثُمَّ صَعِدَ حَتَّى أَتَى السَّمَاءَ الثَّانِيَةَ فَاسْتَفْتَحَ، قِيلَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ. قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ. قِيلَ وَقَدْ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ نَعَمْ. قِيلَ مَرْحَبًا بِهِ فَنِعْمَ الْمَجِيءُ جَاءَ. فَفَتَحَ، فَلَمَّا خَلَصْتُ، إِذَا يَحْيَى وَعِيسَى، وَهُمَا ابْنَا الْخَالَةِ قَالَ هَذَا يَحْيَى وَعِيسَى فَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِمَا. فَسَلَّمْتُ فَرَدَّا، ثُمَّ قَالاَ مَرْحَبًا بِالأَخِ الصَّالِحِ وَالنَّبِيِّ الصَّالِحِ. ثُمَّ صَعِدَ بِي إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الثَّالِثَةِ، فَاسْتَفْتَحَ قِيلَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ. قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ. قِيلَ وَقَدْ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ نَعَمْ. قِيلَ مَرْحَبًا بِهِ، فَنِعْمَ الْمَجِيءُ جَاءَ. فَفُتِحَ، فَلَمَّا خَلَصْتُ إِذَا يُوسُفُ. قَالَ هَذَا يُوسُفُ فَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِ. فَسَلَّمْتُ عَلَيْهِ فَرَدَّ، ثُمَّ قَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِالأَخِ الصَّالِحِ وَالنَّبِيِّ الصَّالِحِ، ثُمَّ صَعِدَ بِي حَتَّى أَتَى السَّمَاءَ الرَّابِعَةَ، فَاسْتَفْتَحَ، قِيلَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ. قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ. قِيلَ

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أَوَقَدْ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ نَعَمْ. قِيلَ مَرْحَبًا بِهِ، فَنِعْمَ الْمَجِيءُ جَاءَ. فَفُتِحَ، فَلَمَّا خَلَصْتُ إِلَى إِدْرِيسَ قَالَ هَذَا إِدْرِيسُ فَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِ. فَسَلَّمْتُ عَلَيْهِ فَرَدَّ ثُمَّ قَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِالأَخِ الصَّالِحِ وَالنَّبِيِّ الصَّالِحِ. ثُمَّ صَعِدَ بِي حَتَّى أَتَى السَّمَاءَ الْخَامِسَةَ، فَاسْتَفْتَحَ، قِيلَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ. قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ صلى الله عليه وسلم. قِيلَ وَقَدْ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ نَعَمْ. قِيلَ مَرْحَبًا بِهِ، فَنِعْمَ الْمَجِيءُ جَاءَ. فَلَمَّا خَلَصْتُ فَإِذَا هَارُونُ قَالَ هَذَا هَارُونُ فَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِ. فَسَلَّمْتُ عَلَيْهِ فَرَدَّ ثُمَّ قَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِالأَخِ الصَّالِحِ وَالنَّبِيِّ الصَّالِحِ. ثُمَّ صَعِدَ بِي حَتَّى أَتَى السَّمَاءَ السَّادِسَةَ، فَاسْتَفْتَحَ، قِيلَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ. قِيلَ مَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ. قِيلَ وَقَدْ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ نَعَمْ. قَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِهِ، فَنِعْمَ الْمَجِيءُ جَاءَ، فَلَمَّا خَلَصْتُ، فَإِذَا مُوسَى قَالَ هَذَا مُوسَى فَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِ، فَسَلَّمْتُ عَلَيْهِ فَرَدَّ ثُمَّ قَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِالأَخِ الصَّالِحِ وَالنَّبِيِّ الصَّالِحِ. فَلَمَّا تَجَاوَزْتُ بَكَى، قِيلَ لَهُ مَا يُبْكِيكَ قَالَ أَبْكِي لأَنَّ غُلاَمًا بُعِثَ بَعْدِي، يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مِنْ أُمَّتِهِ أَكْثَرُ مَنْ يَدْخُلُهَا مِنْ أُمَّتِي. ثُمَّ صَعِدَ بِي إِلَى السَّمَاءِ السَّابِعَةِ، فَاسْتَفْتَحَ جِبْرِيلُ، قِيلَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ. قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ. قِيلَ وَقَدْ بُعِثَ إِلَيْهِ. قَالَ نَعَمْ. قَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِهِ، فَنِعْمَ الْمَجِيءُ جَاءَ فَلَمَّا خَلَصْتُ، فَإِذَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ قَالَ هَذَا أَبُوكَ فَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِ. قَالَ فَسَلَّمْتُ عَلَيْهِ، فَرَدَّ السَّلاَمَ قَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِالاِبْنِ الصَّالِحِ وَالنَّبِيِّ الصَّالِحِ. ثُمَّ رُفِعَتْ لِي سِدْرَةُ الْمُنْتَهَى، فَإِذَا نَبِقُهَا مِثْلُ قِلاَلِ هَجَرَ، وَإِذَا وَرَقُهَا مِثْلُ آذَانِ الْفِيَلَةِ قَالَ هَذِهِ سِدْرَةُ الْمُنْتَهَى، وَإِذَا أَرْبَعَةُ أَنْهَارٍ نَهْرَانِ بَاطِنَانِ، وَنَهْرَانِ ظَاهِرَانِ. فَقُلْتُ مَا هَذَانِ يَا جِبْرِيلُ قَالَ أَمَّا الْبَاطِنَانِ، فَنَهَرَانِ فِي الْجَنَّةِ، وَأَمَّا الظَّاهِرَانِ فَالنِّيلُ وَالْفُرَاتُ. ثُمَّ رُفِعَ لِي الْبَيْتُ الْمَعْمُورُ، ثُمَّ أُتِيتُ بِإِنَاءٍ مِنْ خَمْرٍ، وَإِنَاءٍ مِنْ لَبَنٍ وَإِنَاءٍ مِنْ عَسَلٍ، فَأَخَذْتُ اللَّبَنَ، فَقَالَ هِيَ الْفِطْرَةُ أَنْتَ عَلَيْهَا وَأُمَّتُكَ. ثُمَّ فُرِضَتْ عَلَيَّ الصَّلَوَاتُ خَمْسِينَ صَلاَةً كُلَّ يَوْمٍ. فَرَجَعْتُ فَمَرَرْتُ عَلَى مُوسَى، فَقَالَ بِمَا أُمِرْتَ قَالَ أُمِرْتُ بِخَمْسِينَ صَلاَةً كُلَّ يَوْمٍ. قَالَ إِنَّ أُمَّتَكَ لاَ تَسْتَطِيعُ خَمْسِينَ صَلاَةً كُلَّ يَوْمٍ، وَإِنِّي وَاللَّهِ قَدْ جَرَّبْتُ النَّاسَ قَبْلَكَ، وَعَالَجْتُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَشَدَّ الْمُعَالَجَةِ، فَارْجِعْ إِلَى رَبِّكَ فَاسْأَلْهُ التَّخْفِيفَ لأُمَّتِكَ. فَرَجَعْتُ، فَوَضَعَ عَنِّي عَشْرًا، فَرَجَعْتُ إِلَى مُوسَى فَقَالَ مِثْلَهُ، فَرَجَعْتُ فَوَضَعَ عَنِّي عَشْرًا، فَرَجَعْتُ إِلَى مُوسَى فَقَالَ مِثْلَهُ، فَرَجَعْتُ فَوَضَعَ عَنِّي عَشْرًا، فَرَجَعْتُ إِلَى مُوسَى فَقَالَ مِثْلَهُ، فَرَجَعْتُ فَأُمِرْتُ بِعَشْرِ

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صَلَوَاتٍ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ، فَرَجَعْتُ فَقَالَ مِثْلَهُ، فَرَجَعْتُ فَأُمِرْتُ بِخَمْسِ صَلَوَاتٍ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ، فَرَجَعْتُ إِلَى مُوسَى، فَقَالَ بِمَا أُمِرْتَ قُلْتُ أُمِرْتُ بِخَمْسِ صَلَوَاتٍ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ. قَالَ إِنَّ أُمَّتَكَ لاَ تَسْتَطِيعُ خَمْسَ صَلَوَاتٍ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ، وَإِنِّي قَدْ جَرَّبْتُ النَّاسَ قَبْلَكَ، وَعَالَجْتُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَشَدَّ الْمُعَالَجَةِ، فَارْجِعْ إِلَى رَبِّكَ فَاسْأَلْهُ التَّخْفِيفَ لأُمَّتِكَ. قَالَ سَأَلْتُ رَبِّي حَتَّى اسْتَحْيَيْتُ، وَلَكِنْ أَرْضَى وَأُسَلِّمُ ـ قَالَ ـ فَلَمَّا جَاوَزْتُ نَادَى مُنَادٍ أَمْضَيْتُ فَرِيضَتِي وَخَفَّفْتُ عَنْ عِبَادِي».

TRANSLATION:

Anas ibn Malik narrated from Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah رضى الله عنهما that the Prophet of Allah ﷺ told them about the night he was taken on the journey: **"While I was lying in al-Hatim — or he said, in al-Hijr — someone came to me and split (my chest) from the base of the throat to below the belly. He took out my heart; then a golden basin full of faith was brought to me, and my heart was washed and filled, then returned. Then a white mount was brought to me, smaller than a mule and larger than a donkey"** — al-Buraq, whose stride reached as far as its sight. **"I was mounted on it, and Jibril set out with me until we reached the lowest heaven. He asked for the gate to be opened. It was asked: 'Who is this?' He said: 'Jibril.' It was asked: 'Who is with you?' He said: 'Muhammad.' It was asked: 'Has he been sent for?' He said: 'Yes.' It was said: 'Welcome to him; how excellent his coming is!' The gate was opened, and there was Adam. Jibril said: 'This is your father Adam; greet him.' I greeted him; he returned the greeting and said: 'Welcome, righteous son and righteous prophet.'"** In the same way he ascended to the second heaven and met ***Yahya and 'Isa*** (two cousins), the third and met ***Yusuf***, the fourth and met ***Idris***, the fifth and met ***Harun***, and the sixth and met ***Musa***; each said: "Welcome, righteous brother and righteous prophet." **"When I passed him, Musa wept. He was asked: 'What makes you weep?' He said: 'I weep because a young man was sent after me, and more of his nation will enter Paradise than of mine.'"** In the seventh heaven he met ***Ibrahim***, who said: "Welcome, righteous son and righteous prophet." **"Then Sidrat al-Muntaha was raised up before me. Its fruits were like the jars of Hajar and its leaves like elephants' ears. There were four rivers: two hidden and two visible. I asked: 'What are these, Jibril?' He said: 'The two hidden are rivers in Paradise, and the two visible are the Nile and the Euphrates.' Then al-Bayt al-Ma'mur was raised up before me. Then a vessel of wine, a vessel of milk and a vessel of honey were brought to me. I took the milk. He said: 'That is the fitrah, on which you and your nation stand.' Then fifty prayers a day were made obligatory upon me."** On the way down, Musa advised him: **"Your nation cannot bear fifty prayers a day. By Allah, I tested people before you and struggled hard with the Children of Israel. Go back to your Lord and ask Him to lighten it for your nation."** He went back again and again, and it was reduced ten by ten, then to ten, then to ***five prayers a day***. Musa advised him again, but he said: **"I have asked my Lord until I feel shy; but I am content and I submit." "When I moved on, a caller called out: 'I have enacted My obligation and lightened (the burden) for My servants.'"**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Hudbah ibn Khalid, from Hammam ibn Yahya, from Qatadah, from Anas ibn Malik, from Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah رضى الله عنهما.

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REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Merits of the Ansar, chapter on al-Mi'raj, Hadith No. 3887. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 164). The translation of the second to sixth heavens is summarised as the wording repeats.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3887

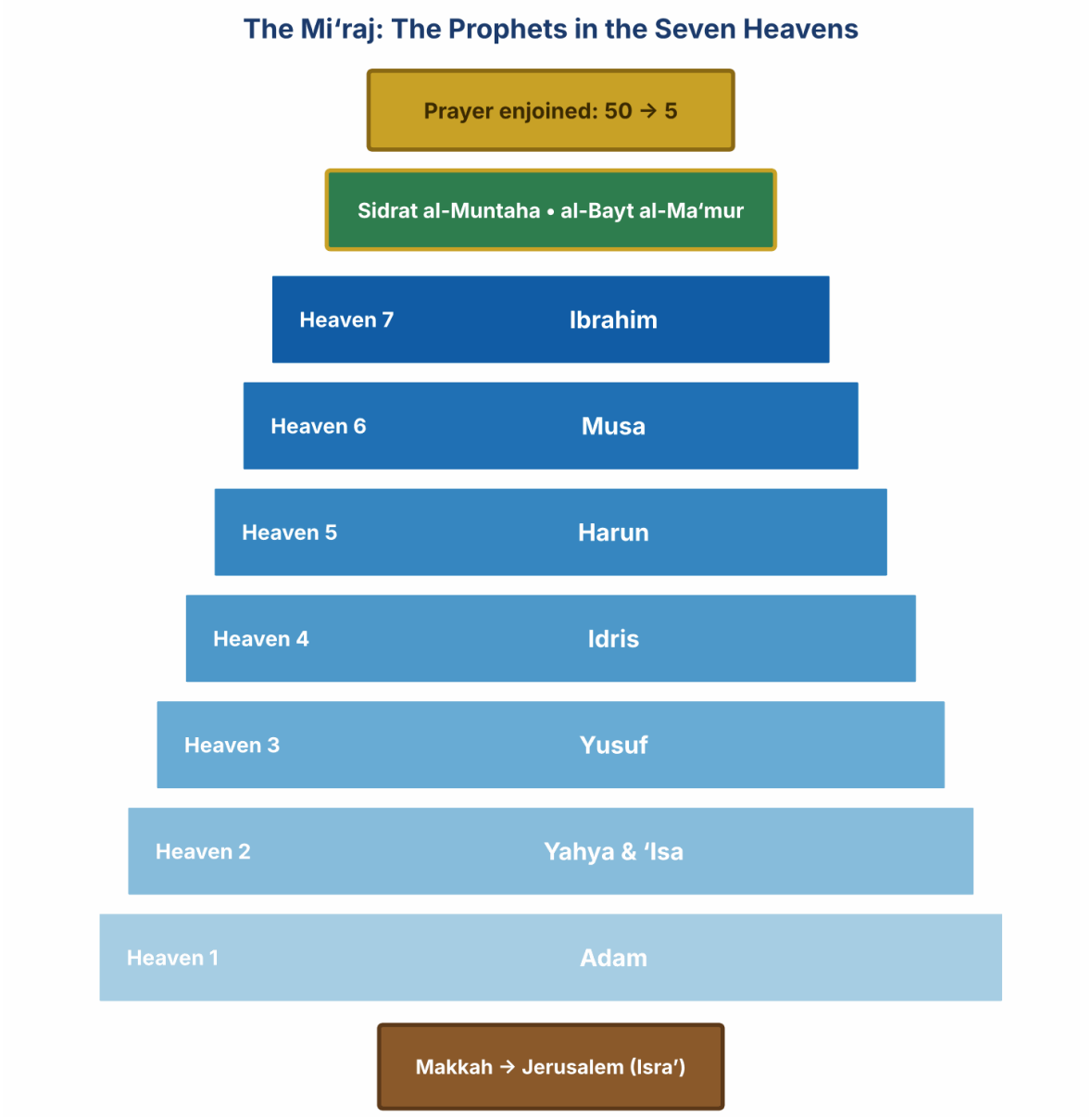
LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Notice ***the etiquette at the gates of heaven***: Jibril asked permission, was asked who he was and who was with him, and the gate opened only after confirmation. Even on the noblest journey, etiquette and permission were observed.

Notice too ***the welcome*** of the prophets: Adam and Ibrahim greeted him as ***"righteous son"***, since he was their descendant; the others greeted him as ***"righteous brother"***. The prophets are one family.

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THE PROPHETS IN THE SEVEN HEAVENS



According to Sahih al-Bukhari 3887 (narration of Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah). This figure is schematic, not a depiction of the unseen.

Figure 3: The prophets met in the seven heavens (schematic).

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Sirah scholars have reflected on the wisdom of meeting each prophet. Some of the explanations below are ***scholarly reflections***, not texts, but they help us understand the continuity of the message:

HEAVEN AND PROPHET	REFLECTION
1 — Adam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Father of mankind; sent out of Paradise, then forgiven — like the Prophet driven from his home.
2 — Yahya and 'Isa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Opposed and persecuted by their own people.
3 — Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Wronged by his brothers, then forgave them.
4 — Idris عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Raised to "a high station" (Maryam 19:57).
5 — Harun عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Beloved by his people; supported his brother in da'wah.
6 — Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	The messenger who struggled most with his people's ways.
7 — Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Father of the prophets; reclining against al-Bayt al-Ma'mur (Sahih Muslim 162).

The lesson: every trial the Messenger of Allah ﷺ faced had been faced by prophets before him. These meetings were ***a consolation*** after the Year of Sorrow.

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THE WEEPING OF PROPHET MUSA

A very moving moment in the Mi'raj hadith is ***the weeping of Prophet Musa*** عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed him: "I weep because a young man was sent after me, and more of his nation will enter Paradise than of mine" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887).

Scholars explain that this weeping was ***not envy***, for prophets are free of it. It was weeping of ***love and sorrow*** for his own people, many of whom rejected him, and a longing for more of his nation to be saved.

MUSA: AN ADVISER TO THE NATION OF MUHAMMAD

Even more remarkable, the same Prophet Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ who wept then ***advised*** the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to go back and ask for the prayers to be lightened — until fifty became five. His experience with the Children of Israel became a mercy for the nation of Muhammad ﷺ.

The lesson: ***the experience of those before us*** is a treasure. Value the advice of those who have walked the road we walk, and do not begrudge others the good they receive.

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SIDRAT AL-MUNTAHA

At the summit of the journey, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ reached ***Sidrat al-Muntaha*** — the lote tree of the utmost boundary, a limit no creature passes. Allah describes it in Surah An-Najm:

SURAH AN-NAJM 53:13–18

وَلَقَدْ رَءَاهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَىٰ ﴿١٣﴾

And he certainly saw him in another descent.

عِندَ سِدْرَةِ ٱلْمُنتَهَىٰ ﴿١٤﴾

At the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary.

عِندَهَا جَنَّةُ ٱلْمَأْوَىٰٓ ﴿١٥﴾

Near it is the Garden of Refuge.

إِذْ يَغْشَى ٱلسِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَىٰ ﴿١٦﴾

When there covered the Lote Tree that which covered [it]?

مَا زَاغَ ٱلْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَىٰ ﴿١٧﴾

The sight [of the Prophet] did not swerve, nor did it transgress [its limit].

لَقَدْ رَأَىٰ مِنْ ءَايَـٰتِ رَبِّهِ ٱلْكُبْرَىٰٓ ﴿١٨﴾

He certainly saw of the greatest signs of his Lord.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/53:13-18

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EXPLANATION OF VERSES 53:13–18

Allah praises the steadiness of his sight: ***"The sight [of the Prophet] did not swerve, nor did it transgress"***. Ibn Kathir explains that his gaze ***did not turn right or left*** nor go beyond what he was commanded — a picture of perfect ***courtesy and obedience*** before the majesty of Allah. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 53:17.

MATTER	DETAILS
Whom he saw (53:13)	According to 'A'ishah and Ibn Mas'ud, he saw Jibril in his true form a second time (Sahih Muslim 177; Sahih al-Bukhari 4856).
The tree	Its fruits like the jars of Hajar, its leaves like elephants' ears (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887).
Covered (53:16)	Covered by colours and things beyond description (Sahih Muslim 162).
The Garden of Refuge (53:15)	The Garden of abode lies near it.
The greatest signs (53:18)	He saw some of the greatest signs of his Lord.

The lesson: ***courtesy*** is a mark of perfection. At the most majestic moment, the gaze of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was controlled — just as a believer must guard his gaze in every situation.

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AL-BAYT AL-MA'MUR AND THE FOUR RIVERS

After Sidrat al-Muntaha, ***al-Bayt al-Ma'mur*** was raised up before him. In another version of the same hadith, Jibril explained: ***"This is al-Bayt al-Ma'mur; every day seventy thousand angels pray in it, and when they leave they never return"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3207).

Ibn Kathir mentions that al-Bayt al-Ma'mur lies ***directly above the Ka'bah*** on earth, and Allah swears by it in Surah At-Tur (52:4). The Ka'bah on earth is the qiblah of mankind; al-Bayt al-Ma'mur in heaven is the place of worship of the angels.

FOUR RIVERS

He also saw ***four rivers*** by Sidrat al-Muntaha: two hidden — rivers of Paradise — and two visible, ***the Nile and the Euphrates***. Scholars explain that this shows ***the blessing*** of these two rivers, and that the origin of their good is from Allah, without denying their known geographical sources on earth.

The lesson: the unseen world is ***vast and full of worship***. If seventy thousand angels worship every day in al-Bayt al-Ma'mur never to return, how small is our worship, and how much we must guard our few prayers.

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MILK, WINE AND THE FITRAH

During the journey, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was offered vessels of drink — ***wine, milk and honey*** — and he chose ***milk***. Jibril said: ***"That is the fitrah, on which you and your nation stand"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887).

In Abu Hurayrah's رضى الله عنه report, Jibril added: ***"Praise be to Allah who guided you to the fitrah. Had you taken the wine, your nation would have gone astray"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3394). The same hadith also describes the appearance of Prophets Musa, 'Isa and Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ as he saw them.

WHAT IS THE FITRAH?

Fitrah is the original pure state on which Allah created mankind (Ar-Rum 30:30). Milk is a drink that is ***pure, nourishing and natural***, a baby's first food; while wine ***ruins the mind***, the source of many evils.

This choice became a symbol of ***the religion of Islam***: a religion in harmony with the fitrah, protecting mind, body and soul. Wine was later prohibited in stages in Madinah.

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THE GIFT OF THE FIVE PRAYERS

The greatest gift of the Mi'raj is ***prayer***. It is the only act of worship enjoined ***directly in the heavens***, without Jibril descending to earth. At first fifty prayers a day, then reduced to five (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887).

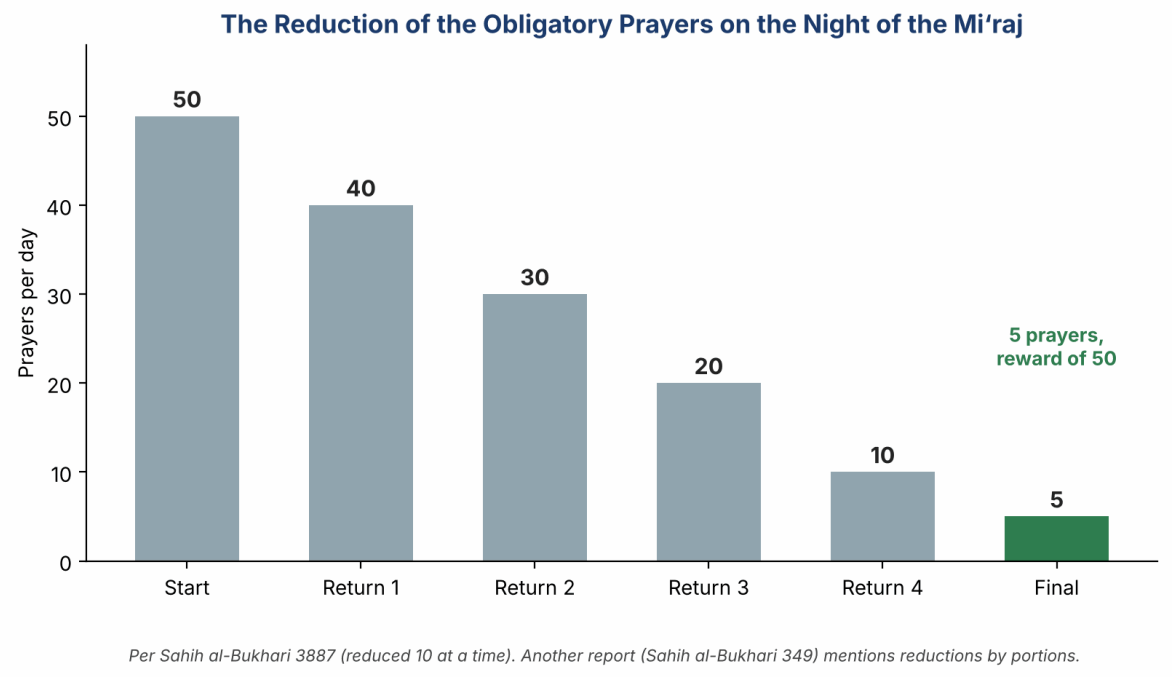


Figure 4: The reduction of the obligatory prayers on the night of the Mi'raj.

In Abu Dharr's رضى الله عنه report, Allah said: ***"They are five, and they are fifty; the word with Me does not change"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 349). Scholars explain: five in deed, but ***fifty in reward***.

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THREE GIFTS AT SIDRAT AL-MUNTAHA

'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was given ***three things*** that night: ***the five prayers***, ***the closing verses of Surah Al-Baqarah***, and ***forgiveness of major sins*** for those of his nation who associate nothing with Allah (Sahih Muslim 173).

THE STANDING OF PRAYER	EVIDENCE
Enjoined in heaven, without intermediary	Sahih al-Bukhari 3887
Pillar of the religion; first deed reckoned	Sunan at-Tirmidhi 413 (authentic)
The line between faith and disbelief	Sahih Muslim 82
The coolness of the Prophet's eyes ﷺ	Sunan an-Nasa'i 3939 (authentic)

The lesson: prayer is ***the believer's "mi'raj"*** — the moment he speaks intimately with his Lord. A gift brought back from the seventh heaven should not be neglected on earth.

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DID HE SEE ALLAH?

This question has been discussed since the time of the Companions. Their views are based on authentic reports:

VIEW	EVIDENCE
He did not see Allah with his eyes	'A'ishah: "Whoever says Muhammad saw his Lord has lied" (Sahih al-Bukhari 4855).
"Light — how could I see Him?"	His answer to Abu Dharr (Sahih Muslim 178).
He saw with his heart	Ibn 'Abbas: "He saw Him with his heart twice" (Sahih Muslim 176).
Whom he saw at the Lote Tree was Jibril	'A'ishah and Ibn Mas'ud on An-Najm 53:13 (Sahih Muslim 177).

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RECONCILING THE VIEWS

Many scholars, including Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Hajar, reconcile these reports: he ***did not see Allah with his physical eyes*** in this world, as 'A'ishah said; and what Ibn 'Abbas meant was ***seeing with the heart***. Seeing Allah with the eyes is the greatest blessing for the believers in ***the Hereafter*** (Al-Qiyamah 75:22–23).

The lesson: in matters of the unseen, we ***stop where the texts stop***, respect the differences of the Companions, and add no descriptions that revelation does not give.

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OTHER SIGHTS THAT NIGHT

Several authentic hadith mention other sights shown to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ that night, as ***lessons and warnings*** for his nation:

SIGHT	SOURCE
People scratching their faces and chests with copper nails — those who backbite and attack people's honour	Sunan Abi Dawud 4878 (authentic)
Prophet Musa praying in his grave by the red sand dune	Sahih Muslim 2375
Malik, keeper of Hell, greeting him	Sahih Muslim 172
The appearance of Musa, 'Isa and Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Sahih al-Bukhari 3394

The hadith of the copper nails is very relevant today. Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه narrated that he asked who they were, and Jibril replied: ***"These are those who eat people's flesh (backbite) and attack their honour"*** (Sunan Abi Dawud 4878).

> **SIRAH NOTE: LONG STORIES THAT ARE WEAK**
>
> There are long, popular stories about various groups punished in particular ways on the night of the Mi'raj — adulterers, those who consume usury, those who abandon prayer and others — with very detailed descriptions. Most of these long reports are ***weak or fabricated*** according to the Hadith scholars, and cannot be attributed to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.
>
> What is authentic about the punishment of adulterers, usurers and others is found in ***a separate dream of the Prophet*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 1386), which is not part of the Mi'raj.

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MORNING IN MAKKAH: QURAYSH DENY

That morning, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ told people of his journey. For Quraysh, the story became something to mock: a journey to Syria that took ***a month there and a month back*** by caravan, claimed to have happened in ***part of a single night***.

They challenged him to describe Jerusalem, which some of them had seen on trade journeys. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself told what happened:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3886

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ بُكَيْرٍ، حَدَّثَنَا اللَّيْثُ، عَنْ عُقَيْلٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ، حَدَّثَنِي أَبُو سَلَمَةَ بْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ، سَمِعْتُ جَابِرَ بْنَ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ «لَمَّا كَذَّبَنِي قُرَيْشٌ قُمْتُ فِي الْحِجْرِ، فَجَلَا اللَّهُ لِي بَيْتَ الْمَقْدِسِ، فَطَفِقْتُ أُخْبِرُهُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِهِ وَأَنَا أَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِ».

TRANSLATION:

Jabir ibn 'Abdullah رضى الله عنهما heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: **"When Quraysh disbelieved me, I stood in al-Hijr, and Allah displayed Bayt al-Maqdis before me, and I began telling them of its features while I was looking at it."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Yahya ibn Bukayr, from al-Layth, from 'Uqayl, from Ibn Shihab, from Abu Salamah ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman, from Jabir ibn 'Abdullah رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Merits of the Ansar, chapter on the Night Journey, Hadith No. 3886. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 170).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3886

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

This hadith shows ***a miracle within a miracle***: Allah displayed Jerusalem before him so he could answer their questions one by one. In Muslim's report, he said he was asked about things he had not noticed, and Allah showed them to him (Sahih Muslim 172).

The lesson: the truth need not fear ***questions***. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not hide the event though he knew it would be mocked; he conveyed it honestly and Allah defended him.

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ABU BAKR AS-SIDDIQ

SIRAH NOTE: "IF HE SAID SO, THEN HE HAS SPOKEN THE TRUTH"

The books of sirah relate that the polytheists rushed to ***Abu Bakr*** and said: "Your friend claims he went to Jerusalem last night and came back before dawn!" Abu Bakr asked: "Did he say that?" They said: "Yes." He said: ***"If he said so, then he has spoken the truth. I believe him in what is farther than that — news from heaven morning and evening."***

This report is recorded by al-Hakim in al-Mustadrak and graded ***authentic*** by some Hadith scholars. From then on Abu Bakr was known by the title ***as-Siddiq*** (the great affirmer of truth).

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Abu Bakr". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Bakr

THE LOGIC OF ABU BAKR'S FAITH

Abu Bakr's answer was very wise. He did not judge the event by ordinary measures, but by ***trust in its messenger***. If he already believed that Muhammad ﷺ received revelation from heaven every day, then a journey to Jerusalem in one night was no harder to believe.

Abu Bakr's standing as ***as-Siddiq*** was also mentioned by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself in an authentic hadith, when Mount Uhud shook: "Be still, Uhud, for upon you are a prophet, a siddiq and two martyrs" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3675).

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A TRIAL FOR PEOPLE

The Qur'an itself states that this event was ***a trial***: some grew stronger in faith, some turned back, and some mocked all the more. Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما explained the relevant verse:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3888

حَدَّثَنَا الْحُمَيْدِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ، حَدَّثَنَا عَمْرٌو، عَنْ عِكْرِمَةَ، عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ فِي قَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى {وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرُّؤْيَا الَّتِي أَرَيْنَاكَ إِلاَّ فِتْنَةً لِلنَّاسِ} قَالَ هِيَ رُؤْيَا عَيْنٍ، أُرِيَهَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم لَيْلَةَ أُسْرِيَ بِهِ إِلَى بَيْتِ الْمَقْدِسِ. قَالَ وَالشَّجَرَةَ الْمَلْعُونَةَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ قَالَ هِيَ شَجَرَةُ الزَّقُّومِ.

TRANSLATION:

Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما said about the words of Allah the Exalted {And We did not make the sight which We showed you except as a trial for the people}: **"It was a sight of the eye (not a dream) shown to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ on the night he was taken to Bayt al-Maqdis."** He said: "And the cursed tree in the Qur'an is the tree of Zaqqum."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from al-Humaydi, from Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah, from 'Amr ibn Dinar, from 'Ikrimah, from Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Merits of the Ansar, chapter on al-Mi'raj, Hadith No. 3888.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3888

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Ibn 'Abbas's explanation that it was ***"a sight of the eye"*** (ru'ya 'ayn) is among the strongest proofs that the Isra' happened ***while awake***, not in a dream. Had it been merely a dream, it would not have been a trial for people, since no one disputes such dreams.

The lesson: ***belief in the unseen*** is the first quality of the God-conscious (Al-Baqarah 2:3). This event sifted those who truly believed from those who followed reason alone.

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WITH BODY AND SOUL?

Scholars have discussed whether the Isra' and Mi'raj took place with ***body and soul***, with the soul alone, or in a dream:

VIEW	DETAILS
Body and soul, while awake	The view of the majority; evidence: the word "His servant" (17:1), the trial for people (17:60) and Ibn 'Abbas's explanation (Sahih al-Bukhari 3888).
The soul alone	Reported from a few of the early Muslims; rejected by the majority.
In a dream	Rejected, since Quraysh would not have denied a dream and it would be no trial.

Source: Ibn Kathir, tafsir of 17:1; Wikipedia, "Isra' and Mi'raj" ("most Islamic scholars hold that the journey was both physical and spiritual").

The lesson: miracles are not measured by ***the ordinary laws of nature***. Allah who created those laws has power to go beyond them for His Messenger.

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LESSONS OF THE ISRA' AND MI'RAJ

The Isra' and Mi'raj left a great many lessons. Among them:

LESSON	EXPLANATION
Consolation after grief	Allah opened the heavens after the earth felt narrow in the Year of Sorrow.
The standing of prayer	The only worship enjoined in heaven.
The unity of the prophets' message	He led the prophets and was welcomed as a brother.
The sanctity of Jerusalem	Destination of the Isra'; first qiblah; one of three great mosques.
Islam, the religion of fitrah	Choosing milk over wine.
Mercy and ease	Fifty became five, with the reward of fifty.
A test of faith	Some affirmed (Abu Bakr), some denied.
Courtesy before Allah	His gaze did not swerve (53:17).

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THE ISRA' AND MI'RAJ IN OUR LIVES

The best way to remember the Isra' and Mi'raj is not with unfounded practices on a particular night, but by ***guarding the five daily prayers*** — the gift brought back from heaven — on time, with humility and in congregation.

Every time a believer says the takbir, he is receiving the gift of the Mi'raj. Every time he prostrates, he is ***closest to his Lord*** (Sahih Muslim 482).

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YATHRIB: A CITY MADE READY

As Makkah grew ever more closed, Allah was preparing another city about 340 km to the north: ***Yathrib***, later known as ***Madinah***. Its Arab population consisted of two related tribes, ***Aws*** and ***Khazraj***, alongside several Jewish tribes.

Aws and Khazraj had long fought each other. The last great battle was ***the Battle of Bu'ath***, a few years before the hijrah. 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها saw great wisdom behind that tragedy:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3777

حَدَّثَنِي عُبَيْدُ بْنُ إِسْمَاعِيلَ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو أُسَامَةَ، عَنْ هِشَامٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ ـ رضى الله عنها ـ قَالَتْ كَانَ يَوْمُ بُعَاثَ يَوْمًا قَدَّمَهُ اللَّهُ لِرَسُولِهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَقَدِمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم وَقَدِ افْتَرَقَ مَلَؤُهُمْ، وَقُتِلَتْ سَرَوَاتُهُمْ، وَجُرِّحُوا، فَقَدَّمَهُ اللَّهُ لِرَسُولِهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم فِي دُخُولِهِمْ فِي الإِسْلاَمِ.

TRANSLATION:

'A'ishah رضى الله عنها said: **"The Day of Bu'ath was a day Allah brought about in advance for His Messenger ﷺ. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ arrived (in Madinah), their leaders were divided, and their chiefs had been killed or wounded. Allah brought it about in advance for His Messenger ﷺ, to ease their entry into Islam."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Ubayd ibn Isma'il, from Abu Usamah, from Hisham ibn 'Urwah, from his father, 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, from 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Merits of the Ansar, chapter on the merits of the Ansar, Hadith No. 3777.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3777

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

The Battle of Bu'ath ***weakened the old leaders*** who might have opposed Islam, and left the people of Yathrib ***weary of enmity*** and looking for a leader who could unite them. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ came, their hearts were ready.

SIRAH NOTE: THE JEWS AND THE AWAITED PROPHET

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The books of sirah say that the Jews of Yathrib often told Aws and Khazraj that ***a prophet would be sent***, and they would follow him to defeat the Arabs. Ibn Kathir mentions this in his tafsir of Al-Baqarah 2:89. When the men of Khazraj met the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, they said to one another: "This is the prophet the Jews promised; do not let them get to him before us."

REFERENCES:

Tafsir Ibn Kathir 2:89 https://tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/2/89

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SIX MEN OF KHAZRAJ

SIRAH NOTE: A MEETING IN THE PILGRIMAGE SEASON

According to ar-Raheeq al-Makhtum, in the pilgrimage season of ***the eleventh year of prophethood*** (around 620 CE), the Messenger of Allah ﷺ met ***six men from Yathrib*** — all of Khazraj — at 'Aqabah, Mina. He recited the Qur'an and invited them to Islam, and they all believed.

Among them was ***As'ad ibn Zurarah***, who would later host Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr. They returned to Yathrib and spread news of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, until ***no house*** in Yathrib did not speak of him.

REFERENCES:

Al-Mubarakfuri, al-Rahiq al-Makhtum — "The First 'Aqabah Pledge". https://islam101.com/index.php/with-the-prophet/biographies/44-ar-raheeq-al-makhtum/499-the-first-aqabah-pledge

SIX MEN, ONE BEGINNING

After ten years of da'wah in Makkah with limited results, ***six men*** from another city became a turning point in history. Allah often begins great things with ***small and unexpected*** beginnings.

The lesson: never underestimate ***one meeting*** or ***one conversation*** of da'wah. That brief meeting at Mina became the beginning of an Islamic state.

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THE FIRST PLEDGE OF AL-'AQABAH

In the next pilgrimage season — ***the twelfth year of prophethood*** — five of those six returned with seven others, making ***twelve men***, including two from Aws. At 'Aqabah, they pledged allegiance to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. One of them, 'Ubadah ibn as-Samit رضى الله عنه, narrated the content of the pledge:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 18

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الْيَمَانِ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنَا شُعَيْبٌ، عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي أَبُو إِدْرِيسَ، عَائِذُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ أَنَّ عُبَادَةَ بْنَ الصَّامِتِ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ وَكَانَ شَهِدَ بَدْرًا، وَهُوَ أَحَدُ النُّقَبَاءِ لَيْلَةَ الْعَقَبَةِ ـ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ وَحَوْلَهُ عِصَابَةٌ مِنْ أَصْحَابِهِ «بَايِعُونِي عَلَى أَنْ لاَ تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا، وَلاَ تَسْرِقُوا، وَلاَ تَزْنُوا، وَلاَ تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلاَدَكُمْ، وَلاَ تَأْتُوا بِبُهْتَانٍ تَفْتَرُونَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَرْجُلِكُمْ، وَلاَ تَعْصُوا فِي مَعْرُوفٍ، فَمَنْ وَفَى مِنْكُمْ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ، وَمَنْ أَصَابَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ شَيْئًا فَعُوقِبَ فِي الدُّنْيَا فَهُوَ كَفَّارَةٌ لَهُ، وَمَنْ أَصَابَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ شَيْئًا ثُمَّ سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ، فَهُوَ إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنْ شَاءَ عَفَا عَنْهُ، وَإِنْ شَاءَ عَاقَبَهُ». فَبَايَعْنَاهُ عَلَى ذَلِكَ.

TRANSLATION:

'Ubadah ibn as-Samit رضى الله عنه — who fought at Badr and was one of the leaders (naqib) on the night of al-'Aqabah — narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, with a group of his Companions around him:

"Pledge to me that you will not associate anything with Allah, nor steal, nor commit adultery, nor kill your children, nor bring forth a slander you have invented, nor disobey in what is right. Whoever of you fulfils it, his reward is with Allah. Whoever commits any of these and is punished in this world, that is an expiation for him. And whoever commits any of these and Allah conceals it, his matter is with Allah: if He wills He pardons him, and if He wills He punishes him." So we pledged to him on that.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Abu al-Yaman, from Shu'ayb, from az-Zuhri, from Abu Idris 'A'idhullah ibn 'Abdullah, from 'Ubadah ibn as-Samit رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Faith, Hadith No. 18. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 1709).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:18

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LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

This pledge is known as ***the Pledge of the Women*** because its terms are almost the same as the women's pledge mentioned in the Qur'an (Al-Mumtahanah 60:12). It contained no agreement to fight; it was a pledge of ***belief and character***.

TERM OF THE PLEDGE	EFFECT ON SOCIETY
Not associating anything with Allah	The foundation of tawhid for all of life.
Not stealing	Protecting property and trust.
Not committing adultery	Protecting lineage and family honour.
Not killing children	Ending the Jahiliyyah practice of killing infants.
Not slandering	Protecting honour and public trust.
Obeying in what is right	Obedience to leaders is limited to what is good.

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MUS'AB IBN 'UMAYR: ISLAM'S FIRST ENVOY

After the first Pledge of al-'Aqabah, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent ***Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr*** رضى الله عنه to Yathrib to teach the Qur'an and the religion. Al-Bara' ibn 'Azib رضى الله عنهما, then a young man of the Ansar, remembered his arrival:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3925

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ بَشَّارٍ، حَدَّثَنَا غُنْدَرٌ، حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، عَنْ أَبِي إِسْحَاقَ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ الْبَرَاءَ بْنَ عَازِبٍ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ قَالَ أَوَّلُ مَنْ قَدِمَ عَلَيْنَا مُصْعَبُ بْنُ عُمَيْرٍ وَابْنُ أُمِّ مَكْتُومٍ، وَكَانَا يُقْرِئَانِ النَّاسَ، فَقَدِمَ بِلاَلٌ وَسَعْدٌ وَعَمَّارُ بْنُ يَاسِرٍ، ثُمَّ قَدِمَ عُمَرُ بْنُ الْخَطَّابِ فِي عِشْرِينَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم ثُمَّ قَدِمَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم، فَمَا رَأَيْتُ أَهْلَ الْمَدِينَةِ فَرِحُوا بِشَيْءٍ فَرَحَهُمْ بِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم، حَتَّى جَعَلَ الإِمَاءُ يَقُلْنَ قَدِمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَمَا قَدِمَ حَتَّى قَرَأْتُ {سَبِّحِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الأَعْلَى} فِي سُوَرٍ مِنَ الْمُفَصَّلِ.

TRANSLATION:

Al-Bara' ibn 'Azib رضى الله عنهما said: **"The first to come to us (in Madinah) were Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr and Ibn Umm Maktum; both of them taught people to recite the Qur'an."** Then came Bilal, Sa'd and 'Ammar ibn Yasir, then 'Umar ibn al-Khattab with twenty of the Prophet's Companions, then the Prophet ﷺ himself arrived. **"I never saw the people of Madinah rejoice at anything as they rejoiced at the Messenger of Allah ﷺ,"** so much so that the slave girls were saying: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has come!" Before he arrived, I had read {Glorify the name of your Lord, the Most High} along with other surahs of al-Mufassal.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Muhammad ibn Bashshar, from Ghundar, from Shu'bah, from Abu Ishaq as-Sabi'i, from al-Bara' ibn 'Azib رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Merits of the Ansar, chapter on the arrival of the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions in Madinah, Hadith No. 3925.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3925

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LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

SIRAH NOTE: A WEALTHY YOUTH WHO CHOSE ISLAM

The books of sirah say that before Islam, Mus'ab was ***the most pampered youth*** in Makkah, with the finest clothes and perfumes. After embracing Islam, he left that luxury behind. In Yathrib, he stayed at the house of ***As'ad ibn Zurarah***.

Through his gentle and wise da'wah, two great leaders of Aws — ***Sa'd ibn Mu'adh*** and ***Usayd ibn Hudayr*** — embraced Islam, and with them the whole of Banu 'Abd al-Ashhal. Mus'ab was later martyred at Uhud; his shroud was not enough to cover his whole body (Sahih al-Bukhari 1276).

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Mus'ab ibn Umayr". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mus%27ab_ibn_Umayr

The lesson: da'wah needs ***teachers with knowledge and character***. One sincere and wise young man was able to change a city within a year.

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THE SECOND PLEDGE OF AL-'AQABAH

SIRAH NOTE: A PLEDGE ON A NIGHT OF THE DAYS OF TASHRIQ

According to ar-Raheeq al-Makhtum, in the pilgrimage season of ***the thirteenth year of prophethood*** (***June 622 CE***), ***73 men and 2 women*** from Yathrib met the Messenger of Allah ﷺ secretly at 'Aqabah by night, on one of the days of Tashriq. The two women were ***Nusaybah bint Ka'b*** (Umm 'Umarah) and ***Asma' bint 'Amr***.

He came with his uncle ***al-'Abbas***, who had not yet embraced Islam. Al-'Abbas warned them to take him only if they were prepared to defend him; otherwise they had better leave him.

REFERENCES:

Al-Mubarakfuri, al-Rahiq al-Makhtum — "The Second 'Aqabah Pledge".
https://seerah.gtaf.org/books/1/chapters/13/the-second-aqabah-pledge/

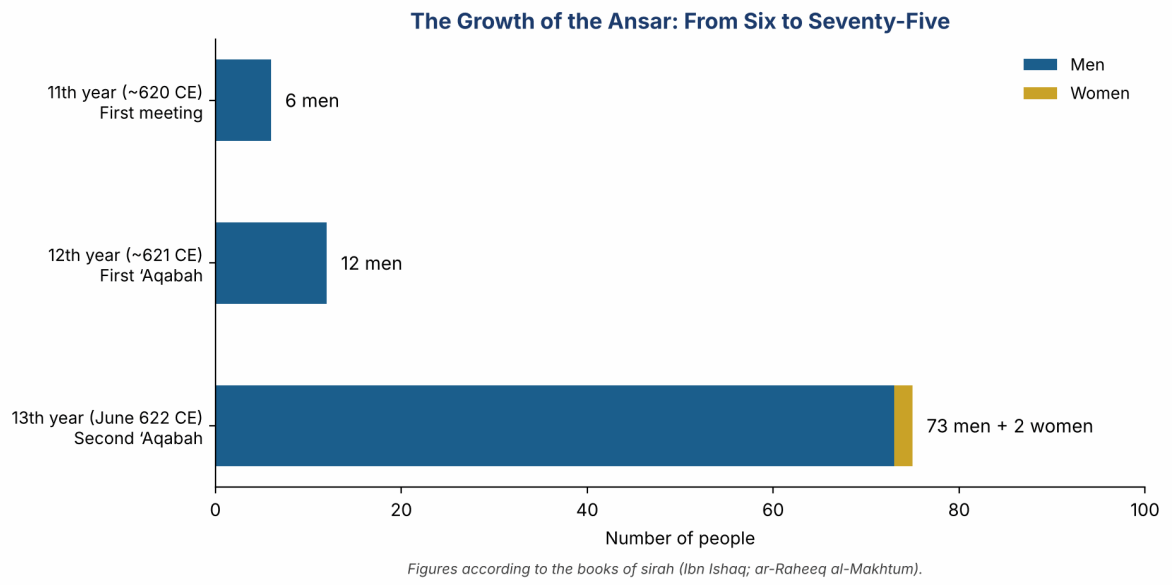


Figure 5: The growth of the Ansar from six to seventy-five.

THE TERMS OF THE SECOND PLEDGE

According to the report of Jabir ibn 'Abdullah رضى الله عنهما in Musnad Ahmad, cited in ar-Raheeq al-Makhtum, the second pledge contained the following terms:

TERM	MEANING
To listen and obey in all circumstances	The discipline of a new society.
To spend in ease and hardship	Readiness to sacrifice wealth.
To enjoin good and forbid evil	Every Muslim's social responsibility.
To fear no blame in Allah's cause	Moral courage.
To protect him as they protect their own families	A defence pact — the basis of the hijrah.
The reward: Paradise	No promise of worldly wealth or power.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then asked them to choose ***twelve naqibs*** (leaders) — ***nine from Khazraj and three from Aws*** — to be responsible for their people. 'Ubadah ibn as-Samit, narrator of the first pledge hadith, was one of them.

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THE PLEDGE THAT OPENED THE WAY TO HIJRAH

The second Pledge of al-'Aqabah was ***the turning point*** of the sirah. For the first time, the Muslims had ***a refuge*** and a community pledged to defend the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Soon after, he permitted the Companions to emigrate to Yathrib in stages.

Today, a small mosque known as ***Masjid al-Bay'ah*** stands at Mina near Jamrat al-'Aqabah, marking the place believed to be the site of that pledge.

The lesson: the only reward promised to the Ansar was ***Paradise***, yet they answered with full conviction. The greatest sacrifices are born of ***faith in the Hereafter***.

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BETWEEN AUTHENTIC REPORTS AND POPULAR STORIES

The story of the Isra' and Mi'raj is among the most embellished of stories. The table below distinguishes the authentic, those from the books of sirah, and the weak or baseless.

STORIES AND THEIR STATUS

POPULAR STORY	STATUS
His chest was opened and washed before the Mi'raj.	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887).
Al-Buraq as a winged horse with a woman's head.	Baseless; authentic hadith mentions only a white mount.
He led the prophets in prayer in Jerusalem.	Authentic (Sahih Muslim 172).
The prophets in the seven heavens and Musa's weeping.	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887).
Fifty prayers reduced to five.	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887, 349).
The Isra' was on 27 Rajab.	Disputed; no authentic report on its date.
Special worship on the night of 27 Rajab.	No authentic evidence.
He saw Allah with his physical eyes.	Denied by 'A'ishah (Sahih al-Bukhari 4855); Ibn 'Abbas: with the heart.
People scratching their faces with copper nails.	Authentic (Sunan Abi Dawud 4878).
Long stories of various punishments that night.	Mostly weak or fabricated.
Abu Bakr: "If he said so, he has spoken the truth."	Al-Hakim; graded authentic by some scholars.
The first Pledge of al-'Aqabah and its terms.	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 18).
Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr teaching the Qur'an in Yathrib.	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 3925).

REFLECTION

The authentic reports of the Isra' and Mi'raj are already astonishing. We need no weak additions to ***magnify*** this event.

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IMPORTANT PLACES IN THIS SERIES

The events in this eBook begin beside the Ka'bah, leap thousands of kilometres to Jerusalem in part of a night, return to Makkah — and end in a narrow hill pass at Mina where the Ansar gave their pledge. This chapter gathers those places together so that readers can picture their distances and setting.

TABLE OF PLACES

The distances in the table are ***approximate***: straight-line distances are worked out from modern coordinates. A caravan in his time took about a month to reach Syria — which is why Quraysh mocked him when he described a journey made in part of a single night.

PLACE	CONNECTION TO THIS SERIES	LOCATION / CONDITION TODAY
Al-Hatim (al-Hijr / Hijr Isma'il)	Where he was lying when the angel came and opened his chest before the Mi'raj (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887); where he stood when Quraysh denied him (Sahih al-Bukhari 3886).	The semi-circular area on the north side of the Ka'bah, inside Masjid al-Haram.
His house in Makkah	In one narration, the roof of his house opened and Jibril descended (Sahih al-Bukhari 349). The books of sirah say he spent the night in the house of Umm Hani' — a report of the books of sirah.	Exact location unknown; most of old Makkah now lies within Masjid al-Haram.
Jerusalem (al-Masjid al-Aqsa)	Destination of the Isra'; he tethered al-Buraq and prayed two rak'ahs (Sahih Muslim 162).	About 1,240 km in a straight line north-west of Makkah.
The area of al-Sakhrah	The great rock at the centre of the al-Aqsa compound; the Dome of the Rock was built over it some 70 years after this event.	At the centre of the al-Aqsa compound's plaza.
The al-Buraq Wall	According to Muslim tradition, al-Buraq was tethered here. The exact location is tradition, not a text.	The western wall of the al-Aqsa compound; the al-Buraq Mosque is a small prayer room within it.
The pass of al-'Aqabah, Mina	Site of the two Pledges of al-'Aqabah (books of sirah; Sahih al-Bukhari 18).	Masjid al-Bay'ah, about 500 m north-east of Jamrat al-'Aqabah; about 5 km from the Ka'bah.
Yathrib (Madinah)	City of the Ansar who gave the pledge; destination of the Hijrah after this series.	About 340 km in a straight line north of Makkah.

Sources: Wikipedia, "Al-Aqsa Mosque"; Wikipedia, "Al-Buraq Mosque"; Saudipedia, "Al-Bay'ah Mosque"; Sahih Muslim 162.

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TWO MOSQUES, FORTY YEARS

Abu Dharr رضى الله عنه once asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ which mosque was built first on earth. He replied: al-Masjid al-Haram. Then which? He replied: al-Masjid al-Aqsa. How long was there between them? He replied: forty years (Sahih al-Bukhari 3366).

The Isra' linked the two oldest mosques on earth in a single night. Scholars explain that "mosque" in this Hadith means a place appointed for prostration to Allah, not necessarily the buildings we know today.

MASJID AL-BAY'AH AT MINA

According to Saudipedia, Masjid al-Bay'ah was built by the Abbasid Caliph Abu Ja'far al-Mansur in 761 CE (about 144 AH) at the place believed to be the site of the pledge, about 500 metres north-east of Jamrat al-'Aqabah. It has been restored several times, including under the Caliph al-Mustansir in 1227 CE. The building is small, fitting the hushed setting of that secret night meeting.

Source: Saudipedia, "Al-Bay'ah Mosque".

LESSON

A month's journey was covered in part of a night, and a small pass at Mina became the birthplace of a state. Human measures of far and near, great and small, are not the measures of Allah.

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JERUSALEM AT THE TIME OF THE ISRA'

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was taken by night to Jerusalem, the city was neither in Arab hands nor in Roman hands. Understanding Jerusalem's situation at that time helps us appreciate why Quraysh were so confident they could "test" him with questions about the city.

CAPTURED BY PERSIA

According to Wikipedia, in ***614 CE*** the Sasanian Persian army under the general ***Shahrbaraz***, in the reign of Khusrau II, took Jerusalem after a siege. The relic revered by Christians as the "True Cross" was seized and carried off to the Persian capital, Ctesiphon. For the Roman Christian world it was an enormous blow.

This happened in the early years of the da'wah in Makkah. The Qur'an itself records that Roman defeat, and promises that they would be victorious again within a few years (Ar-Rum 30:2–4). The idolaters of Makkah rejoiced at the victory of the fire-worshipping Persians, while the Muslims sympathised with the Romans as People of the Book.

THE CITY VISITED IN A SINGLE NIGHT

If the Isra' took place about a year before the Hijrah, as many scholars of sirah hold, then Jerusalem was still under Persian rule at the time. The city was known to the Quraysh merchants who travelled back and forth to Syria. That is why they challenged him to describe it — and Allah displayed Jerusalem before him so that he could answer every question (Sahih al-Bukhari 3886; Sahih Muslim 172).

BACK TO ROME

The Qur'an's promise was fulfilled. Heraclius launched his counter-offensive from 622 CE — the year of the Hijrah — and Persia was finally brought low. According to Wikipedia, the peace of ***628 CE*** returned Palestine and the Cross to Rome; Persian troops were still in Jerusalem until at least late summer or early autumn of 629 CE. On ***21 March 630 CE***, Heraclius himself entered Jerusalem in procession bearing the Cross.

Only a few years later, Jerusalem was opened by the Muslims in the time of the Caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khattab رضى الله عنه, around ***638 CE*** (about 16–17 AH).

Sources: Wikiwand/Wikipedia, "Sasanian conquest of Jerusalem"; Wikiwand/Wikipedia, "Dome of the Rock".

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HISTORICAL NOTE: DIFFERING DATES

Historical sources differ on the exact month Jerusalem fell in 614 CE (April or May), and on the year the Muslims opened Jerusalem (637 or 638 CE). This eBook uses the dates held by most references and marks them as approximate.

The date of the Isra' and Mi'raj itself is also disputed among scholars, as discussed in the chapter «When Did the Isra' and Mi'raj Take Place?».

LESSON

While Jerusalem passed between two great empires, Allah took one of His oppressed servants in Makkah to that city by night and made him the imam of the prophets. Worldly power changes hands; true honour belongs to the one whom Allah chooses.

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TRACES OF HISTORY: THE AL-MASJID AL-AQSA COMPOUND

Many people assume that the famous golden dome is "al-Masjid al-Aqsa". In fact, al-Aqsa is the whole walled plaza of about 14.4 hectares (see the chapter «Al-Masjid al-Aqsa»), and within it stand several buildings constructed long after the Isra'. This chapter introduces the main buildings on the basis of solid historical records.

THE MAIN BUILDINGS AND THEIR AGE

BUILDING	WHEN BUILT	DESCRIPTION
Al-Qibli Mosque	Umayyad period, later restored many times	The main prayer hall in the southern part of the compound; what is usually called "al-Aqsa Mosque".
The Dome of the Rock	Completed around 691–692 CE (72 AH), on the order of the Caliph 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan	A domed building over the great rock (al-Sakhrah); classed as a shrine, not a congregational mosque.
The al-Buraq Mosque	Around the 10th century CE (perhaps earlier)	A small underground prayer room beside the al-Buraq Wall, near the south-west corner of the compound.

Sources: Wikiwand/Wikipedia, "Dome of the Rock"; Wikipedia, "Al-Buraq Mosque"; Wikipedia, "Al-Aqsa Mosque".

THE INSCRIPTION OF THE DOME OF THE ROCK (72 AH)

The Dome of the Rock holds some of the most important Islamic inscriptions from the first century of the Hijrah. Its mosaic inscription is dated ***72 AH*** (691–692 CE) and contains many passages of the Qur'an. Among them is the verse calling the People of the Book not to go to extremes in religion and affirming that 'Isa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ is the messenger of Allah and His word (corresponding to An-Nisa' 4:171), as well as Surah al-Ikhlas (Al-Ikhlas 112) on the outer arcade.

This inscription matters because it shows the text of the Qur'an being displayed officially in a public place some six decades after the death of the Messenger ﷺ.

Sources: Islamic Awareness, "The Arabic Islamic Inscriptions On The Dome Of The Rock, 72 AH / 692 CE"; Wikiwand/Wikipedia, "Dome of the Rock".

THE AL-BURAQ WALL AND THE RING OF THE PROPHETS

An authentic Hadith says he tethered al-Buraq to ***the ring used by the prophets to tether their mounts***, then entered the mosque and prayed two rak'ahs (Sahih Muslim 162).

Muslims have long associated that place with the western wall of the al-Aqsa compound, naming it the ***al-Buraq Wall***. According to Wikipedia, the historian Ibn al-Faqih mentions a place called "Marbat al-Buraq"

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(the tethering place of al-Buraq) in 903 CE. The al-Buraq Mosque today is a small prayer room within a vaulted passage beside that wall.

NOTE: BETWEEN TEXT AND TRADITION

The authentic Hadith only mentions "the ring used by the prophets" without fixing its location. Identifying that location with the al-Buraq Wall is a ***tradition*** held by Muslims for centuries, not an authentic text. Indeed some earlier scholars, such as al-Meknasi (1785 CE), noted that the ring of their own day was only a marker, since the original place had been buried.

The balanced position is to respect this tradition as the heritage of the Ummah, without claiming it as certain fact.

Source: Wikipedia, "Al-Buraq Mosque".

LESSON

The beautiful buildings of al-Aqsa were raised by generations after the Messenger ﷺ as a sign of their love for the place of the Isra'. We inherit that love — but we should distinguish between what is authentic from the texts and what is tradition, so that our love stands on knowledge.

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PEOPLE IN THIS SERIES

This series brings the Messenger of Allah ﷺ together with two groups: the prophets he met on the night of the Isra' and Mi'raj, and the people on earth who accepted or rejected the news, along with the Ansar who gave their pledge. The tables below summarise them with their sources.

THE PROPHETS HE MET

The order of the heavens follows the Hadith of Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887). The details of each meeting are given in the chapter «The Prophets in the Seven Heavens».

PROPHET	WHERE HE WAS MET	SOURCE
The prophets (together)	Jerusalem — he led them in prayer	Sahih Muslim 172
Adam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	First heaven	Sahih al-Bukhari 3887
Yahya and 'Isa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Second heaven	Sahih al-Bukhari 3887
Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Third heaven	Sahih al-Bukhari 3887
Idris عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Fourth heaven	Sahih al-Bukhari 3887
Harun عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Fifth heaven	Sahih al-Bukhari 3887
Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Sixth heaven; also seen praying in his grave	Sahih al-Bukhari 3887; Sahih Muslim 2375
Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Seventh heaven, leaning against al-Bayt al-Ma'mur	Sahih al-Bukhari 3887; Sahih Muslim 162

PEOPLE ON EARTH

PERSON	ROLE IN THIS SERIES	SOURCE
Jibril عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Opened his chest and accompanied him throughout the Isra' and Mi'raj.	Sahih al-Bukhari 3887
Abu Bakr as-Siddiq رضى الله عنه	Affirmed the news of the Isra' without doubt; called al-Siddiq.	Books of sirah; Sahih al-Bukhari 3675
Umm Hani' bint Abi Talib رضى الله عنها	According to the books of sirah, he spent the night of the Isra' in her house.	Books of sirah (Ibn Ishaq)
As'ad ibn Zurarah رضى الله عنه	One of the six men of Khazraj who believed earliest; host of Mus'ab in Yathrib.	Books of sirah

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PERSON	ROLE IN THIS SERIES	SOURCE
‘Ubadah ibn al-Samit رضى الله عنه	Present at the first Pledge of al-‘Aqabah and narrated its content.	Sahih al-Bukhari 18
Mus‘ab ibn ‘Umayr رضى الله عنه	Islam’s first envoy, teaching the Qur’an in Yathrib.	Sahih al-Bukhari 3925
Ka‘b ibn Malik رضى الله عنه	Present at the second Pledge of al-‘Aqabah and narrated it.	Books of sirah; Sahih al-Bukhari 4418
Al-‘Abbas ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib	Accompanied him on the night of the second Pledge though not yet a Muslim (according to the books of sirah).	Books of sirah

LESSON

In the heavens the Messenger ﷺ was welcomed by the prophets; on earth he was denied by his people but believed by one Companion and defended by the Ansar. Every Muslim can choose to be like Abu Bakr and the Ansar: to affirm the truth and to stand up for it.

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TIMELINE: SIRAH AND THE WORLD

This table places the events of this series alongside the major events in Jerusalem and the surrounding empires. The CE years for the events of the sirah are ***approximate***, since scholars differ about the date of the Isra' and Mi'raj.

YEAR (APPROX.)	SIRAH OF THE PROPHET	THE WORLD AND JERUSALEM
614 CE	Open da'wah in Makkah; persecution begins.	Persia captures Jerusalem (Shahrbaraz); the Cross is taken to Ctesiphon.
619–620 CE	The Year of Sorrow; the journey to Ta'if (Part 5).	Jerusalem still under Persia.
~620 CE (11th year of prophethood)	Six men of Khazraj believe at al-'Aqabah.	—
~621 CE (view of many)	The Isra' and Mi'raj; the five daily prayers made obligatory.	—
~621 CE (12th year)	First Pledge of al-'Aqabah; Mus'ab sent to Yathrib.	—
June 622 CE (13th year)	Second Pledge of al-'Aqabah: 73 men and 2 women.	Heraclius begins his counter-offensive against Persia.
Sept 622 CE (Rabi' al-Awwal 1 AH)	The Hijrah of the Messenger ﷺ to Madinah.	—
628–629 CE	—	Peace treaty: Palestine and the Cross returned to Rome.
21 March 630 CE	—	Heraclius enters Jerusalem in procession.
~638 CE (16–17 AH)	—	Jerusalem opened by the Muslims in the time of 'Umar رضى الله عنه.
691–692 CE (72 AH)	—	The Dome of the Rock completed by 'Abd al-Malik.

Sources: books of sirah (al-Rahiq al-Makhtum); Wikiwand/Wikipedia, "Sasanian conquest of Jerusalem"; Wikiwand/Wikipedia, "Dome of the Rock".

LESSON

In less than twenty-five years, Jerusalem passed from Persian hands to Roman, and then to the Ummah whose Prophet had been imam there on the night of the Isra'. This timeline teaches us to read history with the eye of faith: Allah's promise is certain to be fulfilled, even when people see it as impossible.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Here are questions often asked about the Isra', the Mi'raj and the Pledges of al-'Aqabah, with brief answers based on the sources discussed in this eBook. For a hadith-by-hadith discussion, see also the ***Special Edition: Stories of the Night Journey***.

1. WHEN EXACTLY DID THE ISRA' AND MI'RAJ TAKE PLACE?

Scholars differ. The view of many scholars of sirah is about a year before the Hijrah. The date of 27 Rajab is very well known, but it does not rest on an authentic narration. See the table of views in the chapter «When Did the Isra' and Mi'raj Take Place?».

2. DID THE ISRA' AND MI'RAJ TAKE PLACE WITH BODY AND SOUL, OR IN A DREAM?

The view of the majority of scholars is that it happened with body and soul while awake. Their arguments include the word "His servant" in Al-Isra' 17:1, and the reaction of Quraysh in denying him — they would not have mocked him if he had merely related a dream. There are reports from a few of the salaf holding that it happened with the soul, and this view is discussed by the scholars of tafsir. See the chapter «A Trial for People».

3. DID HE SEE ALLAH ON THE NIGHT OF THE MI'RAJ?

The Companions themselves differed. 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها denied it (Sahih al-Bukhari 4855); Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما said he saw with his heart (Sahih Muslim 176); and when Abu Dharr رضى الله عنه asked, he replied: "Light — how could I see Him?" (Sahih Muslim 178). This is a matter of the unseen that calls for caution. See the chapter «Did He See Allah?».

4. IS THERE A SPECIAL ACT OF WORSHIP ON THE NIGHT OF 27 RAJAB?

There is no authentic narration prescribing a special act of worship, such as a particular prayer or fast, for the night of the Isra' and Mi'raj. Remembering this event by studying the sirah, guarding the prayer and doing good deeds in general is good; what should be avoided is fixing special practices that have no basis.

5. DID THE BUILDINGS OF AL-MASJID AL-AQSA ALREADY EXIST ON THE NIGHT OF THE ISRA'?

The buildings we see today were built afterwards (see the chapter «Traces of History: The al-Masjid al-Aqsa Compound»). Yet the Qur'an and authentic Hadith speak of "al-Masjid al-Aqsa" as a place of prostration established long before — forty years after al-Masjid al-Haram (Sahih al-Bukhari 3366). In Arabic, masjid means a place of prostration, not necessarily a building.

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6. WHERE WAS AL-BURAQ TETHERED?

An authentic Hadith says he tethered it to the ring used by the prophets (Sahih Muslim 162). Identifying that place with the al-Buraq Wall is a Muslim tradition, not a text that fixes the exact location.

7. IS THE DOME OF THE ROCK AL-MASJID AL-AQSA?

Not exactly. The Dome of the Rock is a domed building over the great rock at the centre of the al-Aqsa compound, completed around 72 AH. The main prayer hall is the al-Qibli Mosque in the southern part. Both stand within the area of al-Masjid al-Aqsa, which covers about 14.4 hectares.

8. WHY WAS THE PRAYER MADE OBLIGATORY IN THE HEAVENS AND NOT ON EARTH?

Scholars explain that this shows the very high rank of the prayer: other obligations were revealed to him on earth, but the prayer was made obligatory directly on the night of the Mi'raj. Scholars also describe the prayer as the believer's "mi'raj" — the moment he is closest to his Lord.

9. IS THE REWARD OF THE FIVE PRAYERS REALLY EQUAL TO FIFTY?

Yes. In the Hadith of the Mi'raj, Allah said: "They are five, and they are (in reward) fifty; My word is not changed" (Sahih al-Bukhari 349). This is a very great mercy for the Ummah of Muhammad ﷺ.

10. WHO WAS THE FIRST TO AFFIRM THE NEWS OF THE ISRA'?

The books of sirah report that Abu Bakr رضى الله عنه affirmed it immediately when told, and so was called al-Siddiq. His rank as siddiq is confirmed by an authentic Hadith (Sahih al-Bukhari 3675).

11. WHERE DID THE PLEDGE OF AL-'AQABAH TAKE PLACE, AND MAY THE SITE BE VISITED?

In the hill pass of al-'Aqabah at Mina. Masjid al-Bay'ah, built in the Abbasid period, now marks the place believed to be its location, about 500 metres from Jamrat al-'Aqabah. Visiting it to remember the history is fine, but no special practice is prescribed there.

12. HOW DID QURAYSH KNOW JERUSALEM WELL ENOUGH TO TEST HIM?

Quraysh trade caravans travelled to and from Syria every year (Part 2), and many of their merchants had seen Jerusalem. That is why they were sure they could prove he had never been there — but Allah displayed Jerusalem before him (Sahih al-Bukhari 3886).

LESSON

The Isra' and Mi'raj is a tremendous event of the unseen. The safe course is to believe fully in what is authentic, to be open-hearted towards the differences of scholars, and to stay away from baseless additions — so that this event remains a source of faith, not of argument.

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LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

LESSONS FROM THIS EBOOK

First: After hardship, Allah opens the heavens. The Isra' and Mi'raj came after the Year of Sorrow.

Second: The highest honour is being Allah's servant. "Exalted is He who took His servant" (17:1).

Third: Prayer is a gift from heaven. Five in deed, fifty in reward (Sahih al-Bukhari 349, 3887).

Fourth: The prophets are one family. He led them and was welcomed as a brother (Sahih Muslim 172).

Fifth: Jerusalem in the heart of the Ummah. Destination of the Isra' and first qiblah (17:1; Sahih al-Bukhari 40).

Sixth: Islam is the religion of fitrah. Milk was chosen, not wine (Sahih al-Bukhari 3394).

Seventh: Faith in the unseen. Abu Bakr affirmed; Ibn 'Abbas: it was a sight of the eye (Sahih al-Bukhari 3888).

Eighth: Small beginnings, great results. Six men of Khazraj became the beginning of Madinah.

Ninth: Belief and character before power. The first pledge was about tawhid and conduct (Sahih al-Bukhari 18).

Tenth: A sincere teacher changes a city. Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr taught the Qur'an in Yathrib (Sahih al-Bukhari 3925).

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TIMELINE SUMMARY

TIME (APPROX.)	EVENT AND SOURCE
After Ta'if (619–620 CE)	He presents himself to the tribes (Sunan Abi Dawud 4734)
11th year (~620 CE)	Six men of Khazraj believe at 'Aqabah (sirah)
About a year before the hijrah	Al-Isra' wal-Mi'raj (17:1; Sahih al-Bukhari 3887)
The next morning	Quraysh deny; Jerusalem displayed (Sahih al-Bukhari 3886)
12th year (~621 CE)	First Pledge of al-'Aqabah, 12 men (Sahih al-Bukhari 18)
After the first pledge	Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr to Yathrib (Sahih al-Bukhari 3925)
13th year (June 622 CE)	Second Pledge of al-'Aqabah, 73 men and 2 women (sirah)

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CONCLUSION

From al-Hatim beside the Ka'bah, to Jerusalem, through the seven heavens to Sidrat al-Muntaha, and back to earth bearing the gift of prayer — then to 'Aqabah at Mina, where the people of Yathrib pledged to defend him. After the hardship of the Year of Sorrow, Allah opened ***the gates of heaven and the gates of earth***. In sha Allah, the series **The Prophet's Sirah** will continue with ***the hijrah to Madinah*** — the journey that changed world history. And Allah knows best.

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PART SEVEN

Stories of the Night Journey

The Prophet's Sirah — Series 6 (Special Edition)

Between Authentic Reports and Popular Tales: Every Event of That Great Night According to the Qur'an and Hadith

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STORIES OF THE NIGHT JOURNEY

Book 6 of The Prophet's Sirah, ***The Night Journey***, told that great journey within the frame of the sirah: after Ta'if, before the Pledges of al-'Aqabah. Many readers then asked: ***what exactly did he see and experience*** throughout that night? Whom did he meet in each heaven? What is Sidrat al-Muntaha? Are the stories often told at commemorations true?

This special edition answers those questions ***story by story***. Each story rests on ***a verse of the Qur'an or a Hadith***, with its Arabic text, translation, chain and grade. Stories that are popular but ***disputed, weak or baseless*** are discussed in chapters of their own, so that readers can tell the authentic from the unauthentic.

Note: The Qur'anic translation in this eBook is Sahih International. The grade of every Hadith is stated in its box. Scholars' gradings of disputed reports are placed in brown "Sirah Note" boxes, with source links.

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WHY THIS SPECIAL EDITION?

The Isra' and Mi'raj is the event with ***the most reports*** in the sirah. More than twenty Companions narrated part of it. For this reason, hadith scholars such as Ibn Kathir gathered those reports in the tafsir of Surah Al-Isra' and assessed each one.

Alongside the authentic reports, stories have spread that ***have no reliable chain***. Some sound beautiful and moving, but the Messenger of Allah ﷺ gave a stern warning: ***"Whoever lies about me deliberately, let him take his seat in the Fire"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 110).

THE GRADES OF REPORTS USED

GRADE	MEANING AND HOW IT IS USED
Sahih (authentic)	A connected chain of upright, precise narrators, without defect. Shown in Hadith boxes.
Hasan (good)	Like sahih, but some narrators' precision is slightly less. Accepted as evidence.
Disputed	Scholars differ on its chain. Mentioned with each side's grading.
Da'if (weak)	A weakness in the chain. Not used as a basis for belief or as a confirmed story.
No basis / fabricated	No chain at all, or invented. Mentioned only as a warning.

This eBook's method is simple: ***we tell as much as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ told***, and stop where he stopped. Matters of the unseen such as the heavens, Paradise and Sidrat al-Muntaha cannot be known except through revelation.

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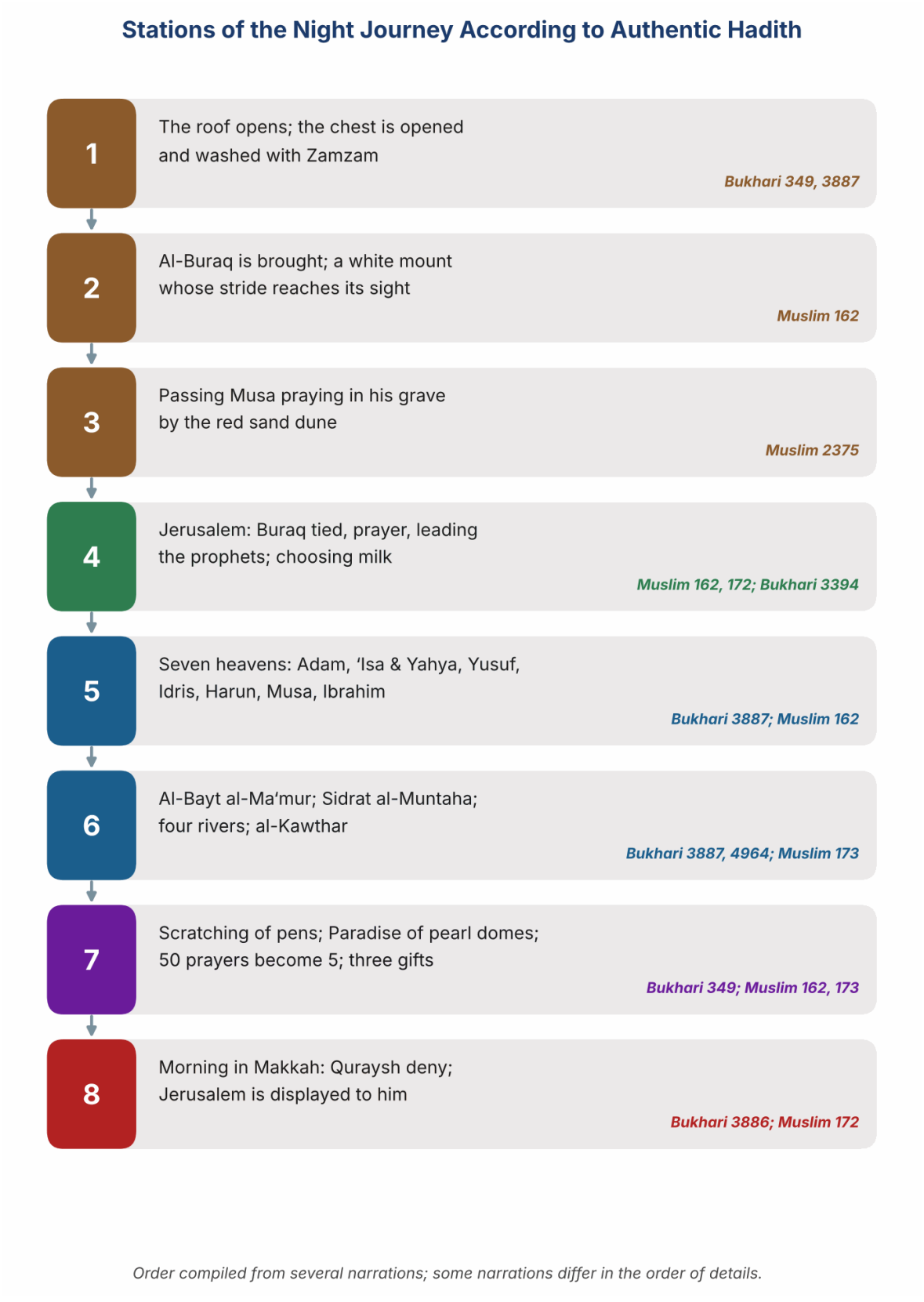


Figure 1: Stations of the Night Journey according to authentic Hadith.

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THE SOURCES: THE NARRATING COMPANIONS

Each Companion narrated ***what he heard and remembered***. Some told the whole journey; others mentioned a single scene. When all the reports are gathered, an almost complete picture of that night emerges.

NARRATING COMPANION	STORIES NARRATED (REFERENCE)
Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah رضى الله عنه	The fullest account: chest opened, Buraq, seven heavens, Sidrah, rivers, prayer (Bukhari 3887)
Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه	Buraq, the ring, milk, the heavens, Yusuf, 50 to 5 (Muslim 162); Musa in his grave (Muslim 2375); al-Kawthar (Bukhari 4964); copper nails (Abu Dawud 4878)
Abu Dharr رضى الله عنه	The opened roof, Zamzam, Adam and his descendants' souls, the pens, pearl Paradise (Bukhari 349); "Light" (Muslim 178)
Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه	The appearance of Musa, 'Isa and Ibrahim; milk and wine (Bukhari 3394); leading the prophets, Malik's greeting (Muslim 172)
Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما	The appearance of Musa and 'Isa, Malik and the Dajjal (Bukhari 3239); tafsir of 17:60 (Bukhari 3888)
'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه	Sidrat al-Muntaha in the sixth heaven, golden moths, three gifts (Muslim 173)
Jabir ibn 'Abdullah رضى الله عنهما	Quraysh deny; Jerusalem is displayed (Bukhari 3886)
'A'ishah رضى الله عنها	The view that he did not see Allah with his eyes (Bukhari 4855; Muslim 177)

WHY DO THE DETAILS DIFFER?

Readers will find small differences between the reports, for example the position of Prophet Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ (sixth or seventh heaven) and how the prayers were reduced (ten by ten or five by five). Scholars such as an-Nawawi and Ibn Hajar explain that such differences arise because ***a narrator summarised or did not retain a detail***, not because the story is contradictory. The core — the journey, meeting the prophets, Sidrat al-Muntaha and the five prayers — is agreed upon by every report.

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THE ISRA' AND MI'RAJ IN THE QUR'AN

The Qur'an mentions this event in ***two surahs***. Surah Al-Isra' mentions the journey ***on earth*** (the Isra'), while Surah An-Najm mentions what he witnessed ***in the heavens*** (the Mi'raj).

SURAH AL-ISRA' 17:1

سُبْحَٰنَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَسْرَىٰ بِعَبْدِهِۦ لَيْلًا مِّنَ ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ إِلَى ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْأَقْصَا
ٱلَّذِى بَٰرَكْنَا حَوْلَهُۥ لِنُرِيَهُۥ مِنْ ءَايَٰتِنَآ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْبَصِيرُ ١

Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/17:1

The verse closes with the purpose of the journey: ***"to show him of Our signs"***. Every story in this eBook is part of those ***signs***Tafsir Ibn Kathir 17:1.

VERSE 17:60: A TRIAL

In the same surah, Allah says: ***"We did not make the sight which We showed you except as a trial for the people"***. Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما explained its meaning:Tafsir Ibn Kathir 17:60.

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3888

حَدَّثَنَا الْحُمَيْدِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ، حَدَّثَنَا عَمْرٌو، عَنْ عِكْرِمَةَ، عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ فِي قَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى {وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرُّؤْيَا الَّتِي أَرَيْنَاكَ إِلاَّ فِتْنَةً لِلنَّاسِ} قَالَ هِيَ رُؤْيَا عَيْنٍ، أُرِيَهَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم لَيْلَةَ أُسْرِيَ بِهِ إِلَى بَيْتِ الْمَقْدِسِ. قَالَ وَالشَّجَرَةَ الْمَلْعُونَةَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ قَالَ هِيَ شَجَرَةُ الزَّقُّومِ.

TRANSLATION:

Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما said about the words of Allah the Exalted {And We did not make the sight which We showed you except as a trial for the people}: **"It was a sight of the eye (not a dream) shown to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ on the night he was taken to Bayt al-Maqdis."** He said: "And the cursed tree in the Qur'an is the tree of Zaqqum."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from al-Humaydi, from Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah, from 'Amr ibn Dinar, from 'Ikrimah, from Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما.

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REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Merits of the Ansar, chapter on al-Mi'raj, Hadith No. 3888.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3888

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SURAH AN-NAJM: WHAT WAS WITNESSED IN THE HEAVENS

Surah An-Najm opens with an oath ***by the star*** and the affirmation that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ does not speak from desire (53:1–4). Verses 5–12 tell of his first meeting with Jibril in his true form on the horizon, while verses 13–18 tell of ***the second meeting at Sidrat al-Muntaha*** on the night of the Mi'raj. These verses are discussed in the chapter on Sidrat al-Muntaha.

Its climax is verse 18: ***"He certainly saw of the greatest signs of his Lord"***. Ibn Kathir explains that this verse shows he saw Allah's mighty ***signs***, and it is the motto of this special editionTafsir Ibn Kathir 53:18.

VERSE	CONTENT RELATED TO THE NIGHT JOURNEY
Al-Isra' 17:1	The journey from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa
Al-Isra' 17:60	The sight of that night as a trial for people
An-Najm 53:13–18	Jibril at Sidrat al-Muntaha; the greatest signs
Ash-Sharh 94:1	The expanded breast (linked by some scholars)
Maryam 19:57	Idris raised to a high station
Al-Kawthar 108:1	The river of al-Kawthar
Al-Baqarah 2:285–286	The closing verses of Al-Baqarah, one of three gifts
As-Sajdah 32:23	Meeting Musa

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THE OPENED ROOF AND THE WATER OF ZAMZAM

The narration of Abu Dharr رضى الله عنه begins the story in ***his house in Makkah***. The roof ***opened***, Jibril descended, and the greatest night in human history began:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 349

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ بُكَيْرٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا اللَّيْثُ، عَنْ يُونُسَ، عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ، عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ، قَالَ كَانَ أَبُو ذَرٍّ يُحَدِّثُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ فُرِجَ عَنْ سَقْفِ بَيْتِي وَأَنَا بِمَكَّةَ، فَنَزَلَ جِبْرِيلُ فَفَرَجَ صَدْرِي، ثُمَّ غَسَلَهُ بِمَاءِ زَمْزَمَ، ثُمَّ جَاءَ بِطَسْتٍ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ مُمْتَلِئٍ حِكْمَةً وَإِيمَانًا، فَأَفْرَغَهُ فِي صَدْرِي ثُمَّ أَطْبَقَهُ، ثُمَّ أَخَذَ بِيَدِي فَعَرَجَ بِي إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا، فَلَمَّا جِئْتُ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ لِخَازِنِ السَّمَاءِ افْتَحْ. قَالَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ هَذَا جِبْرِيلُ. قَالَ هَلْ مَعَكَ أَحَدٌ قَالَ نَعَمْ مَعِي مُحَمَّدٌ صلى الله عليه وسلم. فَقَالَ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ نَعَمْ. فَلَمَّا فَتَحَ عَلَوْنَا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا، فَإِذَا رَجُلٌ قَاعِدٌ عَلَى يَمِينِهِ أَسْوِدَةٌ وَعَلَى يَسَارِهِ أَسْوِدَةٌ، إِذَا نَظَرَ قِبَلَ يَمِينِهِ ضَحِكَ، وَإِذَا نَظَرَ قِبَلَ يَسَارِهِ بَكَى، فَقَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِالنَّبِيِّ الصَّالِحِ وَالاِبْنِ الصَّالِحِ. قُلْتُ لِجِبْرِيلَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ هَذَا آدَمُ. وَهَذِهِ الأَسْوِدَةُ عَنْ يَمِينِهِ وَشِمَالِهِ نَسَمُ بَنِيهِ، فَأَهْلُ الْيَمِينِ مِنْهُمْ أَهْلُ الْجَنَّةِ، وَالأَسْوِدَةُ الَّتِي عَنْ شِمَالِهِ أَهْلُ النَّارِ، فَإِذَا نَظَرَ عَنْ يَمِينِهِ ضَحِكَ، وَإِذَا نَظَرَ قِبَلَ شِمَالِهِ بَكَى، حَتَّى عَرَجَ بِي إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الثَّانِيَةِ فَقَالَ لِخَازِنِهَا افْتَحْ. فَقَالَ لَهُ خَازِنُهَا مِثْلَ مَا قَالَ الأَوَّلُ فَفَتَحَ. قَالَ أَنَسٌ فَذَكَرَ أَنَّهُ وَجَدَ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ آدَمَ وَإِدْرِيسَ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ ـ صَلَوَاتُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِمْ ـ وَلَمْ يُثْبِتْ كَيْفَ مَنَازِلَهُمْ، غَيْرَ أَنَّهُ ذَكَرَ أَنَّهُ وَجَدَ آدَمَ فِي السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا، وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي السَّمَاءِ السَّادِسَةِ. قَالَ أَنَسٌ فَلَمَّا مَرَّ جِبْرِيلُ بِالنَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم بِإِدْرِيسَ قَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِالنَّبِيِّ الصَّالِحِ وَالأَخِ الصَّالِحِ. فَقُلْتُ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ هَذَا إِدْرِيسُ. ثُمَّ مَرَرْتُ بِمُوسَى فَقَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِالنَّبِيِّ الصَّالِحِ وَالأَخِ الصَّالِحِ. قُلْتُ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ هَذَا مُوسَى. ثُمَّ مَرَرْتُ بِعِيسَى فَقَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِالأَخِ الصَّالِحِ وَالنَّبِيِّ الصَّالِحِ. قُلْتُ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ هَذَا عِيسَى. ثُمَّ مَرَرْتُ بِإِبْرَاهِيمَ فَقَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِالنَّبِيِّ الصَّالِحِ وَالاِبْنِ الصَّالِحِ. قُلْتُ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ هَذَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ صلى الله عليه وسلم . قَالَ ابْنُ شِهَابٍ فَأَخْبَرَنِي ابْنُ حَزْمٍ أَنَّ ابْنَ عَبَّاسٍ وَأَبَا حَبَّةَ الأَنْصَارِيَّ كَانَا يَقُولاَنِ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ

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صلى الله عليه وسلم ثُمَّ عُرِجَ بِي حَتَّى ظَهَرْتُ لِمُسْتَوًى أَسْمَعُ فِيهِ صَرِيفَ الأَقْلاَمِ . قَالَ ابْنُ حَزْمٍ وَأَنَسُ بْنُ مَالِكٍ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَفَرَضَ اللَّهُ عَلَى أُمَّتِي خَمْسِينَ صَلاَةً، فَرَجَعْتُ بِذَلِكَ حَتَّى مَرَرْتُ عَلَى مُوسَى فَقَالَ مَا فَرَضَ اللَّهُ لَكَ عَلَى أُمَّتِكَ قُلْتُ فَرَضَ خَمْسِينَ صَلاَةً. قَالَ فَارْجِعْ إِلَى رَبِّكَ، فَإِنَّ أُمَّتَكَ لاَ تُطِيقُ ذَلِكَ. فَرَاجَعْتُ فَوَضَعَ شَطْرَهَا، فَرَجَعْتُ إِلَى مُوسَى قُلْتُ وَضَعَ شَطْرَهَا. فَقَالَ رَاجِعْ رَبَّكَ، فَإِنَّ أُمَّتَكَ لاَ تُطِيقُ، فَرَاجَعْتُ فَوَضَعَ شَطْرَهَا، فَرَجَعْتُ إِلَيْهِ فَقَالَ ارْجِعْ إِلَى رَبِّكَ، فَإِنَّ أُمَّتَكَ لاَ تُطِيقُ ذَلِكَ، فَرَاجَعْتُهُ. فَقَالَ هِيَ خَمْسٌ وَهِيَ خَمْسُونَ، لاَ يُبَدَّلُ الْقَوْلُ لَدَىَّ. فَرَجَعْتُ إِلَى مُوسَى فَقَالَ رَاجِعْ رَبَّكَ. فَقُلْتُ اسْتَحْيَيْتُ مِنْ رَبِّي. ثُمَّ انْطَلَقَ بِي حَتَّى انْتَهَى بِي إِلَى سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَى، وَغَشِيَهَا أَلْوَانٌ لاَ أَدْرِي مَا هِيَ، ثُمَّ أُدْخِلْتُ الْجَنَّةَ، فَإِذَا فِيهَا حَبَايِلُ اللُّؤْلُؤِ، وَإِذَا تُرَابُهَا الْمِسْكُ .

TRANSLATION:

Anas ibn Malik narrated that Abu Dharr رضى الله عنه used to relate that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"The roof of my house was opened while I was in Makkah. Jibril descended, opened my chest and washed it with Zamzam water. Then he brought a golden basin full of wisdom and faith, poured it into my chest and closed it. Then he took my hand and ascended with me to the lowest heaven. When I reached the lowest heaven, Jibril said to its keeper: 'Open.' He asked: 'Who is this?' He said: 'This is Jibril.' He asked: 'Is anyone with you?' He said: 'Yes, Muhammad ﷺ is with me.' He asked: 'Has he been sent for?' He said: 'Yes.' When it was opened, we went up into the lowest heaven, and there was a man sitting with a large group (of souls) on his right and a large group on his left. When he looked to his right he laughed, and when he looked to his left he wept. He said: 'Welcome, righteous prophet and righteous son.' I asked Jibril: 'Who is this?' He said: 'This is Adam, and these groups on his right and left are the souls of his descendants. Those on the right are the people of Paradise and those on the left are the people of the Fire. When he looks to his right he laughs, and when he looks to his left he weeps.'"** Anas said: Abu Dharr mentioned that he met Adam, Idris, Musa, 'Isa and Ibrahim in the heavens, but did not fix their places, except that Adam was in the lowest heaven and Ibrahim in the sixth. He passed Idris, Musa, 'Isa and Ibrahim, and each welcomed him. Ibn Shihab said: Ibn Hazm told me that Ibn 'Abbas and Abu Habbah al-Ansari said: the Prophet ﷺ said: **"Then I was taken up until I reached a level place where I heard the scratching of the pens."** Ibn Hazm and Anas said: the Prophet ﷺ said: **"Then Allah enjoined fifty prayers on my nation."** He returned and met Musa, who told him to ask for a reduction; it was reduced by a portion, then another, until Allah said: **"They are five, and they are fifty; the word with Me does not change."** Musa told him to go back again, but he said: **"I feel shy before my Lord." "Then Jibril**

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took me until he brought me to Sidrat al-Muntaha, which was covered by colours I do not know. Then I was admitted into Paradise, and in it were domes of pearl, and its soil was musk."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Yahya ibn Bukayr, from al-Layth, from Yunus, from Ibn Shihab, from Anas ibn Malik, from Abu Dharr رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Prayer, chapter on how prayer was enjoined on the night of the Isra', Hadith No. 349. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 163).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:349

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HIS HOUSE OR AL-HATIM?

Abu Dharr's narration mentions ***his house***, while that of Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah says he was lying in ***al-Hatim*** (al-Hijr) beside the Ka'bah (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887). Ibn Hajar reconciles the two: he was in his house, then the roof was opened and he was taken to al-Hatim, where his chest was opened and the journey began.

> **SIRAH NOTE: WHOSE HOUSE?**
>
> Some books of sirah, including the report of Ibn Ishaq, say he spent the night in the house of ***Umm Hani' bint Abi Talib***, his cousin. This report is not as strong as the hadith in Sahih al-Bukhari, but it does not contradict it, since the house could be attributed to him as where he stayed that night.
>
> **REFERENCES:**
> Ibn Hisham, as-Sirah an-Nabawiyyah, chapter on the Isra'.

ZAMZAM WATER AND THE GOLDEN BASIN

His chest was washed with ***Zamzam water***, not any other water. Scholars say this shows ***the virtue of Zamzam***; the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said of it: ***"It is blessed; it is food that satisfies"*** (Sahih Muslim 2473). Then ***wisdom and faith*** were poured into his chest from a golden basin.

Some scholars link this event to the words of Allah: ***"Did We not expand for you, [O Muhammad], your breast"***. The stronger view is that the verse refers to ***an inner expansion of the breast*** — receiving revelation and bearing the call — though some exegetes include the opening of the chest in its meaningTafsir Ibn Kathir 94:1.

ADAM LAUGHING AND WEEPING

In the lowest heaven, Prophet Adam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ sat with ***the souls of his descendants*** on his right and left. When he looked to the right — the people of Paradise — he ***laughed***; when he looked to the left — the people of the Fire — he ***wept***. This is a father's feeling for his children: joy for those who are saved, grief for those who perish.

The lesson: Prophet Adam welcomed the Messenger of Allah ﷺ as ***"righteous son"***. All humanity is one family, and each of us should strive to be a cause of ***joy***, not weeping, for our first father.

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AL-BURAQ AND THE RING OF THE PROPHETS

The narration of Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه through Thabit al-Bunani in Sahih Muslim is the most detailed report of ***the mount*** of the Isra' and the journey to the heavens:

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 162A

حَدَّثَنَا شَيْبَانُ بْنُ فَرُّوخَ، حَدَّثَنَا حَمَّادُ بْنُ سَلَمَةَ، حَدَّثَنَا ثَابِتٌ الْبُنَانِيُّ، عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «أُتِيتُ بِالْبُرَاقِ - وَهُوَ دَابَّةٌ أَبْيَضُ طَوِيلٌ فَوْقَ الْحِمَارِ وَدُونَ الْبَغْلِ يَضَعُ حَافِرَهُ عِنْدَ مُنْتَهَى طَرْفِهِ - قَالَ فَرَكِبْتُهُ حَتَّى أَتَيْتُ بَيْتَ الْمَقْدِسِ - قَالَ - فَرَبَطْتُهُ بِالْحَلْقَةِ الَّتِي يَرْبِطُ بِهِ الأَنْبِيَاءُ - قَالَ - ثُمَّ دَخَلْتُ الْمَسْجِدَ فَصَلَّيْتُ فِيهِ رَكْعَتَيْنِ ثُمَّ خَرَجْتُ فَجَاءَنِي جِبْرِيلُ - عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ - بِإِنَاءٍ مِنْ خَمْرٍ وَإِنَاءٍ مِنْ لَبَنٍ فَاخْتَرْتُ اللَّبَنَ فَقَالَ جِبْرِيلُ صلى الله عليه وسلم اخْتَرْتَ الْفِطْرَةَ. ثُمَّ عَرَجَ بِنَا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَاسْتَفْتَحَ جِبْرِيلُ فَقِيلَ مَنْ أَنْتَ قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ. قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ. قِيلَ وَقَدْ بُعِثَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ قَدْ بُعِثَ إِلَيْهِ. فَفُتِحَ لَنَا فَإِذَا أَنَا بِآدَمَ فَرَحَّبَ بِي وَدَعَا لِي بِخَيْرٍ. ثُمَّ عَرَجَ بِنَا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الثَّانِيَةِ فَاسْتَفْتَحَ جِبْرِيلُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ. فَقِيلَ مَنْ أَنْتَ قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ. قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ. قِيلَ وَقَدْ بُعِثَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ قَدْ بُعِثَ إِلَيْهِ. فَفُتِحَ لَنَا فَإِذَا أَنَا بِابْنَيِ الْخَالَةِ عِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ وَيَحْيَى بْنِ زَكَرِيَّاءَ صَلَوَاتُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِمَا فَرَحَّبَا وَدَعَوَا لِي بِخَيْرٍ. ثُمَّ عَرَجَ بِي إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الثَّالِثَةِ فَاسْتَفْتَحَ جِبْرِيلُ. فَقِيلَ مَنْ أَنْتَ قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ. قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ صلى الله عليه وسلم. قِيلَ وَقَدْ بُعِثَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ قَدْ بُعِثَ إِلَيْهِ. فَفُتِحَ لَنَا فَإِذَا أَنَا بِيُوسُفَ صلى الله عليه وسلم إِذَا هُوَ قَدْ أُعْطِيَ شَطْرَ الْحُسْنِ فَرَحَّبَ وَدَعَا لِي بِخَيْرٍ. ثُمَّ عَرَجَ بِنَا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الرَّابِعَةِ فَاسْتَفْتَحَ جِبْرِيلُ - عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ - قِيلَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ. قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ. قَالَ وَقَدْ بُعِثَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ قَدْ بُعِثَ إِلَيْهِ. فَفُتِحَ لَنَا فَإِذَا أَنَا بِإِدْرِيسَ فَرَحَّبَ وَدَعَا لِي بِخَيْرٍ قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ { وَرَفَعْنَاهُ مَكَانًا عَلِيًّا} ثُمَّ عَرَجَ بِنَا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الْخَامِسَةِ فَاسْتَفْتَحَ جِبْرِيلُ. قِيلَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ. قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ. قِيلَ وَقَدْ بُعِثَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ قَدْ بُعِثَ إِلَيْهِ. فَفُتِحَ لَنَا فَإِذَا أَنَا بِهَارُونَ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَرَحَّبَ وَدَعَا لِي بِخَيْرٍ. ثُمَّ عَرَجَ بِنَا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ السَّادِسَةِ فَاسْتَفْتَحَ جِبْرِيلُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ. قِيلَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ.

قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ. قِيلَ وَقَدْ بُعِثَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ قَدْ بُعِثَ إِلَيْهِ. فَفُتِحَ لَنَا فَإِذَا أَنَا بِمُوسَى صلى الله عليه وسلم فَرَحَّبَ وَدَعَا لِي بِخَيْرٍ. ثُمَّ عَرَجَ بِنَا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ السَّابِعَةِ فَاسْتَفْتَحَ جِبْرِيلُ فَقِيلَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ. قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ صلى الله عليه وسلم. قِيلَ وَقَدْ بُعِثَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ قَدْ بُعِثَ إِلَيْهِ. فَفُتِحَ لَنَا فَإِذَا أَنَا بِإِبْرَاهِيمَ صلى الله عليه وسلم مُسْنِدًا ظَهْرَهُ إِلَى الْبَيْتِ الْمَعْمُورِ وَإِذَا هُوَ يَدْخُلُهُ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ مَلَكٍ لاَ يَعُودُونَ إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ ذَهَبَ بِي إِلَى السِّدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَى وَإِذَا وَرَقُهَا كَآذَانِ الْفِيَلَةِ وَإِذَا ثَمَرُهَا كَالْقِلاَلِ - قَالَ - فَلَمَّا غَشِيَهَا مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ مَا غَشِيَ تَغَيَّرَتْ فَمَا أَحَدٌ مِنْ خَلْقِ اللَّهِ يَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ يَنْعَتَهَا مِنْ حُسْنِهَا. فَأَوْحَى اللَّهُ إِلَىَّ مَا أَوْحَى فَفَرَضَ عَلَىَّ خَمْسِينَ صَلاَةً فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ وَلَيْلَةٍ فَنَزَلْتُ إِلَى مُوسَى صلى الله عليه وسلم فَقَالَ مَا فَرَضَ رَبُّكَ عَلَى أُمَّتِكَ قُلْتُ خَمْسِينَ صَلاَةً. قَالَ ارْجِعْ إِلَى رَبِّكَ فَاسْأَلْهُ التَّخْفِيفَ فَإِنَّ أُمَّتَكَ لاَ يُطِيقُونَ ذَلِكَ فَإِنِّي قَدْ بَلَوْتُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَخَبَرْتُهُمْ. قَالَ فَرَجَعْتُ إِلَى رَبِّي فَقُلْتُ يَا رَبِّ خَفِّفْ عَلَى أُمَّتِي. فَحَطَّ عَنِّي خَمْسًا فَرَجَعْتُ إِلَى مُوسَى فَقُلْتُ حَطَّ عَنِّي خَمْسًا. قَالَ إِنَّ أُمَّتَكَ لاَ يُطِيقُونَ ذَلِكَ فَارْجِعْ إِلَى رَبِّكَ فَاسْأَلْهُ التَّخْفِيفَ. - قَالَ - فَلَمْ أَزَلْ أَرْجِعُ بَيْنَ رَبِّي تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى وَبَيْنَ مُوسَى - عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ - حَتَّى قَالَ يَا مُحَمَّدُ إِنَّهُنَّ خَمْسُ صَلَوَاتٍ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ وَلَيْلَةٍ لِكُلِّ صَلاَةٍ عَشْرٌ فَذَلِكَ خَمْسُونَ صَلاَةً. وَمَنْ هَمَّ بِحَسَنَةٍ فَلَمْ يَعْمَلْهَا كُتِبَتْ لَهُ حَسَنَةً فَإِنْ عَمِلَهَا كُتِبَتْ لَهُ عَشْرًا وَمَنْ هَمَّ بِسَيِّئَةٍ فَلَمْ يَعْمَلْهَا لَمْ تُكْتَبْ شَيْئًا فَإِنْ عَمِلَهَا كُتِبَتْ سَيِّئَةً وَاحِدَةً - قَالَ - فَنَزَلْتُ حَتَّى انْتَهَيْتُ إِلَى مُوسَى صلى الله عليه وسلم فَأَخْبَرْتُهُ فَقَالَ ارْجِعْ إِلَى رَبِّكَ فَاسْأَلْهُ التَّخْفِيفَ. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَقُلْتُ قَدْ رَجَعْتُ إِلَى رَبِّي حَتَّى اسْتَحْيَيْتُ مِنْهُ».

TRANSLATION:

Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"Al-Buraq was brought to me — a white, long mount, larger than a donkey and smaller than a mule, which placed its hoof at the furthest limit of its sight. I rode it until I came to Bayt al-Maqdis, and tied it to the ring the prophets used to tie (their mounts) to. Then I entered the mosque and prayed two rak'ahs in it, then came out. Jibril عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ brought me a vessel of wine and a vessel of milk, and I chose the milk. Jibril said: 'You have chosen the fitrah.' Then he took us up to heaven."** At each heaven Jibril asked for the gate to be opened and was questioned as in the other hadiths. In the first heaven he met ***Adam***; in the second ***'Isa son of***

Maryam and Yahya son of Zakariyya, two cousins; in the third ***Yusuf***, **"who had been given half of beauty"**; in the fourth ***Idris*** — Allah said: {And We raised him to a high station}; in the fifth ***Harun***; in the sixth ***Musa***; all welcomed him and prayed for his good. **"In the seventh heaven I met Ibrahim, reclining with his back against al-Bayt al-Ma'mur, which seventy thousand angels enter every day, never to return to it. Then I was taken to Sidrat al-Muntaha; its leaves were like elephants' ears and its fruits like great jars. When it was covered by the command of Allah, it changed so that none of Allah's creation can describe its beauty. Then Allah revealed to me what He revealed, and enjoined on me fifty prayers every day and night."** Musa advised him to ask for a reduction, for he had tested the Children of Israel. He went back and five were removed; he kept going back and forth between his Lord and Musa until Allah said: **"O Muhammad, they are five prayers every day and night, each counted as ten, so that is fifty prayers. Whoever intends a good deed but does not do it, one good deed is written for him; if he does it, ten are written for him. Whoever intends an evil deed but does not do it, nothing is written; if he does it, one evil deed is written."** Musa told him to go back again, but he said: **"I have gone back to my Lord until I feel shy before Him."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Shayban ibn Farrukh, from Hammad ibn Salamah, from Thabit al-Bunani, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Faith, chapter on the Night Journey to the heavens and the enjoining of prayers, Hadith No. 162a. The second to sixth heavens are summarised as the wording repeats.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:162a

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THE DESCRIPTION OF AL-BURAQ

FEATURE	MEANING
"White"	The colour of the mount; no other colour in authentic reports.
"Long"	Its body was elongated.
"Larger than a donkey, smaller than a mule"	A moderate size, suitable for riding.
"Placing its hoof at the limit of its sight"	Each stride as far as the eye can see — extraordinary speed.

Authentic reports ***mention no wings or human face***. The depiction of al-Buraq as a winged horse with a woman's head is a later artistic creation (see the chapter on Weak and Baseless Stories).

THE RING OF THE PROPHETS

In Jerusalem, he tied al-Buraq ***to the ring the prophets used***. Scholars draw a beautiful lesson: even though Allah was the one taking him, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ still ***took the means*** by tying his mount. Reliance on Allah does not cancel effort.

The ring also shows that Jerusalem is ***the place of the prophets***. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ came to the same place earlier prophets had come to — a sign that his message ***continues*** theirs.

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MUSA PRAYING IN HIS GRAVE

During that night's journey, he passed an astonishing scene, narrated by Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه:

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2375A

حَدَّثَنَا هَدَّابُ بْنُ خَالِدٍ، وَشَيْبَانُ بْنُ فَرُّوخَ، قَالاَ حَدَّثَنَا حَمَّادُ بْنُ سَلَمَةَ، عَنْ ثَابِتٍ، الْبُنَانِيِّ وَسُلَيْمَانَ التَّيْمِيِّ عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «أَتَيْتُ - وَفِي رِوَايَةِ هَدَّابٍ مَرَرْتُ - عَلَى مُوسَى لَيْلَةَ أُسْرِيَ بِي عِنْدَ الْكَثِيبِ الأَحْمَرِ وَهُوَ قَائِمٌ يُصَلِّي فِي قَبْرِهِ».

TRANSLATION:

Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"I came to — in Haddab's narration: I passed by — Musa on the night I was taken on the journey, by the red sand dune, and he was standing praying in his grave."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Haddab ibn Khalid and Shayban ibn Farrukh, from Hammad ibn Salamah, from Thabit al-Bunani and Sulayman at-Taymi, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtues, chapter on the virtues of Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, Hadith No. 2375a.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2375a

HOW WAS MUSA BOTH IN HIS GRAVE AND IN THE HEAVENS?

He saw Prophet Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ ***praying in his grave*** by the red sand dune, then met Musa in Jerusalem and in ***the sixth heaven***. Scholars such as al-Qurtubi and Ibn Hajar explain that ***the barzakh*** is not bound by the earthly rules of place and time. The souls of the prophets are honoured and can be wherever Allah wills.

This hadith is also evidence that the prophets ***are alive in the barzakh*** with a life suited to that realm, just as the martyrs are "alive with their Lord, receiving provision" (Ali 'Imran 3:169).

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SIRAH NOTE: WHERE IS THE RED SAND DUNE?

The hadith does not state where ***al-Kathib al-Ahmar*** (the red sand dune) is. In another hadith, Prophet Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ asked Allah to bring him near the Holy Land ***a stone's throw***, and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "If I were there, I would show you his grave by the road, beside the red sand dune" (Sahih al-Bukhari 1339).

The tomb visited today near Jericho ***cannot be confirmed*** as Prophet Musa's grave.

REFERENCES:

Sahih al-Bukhari 1339. https://sunnah.com/bukhari:1339

The lesson: Prophet Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was ***praying*** — the worship he loved in this world remained his delight in the barzakh. What we make our habit in life is what will accompany us after death.

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IN JERUSALEM: MILK OR WINE?

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated two things he told about that night: ***the appearance of three prophets*** and ***the test of two vessels***:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3394

حَدَّثَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بْنُ مُوسَى، أَخْبَرَنَا هِشَامُ بْنُ يُوسُفَ، أَخْبَرَنَا مَعْمَرٌ، عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ، عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ الْمُسَيَّبِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم لَيْلَةَ أُسْرِيَ بِهِ «رَأَيْتُ مُوسَى وَإِذَا رَجُلٌ ضَرْبٌ رَجِلٌ، كَأَنَّهُ مِنْ رِجَالِ شَنُوءَةَ، وَرَأَيْتُ عِيسَى، فَإِذَا هُوَ رَجُلٌ رَبْعَةٌ أَحْمَرُ كَأَنَّمَا خَرَجَ مِنْ دِيمَاسٍ، وَأَنَا أَشْبَهُ وَلَدِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ صلى الله عليه وسلم بِهِ، ثُمَّ أُتِيتُ بِإِنَاءَيْنِ، فِي أَحَدِهِمَا لَبَنٌ، وَفِي الآخَرِ خَمْرٌ فَقَالَ اشْرَبْ أَيَّهُمَا شِئْتَ. فَأَخَذْتُ اللَّبَنَ فَشَرِبْتُهُ فَقِيلَ أَخَذْتَ الْفِطْرَةَ، أَمَا إِنَّكَ لَوْ أَخَذْتَ الْخَمْرَ غَوَتْ أُمَّتُكَ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said about the night he was taken on the journey:

"I saw Musa; he was a lean man with straight hair, as if from the people of Shanu'ah. I saw 'Isa; he was a man of medium height, with a reddish complexion, as if he had just come out of a bath. And I am the one of Ibrahim's ﷺ descendants who most resembles him. Then two vessels were brought to me, one with milk and the other with wine. It was said: 'Drink whichever you wish.' I took the milk and drank it. It was said: 'You have taken the fitrah. Had you taken the wine, your nation would have gone astray.'"

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Ibrahim ibn Musa, from Hisham ibn Yusuf, from Ma'mar, from az-Zuhri, from Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Prophets, Hadith No. 3394. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 168).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3394

THE MEANING OF "FITRAH"

Jibril said: ***"You have chosen the fitrah."*** The fitrah is ***the original nature*** on which Allah created mankind — Islam and an inclination to good. Milk is mankind's first drink, pure, simple and nourishing; wine ***removes the mind*** and is the mother of all evils.

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Then it was said: ***"Had you taken the wine, your nation would have gone astray."*** His choice that night became ***a sign for the nation***: this religion is easy, balanced and in harmony with the fitrah. In the narration of Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah, ***honey*** was also offered, but he still chose milk (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887).

NARRATION	VESSELS OFFERED AND WHERE
Muslim 162 (Anas)	Wine and milk; in Jerusalem, after praying two rak'ahs
Bukhari 3394 (Abu Hurayrah)	Milk and wine; mentioned with the night of the Isra'
Bukhari 3887 (Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah)	Wine, milk and honey; after al-Bayt al-Ma'mur

Scholars explain that ***this test may have happened twice***: once in Jerusalem and once in the heavens. In both, he chose the same — ***milk, the fitrah***.

HE MOST RESEMBLES IBRAHIM

He said: ***"I am the one of Ibrahim's descendants who most resembles him."*** The likeness is not only in looks; the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is the answer to Ibrahim's عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ prayer: "Our Lord, and send among them a messenger from themselves" (Al-Baqarah 2:129), and he brought ***the creed of Ibrahim***, the upright religion of tawhid.

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LEADER OF THE PROPHETS AND MALIK'S GREETING

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated a hadith that combines ***three stories***: the test of Quraysh, praying with the prophets, and the greeting of Malik, keeper of the Fire:

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 172

وَحَدَّثَنِي زُهَيْرُ بْنُ حَرْبٍ، حَدَّثَنَا حُجَيْنُ بْنُ الْمُثَنَّى، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْعَزِيزِ، - وَهُوَ ابْنُ أَبِي سَلَمَةَ - عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ الْفَضْلِ، عَنْ أَبِي سَلَمَةَ بْنِ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم «لَقَدْ رَأَيْتُنِي فِي الْحِجْرِ وَقُرَيْشٌ تَسْأَلُنِي عَنْ مَسْرَاىَ فَسَأَلَتْنِي عَنْ أَشْيَاءَ مِنْ بَيْتِ الْمَقْدِسِ لَمْ أُثْبِتْهَا. فَكُرِبْتُ كُرْبَةً مَا كُرِبْتُ مِثْلَهُ قَطُّ قَالَ فَرَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ لِي أَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِ مَا يَسْأَلُونِي عَنْ شَىْءٍ إِلاَّ أَنْبَأْتُهُمْ بِهِ وَقَدْ رَأَيْتُنِي فِي جَمَاعَةٍ مِنَ الأَنْبِيَاءِ فَإِذَا مُوسَى قَائِمٌ يُصَلِّي فَإِذَا رَجُلٌ ضَرْبٌ جَعْدٌ كَأَنَّهُ مِنْ رِجَالِ شَنُوءَةَ وَإِذَا عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ - عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ - قَائِمٌ يُصَلِّي أَقْرَبُ النَّاسِ بِهِ شَبَهًا عُرْوَةُ بْنُ مَسْعُودٍ الثَّقَفِيُّ وَإِذَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ - عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ - قَائِمٌ يُصَلِّي أَشْبَهُ النَّاسِ بِهِ صَاحِبُكُمْ - يَعْنِي نَفْسَهُ - فَحَانَتِ الصَّلاَةُ فَأَمَمْتُهُمْ فَلَمَّا فَرَغْتُ مِنَ الصَّلاَةِ قَالَ قَائِلٌ يَا مُحَمَّدُ هَذَا مَالِكٌ صَاحِبُ النَّارِ فَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِ. فَالْتَفَتُّ إِلَيْهِ فَبَدَأَنِي بِالسَّلاَمِ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"I saw myself in al-Hijr while Quraysh were asking me about my night journey. They asked me about things in Bayt al-Maqdis that I had not noted carefully, and I was distressed as I had never been distressed before. So Allah raised it up for me to look at; they did not ask me about anything but that I told them. And I saw myself among a group of prophets. Musa was standing in prayer; he was a well-built man with curly hair, as if from the people of Shanu'ah. 'Isa son of Maryam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was standing in prayer; the person who most resembles him is 'Urwah ibn Mas'ud ath-Thaqafi. Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was standing in prayer; the person who most resembles him is your companion (meaning himself). Then the time of prayer came and I led them. When I finished the prayer, someone said: 'O Muhammad, this is Malik, keeper of the Fire; greet him.' I turned to him, but he greeted me first."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Zuhayr ibn Harb, from Hujayn ibn al-Muthanna, from 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Abi Salamah, from 'Abdullah ibn al-Fadl, from Abu Salamah ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Faith, chapter on the Messiah son of Maryam and the false Messiah, Hadith No. 172.

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GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:172

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THE PROPHETS WERE PRAYING

He saw Musa, 'Isa and Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ ***standing in prayer***. When the time of prayer came, ***he led them***. Scholars differ on whether this prayer took place before the ascent or after the descent; Ibn Kathir inclines to ***after he descended*** from the heavens and returned to Jerusalem.

His leading the prophets shows ***the leadership of his message***. All prophets brought one religion — tawhid — and Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is their ***seal*** (Al-Ahzab 33:40).

MALIK GREETED FIRST

After the prayer, someone said: ***"O Muhammad, this is Malik, keeper of the Fire; greet him."*** He turned, but ***Malik greeted him first***. Scholars see this as ***an honour*** for him; even the keeper of the Fire, of the angels the Qur'an describes as stern (At-Tahrim 66:6), initiated the greeting to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

This hadith also mentions ***the test of Quraysh*** the next day, discussed in the chapter "The Morning of Testing".

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THE APPEARANCE OF THE PROPHETS AND THE KEEPER OF THE FIRE

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ not only met the prophets but ***described their appearance*** to the Companions, as if inviting us to see them too. Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما narrated:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3239

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ بَشَّارٍ، حَدَّثَنَا غُنْدَرٌ، حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، عَنْ قَتَادَةَ،. وَقَالَ لِي خَلِيفَةُ حَدَّثَنَا يَزِيدُ بْنُ زُرَيْعٍ، حَدَّثَنَا سَعِيدٌ، عَنْ قَتَادَةَ، عَنْ أَبِي الْعَالِيَةِ، حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ عَمِّ، نَبِيِّكُمْ يَعْنِي ابْنَ عَبَّاسٍ - رضى الله عنهما - عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «رَأَيْتُ لَيْلَةَ أُسْرِيَ بِي موسى رَجُلاً آدَمَ طُوَالاً جَعْدًا، كَأَنَّهُ مِنْ رِجَالِ شَنُوءَةَ، وَرَأَيْتُ عِيسَى رَجُلاً مَرْبُوعًا مَرْبُوعَ الْخَلْقِ إِلَى الْحُمْرَةِ وَالْبَيَاضِ، سَبْطَ الرَّأْسِ، وَرَأَيْتُ مَالِكًا خَازِنَ النَّارِ». وَالدَّجَّالَ فِي آيَاتٍ أَرَاهُنَّ اللَّهُ إِيَّاهُ، فَلاَ تَكُنْ فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِنْ لِقَائِهِ. قَالَ أَنَسٌ وَأَبُو بَكْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم «تَحْرُسُ الْمَلاَئِكَةُ الْمَدِينَةَ مِنَ الدَّجَّالِ».

TRANSLATION:

Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"On the night I was taken on the journey, I saw Musa, a tall, brown man with curly hair, as if from the people of Shanu'ah. I saw 'Isa, a man of medium height and build, his complexion between red and white, with straight hair. And I saw Malik, the keeper of the Fire,"** and the Dajjal — among the signs Allah showed him. {So do not be in doubt of meeting him} (As-Sajdah 32:23). Anas and Abu Bakrah narrated from the Prophet ﷺ: **"The angels guard Madinah from the Dajjal."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari through two chains: (1) from Muhammad ibn Bashshar, from Ghundar, from Shu'bah, from Qatadah; and (2) from Khalifah ibn Khayyat, from Yazid ibn Zuray', from Sa'id ibn Abi 'Arubah, from Qatadah — from Abu al-'Aliyah, from Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Beginning of Creation, Hadith No. 3239. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 165).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3239

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THE PROPHETS' APPEARANCE IN AUTHENTIC REPORTS

PROPHET	DESCRIPTION (REFERENCE)
Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Lean, straight hair, like the men of Shanu'ah (Bukhari 3394); tall, brown, curly hair (Bukhari 3239); well-built (Muslim 172)
'Isa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Medium height, reddish as if just out of a bath (Bukhari 3394); between red and white, straight hair (Bukhari 3239); resembles 'Urwah ibn Mas'ud (Muslim 172)
Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Most resembles the Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself (Bukhari 3394; Muslim 172)
Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	"Given half of beauty" (Muslim 162)

Small differences such as "straight hair" and "curly hair" for Prophet Musa are explained by scholars: the Arabic word ***ja'd*** can mean ***a compact, sturdy body***, not only curly hair. So the two reports do not conflict.

MALIK AND THE DAJJAL

In this hadith, he also saw ***Malik, keeper of the Fire***, and ***the Dajjal***, as part of the signs Allah showed him. The hadith ends with good news: ***the angels guard Madinah from the Dajjal***.

This hadith links the meeting with Prophet Musa to the words of Allah: ***"so do not be in doubt over his meeting"***. According to this interpretation, the verse promised ***a meeting with Prophet Musa***, and the promise was fulfilled on the night of the Mi'rajTafsir Ibn Kathir 32:23.

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THE MI'RAJ: THE HADITH OF MALIK IBN SA'SA'AH

The hadith of Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah رضى الله عنه is ***the fullest report*** of the Mi'raj. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ told it himself to the Companions, heaven by heaven:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3887

حَدَّثَنَا هُدْبَةُ بْنُ خَالِدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا هَمَّامُ بْنُ يَحْيَى، حَدَّثَنَا قَتَادَةُ، عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ، عَنْ مَالِكِ بْنِ صَعْصَعَةَ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ أَنَّ نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم حَدَّثَهُمْ عَنْ لَيْلَةِ أُسْرِيَ بِهِ «بَيْنَمَا أَنَا فِي الْحَطِيمِ ـ وَرُبَّمَا قَالَ فِي الْحِجْرِ ـ مُضْطَجِعًا، إِذْ أَتَانِي آتٍ فَقَدَّ ـ قَالَ وَسَمِعْتُهُ يَقُولُ فَشَقَّ ـ مَا بَيْنَ هَذِهِ إِلَى هَذِهِ ـ فَقُلْتُ لِلْجَارُودِ وَهْوَ إِلَى جَنْبِي مَا يَعْنِي بِهِ قَالَ مِنْ ثُغْرَةِ نَحْرِهِ إِلَى شِعْرَتِهِ، وَسَمِعْتُهُ يَقُولُ مِنْ قَصِّهِ إِلَى شِعْرَتِهِ ـ فَاسْتَخْرَجَ قَلْبِي، ثُمَّ أُتِيتُ بِطَسْتٍ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ مَمْلُوءَةٍ إِيمَانًا، فَغُسِلَ قَلْبِي ثُمَّ حُشِيَ، ثُمَّ أُوتِيتُ بِدَابَّةٍ دُونَ الْبَغْلِ وَفَوْقَ الْحِمَارِ أَبْيَضَ». ـ فَقَالَ لَهُ الْجَارُودُ هُوَ الْبُرَاقُ يَا أَبَا حَمْزَةَ قَالَ أَنَسٌ نَعَمْ، يَضَعُ خَطْوَهُ عِنْدَ أَقْصَى طَرْفِهِ ـ «فَحُمِلْتُ عَلَيْهِ، فَانْطَلَقَ بِي جِبْرِيلُ حَتَّى أَتَى السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا فَاسْتَفْتَحَ، فَقِيلَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ. قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ. قِيلَ وَقَدْ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ نَعَمْ. قِيلَ مَرْحَبًا بِهِ، فَنِعْمَ الْمَجِيءُ جَاءَ فَفَتَحَ، فَلَمَّا خَلَصْتُ، فَإِذَا فِيهَا آدَمُ، فَقَالَ هَذَا أَبُوكَ آدَمُ فَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِ. فَسَلَّمْتُ عَلَيْهِ فَرَدَّ السَّلاَمَ ثُمَّ قَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِالاِبْنِ الصَّالِحِ وَالنَّبِيِّ الصَّالِحِ. ثُمَّ صَعِدَ حَتَّى أَتَى السَّمَاءَ الثَّانِيَةَ فَاسْتَفْتَحَ، قِيلَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ. قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ. قِيلَ وَقَدْ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ نَعَمْ. قِيلَ مَرْحَبًا بِهِ فَنِعْمَ الْمَجِيءُ جَاءَ. فَفَتَحَ، فَلَمَّا خَلَصْتُ، إِذَا يَحْيَى وَعِيسَى، وَهُمَا ابْنَا الْخَالَةِ قَالَ هَذَا يَحْيَى وَعِيسَى فَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِمَا. فَسَلَّمْتُ فَرَدَّا، ثُمَّ قَالاَ مَرْحَبًا بِالأَخِ الصَّالِحِ وَالنَّبِيِّ الصَّالِحِ. ثُمَّ صَعِدَ بِي إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الثَّالِثَةِ، فَاسْتَفْتَحَ قِيلَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ. قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ. قِيلَ وَقَدْ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ نَعَمْ. قِيلَ مَرْحَبًا بِهِ، فَنِعْمَ الْمَجِيءُ جَاءَ. فَفُتِحَ، فَلَمَّا خَلَصْتُ إِذَا يُوسُفُ. قَالَ هَذَا يُوسُفُ فَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِ. فَسَلَّمْتُ عَلَيْهِ فَرَدَّ، ثُمَّ قَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِالأَخِ الصَّالِحِ وَالنَّبِيِّ الصَّالِحِ، ثُمَّ صَعِدَ بِي حَتَّى أَتَى السَّمَاءَ الرَّابِعَةَ، فَاسْتَفْتَحَ، قِيلَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ. قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ. قِيلَ أَوَقَدْ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ نَعَمْ. قِيلَ مَرْحَبًا بِهِ، فَنِعْمَ الْمَجِيءُ جَاءَ. فَفُتِحَ، فَلَمَّا خَلَصْتُ إِلَى

إِدْرِيسَ قَالَ هَذَا إِدْرِيسُ فَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِ. فَسَلَّمْتُ عَلَيْهِ فَرَدَّ ثُمَّ قَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِالأَخِ الصَّالِحِ وَالنَّبِيِّ الصَّالِحِ. ثُمَّ صَعِدَ بِي حَتَّى أَتَى السَّمَاءَ الْخَامِسَةَ، فَاسْتَفْتَحَ، قِيلَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ. قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ صلى الله عليه وسلم. قِيلَ وَقَدْ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ نَعَمْ. قِيلَ مَرْحَبًا بِهِ، فَنِعْمَ الْمَجِيءُ جَاءَ. فَلَمَّا خَلَصْتُ فَإِذَا هَارُونُ قَالَ هَذَا هَارُونُ فَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِ. فَسَلَّمْتُ عَلَيْهِ فَرَدَّ ثُمَّ قَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِالأَخِ الصَّالِحِ وَالنَّبِيِّ الصَّالِحِ. ثُمَّ صَعِدَ بِي حَتَّى أَتَى السَّمَاءَ السَّادِسَةَ، فَاسْتَفْتَحَ، قِيلَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ. قِيلَ مَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ. قِيلَ وَقَدْ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ نَعَمْ. قَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِهِ، فَنِعْمَ الْمَجِيءُ جَاءَ، فَلَمَّا خَلَصْتُ، فَإِذَا مُوسَى قَالَ هَذَا مُوسَى فَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِ، فَسَلَّمْتُ عَلَيْهِ فَرَدَّ ثُمَّ قَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِالأَخِ الصَّالِحِ وَالنَّبِيِّ الصَّالِحِ. فَلَمَّا تَجَاوَزْتُ بَكَى، قِيلَ لَهُ مَا يُبْكِيكَ قَالَ أَبْكِي لأَنَّ غُلاَمًا بُعِثَ بَعْدِي، يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مِنْ أُمَّتِهِ أَكْثَرُ مَنْ يَدْخُلُهَا مِنْ أُمَّتِي. ثُمَّ صَعِدَ بِي إِلَى السَّمَاءِ السَّابِعَةِ، فَاسْتَفْتَحَ جِبْرِيلُ، قِيلَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ. قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ. قِيلَ وَقَدْ بُعِثَ إِلَيْهِ. قَالَ نَعَمْ. قَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِهِ، فَنِعْمَ الْمَجِيءُ جَاءَ فَلَمَّا خَلَصْتُ، فَإِذَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ قَالَ هَذَا أَبُوكَ فَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِ. قَالَ فَسَلَّمْتُ عَلَيْهِ، فَرَدَّ السَّلاَمَ قَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِالاِبْنِ الصَّالِحِ وَالنَّبِيِّ الصَّالِحِ. ثُمَّ رُفِعَتْ لِي سِدْرَةُ الْمُنْتَهَى، فَإِذَا نَبِقُهَا مِثْلُ قِلاَلِ هَجَرَ، وَإِذَا وَرَقُهَا مِثْلُ آذَانِ الْفِيَلَةِ قَالَ هَذِهِ سِدْرَةُ الْمُنْتَهَى، وَإِذَا أَرْبَعَةُ أَنْهَارٍ نَهْرَانِ بَاطِنَانِ، وَنَهْرَانِ ظَاهِرَانِ. فَقُلْتُ مَا هَذَانِ يَا جِبْرِيلُ قَالَ أَمَّا الْبَاطِنَانِ، فَنَهَرَانِ فِي الْجَنَّةِ، وَأَمَّا الظَّاهِرَانِ فَالنِّيلُ وَالْفُرَاتُ. ثُمَّ رُفِعَ لِي الْبَيْتُ الْمَعْمُورُ، ثُمَّ أُتِيتُ بِإِنَاءٍ مِنْ خَمْرٍ، وَإِنَاءٍ مِنْ لَبَنٍ وَإِنَاءٍ مِنْ عَسَلٍ، فَأَخَذْتُ اللَّبَنَ، فَقَالَ هِيَ الْفِطْرَةُ أَنْتَ عَلَيْهَا وَأُمَّتُكَ. ثُمَّ فُرِضَتْ عَلَىَّ الصَّلَوَاتُ خَمْسِينَ صَلاَةً كُلَّ يَوْمٍ. فَرَجَعْتُ فَمَرَرْتُ عَلَى مُوسَى، فَقَالَ بِمَا أُمِرْتَ قَالَ أُمِرْتُ بِخَمْسِينَ صَلاَةً كُلَّ يَوْمٍ. قَالَ إِنَّ أُمَّتَكَ لاَ تَسْتَطِيعُ خَمْسِينَ صَلاَةً كُلَّ يَوْمٍ، وَإِنِّي وَاللَّهِ قَدْ جَرَّبْتُ النَّاسَ قَبْلَكَ، وَعَالَجْتُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَشَدَّ الْمُعَالَجَةِ، فَارْجِعْ إِلَى رَبِّكَ فَاسْأَلْهُ التَّخْفِيفَ لأُمَّتِكَ. فَرَجَعْتُ، فَوَضَعَ عَنِّي عَشْرًا، فَرَجَعْتُ إِلَى مُوسَى فَقَالَ مِثْلَهُ، فَرَجَعْتُ فَوَضَعَ عَنِّي عَشْرًا، فَرَجَعْتُ إِلَى مُوسَى فَقَالَ مِثْلَهُ، فَرَجَعْتُ فَوَضَعَ عَنِّي عَشْرًا، فَرَجَعْتُ إِلَى مُوسَى فَقَالَ مِثْلَهُ، فَرَجَعْتُ فَأُمِرْتُ بِعَشْرِ صَلَوَاتٍ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ، فَرَجَعْتُ فَقَالَ مِثْلَهُ، فَرَجَعْتُ فَأُمِرْتُ بِخَمْسِ صَلَوَاتٍ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ،

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فَرَجَعْتُ إِلَى مُوسَى، فَقَالَ بِمَا أُمِرْتَ قُلْتُ أُمِرْتُ بِخَمْسِ صَلَوَاتٍ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ. قَالَ إِنَّ أُمَّتَكَ لاَ تَسْتَطِيعُ خَمْسَ صَلَوَاتٍ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ، وَإِنِّي قَدْ جَرَّبْتُ النَّاسَ قَبْلَكَ، وَعَالَجْتُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَشَدَّ الْمُعَالَجَةِ، فَارْجِعْ إِلَى رَبِّكَ فَاسْأَلْهُ التَّخْفِيفَ لأُمَّتِكَ. قَالَ سَأَلْتُ رَبِّي حَتَّى اسْتَحْيَيْتُ، وَلَكِنْ أَرْضَى وَأُسَلِّمُ ـ قَالَ ـ فَلَمَّا جَاوَزْتُ نَادَى مُنَادٍ أَمْضَيْتُ فَرِيضَتِي وَخَفَّفْتُ عَنْ عِبَادِي».

TRANSLATION:

Anas ibn Malik narrated from Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah رضى الله عنهما that the Prophet of Allah ﷺ told them about the night he was taken on the journey: **"While I was lying in al-Hatim — or he said, in al-Hijr — someone came to me and split (my chest) from the base of the throat to below the belly. He took out my heart; then a golden basin full of faith was brought to me, and my heart was washed and filled, then returned. Then a white mount was brought to me, smaller than a mule and larger than a donkey"** — al-Buraq, whose stride reached as far as its sight. **"I was mounted on it, and Jibril set out with me until we reached the lowest heaven. He asked for the gate to be opened. It was asked: 'Who is this?' He said: 'Jibril.' It was asked: 'Who is with you?' He said: 'Muhammad.' It was asked: 'Has he been sent for?' He said: 'Yes.' It was said: 'Welcome to him; how excellent his coming is!' The gate was opened, and there was Adam. Jibril said: 'This is your father Adam; greet him.' I greeted him; he returned the greeting and said: 'Welcome, righteous son and righteous prophet.'"** In the same way he ascended to the second heaven and met ***Yahya and 'Isa*** (two cousins), the third and met ***Yusuf***, the fourth and met ***Idris***, the fifth and met ***Harun***, and the sixth and met ***Musa***; each said: "Welcome, righteous brother and righteous prophet." **"When I passed him, Musa wept. He was asked: 'What makes you weep?' He said: 'I weep because a young man was sent after me, and more of his nation will enter Paradise than of mine.'"** In the seventh heaven he met ***Ibrahim***, who said: "Welcome, righteous son and righteous prophet." **"Then Sidrat al-Muntaha was raised up before me. Its fruits were like the jars of Hajar and its leaves like elephants' ears. There were four rivers: two hidden and two visible. I asked: 'What are these, Jibril?' He said: 'The two hidden are rivers in Paradise, and the two visible are the Nile and the Euphrates.' Then al-Bayt al-Ma'mur was raised up before me. Then a vessel of wine, a vessel of milk and a vessel of honey were brought to me. I took the milk. He said: 'That is the fitrah, on which you and your nation stand.' Then fifty prayers a day were made obligatory upon me."** On the way down, Musa advised him: **"Your nation cannot bear fifty prayers a day. By Allah, I tested people before you and struggled hard with the Children of Israel. Go back to your Lord and ask Him to lighten it for your nation."** He went back again and again, and it was reduced ten by ten, then to ten, then to ***five prayers a day***. Musa advised him again, but he said: **"I have asked my Lord until I feel shy; but I am content and I submit." "When I moved on, a caller called out: 'I have enacted My obligation and lightened (the burden) for My servants.'"**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Hudbah ibn Khalid, from Hammam ibn Yahya, from Qatadah, from Anas ibn Malik, from Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah رضى الله عنهما.

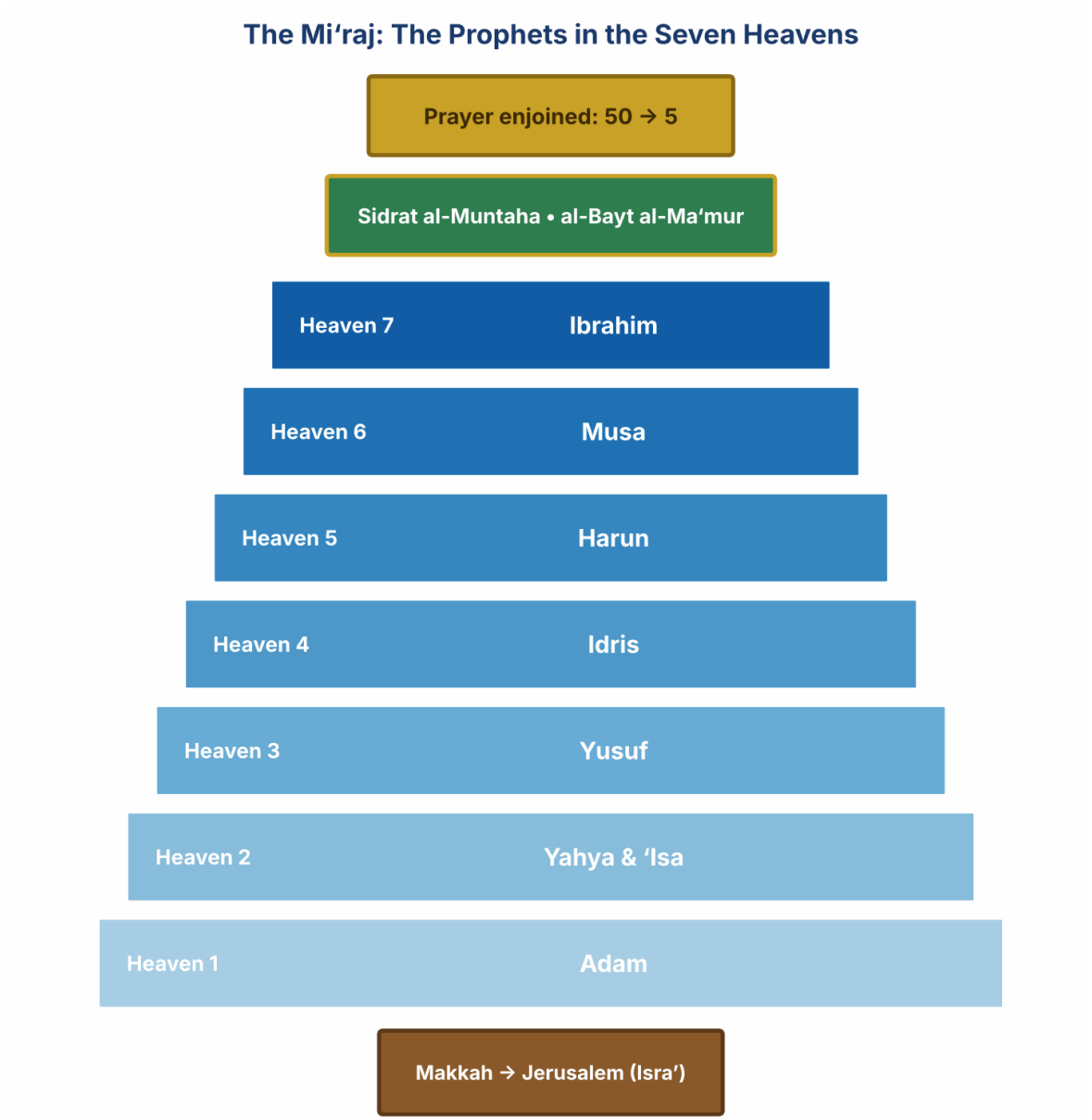
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REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Merits of the Ansar, chapter on al-Mi'raj, Hadith No. 3887. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 164). The translation of the second to sixth heavens is summarised as the wording repeats.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3887

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According to Sahih al-Bukhari 3887 (narration of Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah). This figure is schematic, not a depiction of the unseen.

Figure 2: The prophets in the seven heavens according to Sahih al-Bukhari 3887.

"HAS HE BEEN SENT FOR?"

At every heaven, the same dialogue repeats: the keeper asks ***"Who is this?"***, Jibril answers, then is asked ***"Has he been sent for?"*** Scholars explain that ***the heavens have gates and keepers***, and none may enter without permission — not even Jibril. The question "has he been sent for" shows the angels ***knew*** the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would be summoned, and they welcomed him joyfully: ***"Welcome; what an excellent arrival."***

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The lesson: the etiquette of ***seeking permission*** and introducing oneself by name — not just "me" — is taught by the angels themselves. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ disliked it when someone knocked and answered "me, me" (Sahih al-Bukhari 6250).

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THE PROPHETS IN THE SEVEN HEAVENS

Three authentic reports mention the prophets in the heavens. The narrations of Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah and Anas (through Thabit) ***agree*** on the order of the seven heavens, while Abu Dharr's narration ***does not fix*** the positions of most prophets:

Prophets in the Seven Heavens: Comparing Three Authentic Narrations

Heaven	Bukhari 3887 (Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah)	Muslim 162 (Anas, via Thabit)	Bukhari 349 (Abu Dharr)
1st	Adam	Adam	Adam
2nd	Yahya & 'Isa	'Isa & Yahya	*not fixed*
3rd	Yusuf	Yusuf (half of beauty)	*not fixed*
4th	Idris	Idris (19:57)	*not fixed*
5th	Harun	Harun	*not fixed*
6th	Musa	Musa	*not fixed*
7th	Ibrahim; al-Bayt al-Ma'mur	Ibrahim reclining on al-Bayt al-Ma'mur	Ibrahim in the 6th heaven

Orange: where Abu Dharr's narration differs. Grey: the narrator did not fix the position (Sahih al-Bukhari 349).

Figure 3: Comparing the prophets' positions in three authentic narrations.

Ibn Hajar explains that Abu Dharr's narration placing Ibrahim in the sixth heaven ***was less precisely retained***, since its narrator himself said Abu Dharr "did not fix their positions". The more numerous and detailed reports place Ibrahim in ***the seventh heaven***.

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SECOND HEAVEN: TWO COUSINS

In the second heaven, he met ***'Isa son of Maryam and Yahya son of Zakariyya*** عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, described in the hadith as ***"the two sons of maternal aunts"***. 'Isa's mother, Maryam, and Yahya's mother were sisters or cousins. Both prophets had miraculous births (Surah Maryam), and both were sent to the Children of Israel.

THIRD HEAVEN: HALF OF BEAUTY

Prophet Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ ***"was given half of beauty"*** (Muslim 162). Scholars explain its meaning: Yusuf was given a very great share of beauty compared with other people. This beauty was a test for him, and he passed it with ***'iffah*** (chastity), as told in Surah Yusuf.

FOURTH HEAVEN: IDRIS

When mentioning Prophet Idris عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, Anas recited the words of Allah: ***"And We raised him to a high station"***. Ibn Kathir mentions that this verse is interpreted by Idris's position in the fourth heaven as in the hadith of the Mi'rajTafsir Ibn Kathir 19:57.

FIFTH AND SIXTH HEAVENS: HARUN AND MUSA

In the fifth heaven, ***Harun*** عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, Prophet Musa's brother. In the sixth, ***Musa*** عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed him, Musa ***wept***. When asked, he said: ***"I weep because a young man sent after me will have more of his nation enter Paradise than of mine"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887).

Scholars stress that this weeping ***was not envy***, for prophets are free of it. It was weeping out of ***pity*** for his disobedient people, and ***longing*** for a greater reward. The word "young man" is an expression of esteem, referring to the Messenger's younger age compared with Musa when sent.

SEVENTH HEAVEN: IBRAHIM AND AL-BAYT AL-MA'MUR

In the seventh heaven, Prophet Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ ***was reclining against al-Bayt al-Ma'mur*** (Muslim 162) — the house of worship in the heavens entered by ***seventy thousand angels every day***, who never return to it. Ibrahim, who built the Ka'bah on earth, now reclined against the "Ka'bah" of the heavens' dwellers — a fitting reward for his deeds.

GREETING	SAID BY
"Welcome, righteous son and righteous prophet"	Adam and Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ — both forefathers of the Messenger ﷺ
"Welcome, righteous brother and righteous prophet"	Yahya, 'Isa, Yusuf, Idris, Harun and Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ

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SIDRAT AL-MUNTAHA AND THE GOLDEN MOTHS

After the seventh heaven, he was taken to ***Sidrat al-Muntaha***, "the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary". Allah mentions it in Surah An-Najm:

SURAH AN-NAJM 53:13–18

وَلَقَدْ رَءَاهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَىٰ ﴿١٣﴾

And he certainly saw him in another descent.

عِندَ سِدْرَةِ ٱلْمُنتَهَىٰ ﴿١٤﴾

At the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary.

عِندَهَا جَنَّةُ ٱلْمَأْوَىٰٓ ﴿١٥﴾

Near it is the Garden of Refuge.

إِذْ يَغْشَى ٱلسِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَىٰ ﴿١٦﴾

When there covered the Lote Tree that which covered [it]?

مَا زَاغَ ٱلْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَىٰ ﴿١٧﴾

The sight [of the Prophet] did not swerve, nor did it transgress [its limit].

لَقَدْ رَأَىٰ مِنْ ءَايَـٰتِ رَبِّهِ ٱلْكُبْرَىٰٓ ﴿١٨﴾

He certainly saw of the greatest signs of his Lord.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/53:13-18

Paradise lies beside it: ***"Near it is the Garden of Refuge"***. So Sidrat al-Muntaha is ***the threshold of the realm of Paradise***Tafsir Ibn Kathir 53:15.

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IBN MAS'UD'S REPORT: GOLDEN MOTHS

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 173

وَحَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو أُسَامَةَ، حَدَّثَنَا مَالِكُ بْنُ مِغْوَلٍ، ح وَحَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ نُمَيْرٍ، وَزُهَيْرُ بْنُ حَرْبٍ، جَمِيعًا عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ نُمَيْرٍ، - وَأَلْفَاظُهُمْ مُتَقَارِبَةٌ - قَالَ ابْنُ نُمَيْرٍ حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي، حَدَّثَنَا مَالِكُ بْنُ مِغْوَلٍ، عَنِ الزُّبَيْرِ بْنِ عَدِيٍّ، عَنْ طَلْحَةَ، عَنْ مُرَّةَ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، قَالَ لَمَّا أُسْرِيَ بِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم انْتُهِيَ بِهِ إِلَى سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَى وَهِيَ فِي السَّمَاءِ السَّادِسَةِ إِلَيْهَا يَنْتَهِي مَا يُعْرَجُ بِهِ مِنَ الأَرْضِ فَيُقْبَضُ مِنْهَا وَإِلَيْهَا يَنْتَهِي مَا يُهْبَطُ بِهِ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا فَيُقْبَضُ مِنْهَا قَالَ { إِذْ يَغْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَى} قَالَ فَرَاشٌ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ. قَالَ فَأُعْطِيَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم ثَلاَثًا أُعْطِيَ الصَّلَوَاتِ الْخَمْسَ وَأُعْطِيَ خَوَاتِيمَ سُورَةِ الْبَقَرَةِ وَغُفِرَ لِمَنْ لَمْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ أُمَّتِهِ شَيْئًا الْمُقْحِمَاتُ.

TRANSLATION:

'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه said: **"When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was taken on the night journey, he was brought to Sidrat al-Muntaha, which is in the sixth heaven. To it ends whatever ascends from the earth and is taken from there, and to it ends whatever descends from above it and is taken from there."** He recited: {When there covered the Lote Tree that which covered it}, and said: **"(It was covered by) moths of gold."** He said: **"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was given three things: he was given the five prayers, he was given the closing verses of Surah Al-Baqarah, and the grave sins were forgiven for those of his nation who associate nothing with Allah."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim through several chains: from Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah, from Abu Usamah; and from Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah ibn Numayr and Zuhayr ibn Harb, from 'Abdullah ibn Numayr — all from Malik ibn Mighwal, from az-Zubayr ibn 'Adi, from Talhah ibn Musarrif, from Murrah, from 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Faith, chapter on Sidrat al-Muntaha, Hadith No. 173.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:173

Ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه interpreted the words of Allah ***"When there covered the Lote Tree that which covered"*** as ***golden moths***. Other reports mention ***colours unknown*** (Bukhari 349) and ***the command of Allah*** that made it too beautiful to describe (Muslim 162)Tafsir Ibn Kathir 53:16.

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SIXTH OR SEVENTH HEAVEN?

Ibn Mas'ud placed Sidrat al-Muntaha ***in the sixth heaven***, while the hadiths of Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah and Anas place it ***after the seventh heaven***. An-Nawawi and Ibn Hajar reconcile them: ***its root is in the sixth heaven and most of it is in the seventh***. So both reports are true.

WHY "AL-MUNTAHA" (THE UTMOST BOUNDARY)?

Ibn Mas'ud himself explained: ***there ends whatever ascends from the earth***, and it is taken from there; and ***there ends whatever descends from above it***, and it is taken from there. It is ***the boundary*** between the known created realm and what lies above it, which only Allah knows.

FEATURE OF SIDRAT AL-MUNTAHA	REFERENCE
Its leaves are like elephants' ears	Muslim 162; Bukhari 3887
Its fruits are like great jars (the jars of Hajar)	Muslim 162; Bukhari 3887
Covered by golden moths	Muslim 173
Covered by colours unknown	Bukhari 349
No creature can describe its beauty	Muslim 162
Four rivers flow from its base	Bukhari 3887
Jannat al-Ma'wa beside it	An-Najm 53:15

THE FOUR RIVERS

In the narration of Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah, he saw ***four rivers*** flowing from the base of the Sidrah: ***two hidden*** and ***two visible***. Jibril explained: the two hidden are rivers in Paradise, while the two visible are ***the Nile and the Euphrates*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887).

Scholars explain that this does not mean the known sources of the Nile and Euphrates are physically in the heavens. It means both rivers are ***blessed*** and have ***an origin in Paradise***, and its reality is left to Allah. We believe in it without asking how.

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THE RIVER OF AL-KAWTHAR

Among the blessings shown to him that night was a river promised specifically to him. Anas رضى الله عنه narrated:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 4964

حَدَّثَنَا آدَمُ، حَدَّثَنَا شَيْبَانُ، حَدَّثَنَا قَتَادَةُ، عَنْ أَنَسٍ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ لَمَّا عُرِجَ بِالنَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم إِلَى السَّمَاءِ قَالَ «أَتَيْتُ عَلَى نَهَرٍ حَافَتَاهُ قِبَابُ اللُّؤْلُؤِ مُجَوَّفًا فَقُلْتُ مَا هَذَا يَا جِبْرِيلُ قَالَ هَذَا الْكَوْثَرُ».

TRANSLATION:

Anas رضى الله عنه said: When the Prophet ﷺ was taken up to heaven, he said: **"I came to a river whose two banks were domes of hollow pearls. I asked: 'What is this, Jibril?' He said: 'This is al-Kawthar.'"**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Adam ibn Abi Iyas, from Shayban, from Qatadah, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Tafsir, Surah al-Kawthar, Hadith No. 4964.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:4964

This is the river mentioned in the shortest surah of the Qur'an: ***"Indeed, We have granted you, [O Muhammad], al-Kawthar"***. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ explained that al-Kawthar is ***a river his Lord promised him***, in which there is much good, and ***a pool*** his nation will come to on the Day of Resurrection (Sahih Muslim 400)Tafsir Ibn Kathir 108:1.

Its two banks are ***domes of hollow pearls***. On the night of the Mi'raj, he ***saw with his own eyes*** the river that will one day give drink to his nation. The lesson: we strive to be among those ***allowed to drink*** from his pool, by following his Sunnah and not inventing new things in the religion.

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THE SCRATCHING OF PENS AND THE PARADISE OF PEARL DOMES

Abu Dharr's narration in the chapter "The Opened Roof" mentions two more scenes. First, he was raised to a high place until he ***heard the scratching of the pens***. An-Nawawi explains that these were the pens of the angels ***writing the decrees and revelation of Allah*** from the Preserved Tablet.

Second, he was admitted into ***Paradise***: in it were ***domes of pearl***, and ***its soil was musk***. This is a small part of the blessings "no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no human heart has imagined" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3244).

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THE BACKBITERS WITH COPPER NAILS

On the night of the Mi'raj, he was also shown ***the recompense of some sins***. A report graded authentic mentions the backbiters:

HADITH — SUNAN ABI DAWUD, NO. 4878

حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ الْمُصَفَّى، حَدَّثَنَا بَقِيَّةُ، وَأَبُو الْمُغِيرَةِ، قَالاَ حَدَّثَنَا صَفْوَانُ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي رَاشِدُ بْنُ سَعْدٍ، وَعَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ جُبَيْرٍ، عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم «لَمَّا عُرِجَ بِي مَرَرْتُ بِقَوْمٍ لَهُمْ أَظْفَارٌ مِنْ نُحَاسٍ يَخْمِشُونَ وُجُوهَهُمْ وَصُدُورَهُمْ فَقُلْتُ مَنْ هَؤُلاَءِ يَا جِبْرِيلُ قَالَ هَؤُلاَءِ الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ لُحُومَ النَّاسِ وَيَقَعُونَ فِي أَعْرَاضِهِمْ».

TRANSLATION:

Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"When I was taken up (to heaven), I passed by a people with nails of copper, scratching their faces and their chests. I said: 'Who are these, Jibril?' He said: 'These are those who eat people's flesh (backbite) and attack their honour.'"**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Abu Dawud: from Ibn al-Musaffa, from Baqiyyah and Abu al-Mughirah, from Safwan ibn 'Amr, from Rashid ibn Sa'd and 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Jubayr, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Abu Dawud in Sunan Abi Dawud, Book of Manners, chapter on backbiting, Hadith No. 4878.

GRADE: SAHIH — graded authentic by al-Albani (Sahih Sunan Abi Dawud).

Source: https://sunnah.com/abudawud:4878

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WHY COPPER NAILS?

This punishment ***matches the sin***. The backbiter "scratches" others' honour with his tongue, so he is repaid by ***scratching his own face and chest***. The Qur'an depicts backbiting as ***eating the flesh of one's dead brother*** (Al-Hujurat 49:12), and Jibril described this group as "those who eat people's flesh".

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ explained the meaning of backbiting: ***"Your mentioning about your brother something he dislikes."*** He was asked: "What if what I say is true?" He said: ***"If it is true, you have backbitten him; if it is not true, you have slandered him"*** (Sahih Muslim 2589).

The lesson: of all the many sins, ***a sin of the tongue*** was chosen to be shown to him that night. It is easy to commit, but heavy in its recompense.

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FIFTY BECOME FIVE

The climax of the Mi'raj is ***the enjoining of prayer***. Allah enjoined ***fifty prayers*** every day and night. On the way back, Prophet Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ advised the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to go back and ask for a reduction, for ***"I have tested the Children of Israel"*** (Muslim 162). Three authentic reports tell how the reduction happened:

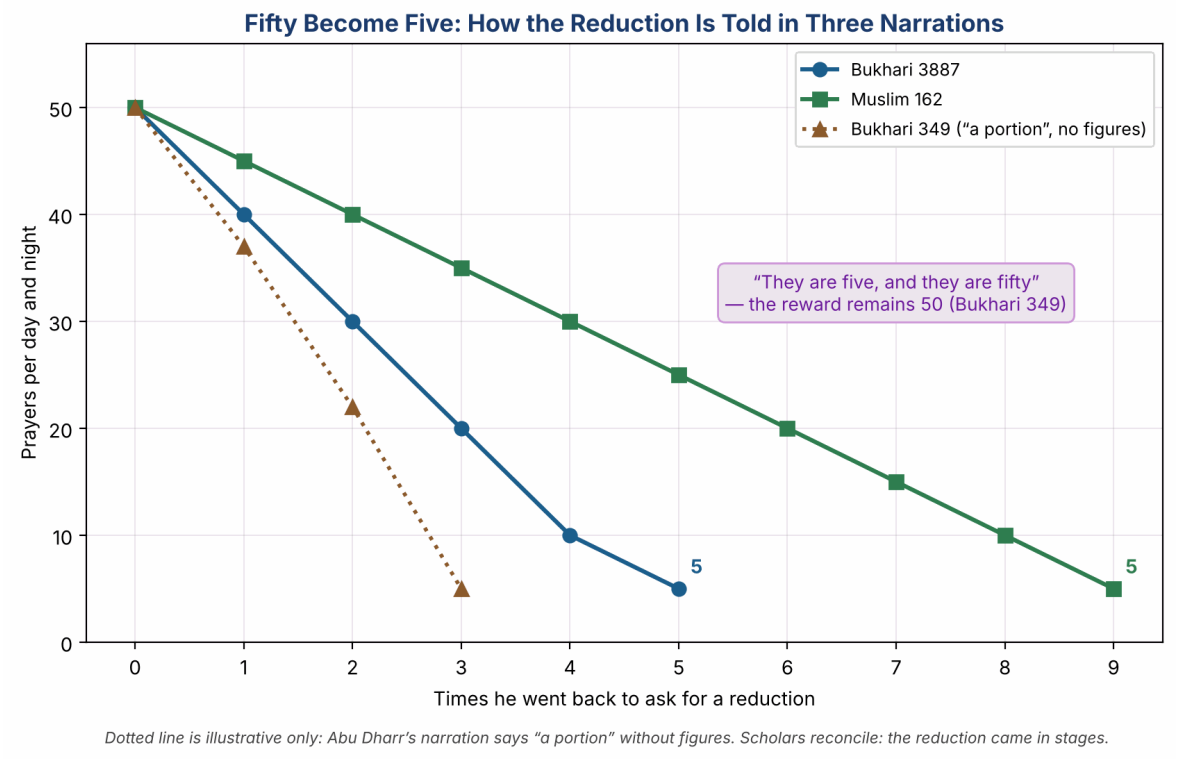


Figure 4: How the reduction of prayers is told in three authentic narrations.

NARRATION	HOW IT WAS REDUCED AND THE CLOSING WORDS
Bukhari 3887 (Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah)	50 → 40 → 30 → 20 → 10 → 5. He: "I am content and I submit." A call: "I have enforced My obligation and lightened it for My servants."
Muslim 162 (Anas)	Five by five down to five. "Each counts as ten, so they are fifty."
Bukhari 349 (Abu Dharr)	"A portion" at a time. "They are five, and they are fifty; the word with Me does not change."

Ibn Hajar reconciles them: the "five by five" report is the most detailed; the "ten" report combines two reductions in one mention; and the "portion" report gives no figures. ***The result is the same***: five prayers with the reward of fifty.

THE GIFT OF INTENTION: GOOD AND EVIL DEEDS

In Anas's narration, Allah added a great gift when setting the five prayers:

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SITUATION	WHAT IS WRITTEN
Intending a good deed but not doing it	One good deed
Intending and doing a good deed	Ten good deeds
Intending an evil deed but not doing it	Nothing
Intending and doing an evil deed	One evil deed

The lesson: the five prayers are ***a gift directly from the heavens***, not conveyed through Jibril on earth like other acts of worship. They are ***light to perform*** but ***heavy on the scale***. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ felt shy to ask again — so who are we to abandon the five that remain?

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THREE GIFTS FROM SIDRAT AL-MUNTAHA

The narration of Ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه in the chapter on Sidrat al-Muntaha ends with news of ***three gifts*** the Messenger of Allah ﷺ brought back for his nation:

GIFT	EXPLANATION
1. The five prayers	The pillar of religion; five performed, fifty rewarded (previous chapter).
2. The closing verses of Surah Al-Baqarah	Verses 285–286: faith in all the messengers and the prayer not to be burdened beyond capacity.
3. Forgiveness of grave sins	For those of his nation who associate nothing with Allah.

THE SECOND GIFT: THE CLOSE OF AL-BAQARAH

Among the content of these verses is ***"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity"***. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ***"Whoever recites the last two verses of Surah Al-Baqarah at night, they will suffice him"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 5009). Scholars mention that these verses were revealed in Madinah, but ***their virtue*** was granted on the night of the Mi'rajTafsir Ibn Kathir 2:286.

THE THIRD GIFT: HOPE FOR THE PEOPLE OF TAWHID

An-Nawawi explains the meaning of "grave sins forgiven": the people of tawhid ***will not remain in the Fire forever***. Some are forgiven outright; others are first purified, then admitted to Paradise. This accords with Allah's words that He does not forgive association, but forgives what is less than that for whom He wills (An-Nisa' 4:48).

The lesson: this gift is ***not a licence*** to take grave sins lightly, but shows how ***precious tawhid is***. Guard your tawhid, for it is the key to every other gift.

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DID HE SEE ALLAH?

This question has been asked since the time of the Companions. Abu Dharr رضى الله عنه asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ directly:

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 178A

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، حَدَّثَنَا وَكِيعٌ، عَنْ يَزِيدَ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، عَنْ قَتَادَةَ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ شَقِيقٍ، عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ، قَالَ سَأَلْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم هَلْ رَأَيْتَ رَبَّكَ قَالَ «نُورٌ أَنَّى أَرَاهُ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Dharr رضى الله عنه said: I asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: "Did you see your Lord?" He said: **"(He is) Light; how could I see Him?"**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah, from Waki', from Yazid ibn Ibrahim, from Qatadah, from 'Abdullah ibn Shaqiq, from Abu Dharr رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Faith, Hadith No. 178a.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:178a

In another wording of the same hadith, he said: ***"I saw light"*** (Sahih Muslim 178b). That is, the light that is Allah's ***veil*** prevented seeing Him.

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THE VIEWS OF THE COMPANIONS

COMPANION	VIEW AND EVIDENCE
‘A’ishah رضى الله عنها	“Whoever tells you Muhammad saw his Lord has lied” — reciting Al-An‘am 6:103 and Ash-Shura 42:51 (Bukhari 4855). He himself explained An-Najm 53:13 as Jibril in his true form (Muslim 177).
Ibn ‘Abbas رضى الله عنهما	“He saw Him with his heart twice” (Muslim 176).
Abu Dharr رضى الله عنه	“(He is) Light; how could I see Him?” and “I saw light” (Muslim 178).

‘A’ishah argued from the words of Allah: ***“Vision perceives Him not”***. Scholars explain that this verse negates ***an encompassing vision*** in this world; seeing Allah in the Hereafter is established by authentic evidenceTafsir Ibn Kathir 6:103.

RECONCILING THE REPORTS

Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn al-Qayyim and Ibn Hajar explain that ***no Companion clearly stated*** that he saw Allah ***with his physical eyes***. Ibn ‘Abbas’s general reports are explained by his own report specifying ***“with his heart”***. So the views can be reconciled: he ***did not see Allah with his eyes*** that night, but saw Him ***with his heart***, and saw ***the light*** that is His veil.

The lesson: in matters of the unseen, we ***stop where the evidence stops***. The Companions differed with complete courtesy, and each held to evidence.

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THE MORNING OF TESTING

The next morning, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ told the people of Makkah about his journey. Quraysh ***denied*** and mocked. Jabir ibn 'Abdullah رضى الله عنهما narrated:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3886

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ بُكَيْرٍ، حَدَّثَنَا اللَّيْثُ، عَنْ عُقَيْلٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ، حَدَّثَنِي أَبُو سَلَمَةَ بْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ، سَمِعْتُ جَابِرَ بْنَ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ «لَمَّا كَذَّبَنِي قُرَيْشٌ قُمْتُ فِي الْحِجْرِ، فَجَلَا اللَّهُ لِي بَيْتَ الْمَقْدِسِ، فَطَفِقْتُ أُخْبِرُهُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِهِ وَأَنَا أَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِ».

TRANSLATION:

Jabir ibn 'Abdullah رضى الله عنهما heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: **"When Quraysh disbelieved me, I stood in al-Hijr, and Allah displayed Bayt al-Maqdis before me, and I began telling them of its features while I was looking at it."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Yahya ibn Bukayr, from al-Layth, from 'Uqayl, from Ibn Shihab, from Abu Salamah ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman, from Jabir ibn 'Abdullah رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Merits of the Ansar, chapter on the Night Journey, Hadith No. 3886. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 170).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3886

Abu Hurayrah's hadith in Sahih Muslim 172 adds that Quraysh asked about ***details of Jerusalem he had not noted***, until he was ***greatly distressed***. Then Allah raised Jerusalem before him, and every question was answered precisely.

SIRAH NOTE: ABU BAKR: "IF HE SAID IT, IT IS TRUE"

Al-Hakim narrated from 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها that the polytheists came to Abu Bakr and said: "Your companion claims he was taken last night to Jerusalem." Abu Bakr asked: "Did he say that?" They said: "Yes." He said: ***"If he said it, then he has spoken the truth. I believe him in what is further than that — news from the heavens morning and evening."*** For this he was named ***as-Siddiq***.

This report was graded authentic by al-Albani in al-Silsilah as-Sahihah (No. 306).

REFERENCES:

Al-Hakim, al-Mustadrak; al-Albani, al-Silsilah as-Sahihah.

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SIRAH NOTE: THE CARAVANS ON THE ROAD

Some books of sirah, including Ibn Ishaq's report, say he told Quraysh about ***caravans*** he passed on the way, including a lost camel and their arrival times, and all proved accurate. These reports ***do not reach the grade of authentic***; what is authentic is that Jerusalem was displayed to him.

REFERENCES:

Ibn Hisham, as-Sirah an-Nabawiyyah.

The lesson: the Isra' and Mi'raj is ***a test of faith*** (Al-Isra' 17:60). Some grew in faith like Abu Bakr; others grew in denial. The measure of a believer is ***believing the Messenger of Allah*** ﷺ even when reason cannot grasp how.

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DISPUTED STORIES

This chapter gathers stories that are ***well known*** and found in hadith books, but ***whose chains scholars grade differently***. Such stories may be told ***with their status stated***, but not affirmed like authentic hadith.

SIRAH NOTE: 1. THE FRAGRANCE OF MASHITAH

Musnad Ahmad narrates from Ibn 'Abbas that on the night of the Isra' he smelled ***a very sweet fragrance***. Jibril explained it was the fragrance of ***Mashitah***, the hairdresser of Pharaoh's daughter, and her children. Her comb fell and she said "Bismillah", and Pharaoh punished her by throwing her and her children into a heated copper vessel.

Grading: Ibn Hibban and al-Hakim graded it authentic; Ibn Kathir said its chain is "acceptable"; al-Albani graded it ***da'if*** because its narrator 'Ata' ibn as-Sa'ib became confused in memory. ***Disputed.***

REFERENCES:

Ibn Kathir, Tafsir 17:1. https://tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/17/1

SIRAH NOTE: 2. PRAYERS AT TAIBAH, MOUNT SINAI AND BETHLEHEM

Anas's narration in ***Sunan an-Nasa'i 450*** says Jibril told him to dismount and pray at ***Taibah*** (Madinah, "your place of emigration"), at ***Mount Sinai*** where Allah spoke to Musa, and at ***Bethlehem*** where 'Isa was born, before reaching Jerusalem.

Grading: Darussalam graded it ***hasan***; al-Albani graded it ***munkar*** (contradicting stronger reports). ***Disputed.***

REFERENCES:

Sunan an-Nasa'i 450. https://sunnah.com/nasai:450

SIRAH NOTE: 3. IBRAHIM'S SALAM AND THE PLANTS OF PARADISE

Ibn Mas'ud narrated that he said: "I met Ibrahim on the night I was taken on the journey. He said: ***O Muhammad, convey my salam to your nation***, and tell them that Paradise has good soil and sweet water, and it is a plain; ***its plants are Subhanallah, walhamdulillah, wa la ilaha illallah, wallahu akbar***" (Sunan at-Tirmidhi 3462).

Grading: at-Tirmidhi said ***hasan gharib***; al-Albani graded it ***hasan*** due to supporting reports; Darussalam graded its chain ***da'if***. Its meaning is supported by authentic hadith on the virtue of dhikr.

REFERENCES:

Sunan at-Tirmidhi 3462. https://sunnah.com/tirmidhi:3462

SIRAH NOTE: 4. THE ANGELS' ADVICE: CUPPING

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It is reported that he said: "I did not pass a group of angels on the night I was taken on the journey except that they said: ***O Muhammad, command your nation with cupping***" (Sunan at-Tirmidhi 2052; Sunan Ibn Majah 3477).

Grading: al-Albani graded it ***sahih*** due to its many routes; Darussalam graded these chains ***da'if***. ***Disputed.*** The virtue of cupping itself is established in Sahih al-Bukhari 5696.

REFERENCES:

Sunan at-Tirmidhi 2052. https://sunnah.com/tirmidhi:2052
Sunan Ibn Majah 3477. https://sunnah.com/ibnmajah:3477

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WEAK AND BASELESS STORIES

The stories in this chapter are often told in lectures and popular books on the Isra' and Mi'raj. Yet ***their chains are weak, or there is no chain at all***. They are mentioned here as ***a warning***, not to be retold as the Prophet's ﷺ words.

THE LONG TORMENT STORIES

The stories of people ***whose heads are crushed with rocks*** and who ***eat rotten meat*** mostly come from one long report through ***Abu Ja'far ar-Razi from ar-Rabi' ibn Anas***. Ibn Kathir cites it in the tafsir of 17:1 and notes that some of its wording is ***strange and severely objectionable (gharabah wa nakarah shadidah)***; Abu Ja'far ar-Razi is graded weak in memory, and al-Albani graded the report ***munkar***. The story of riba-eaters with ***bellies like houses*** full of snakes (Sunan Ibn Majah 2273) is also graded ***da'if***.

SIRAH NOTE: DO NOT CONFUSE: THE AUTHENTIC DREAM OF SAMURAH

Some authentic scenes of punishment actually come from ***the hadith of the Prophet's ﷺ dream*** narrated by Samurah ibn Jundub (Sahih al-Bukhari 1386), ***not*** from the night of the Mi'raj. Among them: a man whose head is smashed with a rock (one who abandons the Qur'an and sleeps through obligatory prayer), adulterers in an oven-like pit, a riba-eater swimming in a river of blood, and a liar whose cheek is torn.

The dreams of prophets are revelation, so its content is true — but ***attributing it to the night of the Mi'raj is inaccurate***.

REFERENCES:

Sahih al-Bukhari 1386. https://sunnah.com/bukhari:1386

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BASELESS STORIES

POPULAR STORY	ASSESSMENT
The Prophet ﷺ ascended to the Throne wearing sandals, honouring the Throne	No basis; hadith scholars declared it false.
Jibril stopped at the Sidrah saying: "If I advance a little further, I will burn"	No authentic chain; not found in the reliable hadith books.
The words of the tashahhud (at-tahiyyat) came from a dialogue between Allah, the Messenger and the angels on the night of the Mi'raj	No basis. Ibn Mas'ud narrated that he taught the tashahhud to replace "peace be upon Allah", which the Companions used to say (Bukhari 831).
Al-Buraq is a winged horse with a woman's face	No basis; authentic reports only mention a white mount between a donkey and a mule.
Special prayers, fasts or supplications on the night of 27 Rajab	No authentic evidence. Ibn Hajar wrote a book (Tabyin al-'Ajab) explaining that no authentic hadith establishes a special virtue for Rajab.

The lesson: the authentic stories of the Isra' and Mi'raj ***are wondrous enough***. We do not need invented tales to increase our love for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

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SUMMARY OF EVERY STORY'S STATUS

The following figure and table summarise ***the status of every story*** discussed in this eBook, for easy reference when teaching or giving talks.

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Status of the Night Journey Stories

Authentic (13)

- Chest opened & Zamzam
- Al-Buraq
- Leading the prophets
- Milk and wine
- Musa praying in his grave
- Prophets in seven heavens
- Sidrat al-Muntaha
- Al-Kawthar & pearl Paradise
- Scratching of pens
- 50 become 5
- Three gifts
- Copper nails (backbiters)
- Jerusalem displayed

Disputed (4)

- Fragrance of Masyitah
- Prayers at Taibah, Sinai, Bethlehem
- Ibrahim's salam & Paradise plants
- Advice on cupping

Weak (1)

- Long torment stories (Abu Ja'far ar-Razi)

No basis / fabricated (5)

- The Prophet's sandals on the Throne
- Jibril fearing to burn
- The at-tahiyyat dialogue
- Winged Buraq with a human face
- Special 27 Rajab rituals

Grades based on the hadith books and scholars' assessments (see the relevant chapters).

Figure 5: The status of the Night Journey stories.

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STORY	STATUS AND SOURCE
Opened roof, chest opened, Zamzam	Authentic — Bukhari 349, 3887
Al-Buraq and the ring of the prophets	Authentic — Muslim 162
Musa praying in his grave	Authentic — Muslim 2375
Choosing milk over wine	Authentic — Bukhari 3394; Muslim 162
Leading the prophets; Malik's greeting	Authentic — Muslim 172
The prophets' appearance; Malik and the Dajjal	Authentic — Bukhari 3239, 3394
The prophets in the seven heavens	Authentic — Bukhari 3887; Muslim 162
Sidrat al-Muntaha, golden moths	Authentic — An-Najm 53:14–16; Muslim 173
Al-Bayt al-Ma'mur and the four rivers	Authentic — Bukhari 3887
The river of al-Kawthar	Authentic — Bukhari 4964
The pens; pearl Paradise	Authentic — Bukhari 349
Backbiters with copper nails	Authentic (al-Albani) — Abu Dawud 4878
50 become 5; intention for good	Authentic — Bukhari 3887, 349; Muslim 162
Three gifts	Authentic — Muslim 173
"Light; how could I see Him?"	Authentic — Muslim 178
Jerusalem displayed	Authentic — Bukhari 3886; Muslim 172
Abu Bakr as-Siddiq affirms	Authentic (al-Albani)
Mashitah; prayers at Taibah and Sinai; Ibrahim's salam; cupping	Disputed — see chapter 19
Long torment stories; bellies like houses	Weak — Abu Ja'far ar-Razi's report; Ibn Majah 2273
Sandals on the Throne; Jibril burning; tahiyyat dialogue; winged Buraq; 27 Rajab rituals	No basis

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OTHER POPULAR STORIES: AUTHENTIC, MISPLACED, OR WITHOUT A CHAIN

The chapters «Disputed Stories» and «Weak and Baseless Stories» have discussed the stories told most often. This chapter adds several other stories commonly heard in our communities. They fall into three kinds: stories that are in fact authentic but little known, stories that are authentic but ***misplaced*** on the night of the Mi'raj, and stories that have ***no chain of narration*** at all.

TABLE OF VERDICTS

COMMONLY HEARD STORY	STATUS	BRIEF EXPLANATION
Al-Buraq's stride reaching as far as the eye can see	Authentic	Mentioned in the Hadith of Anas: al-Buraq placed its hoof at the furthest limit of its sight (Sahih Muslim 162). Many assume it is an embellishment, but it is authentic.
Three vessels: milk, wine and honey	Authentic	Besides the narration of two vessels (milk and wine), the narration of Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah mentions three vessels including honey; he chose the milk (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887). Both narrations are authentic.
A rooster whose feet are on the earth and whose neck is under the Throne, seen on the night of the Mi'raj	The Hadith is graded authentic, but misplaced	The Hadith about this rooster is narrated by al-Tabarani and others, and al-Albani graded its chain authentic. But the Hadith does not mention the night of the Isra' or Mi'raj. Telling it as something seen on the night of the Mi'raj is inaccurate.
Six groups of women punished (hung by their hair and so on), told to 'Ali and Fatimah	No chain	Quoted without a chain in al-Zawajir by Ibn Hajar al-Haytami. Hadith scholars state that it cannot be authenticated and should not be quoted as a saying of the Prophet ﷺ. Exaggerated punishments of this kind are a hallmark of fabricated reports.

Sources: Sahih Muslim 162; Sahih al-Bukhari 3887; The Albaani Site, "A Rooster Whose Neck is Under the Throne of Allaah"; al-Durar al-Saniyyah (dorar.net), the rooster Hadith; HadithAnswers, "The different punishments for the women of Jahannam".

NOTE: WHY "MISPLACED" IS ALSO A MISTAKE

A Hadith may be authentic, yet it becomes inaccurate when it is attached to an event its narration does not mention. Examples are the rooster Hadith above, and the Hadith of the dream of Samurah ibn Jundub discussed in the chapter «Weak and Baseless Stories».

The rule is simple: when telling something as happening "on the night of the Mi'raj", make sure the narration itself mentions the night of the Isra' or Mi'raj. If it does not, tell the Hadith in its true context.

HOW TO CHECK A STORY

Readers do not need to be Hadith specialists to be careful. A few simple steps are enough:

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1. ***Ask for its source.*** An authentic story can usually be traced to a known Hadith collection, such as Sahih al-Bukhari or Sahih Muslim, with its number.

2. ***Check a trusted website.*** Sites such as sunnah.com show the text of the Hadith and its grading.

3. ***Be wary of excessive detail.*** Stories full of huge numbers, terrifying punishments or extraordinary rewards for small deeds are often signs of fabrication.

4. ***Ask those with knowledge.*** If in doubt, ask a teacher or scholar known for being careful in grading Hadith.

LESSON

The truth of a story is not measured by how captivating it is, but by the strength of its source. Being careful about what we attribute to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is part of loving him.

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TIMELINE OF THE NIGHT OF THE ISRA' AND MI'RAJ

The earlier chapters discussed the stories one by one. This chapter arranges them into a single timeline, from the moment he lay down in Makkah to the morning of testing. The order follows authentic Hadith. Where narrations differ about the order, this is stated in the note below the table.

TABLE OF EVENTS

NO.	EVENT	SOURCE
1	He was lying in al-Hatim (or at home, in another narration); the roof opened and Jibril descended.	Sahih al-Bukhari 349, 3887
2	His chest was opened, washed with the water of Zamzam, and filled with wisdom and faith.	Sahih al-Bukhari 349, 3887
3	Al-Buraq was brought; its stride reached as far as the eye can see.	Sahih Muslim 162
4	He passed by Prophet Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ praying in his grave at the red sand hill.	Sahih Muslim 2375
5	He reached Jerusalem, tethered al-Buraq to the ring where the prophets tethered their mounts, and prayed two rak'ahs.	Sahih Muslim 162
6	Vessels of drink were offered; he chose the milk, and Jibril said he had chosen the fitrah.	Sahih Muslim 162; Sahih al-Bukhari 3394, 3887
7	Mi'raj to the lowest heaven: Jibril asked for the gate to be opened; he met Prophet Adam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.	Sahih al-Bukhari 3887
8	The second to the seventh heavens: Yahya and 'Isa, Yusuf, Idris, Harun, Musa, and Ibrahim عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ.	Sahih al-Bukhari 3887
9	Al-Bait al-Ma'mur was shown to him; every day 70,000 angels enter it and never return.	Sahih al-Bukhari 3887
10	Sidrat al-Muntaha, covered by what covered it; four rivers flowing from its base.	Sahih al-Bukhari 3887; Sahih Muslim 173; An-Najm 53:14–16
11	He heard the scratching of the pens writing the decree.	Sahih al-Bukhari 349
12	Fifty prayers were made obligatory; on Prophet Musa's advice he went back and forth until they became five.	Sahih al-Bukhari 349, 3887; Sahih Muslim 162
13	Three gifts: the five daily prayers, the closing verses of Surah al-Baqarah, and forgiveness of major sins for those of his Ummah who associate no partner with Allah.	Sahih Muslim 173
14	He was admitted into Paradise and saw domes of pearl.	Sahih al-Bukhari 349
15	He returned to Makkah the same night.	Sahih al-Bukhari 3886
16	Morning: Quraysh denied him; Allah displayed Jerusalem before him at al-Hijr so that he could answer every question.	Sahih al-Bukhari 3886; Sahih Muslim 172

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Sources: Sahih al-Bukhari 349; Sahih al-Bukhari 3887; Sahih al-Bukhari 3886; Sahih Muslim 162; Sahih Muslim 173; Sahih Muslim 2375.

NOTE: WHEN NARRATIONS DIFFER IN ORDER

The authentic narrations do not always give the events in the same order. For example, some narrations place the offering of the vessels in Jerusalem and others in the heavens. Likewise, scholars differ over whether he led the prophets in prayer before ascending to the heavens or after coming down.

Scholars such as Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani in Fath al-Bari worked to reconcile these narrations. Differences in order do not affect the truth of the event, since each narrator related the part he remembered. The table above follows the best-known order.

LESSON

In a single night he was shown the past (the prophets), the present (the realm of the heavens) and the future (Paradise and the decree). Yet the gift he brought back is something we can practise every day: the five daily prayers.

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LESSONS FOR FAMILIES AND TEACHERS

The Isra' and Mi'raj is among the first stories Muslim children hear. That is why the way it is told matters so much. This chapter gives brief guidance to parents, teachers and speakers so that the story is taught accurately, engagingly and in a way suited to the listeners' age.

SEVEN PRINCIPLES

1. ***Begin with the Qur'an.*** Recite the first verse of Surah al-Isra' (17:1) and explain its meaning in simple words.

2. ***Choose what is authentic.*** Tell only what is mentioned in authentic Hadith. The table «Summary of Every Story's Status» in this eBook can serve as a guide.

3. ***Highlight the gift of prayer.*** The main message for children is: prayer is a special gift that Allah gave directly to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in the heavens.

4. ***Do not frighten.*** Avoid stories of punishment that have no chain. Children need to know Allah through love and hope, not fear alone.

5. ***Separate fact from imagery.*** Do not draw or depict the face of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ or the prophets. Use maps, timelines and pictures of places as teaching aids.

6. ***Teach the attitude of Abu Bakr.*** The story of Abu Bakr al-Siddiq رضى الله عنه, who affirmed the Prophet at once, teaches what it means to be certain of true news.

7. ***Be honest when you do not know.*** If a child asks about something not mentioned in the narrations, say: "Allah knows best; the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not tell us about it."

SUGGESTIONS BY AGE GROUP

AGE GROUP	FOCUS	SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES
Children (5–7 years)	The night journey from Makkah to Jerusalem; the gift of the five daily prayers.	Storytelling with pictures of the Ka'bah and al-Masjid al-Aqsa; naming the five prayer times while counting on fingers.
Children (8–12 years)	The order of events; the prophets in the seven heavens; fifty becoming five; the attitude of Abu Bakr.	Drawing their own timeline based on the chapter «Timeline of the Night of the Isra' and Mi'raj»; a quiz on the prophets in each heaven.
Teenagers (13 and above)	How to assess narrations; the difference between authentic, weak and fabricated stories; miracles and faith.	Checking one popular story on sunnah.com; group discussion of the chapter «Other Popular Stories».

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AGE GROUP	FOCUS	SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES
Adults and speakers	Accuracy of sources; the etiquette of conveying Hadith; avoiding practices without evidence.	Preparing talk notes that state the source and grading of each story.

CHECKLIST BEFORE TELLING THE STORY

☐ Does every story to be told have a source?

☐ If a weak story is mentioned, is its status stated?

☐ Are there no fabricated stories, such as the sandals on the Throne or a Buraq with a woman's face?

☐ Is the main message — the prayer — clearly conveyed?

☐ Are there no pictures or re-enactments depicting the Messenger of Allah ﷺ or the prophets?

LESSON

Teaching authentic stories in an engaging way is a trust. Children who know the Isra' and Mi'raj accurately will grow up loving the prayer and being careful with what they hear.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Questions about the date of the Isra', body and soul, seeing Allah and the night of 27 Rajab have been answered in Part 6, «The Night Journey». The following questions complete them from the angle of the stories in this special edition.

1. MAY A GATHERING BE HELD TO MARK THE ISRA' AND MI'RAJ?

No special act of worship is prescribed for that night, and its date itself is disputed. Some scholars permit gatherings of knowledge that tell this story from authentic sources, provided they are not accompanied by beliefs or special practices without evidence. Other scholars consider the commemoration itself not prescribed. What is agreed: do not invent special acts of worship, and do not tell stories that are not authentic.

2. WHY DID JIBRIL ASK PERMISSION AT EVERY GATE OF THE HEAVENS?

In the Hadith of Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah, the keeper of each heaven asked: Who is it? Jibril answered. Who is with you? Muhammad. Has he been sent for? Yes (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887). It shows that the heavens have gates and keepers, and teaches the etiquette of asking permission and introducing oneself.

3. WHY DID PROPHET MUSA عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ WEEP?

In the same Hadith, Prophet Musa wept because a young man sent after him would have more of his Ummah enter Paradise than the Ummah of Musa (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887). Scholars explain that it was weeping out of love for his own people and ghibtah — wishing for good like another's — not envy.

4. WHAT IS AL-BAIT AL-MA'MUR?

It is a house of worship in the seventh heaven entered by 70,000 angels every day, who never return to it again (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887). It shows how vast the number of angels worshipping Allah is.

5. MAY WEAK HADITH BE TOLD IN TALKS?

Scholars distinguish between weak Hadith and fabricated Hadith. Fabricated Hadith may not be told at all except to expose them. As for weak Hadith, some scholars permit them in encouraging good deeds on conditions: the weakness is not severe, the content agrees with authentic evidence, and it is not believed to be a saying of the Prophet ﷺ. Other scholars do not permit it at all. The safest way is to state its status every time it is told.

6. HOW SHOULD ONE ANSWER THOSE WHO QUESTION THE ISRA' ON SCIENTIFIC GROUNDS?

The Isra' and Mi'raj is a miracle — an extraordinary act that Allah performed for His Messenger. It is not bound by the ordinary laws of nature, just as Quraysh themselves considered it impossible. We need not

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invent "scientific" explanations without evidence. It is enough to believe what is authentic, and to appreciate that Allah has power over all things.

7. WHAT IS MEANT BY THE THIRD GIFT: MAJOR SINS FORGIVEN?

The third gift is forgiveness of major sins for those of his Ummah who associate no partner with Allah (Sahih Muslim 173). Scholars explain that this is subject to Allah's will: He forgives whom He wills. It gives hope, but it is not a licence to take sins lightly.

8. IS IT TRUE THAT HE SAW PARADISE AND HELL THAT NIGHT?

Yes. He was admitted into Paradise and saw domes of pearl (Sahih al-Bukhari 349), and he also saw Malik, the keeper of the Fire (Sahih al-Bukhari 3239). Other details not found in authentic narrations need not be added.

9. WHY DOES THIS SPECIAL EDITION SEPARATE AUTHENTIC AND WEAK STORIES?

So that readers can enjoy the true stories with confidence and recognise the ones to avoid. Many assume that every Isra' and Mi'raj story heard at gatherings is authentic, when some of them have no source.

10. WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO LIVE THE ISRA' AND MI'RAJ TODAY?

Keeping the five daily prayers, for that was the gift of that night; reciting the closing verses of Surah al-Baqarah; avoiding shirk; and guarding the tongue from backbiting, as warned by the backbiters with copper nails.

LESSON

Good questions lead to deeper understanding. Keep asking, and seek answers from authentic sources.

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LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

Every story of that great night carries ***a lesson*** for a Muslim's life today:

STORY	LESSON
Chest washed with Zamzam and filled with faith	The key preparation for a great task is a pure heart.
Buraq tied to the ring	Reliance on Allah does not cancel effort.
Musa praying in his grave	What we habituate accompanies us after death.
Milk chosen, not wine	Islam is the religion of the fitrah; avoid what corrupts the mind.
Leading the prophets	All prophets brought tawhid; Islam is their heir.
Dialogue at the gates of heaven	The etiquette of seeking permission and introducing oneself.
Musa's weeping	A leader's love for his people.
Backbiters with copper nails	Guard the tongue; its sins are easy but heavy.
Fifty become five	Prayer is a gift straight from the heavens; never abandon it.
Three gifts	Tawhid is the key to every gift.
"Light; how could I see Him?"	In the unseen, stop where the evidence stops.
Abu Bakr affirms	Faith is believing the Messenger even beyond what reason grasps.
Weak and false stories	The authentic is enough; never lie in the Prophet's ﷺ name.

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CONCLUSION

That night began with ***a house's roof opening*** in Makkah, and ended at ***Sidrat al-Muntaha***, where everything that ascends from the earth comes to an end. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ returned before dawn, bearing ***the prayer*** — a mi'raj for every believer, five times a day. Each time we stand in prayer, we receive the gift brought down from the seventh heaven that night.

This special edition completes Book 6. In sha Allah, the series **The Prophet's Sirah** will continue with ***the hijrah to Madinah*** (Book 7). And Allah knows best.

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SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:261

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتۡ سَبۡعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٖ مِّاْئَةُ حَبَّةٖۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٦١

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:261

SURAH SABA' 34:39

قُلۡ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبۡسُطُ ٱلرِّزۡقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦ وَيَقۡدِرُ لَهُۥۚ وَمَآ أَنفَقۡتُم مِّن شَيۡءٖ فَهُوَ يُخۡلِفُهُۥۖ وَهُوَ خَيۡرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ ٣٩

Say, "Indeed, my Lord extends provision for whom He wills of His servants and restricts [it] for him. But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:39

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2588

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، وَابْنُ، حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - وَهُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ وَمَا زَادَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا بِعَفْوٍ إِلاَّ عِزًّا وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلاَّ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Charity does not decrease wealth.

Allah does not increase a servant who forgives except in honour. And no one humbles himself for the sake of Allah except that Allah raises him in rank."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtue, Good Manners and Joining the Ties of Kinship (Kitab al-Birr wa al-Silah wa al-Adab), chapter on the encouragement of forgiveness and humility, Hadith No. 2588.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2588

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1631

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ - يَعْنِي ابْنَ سَعِيدٍ - وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - هُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « إِذَا مَاتَ الإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلاَّ مِنْ ثَلاَثَةٍ إِلاَّ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, knowledge that is benefited from, or a righteous child who prays for him."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

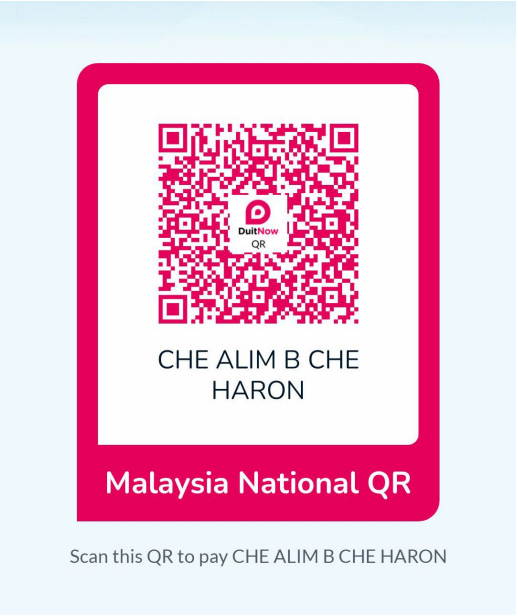
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Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:1631

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