

Chapter 1

His Lineage: The Best of the Best

The Prophet's lineage is clearly documented in books of history; every one of his fathers is known all the way back until 'Adnân. And even though historians disagree about the names of 'Adnân's forefathers, they agree that 'Adnân – and by extension the Prophet ﷺ – was a direct descendant of the Prophet Ibrâhîm ﷺ. In *Al-Bidâyah Wan-Nihâyah*, Ibn Kathîr (May Allâh have mercy on him) describes the Prophet's lineage all the way back until Adam ﷺ; in *Zâd Al-Ma'âd*, however, Ibn Al-Qayyim (May Allâh have mercy on him) pointed out that scholars of genealogy agree about the names of the Prophet's forefathers up until 'Adnân, who was a direct descendant of Ibrâhîm ﷺ, but they disagree about how many of 'Adnân's forefathers separated him from Ibrâhîm ﷺ.^[1] Keeping in mind that the word "ibn"

^[1] Refer to *Al-Bidâyah Wan-Nihâyah*, by Ibn Kathîr (2/195); and to *Seerah Ibn Hishâm* (1/1). Having enumerated all of the Prophet's forefathers until Adnân, Ibn Al-Qayyim wrote in *Zâd Al-Ma'âd* (1/71), "Until here the Prophet's lineage is known for certain, and is a point of agreement among genealogists. Who comes after 'Adnân is a point of disagreement among scholars, who, however,

means “son of,” here then is the Prophet’s full name and lineage: Muhammad ibn ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abdul-Muttalib ibn Hâshim ibn ‘Abd-Manâf ibn Qusai ibn Kilâb ibn Murrah ibn Ka’ab ibn Luaiy ibn Ghâlib ibn Faihr ibn Mâlik ibn An-Nadr ibn Kinânah ibn Khuzaimah ibn Mudrikah ibn Ilyâs ibn Mudar ibn Nizâr ibn Mu’idd ibn ‘Adnân.^[1]

The Prophet ﷺ was the best from the best, as is made clear in this *Hadîth*:

«إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَى كِنَانَةَ، مِنْ وَلَدِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ، وَاصْطَفَى قُرَيْشًا مِنْ كِنَانَةَ، وَاصْطَفَى مِنْ قُرَيْشِ بَنِي هَاشِمٍ، وَاصْطَفَانِي مِنْ بَنِي هَاشِمٍ»
 “Verily, Allâh chose Kinânah from the children of Ismâ’îl; He chose Quraish from Kinânah; from Quraish He chose the children of Hâshim; and from the children of Hâshim He chose me.”^[2]

The Prophet ﷺ was born during the “Year of the Elephant,” or the year during which Abraha led an army towards Makkah with the intention of bringing down the Ka’bah.^[3] More precisely, he ﷺ was born on a Monday, in the month of Rabî’ul Awwal,^[4] in the

do agree that ‘Adnân is from the children of Ismâ’îl ﷺ. And Ismâ’îl ﷺ — at least according to the correct view that is held by scholars from the Companions, the Tâbi’oon (the generation that followed the generation of the Companions), and those that came afterwards — is “The Slaughtered One (i.e., the one that Ibrâhîm ﷺ, during a dream, was commanded to slaughter).”

[1] *Al-Bukhârî* (along with Ibn Hajar’s famous commentary, *Al-Fath*), the Book of the Ansâr’s Virtues; chapter, “The Sending of the Prophet ﷺ,” before *Hadîth* number: 3851.

[2] *Muslim* (2276).

[3] Abraha of course failed in the attempt; the point here is that, because of the significance of his failed attempt, and because his army was accompanied by elephants. The year during which he tried to destroy the Ka’bah became famously known as the “Year of the Elephant.”

[4] It is widely and correctly accepted among scholars that the Prophet ﷺ was born during the “Year of the Elephant,” in the month of Rabî’ul Awwal; in fact, some scholars went as far as saying that there is a consensus on those two points among the people of knowledge. Refer to *Tahdhîb As-Seerah*, by Imam An-Nawawî (pg. 20).

year 571 CE. It is an established fact; in an authentic *Hadîth*, the Prophet ﷺ, while responding to a question about why he ﷺ fasted on Mondays, said, “It was on this [day] that I was born, and it was on this [day] that revelation came down to me.”^[1] The exact date of the Prophet’s birth, on the other hand, is not known for certain; scholars have put forth a number of views: some say he was born on the 2nd of Rabî’ul Awwal; others, that he was born 8 days after the beginning of the month; others still, that he was born after the passing of seventeen days; and yet others, that he was born on the 12th of the month. Two of these views stand out as being not only the most widely-held, but also the most likely to be correct. The first is that the Prophet ﷺ was born after eight days expired from the month of Rabî’ul Awwal; this view was defended by Ibn ‘Abdul-Barr,^[2] who said that it was the more clearly established [view] by way of authentic accounts. The second is that he was born on the 12th of Rabî’ul Awwal; regarding this view, Ibn Kathîr said, “This is the opinion that is held by the majority of scholars.”^[3] In his famous biography of the Prophet ﷺ, Ibn Ishâq stated with certainty that this latter view is correct.^[4]

The Prophet ﷺ died at the age of 63. Forty of those years took place prior to his prophethood, and the remaining 23 years he spent as a Prophet and Messenger. He ﷺ became a Prophet with the revelation of *Iqra* (i.e., chapter “*Al-‘Alaq*” of the Qur’ân), and then he was officially made a Messenger with the revelation of chapter “*Al-Muddaththir*.” His hometown was Makkah, but then later, because of how he was persecuted by his fellow tribesmen, he ﷺ was forced to migrate to Al-Madînah.

Allâh ﷻ sent the Prophet ﷺ with a mission that had two primary — and complementary — goals: The first was to warn people not to associate partners with Allâh ﷻ in worship, and the second was to

[1] *Muslim* (2/820).

[2] Refer to *Al-Bidâyah Wan-Nihâyah* (2/260).

[3] Refer to *Al-Bidâyah Wan-Nihâyah* (2/260).

[4] *Seerah Ibn Hishâm* (1/171).

invite people to embrace Islamic Monotheism (*Tawhîd*). The first ten years of his prophethood he spent promoting only these two goals. Then he was taken on a night journey to the heavens, a journey during which the five daily Prayers — *Fajr*, *Dhuhr*, *‘Asr*, *Maghrib*, and *‘Eesha* — were made obligatory upon him and the members of his Nation. The next three years the Prophet ﷺ prayed his five daily Prayers in Makkah. At the end of those three years, he ﷺ was ordered to migrate to Al-Madînah, since living in Makkah was no longer possible. Years of persecution culminated that year in a joint effort by the various sub-tribes of the Quraish to assassinate the Prophet ﷺ.

After the Prophet ﷺ settled down in Al-Madînah,^[1] he ﷺ was ordered, in stages, to apply the rest of Islam’s legal duties: Zakât (obligatory charity), fasting, Hajj (the greater pilgrimage to Makkah), Jihâd, the call to Prayer, enjoining good, forbidding evil, and so on from the various legislations of Islam. These Islamically obligatory duties he ﷺ continued to apply and teach for a period of ten years; or in other words, until he ﷺ died. The Religion he ﷺ taught for so many years, with all of its detailed legislations, is the Religion that we are commanded to follow today. Anything that is good and beneficial, the Prophet ﷺ has guided us to follow; and anything that is evil, the Prophet ﷺ has warned us to stay away from.

The Prophet ﷺ is the seal of all Prophets ﷺ and Messengers ﷺ; many Prophets ﷺ and Messengers ﷺ came before him, but none will come after him. While other Prophets ﷺ and Messengers ﷺ were sent to specific communities or groups of people, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was sent to all of mankind, and to jinns as well. The simple fact, therefore, is this: Whoever obeys him, will enter Paradise; and whoever disobeys him, will enter the Hellfire.^[2]

[1] The Prophet ﷺ arrived in Al-Madînah on a Monday, in the month of Rabî’ul Awwal; some scholars specified that date as being the 12th of Rabî’ul Awwal. Refer to *Fathul-Bârî* (7/224).

[2] Refer to *Sahîh Al-Bukhârî* (3851), and to *Al-Usool Ath-Thalâthah*, by Shaikh Muhammad ibn ‘Abdul-Wahhâb (75, 76).

The Lessons and Morals of this Chapter

- 1) In this world, people pride themselves based on various factors. Some think that they are superior because of their wealth; others, because of their status; and yet others, because of their noble ancestry. Well, in all regards, the Prophet ﷺ is the best among all human beings. Even among Prophets ﷺ, the Prophet ﷺ is of the highest ranking with Allâh ﷻ, and will have the most followers on the Day of Resurrection. And in terms of lineage, his is unparalleled: he ﷺ was from the best tribe on earth, and he ﷺ was then chosen to be the best tribesman from among them.
- 2) To celebrate the Prophet’s birthday every year on the 12th of Rabî’ul Awwal is an evil innovation that should be avoided, not to mention shunned, by all Muslims. We are commanded to follow the Prophet ﷺ, his rightly-guided Khalîfahs, and his Companions ﷺ. And yet we find that, during his lifetime, the Prophet ﷺ never celebrated his birthday; nor did the Companions ﷺ do so after he died; and nor did the Tâbî’ûn (the generation that followed the generation of the Companions ﷺ) do so during their lifetimes.

Furthermore, given the number of scholarly views regarding the matter, we cannot even be sure that the 12th of Rabî’ul Awwal is the correct date of the Prophet’s birth. But even if we were certain that the 12th was the day on which the Prophet ﷺ was born, we may not, based on the reasons mentioned above, celebrate it on an annual basis. The Prophet ﷺ said,

«مَنْ أَحْدَثَ فِي أَمْرِنَا هَذَا مَا لَيْسَ مِنْهُ فَهُوَ رَدٌّ»

“Whoever introduces something new into this affair of ours (i.e., the Religion of Islam), then he (and his act of innovation) is rejected.”^[1]

[1] *Bukhârî* (2697) and *Muslim* (1718).

According to the narration of Imam Muslim, the Prophet ﷺ said:

«مَنْ عَمِلَ عَمَلًا لَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْرُنَا فَهُوَ رَدٌّ»

“Whoever does an act [pertaining to matters of worship] that is not from our affair (i.e. that is not from the established teachings of the Qur’ân and Sunnah), then he (and his act of innovation) is rejected.”^[1]

- 3) As can be appreciated from the focus of the first thirteen years of his mission, the primary duties of the Prophet ﷺ were to invite people to embrace Islamic Monotheism (Tawhîd), to save them from the evil of polytheism, to bring them from the darkness of sins to the light of good deeds, and to steer them away from ignorance and towards knowledge. In short, anything that is good and noble, he has ordered us to follow and embrace; and anything that is evil and wicked, he has commanded us to avoid and shun. May the peace and blessings of Allâh ﷻ be upon him.



^[1] Refer to *Risâlah At-Tahdhîr Minal-Bid’ah*, by our noble and esteemed Shaikh, ‘Abdul-‘Azîz ibn ‘Abdullah ibn Bâz (May Allah have mercy on him).

Chapter 2

His Upbringing

Both of his parents having died by the time he was only six years old, the Prophet ﷺ grew up as an orphan. As difficult as the life of an orphan usually is, Allâh ﷻ blessed the Prophet ﷺ, providing him with refuge, the love and care of his uncle, and all of his basic material needs.

His father, ‘Abdullah, died while he was still in his mother’s womb. After he was born, he was nursed for a number of days by *Thuwaibah*,^[1] who was a servant of Abu Lahab. Then the Prophet ﷺ was sent away to be cared for in the pure atmosphere of the desert, and there he was nursed by Halîmah As-Sa’diyyah. The Prophet ﷺ remained under the care of Halîmah, and in the company of the Banu Sa’ad tribe, for approximately four years. It was during his stay with Halîmah that he underwent the first major step towards becoming a Prophet ﷺ. It was a preparatory and highly symbolic step, one that involved the literal washing of

^[1] *Al-Bukhârî* (along with Ibn Hajr’s famous commentary, *Al-Fathh*) (9/124).

his heart; and it was a miraculous occurrence that took place in the presence of a group of children from the Banu Sa'ad tribe. In a narration that is related in *Sahîh Muslim*, Anas ibn Mâlik ؓ said, "While the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ was playing with some other boys, Jibrîl ؑ came to him, took him, forced him to the ground, and split him open, revealing his heart. Jibrîl extracted his heart, removed from it a blood clot, and said, 'This is the portion of *Shaitân* (the Devil) in you.' He then washed the heart with *Zamzam* water in a basin made of gold. He then joined the heart together, and returned it to its place. The children hurried off to his mother – i.e. nursing suckling mother. They said to her, 'Verily, Muhammad has been killed.' They went to him and found that his color had changed (though he was otherwise fine)." Anas ؓ said, "I used to see the marks of that stitching on his chest."^[1]

Halimah loved the Prophet ﷺ a great deal; her life changed completely after she took it upon herself to nurse him, for Allâh ﷻ then blessed her with more than sufficient sustenance. Keeping the Prophet ﷺ was in Halimah's best self-interest, she loved him too much to think selfishly about her own comfort and material well-being. After the above-mentioned incident took place, she became afraid for the Prophet ﷺ, and felt that it was no longer safe for him to stay with her. And so she decided to return the Prophet ﷺ to his mother, Âminah bint Wahb.

Later on, Âminah took the Prophet ﷺ with her to Al-Madînah, where she was going in order to visit her brothers. During their return journey to Makkah, at a place called Al-Abwâ, Âminah died. At the time, the Prophet ﷺ was 6 years, 3 months, and 10 days old.^[2]

^[1] *Muslim* (261) (162). Also, refer to Ibn Kathîr's *Al-Bidâyah Wan-Nihâyah*, to the edition that contains the commentary of Dr. 'Abdullah ibn 'Abdul-Muhsin At-Turkî (3/413).

^[2] *Al-Bidâyah Wan-Nihâyah* (4/423); *Al-Fusool Fee Seeratir-Rasool* ﷺ, by Ibn Kathîr (pg. 92). Both of the Prophet's parents died while being upon the polytheist faith of the Quraish – refer to *Sahîh Muslim* (203).

Even though the Prophet ﷺ was an orphan, he never lacked the love and care that every child needs. Whenever he would lose one loving caregiver, Allâh ﷻ would replace that caregiver with another who loved him just as much. With the death of his mother, he ﷺ was taken and cared for by his grandfather, the eminent chieftain, 'Abdul-Muttalib. For the next two years of his life, the Prophet ﷺ enjoyed the healthy and loving atmosphere of his grandfather's home. 'Abdul-Muttalib saw in the Prophet ﷺ signs of greatness, and he took special care of him; for instance, he allowed the Prophet ﷺ, instead of his many sons, to sit beside him on his mat in front of the Ka'bah. Then, with his death imminent, 'Abdul-Muttalib ordered that his grandson be placed in the custody of his uncle Abu Tâlib. The Prophet ﷺ, who was eight years old at the time, could not have been placed under the care of a better guardian – a guardian that cared for and protected him not just as a child, and not just as a young adult, but also during the difficult early years of his prophethood.

'Abu Tâlib loved the Prophet ﷺ deeply, so much, in fact, that despite remaining a polytheist, he supported the Prophet ﷺ during the most difficult years of his prophethood – the years during which he faced constant persecution at the hands of the Quraish. Abu Tâlib was motivated by avuncular love, and not by faith in his nephew's mission; that being said, he did know deep down in his heart that his nephew was preaching the truth. But even his love for the Prophet ﷺ and his inner convictions were not enough to counteract his overriding loyalty to the ways, customs, and beliefs of his forefathers. As such, despite being a staunch supporter of the Prophet ﷺ, Abu Tâlib died a polytheist.

Because of the ultimate justice of Allâh ﷻ, not all polytheists are the same. Some will suffer more than others in the Hellfire; some will be in the Hellfire's lowest depths, while others will be in a shallower, but still horrible, part of the Hellfire. The Prophet's intercession will decrease, but not cancel out completely, Abu Tâlib's punishment in the Hellfire. The Prophet ﷺ said:

whenever they passed by him; he wouldn't even look in their direction or pay any attention to them. While they were unpacking their things, the monk walked slowly by each one of them until he reached the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ. He then took the Messenger of Allâh's hand and said,

«هَذَا سَيِّدُ الْعَالَمِينَ، هَذَا رَسُولُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، يَبْعَثُهُ اللَّهُ رَحْمَةً
لِلْعَالَمِينَ. فَقَالَ لَهُ أَشْيَاخٌ مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ مَا عَلِمُكَ؟ فَقَالَ: إِنَّكُمْ حِينَ
أَسْرَفْتُمْ مِنَ الْعَقَبَةِ لَمْ يَبْقَ حَجْرٌ وَلَا شَجَرٌ إِلَّا خَرَّ سَاجِدًا، وَلَا
يَسْجُدَانِ إِلَّا لِنَبِيِّ، وَإِنِّي أَعْرِفُهُ بِخَاتَمِ النُّبُوَّةِ أَسْفَلَ مِنْ غُضْرُوفِ
كَتِفِهِ مِثْلَ التُّفَاحَةِ . . .»

“This is the chief of all created beings; this is the Messenger of the Lord of all that exists: Allâh has sent him as a mercy to all created beings.’ The chieftains of the Quraish said, ‘And how do you know this?’ The monk replied, ‘When you overlooked this spot from the mountain road, every tree and stone [in this area] fell down to the ground and performed prostration. And they perform prostration only for a Prophet. And verily, I recognize him (i.e., as being the awaited Prophet) by the seal of Prophethood that is like an apple [in shape] and that is situated beneath the soft bone of his shoulder.’”

The same narration goes on to describe how, in an empty sky, a single cloud appeared in order to provide shade for the Prophet ﷺ; similarly, it describes how a tree near the monastery literally leaned over in order to provide shade for the Prophet ﷺ.^[1]

^[1] *At-Tirmidhî* (3620). In *Al-Fusool Fee Seeratir-Rasool* (pg 94), Ibn Kathîr (May Allah have mercy on him) said about this *Hadîth*, “All of the narrators of this *Hadîth* are trustworthy”; furthermore, Al-Albânî ruled it to be an authentic *Hadîth* in *Sahîh At-Tirmidhî* (3620). Also, in *Fiqhus-Seerah* (pg. 68), Al-Ghazâlî wrote, “Its chain is authentic”; however, Al-Ghazâlî did add, “The mention of Bilâl in this narration is, as has been mentioned, *Munkar* (false, strange). In Al-Bazzâr’s narration of the *Hadîth*, Bilâl is not mentioned; instead, a man is referred to, but his name is not mentioned: “And his uncle sent with him a man.”

«هُوَ فِي ضَحْضَاحٍ مِنَ النَّارِ، وَلَوْلَا أَنَا لَكَانَ فِي الدَّرَكِ الْأَسْفَلِ مِنَ النَّارِ»

“He is in a shallow part of the Hellfire. And were it not for me, he would have been in the lowest depths of the Hellfire.”

In another wording of the same *Hadîth*, the Prophet ﷺ said:

«لَعَلَّهُ تَنْفَعُهُ شَفَاعَتِي يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، فَيُجْعَلُ فِي ضَحْضَاحٍ مِنَ النَّارِ
يَبْلُغُ كَعْبِيهِ، يَغْلِي مِنْهُ دِمَاعُهُ»

“Perhaps he will benefit from my intercession on the Day of Resurrection, so that he will be placed in a shallow part of the Hellfire: The Fire will reach his ankles, and as a result of that, his brain will boil.”^[1]

Although his youthful years were relatively uneventful, various incidents occurred to show that the Prophet ﷺ was being prepared for great things to come in the future; and at least on one occasion, he ﷺ was recognized as being the awaited Prophet ﷺ that was mentioned in the revealed scriptures of both Jews and Christians. When the Prophet ﷺ was only 12 years old, he ﷺ accompanied his uncle on a business trip to Ash-Sham (Syria and surrounding regions), a land that was inhabited primarily by Christians. During that trip, Abu Tâlib saw things that confirmed his faith in the bright and great future of his nephew, and as a result, he tried even harder to protect and take care of him. Abu Mûsâ Al-Ash’arî ؓ said, “Along with a group of Quraishî chieftains, Abu Tâlib went to Ash-Shâm (Syria and surrounding regions), taking with him the Prophet ﷺ. When their traveling party overlooked [the monastery of] a well-known monk, they descended [towards him] and unpacked their things in order to make temporary camp there. The monk came out to them, which was strange since, in the past, he would never come out to them

^[1] *Bukhârî* (3883, 3884, 3885, 6208, and 6572), and *Muslim* (209). Also, refer to Ibn Kathîr’s *Al-Fusool* (pg. 93) and to *Al-Bidâyah Wan-Nihâyah* (5/431-434).