

I Took the Red Pill—Now What?

(Part 2: The Higher Levels)



DANIEL TRIMARCHI

I TOOK THE RED PILL, NOW WHAT?

*A Journey Through the Levels of Consciousness – From
Fragmentation to Wholeness*

A Companion to The Red Pill: A Consciousness Manifesto

Part 2: The Higher Levels 7 to 10

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I TOOK THE RED PILL — NOW WHAT?

The Map of Consciousness: From Fragmentation to Divine Unity

A Companion to *The Red Pill: A Consciousness Manifesto*

Part 2: The Higher Levels 7 to 10

This is not a guide for achievement.

It is a path of surrender.

The earlier stages taught you how to wake up. This part shows you how to walk — not as who you were, but as who you are becoming.

Each level ahead invites deeper integration, greater responsibility, and a profound return to the unseen. This is no longer just personal development. This is soul development.

The higher levels cannot be performed.

They can only be lived.

They are hidden in plain sight — protected by sincerity.

If you've found yourself here, it's because you're ready.

Welcome.

Let's continue.

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Foreword Two

For Those Who've Unlocked the Next Gate

The following sections are not available to everyone.

They are not visible through intellect, personal growth, or even deep psychological insight. They are not included in the public portion of this map because they cannot be understood — or even perceived — without a specific kind of access.

That access is not granted by effort alone. It is not earned through discipline or education. It is unlocked through **faith**.

Specifically, through **the Kalimah**:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

La ilaha illa Allah, Muhammadur Rasulullah

There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.

This testimony is not symbolic. It is functional.

It marks a turning point in consciousness — one that allows the heart to witness realities that were previously hidden.

From this point forward, the nature of the journey changes.

The path is no longer about growth. It is about proximity.

No longer about mastery. But surrender.

The stages you are about to read describe internal states that require the presence of *iman*. Without it, these words would appear abstract, exaggerated, or inaccessible. With it, they become mirrors.

These levels are not meant to be debated or taught from a distance. They are meant to be lived.

If you've reached this point with sincerity, it is only by Allah's ﷻ permission.

You have been allowed into a more subtle domain — one governed by intention, remembrance, and light.

And above all of these levels — mentioned or mapped — stands the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, whose **character and conduct** represent the summit of consciousness.

He is not a stage in this journey.

He is the example, the mercy, and the endpoint.

Every level ahead is, in some way, a return to his example — to his Sunnah.

Read with humility.

Reflect carefully.

And proceed as one who has been trusted with something sacred.

— Daniel Trimarchi AKA Abdullah

Seasons of the Soul

One thing not yet addressed in this map — but powerfully exemplified in *The Red Pill Manifesto* — is that our conscious development doesn't happen in a vacuum (i.e., in isolation from real life). As we describe these different levels, what's happening in the day-to-day life of the person traversing them? Seasons.

Everyone is living through their own weather system.

Some are walking through stormy winters — trials, tribulations, heartbreak, loss. Others are basking in the bright calm of summer — a grace period, ease, and answered du'ā'. Regardless of where you are, one truth remains: our relationship with Allah ﷻ must remain anchored in both seasons.

In the easy times, we show gratitude. In the hard times, we seek His help. In both, we turn to Him — consistently, sincerely.

This is what keeps the heart upright.

You can still be progressing through levels even during difficult periods — in fact, hardship can accelerate growth if you face it with the right frame of mind. But if the pain causes your heart to rebel — if you say, “Why me? I pray, I give sadaqah, I do all the right things — so why is this happening?” — you risk collapsing back down the ladder. You risk making the trial heavier by viewing it through entitlement instead of trust.

Compare that to the heart that says:

“Yā Rabb al-Karīm, You know what is best for me. I thank You in all situations. This test is hard — give me sabr to see it through. Grant me strength, increase me in character and conduct. Send Your angels to protect me, and let me emerge with greater understanding. Āmīn.”

Eventually, you'll reach a state where even difficulty triggers quiet gratitude. A test arrives, and you say:

“Yes! — thank You, Allah ﷻ. I've been stagnant. Thank You for giving me a reason to seek You with intensity again.”

That's the heart of the journey: not resisting the seasons, but riding them with consciousness, sincerity, and unwavering trust in the One who sends the wind.

Even the Prophet ﷺ was tested — mocked, insulted, physically harmed — yet he never responded with entitlement. He understood: this life is not heaven. It is purification. And those who are closest to Allah ﷻ are often tested the most, not the least.

So as you move through these levels, remember: you are not judged by whether your life is in ease or in hardship. You are judged by what your heart does with it.

And if your heart says “Alḥamdulillāh” — in every season — then you are exactly where you need to be.

And so, we enter the next phase of the journey — not with ego, but with awe. Not just to learn... but to become a light for others.

A Note for the Conscious Muslim Who Has Arrived Here Before Becoming a Spiritual Professor:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

As-salāmu ‘alaykum wa raḥmatullāhi wa barakātuh.

Welcome, Brother or Sister in Islam

It gives me great joy — and sincere gratitude — to welcome you here today.

Why? Because you are special. Wallāhi, you are.

If you already know this, then **alḥamdulillāh**.

If you don’t yet feel it, I assure you — you will.

That “password” that brought you to this section of the journey may have felt simple. Just a phrase that your parents taught you. But never forget: people have died and still continue to for this testimony of faith. They were tortured, persecuted, and forced to worship in hiding — just to hold onto the **Kalimah**:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

La ilāha illa Allāh, Muḥammadur Rasūlullāh

There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.

It is not just a password for this book.

It is the password for your soul.

A divine code that, when lived with sincerity, unlocks a Paradise in this world and the next.

You might be arriving here with deep self-awareness. You know your inner patterns, your emotional triggers, your desires and fears. You’ve done the work of introspection. You’ve reached Level 5 — the Journey Level — and you’re spiritually awake, living with intention and reflection.

You’ve also moved through social awareness. You see others clearly. You read emotional cues, defuse passive aggression, offer compassion, and create safety. You steer your own ship.

But maybe... you’re not quite a **Spiritual Professor** yet. And that’s okay.

Your Islam is real. You believe, you pray, you reflect, you give. But something is still focused inward — centered around your own peace, discipline, and self-mastery. You’re not yet **guiding** others. Not yet embodying Islam in a way that builds the world around you.

And that’s the difference.

The shift happens when obedience to Allah ﷻ becomes the anchor of your day — not something squeezed into your schedule, but the very *structure* around which your life is built. You begin to prioritize what He loves. Your habits become intentional. Your default becomes integrity — not just in public, but in the quiet, unseen moments.

When *character* overrides *convenience*.

Let's make that real:

You're at the store, purchasing several items. One of them — worth \$150 — doesn't get scanned. You notice. The cashier doesn't.

In that moment, the ego whispers:

"It's not your fault."

"You didn't do anything wrong."

"They should've caught it."

But something deeper answers back:

"Allah ﷻ is watching."

"This is a test."

"Your integrity is worth more than \$150."

You gently point it out to the cashier.

No spotlight. No grand speech. Just quiet honesty.

And in that small act, you didn't *lose* money — you gained something priceless: character.

You reinforced who you are when no one's looking.

This is the transformation.

Not just knowledge.

Not just ritual.

But living your Islam in motion — choosing righteousness when it costs you something.

Choosing truth, not because it's easy, but because it's who you are now.

This... is the beginning of the shift from *Spiritual Journeyer* to *Spiritual Professor*.

You've begun to embody the character and conduct that Islam teaches. You've shifted from just believing to **representing**.

You've stopped choosing which commands feel convenient.

You start submitting — not out of force, but from love.

So if you find yourself here — in between the Spiritual Journeyer sub-level and the Spiritual Professor — know that you are exactly where you need to be.

You're on the cusp of something transformative.

Keep going. Keep building. Keep refining.

And when your character aligns with your creed...

When your inner life and outer actions merge...

You will not need to say you've leveled up.

You'll simply be living it.

Part Two: The Higher Levels

(Levels 7 – 10)

The Spiritual Professor:

This person may have all the knowledge and competence of the theoretical type, but they carry something more: *vision and reverence*. They see knowledge not as an end in itself, but as a means to illuminate higher truths. For the Spiritual Professor, every bit of learning is a doorway to marvel at the Creator or the deeper order of the universe. They look at the complexity of the human body and their immediate response is a quiet “*Wow, this is part of something miraculous.*” They observe the precise orbit of planets and feel reverence, sensing the signs of design and purpose behind it.

In short, everything for them is a **sign** pointing beyond itself. They don’t separate the scientific from the sacred – to them, the two are seamlessly connected. If they teach biology, they will inevitably also impart a sense of awe about life. If they teach business or leadership, they will tie it to ethics, purpose, and legacy. Their classroom (whether literal or metaphorical) becomes a place where students not only gain information, but also a sense of *presence* and deeper reflection.

- This professor teaches *with their being*, not just their words. They might pause in the middle of a lecture, letting silence speak volumes, because they’re tuned into the moment rather than just rushing through slides. There’s a palpable humility in how they convey knowledge – as if they are just a conduit for something greater.
- They link every discovery or idea back to a higher narrative. For example, in discussing a breakthrough in medicine, they might gently remind that healing has an aspect of grace to it. In marveling at a technological innovation, they might point out how it echoes the ingenuity that our Creator endowed in humanity. They’re not preaching in the classroom; rather, they’re *integrating* meaning subtly into everything.
- Students or people under their guidance often leave not only smarter, but more *uplifted*. They feel a sense of gratitude and wonder, not just an increase in skill. This is because the Spiritual Professor’s knowledge comes with *light*. Their intention is not to show off expertise but to benefit and guide. There’s a sense of **amanah** (sacred trust) they carry – they see teaching or leading others as a responsibility before God, not just a job or ego boost.

For the Spiritual Professor, reaching this level isn’t the end of the journey; it’s actually a bridge to something even greater. Their worldly knowledge now firmly intertwined with spirituality sets the stage for entry into the truly rarefied levels of wisdom that lie ahead.

What Defines This Level (generally, for both types):

Whether theoretical or spiritual, being at the Professor Level means you have stepped into a role of influence and teaching. Here are some defining features of life at this stage, especially for the ideal (spiritually aware) professor:

- You naturally begin to **mentor** others, formally or informally. You might take on apprentices at work, younger family members, or community members who seek your counsel. You find people saying, “Your advice helped me so much,” or “I’ve learned a lot just by watching you.”

- You share what you've *lived*, not just what you've read in books. Your guidance often comes in the form of personal stories or lessons from your own life. People appreciate that your wisdom is hard-earned and authentic, not just theory.
- You feel a sense of **duty** to help others grow. It's not about wanting power over people; in fact it's the opposite. You might even feel reluctant to lead, but you do it because you genuinely care. When you see someone struggling in an area you've mastered, you want to lend a hand or a word that could ease their journey.
- You refine your **communication and presence** because you know others are listening. You become more conscious of how you carry yourself, how you speak, what example you set. This isn't vanity – it's responsibility. You've seen how a careless word from a leader can misguide, or how hypocrisy can turn students off. So you strive to **practice what you preach** and to preach only what you practice. You choose your words more carefully. You may even deliberately adopt more humility in your demeanor to deflect personal praise, because you want people to focus on the message, not the messenger.
- You're not concerned with being *impressive* anymore; you're concerned with being *impactful* and beneficial. The ego of youth – wanting to be seen as smart, talented, holy, whatever – fades. What matters is that others gain something good from you. You might catch yourself simplifying a concept rather than flaunting your mastery of it, just so a beginner can understand. You might let someone else take credit if it will encourage them. In meetings or public, you're okay with not always being right or dominating; you'd rather bring out the best in the group. In short, you **lead from a place of service, not dominance**.

Common Experiences at This Level:

- **Being sought out for guidance:** One day you realize people have started treating you as a mentor. Perhaps a new colleague asks you to “grab coffee” and then picks your brain for an hour. A friend calls specifically to ask your advice about a life decision. You might get invited to speak or lead in contexts you hadn't expected. It can be surprising (“Why do they think I have the answers?”) but it's a sign that others trust your insight.
- **Feeling the weight of example:** You become acutely aware that people may emulate you. For instance, you notice a junior teammate imitating your work style, or your child repeating your phrases. This can be humbling and slightly frightening – you realize your mistakes might also be amplified if copied. There's a new weight on your shoulders: an awareness that if you slip, you might drag others with you. This makes you more cautious and introspective about your actions.
- **Balancing visibility with sincerity:** If you step into a larger leadership role or gain acclaim, you might struggle internally to keep your intentions pure. On one hand, you genuinely want to help and maybe that requires being in the spotlight. On the other hand, that spotlight can feed vanity. So you may feel a tension: enjoying recognition versus fearing it. You likely engage in a lot of self-checks (“Why am I really doing this? Would I still do it if no one knew it was me?”).
- **New kinds of internal challenges:** With greater influence, new tests arrive. You may feel temptations toward pride (“Maybe I *am* special?”) or conversely, surges of self-doubt (“Who am I to guide others? I'm still flawed.”). It's common to experience imposter syndrome at first –

worrying you'll be "found out" as not that wise after all. At times, negativity may target you more: people envious of your position, or simply the increase in your ego's tricks. In spiritual terms, when your influence is at stake, the devil works harder to mislead you. You might notice more frequent whispers of insincerity or distractions pulling you from your private practices.

- **Realizing your utter dependence on your Creator:** What once felt like personal growth now feels like sacred responsibility. As others begin to look to you for guidance, you realize the weight of influence — and your own limitations. You whisper often, "O Allah ﷻ, don't let me misguide anyone. I can't do this without You." This level brings not pride, but humility. You know that whatever strength or clarity you carry is not truly yours — it is a trust (amanah) given to you. And it can be lifted at any moment if you become arrogant or complacent. This awareness makes you more prayerful, more cautious, and more reliant on divine mercy and direction.

This level is a blessing, but it can be a minefield if one's ego is not kept in check.

Emotional Landscape:

Living in the Professor Level brings a mix of profound emotions:

- **Humility and Awe:** You'd think being seen as a teacher or guide might feed the ego — but instead, it often breaks you open. What fills your heart isn't pride, but humility. You're struck by how your past pain, your trials, your long road... are now medicine for someone else. You feel awe at how Allah ﷻ weaves purpose into suffering. "Years ago, I was drowning — and now, I'm helping someone else swim. Who am I to be trusted with this?" That thought keeps you grounded. It reminds you that this role isn't a status — it's a trust. A sacred amanah. And every time someone benefits, you whisper inwardly, "All praise is due to You, Ya Rabb."
- **Gratitude:** There's a deep and quiet gratitude that Allah ﷻ is allowing your struggle to bear fruit — not just for your own growth, but for others. When someone finds clarity through something you shared, when a student lights up with insight or a mentee rises with new strength, your heart swells with thankfulness. You don't take credit. You know it wasn't from you — it was through you. And in private, you say, "Alhamdulillah. Ya Rabb, thank You for letting me be of benefit."
- **The Joy of Witnessing Growth:** There is a quiet joy at this level that words rarely capture. When someone you guided starts to heal, or thrive, or turn toward Allah ﷻ — your heart feels it deeply. It's not pride. It's something purer. Like watching a tree you once planted bear fruit, or a light that you helped kindle begin to glow on its own. Their growth feels like a personal gift from your Lord. Sometimes it moves you to tears in solitude — not because *you* did it, but because you were allowed to be part of it. And in those moments, you whisper, "Alhamdulillah... You let me be of benefit."
- **Vulnerability:** Interestingly, even as you're this figure of strength to others, you may feel more emotionally vulnerable than before. Guiding others exposes your heart in new ways. You might care very deeply about those you mentor, feeling their failures and successes almost like your own. Also, being looked up to can be lonely — you might hesitate to share *your* struggles now, unsure if you have peers anymore or worried you must "keep it together" for the sake of your

students. The truth is you absolutely still need confidants and mentors of your own, but you might momentarily neglect that, leaving you feeling emotionally exposed.

At times, you may find yourself doing something new: after giving a piece of advice or leading a session, you turn inward and **pray** quietly, “Please let what I said be beneficial and sincere.” For example, you might speak in an event or give a heartfelt lecture, and immediately afterward your hands tremble and you pray, “Oh Allah ﷻ, keep me humble through this. Let the good in it be from You, not from me, and protect me from any evil in it.” This kind of du’a (supplication) or hope becomes a familiar emotional refrain, especially for the Spiritual Professor. It’s essentially your way of handing the matter to Allah ﷻ and acknowledging your own insufficiency.

The Dangers of This Level:

- **Spiritual pride:** Perhaps the greatest pitfall. After guiding others for a while and perhaps hearing praise (“You’re amazing; you changed my life!”), it’s dangerously easy for the ego to inflate subtly. You might start believing you *have* arrived at some superior place. This pride can manifest as being unteachable – you lose the “student mindset” and stop seeking feedback or acknowledging mistakes. Pride is particularly lethal here because it’s the fastest way to lose the very blessing that raised you up. If one starts thinking the light is *from themselves* rather than a gift from Allah ﷻ, that light may be taken away.
- **Burnout:** The Professor Level comes with a lot of giving. If you constantly pour into others without refilling your own cup, you can spiritually and emotionally burn out. Some at this level become so dedicated to their mentees, community, or work that they neglect their personal time, family, health, or spiritual rejuvenation. Over time, their well runs dry. The irony is you might preach balance to others while not practicing it yourself because you feel *needed* all the time. Burnout can lead to exhaustion, cynicism, or even moral lapses if one is not careful.
- **Self-sufficiency (losing reliance on Allah ﷻ):** As you become the problem-solver or teacher for many, you might start unconsciously feeling like you’re in control. There’s a risk of subtly sidelining Allah ﷻ or your foundational principles, thinking, “I got this.” You might pray or reflect less because you’re busy “doing the work.” That is a trap – forgetting the Source of whatever knowledge or ability you have. Mistaking your own strength for sufficiency is dangerous; it’s like a lamp thinking it can stay lit without staying connected to electricity. Eventually the light dims.
- **Public success, private stagnation:** Another subtle danger is that you become so focused on *others’* growth that you stop growing. You might coast on old knowledge and habits. Since you’re the one giving advice, who’s holding you accountable? It’s possible to stagnate or even decline internally while maintaining an outward image of “the wise one.” This discrepancy, if it widens, can lead to a crisis (public mistake or private loss of faith). Many leaders have fallen into this – outwardly serving others but inwardly empty and troubled, because they poured everything out and didn’t continue their own spiritual and personal development.

To navigate these dangers, one must double down on humility and self-care.

What Can Help:

- **Regular self-reflection and repentance:** Just as you may advise students to introspect, you must do the same, even more rigorously. Frequently take stock of your heart. Ask: *Why did I say that? Why do I feel upset about that feedback? Am I doing this for the right reasons?* Engage in **istighfar**, asking forgiveness for lapses in sincerity or mistakes in judgment. Continuously renew your intention (niyyah) for why you lead or teach — make it about serving Allah ﷻ and His creation, not yourself. A practical habit is to have a moment of quiet after every public effort (meeting, talk, class) to humble yourself and acknowledge any shortcomings.
- **Private devotion that no one knows about:** To keep your soul nourished and ego in check, maintain a private spiritual practice completely away from the eyes of those who admire you. This could be extra prayers in the middle of the night, secret charity, or studying knowledge outside your field where you're a humble beginner again. When you have worship or good deeds that are *only* between you and Allah ﷻ, it protects you from the trap of performing for people's praise. It reminds you that ultimately it's about your relationship with Him, not your reputation with them.
- **Peers and mentors, not just admirers:** Deliberately surround yourself with a few people who are on your level or above in wisdom, who **aren't impressed by you**, but who genuinely care for you. These should be people who can call you out, remind you of your humanity, and with whom you can be vulnerable. If all your circle consists of are people who look up to you, you're in a dangerous bubble. Seek the company of fellow scholars, teachers, or wise friends who keep it real. They will help you stay grounded.
- **Never stop learning:** Continue to be a student. Regularly consume knowledge that humbles and inspires you. Read sacred texts, attend classes with scholars you respect, pursue new skills, or simply stay curious. Learning new things will remind you how much you *don't* know. It keeps you from developing a know-it-all attitude and ensures that what you offer others remains fresh and alive.
- **Take care of your "root" self:** Don't neglect your own emotional and physical well-being. Schedule time off, retreat days, or vacations. Spend time with family or in nature. Pray and reflect — not just as routine maintenance, but as a way to reconnect with Allah ﷻ and soften your heart. If you find yourself feeling drained or unmotivated, that's a sign to step back and refill. Remember, you can't give what you don't have — so preserve your well-being as an act of trust and responsibility.

What They Need Most:

- **People to remind them of their humanity:** As a Professor-level individual, you need people around who see you — not just your role or title. You need the friend who will joke with you, the spouse or sibling who still teases you, the mentor who will point out your mistakes. These interactions keep you grounded. They take off the mask of being "the teacher" and remind you that, at your core, you're still just a student of life like everyone else.
- **Spaces to weep, not just to speak:** You likely spend a lot of time talking, advising, leading prayers or meetings. But you also need spaces where you can cry, express confusion, and be

spiritually rejuvenated. Whether it's in solitude in the pre-dawn asking Allah ﷻ for help, or a private support group of fellow guides, you need outlets for *your* emotions. A place where you're not holding it together for others, where you can lay your burdens down and even be taken care of or advised. This might be in therapy, or in a private prayer niche, or with an elder you trust.

- **An anchor in tawheed (Divine unity):** In Islamic terms, tawheed – the deep awareness that *Allah ﷻ is One* and the center of everything – must remain your anchor. This means you constantly re-align your focus to seek Allah's ﷻ pleasure above all. It protects you from seeking worldly validation and from fearing worldly criticism. Keeping your heart tied to the One God reminds you that you too are a servant, always. Practically, this could mean reciting “La ilaha illa Allah” (There is no God but Allah ﷻ) often, or reflecting on the names of God to humble yourself and gain strength.
- **A plan for continued growth:** You should have a personal growth plan just as you might create plans for those you mentor. Identify what you want to improve in *yourself* next. Maybe it's a character trait, maybe a knowledge area, maybe a spiritual practice. Have goals and teachers for yourself. When you're actively working on your next steps, it keeps you from stagnation and sets an example of lifelong learning for those who follow you.

Final Message

This level is not a final destination; it's a passage. You've stepped into a role of leadership — but the journey of your soul continues. In fact, this is where it deepens. The truly wise know: to become a teacher is to become an even better student.

The Spiritual Professor walks forward — into deeper insight, quieter contemplation, and an even more intimate relationship with the Divine. The next place on the path is one of wonder, not instruction. As one mentor put it:

“The next stage is not where you lead from — it's where you wonder.”

After all the speaking, one learns silence. After all the teaching, one becomes profoundly teachable. And it is from that state of humility and surrender that the next door opens.

Up until now, the journey has required conscious striving — self-awareness, reflection, discipline, and patience. But the levels beyond this cannot be forced or planned. They do not arrive through willpower or routine. They emerge slowly, quietly — as the fruit of long-standing sincerity.

You do not even realize you've leveled up at first. One day, after years of living, guiding, and refining your inner world... something shifts. Your concerns soften. Your lens widens. You start asking different questions — deeper questions. You notice a stillness behind your words, a spaciousness in your thoughts, a quiet longing that wasn't there before.

You've crossed a threshold.

You've become a philosopher — not in title, but in state.

A new chapter has begun.

These next levels are not common. They are hidden from the crowd and even from those who speak of growth but have not lived it. They are not taught in curricula or described in standard teachings. They are glimpsed only by those whose hearts have been softened by hardship, whose character has been shaped by patience, and whose sincerity has endured through long seasons.

You cannot strategize your way here. You cannot climb. These stages are opened through barakah — the grace bestowed by Allah ﷻ upon those He chooses. And though the transition feels sudden, it is never random. It comes only after long fidelity to integrity, service, and remembrance.

This is the point where outward striving fades — and the inward ascent begins.

Level 7 – Philosopher Level

This is the level of **awe**. The word “Philosopher” here isn’t about academic philosophy; it’s about a lover of wisdom in the deepest, spiritual sense. By the time someone reaches this state, their entire relationship with reality has transformed into something poetic, symbolic, and profoundly meaningful. The Philosopher is no longer *trying* to sound wise or be deep – they simply *see* life in layers now. Every encounter, every pattern, every small detail of the world around them carries lessons and reflections of truth. They’ve developed an intuitive, almost child-like wonder coupled with sage-like understanding.

The Philosopher’s life is marked by sincere mindfulness. They move through the world with an awareness that everything carries meaning — even the ordinary things. Having likely endured years of suffering, solitude, and sincere worship, they have emerged quieter, softer, and deeper. There is a noticeable presence about them – not a loud charisma, but a silent depth. They don’t fill space with talk; if anything, their silence itself seems to speak. When they do talk, people often remark that their words feel like they carry weight far beyond the surface meaning.

At this level, the person no longer needs all the answers neatly packaged. They are comfortable with *mystery*. In fact, they are in love with the Unknown, because they trust the One who knows. They don’t rush to judgment or to resolve every ambiguity. Where others might get anxious not knowing how something will turn out, the Philosopher ponders what this *unknowability* might be teaching them. They are patient with complexity and nuance.

They also seek *alignment* over excitement. While in earlier stages one might chase spiritual highs or new knowledge, at the Philosopher level one’s primary aim is to align fully with Allah’s ﷻ will. It’s a state of profound *surrender*, but not passive – it’s an active, joyous compliance with the Divine plan. The Philosopher’s questions to themselves are no longer, “How can I get what I want?” but rather, “How can I get *myself* to want what Allah ﷻ wills?”

They live in near-constant dhikr (remembrance of Allah ﷻ) — not always with the tongue (though often that too), but continuously with the heart. Their inward orientation is fixed, like a flower that instinctively turns toward the sun. You could say their heart is always facing the Divine. They carry an atmosphere of remembrance around them. It shows in their serenity, in the softness of their gaze, in the weight and wisdom of their words. They walk the earth as if they are hearing a subtle, beautiful melody — one that others cannot hear. It is the melody of Allah’s ﷻ signs in all things.

One striking aspect: the Philosopher doesn’t have to deliberate hard about ethical choices at this point; through years of practice and devotion, doing the right thing has become somewhat second-nature. It’s been internalized. They have a kind of *spiritual muscle memory*. That doesn’t mean they’re infallible, but rather that their first impulse is often the wise one, because they’ve trained their soul through discipline and trials. When they encounter negativity or provocation, their response is calm and measured. To an observer, it might seem “instinctual,” but it’s actually the result of long cultivation. They simply *know* how to act in accordance with their principles, almost reflexively. This ease of righteous action further humbles them – because they know it is nothing but Allah’s ﷻ grace allowing them to react with such clarity.

For example, if someone were to insult or yell at a person at this level, the Philosopher might just smile softly, perhaps offer a kind word or prayer for that person, and walk away in peace. Not out of weakness

or avoidance, but out of mastery of the ego. They harbor no grudges from the incident – it’s as if muddy water was thrown at a polished mirror; the water doesn’t stick, it just falls off. Their tranquility cannot be easily disturbed, because it isn’t rooted in circumstances; it’s rooted in Allah ﷻ.

In summary: at Level 7, they are no longer striving to walk the path — they simply live it. Their character reflects years of worship, self-mastery, and trust in Allah ﷻ.

What Defines This Level

In this stage, much of the defining characteristics are inward, but they manifest outwardly in subtle yet recognizable ways. If you are at the Philosopher Level, you likely find that you:

- **Live in constant reflection.** You spend a lot of time in solitude or quiet contemplation, not because you’re antisocial, but because that’s where you drink deeply from the well of truth. Even in company, your mind and heart continuously observe and reflect. Sitting by a window with a cup of tea and gazing at the sky could be an hours-long active experience for you, filled with insights and gratitude.
- **Feel drawn to nature, silence, and simplicity.** A walk in the woods or watching birds at dawn moves you more than any entertainment or party possibly could. You find *significance* in natural phenomena – the cycles of the moon, the change of seasons, the pattern of veins in a leaf – all of it speaks to you of the Creator. Crowds, noise, and excessive luxury might even feel suffocating or overstimulating now. You cherish the simple and the silent because that’s where you often sense Allah’s ﷻ presence the most.
- **See layers of meaning in creation and events.** It’s almost as if you have dual vision: you see the outward reality, and simultaneously you see a deeper significance. For instance, watching a child at play might remind you of the innocence of the soul or how we are before Allah ﷻ – completely reliant and joyful in the moment. Or if you lose something important, you immediately think, “What attachment is Allah ﷻ training me to let go of here?” Everything becomes a mirror reflecting spiritual lessons.
- **Have an intense awareness of the Divine in daily life.** You often ask yourself questions like, “What is Allah ﷻ telling me right now, through this situation?” or “How does this moment point me to my Lord?” For example, when something beautiful happens, you think of it as an ayah (sign) of Allah’s ﷻ mercy. When you see injustice or ugliness, you ponder how it relates to the absence of divine guidance or the lessons of patience and faith. In essence, **tawheed** (the oneness of Allah ﷻ) isn’t just an idea to you – it’s the lens through which you view reality. Everything connects back to Allah ﷻ in your worldview.
- **Contemplate death and the afterlife regularly.** This isn’t done in a morbid or anxious way, but with longing and perspective. You frequently remember that this life is transient. Thoughts of meeting Allah ﷻ, of the souls’ journey after death, of Paradise and Hellfire, are vivid and present in your consciousness. This gives you a certain detachment from worldly anxieties and also a continuous drive to purify yourself. You might often whisper prayers for a good end, or quietly send salawat (blessings) on Prophet Muhammad ﷺ when you think of meeting him in the hereafter.

- **Perceive Allah's ﷻ subtlety (latīf) in everything.** One of Allah's ﷻ names is *Al-Latīf* – The Subtle, The Gentle. At this level, you begin to witness that subtle hand of Allah ﷻ in the smallest details. You recognize “coincidences” as deliberate gifts. The way a friend's call came just when you were feeling down – you see Allah's ﷻ kindness in that. The way a plan didn't work out – you see His protection in that. Small daily events that others might dismiss as chance, you see as personalized touches of divine care or teaching. Your heart often says “SubhānAllāh” (Glory be to Allah ﷻ) in astonishment, even if your tongue doesn't utter it out loud every time.

In essence, what defines a Philosopher-level individual is that **their thoughts orbit around Allah ﷻ, not around themselves**. The ego has been quieted significantly. Life is no longer filtered through “How does this affect *me*?” but rather “What does this signify in the grand scheme that Allah ﷻ is unfolding?”

Common Experiences at This Level:

- **Solitude without loneliness:** You often find immense comfort in being alone. Not because you dislike people, but because solitude is where you commune with the divine and your own heart most deeply. You could spend long stretches alone and feel completely full and connected. This doesn't mean you never engage socially, but you genuinely *enjoy* solitude, whereas many people find it uncomfortable. It feels like quality time with the most loyal friend – Allah ﷻ.
- **Misunderstood by others at times:** People who operate at a faster, more material pace might not fully “get” you. They might find you too quiet, too detached, or even accuse you of not caring enough about worldly matters. If you share a deep reflection, some may react like, “Whoa, that's heavy,” or not comprehend what you mean. This is normal; the Prophet ﷺ said that the believers who deeply remember Allah ﷻ may appear “strange” to others. It doesn't usually bother you much if you're misunderstood, but you notice it. You just realize that not everyone can meet you at the depth you often dwell in.
- **Moved profoundly by beauty:** You might find yourself unexpectedly choked up or in tears from things of beauty – and not just religious beauty like Qur'an recitation or nasheeds (though certainly those too), but even a sunset, a kind act you witnessed, or a line of poetry. Your heart has been made very soft by dhikr and reflection, so it responds to beauty (which is truth's sister) very intensely. You also see beauty in things others might not – like in the dignified posture of an old man praying in the mosque, or in the resilience of a weed pushing through concrete. It *all* touches you deeply.
- **Less need for material stimulation:** At this point, you might notice you crave less entertainment or novelty. It's not that you don't appreciate good food or nice things – you do, with gratitude – but you don't *need* them. You could eat simple meals repeatedly and be fine. You could wear the same modest outfits and not think much of it. The extravagance or constant hunger for “the next new thing” just isn't there. You're quite content with a minimalist approach because your main source of “stimulation” is internal now (in reflection and worship).
- **Drawn to the wisdom of the ages:** You likely spend more time reading or listening to works of true depth – like the Qur'an and its tafsir (exegesis), collections of hadith, stories of the Prophets and sages, or poetry that stirs the soul. The lives of the righteous predecessors, or any story of sincere devotion, fascinate and inspire you. You might find modern self-help or pop culture

literature to be shallow at this point; you thirst for the timeless. Sufi poetry, or the writings of Imam al-Ghazali, Rumi, Ibn al-Qayyim, etc., might resonate strongly if you come across them. This is a natural gravitation towards lights that match the light you are pursuing.

It's often the case that those at the Philosopher Level are *not* widely known or public figures. They may be a quiet elder in the community, the person always sitting in the back of the mosque who leaves immediately after prayer, or someone who chooses to serve in the background. They don't need or want recognition. In fact, they often flee from it. They may deliberately keep a low profile, because the sweetness of privacy with Allah ﷻ outweighs any pleasure of public acknowledgment.

One could say: *They aren't impressed by themselves, so they have no interest in impressing others.* They just want nearness to Allah ﷻ.

Emotional Landscape:

The emotional world of a Philosopher-level individual is characterized by an incredible mix of tranquility and yearning:

- **Constant humility:** A hallmark feeling is, "I know so little." No matter how much insight you've been given, it only makes you more aware of the vast ocean of what you *don't* know. This humility isn't painful; it's almost comforting, because it keeps you dependent on Allah ﷻ and free of arrogance. You frequently feel like a beginner before God, and that feels right.
- **Deep-seated calm:** There is a profound calm that pervades your heart most of the time. Even when life is uncertain or chaotic externally, there's a part of you that remains at peace, anchored in trust (tawakkul). It's the kind of calm that people around you can sometimes sense – they might comment that being with you makes them feel calm, even if you said little. This tranquility is a sign of rida (contentment with Allah's ﷻ decree) settling in your soul.
- **Joy in small things:** The little gifts of everyday life bring you genuine joy. A smile from a stranger, a cool breeze, the taste of water when you're thirsty – these can elicit a spontaneous "Alhamdulillah!" (Praise be to God) from your heart. You sometimes find yourself smiling or even tearing up at such moments of simple happiness, because you see them as gestures of love from Allah ﷻ.
- **Longing and homesickness:** Alongside the calm, there is often an undercurrent of longing – a sweet sort of sadness. It's an ache for the akhirah (the hereafter), a homesickness for a world more pure than this one, and ultimately a yearning to see Allah ﷻ and be near Him. At times, perhaps late at night or when hearing a moving verse, you might whisper, "O Allah ﷻ, I miss You." It's that feeling of "This world is beautiful... but I yearn for the closeness of the next." This longing doesn't make you despair of life; it inspires you to work righteousness and detach from sins, because you *really* want that meeting with the Divine to be on the best terms.

It's at this level that the soul is effectively being weaned off of the dunya (the worldly life), but without bitterness or resentment. It's not that you despise the world; actually you see more beauty in it than ever. But you also see *through* it. You see that all the beauty here is just a hint of what's to come, and all the pain here is also temporary and purposeful. The dunya becomes like a translucent veil – you can appreciate its patterns, but you're always aware of the light beyond it.

The Dangers of This Level:

- **Detachment turning into neglect of others:** Being so inward and upward-focused, Philosophers can sometimes withdraw too much from the community or family responsibilities. The danger is becoming so absorbed in contemplation or personal worship that one neglects the needs of others (who may still be at earlier stages and very much need guidance or support). In Islam, pure contemplation is virtuous, but **service** and fulfilling duties are also paramount. If Shaytan can't tempt you with sin, he may tempt you with an excess of isolation. One must remember the Prophet ﷺ did not permit monks or monastic isolation in Islam; the challenge is to be with Allah ﷻ *while* being constructively with people.
- **Subtle spiritual pride:** Yes, even here pride can rear its head. It might creep in as a feeling of being special or "chosen" because you experience these deep states that others don't. You might start seeing yourself as above the common folk. It's very dangerous because it can be so subtle – a thought like, "These people are so superficial" might flit through your mind. If entertained, it contradicts the very humility that defines this level. The antidote is to recall how, in the sight of Allah ﷻ, you truly know nothing and control nothing, and that He could strip away this insight in an instant if He willed. Also recall how the Prophet ﷺ, despite being who he was, engaged humbly with everyone and never considered himself above even the lowliest companion.
- **Drifting from Shari'ah and grounded practice:** Sometimes, people who reach high states of spiritual experience can become less observant of the "structure" or law (Shari'ah). They might think the rules are for those on the way, and "I'm already close to Allah ﷻ, so minor formalities aren't as crucial." This is a trap. No one is above the sacred law; in fact, truly reaching this level means you embody the Shari'ah even more lovingly (like Prophet Muhammad ﷺ who *increased* in devotion the closer he drew to Allah ﷻ). Going "too deep" without staying tethered to the Quran and Sunnah can lead to deviations or even delusions. Maintaining outward practices and communal worship is a safety rope that keeps the deep diver connected to the boat, so to speak.

What Can Help:

- **Time with grounded scholars or elders:** Seek out or stay connected to those who have great spiritual depth *and* are firmly footed in the orthodox practices. These could be wise scholars, imams, or righteous elders in your community. Spend time with them. Their presence will reassure you that it's possible to be profoundly connected to Allah ﷻ while still leading and serving among people. They can also notice if you start drifting oddly and pull you back gently.
- **Balance inward reflection with outward service:** Deliberately allocate some time to serve others, teach beneficial knowledge, or help in community projects. This ensures you're not just feeding *your* soul but also translating it into good for others. Serving people for Allah's ﷻ sake (**khidmah**) is itself a high form of worship and can bring insights you'd never get alone. It also keeps you empathetic and grounded in real-world compassion, preventing an overly esoteric mindset.
- **Writing or journaling:** You may have a flood of insights and subtle observations. Writing them down helps clarify them and also makes them translatable to others if you ever decide to share. Journaling your reflections can be an act of gratitude as well – documenting what Allah ﷻ is

revealing to you. It creates a map of your journey that could guide someone else later, or at least serve as a mirror for your own consistency.

- **Anchoring in the Qur'an and Sunnah:** Continuously return to the Qur'an as *the ultimate source* of guidance and reflection. No matter how deep your personal reflections, the Qur'an will always take you deeper and keep you on track. You'll find new meanings in it at this stage that you never saw before. Similarly, studying the life and hadith of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ keeps you connected to the perfect example. It prevents any "floaty" detours because you measure your experiences against the lived wisdom of the Prophet and his companions. Essentially, the revealed guidance acts as both inspiration and calibration for your soul.

What They Need Most:

- **Spiritual companionship (suhba):** Even at this stage, and perhaps especially at this stage, having at least one or two companions of the heart is invaluable. These are people who "speak the language of awe" – meaning they understand your expressions of love for Allah ﷻ, they too delight in remembering Him, and they strive for the akhirah like you do. With such friends, you don't have to dilute your devotion or explain your yearning; they get it. Even if they are not exactly at the same level, what matters is a shared orientation toward Allah ﷻ. Such companionship combats loneliness and can be a source of great strength and joy. Historically, even great saints kept circles of dhikr or close spiritual friends, knowing that "Iron sharpens iron, and believer sharpens believer."
- **Freedom to reflect:** You function best when you have the freedom to withdraw when needed. So you need an environment (or a family understanding) that allows you periodic retreats – maybe a corner at home that is your quiet spot, or the ability to go to the masjid when it's empty, or to take solitary walks. If life circumstances start crowding you such that you *never* get quiet time, it will feel suffocating. So it's important to gently ensure you have that space. Those around you should learn that your occasional need for seclusion isn't rejection of them, but rather you recharging with Allah ﷻ so you can be your best *with* them later.
- **Permission to be unseen:** You need to know it's okay not to push yourself into roles that don't suit you at this point. Some people might expect you to take on big leadership since you're wise. If that's not your calling (and often at this stage, one prefers anonymity), you have to allow yourself to remain low-profile. The ego might tempt, "You should be famous for this knowledge," but your soul wants privacy. Give yourself permission to do good quietly, even if no one ever knows. In fact, you prefer it that way. You need to feel it's *enough* that Allah ﷻ sees you. And indeed, it is more than enough.
- **Du'a for continued sincerity and light:** Lastly, you need to continuously ask Allah ﷻ to keep you sincere and to increase you in nur (light). Nothing is guaranteed; hearts flip. The higher one ascends, the more one begs Allah ﷻ to keep them firm. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, who was the most God-conscious of all, used to pray, "*O Turner of Hearts, keep my heart firm on Your religion.*" So you ask Allah ﷻ to keep your heart steadfast, to protect you from pride, and to allow you to die in a state that pleases Him. You become like a beggar at His door in the dark of night, saying "Please don't let this heart deviate now that You have guided it." That du'a is your lifeline.

This level is *sacred*. It is less about doing and more about **being**. Less about leading and more about **listening** – listening to the guidance of Allah ﷻ in everything. A person at the Philosopher Level walks the earth with gentle feet, leaving light footprints, and a heart heavy with remembrance.

If they continue walking in sincerity, another transformation awaits by Allah's ﷻ grace. The nearly invisible quiet influence they carry begins to turn into a true legacy of spirit. The private insight they've nurtured becomes guidance that subtly spreads to others. And the awe that has filled their heart becomes a light that emanates to all around. In time:

- The quiet becomes legacy.
- The insight becomes guidance.
- And the awe becomes light.

And so the journey flows into **Level 8 – the Grandmaster Level**.

Level 8 – Grandmaster Level

Before we begin, it must be said: The difference between the Philosopher and the Grandmaster is not found in a sudden event or new revelation. It is found in time. Years — sometimes decades — of continued sincerity, hidden devotion, and quiet service. The Philosopher never set out to become a Grandmaster. They didn't chase it, claim it, or even notice it happening. They simply kept walking. Kept worshipping. Kept softening. Eventually, their hair turned white. Their voice gentled. And one day, without ceremony, they had become something else entirely — not in their own eyes, but in the eyes of others. And even then, they would never acknowledge it.

To them, they are still learning. Still striving. Still just a servant of Allah ﷻ trying to embody the Sunnah and reflect the light of those before them. They view themselves as simple students, or perhaps, if pressed, as spiritual professors. But others see more. And that silent recognition — not claimed, but bestowed — is what makes the Grandmaster level what it is.

Even that white hair, in Islamic tradition, is a sign of mercy. A divine reminder that time is passing, and that you are approaching your return. It's a call not toward pride, but toward worship. Toward closeness. It's as if Allah ﷻ is saying, "You are ripening now. Prepare to meet Me."

This level cannot be pursued or "achieved" by sheer effort; it arrives by the grace of Allah ﷻ, usually after decades of sincere striving, sacrifice, and purification. The term "Grandmaster" here does not denote a title one claims — it denotes a state that one lives into. Often, it's only recognized in hindsight or by others; the person themselves would never claim to be at this level. In classical Islamic terms, this is the station of the **awliyā'** — the friends of Allah ﷻ.

A person at the Grandmaster Level walks the earth with a remarkable weight of sincerity and presence. There's a gravity to them — not a burden, but a spiritual gravitas. When they enter a room, hearts feel something, even if people can't articulate it. It's not because of their outer appearance or charisma, but because they carry the **light of Allah ﷻ** in their hearts, and light is naturally felt. They often say little, but their silence itself seems to contain wisdom. When they do speak, there is a soft tremor of genuine emotion and God-consciousness in their voice.

By this stage, the ego is thoroughly subdued, nearly extinct in influence. The Grandmaster has no interest in fame, power, or recognition. They often hide in plain sight as "nobodies." If you met one, you might initially have no idea — perhaps they're an older gentleman sweeping the mosque floors, or a grandmother who quietly cooks for the poor. Their greatness is largely invisible to the dunya. But those *with insight* or those whose hearts Allah ﷻ has opened will feel an intense love and respect for them without even knowing why.

At this level, a person has become what was described earlier as a "fortress of light" and a "guide without a sign." They don't wear badges of piety; they **are** piety. Through long years of walking the path, falling and getting up, practicing dhikr, crying in sujood (prostration), serving others for the sake of Allah ﷻ, and facing heartbreak after heartbreak with faith — through all that, Allah ﷻ has polished them into a nearly transparent mirror of guidance. When you sit with them, you feel closer to Allah ﷻ almost effortlessly.

They have *become a reflection of the Truth*, not because they are perfect (no human is perfect), but because they have been perfected by trial and mercy. As one scholar said, "They burned in the fire of

love and emerged as gold.” Allah ﷻ has poured **barakah** (blessing) into their being, so much so that others are blessed through them.

Consider the traits of the Grandmaster:

They are **unwavering**, but not rigid. Life’s ups and downs don’t toss them about; they remain firm upon the deen (religion) and trust in Allah ﷻ (tawakkul). Yet they are not inflexible or harsh – they bend with compassion where appropriate, always upholding principle with gentleness.

They are **gentle**, but not passive. They may speak softly and treat everyone with kindness, but when action is needed or injustice must be confronted, they are formidable and courageous. Their gentleness is born of strength, not weakness.

They are **powerful**, but not loud. They can have a profound impact on hearts and circumstances through their dua (supplication) and sheer sincerity, but you won’t find them raising their voice to dominate others. Their power is like that of gravity – silent, unseen, but tremendous.

They live **for the akhirah** (Hereafter). Their gaze is almost always on the horizon of eternity. This doesn’t mean they ignore worldly duties – on the contrary, they might be very diligent in work and family – but their ultimate concern is the pleasure of Allah ﷻ and success in the next life. Because of this focus, their *presence transforms the dunya* around them. It’s as if, by living in view of the akhirah, they uplift the world they’re in. People around them find themselves thinking of God more, yearning for goodness, feeling disgust for sin – even if the Grandmaster never directly says a word about those things.

There is a divine protection around these people. They are often referred to in stories of the pious as those whom if you wrong, Allah ﷻ Himself defends. There’s a hadith Qudsi (a sacred saying of Allah ﷻ reported by the Prophet ﷺ) where Allah ﷻ says: “*Whoever shows enmity to a friend of Mine (wali), I declare war upon him.*” These individuals are so beloved to Allah ﷻ that to harm them is to invite calamity on oneself (not due to their doing, but due to Allah’s ﷻ protectiveness over His friends). Conversely, to love them and be good to them invites immense blessings, because Allah ﷻ loves those who love His righteous servants.

They often **hide in plain sight**: “unknown by many—but deeply felt by the few who truly meet them.” Perhaps only a small circle recognizes their sanctity. The rest of the world might just find them odd or insignificant. And they prefer it that way, because it preserves their sincerity.

Their **lifestyle** tends to be very simple: They live for the akhirah, so their needs in this world are minimal. Their home is modest, maybe even sparse. They take only what they need. Excess wealth to them is just an opportunity to give sadaqah (charity). They eat simply, sleep adequately but might spend nights in prayer. Their tongue rarely speaks anything except truth or benefit – vain talk or gossip doesn’t interest them.

Their bodies often bear signs of worship: Perhaps you see the mark of sujood on their forehead, or, as is metaphorically said, “their wrists are calloused from the night prayer” – meaning they have spent countless nights in long prostrations to their Lord. They are truly the *‘ibād Ar-Rahmān* (servants of the Most Merciful) described in the Qur’an, who tread gently and spend the night in worship and prayer.

One notable quality: **Love for the Prophet ﷺ is constant and palpable in them.** It may be unspoken, but it’s like a fire in their heart that warms everything they do. You see it “woven into everything they do.”

They follow the Sunnah with both outward precision and inward spirit. Mention of the Prophet can bring them to tears. They send salawat frequently. In fact, their character is a living reflection of the prophetic character. If you want to imagine how the Sahaba (Companions) felt around the Prophet ﷺ – perhaps being around such a person gives a tiny glimpse, because he or she has internalized a fraction of that Prophetic light.

They often **serve the Ummah (community) from behind the curtain**. That means they might be the silent supporter behind big projects, or the one making dua that is actually the cause of the project's success while others think it was their own work. They don't care about credit. They just want to benefit the Ummah of Muhammad ﷺ and humanity at large, all without drawing attention to themselves.

Perhaps one of the most uncanny abilities at this level is how they **see straight into people's souls**. This isn't magic or clairvoyance; it's basīrah (insight) granted by Allah ﷻ to the people of purity. Because their hearts are so clean, they act like clear mirrors – sometimes when they meet you, they can discern what's in your heart better than you can. They aren't distracted by outward appearances, titles, credentials, or the masks people wear. They “smell” sincerity or insincerity almost immediately. If you approach them with a hidden pain, they just might address it without you saying a word, astonishing you. If you come to them bragging, they may smile but their eyes show they see through the bluster to the insecure soul beneath.

They do not engage with the “corpse” – meaning, the body and ego stuff that most people present – instead they speak directly to *what's alive* in a person: the fitrah (innate goodness) or the ailing soul that needs healing. They have a way of awakening the goodness in you, or making you aware of your own shortcomings, all with very few words.

Emotionally, **they carry grief but not resentment**. They often have a deep well of compassion which comes from experiencing pain and witnessing the suffering of others. They might often weep in private for the state of the world or for the people they make dua for. Yet, they hold no bitterness or grudges. Life might have hurt them, but it did not make them hard or resentful – it made them more loving and merciful.

In their presence, hearts remember. There is a description that the awliyā' *“speak a language that the heart remembers.”* It's like their reminders or even just their way of being resonates with a fitrah deep inside others. People around them often feel an urge to repent, or a sudden clarity about what they must do in their life to please Allah ﷻ, or just a peace that they haven't felt elsewhere.

They are leaders, but not by appointment or title – **leaders by presence**. People follow them out of love and trust, not because of official position.

In short, the Grandmaster level is extremely **rare** and cannot be purchased with anything but true, long-term, selfless devotion.

What Defines This Level

It's challenging to bullet “defines” for this level, but we can attempt to describe the outward signs and behaviors that tend to accompany such a soul. If you were at this level (and Allah ﷻ knows best who truly is), you would likely:

- **Radiate calm in the face of chaos:** In crises, all heads turn towards you almost instinctively. You have a calming effect. You yourself feel a serene trust in Allah ﷻ even when everyone else is panicking. Your presence reassures people that *“Alhamdulillah, it will be okay.”*
- **Embody dignity and self-restraint:** You conduct yourself with a quiet nobility. You aren’t swayed by impulses or provocations. There is a noticeable haya’ (modesty and sense of honor) in how you carry yourself. You don’t indulge in loose talk, uncontrolled laughter, or emotional outbursts. Yet, you are approachable and kind.
- **Guide without force:** People naturally come to you for advice, and you guide them, but you never force your opinion or try to control others. You might just pose a thought or tell a relevant story, and let it settle in their heart. There’s zero coercion in your method, yet it often results in deep transformation for the seeker.
- **Speak truth with compassion:** You are committed to Haqq (Truth). You will not lie or shy away from speaking what is right, even if it’s unpopular. However, you do so with immense wisdom and compassion. Your words, even if they are firm, do not bruise – they wake up. People feel that you criticize out of love, not out of ego. This makes even hard truths easier to accept from you.
- **Carry a heart connected to Allah ﷻ – and it shows.** While earlier levels had inner states that others might not notice, at this level that inner connection is so constant that it shines through. There’s a light in your face, an warmth in your smile, or an inexplicable aura of peace around you. People often describe you as “different, in a good way,” or they say meeting you is like a spiritual experience.

In terms of your *modus operandi*: you **no longer rely on theory or even just emotional intelligence**. By now, you operate on **hikmah** – a divinely inspired wisdom that Allah ﷻ places in the hearts of His servants. Hikmah is to say and do the right thing at the right time in the right way. It’s beyond book knowledge; it’s a gift that comes from deeply living the knowledge over time. Your instincts are finely tuned to what pleases Allah ﷻ. Sometimes you may find yourself saying something profound you never planned – that is Allah ﷻ guiding your tongue because of your sincerity. Your silence, too, is full and purposeful; you’re comfortable not filling the air with chatter.

People around you feel safe not because you cater to their egos (you certainly do not), but because your soul has been through the tempering fires of trials, polished by nights of dhikr (remembrance), and humbled thoroughly by knowing Allah ﷻ. So when they are near you, subconsciously they sense: *“Here is someone who will not hurt me, misuse me, or deceive me. Here is someone who sees me, yet still cares.”* That ambiance of genuine care and non-judgmental compassion makes others open up or at least breathe easier around you.

Common Experiences at This Level:

- **Being sought out unexpectedly:** As at the Professor level, you are sought for guidance – but now it might be by people you don’t even know or those much “higher” than you in worldly status. You might find a troubled teenager confiding in you, and also a top businessman or scholar secretly contacting you for advice or dua. It’s not something you advertise; it just happens by

word-of-mouth or a sort of spiritual magnetism. People sense you can help, even if you have no formal office or title.

- **Effortless guidance flowing from you:** You might notice that advising or helping others has become very intuitive. You don't prepare for it; when someone comes with a problem, often the right words just *come*. Sometimes you yourself are astonished at what you said, knowing it wasn't really from you – it was an inspiration (ilham) from Allah ﷻ for that person's sake. Guiding others feels less like a task and more like *being a conduit*. And it never drains you, because you're not giving from ego; it's passing through you from a Higher source.
- **Detachment from worldly noise:** You feel almost "out of the matrix" of worldly clamor. The latest trends, the societal frenzies, the political dramas – you might be aware of them, but they don't deeply unsettle you or occupy your mind. You're in this world but not of it. To others, this looks like unshakeable focus or neutrality. It's not that you don't care about injustice or wrongs – you do, deeply – but you address what you can and leave the rest to Allah ﷻ without losing your tranquility.
- **Intense clarity on priorities:** At this stage, you have laser clarity on what truly matters. It's as if you constantly see through the distractions. So you prioritize worship, family rights, service to others, and preparation for the hereafter, and you do not procrastinate on those. Meanwhile, if something doesn't matter in the big picture, you have no problem declining it or ignoring it. This clarity often makes you very efficient and purposeful in how you spend your day. You're not scattered.
- **Heightened spiritual sensitivity:** You can often *sense* the spiritual state of your surroundings. When entering a place, you might sense if it's filled with malā'ikah (angels) or if it's a place of heedlessness. You might meet a person and sense brightness or darkness in their aura (again, as an inner perception). Additionally, you notice little divine "clues" in your environment that others would miss – like you talk about a certain virtue and suddenly you hear someone recite a verse about it, etc. These synchronicities feel normal to you now, as you see Allah's ﷻ hand in all things.

At this level, your life has become a balance of **hidden worship and silent influence**. You no longer need to preach to correct people; often just *being* who you are will inspire others to reflect and change. You don't run around trying to "fix" everyone – you simply *are*, firmly, a servant of Allah ﷻ, and that state in itself gently pulls others upward. Your **being** corrects, uplifts, and awakens others in a quiet but profound way.

Emotional Landscape:

Even at this lofty stage, you remain human and have an emotional life, though it is very refined:

- **Unshakeable inner peace:** A deep inner sakīnah (tranquility) dominates your emotional state. It doesn't mean you don't feel sadness or concern; you do, but underneath those passing feelings is a bedrock of peace stemming from full trust (tawakkul) in Allah ﷻ. You have a certitude that Allah ﷻ is with you and in control, so you're at peace with whatever comes. It's as if your soul is always saying, "*Surely, in the remembrance of Allah ﷻ do hearts find rest.*"

- **Longing for Allah ﷻ and the hereafter:** This only grows stronger. Sometimes the longing for meeting Allah ﷻ, for the Prophet ﷺ, and for the eternal home makes you weep privately. It's like being at the end of a long journey and anxious to reunite with the Beloved. This longing isn't born of impatience, but of love. It makes you even more avid in good deeds, but also detached enough that if death comes tomorrow, you'd greet it almost like a friend.
- **Softness in tone, firmness in principles:** Emotionally, you are very soft and gentle with people. Compassion flows easily. You might tear up when someone shares their pain; your empathy is finely tuned. Yet, if someone urges you to compromise on a principle or disobey Allah ﷻ, you are immovable. Your "No" can be as gentle as a whisper yet as firm as a mountain. This combination of gentleness and strength gives those around you both comfort and guidance.
- **Love manifesting as character:** Your love for the Prophet ﷺ and for Allah ﷻ simply shows in everything you do. It shows in how kindly you speak to the young and how respectfully you treat the old. It shows in the gratitude that shines on your face when you eat or drink. It's visible in the tear that forms when you hear the Quran or the way you light up at any mention of khayr (goodness). In truth, your character itself – kind, patient, truthful, humble – *is* an evidence of that love, because it is modeled after the one whom you love ﷻ.

You have a profound **love for people**, too – not because of who they are, but because of the Creator who made them. You see every person as a soul known to Allah ﷻ, full of potential for tawba (repentance) and growth. So you serve people tirelessly and sincerely. But – and this is important – you are **not dependent on them**. You don't need their approval or reciprocation. If they fail you, it doesn't break you because you were never working for their recognition anyway. You're like the sun, giving light and warmth because that's what you're made to do, not because the planets give anything back.

You **give generously**, but you also retreat to refill in private worship. The pattern of the Prophet ﷺ and his true inheritors is to expend themselves for others during the day and then recharge with Allah ﷻ by night. You have mastered this balance. You might be found feeding the poor, counseling families, or teaching by day – and by night, you stand before Allah ﷻ, shedding tears and seeking His nearness. This ensures that your giving is always from a place of fullness, not depletion.

You have no interest in being seen or applauded by the world. In fact, you often ask Allah ﷻ to hide you. The only eyes you yearn to notice you are Allah's ﷻ – and He is the All-Seeing. So long as He sees you and is pleased, that is enough. You live by the hadith, *"Actions are by their intentions,"* and your sole intention is *"for Allah ﷻ alone."*

The Dangers of This Level:

Even at this high station, a few dangers lurk (albeit subtler than before):

- **Spiritual burnout:** Because you likely care for many and maybe carry others' burdens in prayer and counsel, there is a risk of fatigue if you don't pace yourself. Some awliya' have literally fallen ill or died young from exerting themselves too much for others and not resting enough. While martyrdom of effort is noble, one is still accountable to preserve oneself for as long as Allah ﷻ wills service. You must continue the prophetic model of balancing acts of worship and rest, family rights and community rights. Never assume you're beyond the need for respite.

Remember, even the Prophet ﷺ took naps (qaylula), ate heartily at times, and sought enjoyment with family – all in moderation.

- **Hidden ego or vanity:** By now, obvious ego is gone, but there is a sneaky kind of vanity that can still nip at the heels: being subtly proud of one's humility or goodness. If Shaytan cannot get you to be proud of achievements (because you attribute them to Allah ﷻ), he might try to get a sliver of "Well, I am truly nothing... but perhaps that makes me something special." It's paradoxical, but a whisper like that can come. The cure is perpetual gratitude and fear. Gratitude that any goodness is purely from Allah' ﷻ s favor, and fear that it could be taken anytime. Essentially, maintaining the attitude: *"O Allah ﷻ, I am nothing without You. Do not leave me to myself even for the blink of an eye."*
- **Over-isolation (excess zuhd):** At this level one might be inclined to seclude completely with Allah ﷻ and leave creation entirely. While temporary retreats are good, permanently abandoning societal roles is not the way of our Prophet ﷺ. The danger is thinking that spending all one's time in personal worship is better than engaging with the messy world. In truth, serving Allah's ﷻ creation is an act of worship of the highest order. Some saints did become reclusive in history, but the shining examples (like the Khulafa' Rashideen, the great Imams, etc.) stayed amidst people. Continuing to show up to the mosque, to the gatherings of knowledge, to community events, even if you feel "beyond" them, actually keeps you integrated and benefits others. Asceticism (zuhd) is praiseworthy, but not when it means hiding away your light where no one else can benefit from it.

To guard against these, one must remain *muraqib* (in a state of vigilant awareness of Allah ﷻ) and also be open to the counsel of other righteous ones if they see an imbalance. Even a Grandmaster needs a friend to say, "You look tired, rest," or "Come join us in this effort, we need you."

Practically, you **must remain close to the Source** always: stay devoted to the Qur'an, keep frequenting the masjid and circles of knowledge (even if just to sit humbly and remember Allah ﷻ), and keep righteous companions. The times we live in are full of trials; no one is totally safe until they meet Allah ﷻ. The Grandmaster knows this and thus keeps a lifeline to every means of guidance and humility.

What Can Help:

- **Regular moments of renewal:** Continue secret acts of worship that are just for you and Allah ﷻ – the late night tahajjud prayer, abundant dhikr when alone, gentle weeping in dua, long stretches of Quran recitation in the quiet morning hours. These moments are your fuel. They flush out any creeping worldly dust from your heart daily and refill you with sincerity and love. They are also where you present all the people you care for to Allah ﷻ, transferring their burdens from your weak hands to His perfect care.
- **Time with sincere believers:** While you may be a guide to many, make sure to spend time with those whose company makes *you* remember Allah ﷻ. Maybe it's attending a study circle held by a scholar you respect, or visiting a friend who has an aura of shukr and sabr (gratitude and patience). The point is to be around those who don't flatter you, but rather join you in mutual remembrance of God. It keeps you from any sense of "above-ness" and provides solace for your

heart too. The awliya often recognize each other and find comfort together, even if they sit in silence.

- **Deep reflection on death and the Hereafter:** Keep the Akhirah vivid. Visit graveyards if possible. Reflect on how close the meeting with Allah ﷻ could be. At this stage, thinking of death isn't scary for you – it's intimate. It's polishing the mirror more and more to be ready for that presentation to the King. It also ensures that you continue to prioritize what truly matters and hurry towards the finishing line with excellence.
- **Connecting with other hidden awliya:** Sometimes, God arranges for his awliya to cross paths. If you sense someone of similar spiritual caliber or a bit above, connect with them quietly. Not for validation – but for *ukhuwwah* (brotherhood/sisterhood) and consultation in tough matters. The great gnostics of the past often were in correspondence or friendship, away from the public eye, strengthening each other with advice and dua. It's a sunnah (prophetic way) for the people of insight to support each other.

What They Need Most:

- **Spiritual privacy:** Despite their influence, these souls need a life of quiet sincerity away from the spotlight. They work best when unobserved by the masses. They prefer anonymity, so they can do their work solely for Allah ﷻ. Thus they need a degree of privacy respected by others. If you know such a person, don't publicize them; let them remain in the intimate company of God without worldly disruption. They need that space to maintain *ihsan* (excellence in worship as if seeing Allah ﷻ).
- **Righteous heirs or successors:** They often think about the light they carry and who to pass it to. "Who will continue this khayr after I'm gone?" is a concern for them, not out of ego, but out of care for the community. They need to find or be provided with students or companions who can carry the torch forward. Not to do things exactly their way, but to keep the legacy of sincerity and wisdom going. So having one or two trustworthy proteges or a circle of younger believers to invest in is something they value.
- **An unshakable intention:** Their life motto is something like, "*I live for Allah ﷻ, and I will die for Allah ﷻ.*" They need to hold onto this pure intention unwaveringly. And usually they do – by this point their niyyah is like a polished diamond. But they will often renew it verbally in dua: "*O Allah ﷻ, for You alone.*" This helps keep every action, however mundane, in service of their Beloved Lord.
- **Tongue in Istighfar, Heart in Love:** They keep seeking forgiveness (*istighfar*) out of humility, and keep their heart in constant love of Allah ﷻ. This combination ensures they never get complacent (*istighfar* acknowledges they can never worship enough) and never despair (love propels them forward joyfully). It's said about some saints that their last words were *istighfar* or *shahada* because that's what their tongue was habituated to, and they passed with Allah's ﷻ name on their lips and His love in their hearts.

This level, being so rare, is a pure gift from Allah ﷻ. One does not "earn" it per se, but one's striving and sincerity invite Allah's ﷻ grace to grant it. It comes after walking through the fire of tests and repeatedly

choosing faith and humility at every juncture. It is a gift given to those who sought *nothing* but Allah ﷻ through all the veils.

Such a person realizes deeply: *You are not here to collect followers or worldly achievements; you are here to plant trees in Jannah.* Every action is an investment in the eternal garden. Every sacrifice is a seed. They often remind others and themselves of the hadith, *“This world is the field of the Hereafter.”*

The Grandmaster does not lead with ego – they lead with submission to Allah ﷻ. And in that submission lies their secret of influence: they are helped by the Lord of the worlds, so how could they not succeed?

And above them, shining through all the levels as the ultimate model and guide, is the most beloved of Allah ﷻ ... the light of **Prophet Muhammad** ﷺ.

Above All – The Light of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

This is not a “level” of the hierarchy – it is the pinnacle and foundation of all levels. It is the horizon every seeker walks toward and the measuring stick for every stage of development. Above every rank, above every soul, above every human possibility, stands the most beloved of all creation: **Muhammad ﷺ**, the Seal of the Prophets, the light of guidance, the mercy to all worlds. In Islamic understanding, he is the perfect human being and the one who attained the absolute peak of servitude and closeness to Allah ﷻ.

The Prophet ﷺ is not part of the ladder of growth – **he is the summit** and the ideal to which the ladder leads. In fact, any virtue or wisdom found at any level of this journey is but a sip from the ocean of his example. He is the divine exception in humanity: protected from sin (*‘ishmah*), chosen by Allah ﷻ for the final message, and the closest of all creation to the Creator.

Let us reflect on who he is:

He ﷺ **was the embodiment of mercy**. The Qur’an testifies to this, calling him “a mercy to all the worlds.” — **Surah Al-Anbiya (21:107)**. He showed compassion to friends and enemies alike, to humans and animals, to believers and disbelievers. His entire mission was rooted in wanting good for everyone.

He **balanced power with tenderness**. He led armies and nations, yet at home he mended his own shoes and cuddled his grandchildren. He could face the fiercest opponents on the battlefield with courage, and moments later weep in prayer begging for his people’s forgiveness.

He was **unmatched in patience, wisdom, and presence**. In 23 years of prophethood filled with hardship, he never once wavered in delivering the message or lost composure out of personal anger. His decisions were guided by revelation and an intellect sharpened by divine insight. And anyone who met him felt seen, heard, and valued – such was his presence that people felt he loved them the most.

He **walked in humility while carrying the heaviest trust ever given to a human**. Despite being chosen as Allah’s ﷻ Messenger, he lived simply – sometimes going hungry for days so others could eat. He said, “I am but a servant of Allah ﷻ; I eat like a servant eats and sit as a servant sits.” He never made people feel small; he lifted others up and attributed all credit to Allah ﷻ.

Truly, when we speak of levels of character or consciousness, all of our growth is but a faint shadow compared to the blazing light of Muhammad ﷺ. Every stage of our journey is essentially a step closer to reflecting a ray of his prophetic character. Not to equal him (no one can), but to emulate him according to our capacity.

He is the **scale** by which we measure our actions and the **mirror** through which we seek what pleases Allah ﷻ. If you want to know what the ultimate *Insān Kāmil* (Perfected Human) looks like, look at him.

What Makes Him ﷺ Unmatched:

- **Divine selection:** Allah ﷻ chose him from among all of humanity to receive the final revelation (the Qur’an) – a direct word of Allah ﷻ that would guide mankind till the end of time. This alone sets him apart. He was also taken on the Mi’rāj (Night Journey and Ascension) to witness the greatest signs of Allah ﷻ, a journey no other human has made in that way.
- **Highest honor in the Hereafter:** He ﷺ has been promised the **Maqām Maḥmūd** (the Praised Station) — a uniquely honored role on the Day of Judgment. While all prophets and people will

be concerned with themselves, saying *“Nafsī, nafsī”* (Myself, myself), he ﷺ alone will plead *“Ummatī, ummatī”* (My community, my community), and will be granted the supreme **intercession (shafā’ah)** for creation. As a result of this honored station, he will also be granted **al-Wasīlah** — the highest rank in Paradise, a position reserved for only one servant of Allah ﷻ. He ﷺ humbly taught us to ask Allah ﷻ for this for him after every adhān, knowing the immense mercy it entails for all of us.

- **Praise in the Quran itself:** Allah ﷻ directly praised the Prophet’s character in the Qur’an, saying: *“And indeed, you (O Muhammad) are upon a magnificent character.” Surah Al-Qalam (68), verse 4.* Imagine, the Lord of the Worlds certifying the excellence of a human being’s character in His eternal speech – that is an honor beyond our comprehension.
- **Heavenly and earthly honor:** In the heavens, his name is coupled with Allah’s ﷻ name in the declaration of faith – every time we say the shahādah, we mention him after Allah ﷻ. The angels know and honor him. Jibrīl (Gabriel) walked beside him on earth. On the earth, he is the Seal of Prophets – confirming and surpassing all who came before. No true believer can mention Allah ﷻ without eventually mentioning Muhammad ﷺ as well – such is the inseparability of his mission from God’s message.
- **Pre-creation light:** Our tradition holds that the very first soul or light that Allah ﷻ created was that of Muhammad ﷺ — often referred to as *Nūr Muhammad*, the Light of Muhammad. He was chosen in the realm of spirits long before he manifested on earth. It is narrated that when Allah ﷻ created the Throne (‘Arsh), He inscribed upon it: **“Lā ilāha illa Allah, Muhammadur Rasūl Allah”** — and when Adam (A.S) saw this inscription, he asked, “O my Lord, who is this whose name You have written beside Yours?” Allah ﷻ replied, “He is from your descendants, and were it not for him, I would not have created you.”
This divine mention confirms what many of the righteous have always known: that the love, light, and purpose of Muhammad ﷺ are interwoven into the very fabric of creation itself — long before the world came into being.
- **His unique concern and love:** He was the only one who openly wept for us (his future followers) centuries before we were even born. He would cry in his night prayers, *“O Allah ﷻ, my ummah, my ummah!”* — concerned about our wellbeing and salvation. In his final illness, as he experienced intense pain, he said, “Let these pains be on me and not on my Ummah.” Who else has loved us like this? No one. And on the Day of Judgment, as mentioned, when every soul will worry only for itself, he will be the one pleading, “My community, my community,” begging Allah ﷻ to forgive us. This unparalleled selflessness is why he is beloved to Allah ﷻ and to us.
- **His light touches everything:** The Prophet ﷺ is the destination of love for every seeker. This entire journey we described – from total unawareness to the highest sainthood – is actually a journey toward embodying, in fractional measure, the qualities of Muhammad ﷺ. He is the human manifestation of the Qur’an (as his wife Aisha said, “His character was the Qur’an”). Thus, drawing closer to his way is drawing closer to Allah’s ﷻ message.

He is not just one step in the journey of life – **he is the destination of love and the path of beauty itself.** As one poet said, *“O Muhammad, you are the road to God, and you are more wondrous than the road.”* Meaning, by following him we reach Allah ﷻ, and in doing so we find the most exquisite example.

So what does it mean for us, practically, to admire and follow the Prophet ﷺ? Especially in our daily lives, far removed from the blessed era he lived in? Here are some guiding principles:

What It Means to Admire the Prophet ﷺ:

- **Study his Sīrah (life) as a mirror:** Learn about his life's events not just as distant history, but as a personal guide. When you read how he dealt with adversity, reflect on your own trials. When you see his compassion, ask how you can implement it today. Let his life story challenge you and inspire you to grow. We should see in his journey the archetypes of our own struggles and learn from the best responses.
- **Speak his name with reverence:** When you mention "Prophet Muhammad," do so with love and respect, not casually like any other name. Some will even say "Sayyidinā Muhammad" (Our Master Muhammad) to express honor. Always add "ﷺ" or "peace and blessings be upon him" – not as a ritual only, but from the heart, wishing the best for the one who benefited you most.
- **Send Salawat frequently:** Sending salutations (ṣalāt) upon the Prophet – such as saying "Allāhumma ṣalli 'alā Muhammad wa 'alā āli Muhammad..." – should become as regular as breathing. The Prophet ﷺ said whoever sends one blessing upon him, Allah ﷻ sends ten blessings upon that person in return. It is a way of connecting to him and receiving mercy. Make it a habit especially on Fridays and whenever you remember him. This also increases love in the heart, because praying for someone is a well-known way to deepen love for them.
- **Measure yourself by his pleasure:** In moments of choice, quietly ask yourself, "*Would this action/thought make the Prophet ﷺ proud of me or not?*" When tempted by sin: "If he were watching, would I do this?" When about to react out of anger: "Is this how he responded to provocation?" Use his example as the criterion. We know he is spiritually aware of his Ummah's deeds (some narrations indicate our salawat and deeds are shown to him). We should aspire to not do anything that we would be ashamed of if he knew.
- **Notice him in everything good you do:** Recognize that every time you eat with gratitude, or treat your parents with kindness, or forgive someone who hurt you, or smile at a stranger, you are following his Sunnah. Consciously link that action in your mind: "*O Allah ﷻ, I do this because I learned it from Your Messenger.*" This transforms mundane acts into acts of love for him. It also makes you aware that his teachings permeate all aspects of life – eating, family, emotions, leadership, worship – everything. The more you become aware, the more you realize you are walking in his footsteps daily.
- **Emulate his beautiful qualities in every role:** If you're a parent, study how he was with children (merciful, playful, gentle guidance). If you're a leader at work, observe how he led (consultative, just, leading by example). As a friend, see his loyalty and cheerfulness. As a worshipper, see his devotion and balance. The idea is: *live as if he is your model in each role you play*. That is true admiration – not just adoring him in theory, but embodying what you can of him in practice.

To truly follow him is to **walk the path of beauty**, even in the midst of grief or difficulty. It is to seek truth, even if you must stand alone. It is to embody light, even in a dark world. His life was not easy – he buried children, was exiled, starved, wounded in battle, slandered by enemies, and more – yet he

responded with unparalleled grace, patience, and forgiveness. Thus, to love him is to aspire to handle our own trials with some of that Prophetic grace.

The Role of the Prophet ﷺ in the Levels (Our Journey):

At every stage of our individual development, the Prophet's example and intercession play a critical role:

- **At Level 2 (Awareness):** The person just waking up often asks, *"Who is Muhammad ﷺ?"* They become curious about faith and the messenger who brought it. Learning about him might spark their heart, because even a basic introduction to his character can ignite love or at least respect. Many people start their journey by reading about the Prophet's life and finding in him a reason to take faith seriously.
- **At Level 3 (Self-Awareness):** As one struggles with their own flaws and pain, they wonder, *"Would he ﷺ understand my struggle?"* There's comfort in realizing the Prophet faced and understood human pain – from loss of loved ones to being misunderstood by family. One begins to see him not as a remote figure, but as someone who *"bore our burdens"* in a sense. That helps a person be gentle with themselves and accepting of guidance.
- **At Level 4 (Social Awareness):** When learning to deal with people and their hurtfulness, one reflects, *"How did he ﷺ treat those who hurt him?"* This becomes a guiding light. We recall how he forgave the people of Ta'if who stoned him, how he prayed for those who mocked him rather than cursing them. His patience and forgiveness become the gold standard we strive for in our relationships. It checks our ego and resentment.
- **At Level 5 (The Journey level):** Here the motto might be that one *"walks with the Prophet ﷺ as a compass."* You start to consciously pattern your routine around his Sunnah – from morning remembrances to nightly reflection, from how you treat neighbors to how you respond to life events. You are effectively walking hand-in-hand (metaphorically) with the Prophet's teachings, letting them guide you step by step on your spiritual journey.
- **At Level 6 (Professor/Leadership):** The person at the Professor level **teaches his hadith**. Whether literally educating others on Islam or simply imparting wisdom, they will inevitably quote and transmit the Prophet's sayings and example. Because he is the source of our knowledge, the professor-level individual knows that any wisdom they have is best conveyed by tying it back to what the Prophet said. They become a vessel to spread his message.
- **At Level 7 (Philosopher):** Such a person **contemplates his character** deeply. They spend long moments reflecting on stories of the Prophet, deriving new insights on leadership, humility, and love from them. They might write poetry in praise of him or simply marvel at his attributes. They see connections between his life and the signs of Allah ﷻ in creation; e.g., thinking of his mercy when it rains (since rain is mercy) or his nur when they see the light of dawn. Everything meaningful reminds them of Muhammad ﷺ in some way.
- **At Level 8 (Grandmaster):** This person **lives in quiet love and longing for his company in the akhirah**. They emulate the Prophet's character so closely that others around them get a small taste of what being around the Prophet might have felt like. Yet in their hearts, they do not think of themselves as "like the Prophet" at all – rather, they are like a lover separated from their

beloved, quietly doing everything in remembrance of him and yearning to meet him one day. They likely send abundant peace and blessings on him, and in their private prayers ask to be with him in the Hereafter. Their every achievement, they present as a gift to him and to Allah ﷻ, hoping it will make them worthy of drinking from *al-Hawd* (the Prophetic Fountain in the Hereafter) at his blessed hand.

At every stage, **he is the light we chase, and the mercy we remember when we fall.** When we slip up, we recall how he is forgiving and how he taught us to seek Allah's ﷻ forgiveness – and we get back up, motivated by his compassionate example. When we excel, we credit his guidance and push further, knowing he set the bar higher.

Ultimately, **what we need most** in our journey is to cultivate a true relationship with Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, which in turn is a bridge to Allah's ﷻ love (since Allah ﷻ has made loving His Messenger a condition of His own love).

What We Need Most:

- **To long for him.** We need to develop a genuine yearning in our hearts to meet the Prophet ﷺ, to be in his presence. This longing makes the Hereafter tangible and fuels our motivation to do good (to be worthy of that meeting). When you long for someone, you naturally prepare to be as presentable as possible for them; similarly, longing for the Prophet makes us beautify our souls with iman and good deeds.
- **To learn from him.** It's not enough to have sentiment; we must actively learn his teachings. Study the ahadith, understand his Sunnah in daily life. Knowledge of his way is light on our path. Every level of growth needs the nourishment of Prophetic wisdom – otherwise we risk going astray or stagnating.
- **To love him more than ourselves.** The Prophet ﷺ said, "None of you truly believes until I am more beloved to him than his parents, children, and all of mankind." This is a high bar, but it's our target. Loving him more than ourselves means we'd gladly sacrifice our comfort, our ego, and even our lives in defense of his honor or to uphold his teachings. It means his desires (which align perfectly with Allah's ﷻ commands) take precedence over our whims. This love isn't abstract; it's proven in those daily choices – choosing Sunnah over nafs (ego), virtue over sin, his approval over people's.
- **To live in a way that would make him smile on Judgment Day.** We imagine that Day when humanity is gathered and the Prophet ﷺ is there, concerned for us. We want to be among those he recognizes as true followers. The thought "Would the Prophet be pleased with me if he saw my life right now?" can guide our actions powerfully. We want to be a source of pride for him, not disappointment. If we kept that in mind, how excellent would our conduct become! We'd strive to be the kind of Muslim that reflects well on Islam, because we represent his Ummah.

Because on that Day, when every prophet and every person will be saying "Myself, myself," our Prophet ﷺ will be the only one saying, **"Ummati, ummati" – "My community, my community."** He will be looking for us, calling out for us, interceding. We dare not show up on that Day having turned away from him in life. We want to be among those he intercedes for, those he embraces at the Fountain and whose thirst is quenched forever by his hand.

He is the one who will **intercede** for us when we have no excuses left. He is the one who will wait for us at the Hawḍ al-Kawthar (the Fountain of Abundance) to welcome us. He is the one whose love should be kindled in our hearts like a burning flame – lighting our way in the darkest times.

He is, ultimately, **the Light above all lights** in this map of consciousness and character. If every other level is a candle or a lamp, Muhammad ﷺ is the sun. Our candles draw from his sun's light.

We walk this path of self-improvement and spiritual growth not just to reach personal excellence, but **to reach him** – to reach a state of being where we can stand in his company in the Hereafter, having truly followed him in this life. And through reaching him, we aim to reach the pleasure of Allah ﷻ, for Allah's ﷻ pleasure is tied to love of His Messenger.

May Allah ﷻ increase our love for our noble Prophet every day, make us true reflections of his character, and reunite us with him in the highest paradise. **اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَى نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ** – O Allah ﷻ, send your blessings and peace upon our Prophet Muhammad.

Conclusion

Reaching the higher levels—like the Professor stage and beyond—does not mean your tests in life are over.

On the contrary, they may increase.

Allah ﷻ may place greater challenges before you—not as punishment, but as invitations to rise. To draw nearer. To ascend in rank.

These are not obstacles.

They are elevators—disguised as difficulty.

And as for His love...

We experience only a fraction of it through the love we feel for our children.

It becomes most clear in moments of urgency—when a life-threatening crisis strikes.

We drop everything.

We become hyper-focused.

Our soul aches until our child is safe.

And in that moment of desperation and clarity, a realization may dawn:

“If I love my child this much... how much must Allah ﷻ love me?”

That’s what happens at the higher levels:

You don’t just endure your tests—you rise through them.

You begin to see the bigger picture.

You cry to your Lord in the silence of night—asking not for escape, but for sabr, strength, and steadfastness.

And then... you pick up your tools, steady your hands, and do the hard thing.

You emerge from the trial not broken—but refined.

Recalibrated.

Reborn.

This is not self-help.

This is **divine help**.

A trial placed by the Creator, to elevate His creation.

And through this—your dunya becomes your paradise.

You begin to see beauty in what others call burden.

You live to please Allah ﷻ —and so, your afterlife becomes a paradise as well.

It’s a win in both worlds.

Never a loss when you walk with Allah ﷻ by your side.

Never lose faith.

Never lose hope.

Always move forward.

Postscript: The Final Thread

You've now traveled the full arc of this journey — from the original *Red Pill: A Consciousness Manifesto*, which exposed the reality of a reactive, unaware life... to its companion guide *I Took the Red Pill — Now What?* which offered you the map: a way to move forward with awareness, responsibility, and conscious growth.

The lower levels served as a mirror — helping you wake up from being a passive passenger in your own life to someone with clarity, direction, and a conscious aim.

But even at your most disciplined and self-aware, something likely felt missing. And that's because, as this map revealed... you were only seeing 20%.

The rest — the missing 80% — is here, in the higher levels.

And it can only be unlocked through a sincere striving to embody the way of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ — not only out of admiration, but out of love, longing, and the deep desire to draw closer to Allah ﷻ. This shift marks the transition from self-mastery... to servitude. From climbing the ladder... to walking in the Light.

From being ruled by ego... to being guided by intention.

From learning to master yourself... to learning how to surrender to something greater.

But maps are not the destination. They are invitations.

The journey ahead of you is no longer about climbing higher. It is about deepening further — into sincerity, into silence, into servitude.

The Prophet ﷺ is not the endpoint because we read about him.

He is the endpoint because we become like him — in prayer, in patience, in love, in longing.

If you felt something stir while reading this — a quiet resolve, a tear, a yearning — then that's not from the words. That's from Allah ﷻ calling your heart closer.

Don't rush past it.

Sit with it. Feed it. Let it grow.

Because the soul only blossoms when it is watered by sincerity... and lit by the Light of the Prophet ﷺ.

So walk forward now — not to “achieve” another level, but to become someone who walks with Allah ﷻ in every step, and toward Allah ﷻ with every breath.

And if, by the end of this path, you have become a little softer, a little truer, a little more like the Prophet ﷺ...

Then by Allah ﷻ — this map has done its work.

On an ending note I would humbly like to present you with a visual & auditory daily reminder. Something to be printed, laminated and put on your wall to look at, reflect on and verbalize (read phrase aloud) every morning to strengthen your aim and life goal. Something to keep your ship steady in harsh waters — and to remind you to raise your sail when the wind of guidance begins to push you forward.

It is something I use in my practice (*Level-Up Coaching Services*) and in my personal life.

Brothers and Sisters, shayṭān works on our memories. A common phrase is “*out of sight, out of mind*” — meaning we forget what we don't see.

A common example is the massive BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Local fishermen were given toxic

chemicals to spray on the surface, forcing the oil to sink. It didn't disappear — it was just made invisible. The world moved on... but the damage remained.

As your brother in Islam, I humbly ask that you don't let your intention disappear the same way. Strengthen your aim.

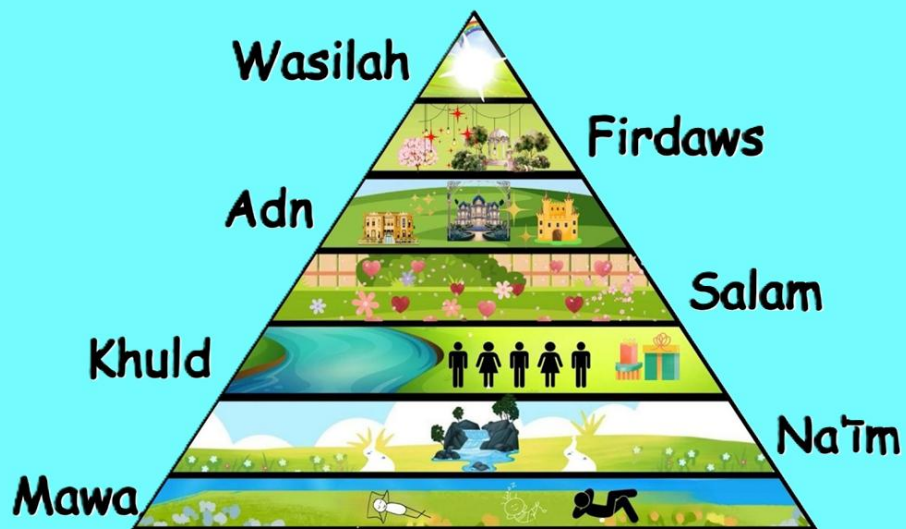
Reaffirm your ultimate destination and purpose.

If for any reason you do not have access to a printer and laminator, or are unable to visit your local print shop, please reach out — and I would be honored to mail you a completed version myself.

BārakAllāhu fīkum, jazākumAllāhu khayr, and thank you dearly for walking this journey to its end.

Keep me and the Ummah in your du'ā', and may Allah ﷻ bless and guide you always.

Mā'a as-salāmah.



"I hold tightly to the rope of Allah – the sacred bond between the servant and the Master. I obey with love, walk with trust, and live solely to seek His pleasure. His reward is a mercy I welcome, but His pleasure is my life goal."

