

Abu-Talib: The Believer of the Quraysh

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DEDICATED TO

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)
and his Righteous Successor
Imam Ali ibn Abi-Talib (AS)

PREFACE

Today, Islam is a worldwide religion with more than a billion followers. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) went through many hardships in spreading God's word and establishing Islam to the religion it is today. Among those who supported Prophet Muhammad in his mission, there is one outstanding character who has been overlooked in history. This character is none other than Abu-Talib, the Prophet's beloved uncle who raised, protected, and supported the Prophet at every step of the way. Without Abu-Talib's contributions, the Prophet's life and mission would have been greatly endangered. Muslims are indebted to Abu-Talib for 42 years of continuous support and protection of the Prophet. This book covers the significance of Abu-Talib's role in supporting and protecting the life and mission of the Prophet and also responds to the rumors intended to damage his holy character. Please visit our website at www.12shiaimams.com to find more about the Islamic history including our videos.

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1- Mecca in the Prophet's Era

The holy city of Mecca, within the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula, was originally built around, and expanded from the holy site of the Kaaba. The Kaaba, the house of God, was rebuilt by Prophets Ibrahim and Ismail, as the symbol of monotheism, the worship of a single God. However, as time passed, the Kaaba became a shelter for idols and pilgrims would come to the Kaaba in large numbers to pay respect to their idols. Mecca was home to the Quraysh tribe, who were descendants of Nazr ibn Kinanah, the 13th forefather of the Prophet. The Quraysh tribe was further divided into 40 clans that were all idol worshippers. While the darkness of polytheism and ignorance dominated Mecca and the rest of the Arabian Peninsula, God sent his last Prophet to guide the people to monotheism and establish his chosen religion, Islam, on earth.

2- The Prophet's Birth

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was born at dawn, on the 17th of Rabi al-Awwal, in Mecca. He was born 25 days after Abrahah's army, which had attacked Mecca in an attempt to demolish the Kaaba, was miraculously destroyed by Ababil birds. When the Prophet was just two months old, his father Abdullah passed away. He had travelled to the Syrian region with a trading caravan of the Quraysh, became sick on the way back, and passed away in Medina. When the Prophet was 6 years old, he travelled with his mother Aminah to Medina, to visit the grave of his father and meet his paternal family. On their way back to Mecca, his mother also became sick and passed away in al-Abwa, a city between Medina and Mecca. The Prophet became an orphan in his early childhood and was under the full guardianship of his paternal grandfather, Abdul-Muttalib for two years, until Abdul-Muttalib's demise.

3- Abdul-Muttalib: The Prophet's Grandfather

Abdul-Muttalib was a respected elder among the Quraysh and one of the most influential spiritual characters of Mecca. He was also the head of the Prophet's clan of Banu Hashim or the Hashemites. He was among the few monotheists in Mecca. He followed the religion of his forefathers, Prophets Ibrahim and Ismail and never worshiped idols. He would practice some customs that were later approved by Islam. For example, he would not drink alcohol nor eat the meat of an animal which was sacrificed for the idols. He had also prohibited the killing of newborn girls, adultery, marriage with close family members, and circumambulating the Kaaba naked. He had defined the number of circles around the Kaaba to be seven and specified the atonement for the blood of a man to equal 100 camels. Due to these customs that he followed, he was given the title of "The Second Ibrahim" by the Quraysh.

Historical records confirm that Abdul-Muttalib knew about the Prophethood of his grandson, Muhammad. For example, when the Prophet was about two years old, Abdul-Muttalib along with a group of the Quraysh elders, visited the king of Yemen, to congratulate him on his victory to reach power. During this visit, which took place in Sana'a in Yemen, the king privately informed Abdul-Muttalib about the signs of God's chosen messenger according to their holy scripture. He also mentioned that the messenger has either been born or was soon to be born. Abdul-Muttalib then confirmed, that the prophesied messenger is indeed his grandson, Muhammad. On another occasion, Mecca was hit by a drought and the people referred to Abdul-Muttalib due to his piety and spirituality and asked him to pray for rain. Abdul-Muttalib accepted their request. He put the Prophet, who was about 7 years old, on his shoulder, and prayed to God for rain. His prayer was granted and rain poured from the sky.

Abdul-Muttalib loved and cared for the Prophet, his grandson, more

than anyone in his family, as he was an orphan and Abdul-Muttalib knew of his prophethood in the future. When Abdul-Muttalib sat by the Kaaba, none of his children would sit by him as a sign of respect to their father. However, the Prophet would come and sit by his grandfather. Abdul-Muttalib's sons would try to stop the Prophet, however Abdul-Muttalib would say: "leave my son alone. I swear by God that he will have a great status. I see a day when he will be your master. I see his honor and glory over all the other people." Abdul-Muttalib then would seat the Prophet alongside himself, kiss him, and would talk highly of him. He would also place the Prophet on his own shoulders, while circumambulating the Kaaba.

4- Abdul-Muttalib's Demise

When Abdul-Muttalib was on his deathbed, he was worried about the future and the safety of his beloved grandson after himself as Muhammad was just 8 years old. Abdul-Muttalib thus chose his son Abu-Talib, from amongst his other children, for the guardianship of Muhammad. He emphasized to Abu-Talib that Muhammad has not smelt the scent of a father nor felt the kindness of a mother. He stated the reason for Abu-Talib's candidacy by saying that Abu-Talib was more knowledgeable than his other children, and that he and Muhammad's father Abdullah, were from the same mother. Further, he asked Abu-Talib more than the responsibility of a guardian. He asked Abu-Talib to follow Muhammad in the future, and support him with his words, power, and wealth. He then swore by God that Muhammad will become a master over others and will achieve a unique status, not attained by any of his forefathers. Abu-Talib accepted his father's request and took God as a witness to his promise. Abdul-Muttalib then felt relief and peace for the future of Muhammad. He said that dying would now be easy for him.

5- The Prophet in Abu-Talib's House

After Abdul-Muttalib's demise, Abu-Talib followed his father's wish

and brought the Prophet to his house. He took on the responsibility of the Prophet's upbringing while he was just eight years old. From the time Abu-Talib brought the Prophet to his house, until his very last breath, around 42 years later, he was the Prophet's strongest supporter and protector. He loved and cared for the Prophet, more than any of his own children. Abu-Talib's wife, Fatimah bint Asad, also loved and cared for the Prophet. She prioritized the Prophet over her own children, and would ensure to feed and care for him before any of her children.

Abu-Talib and Fatimah bint Asad cared for and respected the Prophet as an honorable guest in their house. Abu-Talib's house was a warm shelter for the orphaned Prophet, and he did not feel the hardships of being an orphan. The guardianship of the Prophet by Abu-Talib was God's decree for his chosen messenger, as God later reminded the Prophet about this special blessing in the following verse of the Quran [93:6]: "Did He (God) not find you orphaned, and sheltered you?" This verse beautifully highlights that Abu-Talib was a blessing from God for the Prophet.

Abu-Talib was a respected elder among the Quraysh and had inherited the position of the head of the Hashemite clan after his father Abdul-Muttalib. He was given the title of "Sheikh ul-Bat-haa" meaning the elder of the land of Mecca. He had a high social status, despite his simple life and limited wealth. No one prior to him had such a noble status among the Quraysh, without being wealthy. He would still generously spend from whatever he had and would even borrow money to serve the pilgrims of the Kaaba to provide them with food and water. He would judge among the people and his wise judgement was accepted by all sides. He was also a knowledgeable and famous poet, in an age when poetry was a powerful media among the Arabs, and had a significant impact on the hearts of the people. While Abu-Talib could not explicitly reveal his faith in Islam, he instead used poetry as a means of expressing his true belief and defending the

Prophet. Abu-Talib is known as the First Muslim poet and has uniquely recorded the earliest events of the Prophet's life and mission. More than 3,000 lines of poetry from Abu-Talib have been recorded in history. His surviving poems have been compiled in a book known as "*Deewan-e-Abi-Talib*". His poetry is the best evidence to prove his sincere faith in the Prophet.

The historical records prove that Abu-Talib knew about the Prophethood of Prophet Muhammad even before becoming his guardian. He was frequently reminded by his father Abdul-Muttalib, about the high status of the Prophet in the future. He had witnessed the granting of Abdul-Muttalib's prayer for rain, while carrying the Prophet on his shoulder and praying to God. He had also observed the blessings of the presence of the Prophet in his house. Abu-Talib had observed that any food touched or eaten by the Prophet was blessed to the extent that the food was plentiful enough for the entire family. Thus, Abu-Talib would not allow any of his children to begin eating, until the food was blessed by the Prophet.

In the first year when Abu-Talib took on the guardianship of the Prophet, Abu-Talib decided to travel to the Syrian region for trading. Trading was a common business amongst the Quraysh, which was mostly to either the Syrian region during the summer or Yemen during the winter. Abu-Talib could not separate the Prophet from himself nor would he trust anyone else to care for him in his absence. Thus, he decided to take the Prophet along on this long journey, which would usually take about a month each way. In this journey, when the caravan had travelled most of the route and had passed through the harsh deserts of the Arabian Peninsula, it arrived in Busra, a city in southern Syria. Here, the caravan stopped at a Christian monastery. Bahira, a Christian monk at this monastery, witnessed moving clouds providing a continuous shadow on a person in the caravan. He recalled that this was one of the signs of the promised Prophet, mentioned in the holy books. He then invited the people of the caravan to a feast, so that he

could inquire about them. He found the Prophet amongst them and asked him some questions. He also witnessed the sign of Prophethood on the left shoulder of the Prophet, and admitted that indeed he was the Prophet and the successor of the previous Prophets. He then warned Abu-Talib that the life of the Prophet would be in great danger in the Syrian region as the Jews in that region also knew about the signs of the Prophet and may attempt to harm him. Abu-Talib followed his advice, and promptly returned to Mecca to keep the life of the Prophet safe. The Prophet was so dear to Abu-Talib that he prioritized the Prophet's life and safety over any worldly gain or monetary profit. Furthermore, for the rest of his life, Abu-Talib did not return to the Syrian region for trading, which confirms his commitment to protect the Prophet.

6- The Prophet's Marriage

Lady Khadijah (SA), a well-known businesswoman in Mecca, was looking for a knowledgeable and trustworthy man to lead her trading caravan to other cities. Abu-Talib suggested to the Prophet to work for Lady Khadijah, and he accepted. After the Prophet began working for Lady Khadijah, she too witnessed the honesty and reliability of the Prophet, for which he was famous in society. She had appointed her slave to accompany the Prophet on his business trips. Her slave would share with Lady Khadijah his observations on the Prophet, which caused Lady Khadijah to admire the Prophet's character. Lady Khadijah then sent someone to inform the Prophet about her interest in him and proposed marriage.

When the Prophet decided to marry Lady Khadijah, he informed his uncle Abu-Talib about his decision and asked him to propose to her on his behalf. Abu-Talib, as an elder and the Prophet's guardian, happily proposed this marriage by delivering a powerful sermon. Unlike the Arabs who would begin their speech with the names of their idols, Abu-Talib praised God and proudly mentioned his forefathers,

Prophets Ibrahim and Ismail. He then praised the Prophet, saying that no other man is comparable to his nephew Muhammad, and he is better than everyone. He concluded his sermon with a sentence that showed his knowledge of the upcoming prophethood of his nephew. He swore by God that there will indeed be great news and elevated status for Muhammad in the future. Abu-Talib also sacrificed a camel and provided a feast for the guests in the Prophet's wedding.

7- Helping Abu-Talib in his Hardship

The Prophet, who was raised in the house of his uncle Abu-Talib, was grateful for his support and would not hesitate to help him by any means. Upon the Prophet's engagement in business and his marriage to Lady Khadijah, his sustenance increased. Around this time a drought hit Mecca which caused hardship for many including Abu-Talib. The Prophet, who was aware of Abu-Talib's hardships, spoke to his other uncle, Abbas, who was financially stable. They each decided to bring one of Abu-Talib's sons to their home to help Abu-Talib. Abbas brought Ja'far and the Prophet brought Ali, Abu-Talib's youngest son, who was around six years old, to his house. Thus, Imam Ali ibn Abi-Talib (AS) grew up in the shadow of the Prophet since his childhood even before Islam.

8- Beginning of Islam

Upon the beginning of Prophet Muhammad's Prophethood, Imam Ali was the first male who accepted Islam. He accepted Islam on the day after the first revelation to the Prophet. He joined the Prophet in his worship of God. Imam Ali also informed his father, Abu-Talib, about his belief in the Prophet. Abu-Talib responded that your cousin would not invite you to anything but good; hence always accompany him. Abu-Talib also encouraged his other son Ja'far to accept Islam and join the Prophet and Imam Ali in their worship of God. Ja'far followed his father's words and became a dedicated Muslim like Imam Ali and openly revealed his belief. He later led the Muslim migration to

Habashah or Abyssinia and continued supporting Islam until his martyrdom, years later, at the battle of Mu'tah. Furthermore, Abu-Talib's wife, Fatimah bint Asad became the second woman to accept Islam after Lady Khadijah. Therefore, Abu-Talib's family was not only the closest to the Prophet, but was also the leading family to accept Islam. History proved that they were faithful to Islam and the Prophet until their last breath.

Abu-Talib knew the Prophet better than anyone else and believed in his prophethood ever since he took on the responsibility of his guardianship. He knew that as soon as the Prophet began his mission, the Quraysh would become a threat for the Prophet's life and mission. Thus, unlike Abu-Talib's family who openly declared their belief in Islam, Abu-Talib wisely chose to conceal his faith as a strategy to keep his social and political position, and to efficiently protect and support the Prophet.

9- Inviting the Family to Islam

After three years, the Prophet was commanded by God to openly announce his Prophethood, beginning with his family. He invited his close family members from the Hashemites to a feast at Abu-Talib's house to ask for their support and belief in Islam. In this meeting, Abu-Lahab, one of the Prophet's uncles, began speaking ill against the Prophet, which interrupted the meeting. Thus, the Prophet had to invite his family members to another feast, which was again interrupted. The Prophet then invited them for the third time. In this meeting, Abu-Lahab once again wanted to interrupt the Prophet, but was faced with harsh reaction from Abu-Talib. Abu-Talib then ordered everyone to be silent and provided an opportunity for the Prophet to begin his speech. The Prophet invited them to Islam, and told them that every Prophet of the past had someone from his family as a successor. He gave them glad tidings, that whoever believes in him and supports him would be his successor. In this meeting, Abu-Talib, the

head of the Hashemites, addressed the Prophet, approved his mission, and encouraged him to firmly follow his mission. He then swore by God to protect and support the Prophet. He cleverly expressed his willingness to stay in the religion of his father Abdul-Muttalib, which was the monotheistic religion of Prophet Ibrahim. Abu-Talib's statement was confronted by his brother, Abu-Lahab, who asked Abu-Talib to stop the Prophet before the others stopped him. However, Abu-Talib denied Abu-Lahab and repeated his support for the Prophet. He addressed the Prophet as his master and encouraged him to follow his mission.

At this meeting, the Prophet called his family members three times to believe in Islam and support him in his mission. It was only Imam Ali from the audience who responded to the Prophet every time. Imam Ali was just 13 years old and was the youngest guest present in the meeting. The Prophet then told the audience that he chooses Ali as his brother and successor in Islam. The audience mocked Imam Ali for his selection as the Prophet's successor. They also realized that Abu-Talib's heart was inclined toward the Prophet, and mocked him by saying he should now obey his son's orders. Abu-Talib responded to their ridicule by asking them to leave Ali alone, as he would not hesitate to help his cousin.

By inviting the Hashemites to his house and explicitly expressing his support for the Prophet, Abu-Talib hoped to gather support for the Prophet from his family. The Hashemites were the Prophet's family and were the closest people to the Prophet among the Quraysh. Thus, there was a higher possibility for the Hashemites to accept Islam. However, the outcome of the Prophet's invitation for his family to accept Islam showed that none of them were willing to accept Islam. If Abu-Talib had publicly declared his faith in the Prophet, he would have been stripped from his position as the head of the clan by the Hashemites, since they were still not willing to accept Islam and would likely oppose his leadership. This was especially the case with someone

such as his brother, Abu-Lahab among them, who would never hesitate to oppose the Prophet and would plot against him. Abu-Lahab was also under the influence of his wife Umm-Jamil who was the sister of Abu-Sufyan, the head of the Umayyad clan and one of the leading members of the Quraysh against the Prophet. Both Abu-Lahab and his wife are cursed in the Quran, in the Chapter Al-Masad. Thus, Abu-Talib decided to hide his faith as a strategy to keep his political and social position to continue to protect the Prophet from his countless enemies and support him in his mission. He portrayed to the people that his support for the Prophet was only an emotional support for a family member. He was then able to lead the Hashemites to support the Prophet, as according to their tribal custom, all the people of the clan had to follow the orders of their leader, without objections.

10- Public Invitation to Islam

Upon openly preaching, the Prophet was confronted by the majority of Meccans from the Quraysh tribe, who were idol worshippers, and could not tolerate the Prophet's denial of their idols, as well as his invitation to a monotheistic God. Hosting the idols was a business and valuable source of income for the Quraysh. Thus, they would not tolerate losing their monetary benefits. The Prophet and the Muslims were a minority, and were prone to the harassment, threats, and torture of their enemies. During this time, Abu-Talib continued his wise policy of concealing his faith and belief in the Prophet as a political strategy to effectively support the Prophet from his countless enemies. If Abu-Talib were to publicly reveal his faith, he would have been rejected by the people and would have lost his political and social status as a respected elder and the head of the Hashemites. He instead used his political position to attend the meetings of the Quraysh to get information about their plots against the Prophet. He would then take appropriate measures to make their plots ineffective. By concealing his faith, Abu-Talib appeared to only be providing kinship support to his nephew, the Prophet, which was a common practice among the tribal

communities of that society.

As the head of the Prophet's clan of Hashemites, and also the Prophet's closest family member, Abu-Talib was frequently approached by the Quraysh, who would ask him to stop the Prophet from preaching monotheism and speaking against idol worship, the religion of their forefathers. Initially, the Quraysh thought that Abu-Talib was like them, and was opposing the Prophet, as Abu-Talib had hidden his faith. As a result, Abu-Talib was able to calm and discourage the Quraysh from taking violent measures against the Prophet by using soft and conciliatory language.

When the leaders of Quraysh saw the Prophet continue his preaching despite voicing their concerns to Abu-Talib, they lost their tolerance and came to Abu-Talib again to firmly warn him. They told Abu-Talib: "You have a great status in our eyes. We had asked you before to stop your nephew from his invitation and you didn't act. Now, you should either stop him or we will fight you both until either of us perishes." This time, Abu-Talib had to take one side of the dispute. He delivered their message to the Prophet and asked for his opinion. The Prophet told him that if they put the sun in his right hand and the moon in his left hand, he would not give up his mission, until God makes his religion prevail or he perishes in this way. To which Abu-Talib responded: "O my nephew, continue your preaching freely. I swear by God that I will not surrender you by any means." He then recited a poem in which he said:

حق اوسد في التراب دفينا

و الله لن يصلوا اليك بجمعهم

I swear by God that none of them (Quraysh) would have access to you unless I have been buried under the earth.

وابشر بذاك و قر منك عيونا

فاصدح بامرک ما عليك غضاضه

Thus, follow your mission without any fear. And give glad tidings for your mission, from which your eyes shall be lit.

After this incident, the Quraysh realized Abu-Talib's firm position in supporting the Prophet. They made another plot in hopes of separating Abu-Talib from the Prophet. They brought one of the most knowledgeable and handsome youths of Quraysh to Abu-Talib and offered Abu-Talib to adopt him as his son. In return, they wanted Abu-Talib to turn over the Prophet to them, so that they could kill him and eliminate his threat to the Quraysh. Abu-Talib rejected their offer by wisely responding that this is a bad deal, as "you want me to feed and raise your son and in return give you my son to be killed." He then swore by God not to commit such an action. After this incident, it became clear for the Quraysh that they would not be able to separate Abu-Talib from the Prophet, and he would never surrender the Prophet to them.

The situation in Mecca became increasingly hostile, in that the Quraysh could take any action against the Prophet, therefore placing his life in great danger. Abu-Talib was constantly concerned and worried about the safety of the Prophet. On the night of Mi'raj, by the will of God, the Prophet miraculously rose to the heavens and observed the unseen and the hidden world. On this night, Abu-Talib was actively searching for the Prophet but could not find him. He thought that the Prophet's enemies from Quraysh had plotted against him. Abu-Talib, as the head of the Hashemites, ordered 70 men from his clan to be armed with a hidden dagger, and to be ready to attack the elders of Quraysh on his command. However, later Abu-Talib found the Prophet and was relieved. He then brought the Prophet to the Quraysh and asked his men to show their hidden daggers and revealed his initial plan to them. Abu-Talib then swore by God that he would have ordered to kill them all, in the blink of an eye, if he had not found the Prophet. The Quraysh were shaken by Abu-Talib's plan and the danger that had threatened them. They then promised not to harm the Prophet. Abu-Talib's action was an ultimate warning to the Quraysh, the people of his own tribe, that they would be faced with his sword if they were to harm the Prophet.

Abu-Talib tried his best to provide protection for the new Muslims, who were being threatened and harassed by the Quraysh. Once, he provided sanctuary to Abu-Salamah al-Makhzumi, to save him from the harassment of the Quraysh, including Abu-Salamah's own clan. When the people of his clan objected to Abu-Talib for his support, he replied "Abu-Salamah is my sister's son and thus my support to him is similar to my support to my other nephew, the Prophet."

Abu-Talib would also encourage others, particularly his family members, to convert to Islam. One of those who converted to Islam was Abu-Talib's brother and the Prophet's uncle, Hamzah. Hamzah was a brave hunter and a warrior, and would confront the Quraysh, who wanted to harass the Prophet. When Hamzah believed in the Prophet, Abu-Talib became delighted and recited the following poetry to praise him, and welcome him to Islam:

وَكُنْ مُظَهِّرًا لِلَّدِينِ وَفَقْتَ صَابِرًا

صَبِرًا أَبَا يَعْلَى عَلَى دِينِ أَحْمَدَ

O Aba Ya'laa (Hamzah), be patient and stay firm on the faith of Ahmad (Prophet Muhammad). Tell everyone about the faith you have now accepted, and God will support you.

بِصَدْقٍ وَعِزْمٍ لَا تَكُنْ حَمْزَةً كَافِرًا

وَحْظٌ مَنْ أَتَى بِالْحَقِّ مَنْ عَنِدَ رَبِّهِ

Help (The Prophet) who has brought this faith from God, with truth and dignity and never return to ignorance and Kufr (being a non-believer).

فَكُنْ لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ فِي اللَّهِ نَاصِرًا

فَقَدْ سَرَنِي أَدْقَلْتَ أَنْكَ مُؤْمِنٌ

When you declared that you had accepted Islam I was elated. Now, always help the Prophet of God.

جَهَارًا وَقُلْ: مَا كَانَ أَحْمَدُ سَاحِرًا

وَنَادَ قَرِيشًا بِالَّذِي قَدْ أَتَيْتَهُ

Tell everyone in Quraysh aloud about the faith you have now accepted. Tell them that Ahmad (Prophet Muhammad) is not a

magician.

After Hamzah accepted Islam, he joined his brother Abu-Talib in defending the Prophet, and so the Prophet and the Muslims became stronger in Mecca. Once, a group of the Quraysh soiled the Prophet with camel feces. The Prophet came to his uncle Abu-Talib without changing his clothes and showed him what they had done to him. Upon seeing the Prophet's condition, Abu-Talib was outraged and decided to retaliate. He took his sword and asked his brother Hamzah to take some camel feces. They then accompanied the Prophet and found those who had insulted him. Abu-Talib then asked Hamzah to soil their faces with camel feces in retaliation. Abu-Talib's action was a serious warning for the Quraysh, that any harassment against the Prophet would be met with harsh response.

11- Migration to Habashah (Abyssinia)

While the Prophet was protected by Abu-Talib, new Muslims often did not have their clan's support, and were prone to harassment and torture by the Quraysh. To relieve them, the Prophet allowed them to migrate to Habashah (Abyssinia) as it was ruled by a just Christian ruler, Najashi. The Muslims secretly migrated to Habashah and received Najashi's support. Abu-Talib then sent poetry to Najashi, to appreciate his support and encourage him to accept Islam. In this poetry, he said:

نبی کموسی و المسیح بن مریم

اتعلم ملک الحبیش ان محمدًا

O the king of Habashah, indeed Muhammad is a Prophet like Moses
and Jesus, son of Mary

و کل بامر الله یهدی و یعصم

اتی بھدی مثل الذی اتیا به

He has brought the message of guidance for all mankind, like the
Prophets before him. The previous Prophets guided people on the
orders of God for mankind's salvation as so does he (Prophet

Muhammad)

بصدق حديث لا حديث الترجم

و انكم تتلونه في كتابكم

And you recite (his name and signs) in your (holy) book as a true story and not a fiction.

فإن طريق الحق ليس بمظلم

فلا تجعلوا الله ندا و اسلموا

So, do not associate anyone with God and believe in Islam since the right path is not dark.

12- Socio-Economic Boycott

After a few years, the Quraysh were outraged by the Prophet's public invitation to Islam and could not tolerate his preaching anymore. They saw that despite their will and plots, Islam was growing, and the Muslims who had migrated to Habashah were also living in peace. Thus, the Quraysh clans all united to kill the Prophet and finish Islam. They knew that the Prophet had the support of his clan, the Hashemites, as it was led by Abu-Talib. Thus, the Quraysh united against the entire clan of the Hashemites and decided to punish them all due to their support for the Prophet. The Quraysh's leaders set up a meeting and pledged to impose a socio-economic boycott against the Hashemites, and completely isolate them in Mecca. They pledged not to support, trade, wed, or even talk to the Hashemites. They explicitly mentioned that this isolation will continue until the Hashemites surrender the Prophet to them, so that they could kill him. All the Quraysh's leaders stamped the treaty and hung it inside the Kaaba.

As a result of this treaty, the Hashemites were isolated within their residence in Mecca which was in a valley known as She'b Abi-Talib. She'b Abi-Talib was named after Abu-Talib, the head of the clan. During this long boycott, the clan was not allowed to leave the valley, trade with the Meccans, or provide for their essential needs. The Meccans also made sure that no aid would reach them. They would

warn any tradesmen who visited Mecca that their wealth will be looted if they were to trade with the Hashemites. This crisis led to extreme hardships and suffering for the entire clan, to the extent that they struggled to feed themselves and had to even eat leaves for survival. The wealth of Lady Khadijah, and her secret efforts to provide food during this crisis, significantly helped the Hashemites to survive. The boycott was enforced for 8 months of the year, excepting the 4 months of Hajj and Umrah season. This exception was in place due to a long-standing tradition among the Arabs, of not waging war during the 4 months of Zu al-Qa'dah, Zu al-Hijjah, Muharram, and Rajab, to provide security for the people who would visit Mecca for pilgrimage, and pay respect to their idols. The pilgrims were also a main source of income for the Quraysh, and thus it was in the Quraysh's own benefit to honor their tradition of ceasefire during the pilgrimage months.

The boycott in She'b Abi-Talib was the hardest period in the Prophethood of Prophet Muhammad. This boycott was also the harshest response by the Quraysh against the Prophet and Abu-Talib. Now, Abu-Talib had to witness the suffering of his entire clan due to his firm decision to support the Prophet. Ironically, some of the Hashemites had not even converted to Islam, but due to the tribal tradition, they had to follow the orders of their clan's leader, Abu-Talib. Despite the suffering and the pressure, Abu-Talib did not withdraw his support from the Prophet during the long period of boycott for about three years. This is the strongest proof for Abu-Talib's sincere belief in the Prophet. Otherwise, he would not have sacrificed himself and his entire clan to protect a single member of his family. Furthermore, during this time, when Abu-Talib was contacted by the Quraysh to encourage him to end the boycott by surrendering the Prophet, in response, Abu-Talib recited his famous Laamiyah poetry, in praise of the Prophet and emphasized his support for him. This poetry shows his high spirit and firm commitment in supporting the Prophet during the most difficult time of his entire life.

During the three years of the boycott, Abu-Talib was constantly worried about any attempt by the Quraysh to assassinate the Prophet. He was always alert and was looking out for the Prophet's safety. He had appointed the men of the Hashemites to patrol their residence against any sudden attack by the Quraysh to assassinate the Prophet. Abu-Talib had the authority to manage the men of the Hashemites for the protection of the Prophet, except his own brother, Abu-Lahab. He would arrange the Prophet's bed to be among the others, to increase his protection. Even in the middle of the night, he would secretly switch the sleeping places of his son, Imam Ali, and the Prophet, in case of an attack on the Prophet. Despite all the hardships of the boycott, protecting the life of the Prophet was a priority for Abu-Talib, to the extent that he was even willing to sacrifice his own son to protect the Prophet's life.

After three long years of the boycott, five of the Quraysh leaders became uncertain about continuing their support of the boycott. This was due to their family ties with the Hashemites and witnessing the hardships, particularly the cries of the women and children. Around this time, the Prophet informed his uncle about God's revelation to him that the boycott treaty inside the Kaaba had been eaten by termites. Upon hearing this news, Abu-Talib became delighted and asked the Prophet if this news was a revelation to him from God, which the Prophet affirmed. Abu-Talib then swore that the Prophet had never told him a lie.

To the surprise of the Quraysh, Abu-Talib breached the boycott and came to the Kaaba while being accompanied by a group of Hashemites. The Quraysh initially thought that Abu-Talib had come to surrender the Prophet in the hope of relieving the hardships of his clan. However, Abu-Talib addressed them with high spirits and a loud voice. He made a logical statement and proposed a solution to their long-lasting dispute. He told them: "Don't you want me to surrender my nephew to you to kill him? My nephew has never told me a lie, and

he has informed me that your entire boycott treaty has been eaten up by termites, except the word 'In Your name O Allah'. If he is truthful, then you should be awakened and return from your wrongdoings; and if he is wrong, I will surrender him to you, to do whatever you may desire." This was so improbable that the Quraysh's leaders accepted Abu-Talib's proposal. They then opened up the treaty in front of everyone to verify Abu-Talib's words. As prophesied by the Prophet, they saw that the treaty had been destroyed, except the word "In Your name O Allah". Upon this defeat, some of the Quraysh's leaders called this prophecy a magical act by the Prophet. However, some other leaders who were influenced by Abu-Talib's reasoning, decided to withdraw from the treaty, as there was no longer a binding physical treaty to abide by. As a result, the union of the Quraysh's tribe against the Prophet collapsed, and the boycott against the Hashemites was finally terminated.

13- Abu-Talib's Demise

Shortly after the boycott ended, Abu-Talib, who was more than 80 years old and had suffered many hardships during the boycott, passed away. He passed away on the 26th of Rajab, a day before the 10th anniversary of the Prophethood of Prophet Muhammad. During these ten years, Abu-Talib was like a shield that protected the Prophet from any threats reaching him. Abu-Talib was the primary protector and supporter of the Prophet for 42 long years, ever since he took on the responsibility of the guardianship of the Prophet from his father Abdul-Muttalib. He used his entire social and political potential to support the Prophet and guard him against his countless enemies from the Quraysh. Abu-Talib passed away before witnessing the expansion and the victory of Islam over the idol worshippers. However, Abu-Talib recorded his name in history, as a believer who had believed in the Prophet when he was denied by everyone, and the one who supported the Prophet when he was alone, and Islam was in minority.

When Abu-Talib was on his deathbed, he called the Hashemites and some others from the Quraysh. He made his will and recommended that they honor the Holy Kaaba and perform righteous deeds, including maintaining ties of kinship, providing for the needy, and being honest and trustworthy. He then praised the Prophet and explicitly asked them to protect and support him. He made a prophecy that the oppressed and weak Arabs would join the Prophet and overcome the Quraysh leaders, and the Prophet would become the sole leader of the Arabs. He swore by God that whoever follows the Prophet, will be guided and become prosperous. He then said that “if my death were to be postponed and I had another chance in life, I would again be his supporter and protector.”

Abu-Talib also recited the following poetry to specifically ask four individuals from the Hashemites to support the Prophet.

ابني عليا و عم الخير عباسا

اوسي بنصر نبى الخير اربعه

I advise four individuals in supporting the Prophet of the good: My son Ali and his uncle Abbas

و جعفرا ان تذودوا دونه الناسا

و حمزه الاسد المخسي صولته

And Hamzah, the lion who is feared for his attack, and Ja'far; to get away the harassment of the people from him (the Prophet)

في نصر احمد دون الناس اتراسا

كونوا فداء لكم امي و ما ولدت

May my mother and her children be sacrificed to you, be like the shields in supporting Ahmad (Prophet Muhammad) against the people

تخاله في سودا الليل مقاسا

بكل ابيض مصقول عوارضه

Come out with your shining swords, glowing in the darkness of the night like the burning fire, to protect him at all costs

When Abu-Talib passed away, Imam Ali gave the Prophet this sad news. The Prophet deeply sorrowed and cried for the loss of his beloved uncle. He then told Imam Ali to perform the Islamic funeral rituals for Abu-Talib, which included washing the body and wrapping him in a shroud prior to burying him. The Prophet then prayed for God's blessing on Abu-Talib and came and sat by his body. The Prophet kindly touched the two sides of Abu-Talib's forehead multiple times, while tears rolled down his cheeks. He addressed Abu-Talib by saying, "you took on my upbringing when I was a child, cared for me when I was an orphan, and were my supporter throughout my adulthood. May the Almighty God bless you." The Prophet then led the funeral procession and walked ahead of Abu-Talib's body while crying and consoling himself by saying, "maintaining your ties of kinship will benefit you and may God reward you." When they buried Abu-Talib, the Prophet addressed his uncle and told him that "I swear by God, I will ask God's forgiveness for you, and will intercede on your behalf in such a way, that will surprise all of humankind and Jinn."

14- The Prophet's Hardships after Abu-Talib's Demise

Within a month and half, after Abu-Talib's demise, Lady Khadijah, the beloved and dedicated wife of the Prophet, also passed away on the 10th of Ramazan. The grief of the passing of these two dear ones was so heavy on the heart of the Prophet, that he called that year "A'am al-Hozn" or "The Year of Sorrow."

After Abu-Talib's demise, the angel Gabriel told the Prophet in revelation to migrate from Mecca, as he had now lost his supporter and backbone, Abu-Talib. The Prophet would frequently travel outside Mecca, from one place to another, to invite the Arab clans to Islam and seek their support. However, none accepted his call, and were not willing to put themselves in trouble by supporting the Prophet against the powerful tribe of Quraysh. The Prophet also travelled to Taif, a city close to Mecca, to invite its people to Islam.

This trip took around 26 days and no one from Taif accepted the Prophet's call. When the Prophet was leaving Taif, some people harassed him by using abusive and insulting language and threw stones at him.

During this period, the Quraysh found a suitable opportunity to put pressure on the Prophet, and increase their harassments. They did not dare to physically hurt or insult the Prophet while Abu-Talib was alive. The Prophet would often remember his beloved uncle by saying "O my uncle, how soon I feel your absence". Once, one of the Quraysh dumped dirt on the Prophet's head. The Prophet returned home and his daughter, Lady Fatimah (SA), began crying when she saw her father's face. The Prophet calmed her and told her that God protects her father. The Prophet continued by saying that "the Quraysh did not dare to harass me as long as Abu-Talib was alive."

The Prophet continued his invitation to Islam, despite all the calamities and hardships. Hajj and Umrah seasons were a great opportunity for the Prophet to meet the people who had travelled to Mecca for pilgrimage and invite them to Islam. Eventually, a group of people from Medina converted to Islam, and their faith and support became the grounds for the Prophet's migration to Medina, about 3 years after Abu-Talib's demise. The Prophet migrated to Medina on the very night that the Quraysh leaders had decided to attack his home and assassinate him. The Quraysh would not have dared to assassinate the Prophet as long as Abu-Talib was alive.

15- The Prophet's High Regard for Abu-Talib

After Abu-Talib's demise, the Prophet missed and remembered his beloved uncle and asked for God's blessing and mercy on his soul on various occasions. When the Prophet migrated to Medina, he established an Islamic government and many joined Islam. The Prophet would never forget Abu-Talib, his number one supporter and protector in Mecca, at a time when he was surrounded by enemies, and

the Muslims were in minority. The Prophet would also frequently remember Abu-Talib's poetry, in which he had praised the Prophet and had predicted his victory.

Once, when the Prophet was in Medina, a drought hit the region. The Prophet went on the pulpit and prayed to God for rain, and heavy rain fell. The Prophet then said to his companions that if Abu-Talib was alive, he would have been delighted to see this rainfall. Some of the companions told the Prophet that it is as if you have remembered this verse of Abu Talib's poetry and the Prophet confirmed:

ثَمَالُ الْبَيْتَانِيُّ عَصْمَهُ لِلَّارَامِلْ

وَابِيْضُ يَسْتَسْقِيُ الْغَمَامُ بِوْجَهِهِ

When people swear by the glow of his face and pray for rain, rain falls. He who is a refuge for the widows and the orphans.

Abu-Talib had recited this verse in his long and famous Laamiyah poetry, in praise of the Prophet. This line of poetry referred to the event when Abu-Talib had witnessed his father, Abdul Muttalib's prayer for rain fulfilled due to the blessings of the presence of the Prophet. While on the pulpit and hearing Abu-Talib's poetry, the Prophet asked for God's forgiveness and blessing for Abu-Talib.

When the Muslims defeated the Quraysh in the Battle of Badr, the Prophet passed by the bodies of the idol worshippers and said that if Abu-Talib was alive, he would witness that "our swords destroyed the Quraysh nobles." By this, the Prophet referred to one of Abu-Talib's poetries where he had said:

لَتَلْتَبِسْنَ اسْيَافَنَا بِالْمَائِلِ

كَذَبْتُمْ وَبَيْتَ اللَّهِ أَنْ جَدَّ مَا أَرَى

By the house of God, you (Quraysh) lie. If what I envision happens, our swords will trap (your) nobles.

The Prophet also loved and respected the family of Abu-Talib and treated them as his own family. Once the Prophet told Aqil, one of the

sons of Abu-Talib, that I love you very much for two reasons. You are from my family and also because of your father, Abu-Talib as I know he loved you very much. Also, when Abu-Talib's wife, Fatimah bint Asad passed away in Medina in the 4th year of Hijri, the Prophet grieved and shed tears. The Prophet, who had grown up in her house as a child, described her as his own mother. He gave one of his cloths to be used as her shroud. He then came to her burial procession and prior to putting her body in the tomb, he himself first laid down in her tomb and prayed to God to bless her soul and remove the hardships of the tomb from her. The companions of the Prophet asked him about his actions as he had not treated anyone like her before. The Prophet responded that after Abu-Talib, no one was more kind to me than her.

Once, the Prophet told Imam Ali that no one has your merits for leading the Muslims after me. "You were the first Muslim, and you are my son-in-law and the husband of Lady Fatimah, the master of all the women believers." The Prophet continued, "this is also because of your father, Abu-Talib's support, as he endured many calamities from the Quraysh because of my preaching and the Quranic revelations I received." The Prophet then said, "I like to honor Abu-Talib for his dedication and self-devotion."

16- Rumors on Abu-Talib's Faith

Despite all the love and support that Abu-Talib provided to the Prophet with his entire wealth, life, and reputation, unfortunately, over the years, some Muslims with political motivations accused this holy character of being an infidel, and the one who did not believe in Islam. Unfortunately, this heinous belief has even continued to this day, and those who have such a belief do not have any evidence other than a few fabricated Hadiths that are falsely attributed to the Prophet. Nonetheless, if these Muslims prefer to deny the faith of Abu-Talib despite much historical evidence, why do they insist on degrading him

by calling him an infidel? Abu-Talib never worshipped any idols and always believed in God. Prior to Islam, he followed the Ibrahimic, monotheistic religion of his forefathers. After Islam, he believed in the Prophet, but had to keep his faith a secret to protect the life of the Prophet. Abu-Talib's sermon during the Prophet's marriage proposal is just one of the many historical evidences that clearly proves his belief in the oneness of God. This sermon has been narrated in the narration books of the same group of the Muslims who deny Abu-Talib's faith.

Abu-Talib is the only Muslim whose faith was strictly argued and debated in Islamic history. Strangely, those Muslims who deny Abu-Talib's faith would accept the Islam and the faith of many who had carried animosity against the Prophet and Islam. They would also remain skeptic and silent about the Islam of some others and leave it up to God in the hereafter. However, the same people insist on calling Abu-Talib an infidel and that he would be in hell. They could never find a single historical or logical piece of evidence to prove that Abu-Talib was an infidel or ever acted short of supporting the Prophet. They instead only emphasize the fact that he did not publicly announce his faith while Abu-Talib wisely chose to hide his faith to keep his social and political position to provide the most protection to the Prophet. Of course, if Abu-Talib were to openly declare his faith, the idol worshipers would obviously kill both Abu-Talib and the Prophet. History proved that Abu-Talib's policy was effective in saving the Prophet and accelerating the growth of Islam. The Prophet, who had begun his Prophethood with only a handful of supporters, could establish a powerful minority in Mecca by the time of Abu-Talib's demise around 10 years later.

It is clear that the intention of those Muslims who insist on degrading Abu-Talib is solely to defend their Hadith books which contain the fabricated Hadiths against Abu-Talib. These books were compiled more than two centuries after the demise of Abu-Talib and the Prophet. Right after the Prophet's demise, the ban on narrating Hadith

from the Prophet was enforced by the first caliph. This ban was continued by the other caliphs and the Umayyads for around 90 years after the Prophet's demise. During this long period, many forged narrations were propagated by the caliphs in favor of their own governments, and thus many realities were covered.

Ironically, the same group of Muslims believe that Abu-Sufyan, the number one enemy of the Prophet from the Quraysh, is a Muslim and will go to heaven, while Abu-Talib, the number one supporter of the Prophet, will go to hell. Abu-Sufyan had frequently harassed and even plotted against the life of the Prophet in Mecca. He had later led the Quraysh against the Prophet in the wars of Badr, Uhud, and Khandaq. Abu-Sufyan did not convert to Islam until the Muslims conquered Mecca. He converted not out of choice, but to save his life, and thus the light of Islam never touched his heart. Abu-Sufyan, with a life-long animosity to Islam, who recited a few words to receive the title of a Muslim, cannot be compared to a believer like Abu-Talib, whose heart was full of faith in Islam and the Prophet, and proved it with his 42 long years of support to the Prophet. Abu-Talib's efforts to protect the life of the Prophet during the first 10 years of Islam in Mecca equal the efforts of the entire Muslim community to protect the Prophet during the 10 years of the Prophet's life in Medina.

So, where do the roots of these hateful accusations against Abu-Talib originate? Historically, Abu-Talib has a shining record of support and service to the Prophet, and no one can point a finger at him. His only crime is that he was the father of Imam Ali and the haters of Imam Ali could not tolerate the praise of anybody related to him. At the top of those who had the most hatred against Imam Ali was Muawiyah, the son of Abu-Sufyan. Muawiyah followed his father's footsteps in animosity against the Prophet. He later became the governor of Syria during the reign of the second caliph, and strengthened his power in Syria during the reign of the third caliph, when the Umayyads became powerful in government. He was dismissed during the caliphate of

Imam Ali, but refused to give up his position and fought the battle of Siffin against Imam Ali. Ironically, Muawiyah later became the caliph of the Muslims, after the peace treaty with Imam Hasan (AS). By establishing the Umayyad government, he is the one who changed the system of the Islamic government from a caliphate to a monarchy. This fact is enough to establish that his intention was solely to gain power and benefit himself.

Upon reaching the caliphate, Muawiyah could not tolerate the holy character of Imam Ali. He enforced the cursing of Imam Ali from the pulpits during the Friday sermons all over Islamic territory. This heinous tradition was continued by subsequent Umayyad caliphs for around 60 long years. Muawiyah spent a large amount of wealth and bribed scholars to propagate fabricated Hadiths against Imam Ali. It was very embarrassing for Muawiyah, the caliph of the Muslims, to be remembered as the son of Abu-Sufyan, who was the main enemy of the Prophet. On the other hand, Imam Ali was the son of Abu-Talib, who was the number one supporter of the Prophet. Muawiyah could not simply remove Abu-Talib's name from Islamic history, as he was a key player in every Islamic event in Mecca until his demise. Thus, fabricated Hadiths attributed to the Prophet were systematically spread by the Umayyad government to destroy the character of Abu-Talib and introduce him as an infidel.

Spreading rumors about the faith of Abu-Talib was later supported and further spread by the Abbasid caliphs, who were the descendants of Abbas, the Prophet's uncle and Abu-Talib's brother. Their motivation was to provide status for their forefather Abbas, as if he was the closest and most supportive person to the Prophet. They also wanted to use this claim as propaganda against the Prophet's descendants, who were challenging the Abbasid Caliphate's legitimacy as a righteous government, and were in constant battle with their government. The Prophet's descendants were the children of Imam Ali (AS) and Lady Fatimah (SA), and were thus the descendants of Abu-Talib from their

father's side. However, Abbas's record in supporting the Prophet was not as praise-worthy as that of Abu-Talib's. After Abu-Talib, Abbas succeeded him as the head of the Hashemites, but he could not provide the Prophet with the same level of the support that Abu-Talib had provided. Due to the intense hostile environment against the Prophet in Mecca, ironically, Abbas had even participated in the troops of idol worshippers who came to the Battle of Badr against the Prophet. He was then arrested by the Muslims as a war captive and had to pay for his own release. Thus, the Abbasid caliphs found it favorable to spread rumors to discredit Abu-Talib and destroy his reputation, so as to introduce Abbas as the most loyal uncle of the Prophet.

The belief in the infidelity of Abu-Talib is not only rejected by much historical evidence, but is also logically wrong and self-contradicting. If Abu-Talib was an infidel, how could he provide firm support for someone like the Prophet whose main mission was to remove all of the signs of infidelity and to establish a monotheistic religion in the world? How could one act against his own belief? More importantly, if Abu-Talib was an infidel, how could the Prophet love, respect, and rely on him while this would clearly be against his own preaching and Quranic verses? How could the Prophet not practice something that he himself preached and ordered the others to practice? If Abu-Talib was an infidel, how could the Prophet grieve so much upon his demise and mourn a complete year for him and call it, "The Year of Sorrow"? Various Quranic verses explicitly order the Muslims to separate their path from the infidels and only put their trust in God, such as [4:139]: "Do those who establish friendship with the disbelievers instead of the believers seek honor? Let them know that all honor belongs to God," or [4:144]: "Believers, do not make unbelievers your intimate friends and supporters rather than believers. Do you want to establish clear evidence against yourselves before God?"

Abu-Talib hid his faith solely to protect the life of the Prophet. If he were to openly declare his faith as a Muslim, he would have lost all of

his political and social status, and would have risked the life of the Prophet. He wisely chose to cover his faith as the best strategy to protect the Prophet's life and support him in his mission. He was like the Companions of the Cave in the Quran, who hid their faith in God, and thus received double the reward from God. He is one of the clear examples of those who hid their real faith as highlighted in the following verse of the Quran [16:106]: "Whoever disbelieves in Allah after his belief... except for one who is forced [to renounce his religion] while his heart is secure in faith." Abu-Talib's hidden faith is also beautifully described in the Quran in the story of the believer of the Pharaoh's family [40:28]: "And a believing man from the Pharaoh's family, who **hid his faith**, said: 'Would you kill a man (Moses) because he says: My Lord is Allah, and has brought you clear proofs from your Lord? '". The believer of the Pharaoh's family hid his faith as a strategy to support Prophet Moses in secret and save his life from the plots of the Pharaoh. Therefore, like the believer of the Pharaoh's family, Abu-Talib is, indeed, the believer of the Quraysh.

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