

Those Promised Paradise

*Stories of the Sahabah
Volume I*

Adapted by
Noura Durkee



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Stories of the Sahabah: Volume I
Those Promised Paradise

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*For Margarete—
On whose date of birth, September 18, 1995,
I began this project.*

Table of Contents



<i>IQRA's Note</i>	• vii
<i>Introduction</i>	• xi
<i>'Abd ar-Raḥmān Ibn 'Awf</i>	• 15
<i>'Abdullāh Ibn Salām</i>	• 29
<i>Abū Bakr Aṣ-Ṣiddīq</i>	• 37
<i>Abū 'Ubaidah Ibn al-Jarrāḥ</i>	• 53
<i>'Ā'ishāh bint Abū Bakr</i>	• 61
<i>'Alī Ibn Abi Ṭālib</i>	• 79
<i>'Ammār Ibn Yāsir</i>	• 97
<i>Barakah (Umm Aiman)</i>	• 103
<i>Bilāl Ibn Rabāḥ</i>	• 113
<i>Fāṭimah Bint Muḥammad</i>	• 123
<i>Ḥamzah Ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib</i>	• 131
<i>Ja'far Ibn Abi Ṭālib</i>	• 147
<i>Khadijah Bin Al-Khuwailid</i>	• 163
<i>Sa'd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ</i>	• 173
<i>Salmān al-Fārsī</i>	• 183
<i>Talḥah Ibn 'Ubaidullāh At-Tayyim</i>	• 193
<i>Thābit Ibn Qais Al-Ansarī</i>	• 203
<i>'Umar Ibn al-Khattāb</i>	• 213
<i>Uthmān Ibn 'Affān</i>	• 229
<i>Zaid Ibn 'Amr and Sa'id Ibn Zaid</i>	• 241
<i>Az-Zubair Ibn Al-'Awwām</i>	• 249
<i>Appendix</i>	• 259

IQRA's Note

IQRA' International is pleased to offer *Those Promised Paradise*, the first volume in a series of *Stories of the Ṣaḥābah* adapted by Noura Durkee.

The volume contains the biographies of twenty-one intimate Ṣaḥābah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ who were promised *Jannah* through various traditions of the Prophet ﷺ.

A more famous *Ḥadith* on this subject promises *Jannah* to ten Ṣaḥābah popularly known as *al-'Ashrah al-Mubashshirah*:

'Abd ar-Raḥmān bin 'Awf ﷺ reported the Messenger of Allah ﷺ as saying: "Abū Bakr will go to Paradise, 'Umar will go to Paradise, 'Uthmān will go to Paradise, 'Alī will go to Paradise, Talḥah will go to Paradise, Zubair will go to Paradise, 'Abd ar-Raḥman bin 'Awf will go to Paradise, Sa'd bin Abī Waqqas, Sa'īd bin Zaid will go to Paradise, and Abu 'Ubaidah bin al-Jarrah will go to Paradise." *at-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah*

There are other traditions which mention the name of other Ṣaḥābah and Ṣaḥabiyāt who were promised *Jannah* in their lifetime or soon after their death. We believe all the Ṣaḥābah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ will enter *Jannah*; here we include those chosen ones who heard the good news from the Prophet ﷺ.

As all those chosen Ṣaḥābah included in this vol-

ume are special people, and we have listed their names in alphabetical order. We cannot prefer one over the other, as all of them are very dear to us.

This generation of Rasūlullāh's ﷺ companions followed him in his life and carried the torch of Islam after his death. When describing them, Rasūlullāh ﷺ remarked: "The best generation is mine; then those who will follow; then those who will follow" (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 6159). He ﷺ also said: "Do not abuse my companions, for if any one of you spend gold equal to Uḥud (in Allāh's Cause), it would not be equal to a portion or even a half a portion spend by one of them" (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 5:22). Rasūlullāh ﷺ continued to extol the virtues of his *Ṣaḥābah* throughout his life. This particular volume describes the lives of those who were fortunate to be given the good tiding of entering the *Jannah* during their lives.

The companions of the Messenger ﷺ were not educated in a formal school setting, nor did they receive training in an organized institution. The tradition maintains that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, himself, was not formally educated. Rasūlullāh ﷺ received all his knowledge from Allāh ﷻ through revelation. The *Ṣaḥābah*, in turn, received all their knowledge from the Messenger ﷺ. The comprehensive way of life that Islām prescribes owes to one source person: Muhammad ﷺ. How that message was received through *Waḥī*—communicated and taught to create the most profound generation of the

Ṣaḥābah—is an historical miracle.

Throughout their lives, the *Ṣaḥābah* firmly stood with Rasūlullāh ﷺ through all his ordeals, never abandoning him for personal gain. Even during the worst trials, they strove to safeguard the Messenger ﷺ and his message. They exhibited their love of the Prophet ﷺ by following his *Sunnah* (ways and instructions), preserving the teachings of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* during his life and continuing it after his death.

Among all the prophets and teachers of the ancient past, Rasūlullāh ﷺ is the only person whose life, teachings, and actions have been fully recorded and preserved. His life is free of mythology and based upon historical facts. The example of the *Ṣaḥābah* and their determination to reflect the moral lifestyle of the Prophet ﷺ has continued to guide millions of Muslims throughout the world.

The Stories of the Ṣaḥābah Series presents the lives of the *Ṣaḥābah* for both younger generations of Muslims and the general public and offers the biographies of these role models who are only next to the Messenger ﷺ in their importance in Islam. The biographies have been adapted by Noura Durkee from Arabic and Urdu sources in translation, and she has been able to convey these stories in an engaging and comprehensive way.

May Allah ﷻ reward all the authors whose works we have referenced: Abd ur-Rahman Basha, *Suwar min*

Hāyat aṣ-Ṣaḥābah; Muhammad ad-Dawlah, *Qaṣaṣ min Hāyāt aṣ-Ṣaḥābah*; Talib Ḥashmī, *Rasulullah kay Chalis Jan-nisar*; Khalid Muhammad Khalid, *Rijāl Ḥawla Rasūlullah*.

To the readers of this book, we ask that you remember all of us in your *Du'a* and continue to support IQRA's educational mission.

Chief Editors, IQRA' International
7450 Skokie Boulevard, Skokie, IL 60077
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Jum'ah, 21 Ramadan 1419

Introduction

“The dwellers of Paradise are three: One who wields authority and is just and fair, one who is truthful and has been endowed with power to do good deeds, and the person who is merciful and kind-hearted towards his relatives and to every pious Muslim, one who does not withhold his hand in spite of having a large family to support.”

– Rasulullah ﷺ
Muslim

The Prophet ﷺ said at various times that he could not guarantee anyone’s future, since Paradise, the *Jannah*, was from the grace of Allāh ﷻ only. Even so, from time to time he would mention that he had seen in a vision or a dream someone, or a house built for someone, in Paradise. On other occasions he told one or another of his *ṣaḥābah* that they were promised the *Jannah*. Those who received this good news were held in deep respect by others, and their actions and worship became known as exemplary. They

are models for us all—both men and women, young and old.

In this book, the first of our *Ṣaḥābah* series, we have chosen to present the life stories of those blessed few who were promised the *Jannah* in their lifetime. There may even have been others. For example, the martyrs, women who died in childbirth, and couples who could raise two or more righteous daughters were generally promised paradise also. However, those discussed in this book have come down to us clearly. They include many of Rasūlullāh's ﷺ closest *ṣaḥābah* and loved ones. These are people who have been praised so highly that words like 'noble,' 'honorable,' 'brave,' 'righteous,' and so forth take on new meaning when applied to them. So, we have chosen to tell their stories simply, without too many adjectives, hoping and trusting that some of their beauty and grandeur will touch your hearts. All of them are, as Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, like stars, each worthy to be followed. They are examples of the best of humanity, the true super heroes without magical powers or space-age technology.

We will meet few people like them in our lifetime, but we may refer to these *Ṣaḥābah* ﷺ as living examples of the Light of Islām. As Rasūlullāh ﷺ said,

The stars are a source of security for the sky and when the stars disappear there comes to the sky the same fate as it has been promised, that it will plunge

into darkness. And I am a source of safety and security to my *ṣaḥābah* and when I will go away there will fall to the lot of my *ṣaḥābah* as they have been promised. And my *ṣaḥābah* are a source of security for the 'Ummah and as they would go there would fall to the lot of my 'Ummah as its people have been promised. (*Muslim* 4:1344, 6147)

‘Abd-ar-Rahman Ibn ‘Awf

*“You have done well, for truly a prophet
does not die until he has been led in
prayer by a pious man of his people.”*

— *Rasulullah ﷺ*
al-Waqidi 1012

Muslims are often told of the benefits of giving away wealth. In the Qur’ān, *ṣalah* and *zakāh* are mentioned together time and again. *Zakāh* is the purification of wealth, and when it is paid, the remainder is *ḥalāl* and good for the user. *Sadaqah* is advised by the Prophet, ﷺ, even if it be only a date or a smile. So, Muslims try to give when they can, as much as they can.

This chapter tells the story of a man who could never give it all away, however much he tried. He had

the blessing of great wealth and great generosity. *Shaitān* could never catch him having thoughts of pride or greed, because he was saved by his deep and lasting *īmān*. This man became a Muslim soon after Abū Bakr ﷺ accepted Islām. He was one of the first eight people to come to the truth in Makkah. His name in Jahiliyyah was ‘Abdu ‘Amr ibn ‘Awf, which means the slave of ‘Amr. When he became a Muslim, Rasūlullāh ﷺ gave him a name which was very close to his own heart. The Qur’ān says, “Invoke Allāh or invoke the Infinitely Good (*ar-Raḥmān*), whichever you invoke, His are the most beautiful names” (17:110). The word ‘*Raḥmān*’ was hardly used before Islām. When ‘Abdu ‘Amr became a Muslim, Rasūlullāh ﷺ called him ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ﷺ.

Along with the other early Muslims ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ﷺ endured torture from the Quraish. He was probably better off than some, because he was not a slave or a man without protection or connections. However, even those of very good families were tormented for their beliefs.

‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ﷺ was patient, firm, and loyal. With Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ permission, he and many others at last fled to Abyssinia to save their *din* and possibly even their lives. Later, when he returned to Makkah, after Rasūlullāh ﷺ allowed his *ṣaḥābah* to migrate to Madīnah, he was among the first *Muhājirīn* to go.

In Madīnah, the *Muhājirīn* were landless and without property or money except that which they had

been able to carry away with them. One of the brilliant acts of Rasūlullāh ﷺ was to join together the *Muhājirūn* and the *Anṣār*. The *Muhājirūn* had experience with Rasūlullāh ﷺ and a wealth of knowledge about the Qur’ān and Islām. The *Anṣār* had homes and property and a knowledge of Madīnah. The combination of the two was good for both of them.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ bound ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ؓ in brotherhood to Sa’d ibn Rabi’ah al-Anṣārī. For this, Sa’d ؓ was very enthusiastic. He was vastly generous, as is an Arab custom, and he said to his new brother ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf ؓ, “O brother, we are the most wealthy people of Madīnah. I have two gardens and two wives. Look at which garden you want, and I’ll give it to you and which wife you like better, I’ll divorce her for you.”

‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ؓ replied politely to his Anṣārī brother, “May Allāh grant you blessings in your wives and your wealth. The only thing I need to know is where the market is.” Sa’d ؓ guided him to the market, where from the first day, he carried on business, buying and selling, making profits, and saving money.

Soon after that, ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ؓ had enough money for a dowry, and he eventually got married. One day, he came to Rasūlullāh ﷺ all perfumed. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “Oh wonder! ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān!”

“I got married,” he replied.

“What did you give the bride for a dowry?” asked

Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

“The weight of a date stone of gold,” he answered.

“Make a banquet even with a sheep,” said Rasūlullāh ﷺ, “May Allāh grant you blessings in your wealth!”

‘Abd ar-Rahman Takes Prisoners

Like the other *Ṣaḥābah*, he did business and carried on with his family and his daily life, but when the time came to fight, there he was, dressed for war and standing beside his Prophet ﷺ. On the day of Badr, ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf ﷺ fought bravely for the sake of Allāh ﷻ and killed Allāh’s enemy, ‘Umair ibn ‘Uḥmān ibn Ka‘b Al-Tayyimi.

In those days, soldiers would take anything they could get from the enemy soldiers or the enemy camp. Badr was no exception to this; after the battle, the Muslims combed the battlefield for weapons, armor, tools, anything the enemy left behind. They also took prisoners, as prisoners would bring money when their families ransomed them. The *Muhājirūn* had left their belongings behind, and the *Anṣār* had shared half of what they had with the newcomers.

‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ﷺ had gotten two nice suits of armor and was carrying them across the battlefield when

somebody, Umayyah, called out to him. (Umayyah used to be a friend of his in the days before Islām, but he had become one of the great haters of the Muslims. He had been the owner of Bilāl ؓ, torturing him so severely in the blazing sun that he nearly died.) Umayyah was too fat to escape and had lost his camel. He cried, “O ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān, I cannot escape, take me captive and you will get my ransom along with my son here.” Hearing this, ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ؓ put down his valuable suits of armor, captured him and his son, and was walking with them back across the battlefield, when Bilāl ؓ himself spotted Umayyah.

“Look! The Shaitān Umayyah! By He Who owns my soul, that man cannot leave here alive!” shouted Bilāl ؓ in the big voice that he used to call the prayer. ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān tried to protect his prisoners, but Bilāl’s shout had alerted the army, and soon, the little group was surrounded with furious Muslims who knew the extent of Umayyah’s tortures and cruelties. ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān saw what was coming, dropped the hands of his prisoners, and told them to fend for themselves. So, on that day he lost both his two suits of armor and his prisoners. (And he never let Bilāl ؓ forget it, even when he became rich beyond his wildest dreams.)



‘Abd ar-Rahman’s Jihad

‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān’s conduct in battle was exemplary. On the day of the battle of Uḥud (3 A.H.), he remained loyal and steadfast, while many people fled. He came out of the battle with over twenty wounds, some so deep that no one thought he would survive. At the time of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah (7 A.H.), ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf ؓ was present to take the Oath of *Ridwan* with Rasūlullāh ؑ under the tree. He was also asked by Rasūlullāh ؑ to sign the treaty itself that they made with the Makkans. He was also one of the few who could make a *fatwah* (religious ruling) in Madīnah during the life of Rasūlullāh ؑ. This is an indication of his wisdom and understanding.

Yet, ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān’s true *jihād* was within his soul. His *jihād* in battle fades in comparison to his *jihād* with his money. Throughout his life, he continued to give his money away. The more he gave, the more he got. On the inside, he had to fight pride, greed, and selfishness, all of which he fought and apparently conquered, with the help of Allāh and His Prophet ؑ.

Once, Rasūlullāh ؑ wanted to mobilize a troop for war. He stood among his *ṣaḥābah* and said, “Pay *ṣadaqah*, because I want to send an army.” ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ؓ hurried home and came rushing back and said, “O Rasūlullāh, I have four thousand *dinars*. I’ll lend two to my Lord and keep two for my children.” So

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “May Allāh grant you blessing (*barakah*) in what you gave . . . and may He grant you blessing in what you kept!”

When Rasūlullāh ﷺ decided to go for the last battle of his life, the battle of Tābūk—the city at the frontier between as-Sham and the Arabian peninsula, at that time under Roman rule, now part of Saudi Arabia—he needed money as well as men. That year in Madīnah was one of scarcity; the trip was very long, the weather was very hot, and it was time to work on the harvest. Not only that, but the available provisions were mediocre and the camels scarce. Some people came to Rasūlullāh ﷺ begging him to take them with him, but he had to turn them down for want of a horse or camel to carry them.

The army Rasūlullāh ﷺ finally established was called “the army of constraint,” because the circumstances surrounding its assembly were tight and difficult. At that point, Rasūlullāh ﷺ ordered his *ṣaḥābah* to spend money for Allāh and to seek Allāh. Many Muslims jumped to answer the call of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, and one of the first to give *Ṣadaqah* was ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf ﷺ. He gave two hundred ounces of gold.

‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb said to Rasūlullāh ﷺ, “This is not good; he has left nothing for his family!”

“Have you left something for your family, ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān?” asked Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

“Yes,” he said, “I have left for them more than what I spent and better.”

“How much?” asked Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

“The support, the good, and the payment in return Allāh promised,” replied ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān happily.

‘Abd ar-Rahman’s Special Honor

The army soon headed for Tābūk. There, ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf ﷺ was honored by Allāh ﷻ as no other Muslim had been before. It was the time for *Ṣalāt al-Fajr*, and everyone was waiting for Rasūlullāh ﷺ. They waited for a long time and still Rasūlullāh ﷺ did not appear; the Muslims soon feared they would miss the time for prayer. So ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf ﷺ led the prayer. The first *Rak’ah* was just finished when Rasūlullāh ﷺ joined the people praying. ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ﷺ stepped back, but Rasūlullāh ﷺ motioned for him to continue. ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ﷺ had the most unique experience of being the *imām* in front of the *Imām* of the Prophets, Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdullāh ﷺ.

When the soldiers announced the greeting of peace to end the prayer, Rasūlullāh ﷺ arose and completed the *rak’ah* he had missed. When he finished, he said, “You have done well, for indeed a Prophet doesn’t die until he has been led in prayer by a pious man of his people.”



The Great Trust

When Makkah was finally reopened to the Muslims, a disagreement arose between Khālid ibn Walīd ؓ and ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ؓ. Khālid ؓ spoke angrily to ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ؓ, and Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “Gently, Khālid, let my *ṣaḥābah* be, for if you had Mount Uḥud all in gold and spent it in the way of Allāh, you would not attain the merit of any man of my *ṣaḥābah*.”

At the time of the Farewell Pilgrimage, Rasūlullāh ﷺ further demonstrated his trust in ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ؓ. He appointed him and ‘Uthmān, his son-in-law, guardians of all his wives, who accompanied him. Rasūlullāh ﷺ himself was in charge of a pilgrimage of 30,000 people. It was the first pilgrimage in hundreds of years dedicated solely to Allāh ﷻ, with no idolaters or idolatrous practices, and it was a renewal of the rite established by Ibrahīm and Ismāīl ؑ.

‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ؓ and all the others who were able to share it experienced great joy with their beloved Rasūl ﷺ. However, as they stood at ‘Arafāt listening to Rasūlullāh ﷺ speak of the duties from Allāh that he had discharged, the people became aware that he was saying goodbye. This was confirmed by the Revelation that descended at that time: “This day, I have perfected your religion for you, and I have completed My blessing upon you” (*al-Mā’idah* 5:3).

Not long after that, the Prophet of Allāh ﷺ died.

All of his *ṣahābah* had to go on living without him, doing the best they could. ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf رضي الله عنه continued to take care of Rasūlullāh’s صلى الله عليه وسلم wives, the Mothers of the Believers (*‘Ummahāt al-Mu’minīn*). He used to escort them when they went out, and he made the *Ḥajj* with them when they made the *Ḥajj*. He put special green covers on their *howdahs* (small rooms made to fit on a camel in which a woman could sit in privacy) and rested in the places they chose. This was a merit of ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf رضي الله عنه, that the wives of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم, who were not to be seen by any men except their close relatives and were never to marry again, should have such trust and confidence in him and his honor.

Because of ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf’s dedication to the Muslims and the *‘Ummahāt al-Mu’minīn*, he sold a piece of land he owned at the price of forty thousand *dinars*. He distributed all of this money to the Banu Zuhrah (the people of Āminah bint Wahb, Rasūlullāh’s صلى الله عليه وسلم mother), the poor Muslims, the *Muhājirūn* and Rasūlullāh’s صلى الله عليه وسلم wives. When he sent her share to ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها, she asked, “Who sent that money?”

“‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf,” she was told.

Upon hearing this, she quoted Rasūlullāh’s صلى الله عليه وسلم words, “Only the patient people (*as-Ṣabirūn*) will be compassionate to you after me.”



The Joyous News for ‘Abd ar-Rahman ﷺ

The Prophet’s ﷺ *du‘ā* of blessings for ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf ﷺ accompanied him his whole life. He became the most wealthy of the *Ṣaḥābah*. His business kept growing. His caravans rivaled the old summer and winter caravans of the *Quraish*. Hundreds of camels, under his name and direction, continued coming to al-Madīnah, bringing to its people wheat, flour, oils, clothes, pottery, brass, perfumes and everything they ever needed. Then, they would leave again, transporting the excess of the city’s production, primarily dates.

One day, a huge caravan of seven hundred camels belonging to ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf ﷺ arrived in Madinah. As it entered the city, it was accompanied by the bustle and commotion that was always present at the arrival of a caravan. This time, however, the noise was so loud that the earth began to shake.

When ‘Ā’ishah ﷺ asked what was causing the shaking, she was told that it was coming from the caravan of ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf ﷺ—seven hundred camels carrying wheat, flour and food! She then announced, “May Allāh bless what He gave him in this world and the reward in the world to come will be greater, for I heard Rasūlullāh ﷺ say, “‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf will enter the *Jannah* crawling.””

Before the camels had knelt down, someone delivered the news of what ‘Ā’ishah ﷺ had proclaimed

to ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf ؓ about his entering the *Jannah*. He dropped everything and rushed to the house of ‘Ā’ishah ؓ. When he was admitted he asked, “O Mother, did you hear Rasūlullāh ؓ saying that?”

“Yes,” she replied.

He was so happy that he said, “If I could, I would like to enter it walking. Be my witness, Mother—all these camels with their loads and their saddles shall be donated for the sake of Allāh!”

From that great day on, when he learned that he was one of those Rasūlullāh ؓ had seen in the *Jannah*, ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf ؓ spent even more money for the Muslims. Some of these deeds included giving two hundred ounces of gold as *Ṣadaqah*, carrying *Mujāhidīn* in the way of Allāh on five hundred horses, and then carrying other *Mujāhidīn* on one thousand, five hundred camels or horses. *Alhamdu-li-(A)llāh*, all this money did not change or deceive ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf ؓ. When he was seen among his slaves, people could not distinguish him from them. He did not dress in a gaudy manner, nor did he dress his slaves poorly. Rather, he and his slaves dressed the same, as is ordered in the Qur’ān.

His Last Will

When he was dying, ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf ؓ liber-

ated a great number of slaves. He also donated substantial money to many people around him—four hundred *dinars* of gold for each remaining one of those who fought at Badr, about one hundred servants, as well as a lot of money for the 'Ummahāt al-Mu'minīn. 'Umm al-Mu'minīn 'Ā'ishah ؓ often made *du'ā'* for him, saying, “May Allāh water him from the water of *Al-Salsabīl* (a spring in *Jannah*).”

After all his donations, there was still a huge amount of money for his children. He left one thousand camels, one hundred horses, three hundred sheep. He had four wives and each one's share (which is the quarter of the eighth) was eighty thousand *dinars*. He left gold and silver that was divided between his inheritors with hoes. All of this because of Rasūlullāh's ؓ *du'ā'* that he be blessed with money.

'Abd-ar-Rahmān ibn 'Awf ؓ died at an old age. He was among the wisest and most respected of the great remaining members of the *Ṣahābah*. He had been among the six that 'Umar ؓ had said should select his successor. Many were present at his funeral; he was carried by Sa'd ibn Abū Waqqās ؓ, and 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān, the man of the two lights, prayed over him. The beloved of Rasūlullāh ؓ, 'Alī ibn Abū Ṭālib ؓ, bade him the final farewell from this world, saying: “You attained the serenity of this world and overcome its fraud. May Allāh bless you.”

*May Allāh ﷻ bless his generosity in this world with all
the blessings of the next.*

‘Abdullah Ibn Salam

*“Whoever wants to look at a man who is from the
people of Al-Jannah, let him look at
‘Abdullah ibn Salam.”*

*— Rasūlullāh ﷺ
Bukhari 5:157*

‘**A**mir ibn Sa‘d reported that he heard his father Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ ﷺ say, “I never heard Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ say to any other person that he or she was in Paradise except for ‘Abdullāh ibn Salām.”

In Madīnah, before the time of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, there were several Jewish tribes living alongside the Arab tribe of Aws and Khazraj. These Jewish tribes were quite wealthy in land and possessions. Like people everywhere, some of them were sincere believers and

some of them were not. Among the sincere was a very learned man by the name of al-Husain ibn Salām. He was one of the Jewish rabbis and was honored and respected by all the people, no matter what their religious belief. He was known to be pious and righteous, straight and honest. Al-Husain lived a serene, serious, and productive life. He divided his time into three parts: in the temple to preach and worship; in his garden taking care of his palm-trees; and with the Torah to deepen his knowledge of religion.

Each time he read the Torah, he pondered the news in it about the appearance of a new prophet in Makkah who was going to complete and seal the messages of the previous prophets. He followed the descriptions and the signs of the expected one and found from the Torah that this prophet would make *hijrah* from his land. He would begin teaching in Madīnah, where his residence would be. Each time he read or recalled this news, al-Husain prayed to Allāh ﷻ that his life would be prolonged so that he might witness the appearance of the expected prophet, obtain the pleasure of meeting him, and be among the first to believe in him.

Allāh responded to al-Husain ibn Salam's *du'ā'*. He let him live to meet the prophet of guidance and mercy. Ibn Salam ﷺ left behind his story of the events:

When I heard about the appearance of Rasūlullāh ﷺ in Makkah, I kept inquiring about his name, his rank,

his characteristics, and his place to see if it all applied to what is written in our books, until I made sure of his prophecy and of the honesty of his call. I hid the whole matter from the Jews and held my tongue so as not to whisper one word until the day Rasūlullāh ﷺ left Makkah heading for al-Madīnah.

When Rasūlullāh reached Madīnah and stayed in Quba', a man came to us and announced his arrival. I was, at that moment, on top of one of my palm trees doing my work and my aunt, Khālidah bint al-Hārith, was sitting under the tree. When I heard the news, I couldn't keep from shouting, "Allāh-u-Akbar . . . Allāh-u-Akbar!"

When she heard my Takbīr, my aunt said to me: "May Allāh disappoint you! By Allāh, if you had heard that Mūsa ibn 'Imran (the prophet Mūsa ﷺ) is coming you wouldn't have done more."

"O Aunt," I said, "by Allāh, he surely is Mūsa ibn 'Imran's brother, following the same religion! He is sent with what he was sent with!"

She fell silent for a while, then said: "Is he the prophet you used to tell us about that will be sent to affirm what was sent before him and to complete the messages of his Lord?"

"Yes," I replied.

"Then, he is the one," she said.

I went on the spot to see Rasūlullāh ﷺ. People were crowding at his door. I pressed until I got close to him. The first thing I heard from him was this: "O people, spread greetings. Feed people. Pray in the night, when people sleep; then you will enter al-Jannah peacefully."

I kept staring at him, and I realized that this surely wasn't the face of a liar. I came close to him

and testified that there is no deity but Allāh and that Muḥammad is the messenger of Allāh. He turned to me and asked, “What is your name?”

“Al-Husain Ibn Salām,” I replied.

“Rather, ‘Abdullāh ibn Salām,” he said.

“Yes,” I said, “‘Abdullāh ibn Salām. By the One Who sent you with truth, I wouldn’t like to have any other name from now on.”

I left Rasūlullāh ﷺ and went back home. I called my wife, children and family to Islām and they all entered Islām including my aunt, Khālidah, who was very old. I said to them, “Keep the news of our entering Islām from the Jews until I give you permission!” They agreed to do this.

I then returned to Rasūlullāh ﷺ and said to him: “O Rasūlullāh, I would like you to call notable people among the Jews. Hide me in one of your rooms, then ask them about my position among them before they know about my adherence to Islām. Then, call them to Islām. You will see that they will accuse me falsely of all defects.”

Rasūlullāh ﷺ agreed to do this. He put me in a room next to his, then called them and invited them to Islām and *Imān*, reminding them of what they knew about him from their books. They kept arguing and disputing with him until he gave up and asked them about the position of al-Husain ibn Salām among them.

“He is our master,” they replied, “and son of our master, our man of knowledge and son of our man of knowledge.”

“If he follows Islām,” asked Rasūlullāh ﷺ, “would you follow it too?”

“He would never follow Islām,” they replied,

“may Allāh prevent him from entering into Islām!”

At that point, I came out and said, “O Jews, my people, fear Allāh and accept what Muḥammad has brought. You surely know that he is the messenger of Allāh. You find him written about in your Torah, by name and description. I testify that he is the messenger of Allāh. I have faith in him. I believe him. I know him.”

They then shouted, “Liar, by Allāh, you are the worst man of us and son of the worst man, you are ignorant and son of an ignorant man!” They didn’t leave a defect that they didn’t accuse me of.

After that, ‘Abdullāh ibn Salām  separated himself from the Jews and became a devoted Muslim. He loved the Qur’ān, and spent many hours reciting its verses. He was also very attached to Rasūlullāh  and did all he could to listen to him, help him, and be with him.

He devoted himself to working for the *Jannah* until Rasūlullāh  brought him the news of being one of the dwellers in the Garden. Among the noble *Ṣaḥābah* there were a few who were blessed with such good news (*bishārah*). Qais ibn ‘Ubādah and others told the story of how this news came to ‘Abdullāh ibn Salām .

I was sitting in one of the circles of knowledge in the masjid of Rasūlullāh  in Madīnah. There was, in the circle, an old man who looked familiar to the soul and made the heart feel comfortable. He kept speaking to people, a sweet, impressive speech. When he left,

people said, “Whoever wants to look at a man who is from the people of the *Jannah*, let him look at that man.”

“Who is that man?” I asked.

“‘Abdullāh ibn Salām,” I was told.

I said to myself, “By Allāh, I will follow him,” and I did. He walked until he was almost out of Madīnah. Then, he entered his house. I asked his permission to come in, and he welcomed me into his home.

He said: “What is your need, my brother?”

I told him that I had heard people in the *masjid* saying that whoever wants to look at a man who is from the people of the *Jannah*, let him look at him. I told him that this was why I had followed him, to find out how people knew that he is from the people of the *Jannah*.

He said, “Only Allāh knows the people of the *Jannah*.”

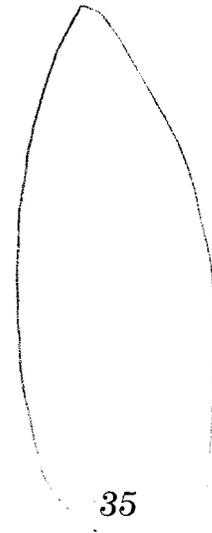
“Yes,” I replied, “but there must be some reason for what they said.”

“I’ll tell you the reason,” he said. “One night, during the time of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, as I was sleeping, a man came to me and told me to stand up. He took my hand. There was a way on my left which I was about to follow, but he said, ‘Leave it, it is not yours.’ Then I looked and saw an obvious way on my right, whereupon he said, ‘Take it.’ I took it until I reached a large, beautiful garden, green and flourishing. In the middle of this garden was an iron pillar fixed in the ground and ending in the sky. On top of this iron pillar, there was a golden ring. ‘Go up,’ said the man. ‘I can’t,’ I replied. Then, a servant came and lifted me up to the top, and I took the ring with both hands. I

remained attached to it until I woke up. The next morning, I went to Rasūlullāh ﷺ and told him about my dream and he said, ‘The way you saw at your left is the way of the *ṣaḥābah* of the left, the dwellers of hell. The way you saw at your right is the way of the *ṣaḥābah* of the right, the dwellers of the *Jannah*. The garden that attracted you, with its greenness and bloom, is Islām. The pillar, in the midst of it, is the pillar of religion. The ring is the most trustworthy handhold (*al-‘urwaht al-wuthqā*). You will keep holding it until you die.’”

And thus he ended his story.

May Allāh ﷻ bless ‘Abdullāh ibn Salām ﷺ and indeed make true Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ promise to him.



Abu Bakr

*“Abu Bakr’s name shall be called out
from all the gates of Paradise, and he will
be the first of my followers to enter it.”*

*— Rasulullah ﷺ
al-Bukhari 5:18*

As-Siddiq—The Most Honored

This most honored of the *ṣaḥābah* was a well-known and well-liked merchant of Makkah. For years, he had been seeking a better religion and way of life than he found among his relatives and tribe. He was not satisfied with the Judaism, Zoroastrianism and Christianity that he sometimes encountered among the other traders. He refused to believe in idol worship. He, and a few others, kept looking for the original Way of Makkah, the Way of Ibrāhīm ﷺ.

When he heard that his good friend Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdullāh ﷺ had been selected by Allāh as His

prophet, Abū Bakr ؓ believed him immediately and without question. He held fast that belief always, in everything that Rasūlullāh ؑ said and did. He brought many people to Islām through his absolute conviction, and he gave his life, his fortune, and his family to the service of Islām and Rasūlullāh ؑ.

Throughout his life, Abū Bakr ؓ was Rasūlullāh's ؑ best friend. Whenever Rasūlullāh ؑ needed anything, he tried to supply it. As Islām grew, others were eager to serve and to help, but Abū Bakr ؓ remained Rasūlullāh's ؑ closest companion. He was the one chosen to make the difficult escape from Makkah to Madīnah with Rasūlullāh ؑ. He was the one who undertook the leadership of the Muslims after Rasūlullāh's ؑ death. He was known as “aṣ-Ṣiddīq,” which means the great witness of the truth. He was a truth-teller and a truth-seeker.

In the early days of Islām, many people refused to believe Rasūlullāh ؑ. They called him a madman, a poet, a liar. Even his new *ṣahābah*, who had accepted the faith, did not always believe everything. One night, Rasūlullāh ؑ experienced *Mi'rāj*, the Night Journey—he traveled from Makkah to Jerusalem and then to Paradise, during which he saw and experienced many marvelous things, before returning to Makkah. In the morning he told people about this. Many of them could not believe it. How could a man travel so far in one night? Impossible! They thought it must be a dream or a

tale. (They thought this even though he accurately described a caravan he had seen making its way toward Makkah. He described the order of the camels and their type. Later, a caravan, with the exact description, arrived in Makkah.) Some people went to Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه and told him what Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم was saying about his journey and asked him what he thought. He simply said, “If he said it, it’s true. Why are you so surprised? He tells me that news comes to him from Heaven to earth in one hour of the day or night, and I know he is speaking the truth.”

Once, while Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم was praying in Makkah, one of the *kuffār* named ‘Uqbah came and put his sheet around Rasūlullāh’s صلى الله عليه وسلم neck and squeezed it tight. Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه came quickly and pulled ‘Uqbah away and said, “Do you intend to kill a man just because he says, ‘My Lord is Allāh’ and has brought forth the Clear Signs from your Lord?”

The Loyal Companion

Along with the other early *ṣaḥābah*, Abū Bakr’s life was so closely intertwined with that of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم that his story is one long history of the growth of Islām. ‘Ammār رضي الله عنه remembered, “I saw Allāh’s Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم and there were none with him but five slaves, two women, and Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه.” From that, he went to being the leader of

hundreds of thousands of Muslims.

Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه is remembered for being a gentleman, polite and generous. He is also remembered for his unshakable love of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم and even more, of Allāh. Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه used to read the Qur'ān in public. His reading was so heartfelt and sincere that it brought people to Islām. As a result, the leaders of the Quraish forced him to confine his reading to his own garden beside his house. However, people could hear over the garden wall, greatly frustrating the Quraish.

If Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم said something was true, that was all the proof needed for Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه. If Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم said something should be done, Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه would see it done, no matter what. Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم appreciated his friendship and service and rewarded him in many ways. One of the greatest rewards was his gift of companionship and time. He visited Abū Bakr's house nearly every day. When it came time to emigrate to Madīnah, Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه asked permission to go. Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم suggested that he wait, as he might have a companion. Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه knew what he meant and had two fast camels put on a good diet in preparation for the trip.

On the day the two men left, 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها, Abū Bakr's daughter, saw Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم coming to her house at an unusual hour. She saw her father get ready and watched the two flee from Makkah. They came upon a cave, within which they hid, staying there for three days. At one point, their pursuers came as close as the

entrance to the cave. Seeing their feet, Abū Bakr ﷺ was frightened and alarmed, because he feared for Rasūlullāh's ﷺ life. Rasūlullāh ﷺ reassured him, "What do you think of two persons, the third of whom is Allāh?" Indeed Allāh ﷻ showed them Paradise on the back wall of the cave, as if it opened out into the Garden, and all fear was gone. The trackers went away as well. The next day, they proceeded on the way to Madīnah.

The Closest of Friends

Once Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, "The person who had favored me most of all, both with his companionship and wealth, is Abū Bakr ﷺ. If I were to take a closest friend (*Khalīl*) other than my Lord, I would take Abū Bakr, but what connects us is Islāmic brotherhood and friendliness. All the gates of the *masjid* should be closed except the gate of Abū Bakr." Likewise, when a woman asked Rasūlullāh ﷺ what she should do if she came back to him and found him gone (dead). He replied, "If you should not find me, go to Abū Bakr."

One day, 'Umar ﷺ and Abū Bakr ﷺ had a quarrel, and 'Umar ﷺ refused to accept Abū Bakr's apologies. Abū Bakr ﷺ went to Rasūlullāh ﷺ to ask forgiveness for his quarrel. The *ṣaḥābah* were always very careful to resolve even the smallest of matters, because of their fear of Allāh. So, Rasūlullāh ﷺ asked Allāh to

forgive him, twice. Then ‘Umar ؓ appeared, searching for Abū Bakr ؓ to forgive him. Rasūlullāh ؓ looked angry, even though Abū Bakr ؓ said the fault was more his. Rasūlullāh ؓ said, “Allāh sent me to you people, but you said, ‘You are telling a lie,’ while Abū Bakr ؓ said, ‘He has said the truth,’ and consoled me with all his resources.” Then Rasūlullāh ؓ said twice, “Won’t you then give up harming my companion?” After that, nobody harmed Abū Bakr ؓ!

Almost daily, Abū Bakr ؓ and his wife ‘Umm Ruman welcomed Rasūlullāh ؓ into their home. Their little daughter, ‘Ā’ishah ؓ, knew him as the most respected and beloved friend of the family. When Rasūlullāh’s ؓ dear wife Khadījah ؓ died, he became very lonely. Someone suggested that he marry ‘Ā’ishah ؓ. They were engaged when she was young and married later. Abū Bakr ؓ was Rasūlullāh’s ؓ father-in-law as well as his closest friend.

Once ‘Amr ibn al-’Aṣ asked the Prophet, “Who is the most beloved person to you?” Rasūlullāh ؓ replied, “‘Ā’ishah.” He then asked, “Among the men?” To which Rasūlullāh ؓ replied, “Her father.”

Rasūlullāh ؓ loved Abū Bakr ؓ very much. Once he was describing how people would be called from the many different gates of the Garden if they did different things, such as fasting or praying. Abū Bakr ؓ asked, “Will anyone be called from all those gates, O Rasūlullāh ؓ?” “Yes,” replied Rasūlullāh ؓ, “and I

hope you will be among those, O Abū Bakr.”

Much later, when Islām was growing and the Muslims of Madīnah wanted to make the *Hajj* to Makkah, Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه proved himself again. The Muslims had traveled peacefully as far as Hudaibiyah, a valley near Makkah. The Makkans said they would fight them if they proceeded any further. After days of waiting and negotiation, a truce was written and signed. To many of the Muslims, the truce seemed to be a defeat for Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم. He seemed to have given in on a lot of points, and because of this, the Muslims were very dissatisfied. ‘Umar رضي الله عنه was very upset and went to Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه to talk about it. Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه calmly said, “Hold to his stirrup, for by Allāh, he is right!” Of course, the Truce of Hudaibiyah turned out to be one of the greatest benefits to the Muslims. It led to years of peace during which many people could travel to Madīnah safely. It eventually led to the conquest of Makkah and the satisfaction of all the Muslims’ demands. Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه had understood and rightly trusted Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم.

Toward the end of Rasūlullāh’s صلى الله عليه وسلم life, he became too ill to lead the prayer. He told ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها to ask Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه to lead the people in prayer, but she said, “O Messenger of Allāh, Abū Bakr is a very sensitive man, not strong of voice and much given to weeping when he recites the Qur’ān.”

Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم repeated firmly, “Tell him to lead the prayer.”

‘Ā’ishah ؓ then suggested that ‘Umar ؓ should take his place.

“Tell Abū Bakr to lead the prayer.”

‘Ā’ishah ؓ tried to get help from Ḥafṣah ؓ, but Rasūlullāh ؓ silenced them both. “Tell Abū Bakr to lead the people in prayer. Let the blamer find fault, and let the ambitious aspire. Allāh ؓ and the believers will not have it otherwise.” Many believe that in this choice of *Imām*, Rasūlullāh ؓ chose his successor.

The Unifying Leader

Abū Bakr’s even and compassionate manner often saved the people from extremes. This was best demonstrated on the day Rasūlullāh ؓ passed away. All of Madīnah was in turmoil, and the people did not know what to do. Abū Bakr ؓ was at the other end of the city when Rasūlullāh ؓ, who had seemed to be better, died. He came quickly on horseback and found ‘Umar ؓ insisting to the people that Rasūlullāh ؓ was not dead. He had misinterpreted a verse of the Qur’ān and believed that Rasūlullāh ؓ could not die before them all. Abū Bakr ؓ went into the house and drew back the cloak that had covered Rasūlullāh’s ؓ face. He gazed at him, kissed him, and said, “Dearer than my father and my mother, you have tasted the death which Allāh decreed for you. No death after that shall ever happen to you.” He drew

the cloak over his face again and went out to the people.

“Gently, ‘Umar!” he said, “Hear me speak!” The people began to listen as Abū Bakr ﷺ praised Allāh ﷻ, saying,

O people, who had worshiped Muḥammad, indeed, Muḥammad is dead. And who has worshiped Allāh—indeed, Allāh is living and does not die. Muḥammad is but a messenger, and messengers have passed away before him. If he die or be slain, will you then turn upon your heels? Who turns on his heels will thereby do no hurt to Allāh; and Allāh will reward the thankful. (3:144)

The people heard this verse, which had been revealed after the battle of Uḥud, and it was as if they had never heard it before. ‘Umar ﷺ said afterwards, “When I heard Abū Bakr recite that verse, I was so astounded that I fell to the earth—my legs would no longer carry me. I then knew that Allāh’s Messenger had died.”

Soon after Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ death, the *Anṣār* decided to hold a meeting to elect a new chief from among them. Hearing of this, Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, and Abū ‘Ubaidah ﷺ went to them. They found the *Anṣār* praising themselves as the fighting force of Islām and talking of choosing a leader from among themselves. Abū Bakr ﷺ spoke to the people. He complimented the *Anṣār* on their greatness in supporting and defending Rasūlullāh ﷺ and the immigrants. However, he tried to explain to

them that in the present situation, the Arabs would never accept anyone but a Quraishi to lead them, because the Quraish were regarded as the best and most noble clan of the Arabs. He said that the *Anṣār* were the ministers and the advisors, and one from the Quraish must be the leader.

The *Anṣār* said, “No, by Allāh, we won’t accept this. There must be a ruler from us and a ruler from you.”

Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه replied, “No, we will be the rulers, and you will be the ministers. I offer you one of these two men, pledge your allegiance to whichever you will. An argument began, but ‘Umar رضي الله عنه quickly said, “O *Anṣār*, don’t you know that the Messenger of Allāh ordered Abū Bakr to lead the prayer?”

“We know it!” they replied.

“Then which of you will willingly take precedence over him?” shouted ‘Umar رضي الله عنه.

“Allāh forbid that we should take precedence over him!” they said.

‘Umar رضي الله عنه grabbed the hand of Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه and gave his allegiance to him, “Our chief and the best among us and the most beloved of all of us to Allāh’s Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم.” Abū ‘Ubaidah, the other *ṣaḥābah*, and everyone in the room came one after another and gave the pledge to him as well, except Sa’d رضي الله عنه, who had hoped to be the new leader.

After the funeral of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم, Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه

made a formal acceptance of the *Khilāfat*:

O people! I have been chosen your ruler, but I have no claim to be the best among you. Obey me only when I do good, but if I go astray, put me on the right path. Truth is honesty, and lying is dishonesty. The weakest of you is the strongest to me, as long as I haven't restored his rights from others. In the same way, the strongest of you is the weakest to me so long as I haven't taken away from the rights of others. You should keep in mind that the nation which gives up the struggle in the path of Allāh becomes wretched and disgraceful to Allāh. When evil deeds are everywhere in a nation, then Allāh puts it to grief. You are to obey me only when I obey Allāh and His Messenger. If I disobey Him and His Messenger, then it shall not be required for you to obey me. (*Holy Prophet and His Four Khaliphs*, Al-Haaj S. A. K. Rao)

Therein, this kind and compassionate man, whose own daughter found him too soft-hearted and soft-spoken, took over leadership of the Muslims.

Strong Leadership in Difficult Times

During the leadership of Abū Bakr ؓ, sentiments of doubt, confusion, and disobedience slowly rose among the tribes of Arabia. Many different leaders and false prophets challenged the power of the *Khilāfat* and suggested new religions. Some of the tribes that had only

recently entered Islām decided to leave it. With Rasūlullāh ﷺ gone, their faith faltered. They did not know enough yet to see that Islām meant far more than following a powerful leader. They did not understand yet that it was a Way from Allāh to positively transform each soul and each life.

‘Ā’ishah ؓ used to say, “When the Messenger ﷺ died, some of the Arabs apostatized, Christianity and Judaism raised their heads, and disaffection appeared. The Muslims became as sheep exposed to rain on a winter’s night through the loss of their prophet, until Allāh united them under Abū Bakr.” Indeed, Abū Bakr ؓ surprised everyone by being absolutely firm with all those who tried to break away. He fought and defeated those who strayed.

The first struggle came immediately. Rasūlullāh ﷺ had ordered Usāmah ibn Zaid ؓ to lead a large army north to Mauta. The army’s departure had been delayed by the death of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Abū Bakr ؓ sent the army on, despite the complaints of many people. They said Usāmah ؓ was too young and that it was a bad time for the men to leave Madīnah, among other excuses. Abū Bakr ؓ responded to the people by saying, “The marching of the army cannot be postponed even if Madīnah becomes so lonely that beasts could enter it and kill me. I cannot put the sword into the sheath which was drawn out by Rasūlullāh ﷺ himself!”

As the army was leaving for Syria, Abū Bakr ؓ

walked alongside Usāmah . Usāmah  wanted to dismount for the *Khalīfah*, but Abū Bakr  told him to stay on his horse. He advised him of the following mandates:

There you will meet a community (Christians), members of which have devoted themselves to the prayer of God, so you should not disturb them. Never kill women, children, and old people. Do not disturb disabled people who can't fight. Do not harm the bodies of the dead. Never destroy crops in the fields. Never cut or destroy the trees bearing fruit. Do not kill animals, except what you must have for food. Never change an inhabited place into a deserted one. Never set fire to an oasis. Do not be unfaithful, cowardly or dishonest, and always divide the spoils of war honorably.

With this, the army went off and returned victorious nearly forty days later. The Muslims were encouraged by this, whereas the rebellious tribes were scared, and most stopped rebelling.

Some tribes avoided paying the *zakāh*. Many of the *ṣaḥābah* were concerned that these people were still Muslim and therefore should not be fought against, but Abū Bakr  said that if today they stopped the *zakāh*, tomorrow they might stop praying or fasting. He even went so far as to say that he would go out and fight them alone if nobody would come with him. Eventually, many of the *ṣaḥābah* became convinced that he was right.

During this time, many people started declaring themselves prophets. These men and women thought they could say that they had a message from Allāh and people would follow them. This would make them rich and strong. Some of these people, particularly Musalaimah, became very powerful, because they attracted tribes that were already weak in their Islām. Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه soon sent armies against them and crushed them in terrible battles.

Because Islām was firmly established in Arabia, the great Roman and Persian empires had to be fought. Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه began the wars against them, as well, which were completed under the later *Khalīfahs*.

Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه was reluctant to change any of the practices left by Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم. Even when money came into Madīnah in large amounts, he refused to put it into savings. A building was put up for the *Bait al-Māl* (the treasury) but it had no guards, because there was never anything in it. Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه would go there as soon as money or goods arrived and distribute them all equally among the people. Whether they were slaves or free, everyone got the same amount. When Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه died, there was only one *dirham* left in the *Bait al-Māl*.

Safekeeper of the Qur'an

During the days of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم, hundreds of the

Muslims had memorized the whole Qur'ān. In all these wars, many of these Huffāz Muslims were killed. 'Umar رضي الله عنه, in particular, became very worried about the safety and future of the Qur'ān. He went to Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه and suggested they write it down. At first, Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه protested, because Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم didn't write it down. But 'Umar رضي الله عنه convinced him that it needed to be done; otherwise, it might be lost to future generations. They, in turn, convinced Zaid ibn Thābit رضي الله عنه to collect all the pieces and to put it into the form of a book.

Zaid رضي الله عنه had been one of the chief writers for Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم. He went around and carefully consulted the *ṣaḥābah* who knew the Qur'ān best. He looked to all the written pieces that had been collected in various households. He consulted his own memory and knowledge. The Qur'ān had been put in order and in chapters named by Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم himself. Now, it would be put into writing for the first time. This collection was called "The Copy of *as-Ṣiddīq*."

When Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه was dying of fever at the age of 63, the same age Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم was when he died, he called together his council of advisors and listened to their ideas about his successor. After hearing their ideas, he proposed the name of 'Umar رضي الله عنه. Some of the *ṣaḥābah* feared 'Umar رضي الله عنه would be too severe on the people, but Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه believed that the office of *Khalīfah* would soften him. Indeed, it did.

*May Allāh ﷻ reward this most loyal friend of
Rasūlullāh ﷺ and Islam.*

'Abu 'Ubaidah Ibn al-Jarrah

*"Whose blood has touched my blood,
him the Fire cannot reach."*

*– Rasulullah ﷺ
Muslim, Waqidi 251*

He was a tall, thin man with a wonderful face that seemed familiar and reassuring to those around him. He was very sensitive, modest, bashful, and full of life. He was not a boastful man, but he could be fiercely brave. He was like the blade of the sword, bright and shiny, but also sharp and piercing. His full name was 'Amīr ibn 'Abdillahi ibn al-Jarrahi al-Fihri al Quraishi, but he was known as 'Abū 'Ubaidah ﷺ. 'Anas once narrated, "Every 'Ummah has its Amin (person of trust), and the Amin of this 'Ummah is 'Abū 'Ubaidah ﷺ" (*al-Bukhārī* 5:87).

'Abū 'Ubaidah ؓ was one of the first to enter Islām. He became Muslim the day after 'Abū Bakr ؓ. 'Abū Bakr ؓ himself brought 'Abū 'Ubaidah ؓ to Islām. He took him, along with 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn 'Awf, 'Uthmān ibn Maḍh'un, and al-'Arqām ibn 'Abi al-'Arqām ؓ, to Rasūlullāh ؓ to declare their acceptance of the truth. They were among the first followers of Rasūlullāh ؓ after his own household. These very early *ṣaḥābah* have a stature that is unique—as if their nearness to Rasūlullāh ؓ when so few believed gave them extra strength and power.

'Abū 'Ubaidah ؓ went through the cruel and lonely experience of being a Muslim in the early days of Islām in Makkah. He suffered pain, harshness, rejection, and sorrow with the other early Muslims, yet he remained firm under the test and loyal to Allāh ﷻ and His Prophet ؓ.

'Abu 'Ubaidah's Most Difficult Test

After the *hijrah*, 'Abū 'Ubaidah ؓ went through an even greater test than he had ever endured before. He was so fierce and fearless in battle that the Quraish cavalry was afraid to confront him. Only one man of the Quraish continued pursuing 'Abū 'Ubaidah ؓ wherever he turned, and 'Abū 'Ubaidah did his best not to face him. The man was determined to attack despite 'Abū

'Ubaidah's desperate attempts to avoid him. Over and over again, he blocked his path and made himself a barrier between 'Abū 'Ubaidah رضي الله عنه and Allāh's enemies. Finally, 'Abū 'Ubaidah رضي الله عنه lost patience and struck a terrific blow on his head with his sword, tearing him in two. The man fell, dead, between his arms. The man was 'Abdullāh ibn Jarrah, 'Abū 'Ubaidah's father.

'Abū 'Ubaidah رضي الله عنه did not kill his father, rather, he killed *shirk* in the person of his father. It is about 'Abū 'Ubaidah رضي الله عنه and his father that these following verses of the Qur'ān were revealed:

You will not find people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day loving those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even though they be their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their clan.... Allāh is well pleased with them, and they are well pleased with Him. They are Allāh's party. Indeed! Is it not Allāh's party who are successful? (58:18)

'Abū 'Ubaidah رضي الله عنه had gained the strength of faith in Allāh, devotion to his religion, and a sense of responsibility to the 'Ummah of Muḥammad that many people of great spirit would like to have reached. Muḥammad ibn Ja'far told this story about him:

A delegation of Christians came to Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم and said, "O 'Abū Qasim, send one of your *ṣaḥābah* with us, one that you agree to be a judge between us on some questions of property about which we disagree.

We accept your judgement.”

Rasūlullāh ﷺ replied, “Come back in the evening, and I shall send with you a strong and loyal companion.”

‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb went early to Ṣalat az-Zuhr, hoping to have this mission, simply because he wanted to be the one described by Rasūlullāh ﷺ. After Rasūlullāh ﷺ had finished the prayer, he began looking right and left and ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb kept raising himself so that he could see him, but Rasūlullāh ﷺ kept looking around until he saw ‘Abū ‘Ubaidah. Then he called him and said, “Go with them, judge between them with truth.”

Devoted Bodyguard of Rasūlullāh ﷺ

One day, Rasūlullāh ﷺ sent a group of his *ṣaḥābah* to meet a Quraish caravan. He appointed ‘Abū ‘Ubaidah as their leader, but he had nothing to give them but a bag of dates. ‘Abū ‘Ubaidah ﷺ gave each one of his *ṣaḥābah* one date every day. He would suck on it, then drink some water, and that would suffice him for the whole day.

When the Muslims were defeated on the day of ‘Uḥud, ‘Abū ‘Ubaidah ﷺ was one of the ten people who surrounded Rasūlullāh ﷺ to protect him from the attacks of the *mushrikīn*. These ten endured all the arrows, spears, and blows directed at Rasūlullāh ﷺ. While other Muslims were running or overcome by despair, these ten

not only protected Rasūlullāh ﷺ with their bodies but were able to shield him as they made their way up the mountain and out of danger.

When they had gone part way up the mountain, one of the *mushrikīn*, Ubayy, who had sworn to kill Rasūlullāh ﷺ, began screaming, “Show me where Muḥammad is!” ‘Abū ‘Ubaidah ؓ and all those around Rasūlullāh ﷺ were prepared to defend him, but Rasūlullāh ﷺ stood up, shaking them off like flies, and thrust Ubayy in the neck with his spear. It was merely a scratch, but Ubayy bellowed like a bull, swayed, turned, and galloped down the hill. When he reached the camp of the Makkans, he swore, “Muḥammad has killed me! He told me he would kill me, and by god, if he had spat upon me he would have killed me!” Soon after, he died of the wound.

When the battle was over, Rasūlullāh ﷺ had one of his front teeth broken, his forehead bashed in, and two disks of metal from his helmet had penetrated his cheeks. Abū Bakr ؓ wanted to take the disks out, but ‘Abū ‘Ubaidah ؓ begged him to leave the job to him. ‘Abū ‘Ubaidah ؓ was afraid that if he extracted them with his hands, it would hurt Rasūlullāh ﷺ, so he bit the first one strongly with his front teeth, carefully pulled the disk out, only to have his front tooth fall out. He bit the second one, pulled it out, and his other tooth fell out.

Abū Bakr ؓ used to say, “‘Abū ‘Ubaidah ؓ was one of the best to have lost their front teeth!”

The Amin of the 'Ummah

Rasūlullāh ﷺ gave 'Abū 'Ubaidah ﷺ the good news of the *Jannah*, along with the others who received that news—the greatest and most noble people of the *Ṣaḥābah*. 'Abū 'Ubaidah was with Rasūlullāh ﷺ at every major event from the day he followed him until the day Rasūlullāh ﷺ died.

On that day, which is called “The day of Saqifah” (the day that Abū Bakr ﷺ was chosen as successor of Rasūlullāh ﷺ), 'Umar ﷺ said to 'Abū 'Ubaidah ﷺ, “Give me your hand, and I'll swear allegiance to you as successor to Rasūlullāh ﷺ, for I heard him say to you, ‘Every 'Ummah has its *Amīn* (custodian) and you are the *Amīn* of this 'Ummah.’”

But 'Abū 'Ubaidah ﷺ replied, “I wouldn't do this in the presence of a man who was ordered by Rasūlullāh ﷺ to lead us in our *ṣalāh* and who did so until the day Rasūlullāh ﷺ died.”

Then, they all swore allegiance to Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq ﷺ. 'Abū 'Ubaidah ﷺ was always his advisor and his generous assistant. After two years, when 'Umar ﷺ became Khalīfah in his turn, 'Abū 'Ubaidah ﷺ was very helpful to him as well. He was also very obedient. He did whatever 'Umar ﷺ asked of him. He only disobeyed him once. . . .

'Abū 'Ubaidah ﷺ was in ash-Sham (Syria) lead-

ing the Muslim troops from victory to victory until Allāh granted him victory over the whole of ash-Sham from the river Euphrates in the east up to Asia Minor in the north. Then, a plague hit ash-Sham. It was like no other illness before. It took whole villages of people, leaving only one or two survivors. People did not know if they had it or not until they suddenly became very ill and died.

‘Umar ibn al-Khattāb  was very worried about his old friend and companion. He sent a fast rider to ‘Abū ‘Ubaidah  with this message: “I am in urgent need of your help, so if my letter reaches you by nightfall, I strongly urge you to leave before dawn, and if it reaches you by day, I strongly urge you to leave before nightfall.”

When ‘Abū ‘Ubaidah  received the letter he said, “I know his need for me; he wants to secure the survival of someone who, however, will not live forever.” So, he wrote back to ‘Umar .

O ‘Amīr-ul-Mu‘minīn, I know why you need me, but I am with a Muslim troop, and I do not want to save myself from what is touching them, nor do I want to be separated from them until Allāh’s will is accomplished for me and for them. So, when this letter reaches you, please release me from your command and give me permission to stay.

When ‘Umar  read the letter, he cried so much

that the people who were with him asked him if 'Abū 'Ubaidah ؓ was dead.

“No,” he said, “but death is close to him.”

That was not a lie. Indeed, 'Abū 'Ubaidah ؓ had become another victim of the plague. As he lay dying, he told his men that he would give them guidance for their lives. He told them to make the *ṣalāh*, fast the month of *Ramaḍān*, give *ṣadaqah*, make *ḥajj* and *'umrah*, give advice to each other, be good advisers to your leaders, do not cheat them, and do not be preoccupied with this life. *As-salamu 'alaikum wa Raḥmatullāh*.

He then turned to Mu'adh ibn Jabal and said, “Mu'adh, lead the *ṣalāh*.” That was his way of passing on his authority. Within minutes of this order, he died.

Mu'adh stood up and said, “O people, you have just lost a man who was—by Allāh—the most generous, the furthest from evil, the most anxious for death, and the best adviser of anyone on earth. So ask Allāh's mercy for him, may Allāh give you mercy.”

May Allāh's ؓ mercy be upon him.

'A'ishah Bint Abu Bakr

Rasulullah ﷺ was asked by 'Amr ibn al-'As one day, "Who is the most beloved of people to you?" He said, "'A'ishah." 'Amr said, "And from the men?" To which he replied, "Her father."

The precedence of 'A'ishah over the women is like the precedence of tharid (a popular Arab dish) over all other foods.

—Anas رضي الله عنه
Sahih al-Bukhari 7:339

"I know that she is the wife of Rasulallah ﷺ in this world and the world to come, but Allah has put you to the test, whether you will follow Him or her."

—'Ammar رضي الله عنه
Sahih al-Bukhari 9:220

The name of ‘Ā’ishah ؓ is derived from ‘aish’, meaning ‘bread’ or ‘living’. Rasūlullāh ؓ, her husband, used to call her “O, ‘Ā’ish!” He also once told her, “O ‘Ā’ish, this is Jibrīl sending you the *salāms*.” He also called her, “O *Muwafaqah* (Successful)”. He often used to call her, “O Bint aş-Şiddīq” and “O Bint Abi Bakr.” Sometimes, he called her “*Humairah*.” *Al-hamra* means, in the language of the people of Hijāz, fair and blond, which was rare among them. He told the people to take their religion from “this little red-haired lady.”

‘Ā’ishah ؓ grew up in Islām from the time she was a baby. She said, “I never knew my parents without their having a religion.” Her parents were very close to Rasūlullāh ؓ. He was a frequent visitor in their house, and the sounds of *ṣalāh* and Qur’ānic recitation were the sounds of her childhood.

One day her mother, Umm Ruman ؓ had her get up and prepare herself, because she was to be presented to Rasūlullāh ؓ for their engagement. She was only nine. They were not to be married until later, but among the Arabs of that time, young people were often engaged. She was happy to think of a future life with their best and oldest friend, whom she already loved. Rasūlullāh ؓ later told her,

I saw you in my dreams for three nights. The angels brought you to me on a cloth of silk. They said, “This is your wife. Reveal her face.” I do, and it’s you. I said, “If this is from Allāh, then may it be.”

The day Rasūlullāh ﷺ and her father were to leave on the perilous journey of the *Hijrah*, she sensed something unusual was happening, because Rasūlullāh ﷺ came to visit at an odd time of day. Their family had to wait, praying for the safety of the men, until at last, news came that they had reached Madīnah in peace. Soon after, they were sent for. Zaid ibn Ḥārith ﷺ came from Madīnah to escort their families, and Ṭalḥah ﷺ went with them. On the way, ‘Ā’ishah ﷺ had an accident.

We came immigrating and passed through Duaina. The camel threw me off violently, and I swear I will never forget what my mother said. She said, “O small bride!” Its head lifted me, and I heard someone say, “Throw away his rein!” So I threw it, and it stood up turning round just as if a human being was standing under it.

They reached Madīnah as the masjid was being built. There, ‘Ā’ishah ﷺ lived with her parents until after the Battle of Badr, when it was decided she was old enough to move to the house of Rasūlullāh ﷺ as his bride. She recalled:

As I changed my seat from the swing to being a housewife, Umm Ruman came over to me while I was on the swing with my friends. She called me and I went to her not knowing what she wanted from me. She took my hand and stopped me at the door. I was panting until I could collect my breath. She let me into the house where women from the *Anṣār* were saying, “Blessings and goodness.”

Because she was very young, she would play with her friends for a long time after getting married. Rasūlullāh ﷺ understood this and let her friends come to visit her. She said,

I played with the girls when I was at Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ place, and he sneaked my friends in to me. I used to play with dolls, and my friends used to join me, but when they saw Rasūlullāh ﷺ, they used to stay quiet. Then, Rasūlullāh ﷺ would leave so that I could play with my dolls and friends.”

Once, Rasūlullāh ﷺ entered my room when I was playing with my dolls. He asked me, “What game is this, ‘Aishh?” To which I replied, “This is the horse of Sulaiman, and it has wings.” He then laughed.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ had a room built for her adjoining the *masjid*. It came to be known as the “Room of Revelation,” because so many revelations came to Rasūlullāh ﷺ in it. Rasūlullāh ﷺ loved ‘Ā’ishah ﷺ dearly. It was well understood among the *Ṣahābah* ﷺ that she was his favorite wife. They used to wait to give him

presents until he was in her house. The other wives became jealous and asked Umm Salma ﷺ to talk to him about it, but after she tried three times to bring up the subject, he turned to her and said, “O Umm Salma, don’t hurt me with ‘Ā’ishah, for by Allāh, the revelation has not come to me while I am in the house of any of you except with her.”

‘Ā’ishah ﷺ was at the center of public life in Madīnah for well over fifty years. A great deal of attention, good and bad, was paid to her because of Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ love for her. Things happened when they were together that affected all the Muslims. One time, she was with him on a campaign in the desert and lost a necklace she had borrowed from her sister. They spent so much time looking for it that the time of *Ṣalāt al-Fajr* was drawing short, and they were at a place where there was no water. People began to complain that ‘Ā’ishah ﷺ was responsible for making the Muslim army miss the *ṣalāh*. Just then, the revelation came that described how to make *tayyammum* with clean dust, if there was no water present. Thereafter, the Muslims thanked her.

Often, women came to her with their problems, and she would help them find solutions and ask the help of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. In this way, several revelations and pieces of advice came about fairness in divorce and other things that were helpful to women.



Trial of Innocence

Indeed, one of the toughest trials ‘Ā’ishah ؓ faced as wife of Rasūlullāh ؓ came when she was very young. She described it as thus:

Before Rasūlullāh ؓ left for his battles, he used to draw lots using arrows, and whomever’s arrow would come out was allowed to go with him. During one battle, my arrow came out, so I went with Rasūlullāh ؓ, after the orders of the *hijāb* had come down. I usually travelled in my *howdah* and lived in it. We went on with Rasūlullāh ؓ until he was finished with his battle. While returning, as we approached Madīnah, we stopped for rest at night. He then ordered that we should go on. I came out of my *howdah* until I was far away from the troops to relieve myself. When I was about to return, one of my favorite necklaces broke and fell off so I bent down and searched for. Because I wanted it, I was delayed. In the mean time, the men carrying the *howdah* lifted it up thinking that I was in it, and they could not tell whether I was in it or not when they lifted it, because I was only a young girl then. So, they took the camel and left. I found my necklace after the troops had gone, and I called out but there was no reply. I remained where I was, thinking that they would miss me and return for me. While I was sitting, I fell asleep.

Ṣafwan ibn al Muṭṭa as-Salmi came after the troops (to find anything left behind). When he approached where I was, he saw that someone was asleep. When he came nearer and saw me, he knew who I was as he had previously seen me before the

ḥijāb. I woke up while he was retreating, and I covered my face with my *jalabiyya*, and in the Name of Allāh, he did not utter a word to me, nor did I hear anything of him except his retreat. He made his horse kneel for me to mount, and he led me until we reached the troops, after which they started backbiting ...and I was blamed for a month. People continued to gossip and perpetuate this lie, although I did not realize what was going on. I became suspicious during a time when I was sick, and I did not feel the tenderness from Rasūlullāh ﷺ. When he entered the room, he saluted us and said, “How are you all today?” and then would leave abruptly. I did not know why he was acting this way until I recovered from my illness and was able to go out. I went with Umm Musatta at al-Munāsiyyia (to the bathroom). She said, “Have you not heard what is being said?” And I asked, “What is being said?” She then told me about the people who were telling the lie. After hearing this, I became more sick than I was before.

Soon after I returned home, Rasūlullāh ﷺ entered and said, “How are you all?” I said, “Would you allow me to bring my parents? I now want to know of this news from them.” Rasūlullāh ﷺ gave me permission to bring my parents. I told my mother, “Mother, what are people talking about?” She said, “Daughter, take it easy, for by Allāh, it is very rare that a woman as beautiful as you and as loved by her husband as you are loved by Rasūlullāh ﷺ, does not have a lot of women gossiping about her.” And I said, “*Subḥān Allāh*, people have talked about this?” I cried all night until there were no more tears and no more sleep.

When no revelation came to dispel the suspi-

cions, Rasūlullāh ﷺ asked ‘Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib and Usāmah Ibn al Zaid, when he had not received a revelation, enquiring whether he should depart from his family. As for Usāmah bin Zaid, he recounted to Rasūlullāh ﷺ what he knew of the innocence of his family and all the good that he knew about them. He said, “O Rasūlullāh, of your family, we know nothing except good about them.” As for ‘Alī, he suggested, “Rasūlullāh, why don’t you ask her maid, and she will tell you the truth.” Rasūlullāh ﷺ called Burairah and asked her, “Burairah, have you seen anything suspicious?” She said, “No, by the Name of He Who has sent you with the Truth, I have seen nothing about her to complain about except that she is a little girl who falls asleep while I am making dough for her parents, and the chicken comes and eats it from her.”

Rasūlullāh ﷺ went on the *minbar* and said, “O Muslim people, what would you say about a man who has spoken ill of the people of my own house? For, by Allāh, I know nothing about my family except what is good about them, and they have spoken about a man whom I know nothing but good and who has never entered my house except with me.”

I remained tearful and sleepless throughout the day. My parents stayed with me, having seen me cry for two whole nights, not sleeping. While they were at my place, one of the women from the *Anṣār* asked permission to sit with me. During this time, Rasūlullāh ﷺ entered, saluted us and sat. He had not stayed at my place since that lie started, and a month had elapsed with no revelation concerning me. He made *tashahhud* and said, “Oh ‘Ā’ishah, if you were innocent, Allāh will make it evident. If you were guilty, ask Allāh for forgiveness and repent. If a slave admits

his guilt and repents to Allāh, Allāh allows him repentance.”

When Rasūlullāh ﷺ finished, I wiped away my tears so he would not feel a drop of them, and I said to my father, “Reply on my behalf to Rasūlullāh ﷺ on what he has said.” He responded, “By Allāh, I don’t know what to say to Rasūlullāh ﷺ.” I said to my mother, “Reply to Rasūlullāh ﷺ.” She said, “I don’t know what to say to Rasūlullāh ﷺ.” Finally, I said, “I am a young girl who has not read a lot of Qur’ān. I have known that you have heard that talk until it has settled in your pulse, and you believed it. If I told you I was innocent, and Allāh knows I am innocent, you would not believe me. If I confessed something, you would believe me. By Allāh, I can find nothing to tell you except the saying of the father of Yusuf, ‘*faṣābrun jamīlun* (patience is beautiful).’ I sat on my bed knowing that I was innocent and that Allāh would make me innocent, but I could not have thought that Allāh would reveal for me a revelation, for I thought of myself as too insignificant to be a case that Allāh would speak of me in the Qur’ān. Yet, I wished that Rasūlullāh ﷺ would see a vision with which Allāh would prove my innocence.”

Then, a revelation came concerning ‘Ā’ishah ؓ that changed the minds of the Muslims and altered their attitude for all time:

Those who brought forward the lie are a body among yourselves: do not think it is an evil to you; on the contrary, it good for you; to every man among them (will come the punishment) of the sin that he earned,

and to him who took on himself the lead among them, will be a grievous penalty. Why did not the Believers—men and women—when you heard of the affair—put the best construction on it in their own minds and say, “This is an obvious lie”? Why did they not bring four witnesses to prove it? When they have not brought the witnesses, such men, in the sight of Allāh, (stand forth) themselves as liars! Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allāh on you, in this world and the Hereafter, a terrible penalty would have seized you in that you rushed lightly into this affair. Behold, you received it on your tongues, and said out of your mouths, things of which you had no knowledge; and you thought it to be a light matter, while it was most serious in the sight of Allāh. And why did you not, when you heard it, say: ‘It is not right of us to speak of this; Glory to Allāh! This is a most serious slander!’ Allāh admonishes you, that you may never repeat such conduct, if you are true believers. And Allāh makes the signs plain to you: for Allāh is full of knowledge and wisdom. Those who love scandal published broadcast among the believers, will have a grievous penalty in this life and in the hereafter: Allāh knows, and you don’t know. Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allāh on you, and that Allāh is full of kindness and mercy, (you would be ruined indeed). (*Sūrah an-Nūr* 11-20)

This is an example of how the lives of the first Muslims were used by Allāh ﷻ to leave lessons of many sorts for the lives of all of us to come. With her innocence and purity proven by Allāh ﷻ, ‘Ā’ishah ؓ was told by her parents to go to Rasūlullāh ﷺ, but she

waited for him to come to her, for she had done no wrong. She once said,

Rasūlullāh ﷺ told me, “I know when you are content with me or if you’re angry at me.” I said, “How do you know?”

He said, “For when you are pleased with me, you say, ‘No, by the Lord of Muḥammad,’ and when you are angry with me, you say, ‘No, by the Lord of Ibrāhīm.’”

Invaluable Trasmmitter of Ahadith

‘Ā’ishah ؓ was very intelligent and quick, and could memorize easily. These qualities served the Muslims, for it is to ‘Ā’ishah ؓ that we owe many of the descriptions of life in Madīnah and many *ahādīth* relating to the personal habits of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. She told us how he prayed in the night, how he behaved with his wives, how much he helped at home, and many things that he said during the eight years of their marriage. She was the only one of his wives who had not been married before, and the only one who had been Muslim from birth. She absorbed his teachings like a sponge and did everything in her power to be near him, to please him, and to learn from him.

When he died, he was with her. He was ill and kept asking the other wives whose day it was. They knew he wanted to be with her and let him go (they trea-

sured their days with Rasūlullāh ﷺ and were generally reluctant to give them up). ‘Ā’ishah ؓ recalled,

It is by the grace of Allāh that Rasūlullāh ﷺ died in my house on my day and in my arms. Abd ar-Raḥmān entered our room and he had a *miswak* in his hand, while I was supporting Rasūlullāh ﷺ, and I saw him look at him. I knew he loved the *miswak*, so I asked him, “Shall I take it for you?” He nodded his head, confirming his wish, so I took it and gave it to him. It was a little stiff for him and I asked him, “Shall I make it softer for you?” He nodded, confirming, so I did. He had between his hands a small container with water. He kept putting his hand in it and wiping his face with it, saying, “*Lā ilāha illa’ Allāh*, for the death has its agony.”

Rasūlullāh ﷺ was buried in the room of Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah ؓ under the place where he died. Earlier she had a dream that three moons fell in her room. Her father, Abū Bakr ؓ, had explained the dream for her and said, “If your dream is true, three of the best of all people on earth will be buried in your house.” When Rasūlullāh ﷺ died, her father told her, “That’s the best of your moons, ‘Ā’ishah.” Later Abū Bakr ؓ and ‘Umar ؓ were also buried in the same place.

After the death of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, all his wives continued to be honored and cared for by the Muslims of Madīnah. Their homes became places of advice and comfort for many. ‘Ā’ishah ؓ continued to work for the

rights of women and to teach what she had learned and understood. People came to visit her from all kinds of places; they were eager to visit the burial place of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

At the time of ‘Umar ؓ, ‘Ā’ishah ؓ began to take her distinctive place as a teacher. When ‘Umar ؓ or others of the prominent *Ṣaḥābah* were in doubt in a situation, especially in things relating to personal matters, they used to ask ‘Ā’ishah ؓ. Ibn Sa‘d once said,

The wives of Rasūlullāh ﷺ learned a lot of the *aḥadīth* from Rasūlullāh ﷺ, but none like ‘Ā’ishah and Umm Salmā. ‘Ā’ishah used to give her opinion at the time of ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān, until she died, may Allāh give her peace. And those people of high rank from the friends of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān, used to send to ask her about *sunan*.

‘Ā’ishah ؓ lived for a long time and became a revered teacher of *ḥadīth* and *Sharī‘ah*. Her later life was marred by the terrible events that surrounded the death of the third *Khalīfah*, ‘Uthmān ؓ, and the political turmoil that existed during the *Khilāfah* of ‘Ali ibn Abī Tālib ؓ. What happened has been called “The Great *Fiṭnah*.”

‘Ā’ishah ؓ remained closely connected with ‘Uthmān ؓ and supportive of him. He also remained highly respectful of her and the rest of the Mothers of the Believers, taking care of them and honoring them

until the end of his life when he was martyred. She then demanded revenge against his murderers and those who had opposed him. This act brought her into conflict with ‘Alī ؑ.

To assume hatred and enmity between the two great hearts of ‘Alī ؑ and ‘Ā’ishah ؑ is probably incorrect. She said many *aḥadīth* about how good ‘Alī ؑ was, for she knew his place in ’Islam. She was asked, “Whom of the people were the most beloved to Rasūlullāh ﷺ?” She said, “Faṭīmah.” She was asked, “From the men?” She replied, “Her husband. For as I know, he was fasting continually and up all night.”

After the murder of ‘Uthmān ؑ, ‘Ā’ishah ؑ (who had been in Makkah at the time) and many of the old *Ṣaḥabah* sought revenge by finding and punishing the murderers, who were a group, many of whom had come from Egypt with complaints against ‘Uthmān ؑ. ‘Alī ؑ, the new *Khalīfah*, wanted to settle the affairs of the government and calm things down before seeking the murderers. A huge disagreement developed between the two factions, which resulted in ‘Ā’ishah ؑ going with an army to Kūfāh in search of justice. She encountered the army of the *Khalīfah* ‘Alī ؑ, with many more of the old *Ṣaḥabah* ؑ. The leaders met to discuss how to resolve this crisis, which both well knew was a terrible and unbelievable thing, the first test of Muslims against Muslims.

Negotiations between ‘Alī ؑ and Ṭalḥah ؑ and

az-Zubair  and 'Ā'ishah  were headed toward reconciliation and peace. In the dawn of that night, after long negotiations and when peace was about to be announced, the whole situation exploded from within the armies, not from the leaders. Fighting soon broke out among the ranks. The great *fiṭnah* took its way and its fuel was the blood of the Muslims. Only Allāh knows best what happened.

Once the battle had begun it was too late to stop it. Many, many Muslims were killed, fighting bravely on both sides for the cause they believed to be right. Many brave men died holding the camel of 'Ā'ishah , which was in the middle of the fight with her in a *howdah* on top. At last, the camel itself was brought down. 'Ā'ishah  was lightly wounded. 'Alī  escorted her politely from the *howdah*, and the battle was over.

'Alī  sent her back to Madīnah. He prepared all she needed—mounts, food, and requirements—and sent with her all those who had survived of those who were with her before. He chose forty of the well-known women from Baṣrah to go with her and told her brother Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr  to help her. On the date of her departure, he came to her. She went out to bid farewell to the people, saying,

O my people, we have blamed each other; some have made a lot of it and some have cut it short. Whoever does this again, please inform him that, by Allāh,

what is between me and ‘Alī from the past is but what is between a woman and her children, and to me, though I have criticised him, he is of the best people.

After the Battle of the Camel and after the martyrdom of ‘Alī ؓ, ‘Ā’ishah ؓ remained in her house. She repented for that battle the rest of her life.

The Wise Mother of the Believers

‘Ā’ishah ؓ was becoming more known and famous for her knowledge of *fiqh* and *ḥadīth*, and everyone went to her when they had questions. Likewise, she became known for her profound generosity—giving away a lot of money while she was fasting, forgetting to keep some for herself for *Iftār*. ‘Arwah ؓ recalled,

Mu‘awiyah sent 100,000 dirhams to ‘Ā’ishah, but in the name of Allāh, the sun had not disappeared before all the money was distributed. One of her servants told her, “If you had bought even one dirham worth of meat for us...” To which she replied, “If you had told me before I distributed all of the money, I would have done that.”

When Mu‘awiyah ؓ took over the *Khilāfah*, he tried to reconcile with the *Ummahat al-Mu‘minīn*. He tried to get the approval of ‘Ā’ishah ؓ and benefit from her wisdom. Yet, she never approved of most of his

actions and deeds, especially when he would exceed the limits of the *Sharī'ah*. He wrote to her once, "Write to me a note, but don't make it long." She wrote back to him, saying, "Peace be on you. I heard Rasūlullāh ﷺ saying, 'He who seeks the good pleasure of Allāh ﷻ with the displeasure of the people, Allāh ﷻ will make him satisfied without the people's help, and he who seeks the good pleasure of the people with the displeasure of Allāh ﷻ, Allāh ﷻ will make him answerable to the people. *'As-salāmu 'alaikum.*'"

All her life, she tried to follow what she had learned from Rasūlullāh ﷺ "If you want to follow me, you have to be satisfied from the world with what a wayfarer would need. Never mix with the rich, and never have a new dress until you have patched the old one." 'Arwah ibn Zubair رضى الله عنه reported, "'Ā'ishah never had a new dress until she had patched the old one."

The night prayers were 'Ā'ishah's ﷺ favorite for optional worship. She would not let it go, and she advised people to make it constant. Her prayers were always lengthy. She also was quite diligent in her fasting. One year, she fasted continuously, enduring even the hottest of days. 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr رضى الله عنه went to see 'Ā'ishah ﷺ on the day of 'Arafāt. While she was fasting, water was being sprinkled over her. Out of concern he pleaded with her, "Break your fast!" But she replied, "Can I break my fast after I have heard Rasūlullāh ﷺ saying that the fasting of the day of

‘Arafāt would erase the previous year’s ill deeds?’”

During the month of *Ramaḍān*, in the year 58 H, Sayīdah ‘Ā’ishah ؓ became very sick. ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ asked her permission to visit. After greeting her, he sat down and said, “Good news.”

“Of what?” she asked.

He then replied:

You were the most beloved of the women of Rasūlullāh ؓ and the Messenger never loved anything but that which is good.” He recounted all the things in her life that had helped the Muslims, including the revelation in the Qur’ān of her innocence. He continued, “There is no *masjid* now of the *masājid* of Allāh in which this *ayah* is not being read night and day.

To which she replied, “Forget it now, Ibn ‘Abbās, for in the name of Allāh, I wish I was forgotten completely.”

May Allāh ؓ bless the little girl who grew into a woman under the love and guidance of Rasūlullāh ؓ and whom we honor as the Mother of the Believers and teacher of the ‘Ummah.

'Ali Ibn Abi Talib

*"You are my brother in this world
and the next."*

– Rasūlullāh ﷺ
at-Tirmidhi 6084

Alī ﷺ was the cousin of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. He came to live with him because his father, Abū Ṭālib ﷺ, had financial difficulties and a large family to support. Rasūlullāh ﷺ and his wife, Khadijah, asked to care for 'Alī ﷺ to ease the burden. Alī ﷺ was a child when he saw Rasūlullāh ﷺ and Khadijah ﷺ praying together. He asked them what they were doing. Rasūlullāh ﷺ then invited him to join them.

'Alī ﷺ wanted to ask his own father for advice about joining them in prayer, but Rasūlullāh ﷺ had not yet made his mission public. He told 'Alī ﷺ that he had

to make up his own mind, since he did not want anyone to know yet about what he was doing. ‘Alī ﷺ carefully considered his decision overnight, and the next day, he approached Rasūlullāh ﷺ. He said, “When Allāh created me, He did not consult my father, so why should I consult my father in order to serve Allāh?” On that day, he became the third person in history to embrace Islām.

Growing up in the household of Rasūlullāh ﷺ—copying his speech, his actions, his attitudes—greatly influenced ‘Alī’s life. To the inheritance of a noble and religious family, he added vigor, intelligence, strength, and insight. His understanding of the deeper meanings of the Revelation opened his heart to all humanity, but at the same time, it separated him from other men. He was the confidant of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and shared his most personal and private thoughts. Like other members of Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ family, particularly his future wife, Fāṭimah ﷺ, ‘Alī ﷺ received much knowledge and many insights and intuitions from Rasūlullāh ﷺ and was regarded as one of the greatest teachers of Islamic knowledge and spirituality.

Soon, Rasūlullāh ﷺ was commanded to invite his nearest relatives to Islām. In Makkah during those days, the families were large—made up of many uncles, aunts, cousins, their children and husbands and wives. He invited about forty of his family members to a feast. He had only a leg of mutton and a cup of milk to serve. When they had all gathered, Rasūlullāh ﷺ told ‘Alī ﷺ

to bring the food. He took a piece of meat, bit into it, and then put it back, saying: “Take it in the name of Allāh.”

The people ate by turns, several at a time, until no one could eat any more. Oddly, however, there was so much food left, it looked as if it had not been touched. ‘Alī ﷺ once said, “I could see no change in the quantity of the food, except that it had been stirred by men’s hands. By my life, if they had been but one man, he could have eaten all that I had put before them.”

After everyone had eaten, Rasūlullāh ﷺ told ‘Alī ﷺ to give them drink. He brought forth an ordinary cup, and after they all drank from it (without filling it up again), there was still more left in the cup!

When they finished, Rasūlullāh ﷺ was about to speak, but before he was able, Abū Lahab cried to the others, “Your host has put a spell on you!” Everyone became frightened and left immediately.

So the next day, Rasūlullāh ﷺ did the same thing again, and everything went as before. This time, he began to speak before they could leave, saying,

O sons of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, I know of no Arab who has come to his people with a nobler message than mine. I bring you the best of this world and the next. Allāh has commanded me to call you to Him. Which of you, then, will help me in this and be my brother and my successor? (‘Alī in *Ibn Hisham, Sirat Rasul Allāh*)

After this, there was silence. Nobody spoke. Finally, ‘Alī ﷺ said, “O Prophet of Allāh, I will be your helper in this.”

Rasūlullāh put his hand on ‘Ali and exclaimed, “This is my brother, my executor and my successor among you. Pay attention to him, and obey him.” Hearing this, everyone got up to go, laughing that they were asked to obey a thirteen-year-old boy!

When ‘Alī ﷺ died fifty years later, he was the ruler of an empire that stretched from Morocco to China. He was the spiritual heir to a vast revelation which had the power to completely transform people. What he knew and understood was so great that it made the transformation of a piece of meat and a cup of milk seem like games for kindergarten!

Growing Up In the Home of the Prophet ﷺ

‘Alī ﷺ grew up scorned by many of his relatives, although his father supported his decision to follow Muḥammad. Inside Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ household ‘Alī, Zaid, and the daughters Umm Kulthum, Zainab, Ruqayyah, and Fāṭimah ﷺ had the best education on earth. They were trained in the subjects of language, literature, speech, and the values of generosity, bravery, good manners, decisive and intuitive thinking, compassion, conviction, morality, and worship. In a time when

few people could read or write, ‘Alī ﷺ learned both. He later became one of the grammarians of the Arabic language. By the time of the *Hijrah* to Madīnah, he was already fulfilling all of the duties he had promised to fulfill at the age of thirteen.

‘Alī ﷺ was very brave. When the Muslims received permission to leave the torments and tortures of Makkah, ‘Alī ﷺ waited with Rasūlullāh ﷺ until nearly everyone had gone. When Rasūlullāh ﷺ was warned by Jibrīl ﷺ that people were trying to kill him and asked him to make *hijrah* to Madīnah, he gave ‘Alī ﷺ a huge responsibility. He said,

Here is my cloak. Lie on my bed tonight, and cover yourself with it. The people who are coming to kill me will think you are me and will wait. No harm will come to you. Tomorrow, return all the money and objects people have left here in trust. Then, come to join me in Madīnah.

‘Alī ﷺ did exactly as he was told, and indeed, the men surrounded the house but did not come in, because they heard the voices of women inside and were too ashamed to enter. Instead, they peeked in the window and saw Muḥammad ﷺ lying on his bed under his coat. So they waited for morning, when they knew he would come out of his house, and they planned to kill him then. The real Muḥammad ﷺ walked out the door, right past them. Allāh ﷻ sealed their eyes, and they did not see

him at all. Meanwhile, it was ‘Alī ؑ who slept on the bed. In the morning, when he opened the door, the killers were surprised to see him and frustrated that their plan had been foiled.

‘Ali ؑ and Fatimah ؑ

After the *Hijrah*, ‘Alī ؑ continued his work in Madīnah. Rasūlullāh ؑ permitted him to marry Fāṭimah ؑ, his youngest daughter. He blessed their marriage and their future children. Over the next few years, ‘Alī ؑ and Fāṭimah ؑ had two sons who greatly delighted their grandfather ؑ. Their names were Hasan and Husain, and they grew up to be great men and leaders of the ‘Ummah.

Throughout their lives, ‘Alī ؑ and Fāṭimah ؑ had very little of anything. Fāṭimah’s hands grew sore from grinding grain, while ‘Alī ؑ carried loads on his back and hauled water for people in the market. One day, ‘Alī ؑ said to his wife, “By Allāh, I have drawn water until my chest hurts. Allāh had given your father spoils of war, so go and ask him for a servant.” She agreed, replying, “By Allāh, I have also ground grain until my hands are blistered.” She then went to Rasūlullāh ؑ, but when he asked her why she had come, she was so embarrassed about her request, she could only say, “I have come to give you greeting.” Then, she

went home.

The two of them went back together and finally presented their request, but Rasūlullāh ﷺ refused to let them have a servant or any luxuries. He said, “By Allāh, I will not give a servant to you, while the People of the *Ṣuffah* (bench) bind up their bellies from hunger. I cannot find anything I can spend on them, but I will sell the spoils and spend it on them.”

The night after ‘Alī ؑ and Fāṭimah ؑ requested a servant, Rasūlullāh ﷺ came to their door, asked permission to enter, and sat beside them. He said, “Shall I give you something better than what you asked of me?” After they agreed, he continued, “Jibrīl ؑ taught me that you should say ‘*Subhān Allāh,*’ ‘*Alḥamdu-li-(A)llāh,*’ and ‘*Allāhu Akbar*’ each thirty-three times after every prayer, and when you go to bed, you should say them thirty-three times before you go to sleep.” Thirty-three years later, ‘Alī ؑ reported, “I have never once failed to say them since the Messenger of Allāh taught them to us.” These important words enabled them to get through even the hardest of times.

The Powerful Warrior

In the battles that led to the establishment of Islām in Arabia, ‘Alī ؑ was a great and powerful warrior. In those days, before a general battle began, the bravest

fighters would ride out between the armies and challenge the other side. The enemy would then send out their bravest and best. The two sides fought, and whoever won had a tremendous advantage when the big battle began. Whenever ‘Alī ﷺ fought, his side always won.

In battle, ‘Alī ﷺ was known for wearing a white plume in his helmet. This plume was highly visible in the Battle of Uḥud. When the Muslims were attacked from behind, many fled in disarray; however, ‘Alī ﷺ was among the small, blessed group who surrounded Rasūlullāh ﷺ at the mountain’s foot, protecting him until they could reach safety at a higher ground. ‘Alī ﷺ carefully carried water in his shield to wash Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ wounds.

During the Battle of the Trench, ‘Alī’s bravery was put to the test. The Muslims were behind the trench protecting Madīnah, and all their enemies were on the other side. The trench was too wide for a horse to jump, but brave warriors from the Quraish and the tribes on the other side would come out and attempt the feat, although no one succeeded. Every day, arrows were shot back and forth, but the distance was too great. The Muslims had scarcely enough people to guard the whole trench. They had to take turns sleeping, so their line of defense was stretched very thin. Everyone was tense and exhausted from the constant strain. One day, ‘Ikrimah, a famous rider, powerful fighter, and a worse enemy of the Muslims, decided to cross the trench. He spurred his

horse, came to the narrowest place at the ditch, and jumped. This time, he succeeded, as did three others who followed him. Waving his sword, he prepared to attack.

Quickly, ‘Alī ﷺ and others closed the gap behind them, so that no more could come, and the four horsemen were trapped. One of them, named ‘Amr, challenged someone to come forth and fight. ‘Alī ﷺ agreed, but ‘Amr said he would not fight him, as he had been a great friend of his father’s and was too young. ‘Alī ﷺ insisted, so ‘Amr dismounted, and the two were soon hidden in a cloud of dust. No one knew who was winning until they heard, “*Allāhu Akbar!*” and everyone knew it was ‘Alī. In the meantime, the other horsemen, save one who had been killed, had jumped back. The Muslims, thanks to the bravery of ‘Alī, won the battle.

The Treaty of Hudaibiyah

At Hudaibiyah, when the peace treaty was composed, ‘Alī ﷺ was the scribe who wrote it down. First, he began with ‘*Bismillahi-(a)r-Raḥmāni-(a)r-Raḥīm,*’ but the Makkan, Suhail, disagreed. “As for ‘*Raḥmān,*” he explained, “I don’t know what it is. Instead, write ‘*Bismika Allāhumma*’ (In your Name, O Allāh) as you used to do.” The *ṣaḥābah* protested, but Rasūlullāh ﷺ said to ‘Alī, “Write ‘*Bismika Allāhumma,*” so he did. As

the process went on, Rasūlullāh ﷺ told ‘Alī ؑ to write that the truce was between Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allāh, and Suhail, the son of ‘Amr. Suhail said, “If we accepted you to be the Messenger of Allāh, we would not have barred you from the House and would not have fought you, so write Muḥammad, the son of ‘Abd Allāh, instead.” However, ‘Alī ؑ had already written ‘Messenger of Allāh.’ When Rasūlullāh ﷺ told him to cross out the words, he said that he could not, so Rasūlullāh ﷺ told him to point to where the words were, since he could not read, and he crossed them out himself.

And so it continued. The Muslims felt they were being short-changed and insulted, but Rasūlullāh ﷺ knew that what the Makkans were getting—in language and concessions—was very small in comparison to what the Muslims were winning. In the following months, his wisdom proved correct. ‘Alī ؑ signed the treaty along with Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, and others.

At Khaibar

When Rasūlullāh ﷺ and the Muslims attacked the Jewish settlement of Khaibar, they had great difficulty because of the number of fortresses that surrounded the settlements. Everyday, people would come out of the fortresses to work on their farms, but when they saw the Muslim army, they quickly retreated inside the stone

castles. Nobody had ever been able to break through the fortresses; however, bit by bit, the Muslims captured one after another.

The trouble began when they encountered a very strong one—its men came out to fight and pushed the Muslims back. “Tomorrow,” announced Rasūlullāh, “I will appoint a man whom Allāh and His Messenger love. Allāh will give us the victory by his hands; he is not one who turns back in flight.” Everyone wanted the flag, of course, but the next day, Rasūlullāh ﷺ appointed ‘Alī. He came forward, suffering from terrible eye trouble, but Rasūlullāh ﷺ rubbed his saliva in his eyes and prayed for him, and immediately his eyes were cured.

The Muslims had with them a huge flag made from a black cloak of ‘Ā’ishah. They named it “The Eagle.” Rasūlullāh ﷺ gave it to ‘Alī ﷺ and prayed for him and for all the troops. After a day of fierce fighting, the Muslims commanded the doors of the fortress, and it soon surrendered.

Among the Prophet’s Nearest and Dearest

When the time drew near for the *Hajj*, in what came to be known as the Farewell Pilgrimage, ‘Alī ﷺ was away with the troops in Yemen. Three hundred horsemen were hurrying back towards Makkah from the south. ‘Alī ﷺ, who wanted to make the pilgrimage with Rasūlullāh

ﷺ, left someone in charge of the army and went on to Makkah as quickly as he could. He completed the pilgrimage and then rode out to meet the approaching army. He was very surprised to find them all in new clothes, taken from the spoils of war that belonged to Rasūlullāh ﷺ and the Muslim state. The men had wanted to look their best on entering the sacred city for the feast. ‘Alī ؑ was furious and made them put back the cloth which was not theirs and enter the city in their old army clothes. The men were very angry at ‘Alī ؑ, even after Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “O people, don’t blame ‘Alī ؑ, for he is too exact and careful in the path of Allāh to be blamed.” Still, the soldiers were unconvinced, and one of them complained vehemently to Rasūlullāh ﷺ about ‘Alī. Rasūlullāh ﷺ, becoming angry with the soldiers for their defiance, then said, “Am I not nearer to the believers than their own selves? Whom I am nearest to, ‘Alī ؑ is nearest to.” Later he repeated this before everybody. He took ‘Alī’s hand and prayed: “O Allāh, be the friend of him who is his friend, and the foe of him who is his foe.”

Rasūlullāh ﷺ planned a huge campaign to Syria, which is now called the campaign of Tabūk. He raised a great deal of money, and thousands of men came to accompany him. For this one time, he left ‘Alī ؑ behind, asking him to look after his family—a request he could only make of a close family member. Taking advantage of this situation, the hypocrites spread a terri-

ble rumor that Rasūlullāh ﷺ was tired of ‘Alī ﷺ and glad to be rid of him. ‘Alī ﷺ heard this rumor and was so distressed and upset that he grabbed his arms and armor and chased after Rasūlullāh ﷺ to beg permission to come with him. Soon, he overtook the army at its first halt, went straight to Rasūlullāh, and told him the rumor he had overheard. Rasūlullāh ﷺ answered: “They are lying. I ordered you to remain for the sake of what I had left behind me. So return, and represent me in my family and in yours. Aren’t you content, O ‘Alī, that you should be to me as Hārūn was to Mūsa ﷺ, except that after me there is no Prophet?” (Hārūn was the right-hand-man of his brother, Prophet Mūsa ﷺ, and he took his place among the people whenever Mūsa had to be away.) ‘Alī ﷺ was humbled by this and soon returned home.

Once, a delegation of Christians came from Najrān and held discussions with Rasūlullāh ﷺ in the *masjid*. They prayed their prayers there as well, with his permission, and discussed many things—one being the disagreement about the person of ‘Īsa (Jesus) ﷺ. Allāh sent a revelation about the nature of ‘Īsa ﷺ and gave a message to Rasūlullāh ﷺ as well. He was told that all the families, both Christian and Muslim, were to gather and that Allāh’s curse would come upon the ones who were lying. Rasūlullāh ﷺ then told the Christians this Revelation and invited them to bring their families. The next day, they came and found Rasūlullāh ﷺ with ‘Alī, Fāṭimah, Ḥasan and Ḥusain. Rasūlullāh ﷺ wore a large

cloak, which he spread wide open, and invited his whole family inside. The five family members became known as “the People of the Cloak,” meaning the nearest and dearest to Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Eventually, the Christians, wanting to avoid any curses, made an agreeable treaty with the Muslims.



When Rasūlullāh ﷺ passed away, ‘Alī ؑ became personally involved in the washing of his body and preparations for burial. He could not even participate in the meeting where Abū Bakr ؑ and ‘Umar ؑ and the others made the proposition of the next *Khalīfah* to the *Anṣār*, which was accepted on the spot. By this process, Abū Bakr ؑ was chosen as the *Khalīfah*.

‘Alī ؑ was the closest of counselors to Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, and ‘Uthmān ؑ, and there were always those who wanted him to rule the Muslims—because of his intelligence and insight, his experience, and his blood ties to Rasūlullāh ﷺ. However, ‘Alī ؑ did not push himself forward. In the terrible confusion surrounding the murder of ‘Uthmān ؑ, the choice of the people was ‘Alī ؑ. He hesitated to take the position of *Khalīfah*, but it was thrust upon him. During his leadership, he faced years of civil unrest which eventually led to civil war. He had to deal with the murderers of ‘Uthmān ؑ, unrest and war on the borders, and the continued disobedience

and opposition of Mu‘awiyah, the son of Abū Sufyān, who was the governor of Syria and wanted independent power. Throughout all of these struggles, he had to pay attention to the needs and wants of the people; check on all his officials to ensure they were fair, just, and uncorrupted; care for the spiritual needs of all the ‘Ummah; speak and write; organize meetings; and lead the *ṣalāh*.

When he came into office, many of the old Companions, including the “Mother of the Believers,” ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها, demanded the immediate capture and punishment of the murderers of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه, but ‘Alī رضي الله عنه wanted to straighten out the affairs of the government first. A big criticism of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه was his appointment of governors, so ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was determined to remove all the governors appointed by ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه and replace them. The problem was that the governor of Syria, Mu‘awiyah, a close relative of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه, refused to be removed. He had become very powerful and was intent on getting the assassins of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه punished first. ‘Alī رضي الله عنه had to deal with him, while at the same time, ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها was gathering an army, including many wise and powerful old *Ṣaḥābah*, to avenge the death of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه. Mu‘awiyah began to blame the death of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه on the companions of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. Eventually, although neither one wanted it, ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها were brought into battle against each other. This was the first instance of Muslims fighting Muslims, although most of the fighting was caused by the murder-

ers of ‘Uthmān ؓ who held positions in the armies. In the end, ‘Ā’ishah’s forces were defeated, and she was soon sent back to Madīnah by ‘Alī ؓ. This certainly was a time of great disillusionment and despair for the Muslims, and they did not know which way to turn.

Mu‘awiyah continued to oppose ‘Alī ؓ, but only confusion came out of the intense efforts at compromise. During this time, there were terrible battles—the major one being called the Battle of Siffīn. The *ṣahābah* were divided, and even those who most strongly supported ‘Alī ؓ turned against him. Finally, as the intense conflict began to subside, ‘Alī ؓ and Mu‘awiyah agreed to have peace. As a condition of the treaty, Syria, Egypt and some of the western areas went to the control of Mu‘awiyah, and the rest of the Islāmic World remained under ‘Alī ؓ.

As a result of these conflicts, ‘Alī ؓ was eventually murdered in the *masjid*, stabbed in the back with a poisoned sword by a member of a group called the Kharijites. They wanted to do away with all the leaders, because they thought that the leaders, who were not able to resolve their differences, were all going against the Qur’ān. As he lay dying, he called his sons to his side, asking them to live with agreement and unity among themselves. He advised them to take care of the life Hereafter and not seek a life of worldly riches.

In many ways, ‘Alī ؓ was like all of the other *Khulafah ar-Rāshidūn* ؓ. Most lived very simply and

took nothing from the state beyond their most basic sustenance. They were truthful, moral, and sincere and spent many of their nights in prayer and many of their days in fasting. They never put themselves above others or became arrogant with pride. They were the best examples, after Rasūlullāh ﷺ himself, for us to follow.

‘Alī ؑ often turned pale and trembled at the time of *ṣalāh*. Somebody asked him why he felt such awe, to which he replied,

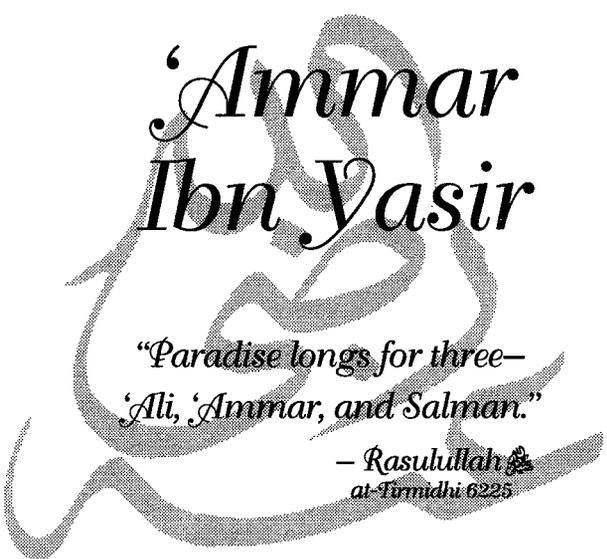
It is the time to discharge that trust which Allāh offered to the heavens and the earth and the hills, but they shrank from bearing it, and I have assumed it.

‘Alī ؑ summed up Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ guidance by saying,

Do for this world as if you were going to live forever and for the next as if you were going to die tomorrow.

In other words, hasten to do all the good you can, now. For, indeed, death is tomorrow and you may never get an opportunity to do good again.

May Allāh ﷻ be pleased with ‘Alī, the brave warrior of Islām and brother of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.



‘Ammar Ibn Yasir

*“Paradise longs for three—
‘Ali, ‘Ammar, and Salman.”*

*— Rasūlullāh ﷺ
at-Tirmidhi 6225*

In Makkah, in the days before Islām, family ties were everything. One had to belong to a tribe, and each tribe had a number of subdivisions. Some might be more powerful, richer, or more famous than others. Everyone knew each others’ tribal affiliation. The way one was treated depended on his or her tribe. Respect was given to some, scorn to others.

In those days, the most respected tribe in Makkah was the Quraish. The Quraish controlled the city and its holy places and claimed direct descent from Qusayy, who had become chief of Makkah two hundred years

before. Within that tribe, the most revered families were the Zuhrah, the Makhzūm, and the Hāshim.

In order to do business or be accepted in Makkah, people with no tribal affiliation had to make an alliance with someone from Makkah. These accepted outsiders were called confederates, and they had the protection of the person who let them in. If one had protection, no one from another tribe or family dared hurt, cheat, or insult them, because this would be just like hurting the family of their protector. Among the Arabs, if a member of someone's family was hurt, the whole family would vow to get revenge. This cycle would continue for years and years.

In addition to the tribes and the confederates, other people visited or inhabited Makkah. Often, visitors and pilgrims would come to Makkah to see the Ka'bah and the idols. This practice was an accepted way of life, and the pilgrims were considered guests of the gods of the Ka'bah and were to be treated with politeness and generosity. There were also a lot of people in Makkah who had no family or position in society—the poor, the servants, and particularly the slaves.

Another unfair division dominated society: the division between men and women. Men controlled and often abused the women. They had many wives, whom they could divorce at any time, and they often treated them very poorly. A father controlled his daughters and a husband, his wives. Men only wanted sons. If a man's

wife gave birth to a girl, he often would take the baby, go out in the desert, and bury it alive in the sand. Many of the girl babies were literally thrown away.

There were those in Makkah who saw these divisions as cruel and unfair. They felt that women and the poor should not be treated so badly. However, they did not have the power to challenge the way things were. They simply did the best they could in their own lives and with their own families. The household of Muḥammad ﷺ and Khadījah ؓ, for example, was known for its generosity and kindness to the poor, who could always find something to eat there or help for their troubles. Others, as well, strived to do right in the midst of such wrong.

Then the first revelations came to the Prophet, ﷺ, and Allāh ordered people to change. People were forbidden from taking advantage of the poor and harming women and baby girls. They were to be fair with their slaves, share their food and clothing with them, and not overwork them. They were not to be arrogant or proud about their family history. The best of people were not to be the rich or the famous, but rather those who worshiped Allāh alone, followed His prophet, and did good deeds in this world.

At first, only those few who had believed these truths all along respected and followed the teachings—the seekers and searchers who sensed the truth of Allāh’s Word. As it spread, the Message began to attract

more and more people—women and men, poor and slave, but primarily young people. Some of the older, more established Quraish began to follow the teachings, however, their sons and daughters were the first to surrender to these values.

A split soon developed in Makkan society between those few who believed and the many who did not. As the believers increased in numbers, the nonbelievers became alarmed and began to work against Islām. First, they used insults and threats and tried being rude and hateful. When that approach did not work, the nonbelievers turned to violence. Young members of rich families were tied up, beaten, and imprisoned. Older people saw their businesses destroyed and were cut off by their old friends and neighbors. Any Muslim who prayed in public risked being beaten up, even if he or she was protected. But the poor, those with no protection, they were mercilessly tortured, day after day.

Such was the condition of the family of Yāsir, Sumayyah, and their son, ‘Ammār . They were confederates of the clan of Abū Jahl and had accepted Islām. Abū Jahl was among the most vehement enemies of Islām. He ordered gangs to torture the weak and unprotected Muslims. He persuaded others to do the same. Sometimes, the torture was so severe that the people had to give in and say they were not Muslim. This confession forced them to practice their Islām in secrecy, in fear for their lives. Still, some people never gave up

and often died because of it.

Yāsir, Sumayyah, and ‘Ammār  were beaten and insulted. They refused to deny Islām. They were made to lie under hot stones at noon in the desert, but their persecutors were unable to break them. Rasūlullāh  saw their suffering but was powerless at that time to do anything to stop it. He encouraged them to be patient and gave them good news of Paradise and the Garden. He himself was not tortured in this way, only because he had the protection of his uncle. His encouragement gave them strength. His prayers and tears helped them to bear the torture.

As a final attempt to get them to give in, Yāsir, Sumayyah, and ‘Ammār  were chained in the hot desert, whipped, beaten, and left for dead. Sumayyah  was killed by the worst of men, Abū Jahl, when he ran her through with his spear. She was the first martyr in Islām. Through her death, she reached a far better life than the one she had known. Her son survived, but her husband, Yāsir , also died from this torture.

With the memory of his mother’s conviction, ‘Ammār  became an even stronger Muslim than he had been before. He stayed close to Rasūlullāh , continuing to learn and to be inspired. This inspiration made him strong, and he used his strength to fight those who tried to hurt him. He survived and immigrated to Madīnah with the other Muslims, where he became one of the honored companions—those who worked night

and day in the community to establish the new world of Islām. He helped build the *masjid* of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and fought with the Messenger ﷺ in many battles. He was known for his courage and enthusiasm. ‘Ammār ؓ outlived Rasūlullāh ﷺ by a number of years and continued working with the Muslims in the spread and development of Islamic society.

During his last battle in the north, ‘Ammār ؓ, by then an old man, recited happily, “I am to meet Muḥammad, blessings be upon him and peace, and his companions!” He then asked for water. When someone offered him some milk, he took it and said, “I heard Rasūlullāh ﷺ saying to me, ‘Milk shall be the last drink of your earthly life.’” After drinking the milk, he went into the battle and fought until he met his martyrdom.

May Allāh ﷻ have mercy on him and on his parents and on all those who died because Allāh ﷻ had conquered their hearts and they knew the truth.

Barakah (Umm Aiman)

*“He that would marry a woman
of the people of Paradise,
let him marry Umm Aiman.”*

*— Rasulullah ﷺ
Kutub at-Tabaqat al-Kabir*

One woman who knew Rasūlullāh ﷺ better than any other was Barakah ﷺ. She knew him when he was a boy and through his adulthood. She lived close to him throughout his years of growth, study, and struggle, and years of revelation, torture, emigration, and the establishment of the first community in Islām. She was neither his wife nor his relative; rather, she was his servant.

Barakah’s parents were from Abyssinia, Africa. She had been sold as a slave in the slave market of

Makkah. As a young girl she became the property of ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib. When ‘Abdullāh married Āminah, Barakah ﷺ became a helper for his new wife. Soon after the marriage, ‘Abdullāh died while on a business and trading trip, and Barakah ﷺ then became the property of Āminah. There they were, the young woman and the teenager—the woman, widowed and pregnant, the teenager, her slave and companion. Barakah ﷺ cared for her and served her during her pregnancy and was present for the birth of her son, Muḥammad ﷺ.

For a short while, the baby lived with his mother and her servant, but he was soon sent away to live in the desert with Ḥalīmah. Barakah ﷺ did not see him often until he finally returned to Makkah at the age of four.

From the time he returned, she became very attached to the little boy. She went with him and his mother to visit Madīnah when he was only six years old. They stayed there for a while, getting to know their relatives who lived in that city. When they started for home, they stopped to visit the grave of ‘Abdullāh, which was on the way between Madīnah and Makkah. Āminah fell ill. The sickness took her quickly, and she did not recover. She died at Abwa, near Madīnah, leaving the girl, Barakah ﷺ, in charge of her young son.

Barakah ﷺ did what was necessary to get back home. She prepared the camels, secured enough drinking water for the journey, and began the trip home to

Makkah, along with some travelers. This was an unusually long trip for a woman, and amazing for a girl and a child. They got back safely, stopping first at Muḥammad's grandfather, 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib's house.

'Abd al-Muṭṭalib was a *shaikh* and the leader of the Quraish, the major tribe of Makkah. He was the most powerful and respected man in the city. He was also very old. He loved his little grandson, and he took charge of him and made him a part of his own household, along with Barakah ؑ, his nurse. So Muḥammad ؑ, orphaned at such a young age, was with two people who had known him since birth and who cared for him with love: 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib and Barakah ؑ.

Barakah ؑ must have been very busy in the house of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib. It was full of active growing boys and girls, their mothers, and a stream of guests. Her dear Muḥammad ؑ was included in everything. People said he was spoiled by his grandfather, who let him come with him to gatherings by the Ka'bah and sit in his lap. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib knew that this grandson had a spark of brilliance, and he honored him above his own children.

Things went on that way for about three years, but soon, 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib became very ill. As he lay dying, he passed the care of Muḥammad ؑ to his own son, the boy's uncle, Abū Ṭālib ؑ. Abū Ṭālib ؑ took the responsibility very seriously. Muḥammad's ؑ father had been his beloved brother, and he treated Muḥammad ؑ

more like a son than a nephew. Barakah ﷺ and Muḥammad ﷺ adjusted to the new household well, seeing the same family and friends as before. Throughout Muḥammad's ﷺ childhood, Barakah ﷺ cared for him.

By the time the two moved in with Abū Ṭālib ﷺ, Barakah ﷺ was a woman in her twenties. She was still a slave but was naturally accepted as an integral part of the large household. She watched Muḥammad ﷺ grow into manhood, becoming a trader with the caravans. She was very proud of him and loved him deeply.

When Muḥammad ﷺ reached the age to marry, he could not, for lack of money. Many women were still very interested in him, because he was very handsome and known for his honesty and excellent character. He finally received and accepted a marriage invitation from the most desirable woman in Makkah, Khadijah ﷺ.

At the wedding, he and his new wife set Barakah ﷺ free and arranged a marriage for her as well, thinking that she must want to have a life of her own. She married 'Ubaid ibn Zaid ﷺ, from the Khazraj tribe of Madīnah, and moved away, living far away from everything and everyone she had known. She was gone for a few years until her husband died or divorced her (we are not sure which), and she came home to Makkah, with her young son, named Aiman, and her new name: Umm Aiman, mother of Aiman. They both moved back into the household of Muḥammad ﷺ and Khadijah ﷺ. Muḥammad ﷺ was glad to have her back. He some-

times called her “mother,” telling other people that “She is all that is left of the people of my house.” She never left Muḥammad ﷺ again.

As the household grew and prospered and the four daughters of Muḥammad ﷺ and Khadijah ﷺ matured, a great change occurred. Muḥammad ﷺ began to receive the powerful, heavenly revelations that would change the world. From the first, Barakah ﷺ believed in him, and she soon became one of the very first Muslims. In the early years of secrecy, when only a few others in and out of the household were included, she was there. When the Message finally became public, she was among the first to endure the shunning, insults, torments, and tortures that followed the Makkan Muslims.

A Woman of the People of Paradise

A strange and wonderful thing happened about the third or fourth year of the Revelation. By that time, the Muslims were meeting in secrecy at the house of Arkam, near the Ka‘bah. They had to be very careful entering and exiting out of that house, because the Quraish were always eager to torment them. One night, Khadijah ﷺ had to send an urgent message to her husband, while he was at the house of Arqam ﷺ. Barakah ﷺ took the message, moving stealthily through the streets, unseen in the night. She arrived there safely,

delivered the message, and left. Rasūlullāh ﷺ, watching her leave, then said, “He that would marry a woman of the people of Paradise, let him marry Umm Aiman.”

Zaid ibn Harith ؓ, who was present, took that remark to heart. He knew Umm Aiman well, as he himself was a part of Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ household, having entered the house as a slave, the wedding gift of Khadijah ؓ to her husband. He had been set free and adopted by Rasūlullāh ﷺ and was one of his closest followers and helpers, but he was much, much younger than Umm Aiman. He knew, however, that she was better for him than any other woman, so he asked to marry her. She agreed to his proposal and they soon married. They had a son, Usāmah ؓ, who became one of Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ favorite people and whom he treated as his grandson. They both remained completely committed to Rasūlullāh ﷺ throughout their lives.

The years that followed were wonderful because of the Revelation and the teachings, but terrible for the torments and hardships. The worst time was at the death of Khadijah ؓ. Barakah ؓ was present at all these events, including when Muḥammad ﷺ finally left his house by night and migrated from Makkah to Madīnah. She waited with the other women for news and shared with them all the joy of knowing of his safe arrival. Zaid ؓ had gone a little earlier, and when places were prepared for them, he returned for the women. Barakah ؓ soon returned to Madīnah, the city that soon took on a

new and more beautiful name—*Madīnah al-Munawarah*, “The City of Light,” the city of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

In Madīnah, the Muslims could live and practice Islām freely among friends, and at last, the true Muslim community could be established. Umm Aiman was as committed to Rasūlullāh ﷺ as ever. She was present at the marriage of his daughter, Fāṭimah ؓ, to ‘Alī ؓ and brought the water with which Rasūlullāh ﷺ blessed them and their children-to-be. She was also present at the death of his daughter, Zainab, and prepared her body for burial, assisted by Sawdah and Umm Salmā.

Her son Usāmah ؓ was so beloved of Rasūlullāh ﷺ that he was often found at Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ house or beside him at the *masjid* throughout his childhood, youth, and into adulthood. He was the same age as Rasūlullāh’s wife, ‘Ā’ishah ؓ. When the lie was circulated that ‘Ā’ishah was perhaps unfaithful to her husband, both Usāmah ؓ and Umm Aiman strongly protested: “This is all a lie,” said Usāmah ؓ. “We know nothing but good of her.” His mother agreed. Their faith in Rasūlullāh ﷺ and his family was secure. They must have shared the relief and joy when Allāh declared ‘Ā’ishah’s innocence in the Qur’ān.



Umm Aiman was always among the Muslim women to be found at the battles. The women usually did not fight,

unless the situation demanded it, but they were a tremendous help, support, and encouragement to the warriors, bringing water, collecting arrows, and tending the wounded and the sick. At the Battle of Uḥud, the women were commanded to stay safely in the city, but as soon as the battle was over, they came out to help with the wounded. Umm Aiman, Safiyyah, and ‘Ā’ishah  were among the first women to reach the battlefield. Umm Aiman also attended the Battle of Khaibar, where there were many arrow wounds from the high fortresses of the Jews, who shot down upon the Muslim army. The Muslims finally captured Khaibar, and with it, the great wealth of its gardens and farms.

After years of battle and hardship, the Muslims at last began to have a little wealth, a little more to eat, and a few possessions. Although many of them were afraid that the new wealth would take people’s minds off worship, they were still glad to have some relief from the terrible poverty they had endured. Even Umm Aiman, who was ready to give up or give away anything and everything, now enjoyed a favor or two from the community’s riches. She even asked Rasūlullāh  for a camel!

“I will put you on the child of a camel,” he said.

“No, no,” said Umm Aiman, thinking he meant a baby camel, “That is not right for me. O Messenger of Allāh, I don’t want it!”

“I will not give you anything except the child of a

camel,” laughed Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

Then, Umm Aiman saw the twinkle in his eye, and she smiled, realizing that every camel is the child of a camel. She went away happy.

In the eighth year of the *Hijrah*, an army was sent to confront the Ghassanid tribes in the north who had killed the Muslim messengers sent to them. They fought in a place called Mu'tah, and the battle is known as the Battle of Mu'tah. The Ghassanids asked for and received help from the armies of Caesar and had a huge force out waiting for the Muslims. Zaid ؓ, Umm Aiman's husband, was the leader of the Muslim army. He carried the great white flag of the Muslims. Although they retreated to find a better position and tried to make the best of it, the Muslims were totally outnumbered. They fought fiercely, but Zaid ؓ was killed, as was Ja'far ؓ, the next in command, and 'Abdallāh ibn Rawahah ؓ, the third in command.

Zaid ؓ, of all the people surrounding Rasūlullāh ﷺ, was one of the most beloved. His death deeply affected the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. and when Rasūlullāh ﷺ went to tell Umm Aiman and the rest of Zaid's family of his death, he began to weep with them. A friend, passing by at that moment said, “O Messenger of Allāh, what is this?” He replied, “This is one who loves yearning for his beloved.”

Two more years passed before the last days of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. He had ordered Usāmah ؓ, a young man

by this time, to lead a large army to the North to confront those same rebellious tribes and to open the way for the Muslims to enter Syria. Some complained about Usāmah's age, but Rasūlullāh ﷺ made it very clear that he was qualified to lead. He rode his father's horse to the battle; however, as the army was preparing to leave, Rasūlullāh ﷺ became so ill that they did not want to go, and they camped outside the city. Umm Aiman stayed constantly with the Messenger ﷺ, nursing him in his illness as she had nursed him as a child. She sent messages to her son about his condition. When it was clear that he was dying, she sent word. Usāmah ﷺ ordered the army's return to Madīnah. There, he found his mother and the entire city in grief.

Umm Aiman lived on for many years. Even though she cared for Rasūlullāh ﷺ when he was a baby, she outlived most of the Companions. When asked why she continued to weep, she explained, "Don't I know that he has gone to something which is better for him than this world? I weep for the news of Heaven which has been cut off from us!"

May Allāh ﷻ reward this woman who gave of her life, as a real mother would have, for the beloved Prophet ﷺ.

Bilal Ibn Rabah, the Abyssinian

*“...I heard during the night the sound of
your steps before me in Paradise.”*

– Rasulullah ﷺ
al-Bukhari-Muslim 2:250

Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ once said to Bilāl ؓ:
“Bilāl, tell me, what did you do for the sake
of Islām for which you hope to receive a good
reward? I dreamt I heard your footsteps going
before me in the Garden.”

Bilāl ؓ responded, “I did not do any Islāmic deed
for which I hope to get any benefit but this, that when I
perform complete ablution during the night or day I
observe the prayer, with that purification, which Allāh
had ordered for me to pray.”

In other words, he hoped for reward simply by

doing what Allāh ﷻ has asked any person to do—praying, with ablution, for that prayer. However, if we study his life, we can imagine the certitude and devotion he must have had in performing that prayer.

Bilāl ؓ was a humble man. He did not seek recognition in his deeds. He did not make a lot of noise in conversation and discussion. The *ṣaḥābah* remembered his voice as the most beautiful; he made the first '*ādhān* over Madīnah. Later, his voice was heard over Makkah, coming from the top of the Ka'bah itself. Bilāl's voice was the voice of comfort, of security, of longing, of belief, of Islām.

Bilāl ؓ was born a slave in Makkah, the property of Umayyah ibn Khalaf. He lived the difficult life of slaves during the pre-Islāmic days. His master wanted to keep him strong and alive but ignored his human rights or dignity. He was valuable as property, and that was all. When Rasūlullāh ﷺ began teaching Islām to the people, Bilāl ؓ was astonished to hear his remarkable views. Slaves were to be treated well, clothed and fed just like their masters, and not overworked. Masters were even supposed to help their slaves with heavy work. In other words, slaves might be owned as servants but had to be treated as people. It was a great blessing and gift to Allāh ﷻ to set them free. Islām also contained deep and beautiful messages to all human beings, slave or free, describing their relationship to one another and to their Creator. Bilāl's heart responded to all these messages,

and he immediately embraced Islām. He did not, however, keep his conversion a secret.

Umayyah was a cruel man—a dictatorial tyrant—and he had no intention of letting a slave of his adopt the new religion. He hated Islām because it taught attitudes that he did not want his society to adopt. He did not want to hear warnings of the Day of Judgment, and he did not want to hear about the dangers of being arrogant and rich. He liked things the way they were, and he was certain he could change the mind of his slave by torture.

The tortures inflicted upon Bilāl  were typical of the kind of torment inflicted on many of the unprotected, poor, or enslaved new Muslims. He was taken out on the desert in the hot sun, dressed in a suit of armor, and made to lie there at mid-day until the heated metal scorched his skin. When this didn't force him to renounce his new religion, a huge boulder was placed on his chest. While it slowly crushed him, he was asked all sorts of sarcastic questions like “Do you believe in the goddess al-Lāt?” or “Do you believe in the goddess ‘Uzza?” or “Why doesn't your God come and save you now?”

Bilāl , deep in suffering, as the heavy stone burned through his skin, repeated over and over and over, “Say, Allāh is One...Allāh is One...One...One.”

The tormentors, taking turns, could get nothing more out of him. They didn't want to kill him, but they could not give up either. Instead, they were determined

to come up with a more severe method of torture. Rasūlullāh ﷺ, seeing Bilāl's intense suffering, urged him to be patient and prayed for his salvation.

One day, Abū Bakr ؓ came upon the proceedings. Appalled at what he witnessed, Abū Bakr ؓ decided to take matters into his own hands. He approached Umayyah and asked, "Are you going to kill this slave for nothing? Sell him to me."

"For a good price, I would be glad to be rid of him," said the furious Umayyah.

"I will pay your price," said Abū Bakr ؓ, who always put his fortune at the service of the Muslims. So he became the owner of Bilāl ؓ and set him free.

Bilal Gives the First 'Adhan

Bilāl ؓ continued to study and work with the Muslims and soon immigrated to Madīnah where he made ṣalāh with everyone in Rasūlullāh's ﷺ masjid. There was one problem, however—there was no way to tell the people when it was time for prayer. Many were far away in the fields or at their homes and would come to prayer too early or too late. Rasūlullāh ﷺ thought of using a horn, like the one used by the Jews, or a bell, which was used by the Christians. Someone else thought of a wooden clapper, but that wasn't satisfactory either.

One night, 'Abdullāh ibn Zaid ؓ, one of the

Anṣār, had a dream. The next day he told it to Rasūlullāh ﷺ:

In my dream, a man wearing two green garments passed by me, carrying a wooden clapper in his hands. I said to him, “O slave of Allāh, will you sell the wooden clapper to me?”

He asked, “What will you do with it?”

“We will call the people to ritual prayer with it!”

“Shall I not show you a better way?” he asked.

“What is that way?” I inquired anxiously.

He then answered: “You should say, ‘Allāh is Greater’ (and the man in green repeated *Allāhu Akbar* four times), and then each of these twice: ‘I bear witness that there is no deity but Allāh’; ‘I testify that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh’; ‘come to prayer’; ‘come to security’; ‘Allāh is Greater’; and then, once ‘there is no god but Allāh.’”

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said that the dream was inspired. He told ‘Abdullāh to go to Bilāl ؓ, whose voice was strong and beautiful, and teach him the words he heard in the dream. A woman who lived near the *masjid* said to him, “My house is on the highest ground here; use its roof to call the people to *ṣalāh*.” After that, every day before dawn, Bilāl ؓ would climb to her rooftop and await the first light. He used to stand and stretch out his arms and pray, O Allāh, I praise You, and I ask Your Help for the Quraish, that they may accept Your *dīn*.” After that *du‘ā*’ he made the call to prayer. Thus, Bilāl

ﷺ became the first caller to ritual prayer in the history of Islām.

Bilāl رضي الله عنه became one of the closest *ṣaḥābah* to Rasūlullāh ﷺ. His beautiful voice became identified in all their minds and hearts with those early days in Madīnah, so full of hope and struggle, so rich in meaning. Whenever people complimented him on his voice or on anything else, however, he was very humble. He would say, “I am only a man who was a slave until yesterday.”

Divine Justice

Bilāl رضي الله عنه participated in several early battles. When he was fighting in the Battle of Badr, he came face to face with his former master. He challenged him, they fought, and Bilāl رضي الله عنه killed Umayyah. Afterwards, Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه commented, “O Bilāl, how sweet is Allāh’s justice!”

Once, after the Battle of Khaibar, Rasūlullāh ﷺ asked for a volunteer to keep watch until dawn so that others might sleep. Bilāl رضي الله عنه said he would. He prayed as long as he could and almost made it to dawn, but fell asleep before his watch was through. Everyone woke up to the heat of the rising sun, but they had missed *Fajr*. It was dawn and they began to ride. When Rasūlullāh ﷺ had gone a short distance on his camel, he stopped, dismounted, and asked everyone to make wuḍū’. He told Bilāl رضي الله عنه to give the ‘*ādḥān*. After they prayed, he told

the people, “If you forget your *ṣalāh*, perform it when you remember it, for Allāh has said, ‘Perform the *ṣalāh* for My remembrance’” (20:14).

Bilal’s High Recommendation

Bilāl  remained unmarried and spent all his time in the *masjid*. Finally, Rasūlullāh  revealed that it was time for him to have a family. One day, ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān came to him and said that his sister was of the age to marry. He then asked if he could suggest a suitable man.

“How about Bilāl?” asked Rasūlullāh .

‘Abd ar-Raḥmān didn’t say anything. A few days later he came back again and asked the same question.

“How about Bilāl?” asked Rasūlullāh .

‘Abd ar-Raḥmān didn’t say anything. A few days later he came back again and asked the same question again.

“How about Bilāl?” Rasūlullāh  offered once again.

This time, ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān replied, “Messenger of Allāh, my sister would be happy to be the wife of a man you hold in such high esteem.” So, the two were happily married.



Bilal Learns a Lesson in Trust

Bilāl ؓ was responsible for managing the expenses of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. When asked how it was done, he told this story:

He never kept back anything for future use. I arranged money for him. Whenever a needy person, whether hungry or naked, came to him, he would send him to me, and I would then arrange for his needs by borrowing money from somebody. Once, a *Mushrik* came to me and said, “Look here! I have a lot of money to spare. You don’t borrow money from anybody else. Whenever you need it, come straight to me.” Pleasantly surprised, I exclaimed, “This is fine, indeed!”

I began to borrow money from him to meet the needs of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. One day, after I had made my *wuḍū* and was about to call the '*ādhān*, the same *mushrik*, accompanied by some people, came and shouted, “O Negro!” When I attended to him, he began to insult me, using filthy language, and said, “How many days are left of this month?”

“Is it close to the end?” I asked.

He then snapped that there were only four days left, and if I could not return the money, he would make me a slave to pay the debt, and I would be herding sheep once again.

Bilāl ؓ, very distressed by this, went to tell Rasūlullāh ﷺ that he was going to disappear for a while, as there was no money to pay the man. He then went

home, collected his sword, shield, and shoes, and waited for the morning to leave Madīnah. He recounted,

Just before dawn somebody came to me and said, “Hurry up! Rasūlullāh ﷺ wants you!” I hurried to the *masjid* and found four loaded camels sitting near Rasūlullāh ﷺ. He said, “Good news, Bilāl! Allāh has made arrangements for clearing your debts. Take these camels with their load. The Chief of Fidak has sent them as a gift to me.” I thanked Allāh, took the camels, and cleared up all the debts.

To Bilāl’s surprise, there was money left over even after the debts were paid. Rasūlullāh ﷺ remained in the *masjid* as Bilāl ﷺ gave away the remaining money. He refused to go home until all of it was spent.

Bilal’s Great Grief

After the death of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, Bilāl ﷺ was too sad to stay in Madīnah. He could not bring himself to make the *’ādhān* any more. He set off into the world to teach Islam and make *jihād*, inner and outer, for Allāh. He traveled a great deal and lived in several places away from Madīnah. One night, he had a dream in which Rasūlullāh ﷺ appeared to him and said, “O Bilāl! How is it that you never visit me?”

The next day, after the morning *ṣalāh*, he set out

immediately for Madīnah. When he got there, he met Rasūlullāh's ﷺ grandsons, Ḥasan and Ḥusain. They pleaded with him to make the 'ādhān as he had done in the days when Rasūlullāh ﷺ was present in the city. He loved them so much that he could not refuse them. He climbed once again to the rooftop and called as he had before. It touched the hearts of the people too deeply to remember the good old days, and both men and women came running out of their houses weeping and grieving. A few days later, Bilāl ﷺ left Madīnah again. He died in Damascus in 20 H.

May Allāh ﷻ shower his peace and blessings upon this humble and courageous man.

Fatimah Bint Muhammad

*“Fatimah is the mistress of the
women in Paradise.”*

– Rasūlullāh ﷺ

al-Bukhari- 5:29

Fāṭimah ﷺ was the youngest daughter of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. She was born the year the Ka‘bah was rebuilt, when her father put the black stone in its place in the wall. The first Revelation descended when she was five. She grew up learning about Islām as it was revealed, taught by the best of teachers.

The years of Fāṭimah’s youth were difficult for Muslims. Once, while her father was being tormented as he prayed by the Ka‘bah, the remains of a sheep were

thrown on his head and shoulders. Fāṭimah ؓ came and cleaned it off, filled with sorrow that her father should be treated like this. Fortunately, she lived to see positive changes for Muslims and was with her father when he entered Makkah triumphant, at the head of his huge army.

Fāṭimah's ؓ mother died when she was about fifteen, a tremendous loss to her, as Khadījah was a source of strength and stability for the whole family. Her sisters, Umm Aiman, and all the close *ṣaḥābah* were always a source of support. Although her three brothers had died in infancy, Zaid ؓ and 'Alī ؓ were like brothers to her, protective, comforting, and strong. It was the presence of her father, however, that truly influenced her life. She loved him, and he loved her, with a love that surpassed the typical love of parent and child and entered the realm of the spiritual.

The women of the family immigrated to Madīnah soon after Rasūlullāh ؑ. When they had lived there about half a year, Alī ؓ proposed marriage to Fāṭimah ؓ.

One story relates that Alī ؓ, in order to provide a *Mihr* (dower), sold one of his camels. Rasūlullāh ؑ then told him, "Invest two-thirds of the money in scent and one third in clothes."

Another story recounts that when Alī ؓ proposed, Rasūlullāh ؑ asked Alī ؓ what dower he planned to give Fāṭimah.

Alī ؓ replied, "I do not have anything to give her as dower."

Rasūlullāh ﷺ then asked, “Where is your coat of mail which I gave you?”

Alī ؑ responded, “I have it.”

Rasūlullāh ﷺ instructed him to give this to Fāṭimah ؑ. He did so, and this became her dower.

For the wedding feast, Sa‘d ؑ of the *Anṣār* offered a ram and a group of *Anṣār* collected some millet. Fāṭimah ؑ was dressed in two robes, the first decorated with silver rings colored with saffron. When she entered ‘Ali’s house, she noticed a sheepskin on a bench, a cushion stuffed with fiber, a waterskin, a sieve, and a napkin and a cup. ‘Alī ؑ explained later, “I married Fāṭimah when I did not have a bed except for a ramskin. We slept on it at night and fed the camel on it by day.”

And so their life together began: poverty in this world, but the knowledge of great riches in the next.

The Devoted Daughter

Fāṭimah ؑ had five children with ‘Ali ؑ—al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusain, Umm Kulthum, Zainab, and Muḥsin (who died as a baby). Rasūlullāh ﷺ loved them all very much, and Fāṭimah ؑ often brought them to visit him. He would let them ride on his shoulders, sometimes allowing them to sit on his shoulders or back while he was leading the *ṣalāh*. He showered them with hugs and kisses. They, in

turn, adored him.

Fāṭimah's life was a short one, spent in reverence and simplicity. She knew fully that the life of this world is passing, and that all true attention should go to the next. And yet she married, bore children, and spent her days in hard physical labor. She also listened intently to the Qur'ān as it came down and was opened to new worlds of understanding. She was present with the other women at the time of the conquest of Makkah and was sitting in the red leather tent of Rasūlullāh ﷺ on the day when he forgave the people of Makkah and accepted their Islām. All her life she was a faithful and inspiring daughter, wife, mother, and friend.

During many of the battles, Fāṭimah ﷺ cared for the wounded and brought water to those who were thirsty. On the day of Uḥud she came out to the battlefield to treat her father's injuries. She placed spider web over the cut on his head and cleaned his other wounds. After the battle, Rasūlullāh ﷺ rejoined his family.

As a gesture of respect and gratitude, he handed Fāṭimah ﷺ his sword and said, "Wash the blood from this, daughter, for by Allāh ﷻ it has served me well today." Her husband 'Alī ﷺ also handed her his sword, saying, "This one too, wash the blood from it, for by Allāh it has served me well today."



The Best of Women

Fāṭimah ؓ is one of the most loved and honored women in Islamic history. Rasūlullāh ﷺ gave her the highest compliment that could be given when he said, “The best women in the world were four: Maryam (the mother of ‘Īsa ﷺ), ‘Āsiyah (the wife of Pharaoh), Khadījah, and Fāṭimah.” He also said, “Fāṭimah is a part of me, and anyone who makes her angry, makes me angry.”

After some time, Rasūlullāh ﷺ gave Fāṭimah ؓ and her husband a house very close to his home, so that he could be close to her. He visited her often, and her home was the first place he would go after prayer or when he returned to the city from a journey or a battle. He sent her food whenever he could, and she would do the same for him.

Fāṭimah ؓ lived during a time in history when daughters were often scorned and sometimes killed by their fathers or other family members, yet she was so beloved by her father that their bond became a new example of an admirable father and daughter relationship.

When Rasūlullāh ﷺ lay sick, he called Fāṭimah ؓ to him and whispered a secret in her ear that caused her to weep. He then whispered another secret in her other ear, causing her to laugh. ‘Ā’ishah ؓ was present and asked Fāṭimah ؓ curiously what Rasūlullāh ﷺ had said to make her react so emotionally. Fāṭimah ؓ replied, “I will not divulge his secret.” When Rasūlullāh ﷺ died,

Fāṭimah ﷺ exclaimed,

O Father, who has responded to the call of the Lord
Who has invited him! O Father, whose dwelling place
is the Garden of paradise! O Father, we convey this
news of your death to Jibril ﷺ.

After Rasūlullāh's ﷺ death, 'Ā'ishah ﷺ asked
Fāṭimah ﷺ again what he had said to her. This time, she
told her about the secret:

In the first secret, Rasūlullāh ﷺ told me that every
year Jibril ﷺ met him and repeated the Qur'ān to him
once. But this year he came twice and repeated it to
him. He then told me, "I think that my end is near. I
will be the best precursor for you." Hearing this, I
wept. In his second secret, he informed me that I
would be the first of his family to follow him, and
upon hearing this, I laughed. (*al-Bukhārī* 5:62)

Indeed, only six months after the death of her blessed
father, Fāṭimah ﷺ got up one day, washed, asked that
her bed be placed in the courtyard, bade farewell to her
husband, lay down in clean linen, and died.

Fāṭimah ﷺ was the first woman to be buried on a
covered bier. She had requested this, because she felt a
woman should not be uncovered, even in death. One of
the women had seen a covered bier in Abyssinia and
had showed it to her. She liked the idea very much.
After Fāṭimah's burial, this method was used for all the

women of Madīnah.

Everyone in Madīnah mourned the death of Fāṭimah ؑ deeply. Many were profoundly affected by the loss of such a pure and austere presence. She is honored as the woman who most closely resembled, both in physical manner and spiritual essence, her father, Rasūlullāh ؑ.

May Allāh ؑ shower His peace and His blessings on the Prophet ؑ and his beloved daughter.

Hamzah Ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib

"Jibril came to me and told me that Hamzah was written among the people among the seven heavens: Hamzah Ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib, the Lion of Allah and the Lion of His Messenger."

— Rasūlullāh ﷺ
Ibn Hisham 613

The Prophet ﷺ used to say that those who were the best in the *Jahiliyyah*—the days of ignorance before Islām—would be even better after they became Muslims. There were a number of very fine men and women among his own relatives and some of the other noble families of the Quraish. Some of them became Muslim early in the Prophethood of Muḥammad ﷺ and some converted later. Yet, there were those who never became Muslim for reasons only

Allāh ﷻ knows.

Among these people were some who had been close friends of Rasūlullāh ﷺ from his youth, who had played, eaten, and grown up with him. Before the Revelation, they honored him highly, but after the Revelation, some of them changed their attitude and spoke of him insultingly, trying to harm him with every word and action. However, one who remained a close *ṣahābī* to Muḥammad ﷺ was his uncle and foster brother, Ḥamzah ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib ﷺ. He himself was well-liked and respected and also feared, because as he grew into a brave hunter and fighter, he became the strongest man in Makkah.

To be considered a good and noble person in Makkah in those days meant that one must possess certain qualifications: generosity, especially toward one’s family and toward travelers; bravery; grace with language—being able to recite poetry on the spot if it was called for; a noble lineage; and trustworthiness. One did not have to be wealthy, although wealth helped. Yet, oddly, some things did not affect one’s “noble” status. It didn’t hurt a man’s reputation if he was a heavy drinker, or if he beat his women, or even killed his female children. Also, he could do anything he wanted to his slaves.

Some thoughtful souls recognized that nobility had to mean more than bravery and tradition—that it must include compassion and mercy as well. However,

those who held this view, in those days, were few.

Ḥamzah ؓ himself was certainly a noble person, particularly towards his family, every member of which he honored very much. He was also very particular about attending to worship and making frequent visits to the idols of the Ka‘bah. Still, he did have some of the bad habits of his day, one of which was drinking and another of which was not paying much attention to the world of ideas. What Ḥamzah ؓ liked to do most was to hunt and be out in the desert.

So, when Muḥammad ﷺ, who was Ḥamzah’s nephew and good friend, had ideas about Allāh ﷻ and the nature of Reality, he probably did not go to Ḥamzah ؓ to discuss them. However, Ḥamzah ؓ was very loyal to Muḥammad ﷺ—so close to him that it was he who went with him to ask for the hand of Khadijah bint Khuwailid in marriage.

When the Revelations started to come, Muḥammad ﷺ kept them secret from all but his closest family and friends. After some time, Allāh ﷻ ordered him to offer these Revelations to his whole family, which included about forty men. He hosted a feast during which he told them that he was the Messenger of Allāh ﷻ and that they should worship Allāh ﷻ only. Ḥamzah ؓ was there but did not respond.

Ḥamzah ؓ went on hunting and amusing himself during the first few years of the mission of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, paying little attention to his teachings. As Rasūlullāh ﷺ

himself said, Ḥamzah ة was very good to his family. He did not want to upset them by breaking with their traditions unless he had to. Unlike many of his peers, however, he did not participate in the torture of the Muslims. He stayed out of the argument altogether.

On the other hand, Ḥamzah ة had a strong and impulsive nature, and when he really felt something strongly, nothing and no one could stop him. Eventually, it was the following example of Muḥammad's ؐ actions in the face of adversity that convinced him without doubt to become one of the finest and most committed Muslims.

One day, when Rasūlullāh ؐ was near the Ka'bah at the hill of as-Safa, Abū Jahl passed by. Abū Jahl was perhaps the most hateful man in Makkah towards Islām and Rasūlullāh ؐ. He had a cruel and foul tongue. When he saw Muḥammad ؐ, he began to insult him. He called him all sorts of horrible names and said cruel and evil things about Islām. Rasūlullāh ؐ took all the abuse without uttering a single word. Finally, Abū Jahl ran out of breath and went back beside the Ka'bah, talking and laughing with other people. Rasūlullāh ؐ went home shortly afterwards.

Ḥamzah ة soon came along, having just returned from hunting, with his great bow hanging over his shoulder. It was his custom, whenever he came back to the city, to first go and honor the Ka'bah before returning to his family. Upon seeing him at the Ka'bah, a woman

from the family of Jad'an, who was herself friendly to Islām, ran out of her house and approached Ḥamzah رضي الله عنه. Having overheard the earlier treatment of Muḥammad صلى الله عليه وسلم, she recounted with outrage every word of Abū Jahl's ranting. "If only you had seen how Muḥammad صلى الله عليه وسلم, your brother's son, was treated by Abū Jahl, the son of Hishām! Yet, even through the horrible insults, Muḥammad صلى الله عليه وسلم said not one word!"

Although Ḥamzah رضي الله عنه was generally an agreeable person, his anger and sense of honor were aroused, and he became furious, realizing that he had been putting something important off far too long. He strode over to where Abū Jahl was sitting with the other men and hit him forcefully on the head with his bow, making him bleed. He then shouted, "Are you going to insult him now, now that I am of his religion, and now that I say what he says and believe what he believes? Hit me back if you can!"

The men jumped up to defend Abū Jahl, but Abū Jahl decided not to fight Ḥamzah رضي الله عنه, saying, "Let him be, for indeed, I insulted his nephew deeply." This day, Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم found a protector.

Afterwards, Ḥamzah رضي الله عنه found himself in a confusing predicament. He was a chief of the Quraish and felt it was dishonorable to leave the ways of his ancestors. On the other hand, he loved Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم and knew that whatever Muḥammad صلى الله عليه وسلم believed and taught must be true. He went to Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم and said, "You

should be pleased, I have taken revenge for you on Abū Jahl!” But Rasūlullāh ﷺ replied that he didn’t care about such matters. He only cared that Ḥamzah should stop worshipping idols and join the straight way.

After a night of prayer and contemplation, Ḥamzah ﷺ went to Rasūlullāh ﷺ and talked to him. His mind soon became convinced of what his heart had already known. He accepted Islām fully and spent most of his time after that with Rasūlullāh ﷺ at the House of Arqām. The Quraish had to be more careful of what they did and said after the strongest man among them attached himself to Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

The Lion of Allah

Not long after Ḥamzah ﷺ became a Muslim, he was joined by another powerful Makkan, ‘Umar ibn al Khattāb. Now the Muslims had two strong supporters, ‘Umar and Ḥamzah. For the first time, they were able to pray and speak in public places and to go again to the Ka‘bah. But the Quraish soon found other forms of torture, and for three years, Muslims had to stay in the desolate valley, banned from all public life and exchange. Ḥamzah shared this time with Rasūlullāh ﷺ and when it was over, he supported him through a year of sadness over the deaths of his loved ones. After this long period, they left the city that had denied the truth for a better

place where they could establish the truth. This place was *Al-Madīnah Al-Munawwarah*—the City of Light.

The first year in Madīnah is usually remembered for the establishment of the first Islāmic government, for the making of treaties with the Jewish tribes, and for the creation of brotherhood between *Anṣār* and *Muhājirūn*. During that time, however, there were several military missions—scouting forays into enemy territory, treaties with neighboring tribes, and confrontations with the Quraish—but none resulted in bloodshed or armed conflict. Ḥamzah ؓ was the general leader for the Muslim forces. He was often in charge of a troop of riders who were sent off to find caravans or spy on the Quraish. His vast experience of hunting and shooting in the desert served him well.

During *Ramaḍān*, the second year of the *Hijrah*, the first major armed confrontation took place at the wells of Badr. The Quraish army was three times the size of the Muslim army and much better equipped. However, the Muslims had the courage of conviction and faith, so they were not afraid to die, knowing they had Allāh ﷻ and his angels to help them.

Ḥamzah, ‘Alī, and ‘Ubaidah ؓ, all from the clan of Hāshim, met the three Quraishi warriors who came out to challenge the Muslims. They swiftly killed the three Quraish, thus starting the battle. Ḥamzah ؓ was like a whirlwind—earning the title “Lion of Allāh.” He had a huge, long sword in each hand and a large, white

ostrich plume stuck in his turban. He was very tall and very strong. The enemy quaked just to see him, and he was so quick that he seemed to be at many places at once.

Ultimately, the battle ended with a decisive victory for the Muslims. The Makkans lost seventy men, including many of their chiefs, and an equal number had been captured. Those who did return to Makkah did so with heavy hearts full of the desire for revenge. Not a house existed without a family member having been slain. Words of hatred directed at Ḥamzah  could be heard everywhere, for he was the warrior whom they blamed for the deaths of many of their fathers, brothers, and sons.

The Muslims, on the other hand, returned home rejoicing, strengthened by their victory and by the evidence of Allāh's favor to them. They knew that so many deaths would not go unavenged. For the time being, they were in a much stronger position than they had ever been before.



After embracing Islām, Ḥamzah  wore no armor in battle. Before he had become a Muslim, he used to wear all the armor of his time—leather breastplate, iron helmet, shield, and so forth. The armor was designed to ward off the blows of swords and to protect the body

from spears and arrows. But Ḥamzah ؓ left his chest open and held an enormous sword with both hands, holding no shield. People asked him why he was intentionally risking his life. Didn't he know that Allāh ﷻ doesn't want us to put our lives at risk unnecessarily? When he was a young man he wore armor; why not now? His friends and family couldn't understand. They told him that arrows and swords have no regard for anyone, and that he could get killed just as easily as anyone else. Ḥamzah ؓ replied to them:

When I was younger, all I thought about was how death deprives a man of worldly luxuries, and I reasoned, "Why should I unnecessarily hasten my mortal end?" After accepting Islām, and as a result of the guidance I received from Rasūlullāh ﷺ, I changed, and now, I have no interest whatsoever in this mortal world. I see death as but a key to Paradise. Armor should be used only by those who regard death as a dreadful end. What you see as death, I see as eternal life.

The Chief of Martyrs

In the third year after the *Hijrah*, the Makkans set out for Madīnah, bent on revenge. They had prepared long and hard, making and buying arms and armor and pooling the wealth of the city in anticipation of war. When the Muslims met them at the foot of Mt. Uḥud, the Makkans

had 3000 soldiers, 700 of them armed and 200 of them mounted in the cavalry. The Muslim army was much smaller with 700 *mujahidīn* and only 100 of them fully armed and but a few mounted.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ encouraged his men to hold firm and have faith in Allāh ﷻ. He placed a troop of 50 archers in the mountain pass to prevent any attack from the rear and ordered the remainder of the army to face the enemy.

As the drums of battle sounded, the Quraishi women in the rear began wailing and singing this song:

We are the daughters of the stars of morning. We walk in decorated, painted garments, with the swinging walk of a goose, the very sight of which bewilders the eyes. Our heads are perfumed with musk, our garlands are studded with pearls. If you advance on the battlefield, not turning back, we will embrace you; our painted sheets will be spread for you.

As was customary, a number of heroes took up the challenge of single combat. The flag-bearer of Quraish, Ṭalḥah ibn Abī Ṭalḥah challenged the Muslims: “Is there anyone who can come out to face me?” ‘Alī ﷺ went to meet him, striking him down with his first stroke. ‘Uthman Abī Ṭalḥah charged forward with a war cry, but Ḥamzah ﷺ pounced on him, striking his shoulder with such force that the sword came down to his waist. Ḥamzah ﷺ then cried, “Look! I am the son of

Abd al-Muṭṭalib who supplied water to the pilgrims!” thus proclaiming his rightful place in Makkah.

Ḥamzah, ‘Alī, Abū Dujānah, Sa‘d bin Abī Waqqāṣ , and others  fought so bravely that they penetrated the enemy lines and fought deep into enemy territory. Ḥamzah  again defeated the Makkans with the fierceness he displayed at Badr.

Yet, danger was lurking before him. A man named Waḥshī, the slave of Jubair bin Mutim, whose uncle had been killed at Badr by Ḥamzah , was an expert spear thrower. Jubair had commissioned Waḥshī to kill Ḥamzah  in exchange for his freedom. Waḥshī had no interest in the battle—he did not care who won. All he wanted was his freedom. So all year he had practiced his spear throwing and waited for the moment of truth. Others encouraged his mission, particularly Hind, the wife of Abū Sufyān, who had lost her father, uncle, and brother to Ḥamzah , by promising riches if he were successful.

Waḥshī was sitting in a bush behind a rock, away from the battle, his eyes glued to the white ostrich plume that clearly marked the position of Ḥamzah , silently waiting for the right moment to attack. Ḥamzah , fighting fiercely, was advancing on the battlefield when he slipped and fell on his back. Waḥshī saw his chance, rose, and threw the deadly spear, piercing Ḥamzah  below the waist. Though he tried to rise, he was unable to. He died within minutes.

The Quraish were elated and encouraged by the death of Ḥamzah ؓ. The battle went on, but the archers soon deserted the rear, allowing the mounted Makkans to come around the side and attack from behind. Fortunately, Rasūlullāh ﷺ was defended by determined warriors, and after great difficulty, the Muslims were able to withdraw to the mountain. The Quraish were soon heard celebrating down below.

As part of the celebration, the women participated in the brutal mutilation of the dead that was common at that time. They cut off the noses and ears of the Muslim martyrs and hung them around their necks; they danced on their bodies; they sang insulting and horrible songs. Hind, after searching everywhere, found Ḥamzah's body. In her frenzy for revenge, she cut open his body, took out the liver, bit off a piece of it, and spit it out. As a token of gratitude, she gave all her arm bracelets and jewelry to Waḥshī. She then climbed to a high spot and proclaimed loudly,

Today we have paid you back for Badr,
And a war that follows a war is always violent.
I could not bear the loss of 'Utba
Nor my brother and his uncle and my first-born.
I have slaked my vengeance and fulfilled my vow.
You, O Waḥshī, have calmed the burning in my
breast. I shall thank Waḥshī as long as I live
Until my bones rot in the grave.

Who, at that time, could have known that both Hind and Waḥshī would enter the fold of Islam seven years later and be counted among the *ṣaḥabah* of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

After the Quraish left the battlefield, the Muslims descended from the mountain to recover their dead for burial. When Rasūlullāh ﷺ saw the torn and mangled body of his uncle and friend Ḥamzah ؓ, he was filled with overwhelming grief. He asked Allāh's mercy over Ḥamzah ؓ, saying, "May Allāh be merciful to you. I know you had a great regard for relatives, and you have always been a great and virtuous leader among people." At the end of the battle, he received the title "Lion of the Rasūl" and was thereafter called the "Chief of Martyrs."

Still, even through the good news and his conviction and understanding that Ḥamzah ؓ was in the Garden, Rasūlullāh ﷺ was angrier than ever to see the mutilation of the bodies of the martyrs. He announced, "By Allāh, I shall disfigure the bodies of disbelievers, taking revenge for you [Ḥamzah]." Just as soon as he said this, Allāh's commandment was revealed:

And if you retaliate, let your retaliation be equal to your wrong, but if you endure patiently, it is indeed better for the patient. Endure patiently. Your endurance is only by the help of Allāh. Do not grieve for them, and do not be in distress because of the things they do. (*an-Naḥl* 16: 126-127)

So Rasūlullāh ﷺ resolved to be patient and not to

retaliate. He made up for his vow of revenge by fasting and feeding the poor and ordered that no Muslim warrior should ever do as the Quraish had done to the dead.

In the meantime, Ṣafīyyah bint ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib ؓ, Ḥamzah’s sister, was determined to look for Ḥamzah. Az-Zubair, her son, had tried to keep her from the battle-field as Rasūlullāh ؐ requested him to do, but Ṣafīyyah was a powerful and strong-minded woman, certainly a sister of her brother. She knew about Ḥamzah and was reconciled that his death was a sacrifice in the path of Allāh—Ḥamzah ؓ had fully prepared them for what could happen. She exclaimed, “I will be calm and patient if Allāh wills.” Rasūlullāh ؐ finally told Az-Zubair to let her go. When she found her brother’s body, cut into pieces, her eyes filled with tears. In her grief, she quietly recited “We belong to Allāh, and to Allāh do we return” and asked Allāh’s forgiveness for him.

In preparation for burial, Ṣafīyyah ؓ handed over two pieces of cloth to be used as a shroud for Ḥamzah ؓ. Az-Zubair used one of the sheets to cover the body of an Anṣārī man nearby, even though the remaining one was not big enough for Ḥamzah’s body. Rasūlullāh ؐ suggested that they cover his head and face with the sheet and his legs and feet with grass and straw. Seeing this, the *Ṣaḥābah* grew ever mournful and began to weep. Rasūlullāh ؐ asked them why they were crying. They then expressed their sorrow and apologies for not being able to cover his uncle’s body fully with cloth

(they were very poor).

Rasūlullāh ﷺ promised them that a time would soon come when Muslims would have plenty of food and clothes and enough animals to ride. Then he said ‘Allāhu Akbar’ and conducted the funeral prayer over the body of Ḥamzah ؓ, who was buried first among the martyrs. His nephew, ‘Abdullāh ibn Jaḥsh, was put in the same grave. The Rasūl ﷺ recited the funeral prayer over each of the martyrs of Uḥud, one after the other, as they were buried beside Ḥamzah ؓ.

When he returned from Uḥud, Rasūlullāh ﷺ heard the women weeping and wailing for the death of Ḥamzah ؓ. He prayed for them all and thanked them for their sympathy. However, he disapproved of screaming and wailing for the dead.

Some time after Uḥud, Rasūlullāh ﷺ told ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbas that he had seen the following in the *Jannah*: Jāfar ibn Abī Ṭālib ؓ (his cousin who would die as a Martyr in battle five years later), flying along with the angels, and Ḥamzah ؓ, leaning against a cushion on a throne.

*May Allāh ﷻ bless him and all his family,
the Prince of Chivalry and the Lion of Allāh.*

Ja'far Ibn Abi Talib

*"I saw Ja'far in Jannah with
two wings stained with blood
and with his feet dyed."*

Rasulullah ﷺ
at-Tirmidhi 6153

Ja'far ibn Abī Ṭālib ﷺ was the brother of 'Amīr al-Mu'minīn, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ﷺ. When Rasūlullāh ﷺ was young, Abū Ṭālib ﷺ took him from his dying grandfather and raised him, along with his many other children. He was highly respected and was one of the leaders of Quraish. Despite his stature, he was quite poor and could barely support his large family. Yet, Allāh ﷻ blessed Abū Ṭālib's adopted nephew, Muḥammad ibn 'Abdullāh, ﷺ with riches when he married the wealthy Khadijah ﷺ.

One year, a severe drought afflicted the Quraish and all the people of the desert as well, killing the camels, sheep and goats and forcing the people to eat anything they could find, even rotten bones. Muḥammad ﷺ and Khadijah ﷺ could manage, because they were able to buy what food there was. However, the difficulties of the other people made them very sad, and they tried to help in any way they could. At that time, there were few in Quraish more wealthy than Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdullāh and his uncle al-‘Abbās ﷺ.

Muḥammad said to al-‘Abbās ﷺ, “O Uncle, your brother Abū Ṭālib has a lot of children. You can see people suffering from thirst and starvation. Come with me and let’s offer to take some of his children. I’ll take care of one, and you take care of one.”

“You have a good and generous heart,” replied al-‘Abbās ﷺ.

They went together to Abū Ṭālib and said, “We want to take some of the load off your back and take care of some of your children until this distress comes to an end.”

“Leave ‘Aqīl to me,” he said, “and do whatever you want.”

So Muḥammad ﷺ took ‘Alī ﷺ under his custody and al-‘Abbās ﷺ took Ja‘far ﷺ to join his children. ‘Alī ﷺ remained with Muḥammad ﷺ and became part of his family. He grew up with his daughters and Zaid ﷺ, whom he regarded as a son. When Allāh chose

Muḥammad ﷺ to be the carrier of the religion of guidance and truth, ‘Alī ﷺ and Zaid ﷺ were the first boys to believe in him. Ja‘far ﷺ, on the other hand, remained with his uncle, al-‘Abbās ﷺ, until he became a man. Soon, however, he became a Muslim and married ‘Asma’ bint ‘Umais. The two of them joined the caravan of light, thanks to the guidance of Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq ﷺ, even before Rasūlullāh ﷺ entered the house of Dar al-Arqām to teach. Islām was still a private and secret matter.

Ja‘far’s Migration to Abyssinia

When the Muslims began to teach, pray, and recite openly, the Quraish responded by tormenting and torturing them, men and women alike. They were especially angry about the conversion of the sons and daughters of noble families, like Ja‘far ﷺ and ‘Asmā’. They could not harm them physically, for fear of invoking the revenge of their powerful families, but they could make life miserable for them. These young Muslims tried to endure the pain, knowing that the way to the *Jannah* is full of hardship. It was particularly hard not being able to make *ṣalah* in public, and they could never really perform their Islāmic duties in peace. The bullies of the Quraish waited for them at every turn, joyfully attacking them like a pack of dogs.

Finally, Ja‘far ibn Abū Ṭālib ﷺ asked Rasūlullāh ﷺ for permission to take his wife and a group of the *Ṣahābah* to al-Ḥabashah (Abyssinia). Rasūlullāh ﷺ, concerned for their young lives, gave them permission. It hurt him to see these noble people expelled, leaving behind them the people and places of their childhood and their youth for no other reason than saying, “Our Lord is Allāh. Allāh is One.” Yet, he had no means to shield them from the Quraish. He himself was spared very harsh treatment only because of the protection of Abū Ṭālib.

Ja‘far ﷺ was placed in charge of the first group of *Muhājirūn* heading for al-Ḥabashah. Although they were being followed, they somehow managed to avoid capture and make their way on to the ships. Soon, they would cross the Red Sea, headed for the shores of a new country. There, they were settled under the rule of the Negus, the good and just king of Abyssinia. The people there were Christians and were peaceful and friendly towards them. For the first time since they became Muslims, they experienced security and enjoyed the pleasure of worshipping with nothing to disturb their happiness. However, they continued to long for aspects of their former lives—their homes, their families and loved ones, and most of all, their beloved Prophet ﷺ.

When the Quraish learned about the departure of that small group of Muslims to al-Ḥabashah, they tried to catch them but failed. As time went by, news came

from across the sea that the Muslims had found security in their worship under the protection of the Negus. The Quraish could not bear that their sons and daughters were worshipping there, out of the reach of their control. They started plotting how to get them away and bring them back to Makkah.

The Quraish knew the people of al-Ḥabashah, because they used to trade goods with them from their caravans. They knew that they were especially fond of their dyed leather goods. They also knew that the Negus always took advice from the religious leaders, who were called patriarchs. With this information, they began to plan a bribe to get the Muslims back.

‘Umm Salmā ؓ, who later became the wife of Rasūlullāh ﷺ after her first husband died, was in al-Ḥabashah during this time. She told the following story about what happened:

When we reached Abyssinia, we met the best hospitality. We did not fear for our religion; rather, we worshiped Allāh, our Lord, without being hurt or hearing bad things. When this news reached the Quraish, they sent two strong men from among themselves—‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ and ‘Abdullāh ibn Abī Rabī‘ah—to the Negus, with presents of all the things the Negus and his people liked from the land of al-Ḥijāz. They were advised to give each patriarch his gift before talking to the Negus about us.

When they reached al-Ḥabashah, they met the patriarchs and gave them all their gifts, saying, “Some

foolish youths of our people came to your king's land; they have left the religion of their fathers and forefathers and disunited their people. When we talk to the king about them, do advise him to deliver them to us without asking about their religion, for the nobles of their people know them and their convictions better."

The patriarchs, happy with their gifts and unaware of the real reasons the Muslims had fled from their homes, said they would so advise the king.

For 'Amr and his friend, nothing could be worse than the Negus calling one of us to talk with him. They did not want the Negus to know about our religion. So, they went to the Negus, gave him his presents, which he liked very much, and said, "O Sire, a group of bad boys from our clan have come to your kingdom. They have invented a religion that neither we nor you know; they have left our religion and have refused to enter into yours. We are sent by the nobility of their people—their fathers, uncles and clans—to get them back, for they know best the *fiṭnah* (mischief) they have caused."

The Negus looked to his patriarchs, who said, "They speak the truth, Sire. These people know better who they are and what they did. Give them back to their people, and let them see what to do with them."

The words of the patriarchs made the king very angry. He said, "By Allāh, I will not deliver one single person before I call them and ask them about this accusation. If they really are as these two men say, I'll deliver them, and if not, I'll defend them and give them my best protection for as long as they ask me to."

The Negus then called us to meet him. We gathered before we went and said to each other, "The

king will ask you about your religion; declare what you believe and let nobody speak for you but Ja‘far ibn Abī Ṭālib.”

Then, we went to the Negus. He had already called his patriarchs who were sitting on both his right and left sides, wearing their green cloaks and their cowls and having their books opened in their hands. There, we found ‘Amr ibn Al-‘Āṣ and ‘Abdullāh ibn Abī Rabī‘ah. When we sat down, the Negus turned to us and said, “What is this religion that you invented for yourself and that made you leave your people’s religion and not enter mine or any other?”

Ja‘far ibn Abī Ṭālib stepped forward and said, “O Sire, we were people of *Jahilīyyah*; we worshiped idols, ate dead animals, committed obscene things, cut the bonds of kinship, hurt the neighbors, tormented the weak. We remained like this until Allāh sent to us a messenger, one of us. We know his family, his loyalty, his honesty and his chastity. He called us to Allāh, to recognize His Oneness and worship Him and to leave the stones and idols that we and our fathers used to worship. He ordered us to tell the truth, to be trustworthy, to tie the bonds of kinship, to be good neighbors, to stop committing sins and stop killing infant girls. He forbade obscene things, telling lies, taking the orphan’s money and accusing virtuous women. He commanded us to worship only Allāh with no partners, to make *ṣalāh*, give *zakāh*, and fast the month of *Ramaḍān*. We trusted him and believed in him. We followed him for what he brought from Allāh. We did what he says is *ḥalāl* and stopped doing what he says is *ḥarām*. Sire, our people tortured us badly to make us go back to idol worshipping. When their injustice and cruelty became unbearable and

when they prevented us from accomplishing the rites of our religion, we came here. We chose you over all others, because we wanted your protection and hoped to be treated fairly in your land.”

The Negus turned to Ja‘far ibn Abī Ṭālib and said, “Can you remember what your prophet brought from Allāh?”

“Yes,” he replied.

“Then, tell me about it,” said the Negus.

At that point, Ja‘far ibn Abī Ṭālib recited the first part of *Sūrah Maryam*. (The beginning of this *sūrah* is about Prophet Yahya (John) عليه السلام. The powerful words of the Qur’ān exalt and praise this prophet who is very well known to Christians, and very important to them.)

When they heard Allāh’s words, the Negus wept, tears soaking his beard. His patriarchs wept as well, tears falling on their books. The Negus then said, “What your prophet brought and what ‘Īsa brought, both come from the same source (niche).” Then, he turned to ‘Amr and his friend and said, “Go away. By Allāh, I will never deliver them to you!”

When we went out, ‘Amr threatened us and said to his friend, “By Allāh, I’ll go tomorrow to the king and tell things about them that will fill his heart with anger and hatred against them. I will push him to uproot them.”

“Don’t do that, ‘Amr,” said ‘Abdullāh ibn Abī Rabī‘ah. “After all, despite their contrariness, they still are our relatives.”

“Never mind,” replied ‘Amr, “by Allāh, I will tell him things that will shake the earth beneath their feet . . . I will tell him they say that ‘Īsa ibn Maryam is a slave (‘abd)!”

The next day, ‘Amr went to the Negus and said, “O Sire, the people you are housing and protecting say terrible things about ‘Īsa ibn Maryam. Call them, and ask them what they say about him.”

When we heard that, we felt more apprehensive and sorrowful than we had ever felt before. We said to each other, “What will you say about ‘Īsa ibn Maryam ~~خ~~ when the king asks you? By Allāh, we shall say what Allāh said about him with not a jot of difference from what our Prophet ﷺ said, no matter what the consequences.” Then, we agreed to let Ja‘far ibn Abī Ṭālib speak for us again.

When the Negus called us, we went there and found his patriarchs sitting just as we had seen them before, along with ‘Amr and his friend. When we stood before him he said, “What do you say about ‘Īsa ibn Maryam?”

Ja‘far ibn Abī Ṭālib said, “We only say what our prophet says about him.”

“And what does he say?” asked the Negus.

“He says that ‘Īsa is a worshipper (‘abd) of Allāh and is His messenger—His spirit and His word which He laid upon the virgin Maryam,” replied Ja‘far.

When the Negus heard Ja‘far’s words, he hit the ground with his hand and said, “By Allāh, what ‘Īsa ibn Maryam brought did not deviate one hair from what your prophet brought!”

The patriarchs grunted to express their denial of this, to which the Negus concluded, “Despite your grumbling!” Then he turned and said to us, “Go; you are secure. Whoever insults you will pay for it and whoever opposes you will be punished. By Allāh, I wouldn’t like to have a mountain of gold for one of

you being hurt.”

Then, he looked at ‘Amr and his friend and said, “Give these two men back their gifts; I don’t need them.” ‘Amr and his friend left mortified, frustrated, and extremely disappointed.

So, we continued to live in the land of the Negus, enjoying the best home and the best protector.

The Return Home

Ja‘far ibn Abī Ṭālib ﷺ and his wife spent ten tranquil and secure years under the protective wings of the Negus, and on the seventh year of *Hijrah*, he left the land of Abyssinia with a group of Muslims heading for Madīnah. When they arrived, Rasūlullāh ﷺ was just returning from Khaibar, which Allāh had opened for him. Rasūlullāh ﷺ was so happy to meet Ja‘far ﷺ that he said, “I don’t know what makes me more happy, the opening of Khaibar or the arrival of Ja‘far!” All the Muslims, especially the poor people, were as happy as Rasūlullāh ﷺ with the return of Ja‘far ﷺ.

Ja‘far ﷺ was very open hearted towards the poor and helpless. He received the honor of being called ‘Father of the Helpless.’ Abū Hurairah was one of the ‘People of the Bench’ (Ahl aṣ-Ṣuffah) who lived in the *masjid*, had no other homes, and were dependent upon the gifts of others to survive. Along with the others, he knew what it was to be hungry, because there were

times when no one had any food at all. He said about Ja‘far ﷺ:

Ja‘far ibn Abī Ṭālib was the best to us helpless people. He used to take us to his home to give us whatever he had to eat. When the food ran out, he gave us the bag of butter for us to lick the butter sticking inside.

The Valiant End

Ja‘far ibn Abī Ṭālib ﷺ was not able to stay long in Madīnah. At the beginning of the eighth year of *hijrah*, Rasūlullāh ﷺ mobilized an army to fight one of the northern tribes, Ghassan, who had captured and killed one of his messengers—a messenger to Caesar, the head of the Christian Byzantine Empire who ruled the lands to the north and northwest. The Ghassanids were mainly Christian. There was a risk that they would call out other tribes in Ash-Sham, and that Caesar himself would help. However, it was still necessary to avenge the death of the messenger and others who had been killed in that area. Rasūlullāh ﷺ assigned Zaid Ibn Ḥārith ﷺ, whom he had raised like his own son, leadership of this army. He gave him a white standard (banner) and said to the people:

If Zaid is killed or wounded, then Ja‘far ibn Abū Ṭālib

will be the leader; if Ja‘far is killed or wounded, then ‘Abdullāh ibn Rawāhah will be the leader. If ‘Abdullāh Ibn Rawahah is killed or wounded then let the Muslims pick a leader for themselves. (‘Urwah Ibn as-Zubair in *Ibn Hisham*)

Then, he went with the army as far as the Pass of Farewell, an opening between two hills to the north of Madīnah.

When the Muslims neared Mu’tah, a village on the frontiers between ash-Sham and Jordan, they found that indeed the Ghassanids had received help from the other northern tribes. Also, Caesar had sent troops from his own forces. The scouts reported that the army waiting for them had one hundred thousand troops, not including the support from neighboring tribes. The Muslim army had only three thousand men.

The Muslims discussed sending a messenger to Rasūlullāh ﷺ informing him of the size of the enemy force. However, ‘Abdullāh urged them forward to fight, restating the resolution of Uḥud: they had only two alternatives: martyrdom for paradise or victory for the Muslims. They decided to fight.

When they encountered the enemy, they found that they were vastly outnumbered. The Byzantine forces had incredible arms, armor, and horses armored for battle. They were drawn up in battle formation beneath their splendid banners, waiting for combat. Even so, the Muslims prepared for attack.

The battle had hardly started between the two armies when Zaid Ibn Ḥārith ؓ was martyred. Ja‘far Ibn Abū Ṭālib ؓ jumped on his golden Arabian mare, wounding it with his sword so that the enemy might not use it. Then, he carried the standard and penetrated deep into the Byzantine ranks, singing:

O how good is the Jannah and its approach!
So good and so cold are it’s drinks!
And the Greeks, their torment is coming close
Unbelievers, with no relationships;
When I meet them, it’s my duty to fight them!

Ja‘far ؓ must have known, as he charged singing into rank upon rank of Byzantine and Arab warriors, that he had little chance of survival. Yet, he had complete *īmān* and the knowledge of a reward for fighting in the service of Allāh—the Garden—he could sing of it and be totally brave. He continued fighting in the ranks of the enemies until his right hand was cut off, so he took the standard with his left hand. Soon, his left hand was also cut, so he held the standard between his chest and wrists. Finally, he got a strike that cut him in two pieces. As he fell, ‘Abdullāh Ibn Rawahah took the standard and kept fighting until he also joined his two friends in death.

Meanwhile, Rasūlullāh ؐ witnessed what was happening at a distance. He saw, in a vision, the fall of the three leaders. The white standard was given to

Khālid ibn al-Walīd ﷺ. The army drew together to fend off the enemy. They found a way to retreat from the overwhelming opposition. That same day, Rasūlullāh ﷺ described the battle to the people, with tears streaming down his face, for he had lost beloved friends, companions, members of his own household. Deeply grieved, he went to the house of his cousin, Ja‘far Ibn Abī Ṭālīb ﷺ, and found his wife ‘Asmā, who left us this story:

When Rasūlullāh ﷺ came to us, I noticed the sadness on his noble face. I was aware of it, but I did not want to ask him about Ja‘far for fear of hearing something bad. He greeted me and said, “Bring Ja‘far’s sons.” So, I did. They jumped happily to him and started quarreling to have him each for himself. He brought them close to him, holding them and crying.

I finally asked, “O Rasūlullāh—dearer than my father and my mother—what makes you weep? Have you heard about Ja‘far and his two friends?”

“Yes,” he said, ‘they obtained *shahādah*.’

Hearing this, she sat down and cried. When the children heard the sobs of their mother, the smiles on their faces disappeared, and they froze in their places.

As Rasūlullāh ﷺ left, he wiped his tears and said, “O Allāh, make up for Ja‘far in his children. O Allāh, make up for him in his wife.”

Returning home, he ordered food to be prepared for the family of Ja‘far ﷺ for several days. He said, “Their grief keeps them busy, beyond caring for their own needs.” That night, to ease the great grief felt in so

many houses in Madīnah, Allāh ﷻ gave a vision to Rasūlullāh ﷺ. His sorrow was much relieved, and in the morning, he told the people in the *masjid* that he had seen Zaid, Ja‘far, ‘Abdullāh, and the other martyrs ﷺ of the battle. He had specifically seen Ja‘far ﷺ flying like an angel with two wings stained red. When he went to tell Asma‘ of his vision, she was deeply relieved to hear the blessed news.

*May Allāh ﷻ bless all these brave souls
and their families.*

Khadijah Bint Al-Khuwailid

“The best of the world’s women (for her time) is Mary and the best of the world’s women (for her time) is Khadijah.”

— Rasūlullāh ﷺ

al-Bukhari 5:163, Sahih Muslim 4:5965

Jibrīl ﷺ once came to Rasūlullāh ﷺ and said, “O Allāh’s Messenger! Khadijah is coming to you with a bowl of soup. When she reaches you, greet her on behalf of her Lord and myself and give her the glad tidings that she has a house of pearls in paradise where there will be no noise nor any fatigue.”

The name given to each of the wives of Rasūlullāh ﷺ is “Mother of the Faithful.” Khadijah ﷺ was the Mother of all the Mothers of the Faithful. All accounts speak of her generosity, beauty, tolerance,

kindness, patience, and understanding. She is regarded as a perfect mother who bore Rasūlullāh's ﷺ six children. She is also remembered as a wealthy businesswoman who conducted her own affairs wisely and successfully during a time when most women were oppressed and enslaved. The *ḥadīth* of Jibrīl ﷺ celebrates her life and tells how her diligence and discipline were rewarded.

Khadijah ﷺ was the very first Muslim after Rasūlullāh ﷺ himself, and she supported him and all the new believers with body, heart, and soul throughout the early and most difficult years of Islām in Arabia. Makkah, during the days of Khadijah's youth, was like a frontier town. Light came from oil lamps, but since these were expensive, most people lived by natural light, rising at dawn and going to bed soon after sunset.

Khadijah ﷺ came from a wealthy family and always had servants around her. The servants of that time were slaves from many places around the world—during those years, the slave trade was a big business—from across the Red Sea in Africa, from one of the Arab tribes, from Europe, or from the Roman or Persian empires.

Trade and business were very important to Makkah's economy. Khadijah's family was engaged in trade, and she grew up in an atmosphere of wealth and power. She learned a lot about business by watching and listening. While she was still quite young, she was

married to one of the noblemen of the Quraish and had several children. When he died, she married another man, only to be widowed yet again. Her husbands and family had left her with a great deal of money, enabling her to continue her business. She did not go on the caravans herself, however; instead, she would hire someone to do the trading for her. Her treasurer, Maisarah, helped her with accounts and hiring and dealt directly with camel drivers and traders.

At the age of about forty, Khadijah ﷺ was living alone, with a successful business, when she heard about Muhammad ﷺ. She was impressed by the stories of his honesty and heard that the people called him al-‘*Amīn*’ (the honest). She knew he was a trader on the caravans and that he was very honorable, and she decided to hire him. Muhammad ﷺ was nearly twenty-five years old when he came to work for Khadijah ﷺ. He had been living with his uncle, Abū Tālib ﷺ, for many years, ever since the death of his grandfather ‘*Abd al-Muṭṭalib*’ when Muhammad ﷺ was nine years old. His father had died before he was born, and his mother died when he was six. When the time came for the next journey north to Syria, Muhammad ﷺ went as the representative of Khadijah ﷺ. She sent Maisarah along to help him.

The caravan left for Syria and was gone for a long time. During the long absence, Khadijah, like all the other traders, prayed and waited expectantly. One day, she heard noises in the courtyard. Maisarah had

ridden ahead of the caravan to announce its arrival. He was dusty and hot, but very happy. He talked endlessly in praise of the new trader, commending Muḥammad ﷺ for his honesty and good business sense. The caravan had made money everywhere it went—much more than expected. Maisarah was also very impressed by Muḥammad’s ﷺ character, by his thoughtfulness, intelligence, and kindness. There was something about this man that Maisarah could not describe—some quality of goodness, radiance, or politeness—and he was unable to stop talking about him.

Khadijah ﷺ listened to Maisarah very carefully and with great interest. When Muḥammad ﷺ arrived, settled the camels, and brought in all the belongings, he came to make his report. As he spoke, Khadijah ﷺ was deeply moved.

Shortly afterwards, a lady friend of Khadijah’s, who also knew Muḥammad ﷺ, came to see him. She asked, “Why don’t you marry?”

He replied, “I have no money.”

She said, “Would you marry someone who has compassion, good reputation, beauty, riches, and who also wants to marry you?”

“And who would that be?” he inquired curiously.

“Khadijah!”

Muḥammad ﷺ was happy and willing, so Khadijah ﷺ went to her uncle, her closest male relative, and Muḥammad ﷺ went to his uncle. Both consented

and the wedding soon took place. Muḥammad ﷺ then moved into Khadijah's big house, an enormous change for him. He had been an orphan since he was very young, and although he had many friends and companions, he had never been as close to anyone as he was to her. She became his best friend—the one who understood him best in all the world, the one he could talk to about everything.

It was also a relief for him not to worry excessively about money. Now, although he continued to work, he was able to take time when needed. He could retreat to the mountains to pray and meditate. He needed this time as an escape from his troubled society. He knew that there was only one God who should be worshiped and that there must be a better way to worship and to live than the ways he saw in Makkah.

For fifteen years, Khadijah ﷺ and Muḥammad ﷺ shared a rich and beautiful family life and a wonderful marriage. They were respected by the Quraish for their nobility, and they were loved by the poor for their generosity and compassion. During their marriage, they had six children: Zainab, Umm Kulthum, Ruqayyah, Fāṭimah, al-Qāsim, and 'Abd Allāh. Sadly, both sons died while they were very young.

Three others lived with the family: 'Alī ﷺ, Zaid ﷺ, and Barakah ﷺ. 'Alī ﷺ was the son of Abū Ṭālib ﷺ and Muḥammad's ﷺ cousin. Muḥammad ﷺ offered to help his poor uncle by taking care of 'Alī ﷺ. Zaid ﷺ

was from an Arab tribe in the north. He had been captured by another tribe and sold as a slave. Khadijah's uncle gave Zaid ؑ to her, and she, in turn, gave Zaid ؑ to Muḥammad ؑ on their wedding day. Muḥammad ؑ later freed him and treated him as his son. Barakah ؑ had also been a servant, first of Muḥammad's father, then of his mother, then of his own. She had been with him all during his childhood and youth. When he married, she was freed and soon married. But before long, she returned with a son, Usāmah ؑ, to live with Muḥammad ؑ and Khadijah ؑ. It was certainly a big household, full of people and activity.

Khadijah ؑ was as close to Muḥammad ؑ as one person can be to another. When the first Revelation descended to him on Mt. Hira, she was the first person to know about it. He was shaken and terrified by the experience. He did not know whether he was going crazy or if an angel really had spoken to him! She listened to him attentively and believed him. She reassured him that he was not crazy and sat with him until he fell asleep. She then put on her coat and went out, going straight to her cousin Waraqah, a Christian and the most religious and pure person she knew. After she told him what had happened, he became very excited:

Holy, holy, I swear by Allāh, if what you say is true, O Khadijah, he has received the greatest Nāmūs (angel), the one who came to Moses and Jesus.

Muhammad is certainly the prophet of this nation, so encourage him to be strong and determined!

Khadijah ﷺ returned home to tell her husband the good news. Muhammad ﷺ then spoke to Waraqah himself. Waraqah had studied the lives of the earlier prophets and knew his subject well. He told Muhammad ﷺ,

You are the Prophet of this nation. They will say you are a liar, and you will be attacked and tormented. They will drive you out of your home. If I live to see you win, I will support Allāh's Word in you!

Rasūlullāh ﷺ asked him, "Will they really throw me out?"

"Yes, they will. No man who brought a Message like yours was ever free of persecution," he replied.

Soon after, life changed dramatically. The Message was not public; it was passed secretly from believer to believer. Muhammad ﷺ taught Khadijah ﷺ to pray, and they made the *ṣalāh* together. Abū Bakr ﷺ, a close friend of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, became a Muslim and brought many others to Islām. In the beginning, the new Muslims did not tell people who might not understand, but after three years, Allāh ﷻ commanded His prophet ﷺ to tell his extended family, his uncles, and other relatives of the Quraish about Islām. He obeyed, but most of them did not want to listen to him. 'Alī ﷺ was the only member of his extended family who promised to support

him, and ‘Alī ﷺ was just a young boy.

Khadijah ﷺ continued to support everyone in the household. Terrible things were happening to the family—they were being beaten in the streets, teased, insulted, and shunned. Old friends and family members refused to speak to them. People they had loved and trusted turned against them. Vendors would not even sell them things in the market. Muḥammad had to go out every day and face the troubles, because Allāh had ordered him to tell the people. Khadijah ﷺ stayed at home and kept that place of security and comfort for him. While terrible things were happening from the outside world, wonderful things were happening within the family. The Qur’ān continued to come, and new believers kept making *shahādah*. The Message from Allāh ﷺ strengthened them and helped them understand this world and the next.

They spent all their money on the poor Muslims who were suffering terribly. They saw their daughter Ruqayyah leave for Abyssinia with her new husband ‘Uthmān, to escape the persecution. Finally, the family was forced to leave their house and were confined to a deserted, dry, hot valley on the edge of Makkah. They nearly starved, there was hardly any water, and the heat was intense. Yet they continued, loving and supporting one another, following the orders of Allāh ﷺ. At last, after several years, the Quraish let them come home again.

Khadijah ﷺ was over sixty years old by the time they returned to Makkah. The three years in the desolate valley had weakened her health. She had given most of her food and water to others at the cost of her own health. Her heart was full, but her strength was gone. After spending three days in bed, with Rasūlullāh ﷺ at her side, she died. They had lived together in profound harmony for twenty-five years, and she had been not only his wife but also his intimate friend, his wise counselor, and mother to the entire household. Rasūlullāh ﷺ refers to the year of her death as “The Year of Sorrow.”

At the cost of tremendous pain and struggle, Islām had finally been established. The message Khadijah ﷺ supported had spread past the angry Quraish to Africa, to Madīnah, and beyond. She was an essential part of its foundation, and every Muslim owes her gratitude and love.

Much of what is known about Khadijah ﷺ came from ‘Ā’ishah ﷺ, a beloved wife of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Rasūlullāh ﷺ never forgot Khadijah ﷺ and was continually touched by anything or anyone who reminded him of her. ‘Ā’ishah ﷺ asked him why he talked as if Khadijah ﷺ was the only woman in the world. He said, “She was and remains so. It was she who gave me children.” ‘Ā’ishah ﷺ once remarked, “I was never jealous of any of Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ wives the way I was of Khadijah, because he always talked of her.”

Rasūlullāh ﷺ continued to send meat and presents, when he had them, to Khadijah's friends and relatives throughout his life. When asked why, he said, "I love those whom she loved."

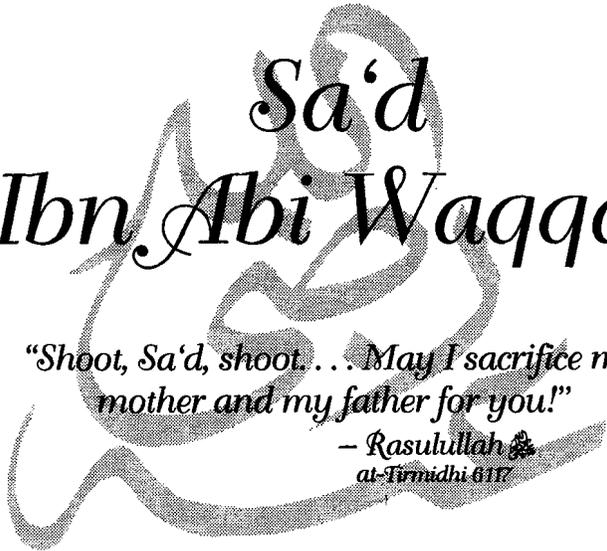
'Ā'ishah ؓ recounted that once when he was in her house, a voice came from behind the door. Rasūlullāh ﷺ immediately reacted to the voice as if it were Khadijah's. Then he realized it was only Hāla, Khadijah's sister, who sounded just like her. 'Ā'ishah ؓ could not help but feel anger and jealousy. "Why do you keep mentioning her so much? Has Allāh ﷻ not given you better than that!" she cried.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ, startled by her words, replied,

She believed in me when no one else did. She embraced Islām when people disbelieved me. And she helped and comforted me in her person and wealth when there was no one else to lend me a helping hand. I had children from her only. (*Musnad Imam Aḥmad* 6/118)

Khadijah ؓ remained an important figure for the remainder of Rasūlullāh's ﷺ life, and her life became an example for generations of Muslims to come.

*May Allāh ﷻ shower His peace and His blessings
on them both.*



Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqas

*"Shoot, Sa'd, shoot... May I sacrifice my
mother and my father for you!"*

*– Rasulullah ﷺ
at-Tirmidhi 6117*

Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ ﷺ was a young man of seventeen when the light of Islām rose in Makkah. He was a very kind and sensitive young man, with tender feelings for his family, particularly for his mother. He was thoughtful and wise for his years and spoke like a person of wisdom and experience, even though he was still young.

Like a few others, he did not feel comfortable with many things about his society. For example, he did not enjoy the kinds of entertainment his peers were interested in. Instead, he spent his time making arrows, repairing bows and training himself to shoot as if he

were preparing himself for a great battle. He did not feel comfortable about the general condition of the Makkans, even though he was from a noble tribe among them. He seemed to be seeking a way out of their darkness. So when Rasūlullāh ﷺ revealed himself, Sa'd ﷺ was completely ready to follow him. Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqās ﷺ was the third or fourth adult man to embrace Islām and often said, "I spent seven days being one third of Islām."

Muḥammad ﷺ was very happy with Sa'd's acceptance of Islām, for he showed the signs of intelligence and maturity that indicated that he was to become a strong, faithful and intelligent follower of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and leader among the believers. Sa'd ﷺ had a noble rank and honorable family, and Rasūlullāh knew that this fact might influence the youth of Makkah to follow his path. Also, Sa'd ﷺ was an uncle of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, since he was from the Banī Zuhrah, the clan of Rasūlullāh's ﷺ mother, Āminah bint Wahb. The Prophet's ﷺ pride in this kinship was evident, because when he saw Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqās ﷺ coming, he exclaimed to others nearby, "This is my uncle, let one of you show me his uncle."

The transition of Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqās ﷺ to Islām was not smooth, however. Immediately following his conversion, he suffered a difficult trial—so harsh that Allāh sent down a Qur'ānic revelation about it. This is what Sa'd ﷺ himself said about his experience:

Three nights before I became Muslim, I saw in my dream that I was sinking in darkness, one layer over the other. While I was confused inside its depth, a moon lit my way, so I followed it. I saw some people who had reached that moon before me— Zaid ibn Hārith, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq. “When did you get here?” I asked. “Just now,” they replied.

The next day, I heard that Rasūlullāh ﷺ was secretly calling people to Islām. I knew then that Allāh was willing something good for me: He wanted to take me to the light, out of the darkness. I hurried to Rasūlullāh ﷺ and met him at one of Makkah’s mountain passes, called Jyad, where he had just prayed *al-‘Aṣr*. There, I declared my *shahādah*, and no one had preceded me but the people I saw in my dream.

When my mother heard about my becoming Muslim, she was furious (I loved her very much and was good to her); she came to me and said, “O Sa’d, what is that religion you left your father’s and mother’s religion for? By Allāh, if you don’t leave that new religion, I shall not eat or drink until I die! Your heart will be broken from grief. You will regret what you did to me, and people will scold you forever!”

“Don’t do it, mother!” I pleaded, “for nothing will make me give up my religion!”

But she didn’t listen, refusing all food and drink. She continued this for several days until she became thin and weak. I kept asking her time and again to eat or drink something, but she obstinately refused and kept swearing not to eat or drink until I rejected my religion. So I told her, “Mother, as much as I love you, I love Allāh and His Messenger more. I swear by Allāh, if you were to have one thousand

lives and lose them one after another, nothing would make me reject my religion.”

When at last she realized I was serious, she gave up and unwillingly ate and drank. Allāh sent down the following words, found in *Sūrah Luqman*: “I take refuge with Allāh from the accursed *Shaiṭān*, in the name of Allāh, The Merciful, The Mercy Bestowing” (31: 14-15).

From then on, Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ رضي الله عنه remained one of the closest and strongest *ṣaḥābah* of Rasūlullāh. Whenever there was something new happening among the new Muslims, Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ رضي الله عنه was most likely present.

In the early days, the *ṣaḥābah* travelled outside the city to pray. If they didn’t, the *mushrikīn* would make fun of them, throw dust and trash on them, and so forth. They met in the small valleys and performed the *ṣalāh* in small groups. One time Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ رضي الله عنه was with a group praying, when another group of Makkans chanced to see them. They rudely interrupted the Muslims, arguing with them and blaming them for splitting up families and criticizing the gods of their fathers. The two groups soon began fighting one another, and Sa‘d رضي الله عنه hit one of the polytheists with the jawbone of a camel, thereby wounding him. Although fighting such as this was not encouraged, the enemies of Islām made it very difficult for Muslims to live free from such ordeals. Some months after the *Hijrah* to Madīnah, Allāh gave

His Prophet ﷺ permission to fight in the way of the *dīn*. Several expeditions and raids took place after that before the first major encounter with the Quraish at Badr.

During one of these raids, the Muslim party met a large number of Quraish. There was no battle, and the two parties each went their way, with one exception—Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ ﷺ shot one arrow at the enemy. This was the first arrow to be shot for Islām. Sa'd ﷺ eventually wrote a poem about it:

Has the news reached the messenger of Allāh
That I protected my *ṣahābah* with my arrows?
By them, I defended their vanguard
In rough ground and plain.
No archer who shoots an arrow at the enemy
Will be counted before me, O messenger of Allāh.

Two Young Brothers in Battle

Sa'd's younger brother 'Umair also embraced Islām in Makkah when he was a little boy. He was barely an adolescent when he migrated to Madīnah, and yet, he wanted to accompany Sa'd ﷺ to Badr. When the army marched out of the city, he joined them. However, when Rasūlullāh ﷺ inspected the Muslim warriors before the battle, 'Umair hid from him, because he knew he would be rejected for being too young. Rasūlullāh ﷺ did see

him and sent him away, forbidding him to fight. ‘Umair began to cry and plead with him until, finally, Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ heart softened and he allowed him to join them. Sa’d ﷺ was so excited by ‘Umair’s acceptance that he knotted a sword strap to fit his brother’s small size. Then, the two brothers went together to fight in the way of Allāh.

When the battle was over, Sa’d ﷺ returned sadly to Madīnah by himself, leaving young ‘Umair a martyr in the ground near Badr. He prayed that Allāh would bless the small warrior with a great reward.

Right-Hand Man

The day of Uḥud, chaos abounded, and many Muslims fled from around Rasūlullāh ﷺ. About ten people, Sa’d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ ﷺ among them, stood fighting for Rasūlullāh ﷺ and defending him with their bows, swords, shields, and backs. Sa’d ﷺ was using his bow with deadly accuracy—each time he shot, he killed a *mushrik*. Rasūlullāh ﷺ urged him on, handing him one arrow after another, saying, “Shoot, Sa’d, shoot, may I sacrifice my mother and my father for you!” All his life, Sa’d ﷺ was proud of that, saying, “Rasūlullāh ﷺ was never willing to sacrifice both his parents except for me.” Sa’d ﷺ also said Rasūlullāh ﷺ even handed him an arrow with no head, saying, “Shoot with that!”

After the battle of Uḥud, Rasūlullāh ﷺ sent Sa'd ﷺ to follow after the Quraish to see where they were going. He said to Sa'd ﷺ, "If they are leading their horses and riding their camels, they are headed for Makkah; but if they are riding their horses and leading their camels, they are headed for Madīnah. By Him in whose hand is my soul, if that is their aim, I will overtake and fight them."

Sa'd ﷺ went down the mountain to the hidden gully where Rasūlullāh's stallion, Sakb, had been tethered, mounted him, and rode him after the departing Quraish. He travelled until he had them in good sight and joyfully returned to Rasūlullāh ﷺ with the news that they were riding their camels, not their horses—that they were indeed heading for Makkah.



And so it went, in battle after battle and great event after great event, Sa'd ﷺ was at the center of the movements that were to change the world. When Rasūlullāh ﷺ died, Sa'd ﷺ continued to serve the Muslims under Abū Bakr ﷺ and then 'Umar al-Fārūq ﷺ. His greatest responsibility came during the rule of 'Umar. Al-Fārūq ﷺ decided to fight the Persians, with whom the Muslims were in a continual state of tension. 'Umar ﷺ hoped that the forces of Islām would finally destroy their throne and uproot the worship of idols from the earth. 'Umar ﷺ

asked his governors and leaders everywhere to send him to anyone who had any weapons, horses, camels, help, advice, merit in poetry or speech, or anything that helps in battle. Soon, *mujāhidīn* troops flowed into Madīnah from Yemen, as-Shām, Egypt, and elsewhere and camped all around the city. When they were ready, Al-Fārūq ﷺ consulted wise and experienced people about whom to assign as leader for that great army. They all unanimously said he should appoint “The lion”—Sa’d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ ﷺ—and ‘Umar ﷺ did so.

When the great force was about to leave Madīnah, ‘Umar ibn al-Khattāb ﷺ bade them farewell and gave Sa’d ﷺ his recommendations. He said,

O Sa’d, don’t let yourself get conceited just because people say, “O, Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ uncle. O, Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ companion,” for Allāh doesn’t erase the bad with the bad, He erases the bad deeds with the good ones. O Sa’d, there is no relationship between Allāh and anyone except through obedience. To Allāh, the noble and the common are equals; He is their Lord, and they are his worshippers; only consciousness of Allāh makes the difference between one and the other and only obedience brings them close to Him. So seek the way you saw Rasūlullāh ﷺ doing and stick to it for it’s the right way.

The blessed army then went its way. It was the sixteenth year of the *Hijrah*. Never again would there be such a force of enlightened people. It included 99 men who

fought beside Rasūlullāh ﷺ at Badr, over 310 people who had accompanied Rasūlullāh ﷺ since the Pledge of ar-Riḍwān at Hudaibiyyah, 300 who marched beside him for the opening of Makkah, and 700 of the children of the *Ṣahābah*.

At a place called al-Qādisiyyah, the army camped and prepared to meet the Persians. A battle broke out that went on for days. Its last day was called “al-Harīr,” because the sound of *harir*—yelling and growling—was all that could be heard.

The Muslims were determined to defeat the Persians once and for all. They surrounded them and broke through their ranks in every direction, shouting *tahlīl* (*lā ilāha illa ‘Allāh*) and *takbīr* (*Allāhu Akbar*), drawing upon the combination of intense faith and the experience of many years of warfare. They fought until Rustum, the powerful leader of all the Persian forces, was killed and his head hoisted over the battle on the spear tip of a Muslim warrior—a sign to the enemy that they were leaderless and destroyed. This sight terrified the Persians and sent them into despair. They were soon defeated under the leadership of Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ ﷺ.

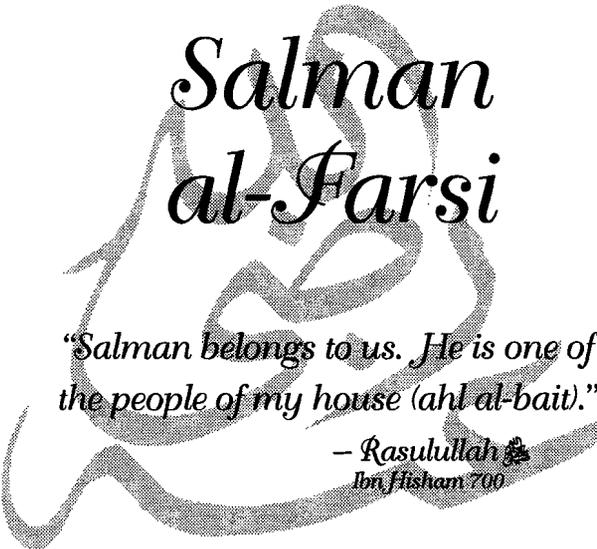
Perhaps thirty thousand people died that day. It was a terrible defeat for the Persians; for the Muslims, it was the key to the rich lands of the Persian empire and the establishment of Islam. That battle marked the triumph of the purity of desert faith over a richer, more

complex, and more culturally diverse life in Persia. It would also usher in a culturally richer civilization for Muslims. The conquest of Persia brought great riches to the Muslims—gold, silk, arms and armor, horses, and fabulous pieces of art were transferred from the Persians to the hands of the Muslim soldiers and the Muslim treasury. The conquest introduced desert Arabs to newer ideas, literature, and art forms. This wealth certainly aided the poor, but it was also a source of great distress to the older *ṣahābah* who knew that the power of wealth in the world often pulled people away from the simple clarity of faith and worship taught by Rasūlullāh ﷺ.



Sa'd ﷺ lived a long life. Allāh granted him wealth in this world on top of the wealth he had stored up for the next. When he lay dying, he asked for a worn-out old wool cloak and said, “Shroud me in it, for I met the *kuffār* with it on the day of Badr, and I want to meet Allāh with it too.”

May Allāh ﷻ bless the brave soldier who died so humbly after a life of fighting for the sake of Allāh ﷻ.



Salman al-Farsi

*“Salman belongs to us. He is one of
the people of my house (ahl al-bait).”*

— *Rasulullah ﷺ*
Ibn Hisham 700

The true story of Salmān al-Fārsi رضي الله عنه, the Persian, is retold in his own words:

I was a young Persian from a village called Jayy, in 'Isfahan where my father was the chief landowner of the village—the richest and the noblest man. From the time I was born, I was the most beloved by my father, and his love for me only became stronger and stronger. As time passed, he feared losing me so much that he confined me to the home as if I were a prisoner.

I became devoted to our Zoroastrian religion, so much so that I became responsible for the fire we worshiped. It was my duty to keep it burning so that it

would not go out for a single minute, day or night.

My father owned a large farm with rich revenues, and he looked after it himself. One day, he was too busy to go out to check on things, so he said, "Son, as you can see, I am too busy to go to the estate, so you go today and take care of it." He gave me certain instructions and then said, "Don't be late, because you are more important to me than my farm, and worrying about you will prevent me from going about my business!"

So I started out, heading for the village. On my way, I passed by a Christian church, and the sound of their singing in praise attracted my attention. I didn't know anything about Christianity or any other religion, because my father kept me in the house away from people. When I heard their voices, I entered the church to find out what they were doing. I was impressed by their prayer and felt drawn to their worship. "By God," I said, "This is better than what we do!" I asked them where this religion originated and I was told "In ash-Shām (Syria)." I stayed with them until sunset and did not go to my father's farm.

At night, I returned to my home. My father had been so worried that all his work had been interrupted. He asked me where I had been and why I hadn't followed his instructions. When my father asked me about the day, I said, "O Father, I saw people praying in a church. I was impressed by them and stayed with them until sunset."

My father was terrified. He warned, "There is no good in their religion, son! Your religion and that of your forefathers is better!"

"No," I replied, "their religion is better than ours!"

My father feared that I would leave my religion, so he tied me up and imprisoned me in the house again. When I got the opportunity, I sent a message to the Christians, saying, “Whenever a caravan of Christian merchants comes from ash-Shām, let me know.”

Soon after, they sent me word that a caravan had arrived. I asked them to ask the merchants if they would take me home with them when they finished their business. They agreed to do this. I managed to untie my legs and escaped from the house. Disguised, I joined the caravan and accompanied them to Syria. There, I asked for the most learned person in their religion. They suggested that I visit the bishop of the church.

I went straight to the bishop and said, “I want to become a Christian, and I would like to be attached to you, to serve you, to learn from you and to pray with you.”

“Come in,” he replied, and I entered the church and stayed in his service.

However, I soon found out that the man was corrupt. He would order his followers to give money for charity, tempting them with the blessings they would receive. When he was given the money to be spent for Allāh, he would use it for himself and never give a poor man any of it. Thus, he filled seven huge jars with gold. I despised him very much for that.

After some time, the bishop died and the Christians gathered to bury him. I came out and told them that the man was corrupt and that he used to gather money for charity from them and then keep it for himself and never give any of it to the poor.

“How can you possibly know this?” they

asked.

“I will guide you to the treasure,” I replied. They agreed to follow, and I took them where they found the seven huge jars filled with gold and silver. When they saw that, they said, “By God, we won’t bury him!” They put him on a cross and threw stones at him. Then, they appointed someone else in his place.

I continued my service with the new bishop. I have never seen any non-Muslim whom I consider more ascetic, more devoted to the next world, and more conscientious night and day in his worship than he was. I loved him more than I had ever loved anyone. I stayed with him as long as he lived. When he was very close to death, I told him how much I loved him, and I asked him to name someone whom I could follow after him. He said, “O my dear son, I don’t know anyone like me. Men have died and have changed or left most of their true religion, except for one man. He lives in Mawsil (Mosul), so go and find him.”

When the bishop died, I went to Mosul, found the man, and told him my story. He was a very good man, just as my old bishop had described. I stayed with him also, but it was not long before he lay dying. Before he died, I asked him to name a man I could follow, and he advised me to find a certain man in Nasibin. He was as good as the first two had been. I followed him until he died, then went to ‘Ammuriyyah to meet another man he had advised me to follow. I stayed with that man, who was as good as the others, and I worked there until I earned some cows and a few sheep. Before long, he too lay dying. I asked him to advise me what to do and whom to follow.

He said, “O son, by God, I don’t know anyone on earth who follows what we have followed any more. The time has come, and a prophet is about to appear in the land of the Arabs. He will be sent with the religion of Ibrahīm and will migrate from his land to another land with plenty of palm trees between two areas of black lava rocks. He has obvious signs: he will eat what is given, but he won’t eat *ṣadaqah* (charity). Between his shoulders, there is the Seal of Prophecy. If you can reach this land, go ahead.”

Soon after he uttered these words, he died and was buried. I stayed in ‘Ammuriyyah until a group of Arab merchants from the tribe of Kalb came. I asked them to take me to Arabia in return for my cows and my few sheep. They agreed and took me with them, but when we reached Wadī al-Qura (a valley between Madīnah and Syria), they betrayed me and sold me to a Jew as a slave.

I worked as his servant, hoping that this was the town that had been described to me, but I was not sure. Then, a cousin of my master came from Banu-Quraidah of Madīnah, bought me, and took me with him to Madīnah. As we approached the town I saw the palm trees that my friend of ‘Ammuriyyah had told me about and the black rocks on either side. I knew it was the city he had described to me, and I lived there in anticipation of the new prophet.

By that time, Rasūlullāh ﷺ was already inviting his people in Makkah to Islām. I had not heard anything about him, as I was busy with my duties as a slave. So, when Rasūlullāh ﷺ reached Madīnah after his *hijrah*, I was on top of a palm tree belonging to my master, who was sitting under the tree. His cousin came to him and said, “May God kill Banū Qailah

(the Aws and Khazraj tribes); they are all gathered at Quba', waiting for a fellow coming today from Makkah who claims he is a prophet!"

As soon as I heard what he said, I felt hot all over and started shivering so much that I was afraid I was going to fall on my master, so I got down quickly and kept saying to the man, "What did you say? What did you say?"

My master got angry and gave me a terrible box on the ears. Then, he scolded me, saying, "This does not concern you. Go back to what you were doing!"

When the evening came, I took some dates I had gathered and went to where Rasūlullāh ﷺ was staying in Quba'. When I met him, I told him, "I heard that you are a virtuous man. You and your *ṣahābah* are strangers and are in need. Here is some *ṣadaqah*, I thought you deserve it more than others," and I gave the dates to him.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ offered the dates to his companions, but he didn't hold out his hand to eat them himself.

I told myself, "That's the first sign!" and I left.

When Rasūlullāh ﷺ left Quba' for Madīnah, I gathered some more dates and went to him and said, "I noticed you don't eat *ṣadaqah*, so this is a present which I freely give you." He then ate and offered some to his companions, and they ate together.

I told myself, "That's the second sign!"

On another day, I went to Rasūlullāh ﷺ, and he was burying one of his *ṣahābah* at al-Baqī' (the graveyard in Madīnah). He sat with a cloak over his shoulders. I saluted him and began looking on his back for the seal that my friend of 'Ammuriyya had

described. When Rasūlullāh ﷺ noticed I was looking at his back, he knew what I was looking for, and threw off his cloak. I saw the seal, burst into tears, and started kissing him.

“Come to me,” said Rasūlullāh ﷺ. So, I came and sat before him and told him my story. After I finished, he motioned to his Companions, as he wanted his *Ṣaḥābah* to hear it as well.

After that wonderful meeting, Salmān ؓ returned to his work as a slave and found very little time to be with Rasūlullāh ﷺ and the Companions. On top of that, he was unable to fight at Badr or at Uḥud. Ironically, he had spent much of his life trying to find Rasūlullāh ﷺ, and now that he had found him, he couldn’t be with him.

While he was discussing this problem one day, Rasūlullāh ﷺ said to him, “Write an agreement.” So he wrote a letter to his master saying he wanted to buy his freedom. He offered to plant 300 palm trees for him, digging out the holes, and pay 40 *okes* (a unit of measure) of gold. Rasūlullāh ﷺ called on the *ṣaḥābah* to help. The following is the rest of Salmān’s story:

They [the Companions] helped: one with thirty little palms, another with twenty, another with fifteen, and another with ten, each helping as much as he could until the three hundred were complete. Rasūlullāh ﷺ told me to go and dig the holes for them. He said that when I had finished, he would put them in with his own hands. Some of the *ṣaḥābah* helped me dig, and when we had completed all the holes, we informed

Rasūlullāh. We then went together and, one by one, brought him the palm shoots, which he planted himself. By Allāh, not one of them died.

Thus, the palm trees were delivered, but I still owed the money. Now, Rasūlullāh ﷺ had been given a piece of gold from one of the mines. It was the size of a hen's egg. He told me to take it and pay my debt with it, but I knew it wasn't large enough. I asked him how much of my debt it would pay. He took the gold and turned it over on his tongue. "Take it," he said to me, "for Allāh will pay your debt with it." I took it to my owners and weighed it out for them, and by Allāh, it weighed exactly forty 'okes'. So, I paid my debt and was free.

The Battle of the Trench

Salmān ﷺ was free before the Battle of the Trench. When the Muslims learned of the huge force marching against them, they met to decide how to defend the city. It was Salmān ﷺ who suggested that they dig a trench around it, as this was a defense used in Persia with which he was familiar. No one in Arabia had ever used it before. The Muslims worked very hard and completed the trench in thirteen days, just before the enemy arrived. When the Quraish and the tribes tried to attack, they found that they could neither jump nor climb across it, and their plans were foiled.

There are many stories about the digging of the

trench. Rasūlullāh ﷺ worked alongside his Companions, and whenever they hit a really difficult rock or hard place in the earth, they would call him. Salmān ؓ recalled,

I was working with a pick in the trench where a rock gave me a lot of trouble. Rasūlullāh ﷺ, who was nearby, saw me hacking away at it. Dropping down into the trench, he took the pick from my hand. He gave the rock such a blow that lightning exploded beneath the pick. He hit it a second and a third time, and each time, I saw a flash of lightning going off in a different direction. When the rock broke, I asked him: “O you, dearer than father or mother, what is the meaning of this light beneath your pick as you strike?”

He said, “Did you really see that, Salmān? The first means that Allāh has opened up the Yemen to me. The second means that Allāh has opened Syria and the West. The third means that Allāh has opened the East.”

On the day that Salmān ؓ proposed the Trench, the *Muhājirūn* (people who made *hijrah*) claimed that he was one of them. He had, indeed, made *hijrah*. The *Anṣār* said he was theirs. He was truly living in Madīnah. But Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “Salmān belongs to us. He is of the people of my household.”

May Allāh ﷻ bless Salmān al-Fārsi ؓ the day he began looking for the Truth, the day he met the Truth and

*believed deeply in it, the day he died, and the day he will
be resurrected.*

Talhah Ibn Ubaidullah

*“Talḥah, after this job, is eligible
for the garden.”*

*– Rasūlullāh ﷺ
Ibn Hisham 2/86*

Young Talḥah ﷺ Hears the Prophecy

Ṭalḥah ﷺ became a Muslim in the first days of the teaching of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, having heard about Islām through a Christian. When he was a young man, he traveled to Ash-Shām with a caravan of Quraish. When the caravan reached the city of Başrah, the chief traders and leaders of Quraish went down to the market to buy and sell. Despite his young age, Ṭalḥah ﷺ went with them. He was so smart and such a good judge of human nature that he could compete with the experienced traders in

getting the best deals.

While he was going and coming in the crowded market, something happened to him that changed his whole life. Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubaidullāh ؓ recalls the beginning events:

As we were in the market of Baṣrah, a Christian monk called to the people and said, “O traders, is there any one among you from al-Ḥaram (the sacred area around the Ka’bah in Makkah)?”

I was standing near him and promptly replied, “Yes, I am from al-Ḥaram.”

“Did Aḥmad appear in your land?” he inquired.

“Who’s Aḥmad?” I asked.

“The son of ‘Abdullāh, son of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib,” said the monk. “This is the month in which he will come forth. He is the last of the prophets. He will come out of your land, al-Ḥaram, and migrate to a land of black stones and palm trees, which is wet and salty with seeping water. Don’t let anyone get to him before you do, young man.”

I was so impressed that I went straight to prepare my mounts, left the caravan behind me, and hurried back to Makkah.

On his way back, Ṭalḥah Ibn ‘Ubaidullāh ؓ overtook another merchant on his way home from Syria. This merchant was ‘Uḥmān ibn ‘Affān ؓ, an acquaintance of his from Makkah. ‘Uḥmān told him of an amazing experience he had just had, in which a voice

called to him out of the desert night, crying, "Sleepers, awake, for indeed Aḥmad has come forth in Makkah!" Ṭalḥah ؓ told him the story of the monk. The two men, mystified, decided to look into the matter as soon as they reached home. Ṭalḥah ؓ continued his story, with 'Uṯmān beside him:

When I reached home, I asked my family, "Did anything happen in Makkah during our absence?"

"Yes," they replied, "Muḥammad ibn 'Abdullāh has claimed to be a prophet. Your cousin Ibn Abī Quhāfah (referring to Abū Bakr ؓ) is following him."

I knew Abū Bakr ؓ was a gentle and easy man. He was a merchant of high ethics and truthfulness. We used to be friendly with him and like to meet with him for his knowledge of the history and lineage of the Quraish.

I went to him and said, "Is it true what they say about Muḥammad ibn 'Abdullāh claiming prophecy and your following him?"

"Yes," he replied. He started telling me the news and encouraging me to follow him. I, in turn, told him about the priest. He was very surprised and said, "Let's go to Muḥammad ؓ to tell him your story and hear what he says, so that he may let you enter the religion of Allāh!"

I went with him to Muḥammad ؓ, who laid Islām before me and recited some of the Qur'ān, predicting for me all the good of this world and the world to come. Allāh ؓ widened my chest to accept Islām. I testified before him that there is no deity but Allāh and that Muḥammad is the messenger of Allāh. I was

the fourth person to enter Islām, thanks to Abū Bakr



Talḥah Holds Fast to His Faith

Ṭalḥah's family was horrified at the news that their son had become a Muslim. His mother suffered the most; she was hoping for him to become a leader of his people because of his noble character. She saw all her ambitions for her son being smashed by his stubborn insistence on following this man Muḥammad ﷺ. She was determined to change him.

All the people of his clan came around trying to make him renounce his new religion, but they found him firm and unshakable. After trying every kind of verbal persuasion, they decided they had to use more forceful methods to change his mind. Mas'ūd ibn Kharāsh describes the torture inflicted upon him:

While I was making Sa'ī between Aṣ-Ṣafā and Al-Marwah, I saw a lot of people following a young man, who had his hands tied to his neck. They were running after him, pushing him from behind and hitting him on the head. A woman was walking behind him, yelling at him and calling him bad names.

I said, "Who is that boy and what has he done?"

They said, "He is Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubaidullāh; he rejected his religion and followed that man of Banū

Hāshim.”

I asked who the woman was, walking behind him and encouraging the others. I was told she was As-Sa‘bah Bint Al-Haḍrami, the boy’s mother.

Ṭalḥah ؓ suffered many atrocities because of his determination to follow Rasūlullāh ؑ. One time, Nawfal ibn Khuwailid, often called the Lion of Quraish, went after Ṭalḥah ؓ, caught him, tied him with a rope, tied Abū Bakr ؓ together with him, and delivered them both to the bullies and foolish men of Quraish who used to hit and torture the Muslims.

Because of this, Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubaidullāh and Abū Bakr Aṣ-Ṣiddīq were later called the two mates (*al-qarīnain*).

Days went by and such incidents gained momentum and support. Torture and punishment made Ṭalḥah stronger in his conviction and passion for the way of Allāh and His Messenger ؑ. His devotion to Islām and the Muslims grew more and more intense. Muslims gave him many names. He was called ‘the living martyr,’ and Rasūlullāh ؑ called him ‘Ṭalḥah the good,’ ‘Ṭalḥah the generous,’ ‘Ṭalḥah the overflowing.’

Gallantry at Uhud

During the Battle of Uḥud, people were fleeing in all

directions, and the army became very confused. Some thought the battle was over, some thought Rasūlullāh ﷺ was dead, and most either despaired or ran away. But a few stood firmly beside Rasūlullāh ﷺ and protected him from the entire Quraish army, thus saving his life.

The *ṣahābah* pulled him up the side of Mt. Uhud, from rock to rock and ledge to ledge. He had been injured, and all of them were also bleeding from serious wounds. They came to one high ledge and Ṭalḥah Ibn ‘Ubaidullāh ؓ, with little regard to his own injuries, bent down and told Rasūlullāh ﷺ to get on his back. He then lifted him up to the safety of a higher place.

That day, Ṭalḥah’s actions probably saved the life of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, and it was through this act that he really earned his name ‘the living martyr’. The Muslims had all dispersed from around Rasūlullāh ﷺ, leaving only about ten men, a woman of the *Anṣār*, and Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubaidullāh from the *Muhājirūn*.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ and his protectors had just started up the mountain when a group of *kuffār* came after them to kill him. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “Who will keep these people off and be my *ṣahābī* in the *Jannah*?”

“I will, Rasūlullāh,” said Ṭalḥah ؓ.

“No,” said Rasūlullāh ﷺ, “stay by your place.”

“I will, Rasūlullāh,” said a man from Al-Anṣār.

“Yes,” replied Rasūlullāh ﷺ, “you may do it.”

The Anṣārī man kept fighting until he was killed. Rasūlullāh ﷺ began to go up again, with his people, but

the *kuffār* caught up to them once again.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “Isn’t there any man for these people?”

“Me, Rasūlullāh,” said Ṭalḥah.

“No,” said Rasūlullāh ﷺ, “stay by your place.”

An Anṣārī man said, “I will go, Rasūlullāh.”

“Yes,” replied Rasūlullāh ﷺ, “You may do it.”

Subsequently, the man fought furiously until he was killed.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ climbed up once more, only to be rejoined by the *kuffār*. He again asked for someone to protect them and again Ṭalḥah ﷺ proposed to be that man. Rasūlullāh ﷺ refused, allowing yet another Anṣārī do the job. They went on like this until five *Anṣār* were killed and only Ṭalḥah remained with a few others. When the *kuffār* reached them again, one of them, named Ibn Qami’ah, barged forth looking for Rasūlullāh ﷺ and shouted, “Where is Muḥammad? May I not survive if he survives!”

Ṭalḥah ﷺ was barely able to throw himself in the way of the sword aimed at Rasūlullāh ﷺ. He pushed it aside just enough so that it only grazed Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ helmet. Ṭalḥah’s hand was paralyzed in the struggle and never functioned after that day. But, he saved Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ life.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ had his front tooth broken and his forehead fractured. His lip was wounded and blood was flowing from his face. He was exhausted. Ṭalḥah ﷺ

continued attacking the *kuffār* to keep them away from Rasūlullāh ﷺ, while also returning in between attacks to carry Rasūlullāh ﷺ a little further up on the mountain each time. He and his incredibly brave *ṣahābah* kept doing this until the enemies were repelled, and they reached safety.

Abū ‘Ubaidah Ibn Al-Jarrah ؓ and Abū Bakr ؓ were at a distance from Rasūlullāh ﷺ. They rushed to give him first aid, but he refused, saying, “Leave me and go to your friend (Ṭalḥah).” Ṭalḥah ؓ was bleeding from more than seventy sword, spear, or arrow wounds. His hand was paralyzed, and he was lying unconscious in a hole. After that day, Rasūlullāh ﷺ used to say, “Whoever wants to look at a dead man walking on earth let him look at Ṭalḥah Ibn ‘Ubaidullāh.” Likewise, whenever Uḥud was mentioned, aṣ-Ṣiddīq would say, “That was a day all for Ṭalḥah ؓ.”

The Generosity of Talhah

Rasūlullāh ﷺ and Abū Bakr ؓ were escaping from Makkah on the way to Madīnah. During the *Hijrah*, they stayed for days in a dusty cave, only to continue their difficult journey over many more hard days. Their clothing was worn out and dirty. As they were constantly on the look-out for pursuers, they were troubled to see a small caravan coming towards them from the direction

of Syria.

They were overjoyed to see it was Abū Bakr's ﷺ cousin Ṭalḥah ﷺ, making his last trip from Syria to Makkah. He planned to sell his wares and then make his own *hijrah* to Madīnah. He had stopped in Madīnah and was able to tell them that Rasūlullāh's ﷺ arrival was eagerly awaited. He then gave them each a new set of clothes made from fine white Syrian cloth, so that they could be as bright on the outside as they were on the inside upon their arrival.



Ṭalḥah ﷺ was a wealthy merchant with a prospering business. After he moved to Madīnah, his business picked up and, before too long, he was able to help the poorer immigrants with the money he made in trade.

Once, after receiving a large amount of money—700 thousand *dirhams*—from Ḥaḍramawt, he spent the night frightened, sad, and restless. Ṭalḥah's wife, Umm Kulthūm, one of the daughters of Abū Bakr ﷺ, came to him and asked, “What's bothering you, Abū Muḥammad? Are you angry with us?”

“No,” he said, “what a good wife for a Muslim man you are. I was just troubled tonight, asking myself, ‘What does a man who sleeps with all that money in his house think his Lord would do to him if he died?’”

She responded, “What preoccupies you so much

about it? Look for helpless people of your clan and your friends and distribute it between them in the morning.”

“May Allāh bless you,” he replied. “You are a generous woman, daughter of a generous man.”

When the morning came, he put the money into purses and distributed it among the poor people of the *Muhājirūn* and *Anṣār*.



One day, a man came to Ṭalḥah Ibn ‘Ubaidullāh رضي الله عنه asking for charity and mentioned a kinship that united them. Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه said, “This is a kinship never mentioned to me before. I have a piece of land that I was going to sell to ‘Uṭhmān Ibn ‘Affān for 300 thousand. If you wish, you can take it, or I will sell it to him for 300 thousand and give you the money.

The man said, “I’ll take the money.” So, Ṭalḥah gave it to him, even though this was a relation so distant that he had never heard of the man before!

Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم said that all of his *ṣaḥābah* were like the stars, but some of them he particularly honored with the promise of the *Jannah*. Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه was among those to whom Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم promised paradise.

*May Allāh صلى الله عليه وسلم be content with him,
and may He enlighten his grave.*

Thabit Ibn Qais Al-Ansari

*“You’re not of the dwellers of Hell—in fact,
you are of the dwellers of the Jannah.”*

— Rasūlullāh ﷺ
al-Bukhari 4:810

Thābit ibn Qais al-Anṣārī ﷺ came to Islām through the recitation of the Qur’ān. A resident of the city of Madīnah, Thābit was a very prominent noble of the Khazraj tribe and was well known as an eloquent speaker. Because of this, he was interested in hearing the young preacher Mus‘ab ibn ‘Umair, who was sent by Rasūlullāh ﷺ to teach the people of Madīnah about Islām. Thābit heard Mus‘ab’s recitation of the Book of Allāh ﷻ and was amazed at his beautiful, resonant voice and the serene rhythm of his reading. Thābit’s heart and mind were drawn to the

verses and the content of the Qur'ān almost immediately, and he soon became one of the first Muslims of Madīnah.

Thābit ﷺ was a good and talented man. He had a pure heart, an intuitive response to people and events, amazing eloquence, and a wonderful voice. Whenever he talked, he won over the discussion, and whenever he made a speech, he impressed the audience. He devoted his heart, mind and talents as a speaker at the service of Islām.

When Rasūlullāh ﷺ came to Madīnah, making Hijrah from Makkah, Thābit ibn Qais ﷺ received him with a group of his people's horsemen. He welcomed Rasūlullāh ﷺ and his friend aṣ-Ṣiddīq with great hospitality. Thābit ﷺ stood before him and made an eloquent speech, praising Allāh ﷻ and His Prophet. He ended his speech with these words: "We promise you, O Rasūlullāh, to protect you from everything that we protect ourselves, our children, and our wives from. What will we receive in return?"

"*Al-Jannah*," replied Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

Everyone's faces lit up with joy and happiness. They exclaimed, "We agree, O Rasūlullāh! We agree, O Rasūlullāh!"

From that day on, Rasūlullāh ﷺ chose Thābit ibn Qais to be his speaker, just as Ḥassan ibn Thābit was his poet. Each time an Arab delegation came to demonstrate their superiority in poetry and eloquence, Rasūlullāh ﷺ

assigned Thābit ibn Qais for the speeches (*khutub*) and Ḥassan ibn Thābit for the poetry.

Thabit, the God-Fearing

Thābit ibn Qais ﷺ had a deep faith and a strong fear of Allāh. He was very careful not to provoke Allāh's anger. Once, Rasūlullāh ﷺ saw him fearful and distressed and quivering from dread and terror. He asked him, "What is it, Abū Muḥammad?"

Thābit ﷺ replied, "I fear that I am ruined, O Rasūlullāh."

"Why so?" asked Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

"Allāh has forbidden us," he replied, "to enjoy credit for what we didn't do, and I find myself liking credit... He forbids pride, and I find myself being proud."

Rasūlullāh ﷺ calmed him down, saying, "O Thābit, wouldn't you like to be thanked during your life, to die as a martyr, and to enter the *Jannah*?"

The good news lightened Thābit's mood, and he said, "Yes, Rasūlullāh! Yes, Rasūlullāh!"

Rasūlullāh ﷺ replied, "You've got it."



When Allāh ﷻ sent down the following words of *Sūrah-al-Hujurāt*, Thābit ibn Qais ﷺ began to avoid

Rasūlullāh's ﷺ meetings, leaving the house only for prayers.

O you who believe!
Do not raise your voices
Above the voice of the Prophet
Nor speak loudly to him in talk
As you may speak loudly to one another,
Lest your deeds become vain and you don't notice.
(*al-Hujurāt* 49:2)

Rasūlullāh ﷺ of course missed him and asked for someone to bring his news. One of the *Anṣār* said, "I will, O Rasūlullāh" and went to Thābit's house to talk to him. He found him sitting at his home, sad and broken down, and so he asked him, "What's wrong with you, Abū Muḥammad?"

"Evil," Thābit replied.

"What evil?" asked the *Anṣārī*.

"You know," he said, "that I am a man with a powerful voice. My voice is often louder than Rasūlullāh's ﷺ. You know the verses of Qur'ān that just came down. I think my deeds are finished, and I am of the dwellers of Hell."

The *Anṣār* went back to Rasūlullāh ﷺ and related to him what he had just seen and heard. Rasūlullāh ﷺ told him to return to Thābit ﷺ and assure him that he was of the dwellers of *Jannah*.

At this news, Thābit ﷺ rejoiced, emerging from

his home to once again join the others.

In Pursuit of Martyrdom

Thābit ibn Qais ؓ participated in all the battles with Rasūlullāh ؑ, except Badr. He pushed himself in the midst of each battle, seeking the martyrdom that Rasūlullāh ؑ had predicted for him. But time after time, to his sorrow (but for the good of the Muslims in battle), he survived to fight again.

At last, after many years, and after the death of Rasūlullāh ؑ, there came another chance for him to achieve the martyrdom he had long sought. In the time of Aṣ-Ṣiddīq, the core of believing Muslims fought a series of terrible battles with those who had left Islām or tried to alter it. These were the wars of apostasies, the worst of which was the war with Musailimah, the Impostor, who claimed to be a new prophet.

By that time, the Muslim army had split into factions. Thābit ibn Qais ؓ was the leader of the soldiers of the *Anṣār*; Salim, Abū Hudhaifah's servant, was the leader of the soldiers of the *Muhājirūn*; and Khalid ibn al-Walid was the general leader for the whole army, including the *Anṣār*, the *Muhājirūn* and those who come from the desert tribes. This split weakened the Muslim army, and all the battles were turning in favor of Musailimah. Thābit ibn Qais ؓ felt sick at heart and

was quite outraged, seeing the Muslims weakened by quarrels among themselves. They were trading insults back and forth between the different sections, between city and desert people, and their energy was drained before they even met the real enemy.

Thābit  was the person who had given, in front of Rasūlullāh  and many others, a great speech that included these words:

The first of creatures to answer and respond to Allāh when Rasūlullāh  called them were ourselves. We are Allāh's helpers and the assistants of His Prophet  and will fight men until they believe in Allāh. He who believes in Allāh and His messenger has protected his life and property from us, and he who disbelieves we will fight in Allāh unceasingly. These are my words, and I ask Allāh's pardon for myself and the believers both men and women. Peace upon you.

One day, Thābit ibn Qais  made a major decision. He perfumed himself with the perfume that is used for dead people, put on his burial shroud, and stood up before all the Muslims, proclaiming in his wonderful voice:

O Muslim people, we didn't fight like this when Rasūlullāh  was among us! How bad it is, letting the enemy get more aggressive against you! How bad it is, letting yourselves get weak right in front of them!

He looked hard and long at the army, and the men were beginning to feel very ashamed. They all knew this man was the public speaker for Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Thābit raised his eyes from the people to the sky and cried, “O Allāh! I am guiltless of the *shirk* of those people over there (referring to the forces of Musailimah!)” and then, “O Allāh! As I am guiltless of what these people do (referring to the Muslims!)”

Then he stormed to the front lines of the army, side by side with a small, valiant group consisting of al-Barra’ ibn Mālik al-Anṣārī; Zaid ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb’s brother; Salim, Abū Hudhaifah’s servant; and others of the first Muslims.

Their bravery and courage filled the Muslims’ hearts with enthusiasm and determination and filled the hearts of the *Mushrikūn* with weakness and terror. Everyone knew that this small group was not afraid to die. In fact, they were determined to die for the cause of Allāh ﷻ. They fought like brave men, like furious lions, like a storm, with every kind of weapon, making great holes in the ranks of the enemy until finally, one by one, they were all killed.

And so, in this battle, Thābit finally died, satisfied with the *shahadah* Allāh ﷻ had granted him, as predicted by his beloved Prophet ﷺ and happy with the victory Allāh had granted to the Muslims through him and his companions. At his death, Thābit was wearing precious armor, but one of the Muslims, passing by him, took the

armor for himself.

That night, when the terrible sounds of battle were stilled and after the men fell into exhausted sleep, another of the Muslims had a dream. In it, he saw Thābit  and heard him speaking to him. He describes the conversation they had in the dream:

“I am Thābit ibn Qais, do you know me?”

“Yes,” I said.

“I’ll give you my bequest,” said Thābit, “but do not dare say this is only a dream and let it go. When I was killed yesterday, a Muslim man took my armor and went to his tent at the border of the camp. He put it under a cooking pot and put a saddle on top of the pot. Go to Khālid ibn al-Walīd  and tell him to send someone to take the armor from that man—it is still in its place.

“I’ll give you another task—but again, do not dare say this is only a dream and let it go. Tell Khalid that when he returns to Rasūlullāh’s Khalīfah (Abū Bakr) at al-Madīnah, he must tell him the following: ‘Thābit ibn Qais has debts, and two slaves who were liberated. Let him pay my debts and free the two boys.’”

The man then woke up. He went straight to Khālid ibn al-Walīd  and told him what he had seen and heard. Khālid  sent someone to bring the armor, which was found under the cooking pot under the saddle as it had been described. When Khālid  returned to al-Madīnah, he told Abū-Bakr  about Thābit ibn Qais .

‘Umar Ibn al-Khattab

“We were with the Prophet ﷺ when he was holding ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab by the hand.”

*– ‘Abdullah ibn Hisham
Sahih al-Bukhari 5:43*

“If there were another prophet after me, it would have been ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab.”

*– Rasulullah ﷺ
al-Bukhari 5:38, Muslim 4:5901*

Umar ﷺ once told this story:

Once, Rasūlullāh ﷺ asked for contributions for the sake of Allāh. In those days, I was in possession of some wealth. I thought to myself, ‘Time and again, Abū Bakr has surpassed me in spending for the sake of Allāh. I shall, by the Grace of Allāh, surpass him

this day, because I have just now a thing or two with me to spend.' I went home buoyant with the idea. I divided my whole property in two, exactly equal parts. One of the parts I left for my people, and with the other I rejoined Rasūlullāh ﷺ, who asked me, "Did you leave anything for your family, 'Umar?"

"Yes, O Prophet of Allāh."

"How much?" he inquired.

"Exactly one half!" I answered.

By and by, Abū Bakr came along with his load. It turned out that he had brought everything that he possessed. I heard the conversation. Rasūlullāh ﷺ asked, "What did you leave for your family, Abū Bakr?"

"I have left Allāh and his Prophet ﷺ for them."

On that day, 'Umar ﷺ admitted to himself that he could never hope to surpass Abū Bakr ﷺ. It is hard to say which one was the greater or more humble in the end.

'Umar ﷺ was a man of great power, but his life was surrounded by controversy. Many people were afraid of him, and yet many people still admired him. Some respected him; some hated him. He remained a mystery, for when people thought they had him figured out, he would surprise them. When they thought he was cruel, he would be kind. When they thought him fierce, he was gentle. When they thought him proud, he was humble. When they thought him unaware, he proved to be the most conscious among them. 'Umar's story is long

and covers the entire beginning of modern Islām from its infancy in the heart of Rasūlullāh ﷺ to many years after his death.

‘Umar ؓ was a member of an important Quraishi family. He was brought up in the traditions of the time, which were the same among all the noble families. He learned to hunt and fight. He learned the good of generosity to the visitor or the guest. He learned that he should always hold fast to the family and tribal traditions. He learned to worship the gods that they thought controlled people’s lives. He learned that he, as a noble of Makkah, was a privileged person and that people of lower class and less power should defer to him. ‘Umar ؓ was an educated man, so he could read and write.

He was a strong man, with a dynamic energy that could be felt by all. He was a loyal friend and family member, but he had a temper. People were careful not to make him mad. He had a deep sense of right and wrong, and he thought it necessary to uphold the traditions of his people. He rarely questioned them or tried to change them. Because of his noble birth, his energy, his intelligence, and his strength, he became a very important member of the Makkan community. People tried to be his allies and avoided crossing him. They listened to his opinions.

So, when Rasūlullāh ﷺ and his small band of followers began to propose a different form of worship, denying even the existence of the many gods of the

Quraish, ‘Umar ؓ was displeased to say the least. His strong sense of tradition told him that this new faith was dangerous. It insulted the gods. It insulted his ancestors. It suggested that something was wrong in his city and that something was wrong in himself. He refused to accept this and decided to fight it by word and deed.

The Muslims were few and weak. Many of them were poor and lacked standing in the community. But their insistence on the rightness of their new faith annoyed and distressed the Quraish. Like most other Makkan nobles, ‘Umar ؓ participated in tormenting the new Muslims. They forced them to pray and meet secretly, for if they tried to come near the Ka‘bah, they were shouted at or even beaten and stoned. ‘Umar ؓ, who felt things very strongly, felt that the torture of the weak and helpless was not enough. He saw Islām as a cancer at the heart of Makkah, and he saw Rasūlullāh ﷺ as the instigator. Working himself into a terrible temper, he decided to do something about the problem by using force—he decided to kill Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

‘Umar ؓ set off with his sword drawn to find his enemy. As he was striding through the streets of Makkah, he came upon an acquaintance of his who was secretly a Muslim. This man saw the naked sword and asked ‘Umar ؓ where he was going. ‘Umar ؓ told him his intention. Desperately, the man thought fast. How could he turn away this danger long enough to run and warn Rasūlullāh ﷺ?

“‘Umar,” he said, “Hadn’t you better look out for your own family first?”

“What do you mean?” asked ‘Umar ﷺ angrily.

“Your sister and brother-in-law! You know that they listen to this new teaching, don’t you? Why not take care of them first?”

‘Umar ﷺ was terribly upset. How could his own sister be a Muslim? Turning quickly, he ran in the direction of her house, allowing the man enough time to warn Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Now, Muhammad ﷺ had just recently been asking Allāh ﷻ to bring either ‘Umar ﷺ or Abdū al-Ḥakām, another prominent noble, to Islām. He wanted the new Muslims to have the strength of one of these men. So, when he heard that ‘Umar ﷺ was coming with a drawn sword, perhaps he thought this would be the time. However, the other men around him were worried. They locked the door and prepared to fight.

Meanwhile, ‘Umar ﷺ had reached his sister’s house. He heard a voice reciting something, but the voice stopped suddenly when he came banging at the door. Inside, his sister and her husband had been listening to an older man (*Khabbāb*) reciting the Qur‘ān from a small written parchment. They quickly hid both the man and the writing, as ‘Umar ﷺ burst in and accused them of being Muslim. As retold in the previous chapter, his sister’s refusal to renounce her new religion and his own attraction to the reading soon changed him.

‘Umar ﷺ was a man who acted immediately on

his convictions. He went straight to Rasūlullāh ﷺ. He arrived at the door with sword still at hand and called out, “Where is Muḥammad? I want to profess my Islām!” The men who were awaiting his arrival with swords in hand were shocked.

“*Allāhu Akbar! Allāhu Akbar!*” shouted Rasūlullāh ﷺ, as he embraced ‘Umar ؓ. His *shahādah* was accepted, and he joined the group, all of whom were shouting *takbīr* with relief, pleasure, and amazement at what seemed to be a miracle.

‘Umar ؓ was not at all content to stay in the house and pray in secret. He went straight to the Ka‘bah and prayed in front of everybody. They were too afraid of him to do anything. After that, when he escorted Rasūlullāh ﷺ or any of the Muslims, they were able to make their *ṣalāh* and *ṭawāf* at the Ka‘bah without being injured. Along with Rasūlullāh’s ؓ uncle Ḥamzah ؓ, ‘Umar ؓ was a great strength for them all.

A Staunch Ally

During the years Islām was being established in Madīnah, ‘Umar ؓ was at the center of activity. He was a leader in battle, a leader in worship, and a leader in the inner *jihād* of transforming himself. The *aḥadīth* he left us show a man who is truly dedicated to pleasing Allāh ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ and is continually fighting

with his own pride and impulsiveness to bring them in line with the Truth. He had great insight. Several times, he would foresee the Revelation and advise Rasūlullāh ﷺ about something that was soon sent down in the Qur'ān.

He had the pleasure of seeing his daughter, Ḥafṣah, married to Rasūlullāh ﷺ and of becoming his father-in-law, just like Abū Bakr. ﷺ settled the disputes about the successor of Rasūlullāh ﷺ by taking the hand of Abū Bakr ﷺ and pledging his allegiance to him before the people.

Under Abū Bakr ﷺ, 'Umar ﷺ continued his service, advising and helping his friend for whom he had more and more awe. Just before Abū Bakr died, he nominated 'Umar ﷺ as Khalīfah. People were worried. They said, "He is too harsh!" But Abū Bakr replied, "The office will bring out his mercy." It certainly did.

A Responsible Leader of the 'Ummah

Throughout the *Khilāfah* of 'Umar ﷺ, there are stories of how merciful and tender-hearted he became. He took seriously the advice he was given: "Even if a sheep dies on the Euphrates River, you will be held responsible." He walked the streets of Madīnah at night, listening and looking, seeing if everything was all right with the people, making sure no one was breaking the law and that

everyone had enough to eat.

One of these nights, he passed by the house of some people who sold milk for a living, and he heard voices coming out the window. The mother was encouraging her daughter to add some water to the milk. The daughter protested, “No, Mother, that is wrong. If the people pay for milk, they should receive pure milk. To sell them water for the price of milk would be stealing!” The *Khalifah* was so pleased with the honesty of that girl that he found out who she was and arranged her marriage to one of his sons.

Another night, during his rounds, he and his slave, Aslam, saw a distant fire in the desert. He said, “There seems to be a camp. Perhaps, it is a caravan which could not enter the town due to nightfall. Let’s go and look after them and arrange for their protection during the night.” There they found a woman and some children. The woman had a kettle of water over the fire, and the children were crying. ‘Umar ﷺ greeted her and, with her permission, approached them.

“Why are these children crying?” he asked.

“Because they are hungry,” replied the woman.

“What is in the kettle?”

“Only water to soothe the children so that they may go to sleep in the belief that food is being prepared for them. Ah! Allāh will judge between ‘Umar and me on the Day of Judgment for neglecting me in distress.”

“May Allāh have mercy on you! How can ‘Umar

know your distress?”

When he is our *Amīr*, he must keep himself informed of us.”

‘Umar رضي الله عنه returned to town, went to the *Bait al-Māl*, filled a bag with flour, dates, oil and clothes and also drew some money. When the bag was ready he told his slave, Aslam, to help put it on his back for him. The slave protested, saying, “No, please, *Amīr al-Mu’minīn*! I shall carry this bag.”

‘Umar رضي الله عنه said, “What! Will you carry my load on the Day of Judgment? I must carry this bag, for it is I who would be questioned about this woman.”

They went, and ‘Umar رضي الله عنه cooked food for the family. When it was finished, the children were happy and the woman said gratefully, “May Allāh reward you for your kindness! In fact, you deserve to take the place of *Khalīfah* instead of ‘Umar!”

‘Umar رضي الله عنه replied, “When you come to see the *Khalīfah*, you will find me there.”

On another occasion, ‘Umar رضي الله عنه took on the role of a servant for the sake of Allāh. During his reign, the Muslim armies were able to defeat the Byzantine forces in Jerusalem (*Al-Quds*). The Christians in the city asked that the *Khalīfah* himself come in person for the signing of the peace treaty. They expected a king to arrive with pomp and splendor. After all, his army was conquering the entire chartered world! But ‘Umar رضي الله عنه had no use at all for pomp and splendor. On the contrary, he hated all

of that. He came traveling all the way from Madīnah with just one servant. The two traveled the long distance across the desert. As they only had one camel, they took turns riding it. When they arrived at the city gates, it was the turn of the slave to ride. So ‘Umar رضي الله عنه arrived to sign the terms of the surrender of the city on foot, walking beside his servant on the camel, which amazed the leaders of the city.

‘Umar رضي الله عنه asked to be shown the city’s landmarks. He was at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, which is very important to the Christians, when it came time for prayer. He went outside and prayed nearby, so that no one would try to turn the church into a *masjid* after he was gone. He asked to see the rock from which Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم had been raised to Heaven on the night of the *Mi‘rāj*. It was covered with garbage, but ‘Umar رضي الله عنه cleaned it with his own hands. Later, Muslims built a dome at the rock and a *masjid* (*al-Aqṣā*) at this holy sight. *Masjid al-Aqṣā* is the third holiest place of Islam.

‘Umar’s Justice: Tough But Fair

Once a man was brought before him who had been caught stealing food. The punishment for stealing is the loss of a hand. ‘Umar رضي الله عنه asked the man to explain himself. The man said that he had a family, but he did not make enough to support them. ‘Umar رضي الله عنه pardoned the

man and blamed those around him for not being aware of their neighbor's plight.

Another case of justice was brought by a poor Egyptian youth. During a horse race in Cairo, a young man had won the race but had been pushed out of his rightful place as winner by the proud and arrogant son of the city's founder, 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ, who insisted that he, himself, had won. The Egyptian, who knew that the *Khalīfah* was supposed to be a fair man, travelled all the way to Madīnah to demand justice. 'Umar ﷺ sent for 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ and his son. When they arrived, he heard the whole story. He accepted the case of the young Egyptian and had both father and son flogged—the son, for injustice and the father for allowing it. 'Umar ﷺ was not going to give special privileges to anyone. He thought that the rulers had to do more and be better than their constituents, not take advantage of their position to be proud or lazy.

His dislike of material wealth was based on something Rasūlullāh ﷺ had said before he died: "I don't fear for you the dangers of war but the dangers of material wealth..." When 'Umar ﷺ sent out governors to the new provinces and territories swiftly coming under the rule of the Muslims, he was always careful to see that they did not take any of the Muslims' money for themselves. He monitored the way they lived, dressed, and behaved. He did not want any ruler to put himself up proudly above his people, but rather, he wanted them to

live simply and compassionately.

‘Umar رضي الله عنه himself was very careful not to waste the people’s money. He often worked at night and had two lamps and two containers of oil. If he was working on something for the ‘*Ummah*, he used one light, whose oil was paid for out of the public treasury. If he was working for himself, he used the other light, whose oil was paid for out of his own pocket.

His tough justice extended heavily to himself. If he found he had made a mistake, he tried to admit it and to correct it immediately. Once, he made a statement in a speech in the *masjid* concerning limiting *Mihr*, the dower for women. An older woman got up and said, “You’re wrong, the Qur’ān does not limit the dower, and we did not do that in the time of Rasūlullāh ﷺ!” When he found this was true, he changed his policy and thanked the old woman.

‘Umar رضي الله عنه was responsible for several changes in the practice of Islām. He established the system of government with provinces, governors and taxes based on Qur’ānic guidance. This system remained more or less until modern times. He also established *Tarāwīḥ* prayers. One *Ramaḍan* he saw some men in the *masjid* praying *Tarāwīḥ* separately. ‘Umar رضي الله عنه brought them together in one line to pray, an act to which all the *ṣaḥābah* agreed. When someone said that was *Bida’* (innovation), ‘Umar رضي الله عنه replied that it was a good change. Muslims have prayed that way ever since.

'Umar is Assassinated

One day, at *Ṣalāt-al-Fajr*, while 'Umar رضي الله عنه was leading the prayer, a non-Muslim slave came up behind him and stabbed him with a knife. 'Umar رضي الله عنه grabbed the hand of 'Abd-ar-Raḥmān ibn 'Awf, signaling him to complete the prayer. All chaos broke loose in the *masjid*; the murderer ran off stabbing in all directions and killed seven more people. When a cloak was finally thrown over him, the intruder killed himself. 'Umar رضي الله عنه asked who had stabbed him and was thankful to Allāh that it had not been a Muslim.

The people were completely upset, hoping and praying their leader would not leave them. He was carried to his house, and soon, everyone knew he was dying. A young man came and began to compliment him, saying how much he had pleased Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم, how well he had served beside Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه, and how highly he was regarded among the Muslims. 'Umar رضي الله عنه simply replied, "I hope that all these privileges will counterbalance my shortcomings, so that I will neither lose nor gain anything."

'Umar رضي الله عنه lived on for four days. During that time, he kept working. He appointed a group of the respected companions to choose the next *Khalīfah*. He advised them that whoever was chosen should be very considerate of the early emigrants and the *Anṣār*, accept the good and excuse the wrong from among them, be good to the

Arab Bedouin, and faithful and honorable with those of other places and other religions who were protected by Islāmic law.

He finished taking care of his personal debts and affairs. Then, he told his son ‘Abdullāh, “Go to the Mother of the Believers, ‘Ā’ishah, and say, “Umar sends you greeting.’ But don’t say, ‘The Chief of the Faithful Believers,’ because today I am not the chief of the faithful believers, and say, “Umar ibn al-Khattāb asks permission to be buried with his two companions.””

‘Abdullāh went, greeted ‘Ā’ishah ﷺ and asked permission to enter. He found her sitting and weeping. He delivered his message. She said, “I had the idea of having this place for myself, but today, I prefer ‘Umar to myself.”

‘Abdullāh returned to his father and delivered the message that ‘Ā’ishah ﷺ had agreed. ‘Umar ﷺ sighed, “Praise be to Allāh, there was nothing more important to me than this.” He left instructions that when he died, they should go again to ‘Ā’ishah ﷺ and take her permission. They did this, and she let them bury ‘Umar ﷺ beside Rasūlullāh ﷺ and Abū Bakr ﷺ in ‘Ā’ishah’s house.

So died this pillar of strength for the *dīn*. Rasūlullāh ﷺ had once said, “Among the nation of Bani Isrā’il who lived before you, there were men who were inspired with guidance though they were not prophets, and if there is any of such people among my followers, it

is ‘Umar” (*Muslim* 4:5901). It was several times the case that ‘Umar ﷺ would express some opinion or idea that soon after came as revelation to Rasūlullāh ﷺ. The passing of this great man deeply affected many people, as Ibn ‘Abbās recorded in this account:

When (the body of) ‘Umar was put on his deathbed, the people gathered around him, called upon Allāh, and prayed for him before the body was taken away, and I was amongst them. Suddenly, I felt somebody taking hold of my shoulder and found out that it was ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. ‘Alī asked Allāh’s Mercy for ‘Umar and said, “O ‘Umar! You have not left behind you a person whose deeds I’d like to imitate and meet Allāh with more than yours. By Allāh! I always thought that Allāh would keep you with your two companions, for very often, I used to hear Rasūlullāh ﷺ saying, ‘Abū Bakr, ‘Umar and I went somewhere’; Abū Bakr, ‘Umar and I entered somewhere’; and Abū Bakr, ‘Umar and I went out.”

May Allāh ﷻ shower his peace and blessings upon this sincere leader of the ‘Ummah and close ṣaḥābī of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

‘Uthman Ibn ‘Affan

“Every prophet has an assistant,
and my assistant will be ‘Uthman.”

– Rasūlullāh ﷺ
at-Tirmidhi 6061

There is an *ḥadīth* from Abū Mūsa al-Ash‘arī, recorded in several versions of *al-Bukhārī* and *Muslim* (*al-Bukhārī* 5:23, for example) which describes the powerful and beautiful relationship between Rasūlullāh ﷺ and Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, and ‘Uthmān:

I performed *wuḍū’* in my house and then went out and said, “Today, I shall stay with Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ all this day of mine.” I went to the *masjid* and asked about Rasūlullāh ﷺ. They said, “He went in that direction.” So I followed his way, asking about him until he entered a place called *Bi’r ‘Arīs*, (which was

a garden around a well). I sat at its gate that was made of date-palm leaves until Rasūlullāh ﷺ finished what he was doing and made ablution. Then, I went up to see him sitting at the well of 'Arīs on the middle of its edge with his legs uncovered, hanging in the well. I greeted him and went back and sat at the gate. I then announced, "Today, I will be the gate-keeper of Rasūlullāh ﷺ."

Abū Bakr came and pushed the gate. I asked, "Who is it?" "Abū Bakr," he said. I told him to wait, went in to Rasūlullāh ﷺ and said, "O Allāh's Messenger! Abū Bakr asks for permission to enter." To this he said, "Admit him and give him the glad tidings that he will be in Paradise." So I went out and said to Abū Bakr, "Come in; Allāh's Messenger ﷺ gives you the glad tidings that you will be in Paradise." Abū Bakr entered and sat on the right side of Allāh's Messenger ﷺ on the edge of the well and hung his uncovered legs in the well just like Rasūlullāh ﷺ. I then returned and sat at the gate.

Meanwhile, I had left my brother performing ablution, and he intended to follow me, so I said "If Allāh wants good for him, He will bring him here." Suddenly, somebody moved the door. I asked, "Who is it?" A voice called out, "'Umar ibn al-Khattāb." I asked him to wait, walked over to Allāh's Messenger ﷺ, greeted him, and said, "'Umar ibn al-Khattāb asks permission to enter." To this he said, "Admit him and give him the glad tidings that he will be in Paradise." With this, I went to 'Umar and said, "Come in; Allāh's Messenger ﷺ gives you the glad tidings that you will be in Paradise." So he entered and sat beside Allāh's Messenger ﷺ on the built edge of the well on the left side and hung his legs in the well. I returned and sat

and said, “If Allāh wants good for another, He will bring him here.”

And again, somebody came and moved the door. I asked, “Who is it?” The man replied, “‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān.” I asked him to wait and went to Rasūlullāh ﷺ to inform him of this visitor. He said, “Admit him, and give him the glad tidings that he will enter Paradise after a calamity befalls him.” So, I went back to ‘Uthmān and said to him, “Come in; Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ gives you the glad tidings of entering Paradise after a calamity befalls you.” ‘Uthmān then came in and, finding the built edge of the well occupied, he sat opposite Rasūlullāh ﷺ on the other side of the well.

This *ḥadīth* not only describes Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ invitation of Paradise to ‘Uthmān ﷺ and the others, but may well also explain the placement of their graves.

In Madīnah, ‘Uthmān ﷺ helped many of the early Muslims with gifts of money and assistance in getting established in their new life. He was well-known for his generosity. When the Muslims needed a well, he bought it. When money was needed for a battle, he supplied much of it. Often, he was not with the greater group, but off doing personal business for Rasūlullāh ﷺ. A few stories illustrate his central and unique function in the early days of Islām

‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān ﷺ was among the noble young men of Makkah. He was very rich and had

tremendously good fortune with money. He also was a seeker of truth. One time, when he was returning from a trading trip to Syria, he stopped to rest along the way. Suddenly, he heard a great voice calling out of the desert, “Sleepers, awake, for indeed Aḥmad has come forth in Makkah!” Surprised by this announcement, ‘Uthmān hurried on his way. He was shortly overtaken by Ṭalḥah, who had spoken to a monk on his own trading journey. The monk had asked him if Aḥmad had yet come forth in Makkah. When he asked who Aḥmad was, the monk told him he was the son of ‘Abd Allāh the son of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the last of the prophets, and this was his month to announce himself.

The two men hurried on and went to Ṭalḥah’s cousin Abū Bakr ﷺ, who took them to Rasūlullāh ﷺ. They told their stories, and declared the *shahādah*.

The Man of Two Lights

‘Uthmān ﷺ was extraordinarily handsome. He married Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ daughter Ruqayyah ﷺ, who was very beautiful. One day, Rasūlullāh ﷺ sent them a message, and the messenger took a long time to return. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said to the messenger, “I know what has detained you—you stood there gazing at ‘Uthmān and Ruqayyah, marveling at their beauty!”

‘Uthmān ﷺ and Ruqayyah ﷺ lived through much

joy and suffering and endured many trials. After surviving the terrible tortures of the early converts in Makkah, these two made the first *Hijrah* to Abyssinia. They lived there for a time and then returned to join the *Hijrah* to Madīnah.

Later, at the time of the Battle of Badr, all the Muslim men were preparing to fight, and Rasūlullāh's ﷺ daughter Ruqayyah, 'Uthmān's ﷺ beloved wife, lay very sick. Rasūlullāh ﷺ commanded 'Uthmān ﷺ to stay home with her. When the victorious army returned, they found grief in the houses of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, for Ruqayyah ﷺ was dead.

After a period of mourning, 'Uthmān ﷺ married Rasūlullāh's ﷺ other daughter, Umm Kulthum ﷺ. Because of this, 'Uthmān ﷺ came to be called "He of the two lights" or "*Dhū an-Nūrain*" for being married, one after the other, to two lovely daughters of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

The Trusted Envoy

After quite a few years in Madīnah, Rasūlullāh ﷺ and his *ṣahābah* longed to return to the Holy House. They wanted to make a peaceful pilgrimage to Makkah, where they could offer worship. They soon began their journey, taking with them a few weapons and many sacrificial animals. They got as far as Hudaibiyah, when the

camel of Rasūlullāh ﷺ stopped and could go no further. Rasūlullāh ﷺ knew this was a sign from Allāh ﷻ and halted there.

The Quraish sent scouts and messengers who soon reported that the Muslims came in peace, but the Quraish refused to let them in. Rasūlullāh ﷺ sent a messenger to Makkah, but his camel was killed and the messenger himself was fortunate to escape with his life. He told Rasūlullāh ﷺ to send someone who was better protected. ‘Umar ؓ was asked, but he suggested that ‘Uthmān ؓ was the one who could enter the city in safety because of relatives and connections there. So ‘Uthmān ؓ went. He was received well and not harmed. The Quraish refused the other Muslims entry, but allowed ‘Uthmān ؓ to make the pilgrimage. However, he refused to do so without the others.

Meanwhile, the Muslims waited patiently for ‘Uthmān, but after a long time, he still had not returned. They began to worry about his safety. It was a tense and potentially dangerous situation. The Muslims agreed that if ‘Uthmān ؓ did not return, they would fight. Yet, they were ill-prepared to fight, having come in peace. During ‘Uthmān’s ؓ absence, Rasūlullāh ﷺ received a message from Allāh ﷻ to gather the people together under a tree and take a fresh vow of allegiance. This vow became famous and was mentioned favorably by Allāh ﷻ in the Qur’ān. It is known as the pledge of *ar-Ridwān*, for the peace it gave the Believers and the plea-

sure it gave to Allāh. After all those present had taken the hand of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, he took one of his hands in the other and made the vow for ‘Uthmān ﷺ.

Soon after this, ‘Uthmān ﷺ returned safely, and the Quraish sent envoys to make a treaty with Rasūlullāh ﷺ. The treaty was accepted, much to the advantage of the Muslims, although many of them did not understand that at the time.

The Farewell Pilgrimage was led by Rasūlullāh ﷺ, who carried the weight of responsibility for all the Muslims who gathered from all over Arabia to accompany him. All his wives came, and he assigned as their escorts ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf and ‘Uthmān. That was a measure of the trust he had in these two men.

Righteous Leader of the ‘Ummah

When Rasūlullāh ﷺ died, ‘Uthmān ﷺ continued to work for the Muslims as a trusted and valued advisor, first to Abū Bakr ﷺ and then to ‘Umar ﷺ. As ‘Umar ﷺ lay dying, he appointed a committee of six to choose the next *Khalīfah*. The group included ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ﷺ, ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf, Sa’d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ ﷺ, Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubaidullāh, and Az-Zubair ibn ‘Awwām. All of them had been promised the Garden by Rasūlullāh ﷺ, so the choice was obviously a difficult one.

For several days they deliberated and discussed the appointment. In the end, the choice came down to either ‘Uthmān or ‘Alī. ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān went to the leading *ṣaḥābah* and other Muslims to get a consensus of opinion in favor of ‘Uthmān. In the *masjid*, before many people, he declared him the elected *Khalīfah* and pledged his loyalty to him. ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān was followed by ‘Alī, the other members of the committee, and all the people. In his acceptance speech, he said,

We dwell in the place of retribution. Our lives are mortal and short. We should try our best to do noble acts as far as possible because we have to become victims of death. Every one of us will be answerable to our Lord on the Day of Judgment. Remember, life is unreliable, and death keeps no calendar. This world is full of illusions. Take a warning from those who were involved in the pleasures of the world. They enjoyed all the comforts of life in the world but returned to dust, degraded. Truly, Allāh is the Beneficent and does not take prompt action against sinners. He gives us opportunities to reform ourselves. We should not take too much advantage of His kindness. We should, therefore, become conscious of Allāh. We should not call up His Wrath by doing evil deeds. We should try to win the favors of Allāh by performing noble acts which shall reward us in the Eternal Home.

‘Uthmān  continued to run the government of the Muslims as his *ṣaḥābah* had done, with impartial jus-

tice for all, humane and thoughtful policies, and striving in the path of Allāh. The borders of the Islāmic state continued to expand. The immense new wealth was used as much as possible to help the needy and poor. By this time, the world of Islām stretched from Morocco in the West to Afghanistan in the East. Persia, Syria, Armenia, and much of the Mediterranean sea came under Muslim rule. During the twelve years of ‘Uthmān’s ﷺ rule, a navy was organized for the first time, with great success. The Qur’ān was copied down several times from the *muṣḥaf* made in the time of Abū Bakr ﷺ and was sent to far away parts of the state, so that it could be taught and understood all over. This was a great advantage for the new Muslims, although a few of the old ones grumbled that it was an unacceptable innovation.

Throughout his life, ‘Uthmān ﷺ continued to be the man he always had been honest, mild, generous, and kind. He often prayed throughout the night, fasted every second or third day, and made *Hajj* almost every year. He knew the Qur’ān by heart and knew where, when, and how its verses had been revealed.

At first, his rule was peaceful, but during the last few years, a dangerous rebellion grew. ‘Uthmān ﷺ could have stopped it immediately with force, but he hoped to reason with the rebels rather than risk shedding the blood of the Muslims. He remembered what Rasūlullāh ﷺ had said, “Once the sword is unsheathed among my followers, it will not be sheathed again until

the Last Day.”

Some people made trouble for him. They accused him of appointing too many family members to high office and being too soft with them. They accused him of other things as well, making gossip and fueling criticisms wherever they went. Unfortunately, many new Muslims listened to them. Some of the old *ṣaḥābah* disagreed with ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه as well, and this made matters worse. Things got so bad that some advisors suggested that ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه leave his office, but he refused on the basis that he was tied to a promise he had made when Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم told him, “Perhaps, Allāh will clothe you with a shirt, ‘Uthmān, and if the people want you to take it off, do not take it off for them.”

When the people demanded he abdicate, he said,

I will never abdicate. I do not like to set a bad example for the generations to follow. By Allāh, if you draw the sword against me, you will open among the Muslims a door of dissension that will never be closed. You will never enjoy peace and tranquility in the future. Unity and kinship among the Muslim nation shall be shattered. The Muslims will split up into different sects. Neither will you accept the leadership of one chief, nor will you be able to pursue holy wars against the pagans. You will be involved in subtraction and separate *Imāms* shall lead you in prayers.

The rebellion grew in different parts of the empire. When at last, it took its final form, rebels sur-

rounded the house of ‘Uthmān ؓ and would not let him out. He said, “Allāh’s Messenger made a covenant with me, and I shall show endurance in sticking to it.” At last, after days of sitting outside, the rebels broke into ‘Uthmān’s ؓ house, entered his room, pushed aside his wife, and murdered him. He was reading the Qur’ān, and when the sword struck him he was reciting, “Indeed, Allāh is enough for you; He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing” (*al-Baqarah* 2:137).

‘Uthmān ؓ suffered and died because Muslims were influenced by gossip, false accusation—all of which are forbidden both by Allāh ﷻ in the Qur’ān and by His Prophet ﷺ. One of the people who gave in to these wrongs and assisted in the overthrow of ‘Uthmān was ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar. Later, however, he felt sorry for his actions and tried to set them right. When he was an old man, someone from Egypt came to him beside the Ka‘bah and asked him some questions about some rumors he had heard and, wisely, wanted to check out. Here is the story:

One day, an old man approached ibn ‘Umar, saying, “O Ibn ‘Umar! I want to ask you about something: please tell me, did you know that ‘Uthmān fled away on the day of the Battle of Uḥud?”

Ibn ‘Umar said, “Yes.”

“Do you know that ‘Uthmān was absent on the day of the Battle of Badr and did not join it?”

“Yes,” he again replied

“Do you know that he failed to attend the pledge of ar-Riḍwan and did not witness it?”

“Yes.”

The man said, “*Allāhu Akbar!*”

Ibn ‘Umar then said, “Let me explain to you all these three things. As for his flight on the day of Uḥud, I certify that Allāh has excused him and forgiven him; as for his absence from the Battle of Badr, it was due to the fact that a daughter of Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ was his wife and she was sick then. Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ said to him, ‘You will receive the same reward and share of the booty as anyone of those who participated in the Battle of Badr.’ As for his absence from the solemn pledge of ar-Riḍwan—had there been any person in Makkah more respectable than ‘Uthmān to be sent as a representative, Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ would have sent him instead of him. No doubt, Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ had sent him, and the incident of the solemn pledge of ar-Riḍwan occurred after ‘Uthmān had gone to Makkah. Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ held out his right hand saying, ‘This is Uthmān’s hand.’ He stroked his other hand with it, saying, ‘This solemn pledge is on the behalf of ‘Uthmān.’”

Then Ibn ‘Umar said to the man, “Bear these excuses in mind.”

And so passed the third *Khalīfah* of Islām.

*May Allāh ﷻ bless the third of the Rightly Guided
Khalīfah—the man of “two lights.”*

Zaid Ibn ‘Amr & Sa‘id Ibn Zaid

*“I make you my Witness, that I am on
the religion of Ibrahim!”*

*– Zaid, father of Sa‘id
al-Bukhari 5*

Zaid ibn ‘Amr, although he searched far and wide, was unable to meet the promised Prophet ﷺ. Much later, Rasūlullāh ﷺ praised Zaid and said that on the Day of Resurrection, “He will be raised as having, in himself alone, the worth of a whole people” (*Ibn Hishām*). When Rasūlullāh ﷺ began calling people to Islām, Zaid’s son Sa‘īd ﷺ was among the earliest to have faith in Allāh and believe in His message. Sa‘īd ﷺ was raised in a household that resented the pagan ways of the Quraish; he was educated by a father who spent his life searching for Truth and

was killed while pursuing it.

Sa'īd ؓ became Muslim, and so did his wife Fāṭimah bint al-Khaṭṭāb ؓ, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb's sister. They kept their Islām a secret for fear of her brother, who had a violent temper and was very opposed to the new religion. He fought it because he sincerely believed that it was splitting up the Quraish, family and tribe, and was insulting to their faith and gods. When they became Muslim, Sa'īd ؓ was hardly twenty years old.

Fāṭimah ؓ loved to hear the Qur'ān recited, and Khabbab ibn al-Aratt often came to their house to read it to them. In those days of little formal education, people memorized what they wanted to know, since few people knew how to read or write. The Muslims memorized whatever was being revealed from the Qur'ān as Rasūlullāh ؐ recited it. Some of them who could would also write it down. There was no paper at that time. They wrote on parchment (dried animal skin), bark, bones, or stone. These pieces of the Qur'ān were very precious.

On one of these days when Khabbab stopped by for recitation, 'Umar ؓ had come to the terrible decision that everything wrong with Makkah was the fault of the man named Muḥammad ؐ. He decided to kill him. Sword at his side, he stomped through the streets on the way to Muḥammad, when he was seen by Nu'aim ؓ, a secret Muslim. Nu'aim ؓ asked him where he was going. He said he was going to the apostate (one who

has left his religion) Muḥammad ﷺ, to kill him. Nu‘aim ﷺ was a quick thinker. He saw that ‘Umar ﷺ was in earnest and that he had to protect Rasūlullāh ﷺ. He had to turn ‘Umar’s attention to something else so he would have time to run to the House of Arqām and warn Rasūlullāh ﷺ. He said, “You’re fooling yourself, ‘Umar. Do you suppose that Muḥammad’s tribe will leave you alive on the earth if you kill him? Hadn’t you better set your own house in order first? Hadn’t you better take care of your own family?”

“My family?” said ‘Umar ﷺ. “What’s wrong with my family?”

Nu‘aim ﷺ answered, “Your brother-in-law Sa‘īd ﷺ and your sister Fāṭimah ﷺ have both become Muslim and follow Muḥammad in his religion, so you better go and deal with them first!”

The delaying tactic worked. ‘Umar ﷺ changed his direction and went to his sister’s house, which was nearby. Just at that moment, Khabbab was reading to them from the manuscript of *Tā Hā*. When they heard ‘Umar’s voice on the stair, Khabbab hid and Fāṭimah ﷺ covered the manuscript, so ‘Umar ﷺ would not see it. ‘Umar ﷺ had already heard the reading on his way into the house and demanded to know what nonsense he had heard. Fāṭimah ﷺ and Sa‘īd ﷺ tried to tell him it was nothing, but he furiously insisted that he had heard something, and knew that they followed Muḥammad ﷺ.

He grabbed Sa'īd ؓ and began beating him. Fāṭimah ؓ jumped in to defend her husband, and 'Umar ؓ furiously hit and wounded her. When he did that, they gave up trying to hide anything. They both exclaimed, "Yes, we are Muslims; we believe in Allāh and His prophet, and you can do what you like!" At that, 'Umar ؓ looked at his sister, with blood on her face, and felt very sorry for what he had done. Softening, he said to her, "Give me the sheet that you were reading from so I may see what Muḥammad has brought." Fāṭimah ؓ bravely told him she feared she couldn't trust him with the text. He then swore by his gods that he would give it back. She told him that his gods made him unclean, so he couldn't touch it. After he washed, she gave him the parchment. When he had read the beginning ('Umar was among the few Quraish who could read and write), he exclaimed, "How fine and noble is this speech!"

Hearing this, Khabbab came out of his hiding place and said, "O 'Umar, by Allāh, I hope that Allāh has chosen you, for only last night I heard Rasūlullāh ؓ praying to Allāh that He strengthen Islām by either Abu al-Ḥakam or by 'Umar!" 'Umar ؓ asked Khabbab to lead him to Rasūlullāh so he might accept Islām.

Sa'īd ؓ and Fāṭimah ؓ succeeded in taking one of their most important and dangerous men away from the Quraish. With both Ḥamzah and 'Umar ؓ on their side, the Muslims felt more confident about moving about and declaring their beliefs.

In the Service of Islam

Sa'īd ibn Zaid ibn 'Amr ibn Nufail رضي الله عنه and Fāṭimah bint al-Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنها put all their energy into the service of Islām. They emigrated to Madīnah with the first group of *Muhājirūn*. Sa'īd رضي الله عنه participated in all the battles except Badr, which he missed because he was on a mission for Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم. However, Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم gave him a share of the spoils of Badr and told him he had all the rewards of fighting there.

After the death of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم, Sa'īd رضي الله عنه continued serving Islām under each Khalīfah. He participated in taking over Caesar's throne and diminishing Caesar's kingdom. In each battle, he exhibited a rare and extraordinary heroism. His most heroic act was recorded the day of al-Yarmuk. Sa'īd رضي الله عنه described his experience in the battle:

The day of Al-Yarmuk, we were about 24 thousand, and the Greeks were 120 thousand. They came towards us with heavy steps, like mountains moved by hidden hands. In the front ranks, they had bishops, patriarchs, and priests carrying crosses and praying loudly, and the whole army repeated the prayers after them, like the rumbling of thunder.

When the Muslims saw this, they feared being so outnumbered. Abū 'Ubaidah ibn al-Jarrah urged them to fight, saying: "O worshippers of Allāh, defend Allāh, He will defend you and make your feet firm! O worshippers of Allāh, be patient, as patience is salva-

tion from *kufr*, satisfaction with the Lord and prevention from dishonor. Aim your spears, hide behind the shields and keep silence except for evoking Allāh in your souls until new orders, Insha 'Allāh!"

At this point, a man came out of the ranks of the Muslims and said to Abū 'Ubaidah: "I've decided to martyr myself and die now. Do you have any message to Rasūlullāh ﷺ?"

"Yes," replied Abū 'Ubaidah, "give him greetings from me and from the Muslims and tell him: 'O Rasūlullāh, we found what Allāh promised us to be true.'"

As soon as I heard him and saw him drawing his sword, while going forward to meet the enemy, I dropped to the ground, knelt down, pointed my spear and struck the first horseman to come. Then, I jumped on the enemy, as Allāh had taken all the fear from my heart. The people raged and kept fighting the Greeks until Allāh granted victory to the believers.

After that, Sa'īd ibn Zaid ؓ participated in the conquest of Damascus. After its submission to the Muslims, Abū 'Ubaidah assigned him to be its ruler (*wālī*); thus, he was the first Muslim *wālī* to rule Damascus.

At the time of Banu Umayyah, Sa'īd ibn Zaid ؓ was involved in an incident that made such an impression on the people that it has been told as a legend ever since. It made more of an impression than all of his feats in battle. 'Arwah bint 'Uwais, a woman of Madīnah, claimed that Sa'īd ibn Zaid ؓ had taken part of her land by force. She kept spreading this rumor among the

Muslims. Then, she brought the charge to Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam, the ruler of Madīnah. Marwān sent people to talk to Sa‘īd  about this matter to get his side of the story. Sa‘īd  had endured the persecution of the Quraish in Makkah, and he was no stranger to insults and accusations, but this one was too much for this truthful ṣaḥābī of Rasūlullāh . He said:

They say that I’ve been unfair to her! How could I be unfair to her? I, who have heard Rasūlullāh  saying: “Whoever takes unjustly one span of land, Allāh will surround him on the day of judgment with seven earths.”

O Allāh, she claims that I was unfair to her. If she is lying then make her blind and throw her in the pit she is arguing about, and make my right as clear as sunlight to show the Muslims that I haven’t been unfair to her.”

Rasūlullāh  then said in return: “Beware of the *du‘ā’* of whoever is treated unjustly, for there is no veil between it and Allāh.” The one who was unjustly treated was Sa‘īd ibn Zaid , who was promised *Jannah*.

Soon after his *du‘ā’*, al-‘Aqīq, a valley in Madīnah where the flood waters run, experienced a flood like no flood anyone could remember. The rushing waters carried away some of the topsoil, and unveiled the stone boundary limit that was the line ‘Arwah was arguing about. It was clear to all the Muslims, from the position of the marker, that Sa‘īd  was speaking the

truth and that the woman was wrong. One month later, 'Arwah became blind and fell in the pit while she was walking on her land. 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه said, "When we were kids, we used to hear the person who was wronged say to the wrongdoer, 'May Allāh make you blind as He did to 'Arwah.'"

May Allāh رضي الله عنه bless Sa'īd ibn Zaid رضي الله عنه, his father, and his wife, and give all of them in the Jannah a place without argument, full of peace.

Az-Zubair Ibn Al-'Awwam

*"Every prophet has had a disciple,
and my disciple is
Az-Zubair ibn al-'Awwam."*

*– Rasulallah ﷺ
al-Bukhari 5:65*

Az-Zubair ibn al-'Awwām ﷺ was the cousin of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and the son of Şafiyya bint 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, Rasūlullāh's ﷺ aunt. He accepted Islām early in the Makkan period. The youngest of those who traveled to Abyssinia to escape the torture of the Quraish, Az-Zubair lived with the others under the protection of the Negus (ruler) of that country, a just and religious man.

During this time, a rebellion broke out in

Abyssinia, and the Negus led his army to fight the rebel leader. The Muslims feared that if the rebels won, harm would come to the Negus and to them, and they were afraid someone might come to power who would not protect the Muslims. The River Nile divided the two forces. The Muslims, waiting anxiously for news of their fate, asked who could go for news of the battle. Az-Zubair رضي الله عنه volunteered for the mission. To prepare him for safe travel, they blew up a waterskin and tied the neck tight, for him to put under his chest as a raft. He then departed, swimming along the Nile until he reached that point where the armies faced each other. He hid himself, quietly watching and waiting.

Soon after, while the Muslims were praying for and anticipating the victory of the Negus, Az-Zubair رضي الله عنه ran up to them, shouting, "Hurrah! The Negus has conquered, and Allāh has destroyed his enemies!" The Muslims were overjoyed. The Negus soon returned from battle, supported by his chiefs, and ruled his country, protecting the Muslims until they returned to their own land.



After the immigration to Madīnah, Az-Zubair رضي الله عنه became one of the close *ṣaḥābah* and supporters of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم. He was a great warrior, and he and 'Alī رضي الله عنه often fought together and were sent on special mis-

sions together by Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

When news came of the caravan leading to the Battle of Badr, the Muslims went out to capture it. Knowing that the Makkans had sent an army to protect the caravan, Rasūlullāh ﷺ anticipated that he might meet the army before being able to reach the caravan and its riches. However, until the Muslims approached Badr, they did not know which they would meet first.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ sent ‘Alī ؑ and Az-Zubair and a few others to do some scouting at the well of Badr. They met some Quraishi men and their camels and brought them back to the Muslim camp. When asked who they were, the men replied,

“We are the watermen of Quraish; they sent us to get them water.” The Muslims were disappointed to hear this, knowing that the men were with Abū Sufyān and not the army. After some interrogation, the two men said, “Stop! We are from Abū Sufyān!” They were brought to Rasūlullāh ﷺ who asked, “Tell me about the Quraish.”

“They are behind this hill which you see on the farthest side,” they replied.

“How many are there?”

“Many!”

“How many?”

“We don’t know,” they answered.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ then asked how many beasts they slaughtered every day, knowing that they would only

slaughter what they needed that day to feed the army, and by their answer, he could estimate the number of soldiers.

They replied, "Nine or ten."

Based on their response, Rasūlullāh ﷺ announced, "The people are between nine hundred and a thousand." He then asked how many of the nobles of Quraish were among them. The men rattled off many names, including most of the Quraish leaders who had badly tortured the Muslims. After hearing this, Rasūlullāh ﷺ turned to his *ṣaḥābah* and said, "Makkah has thrown to you the pieces of its liver!" (The liver was considered not only the best part of the meat to the Arabs, but the seat of the power of a person.)

While this was going on, Abū Sufyān, a very smart man, had ridden ahead of the caravan to seek a path of safety. He went to the wells at Badr and asked a man there whether he had seen anything unusual. The man, who had been there a while, replied, "No, only two riders who stopped at the hill and took water away in a skin." Abū Sufyān went up the hill and searched around until he found some camel droppings. In the droppings were date stones. "By god," he said, "This is the fodder of Madīnah." He returned swiftly to his caravan and changed its direction to travel towards Makkah by the coastal route, avoiding Badr.

When the Muslims met the army that day and defeated it, Az-Zubair was one of the fighters who dis-

tinguished himself, leading them to victory.

In the Face of Tragedy

Az-Zubair رضي الله عنه also fought at and survived the Battle of Uḥud. He was present beside Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم as the bodies of the martyrs were lined up beside his uncle, Ḥamzah رضي الله عنه. As was recounted in an earlier chapter, Ḥamzah's body had been badly mutilated and was wrapped in a cloak. Some of the women had come out to help and fight during the battle, and others came afterwards for news of loved ones. Ṣafiyyah رضي الله عنها, Az-Zubair's mother, approached the field to see her brother Ḥamzah رضي الله عنه. Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم told Az-Zubair رضي الله عنه, "Go meet her and take her back so that she does not see what has happened to her brother."

Az-Zubair رضي الله عنه stopped his mother from coming any further, saying, "Mother, the Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم orders you to go back!"

Ṣafiyyah رضي الله عنها replied, "Why? I have heard that my brother has been mutilated and that, for the sake of Allāh صلى الله عليه وسلم, is a small thing. He has fully prepared us for what has happened. I will be calm and patient if Allāh صلى الله عليه وسلم will."

Az-Zubair رضي الله عنه went back to Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم and told him what his mother had said. Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم instructed Az-Zubair رضي الله عنه to leave her alone. With that, Ṣafiyyah رضي الله عنها

came forward, looked at Ḥamzah ؓ, prayed for him, asking Allāh ﷻ to forgive him, and said, “We belong to Allāh ﷻ and to Allāh ﷻ do we return.” Soon after, Ḥamzah was buried.

Bravery in Battle

Az-Zubair’s bravery was evident in yet another battle. During the Battle of the Trench, Az-Zubair’s son saw him riding his horse several times back and forth between the Muslim lines and the forts of the Banu Quraida, who had turned against them. When he confronted his father about what he had seen, Az-Zubair ؓ replied,

Did you really see me, O my son? The reason is that Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ had asked of us, ‘Who will go to Banu Quraida and bring me their news?’ I offered to go, and when I came back, Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ thanked me graciously, announcing, ‘Let my father and mother be sacrificed instead of you.’

At the Battle of Khaibar, Az-Zubair ؓ fought with the other *ṣahābah*, seeing fort after fort fall before them. Finally, they approached the last two forts, and the siege of these lasted ten days and nights. Some strong Jewish warriors came out from the forts for single combat. One of them, named Marḥab, was killed. Then,

his brother Yāsir came out to fight. As was the custom, he put his challenge of the Muslims into poetry:

Khaibar knows that I am Yāsir,
Fully armed, a doughty warrior.
As when lions advance at a rush
The enemy give way before my onslaught!

Az-Zubair rose to the challenge, replying,

Khaibar know that I am Zabbār,
Chief of a people no cowardly runaways,
The son of those who defend their glory,
The son of princes.
O Yāsir, let not all the unbelievers deceive you,
For all of them are like a slowly moving mirage!

Safiyyah ﷺ, who was there, asked Rasūlullāh ﷺ fearfully, “Will he kill my son, O Messenger?”

“Nay, your son will kill him, if Allāh wills,” replied Rasūlullāh ﷺ. And so Az-Zubair slew Yāsir.

When Rasūlullāh ﷺ was planning the conquest of Makkah, he confided in Abū Bakr ﷺ and instructed him to keep the people from knowing exactly where the army was going, so that he could keep their plans secret from the Quraish. However, as was often the case in such matters, news of the plan spread. Soon after, Rasūlullāh ﷺ was warned in a dream that a secret message was being sent to Makkah through a woman who was traveling there. He sent ‘Alī ﷺ and Az-Zubair ﷺ

after her.

When the men found her on the road, they confronted her about the message, but she denied carrying any letter. They made her dismount, and then searched all her baggage, but found nothing. Knowing that Rasūlullāh ﷺ could not be mistaken, ‘Alī ؓ threatened her that if she did not produce the letter, they would have to take further action. Seeing that he meant what he said, she told them to turn aside and then let down her hair. Hidden under her braids on the top of her head was the letter. They promptly took it from her and rode back to Madīnah.

They discovered the letter was from Ḥatīb ibn Abū Balta and that he had paid the woman to take it to Makkah. When brought before Rasūlullāh ﷺ, Abū Balta explained that he was a sincere Muslim, but he had family in Makkah and wanted to warn them against danger. Rasūlullāh ﷺ, therefore, forgave him. Soon after this, when they finally entered Makkah, Az-Zubair was appointed one of the leaders of the army.

Az-Zubair ؓ continued fighting for the freedom of the Muslims throughout his life. During his last battle, he summoned his son ‘Abdullāh ؓ and shared with him his feeling that this would be his last fight. He told his son that if he died in battle, he must make sure to clear all his remaining debts.

“If you have any difficulty paying the debts,” he said, “call upon your Master.”

His son was a bit puzzled by this remark and asked, “Who is my master?”

“Allāh!” replied Az-Zubair رضي الله عنه.

That same day, Az-Zubair رضي الله عنه died. When his son checked his father’s debts, he found that his father owed a great deal of money. This was because he had a reputation for being honest and trustworthy, and people had come to him to leave their money in a safe place. He had always told them,

“Dear brothers, I possess no vaults for the safe-keeping of your deposits. I will treat them as loans to me, and you may take the same back when you please.”

Then, Az-Zubair رضي الله عنه would take the money to spend on the poor and needy. So, he had no money to pay the people back. However, he trusted Allāh سبحانه وتعالى to take care of it. When ‘Abdullāh رضي الله عنه went about paying the debts, he was able to clear most of them. He said, “Whenever I experienced any difficulty, I would pray, ‘O Master of Az-Zubair, help me,’ and the difficulty would subside.”

May Allāh سبحانه وتعالى bless Az-Zubair, a fighter for the freedom of all Muslims and helper of the poor and needy.

Appendix

Glossary

'*adhān*: the public call to prayer

Amīn: trustworthy

Ansār: Helper; The Muslims native to Madinah who aided the Muslims of Makkah.

Bait al-Māl: the treasury

barakah: blessing

Bida': innovation; change

bishārah: good news

Bismika Allāhumma: “In your Name, O Allāh ﷻ”

Bismillahi-ar-Raḥmāni-ar-Raḥīm: the one and singular God of all, the most Merciful

dinar: a unit of money worth 100 dirhams or about 53 dollars (US)

dirhams: a unit of money worth about 50 cents (US)

du'ā': supplication

Fāsiq: a sinner or wrongdoer

fatwah: religious ruling

fiqh: the details of Islamic law

fiṭnah: mischief

Ḥadīth: the sayings of the Prophet ﷺ

Ḥajj: pilgrimage to Makkah during the first days of the month of *Dhu-(a)l Hijjah*

ḥalāl: lawful and pur

Alhamdu-li-(A)llāh: “All Praise to Allāh ﷻ”

ḥarām: forbidden; a protected place

Hijrah: the migration of the Prophet ﷺ from Makkah to Madinah. The Islamic calendar starts from this event.

howdah: small room made to fit on a camel in which a woman could sit privately

Imām: the leader of the prayer or the community; also a great religious scholar

Mi‘rāj: the Prophet’s ﷺ night journey from Makkah to Jerusalem and to the Heavens

Jahilīyyah: the days of ignorance before Islām

Jannah: Heaven; paradise

jihād: struggle, both external and internal

Ḥabbāb: older man

Ḳhalīfah: the successor of the Prophet ﷺ; the leader of the Muslim community

Ḳhalīl: closest friend

ḵuṭub: speeches

kuffār: plural of *kāfir*; disbeliever; one who covers up the truth

Al-Madīnah Al-Munawwarah: the City of Light

masjid: mosque

Mihr: dower

Muhajirūn: immigrants; those Muslims who migrated from Makkah to Madinah during the *Hijrah*

Mujāhidīn: those people who strive in the Way of Islam

muṣṣhaf: a written copy of the Holy Qur'ān

mushrikīn: those who commit *shirk*; to associate others with Allāh ﷻ; a polytheist

Muwafaqah: successful

al-Quds: Jerusalem

rak'ah: a part of the Muslim prayer that involves bowing while standing

Rasūlullāh: The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ; Muḥammad son of Abdullāh ﷺ

as-Ṣabirūn: the patient people

Ṣadaqah: charity

Ṣaḥābah: the companions of the Prophet ﷺ

Al-Salsabīl: a spring in *Jannah*

As-Salāmu ‘Alaikum: “Peace be with You”; the greeting of Islam.

Ṣalāh: the five daily ritual prayers of Islam

Ṣalāt al-Fajr: one of the five ritual prayers performed at dawn

shahādah: the profession of faith

Shaiṭān: Satan, the devil

Sharī‘ah: the law; the perfected way for humans to live; the way of life given by Allāh ﷻ

shirk: to associate others with Allāh ﷻ; a polytheist

Sunna: ways and instructions

surāh: a chapter of the Qur’ān

Tarāwīh: special night prayer in Ramaḍān, either eight, ten, or twenty *Raka‘āh*

tayyammum: ritual washing with clean earth, sand, or dust if water is not available

‘Ummah: Muslim community

‘Ummahāt al-Mu’minīn: the Mothers of the Believers

Waḥī: revelation

wuḍū: ritual washing before prayer

zakāh: the purification of wealth; charity; alms

IQRA' Transliteration Chart

q	ق	•	z	ز	•	ء	أ	•
k	ك		s	س		b	ب	
l	ل		sh	ش		t	ت	
m	م		ṣ	ص	•	th	ث	•
n	ن		ḍ	ض	•	j	ج	
h	ه		ṭ	ط	•	ḥ	ح	•
w	و		ẓ	ظ	•	kh	خ	•
y	ي		ع	ع	•	d	د	
			gh	غ	•	dh	ذ	•
			f	ف		r	ر	

SHORT VOWELS

a \ َ

u \ ُ

i \ ِ

Such as: *kataba* كَتَبَ

Such as: *Qul* قُلْ

Such as: *Ni'mah* نِعْمَةٌ

LONG VOWELS

a \ َا

u \ ُو

i \ ِي

Such as: *Kitāb* كِتَاب

Such as: *Mamnūn* مَمْنُون

Such as: *Dīn* دِينَ

DIPHTHONGS

aw \ َاو

ai \ َاي

Such as: *Lawh* لَوْح

Such as: *'Ain* عَيْن

* Special attention should be given to the symbols marked with stars for they have no equivalent in the English sounds.
 Note : Letters in parenthesis (a),(i),(u) appear in writing but are not pronounced.

Islamic Invocations

Rasūlullāh, *Ṣalla Allahu ‘alaihi wa Sallam* (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), and the Qur’ān teach us to glorify Allāh when we mention His Name and to invoke His Blessings when we mention the names of His Angels, Messengers, the *Ṣaḥābah* and the Pious Ancestors.

When we mention the Name of Allāh we must say:

Subḥāna-hu Wa-Ta’ālā (سبحانه وتعالى), Glorified is He and High.

In this book we write *سبح* to remind us to Glorify Allāh.

When we mention the name of Rasūlullāh ﷺ we must say:

Ṣalla Allahu ‘alai-hi wa-Sallam, (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ),

May Allāh’s Blessings and Peace be upon him.

We write an *صلى* to remind us to invoke Allāh’s Blessings on Rasūlullāh.

When we mention the name of an angel or a prophet we must say:

Alai-hi-s-Salām (عليه السلام), Upon him be peace.

We write an *عليه* to remind us to invoke Allāh’s Peace upon him.

When we hear the name of the *Ṣaḥābah* we must say:

For more than two, *Radiy-Allahu Ta’ālā ‘anhum*, (رضي الله تعالى عنهم),

May Allāh be pleased with them. For two of them, *Radiy-Allahu Ta’ālā ‘an-humā*

(رضي الله تعالى عنهما), May Allāh be pleased with both of them.

We write *رضي* to remind us to invoke Allāh’s Pleasure on them.

For a *Ṣaḥābī*, *Radiy-Allahu Ta’ālā ‘an-hu* (رضي الله تعالى عنه), May Allāh be pleased with him. We write *رضي* to remind us to invoke Allāh’s Pleasure with him.

For a *Ṣaḥābiyyah*, *Radiy-Allahu Ta’ālā ‘an-hā* (رضي الله تعالى عنها), May Allāh be pleased with her. We write *رضي* to remind us to invoke Allāh’s Pleasure with her.

When we hear the name of the Pious Ancestor (*As-Salaf as-Ṣāliḥ*) we must say.

For a man: *Rahmatullāh ‘alaihi* (رحمة الله عليه), May Allāh’s Mercy be upon him.

For a woman: *Rahmaullāh ‘alai-hā* (رحمة الله عليها), May Allāh’s Mercy be with her.

We write *رحمة* to remind us to invoke Allāh’s Pleasure on the Pious Ancestor.

About the Author

Noura Durkee graduated with an M.A. in Fine Arts from Stanford University. She studied Arabic and Islamic culture at Um al-Qura University in Makkah, Saudi Arabia and attended the Kamel Ibrahim School of Islamic Calligraphy in Alexandria, Egypt. She has traveled throughout the world as an educator and lecturer.

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