

محمد ﷺ

WHY WE LIVE

DISCOVERING WORSHIP
THROUGH THE ROLES OF
PROPHET MUHAMMAD ﷺ

LESSONS FOR A PURPOSEFUL LIFE
INSPIRED BY THE BEST OF CREATION

YOUNES CHAABI

"I did not create jinn and mankind
except to worship Me."

— QUR'AN 51:56

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Why Do We Live?

Why did God create life?

What is the purpose of creation?

These are questions that arise in the mind of every human being. In the midst of life's noise and constant motion — work, sleep, waking, eating, and drinking — when a person pauses to reflect on the course of their life, this question inevitably appears:

Why do we live?

God created the human being. He is the Creator of the universe and everything within it. He created both life and death, which are integral to creation in general and to the human experience in particular. Human beings have been honored with intellect, making them responsible for their choices and actions. Naturally, this leads to an essential question: why was the human being created?

The Qur'an provides a direct answer to this question. God says in Surah Adh-Dhariyat (51:56):

“I did not create jinn and humankind except that they may worship Me.”

According to this verse, the purpose of human existence is worship.

Yet another question remains: what does worship truly mean?

This is precisely what we will seek to clarify in this book, by reflecting on the life of our noble Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. For Muslims, he is the one who worshipped God in the most complete way and who most perfectly embodied the purpose for which human beings were created. He reached the highest level of devotion to God, and thus represents the finest example of human excellence.

In order to reflect on the life of the Messenger of God ﷺ and better understand the meaning of worship mentioned in this verse from Surah Adh-Dhariyat, I relied on several sources.

Among the most important is the book *The Life of Muhammad* by the Egyptian writer Muhammad Hussein Heikal, which is considered one of the richest works in

terms of information and detail about the life of the Prophet ﷺ. I also benefited from the lecture series of Dr. Yasir Qadhi, recorded in English and available on YouTube.

In addition to the classical books of Seerah, I found that certain contemporary works shed practical light on concepts that help us understand the life of the Prophet ﷺ from a new perspective. One such example is The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen Covey, particularly the second habit, which encourages us to “begin with the end in mind.” In other words, a person should define from the outset the purpose they seek to achieve, and clarify the center from which their decisions and direction in life emerge.

This is precisely what we see in the life of the Messenger of God ﷺ. He was the one whose purpose was the clearest, whose intention was the purest, and whose direction was the most steadfast in seeking the pleasure of God. His intention was to please his Lord in every word and every action, and this blessed intention was reflected in all of his roles and responsibilities. We thus realize that outward actions are only a reflection of what is rooted in the heart. By observing a person’s behavior and choices, one can discern the center of their decisions and the true purpose of their life. But every beginning starts from within: from clarity of intention and sincerity of purpose.

The Messenger of God ﷺ is the best of creation and the one who worshipped God in the most complete way. His noble life is the highest model for fulfilling the purpose for which human beings were created. He was an outstanding example in fulfilling trusts and carrying responsibilities, despite their magnitude and diversity. God entrusted him with many roles:

- Messenger to all humanity ﷺ,
- political and military leader,
- educator and teacher,

- husband to multiple wives,
- father of four daughters and three sons,
- and grandfather to his grandchildren.

What is particularly striking in the life of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is the wide range and complexity of the roles he fulfilled. He led armies, governed a state, and provided spiritual and moral guidance — all at the same time.

He succeeded in all of these fields simultaneously. Such comprehensive success would not have been possible without clarity of purpose and unity of intention. When a person's center of decision-making is scattered or limited, balance becomes impossible. One who makes wealth the center of life may succeed in business, but will most likely fail in managing family life, because a family cannot be built on money alone. Wealth is important, but it is not sufficient.

Likewise, one who places the self, social status, or prestige at the center of life will inevitably experience conflict and contradiction.

But when God becomes the center of one's decisions and direction, all roles become aligned and harmonious. This is because God commands truthfulness, justice, mercy, and faithfulness in every aspect of life.

This is what faith in God provides us: a framework of values and a coherent way of life through which we can become the best version of ourselves and fulfill the purpose of our existence as human beings.

To illustrate this principle, this book presents the life of the Prophet ﷺ through the different roles he fulfilled. We believe that the harmony between these roles is a natural reflection of the unity of the center: seeking the pleasure of God Almighty.

For this reason, the chapters of this book are organized according to the roles performed by the Prophet ﷺ throughout his life.

We will study him ﷺ as a son, a husband, a father, a leader, a statesman, a teacher, a caller to God, a head of household, and in many other roles that shape human life.

It is important to note, however, that some of these roles are more thoroughly documented than others, due to the nature of the periods in which the Prophet ﷺ lived.

The last ten years of his life in Madinah, during which the Islamic state was established, are recorded in considerable detail.

The thirteen years in Makkah, however, were years marked by persecution and discretion, and therefore less information has been preserved.

As for the forty years before prophethood, they are the least documented, as he ﷺ had not yet received revelation and his life was largely private and family-centered.

Despite this variation in the amount of available information about each role, the reader will notice a unifying thread that connects them all:

- steadfast values, consistency in character, and unity of intention.

This is what we will seek to explore in the coming chapters, God willing.

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1. The Son

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is Muhammad, the son of Abdullah, the son of Abdul Muttalib, the son of Hashim, the son of Abd Manaf, the son of Qusay. He belongs to the lineage of Prophet Ishmael, the son of Prophet Abraham, who together built the Kaaba for the worship of God alone.

The Prophet's grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, decided to arrange the marriage of his son Abdullah. He chose for him Aminah bint Wahb ibn Abd Manaf ibn Zuhrah, from the respected and noble tribe of Zuhrah, one of the most honored families among Quraysh.

Shortly after the marriage, Abdullah had to leave for a trade journey to the region of Greater Syria, leaving behind his wife while she was pregnant. He was absent for several months. On his return journey, he stopped in Yathrib, where his maternal relatives lived, intending to rest before continuing to Makkah. However, he fell ill there.

When the caravan reached Makkah, Abdul Muttalib learned that his son Abdullah had stayed behind due to illness. He sent his eldest son, Al-Harith, to Yathrib to accompany Abdullah back to Makkah after he recovered. But when Al-Harith arrived, he was informed that his brother had passed away and had been buried in Yathrib a month after the caravan had departed. Al-Harith returned to Makkah to inform his elderly father and Abdullah's widowed wife, Aminah, of his death.

After Aminah gave birth to her child, she sent word to his grandfather Abdul Muttalib, who was overjoyed. He took the newborn to the Kaaba and named him Muhammad.

He then returned the child to his mother and waited with her for the arrival of wet nurses from the tribe of Banu Sa'd, as was the custom among the noble families of Makkah. Halimah Al-Sa'diyyah was the nurse who took the infant into her care.

When Prophet Muhammad ﷺ reached approximately six years of age, his mother Aminah took him to Yathrib to visit his maternal relatives from Banu Al-Najjar. She was accompanied on this journey by Umm Ayman, the servant whom Abdullah had left in her care.

In Yathrib, where the house in which his father had passed away and the grave in which he had been buried were located, the Prophet ﷺ experienced the reality of being an orphan. Perhaps his mother spoke to him about his beloved father, who had died shortly after their marriage among his relatives in Yathrib.

After staying in Yathrib for about a month, Aminah prepared to return to Makkah with her son and her servant, traveling on two camels. On the way back, Aminah fell ill at Al-Abwa, where she passed away and was buried.

Umm Ayman was the one who brought the orphaned child back to Makkah, a child who had now lost his mother after having already lost his father. Only days earlier, he may have been listening to his mother speak about the husband she had lost before he was even born. Now, he witnesses her passing as well, deepening the sorrow of losing both parents.

Fifty years later, the Messenger of God ﷺ was traveling with his companions on the road between Madinah and Makkah. When they passed by the place where Aminah had been buried, the Prophet ﷺ stopped. The Muslim army halted behind him. He then stepped aside from the road with a few of his companions until he reached a grave, where he sat down. Soon, he began to weep. He wept and wept, until his blessed body trembled from the intensity of his crying.

When the companions saw this, they too began to weep out of love for their Prophet, even though they did not yet know the reason for his tears. Umar ibn Al-Khattab رضي الله عنه approached him, embraced him, and comforted him until he calmed down. They then asked him: “What has made you cry, O Messenger of God?”

He replied that it was the grave of his mother. After this moment, the Prophet ﷺ permitted the visiting of graves, as they serve as a reminder of the Hereafter.

When I realized that the best of creation became an orphan at such an early age, I wondered: why? Why did God will that the best of His creation experience such a great trial?

As I studied the emotional condition of orphans, I found that they are often more inclined toward sadness, anxiety, and isolation. Such feelings may stem from a deep sense of loss and abandonment.

When I then read about the character of the Prophet ﷺ in his adulthood, the answer became clearer. His experience as an orphan surely strengthened his attachment to God and deepened his empathy for the vulnerable, especially for orphans.

From an emotional perspective, his grandfather and later his uncle played an important role in easing the pain of losing his parents and filling part of that void. Later, his wife Khadijah رضي الله عنها remained constantly by his side and would play an essential role in supporting him during the early years of his mission.

The strength of faith that developed in him through the loss of his parents helped shape a resilient and patient character that proved essential throughout his mission. He later endured the loss of his uncle, his wife, and several of his children, yet he never gave up the mission entrusted to him by God.

At the same time, the pain he experienced as an orphan nurtured within him, from an early age, a deep sensitivity toward the most vulnerable members of society, especially orphans, because he understood their feelings. This helps explain the strong spirit of solidarity found within Muslim communities.

Sahl ibn Sa'd رضي الله عنه reported that the Messenger of God ﷺ said:

“I and the one who cares for an orphan will be like this in Paradise,” and he held his index and middle fingers close together.

Reported by Muslim, Book of Zuhd and Softening of Hearts, chapter on kindness to the widow, the poor, and the orphan (Hadith 2983).

This deep sensitivity also enabled him, as he grew older, to quickly understand the feelings of those around him — one of the most essential qualities of great leaders. Indeed, had the Messenger of God ﷺ not been granted this remarkable ability by God to win people's hearts and unite them through his emotional intelligence, his mission would have been far more difficult.

God says to His Messenger ﷺ in Surah Aal 'Imran (3:159):

“It is by the mercy of God that you were gentle with them. Had you been harsh and hard-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you. So pardon them, seek forgiveness for them, and consult them in matters. And when you have made a decision, then place your trust in God. Indeed, God loves those who trust in Him.”

SubhanAllah, there is profound wisdom here, showing us the good that can emerge from trials when one relies upon God and holds firmly to Him. Trusting in God transforms difficulties into sources of growth and blessing.

Indeed, had our Prophet ﷺ not experienced these hardships in his childhood, perhaps he would not have developed such a deep connection with God, nor such strength of character and emotional depth.

And God knows best.

2. The Husband

The Messenger of God ﷺ grew up under the care of his uncle Abu Talib, who lived in modest circumstances and had many children to support. One day, Abu Talib heard that Khadijah bint Khuwaylid — a woman of noble lineage and great wealth — would hire men from Quraysh to trade on her behalf in exchange for a share of the profits. Khadijah had been married twice and had become one of the wealthiest people in Makkah. She had turned down many proposals from prominent men of Quraysh, preferring to remain single due to her lack of trust in those around her.

When Abu Talib learned that Khadijah was preparing a caravan to Syria, he suggested to his nephew Muhammad ﷺ — who was then twenty-five years old — that he offer his services to her. Muhammad ﷺ agreed. When Abu Talib approached Khadijah and proposed that she hire him, she accepted with pleasure, knowing well his reputation for honesty and integrity.

During his first trading journey on Khadijah's behalf, Muhammad ﷺ achieved remarkable success beyond expectations, thanks to his trustworthiness and sound judgment in business. His companion Maysarah praised him highly and later described to Khadijah the noble character he had witnessed.

Khadijah's admiration for Muhammad ﷺ soon turned into deep respect and sincere affection. Although she had previously declined many proposals from distinguished men of Makkah, she found in Muhammad ﷺ the character she had long been seeking and wished to marry him. She confided this to her sister and to a close friend named Nafisah.

Nafisah approached Muhammad ﷺ and gently asked him: "What prevents you from getting married?" He replied with humility: "I do not have the means to do so." She said: "What if that were taken care of, and you were invited to beauty, wealth,

honor, and compatibility — would you accept?” He asked: “Who is she?” She replied: “Khadijah.” Muhammad ﷺ was pleased by this generous offer. He knew her status and virtue among the people of Makkah, and he gladly accepted.

Muhammad’s uncles met with Khadijah’s guardian to finalize the blessed marriage. Muhammad ﷺ gave her a dowry of twenty young camels, and he then moved into her home, marking the beginning of a new chapter in their lives.

They were blessed with sons and daughters. Their sons, Al-Qasim and Abdullah, passed away in early childhood, while their daughters grew up under their father’s care, surrounded by his love and tenderness. Khadijah combined deep affection with great respect in her relationship with him, making their marriage a model of loyalty and harmony.

Khadijah recognized in him ﷺ a noble character, deep reflection, and a presence that commanded respect. God spoke the truth when He described him:

“And indeed, you are of a great moral character.” (Qur’an, 68:4)

Khadijah relieved her husband Muhammad ﷺ of the responsibility of managing her business, continuing to oversee it herself as she had always done, thus giving him the space to reflect and contemplate. This marriage had a profound impact on his emotional and social stability. God blessed him with a righteous family, and his noble lineage and exceptional character strengthened his standing in Makkah. He became widely loved and respected, sharing in the daily lives and concerns of his people.

Through his marriage to Khadijah, Muhammad ﷺ grew in both humility and dignity. He listened attentively to whoever spoke to him and never belittled anyone. He spoke little and listened much. His words were thoughtful and measured, yet he did not

refrain from sharing in people's smiles and light moments. At times, he would laugh until his molar teeth were visible. His anger, however, was rarely seen — it would only

appear as a slight vein between his eyebrows, for he restrained his anger out of consideration for those around him.

He ﷺ was distinguished by sincerity, love of goodness, generosity, steadfastness, and strength of will. Once he resolved upon something, he pursued it without hesitation. Those who knew him closely were struck by his qualities; those who saw him from afar stood in awe of him; and those who lived with him loved him. These traits gave rise to a rare and powerful bond with his wife Khadijah — a relationship marked by loyalty, affection, and mutual esteem.

After their marriage, Lady Khadijah gifted her husband Muhammad ﷺ a young servant, Zayd ibn Harithah. The Prophet ﷺ set him free and adopted him*, and Zayd grew up in their household, becoming one of the dearest people to them.

His life during this period was marked by tranquility and stability, thanks to a peaceful home and a loving, devoted wife. This domestic harmony gave him the space to devote himself to deep reflection on what he observed around him — the conversations of people, the state of society, the questions stirring in his heart — until he was being spiritually prepared for the immense mission God would entrust to him.

During these years, Muhammad ﷺ developed the habit of retreating alone to the Cave of Hira, on a mountain about three kilometers from Makkah. There he would spend long days, especially during Ramadan, receiving only modest provisions, absorbed in contemplation of the universe around him. These retreats and meditations formed part of his spiritual preparation for the revelation for which God had chosen him. Khadijah, may God be pleased with her, supported him fully and provided all the conditions needed for this inward journey.

He ﷺ did not expect to find the light of truth in the sayings of monks or in their books; he found it in contemplating creation itself — in the sky and its stars, in the stillness of the desert, in the sea and its waves, in everything pointing to the oneness of

*Adoption in its pre-Islamic legal form was later abolished in Islam, as stated in the Qur'an: "Call them by [the names of] their fathers; that is more just in the sight of God." (33:5)

the Creator. He realized that his people were lost in error, and that their idols neither spoke nor benefited anyone. His heart filled with sorrow for them, and with longing for guidance from God.

These thoughts filled his being, distancing him from the noise of ordinary life and burdening him with the weight of questioning and the search for truth. When he returned from these long retreats, especially after Ramadan, Khadijah would notice upon his face the marks of spiritual exhaustion. She would meet him with concern and tenderness, and in her home he found peace and reassurance.

In his solitude, he called upon his Lord day and night, fasted, walked the paths of the desert in reflection, then returned to Hira to continue his retreat. As the months passed, the burden upon his soul grew heavier. What he sensed and experienced weighed on him, and he confided his fears to Khadijah. She became his refuge and comfort, reassuring him with words of loyalty and certainty:

“By God, He will never forsake you. You maintain family ties, you speak the truth, you help the weak, you honor the guest, and you support those afflicted in the cause of what is right.”

He ﷺ did not yet realize that all these retreats and inward struggles were divine preparation for the Day of the Great Tidings.

Then, in the Cave of Hira, revelation descended upon him.

Overwhelmed, he returned home trembling, saying:

“Cover me, cover me.”

And Khadijah embraced him with all the tenderness and peace in her heart. She did not doubt him for a single moment. She believed in him before the world knew him, and stood beside him in the most unsettling moment of his life.

That moment, in all its details, remains a lesson in devotion, love, and marital serenity: how a home can become the cradle of a prophetic mission, and a wife a spiritual and emotional pillar.

At the moment revelation descended, the Prophet ﷺ was not only a Messenger before humanity — he was also a husband in need of reassurance, and he found it in the heart of his wife.

Then he slept in the embrace of tranquility, only to awaken to a new life — a life of revelation, mission, struggle, and calling. Yet its roots were planted in a peaceful home radiating sincerity and serenity, held together by a wife who believed in him before the world did.

Khadijah began to replay in her mind everything her husband had just told her. She imagined the angel who had appeared to him in the sky, the words that had been revealed to him and engraved in his heart, and the awe that had settled upon his face. Her thoughts moved between hope and longing, fear and concern, until anxiety overtook her. She went to her cousin Waraqa ibn Nawfal, known for his wisdom and knowledge of the Gospel.

When Waraqa heard her account, he reassured her, saying:

“This is the same bearer of revelation who came to Moses. Your husband is the prophet of this nation. Tell him to remain steadfast.”

Khadijah returned home and found the Prophet ﷺ still resting. She looked at him with eyes full of love and concern. Then, while he was in that state, the voice of revelation came to him again:

“O you who are wrapped up,
arise and warn...” (Qur’an 74:1–2)

Khadijah's concern grew when she saw him trembling from the intensity of the experience. She urged him to lie down and rest. But he responded with words that marked the end of comfort and the beginning of responsibility:

“The time of rest has passed, Khadijah. Gabriel has commanded me to warn the people.”

That moment was decisive. Khadijah did not hesitate. She immediately reassured him and strengthened his resolve. She told him what Waraqa had said, and from the depth of her believing heart, she declared her faith and her certainty in his prophethood.

Her belief came naturally. She had known him as honest, truthful, modest, and devoted to what is right. She had seen his years of reflection and retreat, witnessed the moment of revelation, and even tested the nature of what he saw — placing him first on her lap, then drawing him close, then uncovering herself to ensure that what appeared to him was not a devil, but a messenger from God.

Later, the Prophet ﷺ met Waraqa ibn Nawfal, who confirmed once again: “You are the prophet of this nation... You will be denied, harmed, and fought.”

The weight of what had been revealed to him grew heavier, and he began to wonder: Who will I call? And who will answer?

When the revelation paused for a time, he felt sorrow and unease: Had his Lord forsaken him? He returned to Hira, seeking God and calling upon Him. Khadijah shared in his concern and remained constantly by his side, easing his loneliness.

Then revelation came again, with Surah Ad-Duha, bringing a divine response that dispelled his fears and restored peace to his heart:

“Your Lord has not forsaken you, nor has He turned away from you.”

(Qur'an 93:3)

God took him under His care, removed his fear, and serenity returned to his heart. A gentle contentment reappeared upon his face.

And so, in its earliest days, Islam lived within a small household — small in number, yet immense in truth and certainty: the Prophet ﷺ, his believing wife Khadijah, their daughters, Ali ibn Abi Talib, and Zayd ibn Harithah.

Khadijah was not merely a wife. She was the first believer, the first supporter, the first to recognize the light of revelation when no one else did.

In this, the meaning of devotion was embodied in the Prophet's role as a husband: a home that carried the message before the world itself would carry it.

The Messenger of God ﷺ would find refuge in Khadijah within his home, just as he sought protection from the harm of Quraysh through his clan. With the serenity of her faith and the sincerity of her love, she was a true companion — comforting him in his worries and strengthening his heart in moments of weakness, as he faced the harm of his people and their relentless opposition to his message.

In the seventh year of the Prophethood, the trials intensified. Quraysh signed a pact to boycott Banu Hashim and Banu al-Muttalib, in an effort to isolate the Prophet ﷺ and support their hostility toward him. The siege lasted for three harsh years, during which the Prophet ﷺ and his family endured hunger and deprivation in the valley of Abu Talib. Yet Khadijah remained by his side, sharing his suffering without hesitation, believing in his message and trusting in the promise of her Lord.

Then, by God's grace, the boycott came to an end. But only a few months later, the Prophet ﷺ was struck by the loss of the two people dearest to him in the same

year: his uncle Abu Talib, and his wife Khadijah, may God be pleased with her. That year became known as the Year of Sorrow.

Khadijah embodied in her marriage the meaning of tranquility, affection, and mercy that God describes in His words:

“And among His signs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves, that you may find tranquility in them, and He placed between you affection and mercy...” (Qur’an 30:21)

Outside his home, the Prophet ﷺ faced hostility and struggle. But when he returned to Khadijah, he found peace. She was his source of calm, his refuge from fear, and the place where he regained his strength to continue his mission.

When the revelation first came to him, he entered upon her trembling and said: “Cover me, cover me.”

She embraced him with unwavering strength and said:

“Rejoice, O son of my uncle, and stand firm. By God, He will never disgrace you. You maintain family ties, you speak the truth, you carry the burdens of others, you honor the guest, and you support those afflicted in the cause of what is right.”

She reminded him of who he was, reassuring him that God would never abandon someone like him. In this way, his devotion to God ﷻ was reflected even through his relationship with his wife: in his trust in her, in his search for comfort in her embrace, and in the strength he drew from her compassion.

Khadijah, may God be pleased with her, sacrificed her wealth and her status in support of this message. She lived with him through the days of hunger and hardship until she passed away in those difficult conditions, devoted to him until her final breath.

She did not live to witness the victory of the message, nor the conquest of Makkah. Yet she believed with certainty that it would come, and that what is with God is better and everlasting. As God says:

“And surely the Hereafter is better for you than the present life.” (Qur’an 93:4)

If Khadijah did not see the fruits of her sacrifice in this world, then she has Paradise in the Hereafter — with the one she loved, and with God’s pleasure upon her.

The Messenger of God ﷺ never forgot the virtue of Khadijah, may God be pleased with her, even after he migrated to Madinah and married other women. Her memory remained alive in his heart, and loving her became part of his devotion to God, for he never forgot loyalty, nor did he betray the bonds of gratitude and faithfulness.

The Mother of the Believers, Aisha, may God be pleased with her, narrated:

“I never felt jealous of any of the wives of the Prophet ﷺ as much as I did of Khadijah, although I never met her. The Prophet ﷺ mentioned her often. Sometimes he would slaughter a sheep, cut it into portions, and send it to Khadijah’s friends. At times I would say to him: ‘It is as though there was no woman in the world except Khadijah.’ He would reply: ‘She was such and such, and I had children from her.’” [Al-Bukhari]

Whenever he ﷺ slaughtered a sheep, he would say:

“Send some of it to Khadijah’s friends.” [Muslim]

And when Halah bint Khuwaylid, Khadijah’s sister, once came seeking permission to enter, the Prophet ﷺ recognized her voice and was moved by the memory of Khadijah. He said:

“O God... Halah bint Khuwaylid.” [Muslim]

One day, Aisha became jealous and said:

“You mention Khadijah so often, yet God has given you someone better than her!”

The Prophet ﷺ replied:

“God has never granted me anyone better than her. She believed in me when people rejected me, she trusted me when people called me a liar, she supported me with her wealth when people deprived me, and God granted me children through her.” [Ahmad]

He ﷺ would also say whenever something was brought to him:

“Take this to so-and-so, for she used to love Khadijah.” [Authentic narration]

In another touching moment, when Zaynab, the daughter of the Prophet ﷺ, sent Khadijah’s necklace as ransom for her husband, the Prophet ﷺ was deeply moved. He said to his companions:

“If you think it right to release her prisoner and return her property to her, then do so.”

And they did. [Ahmad]

Imam Al-Nawawi commented on this narration:

“This hadith demonstrates loyalty, preserving affection, and honoring the bond of companionship, whether in life or after death.”



When God describes weak households in the Qur’an, He compares those who seek protectors besides Him to the house of the spider:

“And indeed, the weakest of houses is the house of the spider, if only they knew.” [Qur’an 29:41]

This description does not refer only to the fragility of the web itself, but also to the fragility of the relationships within it. Modern science has shown that the female spider may kill the male after mating, and that the offspring may devour their mother after birth. There is no tranquility, no mercy, no lasting affection — only relationships in which selfishness devours love and violence replaces compassion.

For this reason, the Prophet ﷺ said:

“A woman is married for four reasons: her wealth, her lineage, her beauty, and her religion. So choose the one with religion, may your hands be blessed.” [Al-Bukhari]

Faith is the true foundation of tranquility in marriage, because it alone preserves affection when emotions weaken and protects mercy when hearts grow tired. Al-Hasan Al-Basri said:

“Whoever fears God honors his wife if he loves her, and does not mistreat her if he dislikes her.”

And God says:

“And He placed between you affection and mercy.”

Affection is the attraction of the heart, while mercy is the steadiness of wisdom. When beauty fades, wealth disappears, and the body weakens, mercy remains — as loyalty, support, and companionship.

Thus, tranquility, affection, and mercy are the foundations upon which a marriage pleasing to God is built — a marriage that itself becomes an act of worship.

3. The Father

The Prophet ﷺ was careful to marry his daughters to righteous and honorable men, even before prophethood. His eldest daughter, Zaynab, married Abu al-‘As ibn al-Rabi‘, a respected and trustworthy man from Quraysh. His mother, Halah, was the sister of Khadijah رضي الله عنها. Their marriage was stable and loving until Islam separated them, as Abu al-‘As remained a polytheist.

But this was not the end of their story.

After he was captured during the Battle of Badr, Zaynab sent her mother Khadijah’s necklace as ransom for his release. When the Messenger of God ﷺ saw it, his heart softened with emotion. He asked the companions if they would agree to release Abu al-‘As and return the necklace to Zaynab, and they accepted. The Prophet ﷺ then requested that Abu al-‘As allow Zaynab to leave Makkah and join him in Madinah, which he did. Abu al-‘As still did not embrace Islam immediately, but after some time, he returned the trusts and wealth of Quraysh to their owners, accepted Islam, and reunited with Zaynab in Madinah.

This moment reflected the tenderness of a father deeply attached to his daughter, while still remaining fully committed to the commands of God and the principles of justice.

As for Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum, they were initially married to ‘Utbah and ‘Utbah, the sons of Abu Lahab. After the rise of Islam, Abu Lahab ordered his sons to divorce them out of hostility toward the Prophet ﷺ, and they obeyed. Ruqayyah later married Uthman Ibnu ‘Affan رضي الله عنه, and after her death, Umm Kulthum married him as well. The Prophet ﷺ recognized Uthman’s noble character and entrusted him successively with two of his daughters.

Fatimah, meanwhile, married Ali Ibnu Abi Taleb رضي الله عنه after the beginning of the Prophetic mission, once she had reached marriageable age. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم chose for her a man known for his faith, integrity, and closeness to him.

Despite his immense responsibilities as a prophet and leader, the Messenger of God صلى الله عليه وسلم remained a deeply affectionate father. He made his children feel loved and safe, and he responded to their emotions with gentleness and understanding.

After the deaths of Khadijah and Abu Talib, Quraysh intensified their abuse toward him. One day, one of the ignorant men of Quraysh threw dust upon his head. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم returned home covered in dust, and Fatimah came rushing toward him, wiping the dirt away while crying. He comforted her by saying:

“Do not cry, my daughter. God will protect your father.”

He did not complain or despair. Instead, he taught his daughter trust in God, showing her that victory comes through patience and reliance upon Him.

Near the end of his life صلى الله عليه وسلم, Fatimah visited him daily while he suffered from severe fever. Whenever she entered, he would stand up for her, kiss her, and seat her beside him. During his final illness, he whispered to her that he was soon going to die, and she wept. Then he whispered to her again that she would be the first of his family to join him after his death, and she smiled.

In that moment, we witness the depth of the relationship between a father and his daughter — not merely a worldly bond, but one rooted in faith and the hope of reunion in Paradise.

When his pain intensified and Fatimah cried out, “O the anguish of my father!”, he replied with serenity:

“Your father will suffer no more after today.”

With these words, he taught her that worldly pain is temporary, and that true peace lies in meeting God.

Everything the Prophet ﷺ embodied as a father — from arranging the marriages of his daughters, to comforting them through hardship, to caring for Fatimah in his final days — was not driven by emotion alone. It was an act of worship expressed through fatherhood.

Worship is not merely the outward fulfillment of commands, but fulfilling them with their spirit, wisdom, and beauty. God does not only ask us to care for our children; He asks us to do so with mercy, gentleness, and dignity.

God says:

“Speak kindly to people.” [Qur’an 2:83]

“It is by the mercy of God that you were gentle with them.” [Qur’an 3:159]

“And do good; indeed, God loves those who excel in goodness.” [Qur’an 2:195]

And the Prophet ﷺ said:

“The best among you are those who are best to their families, and I am the best among you to my family.” [Al-Tirmidhi]

Thus, fatherhood in Islam is not merely material care or authority. It is a sacred responsibility through which one seeks the pleasure of God by showing mercy, wisdom, and noble character toward one’s children.

For God does not look only at the message itself, but also at the way it is delivered. Human beings are delicate and emotionally complex, and divine guidance reaches perfection only when truth is conveyed with compassion and dignity.

This is what the Prophet ﷺ embodied: justice balanced with mercy, teaching balanced with understanding, firmness balanced with tenderness.

Through this balance, fatherhood itself becomes worship — not by merely pleasing one's children, but by pleasing God through the way one treats them.

And thus the Messenger of God ﷺ stood as the perfect model of devotion in every role he carried — and among the greatest of those roles was his role as a father.

4. The Messenger of God

Seven years after the beginning of his mission, only about seventy people had embraced Islam, most of them among the weak and marginalized.

Despite his efforts, sacrifices, and perseverance, the visible results remained limited.

In the tenth year of his mission, the Messenger of God ﷺ lost his uncle Abu Talib, who had protected him from the hostility of Quraysh. Shortly thereafter, he also lost his beloved wife Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, who had been his greatest support throughout the early years of the call to Islam.

After these losses, Quraysh intensified their persecution. The Prophet ﷺ eventually decided to travel alone to the city of Ta'if, hoping to find support among the tribe of Thaqif and inviting them to embrace Islam.

Instead, he received one of the harshest rejections of his life.

Before leaving, he pleaded with them not to disclose his visit, fearing that Quraysh would mock him. They refused. Not only did they reject him, but they incited their fools and children against him. They insulted him, chased him through the streets,

and pelted him with stones until he sought refuge in an orchard belonging to ‘Utbah and Shaybah, the sons of Rabi‘ah.

There, beneath the shade of a grapevine, exhausted and overwhelmed with grief, he turned his face toward the heavens and made one of the most moving supplications in history:

“O Allah, to You I complain of my weakness, my lack of resources, and my insignificance in the eyes of people. O Most Merciful of the merciful, You are the Lord of the oppressed, and You are my Lord. To whom do You leave me? To a distant stranger who frowns upon me? Or to an enemy to whom You have given power over me? If You are not angry with me, then I do not care. Yet Your grace and protection are easier and more beloved to me. I seek refuge in the light of Your Face, by which all darkness is illuminated and by which the affairs of this world and the next are set aright, from Your anger descending upon me or Your displeasure overtaking me. To You belongs all reproach until You are pleased. There is no power and no strength except through You.”

Imagine the noblest of men صلى الله عليه وسلم, known among his people for his integrity, dignity, and noble character, travelling to a distant city only to invite its people toward their salvation. He asks nothing in return. Yet they not only reject him—they unleash their children against him and drive him out under a hail of stones.

Yet what governed the Prophet’s soul was never the opinion of people. It was only the opinion of God.

“If You are not angry with me, then I do not care.”

In the midst of one of the greatest storms of his life, only one thing mattered to him: the pleasure of God.

His only fear was that these hardships might be a sign of divine displeasure.

This unique relationship between the Prophet ﷺ and his Lord explains why worldly difficulties never broke him or caused him to doubt himself. And for the same reason, success never filled him with pride. Whether in hardship or victory, his heart remained fixed on one goal alone: seeking the pleasure of God.

5. The Leader of the State

“For indeed, with hardship comes ease. Indeed, with hardship comes ease.”
(Qur'an 94:5–6)

After thirteen years of patience in Makkah, relief came through the migration to Yathrib (later known as Madinah). There, the Prophet ﷺ began building a society founded upon faith rather than tribal loyalty. He established brotherhood between the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār, made the mosque the heart of community life, and drafted the Constitution of Madinah, which guaranteed coexistence, justice, and mutual defense. As pressure from Quraysh increased, he preserved peace whenever possible and dispatched limited expeditions to secure trade routes and protect the nascent Muslim community, guided by the principle:

“Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress.”
(Qur'an 2:190)

Yet Quraysh continued its persecution, economic blockade, and confiscation of the emigrants' property. A strategic response became necessary to restore deterrence and protect the Muslim community. Here begins the chapter of the Prophet ﷺ as a military leader: firm in defending the faith and the city, yet with a heart devoted entirely to God, seeking neither personal glory nor worldly power.

In this context, the Prophet ﷺ received news of a large Quraysh trading caravan returning from Syria under the leadership of Abū Sufyān, carrying investments from many of Makkah's leading families. He dispatched Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubaydullāh and Sa'd ibn Zayd to gather intelligence but did not wait for their return before encouraging the Muslims to set out and intercept the caravan. This move was not driven by greed but by the need to respond to Quraysh's political and economic aggression and to test the strength of the emerging Muslim community.

Meanwhile, Quraysh reacted swiftly after receiving word of the Prophet's movements through a hired messenger. Abū Jahl mobilized the people of Makkah to defend their wealth. Although some hesitated, fearing an attack from Kinānah in their rear, Mālik ibn Ju'shum guaranteed their security, and Quraysh marched out in force to confront the Muslims.

The Prophet ﷺ departed Madinah on the 8th of Ramaḍān in the second year after the Hijrah. He appointed 'Amr ibn Umm Maktūm to lead the prayers and Abū Lubābah to oversee Madinah in his absence. The Muslim force numbered slightly more than three hundred men, sharing only seventy camels and taking turns riding and walking. The Prophet ﷺ himself shared a camel with 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and Marthad ibn Abī Marthad, demonstrating humility and solidarity with his companions.

The army initially set out to intercept the caravan led by Abū Sufyān. However, while camped in the valley of Dhafran, they learned that Quraysh had mobilized a large army to protect it. What had begun as an operation against a caravan was now becoming a potential confrontation with a force that greatly outnumbered them.

The Prophet ﷺ consulted his companions. Abū Bakr and 'Umar spoke, followed by al-Miqdād ibn 'Amr, who expressed unwavering loyalty and resolve. Yet the Prophet ﷺ particularly wished to hear from the Anṣār, since their pledge had not explicitly committed them to fighting outside Madinah. At that moment, Sa'd ibn

Mu‘ādh, leader of the Aws, rose and declared the Anṣār’s complete readiness to fight alongside him. The Prophet’s face brightened, and he informed them of the victory Allah had promised.

As the army continued toward Badr, scouting parties gathered intelligence. Reports confirmed that Quraysh had encamped on the far side of the valley and that many of its leading figures had personally joined the expedition. By estimating the number of animals slaughtered each day for food, the Prophet ﷺ concluded that the enemy force numbered around one thousand men. He then remarked to his companions:

“Makkah has cast forth to you the very best of its people.”

Meanwhile, some Muslims still hoped to capture the caravan. Then came the news that Abū Sufyān had successfully escaped and that the confrontation would be with the Quraysh army itself. At that moment, the following verse was revealed:

“And [remember] when Allah promised you one of the two groups—that it would be yours—but you wished that the unarmed one would be yours, while Allah intended to establish the truth by His words and cut off the roots of the disbelievers.” (Qur'an 8:7)

Although the caravan had escaped, Abu Sufyan sent word to Quraysh advising them to return, since the original reason for their expedition no longer existed. Several leaders agreed with him. Abu Jahl, however, vehemently opposed the idea and insisted on continuing to Badr in order to demonstrate Quraysh's power before the Arabs and preserve their prestige and reputation. Most of the army followed his position, while only Banu Zuhrah withdrew after taking the advice of al-Akhnas ibn Shariq.

Meanwhile, the Prophet ﷺ and his companions continued their march until they reached the nearest wells of Badr. Allah sent rain that helped prepare the ground and facilitated their preparations. When the Prophet ﷺ selected a campsite, al-Hubab ibn al-Mundhir proposed a more advantageous military position: advancing to the water source closest to the enemy, constructing a reservoir for the Muslims, and filling in the wells behind them. The Prophet ﷺ accepted this suggestion and implemented it, demonstrating that military strategy was a matter of consultation and judgment rather than revelation.

Sa'd ibn Mu'adh then proposed building a shelter for the Prophet ﷺ from which he could direct the battle. His concern was that, should the battle be lost, the leadership and the message would survive. The Prophet ﷺ accepted the proposal and prayed for him.

At these critical moments, the qualities of prophetic leadership became especially evident: attentiveness to advice, humility, strategic thinking, and flexibility in responding to changing circumstances. His companions likewise displayed remarkable determination despite being vastly outnumbered, fully aware of the importance of protecting their leader and preserving the unity of their ranks.

As Quraysh took their positions, some of their wiser men, including Utbah ibn Rabi'ah, urged the army to withdraw. Abu Jahl rejected every call for restraint and pushed the army toward battle despite the caravan's safety. Then al-Aswad ibn Abd al-Asad advanced to destroy the Muslims' water reservoir, but Hamzah رضي الله عنه killed him, marking the first spark of the decisive confrontation.

Utbah, Shaybah, and al-Walid ibn Utbah stepped forward to challenge the Muslims to single combat. They were met by Hamzah, Ali, and Ubaydah. The duel ended in victory for the Muslims, and soon the two armies engaged fully. The Prophet

ﷺ personally arranged the battle lines and instructed his companions to remain steadfast and patient.

He then returned to the shelter and turned wholeheartedly to Allah in supplication. Raising his hands toward the sky and facing the qiblah, he prayed earnestly:

"O Allah, if this small band is destroyed today, You will no longer be worshipped on earth."

Abu Bakr tried to reassure him, but the Prophet ﷺ continued his supplication until Allah granted him the glad tidings of victory. He then emerged to encourage his companions, saying:

"By the One in whose hand is Muhammad's soul, no man who fights them today with patience and sincerity, advancing without retreating, will die except that Allah will admit him into Paradise."

These words had a profound effect on the believers. Despite their small numbers, they advanced with unwavering resolve, seeking either victory or martyrdom, seeing Paradise closer to them than their enemies.

Throughout the battle, the Prophet ﷺ continued directing and encouraging his men. At one point, he took a handful of pebbles and cast them toward Quraysh, saying:

"May their faces be humiliated."

He then called out:

"Advance!"

The Muslims surged forward with renewed determination, viewing the battle as an act of worship and a means of fulfilling Allah's promise.

The Qur'an later referred to that moment:

"And you did not kill them, but it was Allah who killed them. And you did not throw when you threw, but it was Allah who threw." (Qur'an 8:17)

The ranks of Quraysh collapsed, and Allah's promise of victory was fulfilled. The Prophet ﷺ returned to the shelter praising Allah, while the Muslims pursued the retreating enemy, took prisoners, and secured the first major victory of the emerging Islamic state.

The Battle of Badr ended with a decisive Muslim victory. It marked a turning point in the history of Arabia and laid the foundations for the eventual unification of the peninsula under Islam, opening the way for a civilization that would profoundly influence the course of history.

Although the Prophet ﷺ commanded the battle and encouraged his companions to stand firm, he had instructed them from the outset not to kill certain individuals from Quraysh, including some members of Banu Hashim and others who had previously taken honorable positions, such as opposing the boycott imposed against him. This was not favoritism. Rather, it reflected the justice and loyalty of a leader who recognized past acts of integrity, even among those who still remained his enemies.

After Quraysh fled in defeat, the Prophet ﷺ and his companions remained at Badr until evening. He then ordered the slain Quraysh to be gathered and buried in a single pit. The Muslims spent the night organizing the spoils and guarding the prisoners, while the Prophet ﷺ withdrew in reflection, contemplating the events of that momentous day and how Allah had granted victory to the small community of believers and made their feet firm.

That night, the Prophet ﷺ addressed the fallen leaders of Quraysh in the pit, calling them one by one:

"O people of the pit, have you found what your Lord promised you to be true? For I have found what my Lord promised me to be true."

When the companions expressed surprise that he was speaking to the dead, he replied:

"You do not hear what I say any better than they do, except that they cannot respond."

In another moment, the Prophet ﷺ noticed the emotion of Abu Hudhayfah when the name of his father, Utbah ibn Rabi'ah, was mentioned. He asked him what troubled him, and Abu Hudhayfah honestly admitted that he felt sorrow over what had become of his father, despite having hoped that he would embrace Islam. The Prophet ﷺ comforted him with kind words and prayed for him, demonstrating once again the balance between firmness in war and compassion toward wounded hearts.

The following morning, a discussion arose among the Muslims regarding the spoils of war. Those who had gathered them, those who had pursued the enemy, and those who had remained to guard the Prophet ﷺ each believed they had a stronger claim. The Prophet ﷺ ordered that everything be placed in a common collection until a ruling could be made, thereby establishing principles of justice and discipline within a young army.

The Prophet ﷺ then sent Abdullah ibn Rawahah and Zayd ibn Harithah ahead to Madinah to announce the victory. Meanwhile, he continued the journey with the army, the prisoners, and the spoils. At al-Safra', he distributed additional shares among the fighters, ensuring fairness and granting a portion even to some who had been

unable to participate because of legitimate circumstances. In doing so, he reinforced the principle of collective responsibility in supporting the mission and the state.

On the journey back, two prisoners, al-Nadr ibn al-Harith and Uqbah ibn Abi Mu'ayt, were executed because of their prominent role in persecuting Muslims in Makkah. At that stage, no established policy regarding prisoners of war yet existed. Nevertheless, the firmness shown toward individuals who had become symbols of persecution and oppression demonstrated that the Prophet ﷺ was not a leader of unconditional leniency; he knew when mercy was appropriate and when firmness was required for the welfare of the mission.

Before the Prophet ﷺ reached Madinah, news of the victory had already arrived through Zayd and Abdullah. While Quraysh attempted to spread rumors denying the outcome, the arrival of the Muslim army confirmed the truth. Joy spread among the believers, while disappointment fell upon the hypocrites and many among the Jewish tribes.

When the prisoners entered Madinah, some of the emotional tensions left by the conflict became apparent. One example occurred when Sawdah bint Zam'ah spoke to one of the prisoners in a manner that reflected lingering tribal sympathies. The Prophet ﷺ gently but firmly reminded her that loyalty now belonged to Allah and His Messenger rather than to pre-Islamic tribal attachments. It was another lesson in reshaping loyalties within the emerging Muslim community.

After the Battle of Badr, the Prophet ﷺ distributed the prisoners among his companions and instructed them to treat them well. He then began considering their fate: should they be ransomed or executed? At that time, no clear legal precedent yet existed in Madinah for dealing with such cases, so the Prophet ﷺ consulted his companions.

Abu Bakr favored mercy and proposed accepting ransom payments, hoping that Allah might guide some of the prisoners to Islam. Umar, on the other hand, advocated execution, arguing that they were among the leading figures of disbelief and hostility toward the Muslims.

The Prophet ﷺ listened to both opinions. He then compared Abu Bakr's position to that of Prophets Ibrahim and Isa عليهما السلام, who embodied mercy and hope for the guidance of their people. He compared Umar's position to that of Prophets Nuh and Musa عليهما السلام, who stood firm against those who persisted in rejecting the truth and opposing God's message.

The Muslim community reflected on the two options, and the Prophet ﷺ announced that, given the difficult circumstances facing the believers, no prisoner should be released except through ransom or execution.

Among the captives was the poet Abu 'Azzah al-Jumahi, who pleaded poverty and responsibility for his daughters. The Prophet ﷺ pardoned him without ransom after taking his pledge. Abu 'Azzah later broke that pledge during the Battle of Uhud and was executed after being captured a second time.

In the end, the decision was made to accept ransom. Concerning this matter, Allah revealed:

"It is not for a prophet to have captives until he has thoroughly subdued the land." (Qur'an 8:67)

Many scholars understood this verse as divine guidance not to prioritize material gain through ransom when broader strategic considerations were at stake, particularly during the early stages of building the Islamic state.

This episode reflects the depth of the Prophet's leadership. Mercy was never absent from his decisions, but it was always balanced by the higher interests of the

community. Forgiveness is noble when circumstances allow it, yet firmness can become a responsibility when the survival of a mission is at stake. Such are the difficult decisions every leader may one day be called upon to make.

While the Muslims were celebrating their victory and the spoils of war, al-Haysuman ibn Abdullah al-Khuza'i reached Makkah with news of the defeat. He was the first to inform Quraysh of what had happened at Badr. Shock and disbelief spread throughout the city, soon giving way to grief as the deaths of their leading figures were confirmed. The blow was so severe that Abu Lahab fell ill and died only a few days later.

Quraysh agreed not to display public mourning and not to send envoys immediately to ransom their prisoners, fearing that the Prophet ﷺ and his companions might take advantage of their situation or demand excessive payments. After some time, however, ransom negotiations began. Makraz ibn Hafs came to ransom Suhayl ibn Amr. Umar ibn al-Khattab suggested that Suhayl's front teeth be removed so that he would never again be able to deliver speeches against the Muslims. The Prophet ﷺ refused, saying:

"I will not mutilate him, lest Allah mutilate me, even though I am a prophet."

The Battle of Badr had profound political consequences in Makkah. It intensified Quraysh's determination to seek revenge. In Madinah, meanwhile, the balance of power shifted dramatically. Jews, pagans, and hypocrites alike could see that the Prophet ﷺ, who had arrived as a migrant, now possessed significant authority and influence, to the point that leadership of the city was increasingly centered around him.

After Badr, Jewish tribes and hypocrites became more vocal in their hostility toward the Muslims. Poets began composing satirical attacks against Islam, and assassination plots started to emerge. The conflict had now moved from Makkah to Madinah and had evolved from a purely religious dispute into an open political struggle.

The Prophet ﷺ remained fully aware of these developments, and the situation increasingly required political wisdom and preparation for an internal struggle no less dangerous than the military threats outside the city.

Following the victory at Badr, internal tensions in Madinah continued to rise. New forms of opposition appeared—more subtle and more complex than before. Among the earliest major confrontations was the dispute with Banu Qaynuqa.

The crisis began when a Muslim woman was publicly humiliated in the marketplace of Banu Qaynuqa. The incident escalated into violence that resulted in the death of both a Muslim and a Jew. The Prophet ﷺ called upon Banu Qaynuqa to honor their treaty obligations and cease their hostility, warning them of the consequences. They responded with arrogance and defiance, saying:

"O Muhammad, do not be deceived because you fought people inexperienced in war. If you fight us, you will know that we are true men of battle."

Faced with this open challenge, it became clear that allowing them to remain in Madinah without consequence would weaken the authority of the emerging Islamic state. The Prophet ﷺ therefore marched with the Muslims and laid siege to their fortresses for fifteen days, until they surrendered.

The Prophet ﷺ consulted with the Muslim leadership and initially considered imposing the death penalty. However, Abdullah ibn Ubayy, who still held considerable influence in Madinah, intervened forcefully on their behalf, arguing that they were his allies and requesting clemency for them. After deliberation, the Prophet ﷺ decided instead to expel Banu Qaynuqa from Madinah—a decisive political measure aimed at preserving internal stability and reinforcing the authority of the state.

Banu Qaynuqa departed from Madinah, leaving behind their weapons and workshops. They first settled in Wadi al-Qura before eventually moving farther north toward the region of Syria.

Quraysh did not calm down after Badr. The raid led by Zayd ibn Harithah against one of their caravans only deepened their resentment and strengthened their determination for revenge. They decided to use the profits from the caravan that had escaped at Badr to finance a massive military campaign. Their leaders rallied allied tribes, and even their women—led by Hind bint Utbah—insisted on accompanying the army to stir the spirit of vengeance.

The army numbered three thousand men, supported by two hundred cavalry horses, three thousand camels, and seven hundred armored warriors. It marched toward Madinah under the banner of Talhah ibn Abi Talhah. Al-'Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib, the Prophet's uncle, witnessed the preparations and secretly sent a warning letter to the Prophet ﷺ through a man from the Ghifar tribe. The message reached him at Quba, where Ubayy ibn Ka'b read it to him, and its contents were kept confidential.

The Prophet ﷺ dispatched several scouts to verify Quraysh's movements. Once their approach was confirmed, he consulted the Muslims about how to respond. His preferred strategy was to remain inside Madinah and fight from defensive positions. Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul and several senior companions agreed with this view.

However, some companions—especially those who had not participated in Badr—feared that if Quraysh returned without a battle, they would interpret it as weakness and become even bolder in the future. For this reason, they strongly advocated leaving the city and confronting the enemy in open battle.

In deference to the majority opinion, the Prophet ﷺ accepted their recommendation, remaining faithful to the principle of consultation that formed the

foundation of his leadership. He entered his home, put on his armor, and prepared for battle while the companions continued discussing the matter. Some of them then realized that they had gone against the Prophet's preferred course of action and worried that they had pressured him into something he did not want. They approached him and said:

"Messenger of Allah, do as you see fit. We should not have insisted against your opinion. The matter belongs to Allah and then to you."

But the Prophet ﷺ, now fully armed, replied with the resolve of a leader:

"It is not fitting for a prophet who has put on his armor to remove it until Allah judges between him and his enemy."

He then ordered the army to prepare, reminding them that victory comes through patience.

The Muslim army advanced toward Uhud and camped near al-Shaykhayn. There the Prophet ﷺ noticed a contingent he did not recognize. He was informed that they were Jewish allies of Abdullah ibn Ubayy. The Prophet ﷺ said:

"We do not seek the assistance of polytheists against polytheists."

He therefore sent them back to Madinah. This decision displeased Ibn Ubayy, who the following morning withdrew from the army with a large group of his followers. The Prophet ﷺ was thus left with seven hundred believers facing a force of three thousand from Quraysh.

When they reached Mount Uhud, the Prophet ﷺ positioned the mountain behind them and carefully arranged his ranks. He stationed fifty archers on a strategic pass overlooking the battlefield and instructed them:

"Protect our rear. Do not leave your position. If you see us victorious, do not come down. If you see us being killed, do not come to our aid."

He also ordered the rest of the army not to begin fighting until he gave the command.

Quraysh organized their forces as well. Khalid ibn al-Walid commanded the cavalry on one flank, Ikrimah ibn Abi Jahl led the other, and the banner was entrusted to Talhah ibn Abi Talhah. Quraysh stirred their warriors to battle, while the Prophet ﷺ addressed his companions, encouraging patience and perseverance. He then held up his sword and asked:

"Who will take this sword and fulfill its right?"

After several men stepped forward, Abu Dujanah accepted it. He was known for his courage and determination.

The battle began. One of the first to engage was Abu Amir al-Fasiq, who attempted to win over members of the Aws tribe. Instead, they shouted back:

"May Allah never gladden your eyes, O rebel!"

His plan failed completely.

The fighting intensified. Hamzah ibn Abd al-Muttalib charged deep into the ranks of Quraysh, while Ali ibn Abi Talib killed Talhah, the standard-bearer of the enemy. The Prophet ﷺ and the Muslims proclaimed Allah's greatness. Abu Dujanah advanced with the Prophet's sword, fighting bravely through the enemy lines. At one point he encountered Hind bint Utbah but refrained from striking her out of respect for the sword of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

Quraysh fought with a burning desire to avenge their losses at Badr, driven by tribal pride and the thirst for revenge. Meanwhile, the Prophet ﷺ stood firm with only

three-quarters of his original force after the withdrawal of Ibn Ubayy, facing an army far superior in numbers and equipment. As the battle unfolded, he remained at the center of command, directing and supervising his troops with composure and wisdom.

Hamzah ibn Abd al-Muttalib displayed extraordinary bravery until he was killed by Wahshi, who had been promised his freedom if he succeeded in killing Hamzah. His death represented a major military and emotional loss for the Muslims.

Throughout the battle, the Prophet's military leadership was evident. The archers had been placed in a strategic position to protect the rear of the Muslim army and prevent enemy cavalry from encircling them. He had specifically instructed them not to abandon their posts regardless of the battle's outcome.

This plan initially produced a significant Muslim victory. One after another, the standard-bearers of Quraysh fell. The Makkan army began to collapse, their women retreated, and the idol they had brought with them fell to the ground.

This early success was the result of the Prophet's careful deployment of his forces, his intelligent use of the terrain, and the discipline shown by his soldiers at the beginning of the battle. Despite their smaller numbers, they achieved a remarkable advantage. Their success stemmed not only from military planning but also from the strength of faith the Prophet ﷺ had instilled in them and the clarity of leadership he demonstrated in the most difficult circumstances.

Yet after this success, some of the Muslims made a strategic mistake. They abandoned their assigned positions and became occupied with collecting the spoils of war, a decision that would soon alter the course of the battle.

Seeing that victory seemed assured and catching sight of the spoils of war, most of the archers abandoned their positions in disobedience to the Prophet's ﷺ

explicit command, despite the repeated warnings of their commander, Abdullah ibn Jubayr. Only a small group remained at their posts.

Khalid ibn al-Walid immediately seized this opportunity. Leading his cavalry around the mountain, he attacked the Muslims from the rear, overwhelmed the remaining archers, and struck from behind. The Muslim ranks quickly fell into disarray, and their unity collapsed.

Amid the confusion, a rumor spread that the Prophet ﷺ had been killed. Panic intensified. Many Muslims, shocked and overwhelmed, withdrew from the battlefield, while others, unable to distinguish friend from foe in the chaos, inadvertently struck one another. For a brief moment, the Muslim army suffered a complete military breakdown, brought about by the collapse of discipline and the failure to follow orders.

The Prophet ﷺ, however, had not been killed. He was seriously wounded: his blessed face was cut, one of his front teeth was broken, and two rings from his helmet became embedded in his cheek. Despite his injuries, he remained composed. Ali ibn Abi Talib and Talhah ibn Ubaydullah helped him rise after he had fallen into a pit.

As soon as some of the companions realized that the Prophet ﷺ was still alive, they rallied around him with complete determination, defending him with everything they had. They escorted him to a secure position on Mount Uhud. Among those who stood firm were al-Zubayr ibn al-Awwam and Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, to whom the Prophet ﷺ personally handed arrows, saying:

"Shoot! May my father and mother be sacrificed for you."

Meanwhile, Quraysh believed that the Prophet ﷺ had been killed and therefore stopped pursuing the Muslim army. Their mistake became evident when Ka'b ibn Malik loudly proclaimed that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was still alive. At that

moment, the Prophet ﷺ neither confirmed nor denied the announcement, preserving the tactical balance of the situation.

This episode illustrates how fragile an army becomes when discipline is lost, and how essential obedience to command is, especially at decisive moments. It also demonstrates the Prophet's ﷺ remarkable composure under immense pressure, maintaining command despite severe wounds until he succeeded in reorganizing his forces.

As the Muslims withdrew toward Mount Uhud, Ubayy ibn Khalaf charged forward searching for the Prophet ﷺ, shouting:

"Where is Muhammad? I will not survive if he survives!"

The Prophet ﷺ confronted him and struck him with his spear. Though the wound appeared slight, Ubayy fell from his horse and died on the journey back to Makkah.

The Prophet ﷺ was then carried, wounded, to the upper slopes of the mountain. Ali ibn Abi Talib washed the blood from his face while Abu Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah carefully removed the metal rings lodged in his cheek, breaking two of his own teeth in the process. Despite his injuries, the Prophet ﷺ continued to lead his army. He performed the Dhuhr prayer seated, and the Muslims prayed behind him while seated as well, before continuing their withdrawal to higher ground beyond the reach of Quraysh.

For Quraysh, Uhud was seen as revenge for Badr. Abu Sufyan declared:

"A day for Badr. We shall meet again next year."

The Quraysh then withdrew after mutilating the fallen Muslims in a horrific manner, especially Hamzah ibn Abd al-Muttalib. The sight deeply grieved the Prophet ﷺ. Standing before his beloved uncle, he said:

"Never shall I suffer a loss like yours again."

Overcome by grief, he also declared:

"By Allah, if Allah grants us victory over them one day, I will retaliate with a mutilation the like of which no Arab has ever seen."

Then Allah revealed:

"And if you retaliate, then retaliate only to the extent of the injury done to you. But if you are patient, it is surely better for those who are patient." (Qur'an 16:126)

Upon hearing this revelation, the Prophet ﷺ chose forgiveness and prohibited mutilation.

The Prophet ﷺ returned to Madinah fully aware of the political consequences of the defeat. The Jews and the hypocrites openly rejoiced, while Abdullah ibn Ubayy sought to exploit the situation to undermine the Prophet's authority. Had the defeat gone unanswered, it could have shaken the confidence of the Arab tribes in the rising Muslim community.

For this reason, the very next day, the Prophet ﷺ ordered a rapid pursuit toward Hamra' al-Asad. Only those who had fought at Uhud were permitted to join, despite their wounds. Fires were lit for three consecutive nights, creating the impression of a determined and battle-ready army.

When news of this reached Abu Sufyan, he feared the prospect of another confrontation. Hoping to intimidate the Muslims, he sent travelers to spread the rumor

that Quraysh was preparing to return for a second attack. The Prophet ﷺ, however, remained steadfast and continued the campaign without hesitation. The fires continued to burn, signaling to the enemy that the Muslims were still prepared to fight.

This display of resolve reversed the psychological balance once again. Quraysh abandoned any thought of returning and continued their march toward Makkah. The Prophet ﷺ returned to Madinah having restored much of the Muslims' prestige, even though the defeat at Uhud remained a source of propaganda for the hypocrites.

After the events of Uhud, Bi'r Ma'unah, and al-Raji', the Jews and the hypocrites grew increasingly emboldened. The security of the Muslim community now faced threats from both within and without. As was his custom in strengthening faith and stability, the Prophet ﷺ continued sending companions to teach Islam to neighboring tribes. But the tragedy of Bi'r Ma'unah, where most of these envoys were treacherously killed, deepened the sense of danger and heightened tensions.

Against this backdrop, the Jewish tribe of Banu al-Nadir—who were allied with Banu Amir—received a visit from the Prophet ﷺ and a small group of companions. He came to request their contribution toward the blood money owed for two men who had been killed unintentionally by Amr ibn Umayyah, in accordance with the treaty that bound the two communities.

At first, they appeared willing to cooperate. Secretly, however, they plotted to assassinate the Prophet ﷺ by dropping a large stone upon him from the top of a wall. Allah revealed their plot to him, and he quietly left the place without alerting them, while his companions remained behind, assuming he would soon return.

When the companions realized that he had not come back, they returned to Madinah and met him at the mosque. There, the Prophet ﷺ informed them of the revelation exposing Banu al-Nadir's conspiracy, and they understood the reason for his sudden departure.

He then sent Muhammad ibn Maslamah to deliver a message ordering Banu al-Nadir to leave Madinah within ten days. Their attempt to assassinate him constituted a clear violation of their treaty, and remaining in the city thereafter would be regarded as an act of war.

This decision was a strategic measure to safeguard the security of the Muslim community from an internal threat capable of undermining both its strength and its authority. It also sent a clear message that treachery and betrayal would not be tolerated, particularly at a time when the morale of the Muslims required firmness and decisive leadership.

After Muhammad ibn Maslamah delivered the Prophet's ﷺ order to Banu al-Nadir to leave Madinah within ten days, they attempted to buy time and exert pressure by appealing to old tribal ties. Ibn Maslamah replied that those alliances had changed and that the treaty had been broken by their attempt to assassinate the Prophet ﷺ.

When the deadline expired and they still refused to leave, the Prophet ﷺ led the Muslims in a siege that lasted about twenty days. Fighting occurred intermittently both inside and outside their fortresses. To weaken their resolve, the Prophet ﷺ ordered that some of their date palms be cut down and burned, a measure later confirmed by revelation:

"Whatever palm trees you cut down or left standing on their roots, it was by Allah's permission, and so that He might disgrace the defiantly disobedient." (Qur'an 59:5)

Having lost hope of outside support, they requested safe passage in exchange for leaving with their movable possessions. The Prophet ﷺ agreed, and they departed under the leadership of Huyayy ibn Akhtab. They did not leave Arabia, however. Instead, they settled in Khaybar, where their leaders began actively inciting opposition against the Muslims.

They traveled to Quraysh in Makkah, urging them to form a coalition against Madinah. Quraysh themselves had begun to wonder about the Prophet ﷺ after witnessing his remarkable successes, asking one another: "Is Muhammad's religion better than ours, or are we the ones who are rightly guided?"

At this point, Banu al-Nadir played a dangerous role. Presenting themselves as People of the Book and scholars of the previous prophets, they falsely assured the pagan Quraysh that their religion was superior to Muhammad's, preferring idolatry over monotheism. The Qur'an exposed their deception:

"Have you not seen those who were given a portion of the Scripture? They believe in falsehood and idols and say to the disbelievers, 'These are better guided than the believers.'" (Qur'an 4:51)

Huyayy did not stop there. He traveled among the tribes of Ghatafan, Banu Murrah, Banu Fazarah, Ashja', Sulaym, and Asad, eventually assembling a coalition of nearly ten thousand fighters.

When the Muslims learned of this unprecedented alliance, they became deeply concerned. The Prophet ﷺ, however, responded calmly and strategically. He gathered the Muslim leaders and those with military experience to consult together, avoiding any impulsive reaction.

During this consultation, Salman al-Farisi proposed digging a trench around Madinah, a defensive tactic used in Persia against large invading armies. The Prophet ﷺ accepted the proposal immediately, demonstrating that in Islam the value of an opinion depends on its wisdom and merit, not on a person's origin or social standing.

The Muslims immediately began implementing the defensive plan. The Prophet ﷺ worked alongside his companions with his own hands, carrying earth and encouraging them to persevere. Digging tools were borrowed from Banu Qurayzah, who at that time still honored their treaty with the Muslims. Through an intensive collective effort, the trench was completed in just six days.

When Quraysh and their allies arrived, they were astonished to find no army waiting in the open field but instead a trench blocking access to the city—a defensive strategy entirely unfamiliar to them. They mocked the Muslims as cowards at first, but they quickly realized that storming Madinah would not be easy. As the harsh winter winds intensified, frustration gradually spread throughout their ranks.

At this critical moment, Huyayy ibn Akhtab, the leader of Banu al-Nadir, sought to reverse the course of the campaign. He resolved to persuade Banu Qurayzah to

break their treaty with the Muslims and open a second front from within the city. He went to Ka'b ibn Asad, the leader of Banu Qurayzah, who initially refused even to meet him or consider betraying the treaty. Yet Huyayy persisted, reminding him of what had happened to the other Jewish tribes and assuring him that Quraysh and their allies would not withdraw until they had destroyed the Muslims. He even pledged to share their fate, whatever the outcome. Under the weight of these assurances, Ka'b finally agreed to violate the treaty, and Banu Qurayzah formally joined the coalition forces.

The news of the betrayal reached the Prophet ﷺ. He sent Sa'd ibn Mu'adh and Sa'd ibn Ubadah to verify it, instructing them, if the report proved true, to conceal the matter so that the army's morale would not be affected. When they met Ka'b and tried to dissuade him from treachery, he demanded that Banu al-Nadir be allowed to return to their homes in Madinah. The situation then escalated until the Jews began insulting the Prophet ﷺ. The two envoys left and confirmed the news to him. At that point, the Muslim supply line was cut off, while Quraysh's resolve grew stronger after hearing of Banu Qurayzah's betrayal.

Banu Qurayzah asked the Confederates to give them ten full days to prepare for an attack from within the city. In return, the Confederates were to maintain constant pressure on the Muslims throughout that period, so that the Muslims would be unable to strike Banu Qurayzah before they were ready. The commanders of the Confederates then began dividing their forces: one group under Ibn al-A'war al-Sulami through the valley, another under Uyaynah ibn Hisn from the flank, and a third under Abu Sufyan directly across the trench, while they awaited the opening of the internal front by Banu Qurayzah. In the midst of this extremely difficult moment, the Qur'an described the state of the Muslims:

"When they came upon you from above you and from below you, and when eyes grew wild and hearts reached the throats..." [Al-Ahzab: 10–13]

Some horsemen from Quraysh attempted to cross the trench, among them Amr ibn Abd Wudd, until they found a narrow passage and managed to cross. Ali ibn Abi Talib رضي الله عنه, accompanied by some Muslims, moved quickly to block the gap. Amr challenged him to single combat, and Ali killed him, forcing the rest of the horsemen to withdraw.

Meanwhile, Banu Qurayzah began leaving their fortresses to occupy houses near the Muslim neighborhoods, spreading fear inside Madinah. In the fortress of Fari'ah, where women and children were gathered, Safiyyah bint Abd al-Muttalib saw a Jewish man watching the fortress. She asked Hassan ibn Thabit to kill him. When he refused, she went down herself and killed him in order to protect those inside.

Amid these pressures, Nu'aym ibn Mas'ud al-Ashja'i came to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and secretly declared his Islam, while his people were unaware of it. Nu'aym had close ties with Banu Qurayzah, Quraysh, and Ghatafan, and all of them trusted him. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said to him:

"You are only one man among us, so weaken them on our behalf as much as you can, for war is deception."

Nu'aym began with Banu Qurayzah. He told them that Quraysh and Ghatafan were not from Madinah; if they saw an opportunity, they would return to their own lands and leave Banu Qurayzah alone to face the Muslims. He advised them not to fight alongside the Confederates until they had taken hostages from their nobles as a guarantee that they would not abandon them.

He then went to Quraysh and told them that Banu Qurayzah had regretted breaking the treaty and had sent word to Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم asking for pardon. He claimed that they had promised to take hostages from Quraysh and Ghatafan and hand them over to him. He therefore advised Quraysh not to give Banu Qurayzah anyone if they asked for hostages.

He then went to Ghatafan and repeated the same message.

After that, Abu Sufyan sent word to Banu Qurayzah calling them to launch a joint attack. Banu Qurayzah demanded hostages from Quraysh and Ghatafan first. When Abu Sufyan heard this, he remembered Nu'aym's warning and refused to provide hostages. Suspicion between the two sides only increased.

This coincided with worsening cold, dwindling supplies, and the length of the siege. Then, on a cold night, a violent windstorm struck. It tore up the tents, extinguished the fires, and overturned the cooking pots. Abu Sufyan stood among the people and declared that they could no longer remain there, that the wind was severe, and that Banu Qurayzah had failed them. He ordered the withdrawal. The Confederates departed, and each group returned to its own land.

After the Battle of the Trench came to an end and Quraysh and their allies withdrew, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ reassessed the overall situation. Although Allah had driven the enemy away from Madinah, Banu Qurayzah still remained inside the city, and their betrayal had proven that they posed an internal threat no less dangerous than the external one. Had the Confederates not retreated on that stormy night, Banu Qurayzah would have attacked from within and opened the way for the enemy. Their situation therefore had to be resolved to prevent such treachery from ever happening again.

The Prophet ﷺ instructed the caller to announce:

"None of you should perform the 'Asr prayer except among Banu Qurayzah."

The Muslims immediately marched under the command of Ali ibn Abi Talib رضي الله عنه. Banu Qurayzah were besieged for twenty-five days. Apart from a few exchanges

of arrows and spears, little fighting took place, as they remained inside their fortresses until they realized there was no escape.

They requested that Abu Lubabah, their longtime ally from the Aws tribe, be sent to consult with them. When he saw their women and children weeping, his heart softened. He indicated to them that submitting to the Prophet's ﷺ judgment was their only option; otherwise, they would face execution.

Ka'b ibn Asad, their leader, consulted his people and first proposed that they embrace Islam, but they refused. He then suggested that they kill their own women and children before fighting to the death, but this proposal was also rejected. Finally, they agreed to accept the judgment of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, believing that their allies from the Aws would intercede on their behalf.

When Banu Qurayzah surrendered, the Aws asked the Prophet ﷺ to show leniency toward their former allies, just as leniency had previously been shown to Banu Qaynuqa', who had been allied with the Khazraj, since longstanding alliances had existed between these tribes before Islam.

The Prophet ﷺ replied:

"Would you not be satisfied if one of your own men were to judge between them?"

They agreed and chose Sa'd ibn Mu'adh رضي الله عنه, the chief of the Aws, who had been severely wounded during the Battle of the Trench.

Sa'd was brought forward, and both parties pledged to accept his judgment. Once he had secured their agreement, he ruled that the fighting men should be executed, that the property should be divided, and that the women and children should be taken into custody.

The Prophet ﷺ then said:

"You have judged them according to the judgment of Allah from above the seven heavens."

The sentence was carried out. Among the women, only one was executed after it was established that she had killed a Muslim during the siege. A number of them embraced Islam and were therefore spared.

This episode marked a defining moment in the Prophet's ﷺ role as both a political and military leader. He combined firmness in responding to treason with justice by limiting the punishment to those who had taken part in the conflict, while showing mercy to those who had not participated in the fighting. Although warfare often involves deception and betrayal, he remained faithful to his moral and spiritual principles: he neither killed women and children indiscriminately nor resorted to treachery or the violation of treaties.

What distinguished his leadership ﷺ was the combination of profound faith and careful strategic planning. He understood both situations and human nature, employed lawful strategy when appropriate, and consistently chose the course of action that best served the long-term interests of the Muslim community, as he would later demonstrate at the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah. Perhaps the greatest lesson from this episode is that victory is not achieved through military strength alone, but through foresight, wise leadership, and, above all, the help of Allah, through whom Makkah was opened three years after the Battle of the Trench without battle or bloodshed.

6. The Political Leader

Until the very end of his life, one of the Prophet's ﷺ highest priorities was preserving the unity of the Muslim community, despite the hardships of this world, the

temptation of the wealth that accompanied the Islamic conquests, and Satan's relentless efforts to sow division among people.

Here, one of the Prophet's ﷺ greatest strengths became evident: his remarkable ability to understand people's hearts and to choose the approach best suited to each group in order to win their affection and strengthen Islam.

One of the clearest examples of this came after the Conquest of Makkah. From his share of the war booty, the Prophet ﷺ gave generous gifts to men who had been his enemies only days before, seeking to reconcile their hearts to Islam. He gave one hundred camels to Abu Sufyan, another hundred to his son Mu'awiyah, and generous gifts to al-Harith ibn Hisham, Suhayl ibn Amr, Huwaytib ibn Abd al-Uzza, and other leaders of Quraysh. He also granted fifty camels to several chiefs of smaller tribes.

At first glance, one might think these men deserved nothing because of their long history of hostility toward Islam. But the Prophet ﷺ looked beyond the past with the vision of a far-sighted leader. His goal was to soften their hearts and transform hostility into loyalty. Thus the promise of Allah was fulfilled:

"Repel evil with what is better, and then the one between whom and you was enmity will become as though he were a devoted friend."

(Qur'an 41:34)

This verse perfectly describes what happened. Through kindness and generosity, hearts that had long resisted Islam were transformed into grateful—and eventually believing—hearts. Mu'awiyah, for example, would later become one of the rulers of the Muslim world and play an important role in the expansion of the Islamic state.

Yet the Prophet ﷺ did not treat every group in the same way.

While he used material gifts to reconcile the hearts of Quraysh, he knew that the Ansar were motivated by something entirely different. What mattered most to them was not wealth, but their relationship with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his love for them.

When some of the Ansar quietly wondered why Quraysh had received larger gifts, the Prophet ﷺ gathered them and addressed them with words that moved every one of them to tears:

"O Ansar, what is this that I have heard about you? Did I not find you astray, and Allah guided you through me? Were you not poor, and Allah enriched you? Were you not divided, and Allah united your hearts?"

They replied:

"Indeed. To Allah and His Messenger belong all favor and grace."

He then continued:

"By Allah, if you wished, you could have said—and you would have spoken the truth: 'You came to us rejected, and we believed in you; abandoned, and we supported you; driven out, and we gave you shelter; in need, and we shared what we had with you.' Do you feel resentment because of a portion of this world's wealth by which I sought to reconcile people to Islam, while I entrusted you to the faith that is already in your hearts? Are you not pleased that people return home with sheep and camels, while you return with the Messenger of Allah? By the One in whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, were it not for the Hijrah, I would have been one of the Ansar. If all people were to follow one valley and the Ansar another, I would follow the valley of the Ansar. O Allah, have mercy upon the Ansar, the children of the Ansar, and the grandchildren of the Ansar."

The Ansar wept and replied:

"We are content to have the Messenger of Allah as our share and our portion."

Here, the Prophet's ﷺ genius as a leader becomes unmistakable. Every heart has its own key, and every community requires its own approach. With Quraysh, he used generosity. With the Ansar, he appealed to love, gratitude, and loyalty. He never dealt with people through a single formula; rather, he gave each person what best reached their heart and strengthened their soul.

This offers a timeless lesson for our own lives. How many disputes between siblings, spouses, neighbors, or business partners could be resolved if we simply lived by the Qur'anic principle:

"Repel evil with what is better."

Too often, the ego urges us toward revenge instead of forgiveness, and harshness instead of gentleness. Resentments accumulate until they divide families, friendships, and entire communities.

The Prophet ﷺ taught us that true leadership is not merely about governing people—it is about guiding hearts and uniting them upon the truth.

May Allah grant us a portion of his wisdom, enable us to bring hearts together as he did, and make us among those who respond to evil with what is better in our families, our work, and our communities. آمين.

7. The Social Role Model

The teachings of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ were not the only foundation upon which brotherhood was built. His own conduct and example were the highest

embodiment of that brotherhood in its most perfect form. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ refused to appear in any manner that reflected worldly kingship, authority, or prestige. He would say to his Companions:

“Do not exaggerate in praising me as the Christians exaggerated in praising the son of Mary. I am only the servant of Allah, so say: ‘The servant of Allah and His Messenger.’”

One day, he came out to his Companions leaning on a staff, and they stood up for him. He said:

“Do not stand for me as the non-Arabs stand for one another in exaggerated reverence.”

Whenever he sat with his Companions, he sat wherever there was space, never distinguishing himself with a special place. He joked with them, mixed freely among them, conversed with them, played with their children, seated them on his lap, accepted invitations from the free and the enslaved, the rich and the poor alike, visited the sick even in the farthest parts of Madinah, accepted people's apologies, greeted first everyone he met, and shook hands with all his Companions. If someone came to him while he was praying, he would shorten his prayer, ask about the person's need, attend to it, and then return to complete his prayer. He was the most cheerful and pleasant of people, smiling often unless revelation was descending upon him or he was delivering an admonition or sermon.

At home, he served his family. He cleaned and mended his own clothes, milked his sheep, repaired his sandals, served himself, tied his camel, ate alongside his servant, and attended to the needs of the weak, the poor, and the destitute. Whenever he saw someone in need, he preferred that person over himself and his own family, even when they themselves were living in hardship. He never stored provisions for the

following day. Indeed, he ﷺ passed away while his shield was pledged as collateral to a Jewish man in exchange for food for his household.

His humility was profound, and his loyalty unwavering. When a delegation sent by the Negus (the King of Abyssinia) visited Madinah, he personally served them. His Companions said, “O Messenger of Allah, we can serve them for you.” He replied:

“They honored our companions, and I wished to repay their kindness.”

His loyalty was so remarkable that whenever Khadījah was mentioned, he spoke of her only with goodness. ‘Ā’ishah used to say, “I never felt jealous of any woman as much as I did of Khadījah because I heard him mention her so often.” Once, an elderly woman came to visit him. He welcomed her warmly and asked about her well-being. After she left, he said:

“She used to visit us during the days of Khadījah, and faithfulness to old relationships is part of faith.”

His kindness and tenderness were equally remarkable. He allowed his granddaughters to play around him while he prayed. On one occasion, he led the people in prayer while carrying his granddaughter, Umāmah, the daughter of Zaynab. Whenever he bowed in prostration, he gently placed her down, and when he stood again, he carried her once more.

His compassion extended beyond human beings to animals. He opened his door to a cat seeking shelter, cared for a sick rooster, gently stroked his horse with the sleeve of his garment, and when ‘Ā’ishah was riding a difficult camel and handled it roughly, he gently told her:

“Be gentle.”

The Prophet ﷺ embodied extraordinary strength of character. It was a strength that enabled him to give away everything he possessed. One man remarked:

“Muhammad gives with the generosity of one who fears no poverty.”

He lived detached from worldly wealth—not because he rejected the lawful blessings of life, but because he refused to be enslaved by wealth or status. He slept on a leather mattress stuffed with palm fibers, sometimes went two consecutive days without eating his fill, and tied a stone to his stomach out of hunger. Yet he was also known to enjoy wholesome foods such as meat, honey, and pumpkin.

His simplicity in clothing reflected the same spirit. He wore simple garments made of wool or cotton and was content with modest attire. At the same time, he did not refuse fine clothing appropriate to special occasions when it became available.

His asceticism was not an end in itself, nor was it a compulsory ideal. Allah says:

“Eat from the good things We have provided for you.” (Qur’an 2:57)

And He says:

“Seek, through what Allah has granted you, the Home of the Hereafter, but do not forget your share of this world. And do good as Allah has done good to you.” (Qur’an 28:77)

Rather, he sought to set the highest example of true freedom—a freedom that is not enslaved by worldly possessions or status, so that one's servitude belongs to Allah alone.

Thus, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ became the living example of humility, detachment, compassion, and noble character. His life and Sunnah remain an enduring mercy for humanity until the Last Day. Whoever wishes to fulfill the purpose for which

they were created should follow his Sunnah, and whoever seeks the shortest path to Paradise, success, and true guidance should emulate his example ﷺ.

8. The Grandfather and Role Model for Children

Childhood is one of the most important and delicate stages of a person's life. It is a vulnerable period during which awareness is formed and experiences become deeply rooted, accompanying the child throughout adulthood. Because of their limited knowledge and experience, children often need a wise and gentle hand to guide them, rather than being treated as incomplete beings. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ excelled in this role. He became the greatest example of how to treat children, combining mercy with remarkable emotional intelligence, leaving behind an enduring model of education and upbringing.

In her book *His Noble Character with Children*, Dr. Fatima Al-Kettani explains that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ treated children as independent individuals. He respected their feelings, valued their personalities, and never reduced them to the status of possessions or subjects of harsh authority. This was one of the secrets of his success as an educator: respect, compassion, and a joyful sense of humor.

His grandsons, al-Hasan and al-Husayn (may Allah be pleased with them), the sons of his beloved daughter Fāṭimah al-Zahrā', were among the clearest examples of this. The Prophet ﷺ loved them deeply. He carried them, embraced them, and openly declared before the people:

"Husayn is from me, and I am from Husayn. May Allah love whoever loves Husayn."

(Narrated by Ibn Hibban.)

He would even play with them during prayer. Abdullah ibn Mas'ud reported that al-Hasan and al-Husayn would climb onto the Prophet's back while he was in prostration. Rather than scolding them, he would signal to his Companions to leave them alone. When he finished the prayer, he would seat them on his lap and say:

"Whoever loves me should love these two."

(Authenticated by al-Albani.)

On another occasion, the Companions saw him kissing al-Husayn. Al-Aqra' ibn Hābis remarked, "I have ten children, and I have never kissed any of them." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ replied with words that summarize the entire philosophy of mercy:

"Whoever does not show mercy will not be shown mercy."

(Narrated by Ibn Hibban.)

The Prophet ﷺ comforted children even in their smallest sorrows. One day, he visited the home of Anas ibn Mālik and found Anas's younger brother grieving because his little pet bird had died. Smiling gently, he said:

"O Abū 'Umayr, what happened to the little bird?"

(Narrated by Ibn al-Qaṭṭān.)

With just a few affectionate words, he transformed a child's sadness into a tender memory that would remain with him for life.

His compassion extended especially to orphans. He said:

"The one who cares for an orphan and I will be like this in Paradise,"

and he joined his index and middle fingers together.

(Narrated by Ibn Hibban.)

He also encouraged his Companions to gently stroke the head of an orphan and to feed them, teaching that such acts soften the heart and attract Allah's mercy.

These are different scenes, yet they all convey the same lesson: the Prophet ﷺ did not raise children through words alone, but through his own example. He respected their emotions, showed them affection, played with them, comforted them, and instilled in them the confidence that they were loved and valued.

The Prophet's ﷺ love for children was not limited to affection and play. He also taught them values, respected their individuality, and corrected their mistakes with wisdom.

One remarkable incident beautifully illustrates his respect for a child's rights. Sahl ibn Sa'd al-Sā'idī reported that the Prophet ﷺ drank from a cup. A young boy was seated on his right—the youngest person present—while the senior Companions sat on his left. Since Islamic etiquette gives priority to the person on the right, the Prophet ﷺ asked the boy:

"Young man, would you permit me to give the cup first to the elders?"

The boy replied confidently:

"O Messenger of Allah, I would never give up my share from you in favor of anyone else."

Then the Prophet ﷺ smiled and handed him the cup.

(Narrated by al-Bukhari.)

It was a profound lesson in honoring a child's dignity and respecting his opinion, even in the presence of the most distinguished elders.

On another occasion, a divorced mother and father came before the Prophet ﷺ, disputing the custody of their child. Rather than forcing the child to go with either parent, he said:

"This is your father, and this is your mother. Take the hand of whichever one you choose."

The child took his mother's hand and left with her. *(Authenticated by al-Albani.)*

It is a clear lesson in respecting a child's feelings and giving weight to his wishes.

When a child made a mistake, the Prophet ﷺ corrected it with unforgettable gentleness. Rāfiʿ ibn ʿAmr al-Ghifārī related:

"When I was a young boy, I used to throw stones at the date palms. The Prophet ﷺ took hold of me and asked, 'Young man, why are you throwing stones at the date palms?' I replied, 'Because I want to eat.' He said, 'Do not throw stones at the date palms. Eat instead from the dates that have fallen beneath them.' Then he gently stroked my head and supplicated, 'O Allah, satisfy his hunger.'"

(Reported by Ibn Hajar.)

He did not scold him or humiliate him. Instead, he taught him the right way and prayed for his well-being.

Joy and playfulness were also an integral part of his character. The Prophet ﷺ would line up al-ʿAbbās's sons—ʿAbdullāh, ʿUbaydullāh, and Kathīr—and say:

"Whoever reaches me first will receive such-and-such."

The children would race toward him, throwing themselves onto his chest and back, and he would embrace and kiss them. *(Reported by al-Haythami.)*

What grandfather does this? The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was the greatest example of sincere, loving play with children.

Yet his upbringing was not based on affection alone. It was, above all, a means of instilling enduring spiritual values.

‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated:

"I was riding behind the Messenger of Allah ﷺ when he said to me, 'Young man, shall I teach you some words by which Allah will benefit you?' I replied, 'Yes.' He said:

'Be mindful of Allah, and He will protect you. Be mindful of Allah, and you will find Him before you. Know Allah in times of ease, and He will know you in times of hardship. If you ask, ask Allah; if you seek help, seek help from Allah. The Pen has already dried regarding all that will come to pass. If all of creation were to gather together to benefit you with something that Allah has not decreed for you, they would never be able to do so. And if they were to gather together to harm you with something that Allah has not decreed for you, they would never be able to do so. Worship Allah with gratitude and certainty. Know that in patiently enduring what you dislike there is immense good; that victory comes with patience, relief comes with hardship, and with every difficulty comes ease.'

(Reported by al-Qurtubi.)

These were only a few words, yet they became a lifelong compass for Ibn ‘Abbās, who would later become the great scholar of the Muslim nation and its foremost interpreter of the Qur'an.

Among the practical values that the Prophet ﷺ instilled was teaching children to pray from an early age. He said:

"Command your children to pray when they reach the age of seven, and if they reach the age of ten and still neglect it, discipline them."

(Reported by Ibn al-Mulaqqin.)

Three years of patient repetition, guidance, and personal example preceded any symbolic disciplinary measure, allowing love for prayer to become deeply rooted in the child's heart.

He also taught children forgiveness and purity of heart. He said to Anas:

"My son, if you are able to begin and end each day with no ill feeling toward anyone in your heart, then do so."

(Reported by al-Mundhiri.)

He instilled truthfulness even in the simplest of situations. The mother of ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Āmir narrated:

"I called my son and said, 'Come here and I'll give you something.' The Prophet ﷺ was present and asked, 'What did you intend to give him?' She replied, 'A date.' He said, 'Had you not given him anything, it would have been recorded against you as a lie.'"

(Authenticated by al-Albani.)

Even at mealtimes, he taught practical manners. He said to the young ‘Umar ibn Abī Salamah, who was eating carelessly from the communal dish:

"Young man, mention the name of Allah, eat with your right hand, and eat from what is nearest to you."

‘Umar later said:

"From that day onward, this remained my manner of eating."

(Narrated by al-Bukhari.)

One of the clearest testimonies to the fruits of this blessed Prophetic upbringing is what became of the children who grew up under his guidance. ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās was nurtured by the Prophet's teachings and became the foremost scholar of the Muslim nation, the "Interpreter of the Qur'an," and one of the greatest scholars in Islamic history.

‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar was likewise raised in the Prophet's household from a young age. He became one of the leading scholars among the Companions, one of the most devoted followers of the Sunnah, one of the most prolific transmitters of hadith, and was renowned for his piety, asceticism, and meticulous effort to imitate the Prophet ﷺ in even the smallest details of his life.

Al-Hasan ibn ‘Alī grew up surrounded by the Prophet's love and guidance. He later became one of the great leaders of the Muslim community, and through him Allah brought unity to the Muslims when he relinquished the caliphate to prevent bloodshed.

Usāmah ibn Zayd exemplified the confidence the Prophet ﷺ placed in young people. At around eighteen years of age, he appointed him commander of a great army that included many senior Companions and entrusted him with leading the campaign against the Byzantine forces in Greater Syria. It was a remarkable testimony to the maturity, character, and sense of responsibility that the Prophet ﷺ had cultivated in him.

As for Anas ibn Mālik, who served the Prophet ﷺ from childhood, he became one of the greatest transmitters of hadith and one of Islam's foremost scholars.

Thus, the Prophetic method of education produced extraordinary men and built personalities grounded in knowledge, wisdom, and leadership, by Allah's permission and grace. It was an upbringing founded upon mercy, respect, and the planting of noble values from an early age—an upbringing whose fruits are righteousness in this world and everlasting success in the Hereafter.

Conclusion

Life is a demanding journey, filled with responsibilities and trials. Although the purpose for which Allah Almighty created us is clear, human nature means that we will sometimes grow weak and, at other times, make mistakes. Allah says:

“And mankind was created weak.”

(Qur'an 4:28)

Yet the beauty of it all is that the door of repentance and return always remains open, and that a sincere intention can, by Allah's permission, bring one's entire life back into order. Intention is like a muscle: it requires constant training, regular examination, and continual renewal. The more a person takes care of their intention, the more upright their life becomes, and the more quickly they recover whenever they stumble.

What is required of us is not to be infallible, but to strive sincerely, to keep Allah present in our hearts and minds, and to return to Him whenever we slip or become heedless. The journey toward complete servitude to Allah Almighty is therefore a journey of continual awareness, renewed effort, and constant attachment to the highest purpose for which we were created: to worship Allah alone.

Worship means remaining conscious of Allah in every movement and every action of this worldly life. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the most successful man in human history, both in this world and in the Hereafter, is the perfect embodiment of this meaning.

Naturally, none of us possesses the faith of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, nor his wisdom in understanding and leading people, nor his character or patience. At the same time, however, none of us carries the immense responsibilities that he carried, nor the mission with which Allah entrusted him. Nevertheless, every one of us has a share of faith that can be strengthened.

We should not wait for faith to fill our hearts before we begin to pray. Rather, we should pray even when our actions initially feel mechanical, until faith gradually enters our hearts. Allah Almighty has promised to respond to the small steps of His servant with something far greater. He says in the sacred hadith:

“If he draws near to Me by a handspan, I draw near to him by an arm’s length. If he draws near to Me by an arm’s length, I draw near to him by a fathom. And if he comes to Me walking, I come to him swiftly.”

(Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

Each of us has been granted freedom of choice and a mind with which to distinguish between good and evil. We must therefore not allow our desires to lead us astray. Whether we like it or not, we all carry responsibilities. We are sons and daughters, fathers and mothers, employees and leaders, neighbors and brothers and sisters in faith. Above all, we are all servants of Allah.

We must follow the example of our beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ: to recognize the different roles we have been given in this life, and then continually ask ourselves: **How can we please Allah through the way we fulfill them?**

Naturally, not every day will be easy, and our mistakes will be many. But in those moments, we should remember how the Messenger of Allah ﷺ acted during times of hardship, or ask ourselves: **If he were in this situation, how would he have responded?**

Let us conclude with this comprehensive and noble hadith.

‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him and his father) reported that the Prophet ﷺ said:

“Indeed, every one of you is a shepherd, and every one of you is responsible for his flock. The ruler over the people is a shepherd and is responsible for his subjects. A man is a shepherd over the members of his household and is responsible for them. A woman is a shepherd over the house of her husband and his children and is responsible for them. A servant is a shepherd over the property of his master and is responsible for it. Indeed, every one of you is a shepherd, and every one of you is responsible for his flock.”

(Agreed upon; narrated in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim.)

